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Mr A Frost
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17th December 2020

Dear Andrew,

Chichester Local Plan Review – Site AL6 and the Stockbridge Link Road

Thank you for your letter dated 26 October 2020 regarding the review of the Chichester Local Plan and setting out some of the conclusions of the ongoing transport study. Thank you also for your patience in awaiting my response as I needed to consult a number of colleagues, including taking soundings from local WSCC members.

I am now able to confirm that development of the County Council owned land at Manor Farm is not demonstrably deliverable within the first five years of the Local Plan. Therefore, I confirm the County Council does not intend to promote this land for development at this time. However, we consider that the land does have long term development potential, so the County Council would like the land to remain in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment report (HELAA) as a long-term potential development opportunity.

It is acknowledged that one of the conclusions of your consultants' recent work is that an alternative scheme at the A27 Stockbridge junction will not accommodate the forecast volume of traffic in the future. Consequently, the evidence points towards a need to identify a Stockbridge Link Road (SLR) as a critical item within the transport mitigation package for the Local Plan.

In order to bring forward the SLR, feasibility work will need to demonstrate that such a scheme is deliverable, so I appreciate the District Council's commitment to undertake a feasibility study. This study should consider potential impacts on the transport network, communities and the environment alongside design and delivery issues, including those associated with land acquisition, to provide a realistic understanding of the costs and delivery risks.

As the design of the scheme is not yet fixed, the land needed for the scheme is subject to change following the feasibility study. However, based on previous work, it is assumed the scheme will require land owned by the County Council and adjacent land that is understood to be owned by a developer. The majority of the land owned by the County Council is not currently available due to secure tenancy arrangements and these leasehold interests would need to be acquired, with compensation paid, in

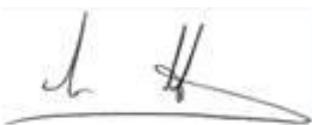
order to deliver the scheme. The delivery programme should ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the processes associated with land acquisition.

If the scheme is included in the Local Plan, implementation would also depend on securing the necessary funding and completion of all relevant statutory processes. This includes planning, which would consider whether the impacts of the scheme are acceptable in planning terms. The County Council would seek to negotiate to acquire both the freehold and leasehold interests in the land required for the SLR, but if this is not successful then the County Council is able to use its powers under the Highways Act 1980 to acquire the land needed for the highway scheme. To ensure there is a sound policy basis, for this process, it would be helpful if the Local Plan could include reference to the potential need for a Compulsory Purchase Order to deliver the scheme.

The scheme would form part of a transport mitigation package that would be delivered by developers and the local authorities over the plan period. The phasing of development and timing of the SLR should be explored as part of the updated Chichester Transport Study. This will help to provide clarity to stakeholders and inform future resource planning.

As you are aware, the transport mitigation package is not expected to address pre-existing issues, including the daily congestion on A27 at Chichester, which need to be considered separately from the review of the Chichester Local Plan as they are not directly related to the proposed development. The Government has committed to develop an A27 Chichester scheme in the 2020-25 period for possible implementation in a future Roads Investment Strategy. Therefore, in addition to work on the Local Plan Review and transport mitigation package, the County Council and District Council will continue to work together to make the case for a Government-led major scheme for the A27 at Chichester through a future Roads Investment Strategy to address these pre-existing issues. If successful within the plan period, this may alter the scope of the transport mitigation package, but I appreciate that this cannot be relied upon at this point in time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Harris', is written over a thin horizontal line.

Lee Harris
Executive Director of Place Services