

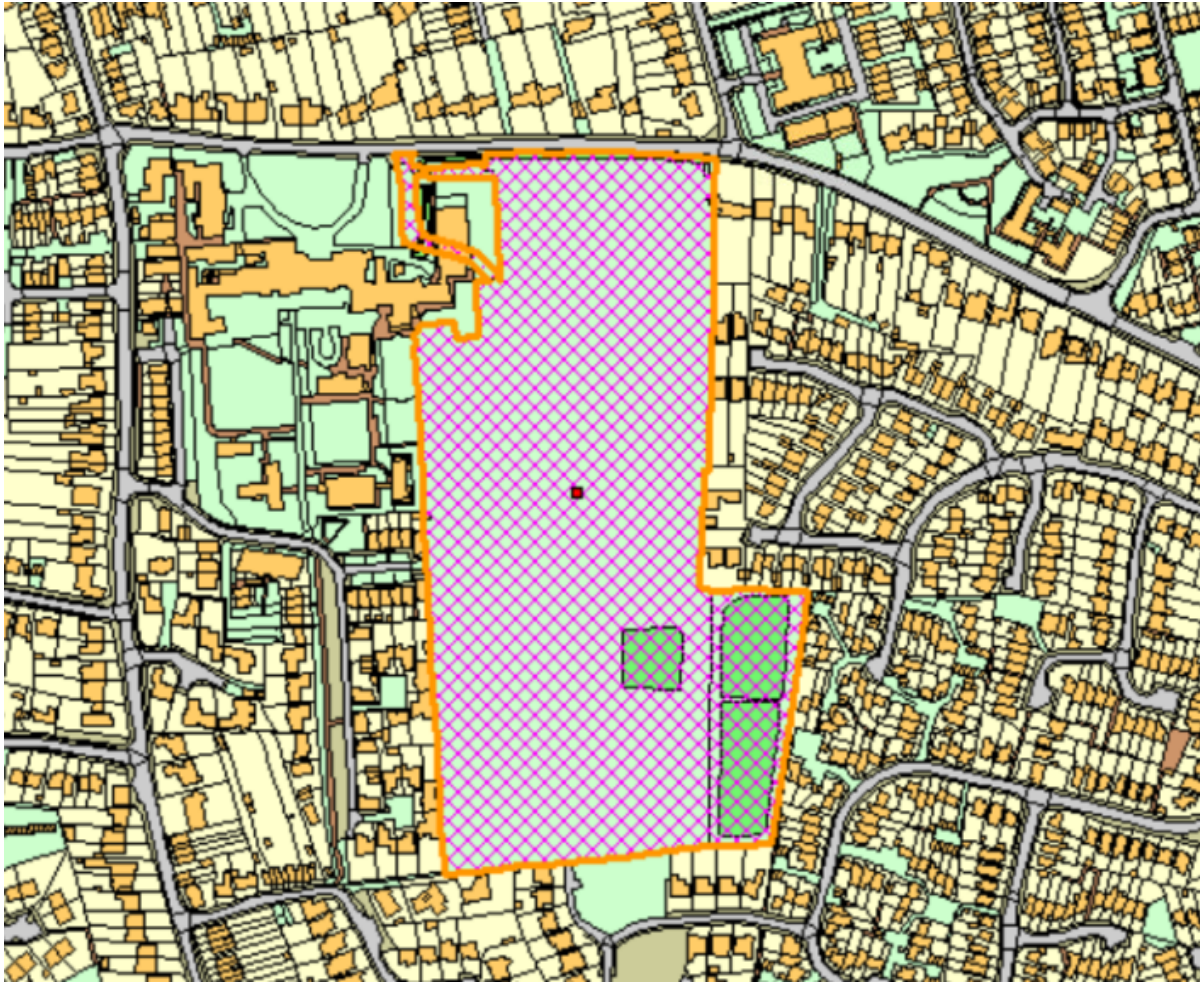
**ITEM NUMBER:** 5

**PLANNING COMMITTEE  
DATE:** 2 July 2025

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** S62A/2025/0107 (UTT/25/1343/PINS)

**LOCATION:** Former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant  
Road, Saffron Walden, Essex

## SITE LOCATION PLAN:



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council      Date: 17 June 2025

**PROPOSAL:**      Erection of 75no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse

**APPLICANT:**      Mr C Neaves

**AGENT:**      Ms L Fitzgerald

**DATE**      20 June 2025  
**CONSULTATION**  
**RESPONSE**  
**DUE:**

**CASE OFFICER:** Natasha Vernal

**NOTATION:** Saffron Walden Conservation Area  
Protected Open Space  
Tree Preservation Orders

**REASON THIS CONSULTATION IS ON THE AGENDA:** This is a report in relation to a major planning application submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for determination.

Uttlesford District Council (UDC) was designated by Government for poor performance in relation to the quality of decisions making on major applications. This application was submitted to PINS prior to the designation being lifted.

This means that the Uttlesford District Council Planning Authority has the status of a consultee and is not the decision maker. There is limited time to comment. In total 21 days.

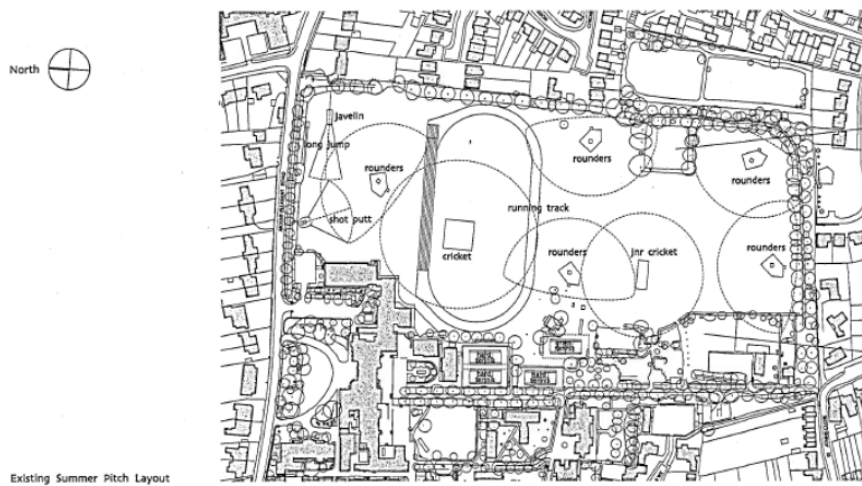
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**1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1** That the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to advise the Planning Inspectorate that Uttlesford District Council make the following observations on this application:
- 1.2** Details are to be outlined by the Planning Committee.

**2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1** The application site, has an area of 6.567 hectares, comprising the playing fields associated with the former Friends School and access into the former Friends School site which is currently under construction for “*conversion of buildings and demolition of buildings to allow redevelopment to provide 96 dwellings, swimming pool and changing facilities, associated recreation facilities, access and landscaping*” (S62A/22/0000002) by the same applicant who owns this site. This consent was granted via Section 62a.
- 2.2** The playing fields like the rest of the former Friends School site was vacated in 2017 when the school closed. The playing fields have fallen into a state of disrepair and have not been open to the public.
- 2.3** When the school was open the playing fields were made available to local clubs outside of timings required by the school. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the layout of the pitches in both the summer and winter seasons as per the position in 2007. These demonstrate that in the summer there were 5 rounders pitches, 2 cricket pitches (both adult and youth), a running track, javelin, long jump and shot putt pitches. In the winter there were 3 junior football pitches, 2 adult football pitches, 2 hockey pitches, 1 rugby pitch and the 2 cricket squares were retained.



## 2.4

The site is approximately 1.2 kilometres south from Saffron Walden town centre, it is generally a rectangular grassed area of land which slopes gently from Mount Pleasant Road (in the north) towards Greenways and St Johns Close (in the south). The site has existing vegetation and trees on the northern, eastern and southern boundaries and none on the western boundary. The site is surrounded by 2 storey residential properties to the north, east, south and the west where The Avenue is located (formally part of the Friends School site) and the current redevelopment of the former Friends School site.

## 2.5

The application site is located within the settlement of Saffron Walden which is the largest settlement in Uttlesford District and classified as a 'Major Service Centre'. The site is located within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area (Zone 6), is located within Flood Zone 1 and part of the site (woodland in the southeast) is identified as 'Protected Open Space of Environmental Value', whilst the remainder is identified as 'Protected Open Space Playing Fields'. Adjacent the site is the former Friend School main building which is locally listed and several listed buildings further afield.

### **3. PROPOSAL**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.2** In 2024, the site was refused permission under S62A ref: UTT/24/1898/PINS and PINS ref: S62A/2024/0057 for the Erection of 91 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing field and associated clubhouse. The Planning Inspectorate's decision UTT/24/1898/PINS relating to the provision of 91 no. dwellings noted the following:
- 3.3** *"The proposal would provide 91 houses at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing supply. I saw that the site, is well located in an accessible location where housing would, in principle, be accepted subject to consideration of other policies in the development plan. This attracts significant weight."*
- 3.4** Of those 91 units, the scheme would have delivered 37 units of affordable accommodation in line with policy within the development plan at a time when there is considerable demand. The Planning Inspectorate found that the Unilateral Undertaking would effectively secure these and therefore give this provision significant weight.
- 3.5** The Planning Inspectorate gave moderate weight to the provision of a new clubhouse and sporting pitches and acknowledged that there would be public access to protected open space and a new public link from Greenways to Mount Pleasant Road which would aid accessibility for local residents, which was also given moderate weight.
- 3.6** The proposal would deliver economic benefits in the form of jobs and the purchase of materials during construction as well as the contribution of future residents to the local economy to which the Planning Inspectorate gave significant weight to. However, the Planning Inspectorate concluded that while the public benefits are significant, they would not outweigh the great weight given to the harm to the designated heritage asset. This being the case, in accordance with paragraph 11(d)(i) of the Framework, the Planning Inspectorate did not engage the tilted planning balance in paragraph 11(d)(ii) as the harm caused to the heritage asset provides a clear reason for refusing the development.



**3.7** *Figure 3 – Demonstrating the proposed site layout from previous PINS application ref: UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057) for 91no. dwellings with associated clubhouse.*





**3.8** *Figure 4 - Demonstrating the proposed site layout of this current application UTT/25/1343/PINS (S62A/2025/0107) for the provision of 75no. dwellings with associated clubhouse.*

**3.9** In 2019 a hybrid planning application (Ref. UTT/19/1744/OP) was submitted for the playing field site which also includes the former sports hall, swimming pool buildings and access (see Figure 3 overleaf). The description of development was:

**3.9.1** *Hybrid application consisting for full details for development of 30 dwellings utilising existing access, re-provision of swimming pool with new changing rooms, artificial grass pitches, sports pavilion, multi-use games area (MUGA), local equipped area for play (LEAP), local area for play (LAP), associated parking and demolition of gym building. The remainder is in outline for up to 70 dwellings with associated infrastructure, public open space, forest school and perimeter path.*

**3.9.2** The former sports hall has since been demolished and replaced by the Ash Buildings which are currently under construction due to have been completed by the end of 2024. The swimming pool building has a planning application approved (Ref UTT/24/1144/FUL) to convert this into a community hall.

