

# FELSTED

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



2018-2033

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Respecting our Heritage, Defining our Future



FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL  
SUBMISSION DRAFT

## Felsted Neighbourhood Plan

### Foreword

Welcome to the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan).

Work began on the Plan in July 2014 with the Parish Council's support for the formation of a Steering Group (SG) and our first meeting. The Plan is based entirely on the many months of consultation, the hundreds of comments and submissions made by you, the members of the community, to the Steering Group through surveys, at meetings and presentations and on independent research commissioned by the Steering Group. The Plan also draws on the Felsted Parish Plan completed in 2012 including the historical context of the Parish, which remains unchanged.

During the consultations, there has been a passionate desire to see our valued amenities, like a doctors' surgery and dispensary, together with the village shop and Post Office, protected and improved. There have also been strong and well-articulated objections to still further housing development.

However, simply saying 'no' to any housing development is not an option that was ever open to us or any community preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. In complying with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Uttlesford's Local Plan, we were required to take a positive approach and to *'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'*.

The obligation on us as a Steering Group is to present a Neighbourhood Plan that provides for the development of no less housing than the UDC Local Plan allocates for Felsted. Due to changes in the number of homes required across the district, UDC have had to consider sites in Felsted to meet identified housing need over the next 15 years.

We have tried to meet our obligation to take a positive approach to sustainable development and to identify development projects that offer the greatest community benefits, deliver some of the identified objectives, contribute to the vision for the Parish and finally – in the face of concerted and understandable objection to *any* further development in the Parish – fairly distribute development. The Plan presented here is what the Steering Group sincerely believes most of the community in Felsted has said it wants from planning policies from now until 2033.

As parishioners, it is axiomatic that the members of the SG have special interests in the future of Felsted. However, from the outset, the SG has been scrupulous in ensuring that members' conflicts or potential conflicts of interest have been fully disclosed and minuted.

Change is difficult. We don't expect that *everyone* in the Parish will be supportive of *every* aspect of the Plan. However, we hope that, when taken as a whole, the Plan will be seen as offering an ambitious, positive and innovative way forward for the next 15 years for the good of our community and we urge you to support it.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the Steering Group and everyone in the Parish who contributed many hundreds of hours to developing this blueprint for our future.

Graham Harvey  
Chairman  
Felsted Parish Council

Roy Ramm  
Chairman  
Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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*Figure 1 Felsted Sign, Braintree Road*

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	FEL/HVC2	Existing Village Shop and Post Office
	FEL/HVC3	Royal British Legion Site
	FEL/HVC4	Additional Car Parking in the Village Centre
	FEL/HVC5	Managing Congestion at the T Junction in Felsted Village
Village Amenities	FEL/VA1	Doctors' Surgery
	FEL/VA2	Memorial Hall
	FEL/VA3	Infrastructure Priorities
	FEL/VA4	Burial Ground
	FEL/VA5	Recreational and Play Areas
Developing Our Schools	FEL/SC1	Supporting our Schools
	FEL/SC2	Felsted School
	FEL/SC3	Felsted School Follyfield Site
	FEL/SC4	Felsted School Facilities off Braintree Road and Garnetts Lane
	FEL/SC5	Felsted Primary School – Modernisation
	FEL/SC6	Felsted Primary School – Expansion
	FEL/SC7	Felsted Primary School Site
Meeting Housing Needs	FEL/HN1	Meeting Housing Needs
	FEL/HN2	Land At Braintree Road (Sunnybrook Farm)
	FEL/HN3	Land At Station Road (Bury Farm)
	FEL/HN4	Residential Development within Development Limits
	FEL/HN5	Residential Development outside Development Limits
	FEL/HN6	Supplemental Dwellings
	FEL/HN7	Housing Mix
	FEL/HN8	Habitats Regulations Assessment
Integrity, Character and Heritage	FEL/ICH1	High Quality Design
	FEL/ICH2	Heritage Assets
	FEL/ICH3	Signage Pollution
	FEL/ICH4	Light Pollution
	FEL/ICH5	Avoiding Coalescence
Supporting the Rural Economy	FEL/RE1	Start Up and Small Businesses
	FEL/RE2	Loss of Employment Uses
	FEL/RE3	Re-use of Rural Buildings
	FEL/RE4	Home Working
Countryside and Wildlife	FEL/CW1	Landscape and Countryside Character
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## Section 1 - Introduction

### 1.1 The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1.1 The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) is a new type of planning document. It forms part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what development takes place in their area. This is set out by the Government in the Localism Act that came into force in April 2012.
- 1.1.2 There is a large amount of background information that has helped in producing the Plan (this is known as the 'Evidence Base'). This is available on the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan website: [www.felstednp.org.uk](http://www.felstednp.org.uk).
- 1.1.3 Felsted Parish Council received approval from Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan in 2015. On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 the Felsted Neighbourhood Area was designated for this purpose which is entirely coterminous with the boundary of the Parish of Felsted.
- 1.1.4 The Parish lies in the south-east corner of the District of Uttlesford, some 9 miles or 14.5 kilometres directly north of the City of Chelmsford. Felsted adjoins the parishes of Stebbing, Flitch Green and Little Dunmow, Great Waltham, Little Leighs, Great Leighs, Great Notley, Braintree, Rayne and Great Saling.
- 1.1.5 The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2018 – 2033. This is known as the Plan period. This was chosen as the minimum period over which a strategic assessment of the Parish could reasonably be projected and aligns with the draft UDC Local Plan which also extends to 2033. We have examined what has happened in the previous 20 years and used this as an indicator of the pressures for change but considered alignment with UDC to be an overriding factor.
- 1.1.6 The Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the people of Felsted and other stakeholders with an interest in the Parish. Details of the consultation have been recorded in a series of reports that are available to download from Felsted Neighbourhood Plan's website. <sup>1</sup> As required by legislation, a Consultation Statement is submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.7 The stage the Plan has now reached in the process is that this is the submission draft plan which is being submitted to Uttlesford District Council as the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority will then publicise the Plan for a minimum of 6 weeks, before it is independently examined to ensure that it meets the Basic Conditions and other relevant legal requirements. The Plan will then finally come back to the Parish for a referendum. If more than 50% of those voting are in favour, the Plan will then be 'made' (adopted) by Uttlesford District Council, and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

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<sup>1</sup>The background survey data will remain available on the [www.felstednp.org.uk](http://www.felstednp.org.uk) website for 2 years after the plan is formally made.



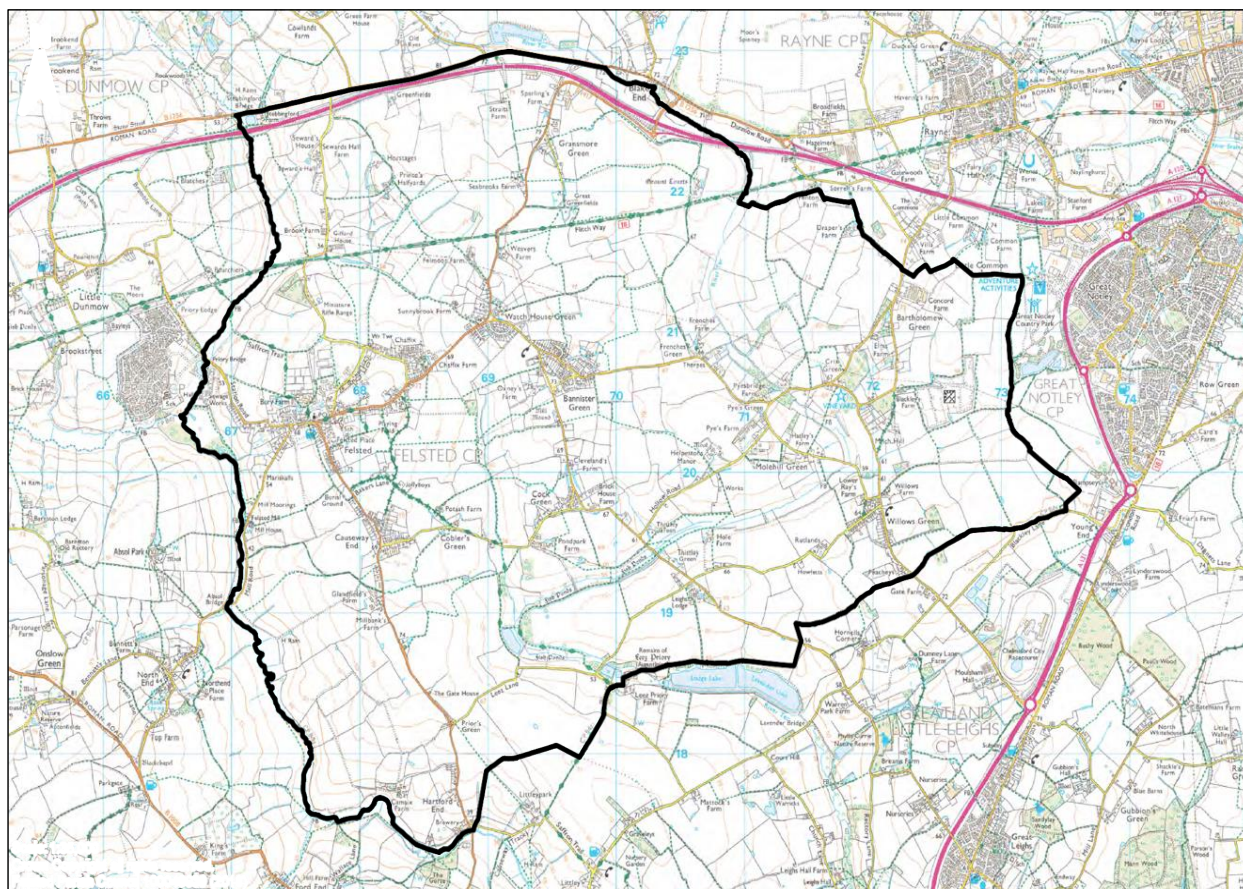


Figure 3 Felsted Neighbourhood Area

## 1.2 The Planning Policy Context

- 1.2.1 Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what development is permitted in their towns and villages, the Localism Act sets out some important 'Basic Conditions' for Neighbourhood Plans, the legal requirements that we must meet before the plan can proceed to a local referendum. Full analysis of how the Plan meets the Basic Conditions is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement, submitted alongside the Plan. In short, the Basic Conditions that the Plan must meet are as follows:
- The Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to National Planning Policy and Guidance, namely the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance;
  - The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the development plan;
  - The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
  - The Neighbourhood Plan must not breach or be otherwise incompatible with European Union obligations, including Human Rights; and
  - The Neighbourhood Plan must not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- 1.2.2 To provide context, this section provides an overview how the Plan for Felsted fits within the hierarchy of existing planning policy.
- 1.2.3 At a national level, Government establishes planning policies for England through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out how sustainable development should be achieved through the plan-making and decision-making processes across the country. In July 2018, Government published a revised NPPF, which was further updated in February 2019. Owing to the fact that the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan is submitted after the cut-off point for specified transitional arrangements, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to those policies contained within the Revised NPPF (2019).
- 1.2.4 At a district level, Uttlesford District Council are responsible for preparing the Local Plan, which sets district-wide policies for use in the determination of planning applications. The extant Local Plan for Uttlesford was adopted in 2005, and thus the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with those policies within the 2005 Local Plan that apply within the Felsted Neighbourhood Area. At the time of writing, Uttlesford District Council have submitted the Uttlesford District Council Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the hearing sessions which form part of the mandatory Examination in Public are due to take place in July 2019.
- 1.2.5 The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the 2005 Uttlesford Local Plan, but the SG has also been mindful of the emerging draft Local Plan so as to reduce the risk of any conflicts. Planning practice guidance and planning legislation states that where a neighbourhood plan policy conflicts with a local plan policy, the decision-maker must resolve the conflict in favour of the policy that has most recently become part of the development plan (adopted). It is, however, fully within the scope of guidance that neighbourhood plans be brought forward in advance of an up-to-date Local Plan, as long as there has been positive collaboration between the Qualifying Body preparing the Plan (the Parish Council) and the Local Planning Authority.<sup>2</sup> The SG has worked positively with Uttlesford District Council as a key stakeholder and is grateful for their advice and assistance in preparing a plan that takes due consideration of Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to add a locally-distinctive layer of policies to ensure that development that comes forward is appropriate and suitable for our Parish. The basis for the neighbourhood plan has been the policies of the 2005 Local Plan, namely:

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<sup>2</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, Para 009, Ref ID: 41-009-20160211



- General policies which address quality of life issues across the district, in respect of access, design, light pollution, infrastructure, parking standards, nature conservation, and the protection of the countryside;
- Economic Activity policies which address accessibility to the workplace, safeguarding land that is used for employment purposes, and the appropriate use of rural buildings;
- Built and Natural Environment policies which address the design of developments within Conservation Areas and those affecting Listed Buildings, open spaces and trees, and natural and historic landscapes;
- Housing policies which address housing development within development limits, replacement dwellings, housing mix, and affordable housing;
- Leisure and Cultural policies which address the loss of sports and recreational facilities, access to leisure and cultural facilities, and community facilities; and
- Retail and Services policies which address the retention of retail and other services in rural areas.

1.2.7 Additionally, in preparing the Plan, the SG has had regard to those policies in the emerging Local Plan, so as to ensure that our Plan does not become out of date if and when a new Local Plan has been adopted. This is articulated in the Basic Conditions Statement but the key aspects of the emerging Local Plan that have been taken into consideration are as follows

- Spatial Strategy policies;
- Housing policies;
- Employment policies;
- Retail policies;
- Transport policies;
- Infrastructure policies;
- Design and Construction policies;
- Environment policies;
- Countryside policies; and
- Policies relating to new housing development in specific locations.

