

As a resident of Manuden, I am aware that a development for a solar farm near Berden has a proposed traffic route submitted as part of its development that will force large, heavy construction vehicles through our village. I have serious concerns about this and would like to draw the following matters to the attention of those considering both the application as well as the details of any traffic management plan in the event it should be successful. I would argue that inability to find a safe route for construction traffic should be a factor taken into account when deciding whether the application should be granted permission.

1. Manuden school sits on the proposed route. It operates between 8.45am-3.15pm. It additionally runs breakfast and afterschool clubs (I believe from 8am until 5.15pm). Every day there are additional extracurricular clubs with children being collected at 4 or 4.15pm. Once a week the Reception children walk around the village during school hours to explore their environment on Muddy Mondays/Welly Wednesdays. Every Friday, KS2 children walk up to the MVCC after school for hockey practice. This is in addition to any ad hoc trips the children have within the village. Therefore, Manuden Primary School generates a considerable amount of footfall along the proposed route. The pavements are narrow in places and often only situated on one side of the road. Parked cars for residents mean the traffic often has to weave into a single lane. At a point just up from the school (at the foot of The Bury) traffic regularly mounts the pavement because it lies flush with the road and there are parked cars. This is a hazard to residents at the best of times. It would be a danger to the children at the school and their younger siblings being pushed in buggies, on scooters, or on foot to have large volumes of traffic along this route. Excluding school hours from operating hours would not mitigate the risk sufficiently.
2. Traffic during pick up and drop off for school is very bad. Parked cars are often hit as traffic tries to go out of the village (south) because it is on a bend (near Cock Farm) making visibility poor when overtaking the parked cars (one parent's car was hit only last week by a gardening company van; a teacher has had her car hit there also). I have been on a coach coming back into school from a trip and it has taken 40minutes to move past that one part of the road (Cock Farm to Manuden House to turn around and back to the school) because it becomes gridlocked. In the end, a teacher and a parent exited their vehicles to move traffic. It is not uncommon to get gridlock. There is an additional pinch point on the corner with The Yew Tree and Church where the road narrows at a bend and the pavement is narrow and only on one side of the road. Wide vehicles are unable to pass with oncoming traffic which results in lorries and vans either mounting the pavement or oncoming traffic having to stop to let them pass. There is often gridlock here too. The route is completely inappropriate for the proposed use.
3. In addition to the footfall of young children created by school activities, Mums 'n' Chums is a parent/baby/toddler group operating in the Church between 8.45am and c.11am on Monday mornings. Many young children are walking home from this or back to cars parked outside school when they leave. I personally run Owlets, the baby and toddler group, which operates on Friday mornings at the MVCC between 9.30-11am. It is a busy group and many young children walk home after it. It would be impossible for traffic to be managed in such a way as to properly mitigate the risks of young families walking around their village.
4. In the summer of 2019, a tractor towing a crop sprayer mounted the curb outside our house (which sits in the middle of the S bend between The Yew Tree and Manuden House). The crop sprayer drove its upper edge into three properties on our stretch, including ours. It caused thousands of pounds of damage and took months to repair our listed buildings. Structural engineers surveyed our house and commented that had it been an inch or two further in it would have caused structural damage. A number of houses on that stretch have an overhang which isn't noticeable to drivers who are looking down at the road to pass the permanently parked cars on the opposite side. That makes our properties vulnerable to large vehicles. It is a risk to have lots of large tall vehicles come down that stretch of road. Tractors always mount

the kerb to pass. After the incident occurred, we put Uttlesford on notice that the bollards (heavy iron bollards that had been sheared-off with such force, they landed all the way down the road at the Yew Tree) needed urgent replacement. They put it as low priority. I notified them that my children slept in that overhang and put them on notice that they were in breach of their duty of care and that they would be liable for harm caused to my property or any person in it. They came out within a few days to replace them. They clearly acknowledged their duty of care to protect my property (a listed building) and the residents within and acted accordingly. The same duty of care must be applied on this occasion.

5. I sit on the PCC of Manuden. The church wall that sits directly on the road at the corner with the Yew Tree is crumbling. We have little money to carry out repairs. Volumes of traffic and cars driving close does not help. Putting lots of lorries on that corner will increase the damage to this wall and, given the narrowing at this point that would not allow for 2-lane traffic with even a slightly wide vehicle, my concern is that there is likely to be an accident with a car being forced into that wall.
6. When the two roads south into Bishop's Stortford were closed at the start of the year, it caused absolute chaos on the roads because all traffic coming through Manuden had to filter through a single route. The school bus from Manuden was getting children into school an hour late on a daily basis (there is a duty of care on you to take steps to ensure children can attend their education settings without disruption). There were countless accidents, one of which involved them closing the then only route out of Manuden, and sadly involved the air ambulance. We have already seen how additional pressure on traffic via this route affects residents – these roads are not designed for heavy traffic. Highways have a duty of care to protect its motorists to ensure they do not knowingly create pressures on road systems that would be deemed unsafe.
7. There are numerous cyclists on the route from Manuden to Bishop's Stortford. The road is narrow and twisty with very few places to overtake in a car, let alone a lorry. I believe there will be an accident if volumes of construction traffic are pushed down this route.
8. Should the scheme be approved, the developers should be forced to limit the number of trucks passing through every day. Watchmen should have to be sited during working hours on the 3 pinchpoints in the village as a measure of safety and traffic flow at the developers' cost. The developers should additionally have to pay to have damaged roads resurfaced as a result of driving heavy loads through small country lanes at the end of the period of development, without having to prove liability. There should be a mechanism put in place allowing residents immediate redress in the event that the developer breaches these conditions. This should be at the developers' expense. Penalties for breach should be heavy enough to act as a deterrent, having regard to the wealth of the developer and potential profit.

As a resident of the village with 4 young children, I am deeply concerned that safety should be carefully considered when deciding whether to grant permission for the application or, deciding what measures should be put in place to mitigate risk, should the development be allowed.

Leni Croker ([REDACTED])