

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 17
DECEMBER 2025 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillors J Emanuel (Co-Chair) and R Freeman (Co-Chair)
Councillors N Church, G Driscoll, R Haynes, R Silcock and
M Sutton

Officers in attendance: D Hermitage (Strategic Director of Planning), E Amponsah (UDC Planning Lawyer), B Aregbesola (Planning Officer), R Beale (Senior Planning Officer), S Bell (Planning Lawyer- Birketts LLP), M Bradley (Essex CC Highways), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), K Jennings (Planning Officer), R McKeown (Essex CC Highways), M Sawyers (Senior Planning Officer), M Shoesmith (Strategic Applications Team Leader), N Stevens (Planning Lawyer- Birketts LLP) and M Watts (Environmental Health Manager)

Public Speakers: A Andrew, Councillor J Backus, M Dodd, J Duke, Councillor John Evans, Councillor C Fiddy, Councillor N Gregory, B Irons, V McKirdy, S Petrosino, D Poole, Councillor N Reeve and Councillor R Wingard.

PC62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emanuel took the Chair for the start of the meeting.

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Bagnall, Lemon, Loughlin and Pavitt. Councillors Driscoll and Silcock substituted for Councillors Bagnall and Loughlin.

Councillor Driscoll declared that he was the Ward Councillor for Agenda item 5 (PC66) but had made no predetermination. He also stated that in respect of Agenda Item 6 (PC68), he had had previous engagement with Wrens but had an open mind in respect of this application.

Legal advice at this meeting was provided for all items, bar Agenda item 5 (PC66), by Planning Lawyers from Birketts LLP.

PC63 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

PC64 QUALITY AND SPEED OF MAJOR AND NON-MAJOR APPLICATIONS

The Strategic Director of Planning presented the standing Speed and Quality Report.

He said that the charts shown on pages 15 and 16 showed the Council to be exceeding Government Performance targets and this data was the best on record for UDC.

In respect of Pending Major Planning Appeals, he reported that the Council had won the appeals for UTT/24/3061/OP- Wicken Road and UTT/24/2359/FUL- May Walk.

Prior to moving on to Agenda Item 4, the Strategic Director reported that a new draft NPPF had been published for consultation the previous day. The current adopted NPPF remained the primary national policy for decision-making. The draft NPPF can be a material consideration. The weight to be given to it is a matter of planning judgement, and as it is at an early consultation stage, the advice was that its weight was limited but that it might be subject to change following consultation. Officers may advise slightly more weight be given to policies that reinforce other, existing national policy, and would provide advice in such circumstances.

PC65

UTT/25/1542/FUL - LONDON STANSTED AIRPORT, BASSINGBOURN ROAD, STANSTED (TAKELEY)

The Strategic Applications Team Leader presented an application for airfield works comprising construction of a taxiway fillet adjacent to the previously consented Rapid Exit Taxiway to enable continued airfield operations of 274,000 aircraft movements and an increase in passenger throughput from 43 million passengers to up to 51 million terminal passengers in a 12 months calendar period.

She updated Members in respect of comments made by Essex Police and the Environment Agency as detailed in the Addendum List. She said that Hertfordshire CC had expressed concerns about the application, but that mitigation had been agreed with the applicant. Paragraph 6.8 of her report had included an error and that reference to 33.9 square kilometres should be deleted. She also said that the Secretary of State had indicated that this application had not been called in and this had been confirmed in writing.

She recommended that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development, subject to those items set out in section 18 and 19 of the report and the conditions covered in the Addendum Appendix C.

Public speakers then made their contributions (names detailed below).

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said that modelling had indicated that there would be an extra 267 vehicles on the local road network each day.

