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23<sup>rd</sup> August 2007

Mrs Madeleine Winter,  
Head of Planning,  
Test Valley Borough Council,  
Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road,  
Andover SP10 3AJ

Dear Mrs Winter,

### **Application 07/01951/OUTN Development on Former Andover Airfield**

We are writing to object to the above planning application on the following grounds:

#### **1. Incomplete information**

The following items are missing from the planning application:

- (a) no. of HGV movements expected during a 24hr period
- (b) distribution of HGV movements as a function of time throughout a 24 hour day
- (c) spread of direction of HGV movements once they leave the 100-Acre junction
- (d) vehicle movements associated with the biomass plant
- (e) any assessment of noise originating from operational activities on the Unit 4 site
- (f) any of the information promised in the title of Appendix 10.2 of the Environmental Statement
- (g) any assessment of the after-dark visibility of the Unit 4 site.

All this information is required to allow the community to better assess the impact that this proposed development would have. A revised application should be sought from the developer that supplies this missing information.

#### **2. Development boundaries are departure from Local Plan**

The layout of the development does not conform to that specified in the adopted Local Plan. The maps associated with the Local Plan clearly show the western boundary of the business park to be on a line connecting Short Lane at Penton Corner to the footpath running SW from Red Post Lane, and they clearly show the landscape strip as being within this boundary. The application illicitly places the landscape strip outside of the business park boundary thus effectively increasing the size of the business park by around 6ha.

This constitutes a clear departure, for which there is no necessity, from the Local Plan and should be advertised and processed as such. The landscape strip is within an area designated as countryside; the construction of it and its bunding should therefore be considered as development in the countryside. SET03 states that "Development in the countryside will only be permitted if ... there is an overriding need for it to be located in the countryside". There is clearly no overriding need here and it is a clear transgression of Local Plan policy.

### **3. Employment provision not as required by Local Plan**

The development does not provide the mix of uses and satisfy the range of needs required by the Local Plan (para. 10.6.2). No office or skilled manufacturer is going to wish to share the business park with this massive distribution centre, so further warehousing is almost inevitable for the other units on the site. Allowing the business park to be effectively monopolised by storage and distribution does not leave any realistic space in the town for the high-class employment called for by the Andover Vision. Andover is getting left behind in the race for IT and high-tech jobs; it is almost criminal to give away this prestige greenfield site to warehousing, leaving would-be high-tech employers to look for second-hand sites amongst the derelict sheds of Walworth.

The proposal will add to out-commuting. Already significant numbers of people commute daily to London, Basingstoke etc for employment in the higher class jobs which are not available in Andover. By failing to provide any white-collar employment on the site the proposal will do nothing to address this situation

Unemployment has been low in Andover for many years and we do not need just any jobs at any cost. Forecasts for the growth in labour supply do not suggest the need for new jobs at this moment is desperate - at least not jobs of this type. New retail jobs coming soon to Andover will supply much of the near-future need for low-end employment.

### **4. Poor utilisation of site**

The suggested usage provides a very low number of jobs for the size of the site. It therefore does not provide the long-term employment resource called for by the Local Plan.

### **5. Effect on DLO/HQLF**

The traffic congestion, vibration, noise and intrusive lights of this development will significantly reduce the quality of the working environment at DLO/HQLF north of Monxton Road. There must be a risk that, if this development goes ahead, it will ultimately add to the likelihood that one of the town's most prestigious employers will decide to leave Andover.

### **6. Unsatisfactory revision of 100-Acre junction**

The proposed revision of this junction is highly unsatisfactory in that it mixes HGV traffic, which is mostly bound for the A303, with local traffic using Weyhill Road (on both sides of the junction) and Churchill Way West. Although the changes may ease the flow of traffic north-east across the A303 bridge, they will cause delays where there are none at present e.g. approaching the 100-Acre roundabout from any other direction, such as Churchill Way West and both parts of Weyhill Road.

More importantly, there will be an increased risk of accidents due to the HGVs swapping lanes amongst local traffic in order to reach the A303 slip road.

