



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and
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Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
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By email

Reference No. HW63013

19 November 2024

Dear Angela

Highsted Park Planning applications in Faversham & Mid Kent

(Planning references: 21/503906/EIOUT and 21/503914/EIOUT)

I am writing to ask why the unusual decision was taken to refer the Highsted Park outline planning applications to be made by you, rather than locally elected councillors who know the area well.

Local people feel strongly about these two planning applications and all the work had been done for local councillors to decide on the applications. It therefore seems highly irregular and undemocratic for the decision to be taken out of their hands just hours before their planning meeting. Why?

This area is new to my constituency but since I was re-elected in July, I have met with hundreds of people living nearby, and without doubt this is their biggest concern. I wrote to the Chairman of the Swale Borough Council Planning Committee, Cllr Mike Baldock, detailing these concerns last month which I attach for your consideration.

In summary, there is huge concern about this massive development which will destroy hundreds of acres of farmland. It will inevitably lead to an increase in traffic on local country lanes, which residents already find alarmingly busy with cars and lorries often trying to avoid queues on main roads. There is no train station nearby nor reliable bus service so new and existing residents are very car dependent.

The M2 already struggles to cope with the volume of traffic on it, and accidents bring it to a standstill – along with nearby A-roads. There is no likelihood of it being expanded to a 3-lane motorway any time soon to address this. So, a new motorway junction would do little to alleviate traffic congestion and the new development will only exacerbate existing problems.

In the interests of transparency, I would also like to know if you or your officials have had any conversations or communications with the developers? This is important as local people must know if you will be making a balanced decision with equal access to both sides of the argument.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent

I write a regular newsletter to keep people up-to-date with what I'm doing for Faversham and Mid Kent. If you're interested in my campaigns on local and national issues, please sign up at: <https://www.helenwhately.org.uk/newsletters>