

19th December 2024

Kari Burton MRTPI MRICS
Senior Planning Manager – South East Region
Mac Mic Group
12th Floor, 5 Merchant Square
London
W2 1AY

kevintravers@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk

Dear Kari,

RE: Revised Plans for Land East of Lodge Road, Hurst

Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which works across all the Berkshire Unitary Authorities, is happy to provide a few strategic observations related to the proposed development east of Lodge Road, Hurst and the types of issues that should be considered to maximise the economic benefit of the proposal. This should not be interpreted as either supporting or opposing either the principle or detail of the development as set out in your planning application.

Berkshire LEP is a not for profit company that works to support and drive economic development and growth. We work with the local authorities in the area to help set the strategic economic thinking that shapes its area, generate private sector investment, and help local businesses to start, grow, export and access skilled talent. In short, we seek to transform the local economies and within this context developments proposals of this nature are of interest to us.

The provision of new homes and business spaces in appropriate locations linked to improvements to infrastructure to enhance connectivity are a key part of transforming local economies. The LEP works with local authorities to provide the economic evidence so that they can identify infrastructure improvements that will ensure Berkshire can thrive economically, maximise job creation and attract inward investment from businesses.

It is important that the economy of the areas around London are recognised in their own right and the LEP is therefore helping the Berkshire Unitary Authorities to develop a Berkshire Economic Strategy, that sets out how key social and economic challenges can be addressed through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and development. Within this context we would expect developments of this nature to:

- Meet the Government's productivity aspirations and encourage a higher-skilled workforce to contribute to the local economy.
- Enhance economic interactions and labour mobility through connectivity improvements.
- Enhance the attractiveness of the area for new investment, including foreign direct investment.
- Demonstrate clear metrics such as Gross Value Added (GVA) and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs to show how they can contribute directly to the local economy.

The LEP has considered the Planning Statement that has been produced and is encouraged to note the development seeks to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect to its economic, social and environmental objectives. In particular the LEP is pleased to see that you estimate that the development will support the employment of in excess of 300 people and generate over £1m in tax revenue. In addition, the commitments to 50% affordable housing and biodiversity net gain above statutory requirements are also in line with the LEPs expectations of a development of this nature.

The LEP has also reviewed the wide range of proposed improvements to walking, cycling and public transport improvements set out in the Planning Statement , which include a 2km cycle connection between Hurst and Twyford Railway Station, pedestrian improvements in Hurst, a new bus service between Hurst and Twyford, and an onsite mobility hub, that will deliver wider sustainability and connectivity improvements. If these are delivered as proposed then they should provide further, wider positive impacts to the local economy.

I hope this is useful in helping you to bring forward a development proposal that is both sustainable and helps meet the economic needs of the area. If I can provide any further information or guidance from a LEP perspective, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Travers

Transport & Infrastructure Lead Berkshire LEP