

From: Philip Kay [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 March 2023 00:31
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Fwd: Planning application S62A/2023/0015

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Philip Kay [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Mar 5, 2023 at 12:07 AM
Subject: Planning application S62A/2023/0015
To: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/madam

In relation to the above planning reference, I would like you to consider the following points:

This is actually the latest attempt to build a housing estate on an unsuitable agricultural greenfield site. The first proposal back in 2015 by the same applicants: Gary and Penny Pyle and Robert Smith was rejected by Uttlesford District Council primarily on the grounds of being unsustainable and that situation has not changed.

This current proposal is a very slightly modified version of one proposed in 2022 and does nothing to address the important fact that Elmdon is specified as an unsustainable Type B village. In the Local Plan, adopted in 2005, it clearly states that 'there will be no new allocations for housing development in Type B villages in the Local Plan'.

The village has no amenities apart from a church and a small village hall. There is no shop, Post Office, school, playground, doctors' surgery or regular transport links. Even the pub is out of action at present and is likely to remain so for a long time. Also, an essential for the present day option of working from home, mobile phone and internet signals are virtually non-existent along Ickleton Road. A car is an absolute necessity.

In consultation with all residents, a Village Design Statement was produced between March 2016 and May 2019. This was adopted as a 'Council Approval Guidance for the purposes of Development and Planning Policy' at Cabinet on 13 June 2019. The proposal now before you totally ignores the recommendations in that document. (Reference [REDACTED]).

Several villagers formed 'The Elmdon Community Group' in 2015 with the purpose of reacting against any building proposal that was out of scale or inappropriate to the village setting. This current proposal falls firmly into that category so, following a very inadequate presentation by the applicants we decided we needed to put out a questionnaire to all households to ascertain the feelings of the community. Between 22 and 27 June 2022, out of 69 questionnaires returned, 62 households were opposed to the development against 7 who didn't mind. That's a staggering 89.9% of respondents against the plans for any development along Ickleton Road. We handed the results to the applicants at that time but still they are pushing to capitalise on this piece of farmland.

Despite the fact that the applicants state the villagers were consulted, they have totally ignored the wishes of the vast majority of occupants.

In their Statement of Community Involvement' (Dec 2022) there are numerous misleading inaccuracies particularly Section 1.3. Para 132 '*Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.*' and Para 1.9 '*The applicant has listened to and taken note of the feedback received in this process.*' They most definitely have not listened. In Para 3.1 '*most attendees recognised that there was a clear demand for new housing, both market and affordable housing.*' In fact, there has never been a proven need for extra housing in the village.

The overall general comment was that the infrastructure would not be able to cope and that the site was unsuitable. The phrase used by many people was 'Greed Over Need' and that the estate would only benefit two families – the applicants – and not supply the village residents with anything (apart from a blot on the landscape). We should not build on agricultural land when, as a country, we are being urged to be more self-sufficient in food production.

If extra housing is proved to be needed in Uttlesford, there are plots of land in already urbanised areas rather than extending villages where a car is an absolute necessity. I'm sorry to say that this proposal is driven by greed and if it is approved, could set a dangerous precedent.

Robert Smith has a large amount of land on which he could build further developments as well as possibly extending this current plan and/or selling some land to large-scale developers which could result in a small rural community becoming an unsustainable town, very much urbanised, with no benefits for existing residents.

In Section 5.1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan, it states:

The policies on the built and natural environment have the following objectives:

To safeguard the character of Uttlesford's historic settlements.

To conserve and enhance the historic buildings in Uttlesford and their setting.

To protect the natural environment for its own sake, particularly for the biodiversity, and agricultural, cultural and visual qualities.

This proposed development meets none of those objectives.

If accepted, this proposal could set a very dangerous precedent for other local landowners who may be persuaded to give up farming the land at a time when we need them most. As with the current applicants, they may be tempted to benefit from the fact that Uttlesford DC are in 'special measures'.

Notes from the National Planning Policy Framework

78. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.

124. Planning policies and decisions should support schemes that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it.

c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use.

d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting.

129. Guides and codes should be based on community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area.

137. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

138c). Green belt serves to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

e) to assist urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

I would like to refer you to the Uttlesford Local Plan of 2005:

Policy S7 — The Countryside

In the countryside, which will be protected for its own sake, planning permission will only be given for development that needs to take place there, or is appropriate to a rural area. This will include infilling in accordance with paragraph 6.13 of the Housing Chapter of the Plan. There will be strict control on new building. Development will only be permitted if its appearance protects or enhances the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set or there are special reasons why the development in the form proposed needs to be there.

Policy ENV5 Protection of Agricultural Land

Development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will only be permitted where opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development on previously developed sites or within existing development limits.

2.2.8 Rural restraint area

Different character areas have a greater or lesser capacity to accommodate development. Open elevated areas with long views to ancient woodland, typical of parts of Uttlesford, are particularly sensitive.

Here is a brief summary of its main points

1. Elmdon is a totally unsustainable village with no amenities apart from a church and a village hall.
2. The proposal is to build on a greenfield site which could be used for farming, as it was previously.
3. The Village Design Statement has been totally ignored.
4. There is no proven need for houses in the village.
5. The site is in an inappropriate elevated position visible from all directions (including the Icknield Way).
6. The proposed houses are 'executive homes', certainly not 'affordable houses'.
7. The quiet village would be urbanised with street lighting, road signs etc.
8. There are no safe areas to walk on the north side of Ickleton Road.
9. The narrow roads are unsuitable for any increase in traffic. (see photo attached "Traffic on Ickleton Road")
10. Too much agricultural land is being lost to housing.
11. The results of a village survey have been completely ignored.
12. A car is absolutely essential to get in and out of the village for any amenities.
13. The proposed plot is outside the village's development limit.
14. The whole scheme is in the wrong place and disproportionate to the character of the village.

