

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 9
APRIL 2025 at 10.00 am**

Present:	Councillor R Freeman (Chair) Councillors N Church, G Driscoll, J Emanuel (Vice-Chair), R Haynes, M Lemon, J Loughlin, R Pavitt and M Sutton
Officers in attendance:	R Beale (Senior Planning Officer), N Brown (Head of Development Management and Enforcement), C Forster (Planning Lawyer), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), G Henry (Senior Planning Officer), J Hoskins (Planning Officer), R McKeown (Essex CC Highways), A Neale (Planning Officer), C Tyler (Principal Planning Officer), N Vernal (Senior Planning Officer) and A Vlachos (Senior Planning Officer)
Public Speakers:	Councillor K Artus, Councillor J Cheetham, W Critchley, A Fisher, G Johns, A Keeling, J Lodge, S Metson, Councillor J Moran, J Norris, F Palmer and Councillor N Reeve.

PC138 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Bagnall; Councillor Driscoll substituted.

The following Declarations of interest were made:

- Councillor Lemon- Item 12; lives in a Listed building and would recuse himself due to a perception of bias.
- Councillor Sutton- Items 7 and 8 – Takeley Ward Councillor; Item 9 – lives at Lindsell; Item 12 – knows applicant; Item 13 – Chair of Museum Management Working Group. In all instances she said she could impartially consider each application.
- Councillor Haynes – declared a pecuniary interest as the Applicant on Item 8 and knew the Applicant's father on Item 9; he would recuse himself from both items.
- Councillor Driscoll- said he had previous involvement in Item 7 as a Ward Councillor and would recuse himself. He said that he knew both applicants in Items 8 and 12 but he could impartially consider each application.
- Councillor Church said that he could impartially consider Item 12, relating to solar panels.
- Councillor Emanuel said she knew both applicants on Items 8 and 12 but could impartially consider each item.
- The Chair said that he knew the applicant on Item 8 but could impartially consider the application. Item 12- he knew the applicant well and would recuse himself and would also recuse for Item 13 where he lived nearby.

PC139 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

PC140 SPEED AND QUALITY REPORT

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Speed and Quality Report. He reported that the majority of indicators were green and that a formal request for de-designation had been submitted to MHCLG but that officers would continue to report this data to Committee.

The report was noted.

PC141 QUALITY OF MAJOR APPLICATIONS REPORT

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Quality of Major Applications report. He updated Members on pending Appeals and the recent awarding of costs.

The report was noted.

PC142 S62A APPLICATIONS REPORT

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the S62A Applications report.

He reported that once UDC has been de-designated there might still be further S62A's to come to Committee as interim arrangements were put in place.

The report was noted.

PC143 UTT/25/0151/PINS & S62A/2025/0077 - LAND WEST OF HIGH STREET, STEBBING

The Principal Planning Officer presented a S62A application for the erection of 28 residential dwellings (comprising 14 affordable & 11 private market homes together with 3 self-build plots); Provision of public open space and associated local amenity facilities (activating Local Green Space allocation); together with integrated landscaping and car parking (to include additional community parking facility). He said that the only change made from the previous application was the removal of the community use building.

He said that as this was a PINS application, UDC were acting as a consultee and could submit observations to PINS. He outlined his comments made for refusal as outlined in Appendix 1 of his report and the Ecology objection.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Addressed ecology objections that had been expressed by various bodies.
- Said that harm to designated heritage assets would be less than substantial.
- Said they did not consider the area to be “Grey belt”.
- Said that only limited weight could be given to the Local Plan.

Members discussed:

- The impact on Stebbing Brook; the need to mitigate run-offs.
- Concerns that all social housing was in one area.
- There being no objections from Highways.
- The importance of Local Green space design and limited amenity space.
- The “Grey belt” argument being irrelevant.
- The failure by the applicant to show why the development had been put forward.
- The strong views being highlighted within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Church supported submission to PINS of the officer’s proposed comments regarding refusal reasons, together with the concerns about Stebbing Brook and the strong views expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

This was seconded by Councillor Emanuel

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to advise the Planning Inspectorate that the comments as outlined in the motion above be submitted.

Councillor Driscoll left the room at 10.40 am.

PC144 **UTT/24/2242/OP - LAND WEST OF STATION ROAD, TAKELEY**

The Senior Planning Officer presented a Hybrid Major Planning Application consisting of Outline application (with all matters reserved) for up to 68 dwellings, a new Early Years and Childcare Facility and associated infrastructure. Full details (with no matters reserved) for the approval of 32 dwellings on Station Road and Bonnington's Farm site frontages, on site open space and perimeter landscaping and improvements to Station Road. 40% Affordable Housing to be provided across the site.

She recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions set out in section 17 of the report.