The present concept of the junction is misconceived and it should be reconfigured more conventionally with two separate roundabouts, one embracing just the A303, its slip roads, the business park link and Monxton Road, and the second, to the north, involving both arms of the Weyhill Road, Churchill Way West and a link road to the first roundabout. This would involve acquisition of land to the north of the present 100-Acre roundabout but would largely separate HGV traffic to and from the business park from local traffic.

## **7. Alternative access to site**

An alternative access to the site would be via the currently-vacant service station on the A303 west of the 100-Acre junction. If the access included a bridge over(or under) the A303 then this would solve the problem of separating local traffic from HGVs to/from the business park. A detailed comparison should be carried of the costs, in terms of delays and accident risks, on both the A303 and on local roads. It has been said that the service station is too close to the 100-Acre junction, but it is no closer to the 100-Acre junction than is the Salisbury (A343) junction and is currently being offered for sale with access to the A303 being a feature.

## **8. Rat-running through villages**

The transport sections of the proposals make no realistic suggestions as to how to prevent employees from the business park from using a variety of rat-runs through the villages south and west of Andover in order to reach the business park. These routes through unsuitable narrow village streets are already used by employees at DLO in order to bypass congestion at the 100-Acre junction and all of them naturally end up in Monxton Road. Some mechanism is required to prevent traffic from Monxton Road turning left into the business park.

## **9. Inadequate provision for cyclists**

People from the villages south-west of Andover who wish to cycle to Andover, or to the sports complex at Charlton, or to various locations on the Portway industrial estate, are inadequately catered for by the road proposals. In order to access Churchill Way from Monxton Road, or vice versa, via the proposed tortuous cycle route would involve 4 frustrating sets of traffic lights and several other road crossings (number depending on direction of travel). Cyclists will be tempted to remain in the main traffic stream in order to minimise their journey time and thus risk collisions with lane-swapping HGVs. Government guidance decrees that the needs of cyclists and pedestrians should be given priority over those of motorised transport when designing road schemes, not just added on as an afterthought. More underpasses are clearly needed.

## **10. Appearance**

Unit 4 will be a massive eyesore. TVBC has a history of granting planning permission for ugly buildings on the western side of Andover, such as the Portway Inn, the Euronics warehouse and the unattractive industrial buildings in the former Dunning's yard at Weyhill, but this development would cap the lot and the uncompromising giant rectangular shape would be visible in daylight from many local roads and tracks.

The Local Plan has a whole raft of policies concerned with design and landscape, notably DES01 (Landscape Character), DES02 (Settlement Character), DES03 (Development Within Transport Corridors), ESN16 (Employment Development Within Settlements) which emphasise that development should fit in with the character and appearance of the local area, as does the business park policy AND04.1. The proposed development clearly fails to do this, being of a size and shape that is overpowering to its surroundings.

## **11. Night-time intrusion**

It will be even more of an eyesore when lit up at night, on autumn, winter and spring evenings, and during gloomy winter days. At these times it will be a highly intrusive feature on the landscape and clearly visible from here in Abbotts Ann as well as many other places. Continually moving lights from manoeuvring vehicles on the site will add to the intrusiveness of the development.

Para. 10.6.6 in the Local Plan says that the landscape features in AND04.2 are needed to minimise the visual impact of the development, but in order to do this, particularly when the lights are on, the building and its slab need to be lower and the proposed bunds need to be higher. However, nothing can make a building of the size and after-dark intrusiveness of Unit 4 "respect its surroundings" as is required by AND04.1.

## **12. It will put Andover on the map**

Finally, it has been suggested by some people that the visibility of this development will "put Andover on the map". One has to ask in what sense:

Will it make Andover more attractive to tourists? - nothing would repel them more.

Will it make Andover more attractive to shoppers? - the HGVs and congestion will put them off.

Will it make Andover appeal to high-class businesses wishing to relocate? - not a chance, the best location for them will have been swallowed up.

Will it make people think "there is a town that stupidly decided to have 6,000 HGV movements a day in return for a load of jobs of the type it did not need" - very probably.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr J R and Mrs J Moon)