



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Our Ref: MM46239

30 October 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

Planning application ref number(s):

20/02162/OUT

This planning application conflicts with national Government policies, specifically the Government's national NHS Hospital Building Programme; and the development of this part of the Borough is not part of the current agreed Local Plan. Based on these facts, the application should not be agreed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, the planning authority. I am writing as Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, the largest town which the new NHS Hospital will serve.

Since this planning application was submitted it has been confirmed by Hampshire Hospitals Trust that the land opposite this site is on a shortlist of two to be the location of North Hampshire Hospital's new Basingstoke Hospital, replacing the current Hospital. The new Basingstoke Hospital is part of the Government national Hospital Building Programme, one of 40 such projects nationwide. If this site is chosen for a new Hospital it would be the major NHS Hospital providing acute care for hundreds of thousands of people living in North and Mid Hampshire. The Junction 7 site has been the emergency services preferred location for a new Hospital because of its ease of access to an extensive road network, including Junction 7 of the M3, indeed this was one reason why the planning authority has previously granted planning consent for a new acute Hospital at junction 7.

This application for a new distribution centre would have a significant impact on traffic congestion levels on local roads and congestion at junction 7 of the M3, including possible traffic queuing, as is regularly seen at other M3 junctions. Traffic queuing problems which resulted in a number of tragic fatalities at Junction 6 were resolved over a 10 year period through the upgrade of Blackdam Roundabout at a cost over £10million. This new planning application for a major distribution centre at Junction 7 includes no detailed analysis of traffic levels and mitigation that would be required if the facility was built. Despite the applicant acknowledging that the site opposite could be part of the Government's national Hospital Building Programme there is no indication of the impact the increased levels of traffic would have on the smooth running of the Hospital, particularly access for 'blue light' emergency service vehicles transporting people with life threatening conditions, including road traffic accident victims, for Accident and Emergency treatment.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is clear that all transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed. It is surprising that this application does not provide a sufficiently detailed analysis of the impact on traffic volume on the existing road network or the mitigation that would be required if the site is also chosen to be part of the National Government programme of Hospital building. The site has been chosen by the distribution centre developer because of its proximity to Junction 7 on the M3, in the full knowledge that the NHS has shortlisted it as a site for a major new acute Hospital but without detailed analysis of the capacity of the road network.

The Highways Agency has confirmed there is no Government plan to expand the capacity of M3 junction 7, so all development planned at this location needs to work within the current road capacity or have funded mitigation in place. The Highways Agency has pointed out the existing, safety problems around Junction 7, in particular the short weaving distance between junctions 7 and 8. The Highways Agency are already monitoring this part of the road network to ensure its continued safe and efficient operation. The next strategic period for the Government Road Investment Strategy is 2025-30. Any development agreed in advance of this time would not be part of the Governments current road investment strategy. Therefore, the planning authority will have to decide between different development proposals at Junction 7 because of road capacity limits and limits of funded mitigation.

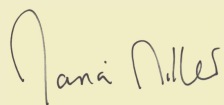
It would be in breach of planning rules to make any decision without full sight of all proposals. The local planning authority under the provisions set out in the NPF must consider the cumulative impact of development in reaching a decision on a planning application. The potential siting of one of the Governments 40 new Hospitals at Junction 7 has to be taken into account by the planning authority. Basingstoke Council cannot make a decision on this application until such a time as the final site for the new Hospital has been agreed (2021) and the cumulative impact of all proposed development at Junction 7 can be taken fully into account. And if mitigation is needed the funding for that mitigation is clear.

The application can be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration under the Town & Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009. This application engages the Secretary of State's 'call in' powers if the Borough Council is minded to agree the application because if Junction 7 was chosen as the site for the new Basingstoke Hospital the distribution centre application would potentially conflict with national policies; and it is outside of the agreed Local Plan which was subject to extensive Public Consultation.

A decision by the planning authority to grant planning consent for a distribution centre at Junction 7 would be inconsistent with its previous, long established approach to planning matters; inconsistent with the existing Local Plan which was subject to extensive local consultation; and conflicts with a major national government policy to build new hospitals nationwide, including in Basingstoke.

I urge Members of the Development Control Committee to refuse this application on these facts.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Hon Maria Miller  
MP for Basingstoke