### 3.9.3

This application was recommended for refusal at the 17 March 2021 Planning committee meeting; members unanimously agreed. The reasons for refusal were:

1. *The scheme of development conflicts with ULP Policies S1, ENV1, ENV3, GEN1, GEN2, GEN8 Essex Design Guide and the NPPF, as the design, layout, scale and appearance of the development is considered inappropriate in terms of the character of the site and surrounding area. In addition, the development would erode a distinctive protected open space of significant importance to the character of this area of Saffron Walden, as well as the conservation area and the locally listed school buildings.*

2. *The submitted layout plans indicating the proposed sports uses and activities are located such that the immediate environs of the new residential properties, will incur, at close quarters, significant disturbance from noise, floodlighting, parking as well as the general coming and going of visitors to the facilities which would be in conflict with ULP Policies GEN2 and GEN4, and the NPPF.*

3. *The proposal is not considered to represent sustainable development in the context of Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, as it cannot show that the economic, social and environmental aspects of the development are satisfied in a positive and beneficial way. The development scheme as submitted, will involve a detrimental impact on the conservation area, the loss of protected playing fields and sports facilities and the locally listed school buildings. Paragraph 11 NPPF, requires full assessment of the benefits that will accrue from the development to show that it will result in a positive contribution. The loss of the protected sports fields, the impact on nearby locally listed buildings and the conservation area would outweigh the benefits of the scheme, especially with limited level of mitigation being proposed. Notwithstanding the fact that the council does not have a 5 year housing supply at present, the type of housing being proposed is not compliant with the housing officers requirements in terms of mix, layout, scale and design. This is a further significant issue that weighs against the development of the site and helps tilt the balance in the consideration of para 11, NPPF. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the NPPF and Local Plan Policies S1, LC1, ENV1 and GEN2.*

4. *The proposal does not show that the development of this site would involve a positive contribution to biodiversity and protected species in the local area, which is in conflict with Local Plan Policy GEN7 and the NPPF*

5. *The planning application does not include a health impact assessment (HIA) or propose any mitigation of the healthcare impacts arising from the proposed development, without this detail and assessment the application cannot be supported. This is contrary to Local Plan Policy GEN6.*

6. *The applicant has not established that this site is redundant in terms of its longstanding sports use, nor has it been shown that there is an excess of sports facilities and playing fields similar to the application site, consequently the loss of this open space area is unacceptable and against UDP Policy LC1.*

7. *The 2005 Local Plan Policy ENV1 specifically provides that Outline Applications for development within Conservation Areas will not be considered, this application*



*incorporates the largest part of the site as an outline proposal which is unacceptable without detailed information.*

*8. The 2005 Local Plan Policy ENV1 specifically provides that Outline Applications for development within Conservation Areas will not be considered, this application incorporates the largest part of the site as an outline proposal which is unacceptable without detailed information.*

**3.10** The applicant did not appeal that decision.

**3.11** Pre-Application Engagement

**3.12** There was no pre-app engagement relating to this current scheme following from the refused S62A application under PINS ref: S62A/2024/0057 (UTT/24/1898/PINS).

**3.13** However, in December 2023 the applicant submitted a pre-application request to UDC with a request from the agent for a written response and no meeting. The applicant clarified the pre-application request as follows: *'Essentially the proposal is seeking to address the previous reasons for refusal and such there is no requirement for extensive exploration of matters that are not associated with this proposed development parcel'* (email on 7 December 2023 to UDC). The pre-application was for an identical scheme as submitted as part of this application.

**3.14** UDC written response was issued in March 2024. This provided a high level, without prejudice, assessment (as requested from the applicant) of the proposal against the reasons for refusal of the 2021 previous planning application. The summary of this response was:

**3.14.1** *In light of the above appraisal and for the reasons highlighted, there is an objection in principle to residential development on this site due to the conflict with the open space policies in the Local Plan.*

**3.14.2** *Furthermore, concerns remain around the type of open space proposed as well the quantum, in light of what the area of open space being lost. In addition to this, given the constraints of the site concerns also remain around the possible noise nuisance to disturbance to existing homes as well as future residents of the proposed development.*

**3.15** The applicant (in their community engagement addendum report) stated that *'The response (from UDC) only considered matters relating to the earlier application (refused application) and provided no feedback on the scheme layout or design proposed. A full response was requested and has never been received'*. UDC provided a response as per the request from the applicant and in accordance with the bespoke pre-application fee. If the applicant required a full response, then this would have been provided upon receipt of the appropriate fee.

**3.16** Proposed Scheme

**3.17** This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 75no.residential dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. The delivery of a multi-sport

pitch and associated clubhouse. This is demonstrated on Figure 4 and the proposal comprises of the following:

- The total site area is 6.72 hectares
- 75 dwellings (mix of flats, semi-detached and detached dwellings) which is 11 dwellings per hectare.
- 40% (30 units) will be affordable (70% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership) – 8 1xbeds flats, 17 2xbed flats, 32 3xbed houses and 20 4+xbed dwellings.
- The proposals provide 74% of the market housing as three-bedroom houses
- 17% of all dwellings will be M4(3) compliant (13 units).
- Creation of a multi-use sports pitch (full size cricket pitch in summer and either 1 adult size football pitch or 2 youth size football pitches in the winter) and the erection of a single storey club house (Class F2(c) – 427 sqm) and 182 ancillary car parking spaces.
- Creation of access roads and parking provision throughout the development
- Public realm improvements including landscaping and the planting of 146 new trees

3.18

Type	M4(2)	M4(3)	Quantum
1 bedroom apartment		6	6
1 bedroom apartment	2		2
2 bedroom apartment	8		8
3 bedroom apartment	1		1
2 bedroom house	7		7
3 bedroom house	31		31
4 bedroom house	13		13
5 bedroom house		7	7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

3.19 *Figure 6 – Extract of Development proposals from Design and Access Statement for current scheme (UTT/25/1343/PINS)*

3.20 Vehicular access to the site will be directly into the existing Former Friends School site via 2 internal roads which leads into the existing access onto Mount Pleasant Road. Pedestrians would also use this access into addition to a new access onto Mount Pleasant Road in the north east corner, an access into the Former Friends School site in the west (just north of the club house car park) and into the housing development within Greenways to the south of the site.

3.21 The concerns raised on the previous application under PINS ref: UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057) included the following:

- Limited planting and grass amenity areas along main road frontage.
- Similar designed houses with very little articulation or contrast.
- Limited information on materials.
- Level of parking seems high given the accessible location.
- Gated element is resisted.
- Lack of play space.

- The housing mix fails to meet local housing need.
- BNG is not adequately secured.
- Loss of playing fields.

**3.22** The relevant differences between the previous S62A under PINS ref: UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057) and this current scheme are:

- This is a S62A application for 75no. dwellings where in the previous proposal was a S62A for 91no. dwellings.
- The previous application proposed planting of 101 trees whereas this scheme proposes 146 new trees.
- The previous application proposed 30 ancillary parking spaces whereas this scheme proposes 182 parking spaces.
- Layout changes to include two pedestrian routes to Grand Avenue and Grand Avenue Link

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**4.1** The application does not include an Environmental Statement as an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') is not required as confirmed by a letter from PINS (15 August 2024).

## 5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

### 5.1

Reference	Proposal	Decision
UTT/24/1898/PINS	Consultation on S62A/2024/0057 - Erection of 91 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing field and associated clubhouse.	Refused on 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
UTT/19/1744/OP	Hybrid application consisting of full details for development of 30 dwellings utilising existing access, re-provision of swimming pool with new changing rooms, artificial grass pitches, sports pavilion, multi-use games area (MUGA), local equipped area for play (LEAP), local area for play (LAP), associated parking and demolition of gym building. The remainder is in outline for up to 70 dwellings with associated infrastructure, public open space, forest school and perimeter path.	Refused 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
UTT/0653/06/OP	Outline application (including details of access, siting and landscaping) for 25 dwellings (Site A), 15 detached houses (Site C), 72 apartments in 3.5-4.5 storey buildings (Site B), 32 dwellings in 3-storey buildings (Sites D & E); 3-storey school boarding house; 2-storey	Refused 10 December 2007

	<p>replacement junior school; restoration of main building for school use; extension to school car park; relocation of vehicular access onto Debden Road and provision of internal roads, including school dropoff point. Construction of performing arts centre (details of siting, design and external appearance included for this element). Installation of traffic signal scheme at Borough Lane/Debden Road/Mount Pleasant Road, and other financial contributions to highway works; provision of footpath link between Site A and Mount Pleasant Road (adjacent playing fields/eastern boundary of site). Provision of communal gardens, play areas &amp; replacement wildlife habitat. Demolition of school buildings (This proposal left the playing fields as they are but proposed residential development in area which is now Protected Open Space of Environmental Value)</p>	
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## 6. **PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND/OR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

### 6.1 See above.

## **7. STATUTORY CONSULTEES**

- 7.1** All statutory consultees are required to write directly to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) (and not the Local Planning Authority).
- 7.2** Accordingly, it should be noted that a number of considerations/ advice normally obtained from statutory consultees to assist the Local Planning Authority in the consideration of a major planning application have not been provided and are thereby not included within this report.
- 7.3** The following responses have been received which have been sent to both PINS and UDC:
- Essex Police – **Appendix 1**
  - UDC Urban Design – **Appendix 2**
  - ECC Place Services Archaeology – **Appendix 3**
  - UDC Housing – **Appendix 4**

## **8 PARISH COUNCIL/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- 8.1** These should be submitted by the Parish Council directly to PINS within the 21-day consultation period being the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and are thereby not informed within this report.

## **9 CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

- 9.1** All consultees' comments should be submitted directly to PINS within the 21-day consultation period being the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Consultation responses received can be found in Appendices 1-4.

## **10. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 10.1** The application was publicised by sending letters to adjoining and adjacent occupiers and by displaying a site notice. Anyone wishing to make a representation (whether supporting or objecting) are required to submit their comments directly to PINS within the 21-day consultation period ending the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025. All representations should be submitted directly to PINS within the 21-day consultation period.
- 10.2** UDC has no role in co-ordinating or receiving any representations made about this application. It will be for PINS to decide whether to accept any representations that are made later than 21 days.

## **11. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1** In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, The Development Plan and all other material considerations identified in the "Considerations and Assessments" section of the report. The determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 11.2** Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act requires the local planning authority in dealing with a planning application, to have regard to



- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,:
- (a) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,
- b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- c) any other material considerations.

