



20th July 2020

Mr Andrew Davie
Head of Strategic Growth
Local Plan
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford
SG17 5TQ

Dear Mr Davie,

[PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO THE INPSECTOR](#)

Policy SE2: M1 Junction 13 – Marston Gate Expansion
Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

I am writing to request that the above policy be removed from the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and for development to be kept west of the Bletchley-Bedford railway line, which will protect the Greensand Ridge and protect designated heritage assets.

I agree with all other statements, comments and reasons as set out on the attached sheet the contents of which you are no doubt aware. All of these should point you in the direction of removing this policy.

In addition, the **M1 Junction 13 has been defined as a ‘hotspot’** and it appears there are no potential solutions to address this problem. Also, the **Congestion on the A507** has been identified as a problem and no solutions appear to have been identified to resolve this. It would also appear that there is no need for this development and it is not required economically or for reasons of economic growth.

In my opinion this development is totally inappropriate in open countryside and the proposal should be removed and alternative sites should be considered that will not adversely affect a sensitive and historic landscape.

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Hughes (Mrs)

cc: Caroline Danby Head of Strategic Development, James Jamieson Leader of the Council
Councillors Ken Matthews, Sue Clark, Robert Morris

In 2005 Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan designated the land east of the railway as an **“Area of Great Landscape Value”**

CBC’s 2016 Landscape Character Assessment states the need to **‘safeguard open land at the foot of the ridge to provide for the setting of the ridge and the associated villages’**

CBC’s 2017 Employment Site Assessment states that it is **‘important to retain development west of the railway and not allow spread into open countryside’**

Historic England stated in January 2019 that the allocation would **‘affect the setting and significance of a number of designated heritage assets in the surrounding area’**

The Local Plan Inspectors said in September 2019 that the allocation is **‘not justified due to the harm that would be caused to the landscape character of the area’**

The impact of the landscape will be significant and detrimental:

In 2005 the land was designated an **“Area of Great Landscape Value”** in the Mid Beds Local Plan

In 2007 Bedfordshire County Council’s Landscape Sensitivity Study concluded that **‘this area itself is very sensitive as the setting to the (Greensand) Ridge’**

CBC’s 2016 Landscape Character Assessment recognises the need to **‘safeguard open land at the foot of the (Greensand) Ridge to provide the setting for the ridge and the associated villages’** and **‘restrict expansion of development associated with J13’**

CBC’s 2017 Employment Site Assessment states that it is **‘important to retain development west of the railway line and not allow spread into open countryside’**. The Assessment went on to score the site ‘red/amber’ for landscape character.

The Inspectors charged with examining the Local Plan highlight in their September 2019 letter that **‘Policy SE2 is not justified due to the harm that would be caused to the landscape character of the area’**

The Inspectors also stated **‘Given the size of the buildings proposed, the visual impact of the allocation would not be mitigated by additional landscaping’**

The Heritage impact is also significant:

Nearby heritage assets include – Ringwork at the Roundhouse, Brogborough a Scheduled Monument, All Saints Church, Segenhoe Church, Segenhoe Manor and Maltings Spinney, Ridgmont – 3 Grade II Listed Structures and an Ancient Scheduled Monument

There are 4 designated Conservation Areas within close proximity of the allocation site at Ridgmont, Husborne Crawley, Husborne Crawley Church End and Aspley Guise

Historic England has concluded that the Marston Gate allocation would erode the rural character of the surrounding countryside that forms the vital setting to all these Conservation areas, detracting from the appreciation of this setting and ultimately harming the significance of the Conservation Areas.

Historic England have stated that the Marston Gate allocation would ‘harm the significance’ of these assets on account of ‘visual impact as well as intensification of noise and artificial light’

Because of the harmful impact on the setting and historic significance of these designated heritage assets Historic England considers the **‘development would not achieve the NPPF’s overarching aim of promoting sustainable development’**

Historic England also affirms that even if the scale of the development is reduced they remain **‘unconvinced this would remove the impact on the conservation areas and in particular on Brogborough ringwork therefore find the proposed allocation is not justified nor consistent with national policy under paragraph 35 of the NPPF’**

The Council has since reached a Statement of Common Ground with Historic England in January 2020; and the document confirms that **Historic England still ‘maintains its objection in principle to the allocation of Marston Gate’**