



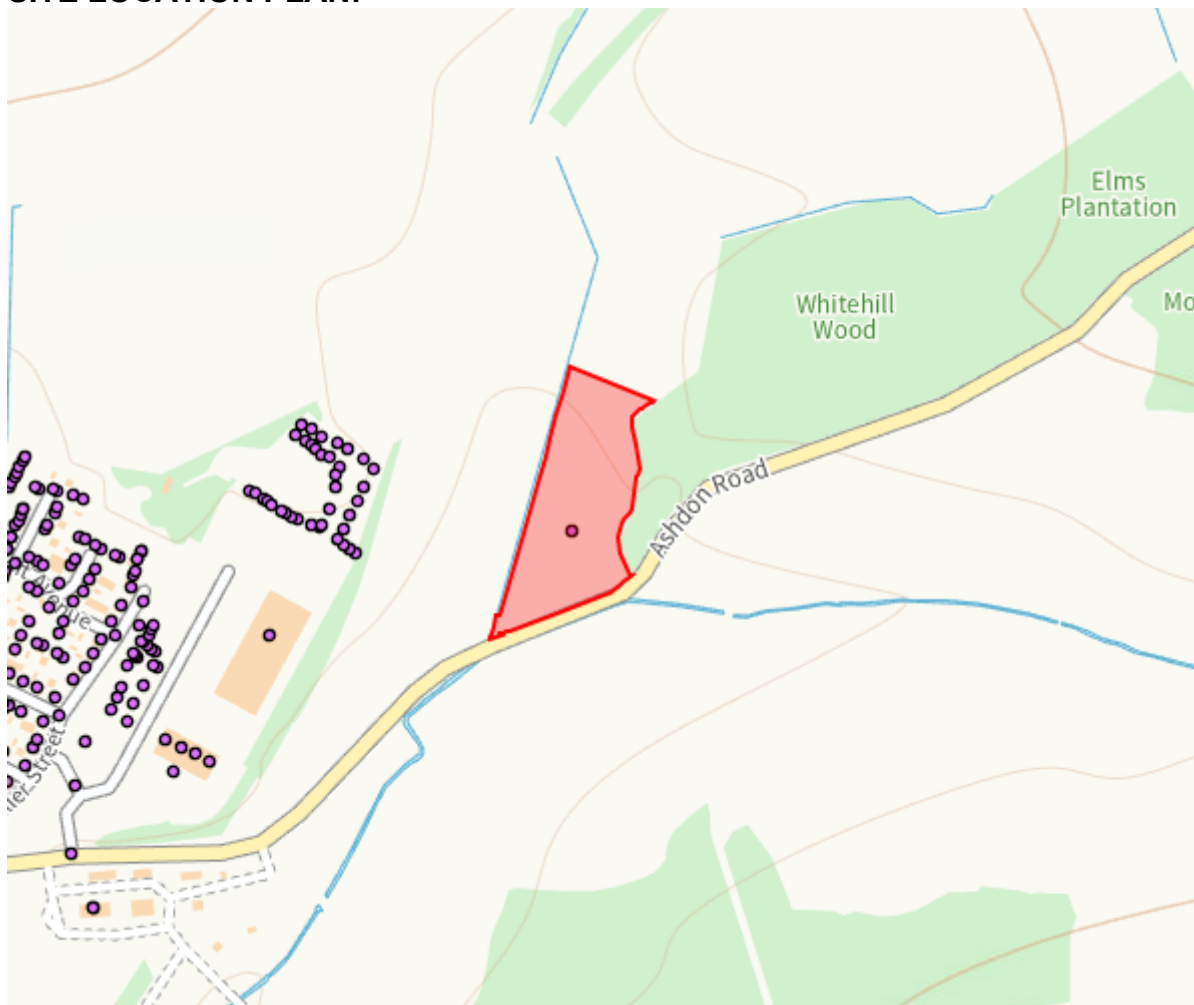
ITEM NUMBER: 7

PLANNING COMMITTEE 17 December 2025
DATE:

REFERENCE NUMBER: UTT/25/2184/FUL

LOCATION: Land West Of Whitehall Wood, Ashdon Road,
Saffron Walden

SITE LOCATION PLAN:



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council Date: November 2025

PROPOSAL: Change of use to a secure dog walking field with parking area and associated fencing and gates

APPLICANT: Mr Jonathan Duke

AGENT: Mr Stuart Wells

EXPIRY DATE: 20.11.2025

EOT EXPIRY DATE: 23.01.2026

CASE OFFICER: Mark Sawyers

NOTATION: Outside Development Limits
Within 200m of Parish Boundary
Within 2km of S.S.S.I
Within 500m Consultation Area - Oil Pipeline Hazardous Installation
Within 500m Of Pollution Control Site
Mineral Safeguarding Area - Description: High purity chalk (93-98% CaCO₃):Cretaceous White Chalk Subgroup
Within 100m of Local Wildlife Site - Location: WHITEHILL WOOD [Site No: Ufd139]
Within 100m of Local Wildlife Site - Location: SAFFRON WALDEN - ASHDON ROAD [Site No: Ufd135]
Within 100m of Special Verge - Location: Saffron Walden - Ashdon Road [Verge No: UTT23]
Within 250m of Ancient Woodland - Location: POUNCE WOOD, SAFFRON WALDEN
Within 250m of Local Wildlife Site - Location: WHITEHILL WOOD [Site No: Ufd139]
Within 250m of Local Wildlife Site - Location: POUNCE WOOD, SAFFRON WALDEN [Site No: Ufd136]
Within 250m of Local Wildlife Site - Location: SAFFRON WALDEN - ASHDON ROAD [Site No: Ufd135]

