

From: Kate Spencer
Sent: 03 March 2022 10:43
To: Planning
Subject: SO reference (22/00385/SO) – OBJECTION

I am writing to object to the proposal – “Screening opinion - proposed construction of a commercial development of between 1.2 million and 1.5 million square feet of logistics/warehousing and associated infrastructure and landscaping on land at Junction 11 M40, Banbury, OX17 2BH”

There are many reasons to object to this proposal, not least that no one wants or needs a huge quantity of ugly sheds built on unspoilt agricultural land, encroaching on rural villages. These fields and the view of Blacklocks Hill, as you leave Banbury, are part of our shared heritage. If you allow developers to take them for profit, we will never get them back.

However, here are my objections that I understand may be relevant to your decision.

Size

At 75 hectares, the proposed development is significantly and materially in excess of the threshold for EIA development. Therefore, the development should require a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Highways impacts

In 2015, when considering the local plan currently extant, the inspector recognised that the current infrastructure cannot accommodate further development. To quote the report: “There are acknowledged barriers to delivery of the whole BAN15 sites at J11, including that the traffic movements likely to be generated would trigger the need for a new South East relief road through the town” (Paragraph 202).

The proposed development would be much larger than, and in addition to, the Banbury 15 site, which was unwisely allowed to go ahead, given that it broke the agreement that development should not take place to the East of the M40. Given its size, the traffic impact of the proposed development may be reasonably assumed to be several orders of magnitude worse.

It is not viable to provide the infrastructure required and there is no plan to do so. The traffic movements likely to be generated would mean a new South East relief road would be needed, but recent developments alongside the motorway have made that impossible to deliver.

Development in this area would increase traffic rat-running through Chacombe and Cropredy (both of which have single-file sections of road), and increase traffic on the Middleton Cheney section of the dangerous Welsh Lane, as drivers on the A361 seek to avoid the motorway roundabout.

Intrinsic Landscape Character of the land to the east of the A361.

The proposal would result in a harmful loss of landscape which makes an important contribution to the surrounding area. In his report in 2015, the inspector recognised that this land is of high visual landscape value and that developing this area would have significant harmful effects on the landscape character.

The landscape impact of development to the east of the A361 would be significant, given the intrinsic landscape value provided by the Blacklocks Hill escarpment and the rural nature of the site.

The proposed development would materially extend the built-up area of Banbury to the East, lead to a significantly harmful erosion of its rural setting on this side of the town, and negative impact on the appearance of the gateway to the town from the North and South (by motorway) and from the East.

In summary

No one wants this development, except for non-locals who want to profit from it and then move on.

It is a huge development that clearly requires an Environmental Impact Assessment.

It will permanently ruin an unspoilt and valuable landscape that many people value a great deal.

The infrastructure of Banbury and the surrounding villages can't take the extra traffic, and it will be impossible to mitigate this given other recent developments next to the M40.

It further breaks the agreement that development should not take place to the East of the M40, which I understand is enshrined in an Act of Parliament.

I urge you to reject this proposal and to resist putting this land in the next local plan, which would make future development impossible to avoid.

Yours sincerely

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