

Hearing Statement on Inspector Questions

Mid Sussex Local Plan 2014-2031

Site Allocations DPD

Examination: Matter 5

Science & Technology Park, Burgess Hill

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

Report date:

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Prepared as response to ID-02:

Matter 5.1(vi)

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Matter 5 - Are the policies to manage and promote the Local Economy and Employment Areas and Allocations sound?

5.1 **Policy SA9** allocates land for a **new science and technology park**; it is located to the north of the A2300, whereas the District Plan policy DP9 is for a high-quality business park to the south of the A2300.

(vi) Can the policy go beyond being aspirational and effectively deliver in **sustainable transport** terms, or is a heavy car dependency inevitable?

SA9.1 *Regulation 19 Representation*, presents the September 2020 Positioning Statement, Section 9 of which deals with Sustainable Transport and Highways.

The location of the STP is directly adjacent to the boundary of the Northern Arc development which will comprise:

- 3,500 homes, of which approximately 1,300 homes will be within a 2km walk of the site;
- new pedestrian and cycle links along the A2300 will connect to the site to the Northern Arc, Burgess Hill, and the neighbouring HUB and Bolney Grange Business Park;
- there is a local population of approximately 40,000 – 50,000 located within cycling distance of the site;
- the 100 bus service passes adjacent to the site on the A2300, and there is potential for new and enhanced bus services to visit and permeate the STP via the proposed 'superhub' within the site.

The site is therefore highly sustainable and would deliver real opportunities for non-car travel within the surrounding area.

Document SA9.11, the *Project Newton Science & Technology Park: Mobility Strategy* which has been agreed with MSDC, WSCC and HE, also prioritises sustainable travel measures as the primary mitigation for the STP.

A key element of the Project Newton STP has always been that it will incorporate a comprehensive sustainability strategy which will ensure that sustainable travel is at the centre of the development's ethos. This aligns with the DPD SA9 requirement that the first priority is to mitigate development impacts by maximising sustainable transport interventions.

The DPD also identifies the requirement to provide new and/or diverted bus routes, and new pedestrian and cycle links, to connect to the surrounding area.

The agreed Project Newton Mobility Strategy (SA9.11) as agreed with WSCC as Highways Authority is an evolving strategy, developed with regard to the Burgess Hill Public Transport Strategy (BHPTS) (2016), and also the Public Transport Strategy of the adjacent Northern Arc strategic development site.

In order to maximise the potential travel mode shift to sustainable transport modes, the Mobility Strategy focuses on the likely home locations of the future workforce of the Project Newton STP.

Furthermore, the Project Newton Mobility Strategy provides a wide range of benefits to both the site itself and to the wider population which would achieve a more comprehensive regional mode-shift than just the STP users.

The target of the Mobility Strategy is to achieve an overall mode-shift to sustainable travel of 10%, which is likely to be realised as an average across the whole site, with specific focus on greater mode-shift from the key origin areas of Burgess Hill, Brighton and Hove, and Crawley.

This is demonstrated in the Mobility Strategy document through analysis of Census data and MSDC's strategic traffic modelling data to focus the Strategy on the key origins and destinations of commuting trips associated with the Project Newton site.

The Mobility Strategy includes a wide range of walking and cycling measures and infrastructure, providing attractive and realistic incentives and opportunities for non-car travel from the surrounding Burgess Hill area.

An on-site car club scheme will provide a sustainable travel option for people who commute to the site by non-car modes, and provide further incentive to commute sustainably for those who need to travel on- or off-site for work.

The Mobility Strategy evidence base identifies potential bus service improvements which could be delivered via the Mobility Strategy and the BHPTS, in partnership with Metrobus, Compass, and West Sussex County Council, which focus on commuting journeys to/from the south coast, Burgess Hill (and the Northern Arc), and Crawley.

Both Metrobus and Compass have been in discussions with the Project Newton Project Team regarding the STP offer, and opportunities and have been party to the preparation of the Mobility Strategy. They have offered their ongoing support to the STP as the development plans progress. Similarly, Enterprise Cars has been consulted with regard to the provision of an on-site electric car-club, and has offered its ongoing support.

The potential bus service improvements and target modal shift for specific origin areas have been assessed as part of a bus viability study, which forms an appendix to the Mobility Strategy, which identifies the financial viability of the various options and the levels of subsidy which may be required to support them.

With effective use of demand management options, coupled with employee incentives, the target modal-shift trip numbers are agreed by all signatories of the SoCG (SA9.17 and the May 2021 update) as follows:

- Burgess Hill @ 50% = 398 trips from car to bus
- Brighton @ 25% = 55 trips from car to bus/rail
- Haywards Heath @ 25% = 31 trips from car to rail
- Crawley @ 10% = 7 trips from car to bus/rail

Total = 491 peak-hour trips shifted from car = 29% reduction from the total S&TP peak-hour trips (average 1,696 peak-hour trips).

In view of the Project Newton Mobility Strategy target mode-shift, the proximity of Project Newton to the Northern Arc and Bolney Grange Business Park, and the associated synergies between the respective public transport strategies, it is a realistic expectation that an overall average 10% mode shift away from the motorcar will be achieved.

The SA9 policy therefore demonstrably goes beyond being aspirational and would effectively deliver in sustainable transport terms without being heavily car-dependent.

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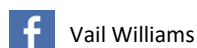
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