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Letter of Support

Kellen Homes
Development of Unused Land (Castleton)
Date: 13 June 2023

The East Lancashire Light Railway Company, as part of the East Lancashire Railway Trust, have ambitions set out in their 2020-2030 strategy to extend railway operations up to Castleton.

To progress this strategy the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) are working with Rochdale Borough Council who also have had ambitious plans to restore the Castleton section of the rail line for many years, with the outline plans including the extension of the railway from Heywood to Castleton.

In extending the line to Castleton there are mutual benefits to the ELR and Rochdale Council given the ELR is the third biggest tourist attraction in Greater Manchester, and connecting this popular heritage line to the national rail network for the first time, via Castleton, is expected to increase ELR annual passenger numbers by around 60,000 annually. It will also serve as a significant regeneration opportunity and an important transportation hub connecting commuters with the rest of the region, offering Castleton the prospect to become a popular destination for tourists, with easy access to surrounding attractions such as the Rochdale Canal and Castleton Moor.

This proposed development opens up the prospect to enhance the range of travel and tourism opportunities in the region, linking the vibrant communities of Greater Manchester, East Lancashire and West Yorkshire to Castleton and its nearby attractions including Rochdale Canal and Castleton Moor.

Whilst we acknowledge local residents' concerns regarding a potential increase in traffic as a result of providing new homes in the area, the ELR fully supports the proposal being submitted for Rochdale Council's consideration. The proposed development by Kellen Homes safeguards 1.6 acres of land for proposals for Castleton Sidings to extend the ELR to Castleton, as well as including a donation of railway track from the site which will help to renew our existing infrastructure. In addition, the proposed development would support Transport for Greater Manchester's tram-train pathfinder project as they explore the feasibility of extending Metrolink the service network starting from Heywood.

The East Lancashire Light Railway Company will continue to work with Kellen Homes and Rochdale Council in the future to realise the vision of extending the heritage railway to Castleton.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Kelly", with a horizontal line underneath.

Mike Kelly
ELR Chairman

HEYWOOD - BURY - RAMSBOTTOM - RAWTENSTALL

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