



ITEM NUMBER: 7

PLANNING COMMITTEE DATE: 13 May 2026

REFERENCE NUMBER: UTT/26/0493/FUL

LOCATION: Land At Sandons Farm
Kates Lane
Ashdon
Essex

SITE LOCATION PLAN:



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council Date: 20 April 2026

PROPOSAL: Erection of new agriculturally tied self-build dwelling at Sandons Farm, associated 2-bay cartshed, new driveway and vehicular access from existing private driveway to Sandons Farm

APPLICANT: Mr and Mrs N Beaton

AGENT: Mr Gideon Brimmer

EXPIRY DATE: 28.04.2026

EOT EXPIRY DATE: 15.05.2026

CASE OFFICER: Mark Sawyers

NOTATION: Within 2km of S.S.S.I.
Public Right of Way - Description: Ashdon (Type: Bridleway) [Site Name: Uttlesford]
Within Flood Plain Zone 2
Within Flood Plain Zone 3
Within Floodzone 3a + Climate Change
Within Floodzone 3b

REASON THIS APPLICATION IS ON THE AGENDA: Councillor Call-In

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new agriculturally tied, self-build dwelling at Sandons Farm, Kates Lane, Ashdon, together with a two-bay cart shed, new driveway and vehicular access taken from the existing private farm access. The site comprises a grazed paddock located within open countryside to the east of Ashdon, opposite the existing farmhouse, *Old Sandons*.

1.2 The site lies outside the established built form of Ashdon, and the proposal therefore engages countryside and spatial strategy policies within the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022). Ordinarily, new residential development in this location would be resisted. However, the scheme is promoted as a rural worker's dwelling to support the effective operation of an established agricultural enterprise at Sandons Farm. The application is accompanied by a detailed Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal which has

been assessed by officers and is considered to demonstrate an essential functional and operational need for a full-time agricultural worker to live at or near the holding, in accordance with Development Policy 3 and paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 1.3** The development has been comprehensively assessed against all relevant material considerations, including design and landscape impact, residential amenity, ecology and biodiversity, flood risk, highways access and parking, accessibility and sustainability. Subject to appropriate planning conditions, no statutory or technical objections have been raised. The proposal is modest in scale, appropriately sited on higher ground outside the functional floodplain, and designed to respect the rural character of the area. Officers are satisfied that the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the landscape, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity interests, highway safety or the water environment.
- 1.4** In undertaking the overall planning balance, significant weight has been afforded to the demonstrated agricultural need for on-site accommodation, the support this would provide to the rural enterprise, and the absence of material harm arising from the development. While acknowledging the countryside location, officers consider that the proposal represents a justified and policy-compliant exception to normal restraint policies and that, on balance, the benefits of the scheme outweigh the limited harm identified. Planning permission is therefore recommended for approval, subject to conditions, including the imposition of a permanent agricultural occupancy restriction.

2. RECOMMENDATION

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| 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 - Conditions |
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3. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:

- 3.1** The application site forms part of Sandons Farm, situated at the eastern end of Kates Lane, Ashdon, approximately 0.9km east of the village centre. Kates Lane is a narrow, historic sunken lane following the course of a tributary of the River Bourne and terminates at the farm, beyond which it continues as a public bridleway.
- 3.2** The site comprises a grazed paddock of approximately 0.8 hectares located to the north of Kates Lane, opposite the existing farmhouse *Old Sandons*. The land rises gently away from the lane and watercourse and is enclosed by hedgerows and vegetation, with no existing buildings on the paddock. Public rights of way run along the northern, western and southern boundaries.

3.3 The surrounding area is predominantly rural and agricultural in character, with dispersed farmsteads, paddocks and woodland. The site lies outside the built limits of Ashdon, within open countryside.

3.4 Parts of the wider site fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the River Bourne; however, the proposed dwelling and cart shed are located on higher ground within the paddock, away from the functional floodplain.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new agriculturally tied, self-build dwelling at Sandons Farm, along with a 2-bay cart shed, the formation of a new driveway, and a vehicular access taken from the existing private driveway serving Sandons Farm off Kates Lane.

4.2 The proposed dwelling would be a detached two-storey, three-bedroom property, designed as a modest rural farmhouse. Its internal layout would comprise living accommodation at ground-floor level and three bedrooms at first floor. The dwelling is intended to be occupied by a full-time agricultural worker associated with Sandons Farm and would be subject to a restrictive agricultural occupancy condition.

4.3 Externally, the dwelling would be constructed using a traditional palette of materials, including rendered walls with brick plinths, clay plain tiled roofing, sections of weatherboarding, and a slate-roofed garden room element. The overall scale, roof form and appearance are designed to be sympathetic to the existing farmhouse (*Old Sandons*) on the opposite side of Kates Lane.

4.4 Access to the site would be achieved via a new spur taken from the existing Sandons Farm driveway, incorporating a new gated vehicular access, driveway, and a small bridge structure across the adjacent watercourse. Associated works include areas of garden curtilage, hardstanding, and boundary treatments. No additional access onto the public highway is proposed.

4.5 The application is supported by the following documentation:

- Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal
- Biodiversity Checklist
- Design, Access, Transport and Flood Risk Statement
- Ecological Survey and Assessment

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 No relevant site history.

7. **PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND/OR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

7.1 There has not been any pre app advice and to the LPA's knowledge there has not been a consultation exercise carried out by the applicant in accordance best practice and the Statement of Community Involvement.

8. **SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

8.1 **Highway Authority – (NO OBJECTION)**

8.1.1 Consultation comments are attached to Appendix 1

9. **PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

9.1 **Location and flood concerns:** The Parish Council noted that the site lies outside the development limits in open countryside and raised concerns about flooding on Kates Lane and the proximity of the site to a tributary of the River Bourne, requesting further detail on drainage and flood risk management.

9.2 **Agricultural need and sustainability:** While acknowledging the animal welfare arguments and the submitted Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal, the Parish Council queried the scale and long-term sustainability of the farming enterprise, including reliance on off-site grazing land, and noted difficulty in assessing viability from the information publicly available.

9.3 **Overall position:** The Parish Council did not express a clear objection or support, considering the application to be complex and concluding that any decision should balance the demonstrated agricultural need against the environmental impact of developing a greenfield site in open countryside.

10. **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

10.1 **UDC Environmental Health – (NO OBJECTION)**

- 10.1.1
- No objection in principle, subject to conditions.
 - Further details required for foul drainage arrangements.
 - No known land contamination.
 - Requests provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

10.2 **Place Services (Ecology) – (NO OBJECTION)**

- 10.2.1**
- No ecological objection, subject to conditions.
 - Ecological Survey and Assessment is considered adequate and proportionate, with no further surveys required.
 - Development is exempt from mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Recommends a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy condition

11. REPRESENTATIONS

11.1 A site notice was displayed on site, and 2 notifications letters were sent to nearby properties. An advertisement was displayed within the local press.

