

GREAT DUNMOW TOWN COUNCIL



26th November 2019

FOR THE ATTENTION OF MADELEINE JONES, UDC

BY EMAIL ONLY

NEW COMMENT: UTT/18/2574/OP - LAND SOUTH OF STORTFORD ROAD

The Town Council (GDTC) has been in dialogue with the applicant, UDC planners and ECC Highways to remove objections previously raised. GDTC is satisfied that the developer has responded positively to the points raised and a further meeting has been arranged with UDC and ECC Highways to seek reassurance from them on our key concerns, which will have a long-term impact on the town.

1) **Prematurity**

GDTC is satisfied that the planning application is not premature regarding a conflict with future requirements for dedicated bus lanes in the Stortford Road for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, as outlined in the Uttlesford Local Plan Examination Document ED13. The issue raised by GDTC because the current planning application has no provision for a dedicated bus lane along the Stortford Road or the bypass road. If it is a Local Plan requirement, it is logical that consideration should be given to providing one as part of this site allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

ED13 states:

Table 2.13 up to 2033 the BRT will run:

- Along B1256 on segregated bus lane from junction with B184 eastward
- On B1256 between junction with Stortford Road and junction with Chelmsford Road, running along B1256 in mixed traffic but with priority. Due to limited requirements for local access along this road section, car access could be restricted by traffic signals at busy times to ensure free flow of BRT vehicles

Table 4.2 shows yellow type 2 segregated (highway) and green type 1 segregated (new)

Table 2.14 Through Great Dunmow – beyond 2033

- Along B1256 on segregated bus lane from junction with B184 eastward
- On B1256 between junction with Stortford Road and junction with Chelmsford Road, running along B1256 with an aspiration to make this road section a dedicated BRT route

However, Essex County Council responded to the developer and UDC by email on 20th September 2019,

‘Bus Rapid Transit Proposal

The recent report issued by Essex County Council identifies possible routes for a BRT, system to link east west across Essex between proposed garden communities. The section identified on Stortford road is for priority within highway, at present there no preliminary designs for the scheme but it is likely that it will take the form of bus lanes leading to the roundabout so that the bus can jump the queue. This development will not compromise delivery of BRT in the future and it is unable to provide additional land for the scheme as Folly Farm has boundary up to the highway and is not included in the application site. The development has been designed so that a bus can go through it on the link road, and a contribution to a bus service will be provided. Some changes are being made to the submitted drawings so that the initially proposed cycleway on the south side will be shortened and moved right to the back of highway land. The second stage is reserved matters only so there are options provide a bus gate and provide walking/cycle links as required, which will provide other options to be considered as more detailed design of the BRT is progressed.

Therefore the highway authority does not take the view that this development will prohibit the implementation of a future Bus Rapid Transit system.’

Furthermore, the applicant responded to GDTC by email on 24th September 2019, ‘The County specifically point out that the bus route is meant to be on line other than where it approaches the roundabouts where an additional lane is being considered. Along our site frontage as I pointed out at the meeting the existing trees and elevated section of road which falls steeply away would precluded widening of the highway along this frontage and third party land between our site and the remaining Siemens land also prevents widening of the road even if it was a requirement.’

On the basis of this new information, GDTC withdraws its objection that the application is premature.

2) **Pedestrian crossings:**

GDTC supports the two proposed crossings on the B1256 Stortford Road however these do not reduce the need for a third controlled crossing on the B1256 to link the Dunmow Cutting, Fritch Way and Honeysuckle Community Woodland with High Meadow and High Stile residential areas on PRoW 32.

- GDTC raised a request with the Local Highways Panel (LHP) in 2016 due to the road safety issue and public demand for safe access to public open space.
- The Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (GDNP) policy GA2: Integrating Developments (Paths and Ways) which ‘should also be linked to the green spaces of the wildlife corridor network’, in this instance areas 7 & 8 of the Policy NE2 Wildlife Corridors. It is important to provide safe access for the new development and equally important for the existing community in neighbouring residential areas such as High Stile.
- The applicant highlighted the issue on p45 of the Design and Access Statement, describing the current road crossing point as ‘precarious’.

- The Town Council attended a LHP meeting on 15th September 2019, where Cllr Susan Barker (ECC) gave her support to the Town Council request. Rissa Long (ECC) confirmed at the meeting that there was no technical reason why a controlled crossing could not be installed at that location.
- All five Gt Dunmow ward councillors wrote to Cllr Susan Barker in support of GDTC's request for the crossing.
- The applicant confirmed to GDTC by email on 8th November that Kier is willing to fully fund the 3rd crossing to the Flitch Way, to allocate and ring fence £180,500 specifically to fund this crossing.
- This sum was indicated by ECC Highways as being the appropriate cost.

Subject to an appropriate s106 agreement and planning conditions, GDTC withdraws its objection.

3) Health centre and school:

Justification for this housing allocation is 'regarded as an enabling residential development to support the provision of a medical centre and a new secondary school with playing fields'.

Essex County Council has subsequently adjusted their requirement to a land allocation for general education use, to which GDTC has no objection.

It is disappointing that the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group cannot agree to build a medical centre on the land allocated for this purpose. GDNP policy wording specifies not only the provision of land for the purpose but also the building itself, 'the provision of a new Health Centre of approximately 1800sqm floorspace together with parking and an ambulance pick up/drop off point (and in accordance with NP policy HE11)' which requires that 'there should be adequate parking spaces for staff and patients'.

The applicant suggests that wording in the s106 agreement allocates land for a building with D1 use so that the building could initially be used as a community hall or creche, however the Town Council does not have the means to fund or implement the construction of the building. The Town Council would, however, consider managing it as a community building with priority use for medical services. Further liaison with UDC planners is required to reassure GDTC that the building will be provided.

4) Harm to views from the Flitch Way:

GDTC raised concerns over the location of a 3-storey apartment block and its detrimental impact on the views. The applicant has responded by producing revised plans which show a partial height reduction of the building and substantial screening of the flats enabled by moving the footpath to the west of the building.

The Town Council withdraws its landscape objection, subject to appropriate conditions on landscape screening.

5) Flitch Way enhancements:

The Town Council supports all additional requirements requested by the Friends of the Flitch Way, for path improvements and connectivity.

6) **Public transport:**

GDNP Policy GA3: Public Transport states, 'New developments should be integrated into the local bus network and appropriate public transport infrastructure and support for services will be sought where appropriate from developers to ensure this'.

The GDNP Position GA-A states: 'Great Dunmow Town Council will continue to work with bus operators and other stakeholders to improve public transport services to and from Great Dunmow.'

Further to discussions the developer has already had with ECC Highways for financial contributions and the inclusion of a bus route within the development, the applicant should also be aware that the 313/313A bus service is currently under threat of full withdrawal in 2020.

GDTC requests that the agreed financial contribution to public transport includes a sum specified by ECC Highways to be ringfenced for the local bus service, in accordance with the town's Neighbourhood Plan (GDNP) objective:

'Great Dunmow will be serviced by a comprehensive and usable public transport network, with routes operating regularly and frequently to a wide range of valued destinations.'

The Town Council withdraws its objection subject to legal agreement to secure adequate financial support for public transport and planning conditions to specify travel plans to encourage new residents to use the local bus service.

Conclusion

The Town Council (GDTC) **supports** the hybrid planning application for 440 homes and associated infrastructure, subject to appropriate legal agreements and planning conditions to be imposed by UDC, which will make the application compliant with the GDNP and satisfy matters 1-6 (above) raised by the Town Council.