Supplementary representation

Church End Bridge assessment and construction routing

Planning application UTT/26/1635/OP

Submitted to Uttlesford District Council on 17 October 2026

Dear Ms Beale,

Please treat this email as a supplementary representation concerning application UTT/26/1635/OP and place it on the public planning file.

Essex County Council has now disclosed the July 2025 structural assessment of Church End Bridge, structure 0023. The findings materially qualify statements made in the applicant's Transport Assessment and Environmental Statement.

The bridge remains subject to a 7.5-tonne legal restriction. Although the assessment identifies an 18-tonne structural capacity in its current condition, Essex has produced no evidence that the Traffic Regulation Order has been changed or that an increased permitted limit has been implemented.

The assessment establishes that:

- the bridge's overall capacity in its current condition is 18 tonnes;
- its cast-iron girders cannot accommodate 40/44-tonne loading under the assessed poor road-surface condition without structural strengthening;
- the girders failed the tested Special Vehicle loading, with a structural adequacy factor of only 0.66 under SV80 loading;
- the road surfacing is poor, water is penetrating through the deck and the joints are defective;
- the parapets do not comply with the relevant containment standard;
- repairs, monitoring and a road-safety audit are recommended; and
- Essex confirms that the bridge is not presently programmed for strengthening or replacement.

This is materially different from the applicant's Transport Assessment statement that the restriction is merely 'environmental' and that heavier vehicles could use the bridge following minor works including resurfacing. Resurfacing would not provide the structural strengthening required for 40/44-tonne vehicles under the identified poor-surface condition.

The applicant's Environmental Statement predicts as many as 100 construction delivery vehicles per day - 200 two-way movements - with approximately 80% comprising HGVs. It says construction traffic would travel southwest along The Broadway before dispersing onto St Edmunds Lane and Church Lane, while HGVs would 'mainly' use St Edmunds Lane.

'Mainly' does not prohibit HGVs or other overweight construction vehicles from using Church End Bridge. The applicant has instead deferred the number, distribution, types and final routing of construction vehicles to a future Construction Traffic Management Plan.

The disclosed evidence demonstrates that this issue cannot safely be deferred until after permission. Before determination, the applicant should be required to provide:

1. a corrected Transport Assessment and Environmental Statement reflecting the disclosed bridge assessment;
2. a definitive construction-routing plan showing that no vehicle exceeding the bridge's legally applicable limit will use Church End Bridge;
3. the gross and axle weights, dimensions and anticipated numbers of all principal construction, delivery, bus, refuse and servicing vehicles;
4. evidence that the alternative route through St Edmunds Lane and onwards to the A120 can safely accommodate approximately 160 daily HGV movements at the construction peak;
5. swept-path, parking-conflict, pedestrian-safety, junction-capacity and road-safety evidence for that route;
6. an enforceable routing, signage, driver-instruction and monitoring regime, including consequences for breaches;
7. confirmation that the development does not depend upon unapproved, unfunded or unprogrammed bridge strengthening; and
8. republication and consultation upon the completed transport evidence before the application is determined.

Unless and until this information is provided, the Council cannot safely conclude that a suitable and deliverable construction route exists. Nor can it rely upon Church End Bridge as a route for buses, servicing vehicles or other traffic exceeding its lawful restriction.

The disclosed report and ECC response are publicly available at:
https://secureapps.essex.gov.uk/Freedom_of_information/ResultDetails.aspx?ID=47146

Please confirm that this representation and the disclosed Essex County Council bridge assessment will be placed on the application file and considered by the case officer and highway authority.

Kind regards,

Carl Rolph
Save Church End

Website copy: personal postal and telephone details are intentionally omitted. The planning substance is unchanged.