

Objection to proposed development at The Ridgeway, Papworth Everard (application number: S/2647/15/OL) on the grounds of adverse affect on local traffic

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My wife and I have lived in Papworth Everard for nearly 15 years. We were attracted to the village by its good connections to both Cambridge and London.

For the past 12 years I have been commuting by rail to London from St Neots station, leaving my house at 6:55 in the morning. Until a few years ago I would drive to St Neots by heading south on the A1198 and then turning right onto the A428 at the Caxton Gibbet roundabout. However, these days the Caxton Gibbet roundabout is just too busy even at this time of morning. Also, due to heavy traffic on the single carriageway section of the A428, it is too dangerous to turn right from the B1040. Instead, I now drive along the minor road through the villages of Yelling and Toseland. Other residents and local cab drivers can confirm that they also use this route in the mornings.

This road is not designed to take a large volume of traffic. Aside from parked cars in the villages themselves, in places the road is so narrow that cars travelling in opposite directions may only pass by mounting the verge. The problem is acknowledged; over the past year a reduced speed limit has been introduced in Toseland and traffic calming has been introduced in Yelling.

My wife works in the centre of Cambridge and commutes by car. She leaves the house at 8am (as soon as our children have left for school). A few years ago she would head south out of the village on the A1198, turning left onto the A428 at Caxton Gibbet. These days, however, due to the congestion at this roundabout, she instead heads north out of the village on the B1040 before turning right into Rogues Lane and through the village of Elsworth, joining the A428 at Cambourne. Again, this is a minor road unsuitable for heavy traffic, but this is the route generally used by residents heading east in the mornings.

The Ridgeway development application includes many pages of statistics and surveys relating to traffic in the village. The conclusion of the traffic surveys is that the A428 roundabout at Caxton Gibbet is over capacity (hence the queues) but that the development will only increase the problem by 1% so is inconsequential. **However, not once does it mention the fact that residents are relying on these minor roads in order to get to work.** I believe this is due to the fact that the surveys only noted the volume of traffic leaving the bypass onto the B1040 (both north and south) and therefore missed the fact that cars were turning off the major roads a few yards further on.

Even without the proposed development, the village will soon be subject to fundamental change. With the Papworth Hospital relocating to the Addenbrookes site, the village will be losing its only major employer. Many of Papworth's residents who work at the hospital are currently in the fortunate position of being able to walk to work. With the hospital gone, those residents will become commuters. The future of the site is currently unknown it is possible that at least some of the land may be converted to residential use (for example I understand that there is an option to convert the wards into apartments). As a result, the volume of traffic leaving the village at peak time will almost certainly increase substantially.

In summary, I consider that Papworth Everard already has severe traffic problems that are not correctly recognised by the application. As a result, the Ridgeway Development would affect traffic proportionally more than the surveys suggest. Forthcoming changes to the village already present enough of a challenge for our local road network.

I would propose that the Ridgeway planning application (and any further Greenfield expansion of the village) is rejected until the congestion at the Caxton Gibbet roundabout is alleviated and the full impact of the hospital closure is understood.