- Said that in future, aircraft would be longer, more efficient and less noisy and that Noise Conditions were included within the recommendations. Longer aircraft were already coming on-stream.
- Re-confirmed that the Secretary of State would not be calling the matter in.
- Said that in respect of concerns expressed by Hertfordshire CC, focus had been on the main routes but that local road monitoring arrangements were in place. Hertfordshire CC could also access the Transport Forum and the Transport levy and that their concerns would be mitigated through the S106 planning obligation and some additional wording. Essex CC Highways officers confirmed that there had been no modelling carried out in Bishop's Stortford's local road, but at the M11/ A120 roundabout. This was explained by the Officer was because of the model split and the trip modelling indicating 96.1% of vehicles would use the Strategic Network.
- Explained transport funding arrangements; the Sustainable Transport Levy (monies from parking and drop-offs at the airport) would form part of the S106 planning obligation and further sums would be put towards local road networks moving forward. A "safety net figure" of £800k had been calculated and negotiated for local road networks with around £1.2m available from the previous application. These monies were index-linked (construction index). Page 62 of the report, paragraph 14.3.40 detailed the enhanced package of transport mitigations which included carrying forward all those secured under the 2021 permission. Highway mitigation works were detailed on page 107 of the report, paragraph 14.13.3.7. National Highways had indicated that they were satisfied with the arrangements.
- Said that an Environmental Impact Assessment had been carried out and had been reviewed by relevant agencies. This had covered air noise.
- Explained the role of the Stansted Airport Transport Forum and for the need for their terms of reference to be laid out in the S106 planning obligation.
- Said that a S106 planning obligation would not usually come back to Committee. Planning lawyers from Birketts LLP explained their responsibilities in the process and that they were clearly bound by resolution made by the Planning Committee. If there were any material deviations from the resolution made by the Planning Committee, Officers would have to consider bringing this back to Planning Committee.
- Said that foul water concerns had been addressed in officers' opinion.
- Said that Environment Agency concerns about PFA's had been addressed through Conditions.
- Said that Construction Management Plan conditions would transfer through from the 2021 permission.
- The intention was for the 2021 permission to be live by June 2026; most conditions had already been discharged. There will be a s.106 planning obligation to ensure that this planning permission is not implemented unless the 2021 permission is implemented lawfully by 20th June 2026.
- Said that in respect of ecological concerns, Natural England had withdrawn their previous concerns.
- Said that any residents' compensation claims were not a material planning consideration for the Planning Committee.

The meeting adjourned between 12.12 pm and 12.27 pm.

The Environmental Health Manager summarised the air quality monitoring arrangements in place. He also said that noise from new aircraft had also been built into the noise model.

Moving onto debate, the Chair asked that Members took each aspect in some order.

The taxiway fillet: No concerns were expressed.

Employment: It was recognised that 2,500 jobs would be created.

Air Quality: Concerns had been addressed.

Waste water: Concerns had been addressed by Thames Water.

Biodiversity: Had been addressed within the report.

Public Transport: Concerns were expressed about the need for better access arrangements from the north of the district and the need for better bus reliability. Consultation with local villages was needed and the Chair suggested writing to the Airport Forum.

Highways: Concerns expressed that works undertaken for Takeley Parish Council by Railton merited further consideration. Officers said that Highways had addressed the Railton report. Concerns expressed also that M11 J8 capacity had been reached. Concerns expressed that the prediction of 267 extra vehicles per day on local roads was not accurate. Officers said that the Environmental Impact Assessment had predicted an overall 2% impact on local roads. Officers again addressed the role of the Stansted Area Transport Forum, particularly in that it needed clarity.

Noise: Concerns expressed that penalising the airlines was not effective. New aircraft should be quieter. Officers highlighted Condition 16 that addressed noise considerations and the use of Noise Contours; the noise from aircraft landing was being monitored. It was stated that night flight arrangements were under the control of Central Government (Department of Transport). There were no proposed changes to the number of flights, just passenger numbers increasing through the use of longer aircraft.

Other significant points:

- The Chair stated that there were no statutory consultees objecting to the application.
- One Member said that she echoed some of the points made about climate change by Councillor Fiddy (public speaker) and that it would be very difficult to refuse the application.
- The issue of fly-parking was raised as a serious problem. This could be addressed through the Sustainable Transport Fund.
- It was suggested that the airport needed to improve their relationship with the local community.

