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MP HELPS UNLOCK 2 YEAR BUSINESS PARK LOG-JAM Up to 500 jobs a possibility when completed

North East Bedfordshire MP Alistair Burt has thanked the Highways Agency, Central Bedfordshire Council, the East of England Development Agency and developers Gazeley for their efforts last week in unlocking a log-jam which was holding up further development on the Stratton Business Park. Mr Burt, who convened the meeting at Highways Agency at 18th February, was asked to help resolve an impasse which had seen potential development of a distribution centre on site delayed for some two years, as the Highways Agency was unable to approve access to the A1, without which Central Beds could not give planning permission.

Alistair Burt said:-'This has been a long running issue between the Highways Agency and the developers, which at the end needed a round the table meeting to resolve a clash of priorities. The Government's transport strategy somewhat unrealistically tries to ensure that no new development will make traffic worse, short or long term, but if we are to have more much needed jobs in the area we sometimes need to look ahead to future road improvements and give the go ahead to business development now and get over temporary difficulties.

In this case the access to the A1 can now be delivered with some immediate improvements to the junction, though larger improvements will come with the Kings Reach housing development. It proved possible for the HA to relax their concerns sufficiently to allow approval to the scheme, which should enable Central Beds to give the go-ahead. This is taking place in an area already designated for such business development, which Gazeley estimates could result in some 500 new jobs.

I am very pleased to have been asked to assist. I first wrote to the Highways Agency some months ago, but it seemed clear from the response that the Agency felt caught between competing needs, so a face to face seemed the best answer. With co-operation all round, I hope we have achieved something good for Biggleswade and those looking for jobs.'

<ENDS>

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