

**FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025 at 6pm**

**Attending: Councillors, Richard Freeman (Chairman), John Moore, Clive Perrins and Roy Ramm. In attendance Clare Schorah - Assistant Clerk**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Graham Harvey and Hywel Jones.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Public Forum**

There were 3 members of the public present.

**4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> September meeting were formally approved. They will be signed at the next Full Parish Council Meeting.

**5. New Applications to be considered**

[UTT/25/2373/FUL](#) / [UTT/25/2374/LB](#)

**Barns At Pyes Farm Molehill Green Road**

Conversion of a barn from vacant office space and garages to a 2 bedroom dwelling house.

Works are to remain within existing footprint of the barn, consisting mostly of internal alterations, new windows & doors and remedial works/repairs.

*No Comment.*

[UTT/25/2539/HHF](#)

**3 Brook Meadow Gransmore Green Lane**

Proposed two-storey rear extension with sky lights.

*No Comment.*

[UTT/25/2498/OP](#)

**Land North Of Rayne Road**

Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the erection of up to 100 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space, with access from Rayne Road.

*Comment: Felsted Parish Councillors (FPC) take pride in the Parish's responses to Planning Applications and seek to avoid emotional and unsupported opinion, concentrating only on evidence and policies.*

*However, councillors feel strongly that we also need to challenge the justification of this application, which we consider to be crudely opportunistic and in direct conflict with and an affront to the principles of Neighbourhood Planning.*

*We consider that it is important that the UDC Planning Committee considers this application in the widest possible planning context and therefore wish to explain where Felsted is in the Neighbourhood Planning process.*

## ***The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) Review and UDC Local Plan***

*The Felsted's Neighbourhood Plan was "made" in February 2020.*

*Following UDC's classification of Felsted in their Emerging Local Plan (ELP) as one of only 8 "larger villages" within Uttlesford District, Felsted received a housing allocation of 104 homes, recently reduced (following the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications of the UDC ELP) to 95.*

*In December 2023 Felsted announced a formal Review of their FNP to continue giving maximum material weight to the made plan and to allow the community to allocate sites for those 104 homes.*

*A "Plan" under Review clearly demonstrates the active and ongoing engagement of the community and "the Plan" remains a live document with the communities' aspirations and policies within it, being vigorously evaluated for update.*

*Allowing for a further permitted reduction due to 24 "windfall" developments approved (since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, when the allocation was made), leaves a residual and outstanding housing requirement for Felsted (following the recent reduction to 95) in the UDC ELP of 71 new homes to be delivered by 2041.*

*In line with the emerging FNP Review, the Parish Council has recently given qualified support to a development of up to 70 dwellings (planning application UTT/25/1929/OP). These proposals include a community benefit of 6 Social Houses to be transferred to the Felsted Community Trust.*

*The FNP Review Group also proposes to support a proposal which will deliver 17 dwellings and the community benefit of a site for the potential future relocation of the village shop and Post Office. This aligns with Policy FEL/HVC2 in the existing Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (and is included in the Neighbourhood Plan Review).*

*The DRAFT Review, currently awaiting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and submission for Reg14, already proposes to deliver more than the homes required by the ELP.*

*The submission of the FNP Review under Regulation 14 has been delayed by the requirement for an SEA. The need for an SEA was originally "screened out" in the made 2020 plan and therefore the requirement for an SEA in the Review had not been anticipated.*

*In June 2025, central Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - MHCLG) unexpectedly withdrew all Neighbourhood Plan funding, this immediately impacted the Review Groups (RG's) ability to undertake the necessary SEA. Without that unforeseen delay the Felsted RG would have been far more advanced with our Review and this applicant would not be able to exploit the unfortunate delay.*

*The Plan has now been submitted to UDC and AECOM and we await the SEA.*

*However, Felsted has continued to use Neighbourhood planning under the Localism Act 2011 to involve residents in local decision-making, fostering trust, community ownership, and participation in developing the Neighbourhood Plan which is intended to ensure that all*

*development is truly “plan led” and aligns with the needs and aspirations of our community.*

*The applicant suggests (in section 7 of their 25th September submitted “Planning Statement”) that the “tilted balance” should apply because of UDC’s 5-year housing land supply and the status in of the UDC Emerging Local Plan (ENP) and FNP. In doing so, they are either ignoring or simply choosing to discount the advanced status of both plans, with the UDC Local Plan being advanced in its Regulation 19 Examination and the FNP having been submitted to UDC in readiness for the AECOM SEA and submission under Regulation 14.*

*With regard to the “tilted balance” in relation to the UDC ELP, we would refer to the July 31st Examining Planning Inspectorates “Post Hearing Notes” where the Inspectors comments include (item 12) “We are satisfied that the Plan identifies sufficient land to meet its housing requirement over the plan period” and goes on to say “the rate of housing delivery in Uttlesford in recent years has been significant and is forecast to continue”.*