**11.3** Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, in considering whether to grant planning permission (or permission in principle) for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses or, fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## **11.4 The Development Plan**

**11.4.1** Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted July 2014)  
 Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2017)  
 Uttlesford District Local Plan (adopted 2005)  
 Uttlesford Design Code (adopted July 2024)  
 Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2020)  
 Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2016)  
 Newport and Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2021)  
 Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2019)  
 Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan (made July 2022)  
 Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2022)  
 Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2022)  
 Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2023)

**11.4.2** The Council is currently consulting on its Regulation 19 Local Plan which will replace the 2005 Local Plan when adopted (forecast 2026). This document currently has limited weight in determining planning applications, however the evidence base to support this document can be a material consideration.

## **12. POLICY**

### **12.1 National Policies**

**12.1.1** National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

### **12.2 Uttlesford District Plan 2005**

Policy S1 – Settlement boundaries for the Main Urban Areas  
 Policy GEN1 – Access  
 Policy GEN2 – Design  
 Policy GEN3 – Flood protection  
 Policy GEN4 – Good Neighbourliness  
 Policy GEN5 – Light Pollution  
 Policy GEN6 – Infrastructure Provision to Support Development

Policy GEN7 - Nature Conservation  
 Policy GEN8 – Vehicle Parking Standards  
 Policy ENV1- Design of development within the conservation area  
 Policy ENV2- Development affecting Listed Buildings.  
 Policy ENV3- Open Space and Trees  
 Policy ENV4 – Archaeology  
 Policy ENV8 – Other landscape elements of importance for nature conservation  
 Policy ENV11 – Noise generators  
 Policy ENV12 - Protection of Water Resources  
 Policy ENV13 - Exposure to poor air quality  
 Policy ENV14 - Contaminated land  
 Policy ENV15 - Renewable Energy  
 Policy H3 – New Housing within Development Limits  
 Policy H9 - Affordable Housing  
 Policy H10 - Housing Mix  
 LC1 – Loss of Sports Fields and Recreational Facilities  
 LC2 – Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities

## **12.4 Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan**

**12.4.1** The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan ('SWNP') was formally made by Council on 11 October 2022. The most relevant policies to consider include:

**12.4.2**

- Policy SW1 – Housing Mix
- Policy SW2 - Affordable Housing
- Policy SW3 – Design
- Policy SW4 – Parking
- Policy SW10 – High Quality Communication Infrastructure
- Policy SW11 – Ecological Requirements
- Policy SW12 – Walking and Cycling
- Policy SW13 – Travel Planning
- Policy SW14 – Public Transport
- Policy SW15 – Vehicular Transport
- Policy SW16 – Playing Fields and Sports Halls
- Policy SW17 – Open Space for Informal Recreation
- Policy SW19 – Land value to natural environment

## **12.5 Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance**

**12.5.1**

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (October 2007)
- Essex County Council Adopted Parking Vehicle Standards (2009)
- UDC Local Parking Standards (2009)
- Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (February 2021)
- BNG – Planning Practice Guidance
- Developer Contributions SPD (March 2023)
- Statement of Community Involvement (March 2021)
- UDC Design Code (2024)

## **13. CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

13.1 The issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- 13.2
- A) Principle of development
  - B) Design, Scale and Layout
  - C) Housing Mix and Tenure
  - D) Heritage Impacts and Archaeology
  - E) Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
  - F) Access and Parking
  - G) Climate Change
  - H) Contamination, Noise and Air Quality
  - I) Flooding and Drainage
  - J) Planning Obligations
  - K) Planning Balance
  - L) Other Matters

13.3 A) Principle of Development

13.3.1 Playing Fields

13.3.2 The site is designed as protected open space, and this is covered by Policy LC1 in the Local Plan which states that development will not be permitted if it would involve the loss of a sports field and the exception to this would be if the replacement facilities will better meet local recreational needs and/or if the need of the facility no longer exists. The supporting text under paragraph 7.2 states (my emphasis in bold) '*As there is already a deficiency in the number of playing pitches, policy LC1 is concerned with total or partial loss of playing fields, open space and allotments. It applies whether **the facilities are still in active use or whether through ownership, for example, this is now prevented.** It also applies to development that would prejudice the use of land as playing fields, open space or allotments. It is not intended to prevent the provision of facilities such as changing rooms, pavilions and club houses. **If replacement facilities are proposed these must be at least as good as those lost in terms of location, quantity, quality, and management arrangements***'.

13.3.3 Policy LC2 of the Local Plan supports sports facilities if they provide inclusive access to all sections of the community.

13.3.4 Policy SW16 of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (SWNP) reflects both the above policies and states under paragraph 11.2.1 that it opposes the loss of the playing fields at this site.

13.3.5 Paragraph 104 of the NPPF (2024) also reflects the Development Plan policies and sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) *The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) *The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

**13.3.6** The SWNP references the UDC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2019 that's states there is a shortfall of grass football pitches, floodlit 3G football pitches, shortfall of cricket, rugby pitches and tennis courts. The applicant also references this document in there planning statement. This document has been superseded by the UDC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Winter Assessment Report (June 2024) which is in support of the emerging Local Plan. This document focuses on winter sports and the summer sports report is being prepared (e.g. to cover cricket, tennis etc). The site falls within the North Uttlesford sub-area and the report had the following findings:

- Current and future shortfall of adult, youth (11v11 and 9v9) pitches whilst mini (7v7 and 5v5) pitches have spare capacity currently and in the future. There is significant future shortfall in youth (11v11) compared to adult and youth 9v9.
- Current and future shortfall of one 3G pitch
- No shortfall exists or in the future for hockey and rugby pitches

**13.3.7** Paragraph 2.3 provides a breakdown of the existing pitches on the site split between the winter and summer as per the 2007 planning application. It mentions that while the school had pitches marked out across all of the playing field they were not used intensively. It also states at the time the school aspired to reduce the size of the playing field from 5.49ha to 3.6ha but did not state what impact this would have on the number and type of pitches (or whether this was implemented).

**13.3.8** In conjunction with the findings from the Winter Pitch Assessment the table below sets out the existing known layout of the site and the proposed pitch layout.

Type of Pitch	2007	2024 (Winter) Provision**	Previous Proposed UTT/24/1898/PINS Provision**	Proposed Provision	Shortfall (current and future)*****
Football (adult)	2	3**	1	0	2
Football (junior)	2	-	2	2	12*****
Rugby	1	1	-	-	0
Hockey	2	1	-	-	0
Cricket (adult)	1	-	1	1	-
Cricket (junior)	1	-	-	-	-
Rounders	5	-	-	-	-
Other*		-	-	-	-

\*includes the running track and associated athletics pitches

\*\*configuration not known so assume it was a mix of adult and junior pitches

\*\*\*summer provision not currently known

\*\*\*\*football proposal is either a single adult or two junior pitches

\*\*\*\*\*summer current and future shortfall not known

\*\*\*\*\*this is split down to 9.5 for 11v11 and 2.5 for 9v9 pitches

- 13.3.9** When the school was open (up until 2017) the pitches were predominantly used by the school, but the community was able to use them outside of school requirements and we understand the pitches were well used by the community. The former school site had several changing facilities used in conjunction with the playing fields which are no longer operational due to the redevelopment of this site. The access to the playing fields was/is via the former main school site and thus there was no direct public access. We understand when the school closed access to the playing fields also stopped, and the applicant has let the site fall into disrepair. It is not known if community sports teams have tried to obtain access to the pitches.
- 13.3.10** There is a clear need for more adult and junior football pitches in North Uttlesford as per the UDC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Winter Assessment Report and it is not currently known what summer pitch need is. Paragraph 6.2 clearly sets out the position of the Football Foundation and English Cricket Board in respect of the proposal. For ease this is repeated as follows:
- Football Foundation: shortfall in pitches, one adult pitch would not work due to proposed layout and impact on the cricket square. Two smaller pitches would work and regardless the club house is too big for the number of pitches and should be smaller. Applicant needs to consult with Saffron Walden Community FC regarding the most suitable pitch sizes.
  - English Cricket Board: single pitch not sustainable and site could accommodate 6 pitches with 2 football pitches proposed. Internal sizes of club house does not know and that information is required as some rooms looks too small.
- 13.3.11** The UDC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Winter Assessment Report is based on evidence from speaking to local sports clubs/stakeholders over what they require in terms of pitches but also in respect of changing facilities and ancillary development (e.g. car parking). The applicant's proposal is based on the current provision offered which is nothing and equal to the historic provision (based on the 2024 UDC Playing Pitch Strategy). Therefore, the proposal is an improvement as it delivers purpose built high quality facilities which meets local need.
- 13.3.12** The applicant had the opportunity to engage with local sports clubs as the Planning Statement makes reference to discussions with the local sports clubs and a balance struck between what can viably be delivered to bring forward the pitches in a quality manner. The Planning Statement also mentions that the applicant does acknowledge that there is a reduction in the overall number of pitches that were available on the site historically and is aware of the local desire to deliver a 3G pitch to assist in pitch requirements in the area.
- 13.3.13** Applicant has proposed a contribution of £75,000 towards the provision of the 3G pitch. This contribution is in addition to the circa £380,000 required to bring the on-site pitches up to standard (as set out in the Preliminary Feasibility Study for Ground Improvement), alongside the cost of a bespoke clubhouse building to serve the pitches which has never been available. The costs for delivering the clubhouse are estimated at £1,425,000.
- 13.3.14** Under the previous application under Planning ref: UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057), the Planning Inspectorate found that the low quantity of the playing fields and facilities do not adequately meet local needs in accordance with Policy LC1

and concluded that the proposal would not be in an acceptable location having regard to playing fields and open space. It would therefore be contrary to Policy LC1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 103 of the Framework. The Planning Inspectorate found that the proposal would result in the significant part of the playing fields being lost and not replaced on a like for like basis. This is, in principle, contrary to the development plan and the Framework.

- 13.3.15** The Appeal decision noted that ‘an updated winter assessment report has been published in 2024 which states a continued deficiency of football and rugby pitches. The pitches at the application site are not therefore surplus to requirement, indeed the 2019 strategy recommended that they be brought back into use to help meet demand.’ Although noting that Policy LC1 of the Local Plan is out of date, the Planning Inspectorate confirmed that the requirements of Policy LC1 are broadly in accordance with the Framework and therefore consider it to be up to date in its approach to the protection of playing fields.
- 13.3.16** While the provision of some replacement sports pitches is undoubtedly welcomed the proposal falls short of being in accordance with Local and National policies/guidance in terms of the replacement and enhancement of sports pitches, for which there is a demonstrable shortfall in the area.
- 13.3.17** Housing
- 13.3.18** The site is located within the settlement boundary of Saffron Walden which is the principal town within the District. Policy S1 of the Local Plan states that proposals will be granted if they are compatible with the character of the settlement. The principle of housing is deemed acceptable due to its location within the settlement boundary.
- 13.3.19** As of 06 January 2025, the Council can demonstrate 3.46 years of housing land supply (which includes a 20% buffer). With the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) being at 46%, the situations of Footnote 8 apply, which means that the Council must continue engaging with the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. The age of the Local Plan is also supportive of this. Finally, the emerging Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 18 December 2024 but due to its stage of preparation and as the proposed strategy has not been tested at examination, it should be afforded limited weight.
- 13.3.20** The proposal is within the settlement of Saffron Walden and principle of housing is deemed acceptable subject to the proposal complying with the other policies within the Development Plan.

