



1. Shared use A134 footway-cycleway

Among the very greatest concerns of Great Horkesley Parish Council is the impact of the construction vehicles on the A134, the only main road in our village. There are four settlements on the road, the largest on Horkesley Heath in the south and the smallest around the ancient All Saint's church two miles to the north; the road is also the only link between the settlements and Trinity Secondary School. The only practicable route on foot or bicycle between the settlements, beside which runs a footway which in places is only one person wide. The road carries in excess of 5000 vehicles per day in each direction.

Various traffic management features have been introduced onto the carriageway over the years in order to persuade traffic to adhere to the speed limits and to help people cross to and from bus stops. Whilst these have generally been successful, an HGV travelling at 30 or 40 mph alongside a footway only one person wide can still be frightening. In places, if two people are approaching each other, one has to step into the carriageway to pass the other.

We have been told that in order to accommodate some 300 movements of construction traffic per day, much of our hard-won traffic calming and other safety measures along the A134 will need to be removed. That is the source of our greatest concern: there are no alternative routes for our cyclists and pedestrians, including the Trinity School pupils who twice-daily use the footway alongside the 60 mph section of the A134 – here, there can be no alternative because the A12 trunk road lies between the village and the school.

The A134 is in poor condition, having been patched and re-patched by way of short-lived repair over many years. The areas around the five mini roundabouts that are the main components of the traffic calming and accident prevention were omitted from the last resurfacing. In these areas unsealed patching is widespread with the result that the road here is particularly prone to water ingress and damage during the winter months.

The Council anticipates that before construction plant can start to use the road, it will need considerable reinforcement. It also anticipates that once construction has finished, further remedial work will be required. This is perhaps where the greatest potential benefit from the construction project to the village is to be found. The Council expects that as part of the planning consent, if it is forthcoming, there will be conditions requiring the applicant to ensure that during construction, pedestrians and cyclists will be able to use the section of the A134 between the settlements – essentially that section known as The Causeway – no less safely than at present even though there will be more, and larger, vehicles using it.

The enduring benefit to the village from these works should be that as the A134 is reinstated after the construction phase, a shared use footway-cycleway would be constructed along the entire length of The Causeway from Tile House Lane or perhaps even Coach Road in the south to Tog Lane in the north, and if possible beyond to London Road where it branches from the A134. If this means permanently narrowing the

carriageway, so be it: the likely outcome will be slower vehicle speeds, another benefit to village residents.

For the first time there would be an off-carriageway link between the settlements that comprise Great Horkesley. It would give the vast majority of residents a “green” access to the Dedham Vale National Landscape via Tog Lane and, on the other side of the A134, Boxted Church Road. Given connectivity with other cycle-friendly routes already negotiated to run generally southwards from Horkesley Heath and beneath the A12, it would also open up safer “green” access to the Dedham Vale for residents of Chesterwell and north Colchester generally.

2. Community Woodland

Great Horkesley Parish Council has two further two proposals for legacies from the construction project. Firstly, on the assumption that there will be considerable landscaping of the new buildings left behind, it is suggested that a community woodland be created. Nothing of the sort currently exists in the village and there is little prospect of land currently used for agriculture being purchased for that purpose. While it would not be close to the greatest population on Horkesley Heath, it would of necessity lie close to, and have access from, the A134, alongside which would run the shared use footway-cycleway linking all the settlements, including Horkesley Heath. It would thus be available to all village residents who might choose to make use of it.

3. Great Horkesley Community Trust

The final proposal is for a community trust to be established. At present, there is comparatively little publicly-owned land in the parish beyond the 14 acres of the Jubilee Green which the parish council is in the process of acquiring from the City Council. Once that transfer is complete, the parish council will establish through public consultation a Jubilee Green development plan to improve its potential for recreational and fitness use by residents; this plan will require funding. Furthermore, under draft proposals being worked up by CCC planning policy, during the period of the emerging Local Plan further land in the village is expected to come into public ownership, the recreational development of which would require funding.

From this point of view, the timing of the works in the village by UK Power Networks will be poor: it is likely that by the time the addition recreational land becomes available, the construction phase will be complete. To overcome this, a trust fund is suggested, with at least one trustee appointed from or by the permanent UK Power Networks staff based in the area. The role of the Trustees would be to approve the contribution of funds to recreational projects connected with any community-owned buildings or land in the village, according to criteria to be agreed at the outset. The operation would be similar to that of the old Landfill Trusts, with the exception that funding would be drawn from a capital sum and therefore be finite rather than generated as a proportion of landfill tax. Wherever possible, the source of the funding would be permanently acknowledged.