

Phil Hope MP

Yvette Cooper MP
Minister of State
Department for communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Our Ref: SmiW.LR

27 March 2007

Dear Yvette

Successful planning appeal 20th February 2007, Little Meadow, Corby Road, Cottingham, Northants

I have received contact from a number of constituents who have expressed concerns over the granting of planning consent given by Steven Fox of the Planning Inspectorate on appeal on 20th February 2007.

I am advised that the original settlement onto this site and its access was declared illegal and enforcement action was taken by Corby Borough Council, subsequently appealed by the applicant who now has permission for one mobile home and one caravan.

Many residents in Cottingham will be concerned at this development, particularly if it grows beyond the limits of the consent given. Though it has been stated that "villages...are submitting an appeal", my understanding is that you cannot appeal against a planning consent granted, and that the only route to oppose this decision by the Planning Inspector would be by Judicial Review?

Whilst it is difficult to envisage that a challenge would be successful however bad this decision looks, I sense that the worst fears of villagers are that this consent leads to further development of the site by more mobiles/caravans either legal or illegal, and it is for this reason that I have asked what measures the Borough Council is able to take to reduce the risk of inappropriate or undesirable additional development taking place? Also whether the Local Plan for the Borough Council area for instance, makes it clear that this is a site where further residential development would not normally be allowed, indeed whether it has been identified as 'agricultural' or 'green amenity' area? I understand that a Planning Inspector will normally respect the integrity of a

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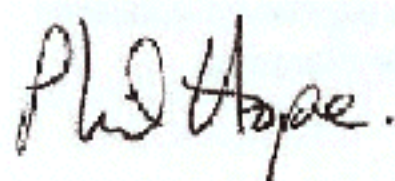
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Local Plan, or indeed any supplementary planning statements attached to a Local Plan that seek to protect or resist particular usages? However, for many of my constituents there are no certainties, and many of them fear an extension of what has already occurred – that an individual brings another un-permitted mobile residence onto the same field, the local authority try to take enforcement action, the defendant then appeals and further development is allowed to take place – in essence residential development by stealth.

During all of this process, a Planning Inspector whom you and I know acts independently of Government in a judicial or semi-judicial capacity, is seen as in this case as Government, apparently remote from the local community.

A decision has been made that was not welcome by the local community, nor the local authority, and I would be grateful for your thoughts on how you think such local authorities can effectively protect the interests of the local community, and the planning and appeals system can be seen to operate much more effectively to ensure that this happens?

Yours sincerely



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Cc Residents of Cottingham

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