## **13.4 B) Design, Scale and Layout**

- 13.4.1** In terms of design policy, good design is central to the objectives of both National and Local planning policies. The NPPF requires policies to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for the wider area and development schemes. Section 12 of the NPPF highlights that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built development, adding at Paragraph 131 ‘The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve’. These criteria are reflected in Policy GEN2 of



the Local Plan and within Policy SW3 of the SWNP. In addition, the Council has recently adopted a District Wide Design Code SPD to help provide design guidance.

- 13.4.2** The design of the dwellings follows the appearance of adjacent residential development, The Avenue which has won numerous awards since being built in 2014, including the RIBA National Award in 2016. All dwellings have steep duo-pitched gabled roofs with a controlled palette of materials with a mix of designs which demonstrate irregular fenestration patterns. The location of the sports pitches ensures the site retains the openness of the outlook of the dwellings along The Avenue.
- 13.4.3** The layout has been chosen with the principal objective to re-provide the sports pitches and that most of the internal road's led to it. This includes the design of the crescent buildings to the north of the sports pitches which reflect the circular layout of the cricket pitch and there are gaps either side to allow a visual vista through the site from north to south.
- 13.4.4** All the dwellings are 2 storeys other than 4 units located in the middle eastern part of the site which are 2.5 storeys. All the garages and the club house are single storey. The proposed heights follow the height of the surrounding dwellings, and this is considered to be appropriate to setting of the area. The proposal will include a mix of 1-4 bed dwellings with all the 1 and 2 beds being flats and designated affordable housing.
- 13.4.5** The Design & Access Statement and Planning Statement make no reference to the Essex Design Guide, so it is not clear if the proposal complies with this. However, the DAS makes a brief assessment which states how the proposal complies with the UDC District Design Code.
- 13.4.6** It is positive that the proposal is following the design of The Avenue to influence this proposal, and the scale seems to be in keeping with the surrounding area. The applicant needs to provide more information over how the proposal meets design guidance and how the proposal mitigates any impact onto the surrounding residential amenity.
- 13.4.7** The Planning Inspectorate stated in the previous appeal decision UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057) that *'the issues I have found to the form of the development and relationship to open space I consider that the materials should be an integrative part of the design especially given the location of this development within the CA.'* The Inspectorate had concerns regarding the layout of the proposal noting that 'The layout includes a gated community in the northern part of the site. Policy SW3 of the NP specifically prohibits this unless the housing is particularly to serve vulnerable residents. This is because it is considered that they are contrary to the objective of retaining a sense of town-wide community spirit and they restrict pedestrians and cyclists from using 'quiet routes'. Therefore, this aspect does not weigh against the design and layout.
- 13.4.8** The Planning Inspectorate referred to the District Wide Design Code 2024 which states that major applications must include exciting multisensory play spaces for children and young people of all ages and integrated within the urban realm or the open space network. However, the Planning Inspectorate found that *'the omission of formal play*

*space for children in this scheme for some 91 houses would be contrary to this guidance and while not determinative in itself, weighs against the overall design of the scheme.'*

**13.4.9** The UDC Design Officer has been consulted regarding the scale and appearance of the application. Comments have been provided and submitted directly to PINS.

## **13.5 C) Housing Mix and Tenure**

### **13.5.1 Housing Mix**

**13.5.2** Policy H10 requires that developments of 3 or more dwellings should provide a significant proportion of small 2- and 3-bedroom market dwellings. The Local Housing Needs Assessment Report (June 2024) which forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan concludes (page 90) that the appropriate mix of market homes on new developments is:

- 1 & 2 beds – 25%
- 3 beds – 45%
- 4+ beds – 30%

**13.5.3** Policy SW1 of the SWNP states that the housing mix should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs and that the specific mix should be based on up to date local evidence and need.

**13.5.4** The accommodation mix is as follows, which is 45 units out of a total of 75 units would be private market:

- 3 beds – 23 units (30%)
- 4 beds – 8 units (10%)
- 4+ beds – 18 units (24%)

Size	Private	Affordable	Total
1 bed	0	8	8
2 bed	4	11	15
3 bed	23	9	32
4+ bed	18	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>75</b>

*Figure 7 – Extract from Planning Statement demonstrating Housing Mix (UTT/25/1343/PINS)*

### **13.5.5 Affordable Housing**

**13.5.6** Policy H9 of the Local Plan states that residential schemes over 0.5ha or 15 or more properties should provide 40% of houses as affordable. The delivery of affordable housing is one of the Councils' corporate priorities. Section 5 of the NPPF requires that developments deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes, including affordable homes,

widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

**13.5.7** Policy SW2 of the SWNP supports the Local Plan but provides more details such as affordable housing should be distributed throughout the development in appropriately sized non-contiguous clusters. In addition, the mix should reflect the most up to date local housing need.

**13.5.8** The Local Housing Needs Assessment Report (June 2024) which forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan concludes (page 90) that the appropriate mix of affordable homes on new developments is:

Shared Ownership

- 1 beds – 20%
- 2 beds – 45%
- 3 / 3+ beds – 35%

Affordable Rented

- 1 beds – 25%
- 2 beds – 30%
- 3 beds – 35%
- 4+ beds – 10%

**13.5.9** The proposal includes the provision of 30 affordable housing dwellings which is 40% of the total number of dwellings (at 75 units). While the accommodation schedule does not provide a split between affordable rent and shared ownership the applicants draft heads of terms states this will be 70% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership. The overall mix is as follows noting that all the 1 and 2 beds are flats, and the 3 and 4 beds are houses. The units are split between affordable rent and shared ownership:

Affordable Rent		
	Proposed	Target
1 Bed	27%	30%
2 Bed	41%	38%
3 Bed	32%	28%
4 + Bed	5%	4%

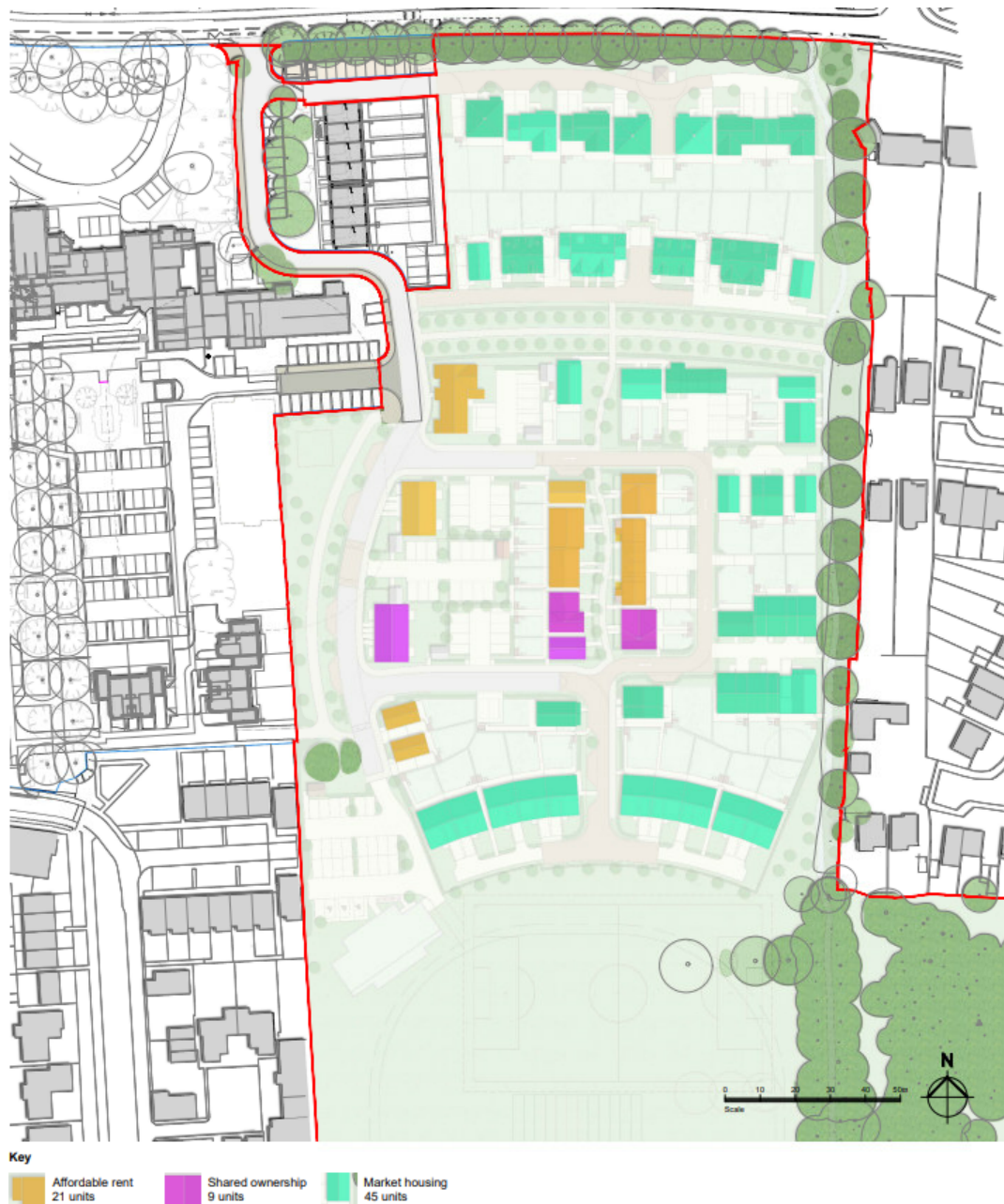
Shared Ownership		
	Proposed	Target
1 Bed	22%	21%
2 Bed	44%	42%
3 Bed	22%	28%
4 + Bed	11%	9%

Market		
	Proposed	Target
1 Bed	0%	3%
2 Bed	22%	25%
3 Bed	43%	44%
4 + Bed	41%	27%

**13.5.10** *Figure 8 – Extract of table from Planning Statement demonstrating affordable rent, shared ownership and housing market - UTT/25/1343/PINS*

**13.5.11** The proposed affordable housing provides a balanced mix of tenures and is largely in accordance with the guidance within the Local Housing Needs Assessment Report (LHNA) (June 2024). The planning statement mentions that a housing association is interested in the site, however there are no further details over who this is and whether they will be taking on all the affordable housing.

**13.5.12** Figure 9 below is a Tenure Plan under drawing no. 23110 (D) 124 of this current scheme which provides the layout of the affordable and market housing. This demonstrates that affordable housing is clustered into one part of the site and is not disbursed/integrated into the rest of the site, this is contrary to Policy SW2 of the SWNP and guidance within the Design Code and would not help to provide a balanced well integrated community.