1.2.8 The Felsted Neighbourhood Plan builds on these policies by outlining an approach to planning and new development that is suitable for Felsted. The SG have used the views and ideas of the local community in combination with local evidence to produce a positive plan for the future of our area.

1.2.9 A specific set of county-wide policies are set by Essex County Council, who are responsible for minerals and waste planning across Essex. Although it is not within the remit of neighbourhood planning to address minerals or waste planning issues, neighbourhood plans should have due regard to any such matters where there are implications for a given area. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted in 2014) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted in 2017) form part of the development plan for Felsted and relevant policies relate to safeguarding areas of land where there are minerals or waste planning issues, in addition to identifying consultation areas around those parcels of land where Essex County Council must be consulted on planning applications. The SG has worked to ensure that none of the policies in the plan would undermine or affect those issues addressed by the Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

1.2.10 The Plan has given local people the power to decide where new housing, businesses and parish amenities should be located. Without the Plan, the Parish Council has limited power to influence planning decisions and UDC would, based on the extant Local Plan, make these decisions on behalf of the people of Felsted.

- 1.2.11 The Plan provides a positive vision for the future of the Parish of Felsted and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. As required by the Localism Act these policies accord with higher level, strategic planning policies of UDC and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Section 2 - The Neighbourhood Area**

### **2.1. Geography**

- 2.1.1. Felsted (sometimes spelt "Felstead") lies in the north west of Essex, south of the A120 and is located west of Braintree, east of Great Dunmow and north of Chelmsford. It lies on the north bank of the River Chelmer as it leaves Great Dunmow and turns south towards Chelmsford.
- 2.1.2. Felsted Parish enjoys the underlying charm of a beautiful rural setting. The historic village of Felsted is the heart of the Parish and is surrounded by 15 individual Greens and Hamlets. This is what attracts people to the area and what the Parish Council has a historic duty to protect. Preservation of our heritage is balanced with a duty to ensure that the Parish thrives and meets the evolving future needs of the community. The Parish boundary (and Neighbourhood Area boundary) is shown on Map 1.
- 2.1.3. The value and importance of Felsted as an outstanding place to live is often recognised. Most recently it has been:
- Winner of Rural Community Council for Essex Village of the Year 2015.
  - Identified as "One of the best places to live in the East of England and a 'Top drawer village" – The Sunday Times (2017)

### **2.2. Historical Overview**

- 2.2.1. There was likely a settlement in Felsted as early as the Stone Age and there is evidence that the village was inhabited throughout the Bronze Age and the Roman Occupation. The first written evidence of a settlement comes with the Domesday Book of 1086 when approximately 360 people lived in the village.
- 2.2.2. The Normans were responsible for the tower of Felsted's Grade I listed Holy Cross Church, which dates from 1120. From the time of the Domesday Book to the fourteenth century the whole of Felsted Parish was under the ownership of the Lord of the Manor of Felsted. At the time, the Manor House was in the centre of the village, close to the Grade II listed Bury. The Manor was owned by the Holy Trinity Abbey in Caen until the war with France in 1338 when it was confiscated by the Crown. One hundred years later the manor was given to the Abbey of Sion who held it until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536.



*Figure 4 The south door of Holy Cross Church Felsted*

- 2.2.3. After the dissolution, most of the properties confiscated by the Crown were redistributed to allies of the King. One such ally was Richard Rich who 'acquired' up to 100 manors, mainly in Essex. He built a mansion for himself on the site of the old Augustinian priory, now known as Leez Priory on the outskirts of the village. Parts of this building still stand today and are Grade I listed.
- 2.2.4. Richard Rich became Lord Rich of Leez. He started a series of good works in Felsted and his foundation was that of Felsted School founded in 1564 in the vacant 'Trinity Guildhall' in the centre of the village. He also established the village alms houses. During the 1600s, after marrying Elizabeth Bouchier of the Felsted Manor of Grandcourts, Oliver Cromwell sent three of his sons to Felsted School.
- 2.2.5. Throughout this period and the 1700s, Felsted was a place of rural industry; it had at least one windmill and two watermills. In 1842 the industrial revolution brought the brewery to Hartford End, the brickworks to Causeway End and the railway came along in 1869, although most of the land remained agricultural. In Victorian times the population of Felsted grew to about 1,860.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.2.6. During the twentieth century, agriculture in Felsted saw the biggest change, as small farms disappeared, with the farmhouses becoming private houses and their land being merged into larger holdings. Livestock also disappeared, most of the remaining farms being solely arable. The century also brought other changes, including in 1926 the building of the sugar beet factory just over our Parish boundary in the Parish of Little Dunmow. In 1999, the factory was demolished and replaced by the new Parish of Flitch Green (Oakwood Park) housing development.
- 2.2.7. Following the Beeching reorganisation of the national railway system in the late 1960s the railway and Felsted Station closed. The population of Felsted grew slowly in the twentieth century, with small pockets of housing in-filling gaps in the village.
- 2.2.8. The population of the Parish is now around 3,000 (2011 UK census data). Where in the past residents worked in or near the village, a substantial proportion of parishioners now commute to the surrounding towns and far beyond. The largest single employer in the Parish is Felsted School.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Drury, *History of Felsted* (privately published, 1999) [ISBN 0-9536154-0-5](#)

<sup>4</sup> Office of National Statistic: Population and Household Estimates for England and Wales

- 2.2.9. The village of Felsted is the heart of the Parish and the village centre a place of great historical importance with 150 statutorily Listed Buildings. Much of it falls within the designated Conservation Area and within it are many listed properties (see Map 2). Some of these are shops and restaurants, generally domestic in scale. The church is the most ancient building and its tower and expansive graveyard dominate this part of the Conservation Area. Other fine structures lie just beyond the Conservation Area boundary including the restored Bury Farm barn, listed Grade II\*, that adds much architectural interest and diversity<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.2.10. Of the 50 Listed Buildings/groups of buildings identified on the Historic England list in the Conservation Area, 18% date from the 15th century or earlier; 20% from the 16th century; 30% from the 17th century; 12% from the 18th century and some 20% from the 19th and 20th centuries.

### 2.3. Character and Heritage

- 2.3.1. In preparing the Plan a full Character and Heritage assessment was commissioned from AECOM and is available to view on the website.



Figure 5 1838 Map of Felsted

- 2.3.2. The Parish enjoys a highly valued rural setting with many attractive feature areas, including the fishponds that stretch from Leez Priory to Leez Lodge and which are listed as an 'ancient monument', important woodland in Stebbing Road to the southwest of the Flitch Way and the Flitch Way itself.

### 2.4. Our People

- 2.4.1. At the time of the 2011 census there were 1,083 households in the Parish and a total population of 3,051 individuals. Since then more than 90 further homes have been constructed or approved.
- 2.4.2. Felsted's population is comparatively much older in relation to the national profile and the Uttlesford profile. Whilst people aged between 55 and 64 represent just over 10% of the population of Uttlesford, the figure for Felsted is 18%. For the age group 65-74 the difference is 16% versus 12% for Uttlesford and for those over 75 the figures are 12.5% and 9.0%. Overall both the median and the mean age of the population of Felsted is circa 40 years of age with 46% of the population aged over 55. It follows that easily accessible amenities, like health care and convenience shopping will

<sup>5</sup> Further information on the Felsted Conservation Area can be found in the Felsted Conservation Area Character Appraisal published by UDC in December 2012.

become increasingly important to this ageing community.

- 2.4.3. Comparing house price data is difficult. Anecdotally, estate agents surveyed say that property in Felsted commands a higher price than in surrounding areas. 'Zoopla' data indicates the current average value of property in the Parish is significantly above the national average house price (£225,621) and Essex averages (£368,356). Felsted, with an overall average value of £607,958 was more expensive than nearby Rayne (£377,635), Dunmow (£458,845) and Great Notley (£404,742). In the past 5 years house prices in Felsted increased by 28.92 % and in the last 20 years, by 233%.

## 2.5. Amenities

- 2.5.1. The Parish is well-served by amenities which are highly valued by the community. In the village centre there is a doctors' surgery and dispensary, a highly regarded village shop and Post Office, two pubs – both serving food and one offering accommodation - an active branch of the Royal British Legion, an Indian restaurant, a tea shop and patisserie, a local estate agent, a hairdresser and beautician and two further retail outlets in the village centre. Bed and breakfast accommodation and holiday lets are also available in the village and elsewhere in the Parish. There are also three residential care homes.
- 2.5.2. The Parish has a much-loved Memorial Hall which is some 90 years old and a village playing field with excellent and exciting modern play facilities for children. There are also play areas at Watch House Green (2), Willows Green and Bannister Green.



*Figure 6 Children's Play Area – Braintree Road*

- 2.5.3. In the wider Parish, there is a nursery school at Whipper-Snappers and pre-school care is also offered by Little Acorns at Felsted Primary School.
- 2.5.4. Elderly residents benefit from the Felsted Alms Houses Charity. The charity built seven bungalows in 1876 and substantially renovated them in 1998. The charity caters for older or disabled persons, preferably with connections to the area. Monthly social activities include: over 60s friendship clubs, organised by local village clubs.





*Figure 7 Felsted Alms Houses – Braintree Road*

- 2.5.5. There are equestrian centres within the Parish and a successful wedding venue on the edge of the Parish at Leez Priory.
- 2.5.6. The spiritual needs of the community are met by Holy Cross Church, the United Reformed Church and the Crix Green Mission.
- 2.5.7. The Parish has a substantial allotment area in the village centre opposite Bury Chase (Woodleys) car park. The allotments are held in trust and must remain as such.
- 2.5.8. The fishponds between Leez Priory and Leez Lodge in the Ter valley are an ancient monument and there are important woodlands in Stebbing Road to the southwest of The Flitch Way.
- 2.5.9. Maintaining the amenities we enjoy, providing opportunities for their development and addressing issues like accessibility to the doctors' surgery and traffic congestion in the historic village centre throughout the Plan period are both key objectives and substantial challenges.

## **2.6. Getting Around**

- 2.6.1. The only A road passing through the Parish is the A120. Most of the northern boundary of the parish is formed by the B1256 (the old A120). The B1417 is the main north-south route through the Parish linking with the B1008 to the south and the A1256 in the north-west and directly to the A1256 and indirectly to the A120 in the north east. The main junction in the Parish is in the centre of the village where the B1417, the Chelmsford Road meets Station Road and Braintree Road.
- 2.6.2. The Parish is served by the 16 bus which runs four times a day between Chelmsford and Wethersfield via Felsted. The 133 bus also runs through the village centre providing an hourly service from Braintree to Stansted Airport. The service passes through Braintree and Great Dunmow in either direction, with facilities that can be accessed by Felsted residents where there are connections to the wider transport network.
- 2.6.3. There are local private hire car services in the Parish.
- 2.6.4. There is an extensive and greatly valued footpath network throughout the Parish, including a major section of linear park known as The Flitch Way, providing an unrivalled amenity for walkers, cyclists

(Part of the National Cycling Route - Route 16 ), and horse riders. The Parish also enjoys an extensive bridleway network and a number of designated 'Quiet Lanes'.

- 2.6.5. Part of the Parish formed a section of the 2014 Tour de France, increasing the Parish's attraction to cyclists still further. The lanes throughout the Parish are now major destinations for cycling enthusiasts and clubs.

## 2.7. Education

- 2.7.1. Felsted School is a flourishing independent HMC school for boys and girls aged 4 to 18, based on a safe, rural 80-acre village campus. It offers day, full and contemporary boarding options and provides a coach service for pupils across the region. With a distinguished 450-year history, occupying an iconic building on a visually significant site in the centre of the village and being the largest local employer, Felsted School's contribution to the social, sporting, cultural and economic fabric is critically important. Felsted School is rated 'Outstanding' in all areas of pastoral welfare and "excellent in every aspect" by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Felsted School has a major impact on the reputational status of the Parish.



*Figure 8 The Tour de France in Chelmsford Road in 2014*

- 2.7.2. State Primary education is provided by the Felsted Primary School. Though the physical presence of the state Primary School at Watch House Green is by comparison more modest, its academic status is rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The school is very highly valued, attracting two thirds of its pupils from outside the Parish. As such, the Primary School also makes an important contribution to Felsted being known more broadly as a place of educational excellence and, for that reason, a highly desirable place for families to live. There is no state secondary school in the Parish.

## 2.8. Health and Wellbeing

- 2.8.1. Primary health care is provided by the practice at the Felsted Surgery and dispensary which is part of the John Tasker House and Felsted Surgeries group. The Practice was visited by the Care Quality Commission in 2015 and was rated as 'Good'. Within the community, the Practice is a highly regarded and valued asset.

### **Section 3 - The Key Issues**

#### **3. The key issues that were raised throughout our extensive consultation:**

In preparing the Plan we conducted multiple consultation events and collected information through the use of various community surveys. Residents and stakeholders were kept informed via the Neighbourhood Plan website and updates to the Parish Council website. A full report of our consultation activity and how it has influenced the preparation of the Plan is set out in the Consultation Statement and submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. The issues the community asked us to address in the Plan were clear.