REASON THIS APPLICATION IS ON THE AGENDA: Major Planning Application

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of approximately 1.6 hectares of agricultural land to a secure dog walking field, including associated fencing, gates, and a small parking area. The site lies outside the development limits of Saffron Walden, on land west of Whitehall Wood, and is currently in agricultural use.
- 1.2 The proposal introduces minimal built form, comprising a 1.9m high deer fence, gates, and a loose aggregate parking area for three vehicles, accessed via an existing track from Ashdon Road. The facility will operate on an exclusive-use booking system, with a maximum of six dogs per session and proposed hours of 06:00–22:00 daily. No external lighting is proposed.
- 1.3 Significant biodiversity enhancements are included, such as 200m of new native hedgerow, wildflower-rich grassland, and native tree planting, delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain exceeding statutory requirements. The site remains largely open and rural in character, with landscaping measures providing visual containment.
- 1.4 The principle of development is supported by Policies S7 and E4 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the NPPF (2024), and Policy SW17 of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan, which identifies a need for secure dog walking facilities. The scheme also aligns with the Uttlesford Design Code (2024) and climate resilience objectives.
- 1.5 Highway safety concerns have been addressed through visibility improvements and on-site parking provision, confirmed acceptable by the Highway Authority subject to conditions. Environmental Health has raised no objection, subject to compliance with an approved Noise Management Plan. No objections were received from statutory consultees, and no public representations were made.
- 1.6 On balance, the proposal represents a sustainable form of rural diversification that meets local needs, enhances biodiversity, and maintains the character of the countryside. Subject to conditions securing mitigation and management measures, the application is recommended for approval.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to **GRANT** permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of this report -

A) Conditions

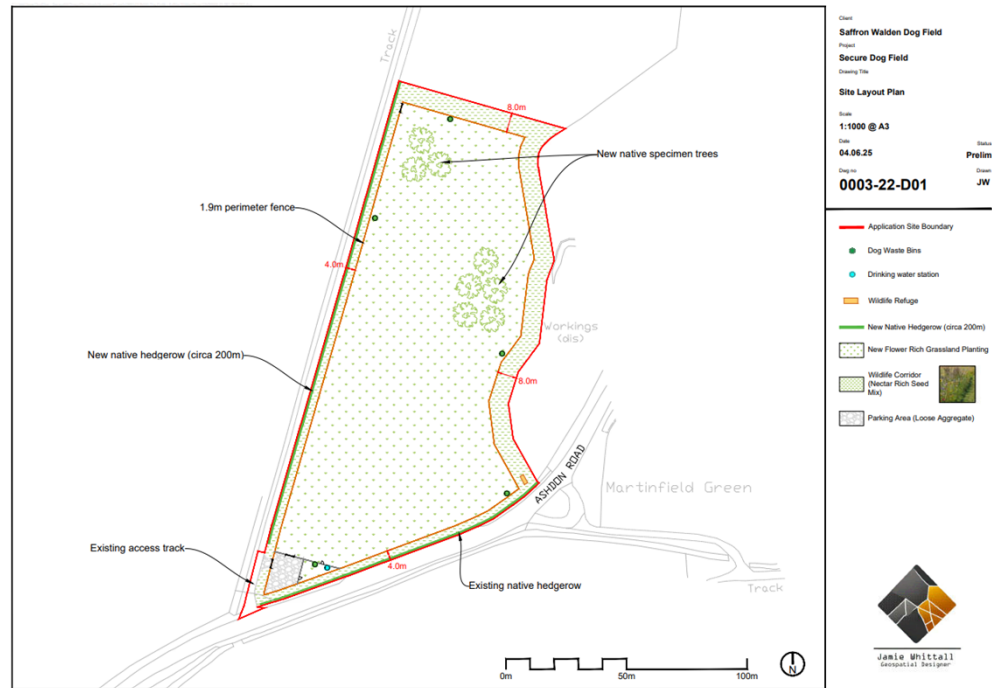
3. **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:**

- 3.1** The application site comprises approximately 1.6 hectares of agricultural land situated to the north of Ashdon Road, on the eastern edge of Saffron Walden, Essex. The site forms the southern portion of a larger arable field and is currently in agricultural use. It is accessed via an existing track leading directly from Ashdon Road.
- 3.2** The site is bounded by mature hedgerows and trees along its southern and western edges, with Whitehall Wood, an area of ancient semi-natural woodland, located immediately to the east. The northern boundary is currently open, forming part of the wider agricultural parcel.
- 3.3** The surrounding area is predominantly rural in character, with farmland and woodland interspersed with isolated dwellings and farmsteads. The nearest residential properties are located approximately 140 metres to the west, beyond an intervening field and hedgerow.
- 3.4** Ashdon Road, which runs along the southern boundary, is a classified rural road providing connections between Saffron Walden and surrounding villages. The site lies outside the defined development limits of Saffron Walden and is not within a designated conservation area. There are no public rights of way crossing the site, although footpaths exist in the wider locality.
- 3.5** The site is relatively level with a gentle slope from north to south. It is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and is not subject to any statutory landscape or ecological designations, although its proximity to ancient woodland and local wildlife sites is noted.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1** The application seeks **full planning permission** for the **change of use of approximately 1.6 hectares of agricultural land to a secure dog walking field**, together with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

4.2



Proposed Site Plan

4.3

The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

4.4

- **Perimeter Fencing and Gates:**
Installation of a **1.9 metre high post and mesh deer fence** around the designated dog walking area, with a **3.66 metre wide vehicular access gate** and pedestrian gates to provide controlled entry. A small secure holding area will be created between the car park and the main field to prevent dogs from running back towards vehicles.

