



MINUTES

Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE 16th June 2025

Time: 6.45pm

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT *Councillors: (9)* B Clegg (Chairman), A Buckley, Mrs P Etherington, R Spearman, A Tyler, Mrs S Jackman, N Born, T Blanks, Mrs S Hawkins

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Clerk to the Council

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (5) – 4 for part of meeting only

P24.149 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Cllr Irvine, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Bedford, Cllr Stroud, and Cllr Kinnear.

P24.150 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

Cllr Lambert.

P24.151 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared in interest in the Local Plan.

P24.152 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous Planning Committee meeting held on 19th May 2025 were **AGREED** and signed as a true record. The Chairman thanked the staff for their efforts in formulating responses on behalf of the Committee.

P24.153 REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three representations from the public, and it was agreed these individuals would be invited to address the Committee under application EPF/1039/25.

P24.154 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following comments on Planning Applications were **AGREED**:

No	Application Number	Location	Proposal
1	EPF/1039/25 <i>Sukhvinder Dhadwar</i> (Major – OPP:SMR)	North Weald Park, Former North Weald Golf Course, Rayley Lane, North Weald Bassett, CM16 6AR	Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for a residential-led mixed-use development comprising up to 600 dwellings (Use Class C3), a care home (up to 70 beds, Use Class C2), primary school, a local centre (Use Classes E(a) and E(b)), sports facilities, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and associated landscaping, infrastructure, and two

The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application for the following reasons:

- 1. Green Belt / Grey Belt** – The Parish Council has undertaken a full assessment to ascertain if the land would be classified as Grey Belt under the December 2024 NPPF, its findings being that it is possible the land could be classified as Grey Belt as it does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the NPPF, nor is it one of the areas of land identified in footnote 7 (given green belt is excluded). However, just because a parcel of land may be deemed Grey Belt does not automatically mean it should be released for development. Paragraph 009 of PPG ID: 64-009-20250225, and paragraph 155 of the NPPF set out that an assessment should also be undertaken to establish if development of the land would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. A core purpose of the Green Belt is to maintain its openness - not just in terms of visual landscape, but also in terms of land use. Even if the land is not pristine countryside, large-scale development would reduce this openness and alter the character of the area. Development of this large parcel would weaken the integrity of the Green Belt as a whole, and whilst 42 hectares might seem ‘modest in isolation’, other developments in the area are already poised for development of over 2,500 homes, and this cumulative impact would significantly reduce the overall effectiveness of the Green Belt.

In addition, Part C of paragraph 155 of the NPPF refers to paragraph 115 which states that *“when assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that (part d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.”* The applicant has not proven this.

With regard to the Golden Rules that apply to Grey Belt sites, Paragraph 156 of the NPPF sets out that *“Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions (‘Golden Rules’) should be made: b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure.”* At this stage, National Highways has in effect set a moratorium on all development in the District which could negatively impact junction 7 of the M11, as they are unable to satisfy themselves that the quantum of development can be safely accommodated at this junction. Thus, part b of paragraph 156 has not been complied with.

Summary – granting approval for development on this site would fundamentally undermine the overall purpose of the Green Belt, and is NOT compliant with paragraphs 155 or 156 of the NPPF, as well as Policy DM4 of the EFDC Local Plan.

- 2. Airfield Safety** – Whilst the applicant has submitted a Parameter Plan for the heights of buildings in terms of storeys, information has not been submitted regarding actual proposed heights of buildings, and as such the Parish Council is unable to ascertain that the development would not cause a safety issues for North Weald Airfield, or jeopardise future aviation activities. A considerable amount of development is located within the transitional slope surface of the airfield which is a key component of the Obstacle Limitation Surface, designed to protect aircraft during take-off, landing, protecting the airspace adjacent to the runway, and the approach / departure paths. In addition, there is an operational readiness platform to the eastern side of the northern section of the runway which is primarily used as a preparation area for aircraft to do checks prior to immediate take off, and where aircraft run their engines 'heavy' during check procedures prior to departure. Having a residential area so close to the runway will undoubtedly lead to future noise complaints as well as a potential safety issue. The adopted North Weald Airfield Masterplan sets out that in order to *“achieve the objectives of the vision, development proposals should demonstrate that they will not unacceptably impact Airfield operations”*. The Civil Aviation Authorities report on ‘Safeguarding Aerodromes’¹ sets out that the *“purpose of Aerodrome safeguarding is to protect the airspace around an aerodrome to ensure no buildings or structures may cause danger to aircraft either*