11.2 One letter of representation has been received.

11.3 Support

- 11.3.1**
- A neighbouring farmer fully supports the proposal, confirming Sandons Farm is an active working farm with a successful livestock (sheep) enterprise, where on-site accommodation is a genuine operational need.
 - It is considered essential for animal welfare that someone lives on site, as livestock issues can arise at any time, day or night.
 - The representation notes that farming faces increasing external pressures, and proposals that help sustain and expand farm businesses should be supported.
 - Supporting the development would help maintain farming as an important part of Ashdon's rural community and provide wider benefits to local businesses.

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.

12.3 The Development Plan

- 12.3.1** Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted July 2014)
 Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2017)
 Uttlesford District Local Plan (adopted 2026)
 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 2026

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|---------------|----------------------|---|
| 13.2.1 | Development Policy 3 | Rural Worker’s Dwellings in the Open Countryside |
| | Core Policy 2 | Meeting Our Housing Needs |
| | Core Policy 3 | Settlement Hierarchy |
| | Core Policy 22 | Net Zero Operational Carbon Development |
| | Core Policy 23 | Overheating |
| | Core Policy 25 | Renewable Energy Infrastructure |
| | Core Policy 26 | Providing for Sustainable Transport and Connectivity |
| | Core Policy 27 | Assessing the impact of Development on Transport Infrastructure |
| | Core Policy 28 | Active Travel - Walking and Cycling |
| | Core Policy 30 | Public Rights of Way |
| | Core Policy 31 | Parking Standards |
| | Core Policy 36 | Flood Risk |
| | Core Policy 38 | Sites Designated for Biodiversity or Geology |
| | Core Policy 39 | Green and Blue Infrastructure |
| | Core Policy 40 | Biodiversity and Nature Recovery |
| | Core Policy 42 | Pollution and Contamination |
| | Core Policy 43 | Air Quality |
| | Core Policy 44 | Noise |
| | Core Policy 52 | Good Design Outcomes and Process |

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| Core Policy 53 | Standards for New Residential Development |
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13.3 The Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (6th December 2022)

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|--------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 13.3.1 | Policy ASH1 | A Spatial Strategy for Ashdon |
| | Policy ASH4 | Landscape Setting and Important Views |
| | Policy ASH7 | Design Considerations |
| | Policy ASH8 | Light Pollution |
| | Policy ASH9 | Flood Risk |
| | Policy ASH10 | Biodiversity and Habitats |
| | Policy ASH11 | Chalk Streams Protection |
| | Policy ASH14 | Public Rights of Way |
| | Policy ASH15 | Protected Lanes |

13.4 Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance

- 13.4.1 Essex Design Guide
 Essex Parking Standards (2024)
 Essex Tree Palette (2018)
 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, Character and Appearance
 - C) Residential Amenity
 - D) Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain, Trees and Landscaping
 - E) Flood Protection
 - F) Highways Access and Parking provision
 - G) Accessible Homes
 - H) Net Zero and Renewable Energy
 - I) Planning Balance

14.3 A) Principle of development

14.3.1 The application seeks planning permission for a new agriculturally tied dwelling on land forming part of Sandons Farm. The site lies outside the established built form of Ashdon and therefore within open countryside, where new residential development is normally subject to strict control.

14.3.2 The statutory development plan comprises the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (adopted 2026) and the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036 (made 2022). The development plan forms the starting point for the determination of the application, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

14.3.3 Relevant policies include Development Policy 3 (Rural Worker's Dwellings in the Open Countryside), Core Policies 2, 3 and 19 of the

Uttlesford Local Plan, alongside Policy ASH1 (A Spatial Strategy for Ashdon). National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 14.3.4** Core Policy 3 establishes a settlement hierarchy in which Ashdon is identified as a smaller village, with development historically directed to tightly drawn Development Limits. Core Policies 2 and 19 confirm that the District's housing requirement is to be met primarily through planned growth in sustainable locations, rather than through sporadic housing development in the countryside.
- 14.3.5** The site is clearly detached from Ashdon's built core and is therefore treated as open countryside, as indicated by Policy CP3. As such, the proposal is assessed on the basis that it lies outside the established built form of the settlement.
- 14.3.6** Policy ASH1 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan supports development outside the settlement where it accords with national and district-level policies. As such, development in the countryside is not ruled out in principle, but must fall within recognised policy exceptions.
- 14.3.7** As a starting point, therefore, the erection of a new dwelling in this location would ordinarily conflict with the spatial strategy of the development plan. However, both the adopted Local Plan and national policy recognise that isolated homes in the countryside may be acceptable where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work.
- 14.3.8** In this regard, Development Policy 3 permits new rural worker's dwellings in the open countryside where it is demonstrated that:
- there is an essential functional need for a worker to be resident;
 - the rural enterprise is established, viable and soundly based;
 - no suitable existing accommodation is available on the holding or nearby; and the dwelling is proportionate to the identified need and subject to an appropriate occupancy restriction.
- 14.3.9** The application is supported by a detailed Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal provided by (Ceres Rural), alongside a Design, Access, Transport and Flood Risk Statement, which together provide a comprehensive assessment of the functional, operational and locational justification for the proposed dwelling.
- 14.3.10** The submitted evidence demonstrates that Sandons Farm is a long-established and viable mixed livestock enterprise, operated on a professional basis. The enterprise includes intensive livestock activities that require frequent, and at times immediate, attendance to safeguard animal welfare, manage biosecurity risks, provide on-site security, and ensure the effective day-to-day operation of the business.

- 14.3.11** On this basis, the evidence confirms an essential functional need for a full-time agricultural worker to live permanently at, or in very close proximity to, the holding. This need is fully consistent with the objectives of Development Policy 3 and paragraph 84 of the NPPF.
- 14.3.12** The proposed dwelling is intended to be occupied by the son of the existing farm owners, who currently resides off-site and is identified as the future principal operator of the enterprise. The appraisal confirms that the existing farmhouse at Old Sandons is already occupied and is not available to meet the operational needs of the farm.
- 14.3.13** In accordance with Development Policy 3, the appraisal further demonstrates that there is no suitable or reasonable alternative accommodation available either on the holding or within the locality that could meet the identified functional need.
- 14.3.14** There are no existing buildings capable of conversion without undermining the functional or practical requirements of the enterprise, and no suitable or affordable nearby dwellings capable of providing equivalent operational support.
- 14.3.15** Whilst the functional requirement is assessed on the basis of a single full-time agricultural worker, the proposal clearly envisages occupation as a family dwelling, which is consistent with established rural planning practice.
- 14.3.16** The proposed three-bedroom dwelling is modest and proportionate in scale, designed to provide appropriate accommodation for the agricultural worker and his family, and remains subordinate in scale and status to the existing farmhouse on the holding.
- 14.3.17** Any planning permission granted would be subject to a restrictive agricultural occupancy condition, limiting occupation to a person solely or mainly employed in agriculture (or forestry) on the holding or in the locality, and to their dependants. Such a condition would ensure that the dwelling remains tied to the rural enterprise and does not result in an unrestricted market dwelling in the countryside.
- 14.3.18** Site Selection and Alternatives
- 14.3.19** The submitted documentation explains that the dwelling has been deliberately sited within an existing paddock forming part of Sandons Farm, to the north of Kates Lane, in order to meet the identified operational need while minimising landscape and visual impacts.
- 14.3.20** The location allows the dwelling to remain close to the working farmstead, supporting animal welfare, biosecurity and security requirements, while maintaining a clear spatial and hierarchical separation from the main farmhouse at Old Sandons, which remains the principal dwelling on the holding.

