

# MIDDLETON PARISH COUNCIL

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Mr Iain Smith  
Head of Planning & Environmental Services  
Corby Borough Council  
Deene House  
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Corby  
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NN17 1GD

8 November 2018

Dear Mr Smith

## **West Corby Extension, Uppingham Road, Corby**

I write in response to your letter to Middleton Parish Council regarding the outline planning application for the West Corby Extension, Uppingham Road, Corby. I apologise that this reaches you so close to the date of the Planning Committee but this is due to reasons outside our control, of which you are aware.

Firstly, we would like to comment on the fact that the paperwork relating to this application runs to nearly a thousand pages and the limitations with Corby's IT system means that many of the documents (although available on line) were only available in small chunks. This makes the content impossible to follow without printing them and does not allow for meaningful consultation. If in future members of the public are expected to read large planning applications on line we must request that investment is made to update your IT systems to give capacity to accommodate large documents in their totality. Despite promising access to hard copies of the documents since September these were only made available on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October with a response deadline of two weeks. This is very disappointing indeed for a Borough Council that prides itself on effective consultation.

Middleton Parish Council would like to preface its comments with the fact that it acknowledges the case for additional housing provision in Corby and supports the strategic principles which underpin the West Corby SUE. We support the need for any development on this site to be an integral part of Corby, with good transport, cycling, walking and public transport links to the centre of town – while maintaining the feel that Corby is an accessible town for those who need to drive. We consider that the current proposals fall very far short of such a plan and do not provide sufficient mitigation of the severe congestion that will be caused on the A6003 and the A427 by at least 612 construction vehicles a day visiting the site during construction and then at least 9,000 vehicles coming and going once the site is complete.

The proposals for mitigation of traffic congestion on the single carriageway A6003 and the roundabouts at the Fourways/BP junction, the top of Rockingham Hill and the exit from the site onto the A427 are seriously inadequate. The additional traffic relating to the development will cause gridlock to the west of Corby at peak times to the detriment of the large number of Corby residents who rely on the western road network to commute to work. In addition, it will be impossible to exit the BP station onto the A6003 due to the volume of traffic, with a high risk of accidents for those brave enough to attempt to turn right from its exit.

The volume of traffic on the A6003 will cause a very substantial barrier to the integration of the development with Corby town centre. You will no doubt be aware that a recent national report criticised Priors Hall as an example of a development that is far too car-dependent and poorly integrated with the town centre. It must be very important to Councillors that this mistake is not repeated in West Corby. We have heard arguments from the Developers that they are constrained in their proposals for the highway network by rising S106 costs of addressing issues on the A6003. In our view, these funds should be put to building a new western relief road to the west of the Development, that joins the A427 allowing the development to link effectively with Corby town.

In the event that the development proceeds as planned with the highways mitigations currently proposed, we ask that you require that the highway improvements take place before construction commences to ensure compliance with the North Northants Joint Core Strategy requirement to 'Provide infrastructure to mitigate the impact on the surrounding highway network.'

As has already been stated the Parish Council is very alarmed by the prospect of serious tailbacks at the roundabouts along the A6003. If these become congestion 'hot spots', we consider that anyone driving south on the A6003 and heading for Market Harborough, Leicester, the A6 or the A14 West will turn off at Rockingham onto the B670 travelling through Cottingham and Middleton to join the A427 at East Carlton. This will take traffic along Middleton Main Street, which has a poor capacity to handle traffic volume or large vehicles. Main Street is a narrow winding road with Cottingham Primary School at one end and a right angle bend at the other. It is single carriageway for stretches when cars are parked outside residential dwellings. For parts of Main Street

the pavement is not usable due to its width. This is not a road that was built for high volume traffic or HGVs. The passage of heavy vehicles, or increased traffic volume along Main Street as a result of congestion around the development site at Corby would cause significant problems in terms of vibration, noise and pollution and would result in the physical degradation of the old stone-built houses along its length. If this development proceeds, Middleton PC requests clear signage and traffic-slowing measures, such as chicanes, to discourage traffic using the B670 through the village as a as a cut-through from the A6003 to the A427.

Since discussion last took place on this planning application in 2017, the reality of the change to a Unitary Authority is much closer. Current 5 year development targets will presumably stay in force for 2017-2022 but once the boundaries between existing boroughs are dissolved the situation may change. The North Northants JPU report of April 2017 shows that Corby has a surplus of 521 units over its requirements of 3190. This figure of 3711 includes 400 from the proposed West Corby development to 2022 and more after that. This would indicate that Corby can show a 5 year land supply without West Corby at present, with the likelihood that planning targets will change for the period after 2022. It should be borne in mind that Deenethorpe Airfield is a proposal for 1500 houses on the edge of Corby that will make demands on the town's resources but is not currently counted in the Corby land supply targets. This means that Corby is contributing to the East Northants target without acknowledgement.

We also note that currently the development of Corby to the south is restricted by the Kettering BC boundary and the East Northants boundary to the east. We would suggest that once the unitary authority comes into being, more effective and more easily achievable land development options may emerge that will work better with existing highways infrastructure and which would avoid the spectre of congestion to the west of Corby for decades to come.

Middleton PC remains concerned that the planning application before you provides insufficient affordable housing. We understand that a development such as this should provide 20% of the housing as affordable in terms of rental, shared ownership and rent to buy. Claiming 'viability' issues, we understand that the Developer is already seeking to reduce this obligation. We are advised that land price plays a big price in the viability calculations and that there is a legal precedent that this should not be set at a level to make affordable housing 'unviable'. We ask that Corby BC insists that the provision of affordable housing for local people is a requirement of the scheme and that other costs are adjusted to ensure that this happens.

We note that in terms of public transport, the application makes reference to the provision of buses from the site to Kettering but makes no mention of the need for public transport from the development site to Market Harborough and Leicester which are popular employment destinations for Corby residents. If car travel is to be discouraged in line with the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan and Corby's Local Part 2 Plan, more thorough public transport arrangements will need to be put in place. It is worth noting that Little Stanion is notoriously poorly provided with public transport links and it is crucial not to replicate this problem in West Corby.

Also on the theme of reducing the carbon footprint of the development we notice that it is proposed that only 25% of all of the dwellings will have electric car charging points. Surely, to comply with Corby's commitment to sustainability and the North Northants Joint Core Strategy, all new dwellings should be built with electric car charging facilities.

For the reasons detailed above, Middleton Parish Council objects to this planning application and asks Corby Borough Council to consider whether, with the formation of a Unitary Authority on the horizon, it is wise to establish a conurbation with a population similar to Uppingham or Oundle, to the West of Corby without adequate highways infrastructure to support it. If the development proceeds we ask that the Council demands a further review of the Highways plans and examination of the option of re-routing the A6003 to the west of the development. The current highways proposals will lead to appalling congestion which will make the development an unattractive proposition for home buyers and Corby an unattractive destination for visitors.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Brant  
Chair – Middleton Parish Council.

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