

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY
2021 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor S Merifield (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, M Caton, A Coote, R Freeman (Vice-Chair), G LeCount, B Light (substitute), J Loughlin, R Pavitt, N Reeve and M Sutton

Officers in attendance: W Allwood (Principal Planning Officer), N Brown (Development Manager), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), M Jones (Planning Officer), N Makwana (Planning Officer), C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer), E Smith (Solicitor), C Theobald (Senior Planning Officer) and C Tyler (Senior Planning Officer)

Public Speakers: Councillor E Oliver, F Woods, P Walters, Councillor S Gill, S Bampton, Councillor S Luck (statement read not in attendance), C Griffin, D Scott, T Knight, I Carter, J Collins (statement read not in attendance), P Kratz and L Trevillian.

PC124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillor Lemon and Councillor Fairhurst.

Councillor Coote declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council/ Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden.

Councillor Bagnall declared a non-pecuniary interest as a ward member for Takeley (Agenda Items 7 & 8)

Councillor Light declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council/ Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden.

Councillor Freeman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council/ Ward Councillor for Saffron Walden.

Councillor Reeve declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of High Easter Parish Council (Agenda Items 6 & 10).

Councillor Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a ward member for Takeley.

PC125 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 April 2021 were agreed and would be signed by the Chair as an accurate record at the next opportunity.

PC126 **UTT/21/0079/OP - LAND EAST OF BANNISTER GREEN RAYNE ROAD, FELSTED**

The Principal Planning Officer presented an outline application with all matters reserved except access and landscaping for the erection of 9 detached dwellings on agricultural land.

It was an unusual report because the applicant had appealed to the Secretary of State against the non-determination of the Planning application. The Committee was therefore requested to establish a position and to agree putative reasons for refusal.

The application was recommended for refusal with putative reasons as set out in the report.

Councillor Coote proposed that the application be refused according to the Officer's report.

Councillor Freeman seconded the motion.

RESOLVED to refuse the application with putative reasons as set out in the Officer's report.

PC127 **UTT/20/2639/OP - LAND TO THE WEST OF STORTFORD ROAD, CLAVERING**

The Senior Planning Officer presented an outline application with all matters reserved except for access, for the demolition of "Poppies" and the erection of up to 31 dwellings (including 12 affordable homes) and 38 visitor parking spaces for the adjacent school.

A balancing pond is proposed to the south east of the site to provide a suitable drainage scheme to serve the proposed development.

The scheme was recommended for approval with conditions subject to an S106 legal obligation.

The Development Manager acknowledged the obvious strength of feeling from the speakers but said they had been unfair to Officers who had a difficult job as every development had objections. He made the following points about the application:

- The 5 year land supply was an issue along with a lack of a neighbourhood plan for the area.
- Despite the long access road this was not an isolated site.

- The appeal was upheld on one issue which was the impact on the landscape. He advised Members to consider if the application overcame that objection.

In response to a question from Councillor LeCount the Senior Planning Officer said that there were 17 spaces along the access road with further spaces within the main site. He said the cars dropping off at the school would leave by driving onto the site. Highways had suggested conditions which had been added, but no objections were raised by them.

Councillor Pavitt understood the Parish Council's position, however he said the application was sustainable and that it benefited the school as the drop off was improved. He said the re-designed application with a wooded area was good for biodiversity.

Councillor Loughlin said the application had not changed significantly, she said the issues remained and for that reason she would refuse the application on S7 grounds.

Councillor Freeman said he thought it was a good application, he suggested a condition was added regarding the turning of cars after drop off, as he was concerned about the potential chaos at the entrance to the estate.

Councillor Bagnall said he was concerned about the loss of agricultural land he said the application was not sustainable because of the long walk to reach the amenities; meaning people would use their cars instead. He was concerned the development was in the wrong location and detrimental to the landscape, and he could not support the application.

Councillor Sutton agreed with other Councillors who had concerns, she said the estate community would be isolated from the rest of the village, and felt that not much had changed since the last application.

Councillor Coote said he was against this application due to the increase in the number of cars, pollution, and safety issues around the school and he did not think Essex County Council Highways had looked into this or the possible effects on children's safety. He said their support of the application was inadequate and inappropriate.

Councillor Caton said he agreed with Councillor Pavitt, but he was concerned about the impact on the landscape. He said it was a difficult decision to make on the basis of the current 5 year land supply position and the need to avoid too many decisions being overturned on appeal when this was a relatively modest sized site.

Councillor Light said there were no amenities, apart from a small supermarket, no secondary school and that commuting for work made the site unsustainable. She was concerned about the loss of agricultural land. She would refuse the application.

Councillor Reeve said the application did have merits and that there was a need to find suitable sites, he was minded to approve but he had concerns about going against local opposition.

Councillor Light proposed to refuse on the basis of S7.

Councillor Coote seconded the motion. This motion was not carried by the majority of the Committee.

Councillor LeCount proposed that the application be approved with S106 Agreement conditions including traffic restrictions and tree planting along the footpath areas.

Councillor Reeve seconded the motion.

RESOLVED to approve the application with S106 Agreement conditions.