¹ [Safeguarding of Aerodromes](#)

in the air or on the ground. This is achieved through the 'Obstacle Limitation Surfaces.' The applicant has failed to evidence that buildings and structures which infringe on the OLS will not detrimentally affect the safety of airfield operations, or the future continued use of the airfield for flying.

Summary - At present, this application fails to adhere to the principles of the North Weald Airfield Masterplan, and as such is contrary to this adopted supplementary planning document. In addition, it fails to comply with Policy DM9 High Quality Design (part I) as it fails to address issues relating to noise likely to arise from neighbouring uses or activities.

- 3. Impact of Traffic** – In January 2024, the Parish Council published a position statement², which set out that *“North Weald Bassett Parish Council is NOT CONFIDENT that the resultant traffic as a consequence of the proposed development both within and outside the parish has been considered as a whole, and no evidence has been provided to show that residents WILL NOT suffer because of them”*. Despite this position falling on deaf ears, it now seems that some 18 months later National Highways has come to the same conclusion by confirming it is concerned that all the proposed development in the District could negatively affect junction 7 of the M11, and they are unable to satisfy themselves that the quantum of development can be accommodated safely. In June 2025, an article produced by the BBC clearly evidences the problems currently being encountered, setting out that *“the popularity of North Weald Market, in Essex meant surrounding roads near Shooters became gridlocked every Saturday”*³. Whilst this issue is localised, the cumulative impact of traffic generated by the following developments has not been fully considered:

- *North Weald Bassett Masterplan – minimum of 1,050 new homes (applications EPF/2587/23 and EPF/1605/24 currently being considered by EFDC)*
- *Latton Priory – application for 1,340 homes EPF/1793/24 currently being considered by EFDC*
- *Tudor House – Permission granted for 113 new homes EPF/0007/24*
- *Rosario – permission granted for 62 new homes EPF/0332/22*
- *Happy Grow Garden Centre – application submitted for 65 new homes currently being considered by EFDC - EPF/2576/24*
- *Google Data Centre – EPF/0849/25 currently being considered by EFDC*

Taking this current application into account as well as the above, this would be an additional 3,230 new homes in an area less than 2.7 square miles. Epping Forest District has a higher than national average of car ownership (84.4% of cars having access to a car⁴), and assuming a conservative 1.5 vehicles per household, this would be an additional 4,845 cars on the roads in a very localised, already congested area. This figure excludes the traffic that would be generated from the Google Data Centre, North Weald Market, intensification of North Weald Airfield Employment uses, the EFDC Waste site located on the airfield, development in Ongar, development in Harlow, development in Epping, and the current population of North Weald Bassett Parish.

Given the distance from the site to both Epping Station and Harlow Station, the application makes it very clear that sustainable transport by rail is dependent on a regular, reliable bus service. Whilst the application makes suggestions about an improved bus services (#22) accessing the site, it provides no firm details, setting out instead that ECC is currently considering its position in this regard to bus services in North Weald. As such, at this stage, commuters would most likely get in their cars to drive to either Epping or Harlow Station.

Summary - The application as presented fails to comply with both EFDC Local Plan Policy P6 North Weald Bassett and T1 Sustainable Transport Choices as it:

- **fails to manage congestion and maintain consistency in journey times**
- **fails to improve the efficiency of the local highway network**

² <https://www.northweald-pc.gov.uk/assets/documents/position-statement-jan-2024>

³ [North Weald Market traffic sees business owner seek compensation - BBC News](#)

⁴ 2021 ONS Census

- **results in a cumulative severe impact on the operation of, or accessibility to, the local or strategic highway networks and compromises highway safety**

- 4. Provision of recreational facilities** – Whilst the application provides for both open green space and play space throughout both the centre of the development, as well as the northern SANG parcel, the Parish Council has serious concerns that the sporting and recreation provision required to support this development is proposed for a private facility (Shooters). The NPPF and Sport England's Planning for Sport Guidance emphasises that new developments must meet the needs they generate for sport and physical activity provision. A key consideration for this is that such provision should be "accessible to the public, not just members or paying customers."

