

**Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review Group**  
**Thursday 16th May 2024, 5:45 pm. URC Hall**  
**Meeting (6)**

**Present:**

Roy RAMM (RR CHAIRMAN), Richard FREEMAN(RF), Nick ARMON-JONES(NAJ),  
Brian POPE(BP), David COHEN(DC), Mike MASTER(MM), Hywel JONES (HJ),  
Mary-Ann DUNN(MD), Kevin FARROW(KF).

**Apologies for Absence:**

David ANDREWS (DA), John MOORE(JKM), Roy MITCHELL(RM).

**Declaration of Interest:**

NONE

**Minutes of Last Meeting:**

Dated 25th April 2024 (Meeting 5), approved after minor amendments for clarity.

**Matters Arising (not on Agenda):**

NAJ suggested we should appeal to UDC to reduce further our housing allocation because of the substantial developments in Little Dunmow along Station Road, on the edge of Felsted PC border which would produce up to 180 new homes; this would substantially affect Felsted's current amenities and infrastructure.

RF reported that FPC and Little Dunmow PC had both strongly objected to all the applications for the developments. RF concluded that was the reason why a Review of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan was required to strengthen any future planning objections. However, RR and RF reported that they had attended a briefing by UDC where it was made clear that our (84 homes) allocation took these developments into account.

RR agreed that the impact of the local development should feature prominently in the narrative of the Review document.

**Drop-In Analysis:**

RR presented Draft Annex A: Summary Analysis of the Drop-In held 15/16th March 2024 and Housing Needs Survey carried out by RCCE during May 2024. The Draft was approved for publication.

**Review Plan Strategy:**

RR presented Draft Annex B: FNP Review Strategy. The Draft was approved for publication.

**Site Selection Criteria:**

RR presented Draft Annex C: Site Selection Criteria (SCC).

The Draft was approved for publication.

RR. presented Draft Annex D: Assessment of Individual Sites.

NAJ suggested that we amend the SCC and add the maximum '*number of houses allowed by UDC*' for each site.

RR responded that the '*number*' referred to does not indicate what is "allowed by UDC", It is simply an assessed "maximum" capacity of dwellings based on the overall size of the site. It is not representative of the density of development seen in subsequent planning applications. Including these numbers could result in unnecessary concern amongst residents.

It was agreed that for clarity, we should amend the Assessment category code from "RED" to "Not applicable (N/A)" to the sites where planning had been either completed or had been granted but work not yet started. (NB: these were sites approved before the original FNP was made in 2020, which in some cases had been subject to objections from by FPC).

**Policy Reviews:**

It had previously been reported that Felsted United Reform Church had generously agreed to open their burial ground in Chelmsford Road for Felsted residents of any denomination, thereby negating the need for the Council to establish a further burial ground in the Parish.

RR and RF reported that recently URC officials have approached the PC with a further offer to transfer the ownership and management of the burial ground to the parish, ensuring both the continuing maintenance of the burial ground and substantial provision for internments for decades to come (estimated at 100 years +).

Apart from the existing area in use for internments having substantial capacity, the adjoining field in Chelmsford Road is owned by URC and, although temporarily divided, is a continuous part of the consecrated ground intended for incremental expansion without the need for any further planning or environmental permissions.

If the transfer of the burial ground goes ahead (it needs to be ratified by the URC synod and the PC) this additional area would also pass to the parish, bringing the availability for internments long into the future.

The PC intends to work with the URC officers to facilitate the transfer either to the PC or the Felsted Community Trust.

**The objective of Policy FEL VA4 is be deemed to have been met and will be deleted in the Review.**

RR agreed to separate the remaining Policies into group packages and circulate to

members for review / consideration in preparation for the next meeting.

**Traffic Survey:**

RF confirmed that Essex CC will be carrying out the survey soon, but during the school termtime.

**Treasurer's Report:**

BP confirmed the current grant was spent so it was agreed we should apply for another grant in preparation for future expenditure including Town Meetings and final publication of the Revised FNP Report.

**Any Other Business:**

1. RR and RF reported they had recently been approached by an agent representing landowners of sites which have been submitted in the CSHLAA, and which were also subject to public consultation in the Review, with possible development proposals. There was an outline discussion of ideas without commitment.

Subsequently, it was agreed that RF and RR should attempt to contact the landowners of other preferred sites, or their agents, to have a similar outline conversation to keep interested parties informed.

2. As a result of communications received by the Parish Council, the Review Group considered the issue of the late submission of previously unsubmitted sites. We noted that, unfortunately, there isn't a clear rule or policy direction to guide us as to whether we should ignore these submissions, so our response is about process.

From the outset, the RG did not consider an additional call for sites to be necessary. Instead, we opted to use UDC's land availability assessment as the basis for our review.

The UDC CSHLAA was a widely publicised exercise which resulted in 19 sites being submitted by landowners in Felsted. Given the recent nature of the UDC call for sites, we considered that to be an up-to-date exercise. After initial assessment, 7 sites were eliminated (largely because development had already taken place or application(s) for the site had been subject to a previous application refusal or appeal dismissal).

We did not invite additional sites because we considered that the availability of those 12 sites already identified through UDCs process have the capacity to more than meet our requirement figure (84 homes over 17 years). We therefore considered an additional 'Felsted' call for sites would be an unnecessary duplication of effort and cost to the public purse for the same exercise.

12 sites have now formed the basis of our public consultation.

We recognised and discussed the benefit of considering previously unsubmitted sites. If a site were to come forward during the Review period offering potentially truly exceptional and unprecedented value to the community.

We also considered the significant disbenefits in having, in effect, a continuous 'open door' policy in that it gives previously unsubmitted sites an opportunity that others haven't enjoyed. As we haven't held a local "call for sites" process, there could be other sites in Felsted that haven't come forward to the NP review. So, we consider it would be unfair to accept late submissions and not do a new call for sites process. It is then difficult to see how we could ever conclude a review if we allow sites to be continually being brought forward for consideration.

RF and RR declared a familial and social conflict with the following item and therefore took no further part in the discussion.

The RG then very briefly considered the two sites that had been the subject of contact with the Parish Council and the proposals and concluded that had they been submitted with UDC CSHLAA, both would have been rejected through our site assessment process.

In conclusion the Review Group decided not to accept late submissions.

Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at UDC 1745