

UTT/20/1929/OP – (GREAT DUNMOW)

(Major)

PROPOSAL:	Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, demolition of existing school buildings, public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access from the B1008 Parsonage Downs.
LOCATION:	Helena Romanes School Parsonage Downs Dunmow
APPLICANT:	Helena Romanes School
AGENT:	Phase 2 Planning
EXPIRY DATE:	01 October 2021 (Extension of Time Agreed)
CASE OFFICER:	William Allwood

1. NOTATION

1.1 The site is located outside the development limits as identified in the adopted Local Plan and is therefore classified as a countryside location where Policy S7 is applicable. However, the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (GDNP) identifies the site as falling within the Town Development Area and Policy DS1 applies. The site is classified as a mineral safeguarding area. The site sits in an ecologically sensitive location with the Fredericks Spring located adjacent to part of the western boundary. The site access passes through the Parsonage Downs Local Wildlife Site. The site falls within the Impact Zone for High Woods SSSI. It also falls within the Zone of Influence for recreational impacts on Hatfield Forest, a SSSI, NNR and Ancient Woodland. The site access passes through the Parsonage Downs Conservation Area and the site has numerous listed buildings in proximity.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 The outline application site measures 10.8 hectares and is located to the north of Great Dunmow and is surrounded by many prominent natural and man-made features. Parsonage Downs to the east of the site comprises several large, detached properties set behind a village green. Some of the buildings are listed and some are newly built. Most of Parsonage Downs is within the Conservation Area. Access to the site is via Parsonage Downs which runs through the green from the B1008. To the southwest of the site is Newton Hall which is a former country estate split into individual dwellings. This collection of buildings is set within large, landscaped grounds. To the northwest is Frederick's Spring which is designated as an Ancient Woodland. An area of woodland extends into the site here although does not form part of the designation. Woodside Park, which wraps around the south and west (sectors 1-3) and the north of the site (sector 4), is a residential development of 1,600 homes which has been built in phases since 1992 with several zones still left to be built. The later phases are closer to the site with earlier phases further south. A few hundred metres from the site entrance, the Saffron Trail can be joined. This is a 71-mile, long distance footpath stretching between Southend-on-Sea to Saffron Walden via Great Dunmow town centre.

2.2 The site currently comprises the Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. The leisure centre is a facility shared between the public and the school. The intention will be to remove the main leisure centre building, all weather pitch, hard court and car park from the application site boundary, to be retained and operated as an independent leisure use. The remaining area (the site) measures 10.8ha and slopes downwards from south to north. The eastern area of the site includes the site access from Parsonage Downs, access to the leisure centre and all of the buildings, internal roads and car parks associated with the school. The buildings range between 1-4 storeys in height. The remaining areas comprise grassed sports pitches which are on tiered levels, sloping downwards from south to north. The western area is located on the highest part of the site and contains a bund along the boundary with the leisure centre car park and all-weather pitch. A short but steep bank leads down to the central area (see photo 4) which includes

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a number of large, mature trees. Finally, another short but steep bank leads down to the southern area of the site. The outer site boundaries contain mature vegetation which is continuous in some locations and intermittent in others. The northern boundary abuts Woodlands Park sector 4, where there are clear views to new housing. The eastern boundary runs along the edge of Parsonage Downs, with the rear of some properties looking directly into the site. The upper half of the western boundary forms the edge of Frederick's Spring ancient woodland. The lower half sits adjacent to Newton Hall where views to the eastern end of buildings is possible. The all-weather pitch and hard court have perimeter fencing. All other shared boundaries with the leisure centre are currently open.