Following the public speakers, the Planning Lawyer drew Members attention to the Addendum List and the Head of Development Management and Enforcement indicated that the Local Plan could not be considered to be at an advanced stage. Rachel McKeown from Essex CC Highways was introduced to the meeting and was available to answer Highways related questions.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed the distance between the site and the bridge was around 300 metres.
- Said there was no necessity to receive a consultation response from the Environment Agency. Thames Water were notified but not consulted.
- Said that it was an unwritten rule regarding no build south of the Flich Way.
- Said that the footway was sufficient as existing but acknowledged it is narrow, but efforts would be made to widen it as much as possible; this would likely be maximum 1.8 metres and could not get to 2 metres. The bridge itself was not considered very long. Highways were satisfied with the proposed arrangements. Additional calming measures of “dragon’s teeth” road markings and flashing signs would be put in place.
- Said that the site had not been ruled out of the Local Plan because of Highways concerns.
- Said that sustainable energy details would be secured by condition.
- Said that this was not considered to be a finely balanced decision.

The meeting briefly adjourned between 11.50 am and 12.00 pm.

Members discussed:

- The widths of footways. Highways stated that the minimum to accept on newly constructed footways would be 1.5m and a condition could detail it to reach at least 1.8m. It was re-iterated that Highways were satisfied with the proposals. There would not be busy footfall. All issues were addressed through Condition 10 in the report. Officers said that Condition 10f could be re-worded to make the existing footway as wide as possible, possible minimum 1.8m.
- Road safety concerns. The possibility of having a signalised bridge. This was rejected by officers.
- Possible conflict with Policy S7. Officers said there would be minimal harm to countryside.
- Paragraph 14.13 referred to Climate Change and it was recognised that an additional condition would need to be added to take these issues on board.
- The scheme being well- designed but concerns that Takeley could become overwhelmed.
- Recognition that the Parish Councils had done much good work in their contributions.

Councillor Loughlin said that from a planning point of view there was no reason not to approve the scheme. She proposed approval, in line with the officer’s recommendations, together with an added Climate Change condition and to ensure that Condition 10 reflected the desire to make footways as wide as possible.

This was seconded by Councillor Emanuel.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to the conditions set out in section 17 of the report and the additional items referred to in the motion above.

W Critchley, A Fisher, Councillor J Cheetham (Takeley PC) and Councillor K Artus (Hatfield Broad Oak PC) spoke against the application. S Metson (Agent) spoke in support.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.25 pm and reconvened at 1.20 pm. At this point Councillor Driscoll rejoined the meeting and Councillor Haynes left the room.

PC145 **UTT/25/0579/PIP - THE CROFT, SMITHS GREEN, SMITHS GREEN LANE, TAKELEY**

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application for Permission in Principle for up to 4 houses. He explained that a Permission in Principle (PIP) application process was primarily for minor, housing-led developments, which separated the consideration of the development's principle from the technical details, allowing for a two-stage application process.

He recommended that the application be refused, in line with the reasons set out in section 17 of the report.

Following the public speakers, the Planning Lawyer drew Members' attention to the Addendum List.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that the dried ditch to the front of The Croft was historically part of the moat and the site was part of the Conservation Area.
- Explained the de-listing process relating to The Croft.
- Said that possible Article 4 designation for the property was not under consideration or adopted.
- Showed Members the current shared access arrangements on the map.
- Said that the grass verge was most likely in the ownership of the Lord of the Manor.
- Confirmed that the site was in the CPZ and part of the countryside; one of the last remaining parts of the countryside between Takeley and Smith's Green.
- Said that Permission in principle is not planning permission.

Members discussed:

- The proposed development being backland in a location, use and density that would alter the linear pattern of development in the area and would bring merge to the Conservation Area with the modern development in Takeley, failing to preserve the significance of the heritage assets.
- The property being in the CPZ and the resulting coalescence between the two settlements by the development.
- PIP considerations, which would include only matters that relate to location, land use and amount of development.
- Whether something had to happen to the existing building. Officers said there was no obligation to do anything, and that The Croft was not part of the application.

- The proximity of the site to the Grade II* Moat Cottage and the impact of the proposed location, use and amount to this asset.

Councillor Pavitt proposed refusal of the application, in line with the reasons listed in section 17 of the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Emanuel.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development for the reasons set out in section 17 of the report.

Councillor J Cheetham (Takeley PC) spoke against the application. J Norris (Planning Consultant, agent) spoke in support.

PC146 **UTT/24/2700/OP - LAND AT HOLDERS GREEN LANE, LINDSELL**

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application for Outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of up to 5 dwellings. The application had been submitted by a UDC staff member. She said that Lindsell Parish Council had previously raised objections to the scheme in November 2024 and highlighted the harms created by the proposals.

She recommended that the application be refused, in line with the reasons set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that the photographs showed the entrance to the site.
- Explained the differences between recent approvals/refused applications within Holders Green Road.

Members discussed:

- The very clear explanation given by the Senior Planning Officer in respect of recent planning decisions within Holders Green Road.
- The proposals being more urban, than suitable for the countryside.
- There being no local infrastructure in a very open area and there being only one bus/week.

Councillor Emanuel proposed refusal of the application, in line with the reasons outlined in section 17 of the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Pavitt.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development for the reasons set out in section 17 of the report.