Councillor E Oliver, F Woods, P Walters and Councillor Gill spoke against the application

S Bampton (agent) spoke in support of the application

The meeting adjourned at 11:40pm and reconvened at 1:00pm

PC128 **UTT/20/0264/OP - LAND TO THE WEST OF THAXTED ROAD, DEBDEN**

The Senior Planning Officer said that the application was for outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of 25 dwellings with 40% affordable housing included.

The Design and Access Statement envisaged a mix of dwellings for 1 bed/2 person, up to 4-bed/6 person houses with a mixture of tenure. Affordable housing would be provided as part of the dwelling mix, and in line with local requirements there would be a 30:70% mix of shared ownership and affordable rented accommodation.

The application was recommended for conditional approval subject to S106 legal obligation.

Councillor Light did not take place in the debate or the vote as she was not in attendance for the full Planning Officer's report.

In response to a question from Councillor Pavitt, the Development Manager said that this application had changed from the previous rejected application. It was half the size, and the number of planned dwellings had been reduced. The reason for refusal of the previous application had been due to the harm the urbanisation it represented could potentially cause, and this had been resolved with the reduction in the size and number of dwellings.

Councillor Pavitt said the application was only reduced by 11 dwellings and they were in a slightly smaller area; he said the houses would be extremely visible

and have a similar impact as previously, and, he questioned the sustainability of the site.

In response to a question from Councillor Coote, Mr Kratz said that the developer was local and buyers here did tend to be local. He said that the affordable housing would definitely be for local people.

Councillor Coote also raised why there had been no consultation with the Parish Council.

Councillor Loughlin said the housing estate seemed to be out of keeping with the linear nature of the current village.

The Chair commented that she was surprised that there were no Parish Council members speaking at the meeting in view of the level of feeling against the development.

In response to a comment made by Councillor Bagnall, the Development Manager agreed that the provision of 40% affordable housing needed to be clarified in the paperwork.

In response to a question from Councillor Caton, the Development Manager said this site had been part of a draft allocation of the local plan but this had not been adopted and it was therefore not an allocated site.

Councillor Bagnall requested that the Developer made a contribution to the building of the new Village Hall.

The Development Manager said this was possible as long as it was CIL compliant. It would need to be proportionate to the size of the development and would be unlikely to be a substantial sum.

There was further discussion about the outline permission as Members were concerned about approving the application when they did not know what size, mix and type of housing would then be proposed.

The Development Manager confirmed, following a question from Councillor Reeve, that Members were being asked to agree the principle of development, everything else was still within the Committee's control. He also said that if this application was refused the Inspector would look at the appeal as an outline application, and would consider whether it was suitable for the area. They would not consider the type of housing, access etc.

Further to a question from the Chair, the Senior Planning Officer said that nothing had been mentioned about manorial rights with regards to the verge and he therefore assumed that there was no issue, although he said the Parish Council had expressed concern.

Councillor Caton proposed that the application be approved with a condition added that a contribution be made to the Village Hall appropriate to the scale of the site.

Councillor Le Count seconded the motion.

RESOLVED to approve the application with conditions as above.

I Carter, D Scott, T Knight, J Collins (statement read; not in attendance), and C Griffin spoke against the application

Councillor S Luck (statement read; not in attendance), P Kratz (solicitor for the applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

PC129 **UTT/21/0692/FUL - MARSTONS, START HILL, GREAT HALLINGBURY**

The Planning Officer said that the proposal was for the demolition of an existing house and the replacement with 8 dwellings, along with associated development including access, car parking and landscaping.

The application was for a mix of 2 and 3 bedroomed, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. All dwellings would have on plot parking, and there were 2 additional visitor parking spaces provided.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

In response to Members' questions, Officers clarified the following:-

- The adjoining site and this application were under separate ownership so there was no provision for social housing.
- Access would be the same as used for the adjacent site.
- Following concerns raised by the Parish Council, a condition would be included providing for a Construction Method Statement to ensure that vehicles would not be allowed to park on the B1256.
- The application was within development limits and in accordance with the 2005 Local Plan.

Councillor Coote proposed that the application be approved.

Councillor Pavitt seconded the motion.

RESOLVED to approve the application with conditions.

L Trevillian (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

Councillor Coote left the meeting at 2:30pm.

PC130 **UTT/20/0050/FUL - YEW TREE COTTAGE, SCHOOL LANE, TAKELEY**

The Planning Officer said that this full application related to the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of 1 dwelling with associated parking and landscaping.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Councillor Bagnall said he had called in this application on behalf of the Parish Council. Their concerns were about the cumulative impact of development on the area, especially in relation to surface water and flooding. He suggested that a site visit should be arranged and this application be deferred for this to take place.

In response to a question from Councillor Bagnall, the Planning Officer confirmed that Yew Tree Cottage, the new proposed dwelling and White House Farm and grounds were all owned by the applicant at the point of submission of the application, and he said there were no ownership issues or irregularities therein. Any changes to the nearby gardens and boundaries were not an issue in terms of this application, as they did not affect the red line of the site.

Councillor Sutton said that Essex County Council had recommended that there was a proper flood impact assessment for the whole of Mole Hill Green.

Councillor Light proposed that the application be deferred for a site visit to be arranged.

Councillor Bagnall seconded the motion.

RESOLVED to defer the application.

D Hyde (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

Due to time constraints Agenda items 8 – 12 could not be discussed at this time.

Meeting Closed at 3:00pm