

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

Present: Councillor R Freeman (Co-Chair) and J Emanuel (Co-Chair)

Councillors N Church, G Driscoll, R Haynes, M Lemon,  
J Loughlin and R Pavitt

Officers in attendance: N Brown (Head of Development Management and  
Enforcement), C Forster (Planning Lawyer) and J Procter  
(Democratic Services Officer)

**PC1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Freeman took the Chair for the whole meeting.

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Bagnall, who was substituted by Councillor Driscoll. There were no declarations of interest.

**PC2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

**PC3 SPEED AND QUALITY REPORT**

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Speed and Quality Report. He said the Council was awaiting an update on its designation status from the Government who had recently indicated the Council would hear back from them in June 2025. He said any delays were due to discussions over the designation of other councils and it was likely the Council would be un-designated. Officers would continue to deliver the standing items in order to closely monitor the designation criteria.

The Chair highlighted the graph on page 17 and noted how the Council had been above the Government Maximum before 2022 and was now successfully below this threshold.

The report was noted.

**PC4 QUALITY OF MAJOR APPLICATIONS REPORT**

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Quality of Major Applications report. He noted it was important to track the quality of major applications, and the introduction of graphs assisted this.

The speed of Major Applications was still on track. He added that performance on non-major applications had also improved in terms of speed.

He noted the cost issue regarding the Great Chesterford appeal had been finalised and in 2024/25, £55,200 had been spent and recovered in legal fees. £19,800 of £25,947 in consultancy fees had been recovered and the remaining consultancy fees related to the Flitch Green hearing where there was an ongoing costs claim against the Council.

In response to a question from a member, the Head of Development Management and Enforcement said he would look to provide members with graphs detailing the Council's status all four of the criteria for potential designation.

The report was noted.

#### PC5 **S62A APPLICATIONS REPORT**

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

He reported that S62A applications would continue to be received until the Council was de-designated. He noted the UTT/25/0906/PINS Cutler's Green application had been withdrawn.

A number of pre-applications had been submitted to PINS and he did not know what arrangements would be put in place following de-designation.

In response to questions from members he said: -

- If UTT/25/0906/PINS (Cutler's Green cabling application) was still going to happen then it would likely come before Committee as he felt it would not be considered a major application.
- He had heard no news regarding application UTT/22/2624/PINS Maggot's farm

The report was noted.

#### PC6 **UTT/25/1276/DOV - LAND WEST OF BURY FARM, STATION ROAD, FELSTED**

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the Deed of Variation application which recommended the obligation to deliver affordable housing at the site be removed and the affordable housing units be changed to market dwellings. He said the item was important as it would likely represent the final step in the delivery of the surgery in Felsted and that it was straightforward.

He issued a correction to the report on page 24 paragraph 7 where it stated the Felsted Neighbourhood plan had not been made when the application was reported to Planning Committee when in fact had been completed shortly beforehand.

He said the development was blocked from proceeding as it had become clear the cost of building the surgery had gone significantly over-budget. The application was obligated to deliver both the surgery and the affordable housing, and so a deed of variation was recommended to the Section 106 Obligation to remove the requirement for the affordable housing as the cost of this housing would cover the increase in cost to the building of the surgery. Concerns had been raised during the completion of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan that predicted the affordable housing would not be able to be delivered alongside the surgery.

In response to questions from members, he said: -

- Officers had seen the figures relating to the increased cost of the surgery and had assessed them. There was no need of a viability assessment as the project had come to a point where the cost was effectively known as the surgery was ready to be built. The removal of the affordable housing would cover the shortfall
- The specific figures were commercially sensitive and therefore confidential. This was reiterated by the Planning Lawyer who noted that officers were satisfied with the figures. Felsted Parish Council and the Community Land Trust (CLT) would have seen the figures as they were partners in the development
- The five affordable dwellings represented the quantum of houses originally approved by Committee
- The surgery was to be situated at the bottom right of the site plan
- They were in a better position to be removing the affordable housing from the obligation after it had become clear they could not be delivered than if they were to have not included them in the obligation and found out later that delivery was possible
- The wording of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan included provision for the obligation to deliver affordable houses to be modified to facilitate the delivery of the surgery

Councillor Emanuel noted that on page 24 paragraph six the word 'account' was missing in the quote from policy FEL/HN3 of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan which should read:

"Affordable housing contributions through a planning obligation will need to take account of the effect on the viability of the development scheme including its requirement to facilitate the delivery of the GP surgery".

Members discussed: -

- Planning Committee's responsibility to make planning decisions only
- Whether viability reports had been carried out effectively at the outset of the application

- The influence that neighbourhood plans had over applications and how they supported flexibility
- The collaboration between multiple parties evident in the application
- Concerns that members were unable to access the specific figures relating to the costs

Councillor Emanuel proposed to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Councillor Church.

RESOLVED to approve the Deed of Variation request and the Section 106 be varied to change the affordable housing units to market dwellings.

*Councillor S Silcock, Councillor R Freeman (Chair of Planning Committee at Felsted Parish Council) and E Irving (Applicant) spoke in support of the application.*

PC7 **UTT/25/0815/FUL - LAND ADJACENT GOODACRES, CHURCH END, BROXTED - WITHDRAWN**

The Chair noted that the application had been withdrawn and therefore would not be considered by Committee.

*The meeting ended at 10.45.*