



**Project: Land South of Radwinter Road  
(East of Griffin Place), Saffron Walden**

**Client: Rosconn Strategic Land**

***Technical Note- Response to ECC Highways Comments***

*Project No.: CTP-20-1142*

*Date: December 2021*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Cotswold Transport Planning (CTP) has been appointed by Rosconn Strategic Land (the Applicant) to provide transport and highways advice in relation to an outline planning application for up to 233 new dwellings on a site to the south of Radwinter Road (East of Griffin Place) in Saffron Walden (UDC Planning Ref: UTT/21/2509/OP).
- 1.2 The planning application was supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP) prepared by CTP.
- 1.3 Following submission of the planning application, a highways consultation response has been received from Essex County Council (ECC). This Technical Note provides a response to the comments received from ECC. The comments received are reproduced in bold italics, followed by the CTP response.

## **2. General**

***This proposal is located at the extreme north western edge of Saffron Walden town and is over 2km away from many of the services there, it is considered that the majority of trips will be undertaken in the car and the planning authority should take this into account when considering the overall sustainability of the site.***

- 2.1 There are a number of facilities within a 2km distance of the application site, including the Tesco store, Shirehill Industrial Estate and schools including Saffron Walden Nursery School and RA Butler Junior School. The proposed school within the Dianthus Land site will also be within 2km. The provision of a pedestrian link on Radwinter Road will allow future residents to access these facilities on foot. The



development also includes provision of a bus service with stops adjacent to the site on Radwinter Road that would also allow journeys to be undertaken by non-car modes. It is considered that the new footway link to the Linden site together with the proximity to new bus stops on Radwinter Road, will provide future residents with realistic opportunities to walk and travel by bus and play their part in reducing the number of single occupancy car trips.

- 2.2 Furthermore, the SHLAA assessment undertaken by UDC as part of the emerging Local Plan identifies the site as being within acceptable distance of a number of local facilities including a secondary school, hospital, retail, and employment centre.
- 2.3 As such, the site is considered to be a sustainable location with opportunities for travel by sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.4 It is also noted that when considering the adjacent Linden Homes site at outline planning application stage (UDC ref: UTT/13/3467/OP), UDC / ECC concluded that the site is a sustainable location, with particular reference to a number of local facilities including many of those listed above and Audley End station, which was noted within the UDC Committee report as being 5.9km from the site. It would therefore seem inconsistent to now conclude that the application site, which lies adjacent to this development, is not a sustainable location.

***The permeability of the site for active travel is also of concern there are limited opportunities for cyclists and no direct pedestrian or cycle routes to the adjacent developments and onwards.***

- 2.5 As set out within the TA, a link to the adjacent Linden Homes site has not been pursued as it is not supported by Saffron Walden Town Council who currently manage the area of public open space over which the link would pass. The proposed footway on Radwinter Road between the site and the Linden access is considered to provide an acceptable level of pedestrian connectivity.
- 2.6 Again, the site can be considered a sustainable location with opportunities for travel by sustainable modes of travel.

***The local plan is currently under consideration and options for Saffron Walden are being considered and evidence gathered. It has been acknowledged in the application that a relief road may be required. There is some intention to address this in the text, however it cannot be identified where this is illustrated***



***on plans making this clear, either for the potential junction with Radwinter Road or safeguarded land for a future link. The potential route is through the residential area which may not be acceptable in the long term.***