- 2.3 Newton Hall is found to the west of the application site. This is a Grade II Listed Building, dating from the mid-C19. A former large country estate, the Hall and associated buildings have been split into smaller properties. One such cottage is also Grade II Listed. Part of this grouping faces east and is visible within the western side of the site. Main materials are red brick and red plain tile. The courtyard of buildings nearest the site feature roof dormers. There are also 7 listed buildings within the conservation area adjacent to the site to the east. These include properties with thatched roofs, red tile roofs, red brick, and a variety of coloured renders.
- 2.4 Access to the site is via Parsonage Downs, where the existing school entrance is. There are currently no other access points to the school. However, Woodlands Park sector 4 (to the north of the site) has been designed to facilitate a pedestrian / cycle link into the site.
- 2.5 At the outset, it is important to state that this application is promoted as "enabling development" and is to facilitate the building of a replacement new 'all through school' (containing shared facilities for both primary and secondary pupils), which was the subject of a separate application with Essex County Council, on land sited to the east of Buttley's Lane in Great Dunmow. Planning approval was granted by Essex County Council under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for an *All-through school (primary, secondary and sixth form); sports hall; formal and informal hard and soft play areas/pitches; new vehicular and pedestrian accesses; vehicle drop-off and parking areas; landscaping and other associated infrastructure and works*, subject to conditions, on the 20th April 2021.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This outline planning application proposes residential development with roads, open spaces, and landscaping. The site area measures 10.8ha with a net developable area of 5.81ha (54% of the site area). The remaining areas comprise:
- Public open space - 4.05ha (37%) including a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and attenuation ponds
 - Retained woodland - 0.94ha (9%)
- 3.2 The submitted development framework land use plan illustrates that the site seeks to accommodate up to 200 homes at a net density of 34dph, and proposes for a variety of apartments, bungalows, and houses. The housing mix will be determined at the reserved matters stage, but the applicant advises that it is expected to include a broad range of house types and sizes.
- 3.3 The applicant does not seek formal approval of this layout; it is primarily submitted to illustrate that the site area can accommodate the quantum of housing proposed, in a form that will meet parking, garden size, highway and public open space standards and policy requirements.
- 3.4 The applicant has advised that illustrative layout has been informed by site specific opportunities and constraints, local character and built form and by good urban design principles. The intention has been to develop a framework which comprises a hierarchy of streets and spaces with differing character.

Avenue - this street type is the primary route into the development on entry from Parsonage Downs. The wide, tree-lined avenue gradually curves into the site, adding visual interest. Once straightened, this formal road provides a vista to the central village green.

Neighbourhood Streets - these secondary streets act as linking roads between the three pockets of development, running through and alongside the green open spaces.

Lanes - these narrow lanes are well-enclosed, shared surface zones that provide links and vistas to the green edges and open spaces of the site.

Green Edge - these shared surface streets and drives run alongside green spaces and corridors providing a low-key, attractive edge to the development.

Mews - these hard landscaped zones are cul-de-sacs into limited areas of development. These streets will often incorporate undercroft car parking or parking barns.

Square - the square is one of several focal spaces within the proposal, acting as a nodal point providing access to further development.

Court - this focal space is enclosed on 2 sides, creating a formal courtyard. Tree planting and integrated parking are featured in the centre.

Greens - there are 3 greens, all of which perform different roles within the proposal and in relation to neighbouring development. Each of these open spaces helps to separate the varied pockets of housing.

- 3.5 The details of the operation of the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre as its own entity is unclear at present. However, Uttlesford DC Officers felt that there was an opportunity to better integrate the leisure centre site into the master plan and therefore steps have been taken to future-proof the layout so that this can be realised. In this respect, discussions have taken place with 1Life, who operate the centre on behalf of Uttlesford District Council

Pedestrian Links The layout has been designed to create potential pedestrian / cycle routes through the leisure centre site, offering better connectivity and access to the leisure centre facilities. Links could be taken from the southern ends of the development, travelling through the car park and to the leisure centre. Other links could be made south to Newton Hall Chase.

Car Park There could be potential to re-arrange the car park by re-routing traffic and consolidating the existing parking into a smaller area. This could create room for a public realm area, such as a plaza, in front of the leisure centre building.

Frontage Building frontage has been located to overlook the leisure centre site to create a better setting to a potentially enhanced car park area.

Retail Unit If links through and improvements to the car park can be made, there is potential to provide a small retail unit to help enhance the sustainable credentials of the site.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 In March 2020, a Screening Opinion was submitted in respect of the *Demolition of existing school buildings and redevelopment of site for approximately 200 dwellings (230 assumed for robustness)*. The Local Planning Authority considered that the proposed development did not constitute an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, as amended.
- 4.2 Human Rights Act considerations: There may be implications under Article 1 and Article 8 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.

