



Active
Travel
England

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Your Ref: S62A/2023/0021
Our Ref: ATE/23/00455/RM
Date: 14 September 2023

Active Travel England Planning Response Detailed Response to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: The Planning Inspectorate

Application Ref: S62A/2023/0021

Site Address: MOORS FIELDS, STATION ROAD, LITTLE DUNMOW, CM6 3HW

Description of development:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 62A Applications)

Application for the approval of reserved matters for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 160 dwellings and a countryside park pursuant to conditions 1 and 2 of outline planning permission UTT/21/3596/OP

Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:

- a. ~~**No Objection:** ATE has undertaken a detailed assessment of this application and is content with the submission.~~
- b. ~~**Conditional approval:** ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.~~
- c. **Deferral:** ATE is not currently in a position to support this application and requests further assessment, evidence, revisions and/or dialogue as set out in this response.
- d. ~~**Refusal:** ATE recommends that the application be refused for the reasons set out in this response.~~

1.0 Background

These comments have been prepared by Active Travel England (ATE) in response to the application with reference S62A/2023/0021 and should be read in conjunction with a detailed Assessor's Report which is submitted with this formal response.

The application site is not allocated in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005. However, Policy GEN1 Access includes the following, which relates to active travel:

- c) *'The design of the site must not compromise road safety and must take account of the needs of cyclists, pedestrians, public transport users, horse riders and people whose mobility is impaired.*
- d) *It must be designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities if it is development to which the general public expect to have access.*
- e) *The development encourages movement by means other than driving a car'.*

A revised Local plan is currently being developed and expected to be adopted in 2026.

An Uttlesford District Cycling Action Plan was published in March 2018. The aims of the plan are to:

- *'Identify how cycling levels can be increased in the District;*
- *Prioritise funding for new cycling schemes in Uttlesford;*
- *Create a usable, high-quality cycle network that connects residential areas with key employment locations, railway stations and town centres; and*
- *Create opportunities to increase recreational cycling in Uttlesford'.*

The Flitch Way, which lies immediately south of the application site, is identified within the plan. It is a former railway line and designated as a Linear Country Park and Local Nature Reserve. Public Right of Way bridleway 42 (Little Dunmow) runs along it, while the route also forms part of National Cycle Route 16. Two strategic schemes are included within the plan to provide missing links into Great Dunmow.

Uttlesford District Council (UDC) has started the consultation process for a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) but this has not yet been published.

The application is for reserved matters following approval of outline application UTT/21/3596/OP. The outline permission includes the following conditions relating to active travel:

22. Prior to occupation of the development, the ghosted right turn access, 6m wide with 2 x 2m width footways, as shown in principle on submitted drawing Proposed Site Access Dwg Ref: 22268-04 and 22268-04-02 shall be provided, including a clear to ground visibility splays with dimensions of 2.4 metres by 106 metres to the north-west and 2.4 metres by 104 metres to the south-east, as measured from and along the nearside edge of the carriageway. The vehicular visibility shall retained free of obstruction at all times thereafter.

23. Prior to the first occupation of the development, the pedestrian/cycle access of minimum effective width of 3.5m as shown in principle in drawing number 22268-04-02, including a clear ground visibility splays with dimensions of 2.4 metres by 90 metres in both directions, as measured from and along the nearside edge of the carriageway. The vehicular visibility shall retained free of obstruction at all times thereafter.

25. Prior to the first occupation, the developer shall provide pedestrian and cycle accesses to the Flitch Way and pedestrian network as shown in principle on the 3202E (illustrative master plan) and provide appropriate fencing and planting between the development and the Flitch Way. No other accesses shall be provided unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with Essex County Council.

27. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby approved, the treatment and surfacing of the Public Right of Ways (PRoW) within the site to be agreed with the Local Planning

Authority. The agreed scheme to include public footpath 35/10 clearance and alignment on to its definitive route.

In addition, off-site improvements to highway and contributions to bus services and the Flich Way improvements are included in the Section 106 agreement.

2.0 Summary

The application does not provide sufficient information for ATE to be assured that the design of the development and proposed active travel infrastructure will create an environment that supports and embeds active travel. It is also considered that there are a number of ways that the design can be altered to ensure that this complies with national standards in LTN 1/20, prioritises pedestrian and cycle movements in accordance with paragraph 112 (a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and creates a healthy, inclusive and safe place as per paragraph 92 of the NPPF.

It is therefore recommended that this application should not be determined until further information has been submitted and reviewed.