- 2.7 The new Local Plan is at an early stage in its development, and no potential options for future development have yet been put forward by Uttlesford District Council (UDC). It is understood that UDC is considering options for potential development of land to the east of Saffron Walden however this process is at a very early stage and so it is unclear how much weight can be afforded to any future aspirations at this stage.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding the above, the submitted masterplan has reserved land around the site access on Radwinter Road to allow future upgrading of this junction. This is demonstrated through there being no development within the vicinity of the junction, including any strategic infrastructure such as drainage features.
- 2.9 In addition, the masterplan also makes allowance for the widening of the primary route carriageway if required in the future through provision of enhanced verge widths. A strip of land has also been reserved at the southern end of the site to provide a connection into the adjoining land if required.
- 2.10 The route of the relief road through the residential parcels does not prevent it from functioning as a relief road, and this approach has been taken elsewhere. This is considered a preferred approach to placemaking rather than locating the road on the edge of the development with no interaction between the development and road corridor.
- 2.11 As such, the proposals will not prohibit the development of further land to the south in the future, in the event that these wider development aspirations come to fruition.

### **3. Access**

***The submitted application has not demonstrated that safe and suitable access for all users has been achieved because:***

***a. A safety audit and audit of the access and associated works against the standards in CD123 has not been provided for the access arrangements.***

***b. No visibility splays have been demonstrated for proposed pedestrian crossing to the east of the proposed access***



***c. Further information is required concerning the delivery of the scheme in relation to the level differences and changes to geometry of Radwinter Road on the bend. It is not clear that the vegetation shown on the topographical survey, which is likely to form the boundary for the highway, allows a 2m footway to be provided within the highway or land in control of the developer***

***d. The footway on the north side of Radwinter Road which links to the proposed bus stop and on to PROW 315/22 to Swards End is not to a current 2m standard width and will not accommodate 2 pedestrians passing.***

- 3.1 Completion of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) could be conditioned as part of any planning permission if considered appropriate by ECC. Notwithstanding this, a Stage 1 RSA of the site access is to be undertaken and will be submitted once completed together with a designer's response.
- 3.2 Visibility splays at pedestrian crossings could be annotated on the access drawing and would be as part of the detailed design of the proposed highway works.
- 3.3 It is unclear what further information is required regarding the delivery of the scheme. The adopted highway data provided by ECC shows sufficient land to provide a footway to the west of the site and in this location, where there are no changes to the geometry of Radwinter Road or significant level differences between the carriageway and verge. To the east of the proposed access, a new 2m footway is proposed on the southern side of Radwinter Road to serve the westbound bus stop and the proposed uncontrolled pedestrian crossing which provides access to the eastbound bus stop. The footway terminates at the crossing point.
- 3.4 There is sufficient highway verge to widen the footway on the northern side to 2m between the pedestrian crossing and bus stop. Widening further to the east is not considered necessary on the basis that demand for pedestrian movement from the site to the east i.e., to Swards End will be very low. On this basis the existing footway between the site and Swards End is considered adequate.
- 3.5 Sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed site access is safe and suitable to serve the site and that amendments can be made as part of the detailed design to include pedestrian visibility splays and widening of the footway on the northern side of Radwinter Road between the new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing and the eastbound bus stop.



#### 4. Capacity

***It cannot be determined from the submitted application that the residual, cumulative impact is on the road network is acceptable for the following reasons:***

***a. The historic traffic data used to produce the flow diagrams has not been provided.***

***b. The background growth applied with TEMPRO does not appear to be correct.***

***c. The rationale behind the internal trip assumptions requires further explanation and the percentage flows are required.***

***d. The base case includes committed development and link road which is not the current position.***

***e. ECC requires a scale drawing to be provided showing the geometric measurements for each of the junctions assessed in order for the models to be checked. The base models should be calibrated using the queue length surveys. These surveys should also be appended to the TA.***

4.1 The historic traffic data used within the assessment was taken from the approved planning application for the Kier / Bellway and Dianthus Land sites and this approach was agreed with ECC as part of pre-application discussions in view of the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions at the time that prevented the collection of traffic flow data. In addition, the data collected as part of these planning applications is considered to remain valid for use.

4.2 Given this approach was agreed with ECC, it is not considered necessary to provide the historic traffic data, since this has previously been reviewed and considered acceptable for use.

