

TAKELEY PARISH COUNCIL – HEARING 13TH NOVEMBER 2023

OBJECTION TO S62A/2023/0019 – LAND TO THE NORTH OF ROSEACRES, BETWEEN
PARSONAGE ROAD AND SMITHS GREEN LANE, TAKELEY

My name is Cllr Jim Backus, speaking on behalf of Takeley Parish Council.

The Parish Council has provided information with the benefit of local knowledge and has tried to create a better understanding of the situation on the ground. We have considered the impact on the existing and new residents and on the natural and historic features in our area. We believe that the harm significantly outweighs the benefits.

This is why it is important to note the photos of existing traffic congestion on Parsonage Road and details of the approved capacity on the HGV route. This is different from the traffic data submitted by the developer, which shows only half the capacity of the approved 400 daily movements for Elsenham Quarry.

Evidence includes the existing protections and history of the CPZ, Priors Wood, the protected lane, verges, and restricted byway, Smiths Green and the new conservation area boundary. There can be no doubt that this setting is one of the most sensitive and valued parts of our parish.

New housing and industrial development has been approved along Parsonage Road during the time when UDC could not demonstrate a 5-year housing supply. This period has seen huge growth in Takeley through poorly planned speculative development.

The conditions that Essex Highways has set out for this application, seek to make this development safe for all users, in all weather conditions and at all times of the day and night. They do not take account of the resulting environmental harms or whether or not the improvements described can be delivered.

There are no conditions set to improve safety where the foot and cycle paths need to combine and cross the roadway or how residents negotiate the indirect and complicated route through the new industrial estate.

The Highways conditions do not protect a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the woodland, they would introduce street lighting into a rural setting of dark skies, impacting on the ancient woodland and wildlife, and introducing an urban influence on the setting of the newly approved conservation area.

Works to create 3m wide surfaced foot and cycle paths through the Village Green protected verges would need permission from the Secretary of State in a separate process, with no reason to assume that those changes would be approved.

New surfacing and lighting on the restricted byway between Jacks Lane and Burgattes Road were considered in the application for 40 homes north of Jacks Lane. The inspector for that application found those changes to be so harmful, they were a reason for refusal.

Our ancient woodland must be protected from harms described by the Woodland Trust in their objection letter of 7th September. We agree with UDC that the buffer zone should extend from the edge of the tree canopy and any roadworks and surfaced pathways must be excluded from the buffer zone.

This matter was not fully explored in the appeal on the wider site and, unlike the previous application, there is no alternative road access therefore this matter is of significant concern.

Adequate protection for Priors Wood must take priority over the provision of 96 homes which would be better located elsewhere.

The location of the housing and details of the road, paths, lighting and drainage works will cause direct and indirect harm to the ancient woodland and to the wildlife inhabiting this woodland.

The development would significantly change the character of the countryside and the setting of Smith's Green as described in the conservation area appraisal, which has been approved for designation. The open aspect of the CPZ would be lost and safe road, footpath and cycle access cannot be achieved. We therefore ask for the application to be refused.