



The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Our Ref: 70084697/ GCC

9 November 2022

For attention Mr Mark Boulton

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Section 62A Planning Application S62A/2022/0012
Land East of Station Road, Elsenham**

I refer to the letter from MAG dated 1st November 2022 which relates to the above planning application. The letter raises a number of highways related matters and I deal with the principal issues below.

On a general point, it is to be noted that the Transport Assessment (TA) which has been submitted in support of the planning application has been prepared in accordance with the scope established with Essex County Council (in its role as local highways authority). The Transport Assessment follows a similar format to the TA produced for the 2017 application for 350 units at Henham Road. That TA was also scoped and approved by ECC.

MAG compares the current application against the 2013 planning application (UTT/13/0808/OP) and its appeal decision (APP/C1570/A/14/2219018) released in August 2016. However, it is important to recognise that there are significant differences between that previous application and the current planning application. The primary differences are:

1. **Scale of development and development mix:** the previous development proposed 800 dwellings together with employment, retail, education, health and community uses. The current scheme comprises 200 dwellings only.
2. **Traffic Analysis:** the current application has been subject to a more detailed and rigorous traffic analysis than the previous application. A Vissim micro-simulation traffic model has been developed which has allowed traffic conditions in Stansted Mountfitchet to be modelled and the impact of development to be assessed.
3. **Changes in circumstance:** the most notable change is that the highway network has changed since the 2016 appeal decision. The Grove Hill traffic signals, which were the primary cause of the congestion noted by the Inspector in his appeal decision, were improved by ECC in 2019. Present day traffic conditions in Stansted Mountfitchet, and particularly at



the Grove Hill traffic signals, are different from those observed by the Inspector at the time of the 2014 planning appeal.

At the time of the 2014 inquiry, there was an expectation that the 2013 planning application would form part of a larger allocation of 2100 dwellings in the emerging Local Plan. The Inspector's comments from the Local Plan examination refer to development of a much larger scale than the scheme now proposed.

In any event, MAG neglects to mention the outcome of three much more recent planning appeals: these are Land at Henham Road (350 units) (APP/C1570/W/19/3243744), Land at Isabel Drive (99 units) (APP/C1570/W/20/3256109) and Land at Rush Lane (40 dwellings) (APP/C1570/W/19/3242550). The 2020 appeal for 350 units at Henham Road comprehensively overturned many of the highways matters contained in the 2016 appeal decision. Together, these recent decisions establish that Elsenham is an appropriate and sustainable location for residential development.

It should be noted that the MAG response is inconsistent with the appeal decisions set out above. The MAG response also makes a number of highways points without providing evidence to substantiate them. For example, the response discusses at length the relative attraction of routes via Hall Road and Stansted Mountfitchet. It states that the Transport Assessment encourages traffic to travel via Hall Road rather than through Stansted Mountfitchet. This is incorrect: the Transport Assessment assesses travel demand on both routes but it does not seek to encourage one route over the other. On a similar point, the letter refers to traffic calming for Elsenham High Street which it is suggested would be provided by this application as a means of discouraging travel via Stansted Mountfitchet. Again, this is incorrect and no such measures are proposed.

Under the heading "Mode Share", the MAG response states that the use of cars will be higher than suggested in the Transport Assessment, but no evidence is provided to substantiate that opinion. It should be noted that predicted mode share was examined at the 2020 planning appeal. Mode share has also been discussed with ECC as part of Transport Assessment scoping discussions.

Under the heading "Impact on Hall Road" the MAG response raises concerns about the capacity of the mini roundabout on Hall Road. The response also suggests that the permitted expansion of operations at Stansted Airport have not been considered by the Transport Assessment. Taking each of these points in turn, the Transport Assessment indicates that, with the proposed development, one arm of the mini roundabout will operate at close to its capacity but only for a short period in the morning peak period. The Transport Assessment concludes that the proposed development produces a small increase in the level of delay on Hall Road in the morning peak period but such delay will be imperceptible to traffic using Hall Road.

With respect to the expansion of the Airport, it was agreed with ECC as part of scoping discussions that the Airport expansion should be represented in the Transport Assessment by applying TEMPro growth to 2022 baseline traffic flows. I emphasise that the expansion of Stansted Airport **has been considered** by the Transport Assessment.

In closing, the response from MAG provides unsubstantiated opinion on a number of transport matters which are at variance with the findings of the three aforementioned, recent planning appeals. Those opinions are also inconsistent with the Transport Assessment. I therefore suggest that the



highways issues raised by MAG would be better considered through the statutory consultation response by ECC Highways.

Yours faithfully

Gerry Corrance
Technical Director

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