- 14.3.21** This approach reflects the established pattern of loose, low-density development along Kates Lane, characterised by detached dwellings within generous plots, and avoids the perception of an overly intensive cluster or subdivision of the existing farmhouse site.
- 14.3.22** The chosen site also benefits from existing boundary vegetation, enabling the dwelling to be set back from the lane and appropriately screened within the landscape.
- 14.3.23** In terms of alternatives, the Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal confirms that Old Sandons is the only existing dwelling on the holding and is not available. The appraisal further concludes that no suitable existing buildings are capable of conversion, and that no reasonable alternative accommodation exists nearby that could meet the functional needs of the enterprise.
- 14.3.24** On this basis, it is considered that the proposed location represents the most appropriate and proportionate solution to meet the essential agricultural need, having regard to operational requirements, landscape impact and local character.
- 14.3.25** Housing Land Supply and Policy Weight
- 14.3.26** In assessing the principle of development, it is important to distinguish between the delivery of general housing and the provision of a functional rural workers' dwelling. Core Policies 2, 3 and 19 are directed at meeting the District's overall housing requirement and distributing growth sustainably.
- 14.3.27** The proposal does not undermine those objectives, as it does not contribute to unrestricted housing supply or speculative development. Instead, it responds to a specific operational need linked to an established rural enterprise and is therefore properly assessed under Development Policy 3.
- 14.3.28** Paragraph 232 of the NPPF confirms that where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and where Housing Delivery Test performance falls below 75%, policies relevant to the supply of housing are to be treated as out of date, engaging the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d).
- 14.3.29** Following adoption of the Local Plan, the Council can currently demonstrate 4.77 years of housing land supply (including a 20% buffer), and the most recent Housing Delivery Test result for Uttlesford is 69%. In these circumstances, restrictive housing policies attract reduced weight.

14.3.30 Nonetheless, the proposal does not rely on housing under-delivery to justify development. It aligns with a form of development that is explicitly supported by both national and local policy where justified, and the imposition of an agricultural occupancy condition ensures that it remains functionally tied to the rural enterprise.

14.3.31 Taking all matters into account, it is concluded that, notwithstanding the site's countryside location, the proposal falls within a recognised policy exception for rural workers' dwellings. The principle of development is therefore acceptable, subject to compliance with other development plan policies and material considerations relating to design, landscape impact, flood risk, highway safety and residential amenity, which are assessed in subsequent sections of this report.

14.4 B) Design, Character and Appearance

14.4.1 Core Policy 52 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) requires development to achieve high quality design that responds positively to its context, reinforces local character, and contributes to a strong sense of place. This is supported by the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), which provides detailed guidance on settlement character, layout, scale, massing, materials, and architectural detailing.

14.4.2 Policy ASH7 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022) places emphasis on development respecting the village's rural character, prevailing form and grain, and the relationship between buildings, plots, and the wider landscape.

14.4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly requires developments to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and establish or maintain a strong sense of place, while ensuring developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area.

14.4.4 The proposed development has been carefully designed to respond to the established character and appearance of the surrounding settlement, reflecting both the spatial and architectural qualities of the immediate context.

14.4.5 The site sits within an area characterised by a loose grain of development, traditional plot widths, and predominantly low-rise built form, interspersed with mature landscaping. The proposal has been informed by these characteristics and seeks to reinforce, rather than disrupt, the established pattern.

14.4.6 Layout

14.4.7 The layout follows the existing settlement structure, positioning built form in a manner consistent with neighbouring properties and ensuring that the development integrates naturally into the street scene. Building lines

broadly reflect those of adjacent dwellings, maintaining visual continuity along the street and avoiding an incongruous or abrupt change in form.

- 14.4.8** Adequate spacing between buildings is retained, preserving the sense of openness typical of the area and allowing for visual gaps that contribute to the village's rural character, in line with the Uttlesford Design Code and Policy ASH7.
- 14.4.9** Private and public spaces are clearly defined, with gardens positioned to the rear and side, consistent with prevailing patterns of development. This ensures both functional amenity for future occupants and a coherent relationship between built form and open space.
- 14.4.10** Vehicular access and parking arrangements are discreet and proportionate, avoiding dominance within the street scene and safeguarding the primacy of buildings and landscaping.
- 14.4.11** Scale and Massing
- 14.4.12** The scale of the proposed development is considered appropriate to its context. The height, form, and massing reflect those of surrounding residential properties, which are generally modest in scale.
- 14.4.13** The proposal avoids excessive bulk through simple building forms, limited roof spans, and articulation within elevations, ensuring that the development does not appear visually overbearing or out of character when viewed from nearby properties or the public realm.
- 14.4.14** The transition between built form and neighbouring development is handled sensitively, with no abrupt changes in height or mass. This approach is consistent with Core Policy 52 and the NPPF's requirement for new development to be sympathetic to local character while establishing a clear and coherent identity.
- 14.4.15** Appearance and Materials
- 14.4.16** The design approach adopts a restrained architectural language that draws from local vernacular traditions without resorting to pastiche.
- 14.4.17** Materials are proposed that reflect those commonly found within the village, such as brick, traditional roof tiles, and simple fenestration patterns. This palette ensures visual consistency with surrounding development and contributes to a cohesive street scene.
- 14.4.18** Architectural detailing is purposeful and proportionate, with window arrangements, roof forms, and finishes designed to provide visual interest while remaining subordinate to the overall form.

14.4.19 The use of traditional proportions and materials aligns with the guidance set out in the Uttlesford Design Code and responds positively to the aims of Policy ASH7, which seeks to preserve Ashdon's distinctive character.

14.4.20 Streetscape and Visual Impact

14.4.21 From public viewpoints, the development would read as a natural extension of the existing built form rather than an isolated or intrusive feature. Boundary treatments, landscaping, and the positioning of built form collectively soften the visual impact and help integrate the proposal into its surroundings. Opportunities for additional planting and retention of existing landscape features further reinforce the rural character and enhance the quality of the streetscape.

14.4.22 Overall, the proposal is considered to achieve a high standard of design. It responds appropriately to local character, respects the scale and form of the surrounding settlement, and delivers a development that is well-integrated and visually coherent.

14.4.23 As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Policy 52 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), Policy ASH7 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022), and the design objectives of the NPPF (2024).

14.5 **C) Residential Amenity**

14.5.1 Core Policies 42, 43 and 44 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) seek to ensure that development protects the amenity of existing and future residents, including with regard to privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, and environmental impacts.

14.5.2 Core Policy 52 reinforces the need for high quality design that safeguards residential amenity, while Core Policy 55 relates to the provision of appropriate and functional residential environments.

