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**IPSWICH**  
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Dear Sir

**Westgate Site**

I write further to your request for clarification as to the position of Ipswich Borough Council in relation to the Westgate site allocation (Civic Centre Area/Civic Drive IP040 & 041). In particular you asked for comment having regard to the Council being a signatory to the Ipswich Vision document (July 2015).

It should be noted that the Ipswich Vision document has not been formally approved by the Executive of the Council. It therefore does not have – and has never been intended to have – the same weight as the Local Plan document which has been formally considered and approved by the Executive and Full Council at various stages of its production. The initial draft of the Vision document was produced by our local Business Improvement District organisation without any knowledge or involvement of the Council.

The Vision recognises that there is an urgent need to improve and develop the retail offer and highlights that attention should be focused on the Central Quarter – i.e. not at the Grafton Way / Commercial Road site (site IP047). Not allocating the site at Westgate would mean a threat of out-of-centre retail development, for example at the site on Grafton Way / Commercial Road (site IP047). Our partners would not wish this to happen. I recognise that some (such as our Business Improvement District organisation) do not support the Westgate designation and have made representations to that effect. That, though, is primarily because they do not believe an additional major allocation is required.

The Ipswich Vision also focuses on improving north-south linkages between the town centre and the waterfront. This north-south axis is not put forward as a focus for new retail development by the Vision. The Local Plan entirely supports improved north-south linkages through allocating the key Turret Lane site (site IP054) and Burtons Site (site IP035) as supporting these key links to the waterfront. These two allocations are not alternatives to retail use on the Westgate site.

To be very clear, Ipswich Borough Council remains committed to the delivery of further and better retail floorspace / occupiers in the town centre. In our view – this means a retail-led mixed use development on the Westgate site, but we do acknowledge the need for flexibility in respect of mix of uses and proportions. The proposed allocation identifies the primary uses as retail but includes a secondary residential use. This accords with the general aspirations of the Ipswich Vision in regenerating the town centre and encouraging new development.

**I trust this clarifies the position of Ipswich Borough Council on this matter.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Councillor David Ellesmere, Leader of the Council**