

Reference: Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road Elmdon, S62A/2023/0015

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Elmdon Community Group wish to make the following points regarding the two reports that were submitted after the prior consultation deadline (of 16th March 2023) and that Mr Boulton recently indicated we can comment on, up until the 5th of April 2023:

The Essex County Council Ecology Report

- We are of the view that whatever mitigation is suggested will be insufficient to negate the highly adverse impact on the site's biodiversity from this proposed development, including from the proposed new access road. The latter would lead to extensive tree losses from Townend Plantation, mainly relating to mature trees.
- We feel it is inexcusable that no attempt was made by the applicants to quantify the possible biodiversity loss.
- We are puzzled by the net biodiversity gain comment, given the lack of any analysis on the likely damage impact in the first instance.
- We doubt that a few bat/bird boxes will mitigate the damage to the bats/birds currently foraging and roosting at this site, and there would presumably be nothing compelling residents to keep these in situ. It is being ignored how 49 car park spaces are being provided by the applicants to accommodate residents and visitors who would all be heavily car-reliant given Elmdon's unsustainable location and near total lack of any services. There would therefore be extensive daily vehicle movements disturbing the bats/birds that currently visit the site to feed and/or roost. In a similar vein, the current peaceful grazing of ponies would be replaced by noise and light disturbance from a resident population at Grange Paddock that could easily number 50+. We feel this development would risk losing the presence of barn owls in the village, given that such a valuable and extensive foraging area for this species would vanish.
- We feel there has been a near total focus on bats. No attention has been given to the barn owls and badgers that have been seen at the site/at Townend Plantation. See the comments in many of the letters from residents of Elmdon. Great Crested Newts are in the vicinity and are very likely to be foraging in the hedgerows. All of the above are protected species.
- The access road inspection was undertaken on a day of extensive snow cover. A later inspection (when badger setts etc would be more visible) was deemed highly desirable, but this never took place.

The UDC Landscape Report

- Mr Smeeden's report grasps the issues to good effect aside from his bizarre observation that: *"The visual impact of the development on the wider rural landscape may be limited"*. This is incorrect - the proposed development would have a highly adverse impact that would be far from *"limited"* (as clearly seen on the header photograph of the ECG's

original submission to the Inspectorate). Had Mr. Smeeden visited the village, he could have seen at first-hand how prominent the elevated site is on rising ground which can be seen at numerous points from local footpaths and bridle paths. For instance, the ancient Ickniel Way offers clear views of the proposed site from near the (even higher) Mill Mound Ancient Monument – a panoramic vista that also takes in the Grade II* Church and other parts of the village's large Conservation Area.

- This is a Greenfield Site. Grange Paddock would be an urban design superimposed upon the current rural landscape and widely visible in the surrounding locality. Its 18 houses would dominate the existing ones along the Ickleton Road, adversely impacting the amenity values of residents and also the heritage status of the Grade II listed building, 'The Hoops'.

Yours faithfully,

Leonie Evans

Secretary, Elmdon Community Group.

A view of Townend Plantation



Another view of Townend Plantation that also shows ‘The Hoops’, the thatched property on the l.h.s.

