



**TOM
PURSGLOVE**



LISTENING TO CORBY AND EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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Mr Graham Wyatt
Head of Planning Services
East Northamptonshire Council
East Northamptonshire House
Cedar Drive
Thrapston
NORTHANTS, NN14 4LZ

Via email to: gwyatt@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

6th March 2015

Dear Mr Wyatt,

RE: PLANNING APPLICATION 14/02372/OUT.

Local concerns relating to this planning application have been raised very regularly with me as part of my *Listening to Corby and East Northamptonshire Campaign*, not only in survey responses, but also in recent weeks, when the *Listening Team* have knocked on every door in Brigstock and during two Q&A events I held in the village.

I am therefore writing to object to this application on the following grounds:

1. Land Supply: Crucially, I am aware that ENC, as the Local Planning Authority, can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites against the requirements set out in the Adopted Core Spatial Strategy (Local Plan), Interim Housing Statement (January 2014), and the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) (July 2011).

I also understand that through planning appeal APP/G2815/A/13/2209113, it was established and determined, that ENC has a five year housing supply and that the Interim Housing Statement is sound. The refusal notice states that *"The proposal would result in new housing development on unallocated greenfield land outside the settlement boundary of Oundle without adequate justification. The Council is able to demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply and as such the development is contrary to policies 1 and 2 of the RNOTP and the NPPF which requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

Clearly, the same applies in this case and there is no immediate overriding need to allow large scale development on this unallocated greenfield site. Essentially, there is no need for additional housing to be built here.

2. Sustainability: I agree entirely with local people that this scheme is unequivocally contrary to the adopted Local Plan for East Northamptonshire and RNOTP. The RNOTP states that *"Development opportunities throughout the area will be of a scale and nature appropriate to the size and character of the settlements concerned."* This development would increase the size of the village by about a quarter. It is the largest

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single development proposal in the history of the village. I therefore associate myself entirely with the Parish Council's view that this is not a sustainable or appropriate development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (policy 55) requires development to be sustainable and "*located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*". Local people do not think that a large development on the outskirts of the village, with difficult access via narrow village roads, and additional pressure on local services such as the doctors' surgery and the school, will enhance the community.

The village school is already at full capacity, with no opportunity to build additional classrooms without seriously compromising the recreation space of the pupils. The school is situated in a confined area in the centre of the village, with no playing fields immediately adjacent. Access to the school is limited and there is serious congestion at peak times. There is very limited parking space at the school. The planning application identifies the need for 30 additional school places – a figure which is disputed locally as an underestimate.

3. Village Confines: The proposal is contrary to Local Saved Policy EN20, as the site does not lie within the confines of the village and the erection of dwellings on this greenfield site would have an adverse effect on the undeveloped rural character, setting, and appearance, of the site and surrounding area.

Indeed, the ENC Local Plan places the site proposed by Gladman Developments Ltd in open countryside. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 112 of the NPPF and Saved Local Policy EN20, in that it will result in the loss of Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land without demonstrating that it is necessary.

4. Housing Requirement: The emerging Core Spatial Strategy and the planning policies of ENC have identified that new housing growth should be focused on Sustainable Urban Developments. The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU) confirms that North Northamptonshire is an appropriate Housing Market Area in which to assess housing requirements in line with NPPF paragraph 47. This means that Corby, Kettering and surrounding settlements should be considered as an HMA with neighbouring authorities working together to assess and respond to housing needs.

Indeed, Thrapston, Oundle and Corby, already have substantial construction of new dwellings ongoing. Corby in particular is providing a good range of different types of housing. The large development at Little Stanion with permission for 970 dwellings, is well underway and within easy reach of train connections to London, local businesses and retail outlets. The extensive Priors Hall Park described as the UK's biggest building site, aims to build 400 dwellings a year for the next 15 years. There are currently over 540 houses for sale in Corby. Further housing development is taking place in Thrapston which has seen considerable expansion in recent years, including the newly developed site to the south of Thrapston and bounded by the A14, which has the potential for 685 units.

