



HAMPSHIRE

chamber of commerce

Tuesday 20th June 2017

Laura Taylor
Chief Executive
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Dear Laura,

I know that you have met with Stewart Dunn and Mark Baulch of Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and therefore I wanted to follow-up your meeting in my capacity as Chair of the Winchester Area Committee.

Within the Winchester Area Committee (WAC) we have a range of local business people who, voluntarily, represent the entire range of businesses that are proud to be based in Winchester.

I hope that we can meet, as we would like, as a group, to express our joint concern that Winchester is not doing enough, as a city, to provide an environment in which businesses can locate, grow and thrive.

We believe that it is important for Winchester to have a vibrant business economy as it;

- A. Supports the achievement of economic prosperity goals within the region.
- B. Provides a significant investment in the economy in terms of business rates, taxes and the BID levy.
- C. Generates local employment opportunities for a range of different ages, abilities and skills.
- D. Supports the local retail and leisure trade. When I was MD of Denplan (Winchester's largest private employer) we calculated that Denplan's presence in Winchester contributed almost £500,000 in to the local retail, restaurant and leisure trades via the team that worked there. Without a thriving business and office community Winchester's pubs, restaurants and shops will surely fail.
- E. Will become increasingly important as a source of funds for the Council - with the growth in business rates being allocated to the Council locally from 2020.

With the latter point particularly in mind, we would support you and the Council leadership taking a more proactive stance in supporting the delivery of major change programmes within Winchester. The Chamber has become almost wearied by up to 20 years of support of the (now renamed) Central Winchester Regeneration and yet we still seem to be far away from actually having diggers on site. We have engaged with JTP in providing the views of businesses as an element of their consultation exercise, however we feel that if the Council does not provide wholehearted endorsement of the vision that will be outlined (and formalised in the Supplementary Planning Document) then it will be doomed to, another, failure.

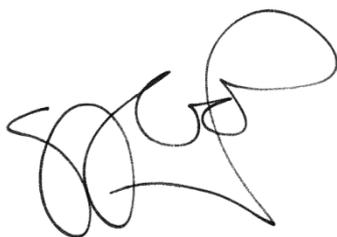
We share a similar feeling of foreboding about Station Approach and the provision of Grade A office space in Winchester to allow businesses to grow and thrive within this great City. We believe that it would be unacceptable for the only option for businesses who grew above a certain size to have to re-locate to, say, Basingstoke or Southampton.

Change will inevitably be met with resistance by those who do not see progress as positive. As a Committee we ask that you demonstrate leadership within the Council to allow Winchester to shed the reputation that it has acquired amongst developers for being a "difficult" City to do business with.

We believe that it is within the Council's remit to outline an exciting vision for the future of Winchester, and to identify how all of the current isolated developments (Station Approach, Central Winchester Regeneration, Barton Farm, St John Moore's Barracks, Bushfield Camp ..etc..) can work harmoniously together to give the residents and workers within Winchester a 21st Century City that they will be proud of.

The Chamber remains ready to provide you with any appropriate input or support in ensuring that Winchester has a positive future and is a centre of thriving economic prosperity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Gates', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Stephen Gates
Chair -Winchester Area Committee
Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
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