5. APPLICANTS CASE

5.1 The following documents have been submitted in support of the outline planning application:

- Level and Boundary Survey
- Lighting Plan
- Building Heights Parameter Plan
- Layout Plan
- Parameter Plan
- Sections and Street Scenes
- Access Arrangements
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Drainage Strategy
- Playing Pitch Assessment
- Sports Pitch Plan
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Landscape Strategy
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Development Viability Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment

6. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

6.1 The application site has a long planning history relating to school development; the most relevant application concerning the residential development of the site is:

6.2 UTT/20/0484/SCO: Request for Scoping Opinion in respect of a proposed development of *Demolition of existing school buildings and redevelopment of site for approximately 200 dwellings (230 assumed for robustness)* Scoping Opinion Given 09th March 2020

7. POLICIES

7.1 S70(2) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 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.

7.2 S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.3 National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

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7.4 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- Policy S1 – Development Limits for Major Urban Areas
- Policy S7 – The Countryside
- Policy GEN1 – Access
- Policy GEN2 – Design
- Policy GEN3 – Flood Protection
- Policy GEN4 – Good Neighbourliness
- Policy GEN6 – Infrastructure Provision to Support Development
- Policy GEN7 – Nature Conservation
- Policy ENV3 – Open Spaces and Trees
- Policy ENV4 – Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance
- Policy ENV5 – Protection of Agricultural Land
- Policy ENV7 – The Protection of the Natural Environment- Designated Sites
- Policy ENV10 – Noise Sensitive Development
- Policy ENV12 – Protection of Water Resources
- Policy ENV13 – Exposure to Poor Air Quality
- Policy ENV14 – Contaminated Land
- Policy ENV15 – Renewable Energy
- Policy H9 – Affordable Housing
- Policy H10 - Housing Mix
- Policy LC2 – Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities
- Policy LC3 – Community Facilities
- Policy LC4 – Provision of Outdoor Sport and Recreational Facilities beyond Development Limits

7.5 Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

SPD – Accessible Homes and Playspace (2005)
The Essex Design Guide
Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (2009)
Uttlesford Local Residential Parking Standards (2013)

7.6 Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was made in December 2016. It identifies this site as Policy DS2: TDA The Existing HRS Site. This Policy identifies the release of this site for 100 residential units if Helena Romanes' School relocates to another site.

The following policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are relevant to the proposed development and have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application for Reserved Matters.

- DS8: Buildings for Life
- DS9: Hedgerows
- DS10: Eaves Height
- DS11: Rendering, Pargetting and Roofing
- DS12: Integration of Affordable Housing
- DS13: Local Housing Needs.
- LSC1: Landscape, Setting and Character
- NE1: Identified Woodland Sites
- NE2: Wildlife Corridors

- NE3: Street Trees on Development Sites
- NE4: Screening
- SOS2: Sporting Infrastructure Requirements
- GA1: Core Footpath and Bridleway Network
- GA2: Integrating Developments (Paths and Ways)
- GA3: Public Transport
- HEI3: Primary School Provision

The Great Dunmow Town Design Statement (2007-2008) also provides relevant design guidance.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 This Outline planning application has been subject to recent amendments, and re-consultations with Statutory and Non-Statutory consultees. This summary of responses below with therefore generally only deal with the most up-to-date replies, to avoid any confusion. Full details of the consultation response can be found in Public Access on the Uttlesford DC website.

Local Highway Authority

8.2 Have advised that that from a highway and transportation perspective, the impacts of the proposal are acceptable to the Highway Authority, subject to conditions and mitigation.

UDC Housing Enabling Officer

Have advised that I note that it is an enabling application as the intention is to provide a new all-through school thereby creating an additional primary school in response to the growth of the town and a new secondary school to replace the current Helena Romanes school. Presumably the viability assessment has been checked to ensure accuracy and the figure quoted for providing a new secondary school taken from the tender process is within the ballpark ECC would expect. From a housing perspective it would be disappointing for a potential new development of around 200 homes not to include any affordable housing provision.

The Housing Officer further advised that the concern regarding this revised application remains the same as before and is the lack of any affordable housing provision.

8.4 Anglian Water

Foul water: The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Great Dunmow Water Recycling Centre which currently does not have capacity to treat the flows the development site. Anglian Water are obligated to accept the foul flows from the development with the benefit of planning consent and would therefore take the necessary steps to ensure that there is sufficient treatment capacity should the Planning Authority grant planning permission.