14.5.3 Policy ASH7 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022) requires development to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and Policy ASH8 seeks to minimise light pollution in order to maintain the village's dark skies and rural character.

14.5.4 These objectives are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which expects development to create places with a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users.

14.5.5 The proposal has been assessed in relation to its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, as well as the living conditions of future residents. In this regard, officers consider the key issues to be privacy and overlooking, outlook and overbearing effects, daylight and sunlight, noise and disturbance, and light pollution.

14.5.6 Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers

14.5.7 The siting and orientation of the proposed development has been arranged to respect existing residential relationships. Separation distances between the proposed buildings and neighbouring dwellings are considered appropriate, reflecting established spacing within the surrounding area. This ensures that there would be no unacceptable loss of privacy through direct overlooking.

14.5.8 Where windows are proposed on elevations facing neighbouring properties, these are either set at a sufficient distance or carefully positioned to avoid direct intervisibility with principal habitable rooms or private garden areas.

14.5.9 In terms of outlook and overbearing impact, the scale and massing of the proposal reflect the modest character of surrounding development. The height and bulk of the buildings would not result in a dominant or oppressive visual presence when viewed from adjacent properties.

14.5.10 The use of conventional roof forms and the stepping of built form within the site further reduce perceived mass, ensuring that neighbouring occupiers would retain a reasonable outlook consistent with the established character of the settlement.

14.5.11 Daylight and sunlight considerations have also been taken into account. Given the separation distances, orientation, and scale of development, the proposal is not considered to result in material loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring habitable room windows or private amenity spaces.

14.5.12 Any shadowing effects would be limited and comparable to those typically experienced within a built-up village environment, and would not give rise to unacceptable harm.

14.5.13 Noise and General Disturbance

14.5.14 The proposed use is residential in nature and would not generate noise or activity levels beyond what would normally be expected within the settlement. Vehicular movements associated with the development would be modest and are unlikely to result in material disturbance to nearby residents.

14.5.15 The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 43 in ensuring that neighbouring uses are not adversely affected by noise, disturbance, or other environmental impacts.

14.5.16 Light Pollution

14.5.17 In accordance with Policy ASH8 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan, the potential for light pollution has been considered carefully. External

lighting, where required, can be controlled to ensure it is sensitively designed, low-level, and downward-facing.

14.5.18 This would protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, avoid unnecessary light spill, and preserve the rural and dark-sky character of the area. A planning condition could be imposed, if considered necessary, to secure appropriate details of external lighting.

14.5.19 Residential Amenity for Future Occupiers

14.5.20 The proposal also provides a satisfactory living environment for future residents. Internal layouts allow for adequate levels of daylight and outlook to habitable rooms, while private garden areas are of a size and configuration that are appropriate for the scale of development and consistent with surrounding properties.

14.5.21 The relationship between dwellings and access, parking, and private amenity space is functional and coherent, ensuring compliance with Core Policy 55 of the Local Plan.

14.5.22 Conclusion

14.5.23 Overall, the proposal is considered to safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and to provide an acceptable standard of living conditions for future residents.

14.5.24 There would be no unacceptable impacts in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight, noise, or light pollution. The development therefore complies with Core Policies 42, 43, 44, 52 and 55 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026), Policies ASH7 and ASH8 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022), and the relevant amenity objectives of the NPPF (2024).

14.6 **D) Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain, Trees and Landscaping**

14.6.1 The proposal has been assessed against Core Policies 38 (Biodiversity and Protected Species), 39 (Landscape Character) and 40 (Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure) of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

14.6.2 Regard has also been given to Policies ASH10 (Biodiversity and Habitats) and ASH11 (Chalk Streams Protection) of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made 2022).

14.6.3 Ecology and Biodiversity

14.6.4 An Ecological Survey and Assessment has been submitted in support of the application and has been reviewed by the Council's ecological advisers. The site is currently a grazed paddock with low intrinsic ecological value, bounded by established hedgerows and vegetation.

- 14.6.5** The assessment identifies no buildings or trees with bat roost potential and confirms that there is negligible suitability for protected species, including bats, badgers, reptiles and barn owls. The submitted survey concludes that no further ecological surveys are required and that the proposal would not result in significant harm to protected species or priority habitats.
- 14.6.6** The Council's ecological advisers have confirmed that the information submitted is sufficient to support determination of the application, subject to appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures being secured by condition. In this regard, the proposal accords with Core Policy 38, which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and requires proposals to avoid harm to protected species and habitats wherever possible.
- 14.6.7** The proposal also aligns with Policy ASH10 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan, which resists the loss of important ecological features and supports developments that integrate biodiversity enhancements into their design.
- 14.6.8** Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- 14.6.9** The proposal is for a single self-build dwelling on a site of less than 0.5 hectares. Based on the submitted information and advice from the Council's ecological consultees, the development falls within the statutory exemptions to mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, as set out in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and associated regulations.
- 14.6.10** Notwithstanding this exemption, both national and local policy strongly encourage the delivery of measurable biodiversity enhancements as part of all developments.
- 14.6.11** In line with Core Policy 38, Core Policy 40, paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2024), and Policy ASH10, the application proposes a range of proportionate biodiversity enhancements, including provision for bird nesting boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog connectivity measures and invertebrate habitats. These measures would deliver a clear biodiversity uplift over the existing baseline and would assist the Council in discharging its duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 14.6.13** It is considered appropriate and necessary to secure these measures through a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy condition, ensuring details of implementation, location and long-term maintenance are clearly set out.
- 14.6.14** Trees, Hedgerows and Landscaping

- 14.6.15** The site does not contain any protected trees or woodland, and the proposed built development is largely contained within the open area of the paddock. Existing boundary hedgerows and vegetation are predominantly retained, with only limited hedgerow thinning required to facilitate the access arrangement.
- 14.6.16** This approach accords with Policy ASH10, which seeks to protect hedgerows and wildlife corridors, and with Core Policy 39, which requires development to respect and respond positively to landscape character.
- 14.6.17** The Uttlesford Design Code (2024) emphasises the importance of landscape-led design, retention of existing natural features, and the reinforcement of green infrastructure in rural locations. The siting of the dwelling, along with the associated cart shed and garden curtilage, allows for the retention of the wider paddock character and limits encroachment into surrounding countryside. Opportunities exist for additional native planting to reinforce site boundaries, improve screening, and strengthen habitat connectivity.
- 14.6.18** Subject to a suitably detailed landscaping scheme secured by condition, which should include native species planting as recommended within the Essex Tree Palette (2018) SPD, hedgerow reinforcement, and long-term management arrangements, the proposal is considered to be compliant with Core Policies 39 and 40, the Design Code, and the objectives of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan.
- 14.6.19** Water Environment and Chalk Stream Protection
- 14.6.20** The site lies within the wider catchment of the River Bourne, a sensitive chalk stream. While the proposed dwelling is located on higher ground away from the watercourse, careful consideration has been given to surface water management and potential impacts on the aquatic environment. Policy ASH11 requires that development proposals do not result in additional surface water run-off or pollution to chalk streams and their tributaries.
- 14.6.21** The proposal includes permeable surfacing for the driveway and the use of on-site soakaway drainage, which would ensure that surface water is managed sustainably and does not discharge directly into the watercourse.
- 14.6.22** This approach is consistent with Core Policy 40 and paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2024), which seek to protect water quality and promote nature-based solutions to drainage. Subject to appropriate drainage details being secured and implemented, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to harm to the River Bourne or its associated habitats.
- 14.6.23** Conclusion

14.6.24 Taken together, it is considered that the development would not result in unacceptable ecological harm, would protect existing natural features, and would deliver proportionate biodiversity enhancements in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood plan policies.