4.3 It is unclear how ECC consider the background growth applied using TEMPRO to be incorrect. The TEMPRO growth factors were adjusted to take account of committed development, and so avoid double counting of future development, and this approach is an accepted approach to calculating traffic growth factors as acknowledged within DfT guidance. It is also noted that during pre-app discussions, ECC suggested not applying traffic growth, however the approach adopted was subsequently agreed.



- 4.4 The trip generation and distribution calculations were submitted to ECC as part of pre-app discussions and agreed by officers who responded to an initial submission with a request for amendments to the proportion of traffic to / from the east. No comments were received in relation to the internal trip assumptions, and on this basis, these were considered to be agreed for use within the TA. It is therefore unclear what further explanation is required at this stage.
- 4.5 As it was agreed with ECC that the traffic flow data that formed the basis of the assessment has been taken from previously approved planning applications, a 'base' case assessment (i.e. the current situation) has not been presented. Base case assessments were presented as part of these previous planning applications and accepted by ECC and therefore it is not considered necessary to present these again as part of this application.
- 4.6 Given the above, the junction models including geometric input parameters have also been taken from the previous planning applications and as such there is no need to re-validate the models. Validation of the models has been undertaken as part of these previous applications and subject to review and acceptance by ECC. The use of these previously accepted models therefore ensures a consistent approach to modelling with the previous approved assessment work undertaken.
- 4.7 It can be concluded that sufficient information has been presented, and that it is based on an approach that has been agreed with ECC. The overriding conclusion of the agreed approach is that the proposed development will not have a significant detrimental impact on the local highway network.

## 5. Accessibility

***3. The submitted application has not demonstrated that pedestrian and cycle movement with neighbouring areas have been given priority.***

***a. There is no permeability from the site to allow easy access to the adjacent development and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.***

***b. The quality of the key routes for pedestrians and cyclists has not been assessed and limited improvement is proposed for mitigation***

***c. The potential of the public right of way network to link the site to the adjacent village has not been assessed.***



- 5.1 As set out above, the link to the adjacent development site cannot be provided. The proposed footway link on Radwinter Road provides for pedestrian connectivity between the site and the adjacent development, as well as connectivity with the existing pedestrian network further to the west.
- 5.2 The existing pedestrian routes to the west are considered suitable to allow future residents of the site to undertake journeys on foot. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are no dedicated cycle facilities on Radwinter Road, this is not considered a barrier to cycling for future residents since they could cycle on-carriageway.
- 5.3 It is also noted that no off-site pedestrian and cycle improvements were required as part of the development of the Linden Homes site, and that the Uttlesford District Cycling Action Plan proposes no improvements on Radwinter Road. It is acknowledged that there are limited opportunities for significant improvements to cycle infrastructure on Radwinter Road due to the limitations of the existing highway network, particularly carriageway / footway width which would preclude provision of dedicated cycle facilities.
- 5.4 Pedestrian demand from the site to the east will be low, particularly demand to Seward's End. Pedestrian demand will be to destinations in Saffron Walden to the west. On this basis it is not considered necessary to provide any improvements to the PRoW network to the east of the site.
- 5.5 It can be concluded that the application makes adequate provision for pedestrians and cyclists within the context of the existing highway network such that future residents will have opportunities to undertake journeys by non-car modes of travel.

## 6. Mitigation

***4. The submitted application has not demonstrated that the mitigation proposed in the application will be deliverable for effective for the following reasons:***

***a. A safety audit and audit of the highway mitigation works against the standards in CD123 has not been provided for any of the mitigation schemes***

- 6.1 Consideration of the deliverability of these schemes has been undertaken to a level of detail typical to support a planning application. The design of the proposed works would be developed further at detailed design stage.



6.2 Completion of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) at each junction could be conditioned as part of any planning permission if considered appropriate by ECC. Notwithstanding this a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) of the proposed off-site highway works is to be undertaken and will be submitted once completed together with a designer's response.