- Another Member said that he felt that this matter should be dealt with through a Public Inquiry. The Chair said she disagreed, and the Strategic Director said that it was proper that UDC make the decision as reflected in paragraphs 3.28 to 3.31 of the report and that a public inquiry may only result if the Planning Committee refused this application and it went to appeal. UDC would therefore retain control. The Planning Lawyer stated that the cost of any appeal was a relevant material consideration.

Councillor Emanuel 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(s) subject to those items set out in section 18 and 19 (plus the conditions set out in the Addendum) of the report-

- A) Conditions
- B) S106 Agreement

And if the freehold owner and all those with a legal interest shall fail to enter into a S106 agreement approved by the Council, the Strategic Director of Planning shall be authorised to refuse permission following the expiration of a 6-month period from the date of Planning Committee.

Councillor C Fiddy and Councillor J Backus (Takeley PC) spoke against the application. Councillor Evans spoke to seek some stronger conditions. A Andrew (Manchester Airport Group) spoke in support.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.42 pm and reconvened at 2.15 pm with Councillor Freeman taking the Chair for the afternoon session.

PC66 **UTT/25/2181/OP - LAND AT CAMPS FIELD, LOWER ROAD LITTLE HALLINGBURY**

The Senior Planning Officer presented an Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for principal access), for the demolition of existing structures and erection of up to 52 dwellings, including affordable housing, associated green and hard infrastructure, public open space, biodiversity enhancements, and principal access off Lower Road.

She said that the site fell within the NPPF definition of Grey Belt and recommended that the application be approved, subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that although the Emerging Local Plan was reasonably advanced, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year land supply, and the planning judgement is that this land is assessed as Grey Belt.

The Planning Inspectorate had previously indicated at pre-app stage that the land was likely Grey Belt.

- In respect of external noise impact concerns, the Environmental Health Officer said that mitigation would be required. It would be up to an acoustic consultant to work with the developer at the detailed stage to take such matters forward. Noise mitigation was covered in Conditions 26 and 27. Condition 26 required the developer to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels for the external amenity and not exceed 55 decibels without justification. Condition 27 required a noise validation report to be submitted. Consideration could be given to conditioning acoustic suppression measures. Fundamentally the Environmental Health Officer did not object to the application.
- Said that a noise impact assessment had been undertaken that confirmed any internal noise could be managed – again, this would be managed by condition.
- Said that more open spaces have been provided in this application compared to pre-app; deficiencies had previously been identified by the Planning Inspectorate and since then the dwellings have been reduced from 71 to 52 with a much smaller developable area. Concerns were raised about the distance between the play area and the development.
- Said that in relation to any flood risk concerns near access, the access was not in a flood zone, and a condition had been recommended by the LLFA.
- Said that very limited weight could be given to the Neighbourhood Plan as it was currently out for consultation.

Members discussed:

- Concerns about the effects on particularly children of continuous noise. The need for robust external noise mitigation strategies to be in place.
- And agreed that in reference to condition 10 to include the wording “or its successor authority” after the word ‘Council’ in the paragraph relating to the submission of monitoring reports.
- Renewable energy. Condition 32 could require solar to be included but the Strategic Director suggested providing an informative where the Council instead strongly suggested a domestic solar scheme.
- Their concerns that this application had not gone through a pre-app phase with the Council or UQRP.
- Affordable Housing Policy of 70% rent and 30% ownership.
- The play area being too far from the houses.
- Some uncertainties re Grey Belt, noise, heritage harm level and possible flooding. The Strategic Director said that it was clearly Grey Belt.
- The possibility of considering deferral to look for further reassurances.
- Floodwater concerns. Officers said that Condition 18 covered such concerns.

Councillor Freeman said that he would propose the motion, provided that a Condition 26 was made much more robust to ensure strong external noise mitigation acoustic strategies were in place. Councillor Emanuel seconded the motion.

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

- A) Completion of a s106 Obligation Agreement in accordance with the Heads of Terms as set out.
- B) Conditions

And if the freehold owner shall fail to enter into such an agreement, the Strategic Director of Planning shall be authorised to refuse permission following the expiration of a 6-month period from the date of Planning Committee.