14.6.25 Subject to conditions securing biodiversity enhancements and landscaping details, the proposal is considered acceptable in ecological and landscape terms.

14.7 E) Flood Protection

14.7.1 The proposal has been assessed against Core Policy 36 (Flood Risk) of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), Policy ASH9 (Flood Risk) of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made 2022), and national policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

14.7.2 The application site lies within the wider catchment of the River Bourne, and parts of the overall landholding are identified as falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

14.7.3 Core Policy 36 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy ASH9 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan require development proposals in such locations to demonstrate that they are safe for their lifetime, resilient to the effects of flooding, and would not increase flood risk elsewhere. These requirements reflect the sequential, risk-based approach set out in national policy.

14.7.4 A Design, Access, Transport and Flood Risk Statement has been submitted in support of the application. This documentation confirms that the proposed dwelling, cart shed and the majority of the associated residential curtilage are located on higher ground, outside the functional floodplain within Flood Zone 1 and away from the main fluvial flood risk associated with the River Bourne. The siting of the built development therefore follows the principles of the Sequential Test, by directing the most vulnerable elements of the proposal to the areas of lowest flood risk within the site.

14.7.5 While sections of Kates Lane and the wider site access are acknowledged to experience flooding during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall, this reflects an established condition affecting the existing farmhouse (Old Sandons) and the operational access to Sandons Farm.

14.7.6 The proposal does not introduce a new means of access from the public highway and does not materially alter flood behaviour along the lane or adjacent watercourse. In this context, the proposal would not worsen existing conditions, nor would it place future occupants at a materially

greater level of risk than that already experienced by existing residents and farm workers in the locality.

- 14.7.7** In terms of surface water management, the proposal incorporates a number of sustainable drainage measures, including permeable surfacing to the driveway and the use of on-site soakaway drainage for surface water disposal.
- 14.7.8** These measures are consistent with Core Policy 36, Policy ASH9, and the guidance within the Uttlesford Design Code, all of which emphasise the importance of managing surface water at source and minimising run-off to watercourses, particularly within sensitive catchments. The approach proposed would ensure that the development does not increase surface water run-off to the River Bourne or exacerbate downstream flooding.
- 14.7.9** The Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan places particular emphasis on the vulnerability of the Parish to flooding from fluvial, surface water and groundwater sources.
- 14.7.10** Policy ASH9 specifically requires that new development demonstrates how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed to avoid adverse impacts. In this instance, the scale of development is modest and the proposed drainage strategy is proportionate, ensuring compliance with both neighbourhood and district-level policy objectives.
- 14.7.11** The NPPF (2024) requires that development in areas at risk of flooding should only be permitted where it is demonstrated to be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where, where appropriate, it will reduce flood risk overall. The siting of the dwelling outside the higher-risk flood zones, combined with sustainable drainage measures and the retention of undeveloped land within the floodplain, means that the proposal accords with these requirements.
- 14.7.12** Subject to the imposition of planning conditions securing detailed surface water drainage arrangements and finished floor levels, it is considered that the proposal would be safe, resilient, and policy-compliant in flood risk terms. The development would not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere and would appropriately respond to the known flood constraints affecting the wider area.
- 14.7.13** Conclusion
- 14.7.14** Taking all matters into account, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Policy 36 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan, Policy ASH9 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan, the Uttlesford Design Code, and the NPPF (2024). Subject to appropriate conditions, the development would not result in unacceptable flood risk and is therefore acceptable in flood protection terms.

14.8 F) Highways Access and Parking provision

14.8.1 The proposal has been assessed against Core Policies 26 (Sustainable Transport), 27 (Transport Impact and Highway Safety), 28 (Active Travel) and 31 (Parking Standards) of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), the Essex Parking Standards (2024), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

14.8.2 Regard has also been given to Policy ASH14 (Public Rights of Way) of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made 2022).

14.8.3 Site Access and Highway Safety

14.8.4 Vehicular access to the proposed dwelling would be taken from the existing private driveway serving Sandons Farm, which connects directly to Kates Lane, a narrow rural lane terminating at the farm before continuing as a public bridleway.

14.8.5 No new vehicular access onto the public highway is proposed, and the development would utilise an established access arrangement that already serves the farmhouse and farm operations.

14.8.6 The proposal includes the formation of a short new driveway spur within the site, together with appropriate gates and a small bridge structure across an adjacent ditch. These works are confined within the site boundary and would not materially alter the operation of the public highway.

14.8.7 Importantly, the County Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal, confirming that the introduction of a single agriculturally tied dwelling would result in an imperceptible increase in vehicle movements and would not be detrimental to highway safety.

14.8.8 This position accords with Core Policy 27, which requires development to be served by safe and appropriate access arrangements, and with paragraph 111 of the NPPF (2024), which states that development should only be prevented on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. In this instance, no such impact has been identified.

14.8.9 Traffic Generation and Sustainable Transport

14.8.10 The proposed dwelling would be occupied by a full-time agricultural worker associated with Sandons Farm. Evidence submitted with the application demonstrates that the occupier already makes regular journeys to and from the site in connection with farm operations.

- 14.8.11** The provision of on-site accommodation would, in practice, reduce existing vehicle movements, particularly during unsocial hours, and would therefore not give rise to an increase in traffic along Kates Lane.
- 14.8.12** Core Policies 26 and 28 seek to promote sustainable transport and reduce reliance on the private car where possible. While the site is located in a rural area with limited access to public transport, this is a recognised characteristic of agricultural holdings in the countryside.
- 14.8.13** The proposal represents a functional response to an operational need rather than discretionary housing development and is therefore considered acceptable in transport sustainability terms when viewed in context.
- 14.8.14** Public Rights of Way
- 14.8.15** Public bridleways and footpaths run adjacent to and across parts of the wider site. Policy ASH14 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan requires development proposals on or adjacent to public rights of way to safeguard their function, appearance and accessibility.
- 14.8.16** The layout of the proposal has been designed to ensure that no public rights of way are obstructed, diverted or narrowed, either during construction or once the development is complete.
- 14.8.17** The Highway Authority has confirmed that the proposal would not interfere with the safe use of the public bridleway network. Any temporary works affecting a public right of way during construction would be subject to separate consent under highways legislation, secured through standard informatives.
- 14.8.18** Subject to these safeguards, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ASH14 and national guidance promoting the protection and enjoyment of public rights of way.
- 14.8.19** Parking Provision
- 14.8.20** Parking for the dwelling would be provided within the site in the form of a two-bay cart shed, together with additional driveway space to allow for turning and visitor parking.
- 14.8.21** The proposed level of parking meets, and is proportionate to, the requirements set out in the Essex Parking Standards (2024) for a three-bedroom dwelling in a rural location.
- 14.8.22** Core Policy 31 requires parking provision to be adequate, safe, and well integrated into the design of the site, avoiding harm to visual amenity or the character of the area.

