

**THE DONCASTER (CITY GATEWAY — RAILWAY SQUARE AND PHASE 1)  
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2023**

**REBUTTAL EVIDENCE**

**OF**

**CHRIS DUNGWORTH**

**10 APRIL 2024**

**PINS REF: APP/PCU/CPOP/F4410/3324357**

## STATEMENT OF TRUTH

The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this public inquiry reference APP/PCU/CPOP/F4410/3324357 in this proof of evidence is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions

**Date: 10 April 2024**

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'A. H. M.', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

## **1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

1.1. I am Chris Dungworth and I am the Head of 'Business Doncaster', which is the City of Doncaster Council's ("the Council") Inward Investment team.

1.2. My qualifications and experience are set out in full at Paragraphs 1.2 – 1.6 of my Proof of Evidence, dated 27 March 2024.

## **2. PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF MR NEIL BERTMAN**

2.1. Mr Bertman's Proof of Evidence raises a number of grounds of objections to the use of compulsory purchase powers. I have commented below in respect of those that are pertinent to my expertise and involvement with the scheme.

2.2. As an initial point of clarification and to assist the Inspector, it is noted that Mr Bertman has referred to a previous Business Doncaster colleague as Mr Adrian Barnes. For ease of reference, I understand this to be a typographical error and can confirm that the relevant colleague (who has since left Business Doncaster) is Mr Adrian Banks.

*Paragraph 3: The industry sector is operated by my colleague, Mr Darren Chandler, who will be shortly leaving the company. The Doncaster office is in a very ideal location very close to Doncaster railway and bus stations. I am aware that majority of industry agency workers visit the branch on these means of public transport, using the trains or the nearby bus service. They come in to look for work, drop in their time sheets, pick up PPE or just want to speak to one of the staff members to ask any questions that they may have. I am aware that many of them have been coming in to this office for the 20-plus years that the Doncaster branch has been open and that even some of their children are now coming in to register with us looking for work, as Taskmaster has been recommended to them by their parents or friends alike. In a way, Taskmaster is like a landmark in Doncaster as an agency for temporary work.*

2.3. In response to the objection of Mr Bertman in Paragraph 3, as confirmed in my Proof of Evidence at paragraph 4.6, Business Doncaster have at all times worked to the specifications provided by Taskmaster in proposing potential relocation properties.

2.4. As such, any property which has been proposed for Taskmaster's relocation has been in close proximity to the city centre and easily accessible by public transport.

2.5. In relation to the properties proposed to date, the average walking time from the existing premises to those proposed as alternative premises has been in the region of 15 minutes.

2.6. Whilst Business Doncaster have worked hard to ensure the properties proposed have had the necessary parking provisions, where those properties have not, Business Doncaster has worked with Joanne Chipp-Smith and others to source alternative parking options available, see for example, paragraph 9.20 of the proof of evidence of Joanne Chipp-Smith.

2.7. Throughout the process of locating alternative premises for Taskmaster, the property options in Doncaster City Centre with a dedicated parking provision was and remains very limited.

*Paragraph 6: Mr Chandler and I were asked by our managing director, Mr Andrew Skorupka, to deal with the Council regarding the relocation of the Doncaster branch. We were contacted by Mr Adrian Barnes from the Council in July 2023 and he showed us the following properties:*

- South Parade, Doncaster DN1 3DY: This property was not suitable due to the offices being on the top floor of a very old building.*
- Lazarus House, Prince Street DN1 3NJ: This was not suitable as the office space offered was too expensive.*
- Cavendish House, South Parade, DN1 2DJ: This was not suitable due to its location within a warren of offices and the fact that the Council was offering split offices at two different locations within the building.*
- 15 South Parade, Doncaster, DN1 2DR: This was not suitable due to it been too small and due to rundown.*
- Kings Mews East Laith Gate, Doncaster DN1 1JD.*

2.8. In response to the objection at paragraph 6, I can confirm that by July 2023 Business Doncaster has proposed 11 properties all of which had been initially proposed by way of email, see paragraphs 4.7 to 4.10 of my proof of evidence. The properties referred to in Mr Bertman's proof above, are the properties which Taskmaster chose to view, as opposed to a complete list of those proposed at the time.

