

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY  
2025 at 10.00 am**

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

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

Officers in attendance: E Che (Planning Officer), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), C Forster (Planning Solicitor), D Hermitage (Strategic Director of Planning), K Jennings (Planning Officer), A Neale (Planning Officer), C Tyler (Principal Planning Officer) and N Vernal (Senior Planning Officer).

Public Speakers: D Morson, Cllr G Mott, Cllr J Hannam and M Taylor.

**PC8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Emanuel took the Chair for the whole meeting.

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

**PC9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

**PC10 QUALITY AND SPEED OF MAJOR AND NON-MAJOR APPLICATIONS**

The Strategic Director of Planning presented the report. He said it was a different report to normal as the Council were no longer designated and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) were pleased with the Council's performance.

Both Co-Chairs said that it was a success for the Committee, they thanked Officers for their hard work and for the training that had been given to Committee Members, which had both helped to make improvements. The Chair said that the graphs showed this progress.

The report was noted.

**PC11      S62A APPLICATIONS REPORT**

The Strategic Director of Planning presented the report.

He said that there was only one decision outstanding which was highlighted in the report and the Former Friends School item on the agenda would be the final S62a application. He said that this report would no longer be needed once the two items had been resolved.

The Strategic Director of Planning said that the Local Plan hearings had closed, however, the policies within the plan were subject to the Inspectors amendment or removal. He said therefore limited weight should be given to the emerging plan.

Further to a request from the Chair, the Strategic Director of Planning gave an explanation of the current position regarding the 5 year housing land supply. He said that the Council's current housing land supply was approximately 3.46 years as of today's date due to changes in national policy. He said once the Local Plan was in place the site allocations would be official allocations and would give the Council a 5 year housing land supply.

The Chair said that therefore the current position until the Local Plan was adopted was that a presumption in favour of development applied.

The report was noted.

**PC12      UTT/25/1343/PINS - FORMER FRIENDS SCHOOL FIELD, MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Senior Planning Officer presented a S62A application for the erection of 75 dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse. She said that the revised application reduces the number of dwellings from 91 to 75 compared to the previous application on this site, and the number of trees provided had increased from 101 to 146.

She said that as this was a PINS application, UDC were acting as a consultee and could submit observations to PINS.

In response to questions from Members, Officers made the following comments:

- A condition to ensure climate change proposals within the applicants Design and Access Statement (at 13.9.2 of the officer report) could be suggested to the Inspector to ensure their implementation, but it was noted that there might not be policy to support all the measures that had been included.
- There was affordable housing within the scheme, but there was no more detail available of the Housing Association (HA) who had expressed an interest in purchasing the affordable homes. It was noted that the HA was not material to the decision.

- The harm to the Heritage Asset mentioned by the Inspector in the 2024 refusal referred to the conservation area in respect of layout and urban features that would replace playing fields.
- A planning condition would be suggested to deal with the request for a stage 2 Geotechnical ground investigation (at 13.10.5 of the report).
- There was a small play area within the plans.
- The proposed pitches met the necessary requirements in terms of dimension.
- There was a public right of way on the southeast of the site by the Woodland.
- The flood authority had withdrawn their objection further to additional information and a flood risk assessment provided by the applicant.
- There was no parking standard for sports facilities it was a judgement made on each site.

Members discussed:

- The car parking allocations and whether visitor spaces were included in the Clubhouse quota.
- The shared parking for both the sports facilities and visitor parking and whether that was adequate.
- The likely overflow parking in the surrounding roads.
- No provision for coaches to park.
- The affordable housing which should be integrated within the site according to current policy.
- Loss of sports provision.
- No provision of bungalows.

