

## Planning and Transport Committee

24.09.2020

### Agenda Item 6a

#### **UTT/20/2007/FUL | Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a discount foodstore, a 70 bed care home and 49 no. retirement living apartments with access, car parking, landscaping and associated works. | Land South Of Radwinter Road (former Printpack Site) Saffron Walden**

This report assesses the proposed development through the framework and guidelines of the [Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan \(SWNP\)](#). Although the neighbourhood plan is not yet officially in place, it has been through several public consultations both formal and informal and has been presented and fully endorsed at several public council meetings. As such it can be said to fairly represent what the public in Saffron Walden expects from development.

This report also assesses the proposed development through the framework and guidelines of the [National Design Guide \(NDG\)](#) and the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), both of which are material considerations for this application.

#### ***1. Principle of development and proposed use***

The application site is within the town's development limits. The site is brownfield and therefore is a priority site for re-development (taking precedence over greenfield sites). The site is allocated for employment, and the proposed uses are mainly employment (Lidl, care home). The other part of the site proposes a residential use however as the proposals are for high-end retirement flats, it might be considered to provide slightly more employment than general housing (the flats will have a site manager on duty, landscaping contractors, cleaners and, one assumes, in the fullness of time some residents will also employ private care workers). On the grounds that the retirement flats will provide some employment, the proposed combination of uses is acceptable.

The proposed uses accord with the paragraphs 117 and 118 of the NPPF which encourage making best use of brownfield land.

#### **Recommendation:**

**1) Not to object to the principle of development of a supermarket, care home and retirement flats on the site.**

#### ***2. Vehicle Traffic***

The emerging SWNP notes concerns about increasing numbers of HGV vehicles and pedestrians in a constrained streetscape. The number of HGV vehicles generated by the construction of the development and the operation of the Lidl are a cause for concern as they will make existing pollution levels worse, and make Radwinter Road even less conducive to walking and cycling.

SWTC notes that the former packaging factory on the site generated traffic, and that this baseline of previously acceptable traffic must be deducted from the total amount of traffic that is forecast, and that therefore it is the net increase alone which must be considered.

The Linden Homes site currently in development (outline application UTT/13/3467/OP) puts a heavier strain on Radwinter Road and the Thaxted Road/Road junction than was anticipated when the planning permission for it was granted. In response to the application for that site, ECC highways noted that this site would need, in the long term, a link road between Radwinter Rd and Thaxted Rd. Recognising that the link road may be undeliverable, or at least a very long term prospect, [ECC said](#) that it did not object to that development, subject to a condition that a connection be created to the Shire Hill industrial estate. UDC neglected to add this condition to the permission when it was granted. Accordingly, there is no apparent way of obliging the developer to open the connection road. While the connection road remains unopened, that development puts a heavier load on the road network than anticipated at the time that consent was granted. By not actioning the mitigating measure, this development is effectively in breach of the non-objection of ECC. To further follow the logic of ECC, if the connection road was required to make the Linden Homes development acceptable in planning terms, because of the traffic that it would create on Radwinter Rd, then the traffic levels on Radwinter Rd must now be unacceptable without the connection road. Therefore, it follows that this proposed application would add cumulatively to an already unacceptable situation and is therefore unacceptable in traffic terms.

**Recommendation:**

**2 a) To object to any development of the Printpak site on grounds that Radwinter Rd has unacceptable levels of traffic already.**

**2 b) To remove objection to development of the site when the connecting road is opened by the Linden Homes and there is a ban on HGV traffic on Radwinter Road between the site and the junction of Radwinter and Thaxted Rds.**

### **3. Foot Traffic**

The emerging SWNP puts an emphasis on encouraging sustainable travel, noting that a particularly high proportion of the population relies on the private car<sup>1</sup>, and that because of this a large portion of the town is in an Air Quality Management Area because of pollution. The more sustainable travel that we can encourage, the better. The SWNP notes that *“10.2.2 A well-connected neighbourhood can encourage sustainable journeys. Where connections that can be made on foot or bicycle are quick and convenient, people are more likely to choose these modes of travel. Where footpath connections are not short, residents may find themselves forced to take longer routes and consequently choose to travel by car”*. This statement was informed by missed opportunities at the Tudor Park development which doesn't link to Tesco and the development by the Water Tower where people climb over a fence (even with prams) to avoid walking the long way round, and with a firm ambition to prevent similar town planning errors in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Census 2011 – 85% of the population has access to a private car as opposed to 75% across England as a whole.

The NDG encourages planning for accessible and connected developments and specifically asks planners *“Have you considered how to reduce reliance upon the private car? Moving away from car use for short journeys? Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport?”*

During early consideration of the application, SWTC officers made great efforts to persuade Lidl to pursue the possibility of acquiring land behind the site to join up with Shire Hill, or to at least secure a permissive footpath agreement. This would have gone some way to reducing the vehicle traffic on Radwinter Rd as it is logical to assume that shoppers at Lidl will travel from the Shire Hill direction. The Senior Acquisitions Consultant at Lidl declined to pursue this option. Therefore, effectively all the trips to the site will be by private car. See 2. *Vehicle Traffic* above.

