

17 Witter Avenue,
Ickleford,
Hitchin,
SG5 3UF

14 August 2017.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

FOI031717

Further to the letter of 11th August from Ingrid Howard refusing the FOI request from Ickleford Parish Council relating to the LS1 site of the NHDC Proposed Submission Local Plan, I am requesting a review of your decision.

I would like to draw your attention to the following:

- It appears strange that the third party has not consented to the disclosure of their discussions, as it was two employees of the third party, in separate conversations with different members of Ickleford Parish Council, who alerted us to the encouragement which NHDC gave them to accelerate their plans prior to completion of the review of the NHDC Proposed Submission Local Plan. It is irrelevant whether any such planning application has yet been submitted; the issue is whether NHDC has tried to subvert the review process by active encouragement of developers. As the Chairman of the Parish Council of the affected village, I know from resident's feedback that there is a strong public interest in this matter, and believe that this should override any reluctance on the part of the third party.
- The LS1 site was added to the Proposed Submission Local Plan at a very late stage, and was therefore neither subjected to public consultation nor available for District Councillor intervention. If, as appears possible from the information given to us by the third party, they were granted access to NHDC in respect of LS1 in a manner which residents and their elected representatives were not, then there is a strong public interest that this be divulged.
- The allegations made to us by the third party are, via letters to *The Comet* newspaper, via our dissemination to residents in Ickleford, and via our communications with the affected neighbouring villages of Henlow and Lower Stondon, fully in the public domain. I believe it is fundamentally incorrect of NHDC to infer that there is not sufficient public interest to outweigh the apparent reluctance of the third party for full disclosure.

However, our interest lies less with communications from the third party to NHDC than they do with those from NHDC to the third party. Therefore, as a compromise, I would be prepared to accept the release of the information with the third party's data redacted. This will obviate any concerns the third party might have. The letter from Ms Howard confirms that NHDC has the information; it should therefore be a very straightforward and quickly-actionable task to provide us with this redacted version.

You will understand that there is some urgency now to this request, as the planning inspector's review is well underway. I hope that I am wrong in inferring that my initial request, dated 26 June 2017, has been handled in a manner designed to delay provision of this critical information. I would be grateful if you could provide me, by return, with a date by which I will receive the redacted correspondence. If it will expedite matters, please advise me, by return, whether a new FOI

submission requesting the same information as per my communication of 26 June, but in a redacted form, would elicit a swifter response from NHDC.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miles Maxwell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Miles Maxwell,
Chairman, Ickleford Parish Council

cc Cllr Harry Spencer-Smith