Apologies for the long email but I wish to counter misleading claims put forward by the applicants' Planning Statement Document' produced by Jon Durbin Assocs Ltd:

4.1 'this proposal would represent sustainable development that would enhance the viability of existing community facilities and services' WHAT COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES?

'and deliver a significant number of new dwellings in the context of a significant shortfall in terms of supply' THERE IS NO PROOF OF A SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALL IN TERMS OF SUPPLY.

4.2 'there would be some impact upon the openness of the countryside and intrusion by way of built form' THERE WOULD DEFINITELY BE A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT UPON THE OPENNESS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

4.11 'land that is outside of settlements should be protected "for its own sake" and that development should only be permitted where it protects or enhances the appearance and particular characteristics of the countryside within which it is set'. IT WOULD NEITHER ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE NOR PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

4.12 'The development of the site would be contrary to policy S7 in that the site is outside of settlement limits.' WHAT WOULD BE THE BENEFITS TO THE EXISTING COMMUNITY?

4.18 'new landscaping could mature to provide a substantial degree of relief' IN ABOUT 15-20 YEARS PERHAPS.

4.20 'there are no major visual effects expected' EVEN THOUGH THE HOUSES WOULD BE ON GROUND SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN EXISTING BUILDINGS? (see photo 'view from planned site towards Ickleton Road' and photo 'view from Ickleton Road south side').

4.26 'those dwellings would not intrude into the street scene or into the outlook of those dwellings on the south side of the main road' HOW HIGH AND HOW THICK WOULD THE HEDGES NEED TO BE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE SITE IS SUBSTANTIALLY ELEVATED? (see photo.view from Ickleton Roadsouth side).

4.38 'The presence of local services would also negate the need for residents to travel by car for some day-to-day functions' THIS IS UTTER RUBBISH. A CAR IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO GET IN AND OUT OF THE VILLAGE TO ACCESS SERVICES SUCH AS SHOPS, RESTAURANTS ETC.

4.39 'policy GEN1 (part e) seeks to "encourage movement by means other than driving a car" AS ABOVE, THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO SERVICES ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT A CAR.

4.43 'The gentle changes in ground level at the site facilitates ease of access to main front doors.' ONCE YOU'VE CLIMBED THE STEEP ELEVATION FROM THE ROAD LEVEL.

4.49 'The submitted transportation statement identifies the availability of public bus services but also that the traffic generated by 18 residential units would have an imperceptible impact on the local road network'. THIS IS UTTER NONSENSE. THERE ARE NO REGULAR PUBLIC BUS SERVICES, ONLY SCHOOL BUSES AND THE INCREASE IN TRAFFIC FROM THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE A GREAT IMPACT ON SUCH A NARROW ROAD WITH CARS PARKED ON THE SIDE. (see photo 'Traffic on Ickleton Road').

'there have been no accidents within close proximity of the site' ACTUALLY THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL NEAR FATAL ACCIDENTS CLOSE BY AND THIS EXTRA ACCESS ROAD WILL EXACERBATE THE PROBLEM.

4.51 'development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings' A HOUSING ESTATE ON AN ELEVATED SITE WILL NOT BE KEEPING IN SCALE, CHARACTER AND SURROUNDINGS.

4.77 'In summary therefore no harm would arise to natural habitats' APART FROM THE BADGERS, OWLS, KINGFISHERS AND OTHER WILDLIFE LIVING IN THE WOODS AT THE EAST END OF THE SITE.

4.101 'In terms of the planning balance, given the acute shortage and need for affordable housing, it is considered that this is a positive factor to take into account.' THERE IS NO PROVEN NEED FOR HOUSING IN ELMDON AND EVEN IF THERE WAS, THIS ESTATE WILL NOT PROVIDE THE CORRECT HOUSING AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE. THE PROPOSED HOUSES ARE, IN THE MAIN, EXECUTIVE HOMES OUT OF REACH OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.

4.102 'Policy of the adopted local plan identifies the development of such land will only be permitted "where the opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development on previously developed sites or within existing development limits" 'The NPPF identifies that the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile and agricultural land should be recognised when taking planning decisions'. THIS IS NOT A PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITE. IT IS A GREENFIELD, AGRICULTURAL SITE NOR IS IT WITHIN THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT LIMITS.

4.103 'the fact that the Council does not have an adequate supply of housing land means that, by default, there are no suitable alternatives'. NO DATA HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR THIS STATEMENT AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF BROWNFIELD SITES IN THE AREA WITHOUT THE NEED TO ENCROACH ON VILLAGES.

THE ONLY REASON THIS SITE IS EVEN BEING CONSIDERED FOR DEVELOPMENT IS BECAUSE THE LANDOWNERS ARE SEEKING TO CAPITALISE ON THEIR LAND WHEN THE LOCAL COUNCIL IS IN 'SPECIAL MEASURES' BUT TO THE DETRIMENT OF EVERYONE ELSE WHO LIVE HERE.

Finally, if I may, can I invite you to visit the village and check out the location of this proposed site for yourselves? You will be totally dependent on a car and you may like to bring your own food since there are no amenities in the village although we are a friendly bunch and would probably invite you in for a cup of tea!

PS: There have been totally misleading articles in the local press and on social media regarding this application, presumably put about by the applicants themselves. If this were going to a court of law, I would want to seriously cross examine the applicants for attempting to mislead public opinion.

Yours sincerely

Philip Kay