Since the land required for the footpath is privately owned, it is not within the control of the developer to acquire it, and therefore planning permission could not be refused on grounds that the footpath is not provided. It could however be viewed that the site, by dint of having no alternative access at the back, is unsuitable for a supermarket.

#### **4. Parking**

The SWNP is clear in that parking provision needs to be adequate. Saffron Walden has a high level of vehicle ownership, and this is not forecast to reduce. Further, public transport is not forecast to increase, in fact quite the opposite is anticipated as public sector budgets are stretched. Policy SW7 Design point 5d supports infill development so long as it provides adequate parking. Policy SW8 specifically requires that parking provision on all developments must provide for spaces as per the ECC parking standards, which have been adopted by UDC.

The NPPF paragraph 105 is perfectly clear on how parking standards should be set, and the particular circumstances of this site are such that there is no good reason to drop the parking standards. Appendix B sets out the facts.

The parking provision at the proposed site is insufficient. Essex County Council guidelines say that the supermarket and the care home have maximum standards of provision (because they are trip destinations, therefore the logic goes that restricting parking spaces at destinations makes people travel by alternative means). However, the retirement home has minimum standards of provision (because it is a trip origin, studies show that restricting parking in residential areas doesn't reduce the numbers of cars people have, it only causes them to park elsewhere).

The developers first claimed that the development as a whole meets parking standards by combining the maximum spaces and the minimum spaces. So SWTC has asked the developers to stand by this statement by confirming that should there be excess need at the residential site or the care home, the excess vehicles will be allowed to park at Lidl. If they are correct that there are enough spaces at each site, then the Lidl will never be troubled by cars from the other sites and they would be safe to allow this in principle.

The developers then said that each element of the site needs to stand alone, i.e. indicating that they would not be receptive to the idea of allowing other cars to park in the Lidl spaces. This indicates that they know that there are not enough spaces at the other elements of the site, and that allowing the need generated there to spill onto the Lidl site would be detrimental to the Lidl site.

The developers then suggested that deliberately restricting parking provision at the retirement home site, and not allowing overspill onto the Lidl car park would help to prevent car ownership at the retirement home. This does not stand because (a) studies show that restricting parking at residences doesn't restrict car ownership, it merely moves it elsewhere and (b) if they do not want the excess cars to park at the Lidl, but accept that there will be excess cars then they must be expecting them to fly park around the neighbourhood, which is unacceptable.

The developers cannot have it every way, they must choose a position, and the recommendations below anticipate the possible positions:

#### **Recommendation**

##### **4 a) Either:**

Developer Position (i) The developers consider that there is sufficient parking across the site as a whole, and as such is willing to put a permission in place in perpetuity that eventual overspill parking would be allowed at the Lidl at no charge, safe in the knowledge that this will never be taken up.

##### **Not to object on grounds of parking provision**

Developer Position (ii) The developers consider that each element of the site needs to stand alone in terms of parking.

##### **To object on grounds of insufficient parking at the care home and the retirement home and the likelihood that there will be fly parking in the area.**

Developer Position (iii) The developers consider that each element of the site needs to stand alone in terms of parking, and that restricting availability of spaces at the retirement home and care home is desirable.

##### **To object on grounds that this strategy is known not to work and that there will be insufficient parking at the care home and the retirement home and the likelihood that there will be fly parking in the area.**

In all circumstances, the spaces must meet the ECC standards in terms of size. The plans do not specify this. Should they not:

#### **Recommendation**

##### **4 b) To object on grounds that the spaces are too small.**

The retirement home has a proposed 0.4ha footprint – 49 flats on this is a density of 123 dwellings per hectare. [The Essex Design Guide](#) notes the difficulties of providing adequate parking for high

density dwellings, such as blocks of flats, and suggests solutions: *“It can be difficult to provide space for car parking at ground level while still achieving an attractive urban living environment at housing densities greater than 50 dwellings per hectare. In order that public space is not compromised while current parking standards for Essex are applied, well design and innovative parking schemes should be provided, particularly, on schemes of greater density. If the public realm and space behind buildings are cluttered with parked cars, it allows little scope for creating quality space for socialising, play, walking or cycling. Solutions may include underground, underdeck parking, roof top and multi storey car parking.”* There is precedent for underground parking for flats as a solution in Saffron Walden; the redevelopment of the brownfield Moore’s Garage site<sup>2</sup> provided mixed commercial and residential use, the residential element comprising 10 flats for which 24 underground spaces were provided. While the design of the building itself remains controversial in the town, the open space around it, which is not dominated by parking and has space for planting, is aesthetically successful. We should seek to replicate successes not failures.

**Recommendation:**

**SWTC recommends that the developers explore the options of underground parking, as otherwise they cannot seem to fit all that they are trying to fit in to the space available, which would be objectionable as overdevelopment of the site.**

**5. Protection of Conservation Area**

The assessment of the proposed development’s impact on the land immediately to the north and east of the site was considered, however the impact on the land to the west was not. This is a failure on the part of the application.

