**Examination in Public – Day 3**

**Future Growth Areas**

These remarks are confined to Land East of Biggleswade since we have no knowledge of the other Future Growth locations.

Biggleswade Town Council knows that east Bedfordshire is facing huge growth through the Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor, East/West Rail and improvements to the A1. We recognise the juggernaut coming down the road. The Town Council wants to take a pro-active role in responding to this growth by encouraging sustainable development with the necessary infrastructure.

With their emerging Local Plan, CBC are beginning to frame this future and helping our community to come to terms with what is likely to happen and what will be needed to maintain the quality of life of our existing residents.

We were disappointed that the Appendix 7 sites east of Biggleswade were not allocated within this Plan, having been in the first draft. We would like to see them allocated but, if this is not possible, then retention of Appendix 7 does at least give a basis to enable proper planning for the big changes which we know our town will undergo. We do recognise that, with all the pending decisions about national infrastructure, final assessment of the Appendix 7 sites was not possible as the Plan was being produced.

We know that change is going to be very rapid, partly through ministerial statements and partly because Central Bedfordshire Council, with the support of the Town Council, have submitted a bid for some £70 million of Housing Infrastructure Fund monies. This bid has already been assessed by Homes England and is currently being assessed by MHCLG. We may have a response as early as July. The Government definitely wants development in Biggleswade and the surrounding area.

The Town Council is in process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan to enable Biggleswade to have a voice in what will happen. Initial public engagement indicates that our community is naturally nervous of this scale of development but, with the right kind of development and the very necessary infrastructure, will accept the growth.

So, given that the sites have not been allocated, we would ask that Appendix 7 is retained so that Biggleswade can play its part in supporting the delivery of this section of the Oxford/Cambridge Arc and all partners can plan effectively for the eventual scale of development likely for our town.