Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP

The Secretary of State

Dept.for Communities & Local Govt.

Eland House

Bressenden Place

LONDON

SW1E 5DU

13 June 2012

Dear Sir

Re: APP. No. 11/01625/FUL The Bishop Centre, Bath Road, Taplow, Bucks

At Taplow Parish Councils last meeting it was agreed that TPC should request that you call the above application in for review.

You will be aware that South Bucks District Council also wishes the decision of its Planning Committee to be reviewed as the latter went against Officer’s recommendation voting 6 for and 5 against. It is reasonable to presume that one supporter of the application was influenced by the offer of £186K made by the applicant towards community projects in Burnham. The member in question has since been deposed as Chairman of Burnham Parish Council.

Being aware of the many letters written to you requesting a review, TPC’s reasons for requesting same are kept to a minimum so to avoid repetition.

TPC fully supports redevelopment of The Bishop Centre as it has taken on a tired and desolate appearance, but the latter largely due to progressive closure of units resulting from Land Securities not renewing leases as they fell in.

TPC believes the proposed development will not enhance the local environment as the existing one does insofar design of the latter recognised the amenity value of the area to local residents and was sensitively planned so as to complement its juxtaposition with the surrounding Green Belt Land.

Land Securities proposal to install a major out-of-town supermarket at the Bishop Centre is unjustifiable on economic grounds and will not as it claims, increase consumer spending in the area. It will merely steal trade from existing stores of which there are at least 15 major grocery outlets within a 5-mile radius. The aim here is not to add to the local economy but rather to help balance the proposed operator’s market share with its competition.

It will at the same time seriously affect the viability of nearby shopping centres in Burnham, Maidenhead and Slough.

The old retail mix in the BC provided an eclectic range of goods and services not easily found nor accessed in traditional high street locations.

The height of the old BC units was such that they did not impact adversely on its verdant surroundings and the Green Belt.

The proposed new build would undoubtedly dominate the view from the Bath Road and surrounding residential properties.

TPC does not agree with Bucks County Councils independent advisor’s view that the new scheme would not impact severely upon traffic flows and add to congestion. The result will be greater traffic queues than currently arise, and an increase in rat-running on local roads and country lanes. Note: It subsequently transpired that BCC’s ”independent advisor” was in fact a BCC Officer.

Traffic movements in the area are already destined to increase significantly and jams will worsen as a result of the redevelopment of the Taplow Paper Mill and Skindles Hotel sites where 100/300 new houses are being planned and whose occupiers will all need to access the Bath Road in due course.

The proposed development will also impact badly upon the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead’s plans for the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre, which reflects Govt. Policy rather than that ofcreating another out-of-town facility. Maidenhead’s future as a town centre with good retail offers should be supported.

TPC supports redevelopment of the BC, but believes it should ideally consist of a variety of small outlets with a wide range of offers and services, and perhaps incorporating some sustainable/affordable housing as the site very close to bus and rail networks.

TPC urges the Secretary of State to call-in this application for review, and to recognise the concerns that we, Taplow Parish Council have about this ill-considered proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr. George E S Sandy

Chairman – Taplow Parish Council and also South Bucks District Councillor