*Further and most importantly they said, (13) “In our view, the advantages of expediting the adoption of the Plan outweigh the disadvantages of it not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing supply at this time”.*

*For the reasons stated by the Planning Inspectors, there is no justification for applying the “tilted balance” when the UDC ELP and the emerging FNP Review are so well advanced, and both will deliver the housing numbers required.*

*A further speculative and opportunistic circa 100 dwellings which will be contrary to both the intended housing delivery via both UDC FMP and the FNP Review are not required for Felsted.*

#### *Bloor Homes Claimed Participation in the Neighbourhood Plan*

*The claim that the Review Group had any substantive dialogue with Bloor Homes is at best extremely misleading and at worst cynically disingenuous.*

*It is important for the Committee and the community to understand the RG’s interactions with the company, as Bloor seems to claim that great weight should be attached to their claim of engagement. In our view those claims go to the integrity of this application.*

*RG group members met briefly with Bloor Homes on just two occasions and has had no written communications with the organisation whatsoever.*

*In March 2024 the RG held its first public consultation on twelve sites, including the Bloor site, the subject of this application. Following the consultation and further assessment, the site was not considered suitable.*

*In April 2025, over a year after the RG’s first public consultation on the NP Review, at the request of Phase 2 Consulting, representatives of the RG attended a meeting at which, without any fore-notice, a representative of Bloor Homes was introduced who wished to discuss the site. The RG explained that the site proposed by Bloor at the meeting had been*

*assessed as unacceptable because of “coalescence” and poor site access. At that meeting no details of Bloor’s plans were revealed to the RG. The state of progress of the NP was also explained, including the delay in funding for the SEA.*

*On 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 Bloor Homes held a public consultation on their site, which included a much-improved access. “Up to 100 homes” were proposed by Bloor, significantly more than Felsted’s need or allocation. The problems with coalescence remained but had been mitigated. The Review Group took no part in and was not consulted about the consultation.*

*On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 a public consultation was held by another developer (Springfield) for a different site (The Water Tower site) which was being considered by the Review. The Review Group took no part in but was informed of the consultation.*

*On 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the RG held an independent public consultation to allow the community the opportunity to consider the relative merits of the proposals by Bloor and Springfield. The outcome of a ballot very marginally favoured the Bloor site, but comments about both sites were equally negative and the outcome was considered inconclusive.*

*On 11<sup>th</sup> August 2025 representatives of the RG met with Bloor and Phase 2. We shared the outcome of the RG’s public consultation (as we had with Springfield). Bloor showed the proposed site plans they had used in the public consultation and claimed they were keen, albeit very belatedly, to engage with the RG in the NP process. We again explained that the NP was in draft and subject to the SEA, would soon be ready for Reg 14.*

*Even though we had assessed the site early on as being unacceptable, from RG’s perspective, we were keen to be seen as fair-minded and objective.*

*We stressed that the proposed housing number was totally unacceptable, vastly exceeding Felsted’s indicated allocation and would not be supported in any circumstances. Additionally, the proposal also failed to offer any community benefit whatsoever. Bloor’s representatives promised to provide further information to the FNPRG “within a day or so” supporting their positive attitude to community benefit. Two months have passed: we have heard nothing more from Bloor.*

*The Bloor Homes application is in direct conflict with the made Felsted Neighbourhood Plan and the current formal Review process.*

*We know (because we told them!) that Bloor are aware that, if this application is approved, together with the further 17 homes anticipated by the RG (see above) are included, its plan would result in the housing allocation for Felsted increasing from 71 to 188. This would be viewed by the Felsted community, who have unquestioningly engaged with the FNP process and accepted the UDC ELP allocation as an irrational and abhorrent decision.*

#### *Assessment of the The Bloor Homes Site*

*The site (Ref: FEL 005 RES) was one of 29 in Felsted originally brought forward under the UDC “Call for Sites” programme and was included in UDC’s 2024 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).*

*Because Felsted is classified as a “large village”, under the agreed terms in the UDC Local*

*Plan the responsibility for identifying suitable sites to accommodate Felsted's housing allocation was adopted by the Parish. Consequently, the site was not taken forward in the UDC Regulation 19 as a "Strategic Residential Allocation".*

#### **2024 HELAA Assessment.**

- *In the 2024 UDC - Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, the site (FEL 005 RES - Land off Rayne Road Bannister Green, Felsted, CM6 3NL) was included in the appendix 9 list, on page 52 of:*

#### **APPENDIX 9: SCHEDULE OF SITES WITHOUT ACCESS**

- *The following table shows sites which cannot be accessed from the highway network and where it would not be possible to achieve access*
- *The site was also given an ECC Highways Assessment – RED*

