

From: Alan Carter [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 May 2023 23:37

To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Subject: Fwd: Objection re s62a/2023/17 Applications UTT/21/0332 and UTT/22/0267 Distribution Centre at Tilekiln Lane Great Hallingbury

I wish to object to the above.

I am secretary of Dunmow Velo, a cycle club in the neighbouring town of Great Dunmow. Dunmow Velo is one of three cycling clubs in Uttlesford, and the closest to the site, but I am objecting here in my capacity as a private cyclist.

The development proposes to move the access to Tilekiln Lane westwards towards the M11 Junction, significantly reducing the distance between the existing junction and the motorway exits.

Junction 7 of the M11 currently creates a substantial barrier to cycling in the area as it provides no safe options for cyclists. Worse, it sits between Stansted Airport and its nearest town/ source of employees. Before changes 20+ years ago, the original eastward exits from J7 were further west, meaning that the gap between the motorway junction and the site has already been significantly reduced. Related changes to the junction have served to significantly increase road speeds on the junction, and (with its unique cut through within the enlarged roundabout) create wide areas of cross-crossing traffic to the eastern side of the roundabout, making use by cyclists especially dangerous.

The nearest safer cycling options for East- West cycling that avoid Junction 7 all involve fairly significant diversions: Bury Lodge Lane at Stansted to the North, and Tilekiln Lane / Gt Hallingbury to the south; this includes the applicants's site.

There is, to be fair, also an unmade B1256> Birchanger cycle route which is part of National Cycle Route 16. This is an unmade track, opened in 2018, and is usually impassable safely, due to flooding under motorway slip roads. It has flooded, unlit tunnels and is not designed for any sort of commuting or reliable daily use.

For the reasons above, cyclists will often find themselves having to make a right hand turn out of Tilekiln Lane, having to wait for gaps in the traffic, including vehicles exiting Junction 7.

1. Moving the Tilekiln Lane exit closer to the motorway would make the exit less safe for cyclists at a time when sensible developments seek to improve provision for non-vehicular road users. This application would be the second occasion since the Motorway opened that the gap between it and Tilekiln Lane has been reduced with no apparent consideration for non-vehicular traffic.
2. The risk to cyclists is enhanced because the area they wait in in order to turn right is an upward slope, making rapid acceleration harder.
3. There also appears to be no provision in the plans for a physical traffic island in the middle of the new Tilekiln Lane exit, leaving cyclists who are forced to spend longer waiting at the proposed junction unnecessarily exposed to HGV drivers exiting from the Motorway and heading right into the proposed development.

4. In addition to the risks to local cyclists that might be familiar with the area, the junction is just 200m from the west exit of The Flitch Way. The Flitch Way is a 16-mile country park utilising an old railway line for much of its course. For most of its length, this park also comprises National Cycle Route 16, and although this designation now diverts approx 300m to the west of the site (across the unmade path referred to above), this is poorly signposted and easily missed by people unfamiliar with the area, and riding the “natural”, straight, and well used, course of the former railway line. Such people will find that they reach the western end of their journey on Tilekiln Lane, having missed the diversion onto the unmade track. They will find themselves in an unfamiliar area and forced to use the proposed junction.

I am surprised; I haven't traced any comment on these aspects from the Highways Authority. This is incorrect, as the design and presence of the M11's Junction 7 forces cyclists to use the proposal site.

I would contend that if there is not enough space on the site for a safe junction for lorries and cyclists, there isn't enough space for the development, irrespective of any other merits. Under no circumstances should the junction be moved closer to the M11.

I am happy to meet your inspector on site if required, and would suggest that a fair consideration of the issues facing cyclists at this junction would require a visit to the alternatives, including the unmade track, which may require appropriate footwear.

Alan Carter

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