

## Basingstoke Transition - Working for a better Basingstoke



Cllr Miller  
Chair Development Control Committee  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Basingstoke

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
info@basingstoketransition.org

Dear Cllr Miller

This Tuesday (24<sup>th</sup> March) the Development Control Committee is being asked to make a key decision on the progress of the Manydown development. Basingstoke Transition Network (BTN) believes that the current proposals are seriously flawed.

Basingstoke already has an air pollution issue. Our borough also emits 1,000,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. Some 40% of these emissions come from the way we build and heat our homes, offices and factories. This is a direct and major cause of climate change.

The decisions your committee will make on Manydown will have a direct influence on the borough's carbon emissions for the next 75-100 years. Thus it will also immediately contribute to climate change.

No doubt you will be fully aware of the Council's Declaration on the Climate Emergency. This was passed unanimously at full Council on July 18<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Part three of the motion was explicit;

*"The Cabinet is to ensure that reducing carbon emissions is embedded in all relevant Council decision making"*

The Cabinet, in its meeting of September 10<sup>th</sup> 2019, fully endorsed the motion and declared a climate emergency. The Cabinet also made the following comments (see meeting minutes 26/19):

*"Cabinet supported the climate emergency declaration and made a number of comments during the discussion which included:*

- It was important to recognise the influence and role the council can play in not only those areas the council has responsibility for but to work with partners within the borough to make a difference.*

- *Environmentally-friendly living should be at the forefront of new homes built on Manydown. New homes should be greener and more environmentally-friendly and should use less resources such as water and electricity and generate fewer carbon emissions. The Manydown Standard should ensure the new Manydown development will be an example to developers of one of the greenest, energy efficient, low carbon communities in the borough.*
- *The council needs to work with house builders, housing associations and developers in the borough to build sustainable homes fit for the future with adequate insulation, sustainable energy sources and electric charging points.”*

In addition you may also be aware of the High Court’s recent decision to rule the government’s Airports National Policy Statement: a new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the south-east of England (ANPS), as unlawful in key parts. The ANPS is informally known as the Heathrow third runway.

The relevant part of the judgement <sup>1</sup> was that the ANPS was not produced as the law requires because:

*“It [The ANPS] must ... include an explanation of how the policy set out in the statement takes account of Government policy relating to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.”*

The Court also found the ANPS was unlawful by reason of a *“failure to take into account the Government’s commitment to the provisions of the Paris Agreement on climate change.”* You may be aware that the Paris Agreement is the international treaty that binds the UK to reducing its carbon emissions to a figure that limits temperature increase to 1.5°C.

Now of course, the High Court’s ANPS decision is not directly relevant to planning decisions in Basingstoke. However, the combination of the agreed policy by both Council and Cabinet to declare a climate emergency and to embed the reduction of carbon emissions into all decision making, in combination with the High Court’s view that policy decisions should be fully considered in planning decisions, makes it clear that the impact of the Manydown development on climate change MUST be considered fully.

We have read the papers submitted to the Development Committee. It mentions climate change on just 5 occasions. One of these occasions is due to public comments, and another three occasions are due to the need to consider how the impact of climate change on flooding should be mitigated.

There is no discussion in the papers on the impact Manydown will have on climate change or on the borough’s emissions of greenhouse gases.

We submit that this is hardly “embedding” carbon emissions in relevant Council decisions. The papers completely ignore the three bullet-pointed comments made by Cabinet.

Given the above, do you, as Chair of the Development Control Committee, feel comfortable that the committee is being fully-informed on its legal and moral duty to take account of the impact of its decisions on climate change?

The whole Manydown development has been mired in legal disputes and judicial reviews. It would be a shame if a whole new round of disputes were begun because due regard is not being taken to

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<sup>1</sup> A summary is here <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Heathrow-summary-of-judgments-26-February-2020-online-version.pdf> )

protect the climate, and particularly so on a project the size of and with the impact of the Manydown development.

Furthermore, given the delays to date, it cannot reasonably be argued that a further delay to consider the above matters would be out of order. Given the prevailing health challenges facing both the borough and nation currently, it is most unlikely that a modest delay to consider the above factors will have a practical impact on the undoubtedly urgent need to commence construction.

Can you confirm, or otherwise, that you are content that due regard has been, and will be, given to the impact of Manydown on climate change in your committee's decision on Tuesday?

Yours sincerely,

Martin Heath

On behalf of Basingstoke Transition Network

Cc Cllrs Ruffell, James, McCormick and Tilbury