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Date 15 September 2015
Our ref 13906/02/JF/HFo/9729945v2
Your ref 15/01013/FUL

Dear Sir/ Madam

Peterborough City Council: Queensgate Shopping Centre LPA Ref. 15/01013/FUL

On behalf of our client, IREEF Queensgate Peterborough Propco S.á.r.l, we write to respond to the consultation response received from Hawksworth Securities plc (Hawksworth) in respect of the above planning application at Queensgate Shopping Centre (QSC), dated 8 September 2015.

The letter raises a number of issues which are very general in nature and draws selectively from planning policy to justify a position that cannot be in any way justified from a full and proper assessment of the statutory development plan. Some of the comments Hawksworth make and conclusions reached are inaccurate or plain wrong. We provide our response to the letter below.

The starting point for the determination of the planning application at QSC must be the policies contained within the Statutory Development Plan (SDP). Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies contained within the SDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning Statement we prepared to accompany the planning application assesses the development proposals at QSC against the policies within Peterborough's SDP (comprising the Core Strategy (2011), Planning Policies (2012) and the City Centre Plan (2014) Development Plan Documents). It concludes that the development is in accord with the policies within these documents.

The nature of the proposed development at QSC directly reflects the specific policy wording of Policy CC3 in the City Centre Plan. This policy relates to the City Core Policy Area, of which QSC is an integral part. This area also includes North Westgate.

To fully consider the policy requirements for this area it is important to read Policy CC3 as a whole. The first part sets out what all new developments within the City Core should achieve to be

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acceptable in planning policy terms. In line with this, the development at QSC is high quality and will strengthen the area as the retail and leisure focus of Peterborough. As demonstrated in the application submission, the development also protects views of the Cathedral, preserves the heritage assets of the area and enhances the existing retail provision of the primary shopping area of the city centre- all requirements of this policy which must be applied where appropriate; the other elements not being applicable to our scheme.

The policy then goes on to identify sites allocated for residential use and identifies two Opportunity Areas for mixed use development: North Westgate and Northminster. The policy states that within North Westgate planning permission will be granted for a comprehensive mixed use development including retail, housing, office and leisure. Policy then states that individual proposals that come forward within this Opportunity Area which would prevent its comprehensive redevelopment will not be permitted.

The policy then moves on to discuss its expectations for sites **elsewhere** in this City Core policy area i.e. not within the two opportunity areas, or on the sites allocated for housing. QSC falls within this element of the policy. This states that elsewhere the council will “*expect and support*” development which, inter alia, “*encourages trips into the city centre for shopping, leisure (including a cinema)¹, social and cultural purposes*”.

This element of the policy is important to the consideration of our scheme and the position is clear. There is an expectation within adopted policy that a cinema will be provided on a site elsewhere within the city core and that this will be supported by the Council.

This expectation of the council doesn’t necessarily preclude a cinema coming forward elsewhere, possibly including the North Westgate site, but the support for a cinema elsewhere in the city centre including at QSC is explicit in the wording.

Hawksworth’s view that there is a policy priority for a cinema at North Westgate has no basis in policy and is flawed. It is against the council’s policy expectation that a cinema would be provided elsewhere in the city centre that the range of uses for North Westgate is set out in policy CC3. In light of this it is perverse of Hawksworth to seek to justify an objection to the QSC proposal because it includes a cinema, when our proposal delivers precisely what the council is seeking within its adopted policy.

It is noteworthy that the City Centre Plan states that there will be new retail and leisure provision within the City Core Policy Area with particular focus on “*further improvements to QSC and the North Westgate Opportunity Area*” (paragraph 5.2.12). The SDP supports development at QSC and North Westgate. The Plan considers both sites should be developed for leisure and retail purposes to contribute to the vision of the plan to enhance the vitality and viability of Peterborough City Centre so it fulfils its sub-regional role. There is no preference in planning policy terms for one site to be delivered over the other.

The QSC scheme will not undermine the regeneration of North Westgate in line with its allocation in the SDP; Policy CC3 allows for a wide range of uses on North Westgate and the application is submitted in outline where other leisure uses could come forward on this part of the site (or alternative uses introduced). We fully support the regeneration of North Westgate. Invesco owns

¹ NLP emphasis.



two significant parcels of land within this area and is keen to see development brought forward to further enhance the vitality and viability of Peterborough City Centre, and is willing to work with Hawksworth and the Council to realise the regeneration potential of the site.

We note Core Strategy Policy CS4 does state that priority will be given to the delivery of additional comparison retail floorspace only on the North Westgate site; not the provision of other uses or the delivery of this wider regeneration site. This policy was formulated back in 2010/2011 against the backdrop of significant retail capacity figures for Peterborough (which have since been reduced), and the historic schemes on the site which were retail led. The same policy states that the City Centre Plan will identify areas where there are opportunities to concentrate development of a particular use. It is this later plan that includes Policy CC3 and the requirements and expectations it sets out about providing a cinema, as set out above.

Given the policy support for the proposed mix of uses at QSC in Peterborough's SDP, specifically City Centre Plan Policy CC3, the proposed uses must be supported in principle unless material considerations indicate otherwise; there are none in this case. In this respect we note that Hawksworth has incorrectly referenced an element of Policy CC3 which states that individual proposals which would prejudice comprehensive redevelopment of North Westgate will not be permitted. This wording clearly relates to individual proposals within North Westgate, not elsewhere within the city centre. This is noted by Hawksworth in the Planning Statement prepared by Savills (para. 8.8) when it is seeking to justify including only part of the land at North Westgate in its planning application.

In its letter Hawksworth refers to what it considers to be the limited and notable failings of our scheme; this is a disappointing comment which reflects the commercial based nature of its objection and one which lacks any kind of objectivity in planning terms. Our scheme represents a very significant investment in the city centre which has many planning benefits. The planning application is presented in full, the key occupiers are already committed to the scheme and our client is preparing to implement any planning permission straight away.

The planning application at QSC is entirely in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan. In accordance with the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it should be granted planning permission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Fortune'.

Hannah Fortune
Associate Director

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