



Active
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Your Ref: S62A/2023/0021
Our Ref: ATE/23/00455/RM
Date: 03 November 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.~~

Background

These comments have been prepared by Active Travel England (ATE) in response to the application reference S62A/2023/0021. ATE's initial response raised a number of issues, to which the applicant has submitted a response and submitted a number of revised drawings.

Although the majority of the issues have now been addressed, a number of outstanding matters generate concerns that it is considered appropriate to be dealt with by way of a condition and minor changes to pedestrian and cycle network.

Areas of Concern

- 1) The provision of the Access and Circulation Plan (drawing number 3261.MA.2000 rev A) is welcomed. ATE recommends two changes to the layout:
 - a) That the footpath shown blue to the north of the development, that connects from south-west to north-east connecting the western footway/cycleway, with the allotments, play area with the residential area in 3 places, is designed as a footway/cycleway to a minimum width of 3m. This will provide a direct route into the north of the development and allow walking, wheeling and cycling to the play area and allotments.
 - b) That the access to the Flitch Way that appears to be in the form of a bridge over the SUDS feature is diverted between the two features to the gap to the west - this will avoid the need for a structure that has to be maintained.

A condition is suggested below and this includes reference to the recommended changes. If the plan is adjusted that reference can be omitted and the revision number of the plan amended.

- 2) The applicant suggests that self-binding gravel is an acceptable surfacing for the routes through the public open space that link together the northern access, proposed residential area, Flitch Way, allotments and play area. ATE maintains its position that self-binding gravel is not suitable in this location. As stated in the initial response, loose material does not provide a good surface for cycling and is not suitable for wheelchair users. *Inclusive mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians* states on page 124 in the chapter on Access to the Countryside states that '*All path surfaces should be compact, firm and stable*' and that '*Loose sand, gravel, woodchips and cobbles should not be used*'. The use of such material in this location does not '*address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport*' as required by NPPF paragraph 112 b.

The proposed self-binding gravel is difficult to maintain, because ruts and pot-holes develop as the surface wears away, giving rise to degradation, pooling and the build-up of silts. ATE is aware of examples where such surfaces have disintegrated after few years and indeed it can be seen in the neighbouring development of Flitch Green, where temporary flag stones have been put down, in an attempt (which has ultimately failed) to make the path passable for all users.

Therefore, it is recommended that the condition below, which contains a requirement for sealed, solid, bound surfacing of the paths, is applied,.

The applicant's comments concerning lighting are noted and given that Station Road, the Flitch Way and pedestrian/cycle routes through Flitch Green are not lit, ATE is content for the routes through the public open space to remain unlit.

Recommended Planning Conditions and Obligations

ATE has no objection subject to the following conditions:

Off-road walking and cycling network

No development shall commence until general arrangement plan(s) to a scale of 1:200 showing details of the walking / cycling network shown in principle on drawing number 3261.MA.2000 rev A, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The exception to the plan being the footpath to the north of the site running south-west to north-east shall be provided as a shared use footway/cycleway (minimum width 3m) and the need for a bridge over the suds feature is negated. The details shall be submitted in accordance with guidance contained in LTN 1/20 on Cycle Infrastructure Design and indicate proposals for:

- Provision of sealed, solid, bound surfacing on the paths
- accesses to the highway, residential road layout and Fritch Way
- Signing, street furniture, street trees and pits
- Extent of any stopping up, diversion or dedication of new highway (including all public rights of way shown on the definitive map and statement)
- The details of any structures proposed on the network.

The development shall not be occupied until the walking and cycling infrastructure for the development has been constructed and completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To comply with policy Gen 1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, NPPF paragraph 92 and the guidance in LTN 1/20 on Cycle Infrastructure Design.

Cycle parking

The cycle parking as shown in principle on drawing number P23-0555-HT25I for flats and houses without garages and in the form of 4 Sheffield Stands at the play shall be provided prior to first occupation of the dwelling or beneficial use of the play area that it serves and it shall retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate cycle parking is provided for residents in accordance with the Essex Parking Standards and NPPF paragraph 110 c.