***c. Radwinter Road/Thaxted Road junction:***

***i. Space around this junction is very constricted and there are a number of utilities in the footway***

***ii. The lane width for the head traffic from east to west is too does not reflect the future use by HGVs or buses***

***iii. The right turn arrow towards Chaters Hill send traffic into the kerb line***

***iv. The mitigation is to the detriment of pedestrians***

6.3 As set out above, the design of the proposed works would be developed further at detailed design stage. This would include consideration of the location of existing utilities and any diversion works that may be required.

6.4 The lane widths at the Radwinter Road approach reflect the maximum achievable to deliver the proposed improvements and are considered consistent with DMRB guidance which permits lane width of 2.5m. It is recognised that there would be a minor reduction in capacity as HGVs use the junction, but this would be low, particularly during the critical peak periods.

6.5 The right turn arrow for vehicles turning right into Chaters Hill is positioned to ensure stacking capacity for vehicles turning right into Thaxted Road is maximised. An amended kerblines on the northern side of the junction is proposed to accommodate the path of vehicles turning right into Chaters Hill. As Chaters Hill is one-way northbound, there would no risk of vehicles being in conflict with opposing vehicles.

6.6 It is recognised that the pedestrian crossing of Thaxted Road is to be relocated to the south of its current position however this is not a significant deviation from the current pedestrian route. In addition, the crossing of Radwinter Road (E) is lengthened but again this is not a significant increase over the existing crossing length. These amendments are required to deliver the highway capacity



improvements and are not considered to result in a significant detrimental impact to pedestrian movements at the junction.

- 6.7 As set out above, the design of the proposed works would be developed further at detailed design stage and any opportunities to reduce the impact on pedestrians further would be considered. The proposed works would not have a significant detrimental impact on pedestrian movements and would provide additional highway capacity. Sufficient information has been provided at this stage to demonstrate that the proposed works are deliverable and could be conditioned as part of any planning permission for the development.

***d. Thaxted Road Junction with Peaslands Road***

***i. The lane widths should be appropriated in relation to bus/HGV numbers***

***ii. Crossings should be a consistent width***

***iii. The signals at the committed access should be taken into account when considering this scheme.***

- 6.8 The lane widths are dictated by land availability and the need to provide sufficient capacity at the junction, and are considered consistent with DMRB guidance, which permits lane width of 2.5m. It is acknowledged that there would be a minor reduction in available capacity as HGVs / Buses use the junction, but the number of these vehicle movements would be low, particularly during peak hours.
- 6.9 The width of crossings can be amended as appropriate and would be reviewed as part of the detailed design of the proposed works.
- 6.10 The signals at the access to the Bellway site are approx. 190m to the south, so there should be no interaction between the two junctions that would require further consideration at this stage.
- 6.11 As such, it is considered that the proposed junction amendments are appropriate and would provide both additional capacity at the junction as well as controlled crossing facilities for pedestrians such that there would be an overall benefit to these being secured as part of any planning permission for the development. Sufficient information has been provided at this stage to demonstrate that the proposed works are deliverable and could be conditioned as part of any planning permission for the development.



**e. Church Street High Street**

***i. The deliverability of this scheme has not been adequately demonstrated it will be difficult to add control to due to the narrow footways and carriageway. Position of the equipment and maintenance bay, the presence of vehicle crossings and cellars and deliveries to local businesses have not been taken into account.***

***ii. Any signal placed in this location would have to be linked to the existing signals on the high street, which may require refurbishment of the whole system.***

6.12 Again, the design of the proposed works has been developed to a level of detail typical of a planning application, and this would be subject to further development at detailed design stage. Whilst it is acknowledged that footways around the junction are of limited width, there is already existing infrastructure including traffic signs that could be rationalised to assist in reducing the impact of the required traffic signal equipment on pedestrian amenity.

6.13 In addition, existing loading restrictions already prevent businesses in the vicinity of the junction from undertaking deliveries in this location.