### 13.5.13 Summary

- 13.5.14** It is the Councils' policy to require 5% of the whole scheme to be delivered as fully wheelchair accessible (building regulations, Part M, Category 3 homes). The proposal delivers a total of 13 market units that are M4(3) compliant, 10% market housing and 15% affordable housing. The planning statement confirms that the proposal would provide 17% M4(3) units for the whole scheme.
- 13.5.15** The Council's Housing Strategy 2021-26 also aims for 5% of all units to be bungalows. The proposal delivers 17 units (22%) as flats with all first-floor flats having lifts. There are no separate bungalows provided which is contrary to this guidance.

- 13.5.16** The proposed housing mix would provide 45 market dwellings which would comprise 3 bedrooms or more which is equates to 100%. UDC Housing Officer considers that there is a greater need for 2 bed houses than 3 bed houses in Saffron Walden, which is backed-up by the 2024 LHNA. The proposal should incorporate more 2 beds in accordance with the Local Housing Needs Assessment Report.
- 13.5.17** While the proposal provides the required level of affordable housing it does not specify what the split is between different affordable products. Contrary to policy it clusters all the affordable in one location which will not provide a balanced and integrated community. Furthermore, UDC Housing Officer considers the affordable housing mix and type would assist towards meeting the local housing need and each property meets NDSS. However, the affordable housing could be better integrated within the site as at present there is effectively a single cluster of 30 affordable units. The proposal needs to amend the proposal and/or provide justification to this position.
- 13.5.18** The Planning Inspectorate found in the previous proposal (UTT/24/1898/PINS) that 'Policy SW1 of the NP states that the housing mix should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs and that the specific mix should be based on up-to-date local evidence and need. As there is a lack of 1 and 2 bedroom houses within the mix of market housing and an overprovision of 3 bed houses, as identified in the up-to-date LHNAR then there would be conflict with this policy and therefore gave any conflict full weight.'

## **13.6 D) Heritage Impacts and Archaeology**

### **13.6.1 Heritage Assets**

- 13.6.2** Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the historical significance, preserve and enhance the setting of heritage assets which is supported by Policy SW3 of the SWNP.
- 13.6.3** The guidance contained within Section 16 of the NPPF, '*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*', relates to the historic environment, and developments which may have an effect upon it. The NPPF defines significance as '*the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest*'. Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.
- 13.6.4** Paragraphs 207, 212 and 213 of the NPPF state: "*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to, the significance, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification*".
- 13.6.5** The site has no designated or undesignated heritage assets within in. It is however classified as an important open space within Zone 6 of the Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal (2018).



- 13.6.6** The nearest listed buildings are the Water Tower (List Entry 1205709) which is located on the western site of the former Friends School site and 9 Mount Pleasant Road (List Entry 1196227) which is located to the northwest of the site on the northern side of Mount Pleasant. Both buildings are Grade II listed, and neither are located on the border of the site and are both set back from the site. The main building to the former Friend's school is locally listed.
- 13.6.7** Annex 2 of the NPPF defines setting as: *"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."*
- 13.6.8** The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as its value to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Significance may be harmed by a development, and it is necessary to determine the degree of harm that may be caused.
- 13.6.9** The applicant has also provided a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment which considers that the proposal will respect the existing character along Mount Pleasant Road and that the site is well screened. The assessment supports the position of the Heritage Statement that the applicant considers the proposal will not have an impact on the important views from the locally listed former main school building.
- 13.6.10** Under the previous application (UTT/24/1898/PINS), the Planning Inspectorate gave significant weight to the harm on the heritage asset noting that *'I have found that the proposal would lead to an unacceptable loss of playing field without there being adequate delivery of replacement facilities. In addition, the proposal would be harmful to the significance of the CA failing to preserve its character and appearance.'*
- 13.6.11** UDC Conservation and Heritage Officer has been consulted regarding the development and the impact onto the setting of these heritage assets. Their response will be important to understand what harm the proposal has and whether the benefits of the scheme could outweigh any negative heritage concerns. Comments are being drafted and will be submitted directly to PINS.
- 13.6.12** Archaeology
- 13.6.13** Policy ENV4 of the adopted Local Plan states the preservation of locally important archaeological remains will be sought unless the need for development outweighs the importance of the archaeology. It further highlights that in situations where there are grounds for believing that a site would be affected, applicants would be required to provide an archaeological field assessment to be carried out before a planning application can be determined, thus allowing and enabling informed and reasonable planning decisions to be made.
- 13.6.14** The site has no archaeological designation however the applicant's heritage report states that the site does have the potential for archaeological remains. ECC

Archaeology have no objection subject to a condition relating to a programme of trail trenching.

## **13.7 E) Nature Conservation and Biodiversity**

### **13.17.1 Nature Conservation**

- 13.17.2** Policy GEN2 of the Local Plan applies a general requirement that development safeguards important environmental features in its setting, which is supported by Policy SW3 of the SWNP. Whilst Policy GEN7 seeks to protect wildlife, particularly protected species and requires the potential impacts of the development to be mitigated. The loss of trees and vegetation will not be permitted unless the need for development outweighs the benefits of the proposal under Policy ENV3 & ENV8.
- 13.17.3** Policy SW17 of the SWNP states that informal recreation must be well located and incorporated into proposals (and not delivered in piecemeal). SW19 states that Saffron Walden has no publicly accessible woodland and the creation of such would be welcomed.
- 13.17.4** Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- 13.7.5** The majority of the site is designed as protected open space for playing fields, while the woodland in the southeast corner is designed as protected open space of environmental value. The proposal includes no development within the woodland. This part of the site has never been publicly accessible, and the proposal seeks to preserve this space and make it accessible to the public.
- 13.7.6** The site boundary currently consists of extensive vegetation and trees on the northern, eastern and southern borders. The western board has no existing vegetation and is highly visible to the former friend's school redevelopment and The Avenue. The proposal seeks to retain and enhance the existing vegetation/ trees (including the woodland in the southeastern corner) through a landscape and maintenance strategies. There will be the loss of some trees relating to the delivery of the sports pitches and some of these are protected by tree preservation orders, but the application considers the removal is deemed to be acceptable due to the provision of new trees across the site.
- 13.7.7** The Landscape and Tree strategies provide a layout of the new trees (146) to be planted. These will be spread out across the site and are proposed to be native fruiting trees and other trees which aim to increase native floral as well as foraging opportunities for birds and invertebrates. The frontages to the dwellings will include native wildflowers and grasses and will be cut a maximum of 3 times a year to ensure flower and seed production.
- 13.7.8** In the previous appeal decision the Planning Inspectorate found that Policy SW17 of the Neighbourhood Plan describes the under provision of such space and the difficulties of small areas being provided which are not of significant use for residents. It states that each new development must provide 75.1m<sup>2</sup> per person of green open

space for informal recreation albeit this is in the explanatory text and not the policy. However, the Inspectorate concludes that while not explicitly providing open space, the proposal encompasses the adjacent protected woodland and formalizes a pathway through that opening it up for recreation purposes creating a linkway between residential areas and therefore sufficient informal green space meets the requirements of Policy SW17 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 13.7.9** The provision of the sports pitches and surrounding open space is covered in the above sub-section and in addition to this the proposal includes a micro-orchard located on the western boarder which is adjacent to the MUGA in the former friend's school site. This offers the potential for community involvement in harvesting the fruits once mature and enables wildlife to forage. There is no other formal or informal open space/play space provided.
- 13.7.10** The applicant states that the formal and informal open space and play space being provided on the former friend's school site will be connected to this site and thus will avoid the need for the applicant to provide additional play space/open space on this site. More evidence is needed to demonstrate that these spaces can accommodated the increased usage and or whether more this site needs to contain more formal/informal play space.
- 13.7.11** Biodiversity
- 13.7.12** Major planning applications now need to comply with providing a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed for the application site and states the proposal would result in a loss of 27% of the habitat units and a gain of 32.49% of the hedgerow units. While some mitigation can be provided on site, 15.54 units will need to be secured off-site. The applicant is proposing to secure off-site credits via the section 106 and consider that there are credits available.
- 13.7.13** The proposal includes sensitive lighting strategy to ensure the impact of external lighting is kept to a minimum on wildlife, such as bats.
- 13.7.14** Furthermore, the Ecology Assessment concludes that the proposal will have no impacts on protected species but does include mitigation measures such as provision of swift boxes, sparrow terrace boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog holes.
- 13.7.15** The Planning Inspectorate found under the previous S62A (S62A/2024/0057) that a legal agreement appropriately secures the bio-diversity scheme and secures the provision of the 10.45 off-site units for the length of the net-gain agreement and that submitted the submitted UU only requires that the owner shall include within the Biodiversity Net Gain Scheme evidence that a contract for their purchase has been entered into. As a result, the Planning Inspectorate concluded that it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposal would adequately secure 10% biodiversity net gain through conditions and the legal agreement.
- 13.7.16** UDC Landscape have been consulted in respect of the impact of the proposal onto the landscape, the proposed landscaping and open space provision. ECC Ecology have been consulted in respect of the impact of the proposal onto the ecology, wildlife and biodiversity provision. It is disappointing for a large site that the proposal cannot provide

the required on-site biodiversity improvements. No comments have been received and any comments received are required to be submitted directly to PINS.

## **13.8 F) Access and Parking**

### **13.8.1 Access**

**13.8.2** Paragraph 114 (b) of the NPPF states that development should ensure that 'safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users', whilst Paragraph 116 (c) states that development should 'create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards.'

**13.8.3** Policy GEN1 of the Local Plan requires developments to be designed so that they do not have unacceptable impacts upon the existing road network, that they must compromise road safety and take account of cyclists, pedestrians, public transport users, horse riders and people whose mobility is impaired and encourage movement by means other than a vehicle.

**13.8.4** The only vehicular access to the site will utilise the existing and enhanced access into the former friend's school site from Mount Pleasant Road, as demonstrated on Figure 6. This provides two vehicular access points into the detached housing in the northern part of the site, via the road running to the north of the Ash Buildings and a new junction where the road runs into the car park for former swimming pool building. The transport assessment states that all of the roads comply with regulations in respect of access for refuse and emergency vehicles. This assessment is not explicit that the roads are suitable for the proposed coaches that will access the club house, but I assume this is the case if refuse/emergency vehicles can (this will need to be confirmed).

**13.8.5** Pedestrian access to the site will be via the new pavements from the vehicular access and also via a separate pedestrian only access that runs along the eastern boundary from Mount Pleasant Road to the housing development to the south of the site (Greenways). There is also a pedestrian access into the former friend school site via the vehicular access and also into the southern part of the former friend's school.

**13.8.6** Given the sites location within Saffron Walden, it is well connected into local bus routes and provides good pedestrians links into and around the settlement.

