

Mid Sussex Local Plan 2014-2031 Site Allocations DPD

Examination: Matter 1: Science & Technology Park, Burgess Hill

On behalf of Dacorar (Southern) Limited
& Wortleford Trading Company Limited

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Prepared as response to ID-02:

Matter 1

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Matter 1

MSDC's representations on M1.1(i), (ii), M1.2(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) and M1.3(i) and (ii) are agreed and, other than the additional matters set out below in relation to M1.2(i), the promoters of the STP have nothing further to add.

1.2 Scope of this part of the Local Plan

The Inspector in his MIQs (1.2) notes that the main aims of the Site Allocation DPD (on page 4, paragraphs (i) to (iv)) make clear reference to the Spatial Strategy in the adopted District Plan, which provide for the delivery of around 543 jobs per annum including a new science and technology park and several smaller employment allocations.

The scope of the Plan is in line with the main aims and strategy of the District Plan and, particularly in regard to the STP, allows the Site Allocations DPD document to identify locational-specific policies, given that a preferred location for the STP has now been identified by MSDC, following promotion of the site from the 'Call for Sites' to the Regulation 19 stage.

The STP allocation SA9 is supported by both MSDC's own evidence base and the raft of detailed technical and market evidence submitted by the STP Project Newton Project Team, summarised in SA9.1 Positioning Statement.

The inclusion of the STP in the DPD provides clarity in terms of delivery and key phasing and the Site Allocations DPD ensures that the objectives and requirements of District Plan Policy DP1 are properly considered, by setting out the necessary criteria for the assessment of a future planning application in Policy SA9.

The additional detail and assessment requirements in policy SA9 ensures that the Site Allocations DPD is compliant with para 35 of the NPPF – the DPD is positively prepared, effective, justified, and consistent with national policy. In this respect, it should also be noted that, as far as the promoters of the STP are aware, no issues in relation to compliance with the duty to co-operate have been raised by any Local Planning Authorities, or other prescribed bodies.

The Scope of the Plan, and in particular, the inclusion of the STP in the DPD is also justified, as it identifies an appropriate strategy for delivery of the STP, having taken into account the reasonable alternatives assessed at previous stages of the DPD (and no longer being promoted). The STP allocation on the site to the North of the A2300 is the only deliverable site to achieve the DPD objectives.

The STP allocation has been subject to considerable scrutiny from MSDC and other stakeholders, including WSCC, HE and the EA. The comprehensive evidence base underpinning the allocation is robust and addresses all relevant matters, as appropriate at this stage – including in relation to planning policy, economic justification, highways (addressed in a recently updated SoCG with MSDC, WSCC and HE), landscape and visual, flooding & water management, ecology, energy efficiency, sustainability and necessary mitigation etc.

No objections are raised to the STP in this location by any prescribed body. In fact, the only objections are from Bolney Parish Council and the Amptico Group (the relevant matters raised in those representations are addressed in the promoters' responses to MIQs 5 and 6).

Further, the supporting information, including the Positioning Document and the promoters' representations on MIQs 5 and 6, confirms that the STP is deliverable over the plan period.

Therefore, the scope of the plan is soundly based and has been assessed against proportionate evidence. Moreover, the scope is consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF, the District Plan and the Site Allocations DPD itself.

Without the inclusion of a STP policy (SA9) in the DPD, the Broad Location identified in the District Plan would be the only indicator to investors, developers and interested parties, leaving the STP as purely an aspiration, until any formal planning application is approved, meaning there would be a lack of policy clarity and certainty – missing a necessary opportunity to facilitate delivery of an important element of the District Plan's strategic objective for a STP to drive economic growth and quality jobs in the district, and the wider region. This is particularly relevant in a time, post pandemic, when central and local government seek investment in infrastructure, and to boost economic opportunities and growth.

The STP is a major element of MSDC's planning objectives for the District. The proposed nature and scale of the allocation will provide a critical mass to deliver a real catalyst for change and a detailed policy framework is required to ensure investor and occupier confidence of delivery and to assess a planning application in due course.

Therefore the allocation should be included within the Site Allocations DPD and the scope of the plan is correct.

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