Surface water: The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer.

8.5 Environment Agency

No objections, subject to condition relating to the proposed method of disposal of foul water

8.6 Essex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Advise that having reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and the associated documents which accompanied the planning application, we do not object to the granting of planning permission, subject to conditions.

8.7 Uttlesford DC Environmental Health

No objections, subject to planning conditions in respect of noise, contamination, development demolition and construction impacts.

8.8 BAA Safeguarding

The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria, subject to demolition and construction control measures, together with matters relating to bird strike/ lighting/ solar PVs.

8.9 Sport England

No objection is made subject to the matters set out in the previous response being addressed through a section 106 agreement and planning conditions.

8.10 NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

Advise that a developer contribution will be required to mitigate the impacts of this proposal. West Essex CCG calculates the level of contribution required, in this instance to be £102,840. Payment should be made before the development commences. West Essex CCG therefore requests that this sum be secured through a planning obligation linked to any grant of planning permission, in the form of a Section 106 planning obligation.

8.11 Essex Police Crime Prevention

Whilst there are no apparent concerns with the layout to comment further, we would require the finer detail such as the proposed lighting, boundary treatments and physical security measures.

8.12 ECC Minerals and Waste Planning

No objections

8.13 Place Services Ecology

No objection subject to securing biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures

8.14 Place Services Historic Environment Team

Advise that the proposed would present the harmful urbanisation of the site resulting in several impacts to the designated heritage assets, especially considering the diurnal, environmental and seasonal changes. The proposed development would therefore adversely alter the experience, understanding and appreciation of the listed buildings. The harm to the designated heritage assets is considered to be 'less than substantial' through change in their setting, therefore Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is relevant. This harm would be at the lower end of the spectrum with exception of Newton Hall and the adjoining cottage which would be towards the middle of the spectrum. Whilst this harm could never be completely mitigated it could be lessened through extended buffering and appropriate landscape design.

Whilst I have no objection to the redevelopment of this site with extensive housing, the outline application and illustrative masterplan does not give the comfort that the maximum possible mitigation has been given to the heritage assets.

8.15 UDC Landscape Officer

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies some 40 trees proposed to be felled.

None of the trees indicated to be felled are of a public amenity value worthy of being made the subject of a tree preservation order. The Landscape Strategy indicates that there would be a significant net gain in tree cover as part of the proposed development. The illustrative layout the development shows, for much the greater part, dwellings to the peripheries of the site outward facing. This is an appropriate design intention, avoiding rear gardens backing on to wooded areas, and providing a more satisfactory setting. The general disposition of open space is appropriate. The development would have limited impact on the wider landscape.

8.16 **National Trust**

Having regard to the evidence and in accordance with the above requirements it is considered that the impacts of the development on Hatfield Forest should be addressed. New housing development within the ZOI will contribute further (both individually and cumulatively) towards recreational pressure on the Forest. Whilst it is acknowledged that this was not an issue when the current Local Plan was adopted and that the draft new local plan has recently been withdrawn from examination, there is nonetheless evidence now available which identifies an issue at a SSSI which Natural England has identified as warranting mitigation.

Based on recommendations set out in the 'Visitor Survey and Impact Management Report', and as referred to in Natural England's letter, the National Trust is currently working in consultation with Natural England on a costed mitigation strategy (Strategic Access Management Measures (SAMM)). The final version of this is currently with Natural England for sign off. This includes a costed package of mitigation measures. In the meantime, Natural England has requested that bespoke mitigation packages are negotiated on a case by case basis.

For the proposed development we consider the following mitigation would be appropriate:

On-Site Mitigation

On-site measures which would help relieve the pressure on Hatfield Forest should be provided.

These should take the form of:

- High-quality, informal, semi-natural areas, to be provided prior to first occupation of the dwellings (Including a dog walking circuit and dogs off lead area);
- Any other on-site mitigation as advised by Natural England.