*Whilst the currently submitted application incorporates an additional plot of land (and house) which changes and improves the access, the fact remains that this "late in the day" amendment does not obviate the legitimate decision of both UDC and the FNPRG to dismiss the site as submitted by the landowner as "unsuitable" when it was considered objectively in an assessment matrix and alongside the other 28 sites in Felsted submitted in the SHLAA.*

*It should not be acceptable to dismiss, discredit and discount a properly established and meticulously prepared Neighbourhood Plan, developed over many months in full compliance with all applicable regulations and delivering the strategic objectives for Felsted by allowing a "recently modified" properly assessed and previously dismissed site submitted as an opportunistic attempt to take advantage of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan and the UDC Local Plans being classified as "out of date".*

#### **Coalescence and Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment**

*In addition to having been assessed as unsuitable by UDC and the FNPRG due to the (then) poor access, the site is also considered unacceptable due to its impact on coalescence. The site is located immediately between two of the Parishes largest settlements, Bannister Green and Watch House Green.*

*It is therefore in conflict with the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Policies FEL/ICH4 – Avoiding Coalescence and FEL/CW1 - Landscape and Countryside Character; the latter referencing the negative conflicts with the Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment (undertaken by AECOM in October 2017).*

*AECOM specifically highlights Landscape Character Area LCA 3: Felsted Rural Greens (which includes Watch House Green and Bannister Green) and identifies (on page 34) "Sensitivity to change", where it states, "There are also some elements which are particularly sensitive to change", including: "Areas of open countryside, which prevent the coalescence of historic settlements".*

*Bloor Homes appear to disregard the impact or even the concept of "coalescence" or have any real understanding of the nature or empathy with the geography and history of the parish.*

*Felsted is defined by its character which comprises of 15 separate hamlets/settlements. In Bloor's "Statement of Community Involvement" - "Introduction" on page 5, item 2.1.2, and also under "site Location" 3.1.1 they state "The site is located centrally to Bannister Green, and to the south of Rayne Road, within the Parish of Felsted".*

*This is quite simply wrong!*

*The site is located at the extreme west of the settlement of Bannister Green. The recently added dwelling, now included to improve access to the site being the last dwelling in Bannister Green before entering the open green space that separates Bannister Green from Watch House Green. It is this sensitivity of the site location that creates the coalescence issue.*

*Further, in the section on "Publicity" under 4.2.3, Bloor show a map of the area where the site is located, but fail to even mention or identify "Watch House Green".*

*Bloor's claim that the site is located "centrally to Bannister Green" without any reference whatsoever to Watch House Green, clearly demonstrates either Bloor's lack of awareness or deliberate disregard for the character of Felsted and the impact of its proposals on coalescence.*

*In addition, the proposed creation of a "Public Right of Way" (PRoW) to the west of the site, would require the change of use of what is currently a closed farm track which is gated, locked and barred preventing public access. As the rear wall of the adjacent private dwelling (Chimes) forms a boundary with this track, conversion of the track to a PRoW would seriously and negatively impact the residential amenity of "Chimes".*

*Finally, in terms of the character of the proposed development. It is typically suburban and characterless! It offers no contribution in terms of architectural merit and instead proposes the perpetuation of the kind of featureless development that is a blight on the countryside.*

*We would concur with the UDC Urban Design Consultation Officers Response which describes the proposal as a having "no demonstration of compliance with the Uttlesford Design Code other than a generic statement" describing it as a "generic suburban housing development" with the Officer expecting "a greater degree of commitment to high levels of design and placemaking".*

*The proposal is in clear conflict with the FNP Policy FEL/CWI Landscape and Countryside Character which states that "proposals must protect and enhance the landscape of the character area in which they are situated" and which, under Landscape and Countryside Character, (5.7.4.), states that "The countryside character of Felsted is integral to the unique identity of the Parish and should be protected for its own sake" including (in 5.7.5.) that the "Open and green spaces in the Parish make an important contribution to the overall character of Felsted".*

### **Conclusion and Summary of Objections**

*The applicant makes frequent reference to the NPPF Paragraph 11, suggesting that because the FNP is "out of date" the application should be approved.*

*However, paragraph 11 b clearly directs “decision makers” to only allow an application, unless “the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance”, provides “a strong reason for refusing the development proposed” or where “any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits”.*

*The recently published (31st August 2025) UDC Neighbourhood Plan Support document (item 11) states “The emerging Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 has provided an opportunity for six selected Larger Villages to take responsibility for planning for “non-strategic” scale growth (sites of less than 100 homes) themselves, rather than this being imposed on them“.*

*Felsted is one of the six “Larger villages” referred to and if this application with its unplanned and unwanted, additional “up to 100 dwellings” is allowed and imposed on Felsted, it will threaten the integrity and public trust in the NP process.*