3.0 National Policy and Guidance

The NPPF states:

92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

112. ...applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas...;
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; [and]
- c) create places that... minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles...;

Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking is the Government's cycling and walking plan for England. This sets the Government's vision for cycling and walking to be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030. ATE's responsibilities for walking also extend to "wheeling", such as the use of wheelchairs (self-propelled or powered) and mobility scooters.

Inclusive mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians provides guidance on designing and improving the accessibility and inclusivity of public transport and pedestrian infrastructure.

Active Design (Sport England, supported by Active Travel England and the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities) sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) provides guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure. It includes five core design principles which represent the 'essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot, based on best practice both internationally and across the UK' and detailed design standards to cycle infrastructure.

4.0 Opportunities

The application proposes a number of paths that link residential properties to the wider area including the accesses on Station Road, the Flitch Way and the adjacent development to the east and south of the application site. The internal layout is designed to be 20mph to encourage walking and cycling while side road treatments are shown that will prioritise pedestrians. These design features are welcomed by ATE.

5.0 Areas of Concern

Detailed analysis of the application is contained in the Appraiser's Report which should be read in conjunction with these comments. The key points are provided below.

The walking and cycling network within the public open space

While walking and cycling links are referred to in section 5.3 of the Design and Access Statement, the plans only identify pedestrian links and Design Code Key point 3 is headed Pedestrian Connectivity. The Pedestrian Movement Plan shows footpaths connecting to pedestrian and cycle accesses and pedestrian accesses on to bridleways. Section 5.11 Pedestrian Movement does not address cycle movements.

1. A pedestrian and cycle movement plan should be provided. This should provide direct, convenient pedestrian and cycle routes, including but not limited to links:
 - a. From the pedestrian and cycle access to the north to the Flitch Way and the proposed residential areas including the play area and allotments.
 - b. From the proposed residential area to the Flitch Way.
 - c. From the proposed residential area to the existing residential area to the east.
 - d. Consideration should be given to providing a direct link to the residential area to the north.
2. Pedestrian and cycle shared use paths should have a minimum width of 3m in accordance with LTN 1/20 table 6-3.
3. Dropped kerbs should be provided where they link to the road network in the residential area and details of the accesses to the Flitch Way should be provided.
4. The current proposal is to the surface the paths with self-binding gravel. LTN 1/20 (Section 15.2.1) states that surface quality affects the comfort and effort required when cycling. Loose surfaces such as gravel or mud can also present a skidding hazard, increase the risk of punctures and make cycles and clothing dirty in bad weather.

Cyclists are also affected by ruts and potholes that can throw them off balance. Smooth, sealed solid surfaces offer the best conditions for everyday cycling. Loose surfaces are also not suitable for wheelchair users. Therefore, the paths should be surfaced with bound material to provide a smooth surface.

5. Principles of the lighting provision should be provided. Links to the northern access to the residential areas should be lit in order provide safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists. The form of lighting should be considered with reference to LTN 1/20 sections 8.7 and 15.3 alongside any ecological requirements.
6. Where links coincide with public rights of way, Essex County Council's Public Right of Way Team should be consulted and the treatment agreed as required in condition 27 of outline permission UTT/21/3596/OP.
7. Hard landscaping plans should be updated to reflect the recommended changes.

Routes within the proposed residential area

8. A number of changes should be made to the layout to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. These include:
 - a. Provision of a footway on the western branch of the access road to link the southern and northern footways and serve the visitor parking and play areas.
 - b. Provision of a link between the private drive to the north of plot 132 and the footway proposed in a) on the western branch of the access road.
 - c. A walking/cycling access should be provided from the private drive serving plot 47 to the adjacent road for convenience.
 - d. There is potential to provide filtered permeability by creating a pedestrian/cycle access only in the vicinity of plots 132 and 29, providing priority for active travel and less traffic on the western arm of the access road. This should be considered in consultation with the local highway authority.

Cycle and vehicular parking

9. Cycle parking should be provided at the play areas as identified as best practice in Active Design (2023) Principle 7.1.
10. No detailed drawing of the cycle parking could be located for the flats. Details are required to ensure the allocated bin/cycle store is of adequate size, areas are separated, and the stands are adequate.
11. There appears to be a number of places where parking on drives is setback from the carriageway. The dimensions have not been provided to check but these could lead to the encroachment of car parking on the footways and verges if residents try to fit in additional cars. The details should be checked and ensured that they are in accordance with the guidance in the Essex Parking Standards (2009).

Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan

12. Maintenance of the lighting of routes in public open spaces should be included in the Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan.

6.0 Next Steps

This advice and the Appraiser's Report should be forwarded to the agent and local highway authority. ATE is open to reviewing any additional submitted information to help address the identified issues; with a view to providing a further response and recommended wording for planning conditions as appropriate.