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Leader of Havant Borough Council

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TO: Councillor Michael Wilson  
Leader of Havant Borough Council

Cc: See separate distribution list

FROM: The Non-Aligned members of the  
Hayling Island Infrastructure Advisory Group

DATE: 8 April 2020

SUBJECT: HAYLING ISLAND TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM

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Dear Michael

We, as non-aligned members of the Hayling Island Infrastructure Advisory Group (HIIAG), wish to complain in the strongest possible terms about the actions of Cllr Pike on the matters revolving around the Hayling Island Transport Assessment Addendum (HITAA) Call-In and approval process.

On 6 February 2020, the HIIAG were informed by Cllr Pike that discussions on the HITAA were complete and would not be addressed in any future meetings.

In early-March, six councillors exercised a Call-In on the HITAA. This very rare and brave action reflected their concerns on the strategy and conclusions drawn.

As a result, a review of the HITAA took place on 10 March 2020 by the Operations & Place Shaping Scrutiny Board, where the Call-In was considered justified, and it was concluded that more work was required on funding, flood risk, mitigation, the Billy Trail and the A3023/Bridge.

A scant five days later, Cllr Pike responded with a Technical Note and a separate note to the Scrutiny Board Chair, Cllr Lloyd, sweeping aside the input from local experts, the Call-In councillors, and the decision from the Scrutiny Board, deeming them as “not necessary” and a “disproportionate hinderance.” Stating here that he, Cllr Pike, is the arbiter of proportionality in this matter is an action of stunning self-appointed authority.

The Technical Note, which is highly selective in its content, does not faithfully reflect the issues raised. It stated to Cllr Lloyd that there was no reason to change the HITAA, and therefore it had been signed and forwarded to the Cabinet for the meeting on 25 March to support potential approval of the Local Plan.

These two notes were not considered acceptable by the Scrutiny Board or the residents’ representatives.

But as the decision made by Cllr Pike is the final one, the matter cannot be called-in again, and the Scrutiny Board’s reply to the Technical Note does not therefore form part of the formal decision-making process, which is required to be recorded and published. As a

consequence, the continuing dissatisfaction of the Scrutiny Board and the Call-In councillors will never be made public.

There was no reason for this pre-emptive action by Cllr Pike other than to drive the HITAA through while we were all preoccupied with concern for our friends and families during Covid-19. In addition, an urgent DMC meeting on 26 March was scheduled to determine the first development on Hayling Island at land North of Sinah Lane.

Thankfully, both the Cabinet meeting and DMC meeting were cancelled.

We conclude the actions taken were with full knowledge of the consequences, and as such may represent political chicanery of the highest order, and should be investigated. Clearly HBC's commitment to openness and transparency is slipping away.

It is now essential to make clear our position as representatives of the local Island community on HIIAG.

The Local Plan allocations for Hayling Island include approx. 1,300 new homes. The stated objective of HBC is to leave no stone unturned and develop any site available. The HIIAG has been told that medium-sized windfall opportunities (historically the largest sector by far) are not included in the Local Plan, and moreover, that we are not to view the 1,300 as any kind of ceiling or limit – all additional sites will be considered moving forward, so it is not sound to reference a limited growth and timeframe to artificially minimise the impact. As the HBC's stated objective demonstrates that the Local Plan is a continuum, not a limited project, the HBC are obligated to provide a parallel sustainable infrastructure for the (NPPF-recommended) lifecycle of the development. The impact of the Local Plan does not end in 2036 – it is when the impact of the Local Plan begins !

The only way to understand the road infrastructure impact of the Local Plan is to evaluate the A3023 trunk, which is a limited and finite resource with no economic corrective actions available to expand its capability. This road is the lifeblood of the Island and must be managed to ensure a sustainable future for the community. Claiming that this over-riding constraint of the capacity of the A3023 is not the concern of the Local Plan sets a dangerous and potentially disastrous precedent as explained above.