Councillor Pavitt proposed objection and a submission to PINS on that basis, with the following comments discussed in the meeting, in summary: -

- Heritage harm in terms of harm to the Saffron Walden conservation area.
- Concerns with a lack of parking provision in terms of visitor parking and lack of coach parking for the sports facilities.
- Loss of outdoor sports provision, contrary to 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Affordable homes clustering.
- Housing mix being out of line with established needs.
- A condition to make sure that climate change proposals were carried out.
- A condition regarding a Stage 2 Geotechnical ground investigation.
- No bungalows.

This was seconded by Councillor Bagnall.

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

**UTT/24/0543/OP - LAND NORTH OF BEDWELL ROAD & EAST OF OLD MEAD ROAD, UGLEY & HENHAM**

The Principal Planning Officer presented outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access, for the erection of up to 240 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point.

He said that:

- A previous application for 220 homes had been dismissed at appeal due to noise related concerns.
- The changes from the previous application included an increase in dwellings by 20; houses in the South-West corner had been removed and amendments had been made to address the noise concerns.
- An objection had been made by the Council's Environmental Health Officer who had considered noise assessments from the applicant and the Parish Council.
- There was public open space throughout the site but these were likely to exceed noise guidelines.
- The application was recommended for refusal.

In response to questions from Members, Officers made the following comments:

- The mechanical ventilation was provided so that windows could be kept shut, there was no specific information given by the applicant, but this could be requested in a condition.
- The application had been withdrawn from a previous Planning Committee and the recommendation changed due to the noise assessment submitted by the Parish Council which was then assessed by Environmental Health Officers.
- Essex Highways did not have an objection but had included conditions.
- There was a holding objection from Ecology, more information had been submitted by the applicant three working days ago which had been considered by Officers but a further response from Ecology had not yet been received.
- The awaited response from Ecology could be a reason for deferment however Officers believed that the recommendation for refusal remained without this response. This was corroborated by the Planning Solicitor who said that the applicant had not provided sufficient information or evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse effect.
- SUDs did form part of the open space allocation.
- The density using the overall site of 13 hectares was 18.4 dwellings per hectare, if using just the built form areas which was 5.2 hectares the density was 46 dwellings per hectare.
- Apart from a site to the south of Bedwell Road, there were no other similar 3 storey dwellings in Elsenham.
- There had been no objection from Environmental Health, subject to conditions, relating to air quality and the air quality modelling found that pollution levels were below relevant air quality objectives and were not significant.

- The Bedwell Road site across the road from this proposed site was materially different from the application site.
- A condition on layout could state that market housing, not affordable housing was built next to the motorway. This was on the basis that occupants of affordable housing were less likely to have a choice of where to live. However, the Officers opinion remained that this was not a sustainable development because of the noise impact.
- There had been two noise reports one from the applicant and one from the Parish Council, these differed in their interpretation but had been assessed by the Council's internal experts in the Environmental Health department and their opinion with the benefit of the further report was to raise an objection.
- For the proposed site some habitable rooms, not bedrooms but living rooms were facing the M11.
- A condition could be applied for a construction traffic route to avoid smaller country roads.
- A condition that the fence by the railway line was an acoustic fence could be added.

Members discussed:

- Concern about the noise levels and whether this was a sustainable site.

Councillor Pavitt supported the Officer's proposed refusal. This was seconded by Councillor Sutton.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development, due to the noise issues, which were backed up by the following evidence:-

- The objection from Environmental Health.
- The report from the Parish Council.
- The previous Inspectors decision.
- Other reasons for refusal was the lack of information regarding Ecology and the lack of an S106 agreement.

*D Morson and Councillor G Mott spoke against the application.*

*The meeting adjourned at 11.52am and reconvened at 12.03am.*

PC14

#### **UTT/25/0871/FUL - THE COAL SHED SITE, LINTON ROAD, HADSTOCK**

The Planning Officer presented an application for the proposed demolition of the existing commercial car repair workshop and its associated structures and hardstanding, and to redevelop the site with three detached dwellings.

He said that:-

- There had been a positive pre-application process.
- The design and scale of the housing was in keeping with housing in Hadstock.
- The access would be widened and Highways had no objection as long as the right of way was not blocked.

