

From: Professor William Brown, CBE  
Chair, Hinxton Parish Council  
(home address: 1 High Street, Hinxton,  
Cambs, CB10 1QY, 01799-530372)

To: The Editor, Cambridge Independent,  
Winship Road, Milton,  
Cambridge, CB24 6PP

30 May 2019

Dear Sir,

What is the morality of our Mayoralty? I refer to the extraordinary intervention of Mayor James Palmer into the appeal of SmithsonHill against the refusal of their planning application to build a business park on open fields by Hinxton village.

Mayor Palmer's letter to the Planning Inspectorate of 17 May is not only in breach of normal procedure, it is also completely without democratic legitimacy. His unsolicited statement in support of the application directly challenges South Cambridgeshire District Council's rejection, which was unanimous and rejected it on nine different grounds. His support is contrary to South Cambs' Local Plan. It is contrary to the explicit opposition of the affected Parish Councils of Hinxton, Ickleton, Duxford, Pampisford, and Whittlesford.

The Mayor's letter shows no understanding of the issues. The 'Agri-tech' label of the application is for marketing purposes and is backed by no significant expertise in relevant technologies. The industrial use classifications that the application requests are for a general purpose business park, for which this arable land and its associated transport and other infrastructure are highly inappropriate. His letter misleadingly refers to the Independent Economic Review, which actually implies that such a development would be best suited to Fenlands or East Cambs, where agriculture is more dominant and jobs are more needed than in South Cambs. It may be understandable that the landowner wishes to make money from the land, but it is shocking that the Mayor should intervene in an enquiry, contrary to the due democratic process.

We have already queried the reasons for the intervention of the Secretary of State in this application (letter, *Cambridge Independent* 12 December 2018). We drew attention to, among other things, the fact that SmithsonHill's parent company made a £20,000 political contribution to the local Conservative Party shortly before the application was made. The Mayor's intervention appears deliberately to treat both democratic decisions and the public enquiry process with contempt.

Yours

William Brown  
(Chair, Hinxton Parish Council)