

SUMMARY OF ORAL REPRESENTATIONS MADE AT COMPULSORY ACQUISITION HEARING 22 SEPTEMBER 2021, ON BEHALF OF BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bedford Borough Council (BBC) owns the freehold of land to the south of the existing Black Cat Roundabout. Approximately 7 acres of the land to the west of the parcel is considered suitable for future employment development being in a sustainable location at an important strategic road network junction.

The Scheme would have a significant impact on the land including permanent and temporary acquisition and the acquisition of rights. BBC seek agreement with the Applicant and safeguards to ensure the potential of their retained land is not prejudiced by the Scheme.

A meeting was held with the Applicant in June 2021, and the Applicant took away several actions necessary to progress matters (as recorded in meeting minutes). BBC has heard nothing further from the Applicant on these actions since the meeting, however notes that some of the points are addressed in the Applicant's response to BBC's Relevant Representation.

The Applicant is required to attempt to seek agreement for the acquisition of land and to avoid the use of compulsory purchase. The Applicant should be engaging directly with BBC on agreed action points and not solely through the DCO mechanism; alternatively it suggests the Applicant is not genuinely seeking agreement to obviate the need for compulsory purchase as it should be.

BBC are a willing party to negotiations for an agreement and urge the Applicant to engage directly with their agents to progress discussions. The Applicant's presentation of a template option agreement is not a reasonable substitute for the necessary detailed negotiations on property specific terms which would inform a legal agreement.

As at 5th October 2021 BBC has heard no further from the Applicant or its agents, and urges the Applicant to urgently get in contact.