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Our reference: JC/N/BE1567/2
Client reference: --
Council reference: CB/14/04048/FULL
Inspectorate reference: --
Thursday 16th July 2015

Sam Boyd
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
Bedfordshire **SG17 5TQ**

Dear Sam

**Former Pig Testing Unit, Hitchin Road, Fairfield Park, Stotfold:
Submission of full planning application for a 70-bedroom care home with
parking; 116 dwellings; access, open space and ancillary works**

Thank you for your assistance to date in this matter, and for the Officers' report to the 22nd July *Development Management Committee* with its recommendation for approval.

We have carefully read through the report and, whilst being grateful for its balanced assessment of the main issues and its positive recommendation, nonetheless would wish to correct a limited number of factually-inaccurate observations reported from your consultees.

CBC Housing Needs Officer

In respect of affordable housing, for the avoidance of doubt, we have never been requested to complete or submit a *Viability Appraisal*. The Council's emerging and adopted affordable housing policies are inherently flexible, which is particularly relevant to this contaminated site and in the context of the very low locally-arising quantum of housing need. Officers from across the Council have worked closely with the applicant in agreeing a balanced Section 106 package reflective of site-specific and unique local needs, and we refute any suggestion that this would somehow set a precedent for schemes elsewhere.

The Officer's suggestion that an equivalent of 4.3% affordable housing is being provided is misleading and factually incorrect. There is already planning permission for 5no. homes on the site and therefore the net number of additional dwellings is 111. Attributing a commonplace value of £30,000 per affordable unit means that the negotiated £600,000 commuted sum could provide for 20 affordable homes, which in addition to the 5 being provided, equates to **23% affordable housing**.

CBC Economic Development

The site has been vacant for several years, and despite extensive marketing has attracted no commercial interest in its employment redevelopment. Even when fully operational the site employed no more than a dozen people, and for an extended period of time (over 8 years) has employed nobody at all.

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As the submitted *Employment Land Case* report clearly demonstrates (paragraph 5.47), the previous outline planning permission (which included Use Class B8 within its approved uses) might hope to generate circa 100 full-time employees in a general B8 warehouse, or 110 employees in the open storage and sales/hire of construction plant. By comparison, the submitted *Standard Economic Appraisal Model* predicts 189 jobs during the construction phase of our proposed development, followed by **222 direct, indirect and induced jobs** throughout its occupation.

Even on a simplistic assessment, 70 new jobs will be provided as a result of the proposed 70-bed care home; 150 jobs can be expected to be created per 1,000 head of population, equating to 42 new jobs¹; homeworkers at Fairfield already account for higher than the national average, which can be proportionally expected to increase through the proposed development; and additional jobs will be created by the new Lower School, wholly facilitated by this application. We cannot accept, therefore, that the scheme fails to provide an equivalence of job creation compared to the previous outline planning permission, when the submitted job creation forecasts demonstrate that a substantially greater quantum of employment opportunities would in fact be created.

We would be grateful if these clarifications and corrections are reported to members on the Update Sheet prior to their consideration of the application. If members have any questions or queries following Monday's site visit, we would be happy to assist in clarifying these ahead of the committee itself on Wednesday.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Croucher', written over a faint blue line.

James Croucher MTP MRTPI
Senior Director

Copied to: Lochailort Stotfold Ltd

¹ Having applied the 2.4 person average household size to the 116 proposed dwellings, thereby yielding 279 forecast additional residents at a ratio of 0.15 jobs created per person