

Mr Jon Palmer, MRTPI  
Head of Planning  
Milton Keynes Council  
Civic Offices  
1 Saxon Gate East  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 3EJ



6<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Mr Palmer,

**Application 19/01818/OUT**  
**Land at South Caldecotte**  
**Adopted Plan:MK (Milton Keynes Local Plan) Site Allocation SD14**

Further to your e-mail dated 29/11/19 which in turn followed David Buckley's e-mail of 21/11/19 I am surprised by your comments that many of the issues we have raised are '*largely out of our hands*' when it is entirely within the Council's hands to support the delivery of a site it has been allocated.

I am not aware of any impediment that prevents the Council making a positive decision on this planning application, other than Highway's England's holding objection; which our project team are working to resolve as a matter of urgency. Our Transport Consultants (BWB) are working with Highways England to demonstrate that the proposals would not have a severe impact on the Strategic Road Network and I am confident that the matter will be resolved in the next few weeks.

Other than this matter, we are working with David Buckley to address any remaining technical issues. There are clearly no 'showstoppers', a point made by the Council in evidence to the Examination in Public and as you well know, our planning application has been prepared in full accordance with the relevant criteria of policy SD14 of Plan: MK which allocates the site. Specifically:

- The development meets the requirement to deliver a minimum of 195,000m<sup>2</sup> of much needed employment floorspace which the Inspector was needed early on in the Plan period to meet the needs for economic growth within the city and beyond.
- A Transport Assessment has been provided which demonstrates that the proposals would not have a severe impact on the Highway Network. This is, in principle, accepted by your highways officers.
- As a result of the preparation of the Environmental Statement, a satisfactory strategy to mitigate the impact on identified heritage assets has been set out in a manner which is proportionate to their importance which takes into account the need to balance the benefits of the allocated development with the preservation of the asset
- The scheme is accompanied by detailed ecological offsetting and mitigation measures. I would remind you that we have frustratingly still not received ecology or landscape comments on the planning application and would ask that these are provided as a matter of urgency.

Cont/d....

Given the above it is within the Council's gift to deliver the allocation set out in it's own local plan, as the Inspector acknowledged as being effective in meeting forecast economic growth in the early to middle period of Plan: MK.

I trust that you will recognise that we have sought to work with the Council at every opportunity and entered into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) in order to deliver this much needed development. We have also complied with your reasonable requests to extend the application deadline thus far, and we continue to be fully willing to work with you to resolve any reasonable matters that consultees may have raised.

However, I repeat that we have become extremely frustrated to say the least that it seems that you would rather impose arbitrary and unnecessary deadlines that delay the proposals - firstly the route of east-west rail, secondly the transport study. These issues were not considered by the Inspector to be necessary to deliver the development, nor do they form part of policy SD14. They may inform the next iteration of Plan:MK but they provide no justified basis for any delay to this planning application;, nor does the Council need them to provide any comfort in order to grant planning permission for the site, given that the evidence base forming part of Plan: MK demonstrated that the allocation was sound. It would therefore be manifestly unreasonable for the Local Planning Authority to delay the determination of a planning application pending these matters for which there is no conclusive timetable .

We note thus far that you have been unwilling to support our planning application until the transport study is complete. For the reasons I have previously outlined, your Council's current position realistically leaves us with little choice but to seek determination by the Secretary of State. Needless to say this would be disappointing for all involved, not least because we will incur further unnecessary time and expense as a result of the Council's actions: it will also place the Council at considerable risk itself.

However, there is still an opportunity here for us to work together. We appreciate your willingness to continue to meet with us regarding the project and we are enthusiastic, as we always have been; to work with you so that you can put a positive recommendation to committee, and to do so promptly and in support of the application. However, for continued meetings to be of benefit I would respectfully suggest that a significantly more positive approach is needed from officers that is cognisant of the fact this site is the principal employment allocation within your adopted local plan. That is something that it is entirely within your power to make happen.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely



**Ian W Jackson** BSc MRICS  
Director