

Bladon Parish Council

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Response to Invitation to Comment

Bladon Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Secretary of State's decision to accept the Applicant's late response to the Request for Further Information (RFI) and the resulting decision to extend the decision deadline to 10 November 2026.

The Council is disappointed that the decision has had to be delayed again because the Applicant has again submitted information after set deadlines. There is a statutory process which has deadlines in place for a reason, and the Council is concerned that these deadlines are effectively being moved as and when the Applicant does not manage to meet them.

The Council is concerned that accepting significant information after the examination has finished gives the Applicant another opportunity to provide information which should have been provided during the examination. This gives the Applicant an advantage over other interested parties who, during this process, have responded to requests for information and provided submissions within the set deadlines.

It is clear through the additional requests for information and the considerable delay in providing the additional information that the application was not sufficiently developed when it was submitted for examination. When this became apparent, the Applicant should have reconsidered its position and should have withdrawn the application and reapplied when it was better prepared.

The Council notes that the Secretary of State decided to accept the late information because it may contain information relevant to the determination of the application. However, the Council feels that if the application does not provide sufficient evidence during the examination stage to meet the relevant legal and policy requirements, then the decision should reflect this rather than the process being extended to allow further information to be provided.

The Secretary of State has stated that "any further unsolicited submissions from the Applicant should not be made and should not be assumed to form part of the material that the Secretary of State will take into account in reaching her decision."

The Council hopes that the Secretary of State stands by this statement and does not allow for any further information to be submitted by the Applicant and maintains the current decision deadline.