

Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review Group,

Thursday 2nd April 2026, 5:45pm URC Hall

Minutes (Meeting 27)

Present:

Roy RAMM (RR) Chairman, Richard FREEMAN (RF), Nick ARMON-JONES, NAJ), Brian POPE, (BP), Marry-Ann DUNN (MD), Mike MASTER (MM), John MOORE (JM).

1. Apologies for Absence:

Kevin FARROW (KF), Hywel JONES (HJ), David COHEN (DC), David Andrews (DA).

2. Declaration of Interest:

None

3. Minutes of last meeting (Meeting 26)

Agreed (Already published)

4. Matter Arising (not on agenda)

Nothing.

5. Draft Regulation 14 submission:

RR reported that the public consultation required by regulation had run for seven weeks and had closed on March 23rd. (The requirement was for a six-week consultation.)

A detailed responses was received from Uttlesford DC which had been followed up with a very constructive Teams Call. (Section 7, below). A detailed response from Essex CC Highways Dept. was found to be very helpful.

RR reported that because of a misunderstanding between the RG and UDC, a further consultation period for statutory consultees would now be necessary. (In the original NP Reg 14 process in 2020 UDC had circulated the statutory bodies.) RR had now written to 42 statutory consultees and the 4 adjoining Parish Councils for comment. The consultation period for those consultees ONLY had been extended a further 6 weeks, ending 7th May.

6. Consultation Public Response:

The representations received by the Parish Clerk from members of the public were discussed.

It was agreed that the representations did not raise any issues not previously identified and considered. The RG again acknowledged the concern of residents immediately affected by the WT site allocation but concluded that the Review did not require amendment. It was agreed that a summary document, though not a requirement, would be an appropriate response. (Annex A)

7. Uttlesford DC Response:

Village development limits:

The RG accepted the UDC advice that a revised VDL policy would supplement the protection offered by UDC LP Core Policy 3 to Felsted Village, Bannister, Causeway End and Watch House Greens.

A new DRAFT policy for Chapter 4 **FELREV/HN11: Residential development within and outside development limits** was discussed and amended.

Supporting explanatory text was agreed be added to Chapter 4 describing the parameters inside and outside the development limits. Following discussions, the revised text on pages 18-20 was agreed. RR agreed to amend the Plan Review Document (FNPR2.8)

As this policy had simply replaced two VDL policies in the original plan without any change in intention, it was not considered to materially affect the Review.

Mapping:

RR reported that UDC had agreed to provide revised maps for each of the settlements including the new developments that have changed the boundaries.

Consultation Statement

A draft consultation statement was in preparation.

8. Treasurers Report.

Nothing to declare.

9. Any Other Business:

RF reported that the agenda for 8th April UDC Planning Committee included the outline planning applications for both **The Water Tower Site** (UTT/25/1929/OP) and **Bloor Homes Site** (UTT/25/2498/OP).

RR said he would attend representing the FNRG and proposed to give a prepared statement offering conditional support agreed to the Water Tower Site.

RF said he would attend representing Felsted PC and proposed to give a prepared statement, opposing the Bloor Home Site.

Statements, representing the FNPG and PC's views, were discussed and approved. (Attached Annex B and C)

NAJ enquired whether we had sufficient funds to organise and run the Referendum, to complete the Revised NP process. RR replied that, the next stage was for the Review to be considered by a Planning Inspector, but if it passed inspection, it was the responsibility of UDC to fund and run a referendum. It was hoped this would be in June/July period.

Date of Next Meeting: 7th May 2026 (Subject to consultation responses)

Meeting ended 1910.

Annex A

General Response to Public Representations to the draft Felsted Reg 14 NPR Consultation

The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review Group is unable to reply in detail to each respondent but offers the following as a general response.

In addition to the detailed representations from UDC and Essex County Council Highways Department, which are accepted, nine further representations were received by midnight on the 23rd of March, the conclusion of the public consultation period (of a minimum of 6 weeks) required by the statutory Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

Of the nine representations, one supportive representation is made on behalf of Troy Homes and gives support to the Sunnybrook II site. We have no comment to make other than to welcome Troy's engagement.

Eight representations are identified as being from Felsted residents who make various objections to the Water Tower site and inter alia the impact of increased traffic in the parish.

They variously argue that:

- the housing requirement could be met through smaller, dispersed sites
- that the **Strategic Environmental Assessment** identifies significant negative impacts on heritage, landscape and land
- there are risks associated with flooding and drainage,
- road safety and congestion (especially near Felsted School), is threatened
- the ecology (including Great Crested Newts and RAMS contributions), environmental health is threatened, that the proposals cause
- harm to nearby **Grade II listed** buildings, that
- there has been procedural unfairness, and the planning status of the Water Tower had been misrepresented

Small dispersed sites

The NPR examined all the sites in Felsted proposed by landowners as being suitable and available for development through the UDC SHLAA (call for sites) process. Whilst the idea of 'smaller, dispersed sites' is superficially attractive, many of the proposed sites were considered isolated and consequently "unsustainable". The Neighbourhood Plan is also required to propose sites that offer "certainty of delivery". There was not and remains no alternative mechanism that would offer certainty of delivery of the number of homes required through small, dispersed allocations.

The SEA

The SEA is a balanced professional assessment of the plan review. We had already recognised the potential negative impacts it identifies -particularly in construction phase of the Water Tower site- and we have attempted to mitigate the impact of increased traffic, both in our recommendations and in our responses to associated planning applications. Overall, we are pleased to note that the conclusions of the SEA are supportive of the Plan.

