

AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillor Angela Macpherson
Leader

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1 August 2018

Kit Malthouse MP
Minister of State for Housing
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Sent via email: kit.malthouse@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Mr Malthouse

Delivering ambitious housing growth in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor

Firstly many congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister for Housing.

I too am newly appointed, as the Leader of Aylesbury Vale District Council and recent briefings emphasise the key issues for this authority include unlocking the economic potential of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor and delivering the sustainable housing growth that it would bring. This will be transformational for Aylesbury Vale.

As one of the areas that has been consistently delivering a rate of growth above its housing need, Aylesbury Vale is a key contributor to achieving the national housebuilding target. Our performance in delivering high rates of housing is on a par with some of our adjoining authorities including Milton Keynes and Cherwell. We have recently concluded our Examination In Public on our local plan, which proposes almost 30,000 additional new homes in the Vale up to 2033. This includes accommodating 8,000 homes as unmet need from our more constrained neighbours to the south.

We have committed to an early review of our local plan, in the light of the work on the corridor and the new NPPF. We are also currently working with the other growth authorities in the central part of the CaMKOx corridor, on a longer term, strategic direction for growth and early discussions on a housing deal are also taking place, including discussions with your officials.

I was therefore somewhat surprised by your recent letter requesting ambitious proposals for housing growth including new settlements within the timescale you set out. However I have since seen the recent email from Rachel Fisher explaining that this is 'the first step in a long term process'. As Rachel rightly points out understanding the opportunities for new settlements is complicated and will take time.

Continued overleaf...

Cabinet Office

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Whilst willing to partner future discussions and increase engagement across ministerial departments, as is necessary to deliver sustainable housing growth and infrastructure, I must express concern about the process and its pace.

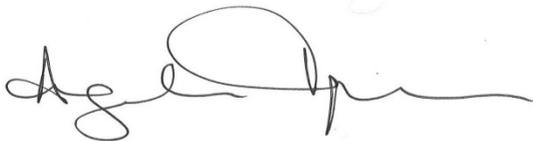
There are still several outstanding unknowns, specifically there is no clarity on the corridor choice for the Expressway and potential uncertainty around when East West Rail will actually be built. Additionally, consideration must be given to ensure options are considered through a proper democratic process and that there is engagement with the public.

As mentioned I would like to emphasise the authority's willingness to continue our dialogue both at an officer and political level. I understand that there have been requests for meetings for some time now with your department to discuss the prospect of planning for a new settlement and options for the scale of growth that could be accommodated, particularly linking with the expressway and east west rail proposals and I will encourage the County Council to also join in these discussions.

I look forward to meeting you and exploring how we can work together on this very important local and national issue and to ensure that our area achieves its full potential.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Macpherson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Angela Macpherson
Leader of Aylesbury Vale District Council

Cc James Brokenshire MP