#### **3.1. About Traffic and the Village Centre**

- 3.1.1. Problems caused by limited parking facilities and increasing traffic and congestion are a serious cause for concern among residents who want a greater focus on pedestrians in the village centre. This is particularly acute because of the numbers of school children crossing Braintree Road and Stebbing Road during the day.
- 3.1.2. The negative impact of the weight, both in terms of numbers and size, of vehicular traffic on the fabric of buildings in the Historic Village Centre (HVC) and the harm caused by vibration and fumes was another issue of concern expressed by residents. These concerns are exacerbated looking forward over the Plan Period as the Parish faces the challenges of potential very large developments in neighbouring parishes.
- 3.1.3. School traffic has a negative impact on congestion. In the village and at Watch House Green congestion during the morning drop-off and the afternoon collection periods is a major concern. Observation and complaints from parishioners confirm that the number and size of vehicles is increasing. Badly parked vehicles obstruct the highway and the footway and are hazardous to other road users and pedestrians.
- 3.1.4. Stebbing Road runs directly through the 80 acre site occupied by Felsted School. The school has major facilities for students on both sides of Stebbing Road, frequently requiring students to move across the road during the school day. The road has a 30mph speed limit. The further development of facilities on the site will increase pedestrian traffic. Though a public thoroughfare, consideration needs to be given to how priority can be afforded to pedestrians and to slow vehicular traffic.
- 3.1.5. The Royal British Legion is a respected and valued amenity. However, the Legion building is unattractive and detracts from the visual amenity in the village centre. Additionally, the site occupied by the Royal British Legion and some adjacent properties also offer a valuable opportunity in the centre of the village to improve parking, increase public open space and to create a focal point around Holy Cross Church as it approaches its 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. It could provide a location for the recently discovered and historic Felsted Market Cross stone.
- 3.1.6. The visual amenity of the historic village centre and the listed buildings are also seen to be vulnerable to insensitive signage, overhead cables and excessive lighting.
- 3.1.7. In the longer-term traffic volumes in the village and throughout the Parish would be very seriously negatively impacted by any changes to the junctions on the A120. Currently only westbound traffic on the A120 can exit the dual carriageway and enter Felsted via the roundabout at the junction with

the B1417. There is no eastbound exit from the A120. Any changes to the junction with the B1417 that allowed east bound traffic on the A120 to both join and exit the dual carriageway would increase traffic volumes considerably, particularly if new large settlements are developed on our Parish borders.

- 3.1.8. Outside of planning policies, the Plan makes strong recommendations intended to further reduce congestion and to give priority to pedestrians in the village centre.

### 3.2. About Amenities

- 3.2.1. Retaining and improving village amenities is a key issue of concern to residents.
- 3.2.2. The services provided by the doctors' surgery and dispensary are enormously valued by the community and were consistently identified as the most important amenity the Plan should provide and demands for high quality local healthcare are inevitably increasing.
- 3.2.3. The current Practice has indicated that it will be unable to provide a service from the existing premises beyond the next 3-5 years. Modern surgery premises are required to have more advanced infection control measures – such as independent air-conditioning in every room and special anti-bacterial surfaces. The existing surgery building is small and does not meet NHS England standards. Access to the surgery is restricted and finding adjacent parking is often difficult, particularly for those with disabilities. The current site of the surgery and dispensary is not suitable for the development of a larger modern facility.
- 3.2.4. The Plan's entire purpose and focus is to reflect the needs of the people of Felsted and the strategy of the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The CCG indicated support for the continued presence of a General Practice within the Parish of Felsted but accept that the current surgery building has limited viability and will not be fit for purpose for future needs.
- 3.2.5. The CCG's plan is that the surgery *serving* Felsted will need to accommodate 4500 - 5000 patients. There are already approximately 2000 patients who should be looked after by Felsted surgery but who cannot be accommodated and have instead to go to John Tasker House (JTH) in Dunmow. However, JTH is also at capacity and cannot register any significant number of new patients. The CCG must commission new larger surgeries to serve the growing local community in the West Essex area.
- 3.2.6. The Plan retains its focus on the needs of the people of Felsted and acknowledges that unless a suitable site for a surgery is found *within* Felsted, the CCG will identify a site outside the Parish and the community will have lost a valued asset.



*Figure 9 Felsted Surgery, Braintree Road (left of image)*

- 3.2.7. The Steering Group initially pursued the idea of the development of a new Community Hub (including the doctors' surgery, village shop, and Memorial Hall) in a sustainable, central location in the Parish to provide more accessible and long-term access to valued services. Disappointingly, a coincidence of factors meant it became unrealistic to deliver this aspect of the project.
- 3.2.8. The current village shop and Post Office are also highly valued but occupy a Listed building (part Grade I) in the centre of the historic village. It struggles to offer the facilities that shoppers require. Access is difficult for people with even relatively minor disabilities and there is limited opportunity for the shop to offer the full range of goods and services customers seek. Deliveries to the shop and frequent short term on-road parking add to congestion at the Chelmsford Road, Braintree Road, Station Road junction.
- 3.2.9. A need for a new village hall was also clearly expressed during consultation. The Memorial Hall has served the Parish well but is 90 years old, in need of extensive maintenance and, in a parish of over 3,000 people, is only able to accommodate events for a maximum of 90 people. It does not meet the needs of the community currently or for the Plan period. However, the Memorial Hall Committee have embarked on a plan of their own to improve the facilities at the existing hall. Redevelopment of the Memorial Hall on its existing site is feasible.<sup>6</sup>
- 3.2.10. The burial ground at Holy Cross church has reached capacity and is closed for further interments. The United Reformed Church burial ground in Chelmsford Road is currently accepting burials of other denominations. This is not a permanent solution. The community want a suitable new site identified within the Parish.
- 3.2.11. UDC's advice on deliverability is that funding for community amenities is usually provided, at least in part, by market housing development. This makes protecting our amenities a particularly challenging and contentious policy objective to achieve in the face of community resistance to further housing development.



*Figure 10 Felsted Memorial Hall*

<sup>6</sup> See AECOM Feasibility Study on the FNP website.



### 3.3. About the Schools

- 3.3.1. Throughout the consultation process it has been clear that the importance of the schools is well recognised and highly valued by the community, both as amenities and major sources of employment.
- 3.3.2. Currently the Primary School has a single form intake and the Board of Governors has indicated that they intend to meet the School's immediate accommodation needs on the existing site for the short term. Essex Education Authority has no current plans to expand the school. However, given population growth and housing developments within the School's catchment area, it is considered prudent to provide a policy framework to support the Primary School should it need to expand or move during the Plan period.
- 3.3.3. Felsted School has also indicated its intentions to expand and develop new facilities in and around its existing site.



*Figure 11 Felsted School*

- 3.3.4. The community wants the Plan to support expansion and redevelopment of the schools, to ensure the schools are better integrated into the wider community but also wants to ensure planning policies mitigate any negative impact of the Schools on congestion created or exacerbated by School traffic. Throughout the NP process, it has been clear that the School appreciates the support of the community.

### 3.4. About Housing

- 3.4.1. Felsted is a very desirable place to live. The result of a survey of estate agents indicated that the demand for property within Felsted is extremely high, creating continuing and unrelenting pressure for additional market housing development.
- 3.4.2. In the last twenty years, *excluding* replacement dwellings constructed on a one-for-one basis, over 200 new homes have been built in the Parish. Though increasing the demands and pressures on local amenities and infrastructure, they have delivered little or no contribution to the development or enhancement of amenities or responded to any specific significant needs identified by the Parish Council.
- 3.4.3. From the outset and throughout the Neighbourhood Planning process, the overwhelming response

from parishioners has been that the Plan should resist further market housing development beyond that imposed by Uttlesford District Council's Local Plan or which has been identified as 'needed affordable housing' by independently conducted housing needs surveys. The Localism Act allows the Neighbourhood Plan to provide more than this number of houses and an amount of employment land, but it does not allow the Plan to provide for less.

- 3.4.4. Since the SG commenced work on the Plan, the pressure from central government on local authorities, including Uttlesford, for the development of more homes has increased considerably. Without a demonstrable 5 year housing supply pipeline, UDC has been much less effective in preventing development that has been resisted by parish councils. To meet its housing requirements, UDC have had to reconsider the Type A villages and other settlements in respect of housing allocations in the revised draft UDC Local Plan.
- 3.4.5. Concerns about excessive market housing development are repeatedly expressed by the Parish Council and many individual parishioners in their objections to planning applications. Through these comments, the community makes it clear that it wants the Plan to offer the strongest possible protection to the physical integrity of the Parish and its quiet rural nature.
- 3.4.6. These views are consistent with those expressed during the consultation work on the Parish Plan published in 2012 and have been repeatedly expressed by parishioners to the Parish Council and in objections to planning applications.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.4.7. Accurately identifying the need for affordable housing is essential to developing effective housing policy. Housing Needs Surveys are conducted upon the request of the Parish Council. The results of the report are valid for 3 years. Housing Needs Surveys are conducted on a Parish wide basis to determine the needs of that Parish. In May 2016 the Rural Community Council for Essex conducted a survey on behalf of Felsted Parish Council to determine the affordable housing need for the coming 3 years. The survey identified a need for 14 affordable units and 1 starter home, although it is noted that this focussed solely on locally-identified need. Regular Surveys are valuable and should be routinely considered by the Parish Council.
- 3.4.8. There is also concern that developments have not resulted in increased opportunity for moving within the Parish. Active, older residents, finding themselves unable to downsize into smaller high-quality homes, rather than leave the Parish, are remaining in homes they consider to be too large for their needs, meaning that high-demand housing (larger, family homes) are not as available as part of the market stock.

### **3.5. About Integrity and Character**

- 3.5.1. The community is vocal and determined in expressing its concern that 'excessive development' of market housing is harming the character and heritage of the village, the constituent Greens and hamlets and the rural nature of the Parish. This has been raised consistently as a key concern throughout our consultation.
- 3.5.2. There are also concerns that coalescence with neighbouring parishes puts at risk the integrity and the unique identity of historic Felsted. In addition to the concerns about development within the Neighbourhood Area, the situation is greatly exacerbated by the uncertainty of development proposals to the west of the Parish at 'Chelmer Mead', to the east in the development described as 'West of Braintree' and to the Great Leighs development in Chelmsford. These proposed developments present very significant risk, threatening to put unprecedented pressures on Felsted's

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<sup>7</sup>Felsted Parish - A Plan for the Future' Published by Felsted Parish Council, available on [www.felstednp.org.uk](http://www.felstednp.org.uk)

built and green infrastructure and valued amenities.

- 3.5.3. Similarly, the individual charm of the constituent Greens and hamlets is also seen to be threatened by coalescence. Avoiding coalescence does not mean that the Plan rejects all development in a Green or hamlet, but it does require the Plan to place restrictions on developments that threaten the individual integrity of a settlement in order to minimise the risk of coalescence between settlements within the Parish.

### **3.6. About the Rural Economy**

- 3.6.1. The community is also concerned to protect and encourage the rural economy and to offer local employment by providing suitable opportunities for business. These aspirations go to the heart of ensuring that the Parish remains a vibrant and discrete community offering employment opportunities within its boundaries.
- 3.6.2. There is also concern that the development of economic activity in the Parish should be unobtrusive and appropriate to the rural setting.
- 3.6.3. We surveyed the attitudes of business owners in the Parish. Felsted is fundamentally a rural parish with a strong agricultural base. In general, farmers were concerned that it remains as such. The few responses received from other businesses were, with very few exceptions, were concerned only with issues outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, like improved internet access and faster broadband speeds.

### **3.7. About the Countryside and the Environment**

- 3.7.1. The community is fiercely protective of the natural environment and the green spaces that surround the village and give access to the 15 individual Greens and hamlets that comprise the Parish. The community demands that planning policies both protect the countryside and wildlife and ensure access is maintained.
- 3.7.2. There is concern that insufficient importance is given to the ecology of the Parish and more information needs to be offered to users of the footpaths and bridleways to ensure they better understand the environment and their impact on it.
- 3.7.3. Areas such as the nature area in the village allotment site and the recently designated Nature Area, adjacent to Felsted Fen, are highly regarded and valued.
- 3.7.4. Many of the concerns expressed during the consultations have been expressed to the Parish Council and to UDC over many years.

When?	What?
July 2014	Inaugural Meeting of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
December 2014	Felsted Neighbourhood Area designated by Uttlesford District Council
March 2015	'Setting the Agenda for Consultation' document launched
May 2015	First village open day
Spring 2015	Consultation with schools and survey

*Figure 12 The River Chelmer to the west of Mill Road*

### 3.8 Consultation



### Timeline

Felsted Neighbourhood Plan: Respecting our heritage, defining our future

Spring 2015	Consultation with Doctors' Surgery and survey
September 2015	Traffic survey
August 2015	Focussed workshop on key themes (1 of 3)
September 2015	Focussed workshop on key themes (2 of 3)
October 2015	Focussed workshop on key themes (3 of 3)
January 2016	Rural Community Council of Essex – housing needs survey
January 2016	Youth survey to accompany housing needs survey
March 2016	Estate agents survey
May 2016	Feedback session on Housing Needs Survey, Youth survey and Estate Agents survey
Throughout 2016	Heritage and character assessment undertaken by green leaders
Throughout 2016 and 2017	Feedback on drafting the plan via website and updates to the Parish Council
July 2017	Presentation of the Policy Intentions Document
April 2018	Update on the Neighbourhood Plan and housing
Summer 2018	Pre-Submission Consultation

## Section 4 - The Vision for Felsted

### 4.1. Developing the Vision

- 4.1.1. The vision for Felsted developed in the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the community's concerns and aspirations, identified as key issues through consultation. It attempts to say what we want our Parish to be working towards throughout the fifteen years of the Plan period to 2033.
- 4.1.2. The Plan brings forward policies that respect our heritage and define our future. Some things need to change but many aspects of the Parish will remain the same. One of the key objectives has been to plan to value what we have and to change as little as possible; another is to ensure that where inevitable and necessary changes take place they are appropriately planned for to ensure they bring real and enduring benefits to the people of Felsted.
- 4.1.3. Each of the policies in **Section 5** is directly related to and aimed at delivering an aspect of our vision.
- 4.1.4. There are some issues raised through the consultation process that are not deliverable through planning policies. These are nonetheless important to the community and though the Neighbourhood Plan cannot propose policies to facilitate their implementation they are supported.