The land to the west is particularly sensitive to development because it is: a cemetery, within a Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the development, holds War Graves.

Since the impact assessment failed to consider the impact on the cemetery, it also failed to suggest mitigating measures. It is almost certain that mitigating measures would have been suggested had they been considered because they have been suggested for the care home. See Appendix C for further reasoning.

As a final note, the noise impact assessment was carried out during the early stages of the COVID lockdown<sup>3</sup> and cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered to be an accurate representation of day to day normal traffic. The noise impact assessment must be re-run.

**Recommendation**

---

<sup>2</sup> [UTT/14/2003/FUL](#)

<sup>3</sup> See paragraph 5.1

**5 a) To place a holding objection on the whole development until a second Acoustic Design Statement & Noise Impact Assessment is carried out to assess audio impacts of the proposals on the cemetery and make recommendations on mitigating measures.**

The application proposes to remove a number of trees at the north/front/Radwinter Road side of the site which have Tree Preservation Orders.

The SWNP Policy SW7 Design 4c says *“Developments must demonstrate that they: Integrate well with existing neighbourhoods while seeking, where appropriate, to improve the aesthetic of the immediate area”*.

Although the trees are in some respects unremarkable in themselves, their density unarguably screens the site from the road in a manner that is aesthetically more pleasing than the site will be if developed as proposed. Instead of a green screen, viewer will see a car park and the blue lit signs of the Lidl. Thus the proposals do the opposite of the SWNP policy.

SWTC has been informed by UDC that if the permission is approved, this effectively also removes the TPOs. UDC could however apply a condition to an eventual permission that the trees are not to be removed.

The developer will argue that the Lidl needs to be advertised from the road. This argument holds no water; in Saffron Walden the Waitrose is extremely busy and almost completely hidden from all directions. Gentle signage at the entrance of the site should be adequate to advertise the location for out-of-town shoppers. One would expect it to be within the capabilities of a brand of the size of Lidl to develop external branding that is appropriate for a Conservation Area (similar to the way, for example, that McDonalds changes its branding for heritage areas). All shoppers from within the town will have no trouble finding it even with the trees.

The application proposes the replacement of some trees, but these are unlikely to perform the same screening role, since the reason for removing the screen is apparently to increase visibility of the site.

### **Recommendation**

**5 b) To object unless the trees are protected by condition. Should the trees be removed, an appropriate sum be provided for woodland or nature conservation elsewhere in the parish.**

## **6. Ecological Concerns**

### *Ecology*

As noted above, the trees to the north/front/Radwinter Road side of the site, while not ‘grand’ unarguably provide a continuous band of vegetation, which absorbs pollution and hosts wildlife. The removal of these trees will remove this habitat. While the site has not been vacant for enough years to have become naturalised to the point where it should be afforded legal protection, it has

become naturalised to a point whereby it hosts many birds and bats. The redevelopment will displace this wildlife, and the resumption of human activity on the site through the proposed dense use will not naturally encourage its return, despite the proposals for environmentally friendly mixed planting of the site.

The plans do not obviously provide for bat and bird nesting boxes on the new building; these would be a very inexpensive and beneficial addition to the site. Government legislation and building regulations does not require the installation of these boxes, and so their omission from plans cannot be a reason for refusal. SWTC can only request that Churchill Retirement Living, Care UK and Lidl show industry leadership in sustainability and adopt corporate policies specifying bird and bat nesting boxes at their sites. In 2019 SWTC added bird and bat boxes in the cemetery.

### **Recommendation**

**6 a) To request that the developers add bat and bird boxes to the proposals.**

### *Surface Water*

It is noted that the proposals involve more impermeable surfaces than on the current site. SWTC would like to see more permeable paving being proposed. It is also noted that excess surface water that cannot be absorbed will be discharged to the sewer system.

Affinity Water's response notes that the development will draw water from an area which is already classed by the Environment Agency as water stressed, and suggests that the development explores measures such as rainwater harvesting.

The development will meet statutory requirements. However despite the East of England being officially water stressed for well over a decade, the government's statutory requirements still do not include rainwater harvesting measures. Therefore implementation of rainwater harvesting for uses such as flushing toilets remains voluntary for developers. A quick desk-based search shows that they are relatively inexpensive to install at the start of a development (while very costly to retrofit).

It is noted that Churchill Retirement Living, Care UK and Lidl have not voluntarily put forward proposals to reduce mains water use in their new developments in water stressed areas by using rainwater harvesting. SWTC can only request that Churchill Retirement Living, Care UK and Lidl show industry leadership in sustainability and adopt corporate policies specifying rain water reuse at their sites.

On this particular site, rainwater harvesting would both reduce use of mains water and help to reduce the amount of rainwater which enters the sewer system. While it would be the only sustainable option, government regulations mean that this is not something SWTC or UDC can insist upon and therefore is not a valid reason for objection to the development.