Councillor Haynes returned to the room following this item at 2.10 pm.

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application for proposed conversion of barn and stables to form a residential annexe. She said that a late consultation response had been received from Place Services (Ecology) as set out in the Addendum list; they had maintained a holding objection due to insufficient information in relation to bats and therefore an additional reason for refusal of the application had been added on Ecology grounds.

She recommended that the application be refused, in line with the conditions set out in section 17 of the report and the additional reason detailed above.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that a residential annexe was being proposed, not a separate property. The building was a conversion, keeping its existing form.
- Said that Policy H8 Internal Design, Building Standards did apply to Listed Buildings.
- Said that it would be unwise to condition the removal of the mezzanine floor.

Officers responded to comments from the applicant regarding inaccuracies in the Committee report which referenced a first-floor level. It was explained that there are stairs on the plans leading to a first floor. The applicant(s) responded by stating this was not correct, Officers stated that it was down to Members to review the plans for themselves.

Members discussed:

- The need to preserve the building.
- The size of the proposed annexe being excessive but in the same footprint.
- Conservation aspects.
- The proposal being no different to many barn conversions.
- The legal obligation to consider the recent Place Services (Ecology) comments and the possibility of deferring the item to resolve this issue.
- Considerations that the proposed annexe would not be tantamount to an additional and separate residential property.

Councillor Emanuel said that she considered the proposed annexe to be very large and proposed refusal of the application for the two reasons detailed by officers in their report.

This was seconded by Councillor Loughlin. The motion was lost.

Councillor Driscoll proposed that the application be refused solely on Ecology grounds as detailed by Place Services (Ecology).

This was seconded by Councillor Haynes.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development purely on Ecology grounds.

A Keeling spoke in support of the application on behalf of the applicants.

The meeting briefly adjourned between 3.00 pm and 3.10 pm, following which Councillor Emanuel took the Chair.

PC148 UTT/23/3239/FUL - LANG MEADOWS, BARTLOW ROAD, ASHDON

The Planning Officer presented an application for proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of new dwelling with associated garaging, swimming pool, and extensive soft landscaping and retention of existing stable block. The proposal accords with the development plan and the NPPF.

He recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that any concerns about the River Bourne, as raised particularly by Councillor Moran, were covered by Condition 10 in the report.
- Said that in order to prevent there being two houses on site at the same time, a further condition could be added with a time constraint placed on demolition within three months of completion of the new development.

Members discussed:

- The beautiful location of the dwelling.
- The favourable design and the way that the solar panels had been incorporated.
- Surface water drainage run-off during Construction. Officers said that these concerns could be addressed through an additional paragraph being added to Condition 9.

Councillor Pavitt proposed approval of the application, together with an additional condition that required demolition works to be completed within three months of building completion and that an additional paragraph be inserted into Condition 9 relating to surface water run-off during construction.

This was seconded by Councillor Church.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report, together with the additions detailed in the motion above.

Councillor J Moran raised concerns on behalf of Ashdon PC about the need to ensure preservation of the River Bourne; he then left the room. G Johns (Architect) spoke in support on behalf of the applicant.

Councillors Lemon and Freeman left the room at 3.30 pm.

PC149 **UTT/25/0001/LB - 4 COMMON HILL, SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Planning Officer presented an application for Installation of 14 solar panels on the west facing roof of the house.

He recommended that the application be refused, in line with the reasons set out in section 16 of the report.

Following on from the public speakers, the Head of Development Management and Enforcement said that the objections made by Place Services (Conservation) had not been addressed and that this process needed to be carried out.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed the need to protect heritage assets.
- Said that fundamental scientific questions had not been addressed.
- Said that visibility of the solar panels from the rear garden would be dominant.
- Said no information had been provided as to how the solar panels would be fixed to the roof of a Listed building.

Members discussed:

- The need for Listed buildings processes to be gone through.
- Lack of information regarding fixing the solar panels to the roof.
- Concerns regarding previous roof tile replacement works requiring Listed Building consent.
- Comments made by Place Services (Conservation).
- The limited benefits provided which would not be sympathetic to both the listed building and the conservation area. The need to protect places of interest.

Councillor Haynes proposed refusal of the application, for the reason outlined in Section 16 of the report. This was seconded by Councillor Loughlin.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development for the reason outlined in Section 16 of the report.

Councillor N Reeve spoke in support of the application and then left the room. J Lodge (Applicant) spoke in support.

Councillor Lemon returned to the meeting following this item at 4.15 pm.

PC150 **UTT/25/0794/TCA - SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM, MUSEUM STREET, SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented a Notification of intent to carry out tree works within a conservation area at Saffron Walden Museum. He explained that the notice period gives the authority an

opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the trees but there was no justification for that action in this instance.

Councillor Pavitt said that he had recently seen the specific tree and supported the need for tree works. He proposed that the Committee raised no objection to the proposed works. Councillor Sutton seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED that there was no need to make a Tree Preservation Order to protect the trees.

F Palmer spoke in support of the proposed action.

The meeting ended at 4.17 pm.