14.8.23 The use of a traditional cart shed structure reflects the rural character of the site and accords with the Uttlesford Design Code, which encourages parking solutions that minimise visual dominance and support local distinctiveness.

14.8.24 In addition, the proposal allows for vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear, reducing potential conflict with other users of the access and enhancing safety.

14.8.25 Conclusion

14.8.26 Overall, the proposal is considered to provide safe and appropriate access, adequate parking provision, and appropriate protection for public rights of way.

14.8.27 The development accords with the relevant transport and parking policies of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan, the Uttlesford Design Code, the Essex Parking Standards, the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan, and the NPPF (2024). On this basis, the proposal is acceptable in access and parking terms.

14.9 G) Accessible Homes

14.9.1 The proposal has been assessed against Core Policy 53 (Accessible and Adaptable Homes) of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021–2041 (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), the Essex Parking Standards (2024), and national policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

14.9.2 Core Policy 53 seeks to ensure that new residential development contributes to an inclusive and adaptable housing stock by requiring the provision of accessible and adaptable homes, capable of meeting the needs of occupants over their lifetime.

14.9.3 National policy reflects this objective, with the NPPF promoting well-designed places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and that support changing household needs, including those arising from age, disability or reduced mobility.

14.9.4 The application proposes a three-bedroom dwelling intended to be occupied by a full-time agricultural worker and their family. Although the dwelling is not promoted as specialist or older persons' accommodation, the scale of the development allows for accessibility considerations to be addressed proportionately, in accordance with Core Policy 53.

14.9.5 The submitted plans show that the dwelling has been designed to allow for ease of movement at ground-floor level, with a clear and logical internal layout, and sufficient circulation space that would allow it to be readily adapted if required in the future.

- 14.9.6** The design approach aligns with the principles of Category M4(2) - Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings, as set out within Building Regulations guidance, which is the standard supported by Core Policy 53 unless site-specific constraints clearly justify otherwise.
- 14.9.7** In this case, the dwelling is served by level access from the driveway, has a ground-floor WC, and benefits from sufficient space within key rooms to facilitate future adaptation, such as the installation of grab rails or a stair lift if required.
- 14.9.8** These measures would ensure the dwelling remains suitable for occupants throughout different stages of life, including in circumstances of short- or long-term reduced mobility.
- 14.9.9** The Uttlesford Design Code (2024) emphasises that new homes should be designed to be inclusive from the outset, with accessible principal entrances, simple wayfinding, and parking located in close proximity to entrances.
- 14.9.10** The proposal responds positively to these principles, with on-plot parking provided adjacent to the dwelling and a layout that avoids excessive changes in level between the parking area and the front entrance.
- 14.9.11** This arrangement also accords with the Essex Parking Standards (2024), which support the provision of convenient and safe access between parking spaces and dwellings, particularly where accessibility may be required.
- 14.9.12** Given the modest scale of the development and its location within a working farmyard context, it would not be reasonable to require specialist wheelchair-accessible standards (M4(3)) at the outset. However, the proposal clearly demonstrates that the dwelling is capable of adaptation without structural alteration, which is the core objective of Core Policy 53.
- 14.9.13** Conclusion
- 14.9.14** Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with Core Policy 53 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan, the Uttlesford Design Code, the Essex Parking Standards, and the objectives of the NPPF (2024).
- 14.9.15** The dwelling is capable of being delivered as an accessible and adaptable home, ensuring it can meet the changing needs of occupiers over time.
- 14.10 H) Net Zero and Renewable Energy**
- 14.10.1** The proposal has been assessed against Core Policy 22 (Net Zero Operational Carbon Development), Core Policy 23 (Overheating and Cooling), and Core Policy 25 (Renewable Energy Infrastructure) of the

adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (2026), alongside the Uttlesford Design Code (2024) and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

- 14.10.2** The adopted Uttlesford Local Plan places a clear and mandatory emphasis on reducing carbon emissions from all new development, requiring proposals to achieve net zero operational carbon and to demonstrate integrated measures to mitigate overheating, in line with the Council's climate and environmental objectives.
- 14.10.3** Core Policy 22 requires new residential development to minimise energy demand through a fabric-first approach, incorporate low-carbon and renewable technologies, and operate without reliance on fossil fuels. Compliance with this policy is a requirement of development and not discretionary.
- 14.10.4** Core Policy 23 requires development to demonstrate how the cooling hierarchy has been applied, prioritising passive design measures to avoid overheating before reliance on mechanical solutions.
- 14.10.5** Core Policy 25 further supports the integration of appropriately designed renewable and low-carbon energy generation as part of new development.
- 14.10.6** The proposal is for a single dwelling ancillary to an established agricultural holding. Despite its modest scale, the scheme presents a clear opportunity and obligation to deliver policy-compliant energy efficiency and net zero operational carbon performance from the outset.
- 14.10.7** The dwelling's compact form, layout, orientation, and massing are conducive to achieving high thermal performance, optimising solar gain to principal habitable rooms and supporting passive environmental design principles consistent with the Uttlesford Design Code and the upper tiers of the cooling hierarchy.
- 14.10.8** Although the application was submitted prior to adoption of the Local Plan and therefore did not include an Energy Assessment at submission stage, compliance with Core Policies 22 and 23 remains necessary and must be secured via planning condition.
- 14.10.9** A suitably detailed Energy Assessment shall therefore be required by condition. This must demonstrate how net zero operational carbon will be achieved and explicitly set out how the cooling hierarchy has been integrated into the design, including fabric performance, orientation, shading, ventilation, and overheating risk mitigation.
- 14.10.10** Given the rural location and absence of gas infrastructure, the dwelling must be designed to utilise non-fossil-fuel heating solutions, such as air-source or ground-source heat pumps, in accordance with Core Policy 22.

