

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on
WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2021 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor S Merifield (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, M Caton, A Coote, P Fairhurst,
R Freeman, G LeCount, M Lemon (Vice Chair), J Loughlin,
R Pavitt, N Reeve and M Sutton

Officers in attendance: W Allwood (Principal Planning Officer), R Beale (Planning Officer), N Brown (Development Manager), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), M Sawyers (Planning Officer), C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer), M Shoemith (Development Management Team Leader), E Smith (Solicitor), C Theobald (Planning Officer) and C Tyler (Planning Officer)

Public Speakers: P Belton, A Butcher, C Campbell, Councillor M Coleman (Great Dunmow TC), P Danbury, S Drury, Councillor M Elsey (Ashdon PC), G Gardener, D Graves, L Green, J Grey (Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) N Hooper, M Horrigan, P Horrigan, R Houghton, M Hughes, Councillor P Lees, L Leicester, N Lines, Dr J Padfield, S Patrick (Ashdon Flood Group), V Ranger, S Robinson, Councillor G Sell, J Smith, J Snares, M Stewart, M Tuff and Councillor J De Vries

PC95 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Lemon declared a non-pecuniary interest as Ward Councillor for Hatfield Heath (Agenda Items 5 and 12).

Councillor Fairhurst declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council and Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Coote declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council and Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Freeman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council and Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor LeCount declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Henham Parish Council and Ward Councillor for Elsenham and Henham. He requested to reclude himself from agenda items 4 and 13, due to personal reasons.

PC96 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Fairhurst referred to PC93 in respect of 20-22 Castle Street, Saffron Walden and asked that it be noted that members requested a policy to cover replacing felled trees.

He also referred to PC91 in respect of Land West of Radwinter Road and requested that “defer” be amended to “deferred” on page 7, paragraph 3 of the agenda pack.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2021 were agreed, subject to the changes proposed by Councillor Fairhurst, and would be signed by the Chair as an accurate record at the next opportunity.

PC97 UTT/20/2220/DFO - LAND WEST OF WOODSIDE WAY, DUNMOW

The Principal Planning Officer presented an application for the Approval of Reserved Matters for the details of layout, scale, landscaping and appearance to provide 326 residential dwellings, following the grant of outline planning permission in October 2015 under reference UTT/13/2107/OP.

The site comprises the northern parcels of the site at Woodside Way, and is currently formed of 3 agricultural fields, measuring 23.26ha or 57.48 acres. The proposed dwellings as stated would be a mix of 1-5-bedroom units, with 32% affordable housing provision, indicating a mix of shared ownership and affordable rent, as approved as part of the s106 Agreement. 5% wheelchair accessible M4(3) bungalows would be provided for both the market and affordable housing provision, as per the Section 106 Agreement.

The development would also provide public open space including tree and hedgerow planting, habitat creation, including natural and semi-natural green space, children’s and youth play areas, allotments, pitch quality ground, including sports pavilions, and an area set aside for a Primary School.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

In response to questions from the committee, officers clarified:

- Planning Conditions, including a Construction Management Plan, were agreed and set out in the Outline Planning Permission. This application was to agree details relating to layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.
- Essex County Council Highways raised no objections to the application; however, the applicant was having ongoing discussions with the department about the impact which this development would have on Stortford Road.
- The children’s play areas would be located in the central spine area and to the east of the site. The locations were sited along the route of an existing pipeline which was not fit for development and was also accessible to nearby footpaths.
- Every property would have an electric charging point; however, the charging unit would not be provided. The applicant explained that this was

due to a changing market and that not all residents would want one. They highlighted that government grants were available for individuals to buy the units at a lower price.

- Water Butts would not be installed at every property but would be provided in the allotment which would be considered as a separate application. Further details would be set out in the s106 agreement.
- The 2-bedroom property, located above a garage, would be given use of the garage, as well as an additional parking space to the side.
- Once this application had been approved, development would commence. Currently, only the building of the spine road had commenced. When the development had been completed, it would contribute to the districts housing supply numbers.
- The proposed bungalows did have permitted development rights; however, owners would need to apply for planning permission in order to substantially extend or demolish them to replace them with larger houses. Members raised concerns about the protection of bungalows both on the development and in the district as a whole.