It is noted that the Ecological Impact Assessment states that a 1.6km walking route will be provided within the development. However, this is an outline application and the layout of the development is reserved for later approval. Therefore, there is no mechanism to secure this. Furthermore, this alone would not mitigate the impacts of increased recreational pressure on Hatfield Forest arising from the development. Hatfield Forest offers other visitor experiences which could not be replicated on a new site. It is used for a range of recreational activities including jogging, cycling, wildlife watching, family outings and photography. It also includes visitor infrastructure such as a café, toilet, shop and education building. This makes it vulnerable to current and future demand. Even if on-site mitigation is proposed, it is considered that there will still be a residual recreational impact on Hatfield Forest which needs to be mitigated.

Off-Site Mitigation

- A financial contribution to the National Trust for use at Hatfield Forest towards visitor and botanical monitoring and mitigation works. As an indication of some costs, the Mitigation Strategy sets out that independent Visitor Surveys will take place every 5 years at a cost of £30,900, annual Impact Surveys will take place at a cost of £2522 and soil compaction analysis will take place annually at a cost of £3090.

Although the National Trust's Mitigation Strategy is currently awaiting sign off, it provides up to date information and costed measures which can help identify mitigation which the developer is requested to provide by a statutory authority and to fulfil the legal requirement of the LPA.

8.17 **Great Dunmow Town Council**

Please note our previous submission, where we support the redevelopment of the site with housing in principle and that the indicative layout and house types are broadly supported but this application reserves all these matters except access. Please note our comments on the

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applicant's updated documents.

Reserved Matters

The indicative plan for flats to the height of the existing secondary school building and other aspects of the parameter plan are not supported and should be dealt with in a detailed application.

We ask the planning authority to include a planning condition to require collaborative work on a masterplan for the reserved matters application, which will include evidence for the parameter plan prior to the detailed application being presented for decision by the planning authority.

Affordable Housing

This application site is allocated for development in our Neighbourhood Plan by Policy DS2, which was for a minimum of 100 homes if this site is no longer required for educational use.

This proposal has increased the number of homes from 100 to 200 homes, to support costs of the new school and this is supported by the Town Council as the policy acknowledges that the development should part-fund the construction of a new secondary school. However, the perception expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan is that the new school would be larger than the existing one, to accommodate the growth of the town, which has not materialised. In the future, Great Dunmow residents should be able to use the new all-through school however this will be at the expense of neighbouring villages and communities who, as the town grows, will be guided to secondary schools further afield, including Stansted.

Furthermore, the newly approved all-through school and sports village does not fully comply with the Neighbourhood Plan in that it did not use all the land allocated for that purpose in the Neighbourhood Plan and the access arrangements were strongly opposed by the Town Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not condone an avoidance of UDC's policy to provide 40% affordable housing on new developments and does request that adequate financial contributions are made to mitigate the harm from development. Reference to wording in the withdrawn local plan, which was not fully examined, is irrelevant and carries no weight.

This 200-home development is intended to financially contribute to the new school development however viability should not be at the expense of the Town Council or the local community. New development must address the district shortfall of affordable housing therefore permission should not be granted unless the applicant can fulfil their affordable housing obligation.

GDNP GA1: Core Footpath and Bridleway Network and GA2: Integrating Developments

Having liaised with Essex Highways, the Town Council supports a planning condition for a new foot/cycle path, to be adopted by the County Council. This would extend from the Woodlands Park Sector 4 boundary to the entrance of this development on Parsonage Downs and extending outside the development site, across the Gt Dunmow Town Council common land to Newton Hall Chase, and link with PRowS 79 and 87 as indicated in blue on the Revised Proposed Layout Plan - 3615549.

The Town Council reserves the right to specify any surface treatment on the common land on Parsonage Downs and to seek appropriate permissions from the Secretary of State, if required.

There should be a commuted sum to construct a culvert and footbridge to link with Woodlands Park Sector 4, to maintain the new path for a 15-year period and to improve the PRowS 79 and 87 which are shown on the same plan.

GDNP Policy GA3:Public Transport

An appropriate commuted sum should be allocated to Essex Highways for the Gt Dunmow bus strategy to support services.