### 4.2. The Vision

1. *Over the Plan period Felsted will continue to be a special place to live in a rural setting.*
2. *Our village amenities will have been expanded and enhanced, particularly our primary health care and village shopping. We will have a new larger community hall providing a focus for Parish public and private events.*
3. *Congestion at peak times will have been eased and pedestrians will be able to move around the village centre and our schools in safety and comfort.*
4. *The setting of listed buildings in the village centre along with Holy Cross Church will have been protected in an enhanced public space, which will have created a clearly defined historic centre, articulating to residents and visitors the value importance of this ancient settlement recorded in the Domesday Book*
5. *The dispersed nature of the Parish of Felsted with its 15 individual Greens and hamlets will remain. This Plan will have ensured the character and identity of this place and its ecology are protected from housing and infrastructure changes in the surrounding area.*
6. *Felsted will have met housing needs and supported additional market housing development where it supports provision of parish amenities and facilitates continuity of residence in the Parish.*
7. *Local employment will have been encouraged through supporting*



*small business development.*

8. *Our schools will continue to be emblematic of educational excellence, meet emerging demands and will play an active role in the community.*
9. *The natural environment will have been protected and enhanced and a green infrastructure delivered.*
10. *New technology will have been used to provide information to users of footpaths and bridleways about the historical setting of the countryside, its wildlife and what might be expected to be seen at any given location.*

4.2.1. The SG recognises that achieving this vision is very challenging. The SG would have ideally liked to have seen the key amenities provided in one place in a single development. Achieving this during our work on the Neighbourhood Plan has not proved possible. What is possible is the provision of a much-improved Surgery in community ownership with a small development of market housing at Station Road. The surgery in community ownership will generate a revenue stream for community amenities, which could include the redevelopment of the Memorial Hall and the relocation of the village convenience shop and Post Office.

### 4.3. How we will deliver the Vision

4.3.1. The Vision will be delivered through the implementation of the Planning Policies detailed in Section 5 of this Plan, through the creation of a charitable trust to receive and distribute funds generated by supported development projects and by identifying issues to the Parish Council that are not deliverable through planning policy, but which have a material impact on our community.

4.3.2. The following table provides a list of the policies and which section of the Vision that they originate in. Additionally, the introductory text to policies provides commentary on which elements of the vision are being delivered.

Theme	Policy Reference	Policy Title	Relationship to Vision
Protecting the Historic Village Centre	FEL/HVC1	Historic Village Centre	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4
	FEL/HVC2	Existing Village Shop and Post Office	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3
	FEL/HVC3	Royal British Legion Site	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4
	FEL/HVC4	Additional Car Parking in the Village Centre	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3
	FEL/HVC5	Managing Congestion at the T Junction in Felsted Village	Paragraphs 1 and 3
Village Amenities	FEL/VA1	Doctors' Surgery	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3
	FEL/VA2	Memorial Hall	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3
	FEL/VA3	Infrastructure Priorities	Paragraphs 1 and 2
	FEL/VA4	Burial Ground	Paragraphs 1 and 3
	FEL/VA5	Recreational and Play Areas	Paragraphs 1 and 3
Developing Our Schools	FEL/SC1	Supporting our Schools	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 8
	FEL/SC2	Felsted School	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 8
	FEL/SC3	Felsted School Follyfield Site	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 8

	FEL/SC4	Felsted School Facilities off Braintree Road and Garnetts Lane	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8
	FEL/SC5	Felsted Primary School – Modernisation	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 8
	FEL/SC6	Felsted Primary School – Expansion	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 8
	FEL/SC7	Felsted Primary School Site	Paragraphs 1 and 6
Meeting Housing Needs	FEL/HN1	Meeting Housing Needs	Paragraphs 1 and 6
	FEL/HN2	Land At Braintree Road (Sunnybrook Farm)	Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 6
	FEL/HN3	Land At Station Road (Bury Farm)	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 6
	FEL/HN4	Residential Development within Development Limits	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 6
	FEL/HN5	Residential Development outside Development Limits	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 6
	FEL/HN6	Supplemental Dwellings	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 6
	FEL/HN7	Housing Mix	Paragraphs 1 and 6
	FEL/HN8	HRA/SEA assessment	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 6
Integrity, Character and Heritage	FEL/ICH1	High Quality Design	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 9
	FEL/ICH2	Heritage Assets	Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5
	FEL/ICH3	Signage Pollution	Paragraphs 1 and 5
	FEL/ICH4	Light Pollution	Paragraphs 1 and 5
	FEL/ICH5	Avoiding Coalescence	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 9
Supporting the Rural Economy	FEL/RE1	Start Up and Small Businesses	Paragraphs 1, 2 and 7
	FEL/RE2	Loss of Employment Uses	Paragraphs 1 and 7
	FEL/RE3	Re-use of Rural Buildings	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 7
	FEL/RE4	Home Working	Paragraphs, 5 and 7
Countryside and Wildlife	FEL/CW1	Landscape and Countryside Character	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 9
	FEL/CW2	Nature Area including Felsted Fen	Paragraphs 1, 2, 5 and 9
	FEL/CW3	Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways	Paragraphs 1, 5, 9 and 10
	FEL/CW4	Green Infrastructure	Paragraphs 1, 5 and 9

#### 4.4. The Felsted Community Trust

- 4.4.1. The SG considered that establishing a charitable trust would be an effective mechanism to help secure the community benefit objectives of the Plan. The SG has worked with the Parish Council to create the Felsted Community Trust. Initially, contributions to the Trust may be required from the landowners and developers of schemes supported by the Plan. A doctors' surgery will be a capital project donated to the Felsted Community Trust by a developer of the identified site in Station Road. This will remain an asset of the Trust for the benefit of the community
- 4.4.2. Over the Plan period, the surgery will generate a return in rent from the doctors' practice that in turn will be available to the trustees to distribute to community projects, including funding for the village

hall.

#### **4.5. Issues that are not deliverable through Planning Policy**

- 4.5.1. There are a number of issues that have emerged through the consultation process as concerns or objectives which are outside the scope of the Plan's planning policy remit. These issues are nonetheless important, and their resolution would benefit the community. The Parish Council will seek to implement these projects through the identification of key partners and sources of funding.
- a) Notwithstanding the requirement in policy SC2, the road surfaces in Stebbing Road from the junction with Braintree Road to the junction with Garnett's Lane should be changed to indicate a pedestrian priority area.
  - b) In the event that further school facilities are developed on the playing fields to the west of Stebbing Road, the same considerations as described in (b) above should apply to the road surface between Garnetts Lane and the section of Stebbing Road adjacent to the playing fields. (See Map 4)
  - c) The construction of a new access for Felsted Primary School.
  - d) Where significant developments in close proximity to the Parish are proposed, the Plan supports the Parish Council in expecting such proposals to be accompanied by a "Travel Plan, Transport Assessment and Statement" to assess the predicted flow of through traffic in the Felsted Conservation Area. Where potential increases are identified, mitigation measures will be sought to constrain traffic flow through the Felsted Conservation Area and avoid the Parish becoming a 'rat run' for traffic.
  - e) New technology should be embraced, for example to provide charging points for electric vehicles and to communicate information about the Parish's history and ecology, Quick Reader codes should be used on public signage, including footpath signs and way markers offering access to information about the Parish. Any installations must be sympathetically incorporated into their surroundings.
  - f) As part of traffic mitigation measures, School 'Park and Ride' or 'Park and Walk' schemes should be encouraged.
  - g) Following any move of the village shop away from the 'T' Junction, the Parish Council should review parking restrictions in Station and Braintree Roads.
  - h) A Pavement Parking Prohibition Order should be obtained and enforced to cover the whole village.
  - i) Priority for local purchasers will be encouraged by asking developers to offer 'priority purchase' schemes for entry level properties, wherein parishioners are given an exclusive 3-month window during which they are able to express an interest in acquiring a newly developed property before it goes to open market.

## Section 5 – The Policies

### 5.1. Protecting the Historic Village Centre



*Figure 13 Grade 1 Listed Holy Cross Church*

- 5.1.1. The Parish is substantially defined by an area in the centre of the Village that comprises some of the most iconic and best-known buildings in Felsted. To ensure this small area is properly recognised and protected and to provide context for the policies in this section, the Plan designates the Historic Village Centre (HVC) as a historic character area. The area is shown on Map 2 and is identified for its historic significance, its function as a focal point for amenities and services and the contribution that it makes to the Parish as a whole. It is not coterminous with the Conservation Area (CA) but many of the 49 Listed Buildings in the CA are in the HVC. The heritage assets of the village are described in detail in the comprehensive Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment report produced by AECOM.
- 5.1.2. Frequent short-term visits by customers and deliveries to the village shop in the HVC are identified as major causes of congestion at the 'T' junction of Braintree Road, Station Road and Chelmsford Road. Parking and deliveries for The Swan, The Boote House and The Royal British Legion are also, at different times, contributors to congestion. Holy Cross Church and Smylie Hall together with the Doctors' surgery and dispensary, Felsted School, and Felsted Primary School traffic, further east at Watch House Green, also contribute significantly to congestion.
- 5.1.3. The Plan seeks to address these concerns and meet the ambitions of the community by bringing forward policies on the use of premises that cause congestion, including the Schools, requiring them to include off road parking as part of any development proposals.
- 5.1.4. Like the community, Felsted School is also keen to improve traffic management in the village, but the success of this will be dependent on the Local Planning Authority agreeing to parts of the school's estate being adapted to provide additional parking.
- 5.1.5. The Plan proposes policies support the relocation of the village shop and Post Office and the Royal British Legion away from the Village Centre to alleviate traffic concerns whilst also providing the opportunity for expansion of services in new, more sustainable premises. The intention is to

encourage the use of the vacated premises in ways that will attract less short-term visitation at peak times.

- 5.1.6. The Royal British Legion, the small car park (known locally as Woodley's car park) and the premises shown on Map 2 occupy important sites within the HVC. However, The Felsted Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that the car park provides a poor setting for the adjacent Norman church and other historic and listed buildings.<sup>8</sup> The Character Appraisal lists relatively modest ways in which the car park could be improved (e.g. replacing the wooden fence that defines the car park's western boundary with a native species hedgerow or reducing the impact of the wooden fence through planting). It also suggests that the site is an ideal location for a sensitively designed public convenience. The Plan is much more ambitious for the HVC and identifies a much more substantial opportunity for improvement and considers that these sites could be used to greatly enhance the general setting of the Felsted Conservation Area and the particular setting of the Grade I Listed Holy Cross Church. The Plan therefore includes policies that recognise and make the best use of the potential of these sites.
- 5.1.7. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by protecting and enhancing village amenities to ensure that they remain viable within the Parish, by supporting the increase of parking facilities and helping to alleviate traffic congestion travelling through the village centre. The policies also seek to ensure that valued heritage assets and the historic character of the village centre are preserved and enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

**FEL/HVC1** The Historic Village Centre (as shown on Map 2) is designated as a historic character area and local centre for its historic significance, its contribution to the character of the Neighbourhood Area, as well as for its amenity value which provides a focal point of facilities and amenities for all residents and visitors alike.

Development proposals within the Historic Village Centre should:

- Provide a good, safe, and attractive pedestrian environment and improve the quality of the pedestrian environment; and
- Ensure that the choice of materials, forms and designs integrate sympathetically with the existing sensitive and historic environment

Proposals for additional services and facilities within the must demonstrate that:

- (i) access arrangements and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided without impinging on adjoining residential and non-residential uses;
- (ii) the proposal will help alleviate existing traffic congestion and not adversely affect the free-flow of traffic on the adjoining highway; and
- (iii) the proposal will not generate unacceptable noise, fumes, smells or cause disturbance to neighbouring residential properties.

<sup>8</sup>Felsted Conservation Area and Management Proposals, Uttlesford District Council, 2012  
(<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1919&p=0>)

### Existing Village Shop and Post Office

- 5.1.8. The UDC draft Local Plan includes a policy (RET4) which resists the loss of shops and other community facilities beyond the district's town and local centres.<sup>9</sup> This Plan complements that approach by taking a similar approach to these uses within the HVC.
- 5.1.9. Policy HVC1 establishes what uses would be supported at the site of the existing village shop and Post Office in the event that they are vacated. It is of priority that existing traffic congestion and parking concerns at this location are not exacerbated and, where possible, improved as a result of any changes at this site.
- 5.1.10. Throughout the extensive consultation undertaken during the preparation of the Plan, it was particularly evident that the village shop and Post Office are highly treasured assets within our community. It is recognised that the existing shop and Post Office are not in the most appropriate location to secure their ongoing commercial viability, and that an alternative site may be secured in the Plan Period in the parish. The Plan supports the sustainability and continuation of the service provided by the shop and Post Office and seeks to provide the opportunity for the shop and Post Office to remain in the parish in the longer term.