4.5

- **Parking Area:**
Formation of a **loose aggregate surfaced parking area** within the site, capable of accommodating **three vehicles**, including space for turning and forward exit. Access will be via the existing track from Ashdon Road.

4.6

- **Operational Details:**
The facility will operate on an **exclusive-use booking system**, allowing a maximum of **six dogs per session**. Proposed opening hours are **06:00 to 22:00 daily**, including weekends and bank holidays. No external lighting is proposed.

4.7

- **Landscaping and Biodiversity Enhancements:**
The proposal includes significant ecological improvements, comprising:
 - **200 metres of new native hedgerow planting** along site boundaries.
 - Creation of **flower-rich grassland and wildflower margins**.

- Planting of **native specimen trees** and provision of wildlife refuges.

These measures are designed to deliver a **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** exceeding statutory requirements.

4.8

- **Waste Management:**

Provision of **four dog waste bins** within the field and one general waste bin in the car park, with waste collected by a licensed contractor.

4.9

The proposal does not involve any new buildings or hardstanding beyond the parking area and fencing. The land will remain largely open and rural in character, with enhancements aimed at improving biodiversity and maintaining visual containment.

5.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1

The development does not constitute 'EIA development' for the purposes of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

6.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

6.1

Not Applicable

7.

PREAPPLICATION ADVICE AND/OR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

7.1

There has been no pre-application advice sought from the Local Planning Authority in relation to this proposal.

8.

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

8.1

Highway Authority – (No Objection)

8.1.1

No objection from Highway Authority, subject to conditions:

1. Visibility Splays:

- Clear-to-ground visibility splays as per drawing no. 0003-22-D04 to be provided and maintained.
- Reason: Ensure inter-visibility for highway safety (Policy DM1).

2. Gates:

- Inward opening only; set back minimum 6m from carriageway.
- Reason: Prevent obstruction of highway (Policy DM1).

3. Surface Treatment:

- No unbound material within 6m of highway boundary.
- Reason: Avoid loose material on highway (Policy DM1).

4. Parking & Turning Areas:

- Construct and retain as per drawing no. 0003-22-D01.

- Reason: Prevent on-street parking; comply with Policy DM8.

8.2 Local Flood Authority – (No Comment)

8.2.1 As there does not appear to be sufficient scope to deliver SUDS features on this site, we do not wish to provide formal comment on the above application.

9. TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS – (No Comment)

9.1 No Comment

10. CONSULTEE RESPONSES

10.1 Cadent Gas – (No Objection)

10.1.1 We have no objection to this proposal subject to protection of their assets adjacent to the site.

10.2 UK Power Networks – (No Objection)

10.2.1 From the response, it does not appear that there is any UK Power Networks infrastructure within the application redline.

10.3 Anglian Water Consultation – (No Objection)

- 10.3.1**
- **Assets**
 - No Anglian Water-owned assets or adoption agreement assets within the site boundary.
 - Permission required for any diversion or building over Anglian Water assets.
 - **Foul Water**
 - Proposed foul water disposal does **not** involve Anglian Water assets.
 - **Surface Water**
 - Proposed surface water management does **not** involve Anglian Water assets.
 - No comments provided on suitability; LPA should consult Lead Local Flood Authority
 -
 - **General Guidance**
 - Development must comply with Building Regulations and Water Industry Act.

10.4 UDC Environmental Health – (No Objection)

- 10.4.1**
- No objection to the application.

- The site shall be operated in full accordance with the approved Noise Management Plan at all times.

10.5 UDC Landscape Officer/Arborist – (No Comment)

10.5.1 No Comment

10.6 Place Services (Ecology) – (No Objections)

10.6.1 No ecological objection subject to conditions.

10.6.2 Recommended Conditions:

1. Compliance with Ecological Assessment mitigation measures.
2. Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (including hedgehog-friendly fencing).
3. Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Design Scheme (if lighting proposed).
4. (Optional) HMMP pre-commencement condition for long-term management.

10.7 Ward Member for Castle Ward – (No Objection)

- 10.7.1**
- No Objection
 - Need assurance that there is adequate management of the site and its access.
 - Who is responsible for the supply, upkeep and emptying of the dog waste bins?

11. REPRESENTATIONS

11.1 A site notice was displayed on site, and 20 notifications letters were sent to nearby properties. A notification within the local press was also undertaken.

11.2 Support

- 11.2.2**
- Not Applicable

11.3 Object

- 11.3.1**
- Not Applicable

12. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 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.

12.2 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:
 - (aza) 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.

12.4 The Development Plan

12.4.1 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)

13. POLICY

13.1 National Policies

13.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

13.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

13.2.1	S7	The Countryside
	GEN1	Access
	GEN2	Design
	GEN3	Flood Protection
	GEN4	Good Neighbourliness
	GEN5	Light Pollution
	GEN7	Nature Conservation
	E4	Farm Diversification: alternative use of farmland
	ENV3	Open Space and Trees
	ENV5	Protection of Agricultural Land
	ENV10	Noise Sensitive Development
	ENV13	Exposure to Poor Air Quality

13.3 State name of relevant Neighbourhood Plan in this title

13.3.1 Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2022).

