

Statement by Councillor G Butland - Black Notley and Great Notley Ward  
App. No. 20/01421/VAR - Gridserve Electric Forecourt, Edison Way, Great Notley

As one of the Ward Councillors I wish to object to this application to vary conditions to the original Planning Application.

The purpose of this application is to seek permission to remove a further part of the tree belt running alongside the A131 - Great Notley By-Pass.

The applicant's sole purpose in seeking this variation is "to maximise the visibility of the Electric Forecourt from the carriageway" The applicant states that "it is imperative the site maximises the extent of visibility from the carriageway".

Visibility from the southbound carriageway of the A131 needs no further changes. It is perfectly clear to traffic travelling in that direction.

Traffic approaching from Chelmsford along the A131 will only have to turn onto the Great Notley By-Pass to see the slip road and access into the site; This is also aided by a large Totem Pole sign which has already been approved.

Additionally it is unlikely that any driver of an electric vehicle will, in the immediate future, set out on a journey without first establishing where charging points will be along their route, not to mention using a GPS System.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment states that all the trees to be removed are of low value. Individually they may be of low value but collectively they are of extremely high value in softening the visual impact of the development.

The suggestion by the applicant that "the enhanced site appearance from the carriageway is considered to further emphasise the sustainability objectives [of] the development and the broader sustainability objectives [which] the Council upholds" is, in my opinion, merely a ruse to attract greater attention to the retail element of the development.

Tesco could equally argue that the tree belt on the Southbound carriageway of the A131 should be cleared to enhance the visibility of its business which also has electric charging points.

The revised variation is welcome but, in my opinion, still unnecessary as the site at present is clearly visible as soon as one enters the Gt Notley Bypass.

I ask that the consideration is given to rejecting that part of the application relating to further removal of the tree belt along the eastern boundary abutting the A131.