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Mr Gerald Chibumu  
Corby Borough Council  
Planning & Environmental Services  
One Stop Shop  
George Street  
Corby  
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NN17 1QB

10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Mr Chibumu

**Application 20/00458/COU**

**Ref: Proposed residential caravan site for 6 gypsy/traveller families at land south of Land off Ashley Road, Middleton, Leicestershire.**

At a meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Cottingham Parish Council would like to formally acknowledge their support for Middleton Parish Council's opinions about, and responses to, this application. Cottingham Parish Council would also like to have on record that they cannot support the application for the following reason:

**1. Errors and assumptions in the application**

- a. The construction drawings are unacceptable and fail to show anything but the outline of a proposed building.
- b. We cannot accept the comment made by the applicant that there are no trees or hedges near the site.
- c. The applicants comment that the site is not within 20m of a water course. However, there is a water course across the road from the site that feeds the River Welland.
- d. Also, to the west of the plot by the hedge line, there's another stream that goes under Ashley Road towards the river.
- e. There is no evidence of how services will be provided to and from the new site.

- f. The poor standard of the application text (e.g., the author seems to be ignorant of the meaning of ‘infer’) has allowed for some dubious assertions and unverified assumptions to be ‘slipped in’:
- a. It asserts that the qualifying condition for compliance with criterion a) of Policy 31 (“*the site must be linked to an existing settlement with an adequate range of services*”) is the site’s proximity to Middleton, and then rather conveniently refers to “*the settlement of Middleton/Cottingham*”. These villages are discrete parishes, not one settlement. Middleton has no facilities and, arguably, proximity of nearly a quarter of a mile does not meet the condition of being ‘closely linked’.
  - b. The statement that “*foul drainage was the subject of a condition imposed upon the 2009 Oakley Park appeal decision*” is followed by the following text: “*The fact that such a condition was not reimposed on the 2013 appeal decision suggests that a satisfactory means of foul drainage had already been provided and that mains drainage was not a viable or necessary alternative*”. Firstly, this is an unverified assumption. There is no evidence that an absence of the condition in an appeal decision pertaining to a completely different application has any relevance or bearing on this one. Secondly, we who are trying to respond logically and fairly to this application are exhorted to judge it solely on its own merits, without reference to any previous or on-going other applications or appeals. This application’s references to previous applications and appeals must surely, therefore, be deemed irrelevant to the matter before Council.
  - c. Similarly, the application states: “*The inspector, in the 2013 Oakley Park appeal, was clearly satisfied with the use of non-mains drainage, despite the close proximity of the sewage treatment works*”. Firstly, unless evidence has been provided **as part of this application** that ‘the Inspector was clearly satisfied’, this statement only has the status of an unsubstantiated assumption and cannot be factored into a decision about this particular application. Secondly, satisfaction or otherwise about sewage arrangements for a different site has no bearing on whether the sewage arrangements for the site that is the subject of this application are acceptable and compliant.

## 2. Environmental concerns

- a. The Environment Agency make it clear that on site foul water drainage should only be used if access to mains sewerage is likely to cause failure of the system. The applicant has stated that no provision has been made for foul water drainage, this in itself is sufficient to refuse the application.
- b. With inadequately planned services environmental damage to the river is likely to occur. Adding to water circulating issues is the desire to add more hard surfacing to the site thus decreasing the chances of proper drainage, the field adjacent to the existing site has already had problems with standing surface water which can be traced to the development of the site.
- c. Allowing an extra residential area to an already crowded site will risk increasing the environmental damage already done by previous

construction work, for example the removal of an ancient hedge and inadequate sewage disposal.

- d. There is no mention of how 'hard waste' materials will be disposed of (dustbins?).
- e. Installation of any non-mains sewage treatment system such as a package sewage treatment plant ("PSTP") requires a "discharge permit" from the EA. The application makes no reference to this or of any intent to obtain such a permit.
- f. The application and site layout plan show that residential arrangements on each pitch will comprise two units - a 'mobile home' and a 'tourer' caravan. Toilet facilities in tourer caravans are cassette chemical toilets which must not be emptied into package sewage treatment plants because "*the chemicals used in chemical toilet fluid kill friendly bacteria and must not be allowed to contaminate the ground*" (Camping & Caravan Club). All PSTP manufacturers, as well as Caravan organisations, stress this point.

### **3. Impact**

- a. There is no evidence that any impact assessment has been carried out.
- b. There already exists a Travellers site at Little Meadow on the Corby Road. Ashley Road has already exceeded its planning (and appeal) numbers. Paragraph 14 of the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) states that sites should not dominate the nearest settled community. The site is too near the village of Middleton to meet that criteria.
- c. The erection of a 2m fence is contrary to the criteria set out in Planning Policies for Travellers Sites, Policy H. This fencing will be completely out of character with the surrounding countryside. There are no plans to landscape the area to help to keep it in tune with the surrounding countryside.
- d. The impact on the small villages which surround this site in terms of traffic and increase in population density is too large.
- e. There is a lack of amenities within the village of Middleton to believe that this expansion is sustainable.

### **4. Road Safety**

- a. As we have already stated in previous responses to applications concerning this site, the road, which is relatively narrow is not sufficient to allow for safe access and egress to this site. The plans are suggestive that the number of vehicles using this site will increase.
- b. Safety issues are not restricted to car usage. The delivery of mobile homes and usage of tourer caravans will ensure that large vehicles will be constantly using a narrow road, near to a bend and within a 60mph limit.
- c. A typically sized tow car and tourer caravan have a combined length of at least 12.5 metres. Ingress to, and egress from, the site as drawn on the site layout plan would necessitate such a rig occupying, and therefore obstructing, both carriageways of Ashley Road for a significant period of time to complete manoeuvres.

This planning application has been put forward against a backdrop of an appeal against an earlier planning application and a complete disregard of the decisions made by the planning authority.

Can I request Cottingham Parish Council are allocated a slot to enable them to speak when this application is put to the planning committee?

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Raj". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Rachel Raj, Clerk to the Parish Council