**FEL/HVC2** The relocation of the village shop and Post Office to an alternative site within the Felsted Neighbourhood Area in a sustainable, accessible location which includes adequate car parking will be supported.

In the event that the village shop and Post Office are vacated, change of use from Class A1 (Shops and retail outlet) to Class A3 (Food and drink), A2 (Professional Services), Class B1 (Business) and/or residential use on the site (shown on Map 3) will be supported.

Proposals must demonstrate that they will not exacerbate existing traffic congestion and parking issues at this location.

### Royal British Legion Site

- 5.1.11. The Plan recognises and seeks to support The Royal British Legion (RBL) as a valued and respected asset to the community. However, notwithstanding the affection in which it is held by members, the current building is of no architectural merit, detracts significantly from the setting of the Grade I Listed Norman Church and is not located centrally in relation to the more significant areas of population in the Parish. Parking is also limited. In the event that the RBL should seek to relocate within the Parish, the Plan supports moving the Club premises further east.
- 5.1.12. There are no existing public conveniences within the Historic Village Centre. There was previously WC provision at the side of The Swan Public House although this was removed following the withdrawal of Local Authority funding. During the public consultation, the lack of WC provision was raised as an issue for the SG to address, particularly at the first village open meeting where issues and options were considered.
- 5.1.13. The existing site of the RBL building and adjacent properties identified on Map 2 is ideally situated for the creation of public open space. In the event of any of those identified properties being

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<sup>9</sup> UDC Draft Local Plan Policy RET4



vacated, opportunities are presented to create significant improvements to the setting of the Grade I Listed Holy Cross Church which serves as a significant focal point for the HVC in terms of local character and identity.

- 5.1.14. The Plan supports the creation of more public open space at the western end of Holy Cross Church incorporating the relocated Market Cross.
- 5.1.15. Due to the significance of this site in providing enhanced open space and public realm within the setting of the adjacent Holy Cross Church and due to the need to retain existing car parking capacity on the site it would not be appropriate to re-develop the site for housing or other uses that generate significant additional demand for parking spaces. The wider site is in a mix of ownerships, including the Parish Council, the British Legion and private landowners.
- 5.1.16. With regard to delivery, consideration has been given to the Felsted Community Trust being the organisation to fund and manage this project. The SG acknowledges that this project is partially aspirational, although not undeliverable. The Community Trust will be in receipt of rental revenue from the new doctors' surgery (Policy FEL/HN3) and monies generated will be used to fund other community projects, as decided by the Trust.

**FEL/HVC3** The relocation of Royal British Legion (RBL) elsewhere within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In the event that it successfully relocates within the Parish, the site (as shown on Map 2) is safeguarded for community use and for the provision of accessible public open space.

Proposals are sought which:

- i) Incorporate a public open space to enhance the setting of the Grade 1 Listed Holy Cross Church;
- ii) Accommodate the Market Cross stone;
- iii) Enhance the setting of the Conservation Area by creating a focal point using public realm improvements; and
- iv) Include the provision of accessible public conveniences.

#### **Additional car parking in the Historic Village Centre**

- 5.1.17. Congestion in the HVC at the 'T' junction of Chelmsford Road, Station Road and Braintree Road was amongst the most serious areas of concern raised during the consultation process. There are two main factors that contribute to the congestion; parked vehicles at all business premises at the 'T' junction and congestion caused by parents dropping and collecting children from Felsted School, especially those turning right into and out of the school grounds from Braintree Road.
- 5.1.18. In late 2015 and early 2016, the Steering Group arranged for a traffic survey to be undertaken by volunteers from the Parish. The survey was conducted during school term-time, to monitor the levels of traffic moving through the village. The results demonstrated nearly 4,000 traffic movements through the Parish at peak time of 7 – 9am, an increase of some 25% on a similar survey undertaken in 2007.
- 5.1.19. There is very limited scope in the HVC to increase parking facilities to resolve these issues. It is also recognised that on-street parking provides a form of traffic-calming, helping to reduce vehicle

speeds. As such its removal would likely require traffic calming measures. Policy HVC3 seeks to ensure that development takes account of the need to reduce traffic and, where reduction is unachievable, to mitigate its impact.

- 5.1.20. The Plan supports Uttlesford Local Plan's policy on Electric Vehicles (EVs) and the installation of active spaces and passive provision for all appropriate developments. Active spaces are fully wired and connected, ready to use, EV charging points at parking spaces. Passive provision requires the necessary underlying infrastructure wiring (e.g. the capacity in the connection to the local electricity network and electricity distribution board, as well as cabling to parking spaces) to enable simple installation and activation of a charge point at a later date.

**FEL/HVC4** The provision of additional off-street parking spaces within the Felsted Village Development Limits (as shown on Map 13) will be welcomed where they:

- do not harm the character or appearance of the local area;
- are appropriately landscaped;
- are sensitively designed to reflect the local area and any surrounding buildings; and
- alleviate pressure on the local highway network.

The installation of EV charging points infrastructure (active or passive) in all developments (domestic and commercial) with parking facilities will be supported.

#### **Managing Road Congestion at Felsted Village T Junction**

- 5.1.21. Movement of traffic through the village at peak times, particularly at drop off and pick up times at Felsted School, is significantly impeded by parked cars and goods deliveries at businesses within the HVC, in particular along Station Road, Chelmsford Road and Braintree road.
- 5.1.22. New development along such routes will unavoidably exacerbate existing issues of traffic congestion and therefore the following policy introduces a requirement for new developments to minimise any adverse impact that they may have on traffic flow or parking stress issues. This should be assessed and measured through the planning application process. Planning applications will be required to include a traffic impact assessment to demonstrate that the proposal will not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate parking issues or identify and include appropriate mitigation measures where it cannot be demonstrated that there is no adverse impact.

**FEL/HVC5** Development proposals which would increase the number of access points or significantly increase the volume of traffic in the areas identified on Map 2 (see below) must be accompanied by a traffic impact statement to demonstrate how they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate conditions of parking stress, including conflict with larger vehicles, or identify and include appropriate mitigation measures where this cannot be demonstrated:

- (i) that section of Station Road between the Mill Road and Chelmsford Road junctions;
- (ii) that section of Chelmsford Road between Station Road and Cromwell Park; and
- (iii) that section of Braintree Road between Chelmsford Road and the War Memorial

## 5.2. Village Amenities

- 5.2.1. Throughout the consultation process, the community has been insistent that the Plan should do everything possible to protect the amenities we currently enjoy. This has proved challenging. The Doctors expressed a strong preference for a new location on the extreme western edge of the parish. In general development on the edge of parish is inconsistent with another objective, that of resisting coalescence.
- 5.2.2. The shop is another valued amenity. Many parishioners have said it is the 'heart of the community'. However, the shop occupies a listed building in the village centre that constrains its ability to offer the kind of range of services that will be required throughout the Plan Period for it to remain viable as a commercial enterprise. Even if the shop could expand on this site, it would then exacerbate the problem of congestion in the village centre, another issue the SG has also been asked to resolve. If the shop is to continue to operate competitively and extend its services it will eventually, and in our view during the Plan Period, need to move to a larger and more accessible site.
- 5.2.3. The SG attempted to find a site that would allow co-location of amenities in a new Community Hub that met the needs of all stakeholders but was unable to do so. The Plan therefore includes policies that offer as much support as possible to the individual amenities to preserve their accessibility throughout the Plan Period.
- 5.2.4. During the course of preparation of the Plan, the SG received a presentation on a 'Dementia Unit' project for 120 residents in a community setting. The SG was impressed by the presentation. The SG considered that the unit was innovative and potentially offered a valuable amenity for our ageing community which, because of the proposed style, had relatively limited impact on the rural character of the parish. It also offered some limited benefits in relation to rural employment. On balance, the SG supported the project. However, we carefully considered whether it was within our remit to support the specific proposal and concluded that it had not been consulted on sufficiently for a specific policy to be included in the Plan.
- 5.2.5. The Plan recognises that new technologies offer the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and encourage the use of electric vehicles. The installation of EV charging points infrastructure (active or passive) in accordance with agreed minimum standards will be strongly encouraged and supported at all developments (domestic and commercial) with parking facilities.
- 5.2.6. The Policies in this section help to deliver the vision for Felsted by supporting valued amenities to remain in the Parish in appropriate and modernised facilities whilst providing for appropriate development which does not cause additional stress to the highway network. Additionally, the policies support the provision of further village amenities and protect valued play and sports facilities within the Parish.

### Doctors' Surgery

- 5.2.7. Retaining a surgery is a key community objective identified for inclusion in the Plan and it is the intention of this Plan to support the re-location of the doctors' surgery within the Parish. Parishioners expressed strong support for the doctors but wished to see a surgery that offered easier parking, better accessibility and a wider range of health services.
- 5.2.8. The existing single storey surgery building is located in the Conservation Area in close proximity to the Grade I Listed Cricket Pavilion. Any replacement structure of more than a single storey risks negatively impacting on the setting of this designated heritage asset. Single storey residential use or

office use would be an appropriate re-use of the site in the event that it is vacated. The Plan ensures that the existing surgery site is not redeveloped without concern for the character and nature of the village setting and does not continue to contribute to congestion in the village.

**FEL/VA1** The relocation of the GP surgery and associated dispensary within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In the event that the Surgery successfully relocates within the Neighbourhood Area, the redevelopment of the site (as identified as VA1 on Map 3) for residential (C3) or professional services/office (A2) uses will be supported, where the proposal:

- conserves and enhances the character and setting of the Grade I Listed Cricket Pavilion; and
- does not adversely affect visual or residential amenity including through noise or traffic generation.

Proposals must demonstrate that they include adequate off-street parking provision and will not exacerbate problems related to existing traffic congestion at this location.

### **Memorial Hall**

- 5.2.9. Now over 90 years old The Memorial Hall, though greatly valued, can no longer be expected to meet all the needs of our enlarged community. The Hall is relatively small and was constructed to accommodate the needs of a population of just a third of the current size. It is lacking in modern amenities and has no real capacity to expand. The community has said it wants a larger place to meet; to hold private functions e.g. family parties, to facilitate larger community groups and to provide a venue for public meetings.
- 5.2.10. The site of the Memorial Hall is also important in that, potentially, it could provide vehicular access from Braintree Road to the Parish playing field and children's activity area. The current access is for pedestrians only: there is no vehicular access directly from Braintree Road. In the event that the Memorial Hall is relocated or redeveloped, the Plan seeks to improve vehicular access to these amenities.
- 5.2.11. A board of trustees administers the Memorial Hall. The trustees made it clear to the SG that their first choice is for the Memorial Hall, which they consider has significant sentimental value and important visual impact, to remain as it is and simply be refurbished. As an alternative the trustees would consider moving to the back of the existing site. Whilst this may provide access to the children's play area (5.2.9 above) neither of these proposals contribute to the Plan's wider objectives in relation to enhancing amenities.
- 5.2.12. The Plan therefore seeks to support the delivery of a new Village Hall as an asset for wider community use and safeguards the existing site for the benefit of the community. The re-development of the Memorial Hall also provides a significant opportunity to accommodate the re-location of the Village Shop as supported by Policy HVC2.

**FEL/VA2** The redevelopment of the Memorial Hall (as shown as VA2 on Map 3) with a capacity of up to 250 people seated on the existing site or at another suitable site within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported.

In the event of the successful re-location of the Memorial Hall to an alternative site within the Neighbourhood Area, the site is safeguarded for a community use and/or A1 Retail. Provision of a new Village Shop and Post Office (as defined as a 'Small Shop' by the Sunday Trading Hours Act 1994) will be supported, in line with Policy HVC2.

Access to the recreational areas at the rear of the site should be improved to provide vehicular access, and additional car parking facilities.

### Infrastructure Priorities

5.2.13. Also, pivotal to maintaining the integrity of Felsted is preserving the amenities within the Parish. In the event of housing proposals coming forward which trigger a Local Plan requirement for affordable housing and where there is no unmet need for such housing in the Parish, the infrastructure requirements set out in Policy **VA3** will take priority. Development proposals will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of necessary community infrastructure where appropriate. Section 106<sup>10</sup> contributions will meet the tests set out in the NPPF and be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

5.2.14. Given the proposed housing development in and around Felsted over the Plan period, it is possible the existing primary school will need to accommodate an increased pupil intake. (See section 5.3, below). The Plan therefore directs infrastructure provision to support the potential expansion of the primary school, or appropriate enhancement of the existing facilities on the site, for example through the replacement of existing temporary buildings to facilitate the anticipated future growth.

5.2.15. Similarly, there are local aspirations for the replacement of both the Royal British Legion and the Memorial Hall. Conversations about both projects are ongoing, and the Plan includes policies to support those ambitions. The Plan therefore directs developer contributions through the Felsted Community Trust or Section 106 monies to support the realisation of projects such as improvements to the primary school, securing continued provision of a village hall and the Royal British Legion within our parish.

5.2.16. When considering the nature of developer contributions in respect of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area, the following local infrastructure requirements will be given priority:

- Improvements to and enlargement of the Primary School;
- A village hall to accommodate up to 250 seated people;
- Premises for the relocation of the Royal British Legion

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<sup>10</sup> Section 106 (S106) Agreements are legal agreements between Local Authorities and developers linked to planning permissions and are also known as planning obligations. They often include requirements for financial contributions from developers. Should Section 106 be supplemented by the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) the conditionality in VA3 is intended to similarly apply.