### **Recommendation**

**6 b) To request that the developers add rainwater harvesting equipment to the proposals.**

## **7. Developer Contributions**

The applicant has included an Affordable Housing and Viability Statement as a supporting document to the application. This statement serves to demonstrate that the development is exempt from providing affordable housing through Vacant Building Credit (VBC) allowances. VBC is a simple calculation which has regard only to the square meters of vacant buildings to be demolished and the square meters of residential space proposed to replace it. VBC has no regard to overall scheme viability and can be applied to any qualifying development, regardless of expected returns.

The Affordable Housing and Viability Statement makes no mention of scheme viability; therefore it can be presumed that the scheme is as viable as any other in Saffron Walden. Therefore, it is appropriate for this development to make other community contributions, since it will bring additional traffic and residents to Saffron Walden.

It is expected that the care home will be largely self-sufficient. The retirement flats will bring new residents to the town (either directly – people moving in from elsewhere or indirectly – people downsizing from within in the town). The Lidl will bring car traffic to the site which is at the edge of the town. In order to mitigate against the impact of the development, the following community contributions are required, which meet the statutory 6 tests below:

Test 1—Necessary

Test 2—Relevant to planning

Test 3—Relevant to the development to be permitted

Test 4—Enforceable

Test 5—Precise

Test 6—Reasonable in all other respects

### **7 a) To request a leisure contribution from retirement homes: £4,612 per dwelling - £225,988**

This is *necessary* because the retirement homes will create residents with the time for leisure activities, and all the leisure facilities in Saffron Walden are underfunded and overcapacity, as evidenced in the Uttlesford District Council Sports Facilities & Recreation Strategy Assessment Report (Knight Kavanagh & Page Ltd, December 2018 - May 2019)

This is *relevant to planning* because it is directly related to mitigate against the increased numbers of residents that would be created by the grant of planning permission.

This is *relevant to the development to be permitted* because it makes specific consideration of the demographic of the new residents who will be created by the grant of planning permission.

This is *enforceable* in that the funding would be met directly by the developer and is therefore within the control of the developer.



It is *precise* in that it is a specific sum per household which was recommended by the document which is still in the public domain: Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy (The Landscape Partnership, 2012)

It is *reasonable in all other respects* in that it is common practice for a development to be asked to contribute towards leisure facilities in the locality.

**7 b) To request an emergency healthcare contribution from the care home and retirement flats: £14,000**

We expect that the demographic residents of the retirement home and the care home will be such that emergency healthcare will be called upon more frequently than it would be for a mixed-age residential development. This will place a disproportionately high pressure on the emergency services and volunteer First Responders. The NHS response submitted by West Essex CCG only takes into account the demand that the development would place on the doctor's surgeries and omits to consider the impact on emergency services, which is why they are now being considered here.

The £14,000 is made up of:

£4,000 for two new public-access defibrillators on the east of the town in locations to be recommended by the First Responders. While we expect that the care home and retirement home will have their own defibrillators, they will not be public access and therefore of no use to the general public, which might need them while the First Responders are attending an incident at the development.

£10,000 towards general equipment for the First Responders – the NHS funds consumables however all other equipment is funded by donation. The volunteer First Responders use their own cars. This contribution will enable them to purchase additional equipment to meet the additional demand.

This request passes the test of being *necessary, relevant to planning and relevant to the development to be permitted* because while the NHS has requested funds towards healthcare, this has been calculated at a standardised formula which equates to £206 per head of new population. This formula may be appropriate for standard housing, however the resident demographic of this specific development is such that emergency healthcare must also be funded (as set out above).

This is *enforceable* in that the funding would be met directly by the developer and is therefore within the control of the developer.

It is *precise* in that it is calculated by adding up specific needs.

It is *reasonable in all other respects* in that it is common practice for a development to be asked to contribute towards healthcare facilities in the locality.

---

**Notes for Planning and Transport Committee – SWTC officers have already been in contact with the other authorities in an effort to secure the best outcomes for the town. The developer has**

**noted that the SWTC has been consulted on the application in the run-up to the application being lodged; it should be a matter of public record that SWTC has expressed its concerns throughout this period. These concerns have included all of the issues outlined here baring the noise impact because the noise impact assessment had not been seen. Here is an update:**

- Noise impact – the noise impact assessment was not a public domain document and therefore was not available to the town council until the planning application was lodged on the planning portal. Since it has been on the planning portal, SWTC officers have contacted UDC Environmental Health to ask them to consider the noise impact on the cemetery, in the hope that an additional study could be done while the application is being considered.

Update from the developer 18/09/2020 : “In terms of noise, we have discussed this with our noise consultant (MLM) and they are currently undertaking additional modelling in respect to the issues flagged regarding the cemetery. We will give you an update on that as soon as we receive this information ourselves.”

- Parking – the low amount of parking being proposed has been clear from the start – long before the application was formally submitted - and SWTC has always expressed concerns about this. SWTC officers have been in touch with ECC and UDC to express concerns about parking as the level of parking proposed, and has made this clear to the applicant at each meeting.