Whilst Sport England indicate they may support community use of private facilities⁵ (provided there are formal agreements in place such as community use agreements), ultimately it has absolutely no control over the future of a private enterprise. A section 106 agreement may seek to mitigate the developments impact on local sporting provision by investing in a private facility, but this approach carries significant long-term risks. Private facilities are inherently vulnerable to changes in ownership, financial viability, or operational priorities, which could result in closure or restricted access. Unlike publicly owned or secured community facilities, there is no guarantee that the private facility will remain available or suitable for community use throughout the lifetime of the development. Even with robust, enforceable, and enduring community use agreements, this form of mitigation simply cannot be considered reliable or sustainable.

Epping Forest District Councils Playing Pitch Strategy 2018⁶ sets out that there is '**no spare capacity**' at the Shooters site. As such, simply upgrading these facilities does not fulfil any need that would come as a result of this development. It would simply be investing in a private enterprise for personal gain.

In addition, it seems that only the Karate Club and Epping Youth have been singled out for the potential use of facilities (p123 of the Design and Access statement). No commitment to the Scouts, Brownies, Guides, Rainbows, or any other community group. The previously proposed development included considerably more sports and community facilities located east of the proposed SANG parcel of land north of the A414, however this area no longer forms part of this planning application, and it can only be assumed that this area is being kept for a potential future housing allocation.

Summary – As currently presented, this application does not to comply with Policies SP2 Place Shaping and D1 Delivery of Infrastructure as it fails to provide sufficient additional, freely accessible opportunities for sport to meet the needs of the development, as well as safeguarding its future use for the community.

- 5. Water (Foul / Surface)** – The application states that all foul water will be directed to the North Weald Sewage Treatment Works (STW) located south of the site, however Thames Water has already publicly stated that the STW does not have sufficient capacity to deal with homes from applications that have already been submitted to EFDC (as listed under part 3 of this response). Furthermore, this Council has received confirmation from Thames Water's Regional Development Planning Lead that any upgrades taking place as part of their AMP7 and AMP8 programme have been "*factored in to align with the growth trajectories as set out within Epping Forest's Local Plan with a current design horizon of at least 2031. If future upgrades are required to accommodate additional growth beyond 2031, this will be covered as part of the AMP9 submission.*" Thus, any upgrades necessary to facilitate the development proposed as part of the application have not been considered as part of the current sewage upgrades, and would not be considered under after 2031.

With regard to surface water, the information suggests all runoff will be directed to the central North Weald Brook water flow via attenuation basins, attenuation tanks and swales, after

⁵ [Community Use Agreements | Sport England](#)

⁶ [EB714-Playing-Pitch-Strategy-Full-Analysis-4global-March-2018.pdf](#)

which time it would flow north through to the Crispy Brook. There are no plans provided which show water flow north of the A414. Whilst the dynamics of SUDs is understood by this Council, it remains of concern that the Crispey Brook is liable to regular flooding on the A414 between Ongar and North Weald, resulting in the A414 being regularly closed to traffic and considerable disruption to residents over a very wide area. There are no enhancements to either North Weald Brook or Crispey Brook suggested as part of the proposals, and whilst not experts in the matter, the Parish Council is concerned that wider parts of the site are subject to flooding or very wet ground which would cause problems in future years. For example, the map on Chapter 7 (page 104) of the Design and Access Statement seems to suggest that all the proposed play areas will be located in areas which form part of the proposed flood alleviation / surface water channel – this is simply not acceptable, short sighted and would lead to future maintenance and safety issues.

