

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting Tuesday 18th January on-line at 6 pm

Attending: Councillors Richard Freeman (Chairman), Andy Bennett, Alec Fox, Hywel Jones, Penny Learmonth, Roy Ramm and Andrew Parker. In attendance Clare Schorah - Assistant Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. Cllr Hywel Jones and Cllr Roy Ramm arrived during item 5.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the December meeting were formally approved. They will be signed when the Planning Committee next physically meet.

5. New Applications to be considered

[UTT/21/3736/HHF](#)

Beretun Barn Cobblers Green Causeway End Road

Proposed detached single storey garage, store and home office (Cllr Hwyl Jones arrived at this point)

No Comment

[UTT/21/3795/HHF](#)

Limeen 25A Station Road

Conversion of existing loft space to provide 2 additional bedrooms and bathroom/shower room. Provision of pitched dormer windows to rear elevation and Velux style roof windows to front elevation

No Comment

[UTT/21/3493/HHF](#)

16 Evelyn Road Willows Green

Proposed front and side extensions. Re-roofing including provision of dormer windows. Alterations including replacement roof to conservatory, with associated works - amended application to that approved and part implemented scheme under UTT/17/3085/HHF

No Comment

[UTT/22/0007/FUL](#)

Land East Of School Road And Main Road

Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with an output capacity not to exceed 49.9MW of energy, with supporting infrastructure and battery storage, inverters and transformers, fencing and landscaping works (Cllr Roy Ramm arrived at this point)

This application was discussed in a full PC meeting and it was agreed not to object but with specific concerns raised and clarification of certain details requested. At the time of consideration there were only two objections recorded (and one of those was from a resident outside Felsted Parish).

Comment: Felsted Parish Council does not object in principal to this development but request that if the development is approved by UDC, that a number of matters and assurances are included as conditions of approval:

Management

It is concerned that a number of aspects relating to long term management and decommissioning of the site are reliant on separate “currently unspecified” agreements being made between the applicant and site owner.

The applicant states “Provision will be made to ensure that the cost of decommissioning is fully and properly funded so that the burden of cost falls on the operator of the solar farm and not on the landowner at such time as the decommissioning is required. The Applicant has put in place with the Landowner a mechanism that will enable funds to be placed in escrow no later than 10 years following the commencement of export of electricity and for the fund to be independently reviewed on a five yearly basis to ensure that it is sufficient for the purpose”.

Felsted Parish Council believes that it is vital that these agreements are all specified in and governed by a Section 106 (S106) agreement to ensure transparency and certainty that all aspects of the planning application are both defined, are carried through and are enforceable.

A Section 106 agreement which includes details to ensure funds are collected and protected including assurances of how the “bond” and escrow will be administered. Confirmation of who will hold and manage the third party held funds. The Planning Statement suggests that it will be the “Landowner” but a more robust assurance than that is required within the S106.

Landscape and Wildlife

The development is on a very large site and Felsted Parish Council seeks assurance that it will not affect the character of the landscape and countryside adversely, or breach policy FEL/CW1 of the Made Felsted Neighbourhood Plan.

There should be a clearly defined responsible party for the long term maintenance of the ecological corridors, public footpaths and hedgerows, to include the responsibility of ensuring the survival and heathy establishment of the hedgerows, trees and wildflower planting. Felsted Parish Council also seeks clarification on the width of the ecological corridors and stresses the importance of them being as wide as possible for the deer population that uses that area. It also suggests that there be a planning condition within the decommissioning plan that the planting legacy, corridors and habitat are protected.

The applicant states that it will “be restored for use for agricultural purposes within 3 months” but also references planting identified as ‘legacy planting’ which is to remain on site as legacy features, to maintain any biodiversity gain past the end of the project life”.

This cannot be reconciled with the site being returned to “agricultural purposes”? Given that the site will have been a secure and protected environment for “up to” 40 years and that there will be considerable “legacy planting”, presumably with an associated biodiversity net gain in animal habitats on-site it seems inappropriate for the site to be returned to agriculture and consideration should be given to negotiating it’s future use as a protected wildlife area and public open space.