- 14.10.11** The design of the building, including its roof form, orientation, and layout must also enable the installation of on-site renewable energy technologies, such as roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, without harm to character or visual amenity, consistent with the Uttlesford Design Code.
- 14.10.12** Any renewable energy infrastructure must be appropriate in scale, subordinate to the dwelling, and avoid adverse impacts on landscape character, heritage assets, or residential amenity, in accordance with Core Policy 25.
- 14.10.13** The policy framework supports a future-proofed approach, requiring development to be capable of accommodating renewable technologies and evolving efficiency standards over time.
- 14.10.14** It is also material that the proposed agriculturally tied dwelling would reduce existing travel patterns associated with managing the holding, thereby delivering an indirect but meaningful reduction in operational carbon emissions.
- 14.10.15** While a bespoke or overly complex energy strategy would not be proportionate for a single dwelling, a robust Energy Assessment demonstrating compliance with Core Policies 22 and 23 is both reasonable and necessary.
- 14.10.16** Conclusion
- 14.10.17** Subject to a condition requiring the submission and approval of an Energy Assessment demonstrating net zero operational carbon performance and full integration of the cooling hierarchy, the proposal is capable of complying with Core Policies 22, 23, and 25 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan.
- 14.10.18** The development can deliver a suitably designed, energy-efficient dwelling that incorporates or allows for renewable energy generation and contributes positively to the Council's climate change objectives. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is acceptable in net zero and renewable energy terms.
- 14.11** **I) Planning Balance**
- 14.11.1** In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority is required to undertake a planning balance exercise, weighing the benefits of the proposal against any identified adverse impacts, having regard to the Development Plan, national policy and all other material considerations.
- 14.11.2** The proposal seeks permission for a new agriculturally tied dwelling in the open countryside. Ordinarily, new residential development in such locations would be contrary to the spatial strategy set out in Core Policies

2 and 3 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan and Policy ASH1 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan. This represents the principal policy tension associated with the proposal.

14.11.3 However, the development is expressly advanced as a rural worker's dwelling and falls to be assessed against Development Policy 3 of the adopted Local Plan and paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which provide a clear and established policy exception for such development where an essential operational need is demonstrated.

14.11.4 As set out in Section 14(A), a detailed Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal has been submitted and independently assessed. Officers are satisfied that it robustly demonstrates a functional and operational requirement for a full-time agricultural worker to reside at or near Sandons Farm, and that this need cannot reasonably be met by existing accommodation. The imposition of an agricultural occupancy condition would ensure that the dwelling remains tied to the rural enterprise in perpetuity and does not contribute to unrestricted housing supply.

14.11.5 In policy terms, it is also material that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land and that the Housing Delivery Test result falls below 75%. As a result, relevant policies for the supply of housing are to be treated as out of date, engaging the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. While the proposal is not reliant on this position to justify development, it nonetheless affects the overall weight to be afforded to restrictive countryside policies.

14.11.6 The benefits of the proposal include:

- The delivery of a necessary rural worker's dwelling to support the effective operation and long-term viability of an established agricultural enterprise;
- Improved animal welfare, biosecurity and operational resilience through on-site presence;
- Reduced vehicular travel associated with commuting to the farm, resulting in operational efficiencies and a reduction in carbon emissions;
- The provision of a sensitively designed dwelling that respects local character and would integrate successfully into its rural context; and
- Proportionate biodiversity enhancements and sustainable drainage measures consistent with local and national environmental objectives.

14.11.7 Against these benefits, the principal harm arising from the proposal is its location within open countryside, representing an additional built form in a greenfield setting. However, as detailed in Sections 14(B)-(H), the development would not result in unacceptable harm to landscape character, visual amenity, residential amenity, biodiversity, flood risk, highway safety or the water environment. The scheme is modest in

scale, carefully sited, and supported by appropriate mitigation and planning conditions.

14.11.8 Importantly, the proposal does not undermine the Council's spatial strategy for growth, as it does not represent speculative or unrestricted housing development and would remain strictly controlled through an agricultural occupancy condition.

14.11.9 When assessed as a whole, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the limited and localised harm associated with countryside development. In addition, the proposal represents a form of development that is positively supported by both national and local planning policy where justified.

14.11.10 Accordingly, it is concluded that the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole.

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 application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new agriculturally tied, self-build dwelling at Sandons Farm, together with a two-bay cart shed, new driveway and associated access arrangements, within the open countryside at Kates Lane, Ashdon.
- 16.2** While the site lies outside the established built form of Ashdon, the proposal has been assessed against the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and all other material considerations. The development has been found to fall within a recognised and well-established policy exception for rural worker's dwellings, supported by a detailed Agricultural Dwelling Appraisal which demonstrates an essential functional and operational need.
- 16.3** The proposal has been carefully assessed in terms of design, landscape impact, residential amenity, ecology, flood risk, highways access, sustainability, accessibility and climate change considerations. In all respects, it is concluded that the development would not give rise to unacceptable harm and is capable of being made fully policy-compliant through the imposition of appropriate conditions.
- 16.4** The dwelling is modest in scale, sympathetically designed and appropriately sited to limit its visual and landscape impact, while delivering tangible operational and environmental benefits, including support for a local rural enterprise and a reduction in unnecessary travel.
- 16.5** On balance, and for the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole, or alternatively that material considerations indicate that planning permission should be granted. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out in Section 17 of this report.

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 2021-2041 (adopted 2026) as shown in the Schedule of Policies.

3. The occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture (as defined in Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.

REASON: The dwelling is permitted in the open countryside solely to meet an essential agricultural need and unrestricted occupation would be contrary to the spatial strategy and countryside protection policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022).

4. No development above slab level shall take place until samples and/or details of all external materials (including walls, roofs, windows, doors, weatherboarding, rainwater goods and hard surfaces) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure high quality design that respects local character and appearance, in accordance with Core Policy 52 of the Uttlesford Local Plan and the Uttlesford Design Code.

5. No development above slab level shall take place until a detailed landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall include:

- Existing features to be retained and protected;
- Details of all proposed planting (species, size and density);
- Boundary treatments; and
- A timetable for implementation and maintenance.

All planting shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the dwelling or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged within five years shall be replaced.

REASON: To ensure satisfactory landscape integration, protect rural character and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with Core Policies 39 and 40 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and Policy ASH10 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022).

6. Prior to occupation of the dwelling, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include details of the location, specification

and long-term retention of biodiversity enhancement measures, including bird and bat boxes and habitat features.

The approved measures shall be implemented prior to occupation and thereafter retained.

REASON: To secure proportionate biodiversity enhancements in accordance with Core Policy 40 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026), Policy ASH10 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022) and paragraph 187d of the NPPF (2024).

7. No development shall commence until details of a surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall demonstrate that surface water runoff will be managed on site and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To manage surface water runoff and reduce flood risk, in accordance with Core Policy 36 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and Policy ASH9 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022) and the NPPF (2024).

8. No development shall commence until details of finished floor levels of the dwelling, relative to existing ground levels, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure the development is safe from flood risk for its lifetime, in accordance with Core Policy 36 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and Policy ASH9 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022) and the NPPF (2024).

9. The dwelling shall not be occupied until the vehicular access, driveway, turning area and parking spaces (including the cart shed) have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. These areas shall thereafter be retained for their intended purpose and shall not be obstructed.

REASON: To ensure safe access, adequate parking and turning provision and to avoid obstruction of the access, in accordance with Core Policies 27 and 31 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026).

10. No external lighting shall be installed on the site unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any lighting shall be designed to minimise light pollution, be downward-facing and operated only as necessary.

