

Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review

Analysis of Drop -In Sessions and Housing Needs Survey

Next Steps for the Review

Drop -In Sessions

Over the two days of the drop-in sessions at the Memorial Hall, the Review Group met around 150 parishioners (137 registered) who viewed and commented on the 18 information boards and the maps of the sites the Group was proposing as *possible* sites for the 95 additional new homes the parish is obliged, by Uttlesford District Council, to accept between now and 2041.

Unsurprisingly, the unanimously expressed opinion was that Felsted '*had enough*' and any further development was undesirable anywhere in the parish. However, it was also accepted that if we had to have more homes, planning where they should be, what they should look like and defining the need they should meet was infinitely preferable to allowing developers free reign.

The Drop-In invited parishioners to consider twelve sites, all of which have been put forward by landowners to UDC as being available for development, and to put coloured dots signifying either their support or objection to each site. Members of the Review Group had well-informed and engaged conversation with many of the attendees, while others were content just to read the information boards and make their decisions.

(Note. Following the Sessions, the housing allocation has been reduced to 84 new homes)

Drop In March 15/16 Analysis

Site No	Brief Site Description	For	Against
Fel 001 RES	Land South of Braintree Rd. Op Chaffix Farm	3	26
Fel 002 RES	Land N/W of Bannister Green	4	29
Fel 003 RES	Land North of Garnetts Lane	24	9
Fel 004 RES	Land S/W of WHG	6	28
Fel 005 RES	Land off Rayne Road	3	38
Fel 006 RES	Land off Rayne Road	5	38
Fel 007 RES	Sunnybrook Farm	14	20
Fel 008 RES	Land S/E Clifford Smith Dr (site1)	10	10
Fel 009 RES	Ditto (site 2)	13	12
Fel 010 RES	Kinvarra B park	23	30
Fel 011/12 RES	Sparlings Farm	7	47
Fel 019/RES	Land at Willows Green	14	18

Alternative Location for the village shop

Attendees were also asked where, if necessary, Linsell's, the village shop and post office could be relocated.

Unsurprisingly, great affection for Linsells and respect for the proprietors was warmly expressed to the RG. There is also understandable concern for the future of the Grade II listed Linsell's premises if economic and or regulatory pressures mean the current shop and post office business needs to relocate.

Concerns about the vibrancy of the village centre have been amplified by the continued lack of occupation and economic activity at the Boote House.

Concern continues to be expressed about the traffic congestion at the Chelmsford Road junction, parking and accessibility in the centre of the village.

Shop /Post Office relocation:

Chelmsford Road **4**
Near the j/w Stebbing Road – former Indian restaurant **5**
On or near the Abbeyfield developments site **8**
On or near the Troy Homes site at Sunnybrook **17**
Rayne Road **2**

Three recurrent concerns

Firstly, it's important to know the Felsted parish boundaries. For example, the large developments west of Priory Bridge on Station Road are in Flitch Green and Little Dunmow parishes, outside of Felsted Parish and are therefore beyond any control or influence we might have through our current neighbourhood plan.

Secondly, there is a consensus that the kinds of home that are being built are often not what local people want. There are too many large 'executive' homes and too few, smaller but nevertheless high quality, spacious homes for downsizers or homes for younger entrants to the housing market. The Review Group will very carefully consider these comments alongside the outcome of the Housing Needs Survey.

Thirdly, there was a broad consensus that development should be phased over the 17 years between now and 2041 and not 'front-loaded'. These comments are entirely in alignment with the Review Group's current thinking, inasmuch as we think the housing need will change over the plan period and should be met incrementally after further Housing Needs Survey's at five year intervals. We don't yet know how phasing can be structured; that is something the Group will now investigate.

Thanks to all who came along and for your kind words and for your sharing our passion for keeping Felsted a wonderful place to live.

The Housing Needs Survey

In brief, the need for affordable *rented* housing units was identified as being for up to nine either 1, 2 or 3-bed units. Housing associations tend to think of the long-term sustainability of schemes, and the possibility of bringing forward more 2-bed units rather than any 1bed units seems preferable.

Should the Review suggest an affordable housing scheme, discussions on finalizing the size, tenure and design will take place with the parish council, any housing association partner, and the local authority, to ensure that the right mix is selected.

Smaller, affordable, shared ownership and discounted market sale open market properties were all cited as being needed.

Four respondents answered that they have a special housing need for a physically adapted home leading to a recommendation that if any open market 3-bedroomed bungalows come forward, they should be fully wheelchair accessible.

Five households are currently on either the local authority housing register or Housing Association register. The survey recommended that the Parish Council raise awareness of the need to be on the register amongst the residents of the parish, for them to be considered for affordable housing schemes in the future.

As of April 2024, there are currently 33 applicants on the housing register who are residents or have possible connection to the villages with a further 197 with no local connection; further investigation on local connection would be undertaken once a vacancy arises.

The HNS also provide some useful commentary on site selection.

Next Steps for the Review

The next step for the Review Group is to analyse the choices indicated, to combine the results with the outcome of the independent Housing Needs Survey and to define some potential development criteria (which might form the basis of new policies) and begin discussions with landowners who might be able to meet those development criteria.