The Chair noted that the developer had stated in a recent publication that the Council's policy on affordable housing was 32%. She clarified that the policy was actually 40% and that the development is part of a series of developments which overall would bring the affordable housing total up to the policy requirement.

Members welcomed the developer's collaboration with the community to produce an application which was sensitive to nature and provided suitable housing to address housing need in the area.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Coote.

RESOLVED to approve the application with conditions.

Speakers: Councillor M Coleman (Mayor of Great Dunmow Town Council) and R Houghton (applicant) spoke in support of the application

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 and reconvened at 11:30

Councillor Le Count left the meeting at 11:30

PC98 **UTT/20/0604/OP - LAND SOUTH OF VERNONS CLOSE, HENHAM**

The Planning Officer presented an outline proposal with all matters reserved, except access, relating to the residential development of a site comprising of 45 dwellings with associated landscaping and public open space. The site lies on the east side of Mill Road to the immediate south of Vernons Close, a 1960's housing development, and comprises a field roughly square in shape with a stated area of 5.17 ha. currently out of arable production. A slightly larger parcel of land used for amenity purposes lies to the immediate east of the site with agricultural land lying further to the east of this, whilst agricultural land lies opposite the site to the west. A nursery lies to the immediate south.

A Parameters Plan (ref: 1123/002 Rev B) had been submitted with the application which sets out the framework for consideration of the proposal and which shows the disposition of land uses across the site between built form and open space areas, the indicated access point, likely storey heights for dwellings up to 2.5 storey, the indicative location for surface water attenuation and also a children's equipped area of play.

An Illustrative Masterplan (ref: 1123-004 Rev A) has also been submitted demonstrating how 45 dwellings, vehicular access, landscaping and areas of public open space could be accommodated at the site whereby access is shown being gained from Mill Road. The south of the site is shown to comprise a proposed landscaping tree belt along the southern boundary which, together with new open space would, it is stated, make up to 50% of the site's total area. A Proposed Access Arrangement Plan had also been submitted.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Members welcomed the open layout of the site and the varied housing mix which had been proposed, however concerns were raised around the sustainability of the development due to the isolated location, as well as the lack of local amenities, public transport, and footpaths for pedestrians. They noted Essex County Council Highways' comments that the location of the site was such that access to key facilities, shops, employment and leisure opportunities was limited and for the vast majority of journeys the only practical option would be the car.

Members also discussed the cumulative highway impact that the development, along with others in the area, would have on the Grove Hill junction and noted that the highway assessment had not considered the nearby Fairfields site which had recently received approval on appeal for over 300 new houses.

Councillor Pavitt proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of a lack of sustainability and the protection of the countryside.

This was seconded by Councillor Fairhurst.

RESOLVED to refuse the application

Speakers: Councillor G Sell (on behalf of Stansted Parish Council), Councillor P Lees and G Gardener (on behalf of Henham Parish Council) spoke against the application and A Butcher (applicant) spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Le Count returned to the meeting at 12:42

The Development Manager presented an application for the erection of 12 dwellings including new access, associated landscaping and the creation of a parking area for the adjacent playing field.

This application related to a parcel of land of 0.6 ha adjacent to the existing housing developments of Broomfields and Cox Ley. The land is located directly to the north of the development limits of Hatfield Heath, within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

In response to members' questions, officers clarified the following:

- Hatfield Heath Parish Council conducted a housing need survey which identified a serious need for affordable housing. The development would meet the demand and the first nominations would be offered to residents of Hatfield Heath, cascading to neighbouring parishes where applicable.
- The Parish Council's housing survey had identified at least 20 individuals in need of affordable housing, therefore there would be enough local people to occupy all the properties.
- The Parish Council had enquired about at least 6 other sites for an affordable housing development, however landowners refused to give away their sites.
- The site was classed as an exception site and would only be used for the 10 affordable rent homes. The two market dwellings were proposed to cross subsidise the cost of delivery.
- There were existing drainage issues in Hatfield Heath, but it is not a requirement for the developer to address this. An application would have to improve general drainage, which this application does, according to the local flood authority.
- The football pitch adjacent to the site would be retained but would be relocated away from the development.
- The properties would be built to the PassivHaus standard.