**FEL/VA3** As part of any major development proposal, financial contributions or direct provision of new infrastructure will be sought to secure infrastructure improvements made necessary by the scheme. In some cases, it will be appropriate for provision to be focused and delivered on-site (e.g. on site play provision) and in other cases it may be more appropriate for provision to be focused off-site for example through contributing towards the Neighbourhood Plan's identified infrastructure priorities namely:

- Improvements to and enlargement of the Primary School;
- A village hall to accommodate up to 250 seated people;
- and Premises for the relocation of the Royal British Legion.

### **Burial Ground**

- 5.2.17. The cemetery at Holy Cross Church is closed and there is concern that there is no alternative facility. The Plan seeks to support the identification of a new sympathetically located burial ground within the Parish that provides safe vehicular access and adequate parking for visitors. If a new burial ground is identified the opportunity must be taken to design the grounds as additional green infrastructure to provide multiple benefits such as improvements to biodiversity, sense of place and improvement of health and well-being (including spiritual). Amenity provision and environmental enhancements will be encouraged.

**FEL/VA4** The provision of a new burial ground within the Neighbourhood Area that provides safe vehicular access, adequate and sympathetically designed parking for visitors and which enhances and/or extends the Green Infrastructure will be supported.

### **Recreational and Play Facilities**

- 5.2.18. Recreational and play facilities are recognised as important amenities and form an integral part of the Green Infrastructure of the Parish. They contribute to the health and well-being of the community and were considered as valuable community assets during the consultations on the preparation of the Plan.

**FEL/VA5** The change of use of any existing recreational or play facilities will not be supported unless an equivalent alternative facility is provided in an acceptable location within the Neighbourhood Area.



### **5.3. Developing Our Schools**

- 5.3.1. The development of the schools in the Parish is strongly supported but, whilst recognising their cultural, social and economic importance, the community has demanded that greater consideration be given to their overall impact on the Parish. In particular there is concern that insufficient recognition is given to the congestion caused by school traffic.
- 5.3.2. Felsted School has developed new facilities and the Plan recognises the likelihood of a continuing need for development throughout the Plan period.
- 5.3.3. Felsted Primary School at Watch House Green also needs better facilities. Temporary classrooms need to be replaced and some additional buildings may be required during the Plan period in light of probable growth in demand for school places.
- 5.3.4. The Plan seeks to address these concerns by establishing generic policies for all Schools' development and specific policies for each school. The policies are intended to:
- Mitigate the impact of school traffic
  - Secure the future of a primary school within the Parish
  - Control parking and improve road safety
  - Encourage wider community use of school facilities
- 5.3.5. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by providing support to the continuation and positive development of our highly-esteemed schools. Support is provided for the expansion of facilities and modernisation of facilities, whilst requiring that congestion and parking issues are addressed through new development proposals, helping to ensure that the schools continue to make a positive contribution to our Parish.

#### **Supporting our Schools**

- 5.3.6. Felsted is known as much for the quality of its schools as it is for its beautiful rural setting. Both the state primary school and Felsted School do much to enhance the reputation of the community, provide employment and enhance the social fabric of Felsted. The Plan seeks to offer the schools support and to encourage their development as places of educational excellence. At the same time, the Plan also seeks to mitigate the negative impacts of the schools on wider parish life by focusing on the schools' impact on traffic congestion.

**FEL/SC1** The following development proposals by the schools will be supported:

- Proposals to enable expansion and improvement of the schools and, other than those specifically supported in SC5, subject to it being demonstrated that they will:
  1. Ease the free flow of traffic and reduce parking stress.
  2. Wherever possible provide wider community benefit.
- Park and Ride or Park and Walk schemes which are sympathetically designed, alleviate pressure on the local highways network and respect the character and appearance of the local area.
- Proposals that provide additional sympathetically designed parking within or adjacent to the existing school site boundaries and include effective and deliverable traffic management schemes.

Development proposals that do not include sufficient off-street parking provision and/or or effective and deliverable traffic management schemes will not be supported.

**Felsted School**

- 5.3.7. Stebbing Road runs directly through the 80-acre site occupied by Felsted School. The school has major facilities for students on both sides of this road, frequently requiring students to move across the road during the school day. Stebbing Road has a 30mph speed limit. The further development of facilities on the school site will increase pedestrian traffic. Though a public thoroughfare, consideration should be given to how priority can be given to pedestrians and in turn to slow vehicular traffic. The Plan makes recommendations in the non-planning section to address this issue.

**FEL/SC2** Subject to SC1, the expansion of Felsted School's permanent facilities off Stebbing Road will be supported providing they include deliverable pedestrian priority plans developed in consultation with Essex County Council Highways to improve public safety in that section of Stebbing Road as marked on Map 4.

**Felsted School Follyfield Site**

- 5.3.8. The location of the School's facilities in the centre of the village present a particularly acute challenge. The Plan seeks to ensure that the partial alleviation of congestion, currently provided by the use by the School of the Follyfield site for parking, are not lost through development of additional School facilities.
- 5.3.9. Access and egress of the Follyfield site by parents at peak times cause significant impediments to the free-flow of traffic through the centre of the village, and is evidenced by the Traffic Survey undertaken by the SG and volunteers. Whilst the Plan provides support for the development of the school to ensure that it continues in its role as a valued asset to the Parish, it is acknowledged by the School and by residents that school pick up and drop off times give rise to significant traffic management issues, which remain a cause for concern.
- 5.3.10. Redevelopment of Felsted School is supported but the SG is keen to ensure that existing parking capacity on the Follyfield site is not compromised as a result of development proposals as well as

ensuring that issues currently caused by accessing the site are not exacerbated. Policy SC3 therefore introduces a requirement for a traffic management proposals to be submitted as part of a planning application to ensure that development proposals take full account of any adverse impacts on traffic issues and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures.

- 5.3.11. The preparation of the Schools section of the Plan has been undertaken in close collaboration with both schools as key stakeholders. Felsted School is keen to ensure that any future development is mutually beneficial for the wider community, recognising the impact that it has on local highways infrastructure, particularly in respect of traffic caused at peak times.

**FEL/SC3** Any redevelopment of Felsted School's Follyfield site (as shown on Map 4) must include provision for parking and not reduce the existing off-road parking capacity (68 vehicles) without equivalent alternative provision.

Unless effective alternative traffic management solutions are developed, proposals must include a single vehicular entry and a single vehicular exit point to the public highway between the houses on Braintree Road known as The Folly and Rose Cottage and must also include a deliverable traffic management scheme to manage 'right turns' to and from the public highway.

#### **Felsted School Facilities off Braintree Road or Garnetts Lane**

- 5.3.12. Whilst recognising the economic importance of Felsted School and supporting its continuing need for development, the Plan also recognises the need to ensure that development does not impair the open aspects of the village centre or create an urban or overbuilt environment detached from the overall rural community setting of the Parish. Consequently, the Plan supports the growth and redevelopment of Felsted School facilities but requires consideration to be given to their impact on the wider community and *where possible* to sharing amenities for wider community use.
- 5.3.13. The AECOM report notes the important contribution that Felsted School makes to the character of the Parish. The Plan supports that contribution and developments of the School that are sensitive to local character. The report highlights the substantial areas of well-maintained green space within Felsted School, which provide the setting of the historic buildings of the School. The report also notes that the cumulative impact of continued development of Felsted School has the potential to erode the character of the area and that open space in the village and rural fringes contributes positively to the setting and significance of heritage assets in the area.
- 5.3.14. Views from Braintree Road and Garnetts Lane across the significant open space in front of the main school building are defining factors in the character of the village centre, providing a locally-distinctive and historic landscape character. Further developments in Braintree Road or in Garnetts Lane have potentially negative and harmful impacts on the open views of the school.

**FEL/SC4** Any further development of Felsted School Facilities off Braintree Road or Garnetts Lane will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated through a townscape impact appraisal that the existing open vistas and views of the school will be maintained or enhanced.

### **Felsted Primary School – Modernisation**

- 5.3.15. The SG carefully considered future potential growth of Felsted Primary School. The ECC document ‘Meeting the demand for school places in Essex 2019-2028’ indicates that there is no immediate Plan to increase the pupil intake of the School. However, it does show forecast data (both with and without actual birth information) indicating a small anticipated shortfall of places and an increasing trend for pupil numbers beyond the ECC plan period of 2028. As the plan period extends 5 years beyond the ECC Plan period up to 2033, the FNSG consider it prudent to assume at least a possibility of the school needing to increase pupil intake during NP period.
- 5.3.16. Felsted Primary School has ‘single form entry’. It is possible that during the Plan Period, there will be continued growth requiring the School to expand its facilities. The Plan seeks to both meet the School’s current needs and provide a contingency for expansion.
- 5.3.17. The Plan recognises and seeks to support the Primary School’s need for modernisation. In particular, the existing temporary structures are incompatible with the delivery of high-quality education of the standard the community demands throughout the Plan period.
- 5.3.18. The primary aim of the policies in this section of the Plan is to support improvements and growth of Felsted Primary School on the *existing* site.
- 5.3.19. Notwithstanding the requirements of SC1, the Plan considers it unreasonable for modernisation of Felsted Primary School to be constrained, in limited circumstances, by any requirement for the school also to be required to address external issues of parking and traffic management. Therefore, the Plan supports the replacement of *existing* temporary structures without the conditionality contained in SC1 above.

#### **FEL/SC5**

Notwithstanding the general conditionality of SC1, the replacement of existing temporary buildings and other measures that modernise the Primary School (as shown on Map 5) will be supported where they are of sympathetic design and an appropriate scale.

### **Felsted Primary School Expansion**

- 5.3.20. Parking and congestion is already a very significant concern at the existing Primary School site. The community is concerned about the extant congestion problem around the School, its impact on through traffic and the risk of accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians.
- 5.3.21. To alleviate these issues, the Plan applies policy SC1 and SC6 and makes any *expansion* of the school’s facilities conditional on significant improvements to parking, public safety and traffic congestion. Additionally, the Plan identifies a site at Sunnybrook Farm for the development of new homes contingent on the developer providing both parking and drop-off facilities for School.

**FEL/SC6** The development and expansion of the Primary School on the existing site as shown on Map 5 will be supported providing the proposal is accompanied by a detailed and deliverable traffic management scheme potentially including:

- i) New vehicular access and egress for the school;
- ii) Substantial off-street short-term waiting;
- iii) Adequate off-street parking for staff;
- iv) Safe off-road drop-off and pick-up areas;
- v) Enhanced parking restrictions in the vicinity of the School;
- vi) Modal shift through travel planning;
- vii) Improved walking and cycling routes and facilities;
- viii) Measures to reduce unsafe or inappropriate parking; or
- ix) Speed reduction.

5.3.22. A secondary aim of Schools Policies in the Plan is to provide support for appropriate development of the Felsted Primary School Site *should* it become necessary to relocate the Primary School within the Parish. The re-development of the site for housing should be based on thorough consultation and engagement with the local community through the preparation of the development brief which sets out the design of the development, mix of houses and the incorporation of Green Infrastructure.

**FEL/SC7** In the event that the Primary School is successfully relocated to an alternative location within the Neighbourhood Area, the development of housing on the site (as shown on Map 5) will be supported subject to the development comprising a mix of the following:

- 2-3 bedroom homes;
- Downsizing opportunities;
- Homes suitable for elderly people; and
- Starter homes.

Development proposals must be based on active consultation by the applicant with the community and the Parish Council through the provision of a development brief prior to any application being submitted.

#### **5.4. Meeting Housing Needs**

- 5.4.1. The Plan policies aim to meet housing needs and address the community's concerns by offering policies which take a positive approach to sustainable development, but which also ensure maximum community benefits.
- 5.4.2. Consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Plan supports a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals by decision-makers to identify sustainable proposals that can contribute positively to the Parish.
- 5.4.3. Neighbourhood Plans are not required to allocate sites for housing development. However, in order to maximise the benefits of accepting new housing development, in a climate of there being an identified "housing crisis" and an increasing demand for housing in Felsted, the Steering Group decided to allocate housing sites to meet current and anticipated future demand in Felsted. The allocations proactively contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and, at the same time, use the allocations to resolve major community issues.
- 5.4.4. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by ensuring that the historic character of our Parish is protected whilst accommodating the delivery of new housing which meets identified need and also provides substantial benefit to the community. The policies ensure that new developments contribute positively to the village and are well integrated. Additionally, the policies provide support for appropriate development that meets additional needs generated by our population profile and provides the opportunity for younger people to access the market in affordable, high-quality housing.
- 5.4.5. The ageing demographic profile of our community requires that special consideration be given in planning policy to ensuring that valued amenities like the doctors' surgery, dispensary, village shop and Post Office are supported so they remain viable and accessible.
- 5.4.6. Accurately identifying the future need for affordable housing is essential to developing effective housing policy. Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) should be conducted every 3 years to ensure that the Parish's 'need' is properly understood on a continuing basis throughout the Plan period to 2033. A HNS was conducted in Felsted in 2016 by the RCCE.
- 5.4.7. The Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) conducted a survey to determine the affordable housing need for the 3 years commencing May 2016. The survey identified a need for 14 new affordable homes, which had been met by 2018. The survey is valid for 3 years.
- 5.4.8. A significant consideration for the Plan is meeting the specific needs of the ageing demographic of the Parish. Felsted's population in relation to the national profile and the Uttlesford profile is comparatively much older.



