

Your Ref: S62A/2022/0014
Our Ref: HT/TPD /SD/KW/53482/4B
Date:- 22 March 2023



Essex County Council

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Recommendation

Application No. S62A/2022/0014

Site Location Land west of Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden

Proposal Outline application for the erection of up to 170 dwellings with access from Thaxted Road with all other matters reserved

Summary of Current Position

1. The highway authority submitted an initial response to the Inspectorate in January 2023, this outlined a number of concerns that we had with the application, these required additional information or changes to the proposal. The response also included a draft list of proposed transport obligations/conditions for consideration should the application be granted approval.
2. The request for revised and additional information fell under a number of broad headings.
 - Impact on the highway and modelling
 - Access and Highway Works
 - Sustainable transport
 - Permeability of the site
 - Travel Plan
3. Throughout the course of the application the highway authority has liaised with the transport consultants to try and ensure that the revised information was acceptable and that the work carried out provided a model of the highway network that was broadly representative of current and future conditions. An Addendum to the Transport Assessment was submitted, the large amount of submitted information has been reviewed with a site visit and internal consultations. The assessment of the application and Transport Assessment and Addendum was undertaken with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and in particular paragraphs 110 – 112, the following was considered: access and safety; capacity; the opportunities for sustainable transport; and mitigation measures. A short summary is provided below.

4. Impact on the Highway

4.1. Additional work was carried out by the consultants to address the concerns of the highway authority, the modal split was reassessed in to include census data for the town centre, distribution was checked and recently collected traffic data was used to reassess key junctions. There are a number of junctions within Saffron Walden that are forecast to be at or approaching capacity. As part of the new development to the east of Thaxted Road a link road it being secured which will help alleviate the pressure in particular on the Thaxted Road/Radwinter Road junction. Three developments are required to be built out before this road scheme is delivered (two are currently being built) so modelling was undertaken with and without the scheme. Key junctions that were forecast to be over capacity were Thaxted Road/Radwinter Road and High Street/George Street/Abbey Lane. The cumulative impact on the junctions from the development increased the queuing at both junctions. The best way to mitigate this and limit the impact is through a strong package of sustainable transport measures. These are outlined below.

5. Access and highway Works

5.1. The Addendum proposed a revised access to the site was reviewed and a safety audit and designer's response provided. The signalised access was linked with the signalised access to the east of Thaxted Road (Cardamon Road) and includes pedestrian and cycle crossing points. While the addition of a fourth arm and associated traffic will impact on the junction capacity, the impact is not severe and the junction design provides for all users, as it includes footway/cycleways, crossings and bus stops, and facilitates sustainable connections to key facilities.

6. Sustainable Transport

6.1. The original Transport Assessment contained highway works that included a cycleway on Thaxted Road that linked the application site to the Knight Park Retail Park via a raised crossing. As part of the work for the Addendum and in response to the safety audit the crossing has been revised and a Pegasus crossing is now proposed. This will form a link between the proposed Green Route within the site and byway 44/18 as well as to the shopping facilities. Also included are further details on enhancements to bus stops that will serve residents of the application site. These works have been subject to safety audit and, while there are some details that need to be addressed at detailed design stage, are considered deliverable by the developer through a S278 agreement.

6.2. Another essential route is the route for pedestrians and cyclists is into the town centre. At the highway authority's request, the consultants undertook an Active Travel Audit (ATA) of the part of the that route that is on Peaslands Road. A number of improvements were proposed including drop kerb crossings, cycle signing, road surfacing, side road entry treatments, an off-road shared cycle/pedestrian route, dropped kerbed crossings, potential side road treatments, widening the footway to a 3m shared use cycleway footways and changes to junctions to make them more cycle friendly.

6.3. The ATA shows that there is potential to improve the route to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists, however further work is required to the proposed schemes to safety audit them and ensure they conform to LTN1/20 so delivery cannot be assured at this stage. UDC has commissioned a Local Cycle and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP), this will identify key routes in Saffron Walden and their deliverability and priority. It is therefore proposed that a proportionate sum is taken to contribute to the implementation of that part of LCWIP that will focus on the links between this area and

the town centre. This should be secured through a S106 obligation, some further details of costs have been requested from the applicant and the sum will be included in the S106.

