

**Danbury Parish Council
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 February 2025 at 7.30pm at Danbury Parish Council Office, Main Road, Danbury, CM3 4NQ

Present: Cllrs: J Amstrong, S Berlyn, A Chapman, P Churchouse, M Hessing (Chairman),

In Attendance: Ms M Harper (Clerk), Mr S Holland, Mr M Scofield and Cllr G Chapman

24/25.134 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs A Keeler and U Rasiule

24/25.135 Declarations of Interest

Members are required to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they know they may have in items of business on the meeting's agenda. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

There were no declarations of interest

24/25.136 Public Participation

Members of the public are invited to address the Council, give their views and question the Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration (at the discretion of the Chairman). Members of the public may not take part in the Council meeting itself. At the close of this item members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council unless invited to do so by the Chairman. The session will last for a maximum of 15 minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 5 minutes. Members of the public should address their representation through the Chairman of the meeting.

There were no members of the public

24/25.137 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning Committee meeting held on 3 February 2025 were approved and signed as being a true record, proposed by Cllr A Chapman and seconded by Cllr Churchouse, all agreed.

24/25.138 Planning Applications

24/25.138.1 Response to the following application were considered for submission to Chelmsford City Council (CCC).

Ref no	Property	Proposal	Comments
24/01786/OUT	Land South Of Maldon Road And East Of Hyde Green Maldon Road	Outline application for the erection of up to 72 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. Access being sought. Appearance, layout, landscaping and scale reserved.	Please see attached response

24/25.138.2

Application 24/01786/OUT was referred to the Local Ward Members for determination by the CCC Planning Committee (unless officers were minded to refuse it)

24/25.133 Date of next meeting

Monday 24 February 2025 at 7.30pm at the Parish Council Office

There being no further matters to consider, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed

Chairman.....Date.....

Danbury Parish Council – Objection to Planning Application 24/01786/OUT - Land South Of Maldon Road And East Of Hyde Green Maldon Road

Danbury Parish Council strongly objects to the current access arrangements proposed in planning application 24/01786/OUT. Additionally, we have significant concerns regarding non-compliance with the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) 2023-2036, major traffic and highway safety issues, environmental and biodiversity impacts, and the strain on local infrastructure. Following extensive public engagement, the Parish Council has received multiple objections from residents, who have raised serious concerns about the proposed development. These concerns are outlined in detail below.

1. Traffic & Highway Safety Concerns

1.1 Cherry Garden Lane – Unsuitable Access Point

The proposed access arrangements directly contradict policies in the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) and Chelmsford City Council Local Plan, as outlined below:

- Cherry Garden Lane is a single-track rural lane with no passing places and is unsuitable for increased traffic.
- If used for site access, Cherry Garden Lane will become a rat run, significantly impacting local residents.
- Residents have proposed alternative solutions, including:
 - Making Cherry Garden Lane a cul-de-sac.
 - Making Cherry Garden Lane one-way with no entry from the development.
 - Moving the access point on the A414 further from Cherry Garden Lane.
- The junction onto the A414 is unsafe, with concerns about visibility, increased congestion, and accident risks.
- Emergency vehicle access will be compromised due to potential congestion on Cherry Garden Lane.
- Increased traffic will create safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists due to the lack of designated crossings and cycle lanes.
- Additional traffic will cause significant wear and tear on Cherry Garden Lane, resulting in higher maintenance costs for the local authority.
- The speed limit from Oak Corner to the development should be reduced to 30mph to improve road safety.

1.2 A414 Traffic & Road Safety Issues

- The A414 is already heavily congested, and this development will worsen traffic flow through Danbury.
- A traffic light-controlled crossing on the A414 should be installed to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

1.3 Non-Compliance with Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) Policies

- DNP5 & DNP16: Cherry Garden Lane is a rural lane and should not be used for development access.
- DNP13: Development must have access from Priority 1 or 2 roads—this site should have direct access from the A414, not local roads.

- The development would increase rat-running through Hyde Lane, Runsell Lane, Hopping Jacks Lane, and Mill Lane, damaging their rural character.

1.4 Conflict with Chelmsford City Council Local Plan Policies

- Policy S4: Developments must minimize car dependency by ensuring access to sustainable transport. Danbury has limited public transport, meaning most residents will rely on cars, increasing congestion on the A414.
- Policy DM23: Cherry Garden Lane is unsuitable for additional traffic, making its use as an access point a direct contradiction of this policy.

