

# LAUNCH OF **SAVE TOWCESTER NOW** CAMPAIGN



Image to scale according to DHL plans

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## Local campaign to fight proposed giant warehouse developments around historic town goes live and asks for your help

Residents of the historic market town of Towcester and surrounding areas have launched the **Save Towcester Now** campaign ([www.savetowcesternow.org](http://www.savetowcesternow.org)) to fight against the building of four major industrial and warehouse developments around or near the town. The campaign is arguing that the proposals will have a severe and irreversible impact on an already congested local road network as well as create increased air and noise pollution, inflicting huge damage to the environment and quality of life.

The first of the developments, a 76 acre, 80ft high DHL warehouse site next to The Bell Plantation on the A5 opposite Jack's Café, is due to go before West Northants Council Planning in February 2022. Others following close behind will be sited between the A43/A5 roundabout and Tiffield (85 acres and up to 78ft high), between the A43/A5 roundabout and the Towcester Rugby Club (11 acres and up to 11 metres high) and above the A43/Whittlebury junction (31 acres, up to 49 ft high plus land elevation).

Together, all four developments will total four million square feet of mainly warehouses, many of them up to 40% higher than industry average. **Save Towcester Now** calculate that this could generate up to 10,000 extra traffic movements each day in and around an already overcrowded Towcester road network.

**'These warehouses belong by the motorways, not on the edge of a historic town,'** says Louise Croft, co-founder of **Save Towcester Now**. 'The traffic chaos, 24-hour air, noise & light pollution in over four million square feet of industrial development up to 82ft (25 metres) in height will impact on our local environment, health, quality of life & destroy the character of Towcester forever.'

**Save Towcester Now** also point out that the developments are in direct contradiction to the South Northants Local Plan, approved by South Northants Council in July 2020. The Plan clearly stated that a key objective of any development would be "To conserve the tranquillity of the natural and built environment in South Northamptonshire through high quality design that is respectful to heritage assets and their settings, biodiversity and the environmental character of the locality and the surrounding landscapes."

**Save Towcester Now** are calling for the South Northants Local Plan to be reviewed and those promises kept by the newly formed West Northants Council and are urging local people to join their campaign via their website [www.savetowcesternow.org](http://www.savetowcesternow.org) where they can learn more about these proposed developments and how to fight them.

'Had these four developments been submitted for planning as one, then it would have almost certainly triggered a review at national government level with widely publicised consultations,' explains Isla Whitcroft, campaign manager of **Save Towcester Now**.

'Instead, possibly because of Covid, the public consultation was limited and inadequate and as result the developments have stayed 'under the radar'. It is extraordinary how many people in Towcester have simply no idea that these warehouse developments are being planned and are horrified when they hear the facts.

'However, collectively we can make a difference. There are some very simple but effective steps which every resident of South Northants can take to ensure that these developments do not go ahead in their current form.

'Firstly, we would urge everyone to visit our website [www.savetowcesternow.org](http://www.savetowcesternow.org) to learn the facts about exactly what is happening. Then once you are fully informed, and if you wish to, please sign our petition and, crucially, follow our simple guide to informing West Northants Council of your objections.'

The planned developments collectively cite 2,800 jobs for Towcester and the surrounding area. However, **Save Towcester Now** has unearthed figures that show there are only approximately 160 people currently on the Job Seekers Register in the town.

'We are certainly not arguing against job creation, but these warehouse jobs are mainly low skilled and low paid shift work with little job security or training prospects,' says Louise. 'We know that other warehouses in Daventry and at Grange Park cannot fill their vacancies and are bussing in agency workers from as far afield as Nottingham. This will undoubtedly be the case here in Towcester, adding to the traffic congestion and putting nothing back into the local economy.'

There is also opposition to the developments at a political level. Conservative MP for South Northamptonshire, Dame Andrea Leadsom says: 'Hundreds of constituents have written to me with their grave concerns about the extent of development in our area, particularly of industrial units and logistics warehousing. Towcester is a historic town, full of character and its fantastic community spirit must be protected.'

Whilst West Northants Councillor for Towcester and Roade, Ms Maggie Clubleby, is firmly supportive of the **Save Towcester Now** campaign: 'No one is against proportionate and sensible development commensurate with the needs and demographic of Towcester and South Northants,' she says. 'However, these proposed giant developments are totally inappropriate for our beautiful town and surrounding areas. The resultant traffic congestion and environmental impact will be enormous and highly detrimental to the quality of life in our beautiful town. I totally oppose them.'

At a local level, Towcester Town Council recently opposed the proposal and several other parish councils including Whittlebury, Tiffield, Roade, Litchborough and Pattishall have written to West Northants Planning to voice their concerns.

‘Does anyone actually think that these developments are a good idea for Towcester?’ asks Louise. ‘Possibly only the developers and the planners. But, funnily enough, they don’t actually live here and won’t be affected by the fall out.

‘We urge people to support our campaign and as soon as possible. It may seem as if corporate giants will always get their way but that’s not true. Collectively we can make a big difference.’

Interviews: Louise Croft (campaign co-founder) and Adam Wood (member) are both available.

All press enquiries to:  
Graeme Whitcroft  
Email: [GraemeWhitcroft@Healthypr.co.uk](mailto:GraemeWhitcroft@Healthypr.co.uk)  
[GraemeWhitcroft@gmail.com](mailto:GraemeWhitcroft@gmail.com)  
Mob: 07793980500