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DEVELOPMENT

Reasons to stop Magna Park plan

While admitting that Lutterworth is geographically in the “Golden triangle” for logistics companies and therefore there are many reasons for wanting to be located here, and a lot of money behind the projects, I feel that the residents of South Leicestershire and North Warwickshire need to be considered over and above the desire of the logistics and development companies and are worth a far greater financial consideration.

Allow me to list a few of my concerns over this plan. Magna Park was originally built on a brown field site, the old Bitteswell aerodrome. The expansion plans are on green field sites. While we are the most densely populated country in Europe, we are using our finite resources, including green field sites.

The way we use up space in this country is very wasteful. We use land for single level car parks, more land for factories, houses or warehouse and yet more land for solar farms.

I believe this wasteful usage is immoral and we have seen many countries using their land much more effectively.

Many countries build underground car parks under office, houses and flats. We concrete over even more green field sites. I've been into some factories that are built on top of each other; they look like blocks of flats from the outside, but have underground parking garages and then factories on top of factories, with reinforced floors to take industrial machinery.

Some people install wind turbines or solar panels on the roofs of their factories, flat roofs and barns, like Lutterworth Town Council. Supermarkets with parking garages under them – such as Tesco at the Swan's Centre, Loughborough – or in some cases above them.

Surely the smart answer is to try and use each inch of green field to its maximum usage. Yes, it costs more, especially underground. But that is only money.

The companies proposing these plans will make more money from them. The land is finite. We can only use it once – then it's gone.

Lutterworth enjoys one of the country's lowest unemployment rates. This is evident from the number of people looking to rent rooms and flats in the area. Some companies have trouble recruiting staff locally.

It has been a recognised fact, for some years, that the average of Lutterworth employees at Magna Park is less than 10 per cent and even IDI Gazeley claim a figure of just 18 per cent for the whole Harborough District Council area.

This means there is little benefit to Lutterworth residents in expanding Magna Park. At least 90 per cent of the increase of employees will be travelling some distance to and from Magna Park.

This, it must be agreed, will further exacerbate the traffic condition in Lutterworth and surrounding Lutterworth for a 10, 20 or possibly 30-mile radius. The problems with traffic in and around Lutterworth are legend.

The southern bypass has worked well for the traffic from the M1 junction 20 to Magna Park. However we are now seeing an increasing traffic issues at the roundabout to the south of the town.

These also manifest themselves along the A426 to the M6 roundabout, and either side of the A5 roundabout at Magna Park, Lutterworth.

At the time Magna Park was originally considered a Western Relief Road was considered and never completed due to financial constraints.

Since the relief road was never completed and the two parts that exist are have limitations. An Eastern Relief Road was con-

sidered, proposed by the then Councillor Martin Willey, however this was not taken up, again due to financial constraints. A request for a 7.5 tonnes weight limit through the town was denied.

At the time of considering the planning applications for the housing estates on either side of the Leicester Road (A426) the town council asked for a roundabout at the Bill Crane Way T junction, originally a part of the Western Relief road, to reduce traffic speeds and as a proactive safety measure.

Further, it is a common occurrence for cars to “shoot” the red lights on the A426, in the centre of town. It would seem appropriate that any consideration to the expansion of Magna Park should be prefaced by an open-minded review of the traffic, in the town and for at least a 10 mile radius of the A5/ Magna Park roundabout.

About eight years ago, the then councillor Ken Seymour, submitted a detailed report to Lutterworth town council about the level of air pollution in Lutterworth.

Air pollution in Lutterworth was then higher than European rules allow.

Nothing has been done to improve the situation. Expanding Magna Park or any other such industrial expansion in the area must exacerbate this.

Without proper consideration such an expansion will also increase the noise, if only from the traffic aspect.

Not only the volume, but the likelihood of an increasing number of cars being fitted with extra loud exhausts. Similarly, depending on where the lorries park-up overnight, these might cause extra disturbance, in particular those lorries with refrigeration units.

Concreting over such vast areas will prevent the natural drainage of rain water.