2. Environmental & Biodiversity Impact

The proposed development threatens local wildlife, habitats, and biodiversity, contradicting DNP policies and the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan.

2.1 Threat to Protected Species & Biodiversity

- The site is home to skylarks, slow worms, deer, badgers, and foxes, which will be displaced by development.
- Mature oak trees on-site support over 1,500 species, making biodiversity loss irreversible.
- Wildlife corridors must be created within the development to maintain ecological connectivity.

2.2 Compliance with UK Environmental Laws

- Has an independent ecological survey been conducted? Given the presence of protected species under UK wildlife laws, a full impact assessment is required.
- The 2023 Environment Act mandates a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG)—there is no evidence the developer has proposed sufficient mitigation strategies for this to be achieved onsite

2.3 Conflict with Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) Policies

- DNP6 & DNP7: The application lacks a biodiversity mitigation strategy and does not ensure wildlife connectivity.
- DNP9: No mitigation plan to address recreational pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- DNP10: The development fails to minimize light pollution, impacting local wildlife and Danbury's dark skies.

2.4 Conflict with Chelmsford City Council Local Plan Policies

- Policy S6 & DM16: The development damages Danbury's rural character and landscape.
- Policy DM17: Mature trees and protected species must be safeguarded.
- Policy DM29 & DM30: The development fails to meet the required 10% biodiversity net gain and lacks mitigation measures for Blackwater Estuary SPA & RAMSAR site.

3. Strain on Local Infrastructure & Services

The proposed development will place excessive strain on Danbury's already overstretched healthcare, education, and amenities, without adequate mitigation.

3.1 Healthcare Strain

- Danbury Medical Centre is already oversubscribed. The application does not provide any additional healthcare provision.

3.2 Education Capacity

- Danbury has no secondary school, meaning students will need to travel to Chelmsford or Maldon, increasing congestion on the A414.
- Local primary school places are at capacity, and there is no plan for expansion.

3.3 Conflict with Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) Policies

- Limited shopping facilities exist in Danbury, and the development does not include additional community amenities as recommended by DNP14.

3.4 Conflict with Chelmsford City Council Local Plan Policies

- Policy S8: New developments must contribute to local infrastructure—this application fails to do so.
- Policy DM24: The lack of healthcare and education provisions contradicts local planning requirements.

4. Sustainable Development & Overdevelopment

- Approval of this application would set a dangerous precedent for urban sprawl, undermining Danbury's rural character.
- A Green Wedge should be established from the eastern edge of the Tyndales to the Parish Boundary to prevent excessive development.
- There is no guarantee of genuinely affordable homes for local residents.
- Public open spaces within the development should be adopted by Chelmsford City Council or Danbury Parish Council, rather than managed by private companies.

4.1 Conflict with Chelmsford City Council Local Plan Policies

- Policy S1 & S2: Developments must ensure sustainable growth without excessive infrastructure strain—this application fails to do so.
- Policy S7: Danbury is a Service Settlement, meaning growth must be carefully controlled. This development does not align with sustainable planning policies.

5. Design and Access Statement

- Concerns regarding whether the proposed 18 visitor parking spaces for the site (based on 0.25 per house) will be sufficient throughout the site bearing in mind only 2 car spaces are provided for houses 2+ bedrooms to ensure the strategy is delivered
- The most sensitive part of the site is in the north west near Little Heyrons. CCC commented in September 2024 (page 43) that the landscaped western boundary should be increased in width. However, this has not been implemented where the greenway runs from the south to north passing Little Heyrons where it 'protrudes' into the site. This should be redesigned to provide a substantial buffer to Little Heyrons. The Built Form diagram on page 57 includes two northernmost houses which could be removed to facilitate this. The resulting scheme will still have capacity to provide the allocation of around 65 houses in the Neighbourhood Plan

Conclusion

Danbury Parish Council strongly objects to this application due to its failure to comply with the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan and Chelmsford City Council Local Plan. We urge Chelmsford City Council to reject this application unless significant amendments are made, particularly regarding:

1. Access arrangements – Cherry Garden Lane must not be used for site access.
2. Traffic impact mitigation – The A414 needs additional infrastructure to handle increased congestion.
3. Biodiversity protection – The developer must meet legal BNG requirements.
4. Infrastructure provisions – Additional healthcare, education, and community facilities are essential.

We request that these concerns be taken into full consideration when reviewing this application