Dear Sean,

RE: Blackhorse Lane AAP – Height of Buildings

The Inspector has asked me to provide this letter to clarify his reasons for putting forward MM8.

The permissions granted by the Council for 8 and 9 storey buildings on Site BHL1 support a finding that, in principle and subject to assessment at the individual project level, taller, as distinct from tall, buildings would be acceptable on Site BHL1 in terms of impact on the SPA and SSSI. Accordingly the key rationale to justify the policy reference to 3-6 storeys is the Urban Design Framework’s reference to context but in view of the extant planning permissions it would appear that context has changed. The permitted context would justify taller buildings of up to 9 storeys and so the proposed upper limit in the policy of 6 storeys does not appear to be justified by evidence.

For these reasons, the Inspector proposes [MM8] that Policy BHL8, together with its supporting text, be modified but that rationale does not extend beyond the key gateway site [BHL1]. Whilst the Council has expressed a concern that if the AAP were to propose buildings up to 9-storeys this would lead to pressure for tall buildings, 10-storeys and above, the proposed modification makes a clear distinction between tall and taller buildings based on the unchallenged position taken in the Urban Design Framework. Accordingly the modification would make the position of the AAP in respect of tall buildings clearer.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Copsey
LDF Programme Officer