

Fire-service capacity and emergency response

Planning application UTT/26/1635/OP

Submitted by Carl Rolph, Save Church End | 2026-08-25

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

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's August 2026 consultation response raises a serious outstanding infrastructure issue.

ECFRS formally objects and confirms that:

- Great Dunmow Fire Station is operated by on-call firefighters;
- an on-call station has a longer initial attendance time than a wholetime station;
- the existing Great Dunmow resources are already operating at capacity;
- three appliances would typically be required at a domestic dwelling fire; and
- additional appliances would have to attend from Braintree and Thaxted, both of which also rely upon on-call firefighters.

ECFRS seeks £297,500 and developer-funded hydrants. However, its contribution schedule does not expressly secure additional firefighters, an additional appliance, wholetime cover or any measurable improvement in emergency attendance performance. Much of the proposed contribution is allocated to refurbishment, EV charging, office facilities, digital systems and equipment.

Payment of a contribution does not, by itself, demonstrate that the identified operational-capacity and attendance-time problems will be resolved.

Before ECFRS's objection is withdrawn or the application is determined, the Council should therefore require a clear and enforceable Great Dunmow-specific delivery plan explaining:

- 1 precisely what additional operational capacity will be provided;
- 2 how the existing on-call capacity problem will be addressed;
- 3 whether additional firefighters or appliances will be provided;
- 4 how reliance upon appliances travelling from Braintree and Thaxted will be mitigated;
- 5 what measurable emergency-response improvement will result;
- 6 where each element of the £297,500 will be spent; and
- 7 when every improvement will be operational in relation to the occupation of the development.

The proposed hydrants must also be supported by confirmed adequate water volume and pressure. This cannot simply be assumed while wider clean-water capacity and pressure questions remain unresolved.

I also note that the policy appendix to the ECFRS response refers to the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework, although the revised NPPF was published on 17 August 2026. The Council

should ensure that the response and any proposed mitigation are assessed against the current national framework.

ECFRS should be reconsulted on a detailed and enforceable mitigation scheme and asked to confirm whether it genuinely resolves the operational-capacity and attendance issues identified in its own response. Its objection should remain in place until that has occurred.

Please confirm that this representation has been placed on the application file and brought to the attention of the case officer, ECFRS and the relevant infrastructure and planning-obligations officers.

Carl Rolph
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