Update from the developer 18/09/2020 : “Regarding the parking, we want to reiterate that there are no plans to impose any rigid car parking restrictions by Lidl. Indeed, we have discussed with Lidl the point you made about utilising some of Lidl’s car park by both the Churchill and/or Care UK users, and they have no issues in principle with having an informal agreement of such nature, should that ever be necessary.”

- SWTC officers have been in touch with ECC and UDC to ask if the proposed developer contribution towards buses could be worded flexibly in the Section 106 so as to be able to be spent on either buses or studies to review the local bus services. In meetings with developers the developers indicated that the principle of this would be acceptable to them. This would allow maximum and best benefit to the town to be derived from the contribution.
- The developer has noted that the SWTC has been consulted on the application in the run-up to the application being lodged; it should be a matter of public record that SWTC has expressed its concerns throughout this period. These concerns have included all of the issues outlined here baring the noise impact because the noise impact assessment had not been seen.

Update from the developer 18/09/2020 : “Lastly, in terms of the access to the rear. As promised, we have looked further into this but there are some practical issues associated with having such arrangements. As previously mentioned, the biggest constraint is the ownership issue. This is

somewhat outside of our control and as outlined in our previous discussion there are some potential safety implications. In addition, having looked into the details of this, we identified that this would require a 'break' in the proposed acoustic fence which has implications on the proposed noise mitigation measures."

- SWTC notes the public responses to the online survey and the strength of feeling demonstrated by responses to the live application.

## Appendix A – Reasoning for Highways Mitigation Measures

### No HGV/LGV Access on Radwinter Rd from Thaxted Rd lights to Printpak entrance:

ECC and UDC has secured an 'eastern connector' road from Shire Hill to the east of Tesco. This road is designed to move traffic away from the polluted Thaxted/Radwinter Rd traffic lights and reduce congestion on the northern part of Thaxted Rd and Radwinter Rd. Two things are required to make this happen.

- a. The Eastern Connector needs to be opened. It is built but has not been adopted by ECC whilst the build out of the Linden estate is underway, and so is closed by the developer outside of working hours. ECC is unlikely to adopt this crucial road until construction has finished and so construction and utility to the road is over.
- b. An HGV/LGV ban through the Thaxted Rd lights and along Radwinter Rd to the entrance of the former Printpak site

These two actions would immediately reduce the HGV traffic in the area, the worst pollution and the lorries that often clog both Thaxted and Radwinter Rds. The principle sites on the east of Saffron Walden with HGV/LGV traffic are Shire Hill, Ridgeons, Tesco, Homebase, Jossaumes, and the Printpak site. All these could easily be accessed via this new route.



The adoption of this route would also reduce HGV access in the town centre as more of it would now use the southern connector along Mount Pleasant Rd/Peaslands or the high/wide load route via Carver Barracks.

Opening the route would also have the effect of naturally siphoning off a good proportion of the residential traffic to the new route

All of the benefits of the connection were outlined clearly in the transport assessment for the [application UTT/13/3467/OP](#).

## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

### Reasons why proposed quantum of parking is insufficient and unacceptable

The parking provision is inadequate by Essex Parking Standards, and this is acknowledged in the outline travel plan.

Essex Parking Standards differentiate between:

Trip origins (homes) where parking standards are minimum; and

Trip destinations (commercial, leisure and retail), where parking standards are maximum.

Use and Essex Parking Standards	Parking Provision according to Essex Parking Standards	Parking Provision proposed	Shortfall
<b>Supermarket</b> 2178 sq. m. 1 space per 14 sq. m.	Maximum - 156	123	Shortfall: 33
<b>Retirement home - Residents</b> 49 flats 1 space per dwelling (this is the absolute minimum – in fact the 2-bedroom flats ought to have 2, but assuming retired couples run one car between them)	Minimum - 49	24	Shortfall: 25
<b>Retirement home - Staff</b> Not counted or provided for however the travel plan says there is a full-time lodge manager, and part time gardeners, cleaners etc. Assume 3 members of staff on site at any one time during the day.	Maximum - 3	0	Shortfall: 3
<b>Care home</b> 70 beds. 60 FTE members of staff, but 22 per shift. 1 space per employee and 1 space per 3 beds.	Maximum 45	24	Shortfall: 21
	253	171	<b>Total shortfall</b> <b>82 Spaces</b>

Even being as generous and as pragmatic as possible, there is a shortfall of 82 spaces. To give this some context, the development only provides 68% of the parking it should provide.

#### *Is the site “well-served” by public transport?*

The Travel Plan and wider application documents propose building two new bus stops on Radwinter Road with real time travel data panels. The Travel Plan fails to point out that bus services will not be able to serve staff working on the morning and afternoon shifts at the care home because they arrive and leave before and after the shifts start and end.

## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

There are 4 buses which call at or near Radwinter Road.

Two of them, the 301 and the 60 do not call at or near Radwinter Road after the end of the middle shift at the care home, and therefore will not be usable by the staff of the care home in middle and late shift of the care home. Similarly they are unlikely to be used by the younger working offspring visiting residents of the care home and the retirement home in the evenings.

The number 6 just about serves the middle shift of the care home but calls at limited destinations, and as with those above, is of no use to late shift workers or afternoon/evening visitors.