**13.8.7** The transport assessment considers that the proposal will generate 43 vehicle movements in the AM peak and 47 vehicle movements in the PM peak and thus this will generate a small number of vehicle movements onto the local highway network. A review of 7 junctions considers that the proposal will not have a significant impact onto these.

**13.8.8** The sites previous impact onto the highways network is not known but is assumed to have had little to no impact and thus the proposal is likely to have an impact onto the local road network, which has not had this historic level of accessibility. It makes sense for the vehicular access to utilise the existing access from the adjacent site.

### **13.8.9 Parking**

- 13.8.10** Policy GEN8 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted unless the number, design and layout of vehicle parking places proposed is appropriate for the location as set out in the ECC Parking Standards Design and Good Practice (2009) and Uttlesford District Council Local Residential Parking Standards (2013) which only updated the parking requirement (3 spaces) for 4 or more-bedroom dwellings. The Essex guidance states that a minimum of 1 car parking spaces per 1xbed and 2 car parking spaces per 2/3xbed dwellings are provided. In addition, each dwelling should also be provided with at least 1 secure cycle covered space.
- 13.8.11** Policy SW4 of the SWNP supports the above policy and also states that all dwellings should make provision for electric vehicle charging points. Each dwelling will be provided with a designated vehicle charging point close to the property.
- 13.8.12** The proposal provides a total of 182 allocated car parking, 33 unallocated spaces including 3 blue badge spaces. Included within the unallocated provision are 25 car parking spaces proposed to be associated with the clubhouse and sports field uses. The applicant considers that the approach to the visitor parking provision is to combine it as dual use with the sports pitch parking and this avoids the need to provide the required level of visitor parking for the residential dwellings.
- 13.8.13** Cycle parking will be provided within a secure storage within the curtilage of each house (e.g. a shed or garage) and in secured communal store for the flats. 14 cycle parking spaces are proposed as part of the club house.
- 13.8.14** ECC Highways Officer has been consulted regarding the proposal and in particular for the increase in traffic onto the local road network and the lack of visitor car parking spaces. While I can understand the rationale the dual use of the sports pitch parking for both sports teams and visitors, it is more likely that visitors will visit outside of working hours (e.g. evenings weekends) and this more likely to be when the sports pitches are being used and thus the proposal should provide the required level of visitor parking. No comments have been received and any comments received are required to be submitted directly to PINS.

## **13.9 G) Climate Change**

- 13.9.1** Policy GEN2 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that the design of new development helps to minimise water and energy consumption. Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (2021) sets out a list of Policies of note a demonstration of how developments demonstrate the path towards carbon zero. The NPPF seeks to ensure that new development should avoid increased vulnerability arising from climate change. More so, developments should help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 13.9.2** The applicant has indicated within their Design and Access Statement that the design of the proposals to help tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions will include the following techniques and features:
- Highly insulated external walls, floors and roofs
  - Installation of energy efficient appliances and light fittings
  - Insulated pipework within the dwellings

- Orientation to allow all gardens and houses, and the clubhouse, to benefit from solar access at some point during the day
- Pitched roofs to allow for the most efficient installation of renewable panels
- Argon filled, sealed double glazed window units to all properties and sized to control solar gain
- An air tightness level to minimise the potential for loss of heat energy through air leakage
- Quality control monitoring to ensure the buildings meet the energy efficiency targets
- Provision of Operational and Maintenance manuals to all dwellings to inform the occupiers of the energy saving design features applied to the property
- Low flow taps and dual flush WCs
- Air source heat pumps (ASHP).

**13.9.3** The application includes a sustainable assessment which concludes that the proposed residential development will achieve a 66% improvement over Part L 2021 of the Building Regulations and the commercial development will achieve a 43% improvement. Overall, the proposed development will achieve a 66% improvement over Part L 2021 of the Building Regulations (site-wide).

**13.9.4** The proposal seems to provide a range of measures to tackle sustainably and meet the guidance within the Interim Climate Change Policy and District Wide Design Code SPD.

**13.9.5** UDC Environmental Health have been consulted regarding the sustainability proposals. No comments have been received and any comments received are required to be submitted directly to PINS.

## **13.10 H) Contamination, Noise and Air Quality**

**13.10.1** Policy ENV14 of the Local Plan states that any proposal on contaminated land needs to take proper account of the contamination. Mitigation measures, appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed development will need to be agreed.

**13.10.2** Policy ENV11 of the Local Plan states that noise generating development will not be permitted if it would be liable to affect adversely the reasonable occupation of existing or proposed noise sensitive development nearby, unless the need for the development outweighs the degree of noise generated.

**13.10.3** Policy ENV13 of the Local Plan states that proposals that would involve users being exposed on an extended long-term basis to poor air quality outdoors near ground level will not be permitted. Policy GEN4 states that the installation of plant will not be permitted where dust, fumes, exposure to other pollutant would cause material disturbance or nuisance to occupiers of surrounding properties.

**13.10.4** The SWNP states that the northern part of the site is located within the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). However, this AQMA was revoked on 19 March 2024 as it indicates that local air quality has improved and is generally good with a low risk to health impacts.



- 13.10.5** The applicant has submitted a Stage 1 Desktop report into the potential contamination on the site. This considers that there are several potential areas for contamination (such as a substation and groundwater). This report considers that a Stage 2 Geotechnical ground investigation is required.
- 13.10.6** The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment which considers the proposal is acceptable in terms of noise levels (such as from road traffic and ASHP).
- 13.10.7** The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment which considers that the proposal is suitable in terms of air quality and there are no air quality constraints. It also states that during the construction phase, best practice mitigation measures would ensure there are no significant residual air quality impacts.
- 13.10.8** UDC Environmental Health have been consulted regarding impact of the proposal onto the above points. No comments have been received and any comments received are required to be submitted directly to PINS.

### **13.11 I) Flooding and Drainage**

- 13.11.1** Policy GEN3 of the Local Plan requires developments within settlements and outside of flood risk areas to not increase the risk of flooding through surface water run off and a flood risk assessment is required to demonstrate this. Sustainable drainage systems should also be considered.
- 13.11.2** The Environmental Agency's website and the Council's policy maps has identified the site is within a fluvial Flood Zone 1 where there is a minimal risk of flooding.
- 13.11.3** The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment which demonstrates how surface water and foul water drainage will be dealt with.
- 13.11.4** The former friends school redevelopment includes a SUDS drainage feature to the rear of the Ash Buildings. This has a building exclusion zone which extends into the site, and this is not proposed to be built on.
- 13.11.5** ECC Flooding have been consulted regarding the flood risk assessment and how the proposal mitigates the impact of drainage. No comments have been received and any comments received are required to be submitted directly to PINS.

### **13.12 J) Planning Obligations**

- 13.12.1** Policy GEN6 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted unless it makes provision for school capacity, public services, transport provision, drainage and other infrastructure that are made necessary by the proposed development.
- 13.12.2** Paragraph 58 of the NPPF sets out that planning obligations should only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. This is in accordance with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations.

**13.12.3** A draft section 106 will be prepared and will take into consideration consultation responses received.

**13.12.4** The following are the indicative obligations that the proposal is likely to need to provide against:

- Provision of at least 40% affordable housing.
- Affordable housing tenure mix will be 70% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership
- Provision of at least 5% wheelchair accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(3) – Building Regulations 2010).
- Off-site provision of 15.54 habitat units to achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
- On site public open space
- On site club house and sports pitches
- Education contributions
- Healthcare contribution £152,152.00 (subject to final tenure mix)
- Sustainable Transport Contribution
- Travel Plan
- Public Library contribution
- Employment & Skills
- Flood and Water management
- General monitoring Fees

### **13.13 K) Planning Balance**

**13.13.1** This section provides a summary of the key points of the proposal. It is difficult to fully understand whether the proposal is acceptable without specialist input from consultees.

#### **13.13.2 Benefits of the proposal**

- A new club house and associated sports pitches will meet identified need for both within the sub-area
- The protected open space (woodland) in the southeast of the site will be opened up for public use. The SWNP identifies that the town has no publicly accessible woodland and this will help to meet this shortfall.
- A new footpath will connect Mount Pleasant Road to Greenway via the woodland.
- Short term benefits associated with the construction of the site in terms of construction jobs
- Long term benefits of future occupiers contributing to the local economy
- Biodiversity improvements including the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation and the creation of 101 new trees
- A new community orchard for both residents and to help support wildlife
- Sustainability improvements – proposal will achieve a 66% improvement over Part L 2021 of the Building Regulations (site-wide).

#### **13.13.3 Neutral Factors**

- While the proposal provides a positive contribution to the provision of housing within Saffron Walden including the required level of affordable housing. The proposal does not provide the identified need for a mix of tenures for both market and affordable units as per the Local Housing Needs Assessment Report (June 2024). All of the affordable units are located in a cluster, and it is not clear what units are affordable rent and shared ownership
- The minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain cannot be delivered on site and an off-site credit is required. It is not clear how deliverable this is.
- Propose utilities the former friends school facilities (e.g. MUGA) and its not clear if there is a requirement for the site to have more formal play space
- No bungalows are provided but this could be offset by the number of 1 bed flats with lift access.
- The Council can currently demonstrate a 4-year housing land supply but remains in the position of presumption of sustainable development.
- The site is designated as providing openness in respect of the surrounding dense development as per the Conservation Area, this is slightly mitigated by providing the sports pitches to the south of the site to enable the openness of dwellings within the Avenue to be retained.
- Small impact onto the transport network – it is not known if this is acceptable
- Lack of the required level of visitors parking which relies of space within the car park for the sports club.

#### **13.13.4 Adverse impacts of the proposal**

It is not clear how many and what type of existing sports pitches were part of the site, however the proposal will not provide a like for like replacement, and this is contrary to planning policy.

- There is no end user for the sports pitches identified and thus it is unclear what the final sports pitch layout will be. It is disappointing that the applicant has not engaged with local sports clubs given that there is an identified need for sports pitches in the sub-area
- For a scheme of this size, it is disappointing that the applicant has not undertaken a pre-submission consultation with local residents and neighbours given the impact this proposal will have. This is contrary to the guidance within the District Wide Design Guide.
- The proposal will be not comply with the openness of the site in relation to the designation within the Conservation Area Appraisal

#### **13.14 L) Other matters**

- 13.14.1** From 1 October 2013 the Growth and Infrastructure Act inserted two new provisions into the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) ('the Act'). Section 62A allows major applications for planning permission, consents and orders to be made directly to the Planning Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) where a local planning authority has been designated for this purpose.
- 13.14.2** The Planning Inspectorate will appoint an Inspector to determine the application. The Inspector will be provided with the application documents, representations and any other relevant documents including the development plan policies. Consultation with

statutory consultees and the designated LPA will be carried out by the Planning Inspectorate.