13.4 Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance

13.4.1 Uttlesford Local Residential Parking Standards (2013)
Essex County Council Parking Standards (2009)
Supplementary Planning Document – Accessible homes and playspace
Supplementary Planning Document – Developer's contributions
Essex Design Guide
Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (2021)
Uttlesford Design Code (2024)

14. CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

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

- 14.2**
- A) Principle of Development**
 - B) Design and Visual Impact**
 - C) Impact on Residential Amenity**
 - D) Access and Parking**
 - E) Flood Risk and Drainage**
 - F) Ecology and Biodiversity**
 - G) Sustainability and Climate Change**
 - H) Planning Balance**

14.3 A) Principle of Development

14.3.1 The application site lies outside the defined development limits of Saffron Walden and is therefore located within the countryside for planning policy purposes. Policy **S7 (The Countryside)** of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and states that planning permission will only be granted for development that needs to take place there, or is appropriate to a rural area and its appearance protects or enhances the particular character of that part of the countryside.

14.3.2 The proposed use as a secure dog walking field is inherently rural in nature, requiring a large open area away from built-up locations to function effectively. The proposal would not introduce built development beyond fencing and a small parking area, and the site would retain its open character. On this basis, the proposal is considered appropriate to a rural area and compliant with Policy S7.

14.3.3 Policy **E4 (Farm Diversification)** supports alternative uses of farmland where they include proposals for landscape and nature conservation enhancement, do not result in significant noise or other adverse impacts beyond the holding, and do not place unacceptable pressures on the

rural road network. Only limited weight is given to the emerging Local Plan (eLP) and emerging policy CP51 supports small-scale development, including farm diversification, for leisure uses, provided that proposals are in keeping with the scale and character of the locality and would not adversely affect heritage assets or their setting.

- 14.3.4** The proposal includes substantial biodiversity enhancements, such as new hedgerow planting, wildflower grassland creation, and specimen trees, and is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment demonstrating compliance with statutory requirements. The use is low-intensity, with limited traffic movements and operational controls to manage noise, and therefore accords with Policy E4.
- 14.3.5** Policy **ENV5 (Protection of Agricultural Land)** seeks to safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land. While the site is classified as Grade 2, the proposal does not involve permanent built development and could be readily reversible to agricultural use in the future. The land will remain largely undeveloped, and the change of use would not result in the irreversible loss of agricultural land quality.
- 14.3.6** The **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)** promotes sustainable development and supports the diversification of rural businesses and the provision of recreational facilities in rural areas (paragraphs 88 and 89). It also requires decision-makers to recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found beyond existing settlements and in locations not well served by public transport.
- 14.3.7** The proposal aligns with these objectives by providing a facility that meets a growing community need for secure dog walking spaces, while incorporating biodiversity enhancements and maintaining the rural character of the site.
- 14.3.8** The **Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (2021–2036)** identifies a lack of dedicated dog walking facilities and states that a fenced and dedicated dog park would be welcomed within the plan area (Policy SW17). The proposal directly responds to this identified need and is therefore supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 14.3.9** The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle. It represents an appropriate rural use that supports farm diversification, delivers biodiversity enhancements, and meets a locally identified need, without causing harm to the character of the countryside or resulting in the permanent loss of agricultural land.
- 14.3.10** The principle of development is therefore in accordance with Policies S7, E4, and ENV5 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the NPPF (2024), and Policy SW17 of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.

14.4 B) Design and Visual Impact

- 14.4.1** Policy **GEN2 (Design)** of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) requires development to be compatible with its surroundings in terms of scale, layout, and appearance, and to safeguard important environmental features.
- 14.4.2** The **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)** reinforces these principles, promoting high-quality, context-sensitive design that respects local character and landscape setting.
- 14.4.3** The **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)** similarly seeks well-designed places that are sympathetic to local character while not discouraging appropriate innovation (paragraph 135).
- 14.4.4** The proposal involves minimal built form, comprising a 1.9m high post and mesh deer fence, vehicular and pedestrian gates, and a small loose aggregate parking area. These elements are typical of rural settings and agricultural land management, and their open, visually permeable design ensures they do not appear intrusive within the landscape.
- 14.4.5** The fencing specification is deliberately chosen to maintain transparency and reduce visual impact, while the gates adopt a simple, functional rural style.
- 14.4.6** The parking area is modest in scale, located in the south-west corner of the site, adjacent to the existing access track, and surfaced in loose aggregate, a material commonly used in agricultural contexts. This approach avoids the introduction of urbanising features and ensures the site retains its rural character.
- 14.4.7** The proposal includes significant landscape enhancements, notably 200m of new native hedgerow planting, wildflower-rich grassland, and native specimen trees, which will reinforce existing boundary vegetation and improve visual containment. These measures will soften the appearance of the fencing and parking area over time, integrate the development into its setting, and enhance biodiversity.
- 14.4.8** No external lighting is proposed, avoiding potential visual intrusion and protecting the rural night-time character. The site will remain largely open and undeveloped, preserving the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as required by the NPPF.
- 14.4.9** The design is simple, functional, and appropriate to its rural context. The limited built elements are characteristic of agricultural landscapes, and the proposed landscaping will further mitigate any visual impact.
- 14.4.10** The development therefore accords with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and the NPPF (2024).