6.4. This obligation in conjunction with the contribution to the improved bus services linking to the station and town centre, improvements to the bus stops serving the site and the travel plan will help to mitigate the impact of the development traffic on the network.

7. Permeability of the site

7.1. A number of walking/cycling accesses are proposed from the site, these are shown in principle on submitted drawing 3118/A/1202/PL/D. Key to the application is the provision of links from the application site to the residential area to the north. This will provide not only direct links to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists but also links to nearby bus stops. Submitted drawing 22078/003/A shows two potential links to Peal Road and Tukes Way across the 'Green Mile' which I understand is owned by the Town Council. I understand that there is no agreement between the applicant and the Town Council that links can be provided across the land and the Town Council have concerns that the proposed connections may not be in the best place. A contribution is proposed by the applicant to provide those links which would be secured through the S106 and the applicant should be obliged in the S106 to use best endeavours to secure the links and provide them or pay the contribution. A sum has been proposed by the applicant, this has been checked by ECC and sent back with some areas to review. A sum will be agreed shortly for inclusion in the S106.

7.2. Other links include a pedestrian/cycle route onto Thaxted Road and the provision of a multi user 'Green Route' which links to the existing public rights of way network and forms part of a longer term plan from UDC for an orbital green way.

7.3. It is recommended that a condition is used to secure the accesses, Multi-user Green Route and a high quality walking and cycling network within the site.

8. Travel Plan

8.1. The Travel Plan has been updated to include the 2011 census trips within the MSOA 002 (the site and town centre) in order to set an initial target. The proposed target is a reduction of 6% of single occupancy car trips over 5 years. The Plan includes specific actions including contribution for provision of 6 electric cycle hire bikes as part of a town wide scheme, 2 electric car club spaces with charging and support for the scheme and free hours for residents, and vouchers for cycle hire and bus travel tickets. This approach, if rigorously implemented, will help to mitigate the impact of the development on the highway.

From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to the following mitigation and conditions:

1. **Construction Management Plan:** No development shall take place, including any ground works or demolition, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Plan shall provide for;
 - I. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
 - II. loading and unloading of plant and materials,
 - III. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
 - IV. wheel and underbody washing facilities.
 - V. Routing strategy for construction vehicles

- VI. Protection of any public rights of way within or adjacent to the site
- VII. Before and after condition survey to identify defects to highway in the vicinity of the access to the site and where necessary ensure repairs are undertaken at the developer expense where caused by developer.

Reason: To ensure a managed approach to construction and the impact on the highway in the interests of highway safety and Policy DM 1 of the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies February 2011.

2. **Access:** Prior to occupation of the development, the signalised access, as shown in principle on submitted drawing 22078/006 Rev D shall be provided, including a carriageway of minimum width (at junction) of 7.3m, a footway minimum width 2m and shared pedestrian/cycleway minimum effective width 3.5m, toucan crossings on the access road and the northern arm of Thaxted Road, the junction signals shall include capability to link it to any current or future signals in the vicinity, provision of MOVA and a clear to ground visibility splays in accordance with the speed of the road. The visibility splays shall be retained free of any obstruction at all times thereafter. All necessary works including safety audits, any relocation or provision of signage, lighting, associated resurfacing or works to the existing carriageway to facilitate widening and Traffic Regulation Orders to be carried out entirely at the developer's expense. **Reason:** To ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the highway in a controlled manner in forward gear with adequate inter-visibility between vehicles using the access and those in the existing public highway in the interest of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.
3. **Off-site highway works:** Prior to first occupation the highway works shown in principle in submitted drawings 22078/006 rev D to be provided, all necessary works including safety audits, any relocation or provision of signage, lighting, associated resurfacing or works to the existing carriageway to facilitate widening and Traffic Regulation Orders to be carried out entirely at the developer's expense. The works include
 - 3.1. Pegasus crossing of Thaxted Road, including visibility splays in accordance the speed of the road, to link public right of way, byway 44/18 to the proposed greenway within the site and proposed footway cycleway. The visibility splays shall be retained free of obstruction at all times thereafter.
 - 3.2. A footway/Cycleway on the western side of Thaxted Road of minimum effective width 3.5m, to link onto Peaslands Road to the north and at least to the proposed Pegasus crossing to the south and a footway of minimum width 2m to continue south to the bus stop opposite Knights Retail Park. For the avoidance of doubt such cycleway to include full depth construction/reconstruction of any existing footway and surfacing of the entire width of the cycleway to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority
 - 3.3. Two new bus stops on Thaxted Road north of the access which shall comprise (but not be limited to) the following facilities: shelters; seating; raised kerbs; bus stop markings; poles and flag, timetable casings and real time information. Upgrade of the bus stop on Winstanley Road known as Tukes Way (adj) with raised kerbs and upgrade of stop known as The Glebe and a new partner stop with a new Essex Standard pole, flag and timetable frame. Raised and dropped kerbing and bus stop clearway markings