The number 34 calls twice a week so can be discounted.

It simply cannot be said that the site is “well served by public transport”. Thus, the position put forward by the developers that consequential numbers of staff and visitors will use buses to access the site flies in the face of the timetabled reality and should be ignored accordingly. We must accept and plan for the fact that staff and visitors to the site will arrive by car.

It is common knowledge that private care providers have staff who travel from to client to client, site to site by private car, on tight time schedules. It is not reasonable to suggest that these trips could be made by public transport. This applies to both the care home and the flats.

### *Shortfall at Care Home*

The Travel Plan states that typically only 50% of employees at Care UK homes travel by car, while the rest use alternative means of transport. The Travel Plan then refers to the appendices in the Transport Assessment for evidence. The appendices provide no comparison between the availability of public transport, walking and cycling options at the proposed site and the sites selected for comparison in the transport assessment. Therefore, this statement of 50% cannot be assumed to bear any relevance to considerations of parking standards at the application site and should be ignored accordingly.

A care home is a trip destination for parking because the residents do not drive. In theory therefore, 45 should be considered a maximum of spaces not a minimum. However, the Essex Parking Standards say that “*residential parking should reflect the local circumstances of a development*”. Quite clearly, the local circumstances mean that alternative means of transport are unlikely.

The parking provision proposed at the application site for the care home is unacceptably low, and should be at or very close to the maximum.

### *Shortfall at retirement home*

The shortfall of parking proposed at the retirement home is substantial. The applicant suggests that there is relevant case law created at appeal which means that retirement homes don't need as much parking as 'normal' homes. Some of this appeal precedent appears to be based upon the work of Dr Allan Burns, advisor to retirement home developers McCarthy and Stone.

## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

Dr Burns notes<sup>4</sup> that Census data suggests that 22% of residents at retirement homes do not own a car. He then adds *“Experience suggests that more than 22% of the residents in this form of housing are likely to be non-car owners. Persons entering this form of housing are undertaking a lifestyle change and my surveys show that a significant number either give up car ownership before they enter this form of housing or in the same year that they make this move.”*

Considering only past experience to the exclusion of future trends is a disingenuous selection of facts.

There are at least three very obvious reasons why car ownership is likely to rise from past low levels at retirement homes, at least those in rural towns such as Saffron Walden.

i) Rural bus services are in decline. It is a nationally recognised fact that it is not easy to run rural bus services, and ECC, like other public transport providing authorities, is looking for cuts to this non-statutory service. While everyone would like to see more buses, to hope that buses may one day be more rather than less ubiquitous is clearly wishful thinking.

ii) Statistically, more retired people will have driving licences –

First, in the past more men than women had driving licences. The graph (DfT data) below illustrates this. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in recent years, far more men in the retirement population had a driving licence than women.

This is compounded by the fact that women live slightly longer than men. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that retired females slightly outnumber retired males. Combining these well-known facts, it is very easy to explain why in the past, residents of retirement homes were less likely to have cars.

However, the graph below illustrates very clearly that driving licences are now much more prevalent amongst women, particularly since 1998. In the future the dramatic discrepancy between the number of retired female and male drivers will disappear, as the graph shows.

Second, the number of drivers overall has increased. According to the graph below, approximately 75% of the population has a driving licence in 2020, compared to about 65% in the early 1990s. The graph shows just the proportion of the population with licences; the population has increased as well in those years. In absolute numbers 75% of the 2020 population is greater than 75% of the 1990 population, thus the difference shown in the graph below is not 10%, it is greater. When these people retire, they will still have their driving licences. This is a much higher number than past generations of retirees. They will also be more likely to continue driving into older years because:

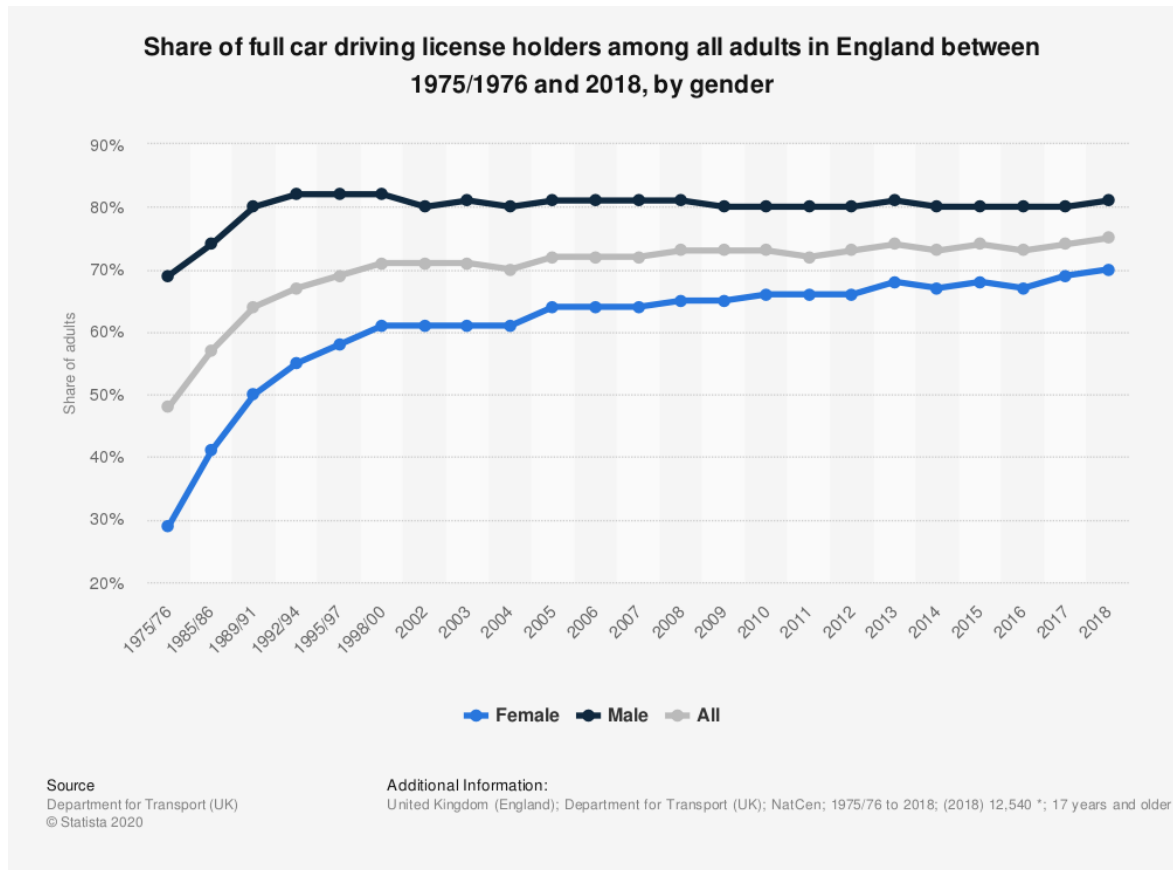
iii) Cars are becoming more autonomous. While the days of completely self-driving cars may seem a long way away, it is already the case that modern cars assist drivers far more than they used to. ‘In the old days’ older people would tend to give up their cars after a few too many bumps and scrapes. Now that cars are self-parking, or at least have parking sensors and aids, and monitor distance while driving, older drivers are likely to keep their cars for

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s14854/Working%20Paper%206.pdf>

## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

longer. This is an informal assessment, but it would be difficult to argue its logic. Car manufacturers no doubt keep data which would back this up, otherwise they would not invest so much in the self-driving technology aimed at this growing market.



For all of these reasons it has to be assumed that levels of car ownership are likely to rise in the retirement age category.

It also has to be accepted that Saffron Walden is a rural town, and the proposed retirement flats are aimed at the higher end of the retirement market. It is inconceivable that the residents of these flats will live their lives constrained within the boundaries of Saffron Walden. They are most likely to have funds and lifestyles which allow them to continue to travel widely for leisure activities and to visit friends and family further afield. They will need cars to do this.

Therefore, provision of parking spaces at retirement homes has to be brought into line with normal residential accommodation, perhaps with a caveat that a 2-bedroom retirement property could provide just one space instead of two as many retired couples, especially those downsizing in accommodation, only need one car between them.

The Essex Design Guide Parking Standards notes that restricting parking at trip origin sites (i.e. housing) does not constrain car ownership, and that it should not be attempted as a tool to achieve this. It says: *A fundamental change included in the revised parking standards [i.e. the current 2009 standards] is a move to minimum standards for trip origins (residential parking) and maximum*



## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

*standards for trip destinations (for example, commercial, leisure and retail parking), acknowledging the fact that limiting parking availability at trip origins does not necessarily discourage car ownership and can push vehicle parking onto the adjacent public highway, diminishing the streetscape and potentially obstructing emergency and passenger transport vehicles.*

The parking provision proposed at the application site for the retirement home does not meet minimum standards and therefore is unacceptable.

### *Shortfall at supermarket*

Parking at the supermarket is insufficient. However, this could reasonably be left to the discretion of the supermarket. If there is famously nowhere to park at the Lidl, residents will simply drive to other supermarkets. It is unlikely that shoppers will fly park in the neighbourhood to get to the Lidl when other local supermarkets have ample parking close to their front doors. Putting it plainly, insufficient parking will be Lidl's problem, not the community's.

### *On-street parking amenity*

On-street parking on Radwinter Rd impedes traffic but it is an important facility for local residents, many of whom are unable to add off-street parking to their properties. The access to the Printpak site is close to the Elizabeth Way traffic lights. In order to make increased access to the site work, it is likely that a parking restriction will need to be implemented on a portion of Radwinter Rd. Some of this may move to the dedicated parking spaces at the back of those properties. It is acknowledged by the developer that at least one house will completely lose its parking. This property should be given a space within the scheme/site red line.