14.5 C) Impact on Residential Amenity

- 14.5.1** Policies GEN2 (Design) and GEN4 (Good Neighbourliness) of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) require development to safeguard the reasonable occupation and enjoyment of nearby properties, avoiding material disturbance from noise, traffic, or other environmental impacts.
- 14.5.2** Policies ENV10 (Noise Sensitive Development) and ENV11 (Noise Generators) further state that noise-generating uses should not adversely affect the amenity of existing or proposed noise-sensitive development.
- 14.5.3** Policy GEN5 seeks to prevent light pollution and protect the rural night-time environment. These principles are reinforced by the Uttlesford Design Code (2024) and the NPPF (2024), which require developments to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 14.5.4** The nearest residential properties are located approximately 140 metres west of the site, separated by an intervening agricultural field and mature hedgerows. This separation distance, combined with existing and proposed planting, provides a substantial buffer to mitigate visual and acoustic impacts.
- 14.5.5** The proposed use has potential to generate noise from dogs and vehicles. However, the applicant has submitted a Noise Management Plan, which has been reviewed and accepted by Environmental Health.
- 14.5.6** The plan includes measures such as:
- **Exclusive-use bookings** (maximum six dogs per session).
 - **Household-only policy** to avoid unfamiliar dogs interacting.
 - **No agility equipment**, reducing high-energy activity and barking.
 - **Booking system with 10-minute buffer** to prevent overlap and associated disturbance.
 - Clear procedures for complaint handling and enforcement of a **No Unreasonable Noise policy**.
- 14.5.7** Environmental Health initially raised concerns regarding the proposed operating hours (**06:00–22:00 daily**), particularly during early mornings and late evenings when background noise levels are lower. These concerns have been addressed through the Noise Management Plan, which will be secured by condition to ensure ongoing compliance. The plan also confirms that no external lighting is proposed, avoiding light pollution and protecting the rural night-time character in accordance with Policy ENV5.
- 14.5.8** Traffic movements associated with the development are minimal, with a maximum of three vehicles per hour in the worst-case scenario. Access improvements and on-site parking provision will prevent on-street parking and congestion, further reducing potential amenity impacts.

14.5.9 Subject to conditions requiring adherence to the approved Noise Management Plan and prohibiting external lighting, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on residential amenity. It complies with **Policies GEN2, GEN4, GEN5, ENV10, and ENV11 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005)**, the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)**, and the **NPPF (2024)**.

14.6 D) Access and Parking

14.6.1 Policy GEN1 (Access) of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) requires all development to have safe and suitable access to the highway network and to avoid compromising road safety. Policy GEN8 (Vehicle Parking Standards) requires adequate on-site parking provision in accordance with adopted standards.

14.6.2 These principles are reinforced by the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)** and the **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**, which state that development should ensure safe and suitable access for all users and avoid unacceptable impacts on highway safety (paragraph 116).

14.6.3 The site is accessed via an existing agricultural track leading from Ashdon Road, a classified rural road.

14.6.4 The Highway Authority initially raised concerns regarding visibility splays; however, following submission of an Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) survey and updated visibility drawings (Drawing No. 0003-22-D04), the Highway Authority has confirmed that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.

14.6.5 The survey recorded 85th percentile speeds of 37.6 mph eastbound and 42.4 mph westbound, requiring visibility splays of 2.4m x 91m and 2.4m x 114m respectively.

14.6.6 These splays can be achieved with minor vegetation clearance, which will be secured by condition. Gates will be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the carriageway and will open inward only, ensuring vehicles can wait clear of the highway.

14.6.7 The proposal includes a loose aggregate surfaced parking area within the site, providing three spaces and a turning area to allow vehicles to exit in a forward gear.

14.6.8 This provision meets the **Uttlesford adopted parking standards (2013)** and the **Essex Parking Standards (2024)** for a low-intensity rural use.

14.6.9 The parking layout is shown on Drawing No. 0003-22-D01 and will be secured by condition to prevent on-street parking and ensure safe manoeuvring.

- 14.6.10** Traffic generation is expected to be minimal, with a maximum of three vehicles per hour in the worst-case scenario. The exclusive-use booking system and 10-minute buffer between sessions will prevent overlapping arrivals and departures, further reducing potential highway impacts.
- 14.6.11** The Highway Authority has confirmed that, subject to conditions, the proposal will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF.
- 14.6.12** The proposed access arrangements and parking provision are considered acceptable. The development complies with **Policies GEN1 and GEN8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005)**, the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)**, the **Essex Parking Standards (2024)**, and the **NPPF (2024)**.
- 14.7 E) Flood Risk and Drainage**
- 14.7.1** Policy GEN3 (Flood Protection) of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) requires development to demonstrate that it will not increase the risk of flooding on-site or elsewhere and encourages the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) where appropriate.
- 14.7.2** The Uttlesford Design Code (2024) reinforces this by promoting climate-resilient design and natural drainage solutions.
- 14.7.3** The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly seeks to direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding and ensure that proposals are safe for their lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere (paragraphs 170–181).
- 14.7.4** The application site lies within Flood Zone 1, which represents land at the lowest probability of flooding (less than 0.1% annual risk). The Environment Agency’s mapping and the Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment confirm that the site is not at risk from fluvial flooding.
- 14.7.5** Surface water flood risk is minimal, with only a small area along the western boundary identified as having a very low risk (0.1–1% annual chance).
- 14.7.6** The proposal does not involve the construction of buildings or significant areas of impermeable surfacing. The parking area will be finished in loose aggregate, a permeable material that allows infiltration and avoids increasing surface water runoff.
- 14.7.7** The remainder of the site will remain as grassland, supplemented by new planting and habitat creation, which will further improve infiltration and reduce runoff rates compared to the existing arable use.

