MINUTES

of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 30 June 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor H. Ayres (Chair)

Councillors, H. Clark, P. Clark, S. Dobson, J. Frascona, S. Hall, R. Hyland, V. Pappa, E. Sampson, J. Sosin, A. Thorpe-Apps and P. Wilson

Also in attendance:

Cllr S. Shah

1. Chair's Announcements

For the benefit of the public, the Chair explained the arrangements for the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Rajesh and Tron. Cllr Frascona substituted for Cllr Rajesh.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26th May 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Public Question Time

Public questions had been submitted in advance for Item 7 and are summarised under the relevant item and can be viewed via this link.

6. 25/01780/OUT– Land North East of Little Fields, Danbury, Chelmsford, Essex

Cllrs Pappa and Thorpe-Apps who were not at the previous meeting, did not take part in this item.

The Committee were asked to consider the detailed reasons for refusal that had been suggested by officers following the deferral of the item at the previous meeting. The Committee noted that the first refusal reason, covered their concerns regarding conflict with the Danbury Neighbourhood Local Plan and Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Committee also noted a further refusal reason, proposed by officers regarding the absence of a signed Section 106 agreement.

Committee members noted that they were content with the reasons and the wording, as set out by officers.

RESOLVED that the application be refused for the reasons detailed in the report.

(7.03pm to 7.11pm)

7. 23/01751/OUT - Zone 2 Chelmsford Garden Community Beaulieu Parkway Chelmsford

The Committee heard that the application formed part of Strategic Growth Site 6 in the Council's Local Plan and that the CGC had been awarded Garden Community status in 2019, where it had been merged with the Channels and Beaulieu developments. It was noted that the site had been through the Council's Masterplanning process, where it had been endorsed by the Chelmsford Policy Board and Cabinet. It was noted that the site would deliver up to 3500 new homes and would be delivered over a 20 year period with affordable housing delivered in line with the viability position up to a maximum of 35%, subject to a viability review mechanism, with a minimum of 19%. The Committee noted that Zones 1 and 3 had been considered and approved subject to conditions and other agreements in December 2025. The Committee were reminded of the importance of the key documents that had allowed the Garden Community to be planned, with multiple landowners, including the Development Framework Document, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Planning Framework Agreement. The Committee noted the green sheet of amendments to the item, which detailed additional conditions and consultation responses.

The Committee were provided with significant details of the application covering, stewardship arrangements, affordable housing, design and character elements, sustainable transport solutions including the use of mobility hubs, off site infrastructure, mitigation schemes, heritage and ecological matters, employment areas and healthcare provisions. The Committee heard that the proposals were well considered, the result of extensive and detailed negotiation and would deliver significant infrastructure and public benefit, including notable economic, social and environmental benefits. The Committee were also provided with information on public transport plans for the development, education facilities, sport facilities and other key aspects. The Committee were also informed that the viability assessment had concluded that due to mineral extraction works and the high level of abnormal costs associated with the development, 35% affordable housing in accordance with policy would not be possible to begin with, but would be reviewed as the development was built out. The Committee were informed that the application had been recommended for approval, subject to detailed conditions within the report, and the finalising of other agreements, such as the Planning Framework Agreement and the Section 106 Agreement.

The Committee heard from members of the public who spoke in support of the application and highlighted the large amount of homes provided, the completion of the overall masterplan for the Chelmsford Garden Community, delivering a genuinely inclusive neighbourhood, the provision of a sports hub at Dukes Wood, education facilities and a healthcare centre amongst other benefits. The Committee also heard that the consortium were committed to bringing forward the high-quality Garden Community at pace.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers stated that;

- The recommendation was subject to the completion of a site specific S106 Agreement to secure all necessary obligations and planning permission would not be granted until the terms of the agreement were negotiated successfully to provide all obligations.
- Productive landscape areas were included within the site, to provide areas suitable for allotments or community gardens.
- The consultation response from the Integrated Care Board had not required contributions to Broomfield Hospital, instead it had requested the provisions that had been agreed and were detailed in the report regarding the provision of two healthcare centres; one within Zone 1 and the second larger facility within the application site.
- The Development Framework Document had set out required parking standards and not all parking would be provided on plot, with many other options available that would not require the use of a private car.
- The four village centres across the wider CGC would provide opportunities, for restaurants, cafes, a stewardship office, community centre and which would be all be within walking and cycling distance of homes.
- Heritage assets would continue to be maintained and obligations would be included within the s106 Agreement in relation to the T2 Hanger and Romney Hut
- The submission of a Parking Strategy would need to accompany each application for approval of reserved matters , to set out specific details for each site.
- Chelmsford Garden Community Council had made it clear that they wanted to be the stewardship body for the Garden Community and had appointed a consultant to assist with the required business plan. It was also noted that income generating assets would assist the stewardship body going forward and that the Parish Tier Council, would provide a democratic and accountable way for residents to have a say in how their community was managed.
- The majority of roads in the development would be adopted by Essex County Council, but some smaller driveway roads may not be adopted, instead it was expected that they may be managed by the stewardship body.
- There was always a balance to be struck on any development, between the cost of providing the required infrastructure against the required affordable housing, but it was felt that this development had struck the best balance possible given viability issues and that it would be reviewed at key milestones in the future, with any additional value being put into delivering additional affordable housing, as detailed in the S106 Agreement.

Members of the Committee thanked officers for their continued hard work in delivering Chelmsford Garden Community.

RESOLVED that the application be approved in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the report and on the green sheet.

(7.12pm to 8.44pm)

8. Planning Appeals

RESOLVED that the information submitted to the meeting on appeal decisions between 9th March and 1st June 2026 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Chair