

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

Present: Councillor S Merifield (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, J Emanuel, R Freeman, G LeCount,
M Lemon (Vice-Chair) B Light, R Pavitt, G Sell and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: W Allwood (Principal Planning Officer), N Brown (Development Manager), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer), M Shoesmith (Development Management Team Leader), E Smith (Solicitor), C Theobald (Senior Planning Officer), C Tyler (Senior Planning Officer) and A Vlachos (Planning Officer)

Public Speakers: L Carpenter, M Culkin, C Day, Cllr N Gregory, Cllr D Hall, C Hawkins, C Houston, Cllr J Jewell, Cllr S Luck, T Magness, Cllr E Oliver and Cllr F Wilkinson

PC31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Fairhurst, Reeve, Sutton and Loughlin.

Councillor Pavitt declared a non-pecuniary interest as Ward Member for Littlebury, Chesterford and Wenden Lofts (Agenda Item 3).

PC32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

PC33 UTT/20/3329/DFO - LAND SOUTH-WEST OF LONDON ROAD, LITTLE CHESTERFORD

The Senior Planning Officer presented a report on a reserved matters application, seeking approval of appearance, layout, scale, and landscaping, for 76 dwellings following the approval of outline planning permission UTT/19/0573/OP.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

Members discussed the proposal. Whilst there was agreement that the District would benefit from the affordable housing which the application offered, they raised concerns regarding the following:

- The amount of green space proposed was inadequate, given the size of the development, and the play areas were both small and poorly

positioned on the edge of the site beside a busy road and the attenuation basin.

- The design of the scheme was unsatisfactory as the layout, scale and density were overbearing. Officers confirmed that the proposed layout had been submitted to the Essex Design Quality Review Panel and, whilst it was deemed an acceptable scheme, the developer had used the feedback given to enhance the design further. Members suggested that the design could be improved with a large, central green space.
- The plans indicated the retention of the 50mph zone on the B1383 through the development which raised concerns about pedestrian road safety.
- Further consideration needed to be given to the proposed woodland at the edge of the development. Members suggested that the saplings would die if there were not proper maintenance arrangements in place, and requested that the developer considered planting mature trees instead of whips. It was confirmed that the developer would be expected to work alongside the Parish Council and Woodland Trust in the long-term on the woodland's upkeep.
- Great Chesterford has an inadequate sewage network and is already over capacity. As a result, sewage flooding in the Chesterfords is a common occurrence and there is not enough water pressure in the new developments. Whilst this developer is not at fault, the whole system will not be sustainable with further new development and members requested that a condition be included whereby the housing cannot be occupied until these issues are resolved. Officers explained that such a condition could not be imposed as it would constraint future development and that the utility companies had been informed of the additional 76 properties.
- Electricity substations are often noisy and cause disruption to residents. Members requested that the substation on the new development should to be constructed beyond existing standards so that it would not increase the level of noise beyond the current level of background sound.
- The Parish Council were dissatisfied with the cycle path in the S106 agreement as it was not routed to go to directly to Great Chesterford station. Officers clarified that members were not considering the cycle link as this will be developed on Highway land and so cannot be included in the scheme.
- The car parking provisions were in line with Essex Parking Standards, but did not comply with the Uttlesford Residential Parking Standards as there was no provision of a 3rd parking space for the 4-bedroom dwellings. Whilst officers were satisfied that the development provided sufficient off-street parking and the additional 30 visitor parking spaces could be used by the 4-bedroom dwellings, members indicated that this could mean that 23 of the 30 visitor spaces would potentially be permanently occupied to make up for the missing parking spaces. Furthermore, the parking provision would leave residents with the choice to park away from their house, or off-road.

Councillor Emmanuel proposed that the application be deferred to consider the issues raised around design. This was seconded by Councillor Le Count.

RESOLVED: To defer the application.

Speakers: Councillor N Gregory, C Day, Councillor D Hall (Great Chesterford Parish Council), Councillor F Wilkinson (Little Chesterford Parish Council) spoke against the application and C Houston (agent) spoke in favour.

The meeting adjourned between 11:30 to 11:35

PC34 UTT/21/0507/FUL - SITE AT CANFIELD DRIVE, GREAT CANFIELD ROAD, GREAT CANFIELD

The Principal Planning Officer presented an application for the replacement of 4 existing static homes with 4 detached houses with associated access and parking, as well as the change of use of disused land to 1 travellers' plot.

The application had previously been deferred at July's Planning Committee for a site visit and was recommended for approval with conditions.

As the consultation period was not due to end until the day after the meeting of the Planning Committee, any resolution would be made on the condition that no new evidence be brought to light before the end of the consultation.

In response to member questions, officers clarified that a significant change in definition was introduced in planning policy for traveller sites in 2015 whereby traveller status now excluded those who have ceased travelling permanently. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of traveller pitches for the future, the 4 new dwellings would address the new need for housing for settled travellers no longer meeting the 2015 definition, such as the current occupants. Furthermore, the additional travellers' plot would ensure that the Council's requirement to provide for such sites in the District was met.