Reason: to improve the accessibility of the of the development by walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011

- 4. Permeability:** Prior to the commencement of the development, a scheme showing the walking and cycling network within the site and accesses to the northern residential area and Thaxted Road, as shown in principle in drawing number 3118/A/1202/PL/D including the Multi-user Green Route, shall be provided. The scheme shall provide details of any necessary surfacing, signing and lighting and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The footway/cycleways shall be constructed in accordance with the approved scheme and made available for use prior to the occupation of the first dwelling hereby permitted. **Reason:** to improve the accessibility of the of the development by walking and cycling in accordance with policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 5. Permeability walking and cycling links across 3rd party land:** Prior to commencement the developer to use best endeavours to secure links across the 'green mile; to the residential area to the north of the site and prior first occupation either pay of a financial contribution of £TBC (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to provide pedestrian and cycle links between the site and the residential area to the north, or deliver the agreed scheme. **Reason:** to improve the accessibility of the of the development by bus in accordance with policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 6. Bus services** Prior to first occupation payment of a financial contribution of £238,000 (indexed from the date of this recommendation) and a second contribution to be paid 1 year later of £238,000 (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to fund improvements to enhanced bus services between the development and the town centre; local amenities and Audley End Rail Station improving the frequency, quality and/or geographical cover of bus routes servicing the site. **Reason:** to improve the accessibility of the of the development by bus in accordance with policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 7. Walking and cycling network:** Prior to first occupation payment of a financial contribution of £TBC (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to improve the pedestrian and cycle routes between the site and key facilities in and around the town centre as identified in the forthcoming Local Walking and Cycling Action Plan being produced by Uttlesford District Council (UCD) and or the Active Travel Audit submitted in the Transport Addendum. **Reason:** to improve the accessibility of the of the development by walking and cycling in accordance with policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 8. Residential Travel Plan:** Prior to first occupation of the proposed development, the Developer shall submit a residential travel plan based on the principles in Framework Travel Plan (February 2023) to the Local Planning Authority for approval in consultation with Essex County Council. Such approved travel plan shall then be actively implemented by a travel plan co-ordinator for a minimum period of 5 years or from first occupation of the development until 1 year after final occupation, whichever is longer. It shall be accompanied by an annual monitoring fee of £1596 (index linked) to be paid to Essex County Council. **Reason:** In the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport in accordance with policies DM9 and

- 9. Travel Packs:** Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the Developer shall be responsible for the provision and implementation of a Residential Travel Information Pack per dwelling, for sustainable transport, approved by Essex County Council, to include travel vouchers and bus tickets of the value of £100 for use with the relevant local public transport operator, or cycle hire scheme. **Reason:** In the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport in accordance with policies DM9 and DM10 of the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 10. Support of Travel Plan initiatives, Car Club:** Prior to first occupation payment of a financial contribution of £64,600 (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to support the provision of an electric car and incentives for use as part of a wider Saffron Walden scheme secured by Uttlesford District Council or best endeavours to secure a scheme if a UDC scheme is not available. And provision of two electric vehicle parking spaces for the scheme. **Reason:** In the interests of promoting sustainable development and transport in accordance with policies DM9 and DM10 of the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011
- 11. Support of Travel Plan initiatives, electric cycle hire** Prior to first occupation payment of a financial contribution of £69,000 (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to support the provision of 6 electric bikes as part of a wider Saffron Walden scheme secured by Uttlesford District Council. And provision of six electric cycle parking spaces. **Reason:** In the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport in accordance with policies DM9 and DM10 of the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011

The above conditions and obligations are required to ensure that the development accords with the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011 and Uttlesford Local Plan Policy GEN1.