Summary – The application does not comply with EFDC Local Plan Policy DM18 On-Site Management and Reuse of Waste Water and Water Supply, as it fails set out sufficient foul drainage and treatment capacity to serve the development, and as a result of there being capacity concerns regarding the local public sewer network the applicant has failed to demonstrate that consultation has taken place with the local sewerage infrastructure provider to show that any necessary upgrade can be delivered in advance of the occupation of development or at an agreed point where development is phased. In addition, the proposals do not comply with EFDC Policy DM17 Protecting and Enhancing Watercourses and Flood Defences.

6. Contamination – The applicant recognises that areas within the site are contaminated. This has been well known locally for many years, specifically as a result of the ‘made ground’ following the importation of contaminated soil to form the landscape for the golf course. The various submitted reports identify:

- Three specific ‘hotspot’ areas in relation to ‘made ground’ with various contaminants including lead, arsenic, and mercury, where further investigation is needed to ensure there is no risk to human health.
- The presence of methane and carbon dioxide on site, which would necessitate basic ground gas protection measures for any new structures.
- The presence of asbestos onsite (albeit not though to be widespread)
- The possibility of military contaminants as a result of the nearby WWII airfield

As this is an outline application, a full mitigation strategy has not been submitted detailing if, or how, these contaminants can be effectively mitigated. The applicant has accepted that further information / testing is required.

Summary - As presented the application fails to comply with EFDC Local Plan Policy DM21 Local Environmental Impacts, Pollution and Land Contamination, as it has NOT been proven that the residual local environmental impacts of the development proposal (after mitigation) would not lead to unacceptable impacts on the health, safety, wellbeing and amenity of existing and new users or occupiers of the development site, or the surrounding land. It also fails to comply with paragraphs 196-198 of the NPPF 2024 for the same reasons.

7. North Weald Bassett Cemetery – the Cemetery is located at the southern most part of the proposal application site. This cemetery is a place of peace, reflection, and remembrance for many individuals and families in our community, and its tranquil environment is essential for those who visit to mourn, reflect, and pay their respects. The current proposals suggests that a new bus access / emergency vehicle access / footpath / cycle lane / local school will be located directly adjacent to the western edge of the Cemetery, thereby threatening to disrupt this serenity through increased noise, traffic, and general activity. Construction work, ongoing operations, and the presence of additional people and vehicles will significantly alter the quiet atmosphere that is so vital to the cemetery’s purpose.

In addition, the plans propose a 2m wide footway on the northern side of Vicarage Lane (West) from the bus access point to connect the site with the proposed Vistry development site. As proposed, these plans currently encroach onto cemetery land (southern border and south western corner) which is not acceptable. There is insufficient highway owned land to

create this proposed footway. Furthermore, any such works would detrimentally affect the layby located outside the cemetery, often used by funeral corteges and those visiting the cemetery.

Summary – the application fails to comply with EFDC Local Plan Policy D4 Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities, as it fails to improve the quality and capacity of facilities valued by the community.

8. **Wilhelm Mohr Court** – There are a number of concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on Wilhelm Mohr Court. Firstly, the indicative masterplan seems to suggest that the secondary access to the development will no longer provide access to either residents of Wilhelm Mohr Court, or Scribbles Day Nursery. Indeed, it seems that both these neighbouring (but linked) developments have been completely ignored. Given both will be impacted by the proposals, this seems exclusionary and inconsiderate. At present residents on the east facing elevation of Wilhelm Mohr Court have views over open countryside. Whilst nobody has a right to a view, these proposals will undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of these residents, and appropriate mitigation should have been considered as part of the proposal.

Summary – As currently presented, the Parish Council cannot be confident that proposals will not detrimentally affect the privacy and amenity of occupants of Wilhelm Mohr Court and Scribbles Day nursery. As such, this would be contrary to EFDC Local Plan Policy DM9 High Quality Design which requires development proposals to take account of the privacy and amenity of the development's occupiers and neighbours, as well as avoiding overlooking and loss of privacy detrimental to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

9. **Quantum of Development / Local Plan** – It is understood that unlike as stated by the applicant in various submitted documents, EFDC **is** able to evidence a five year land supply. Furthermore, this site is not included within the current Local Plan. Whilst it is accepted that recent changes in Government targets mean the housing target for EFDC is now higher than that proposed in the local plan, consideration should be given to focusing so much development in one small area of the District.

