

Committee: EAST AREA PANEL

Agenda Item

Date: January 11, 2006

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Title: **GREAT DUNMOW PRIMARY SCHOOL –
HOUSING LAND, EASTERN BOUNDARY**

Author: Rod Chamberlain, Executive Manager (Housing Services), 01799 510508 **Item for decision**

Summary

This report advises the Panel of the issues relating to parents of children parking their vehicles in close proximity of the school. It refers to a request from Essex County Council that a strip of housing land running along the eastern boundary is turned into a footpath and highlights that there could be opposition to this proposal from nearby residents.

Recommendations

That the Panel indicates whether or not it wishes for Officers to enter into negotiations with Essex County Council regarding the proposal to create a footpath along the eastern boundary of the Great Dunmow Primary School.

Background Papers

The following papers were referred to by the authors in the preparation of this report:

1. File re housing land in question
2. Correspondence from relevant agencies during 2005

Impact

Communication/Consultation	There will need to be an explanation given to residents in the Newton Green area of this Council's final decision.
Community Safety	There are issues about the safety of people using a new pathway and also with children getting to and from school.
Equalities	N/A
Finance	Could require some general fund expenditure.

Human Rights	N/A
Legal Implications	Agreement of responsibility will need to be resolved.
Ward-specific impacts	Both Great Dunmow wards and some nearby wards.
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

- 1 The new Dunmow Primary School opened in September 2005. It is situated adjacent to the B road formerly known as the A120. The front access to the school is from Woodlands Park Drive.
- 2 Since the school opened there have been significant problems with parents attempting to park as near as possible to the school to drop off and collect their children. There is no specific parking area to allow this to prevail. The Council has had to take action to try and avoid parking in Stortford Road. This has proved to be very difficult to manage.
- 3 Currently Essex County Council is constructing a 12-vehicle lay-by at the rear of the school. However, pedestrian access from this area will still be very difficult. At the front of the school there will be parking restrictions along Woodland Park Drive at relevant school times although there will be pedestrian access available to the school.
- 4 Along the eastern boundary of the school there is a strip of housing land, which has become an unofficial pedestrian access route to the main road. This strip of land, it is understood, has had limited use in the past.
- 5 A request has been received from Essex County Council for this Council to approve that this strip of land is made up to form a proper footpath. Essex County Council is prepared to allocate some funding for this proposal. Should UDC have to contribute it would need to be General Fund expenditure as Housing Revenue Account money can only be used for the general benefit of tenants.
- 6 If a path were established it would cause very major parking problems on the nearby Council estate at Newton Green as this would clearly be the nearest dropping off area. The school has opened a gate along this boundary.
- 7 If Members are minded to approve this proposal, there will need to be discussions with Essex County Council regarding ownership, funding and maintenance and with Essex Police regarding safety and lighting issues. The Police have expressed some reservations about the suitability of this pathway being formally constructed.

- 8 Members will need to be aware of likely opposition as a reaction from residents in the Newton Green area.
- 9 Further information will be available at the meeting.

Options

- 10 No action.
- 11 Agree to request of Essex County Council

Pay-Offs/Penalties

- 12 Proposal could assist the wider community by allowing parents to get their children to school.
- 13 There is likely to be significant hostility from residents in the Newton Green area.

Risk Analysis

- 14 The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
If pathway created will create hostility from nearby residents	HIGH	HIGH	Explanation of Council policy needed may settle down in time.
Will help the school function	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Will provide an area for parents closer to school.
Safety issues along path which could become overgrown	MEDIUM	HIGH	The area would require ongoing lighting and maintenance (at a cost) and cutting back of trees