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Dear Simon,

## **BUNFORD PARK, YEOVIL**

Following our meeting last week, I write to confirm details of the impasse we have reached in terms of the outstanding s.106 issues for our Bunford Park business park development.

To recap, SSDC's Minutes of the Bunford Park planning committee meeting, dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009, confirm seven elements to the s.106 agreement attached to the resolution to grant outline approval. Six of these, which comprise strategic landscaping and future maintenance; phasing; heights of buildings; off-site highway infrastructure; design code and layout of principle estate road are being progressed satisfactorily. However, the final s.106 input, the Green Travel Plan, is proving to be very problematic.

You will recall that we submitted a 'site-wide framework travel plan' with the Traffic Assessment which formed part of our original planning application submission. In summary, this obligated us to a range of measures comprising the appointment of a travel plan co-ordinator/travel plan board to assist the implementation of the Plan; parking management to monitor usage levels as part of a parking management strategy; production of a travel information leaflet and erection of on-site information estate boards highlighting various transport modes and service information; production of a green travel welcome pack to all new occupiers; the construction of new physical links into existing pedestrian and cycle networks on the A3088 and a demand responsive bus service.

This package of green travel plan obligations is in addition to the agreed circa £3M of phased off-site highway works that the project must deliver. These works will bring significant improvements to existing pedestrian and cycle safety in the local area and thereby encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.

Within this context and post the resolution to grant outline planning and having reached agreement on the substantial package off-site highway works, Somerset County Council's Green Travel Plan officer has demanded the introduction of additional obligations. These new obligations are very onerous and centre around the introduction of a tariff based fine system apparently targeting the enforced use of alternative modes of transport to the private car. We note that this concept has not yet been implemented on any development within the County.

This tariff fine idea targets property developers and landowners rather than the end users and occupiers of a business park. This is one of its inherent weaknesses as it seems destined to fail to achieve its stated goal of a modal shift away from driving to work by not being linked to the end user. Instead, it seems to be just another form of development tax. This view is reinforced by the failure of the County Council to clarify to us what the revenue collected from the tariff based fines system would be used for, especially within the context of the extensive package of measures and infrastructure works already proposed at Bunford Park.

We are concerned that in proposing the introduction of a tariff based fine system for Bunford Park, no account appears to have been made to the commercial reality of this project. The delivery of the Bunford Park business park will require substantial upfront infrastructure works to transform what is currently undulating open farmland into a new employment district. This means that additional planning costs will quickly make the project financially unviable to deliver.

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This is especially relevant when you consider that the proposed fine based tariff system would saddle Bunford Park with obligations that no other employment site in the County has to deal with. As developers we would need to pass on any additional costs to the end user. This would materialise itself as higher rents, building costs and service charges.

From an economic development perspective this seems unreasonable as prospective occupiers will in all likelihood simply vote with their feet and opt to relocate their business to other rival business park locations which do not have to pass on extra costs and charges. In Yeovil, it seems unreasonable and inequitable to adopt a different approach for Bunford Park, than, for example, Lufton 2000 when only last month a Green Travel Plan was agreed without such onerous obligations.

This Green Travel Plan issue is now directly frustrating the unlocking of the Bunford Park s.106 agreement and hence delivery of Yeovil's identified key strategic employment site. We are concerned that such a strategic projects appears to be held to ransom like this by the County Council. It is very clear that we have reached an impasse with the County Council in resolving this issue.

Looking forward, whilst we remain totally committed to delivering the Bunford Park business park project and to transforming it from a strategic employment site allocation into a bricks and mortar reality, this issue really is a commercial show-stopper for us unless it can be satisfactorily resolved.

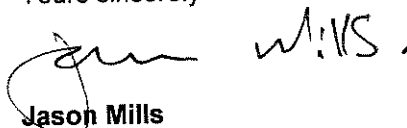
For us, that means that the County Council's demand for the introduction for a tariff based fine system must be avoided. We would like some advice from you on how we can break the impasse.

It might be that you conclude that there is no alternative but to take the Bunford Park project back to the Area South planning committee to seek Members agreement to specifically amend the current resolution. We would be happy with this option if it could unlock the project.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

  
**Jason Mills**  
**Managing Director**  
**Abbey Manor Capital Partners**