

Application Ref	25/00772/OUT		
Contact Name	Mark Cusack	Submission typ	O - Objection
Reocode	DRAIN - Insufficient drainage TREES - Loss of trees and vegetation OVERDE - Over development POLICY - Policy objection WILDLI - Protection of Wildlife HIGHWA - Traffic generation/access OTHER - null	Contact address	87 North Street Great Wakering
Contact Email	[REDACTED]	Postcode	SS3 0HT
Objector type	IP - Interested Party	Phone number	[REDACTED]
Id	17616	Timestamp	2025-11-27 13:06:04.157+00

Letter sent to Planning Officer and Natural England
 Dear Mr Evans and Natural England

I am writing regarding planning application 25/00772/OUT Land East of Shoebury Road, Great Wakering (Friends Farm) to raise a concern about the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) evidence submitted in support of the scheme.

The Planning Statement (para 7.19) relies on the CDS Agricultural Land Classification Report (April 2025), which in turn appears to use a soil-depth table taken from the MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification guidelines. However, in the original MAFF guidance this table is expressly limited to situations where: soil overlies consolidated or fragmented rock which cannot be penetrated satisfactorily by cultivation implements.

This condition does not apply at Friends Farm. The land has deep, workable soils with no shallow rock within cultivation depth and has been in long-term productive agricultural use. Applying that MAFF table here therefore appears to be a misuse of the national guidance, which will tend to artificially downgrade the quality of the land.

If the soil-depth criterion has been applied outside its intended scope, parts of the site that are in reality Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land very likely Grade 1 may have been incorrectly recorded as lower grade. That has important implications for compliance with national policy on the protection of BMV agricultural land.

In light of this, I would respectfully request that:

Rochford District Council treats the current ALC assessment for Friends Farm with caution and seeks an independent review or updated survey that correctly follows the MAFF 1988 guidance; and

Natural England, as statutory consultee on BMV land, reviews the methodology used at Friends

Farm and advises the Council on the appropriate grading and the policy implications of developing such land.

Given the likely high quality of the soils at Friends Farm, it is essential that any decision on this application is taken on the basis of accurate and robust ALC evidence, consistent with national policy on protecting the best and most versatile farmland.

Yours sincerely, ØÇØ

Mark Cusack