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L 150903 JSI SODC CIL Further Reps

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Mr. Chris Banks
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By Email Only

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Dear Mr Banks

Examination of the South Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy
Didcot A Power Station

I write with reference to the Examination into the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that took place on Wednesday 29th July 2015. Specifically, this additional representation is made in regards to the Didcot A Power Station Site. We request that this representation is considered together with our previous representations dated March 2015.

A planning application has been submitted for the regeneration of the site for mixed-use development, including the erection of up to 400 dwellings. The planning application covers land within both Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. Roughly, 280 of the proposed 400 residential units are situated within South Oxfordshire.

Following discussion at the earlier hearing session we proposed to enter into a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with SODC and circulated a draft prior to the Examination taking place. In their response, SODC stated that they "*strongly refute that the Statement of Common Ground has been jointly prepared. This is the first opportunity the Council have been given to review the statement*". The draft SoCG was intended to be completed in consultation with SODC and it was not our intention that it be interpreted as a final document. It has not therefore been possible to agree a SoCG with the Council despite our intentions to enter into dialogue with the Council. I attach a full copy of their response.

At the Examination we gave evidence that raises very serious concerns that this site will be subject to CIL whilst the associated proposals within the Vale of White Horse District will be subject to S106. The application is for a comprehensive development and it should thus be processed in such a manner.

To enable the delivery of large scale development, prospective developers and occupiers want straightforward sites and permissions free from complications. Within this context it is very reasonable for us to promote that the market will not favour a site that is constrained in this way.

This scenario raises a very significant issue with regards to the deliverability and therefore in turn the viability of the site. The presence of two separate distinct infrastructure funding regimes within the two administrative areas will render the costs for delivery impossible to define and consequently the delivery of the scheme as a whole, but particularly the link road and Science Bridge will be put at risk.

As such, the basis of our representations and evidence presented to the examination demonstrates that these issues can be resolved through the exemption of this site from the CIL Charging Schedule. I note that the draft CIL already includes three other exempt sites owing to their strategic nature and I promote that the Didcot A site is no different and should be considered in the same way.

The necessary infrastructure costs can then be sought through a comprehensive cross boundary Section 106 agreement for the site. Such agreements are very common on cross boundary applications as they allow for the development and associated infrastructure to be delivered comprehensively.

We trust that the contents of this letter are given due consideration. The redevelopment of Didcot A Power Station will generate a significant contribution towards meeting the strategic housing and very important infrastructure objectives of the District and their vision to realise the Science Vale.

Yours sincerely

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Associate Planner