Councillor N Reeve, V McKirdy and Councillor R Wingard (Little Hallingbury PC) spoke against the application. M Dodd and S Petrosino (Agent) spoke in support.

There was a brief comfort break between 3.45 pm and 3.55 pm.

PC67 **UTT/25/2184/FUL - LAND WEST OF WHITEHALL WOOD, ASHDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN**

With the agreement of the Committee, this application (Agenda item 7) was brought forward.

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application for 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.

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

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Showed on the plans where the intended car park would be.
- Said that the car park would not be “policed” and that the three spaces proposed would be adequate.
- Said that no objections had been expressed by the Highways Authority.

Councillor Emanuel proposed approval of the application. This was seconded by Councillor Sutton.

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

- A) Conditions.

J Duke (Applicant) spoke in support of the application.

PC68 **UTT/25/2397/FUL - LAND NORTH OF STANSTED, THIRD AVENUE, STANSTED**

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application for use of the Site as a distribution depot (use class B8) and associated works including the provision of HGV parking and yard area with associated office unit, car and cycle parking, vehicle wash area, and other associated works.

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

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that a Landscape Plan was covered by Condition 3.
- Explained how the Biodiversity Net Gain measures had been attributed to the greater Northside development as a whole.

Members discussed:

- The access arrangements being good.
- The need to restrict the numbers of vehicles to 50, as opposed to the 80 vehicles shown on the licence.

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

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

A) Conditions.

PC69 UTT/25/1127/FUL - LAND ADJACENT LANGFORD DRIVE, PALMERS LANE, CHRISHALL

The Planning Officer presented a full planning application for the erection of 2 dwellings with associated development.

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

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said that in respect of the existing front hedge, Highways had requested a visibility splay, which was likely to result in the hedge being trimmed.
- Addressed concerns expressed about Priority habitats as reflected in Paragraph 14.10.4 (Page 327).
- Said that the 2014 S106 Agreement had been complied with and was therefore not relevant.
- Confirmed that permission was not being sought for Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- Said that under the Emerging Local Plan, Chrishall was defined as a smaller village, which meant that limited infill was in order. This gave the policy slightly more weight than previously.
- Said the garden sizes were 247 square metres and 300 square metres.

Members discussed:

- The application not being considered to be infill.
- Concerns about the proximity to the habitats and the need to protect the natural habitats.
- Concerns about the front hedge and the Priority habitats.
- Concerns that the proposed two dwellings looked very good but were in the wrong location; they represented overdevelopment, overcrowding and the design was out of context.
- Concerns about awkwardly accessible parking spaces.
- Access concerns, although there had been no objections from Highways.
- The possibility of refusal or deferral of the application. The Planning Lawyer reminded Members that under Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the tilted balance was in play and if Members were seeking to go against officers' recommendations, then there needed to be good reasons given. The Strategic Director provided some advice as to possible reasons for refusal.

Councillor Freeman proposed refusal on the grounds of layout, scale and quantum of development, resulting in a visually cramped and contrived form of development, that fails to respond to the site and local character. Additionally, there was concern about the position and size of private amenity spaces and layout and useability of the parking and turning areas, therefore failing to achieve a high standard of design and layout. The development would also result in visual harm and be contrary to NPPF (paragraphs 130) policy (GEN2) of the adopted Local Plan 2005 and policy (CP3) of the emerging UDC Local Plan 2021- 2041.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Emanuel.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development as outlined above.

Councillor N Gregory and B Irons (Chrishall PC) spoke against the application. D Poole (Agent) spoke in support.

PC70 **UTT/25/2525/FUL - GREEN ENERGY HUB, CHESTERFORD PARK, LITTLE CHESTERFORD**

The Planning Officer presented an application for proposed installation of a bin store, together with related landscaping, tree planting and associated development. Section 73A retrospective application for a new fibre building, and glass reinforced plastic (GRP) equipment enclosures. The Council has a part ownership of the site.

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

In response to questions from Members, officers confirmed that other bins contained equipment that was not seen as having a significant impact on residential amenities.

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

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

A) Conditions.

The meeting ended at 5.32 pm.