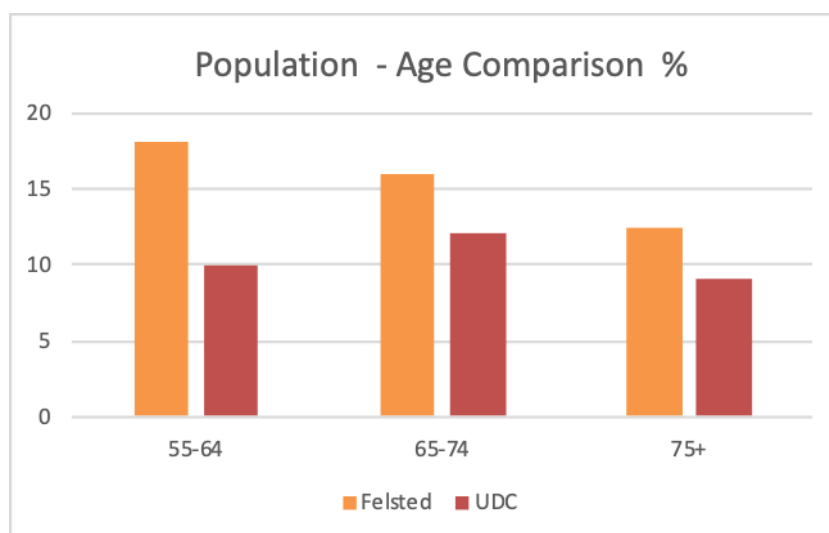


Figure 14 Office of National Statistics - 2011 Census data

- 5.4.9. Among this increasing number of older members of the community in Felsted, there is concern about the lack of suitable properties for downsizing. Many active older people occupy substantial family houses and, whilst they would like smaller, easier to manage properties, they do not want to relinquish the standard of comfort and amenity their homes provide or move away from Felsted - where they have long established social and family connections - to find suitable smaller places to live.
- 5.4.10. The survey of estate agents confirmed the anecdotal evidence gathered. Felsted is a highly desirable place to live and there is demand for housing of all kinds. This can be summed up by the comments of one agent who said, 'Build whatever you like in Felsted and it will sell'. Smaller homes, which encouraged older owners of large well-appointed family homes to downsize were in short supply as were lower cost, entry level homes.
- 5.4.11. Housing policies in the Plan are intended to maintain the rural character and heritage of the Parish as characterised in the AECOM report and to:-
- Meet any identified need for affordable housing
  - Help younger people remain in the Parish
  - Ensure development is controlled and is sustainable
  - Extract the maximum community value from major development<sup>11</sup>
  - Encourage the development of small high-quality homes suitable for downsizers with local connections to the Parish
  - Protect the Parish and its constituent hamlets from coalescence
  - Protect the character and heritage of the Parish
  - Protect and enhance the natural environment and Green Infrastructure network
- 5.4.12. The policy response to consultation requests, '*to provide more opportunity to downsize*' and '*to create opportunity for younger parishioners to remain*' is important to create conditions that foster social cohesion. Policies in the Plan should also encourage people to give up homes which are too large for their needs and provide opportunities for families to acquire larger family homes in the Parish without excessive over-development.
- 5.4.13. UDC's draft Local Plan identifies Felsted as a Type A village. In early drafts of the Local Plan, Felsted (or

<sup>11</sup> 'Major development' means inter alia, '10 or more dwellings' (TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, ENGLAND. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Part 1, Article 2.)

other Type A villages – with the exception of Quendon and Rickling) were not identified as settlements that would see additional housing development through allocation in the Local Plan. However, in October 2017, the Government launched the consultation document “Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places”, which set out a revised methodology for Local Planning Authorities’ Objectively Assessed Needs for housing growth. The consultation document stated very clearly that the figures calculated for each Local Planning Authority would be a minimum. The document stated a figure of some 136 units per year higher than set out in the draft UDC Local Plan. In the absence of a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites (a requirement of the NPPF), there is an increasing level of interest and speculative development proposals coming forward, particularly in Felsted which has a very strong housing market.

- 5.4.14. Following informal conversations with UDC planning officers and consideration by the SG, it was recognised that the Parish would strongly resist any further housing development, but at the same time it was likely that the revised draft Local Plan would allocate housing sites for development in Felsted. UDC were unable to provide figures on a parish-by-parish basis, so were unable to identify a target number of units that Felsted would have to accommodate.
- 5.4.15. In order to maximise the benefits and choice for the community from the likely housing growth in the Plan period, the SG decided to push ahead with allocating sites for housing development in order to meet likely future needs, and to contribute to the higher target at a Local Plan level. Although the SG were reluctant to include further housing development in the Plan, it recognised the responsible way forward would be for the NP to allocate housing sites in order to prevent unwanted or unsuitable development that would otherwise be likely to come forward over the Plan period.
- 5.4.16. UDC have not provided a housing target at a neighbourhood-area level, and the SG therefore had to develop an appropriate methodology which is based on Planning Practice Guidance. This methodology also reflects local circumstances and the range of sites that may come forward as suggested by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)<sup>12</sup>. The process of establishing a housing target for Felsted and the consequent site selection to meet this target is set out in the Site Justification Evidence Base document.
- 5.4.17. The Plan’s support for *any* additional market housing in the Parish has been strictly conditional on the basis that the schemes identified contribute to ongoing sustainability and bring with them significant long-term benefits to the community as identified through the consultation process
- 5.4.18. The specific development proposals identified in this Plan reflect the specific concerns of the community in relation to securing a doctors’ surgery within the Parish and relieving the congestion caused by parking around Felsted Primary School. Both issues were recurring and consistent themes of the extensive consultations. Many months of negotiations with stakeholders provided unique opportunities to both secure a most valued community asset and to ease serious traffic congestion in the parish. These opportunities would have been lost if the SG had not engaged with prospective developers.

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<sup>12</sup> The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is a technical study that informs the development of planning policies. It forms a register of available and achievable development sites and is used by the Local Planning Authority to determine how much land is available for housing. Sites are submitted to the SLAA for consideration during the Local Plan process and may be allocated by the Local Planning Authority for housing development.

**FEL/HN1** The following sites are allocated for housing development of up to 63 new homes within the Plan period:

- FEL/HN2: Sunnybrook Farm Site (24 units)
- FEL/HN3: Bury Farm Site (39 units)

Proposals for allocated housing sites are expected to come forward within years 1 – 5 of the Plan period.

### Housing Site Allocations

- 5.4.19. Identifying sites for development has been the most difficult aspect of the NP process. Parishioners have been unanimous in resisting further development. We have been particularly mindful of the strenuous opposition to any further development voiced by the residents of some areas of the Parish who feel besieged by building that has, in their view, irreversibly damaged the amenity of their communities. The community at Watch House Green has been particularly vocal in its objections to any further development. However, we have an obligation to support some development. We have carefully considered the long-term benefits, which could accrue from limited developments throughout the Plan Period and we have ensured that no single area bears the burden of unwanted development.
- 5.4.20. Sites have been considered and objectively assessed for their suitability, deliverability, achievability and availability and their contribution to the community. The potential sites were identified from the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). The assessment provided by the SLAA formed the basis for the SG's Site Assessment work. Each site assessment included the UDC Status comment and where relevant the comments submitted to UDC by Felsted Parish Council.
- 5.4.21. Following the assessment process, and with consideration of the target set by Policy HN1, the sites at Sunnybrook Farm in Braintree Road (SHLAA site 20FEL15) and land adjacent to Bury Farm on the north side of Station Road (SHLAA site 01Fel15) were considered both appropriate and sustainable sites for new housing development in Felsted. Both sites offered very significant community benefits. Details of the assessment process are provided in the Site Assessment Evidence Base document. UDC's emerging Local Plan also identifies SHLAA site FEL2 Land East of Braintree Road for development. However, the NP does not allocate this site as other sites offer significantly greater community benefits.
- 5.4.22. Dialogue with landowners and their agents confirm that both schemes of development will be well within the Plan period. The landowner of the Bury Farm site recognises that the CCG's need for a new surgery in the next 18 -24 months. The landowner at Sunnybrook farm is less externally constrained but is nevertheless keen to see the development proceed quickly.
- 5.4.23. In relation to the UDC Local Plan, the site at Sunnybrook Farm (SLAA site 20FEL15) although assessed by UDC as '*available and development is considered achievable*' is not included in the Local Plan. The Site at land adjacent to Bury Farm (SHLAA site 01FEL15) is identified as Residential Development site (FEL1) site in the UDC Local Plan as Policy FEL 01.
- 5.4.24. The Neighbourhood Plan opposes development identified in the UDC Local Plan as FEL 2 as Land East of Braintree Road (SHLAA sites 17FEL15). Throughout the Plan we have ensured that the allocations we have proposed deliver enough housing to meet any reasonable allocation that could be applied to Felsted and also deliver additional benefits to the community. The additional development proposed

for this site would, when taken cumulatively with the proposed development on the NP allocated sites, be excessive and far more than the Parish should reasonably be expected to support. The application has twice been rejected by UDC's Planning Committee and the SG consider that support by the UDC Local Plan for this site should be withdrawn. At most the site should be considered as a possible future Rural Exception site.

- 5.4.25. **The Sunnybrook Farm site in Braintree Road. SHLAA site 20FEL15:** Traffic congestion around the Felsted Primary School is an immediate and significant problem the community wants the Plan to address. Traffic surveys conducted revealed that a journey through the village was seriously impeded by more than 100 vehicles parked around the school. Local residents in Braintree Road and Ravens Crescent frequently complain of their driveways being blocked. Buses and other large vehicles are often obstructed at the junction of the B1417 and Ravens Crescent and on average a journey through the village takes five times longer during school opening and closing hours.
- 5.4.26. The Primary School is full and there is continuing pressure for places. During the Neighbourhood Plan Period – which extends beyond the ECC strategic plan period for the school – the SG considers there is a possibility the school will be under pressure to increase pupil intake. A larger primary school pupil population will attract additional vehicles and exacerbate the existing problems of traffic congestion and public safety. Therefore, it is considered prudent not only to address the current problem, but to make adequate provision for any increase in the size of the school over the Plan Period. The school has been consulted and supports the provision of the parking and the additional school facilities to meet immediate needs.
- 5.4.27. Development of the school as a service is outside the control of the Parish Council and is a matter for Essex County Council as the Education Authority. There is insufficient land in parish or currently in ECC ownership adjacent or sufficiently close to the school for off-road parking for school traffic. Additionally, given the pressure on education budgets, there can be no expectation that ECC could in the foreseeable future fund measures to alleviate traffic congestion caused by school traffic. Consequently, to resolve this high-priority concern identified through consultation, the SG engaged with a neighbouring land-owner.
- 5.4.28. Sunnybrook Farm site is immediately adjacent to the Primary School. Housing development on this site provides an opportunity to mitigate the congestion currently caused by school traffic and to provide some contingency for an increase in the size of the school. Support for the housing development proposal is entirely contingent on the provision by the developer of a new road to the west of the School and generous off-road parking and drop-off areas. The specific location, design and details will take account of the operational requirements of the school and Education Authority and maximise land use, including the potential for the integration of the very small area of land under the control of Essex County Council.
- 5.4.29. The landowner has agreed to convey the land for the parking and the 'kiss and drop' area to the Parish through the Felsted Community Trust. Over the period of the Plan, the acquisition of this parking area offers the Trust an opportunity for a revenue stream through providing funding at the Trust's discretion for future community projects.
- 5.4.30. The Plan supports the development of 24 dwellings on this site on the basis of the additional benefits to the community by alleviating traffic congestion caused by the School at Watch House Green through the provision of significant off-street parking, a 'kiss and drop' facility and the proposed housing mix which promises opportunities for downsizing and first-time buyers.
- 5.4.31. This site was assessed as a SHLAA site by UDC and was found unsuitable as it is considered that development would not contribute to sustainable patterns of development as it could lead to

coalescence

- 5.4.32. The SG also carefully examined the issue of coalescence and the visual impact of the scheme. The development is not linear and, whilst in general the Plan resists 'back land development', the scheme assists in maintaining the visual transition from Felsted village to the settlement at Watch House Green. Its impact is further mitigated by the proposal to retain the existing hedgerows and to 'double plant' a buffer zone in order to provide screening and protect amenity.
- 5.4.33. The Plan attaches significantly greater weight to the opportunity this development provides for delivering the urgent objective of reducing congestion caused by school traffic and does not therefore consider the limited degree of coalescence a precluding factor.
- 5.4.34. Properly secured to avoid inappropriate use, the site also offers an opportunity for a safe and secure recreational area. The car park will also serve as an additional recreational facility primarily for the Primary school but also for the wider community.
- 5.4.35. Indicative drawings for how the scheme could be laid out when brought forward by the developer are shown in Appendix 1.
- 5.4.36. The SG have had extensive discussions with the developers of this site and have agreed that the scheme, when brought forward, will include:
- Proposals for on-site SUDS through the provision of swales to mitigate surface water run-off<sup>13</sup> unless drainage studies dictate otherwise;
  - Measures for screening and landscape buffers to the site to avoiding coalescence;
  - A kiss and drop facility for the Primary School and significant car parking; and
  - A mix of dwellings to address local needs.
  - A landscape buffer which could take various forms such as extended gardens, thick planning screen or bunding. The preferences of individual occupiers concerning the depth and design of this buffer will be established and a suitable scheme drawn up as a result. Issues of privacy will be taken into account, particularly if any footpaths are required to the north of the buffer.
- 5.4.37. Development of this site is considered as enabling development allowing the significant problem of traffic congestion around the primary school to be addressed. Affordable housing provision will need to take account of the effect on the viability of the development as a whole and its requirement to deliver the parking and kiss and drop facilities.
- 5.4.38. The landowners is supportive of the site being allocated and has conducted a viability appraisal. The AECOM viability study evidence supporting this plan has also confirmed the scheme is viable and can deliver the community identified benefits.