- 13.14.3** The LPA also must carry out its normal notification duties, which may include erecting a site notice and/or writing to the owners/occupiers of adjoining land.
- 13.14.4** The LPA is also a statutory consultee and must provide a substantive response to the consultation within 21 days, in this case by 30th July 2024. This should include a recommendation, with reasons, for whether planning permission should be granted or refused, and a list of conditions if planning permission is granted.
- 13.14.5** The Planning Inspectorate will issue a formal decision notice incorporating a statement setting out the reasons for the decision. If the application is approved the decision will also list any conditions which are considered necessary. There is no right to appeal.

#### **14. CONCLUSION**

- 14.1** Due to the nature of this application process, it is not possible to provide a detailed assessment of the proposal due to the lack of input from all consultees at this early stage. Similarly, no neighbour responses can be factored into the assessment of the proposal.
- 14.2** The site is vacant and has fallen into disrepair following the closure of the former Friends School in 2017. The site previously provided sports pitches which could be used by local sports teams outside of school use. Other than the site providing open space within the setting of the Conservation Area it is not providing any benefits to Saffron Walden. The redevelopment of this site could be considered positively, especially the provision of a range of much needed houses and the provision of sports pitches of which there is an identified need.
- 14.3** However, the applicant has not positively engaged with the local community, stakeholders and importantly local sports clubs who are likely to be using the sporting provision. The proposal does not provide a coherent position of what the sporting pitch provision will be and the response from SP is clear that the proposal needs to be tailored to the end user. There is an identified need for football pitches and cricket pitches (noting that a revised summer pitch assessment is in the process of being prepared). This is a large site which had a significantly larger provision of sports pitches than is being proposed. The site doesn't have a lot of physical constraints which would warrant the need for significant housing to enable the delivery of sports pitches. The site is in a highly accessible location to the residents of Saffron Walden and the proposal should deliver a greater provision of sports pitches to mitigate the loss of the whole site as supported by planning policy.
- 14.4** The unique application process that is presented by this submission, requires the Local Planning Authority to advise the Planning Inspectorate whether or not it objects to this proposal. Having regard to the limited opportunity to consider the proposals the Planning Committee is invited to provide its comments on this proposal.

#### **14.5 PLANNING CONDITIONS**

**14.5.1** Without prejudice to the council's formal view, should the Planning Inspector be minded to grant planning permission the following draft conditions are suggested.

**1** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

REASON: In accordance with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**2** The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the development is built out in accordance with the approved plans and to ensure that the development reflects and maintains the character of the surrounding locality in accordance with Policies GEN2 and S7 of the Adopted Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**3** No development above slab level shall commence until the external materials of construction for the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and to accord with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005.

**4** Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) in accordance with the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD environmental, June 2024) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- Identification of "biodiversity protection zones"
- Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
- Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (As amended).

**5** All works hereby permitted shall be carried out only between the following hours:

- 08 00 Hours and 18 00 Hours on Mondays to Fridays
- 08 00 and 13 00 Hours on Saturdays and;
- at no time on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Deliveries to and removal of plant, equipment, machinery and waste from the site must only take place within the permitted hours detailed above.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of surrounding locality residential premises in accordance with Policies GEN2, and GEN4.

**6** No development shall take place, including any ground works or demolition until measures to minimise and manage the creation of dust and smoke should be implemented for the full duration of all construction works, including demolition and excavation, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure the protections of the surrounding residential amenity and in conjunction with Policies ENV13 and GEN4 of the Local Plan.

**7** Prior to the commencement of the development details of any external lighting to be installed on the site, including the design of the lighting unit, any supporting structure, and the extent of the area to be illuminated, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the details thereby approved shall be implemented.

REASON: To ensure there are unacceptable impacts onto the amenity of the surrounding residential premises in accordance with Policies GEN2 and GEN4.

**8** No development shall take place, including any ground works or demolition, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority, in consultation with the local highway authority. The approved plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Plan shall provide for:

- a) construction vehicle access
- b) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- c) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- d) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- e) wheel and underbody washing facilities.
- f) routing strategy for construction vehicles,
- g) protection of public rights of way within or adjacent to the site.

REASON: to ensure that on-street parking of these vehicles in the adjoining streets does not occur and to ensure that loose materials and spoil are not brought out onto the highway in the interests of highway safety and Policy DM1.

9

No development shall take place, including any ground works until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The scheme should include but not be limited to:

- Verification of the suitability of infiltration of surface water for the development. This should be based on infiltration tests that have been undertaken in accordance with BRE 365 testing procedure and the infiltration testing methods found in chapter 25.3 of The CIRIA SuDS Manual C753. If infiltration is viable, an infiltration scheme should be used in accordance with the Drainage Hierarchy.
- If infiltration is not feasible, discharge rates must be limited to a maximum of 1.8l/s for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% allowance for climate change storm event. All relevant permissions to discharge from the site into any outfall should be demonstrated, inclusive of the settlement chamber.
- Provide sufficient storage to ensure no off site flooding as a result of the development during all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event.
- Half Drain Time - demonstrate that features are able to accommodate a 1 in 10 year storm event within 24 hours of a 1 in 30 year event plus climate change. This requires hydraulic modelling to be run for both storm events.
- Provision of 10% urban creep allowance.
- Final modelling and detailed calculations for all areas of the drainage system. Full drainage network details and results to be produced within modelling software. The includes the manhole schedule, design criteria and input variables, area summaries, outfall details, modelled storm details and simulation criteria, flow control structure details, and the summary of results for critical storms for the 1yr, 30yr and 100yr plus 40% climate change storms. Sewer Network Design should demonstrate that there is No Surcharging for the 1 in 1yr RP.
- The appropriate level of treatment for all runoff leaving the site, in line with the Simple Index Approach in chapter 26 of the CIRIA SuDS Manual C753. This must acknowledge the site being within a SPZ.
- The provision of permeable paving for any required hardstanding
- where possible.
- Demonstration that the sediment chamber which will be used to convey surface water, has been cleared of any blockage and is in fully working condition.
- Detailed engineering drawings of each component of the drainage scheme, including the pond.
- A final drainage plan which details exceedance and conveyance routes, FFL and ground levels, and location and sizing of any drainage features.
- An updated drainage strategy incorporating all of the above bullet points including matters already approved and highlighting any changes to the previously approved strategy.

The scheme shall subsequently be implemented prior to occupation.

REASON:

- To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site.
- To ensure the effective operation of SuDS features over the lifetime of the development.
- To provide mitigation of any environmental harm which may be caused to the local water environment
- Failure to provide the above required information before commencement of works may result in a system being installed that is not sufficient to deal with surface water occurring during rainfall events and may lead to increased flood risk and pollution hazard from the site.

- 10** No development shall take place, including any ground works or demolition until a scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding caused by surface water run-off and groundwater during construction works and prevent pollution has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

REASON: The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 167 and paragraph 174 state that local planning authorities should ensure development does not increase flood risk elsewhere and does not contribute to water pollution.

Construction may lead to excess water being discharged from the site. If dewatering takes place to allow for construction to take place below groundwater level, this will cause additional water to be discharged. Furthermore, the removal of topsoils during construction may limit the ability of the site to intercept rainfall and may lead to increased runoff rates. To mitigate increased flood risk to the surrounding area during construction there needs to be satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water and groundwater which needs to be agreed before commencement of the development. Construction may also lead to polluted water being allowed to leave the site. Methods for preventing or mitigating this should be proposed.

- 11** Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, measure of renewable energy/climate control and water efficiency measures associated with the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, all approved measures shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development and thereafter retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure the development is sustainable and makes efficient use of energy, water and materials and has an acceptable appearance to comply with Policies ENV13 and GEN2.

- 12** 1. No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until a programme of archaeological investigation has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.



2. No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the completion of the programme of archaeological investigation identified in the WSI defined in 1 above.

3. The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

REASON: To protect the historic environment, in accordance with Policy ENV4 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

- 13** Prior to the occupation of the club house a management plan and travel plan should be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This will provide details over how the building and car park will be managed and to reduce any negative impacts onto the surrounding uses. The building should not be used after midnight during the week and at the weekend.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of the surrounding properties in accordance with Policies GEN2 and GEN4 of the Local Plan.

- 14** No plant or machinery shall be operated on the site during the construction phase of the development hereby permitted before 0730hrs on Monday to Saturday, nor after 1800hrs on weekdays and 1300hrs on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays or bank holidays.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of residents of nearby properties, in accordance with Policy GEN4 of the of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

- 15** If during any site investigation, excavation, engineering, or construction works evidence of land contamination is identified, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. The contamination shall be investigated by a competent person in accordance with the Essex Contaminated Land Consortium's 'Land Affected by Contamination: Technical Guidance for Applicants and Developers' and The Environment Agency Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) and other current guidance deemed authoritative for the purposes, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, to ensure that the site is made suitable for its end use. Where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted for the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority

REASON: To ensure that the proposed development does not cause harm to human health, the water environment, and other receptors in accordance with Policy GEN2, ENV12 and ENV14 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

- 16** Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall be in accordance with Landscape and Tree Strategies submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include [for example]:-

- proposed finished levels or contours;
- legacy planting proposals
- means of enclosure including security fencing and CCTV during operation of the site;
- car parking layouts;
- other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- hard surfacing materials;
- minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, etc.);
- proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (e.g. drainage power),
- communications cables, pipelines etc. indicating lines, manholes, supports);
- Soft landscape works shall include [planting plans; written specifications including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate; implementation programmed.

REASON: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted, in accordance with Policies GEN2, GEN8, GEN7, ENV3 and ENV8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

- 17** All existing trees and hedges shall be retained, unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. All trees and hedges on and immediately adjoining the site shall be protected from damage as a result of works on the site, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, or any subsequent relevant British Standard, for the duration of the works on site and until at least five years following contractual practical completion of the approved development. In the event that trees or hedging become damaged or otherwise defective during such period, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and remedial action agreed and implemented. In the event that any tree or hedging dies or is removed without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority, it shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable and, in any case, by not later than the end of the first available planting season, with trees of such size, species and in such number and positions as may be agreed with the Authority.

REASON: To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees and hedges, in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

- 18** A) The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Ecological Appraisal dated June 2024 and prepared by ACD Environmental.  
 B) The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:  
 (a) a non-technical summary;  
 (b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;  
 (c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;

(d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and

(e) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

C) Monitoring reports shall be submitted to local planning authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP.

REASON: To enhance the ecology and biodiversity in accordance with national and local planning policy.

**19** There shall be no discharge of surface water onto the highway.

REASON: to prevent hazards caused by water flowing onto the highway and to avoid the formation of ice on the highway in the interest of highway safety to ensure accordance with policy DM1 and Local Plan Policy GEN1, and GEN2.

**20** The planting proposals hereby approved shall be carried out no later than during the first planting season following the date when the development hereby permitted is ready for occupation or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the council. All planted materials shall be maintained for five years, and any trees or plants removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced with others of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

REASON: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Local Policy GEN2.

