Dear Planning Committee,

We are writing to express our extreme concern regarding Planning Application S/2413/17/OL.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes several strategic points about development. To paraphrase, a new development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and should seek opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment. In addition, Planning Practice Guidance issued by the government in 2014 includes the statement that "successful integration of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective". These overarching objectives were already stated in more detail in South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies (2007). We believe that with these objectives in mind, the Gladman proposal is deeply flawed.

There are numerous detailed reasons why this is so. Firstly there are several issues with the location of the development:

- The distance from the village centre is not sustainable, contrary to Gladman’s Design and Access Statement. It is too distant for a convenient walk; but driving to and parking in the centre will be extremely difficult given the already crowded village situation. Even now during the week on-road parking is more or less full (there are no off-road options).

- Gladman implies that there is public transport for the length of Rampton Road. In fact the bus turns down Lambs Lane, leaving a long walk from the centre of the proposed development.

- The site of the main access road from the development onto Rampton Road is dangerous. It is on the brow of the hill and on a bend, which will compromise visibility in both directions, particularly with the number of vehicles exiting at "rush hour" times.

- The 70 elderly people living in the proposed accommodation will have more frequent visits to their GP. Are they expected to walk into the village? What are the other options, if any?

There are also several other issues pertaining to the road and its location:

- As there will be no extra employment in Cottenham once these houses have been built, there will large movements of traffic mornings and evenings as
commuters leave, either towards the A14 and Willingham, or into the village for Cambridge or Ely. The congestion on Rampton Road will make crossing the road even more hazardous than it already is, particularly for parents taking children to school in Lambs Lane.

- Rampton Road historically is a basic agricultural road. Its foundations are shallow and prone to subsidence. Larger vehicles already shake the foundations of older properties in the road as they navigate the uneven surface; the almshouses with their non-foundations will suffer even more as the enlarged roundabout brings the road even closer.

- Oakington Road will see increased traffic flows. Cyclists, who use the road route, already find it hazardous owing to cars driving fast and there being no cycle path. Cycling along this route may well become unsustainable once traffic increases.

- An increase in rush-hour traffic on Rampton Road will mean longer queues at peak times. Stationary and slow-moving cars are very polluting, not only for the residents but especially so for parents and children, who occupy the pavements at precisely those rush-hour times.

The amenities in the village will be profoundly affected by this development:

- The primary school in Lambs Lane is one of the largest in the county, if not the largest, with more than 600 pupils. Already this is regarded by educationalists as very large and impersonal, particularly for young children. We believe that it is at near maximum numbers now. Any attempt to add more pupils could result in temporary accommodation taking up much of the outdoor areas, as in past years. This is not a good situation for the school, its staff and pupils. If extended, as it already has been, we believe the school would become far too large. A suggestion of another school on the site to accommodate younger pupils with its proximity to playgroup provision and day/holiday care would be preferable but very expensive. Any contribution from the developers would be negligible in providing the best quality provision for young children in the village. Parking in Lambs Lane when parents drop off or pick up their children makes the road a "no go" area even for pedestrians; this is bound to increase, particularly as the development is too far removed for many parents to walk.
At present there are two doctors' surgeries, both of which are very busy. There will be even more pressure on the surgeries, particularly with 70 elderly people needing attention. There is a suggestion that a medical/health centre should be built, combining the two practices. A very good idea but the developer’s financial contribution will amount to a small percentage of the total cost. How would it be funded, and where would it be sited?

A development of this size will put more demands on the sewerage system. Presumably Gladmans have surveyed this and are happy with its capacity to cope with the extra demand.

In a similar way, the houses will increase the risk of flooding. The plans presumably cater for increased surges of surface water into the drains that serve Cottenham Lode.

Finally there are miscellaneous issues that should be considered:

This proposal does not seem to be "future-proofed": Northstowe is being developed, and how will that affect Cottenham from the traffic and access viewpoint?

There are other applications under consideration as well. While these cannot be taken into account as a whole, one has already been approved and therefore will have a material effect on this (Gladman) application - especially as it uses the same nearby access roads.

At present Cottenham and Rampton are two separate communities. This development could be seen as a gradual erosion of the space between them, with the possibility of further infilling to effectively merge the two.

Driving up the hill from Rampton to Cottenham the view is what one might expect on entry to a village, with fields and a small number of houses visible. It would be aesthetically displeasing to have part of this replaced by a sprawling housing estate.

We feel that very little attention has been paid to the consequences of this development: it does not in any way integrate with the village, nor does it make a positive contribution to our local character. As Cottenham residents for many years we urge planners to reject this ill-thought out, cynical and detrimental development.
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