Impact on the highways and flooding

In respect of the impact of the development on flooding and road safety, it is important to recognise the responsibility of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and Essex Highways. The Highways response is very welcome as is the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) response to the Planning Application UTT/25/1929/OP (referred to by one respondent), the RG also

supports the need for a detailed and comprehensive Traffic Management Plan and expect it to include a temporary haul route for construction traffic from Braintree Road.

Additionally, and importantly, following further dialogue with UDC, we have been able to insert a condition for an identified haul route in the policy REVHN/10 which allocates the Water Tower as a site allocated for development.

Finally, though they are one of the most common causes of concern or complaint neither the Parish Council nor the Neighbourhood Plan have any power or resource to deal with highways issues. (We often wish we had!) We encourage you to report problems to Essex Highways through the website.

Ecology and heritage

Issue in relation to the impact of the plan on the ecology and heritage assets will be further addressed by the statutory consultees.

The sites chosen were carefully selected for their ability to deliver the centrally directed housing requirement in sustainable locations. Other sites with the capacity to deliver the kind of numbers of homes required have been screened out for various reasons, including the impact of coalescence on historically separate communities.

Procedural Issues

The RG was also concerned to see the report in the local media that that the planning status of land *proposed* in the Review as suitable for development was incorrectly identified and described as having '*planning consent*'. It did not and still (March 2026) does not have any such consent. The land is now subject of a planning application at due to be heard on 8th April by UDC.

The RG has not issued any press statement whatsoever and is disappointed that the inaccuracies in the reports in the local newspaper have caused unnecessary concern.

As local residents, the RG has worked hard to ensure that the consultation process has been open, fair and compliant with the NP regulations. It will now be a matter for a Planning Inspector to assess if we have managed the review process properly.

The Review Group

Annex B

Water Tower Site

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Roy Ramm

I am Chair of the Felsted Parish Council Neighbourhood Review Group and a Parish Councillor

As one of eight Parishes in UDC's new Local Plan classified as a "Larger Village" Felsted was given an initial housing allocation of 320 new homes. With an allowance made for the 225 dwellings built or granted planning permission between that determination and the 1st April 2023, when the "Emerging UDC Local Plan" was finalised, this figure was reduced to a residual 95 dwellings.

Felsted Parish Council has accepted responsibility for identifying sites for these 95 homes through the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review.

At the outset, it is right to say there is no public support for any further development in Felsted. Our community believes Felsted has been over-developed and is losing its identity as a largely farming based community. In our first neighbourhood plan, made in 2020 we won public support for more than 60 new homes, but the expectation was that should take us through to 2031. In less than 5 years, we are being required to accept scores more homes.

Therefore, Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group are reluctantly supporting development on two separate sites, including this site, meeting our allocation in full. Our allocations are the least worst options.

This proposal, for up to 70 dwellings is supported in the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review which is at an advanced stage, having completed its Regulation 14 Public Consultation.

Once delivered, the development has the potential to provide a well-designed and sustainable extension to the village, while contributing tangible community benefits, including the provision of six social housing units to the Felsted Community Trust.

However, we are deeply concerned about the potential impact of the construction traffic on the community, Felsted School and our heritage assets. The development of the site is likely to take at least 3 years and will require thousands of additional vehicle movements, including heavy construction traffic, adding to congestion and presenting real danger to pedestrians and damage to heritage assets in the village centre. These concerns also apply to both Stebbing Road, particularly through the school grounds and Garnetts Lane, both of which enjoy unrestricted and well-used on-street parking. Site access has been a recurring concern of the community during our consultations.

Problems with site access were also identified by the applicant's agent, Mr Loon who, during the public consultation arranged by the applicants, sketched out a potential haul route. We

have pressed the applicant's for more detailed proposals, but they have not been forthcoming.

Our concern about access to the site is shared by Essex Highways and AECOM who conducted the Strategic Environmental Assessment. We expect English Heritage to express similar concerns.

The requirement for a temporary haul route is now included in the NP review policy FELREV/HN11 supporting the site allocation.

For these reasons, we ask the Committee to support this application and impose a condition in the S106 agreement that construction traffic access to the site is solely via a temporary haul route from Braintree Road. The necessary land is within the same ownership as the proposed development and this approach would significantly mitigate the impact on the village community.

Thank you

Annex C

Bloor Homes Site

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Richard Freeman, and I am Chair of the Felsted Parish Council Planning Committee.

We strongly oppose the application before you.

This proposal, for up to 100 dwellings is not supported as a strategic allocation in the newly adopted Uttlesford Local Plan or the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan which is currently under review and is at a well-advanced stage, having completed its Regulation 14 Public Consultation.

Felsted Parish Council accepted responsibility for identifying sites for these 95 homes through the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review and we are currently supporting development on two separate sites, meeting this allocation in full.

Consequently, speculative and unwanted applications such as this that are not supported by the adopted Local Plan nor the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan must be refused.

With Felsted already supporting housing to meet our allotted allocation, to allow this application for up to 100 additional unplanned dwellings would over double our allocation, undermining all public confidence in the democratic principles of Neighbourhood Planning.

The site in question is also considered inappropriate for the following reasons:

1. Approval would vastly exceed our housing obligation and would be particularly damaging to the community in Watch House Green which has already suffered through over development.
2. As confirmed by the UDC Principal Landscape Officer, the site in question plays a clear role in maintaining separation between the settlements of Watch House Green and Bannister Green which would build significant physical coalescence, eroding and materially diminishing the openness of the intervening landscape, impacting the identity of these two unique settlements.
3. Finally we also consider the proposed development layout and design to be incompatible with local character. It is typically suburban and characterless, offering little contribution in terms of architectural merit, instead proposing perpetuation of the kind of featureless development that is a blight on the countryside.

Felsted Parish Council urges you to refuse this application.