Where will all this water go? What consequences will there be to the recipient areas of the extra run off?

There have been numerous complaints about light pollution in the area, especially about Magna Park.

Lutterworth Town Council and I have made a number of approaches to IDI Gazeley about the complaints and have never found them willing to discuss the issue. Indeed in April 2008 I wrote a report on light pollution, which considered many aspects of light pollution, including aspects of Magna Park. The whole street scene and vista for miles and mile around will be changed by this development.

Apart from the phenomenal increase in the number of “sheds” one of them will be 21 metres (approaching 70ft) taller than any existing “shed”.

The idea of painting the largest shed of all, blue, so it merges with the sky has two fundamental problems.

The shade of the sky changes. A number of the sheds are already painted in blue – however different shades of blue.

In conclusion, this isn't Nimbysism, these are the real issues affecting the people in the area.

At the recent Lutterworth Town Council meeting two pertinent comments were made: the inevitability of it, as there was so much money behind the plans, and none of those people involved will have to live with the result.

As said in my opening paragraph, Lutterworth sits in a “Golden Triangle” for logistics companies.

Indeed the desirable area expands up the A5 almost to J14 of the M6. And south to Milton Keynes as far as even Luton. Perhaps the ideal situation would be to make a holistic review of the whole area taking into consideration all links, such as road, rail, air and possibly sea, as so much is imported. Such a holistic review might best encompass all of the above topics for each of the settlements within the whole area.

Bill Piper
Lutterworth

SHOOTING

Let's have some peace and quiet

For 20 years I lived in rural South West Wales and as you can imagine, very quiet and peaceful.

I've returned to Leicestershire where I was born and bred and, on my travels wherever I go with my dog in the countryside, is the bombarding sound of the firing of guns.

Yes, I do know its pheasant shooting season but, are there not enough people firing off guns for pointless reasons in the world.

Let's have some peace in our countryside.

RPELLIS
By email

ANIMALS

Angry and sad to see furs on sale

It saddens and angers me that real fur is for sale in many shops.

Most fur on sale is produced on a so-called fur farm.

On a typical fur farm, thousands of wild animals are forced to spend their entire lives crammed into wire mesh cages. Animals used include foxes, mink, raccoons, chinchillas and rabbits.

After a lifetime of torture and misery, death is yet another terrible ordeal for the animals.

In order to avoid damaging the fur, the animals are killed by methods such as gassing, strangulation and electrocution.

Many of the animals are not killed outright, and have their skins ripped from their bodies while they are still alive and conscious.

Because of the suffering, fur farming is illegal in the UK, but our government still allows imports from other countries which keep the fur industry in business.

How wrong and hypocritical is that?

Fur has become a “fashion statement”, but there is no need

for us to wear real fur. Doyou really want the suffering and blood of an innocent animal on the bobble of your hat, waistcoat, scarf, keyring, bag charm?

Please everyone avoid wearing fur and take a stand for the animals who cannot speak for themselves.

And a plea to the owners of the fashionable boutiques involved in this – please have compassion and stop the sales of real fur. Don't let the cold penetrate your heart, refuse to wear fur or fur trim.

Jean Bird
Kibworth

TRANSPORT

Elderly need better shelters

Due to the amount of elderly folk relying on the X3 bus from southern estate, to shop in Market Harborough, it is disgusting that many of them stand in the wind and rain at the Essex Gardens stop.

Shelters have been erected in places that are very really used. I think it is time that the local council pulled themselves and get a shelter erected irrespective of any stupid comments made by people living close to the stop, as for jobs using it for a drinking, there are none in this area as I know of.

Keith Toombs-Swannack
By email

THANK YOU

Grateful to those who helped mum

My mother fell on Welland Park Road last week. Some kind people stopped to help her.

They were so very thoughtful and brought her home. Our family are so grateful to them for what they did and it would be very helpful if you could possibly print this email in your newspaper.

Fortunately, she has not suffered any injury from her fall.

Mrs M Griffin
By email

Harborough Mail

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