*FPC argues strongly that the active Review of the FNP should be viewed as a significant local “asset” and allowing this application, in “direct conflict” with the FNP Review would “significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits”, making this application “unsustainable”.*

*It is an exasperating anomaly that the FNPRG is required by regulation to undertake an SEA to support a plan which includes a development of 70 homes, but a developer, like Bloor Homes, can propose a development of up to 100 homes in precisely the same Plan area without any obligation to undertake an SEA.*

*On planning terms alone Felsted PC strongly object for the following reasons:*

- Felsted has accepted the responsibility of identifying sites through the Neighbourhood Plan process. It follows that it would be unfair of UDC to now consider approving a proposed site unrelated to our Neighbourhood Plan, that would result in almost twice as many homes as the parish is required to accept through UDC’s ELP allocation.*
- It is impossible to conclude other than Bloor Homes proposal is a cynical and opportunistic application that seeks to exploit what they perceive as an “open goal” caused by the timing of both the UDC Local Plan and Review of the FNP.*
- Bloor’s claims of “engagement” with the Felsted Community, are baseless, fanciful and nothing more than a misleading claim that they present as ticking the “community engagement box”.*
- The quality and density of the homes proposed damages the countryside. The creation of a “Public Right of Way”, replacing what is currently a closed track with no public access to the west of the site would seriously, negatively impact the residential amenity of the adjacent dwelling of “Chimes”*
- Bloor’s proposals would cause unacceptable coalescence and cause harm to the uniqueness of the constitution of the Parish’s Greens.*
- The proposals “for up to 100 new homes” far exceeds the need and the allocation for Felsted.*

*For the multiple reasons stated, Felsted Parish Council urges the Planning Committee to refuse this application.*

[UTT/25/2602/FUL](#)

**Industrial Complex Hollow Road**

Proposed removal of existing industrial units and hard standing. Erection of 2 no. self build detached dwellings with landscaping, integral garage and associated operational development.

*No Comment.*

[UTT/25/2728/FUL](#)

**Sparlings Farm Braintree Road**

S73 application to vary condition 3 (opening hours) of UTT/24/1361/FUL

*Comment: Felsted Parish Council supports this application because it recognises that extending its opening hours will allow the business to continue to operate and provide employment to local residents.*

[UTT/25/2547/FUL](#)

**The Chequers Inn Braintree Road**

Proposed partial demolition of section of outbuilding to rear, along with festoon posts and lighting, access gate, close boarded fencing and extension of existing decked area.

*Comment: Felsted Parish Council supports this application which restores and protects the long term future of an important building that has required attention for some time. This outbuilding contributes to the historic and architectural importance of the Conservation Area as a fine example of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century building which is associated with The Chequers Inn, and by retaining the front part of the historic building, the proposal maintains the character and the street scene within the conservation area.*

**6. Decisions received since 16<sup>th</sup> September**

[UTT/25/2162/HHF](#)

**Fairfield House Bakers Lane**

Proposed Outbuilding.

**Permission Granted - 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

[UTT/25/1891/LB](#)

**Bell House 7 Station Road**

Paint and change external colour.

**Permission Granted - 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

[UTT/25/2205/HHF](#)

**Cromwell House Willows Green Main Road**

Proposal for garage with first floor annexe accommodation.

**Permission Granted - 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

[UTT/25/0527/HHF](#)

**35 Station Road Felsted Essex CM6 3HD**

First floor gable ended extension to form new bedroom with en-suite bathroom over existing ground floor dining room, office and living room. New bedroom to be have void space over living area to form double height living space with new full height gable end glazing. New dormer window to front elevation, to form new en-suite bathroom at first floor level. New front entrance porch lined up with existing dormer window at first floor level. New external private terraces to be formed in pitched roof over living room and kitchen to

rear side of building, bi-fold doors to form access from bedrooms to private terrace areas. New full height glazing to gable end, new full height glazing to side elevation to double height living area.

**Planning Inspectorate Appeal Allowed - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**7. Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation for Uttlesford DC**

No Comment.

**8. Draft Local Plans - Uttlesford DC, Braintree DC**

No Comment.

**9. Other Urgent Planning Business and Future Dates**

Felsted Parish Council has been invited to respond to a consultation on the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan. This will be added to the November agenda.

**Next Meeting is 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 online using Zoom.**

..... 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 Chairman

**Planning Information for Residents**

Residents wishing to make comments on Planning Applications or view other comments can go to the Uttlesford District Council Website: <https://publicaccess.submitted.uttlesford.gov.uk/online-applications>.

To find out more about Appeals please go to the Planning Inspectorate Website: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

More information about the Planning Process is available here: <https://felsted-pc.gov.uk/planning/>

To find out more about Felsted's Neighbourhood Plan please visit our webpage here: <https://felsted-pc.gov.uk/felsted-neighbourhood-plan>