



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

APHA Local Engagement Team  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: BS27415

23 June 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Re: APHA Master Outline Plan consultation response**

I write in response to the APHA Master Outline Plan consultation seeking local views on the planned redevelopment of the APHA site in New Haw.

Following Government commitments to large scale investment in the Animal and Plant Health Agency, headquartered in New Haw, I welcome the progress made and the publication of plans to deliver these improvements. I am also grateful for the local engagement that has accompanied this consultation, which has included meetings with local representatives as well as three community events and direct mailouts to local residents.

The APHA plays a vital role in UK trade, science and health. Its work underpins all trade in plant and animal products, while its research capacity ensures effective monitoring of and response to zoonotic disease – diseases that can pass from animal to humans. Their work has included responding to outbreaks of avian flu, BSE and Bovine TB, as well as investigating reports of covid spreading from humans to animals during the pandemic. This vital work needs state of the art facilities, and I am delighted this investment is now being made.

It has been my pleasure to recently visit the site on two occasions. While the work of the APHA is impressive, the site itself is clearly in need of investment and improvements. This is a great opportunity to ensure our science capabilities are not only maintained, but expanded, so we are prepared to meet future challenges that may arise. It will also improve conditions for staff currently working on the site and open the potential to invite representatives from the international scientific community to learn and collaborate with leading UK scientists.

Any development should also benefit the local community. In addition to world renowned science, the New Haw site also supports the local economy, community, and environment. As a large local employer, work to invest in and expand facilities will improve conditions and safeguard thousands of highly skilled jobs for years to come. I am pleased the consultation also highlights a desire to offer greater training opportunities through apprenticeships and working with local schools and colleges.

I also welcome the social and environmental benefits referenced in the outline plan. The agreement for Defra land to be used for the Holme Farm Community Workshop and gardens has enabled real progress on this ambitious project. This has the potential to not only benefit local residents but also support school and health teams, while addressing the very real issues of loneliness and isolation. I am delighted Defra continue to support the project and I look forward to this continuing throughout this project and beyond.

The development plans also aim to deliver local environmental benefits, including improved flood management and increased biodiversity.

Overall the aims of this project are impressive and could deliver real benefits for both the country and community. It will, however, be important that the same level of ambition and consideration is applied to the delivery and development of the scheme should it receive planning permission. Local roads already suffer from congestion, especially at peak times, many residents live in close proximity to the site and any large-scale development will always cause some level of disruption.

Mitigating this, and ensuring clear communication and consideration of residents' needs, will be vital throughout this process. I am encouraged by the commitment to full engagement shown so far, and look forward to receiving regular updates from Defra as these plans proceed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Dr Ben Spencer MP**  
**Runnymede and Weybridge**