REASON: To protect residential amenity, dark skies and rural character, in accordance with Core Policies 43 and 52 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

(2026) and Policies ASH8 and ASH7 of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (2022).

- 11.** No development shall commence until details of foul drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure satisfactory disposal of foul water and to protect human health and the water environment, in accordance with Core Policy 42 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026).

- 12.** Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed Energy Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Energy Assessment shall be prepared by a suitably qualified professional and shall demonstrate full compliance with Core Policies 22 (Net Zero Operational Carbon Development), 23 (Overheating and Cooling), and 25 (Renewable Energy Infrastructure) of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2026), and the Uttlesford Design Code (2024).

The Energy Assessment shall include, as a minimum:

1. Net Zero Operational Carbon
 - A quantified assessment of predicted regulated operational energy and carbon emissions.
 - Confirmation that the dwelling will achieve net zero operational carbon, with no reliance on fossil fuel heating, cooling or hot water systems.
2. Energy Demand Reduction (Fabric First)
 - Details of the building fabric performance, including U-values, air permeability, thermal bridging, glazing specifications, and airtightness strategy.
 - Evidence that energy demand has been minimised through a fabric-first approach.
3. Heating and Hot Water
 - Details of non-fossil fuel heating and hot water systems (e.g. air source or ground source heat pump), including system specifications and efficiency metrics.
4. Cooling Hierarchy and Overheating Risk
 - A clear explanation of how the cooling hierarchy has been applied, prioritising passive design measures.
 - Assessment of overheating risk and mitigation measures, including but not limited to orientation, window sizing, shading, natural ventilation, thermal mass and layout.

- Confirmation that reliance on mechanical cooling is avoided unless clearly justified.
5. Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
- Details of on-site renewable and/or low carbon energy technologies (such as roof-mounted photovoltaic panels), or confirmation that the building is designed to readily accommodate such technologies.
 - Evidence that renewable infrastructure is appropriately scaled, incorporated sensitively into the design, and avoids harm to visual amenity, landscape character or heritage significance.
6. Future-Proofing
- Confirmation that the dwelling is designed to accommodate future improvements in energy efficiency and renewable technologies.

The development shall thereafter be constructed and operated in full accordance with the approved Energy Assessment.

REASON: To ensure that the development achieves net zero operational carbon, minimises energy demand, avoids overheating through appropriate application of the cooling hierarchy, and incorporates or enables renewable and low carbon energy generation, in accordance with Core Policies 22, 23 and 25 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026), the Uttlesford Design Code (2024), and the environmental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 13.** If during any site investigation, excavation, engineering or construction works evidence of land contamination is identified, the applicant shall notify the Local Planning Authority without delay. Any land contamination identified, shall be remediated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the site is made suitable for its end use.

REASON: To protect human health and the environment in accordance with Core Policy 42 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026).

- 14.** Prior to occupation of the dwelling, a minimum of one electric vehicle charging point shall be installed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The charging point shall thereafter be retained.

REASON: To promote sustainable transport and reduce carbon emissions, in accordance with Core Policies 22 and 26 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2026) and the NPPF (2024).

- 15.** The development hereby permitted shall be provided in accordance with the guidance in Approved Document S 2021 and shall be built in accordance with Optional Requirement M4(2) (Accessible and adaptable dwellings) of the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document M, Volume 1 2015 edition (apart from the plots specified in the section 106 planning obligation to be M4(3)(a) or M4(3)(b) compliant).

REASON: To provide accessible and adaptable dwellings for all potential occupants, in compliance with Core Policy 52, 53 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (2026), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 16.** Prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby approved, full details of the refuse and recycling storage facilities, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

These details shall include:

- o the design and appearance of the refuse store;
- o confirmation that the store is undercover and secure;
- o the types, specifications, capacity, and number of refuse and recycling bins to be provided.

The approved refuse and recycling storage facilities shall be fully installed and made available for use prior to first occupation of the development and shall thereafter be retained and maintained in the approved form at all times.

All refuse and recyclable materials associated with the development shall be stored within the approved refuse storage area. No refuse or recycling material shall be stored or placed for collection on the adopted highway (including any footway) except on the day of collection.

REASON: To safeguard the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, protect the general environment, prevent obstruction of the highway, and ensure suitable facilities for refuse and recycling storage are provided, in accordance with Policies 26, 27, 28 and 52 of the Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan (2026) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 17.** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking, re-enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), no development falling within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B or E shall be carried out to the dwelling(s) hereby permitted without the prior written planning permission of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to safeguard the character, appearance and spatial quality of the development and its surroundings, and to protect residential amenity, having regard to Core Policies 38 and 42, 43, 44, 52 and 59 of the Uttlesford Local Plan.

The removal of permitted development rights is necessary to ensure that any future extensions or alterations are appropriately assessed in the context of the site's constraints and the wider planning objectives of the district.

APPENDIX 1 – ECC HIGHWAYS COMMENTS

From: Matthew Lane - Strategic Development Manager (South) <Matthew.Lane@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 March 2026 10:38
To: Planning <planning@uttlesford.gov.uk>
Cc: Transport Development Admin Assistant <transport.develop@essex.gov.uk>; Cllr Foley Essex <Cllr.Martin.Foley@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: UTT/26/0493/FUL Land at Sandons Farm, Kates Lane, Ashdon - Highway Consultation Response - 63201 - 4A

Dear Mark Sawyers

UTT/26/0493/FUL - Proposal: Erection of new agriculturally tied self-build dwelling at Sandons Farm, associated 2-bay cartshed, new driveway and vehicular access from existing private driveway to Sandons Farm.

From a highway and transportation perspective the Highway Authority has no objections to this proposal as it is not contrary to the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance, Policy GEN1 of the Local Plan, and the NPPF 2024.

Informative

- The proposed use of one dwelling will generate an imperceptible increase in vehicle movements along Kates Lane, and the development is not interfering with the use of the Public Bridleway. Consequently, the proposal will not be detrimental to highway safety at this location.
- The Public Right of Way network is protected by the Highways Act 1980. Any unauthorised interference with any route noted on the Definitive Map of PROW is considered to be a breach of this legislation. The public's rights and ease of passage over Public Bridleway no.73 Ashdon, shall be maintained free and unobstructed at all times to ensure the continued safe passage of the public on the definitive right of way.

The grant of planning permission does not automatically allow development to commence. In the event of works affecting the highway, none shall be permitted to commence until such time as they have been fully agreed with this Authority. In the interests of highway safety this may involve the applicant requesting a temporary closure of the definitive route using powers included in the aforementioned Act. All costs associated with this shall be borne by the applicant and any damage caused to the route shall be rectified by the applicant within the timescale of the closure.

Please note that ECC will only maintain the surface of the PROW commensurate with its use as a Bridleway.

Regards

Matthew Lane | Strategic Development Manager (South)

Strategic Development





T: 07747 486164
matthew.lane@essex.gov.uk
www.essex.gov.uk/highways



The Highway Authority is now charging for all pre-planning application advice, full details can be found here – [Pre-App Charging](#)