8.18 **Third Party Representations**

Representation were received from neighbouring residents, and the following observations have been made:

- Impact upon the local wildlife and countryside

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- The Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan envisages 100 dwellings at the site; why is the application now for 200?
- Likely traffic congestion
- Noise and pollution impacts
- Impact upon the adjoining Conservation Area
- The relationship between the development of this site and the new “All-Through School” is unfair to residents around the old HRS
- Profit making exercise for the school
- Cumulative impacts of new housing development upon local infrastructure
- Development is out of keeping with the established pattern locally
- Impact upon heritage
- Taller buildings will be visible locally
- Restricted access to the Leisure Centre

9. APPRAISAL

9.1 The issues to consider in the determination of this Approval of Reserved Matters application are:

- i) Principle of Development**
- ii) Housing Land Supply**
- iii) Layout**
- iv) Affordable Housing**
- v) Highways**
- vi) Heritage**
- vii) Ecology and Trees**
- viii) Environmental Health**
- ix) Flooding**
- x) Infrastructure Provision to support the development**
- xi) Other Material Considerations – Part 2 Item - Viability**

Principle of development

- 9.2 The development of the site needs to be considered and assessed against the current Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The application site comprises 10.8 hectares of land and is located within the open countryside on the edge of Great Dunmow, albeit on the site of an existing School. The site is outside the development limits of Great Dunmow as defined by the Proposals Map and is therefore located within the countryside where ULP Policy S7 applies. This states that the countryside will be protected for its own sake and that planning permission will only be given for development that needs to take place there or is appropriate to the rural area, with development only being permitted if its appearance protects or enhances the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set or there are special reasons why the development in the form proposed needs to be there.
- 9.3 The Council’s Review of the adopted policies of the Local Plan found Policy S7 to be partly consistent with the NPPF but that while the NPPF takes a positive approach, rather than a protective, Policy S7 is still compatible with the aims of the NPPF in protecting the countryside.
- 9.4 This application is supported with the submission of a Landscape & Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA). The LVIA assesses the impact the proposed development would have on the landscape and countryside. A number of viewpoints have been duly assessed. The site is judged to be of medium landscape sensitivity and of medium landscape value and the LVIA concludes that the proposed development is considered as having a slight to substantial/ moderate local landscape and visual affects, these are limited to few visual receptors, and these are expected to become more enclosed when vegetation is in leaf. If mitigation recommendations are followed, an increase in boundary cover will be a net biodiversity gain and provide further screening of the proposals.
- 9.5 The Uttlesford DC Landscape Officer advises that the development would have limited impact on the wider landscape.

- 9.6 The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the provisions of Policy S7 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, and Policy LSC1 of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016.

Housing Land Supply

- 9.7 The NPPF describes the importance of maintaining a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council's housing land supply currently falls short of this and is only able to demonstrate a supply of 3.11 years (Five Year Housing Land Supply update April 2020).
- 9.8 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF considers the presumption of sustainable development, this includes where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date. This includes where the five-year housing supply cannot be delivered. As the council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, increased weight should be given to housing delivery when considering the planning balance in the determination of planning applications, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF (paragraph 11).
- 9.9 The provision of 200 residential units represents a significant proportion of the annual housing supply based on the district. In this respect the proposal would make a valuable contribution to housing supply within the District.

Layout

- 9.10 As advised, the illustrative layout has been informed by site specific opportunities and constraints, local character and built form and by good urban design principles.
- 9.11 The balance of the open space is designed as natural and seminatural space, where a variety of landscape types such as new native woodland, scrub and an array of species-rich grassland knit together to assist in mitigating against the ecological impact of the development on the adjoining wildlife sites, particularly adjacent to Graces Wood to the northeast and Fredericks Spring to the northwest, while the interior open spaces are more amenity led, containing focal play spaces and shorter-mown grassland.
- 9.12 Large, open swathes of grassland predominate the western half of the open space, where a multitude of surfaced and mown footpaths intersect one another to create a mosaic of sward heights. To the northern half of the open space, a mix of landscape typologies can be found befitting of the semi-natural nature of the space, with the inclusion of the SuDS drainage basins, as required to fulfil the site-wide drainage requirement, with again a variety of species-rich wildflower and tussock grassland meadows. These features have been softened and enhanced through careful placement of structural thicket, tree and aquatic plug planting to maximise their biodiversity benefit, whilst still maintaining an important drainage function.
- 9.13 In terms of the play and recreation strategy, these proposals seek to create a landmark play area to act as a play hub for the residents. The play area has been designed so as to provide a range of exciting and imaginative play opportunities for a wide range of ages and to create an inclusive play environment. It will provide congenial play for all residents catering for a wide range of abilities. The play area caters for a range of ages from 18 months to 18 years overall and has been designed to provide play opportunity across the site. The play area offers a range of stimulating and challenging experiences such as balancing, climbing, sliding, swinging, rotating, hanging for both older and younger children. Natural play elements like mounds, boulders and tree trunks form an essential part of the overall experience and enable more imaginative play. Safety surfacing of rubber bark mulch and grass matting is proposed to integrate with the varied play environment and natural setting.
- 9.14 Overall, the proposals provide a high quality multi-functional open space, which will serve a range of requirements from toddlers to adults, whilst also providing a range of recreational opportunities, and this arrangement is considered acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. The proposals are therefore considered to be consistent with the provisions of Policies ENV3 and LC4 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, and Policy LSC1 of the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan.

