



Request to remove Policy SE2: M1 Junction 13 – Marston Gate Expansion from the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

I am writing to request the removal of Policy SE2 from the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and for development to be kept west of the Bletchley-Bedford railway line in order to protect the Greensand Ridge and the designated heritage assets in the local area.

My reasons for making this request relate to the negative impact the impact this development would have on the landscape, heritage and community in which I live and the lack of any economic justification for the proposals, as detailed below:

1. Previous Council plans and assessments highlighted the importance of the area to the area from a landscape perspective as follows:
 - The 2005 Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan designated the land east of the Railway as an Area of Great Landscape Value and the 2007 Bedfordshire CC Landscape Sensitivity Study concluded that *'this area ... is very sensitive as the setting to the [Greensand] Ridge'*.
 - The 2016 CBC Landscape Character Assessment indicated the need to *'safeguard open land at the foot of the Greensand Ridge'*.
 - The 2017 CBC Employment Site Assessment stated that it was *'important to retain development west of the railway and prevent spread into open countryside'*.
 - Local Plan Inspectors, in September last year, stated that this expansion was *'not justified due to the harm it would cause to the landscape character in the area'*.

The area in question includes, or is skirted by, many footpaths and bridleways including the long-distance paths, the Greensand Ridge Walk and the John Bunyan Trail. These are important community assets, which are always well used but have

been of even greater value during the current COVID crisis providing families with the opportunity for safe daily exercise.

2. Heritage England have concluded that this expansion, as a consequence of greater noise and artificial light, would harm a number of Grade II heritage sites (e.g. All Saints Church, Segenhoe and Segenhoe Manor) as well as a number of Conservation Areas (e.g. Ridgmont, Husbourne Crawley and Aspley Guise). They state that the expansion would erode the rural character of the surrounding countryside, detracting from the current rural nature of their setting and ultimately harming the significance of the Conservation Areas. As a result they have stated that *'the development would not achieve the NPPF's overarching aim of promoting sustainable development'*.
3. Traffic congestion:
 - M1 Junction 13 is already defined as a hotspot and further development would only make this worse.
 - CBC already expects the A507 to experience high levels of congestion. This will clearly be made worse by further developments in the area.
4. Lack of economic justification. I understand that the Council's own assessments (in the FEMA and ELR reports) show that there is currently an over supply of employment land and alternative brown field sites are available elsewhere. Hence this development is not necessary.

For the above reasons, I would urge that that the unjustified and potentially very damaging Policy SE2 be removed from the local plan and any new development is kept to the west of the Bletchley-Bedford railway line.

I would be grateful if you would ensure that this letter reaches all relevant parties and is also forwarded to the Plan Inspector.