Informatives:

- (i) All housing developments in Essex which would result in the creation of a new street (more than five dwelling units communally served by a single all-purpose access) will be subject to The Advance Payments Code, Highways Act, 1980. The Developer will be served with an appropriate Notice within 6 weeks of building regulations approval being granted and prior to the commencement of any development must provide guaranteed deposits which will ensure that the new street is constructed in accordance with acceptable specification sufficient to ensure future maintenance as a public highway.
- (ii) In making this recommendation the Highway Authority has treated all planning application drawings relating to the internal layout of the proposal site as illustrative only.
- (iii) Any signal equipment, Real Time Passenger Information, structures and non-standard materials proposed within the existing extent of the public highway or areas to be offered to the Highway Authority for adoption as public highway, will require a contribution (commuted sum) to cover the cost of future maintenance

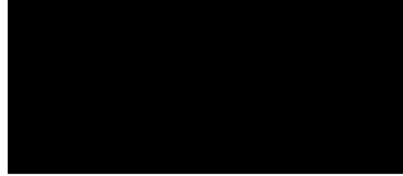
for a period of 15 years following construction. To be provided prior to the issue of the works licence. This obligation will be included in the S278 agreement with the highway authority.

- (iv) All work within or affecting the highway is to be laid out and constructed by prior arrangement with, and to the requirements and satisfaction of, the Highway Authority, details to be agreed before the commencement of works. The applicants should be advised to contact the Development Management Team by email at development.management@essexhighways.org or by post to SMO2 - Essex Highways, Springfield Highways Depot, Colchester Road, Chelmsford. CM2 5PU.
- (v) Prior to any works taking place in public highway or areas to become public highway the developer shall enter into an appropriate legal agreement to regulate the construction of the highway works. This will include the submission of detailed engineering drawings for approval and safety audit.
- (vi) The Applicant should provide for agreement, information regarding their drainage proposals i.e. draining by gravity/soakaways/pump assisted or a combination thereof. If it is intended to drain the new highway into an existing highway drainage system, the Developer will have to prove that the existing system is able to accommodate the additional water.
- (vii) The Highway Authority cannot accept any liability for costs associated with a developer's improvement. This includes design check safety audits, site supervision, commuted sums for maintenance and any potential claims under Part 1 and Part 2 of the Land Compensation Act 1973. To protect the Highway Authority against such compensation claims a cash deposit or bond may be required.
- (viii) The Public Right of Way network is protected by the Highways Act 1980. Any unauthorised interference with any route noted on the Definitive Map of PROW is considered to be a breach of this legislation. The public's rights and ease of passage over public rights of way shall be maintained free and unobstructed at all times to ensure the continued safe passage of the public on the definitive right of way.

The grant of planning permission does not automatically allow development to commence. In the event of works affecting the highway, none shall be permitted to commence until such time as they have been fully agreed with this Authority. In the interests of highway user safety this may involve the applicant requesting a temporary closure of the definitive route using powers included in the aforementioned Act. All costs associated with this shall be borne by the applicant and any damage caused to the route shall be rectified by the applicant within the timescale of the closure.

- (ix) Mitigating and adapting to a changing climate is a national and Essex County Council priority. The Climate Change Act 2008 (amended in 2019) commits the UK to achieving net-zero by 2050. In Essex, the [Essex Climate Action Commission](#) proposed 160+ recommendations for climate action. Essex County Council is working with partners to achieve specific goals by 2030, including net zero carbon development. All those active in the development sector should have regard to these goals and applicants are invited to sign up to the [Essex Developers' Group Climate Charter \[2022\]](#) and to view the advice contained in

the [Essex Design Guide](#). Climate Action [Advice guides](#) for residents, businesses and schools are also available.



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