The committee debated the need to balance the views of the Parish Council with the opinion of residents in the community. Members indicated that they were unable to make a fair assessment of the application without a site visit to assess the impact on the surrounding area.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be deferred so that a site visit could be conducted. This was seconded by Councillor Coote.

RESOLVED to defer the application

Speakers: N Lines, D Graves, M Stewart, P Danbury and L Leicester spoke against the application and S Robinson and N Hooper both spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application.

Meeting adjourned 13:48 and reconvened 14:37

STATION ROAD, LITTLE DUNMOW

The Planning Officer presented a reserved matters application relating to the consideration of scale, layout, appearance and landscaping following the grant of outline planning permission UTT/17/3556/OP for the demolition of all commercial buildings and removal of commercial storage at Priory Lodge and the erection of 8 detached dwellings together with modification of the existing vehicular access to Priory Lodge. The DFO application as submitted had deleted one dwelling unit from the outline approved scheme and the application is now for 7 dwellings.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Members raised concerns around the impact that the development would have on the adjacent Fitch Way and potential contamination of the Stebbing Brook. Officers clarified that there were biodiversity conditions in place, such as replacing any plants which die within the first five years of the development's completion. Furthermore, the applicant had included a 5-metre exclusion zone on the northern limit of the dwellings which would create a buffer zone to protect the Fitch Way.

During further discussion, members requested the following conditions be added, should the application be approved:

- No pedestrian gates or other form of gates to be installed along the Fitch Way Buffer Zone, located on the northern boundary of the site.
- Prior to occupation of any of the dwellings, a stewardship arrangement for the ongoing maintenance of all communal areas be set up and retained on a permanent basis.
- Any plants which within a period of ten years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be approved with the above conditions. This was seconded by Councillor Merifield.

RESOLVED to approve the application with conditions.

Speakers: S Drury (on behalf of the applicant) and M Tuff (agent) spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Freeman joined the meeting 14:50. Due to not hearing the item in full, he did not vote on the item.

PC101 UTT/20/0921/DFO - LAND NORTH OF ASHDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN

The Development Management Team Leader presented an application for reserved matters permission for “details following outline application UTT/17/3413/OP - Erection of 4 commercial buildings for use as B1, B2 and/or D2 in the alternative together with access road, car parking, bins and bike stores and associated works. The application detailed appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.”

The application had been deferred by Planning Committee in December 2020 to resolve parking layout. Following the deferment of the application, the applicant has submitted a revised parking scheme illustrating the parking spaces to be at Essex Parking Standards size. This has resulted in the slight reduction in parking space provision from 34 spaces to 29 spaces.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Members debated the amended car parking provisions; notably, if the reduced allocation of parking would be adequate for the commercial units and the impact that this would have on parking in the nearby area.

Councillor Lemon proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Loughlin.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Speakers: P Belton (agent) spoke in support of the application.

PC102 **UTT/20/2009/FUL - LAND TO THE WEST OF RADWINTER ROAD, ASHDON**

The Planning Officer presented the application for the erection of 5 dwellings, with access from Radwinter Road. The application was deferred by the Planning committee in January 2021 to allow for the submission of further information in regards to drainage, site levels and layout of the development.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions

The Development Manager advised that planning permission and agreement to discharge into a water course were not linked and neither gave the other automatic consent. He explained that the logical order was to get planning permission first because an application to discharge water would be rejected if there was no reason to do it without planning permission being in place. Members questioned why the applicant had not already approached the relevant water authority, given that planning permission was initially granted in 2018.

During discussion, officers also clarified the following:

- There were no grounds for making a decision based on an emerging neighbourhood plan as it currently holds no weight.
- Members cannot disregard the outline planning permission for 4 dwellings as this is a material planning consideration.
- The site has an existing electricity transformer and there is no proposed substation.

