

Mr John Exley

Interested Party ID 20010773, Northampton Gateway.

Open Floor Hearing 14th March 2019

The Carbon Cost

The issue of air pollution has been well aired and continues to be debated, with the Applicant putting forward some very formulaic mitigation measures in an attempt to convince us that the health of those in the area will not be detrimentally affected. However, beyond a reference to sustainability in document 5.2 which merely highlights a number of low carbon technology options and then mostly dismisses them as not feasible, I have not been able to find anywhere in the Applicant's 695 documents a clear assessment of the embodied or operational carbon impacts associated with the construction or operation of their development. Whilst the Applicant seems happy to make claims that local health will not be affected because the vehicle emissions might well blow somewhere else; this ignores by far the most important consideration: that these emissions will never disappear. They will add to the ever increasing carbon content in the atmosphere which is, without question, the single biggest threat the world faces today. It is this, even more than localised pollution, that we believe has not been given due consideration.

The rather inconvenient truth is that we now have less than a generation to prevent some of the more extreme catastrophic scientific projections coming to pass. It is already too late to halt many of them. Reduced human activity is the only effective solution and the building of sheds to import more consumer goods, the very production of which is destroying the planet is not in any way sustainable, even in the short 30 year period that is claimed to be Northampton Gateway's lifespan. Furthermore, whilst our aspirations in the UK might be the gradual transition to a more energy efficient landscape, such admirable aspirations are not shared by our coal-burning trading partners from whom we import the majority of our consumer goods and food. With the predicted increases in temperature will also come a severe reduction in crop yields and a significant reduction in viable agricultural land at a time when population continues to multiply exponentially. With this as a backdrop the loss of productive agricultural land becomes even harder to justify and anything but "sustainable" in any chosen timescale.

Any minimal savings from the arrival of a couple of trains, the provision of a few electric car plug in points and the unlikely success of a car sharing scheme are a relative irrelevance in the grand scale of things. There are no carbon savings associated with developments such as these, only increased emissions.

Whilst, unfortunately, I have little faith that the bigger picture will be taken into consideration when reviewing individual applications such as this, I feel strongly that the point needs to be made. Until we fix the disjoint between very high level (and some might argue, hollow) Government climate commitments, and the sanctioning of activities that can only ever add to our carbon footprint, we will never make a meaningful difference. For example, how can a Government that are on course to miss their carbon targets then consider consenting a third runway at Heathrow which will throw

220,000 more flights into the most vulnerable parts of the atmosphere and by 2050 be responsible for 55% of the UK's aviation emissions.

We cannot detach our pursuit of economic growth and increased consumerism from the environmental impacts they are having on the planet; the two are not mutually exclusive: one will necessarily have to be forsaken in the pursuit of the other.

It may salve our collective consciences to convince ourselves that the decisions taken in examinations such as this are detached from the issue of climate change but the stark reality is that they are not. Unless our Government and collective global nations stop paying lip service to the realities of climate change we will continue on the current trajectory; a trajectory that most find too difficult to contemplate so instead chose to stick their collective heads in the sand.

With overwhelming scientific evidence in the public arena it is no longer morally or ethically permissible to dismiss climate change predictions as environmental alarmist rhetoric. Our current climate crisis has largely been generated by the actions of a single generation with Global emissions in 2018 hitting an all-time high of 37 billion tonnes with almost all countries contributing to the rise. The current Paris agreement pledges from nations will only limit global warming to 3C, while even a rise of 1.5C will be disastrous for many people, according to the world's scientists. The IPCC predicts a rise of 4 degrees by 2100 if we continue on our current path which, on current evidence, we will continue to do. Of the 195 signatories to the Paris climate accord only seven are considered to be even in range of their targets.

In 30 years since Al Gore published his first Inconvenient Truth we have emitted more than half the carbon that has ever been emitted by burning fossil fuels. So, rather soberingly, we have now knowingly done as much damage to the planet as we ever did in ignorance. In 2016 what was considered by Scientists to be the critical threshold of 400 parts carbon per million was reached and two years later this had climbed further to 411. We now have more carbon in the atmosphere than at any time in the last 800,000 years and it is rising at a faster rate than ever before.

So if this examination is going to include assessment of the climatic impacts could we at least require the Applicant to provide us with a genuine and unobscured assessment of the carbon emissions over its lifetime and an explanation of how such vastly increased human activity could ever contribute to global emission reduction targets. If, like the majority of the nations on our planet, we are going to pay the issue nothing more than lip service then I suggest the best course of action would be to remove it as a topic from the examination and hope to high heaven that Donald Trump is right.

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Additional Material for NG TR050006

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As an Engineer I have a fascination with numbers and how they often do not represent the true value of scale.

JUST HOW **MASSIVE** IS 5 MILLION SQUARE FEET of
Northampton Gateway

40 x The Clipper warehouse at M1 J15.

Or: The UK Smart motorway minimum width is 95 feet wide,
that is, 8 x lanes and 1 x central reservation.

So how far must one drive to cover 5 million square feet ?

1 mile is 5280 feet.

95 feet wide x 5280 ft x 10 = 5,016,000 sq feet

You need to drive for **10 miles** to cover the same square footage as 5,000,000 square feet , this is the area destroyed by the proposed warehouses without taking into account traffic disruption, train connectivity and the strategic argument.

The M1 total width for 10 miles.... That covers it !

This is just the building area, NOT the whole site !