9.15 Matters relating to the Heritage Impacts of the layout are dealt with elsewhere within this Report.

Affordable Housing

- 9.16 As advised by the Uttlesford DC Housing Enabling Officer, and Great Dunmow Town Council, the proposed development does not provide for any affordable housing, contrary to the implementation of Policy H9 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, Policy DS12 &13 of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan, and guidance contained within the NPPF.
- 9.17 The applicant has sought to justify this omission within its submitted Development Viability Assessment (DVA); Uttlesford DC have instructed independent assessors to review the DVA, and this can be found within the Part 2 Item to this Report.
- 9.18 However, and in conclusion, the Local Planning Authority are of the view that the proposal is contrary to the implementation of Policy H9 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, Policy DS12 &13 of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016, and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Highways

9.19 As advised by Essex County Council as Local Highway Authority, from a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority, subject to the following mitigation and conditions. The proposed conditions relate to matters to include the following:

- Construction Management Plan
- Access provision, to include visibility splays
- Provision of bus stops
- Footway connectivity
- Appropriate parking provision for cars and cycles
- The Developer shall be responsible for the provision and implementation of a Residential Travel Information Pack per dwelling, for sustainable transport, approved by Essex County Council, to include six one day travel vouchers for use with the relevant local public transport operator.

9.20 The proposed mitigation measures identified are:

- Contribution of £42,667 to be paid to the highway authority to carry out works to mitigate the impact of additional use of the public rights of ways and pedestrian network and improve accessibility on foot or cycle to and in the vicinity of the site (but not the within it).
- A financial contribution of £365,000 (indexed from the date of this recommendation) to be paid to the highway authority, in order contribute to funding a strategy that will enhance bus services between the development and the town centre; local amenities and/or key towns improving the frequency, quality and/or geographical cover of bus routes servicing the site.
- The Developer shall submit a residential travel plan to the Local Planning Authority for approval in consultation with Essex County Council. Such approved travel plan shall then be actively implemented by a travel plan co-ordinator for a minimum period from first occupation of the development until 1 year after final occupation. It shall be accompanied by an annual monitoring fee of £1533 (index linked) to be paid to Essex County Council

9.21 These suggested conditions and mitigation measures are consistent with the provisions of Policy GEN1 of the Adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, and Policy GA1, GA2 & GA3 of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016.

Heritage

9.22 As advised, the Place Services Historic Environment Team have raised concerns over the impacts of the proposed outline planning application upon Heritage Assets locally, and in this regard advise the following:

The site affected by this application is the grounds associated to Helena Romanes School, it is bounded to the south by Newton Hall Chase Lane, Newton Hall to the west, the backs of properties along Parsonage Downs to the east and Graces Wood to the north. This application has the potential to affect several heritage assets including the Great Dunmow Conservation Area which bounds the site from the northeast to the south, the other asset's affected are:

- *Newton Hall, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1054926)*
- *Cottage adjoining Newton Hall to east, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1098286)*
- *Pink Cottage, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1087883)*
- *Friars, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1049053)*
- *5 Parsonage Downs, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1087884)*
- *Burntwood Cottage, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1087885)*
- *21 Parsonage Downs, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1051088) Herb of Grace, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1334874)*
- *29-31 Parsonage Downs, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1051063).*

The proposed includes up to 200 dwellings, densely infilling the site. The setting of the buildings above will be affected by the development, the existing site positively contributes to their setting and significance through being undeveloped land which preserves their sense of tranquillity and isolation. In particular, the setting of Newton Hall and The Cottage adjoining Newton Hall which faces the proposed site will be impacted by the proposed. Whilst visually the proposed will be intrusive, other factors such as light pollution, noise pollution and general disturbance must be taken into consideration for all of the above.

