

W. Kellett 4 Wintergreen Fields Objection to Firethorn document TN009 Application 21/01630/OUT

The most recent TN009 seems to continue to find more ways in which to suggest that the solution is to utilise the existing infrastructure only, using Charlotte and Braeburn Avenue for the long-term vehicle access to the proposed 530 homes, and that this will somehow manage to cope with the traffic levels the new development will bring. This demonstrates a blinkered approach by the developer who is clearly more concerned with cost rather than an open approach where the needs and amenity enjoyed by Elmsbrook residents is not significantly impacted. At no point does the Developer consider the alternative, to make the proposed temporary 3rd access for construction traffic into a permanent junction - and OCC's reviewer has already stated that they see no reason why this couldn't be done.

The problem is that the methods proposed by the Developer ignore where the true problems lie, and still refuse to acknowledge these, and do proper calculations – and make use of the most recent (September 2021) traffic surveys and monitoring data, to test the many assumptions applied using their model. In fact, ignoring this vital source of data does lead to the feeling that perhaps it is being deliberately ignored, for fear it will give an unwanted answer – namely, concurring with Elmsbrook's Traffic and Parking Committee's previous analysis, showing the traffic levels are vastly underestimated by the model.

I believe that this application is to come to Planning Committee in September and I would like this objection noted. The application is problematic it does not address the zero-carbon aspect of the Eco Homes and simply focuses rather badly on the traffic aspects of the application presumably as this has received most push back from residents and interested parties. My comments relate to the Developers latest TIA and I will rely on CDC to take appropriate action with respect to the other planning conditions that apply to the Eco Town.

Please consider each of the following points in turn, and consider that alternative solutions can potentially avoid all of these issues:

1. This most recent TNs focusses on the stretch of road *North* of Gagle Brook School, where there is the longer narrow stretch to 4.1 metres – and *not* the stretch South/East of the school, by the park, where the traffic flow is higher and there are 2x one-way bottlenecks to 4.0 metres and with double bollards 0.50 m from the curb sides – at each of 4 locations here. These – even tighter impingements on traffic flow – continue to be completely ignored (we have pointed them out 3 times now, and have yet to see any response related to them), despite the fact that these take more traffic (than the North side) in the 8-9AM peak hour, and are the main reason that the predicted traffic levels are so inaccurate: if they are not modelled properly, then the true impact remains unassessed.

2. For the stretch of road *North* of Gagle Brook School, the suggestion is made to widen the 4.1 m section north of the school, albeit with an issue already raised being the existence of trees in the pavement regions. Doing this would also, as we understand it, reduce the widths such as to then prevent the footpath(s) being for both bicycles and pedestrians. Since this is one of the 2x main stretches used to walk and cycle the pupils to school, this would be a huge concern. (Not to mention a major/long operation, since the curb stones have "special" drainage features, and some water-meters are installed very close to the curb.)

The stretches here by the bridge are already barely wide enough for an adult with a child holding each hand, i.e. 3-abreast – which is surely the minimum (since we are undoubtedly going to *have* to have Walking Bus schemes as per the GBS Travel Plan at some point in the future due to significant lack of any places for cars to park). Presumably, the same widening would also then be required at the park bottlenecks – which then removes the “safe” crossings into the park for kids using it; again, going against the clear intention of the original design for Safety of pedestrians and cyclists (especially younger ones).

3. My understanding of the initial master plan is that the stretch of road between school and bus gate was never meant to receive any additional traffic than the Exemplar phase, i.e. since the Eastern parcel was not part of the original Masterplan when it was modelled, and therefore would not include traffic from what was not planned to be built. Residents thus bought homes on the stretch of Charlotte Avenue between school and bus gate on the assumption that their street would have certain characteristics, pavement width, landscaping, etc, and any change

to their pavement structure as this could impact their quality of life and property value. To amend this stretch of road and infrastructure as suggested by the Developer is unreasonable.

The infrastructure on the development has not been adopted therefore it is not in the gift of CDC or OCC to permit alterations to the existing infrastructure so any arrangements would need the consent of A2Dominion and then the consent of OCC Highways. All residents on Elmsbrook would object to any suggested alterations to the existing infrastructure, being Roads, Footpaths, amendments to the existing narrowing's of any type and alterations to the drainage.

This is an issue for the new developer who has options but is choosing to ignore them.

4. Furthermore, the bridge north of the school would need significant redevelopment, as the current design with a bend at one end, the traffic calming bollards which only allow a single file of traffic, and a narrow stretch of road at the other (as per the Phase 1-2 park/bridge) reduces speed and encourages people to drive with caution in that area - which would further increase congestion in and around that part of the school. Removing these bollards to increase traffic flow would then likely increase average speeds along Charlotte Avenue between the school and the bus lane at the end of the road, again increasing risk - to kids walking/cycling to school along there. Residents in Wintergreen Fields would also be forced to join significantly higher traffic volumes on exiting their part of the development directly onto a narrowing

5. VTP's original statement that they can't use traffic surveys due to Covid lockdowns is not longer valid – because Mode carried out just such a full-day survey in September 2021. Also, the traffic monitoring data is available from Mode for the years up to March 2020. All these datasets show how significantly the VTP figures underestimate the true traffic levels. Why is the Developer/VTP not required to assess using that data, now it's available? Without comparison and quantification of these results, it seems impossible to be able to trust their simulation results.

6. The figure for the 8-9AM peak hour vehicle count remains 140, reduced from 636 – but still with no explanation of why/how. This needs to be challenged with the developer/VTP, as it certainly seems completely unreasonable in practice – as per the calculations set out in the Elmsbrook Traffic and Parking Committee's previous response, in Section A, Part 4.

7. VTP state, again, that the original design "must have" been acceptable to OCC, when it was signed off in 2016, based on future scenarios for the Ecotown Masterplan. However, 14% of the total homes which would be accessed via Charlotte and Braeburn Avenues, if the Firethorn scheme were accepted as it stands, are located on a field which was never part of the Masterplan, and was "added on" in or after 2018-19 shown as the "Eastern Parcel" in Firethorn's application. In fact, re TN009 Clause 2.1.2 - entering a Section 38 agreement does not mean that the highway will be adopted for sure, even if this was the intention - private highways in the development may stay private if local highway authority is not satisfied and the legal agreement not executed.

Concluding Remarks:

I can only continue to raise my objections –this application should be allowed to be brought to Committee when it is still contradicting key development principles, proposing changes which would seriously adversely affect a large number of homeowners in very direct ways, along with the School plus all homeowners (current and future) at peak traffic/commute times. There is still a clear lack of evidence to show that traffic impacts would not be 'severe', based on NPPF paras. 109-111.