

From: Ian Palmer [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 September 2023 12:34
To: Palmer, Leanne
Subject: Appeal Reference APP/U3100/V/23/3326625 Didcot HIF1 Road

Dear Ms Palmer

I write to strongly oppose the above application on behalf of myself and my relatives who live in Appleford, a village which will be uncomfortably close to the proposed road.

My relatives and I are very concerned about the impact this road will have on their lives especially due to the levels of noise and pollution. The environmental report in April 2023 confirmed the road **will impose severe, permanent, and unmitigated noise damage to Appleford homes** but this report did not consider existing noise levels from the tip and railway sidings and ignores the classification by DEFRA.

The Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) has recognised that the road will have significant adverse consequences for residents and by granting permission for this road the Council will knowingly create permanent noise damage. This proposed road will also cause unacceptable levels of pollution detrimental to the health of residents of the village and the environment. Yet no monitoring or health impact report has taken place.

Part of Appleford village has already been designated by DEFRA as a noise important area. DEFRA confirms that the population of the location are **likely to be at the greatest risk of experiencing a significant adverse impact to health and quality of life because of their exposure to noise**. This road and its elevation near the village will add to the detrimental impact already being felt as classified by DEFRA.

The Council has not engaged with our Parish Council and others who put forward an alternative to mitigate some of our concerns therefore our valid concerns have been ignored.

The Council was in the news launching a £200,000 plan to cut air pollution which the Council is quoted as considering it to be the **"biggest environmental risk to public health"**. The Council announced its strategy to lower emissions of air pollution to protect those most vulnerable alongside reducing vehicle usage and establish homes and schools away from major roads. Yet this policy is not being implemented in Appleford, so it appears it is acceptable to subject the residents of this village to the pollution that this road scheme will cause.

In 2019 the Council and the District Councils (SODC & VOWH) declared a climate emergency acknowledging the need to act on the causes and impacts of climate change and have declared their commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. This proposed road does not align with the policies adopted by the Council and the District Councils on climate change or development to reduce car journeys.

The Council's LTCP Part 36 D & E requires transport developments to apply decide and provided undermining the argument that this road is needed to unlock the new houses and economic development in the area. Therefore, the District Council's should adhere to this policy from the transport authority.

The Council's LTCP policy does state that there may be situations where a new road should be built however this is after all other options have been considered and explored. The only alternatives to this road which have been considered are which route out of three it should take and no road. Therefore, alternatives such as rail, buses and active travel have not been explored.

The planned road will not solve any congestion problems, it is well known and acknowledged by the Council in its LTCP that new roads lead to induced demand leading to more cars on the road and the road reaching capacity. Furthermore, the Council acknowledges that new roads are not a sustainable long-term solution for Oxfordshire.

The traffic modelling is outdated pre-Brexit and COVID it also does not allow or consider induced demand and is therefore invalid.

No consideration has been given to the effect of this road on areas such as Abingdon and where the new road ends on the B4015 Oxford Road. This road has been described as a **road to nowhere** ending on narrow country roads totally unsuitable for the type of commercial vehicle which will be encouraged to leave the A34 and use this road.

When this new road hits capacity with tailbacks at the B4015 traffic will inevitably revert back to using surrounding villages such as Appleford, Sutton Courtenay, Culham and Clifton Hampden.

As taxpayers we are concerned at how will the Council meet its part of the cost of this road? Our concern is that this will result in a higher element going to the Council from our council tax to fund the cost. We are struggling with high energy bills, high food bills, increases in mortgage rates and increases in insurance. Increased taxes to fund a road which will not solve congestion and is not needed to unlock development is not acceptable anytime, least of all during a cost-of-living crisis.

Policies have been agreed by the Council and the District Council's on how development should take place to reduce car journeys, to take action on climate change and to reduce pollution. This planned road is not in accordance with these policies and is also not in accordance with the Paris Agreement or the recommendations of the UK Government Climate Change Committee progress report to Parliament.

In addition, we are very concerned at the actions taken by the Council since the application was rejected on 18 July 2023 and called in by the Secretary of State. Following the call in the Council met on 27 September 2023 with a view to changing their decision on this application. We understand that the Council is both the planning authority and the application but once the decision was made by the planning committee to reject the applicant this should be the Council's stance as planning authority. This matter was taken out of their hands, so it appears very underhand and undemocratic for them to be trying to change their decision.

This application was rejected for very valid reasons. It is not the right solution and I therefore ask the Secretary of State to reject this application as it is not fit for purpose, is full of discrepancies and fails proper scrutiny. Finally, it will put the lives of the residents of Appleford at harm from pollution to quote the Council the **biggest environmental risk to public health** and to quote DEFRA it will add to the already **significant adverse impact to health and quality of life because of their exposure to noise**.

Yours sincerely

Mr I Palmer