Members indicated that they were minded to refuse the application due to concerns regarding the scale and bulk of the development and the impact on the setting of the surrounding area, the risk of flooding and the sustainability of the drainage solutions.

Councillor Bagnall proposed that the application be refused on the following grounds:

- The proposed development by reasons of its scale, height, position within the site and proposed ground levels would result in a harmful, overbearing impact to the residential and visual amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
- The application does not include sufficient information that the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding through surface water runoff
- The scale and siting of the dwellings within the site would result in a harmful impact to the setting of the surrounding and nearby listed buildings and heritage assets.

This was seconded by Councillor Coote.

RESOLVED to refuse the application

Speakers: Councillor J De Vries, Councillor M Elsey (Chair of Ashdon PC), P Horrigan, M Horrigan, S Patrick (Ashdon Flood Group), Dr J Padfield and J Grey (Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) spoke against the application and J Smith spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application.

PC103 UTT/20/3263/FUL - LAND NORTH OF BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE, GREAT CHESTERFORD

The Planning Officer presented an application to amend plot 7 previously approved under planning application UTT/19/2288/FUL. The proposal would make a material change to plot 7 by increasing the floor space and external appearance. The increase in floor space would accommodate the increase from a 2-bedroom to a 3-bedroom property. A carport over the existing parking to the side of the property was also proposed.

The application was recommended for approval.

Councillor Freeman proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Pavitt.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Speakers: J Snares spoke in support of the application..

PC104 UTT/20/2653/FUL - THE JOYCE FRANKLAND ACADEMY, CAMBRIDGE ROAD, NEWPORT

The Development Management Team Leader presented an application to vary conditions 2 (plans), 3 (WSI), 4 (foul drainage), 5 (construction management plan), 6 (surface water drainage), 7 (arboriculture), 9 (external finishes), 14 (arboriculture), 19 (vehicular access), 20 (pedestrian crossing), and 22 (parking) attached to planning application UTT/18/0739/FUL (approved under appeal APP/C1570/W/19/322942).

Councillor Coote proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Fairhurst.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Speakers: C Campbell spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application..

PC105 **UTT/20/2450/FUL - BARN ADJ. LITTLE MORTIMERS, WATER END, WATER END ROAD, ASHDON**

The Planning Officer presented an application for the demolition of an existing barn and proposed replacement structure to provide 1 dwelling.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

In response to the members questions, the Development Manager clarified that planning permission had been previously given due to the prior notification process. Throughout the previously approved applications, the proposed dwelling had already been approved in terms of layout, access, scale, form, design and appearance and therefore the purpose of this application was to decide whether there were any material planning reasons why the demolition of the barn cannot take place.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be approved with additional conditions, to be drafted by the Planning Team, which would cover the following:

- Further information as to the landscaping works be provided
- Renewable energy solutions, including a renewable drainage solution, be installed in the development
- A Construction Management Plan to be submitted, prior to building work commencing

This was seconded by Councillor Merifield.

RESOLVED to approve the application with conditions.

Speakers: Councillor J De Vries and L Green spoke against the application.

PC106 **UTT/20/2299/FUL - LAND EAST OF FRIARS LANE, HATFIELD HEATH**

The Planning Officer presented an application seeking planning permission for the erection of a fence. The fence would be constructed with chestnut posts at a maximum height of 1.5m from the ground, with a centre to centre distance between the posts of 1.8m. Galvanised wire stock fencing would be stapled to the posts to a height of 1.15m with a single strand top wire running along the top of the post.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Members raised concerns that the application would result in the enclosure of underdeveloped, agricultural land and the implications that this would have for the wildlife corridor.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of the impact to the Metropolitan Green Belt. This was seconded by Councillor Lemon.

RESOLVED to refuse the application

Speakers: V Ranger spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application.

Councillor LeCount left the meeting at 18:35.

PC107 **UTT/20/2541/FUL - COTT MOOR, OLD MEAD ROAD, HENHAM**

The Development Manager presented an application for planning permission for the creation of new vehicular access.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Councillor Fairhurst proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

RESOLVED to approve the application

The meeting ended at 18:41