The only way to evaluate the Local Plan's impact over time is to undertake a detailed flow/capacity analysis of the A3023.

This should be based on a range of traffic loading from Worst to Best Case through time. This is essential because as the loading increases beyond the capacity – as we believe it will – this bottleneck will seriously impact Business, Tourism, Leisure Activities and Emergency Services. Investigation should be focused on the A3023 Bridge choke point to alleviate congestion. The best and most economic way would be to limit extra traffic to and from the Island by controlling development.

The parameters which drive the traffic models, including growth, have not been published outside the project team – although requested by HIIAG many times – and have not received external review. This is a key requirement as it is the quality of the input parameters which define the quality of the output – not the process undertaken.

HBC stated that the members of the HIIAG would have sight of all model parameters, an audit trail of changes, and education to understand the modelling process. None of these commitments made by HBC have been honoured.

We view the review of the consultants, CampbellReith, to be of limited value as it only studied the work done, not what should have been done, e.g. Hayling Island strategic requirements. This is like asking your best friend to mark your exam papers.

The Save Our Island Group's detailed report on HITAA presented to the HIIAG did not receive a response from HBC, and their offer to assist in this process with their internationally-recognised road design expert has not been taken up.

We also note that Cllr Pike has now changed his infrastructure focus to intimate that the prime objective is to improve the Island's road junctions, and the developments will be needed to fund them. This is a misrepresentation of the facts. The HBC plan is to build 1,300 new homes plus an infinite number of windfall applications. The HITAA is to support this programme ... not the other way round.

Flood risk to the Island is a real and present danger, and only now is the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership starting on a Hayling Island Coastal strategy. This will run through 2021, and on completion we will for the first time understand the risks, the options and the funding restrictions. We know that 80% of our coast will not meet the 8:1 funding ratio so it is unlikely that Government monies will be forthcoming. Again, the Government require this Coastal Strategy to maintain a sustainable infrastructure for the lifecycle of the plan – 60-100 years.

The flood risk issue is not addressed in the Local Plan or the HITAA, and recent experience at West Beach demonstrated that erosion is impacting much faster than anticipated. Logic would dictate that all development in this environment be informed by the result of the Coastal Strategy.

Cllr Pike, in a note to a HIIAG member, has told us that he is taking full account of local circumstances – we adamantly disagree. In the same note, he remains disappointed that members of HIIAG have spent time trying to undermine the work of HBC's professional Officers and Consultants rather than trying to improve our proposals. Cllr Pike and his team do not hold a monopoly on experience, knowledge or professionalism. In our democracy this process should never be seen as threat to authority, but proof that the public are actively engaging in the consultation, as is required by the NPPF.

The members of HIIAG have taken this as a personal insult, which we are sure was the intention. For three years, HIIAG have worked only to improve the Local Plan in the face of a stream of barriers presented to it, requiring tenacious endeavours to get relevant opinions recognised.

We conclude that the HITAA in its current form remains unsound and does not provide for the long-term sustainability of the Island's community.

If the Hayling Island elements of the Local Plan move forward unchanged, Cllr Pike will have placed HBC in an unnecessary head-on confrontation with the Island residents which will run and run.

We do not claim to understand the processes and constraints which govern the HBC organisation, but in the wide world of industry and commerce, any decision considered inappropriate can and will be reversed in short order. We would ask you as Council Leader to use whatever mechanisms are open to you to stop this runaway train from creating a potential disaster.

We ask you to ensure this considered document is made available to the Inspector as this is the only avenue for communication left open to us, and we must now trust our future to the integrity of the independent review process.

Kind regards,

David Parham  
Richard Coates  
Robin Davison  
Wilf Forrow  
Ann Griffiths  
Rosie Law  
Mike Owens  
Jim Palmer  
David Pattenden  
John Perry  
Ray Rowsell  
Peter Sebley  
Anne Skennerton  
Robert Woodward