

Linda Arthur

The Village Alliance

Good morning sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am Linda Arthur from the Village Alliance, a community group formed 15 years ago representing residents of Mersham, with the aim of protecting our village from encroaching development.

With this in mind we need a commitment from the Department of Transport for the long term protection of the land to the East of Highfield Lane up to Blind Lane to be preserved as a Green buffer between Mersham and the IBF. This land has been designated as a buffer under the current Ashford Borough Local Plan to 2030 Policy SP7 to protect the integrity of the village of Mersham from encroachment. We also need assurance that the land will be managed in the future to prevent the spread of noxious weeds onto adjoining land. We live [REDACTED] and have experienced the widespread contamination from thistles and ragwort. More recently, the land has been maintained to a more satisfactory level, which is very encouraging and welcome. However, there are still areas of hedgerows, particularly adjacent to Kingsford Street, which have been damaged by original earthworks to bury electricity cables on the perimeter boundary and not been reinstated. We would request that hedges are replaced, as they help protect the village from the light pollution from the IBF. In addition, there are numerous trees which formed part of the original planting, but have since died. These need replacing and maintaining.

We are still experiencing errant HGV's travelling into Mersham village and onto Kingsford Street to access the IBF. This presents a very dangerous situation along a narrow lane, with no pavement and numerous dog walkers, children in prams, joggers and cyclists using the road. We were promised a permanent sign at the entrance to Kingsford Street, but this has not materialised and the signs age of the A20 is obviously not working..

The light pollution from 12 metre high lights is very significant and intrusive and we have lost the night sky. Any improvements/lowering of the lights would vastly help restore the dark sky to residents and wildlife.

There are multiple reports from local residents of a persistent, low-frequency hum being generated by the site. This has led to an investigation by Environmental Protection. Early indications for this, taken by the Council's own monitoring, suggest that the Inland Border Facility is producing low-frequency noise at levels that exceed the Salford Criterion. This is particularly concerning given that the criterion itself was commissioned by DEFRA, the very department responsible for the operation of the site.

The evidence gathered so far points strongly towards the IBF generating a continuous low-frequency emission that is travelling at least 600 metres and causing residential disturbance. It is essential that the Inspectorate consider these emerging findings, as they indicate a likely breach of recognised environmental standards. Thank you.