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Jessica Toale, MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Jessica Toale MP,

Firstly, while I did not personally support your candidacy, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the new MP for Bournemouth West. I look forward to seeing what plans you have for our constituency and the positive changes you will bring.

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chair of the Talbot Village Residents Association to urgently seek your assistance following the recent appeal decision regarding the Highmoor Farm land in Talbot Village. We, as a community, have worked tirelessly to see this planning application refused, and it was indeed rejected on October 2nd, 2023. However, after BCP Council failed to issue a determination notice, the applicants, Talbot Village Trust, appealed. The Planning Inspectorate has now overturned the original decision on the grounds that the plan complies with the Poole Plan of 2018.

Here is what I said during the appeal:

I speak on behalf of the residents of Talbot Village. In 2012, Secretary of State Eric Pickles stated that the TVT planning application of 2011 was in accordance with the site allocation in the Poole plan. However, there were significant factors against the proposal, particularly concerning its impact on designated heathland. He assessed whether the proposal met the legal test set out in section 61 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 and concluded that adverse effects could not be excluded. The Secretary of State could not confirm that the proposed development, either on its own or in combination with other schemes, would not have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the international sites, thus failing to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

This application aligns with the Poole Plan 2018 but raises concerns about its impact on heathland. Although the development scope has shifted from housing to a hospital and Innovation Quarter, the core issue remains: ensuring it won't harm designated European sites.

The Heathland Support Area was previously denied planning permission in 2022 due to concerns about over-intensification of public access and adverse impacts on the site and adjacent heathland. Similar concerns persist regarding the hospital and Innovation Quarters, with an estimated 1000+ employees adding pressure to the SSSI. The HSA was resubmitted in 2023, combined with the Innovation Quarter and Nuffield Hospital, but was again refused permission on October 2nd, 2023, due to serious concerns about damage to Talbot Heath.

The planning application of 2011 was refused. The 2022 HSA application was refused. The planning application of 2023 was refused. How many more times will applications be proposed on the same site? Section 106 agreements are useful for most planning matters but may not address environmental concerns. In terms of a Section 106 agreement related to the environment, how can damage to habitats or loss of biodiversity be measured? Who will enforce this if the provisions are not adhered to? How can it be quantified? No remedy will reverse the loss of wildlife. The damage is permanent and unrecoverable.

Surely we must minimise harm and prevent habitat destruction, pollution, and disruption of ecosystems. Any development on this land, past or future, will face these consequences.

Ecological arguments aside, there are other important aspects to be considered.

The Bournemouth, Poole, and Dorset Transport Plan recognises Wallisdown Road, the main route into Talbot Village, as a key transport challenge. It is heavily congested. Data provided to BCP states the hospital alone "is expected to generate additional traffic flows of 1,153 vehicles per day throughout the local road network." This road is utilised by school children attending four schools in the immediate vicinity, and students to two universities. Millions of pounds were spent on cycle

lanes to improve safety, yet such proposals will significantly increase traffic in the area and have a huge impact on cyclists and pedestrians. Within this same report, BCP noted a high number of personal injuries on Wallisdown Road and adjoining roads, some of which were serious or fatal. Despite this, BCP Highways stated it would be a mere 'inconvenience'! Surely it's important to maintain consistency in argumentation rather than switching positions to fit different purposes.

The applicant's argument that traffic impacts would be mitigated by promoting cycling, walking, or public transport is unrealistic, given the nature of the proposed hospital. The majority of patients, visitors, and employees are unlikely to utilise these methods, making it naive to suggest otherwise merely to address the increase in traffic.

The Air Quality assessment highlights vehicle emissions as a significant pollution source in the area, with traffic increases leading to permanent rises in carbon emissions. The Noise Impact Assessment reveals that 36 families will be affected, with seven families facing a major noise increase detrimental to their health and quality of life, for which no mitigation measures are available.

In closing, the applicant fails to mitigate the major increase in traffic and introduces significant risks to children, vulnerable residents, and highway users. The applicant has also failed to mitigate noise pollution.

These are contrary to PP21.

Please ensure planning applications such as this are refused to protect residents and safeguard our wildlife for generations to come.

While I understand that the application complies with the Poole Plan, it should never have been included there in the first place. No mistake by a council should ultimately lead to the devastating loss of a green area, especially one adjacent to Talbot Heath, an SSSI. I am deeply concerned about the massive impact this development will have on residents, who will have to endure noise, air pollution, and a huge increase in vehicles in the village and surrounding roads. I am at a loss to understand how the inspector (not a local person) could rely on the BCP transport department's assessment that it would be a mere inconvenience. You will know from your canvassing that Wallisdown Road is heavily congested, and the roads into Talbot Village will not cope with this level of additional traffic. We simply cannot risk the lives of children and students in the vicinity with huge volumes of traffic entering a residential area that was not designed to support two universities, a hospital, and an Innovation Quarter.

I am urgently asking for your help in this matter. Is there anything within your power that can be done to assist us in protecting our community and our environment from this inappropriate development? Your support could make a significant difference in ensuring that our concerns are heard and addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Keeling
Chair, Talbot Village Residents Association