- 14.7.8** The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy confirms that:
- No new connections to foul or surface water drainage networks are required.
 - Surface water will continue to drain at existing greenfield runoff rates.
 - Proposed biodiversity enhancements, including hedgerow and wildflower planting, will assist in intercepting rainfall and slowing runoff.

14.7.9 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has been consulted and raised no objection, noting that the scope for SuDS features is limited but that the proposed approach is acceptable given the nature of the development.

14.7.10 The development will not increase flood risk within or beyond the site and incorporates permeable surfacing and planting to manage surface water sustainably. The proposal therefore complies with Policy GEN3 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and the NPPF (2024).

14.8 F) Ecology and Biodiversity

14.8.1 Policy GEN7 (Nature Conservation) of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) requires development to avoid harm to wildlife and geological features and to provide mitigation or compensation where impacts occur.

14.8.2 Policy ENV3 (Open Spaces and Trees) seeks to safeguard important environmental features and promote biodiversity enhancements.

14.8.3 These principles are reinforced by the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), which encourages developments to integrate green infrastructure and habitat creation, and by the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires planning decisions to protect and enhance biodiversity and deliver measurable net gains (paragraphs 187 and 193).

14.8.4 The site is currently an arable field with limited ecological value, but it lies adjacent to Whitehall Wood, an area of ancient semi-natural woodland, which is classified as both a Priority and Irreplaceable Habitat.

14.8.5 The submitted Ecological Assessment (Coyne Environmental, July 2025) confirms that the site itself supports no protected species and has low ecological sensitivity, although badger activity was noted in adjacent woodland.

14.8.6 No evidence of bats, great crested newts, or other European Protected Species was found. Hedgerows have potential for nesting birds, and appropriate seasonal restrictions on vegetation clearance will be secured by condition.

- 14.8.7** The proposal includes significant biodiversity enhancements, including:
- 200 metres of new native hedgerow planting.
 - Creation of flower-rich grassland and wildflower margins.
 - Planting of native specimen trees and provision of wildlife refuges.
 - Incorporation of hedgehog highways within fencing.
- 14.8.8** A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment has been submitted, demonstrating a 233.68% increase in habitat units and a 139.47% increase in hedgerow units, far exceeding the statutory minimum of 10%.
- 14.8.9** Place Services (Essex County Council) has confirmed no objection subject to conditions requiring:
- Implementation of mitigation measures in the Ecological Assessment.
 - Submission of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy.
 - A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for a 30-year period.
 - Confirmation that no external lighting will be installed, or submission of a wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme if lighting is proposed.
- 14.8.10** These measures will ensure compliance with the mandatory biodiversity gain condition under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its biodiversity duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.
- 14.8.11** Subject to conditions securing mitigation, enhancement, and long-term management, the proposal will deliver substantial biodiversity benefits and is considered acceptable. It complies with Policies GEN7 and ENV3 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and the NPPF (2024).
- 14.9** **G) Sustainability and Climate Change**
- 14.9.1** The **Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy (2021–2030)** sets out the Council’s commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and requires developments to demonstrate how they will mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 14.9.2** The **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)** reinforces these principles by promoting energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, biodiversity enhancement, and low-carbon design.
- 14.9.3** The **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)** similarly requires planning decisions to support the transition to a low-carbon future, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase resilience to climate change (paragraphs 152–158).

14.9.4 The proposed development is inherently low-impact and aligns with these objectives in the following ways:

14.9.5

- **Minimal Built Form and Low Carbon Impact:**
The scheme involves no permanent buildings and only lightweight fencing and gates, minimising embodied carbon and construction emissions. The parking area will use permeable loose aggregate rather than hard surfacing, reducing material use and supporting natural infiltration.

14.9.6

- **Sustainable Drainage and Flood Resilience:**
The site remains largely permeable, and the proposed landscaping will improve infiltration and reduce surface water runoff, consistent with SuDS principles and climate adaptation goals.

14.9.7

- **Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure:**
Significant habitat creation, including wildflower grassland, native hedgerows, and specimen trees will enhance carbon sequestration and ecological resilience. These measures contribute to the Council's biodiversity and climate objectives by supporting pollinators and improving ecosystem services.

14.9.8

- **Operational Sustainability:**
The facility will operate without external lighting, avoiding unnecessary energy consumption and protecting dark skies. Waste management will be handled by licensed contractors, ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

14.9.9 While the proposal does not include renewable energy generation or active travel infrastructure (reflecting its rural location and low-intensity nature), it represents a form of farm diversification that supports sustainable rural economies and provides a local recreational resource, reducing the need for longer journeys to similar facilities elsewhere.

14.9.10 The development is considered consistent with the principles of sustainable design and climate resilience set out in the **Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy (2021–2030)**, the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)**, and the **NPPF (2024)**.

14.9.11 It delivers biodiversity enhancements, maintains a permeable landscape, and avoids features that would increase carbon emissions or flood risk.

14.10 H) Planning Balance

14.10.1 The proposal seeks the change of use of agricultural land to a secure dog walking field with associated fencing, gates, and a small parking area. The key considerations in the planning balance are:

14.10.2 Principle of Development:

The use is appropriate to a rural location, supports farm diversification, and meets an identified local need for secure dog walking facilities as set out in the **Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (Policy SW17)**. It aligns with **Policies S7 and E4 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005)** and the **NPPF (2024)**, which support rural diversification and recreational uses in the countryside.