6.14 There is only one other set of traffic signals on the High Street and given the distance between these junctions (over 130m) it is not considered that linkage would be required for these two junctions to operate satisfactorily.

6.15 The proposed mitigation would provide additional capacity at the junction and sufficient information has been presented at this stage to demonstrate that the proposed works are deliverable and could be conditioned as part of any planning permission for the development.

***f. It has not been demonstrated that the Travel Plan will be effective in promoting sustainable modes of transport and reducing the car trips.***

***i. The objectives does not include reducing single occupancy vehicle use***

***ii. It does not contain the targets around increasing walking, cycling or bus travel***

***iii. The time frame and targets do not extend to the full occupancy of the development***



***iv. The action plan does not contain key actions to promote sustainable travel***

***iv. The action plan does not contain key actions to promote sustainable travel***

- 6.16 The Travel Plan contains a commitment to reduce the number of vehicle trips at the site, which would include those undertaken by single occupancy vehicle.
- 6.17 Specific targets for an increase in the use of other modes were not included since the main objective is to reduce SOV trips. Any reduction here would result in an increase in the use of other modes and so there is no need to set specific targets for each mode of travel, although this could be incorporated into the full Travel Plan if considered to be required by ECC.
- 6.18 The Travel Plan does contain a commitment for the TPC to be in place for 5 years from occupation of the final dwelling, although the targets do not cover this full period. The Travel Plan targets could be amended as part of the submission of a full Travel Plan if required by ECC.
- 6.19 The Travel Plan contains a number of measures to promote sustainable travel including welcome packs and travel vouchers. It is therefore unclear what key actions are not included. Again, the full Travel Plan could include additional actions as appropriate.
- 6.20 It is anticipated that the requirement for a Travel Plan would be secured via planning condition / S106 obligation as part of any planning permission, with the full Travel Plan to be submitted prior to occupation of the site. The full Travel Plan could therefore include revised targets, and additional measures to promote sustainable travel.

## **7. Summary and Conclusions**

- 7.1 This Technical Note has been prepared in response to the highways consultation response received from ECC in response to the submitted planning application. Having considered the ECC comments, it can be concluded that:
- The site can be considered a sustainable location and opportunities for travel by non-car modes are provided as part of the development.



- Limited weight can be attributed to aspirations for future development of land to the south of the site, but the proposed development would not prevent this coming forward. The illustrative site masterplan has been developed to ensure that future upgrading of the site access, and widening of the primary route carriageway can be undertaken in the future, whilst a strip of land has also been reserved at the southern end of the site to provide a connection into the adjoining land if required.
- The approach to the assessment of the highway network was agreed with ECC as part of pre-application discussions and is based on traffic flow data and junction models that have been accepted by ECC previously. As such, there is no requirement to present an assessment of base traffic flow or re-validate previously agreed models and the information presented is sufficient to ensure a robust assessment of the highway network. This demonstrates that the development will not have a severe impact on the local highway network.
- The proposed off-site highways mitigation has been developed in sufficient detail at this stage to demonstrate they are deliverable and suitable to provide additional highway capacity. In addition, a Stage One Road Safety Audit has been commissioned to identify any issues that may need to be addressed at this stage.
- The Travel Plan contains a commitment to reduce vehicle trips at the site and a package of measures to promote the use of sustainable (non-car) modes of travel. A full Travel Plan would be secured as part of any planning permission that could incorporate any additional measures or amendments as required by ECC.

7.2 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in transport and traffic terms and meets the policy requirements as set out in paragraph 110 of the NPPF as:

- Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes will be taken up;
- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
- The design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflects current guidance; and
- There will be no significant impacts from the development on the transport network in terms of both capacity and congestion.

7.3 As such, the development will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the residual cumulative impact on the road network will not be severe



such that there are no highways and transport reasons why the proposed development cannot be granted planning permission.