### **Reasons why Essex Parking Standards are appropriate as per the NPPF: (NPPF text in italics)**

*105. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:*

*a) the accessibility of the development;* The development can only be accessed from one road and the site has low permeability. Therefore the site users will be highly likely to use cars.

*b) the type, mix and use of development;* Essex parking standards allow for maximum parking standards and minimum standards depending on the type of development and therefore rightly take 105b into account.

*c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;* Saffron Walden has very little public transport and such that there is, is in decline.

*d) local car ownership levels; and* Local car ownership levels are particularly high as demonstrated above, and this is unlikely to reduce given demographic, lifestyle and technological trends, plus the reduction of public transit alternatives.

*e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.* The development provides for these.

## Appendix B – Reasoning for Parking Mitigation Measures

Arguably, the Essex Parking Standards, in setting maximum parking standards, fail a location such as Saffron Walden, in which maximum parking standards are not appropriate according to the NPPF:

*106. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. As is demonstrated above, maximum parking standards will not manage the local road network in Saffron Walden because it is not well served by public transport. Applying maximum parking standards to a development within the town will densify the neighbourhood to the detriment of the visual and practical amenity.*

### **Reasons why proposed sizes of parking spaces is insufficient and unacceptable**

The parking spaces proposed are too small by Essex Parking Standards. As with the quantity of parking, again the developer leans on appeal precedents supported by Dr Allan Burns, who references cases in Saffron Walden<sup>5</sup>.

The thrust of his argument is that retirement homes don't need large parking spaces because: *"the majority of residents of this form of housing are unlikely to need, wish or possibly afford to own 4 x 4s or even SUVs"*. This line of argument does not stand up in the case of this development; someone who cannot afford an SUV or a 4x4 car is unlikely to be able to afford one of the proposed retirement flats, which the developer has acknowledged are a luxury housing product.

He also argues that people in retirement homes don't need big family cars any more, however their children and families are likely to have such cars and use them to visit.

The same is true for the visitors of residents in care homes – their families will be likely to visiting in larger family cars.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://pad.basingstoke.gov.uk/documents/4753/01/18/71/01187170.PDF>

## Appendix C – Reasoning for Conservation Area Mitigation Measures

### Reasons why the audio and visual impact assessment is inadequate

The site is immediately adjacent to one of the Conservation Areas, and therefore great weight must be given to the protection of this area. The site borders onto the cemetery of the town, and the cemetery has two buildings in it, which are both Grade II listed.

Because of the Conservation Area, the listed buildings, and the specific use and of the land as a cemetery, development adjacent must be very carefully and sensitively considered. Development that is detrimental to the visual and aural tranquillity of the cemetery would be substantially harmful and according to the NPPF, would require “*clear and convincing justification*” (paragraph 194). There is no clear and convincing justification for the current proposals which are detrimental to the site.

#### Visual protection

At the boundary between the application site and the cemetery are a number of mature trees, and the maps indicate that these are on the application site land. The Historic Environment Assessment leans heavily on the presence of these trees to justify the application, which, because of the screening provided by the trees, will not be harmful to the cemetery. The HEA says: “*Furthermore, the mature trees along the boundary of the study site with the cemetery, where the new supermarket is Land at Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3HY July 2020 21 proposed, will be retained. Therefore, the part of the existing modern building that is visible from the cemetery would be replaced with a new modern building of a much smaller scale. It is unlikely that the supermarket building will be visible from within the cemetery, and if glimpsed, views would be of the top of the roof, which would slope away from the cemetery, and which would be far less visually intrusive than the existing building.*” These trees must be protected by Tree Preservation Order, and a planning condition that they must be retained at all costs.

Lighting and signage associated with the Lidl is likely to be visually intrusive in the Radwinter Road residents and the hours of operation must be limited by condition to the opening hours of the store.

#### Sound protection

It is very disappointing that the Acoustic Design Statement & Noise Impact Assessment makes no mention whatsoever of the impact of the development on the cemetery, and only focuses the assessment of the impact of the proposed supermarket on the proposed care and retirement homes. It finds the north and east sides of the store potentially detrimental enough for the care home to need a 2.5m barrier wall between it and the supermarket.

However, it is the south and the west sides of the store while will create the most noise, and these are the sides which are immediately adjacent to the cemetery.

To the south is the loading bay area which will be served by 6 deliveries a day, for one hour each, during which time the delivery vehicles are assumed to be running their refrigeration units. This means that there will be 6 hours per day of vehicle noise right next to the cemetery.

## **Appendix C – Reasoning for Conservation Area Mitigation Measures**

To the west is the back wall of the store. No drawings have been provided but it is reasonable to assume that this will be the wall which hosts all the refrigeration units and other noisy machinery. This is not even mentioned, never mind risk assessed. It is clear this that will be extremely noisy and therefore detrimental to the cemetery.

The noise forecast to be generated by the supermarket is well above that which would be acceptable for a private garden, and this would be worsened during delivery times.

It is essential to place a holding objection on this application for this reason until a second Acoustic Design Statement & Noise Impact Assessment is carried out to assess audio impacts of the proposals on the cemetery and make recommendations on mitigating measures.