14.10.3 Design and Landscape Impact:

The proposal introduces minimal built form and retains the open character of the site. Fencing and gates are typical of rural settings, and significant landscaping enhancements will improve visual containment and biodiversity. The scheme complies with **Policy GEN2**, the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)**, and the **NPPF** requirement for well-designed, context-sensitive development.

14.10.4 Highways and Access:

Following submission of speed survey data and visibility drawings, the Highway Authority has confirmed the access is acceptable subject to conditions. Traffic generation is low, and adequate on-site parking is provided in accordance with **Policies GEN1 and GEN8**, the **Essex Parking Standards (2024)**, and the **NPPF**.

14.10.5 Residential Amenity:

Potential noise impacts have been addressed through an approved **Noise Management Plan**, which will be secured by condition. No external lighting is proposed, avoiding light pollution. The separation distance and intervening vegetation further mitigate impacts, ensuring compliance with **Policies GEN4, ENV5, ENV10, and ENV11**.

14.10.6 Ecology and Biodiversity:

The proposal delivers substantial biodiversity enhancements and exceeds statutory **Biodiversity Net Gain** requirements. Conditions will secure mitigation measures, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy, and long-term habitat management, in accordance with **Policies GEN7 and ENV3**, the **Design Code**, and the **NPPF**.

14.10.7 Flood Risk and Drainage:

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, and the permeable design ensures no increase in flood risk. The approach accords with **Policy GEN3**, the **Design Code**, and the **NPPF**.

14.10.8 Sustainability and Climate Change:

The development is low-impact, avoids unnecessary energy use, and incorporates green infrastructure, supporting the objectives of the **Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy (2021–2030)** and the **NPPF**.

14.10.9

The proposal represents a sustainable form of rural diversification that meets local needs, enhances biodiversity, and maintains the character of the countryside.

14.10.10 Subject to conditions, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to highway safety, residential amenity, or the environment. The benefits of the scheme, including biodiversity net gain and community provision, carry significant weight and outweigh any limited impacts.

14.10.11 On balance, the proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with the **Uttlesford Local Plan (2005)**, the **Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan**, the **Uttlesford Design Code (2024)**, and the **NPPF (2024)**.

15. ADDITIONAL DUTIES

15.1 Public Sector Equalities Duties

15.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers.

15.1.2 The Committee must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

15.1.3 Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised.

15.2 Human Rights

15.2.1 There may be implications under Article 1 (protection of property) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the First Protocol regarding the right of respect for a person's private and family life and home, and to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions; however, these issues have been taken into account in the determination of this application.

16. CONCLUSION

16.1 The proposed development seeks the change of use of approximately 1.6 hectares of agricultural land to a secure dog walking field with associated fencing, gates, and a small parking area.

- 16.2** The site lies outside the development limits of Saffron Walden but is considered an appropriate rural use that supports farm diversification and meets an identified local need, as set out in the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.
- 16.3** The scheme introduces minimal built form, retains the open character of the countryside, and incorporates significant biodiversity enhancements, including new hedgerow planting, wildflower grassland, and specimen trees.
- 16.4** These measures will deliver a substantial Biodiversity Net Gain well above statutory requirements.
- 16.5** Highway safety concerns have been addressed through visibility improvements and on-site parking provision, which comply with adopted standards.
- 16.6** Potential amenity impacts, particularly noise, will be managed through an approved Noise Management Plan, and no external lighting is proposed, avoiding light pollution.
- 16.7** The development is low-impact, climate-resilient, and consistent with national and local planning policies, including the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), the NPPF (2024), and Policy SW17 of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.
- 16.8** Subject to conditions securing mitigation, enhancement, and management measures, the proposal will not result in unacceptable harm to highway safety, residential amenity, or the environment.
- 16.9** On balance, the benefits of the scheme, including biodiversity improvements, rural economic diversification, and provision of a valued community facility carry significant weight and outweigh any limited impacts. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

17. CONDITIONS

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

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 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 permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as set out in the Schedule.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted, to ensure development is carried out in accordance with the approved application details, to ensure that the development is carried

out with the minimum harm to the local environment, in accordance with the Policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) as shown in the Schedule of Policies

3 Prior to first use of the development:

- a) Visibility splays measuring 2.4m x 91m eastbound and 2.4m x 114m westbound shall be provided and maintained clear to ground level as shown on Drawing No. 0003-22-D04.
- b) The access gates shall be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the carriageway and shall open inward only.
- c) The parking and turning areas shall be constructed and retained as shown on Drawing No. 0003-22-D01.

REASON: To ensure safe access and prevent obstruction of the highway in accordance with Policies GEN1 and GEN8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

4 Prior to the first beneficial use of the development, a Waste Bin Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The plan shall include details of:

- a) Responsible party for supply, installation, and ongoing maintenance.
- b) Emptying frequency and disposal arrangements to ensure bins are kept hygienic and operational.
- c) Contact details for reporting issues.

The approved plan shall be implemented in full and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure adequate provision and maintenance of dog waste bins in the interests of public health, amenity, and compliance with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Guide (2024), and Section 8 of the NPPF (2024).