**21** A minimum of 5% of the total dwellings approved by this permission shall be built to Category 3 (wheelchair user) housing M4(3)(2)(a) wheelchair adaptable. The remaining dwellings approved by this permission shall be built to Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document M, Volume 1 2015 edition.

REASON: To ensure compliance with Policy GEN2 (c) of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 and the subsequent SPD on Accessible Homes and Playspace.

## Appendix 1 – Essex Police Consultation Response



Name: Natasha Vernal  
Uttlesford Planning Office  
via E mail to: [planning@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:planning@uttlesford.gov.uk)  
Ref: UTT/25/1343/PINS/

Andrew Simpson  
Designing Out Crime Office  
Essex Police HQ  
Springfield  
Chelmsford  
Tel.07971 902227  
Date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, Essex.

UTT/25/1343/PINS Consultation on S62A/2025/0107 - Erection of 75no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse

Dear Ms Vernal,

The 'Essex Police – Designing out Crime Office (DOCO) again welcomes the opportunity to make comment on the proposed development of the former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden.

We previously commented on 24<sup>th</sup> August last year and request that our previous response, under planning reference UTT/24/1898/PINS, is considered together with this response.

As we previously stated, good design and early co-ordination, incorporating 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) principles, can avoid the conflicts that may be expensive or impossible to resolve once the construction phase is complete. CPTED forms part of Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (PCPI) which is the official UK Police Security Initiative.

Furthermore, Essex Police considers that it is important that, if approved, this construction project is designed incorporating the maximum achievable benefit of CPTED for which Secured by Design (SBD) is the preferred enabler.

We therefore strongly recommend that a Secured by Design condition is imposed for the developer to achieve the relevant Secured by Design accreditation detailed within the current Secured by Design Residential and Non Residential guides for the development, (<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides>) provides full details.

We acknowledge the inclusion of the Community Safety section within the latest Design and Access Statement (page 61) in which there is a commitment to adopt key principles for creating a secure and safe environment and therefore do not consider that the SBD condition will be burdensome.

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In an emergency always dial **999**. For non emergencies dial **101**.  
[www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk)

It is important that design and security specifications are risk commensurate and provide an effective and realistic level of physical security that is commensurate with the risk posed by crime. Consequently, the questions posed in our previous correspondence of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024 concerning security are still relevant; we would therefore like to discuss the following areas with the applicant:

**Access control:** Details of the access control measures proposed for the Apartment Block are sought.

**Bin and Cycle Storage:** Details of the access control measures for the Bin and Cycle Storage is sought.

**CCTV/Intruder Alarm:** Details of the CCTV and Intruder Alarm for the Club House is sought.

We would welcome the opportunity for engagement with the design team to discuss the security design aspects of the development to ensure provision of a safe and secure environment for the future.

If you have any further queries relating to the above or regarding means to adopt designing out crime practices, please contact the team via email [designingoutcrime@essex.police.uk](mailto:designingoutcrime@essex.police.uk).

We look forward to hearing from you to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Designing Out Crime Officer  
Local Policing Support Unit  
Essex Police HQ

## Appendix 2 – UDC Urban Design Consultation Response



### UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER  
Telephone (01799) 510510  
Textphone Users 18001  
Email [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk) Website [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

#### Urban Design Consultation Response

*The following notes are associated with Urban Design aspects only and are to be considered advisory and the opinion of specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.*

<b>Reference Nos.</b>	UTT/25/1343/PINS S62A/2025/0107
<b>Applicant</b>	Chase New Homes
<b>Site Location</b>	Former Friends School Field Mount Pleasant Road Saffron Walden Essex
<b>Proposal Description</b>	Consultation on S62A/2025/0107 - Erection of 75no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse

#### Summary

The proposal is for 75 dwellings and sports pitches and clubhouse on the site of the former playing fields of the Friends School. There are two listed buildings in the vicinity of the site (9&10 Mount Pleasant) and the site is in a Conservation Area and is designated as Protected Open Space.

It is noted that the site has been the subject of previous unsuccessful applications, UTT/19/1744/OP, in 2019 that was refused on several reasons, including the design being inappropriate to the character of the area and loss of protected open space. A subsequent application UTT/24/1898/PINS (S62A/2024/0057) was also refused on several reasons including design, layout and appearance, impact on the character of the conservation area and loss of a significant area of playing field.

The submitted scheme is similar to the previous refused scheme, except with some layout changes and a reduction in housing numbers, but these do not materially alter the design intent. I have provided comments on this previous scheme on 5 September 2024. Therefore, I repeat here a lot of my previous and still relevant comments.

Given the site's location within a Conservation Area and its value as a Protected Open Space, the design quality of any scheme coming forwards should be exemplary and whilst this scheme meets the threshold for acceptable design quality, it falls short of exemplary.

It is noted and appreciated that the applicant has prepared and submitted a Design Code Review document, assessing the scheme against the Uttlesford Design Code, to which it broadly complies.

#### Character & Identity

The site is located within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area and adjacent to and part of the former Friends School and the site itself is designated Protected Open Space. Given these factors, it should be a prerequisite that any proposals be of exceptional design quality to mitigate the loss of open space and of developing within a Conservation Area. The proposals note their adjacency to The Avenue and use this as a contextual reference and design precedent.



The Avenue is a scheme of exceptional design quality and a benchmark locally for high quality design, so it is positive that the design proposals are aspiring to meet this design standard. However, it is important that the design proposals take those design strengths and cues and make them their own, rather than imitate. It appears that house types, The Willow, The Aspen and so on, are standard house types used on other schemes, but with different cladding (timber shingles for example) to match The Avenue.

There are supplied street elevations within the DAS and some CGI's which do indicate some variety in terms of elevational treatment and roofscape. It would, however, be helpful to supply street elevations of the key streets; Grand Avenue, Grand Avenue Link etc. so that the quality of the streetscene in these key spaces can be assessed. As an example, The DAS states that corner buildings have been designed to "respond to their corner location where they address two streets" However, the drawings for plot 24, house type 'Bronte' have an entirely windowless long façade which is presented to the pedestrian footpath as well as the garden boundary treatment. Similarly, the additional windows added to plot 64 only on house type 'The Villa' do not provide sufficient active frontage and passive surveillance to the pedestrian footpath along the eastern edge of the site. This coupled with large extents of garden boundaries will make this pedestrian footpath unattractive after dark.

The crescent housing could be a successful layout in relation to the sports pitch, although the façade design would benefit from more articulation and the integral garages limit passive surveillance and engagement with the street. The elevation presented to the sports pitch is lacking in variety or animation, with a uniform ridge line. This remains unchanged in its design and facades should be curved in the form of a crescent, rather than the faceted form as shown in the drawings.

#### **Streets and the public realm**

The layout has been revised since the last application and has some positive merits. The inclusion of two pedestrianised routes – Grand Avenue and Grand Avenue Link – is welcome. However, as stated above, street elevations should be supplied. In placemaking terms, it would be beneficial to use these routes to lead to a destination, such as a small square or amenity open space. The Grand Avenue is a slightly curved tree-lined route running east-west and whilst this will create an attractive environment, it seems overly formal for its destination, which is a pedestrian footpath running north-south on the eastern edge of the site. Similarly, the Grand Avenue Link, is a more informal pedestrian route, and is a positive asset, however, its design results in a lot of courtyard parking and lack of street animation or passive surveillance to the surrounding one-way street, in contravention of code M3.7C.

Parking provision generally seems high, given the location of the site and its proximity to the town centre. There are bus routes outside the site on Mount Pleasant Road and it is walkable to the centre of town. Development proposals should be promoting sustainable travel options, such as walking, cycling and public transport over a reliance on the private car.

<b>Prepared by</b>	Nick Phillips Principal Urban Design Officer
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<b>Date</b>	11 June 2025
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## Appendix 3 – ECC Place Services Archaeology Consultation Response

Place Services  
Essex County Council  
County Hall, Chelmsford  
Essex, CM1 1QH  
[www.placeservices.co.uk](http://www.placeservices.co.uk)



FAO: Planning Department,  
Uttlesford District Council

Our ref:04760  
Application ref: UTT/25/1343/PINS  
Date:4 June 2025

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE

#### RE: Former Friends School Field Mount Pleasant Road Saffron Walden Essex

The application is a Consultation on S62A/2025/0107 - Erection of 75no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse.

A Heritage and Archaeology statement has been submitted with the above application. The report again highlights the archaeological sites within the vicinity of the proposed development. It specifies that key sites were identified in the 19th century and 1930s although in the last ten years human remains have been discovered within the vicinity of the site; these were potentially associated with Late Iron Age and Roman material recovered during the construction of the water tower. The report also refers to prehistoric activity nearby including those remains discovered immediately south (EHER 14594). Previous archaeological work within the confines of the main school has been limited however deposits within the vicinity indicate the potential for multi - period archaeological deposits being present therefore the below condition is reiterated. We would however support the recommendation in the Heritage and Archaeology statement to undertake a geophysical survey of the site as this has the potential to target the trial trenching.

To understand the potential for, and significance of, archaeological deposits impacted by the proposal, a programme of trial trenching followed by excavation is being recommended in line with paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). A recognised team of professionals should undertake the archaeological work. The archaeological potential beneath the dwellings, infrastructure and landscaping needs to be further understood by a programme of trial trenching. Should this reveal archaeological deposits it could be followed by further targeted excavation; this could be outlined in further detail by a brief from this office to inform a WSI.

**RECOMMENDATION:** An Archaeological Programme of Trial Trenching followed by Open Area Excavation

1. No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until a programme of archaeological investigation has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of

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investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

2. No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the completion of the programme of archaeological investigation identified in the WSI defined in 1 above.

3. The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

## Appendix 4 – UDC Housing Consultation Response

**From:** Development Support <developmentsupport@uttlesford.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 04 Jun 2025 10:31:46  
**To:** dmsplanning@uttlesford.gov.uk  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** FW: Planning Application Consultation Response- N UTT/25/1343/PINS NATASH  
**Attachments:**

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-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Lock <plock@uttlesford.gov.uk>  
Sent: 03 June 2025 15:02  
To: Planning <planning@uttlesford.gov.uk>  
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation Response- N UTT/25/1343/PINS NATASH

Afternoon,  
Thank you for consulting me on this application.

The affordable housing mix and type would assist towards meeting the local housing need and each property meets NDSS.  
However, the affordable housing could be better integrated within the site as at present there is effectively a single cluster of 30 affordable units.

Regards

Peter Lock  
Housing Strategy, Enabling & Development Officer Uttlesford District Council Council Offices London Road Saffron Walden Essex  
CB11 4ER  
T: 01799 510633  
E: [plock@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:plock@uttlesford.gov.uk)

-----Original Message-----

From: Planning <planning@uttlesford.gov.uk>  
Sent: 30 May 2025 13:54  
To: Peter Lock <plock@uttlesford.gov.uk>  
Subject: Planning Application Consultation - N UTT/25/1343/PINS NATASH

Please See Attached