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Date: 18th March 2019
Our Ref: HKW/AR/EC709.419
Your Ref:
Phone:
e-mail:

Dear Hannah

Re: Valley Gardens Phase 3

Thank you for letter of 1 February outlining the LEP Investment Committee's requirements that the council should fulfil before the Funding Agreement can be completed, agreed and issued for Phase 3 of the Valley Gardens project. I note from your email dated 1 March that you require a letter from the Monitoring Officer. You have made clear that you are not seeking a legal advice and for the avoidance of doubt I would like to highlight that this letter should not be treated as legal advice or a legal opinion.

I can confirm on behalf of the council that it has carried out consultation in compliance with its statutory requirements, and comments from the public and various organisations and bodies, including those of the city's Transport Partnership and Tourism Alliance, as well as those of the Valley Gardens Forum, have been appropriately considered, responded to and addressed prior to proposing approval of the Final Preliminary Design to the council's ETS Committee. This has included a consultation questionnaire, meetings with individuals and groups of representatives, and workshops and formal meetings with key partners.

I am also able to reassure you that the Final Preliminary Design meets the requirements of all relevant statutory legislation and that the project is considered to achieve an appropriate balance between its implications and outcomes for traffic congestion, air quality and sustainable transport and public realm benefits; as these items were all identified within the core objectives that the council agreed for the project, against which various options have been appraised and assessed by the council's consultants, the outcomes reviewed by officers, and subsequent decisions made by the ETS Committee. Those committee decisions have also been made with the full knowledge of public representations about the Valley Gardens Phase 3 project (such as questions and deputations) that have been made directly to the committee Chair, or the committee itself, and which have then been publicly responded to by the Chair or considered by the Committee itself.

The appropriate level of engagement and consultation will continue as the project progresses through its detailed design stage, and various elements of the design are refined prior to construction. This progress will be reported to the appropriate committee as will any objections subsequently received to Traffic Regulation Orders.

I trust that this letter therefore provides you with the assurances that you are seeking regarding the council's approach and commitment to this project, and its current and future plans for engaging fully with the city's stakeholders prior and during to its delivery.

Yours sincerely

Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis
Executive Lead Officer Strategy, Governance and Law