**Planning Inspectorate Reference: S62A/2022/0012**

**Uttlesford District Council Reference: UTT/22/2760/PINS**

**Residential development comprising up to 200 dwellings,**

**land to the east of Elsenham railway station**

**Address to Planning Inspectorate Hearing, 12 December 2022**

Good morning, Sir. I am Dr Graham Mott, I am the Chairman of Elsenham Parish Council, and I speak on behalf of the Parish Council. I have lived in Elsenham for 36 years.

**1. Introduction**

The application site is in Henham parish, but it is hard against the Elsenham parish boundary, such that the development of 350 dwellings to the south which is now under construction by Bloor Homes is wholly in Elsenham parish. By common consent, if the present application was to be agreed, there would be major impact on Elsenham village.

Our written representations were made to the Inspectorate dated 14 November 2022. I have endeavoured to keep up to date with the various documents which have been added to the PINS website since then, and the Parish Council stands by everything in our representations. What I have to say now is mostly by way of elaboration; there are six brief sections.

**2. Highways, general**

Highway safety is clearly a major issue, and the many residents’ representations bear testimony to concern regarding the main exit route out of Elsenham via Stansted Mountfitchet. These matters have been well dealt with by the consultants on behalf of Henham Parish Council, and we also consider the issue at some length, Section 3 in our written representations. I shall mention now just two points regarding transport generally: the first is the need to bear in mind the large number of 619 dwellings which have already received approval in Elsenham and have yet to be delivered, together with another 45 in Henham. The second is to note that Henham Parish Council cast considerable doubt on the usefulness of transport models when compared with the raw testimony of local residents. We drew attention previously to the applicants’ lack of confidence in their own model, since they feel justified in setting aside results which do not coincide with their preconceptions, regarding the important question of gridlock on Grove Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet.

**3. Access to the road network**

A particular matter of great concern to Elsenham Parish Council relating to road safety is considered in Section 4 of our written representations, that is, the use of the junction with the main road which has been constructed already for the agreed 350 houses to the south of the proposed development. We describe the supposed ’T’ junction as being more in the form of an arrowhead, since it is on the inside of an appreciable bend and thus the main road tends to curve round behind the driver on both sides.

The junction and the first short stretch of the access road are now open to the public, and It is possible to drive up the access road for a short distance to the sales office, then turn round and drive out. The effect at the junction is as bad as we imagined it would be, if not worse. Most traffic from the new estate will turn right, towards Elsenham. I would suggest to you, Sir, to make the experiment, if you would. I am confident that, if you do, you will appreciate how very difficult it is to see properly at the junction, particularly to the left, where you need to look out of the back passenger window. It is even more difficult with a front-seat passenger, or if driving a van rather than a car.

No doubt, Sir, you will be told that the junction has been cleared by Essex Highways, there is no problem and that I am wholly mistaken in insisting that experience of the situation on the ground is of first importance. But, if the application is granted, the vehicles from as many as 550 dwellings will be using this junction on a regular basis. There really should be another access point for such a large new estate in any event. The junction is in Elsenham parish, and the Parish Council is most concerned that accidents and near misses are inevitable.

**4. Site layout and capacity**

The application is for ‘up to 200 residential dwellings’. There can be no doubt that, if it was to be agreed, it would be regarded as a green light for a development of 200 dwellings, come what may, and the ‘up to’ qualification would be quietly forgotten. We say that it is therefore necessary to show that 200 dwellings can reasonably be accommodated on the site, and the applicants have conspicuously failed to do so.

Perhaps the most alarming document amongst those provided is entitled *Parameter Plan: Building Heights*. It shows that a large swathe of the area would be available for development up to three storeys high. The suggestion is completely unacceptable in a rural area. The Parish Council has fought successfully against proposals elsewhere for three-storey dwellings, and regarded the provision of just two three-storey blocks of flats on the site to the south as inappropriate, and we warned that it would be used as a precedent. This application shows that our warnings were indeed well-founded.

The dwelling mix on the *Illustrative Site Layout* shows that the large number of 64 out of the proposed 200 dwellings would have four or five bedrooms, and all of them would require at least three parking spaces, avoiding triple-tandem parking, in order to comply with Uttlesford’s standards. It is also necessary to show that provision has been made for gardens in accordance with the Essex Design Guide.

All this the applicants have failed to do and the Parish Council therefore asserts that an application for up to 200 dwellings cannot be approved.

**5. New Community Hall**

I said earlier that it is common ground that the application, if granted, would have a considerable impact on Elsenham. In this regard, Elsenham Parish Council welcomes the commitment by the applicants in the letter from Carter Jonas held as (Numeral) *1 Applicant response to PINS 5 DEC 2022*, wherein, towards the end, it is agreed that a financial contribution of £596,154 should be included in the draft S106, towards a new Community Hall in Elsenham. The amount has been calculated to allow for inflation since earlier contributions, and the Parish Council requests that, also in line with provisions elsewhere, it should be index-linked from the date of signing of the S106 until the date of payment. The proposed provision has been supported by Uttlesford and by Henham Parish Council, in paragraphs 9.10 to 9.17 of Hutchinsons’ representations. I know that you, Sir, and the applicants will understand that Elsenham Parish Council’s statement on the matter is made without prejudice to our position of total objection to the application as a whole, but I mention this for the benefit of residents who might be accessing this meeting remotely.

**6. Amenities and conclusion**

We show in Section 9 of our written representations the range of amenities which are deficient in the village - cemetery, employment, shops, doctors’ surgery, sporting facilities, public meeting rooms. Parking is very difficult at the surgery and at the small range of shops. A new surgery would be wonderful - so too would be a dentists’ and a secondary school. This application, if granted, would only tend to exacerbate these shortcomings by placing further pressure on the village. They would not contribute to social or economic well-being.

One final request, Sir, if I may. Whatever your decision might be, I do hope that you will not repeat the *faux pas*, as it seemed to us, of one recent Appeal Inspector, who referred to Elsenham as a ‘town’. Despite the excessive amount of recent house-building, it really is a village, and deserves to be regarded as such.

My thanks to you, Sir, for your attention. i shall be pleased to answer any questions.

Also, I’m not quite sure as to the protocol, but I have hard copy of this statement available to you and to the applicants, if required.

Graham Mott, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, PhD

Chairman, Elsenham Parish Council

12 December 2022