***Statement by David Taylor***

I am David Taylor, Chairman of the Pickwick Association and speak to ensure our objections to these applications are heard and on record before you reach your decision. Our Briefing Pack, provided today and emailed to you yesterday, contains important information some of which is still not available on the website.

The applications concern the four ‘Reserved Matters’ defined in the Inspector’s outline consent. We focus on two of these, ‘layout’ and ‘scale’ where concerns relating to stone-mining, arising from detailed geological research by GWP Consultants LLP[[1]](#footnote-1), have still not received proper attention.

You’re about to decide on proposals to build 150 houses - and two office blocks – on top of a stone mine that:

* Extends beneath the entire site
* Is being commercially worked underneath the proposed buildings as I speak, and
* Is licensed – by Wiltshire Council - to do so until 2042 at least

***No-one*** I’ve spoken to can understand that principle. What’s more, it’s in direct conflict with the Council’s own Core Minerals Strategy[[2]](#footnote-2), that says *“significant workable mineral deposits should be safeguarded against other forms of development and, whenever practicable, should be extracted prior to any development which could result in their sterilisation”*

In this area, the Planning Inspector was very careful wording his decision: *“This potential risk[[3]](#footnote-3) could be addressed by way of a condition requiring a land stability risk assessment* ***to be submitted for approval alongside the submission of reserved matters”*** [[4]](#footnote-4)***.***

The consequent Condition 7 requires a “Land Stability Risk Assessment” including *“details of intrusive site investigations****, an assessment of land stability risks*** *and mitigation measures…..”.* Against advice fromthe Council solicitor, with no professional geological advice and without any assessment of land stability risks, Officers discharged that condition in August ‘16 independently of reserved matters. Our lawyers make clear[[5]](#footnote-5) that Condition 7 has not been fully discharged, and GWP provide evidence[[6]](#footnote-6) [[7]](#footnote-7) that the lack of the required assessment of land stability carries substantial risk.

To ensure the obvious, common-sense risks – noise and vibration - of building above a working mine are properly assessed, the Inspector requires[[8]](#footnote-8) that “*No development shall take place until a Foundation Investigation Plan”*[[9]](#footnote-9) is agreed. All Gladman’s efforts over the last two years to discharge those conditions have failed – most recently on 31 August.

GWP make clear that assumptions on depth of rock cover above the mine are fundamentally incorrect and misleading.[[10]](#footnote-10) Further on-site investigation must take place for a competent Land Stability Risk Assessment to be made. The critical impact on these Reserved Matters of issues of land stability and mining must be settled first. Deciding now the detailed layout and scale of development on this site is both premature and presumptive.

**David Taylor , Pickwick Association , 5 September 2017**

1. GWP letter of 7 June 2017 to Pickwick Association and accompanying report of same date [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Policy MSP4 – Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan : *“significant workable mineral deposits should be safeguarded against other forms of development and, whenever practicable, should be extracted prior to any development which could result in their sterilisation”*  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “….the possibility of unmapped shallow mine-workings which might potentially be used by bats” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Paragraph 78, Appeal Decision [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Buxtons letter to WC 16 August [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. GWP report 7 June 2017 – Conclusions – 4.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. GWP letter to WC 13 July 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Conditions 22 & 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Planning Inspectorate, Schedule of Conditions, nos. 22 and 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. GWP report 7 June 2017. Section 3.3 and Conclusions – 4.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)