

Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign (BACC)

Bower Farm, Bower Lane Planning Application 09/20/00019

Formal Objection/Comments

For the attention of Adrian Noon, Case Officer

Dear Sir or Madam,

One of the main Bridgwater Vision Document 15 Primary Objectives states "to shape and influence a transport strategy and investment package for the town which will create a safe, attractive and inclusive public realm, with an enhanced environment for pedestrians and cyclists" and further within the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032 (adopted version, Feb 2019) within its Sustainable Development Principles (policy S4), it states "minimising the need to travel and encourage any journeys by alternative means of travel by maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport"

We object to this proposed development because it is not fully compliant with the above documents and due to our specific concerns as detailed below;

1. RELATIONSHIP TO BOWER LANE:

It is unclear whether the intended North-South cycle route between the A372 and A39 will continue to be Bower Lane or a new cycle path through the site (we understand that Bower Lane will ultimately become traffic free, a 'green lane'). It appears that the long term aim from this application is that it will be the latter.

However this development phase shows a proposed cycle path by the spine road ending at the North end of this development with no re-connection to Bower Lane, so in effect a dead end. We consider that this development must provide a satisfactory route in it's own right, without depending on future phases that are not even certain.

One of the following options must be adopted:

1.1) The cycle route through the development becomes the new North-South cycling and walking route. It needs to re-connect to Bower Lane at the North end of the development and at intermediate locations. It also needs a more direct route along the West perimeter of the development which currently shows only a footpath. The currently proposed cycle path is very indirect, taking cyclists away from Bower Lane. It is also shown along the East of the spine road requiring the spine road to be crossed and re-crossed by cyclists wishing to rejoin Bower Lane. It should be on the West side, as Outline Planning permission 09/17/00031 (As Somerset County Council Highways email of 7 Dec 2020 from Carl Brinkman, Principal Planning Officer).

OR:

1.2) Bower Lane should be improved and retained as the main cycling route. It needs to either have vehicle use restricted or safety improvements made for walkers and cyclists. If vehicle use is to continue, a second vehicle exit is needed at the North end of the site as the current proposals require vehicles wishing to drive Northwards to exit at the South end near the A372, turn right and drive the whole length of Bower Lane. Bower Lane is narrow and will become far busier, with 746 cars (Parking Matrix figures) from this phase alone, plus those from further phases. Improvements such as better passing places or traffic calming measures are needed to minimise danger to walkers and cyclists. If vehicular use continues it is likely most vehicles leave the site will use it. It cannot be assumed that drivers will use Eastern Avenue or Parkway instead.

2. A372 WESTONZOYLAND RD ROUNDABOUT: There appear to be no facilities provided for safe cycle passage around and particularly across the proposed roundabout as required by LTN1/20 section 10.7. We request that this be addressed. An ideal new cycling & walking crossing should be built to the east of the new roundabout that links the Dunwear Lane to both the new Spine Road & Bower Lane. A significant amount of cyclists will use the North/South corridor from Bath Road of Bower Lane to the end of Dunwear Lane and its connections

3. SHARED USE SURFACES: It is noted that shared use surfaces for vehicle, cycles and pedestrians are proposed for cul-de-sac areas leading to the secondary and Spine Roads. It is hoped these are retained to encourage calming of traffic and responsible sharing with pedestrians and cyclists in these areas (Statement of Compliance Part 1 of 2 Drg 0710 – 122B).

4. BIN/CYCLE STORES: Statement of Compliance Part 1 of 2 Drg 0710 -0112A shows bin & cycle stores. We hope these will be provided at least to every house without a garage

5. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS: The Bower Farm planning application is the start of a series of housing developments along the Bower Lane/M5 corridor. We request to understand how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been proportion for sustainable development and particularly what mitigation does it contain with respect to cycling & walking improvements

Please take notice that we would like to speak at the meeting of the committee at which this application is expected to be decided. Please let us know the date, as soon as applicable

Yours Faithfully

BACC Planning Team

BACC Mission Statement

The BACC is a voluntary group run by cycling enthusiasts and local residents. Formed in February 2019, our main aim is to improve & promote safer cycling and the provision of new route infrastructure within Bridgwater and the surrounding areas. We also will support (where applicable) safer walking, the interests of pedestrians and all means of sustainable transport.

The group has four main focus areas.

These are, safety (concerning ourselves with vulnerable road users, reduction in speed limits and assessing local areas for personal safety risk), behavioural change (raising awareness of the benefits of cycling and increased physical activity), infrastructure (influencing changes to both existing and new paths and local route mapping), and communications (raising awareness through 'our' website, social media, the local press and any group's correspondence).

Website <https://thebacc.org.uk/>