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De Sir David

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REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Thank you to you and local authority colleagues for joining me to discuss the review of Cambridgeshire Horizons, based on John Walker's interim report.

We agreed that much good work had been done by Horizons and its member authorities in setting a framework for growth. However, it was clear that we are facing a major increase in the complexity and size of the task. Emerging conclusions from John's report highlighted significant concerns about current capacity and mechanisms for achieving delivery of the very challenging growth objectives set for Cambridgeshire, particularly in relation to the sites immediately around Cambridge, and including Northstowe. I was grateful for the open discussion of these issues, and for your positive response to the interim findings of John's report. I was encouraged by the shared views on the need for these major new schemes to achieve the very highest standards of design, environment quality, and services if we are to achieve our goals.


It is clear from our discussion that we will need to give further thought to how we achieve the quality and pace of delivery that will be needed. I want to be confident that we have the necessary structures, capacity (for example in progressing major schemes) and commitment to a shared leadership agenda. The review provides the opportunity for us to put this beyond doubt. Once we have reached that position, I am prepared to commit Government to providing greater certainty of support on investment for the future. While I valued the proposals you put forward at the meeting, I was not convinced that they were sufficient in themselves.

We also touched on Northstowe. It is particularly important that we create arrangements which allow public/private investment streams to be maximised. I am particularly keen that you discuss with John Lewis of EP how this can be best achieved.

I share your view on the importance of maintaining the valuable consensus among local authority partners which you have secured, and I hope that it will be possible to build on and strengthen that with arrangements which we can each support. I recognise in this context that authorities would prefer not to move to a statutory development corporation. The challenge, as we discussed, is for you and colleagues to propose an alternative that is fit for purpose. I am grateful for your agreement and that of local authorities to explore with John what this might be.

I look forward to hearing your further proposals after the work is completed. It would be helpful to have these by the end of November if possible.

Copies of this letter go to those who attended our meeting.



YVETTE COOPER

We should not be in any doubt about the importance of this.