The proposed would, I feel, present the harmful urbanisation of the site resulting in several impacts to the designated heritage assets, especially considering the diurnal, environmental and seasonal changes. The proposed development would therefore adversely alter the experience, understanding and appreciation of the listed buildings. The harm to the designated heritage assets is considered to be 'less than substantial' through change in their setting, therefore Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is relevant. This harm would be at the lower end of the spectrum with exception of Newton Hall and the adjoining cottage which would be towards the middle of the spectrum. Whilst this harm could never be completely mitigated it could be lessened through extended buffering and appropriate landscape design.

Whilst I have no objection to the redevelopment of this site with extensive housing, the outline application and illustrative masterplan does not give the comfort that the maximum possible mitigation has been given to the heritage assets.

9.23 On the basis of the above advice, the proposed development is contrary to the implementation of Policy ENV2 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, Bullet Point 5 of Policy DS2: TDA: The Existing HRS Site of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016, and the NPPF.

Ecology and Trees

- 9.24 As previously advised, no objection to the scheme has been raised by the Place Services Ecology Team, subject to securing biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 9.25 Further, the Uttlesford DC Landscape Officer advised that the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies some 40 trees proposed to be felled. None of the trees indicated to be felled are of a public amenity value worthy of being made the subject of a tree preservation order. The Landscape Strategy indicates that there would be a significant net gain in tree cover as part of the proposed development. The illustrative layout the development shows, for much the greater part, dwellings to the peripheries of the site outward facing. This is an appropriate design intention, avoiding rear gardens backing on to wooded areas, and providing a more satisfactory setting
- 9.26 The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy ENV3 and GEN7 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, Policy LSC1, NE1 & NE2 of the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016, and the NPPF.

Environmental Health

- 9.27 As advised, the Uttlesford DC Environmental Health had no objections to the application, subject to planning conditions in respect of noise, contamination, development demolition and construction impacts. The application is therefore consistent with provisions of Policy GEN2, ENV11 & ENV14 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005

Flooding and Drainage

- 9.28 As advised, neither Anglian Water nor the Environment Agency have any objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. Further, Essex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority do not object to the granting of planning permission, subject to conditions. The application is therefore consistent with provisions of Policy GEN3, and ENV12 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005

Infrastructure Provision to support the development

- 9.29 Policy GEN6 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 advises that development will not be permitted unless it makes appropriate provision for infrastructure to serve its residents. In this instance, the following mitigation is required:
- Health Care Provision
 - Hatfield Forest mitigation
 - Bus Transport Strategy
 - Residential Travel Plans
 - Footpath Improvements
- 9.30 Given that the application is being recommended for refusal, the application is considered contrary to the implementation of Policy GEN6 of the Local Plan.

Consideration of reports containing exempt information within the meaning of section 1001 and paragraphs 3 (information relating to financial affairs etc.) part 1 Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972

This can be found in the Appendices to this Report.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The submitted would cause conflict with the development plan, the Made Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan – December 2016, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, and this indicates that the application should be refused. Further, the scheme does not have the support of Great Dunmow Town Council.

10.2 It is therefore recommended that the application should be refused for the following reasons:

RECOMMENDATION – REFUSE

1. The proposed development fails to deliver appropriate infrastructure in order to mitigate any impacts and support the delivery of the proposed development. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the implementation of Policies GEN6 - Infrastructure Provision to Support Development - and Policy H9 - Affordable Housing - of the Adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
2. The proposed would present the harmful urbanisation of the site resulting in several impacts to the designated heritage assets, especially considering the diurnal, environmental and seasonal changes. The proposed development would therefore adversely alter the experience, understanding and appreciation of the listed buildings. The harm to the designated heritage assets is considered to be 'less than substantial' through change in their setting, therefore Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is relevant. This harm would be at the lower end of the spectrum with exception of Newton Hall and the adjoining cottage which would be towards the middle of the spectrum. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the implementation of Policy ENV2 of the Adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

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