5 The site shall be operated in full accordance with the approved Noise Management Plan at all times.

REASON: To protect residential amenity in accordance with Policies GEN4 and ENV10 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

6 The dog walking facility shall operate only between the hours of 06:00 and 22:00 daily.

REASON: To protect residential amenity in accordance with Policies GEN4 and ENV10 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

- 7** No external lighting shall be installed on the site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority following submission of a Wildlife-Sensitive Lighting Scheme.

REASON: To prevent light pollution and protect biodiversity in accordance with Policies GEN5 and GEN7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

- 8** All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Assessment (Coyne Environmental, July 2025) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

The works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.

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) in accordance with Policy GEN7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

- 9** Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment (Coyne Environmental, July 2025) and including hedgehog friendly fencing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

REASON: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) in accordance with Policy GEN7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).

- 10** All planting, seeding, or turfing comprised in the approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season (November to March) following the commencement of the development or its first beneficial use, whichever is sooner.

Any trees, shrubs, or plants which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

REASON: To ensure timely implementation and maintenance of landscaping in the interests of visual amenity, biodiversity, and compliance with Policies GEN2, GEN7 and ENV3 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

- 11** No development shall take place, including any ground works or demolition, until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for significant on-site enhancements, prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the local authority,

It is to include:

- 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 on-site significant enhancements 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;
- e) the monitoring methodology in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority; and
- f) details of the content of monitoring reports to be submitted to the LPA including details of adaptive management which will be undertaken to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- initial enhancements, as set in the HMMP, have been implemented; and
- habitat creation and enhancement works, as set out in the HMMP, have been completed after 30 years.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, monitoring reports shall be submitted in years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 to the Council, in accordance with the methodology specified in the approved HMMP.

The Council shall only issue approval of the habitat creation and enhancement works until:

- the habitat creation and enhancement works set out in the approved HMMP have been completed; and
- a completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To satisfy the requirement of Schedule 7A, Part 1, section 9(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that significant on-site habitat is delivered, managed, and monitored for a period of at least 30 years from completion of development.

- 12** The development may not be begun unless (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority (see informatives below), and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan (see informatives below).

REASON: In order to accord with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and amended by The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) Modifications and Amendments (England) Regulations 2024.

APPENDIX 1 – ECC HIGHWAYS COMMENTS

Your Ref: UTT/25/2099/FUL
Our Ref: HT/SD/RMc/15701
Date: 08/10/2025



CC (by email): Cllr Gadd

To: Uttlesford District Council
Assistant Director Planning & Building Control
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4ER

Highways and Transportation
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH

Recommendation

Application No.	UTT/25/2099/FUL
Applicant	Mr Jonathan Duke Westley Farm Little Walden Road Saffron Walden Essex CB10 1UX
Site Location	Land To The West Of Butlers Lane Saffron Walden
Proposal	Section 73A Retrospective application for the construction of a farm reservoir

The Highway Authority has assessed the information which has been submitted with the planning application. The assessment of the application and Transport Assessment was undertaken with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and in particular paragraphs 115-117, the following was considered: access and safety; capacity; the opportunities for sustainable transport; and mitigation measures

From a highway and transportation perspective, the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to the following condition:

1. **Construction Management Plan:** prior to the continuation of spoil importation or any further construction works a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Plan shall provide for:
 - a. vehicle routing including safe site 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.

Reason: in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies DM1 and DM20 of the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies as County Council Supplementary Guidance

The above conditions are required to ensure that the development accords with the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance and Uttlesford Local Plan Policy GEN1.

Informatives:

- (i) All work within or affecting the highway is to be laid out and constructed by prior arrangement with, and to the requirements and satisfaction of, the Highway Authority, details to be agreed before the commencement of works. The applicant should be advised to contact the Development Management Team by email at

development.management@essexhighways.org

- (ii) Under Section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 it is an offence to deposit mud, detritus etc. on the highway. In addition under Section 161 any person, depositing anything on a highway which results in a user of the highway being injured or endangered is guilty of an offence. Therefore the applicant must ensure that no mud or detritus is taken onto the highway, such measures include provision of wheel cleaning facilities and sweeping/cleaning of the highway
- (iii) There shall be no discharge of surface water onto the Highway.

FMasnie

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pp. Director of Highways and Transportation
Enquiries to Rachel McKeown
Email: rachel.mckeown@essex.gov.uk
Internet: www.essex.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2 – LOCAL LEAD FLOOD AUTHORITY'S COMMENTS

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

From: Suds <suds.mail@essex.gov.uk>

Sent: 28 August 2025 10:32

To: Planning <planning@uttlesford.gov.uk>

Subject: >> RE: Planning Application Consultation - N UTT/25/2184/FUL (SUDS-008451)

Good morning,

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

As there does not appear to be sufficient scope to deliver SUDS features on this site, we do not wish to provide formal comment on the above application.

However, if you have any specific drainage concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Many thanks,

Anna Murphy (she/her)

Development and Flood Risk Officer

Climate Adaptation and Mitigation | Green Infrastructure and SUDS

Adr: E1 County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1QH

Email: anna.murphy@essex.gov.uk

<https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/RKkbC9r1Zukg4OwUofzsq5hL5?domain=floods.essex.gov.uk>

<https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/RoVgCORYZIGDNyAUDh1s94zXd?domain=essex.gov.uk>

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

From: planning@uttlesford.gov.uk <planning@uttlesford.gov.uk>

Sent: 21 August 2025 13:22

To: Suds <suds.mail@essex.gov.uk>

Subject: Planning Application Consultation - N UTT/25/2184/FUL (SUDS-008451)

CAUTION: This is an external email.