*Paragraph 7: We wrote to Mr Barnes to inform him that Kings Mews and I think the one on the Printing Office Street, DN1 1TR were potentially suitable. We never heard back from Mr Barnes.*

2.9. In response to the objection raised by Mr Bertman in Paragraph 7, for clarity, I can confirm that Taskmaster wrote to Business Doncaster on 30<sup>th</sup> July to ask further questions and express interest in the potential suitability of Kings Mews and 39 Printing Office Street.

2.10. Mr Banks wrote back to Taskmaster on 31 July 2023 with further details about the properties viewed (see paragraph 4.13 of my Proof of Evidence). A further email was then sent on 1 August 2023 to confirm that 39 Printing Office Street was now under offer and therefore was no longer available. I have attached a copy of this email to my rebuttal at **POE/CD/65**.

2.11. The Kings Mews property remains available and is being considered as can be seen in my Proof of Evidence at paragraphs 4.26.16 and 5.4.

*Paragraph 8: In November 2023, we were contacted by another officer from the Council, Mr Chris Dungworth. Mr Dungworth said he knew that the Council had not been proactive in helping us look for new premises, but he was going to change that. In December 2023, Mr Dungworth showed us the following properties:*

- a. St Leger Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster: At the site visit, we were told that the annual rent for this property was in the region of £10,000. We were later told in writing that it was £27,000. This was above our price range;*
- b. Doncaster Business Innovation Centre, Ten Pound Walk, Doncaster (DBIC): This property was off the beaten track and well out of the way. Also, with this property, there would have been no way of put up a sign to advertise our location in amongst a warren of other offices.*
- c. Kings Mews East Laith Gate, Doncaster DN1 1JD: This is so far the best of a bad bunch. It is in a good location however the parking premiums are extremely high. This property is owned by a private landlord. It was potentially suitable if adequate car parking spaces could be found. We informed the Council that we need a total of 8 spaces for the Doncaster branch.*

2.12. In response to the point raised by Mr Bertman at paragraph 8 of his proof, I can confirm that Taskmaster raised concerns about whether Mr Banks had been proactive enough, specifically in relation to his overall responsiveness. This was not in relation to whether sufficient assistance was being provided in relation to searching for and proposing

alternative premises for consideration. To ensure positive relations moving forward, I did reassure Taskmaster that I and Business Doncaster would take every reasonable step to assist them. As can be seen in my proof of evidence at paragraph 4, Business Doncaster and the Council have been and continue to be actively engaged in assisting Taskmaster to find an alternative property.

2.13. In addition, when Mr Banks left Business Doncaster I picked up the ongoing search and took the opportunity to meet with Taskmaster on 28 November 2023. I have established and remain keen to have a productive relationship with Taskmaster to be able to assist them in their search for a new property.

2.14. Whilst there may have been some delays, it must be noted that during the time of dealing with Mr Banks, Taskmaster requested a 4 month pause (see paragraph 9.7.2 of Joanne Chipp-Smith's proof) whilst they awaited their new sales / commercial Director to be on board.

2.15. As already indicated above, at all times both Business Doncaster and the Council have remained proactive as far as able to help Taskmaster with the search of alternative premises whilst being considerate to their requirements for their business.

*Paragraph 9: During the visits, Council officers told us that the CPO was a done deal and that they would help us find a suitable property within the town centre as they did not want another business to leave the centre and were aware of the timescale. We wrote to the Council regarding the properties that they showed us and what we were looking for. We asked for an update on 14 February 2024. We were contacted again on 18 March 2024 by the Council regarding the car parking arrangements.*

2.16. In response to the objection raised by Mr Bertman at Paragraph 9 of his Proof, specifically in relation to the alleged comment made by a Council officer that the CPO was a done deal, from the proof it is not clear whom Mr Bertman alleges to have said this. Further, it is not within my knowledge or anyone else's knowledge that this was said.

2.17. What was apparent initially was that Taskmaster were reluctant to engage in discussions ahead of the CPO being confirmed by the Secretary of State. As such what the Council has, and continues to, emphasise is that a resolution was granted by the Council's Cabinet to make the CPO, that the CPO had thereafter been made, and as

such the Council were looking to acquire the land by CPO if an agreement could not be reached.

