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Subject: FW: APPLICATION TO BUILD OFFICES NEXT TO CLIPHEDGE FARM, LITTLE BENTLEY

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From: Julian Foynes [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 September 2021 20:13
To: Planning Services [REDACTED]
Subject: APPLICATION TO BUILD OFFICES NEXT TO CLIPHEDGE FARM, LITTLE BENTLEY

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(please send any acknowledgments or replies via e-mail)

PLANNING DEPT.
TOWN HALL
TENDRING COUNCIL
STATION RD
CLACTON-on-SEA
ESSEX

Re:

21/01523/FULAlternative ReferencePP-10020464

Application ReceivedWed 25 Aug 2021Application ValidatedWed 15 Sep 2021AddressLand adjacent Cliphedge Farm Harwich Road Little Bentley Essex

Proposal---Proposed construction of office buildings , including ancillary site works (car parking, landscaping, new vehicular access points of Harwich Road and stopping up of existing access).

I wish to object to the Cliphedge Farm proposal recently made by Mr Naphine. I attended the inquiry on his previous (Brandart) scheme and am familiar with it, the site, and the various "for and against" arguments.

I opposed the first proposal and this time round so even more emphatically, for the following reasons:

1))NOT THE PREVIOUS SCHEME MERELY ADJUSTED

The buildings proposed, and the associated parking, are on a much greater scale than those in the previous Brandart plan. This is essentially a completely **new** scheme, not just a tweak of the old one. Its negative impact will therefore be greater.

2)INVALIDITY OF PRECEDENT ARGUMENT

Much was made at the previous inquiry by Mr Naphine's lawyer that a precedent for a considerable commercial development at the site had already been set by the car auctions and Penguin books premises at Frating, a garage and vehicle park at Hare Green, and so on. They described the locality as semi-urban, Mr Naphine's lawyer going so far as to say it struck him (as a resident of Shropshire) as already quite built up.

But these existing commercial sites are quite distant to the west or south-west. Cliphedge Farm is a rural location, surrounded by farmland, woods and decidedly small hamlets. Little Bentley parish, in which it is located, has a mere 250 residents, and is mainly a home for farmers and retired people.

I maintain that the appropriate place for new Tendring District commercial schemes (except very small ones contained in farm yards) is in the established **urban communities which fringe it** Manningtree-Mistley, Harwich-Dovercourt, Clacton etc, not in its rural interior, with its fields, woods, ancient churches, and traditional rural landscape.

Some of these coastal towns suffer from unemployment, all are small enough to allow of walking or cycling to work (rather than journeys by car), and all have places to eat and drink, unlike the vicinity of Cliphedge Farm.

(At the first inquiry I found the Mr Naphine's suggestion that a Brandart employee might come on a bus and then walk a mile along a rough grass verge every day to lunch in a pub fanciful).

Of course if the present proposal is allowed it will itself be a precedent for more urban-type development and traffic in and around Little Bentley!

3)INVALIDITY OF INCENTIVISING SCHOOL PUPILS & LEAVERS ARGUMENT

At the last inquiry about the site the previous Brandart scheme was advocated as a way of bringing higher-status, better-paid and more creative jobs and certainly **new types of jobs** to an area where school leavers tended to go on to achieve less than those in other places. This was **stressed**, not merely mentioned in passing. The artistic, museum-related, and also international, dimensions of Brandart were much emphasised by Mr Naphine's lawyer.

I cannot see how renting out space to other firms of different types fulfils this claim.

4)THE ROAD ACCESS & TRAFFIC ISSUE

I refer again to the fact that with one very occasional bus from Colchester, and no railway station within three and half miles, all users of the site would come by car.

I therefore again draw attention to the road access situation locally.

Vehicles coming from the Clacton-Frinton area along the A133 main road will either have to drive round to it via Frating Cross and Hare Green or come through Ravens' Green Lane or the lanes past Little Bentley Church and the Bricklayers' Arms pub – especially in the Ravens' Green case there is already serious congestion and inconvenience to residents, and to essential farm and even emergency service vehicles on these little roads, which are of course not designed for the traffic of sizeable workforces.

This is not understandable without consulting the road map. The proximity of the site to the A120 and new Little Bentley roundabout might suggest that it presents no traffic problems. But although the A120 gives direct and easy access from the northern outskirts of Colchester, or from Harwich, it does **not** do so from the homes from which most commuters to the site are likely to drive. This includes most of Colchester and indeed most of the Tendring District. The A120 (and the A133's Strurrick Lane roundabout) were designed to take traffic between London and the coastal towns (Harwich, Clacton etc), and **not** to route it between those towns and inland villages. For instance, when a vehicle passes north from the A133 roundabout onto the A120 it can only continue round the north of Colchester and/or on towards London – it cannot turn right towards the A120 roundabout and Cliphedge Farm. Hence the reliance on narrow lanes and residential roads.

As an additional issue, vehicles coming from Manningtree or Suffolk cannot turn straight out onto the A120 (Harwich) main road towards Cliphedge Farm, but have to go up as far as Horsley Cross roundabout (in the opposite direction), and then turn back on themselves, adding 2 miles (and additional carbon emissions) to their journeys. This is because the dual-carriageway at Pelland's Corner does not allow traffic to pass straight down into Little Bentley, as it did until recent years.

5)A GENERAL BUT TOPICAL COMMENT

When Cliphedge Farm developments have been proposed in the past, a main "pro" argument was the need to encourage such schemes in new, including out-of-town, locations, so as to give a boost to areas lagging in job prospects and incomes. Mr Naphine's lawyer put most of his case in this "progressive" and "socially concerned" manner, citing the recent freeing-up of planning laws (and their interpretation) as evidence that a **national policy shift** had emerged in favour of this sort of proposal. (See Point 3).

However, I think the situation has rather altered. Reducing road traffic and carbon emissions, and safeguarding the environment, now surely rank even higher than last time round. The earlier Cliphedge scheme had its little ecological aspect (some trees and a pond, I recall), but that hardly offset covering thousands of a square metres of wild meadow with concrete building and car park foundations, or altering the character of a small rural parish. Furthermore the pond and its

wild life seem no longer to feature in the proposal, since the building would leave no space for them.

JULIAN FOYNES (24/9/2021)