- The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

The Chair said that this application had been called in by Councillor Moran because he thought this constituted a major change to a rural area and should be scrutinised by the Planning Committee.

In response to questions from Members, Officers made the following comments:

- This was not an allocated employment site and therefore could be used for alternative development if a need was identified.
- It was a criminal matter to block a public right of way, an informative to flag this could be added. There was no suggestion it would be blocked.
- The site had a low risk of flooding and therefore the flood authority had not been consulted. The applicant had provided a drainage layout and strategy.
- The proposed plans show that all of the ditches and drainage culverts remained, there was no suggestion that they would be filled in.
- A condition could be applied for details of access to the public right of way during the construction phase.
- A condition had been proposed that would enable details of the hard surfacing to be changed before construction started. An informative could be added to suggest that gravel was more suitable in this environment rather than block paving. It was agreed that Highways could also be consulted however it was a public right of way and not a road.
- Concerns regarding flooding on Linton Road were covered in the report within the Highways response on page 152 stating that all work which affected the highway would need prior arrangement with Essex Highways.
- Highways also stated that there should be no discharge of surface water onto the highway and this could be conditioned.

Members discussed:

- Flood risk on Linton Road.
- Proposed hard surfacing at the site.
- Design within the application.

Councillor Pavitt proposed approval of the application. This was seconded by Councillor Lemon.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to the conditions set out in the report with the addition of an extra line within condition 9 to ensure that the right of way was not blocked during construction and a condition that there should be no discharge of surface water onto the highway.

*Councillor J Hannam spoke to raise some concerns from the Parish Council, M Taylor (Agent) spoke in support.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 12.50pm and restarted at 1.45pm.*

PC15

**UTT/25/0720/FUL - SAFFRON WALDEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, AUDLEY  
END ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Planning Officer presented an application for the proposed installation of LED floodlights at the existing hockey pitch within the grounds of Saffron Walden County High School.

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

In response to questions from Members, Officers made the following comments:

- The original use of the pitch was restricted to weekdays, 9am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 5pm and no use on Sunday or Bank Holidays. This application proposed the same restrictions for the lighting.
- This would enable the use of the pitch in the winter months up to the hours that had already been deemed as acceptable within the original condition.
- An informative could be added, but not monitored, that the lights were dimmed to 200 lux as a default when not in use for competitions.
- The wording on condition 5 in section 17 of the report would be changed to 'Saturday' rather than 'on weekends' and 'artificially lit' instead of 'externally lit' as currently stated.

Members discussed:

- The effect of the lights on surrounding houses.

Councillor Church proposed approval of the application. This was seconded by Councillor Bagnall.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the application including the change of wording to condition 5.

PC16

**UTT/25/0652/FUL - THE DARWIN LABORATORY BUILDING 900,  
CHESTERFORD PARK, LITTLE CHESTERFORD**

The Planning Solicitor said that the reason for this application coming to Committee was because Uttlesford District Council had an interest in the land and therefore in the interest of transparency it needed to be reported to Committee.

The Planning Officer presented the report which proposed minor works to the existing building entrance which included replacing the existing lobby structure and canopy and the revision of existing parking configuration and external paving.

He recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions set out in section 16 of the report.

Councillor Pavitt proposed approval of the application, this was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to the conditions set out in section 16 of the report.

PC17      **UTT/25/1223/HHF - BARLEY HOUSE, DUNMOW ROAD, THAXTED**

The Chair said that this was on the agenda as the applicant was associated with Uttlesford District Council as a consultant.

The Planning Officer presented the report which proposed a loft conversion, including the installation of four rooflights to the roof slopes.

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

In response to questions from Members, Officers made the following comment:

- The listed buildings were not close enough to the site to be a consideration.

Councillor Bagnall proposed approval. This was seconded by Councillor Sutton.

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

*The meeting closed at 2.15pm.*