2.18. The Rebuttal Proof of Joanne Chipp-Smith deals with the correspondence mentioned at paragraph 9 in Mr Bertman's proof in further detail.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

3.1. As can be seen from my Proof of Evidence dated 27 March 2024, Business Doncaster has been engaged for some time in a long and detailed course of correspondence with Taskmaster. Business Doncaster has worked hard along with the Council to assist in the search for alternative properties to relocate Taskmaster's business.

3.2. A number of office solutions have been presented to Taskmaster, including Kings Mews and St Leger's Court, that I understand Taskmaster were interested in. Business Doncaster have arranged viewings and accompanied Taskmaster on these visits. For operational needs, Taskmaster were only interested in properties in the City Centre so that restricted options, especially when Taskmaster were asking for dedicated car parking spaces to be included as part of the requirements.

3.3. I have considered the points raised by Mr Bertman in his proof of evidence and confirm that nothing within his Proof alters the conclusions made in my Proof of Evidence, especially when considering the steps taken by Business Doncaster to assist with locating alternative premises for Taskmaster to relocate to.

**POE/CD/65**

**From:** Banks, Adrian [<mailto:Adrian.Banks@doncaster.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 01 August 2023 09:56  
**To:** Neil Bertman <[nbertman@tmrec.com](mailto:nbertman@tmrec.com)>  
**Cc:** Darren Chandler <[dchandler@tmrec.com](mailto:dchandler@tmrec.com)>; Dungworth, Chris  
<[Chris.Dungworth@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Dungworth@doncaster.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: New Office Properties in Doncaster

Hi Neil

Lazarus house comes with 8 free spaces.

Sorry but 39 Printing Office Street is under offer. If this changes, I'll let you know.

Regards

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

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**From:** Neil Bertman <[nbertman@tmrec.com](mailto:nbertman@tmrec.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 31, 2023 6:06:00 PM  
**To:** Banks, Adrian <[Adrian.Banks@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Adrian.Banks@doncaster.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Darren Chandler <[dchandler@tmrec.com](mailto:dchandler@tmrec.com)>; Dungworth, Chris  
<[Chris.Dungworth@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Dungworth@doncaster.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: New Office Properties in Doncaster

Hi all

Lazarus house, does it come with free Parking ?

In regards to the parking at Mews would they come down on the price as we are requesting 10 spaces ?



Kindest Regards Neil

Sent from iPhone  
Divisional Manager  
Taskmaster

Doncaster Tel: 01302 304907

Sheffield Tel: 01143 998850

Driving Division Email: [syd@tmrec.com](mailto:syd@tmrec.com)

Personal: [nbertman@tmrec.com](mailto:nbertman@tmrec.com)

On 31 Jul 2023, at 17:45, Banks, Adrian <[Adrian.Banks@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Adrian.Banks@doncaster.gov.uk)> wrote:

Hello

Please see below prices for properties you liked/thought would work we viewed last week:

Alba House, South Parade, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN1 2DY – response from Ben Flint - £17,500 pax

Lazarus House, Princes Street, Doncaster, DN1 3NJ, Floor 5 (top Floor) - £35,000 pax + £2000 service charge (these would need confirming). There would be no parking in the basement due to insurance issue but spaces will be made available in the carpark next door we saw.

Kings Mews, East Laith Gate, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN1 1JD – response from Craven Wildsmith – “£20,000 p.a for the 2 floors space. Parking is available at £1,200 per space per annum. North these are subject to VAT. From my file it looks as if the insurance rent and service charge is £1,750 per annum but I will need to check that with Amelia when she is back next week.”

I am still waiting to hear when we can view 39 Printing Office Street, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN1 1TP (attached) I will get back to you.

I have copied Chris Dungworth, head of Business Doncaster & can help if you require any further information whilst I am away.

Hope this is helpful

Thank you

Regards

Adey

**Adrian Banks**

Inward Investment Officer for Retail & Leisure

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Place Directorate  
Doncaster Council

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