In the village, a detailed local housing needs survey undertaken in 2011 by Midlands Rural Housing, identified the need for 6 affordable dwellings for people with connections to the village. Since then, Spire Homes has built a two-bedroom bungalow in Barnards Way and I know the Parish Council is actively looking at other sites in the village suitable for affordable housing, which would fulfil identified needs in the near future.

It is also worth noting that a total of 630 affordable homes have been built in the borough of Kettering since April 2010, with 410 having been built in Corby borough and 360 in each of Wellingborough and East Northants.

5. Neighbourhood Plan: The Village Design Statement, completed in 2005 with the support of ENC, identified areas around the village for future small and sustainable developments. The proposed development site was not one of them.

A Neighbourhood Plan proposal will also be submitted shortly, which will update the VDS and identify suitable development sites in and around the village, including sites for affordable housing, in consultation with local residents. I commend the enthusiasm of the village to engage in this process and believe that as a result of going down this route, their views should be respected as to where development is, and isn't, acceptable.

It is also interesting that Gladman Developments undertook a statutory consultation but not all residents in the village were sent information in spite of the fact that this development will affect every single resident in the village. As a result of their consultation, Gladman Developments reduced slightly the proposed number of dwellings from 130 to 110, but responses that Gladman received show, from their application, that the overwhelming majority of those who responded were not in favour of a large development. Responses posted on the ENC website endorse this view.

6. Highways: The proposal is contrary to paragraph 34 of the NPPF and Policy 3, Policy 4 and Policy 13 of the CSS, in that it increases the severity of local traffic rather than relieving the existing community from traffic. It will substantially increase the number of local cars and vans by approximately 184. This is based on the Census 2011 Tables QS113EW and QS416EW for the parish of Brigstock, that show an average of 1.67 cars and vans per household. The application admits that the extra traffic will increase pollution. This will be particularly noticeable in Back Lane and the High Street, which will bear the largest increase in traffic, thus decreasing the quality of life for people living in Brigstock. According to the 2011 census, 69% of journeys in East Northamptonshire are undertaken by cars or vans.

In particular, most car journeys from the village are towards Corby and Kettering via the A43. This will necessitate vehicles from the development using Back Lane, which is already congested and difficult to navigate.

This development would undoubtedly lead to a substantial increase in traffic movement, especially at peak times that will put strain on the narrow village road system, increasing the risk to the safety of pedestrians and road users, and causing delays within the village.

I also have sympathy with the argument that many of the travel plan measures are just proposals and nothing more. The application states that Gladmans is *"investigating the possibility of providing discounted public transport tickets to residents"* and *"investigations are also underway to identify opportunities to increase the frequency of bus services"*. Clearly, however, these are not firm undertakings. The proposed travel subsidy for three years and appointment of a travel plan officer is not sustainable in the long term either. Meanwhile, as the proposed development is scheduled to take three years to deliver, only a small proportion of residents would be able to take advantage of any subsidies offered. Taking into account the number of residents who use the bus service at present, even if the bus service were to be

more frequent, it is very likely that people would still use their cars for commuting as they do at the moment - the survey of journeys in East Northants shows that only 1% of people use public transport. This would mean that the likely increase in passengers from the new development is two or three.

7. Flooding: The proposed development would result in an increase of surface water runoff from the proposed hard standings, with less water being absorbed directly into the water table. This would ultimately affect the volume and flow of water down to Harper's Brook, increasing the risk of flooding in what has already been designated a flood risk area.

In concluding, I can only reemphasise the strength of feeling I have received against this planning application and I would therefore be most grateful if you could ensure that these important points are taken into consideration when it is determined - I would very strongly urge councillors to reject it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "TOM". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within two parallel diagonal lines that slant downwards from left to right.

**TOM PURSGLOVE
CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**