Mr & Mrs S Fletcher

The Old Dairy

Letchmere Farm

Upper Heyford

Oxon

OX25 5LS

19th January 2015

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House

Bodicote

Banbury

OX15 4AA

Dear Mr Lewis

**Planning Application 14/02025/HYBRID Warehouse, Storage and Manufacturing Unit on land adjacent to Chilgrove Drive, Upper Heyford.**

Bearing in mind, the application site has been rejected and found unsuitable for development by Cherwell District Council in its recent “call for sites”, prior to the reconvening of the Local Plan examination in December 2014, I am surprised that the applicant has chosen to submit an application for development in this location.

Cherwell District Council has recently undergone examination of their Submission Local Plan, with the initial examination being adjourned to allow the council time to review their land use requirements. The further work undertaken by the council included a review of Policy Villages 5 – Upper Heyford. The review saw changes to the boundary of the Upper Heyford development site, with the inclusion of further alternative sites for development, which excluded the application site.

Village Policy 5 states that 120,000 sqm of space will be allocated within the built up settlement of the former Air Base. The policy further goes on to say that any additional employment land will be accommodated primarily within the existing buildings within the overall site, or within limited green field land to the south of Camp Road. Even if it were to be the case that greenfield sites were required to be developed to meet additional employment needs, the councils preferred location would be the greenfield site located south of Camp Road, as shown on the Upper Heyford Policy Villages 5 proposal maps.

It is difficult to see how the council, close upon the adoption of their Local Plan, could find development on this site acceptable.

The applicant has put forward the argument that the application site is the only suitable and available site in the whole of the district, which is a little hard to believe; even the supporting letter from the applicants Commercial Property Consultants, states that *“with exception of Bicester Business Park there are no other allocated employment sites”* It is questionable that there are no, more policy compliant sites, available within the district.

The proposed large sheds would be the first visible buildings as you arrive in Upper Heyford from the east,

creating an unattractive and imposing first impression of the settlement. Whilst employment buildings are seen on the outskirts of large towns and cities, development located on the edge of a rural settlement should be appropriate, and reflect the existing rural character and setting. The proposed development by its shear scale and utilitarian design fails to do this and would be contrary to emerging Policy Villages 5 criteria that emphasis “*Development on greenfield land within Policy Villages 5 should provide for a well-designed, ‘soft’ approach to the urban edge, with appropriate boundary treatment”*

As you are aware I am working with West Waddy ADP and Pye Homes in putting together a residential development on my land located to the west of the application site (separated by a track and water course). My land has been identified as a suitable alternative site for development and included within the amended boundary of the Upper Heyford Policy Villages 5 emerging Local Plan Policy. A residential development on my site, with a sensitive and imaginative design, would create a much more attractive, appropriate and soft edge to the settlement of Upper Heyford. I am also concerned that an industrial and potentially noisy manufacturing neighbour could impact the amenity of new residents of any scheme built out on the site. Pye Homes and West Waddy have commenced pre-application discussions and I expect a planning application to be submitted toward the end of February 2015.

To ensure that the character and rural setting of the proposed new settlement at Upper Heyford is retained and improved, it is essential that the right development is located in the right place. For the reasons given above, I am not convinced that extending the settlement edge further to the east, than that already agreed in the emerging Local Plan, coupled with the intrusive nature of the proposed industrial buildings, the proposed development would do this.

The application does not comply with Policy Villages 5. The application site is outside the proposed new settlement at the Air Base and has not been assessed at any time by the Council’s Officers as a suitable site for development.

The application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

Simon & Rebecca Fletcher