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Ref:

30th May 2008

Richard Wright
Planning Officer
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Council Offices
Argents Mead
Hinckley
Leicestershire LE10 1BZ

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- 6 JUN 2008
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Dear Richard

Re: Geary's Bakeries

I am writing to explain our interests and commitment to the proposed employment development at Hill Lane, Markfield. We have been looking for a site to accommodate our business for some time now and have engaged market agents to assist us in this. The outcome of this search is that the site at Hill Lane, Markfield is the only site that meets our requirements in respect of both the size and location.

To provide some background to the company, Geary's Bakeries have been established in Ratby for the past 100 years and are a well known name in Leicestershire. We supply a range of companies include Samworth Brothers (Tesco), Buckingham Foods (Sainsburys), Uniq Foods (M&S), British Airways, Aldi and Midlands Cooperative

The company has recently been faced with a decision regarding its future. The market place for baked goods is increasingly competitive and Geary's has had to face the issue of whether to compete within this market or to continue with the status quo, which would have almost certainly undermined the company's position within the market place.

We have taken the decision to seek to enhance the role of Geary's in the provision of baked goods and the company has been restructured and modernised, whilst retaining the management of the business within the Geary's family.

The success of the company's restructuring is evident in the recently won contract with Marks and Spencer, which now accounts for 20% of the business and could account for up to 40% of the company's turnover, with a corresponding increase in employment. This is obviously a key contract for Geary's; however, the contract is conditional upon finding a site that meets Marks and Spencer's stringent standards. The current bakery is below standard and Marks & Spencer have only allowed us a temporary contract until a suitable new site is secured prior to July 09. And therefore Geary's will lose this important business with significant consequences for the company.

We continue to seek to win new contracts but we are held back by the current condition and size of our buildings. For example, we have been trying to obtain a license to produce Disney related goods, but are unable to do this until we have improved premises. A better site is essential to meet the demands of our current and potential future customers and such demands cannot be accommodated within the constraints of our current bakery site. In any case, it would not be economically viable to demolish and rebuild the existing buildings and would also require the bakery to cease operating whilst redevelopment works took place.

The location of the existing bakery within the centre of the village, in such close proximity to houses, causes other problems. Our business operates twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, with deliveries taking place six or seven times per week by large vehicles. The position of our access and width of the road requires us to ask neighbours to move their cars in order to allow lorries to enter the site. This causes disruption to nearby residents.

The nature of the bakery business also means that distribution typically takes place between midnight and 4am to ensure deliveries are made by the start of the day. This has caused problems for immediate neighbours and has on occasion resulted in complaints to the Council's Environmental Health Department. It would be impossible to continue to expand and strengthen the Geary's business within Ratby village centre as well as continue to be a good neighbour to the people who live next to the bakery.

Whilst we are keen to grow the Geary's business, we have a loyal and local workforce and would like to relocate locally to be sure that we can retain existing jobs. We estimate that 95% of Geary's 80 employees live within a ten mile radius of the site. Thus, we need to find a new site within this area as it is important to us as a local employer. This has, of course, influenced where we have looked for new sites and we have undertaken an exhaustive search of opportunities within

the area, as well as considering sites which are not ideally located for our company. The search has revealed no other sites that meet our requirements and the site at Hill Lane, Markfield remains the best site suitable and available to us within our timescales.

The Hill Lane site will allow us good access to the M1 corridor, which is important for our deliveries and will also allow us to retain our existing employees. We have already considered how we could provide a shuttle bus service to ensure that our Ratby employees could be transported to the new site. The site also provides us with enough space to provide a purpose built facility which will enable the company to gain valuable new contracts. We estimate that new purpose built premises could provide up to 40 additional jobs and, in time, potentially treble the workforce.

Geary's Bakeries remain fully committed to their presence within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough and their role as a local employer in the Ratby area. We would like to be able to strengthen our contribution to the economy of the area through relocation to the site at Hill Lane, Markfield. It is hoped that the Council will take these important issues into account when considering the application for the site and will bear in mind the positive aspects of the proposals and the benefits that the continued presence of the Geary's Bakeries will bring to the Borough.

Yours sincerely

Jason Geary
Joint Managing Director Geary's Bakeries