The North Weald Bassett Strategic masterplan identifies one of the four key characteristics of North Weald Village being its 'Discrete village-like feel', setting out that the "village retains a semi-rural, quiet and friendly village character". It goes on to state that "understanding this is critical to how the SMF integrates with the existing village and functions spatially". In addition, the Landscape Character Assessment completed as part of the Local Plan process identified some suggested landscape planning guidelines for this area, which included ensuring that any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern of small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles, and should maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area.

Villages are more than just collections of houses. They are living communities with unique identities, histories, and ecosystems. North Weald Ward has roughly 1,950 houses. The Local Plan allocates land for a minimum of 1,050 new homes in this ward, and to add a further 600 to this would almost double the size of the village. Rapidly doubling the number of homes risks overwhelming the very character and infrastructure that make village life so valued. Instead, a measured, incremental approach to development allows the community to grow in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and respectful of its heritage. The recently conducted Neighbourhood Plan follow-up survey identified that 83% of residents valued the **Village Feel** characteristic of North Weald Bassett. Concern already exists that this village feel will be lost if the NWB allocation is granted approval, but to then add another 600 homes would effectively be signing North Weald Village's death warrant.

It is for all the policy reasons identified above that the Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application. The Parish Council is prepared to speak at any Planning Committee on this application.

Informative: Should EFDC grant permission for this application, the Parish Council will consider requesting a full public enquiry, conducted to Alex Burghart MP, into this matter on behalf of residents.

2	EPF/0607/25 <i>Caroline Brown</i>	Woodside Lodge, 9 Woodside, Thornwood, Epping, CM16 6LH	Replacement of existing boundary fence and gate with brick walls and gate.
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The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application. The proposed gates are less than 6m from the back edge of the carriageway, presenting a highway safety risk. Whilst it is accepted a gate already exists at this location, the proposed new gates and pillars present a more formal gate which is more likely to be closed (and as suggested within the applicants paperwork is required for security reasons). At its proposed location, a vehicle would have to wait on the highway for the gates to open, which is unacceptable. Should permission be granted, it is suggested that the gates are pushed back 6m from the carriageway, inward opening, and should not be more than 6ft in height.

3	EPF/0987/25 <i>Caroline Brown</i>	Fairview, Carpenters Arms Lane, Thornwood, Epping, CM16 6LR	"Part One: Demolition of existing conservatory partial rear extension Part two: Erection of one storey rear extension including 3No Skylights. Part Three: Erection of loft conversion, comprising dormer to rear and skylights to back (PD)."
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The Parish Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

b) To **CONSIDER** any other urgent planning applications received since the agenda was prepared.
None.

c) Applications received for information only where comments are not normally accepted (these are copied exactly as they appear on EFDC's Weekly Lists).

No	Application Number	Location	Proposal
1	EPF/0946/25 <i>Suleman Uddin</i>	11, Park Avenue, Hastingwood, Harlow, CM17 9NL	Certificate of lawful development for a proposed siting of a caravan for ancillary use.

NOTED

2	EPF/0986/25 <i>Mohinder Bagry</i>	New Haven, Blackhorse Lane, North Weald Bassett, Epping, CM16 6EP	Application for approval of details reserved by Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15 & 19 and granted permission on EPF/2443/23 (Part demolition, extension and conversion of existing three bedroom dwelling into 2 semi detached 4 bedroom dwellings and erection of 1 x 4 bedroom detached dwelling. Demolition of detached garage.)
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NOTED

P24.155 DECISIONS BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

These had been previously circulated.

P24.156 EFDC LICENCES & CONSULTATIONS

None.

P24.157 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

None.

P24.158 ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO PLANNING

Concern was expressed that as previously reported to EFDC, the actual size of the development site at 246 High Road, North Weald, does not accurately represent what has been agreed as part of the planning permission. It was ***AGREED*** that Cllr Tyler would have a look at the plans and site and report back to Council.

Meeting Closed 20.32

Signed Date