

TWO-PAGE PLAIN-ENGLISH SUMMARY

Broadway development: why I believe this application should be refused

Planning application UTT/26/1635/OP - up to 850 homes around The Broadway and Church End

THE SIMPLE POINT

The homes are much more certain than many of the services and improvements shown with them. The application should be judged on what is properly checked, funded and protected now, not on what may be worked out later.

What is being proposed?

Gladman wants outline permission for up to 850 homes. The plans also show land for a school and healthcare, together with shops, community buildings, sports pitches, open space, roads and drainage.

I support the need for new homes. My objection is that the houses are far more certain than many of the facilities promised with them.

Why 850 homes matters

More than planned: The Local Plan figure for this land is about 715 homes. The application asks for 850 - 135 more homes, or nearly 19% extra.

More pressure: More homes can mean more traffic, schoolchildren, patients, sewage and surface water. Every assessment must use the full figure of 850 homes and consider other development around Great Dunmow.

The strongest concerns

St Edmunds Lane and construction traffic: This residential street is the main proposed construction-lorry route. On the busiest days there could be up to 100 delivery vehicles, making 200 movements as they enter and leave. The applicant says about 80% is likely to be heavy lorries. Parked cars already make parts of the road effectively one-way. The effect on children, pedestrians, cyclists and residents' parking must be properly tested.

Church End Bridge: A 1994 assessment recorded 7.5 tonnes. Essex County Council now requires a 40-tonne assessment plus checks for construction traffic. The applicant has not published the completed current assessment or demonstrated that the bridge and any required works can safely carry the proposed construction traffic.

Fire-engine access: The Fire Service has not yet checked whether fire engines can reach every proposed home when the estate is occupied and cars are parked. Its current reply only considers existing nearby buildings and leaves the new estate until later. Before approving the principle of 850 homes and the main access, the Council should require a realistic test of road widths, bends, turning places, blocked routes and firefighting water supplies.

Public transport: A 30 July weekday check showed about 1 hour 48 minutes from Church End to Liverpool Street for a 9.00 am arrival, and about 2 hours 5 minutes to Westminster, before disruption. Current buses do not run through the proposed estate. A Bishop's Stortford-Liverpool Street return was advertised from £23.50, before feeder buses and onward London travel. A frequent, funded and affordable station service must be secured from first occupation.

Air quality, noise and construction: The applicant says its traffic-emissions and construction-dust work is unfinished. Its traffic counts were taken in April 2026, not during COVID, but there is no close monitoring of fine particles at St Edmunds Lane or Church End. The busiest construction days could bring about 160 HGV movements along St Edmunds Lane. Seven years of traffic, dust, noise and vibration must be assessed before permission.

Church End and the countryside: Council evidence and the adopted Design Code protect Church End's separate rural character, landmark views, historic lanes, hedgerows and valley views. In 2019 a Planning Inspector rejected 50 homes on land wholly inside this much larger site because housing would strongly urbanise the rural Chelmer Valley approach. Gladman has not answered why that site-specific harm would now be acceptable. Planting cannot restore lost countryside.

Wildlife, water and essential services

Wildlife: The surveys found seven skylark territories, a peak of 133 bat contacts suggesting that a roost may be nearby, and a main badger sett. The applicant mapped one pond on the site and 16 more within 500 metres, but only two were sampled for newt DNA; access was not granted to eight of the closer ponds. Natural England found no formal newt-licensing enquiry using the site name. The full 209-page Essex Field Club report should be published and its 2025 records checked for updates.

Sewage, the river and flooding: Great Dunmow's sewage works needs major upgrading. The River Chelmer already has water-quality problems. The Council's 2024 flood assessment used a newer river model than the applicant and identified this as one of Uttlesford's sites most affected by river flooding, surface water, climate change and access problems. The applicant uses a different boundary and mainly an older model; its preliminary plans show water routes crossing the site, ditches to be changed and an unconfirmed culvert route. Safe access and these differences must be resolved before permission. The Environment Agency's formal response is still awaited.

School: Land for a school is not the same as a funded, staffed and open school. We need to know who will build it, who will pay and when it will open.

Healthcare: The two local GP practices already serve 26,671 registered patients. No operator, funded staffing plan or opening date is secured. NHS Essex should decide whether 850 homes require a separately staffed practice; moving existing staff into a new building would not create extra appointments.

Electricity capacity: This is a separate infrastructure issue. The applicant has not provided a scheme-specific network statement covering 850 homes, heat pumps, vehicle charging, the school, healthcare and local centre. Required reinforcement, funding and energisation must be confirmed before occupation.

Housing mix: The application form records all 552 market and 298 affordable homes with an unknown bedroom count. It does not rule out a large-house-heavy scheme. The Council should secure the bedroom, type, tenure, accessible and specialist mix before treating 850 homes as meeting local need.

Employment and commuting: The application form leaves proposed employee numbers blank. Gladman's benefits statement estimates 108 completed-site jobs, many dependent on the school and health facility opening, but gives no clear account of where the working residents of 850 homes would work or how they would get there. This must be assessed.

Promises must be protected

Affordable housing and other promises: At Woodlands Park, 40% affordable housing was later reduced to 23.7%. This local example demonstrates why every important Broadway promise must be clearly protected from the start.

The effect on the whole town: Broadway will use the same roads, doctors, schools, sewers, shops and car parks as existing residents and other new developments. The Council must look at the total pressure on Great Dunmow, not this site on its own.

What I am asking the Council to do

I believe the application should be refused. If the Council is not ready to refuse it, the decision should be delayed until:

- all assessments cover the full 850 homes and nearby development;
- St Edmunds Lane, Church End Bridge and fire-engine access through the new estate are shown to be safe;
- the sewage, flood, drainage and River Chelmer questions are answered;
- the missing ecology information is published; and
- the school, healthcare, housing mix, electricity, employment, public transport and other promises are funded and protected.

THE CENTRAL POINT

Roads, schools, healthcare, sewage treatment and other services must be ready before they are needed - not years afterwards.