This would be justified to protect the creation (as stated by the applicant), of an estimated 60% biodiversity net gain in habitat units and 20% gain in hedgerow units, resulting in legacy features which will remain once the solar farm has been removed, including :

- 7.3 hectares of new woodland and tree belts
- 20 hectares of wildflower margins
- 3.5 hectares of amphibian habitat
- 4 new ponds
- 6.2 km of new hedgerows / screening

There is also a concern that a huge development like this might generate a humming sound that could affect wildlife and residents. Felsted Parish Council seeks assurance that the site will not generate a disturbing noise. On page 25 of their Statement of Community Involvement, in response to a residents concern about noise, they state that “A noise assessment has been completed and accompanies the planning application”, but we were unable to find this assessment within any of the submitted documents.

An additional concern is the appearance of the any security fencing installed around the site and whether it will have an impact upon the appearance of the countryside setting.

Access

Felsted Parish Council supports the “one access point” from Blackleys Lane but need certainty that this will only ever be from the South East via London Road / Blackleys Lane /A131 and at no time from the South West via Blackleys Lane and Moulsham Hall Lane / A131 and there should be “No right turn signs” from the site exit.

Signage should also be erected on the A131 to prevent drivers of vehicles (traveling north east) who might be following satellite navigation from being directed via Moulsham Hall Lane (which would be the shortest distance for these drivers).

Community fund.

In their “Statement of Community Involvement”, the applicant states that “£15,000 will be paid annually into a community fund for the 40-year lifetime of the project”.

This is welcomed by Felsted Parish and the s106 should include a reference that this financial contribution should be paid to the “Felsted Community Trust” which is an appropriate vehicle for the receipt of these community funds.

Security

Felsted Parish Council is concerned about the security of the site and believes it needs a further security assessment. It questions whether the deer corridors and access points could make it vulnerable to crime, and impact upon the residents of Felsted.

[UTT/22/0121/FUL](#)

Land North Of Crix Green Road

Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to equine use.

No Comment

6. Decisions received since 21st December

[UTT/21/2818/LB/](#) [UTT/21/2817/FUL](#)

Blackleys Farm Milch Hill Lane Great Leighs

The restoration, alterations and two storey and single storey extensions including partial demolition of later additions of the main farmhouse. The conversion of 2 no. vacant barns within historic farmstead including link extension and placement structures with associated landscaping, engineering and operational development and new vehicular access.

Permission Granted – 21st December 2021

[UTT/21/2766/HHF/](#) [UTT/21/2767/LB](#)

Terleys Mole Hill Green Molehill Green Road

Proposed single storey front extension and associated alterations

Permission Granted – 4th January 2022

[UTT/21/3611/HHF](#)

Meadow House Cock Green Cock Green Road

Proposed loft conversion incorporating raising of roof, creation of rear facing dormer, installation of two rooflights - amendments to previously approved and part implemented scheme under reference UTT/19/3022/HHF

Permission Granted – 12th January 2022

[UTT/21/3507/HHF](#)

Ro Ellen Willows Green Main Road Felsted

Single storey side and rear extensions, re-positioning metal chimney to rear

Permission Granted – 10th January 2022

7. New Appeals to consider

[UTT/21/1891/FUL](#)

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/21/3284780

Glan Howy Bannister Green Felsted

Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling

It was noted that this Appeal had not started yet.

UTT/21/1561/FUL

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/21/3281274

Cromwell House Willows Green

Demolition of outbuilding and Erection of 1 no. bungalow and detached garage

No Comment

8. Draft Local Plans -Uttlesford DC, Braintree DC

No Comment

9. Other Urgent Planning Business and Future Dates

Next Meeting 15th February 2022.

..... Chairman

15th February 2022

Residents wishing to make comments on Planning Applications or view other comments submitted can go to the Uttlesford District Council Website:

<https://publicaccess.uttlesford.gov.uk/online-applications>

To find out more about Appeals please go to the Planning Inspectorate Website:

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>