

Dear Jonathan

I have obviously been discussing the plans for New Monks Farm with a number of interested local groups and constituents who all share my concern that the use of public funds here clearly conflicts with the aims and objectives of the LEP. In your Strategic Economic Plan you quite rightly identify upskilling the workforce and developing business opportunities for a more productive economic area as your priorities. You have identified Adur as one of the most challenging districts to identify new spaces for businesses to grow and we have discussed the fact that in Lancing Business Park we have the county's second largest business park with over 230 businesses and 3200 jobs but with around 99% occupancy limited opportunities for expansion. The LEP has identified the potential areas for growth in Adur as Medium tech, telecommunications, computer and consumer electronic manufacturing, communications and navigation equipment manufacturing and automotive manufacturing. I agree with that analysis.

It would therefore appear irreconcilable with that plan that the LEP is providing £5.7m of public funds to subsidise a road scheme at the Sussex Pad on the A27 in Lancing that primarily enables a 35,000 square metre site to be taken by IKEA which offers mostly living wage, lower skilled retail jobs with limited growth prospects. In addition the anticipated 2 million customers a year who disproportionately come to IKEA by car over any other retailer which will add substantially to the existing congestion on the A27 which the LEP is keen to see addressed. We are years away from any effective scheme to upgrade the A27 as you know yet this development will be up and running in just a few years without any substantial improvements to the A27 that will deal with capacity and traffic flow which is of course the real problem.

In addition to enabling the IKEA development the new roundabout which lacks a fourth arm will severely be to the detriment to all those residents and users of the Coombes Road not least Lancing College, a significant local employer which occupies an area substantially bigger than New Monks farm. Planning guidance states that planning arrangements should mitigate against off-site traffic impacts yet this proposal clearly adds to them. Indeed Lancing College commissioned experts who estimated that the absence of the fourth arm on the roundabout will 'add c690,000km vehicle miles per annum to the main operational traffic associated with Lancing College, excluding other events related traffic and other traffic related to nearby homes and businesses. This will result in long diversions, add to local traffic on the already congested A27, further increase air emissions and greatly affect the College's operations. Provisions for non-motorised users are also inadequate and unsafe.' Clearly public money is being used to promote a scheme which creates additional traffic, adds to air pollution in an already highly polluted area and is contrary to all the sustainable transport principles which government, councils and other public bodies are trying to promote.

It has become clear that the financial viability of the whole scheme is highly questionable and without the LEP contribution could not go ahead. It only became clear at the Planning meeting which deferred the decision that the developers were not able to make the full education contribution to the local authority required of them. This is deeply worrying. In addition the space allocated for the community park has been reduced from 28 hectares to 25.5 to accommodate the BHFC additional 2 training pitches which are apparently now deemed critical to their operations. That is further evidence on how tight the finances and land allocation are on this site and how public sector money is being used to prop up the deal on behalf of a wealthy organisation and set of individuals where the full viability case has not been made public. How can that be a good use of public funds?

The Adur Local Plan allocated a minimum of 10,000 square metres for 'employment floor space' with some flexibility although the Inspector was at pains to point out that it did not amount to a 'blank cheque.' In the event what is being proposed is 35,900 square metres of retail warehouse and the

loss of a prime site which could be instead designated as a high-tech business park for example attracting quality jobs an investment and limited traffic and without the severe congestion caused by 2 million car bound customers 7 days a week. BHAFC claim that there is no demand from alternative businesses to IKEA yet the warehouse development being proposed adjacent to the site at Shoreham Airport is oversubscribed by 3 times according to the head of Albermarle in administration who are responsible for the Airport. Clearly the developers never entertained the idea of alternative less damaging business uses for the site because they had a safe and credible customer in the form of IKEA right from the start.

We will be expanding on our objections ahead of the next planning committee meeting where the NMF proposal comes up but I would be grateful if you would report these points back to your colleagues at the LEP, particularly those on the Investment Committee who do not seem to have considered all of the facts according to the minutes of the June 28th meeting.

Kind regards

Tim Loughton MP

Member of Parliament for East Worthing & Shoreham