It was noted that the Parish Council had observed that the proposed development site, including the additional travellers pitch, extended beyond the 0.5 hectares which would trigger a contribution to affordable housing. However, the proposal itself only covered an area of 0.46 hectares, which meant that this criterion was not met.

A condition had been included for the removal of the existing day rooms and the caravans, as well as permitted development rights. Members requested that the wording to condition 16 be amended so that the caravans are removed from the site, rather than just the dayrooms.

Councillor Lemon proposed that the application be approved with the additional conditions:

- The dayrooms located on the plot be removed from the site
- The wording to Condition 16 be revised so that the static caravan/mobile homes are required to be removed from the site, rather than just from the plots.

This was seconded by Councillor Le Count.

RESOLVED: to approve the application with conditions.

Speakers: Councillor J Jewell (Great Canfield Parish Council) spoke against the application and L Carpenter (agent) spoke in favour.

Meeting adjourned between 12.17 and 13.15.

PC35 UTT/21/0333/OP - SABRE HOUSE, DUNMOW ROAD, STEBBING

The Planning Officer presented an outline application with all matters reserved, except for access, to demolish all buildings and remove commercial uses (car sales and airport parking etc) and construct residential development of up to 9 dwellings.

The application was recommended for approval with conditions.

In response to questions, officers clarified that the scheme was indicative only and there was no commitment to details such as bedroom sizes or housing mix at this stage in the process. The site had previously received planning permission at committee in 2017, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the sale of the land had fallen through, and the permission had not been implemented.

It was confirmed that the land to the rear was owned by the same individual. Currently, the proposed development did not meet the criteria for the requirement to provide affordable housing to be triggered, however, should a further application for housing come forward on the adjacent land, then a contribution to affordable housing would be considered.

During discussion, members raised concerns for the following:

- The indicative housing mix did not meet the area and District's demand for smaller 2/3-bedroom properties.
- The development would result in the loss of employment land, in an area of light industry. Officers clarified that as the land was not a protected employment site, there was no requirement for the freeholder to seek alternative employment options before requesting the change in usage.
- The site was not in a sustainable location as it was not within walking distance of the village centre, had limited access to amenities and had no access to footpaths or countryside.
- The development would be situated close to the B1256 and closely proximate to the A120, prompting concerns around noise and air pollution.
- The access to the site was dangerous, as it is situated on a busy and fast stretch of road.
- The site was potentially contaminated due to its historic commercial use as a petrol filling station and would therefore require input from the Council's Environmental Health Department to clean it before development could commence.

Councillor Bagnall proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of unsustainability (policy S7). This was seconded by Councillor Freeman

RESOLVED: To refuse the application

PC36 **UTT/21/1108/FUL - LAND AT LODGE FARM, BARDFIELD END GREEN, THAXTED**

The Planning Officer presented an application for the demolition of an existing hay barn and erection of new farmhouse.

The application was recommended for refusal.

Members expressed their support for the application and said that there was full justification of need as it would partially restore the historic nature and character of the site, as well as assist the farm in their operations through providing provisions for the farm workers and allowing the full-time supervision of livestock.

Officers clarified that the applicant had not submitted an agricultural planning application, so the proposal could not be assessed as an agricultural case and must be considered on its own merits. On this basis, the development represented a form of inappropriate development in the countryside and was not considered sustainable, due to being poorly served by public transport and not within walking distance of local services.

Councillor Merifield proposed that the application be deferred for a site visit and further consideration around the agricultural requirement. This was seconded by Councillor Le Count.

RESOLVED: To defer the application.

Speakers: A statement from Councillor S Luck was read out in favour of the application. M Culkin (Thaxted Society) and T Magness (Applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

PC37 **UTT/21/1811/HHF - WATTS FOLLY, WENDEN ROAD, ARKESDEN**

The Planning Officer presented an application for the proposed single-storey Oak Frame rear extension.

The application was recommended for refusal.

Members recognised the importance of conserving Uttlesford's heritage and debated the need to apply Planning Conservation rules in a balanced way. Officers explained that whilst the proposal may not cause substantial harm to the building, there was no dispute that there would be harm, such as to the building's circulation.

Several members indicated their concerns with the extension, given the prominent location of the Grade 2 listed cottage and the matters raised within Place Service's assessment.

Councillor Le Count proposed that the application be refused. This was seconded by Councillor Sell.

RESOLVED: to refuse the application.

Speakers: Councillor E Oliver and C Hawkins (Applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

PC38 UTT/21/1812/LB - WATTS FOLLY, WENDEN ROAD, ARKESDEN

Councillor LeCount proposed that the application be refused. This was seconded by Councillor Sell.

RESOLVED: to refuse the application.

PC39 UTT/21/1870/TCA - THE BLUEBELL INN, HIGH STREET, HEMPSTEAD

The Development Manager presented a notification of intent to carry out tree work within a conservation area at The Bluebell Inn, Hempstead. The proposal was to fell 1 cobnut, 1 hawthorn and 1 plum tree, as well as to reduce lower branches of 1 pine, and reshape 1 plum.

Councillor Pavitt proposed that no objection be raised to the proposed tree work. This was seconded by Councillor Lemon.

RESOLVED: To raise no objection to the proposed tree works.

The meeting ended at 15.10.