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<sup>13</sup> SUDS: Are physical structures built to receive surface water run-off and provide a drainage system;  
Swales: Are dry channels or ditches and basins are dry "ponds".

**FEL/HN2** The Plan allocates the Sunnybrook Farm Site as shown on Map 6 and Map 7 for housing development of 24 units. Development on this site will:

- I. Include a new access road, a kiss and drop facility and significant off-road landscaped secure car parking provision for approximately 90 vehicles, including contingency provision pending future expansion of the Primary School. These should be designed to take account of any reasonable operational requirements of the school and maximise land use. All mitigation measures, including any off-site highway measures, will be secured through appropriate legal agreement(s) or, where appropriate, Grampian style planning conditions;
- II. Be well-screened with native hedgerows or tree screening to the western and northern boundaries to mitigate the visual impact of the development on the landscape;
- III. A landscape buffer behind the existing properties at Braintree Road;
- IV. Swales to provide SUDS running along new roads unless Drainage Strategy considerations dictate otherwise;
- V. Provide a mix of housing to meet existing and future needs of our community by including a significant proportion of starter homes and accessible homes that are suitable for the elderly;
- VI. Be based on active consultation with the community, the Parish Council and Essex County Council as the Highways Authority through the provision of a development brief prepared prior to the submission of a planning application; and
- VII. Due to its location within the zone of influence of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and RAMSAR site, the proposal shall be accompanied by a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment which will demonstrate that the development proposal will have no adverse effects on the integrity of the European site; or, in the case of the Essex RAMS SPD being adopted, be subject to a financial contribution towards avoidance and mitigation measures as specified in the Recreational disturbance and Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) for the Essex Coast.

5.4.39. **Land in Station Road to the west of Bury Farm. SHLAA site 01Fel15:** This site is identified by UDC as development site (FEL1) in the UDC Local Plan.

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5.4.40. The development is designed to mitigate adverse effects upon existing residential and community interests. It contributes towards wider and longer term planning benefits reasonable associated with the alleviation of any such impact. The Local Plan allocates "*approximately 40 dwellings*". Discussions with the land-owner and his planning advisors have resulted in a scheme offering 39 dwellings, a development assessed in the Neighbourhood Plan as being sufficiently proximate to UDC's requirement.

5.4.41. The site was also identified by Strutt and Parker, in an independent report commissioned by the SG, as a suitable site for a Community Hub including a doctors' surgery.<sup>14</sup> However, this site is on the extreme western edge of the Parish and the SG did not consider that it could be recommended to the community as a 'hub' for all of the key village amenities. No other suitable site for a community hub could be found and the SG has worked with the landowner's representative, the CCG and the GPs to secure the provision of a purpose-built surgery on this site.

5.4.42. The Clinical Commissioning Group's role is to 'buy' health services for the people of the area it represents, in this instance West Essex. Currently, the CCG pays rent to the John Tasker House Practice for the Felsted surgery. The Felsted surgery is in need of replacement and the CCG does not have the capital funds for a new surgery nor does it consider the provision of health care on a 'parish

<sup>14</sup> The Strutt and Parker Report is available on the FNP website as part of the Evidence Base.

basis'. The CCG could not therefore guarantee that a new surgery – however funded – serving Felsted would be within the Parish. A new surgery building provided within Felsted will be leased by the CCG who will fund the provision of health services within the Parish.

- 5.4.43. The CCG told the SG that a new surgery is required that will initially meet the needs of circa 4500 people, about 70% of whom come from Felsted Parish, and with potential for growth. Over the Plan period an increasing number of patients will come from outside the Parish to the west. Consequently, unless a new surgery could be funded within Felsted, when the existing surgery closes, it is overwhelmingly likely that the increasingly aged population of Felsted would have to travel outside the Parish to see a doctor.
- 5.4.44. Modern clinical requirements mean that modern surgeries are much more costly than existing premises and require more capital than the John Tasker House practice could provide and more than individual GPs could consider.
- 5.4.45. Locating a new surgery within Felsted is consistent with the CCG's plans for a new surgery in the coming 18 months. The doctors were very clear that a site in the centre of the village was unacceptable and a site to the west of the Parish was their preferred location. The doctors cited delays caused by school traffic and congestion at the junction of Chelmsford, Braintree and Station Roads and excessive journey times to a surgery in the centre of the Parish as being unacceptable. The assessed affordable housing need in the Parish having been met<sup>15</sup>, the Plan supports this site solely on the basis of it being enabling development to provide a doctors' surgery. Affordable housing contributions through a planning obligation will need to take into account of the effect on the viability of the development scheme including its requirement to facilitate the delivery of the GP surgery.
- 5.4.46. Though on the western edge of the Parish, the site is served by the same bus service as the current service. Many patients at the existing surgery travel by car and the new surgery will have significant off-road patient parking. There is a footpath from the village centre to the site of the new surgery. Some Felsted patients will find it a little more difficult to visit a surgery at this location, equally others will find it easier. Given that, going forward, *any* new surgery in Felsted is expected to serve a much larger patient population from the west, this site reduces the impact of that traffic on the village centre. On balance we consider the location accessible and meeting the expressed needs of the community in Felsted.
- 5.4.47. If the Plan fails to deliver this surgery and the associated enabling housing, the CCG will seek an alternative location for a replacement surgery outside of Felsted. Local health provision would be lost but the housing element of the proposal, which is being promoted through the UDC Local Plan process, would almost certainly go ahead without any significant community benefit for Felsted.
- 5.4.48. The Plan seeks to deliver a surgery in the Parish by allocating this site for housing and supporting enabling development *solely* to secure the funding and delivery from the developer of a surgery and dispensary. A viability assessment conducted by the landowner and a second assessment conducted by AECOM in support of this Plan conclude that the development and provision of a surgery to be viable. The land-owner is committed to the scheme.
- 5.4.49. The Plan therefore supports development of no more than 39 dwellings on this site as being the most favourable option for our community. The landowner has agreed to convey the land and built surgery to the Parish through the Felsted Community Trust for leasing to a Doctors' Practice. The

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<sup>15</sup> Affordable housing need was assessed in 2016 by the RCCE and was determined as being met by developments in Clifford Smith Drive and Porter Close.



CCG have agreed to lease the surgery from the Felsted Community Trust, providing funding for future community projects within Felsted Parish. The Plan considers this a long-term benefit to community.

- 5.4.50. To minimise the risk of coalescence with Flitch Green and to retain as much as possible of the existing streetscape, the Plan supports a development boundary which extends in a line from a point directly opposite the boundary of the existing dwellings on the west side of Station Road to the angle formed by the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Additionally, the landowner will give the north western segment of site identified in SHLAA Site FEL1 which extends from the northern boundary of the proposed development in a triangular shape as a 'buffer' preventing further development.
- 5.4.51. The 'buffer' of the amenity land to the north-west of the site will be transferred directly (as opposed to the Felsted Community Trust) to the Parish. This land is essential in ensuring a clear break and avoiding coalescence between the village of Felsted and Flitch Green and any developments outside and to the Parish to the West.
- 5.4.52. This buffer land also offers an area of open space directly opposite the recently designated Nature Area adjacent to Felsted Fen, enhancing the enjoyment of the adjacent footpaths, providing added public amenity and an opportunity to mitigate against harm caused by the development to existing on-site ecology features, such as the hedgerows that bound the site.
- 5.4.53. The Plan's support for this site is also conditional on the landscaping of the north western boundary of this development retaining or reinstating hedgerows to secure a positive transition between the rural and built environments, serving as a gateway to the Parish, and to minimise any visual coalescence with the development at Flitch Green.
- 5.4.54. Indicative drawings of how the scheme might look when brought forward by the developer are shown in Appendix 2.

**FEL/HN3** The Plan allocates Bury Farm Site as shown on Map 6 and Map 8 for housing development of up to 39 units and for the development of a doctor's surgery.

Development of this site will:

- I. Provide land and building for the development of a doctors' surgery which:
  - a. Will feature as part of the comprehensive development of the wider site;
  - b. Provides a doctor's surgery and dispensary;
  - c. Provides adequate car parking; and
  - d. Is designed and landscaped to a high standard.
- II. Incorporate a mix of housing to suit the needs of the community, including the provision of high-quality smaller homes for downsizing or for first time buyers;
- III. Commence infrastructure development to enable Surgery construction on or before the development of the 10<sup>th</sup> dwelling;
- IV. Not extend beyond the end of the built form on the southern side of Station Road and provide landscaping and screening to the edge built-up area of the development to avoid coalescence with Flitch Green and provide a positive visual transition into the village;
- V. Provide on-site natural open space to the north western end of the site as a continuation of the Nature Area and access to the adjacent Public Right of Way, gifted to the Parish and safeguarded from future development;
- VI. Avoid unnecessary removal of hedgerows and where removal is necessary provide on-site replacement native hedgerows and;
- VII. Address the elevated topography of the site and the effect of the development on the landscape and views that contribute to the character of Felsted; and
- VIII. Allow operation of the surgery during the remainder of construction work on the site.

Development should be based on active consultation with the community and the Parish Council through the provision of a development brief prepared prior to the submission of a planning application.

### **Residential Development within the Development Limits**

- 5.4.55. The Local Plan identifies and designates 4 areas of Development Limits in the Parish: Felsted Village, Causeway End, Watch House Green and Bannister Green (shown on Map 12 and Map 13). The draft Local Plan provides for development within identified Development Limits that is in keeping with the local character and built environment.
- 5.4.56. Policy HN4 supplements that approach by defining appropriate development within Felsted's development limits and is only to be applied to development proposals within the development limits.

**FEL/HN4** Residential development proposals within the Local Plan Village Development Limits (VDLs) will be supported subject to:

- i) The development respecting the character of the area in which it is located;
- ii) The development not having an unacceptable adverse impact on congestion in the Historic Village Centre or on the local highways network;
- iii) The proposed housing mix being appropriate to identified local housing needs including specific provision for older people looking to downsize, younger people looking to remain in the Parish, opportunities for shared ownership, starter homes and affordable housing; and
- iv) It being demonstrated that necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to serve the development.

#### **Residential Development Proposals outside the Village Development Limits**

- 5.4.57. As identified by Policies HN1, HN2 and HN3, the SG recognises that new housing development will come forward in Felsted during the Plan period. Housing sites have been identified that are adjacent to the edges of the identified Village Development Limits in Felsted.
- 5.4.58. It is recognised by the SG that during the plan period, other development proposals may come forward outside the Village Development Limits which would be appropriate despite their countryside location. The SG carefully considered the development of 'infill home' in areas like the Greens. In this context, the Plan supports the UDC Local Plan (Regulation 19 Plan) policies SP10 and C1. Policy HN5 defines acceptable sustainable development outside of the Village Development Limits.
- 5.4.59. Any starter homes being provided as part of rural exception sites affordable housing may not be subject to being allocated in perpetuity in order to comply with Government policy at the time.

**FEL/HN5** Residential development proposals outside the Local Plan Village Development Limits will be supported in the following circumstances:

- I. Rural Exception Housing, subject to the types of dwellings being provided being consistent with the needs identified in an up to date professionally assessed housing needs survey for the parish and subject to homes being allocated in perpetuity to those with a strong connection on a hierarchical cascade basis to Felsted Parish;
- II. Limited market housing required to enable the delivery of rural exception Affordable housing;
- III. Replacement dwellings where the size of replacement dwellings is dealt with on a site by site basis in line with Local Plan policy (See Adopted Plan 2005 Policy H7 – Replacement Dwellings and Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19) Policy H4);
- IV. Supplemental residential dwellings in line with Policy FEL/HN6;
- V. Development allowed in exceptional circumstances on the edge of the VDLs by other policies in this plan (SC4 and SC6) where the community has been actively engaged, via the provision of a development brief and where exceptional benefits to the community (including delivery of infrastructure requirements identified in this Plan) can be clearly demonstrated; or
- VI. Sites allocated in this plan (HN2, HN3).

### Supplemental dwellings

- 5.4.60. The Plan recognises the value in providing opportunities for older people to downsize and to remain close to their established community. Similarly, where a greater degree of health care is required than that which can be provided in a primary dwelling, a supplemental development within the curtilage of existing residential dwellings could provide a solution with considerable community benefits. Supplemental dwellings are defined as residential units developed within the curtilage of existing homes which are necessary to enabling the existing resident to remain in their own home, through using the supplemental dwelling to house carers or family members whilst providing care to the resident.
- 5.4.61. The 2019 NPPF at Annex 2 provides a definition of older people as *“people over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs”* and Policy HN6 is to be interpreted using this definition.
- 5.4.62. Care is required to ensure that the policy intentions are not abused to secure development where it would otherwise be resisted. The Plan therefore offers limited support for supplemental dwellings on a case-by-case basis but also requires an applicant to surrender any unused Permitted Development Rights on the primary dwelling to limit over-development of a residential site.
- 5.4.63. Implementation of this policy shall be by means of a condition forming part of any planning consent for a supplemental dwelling which restricts the separation for sale of the primary and supplemental dwellings for a period of 15 years and gives effect to the following intention:-

For a period of not less than 15 years from the grant of planning consent occupation of the dwelling shall be restricted to either of:-

- a) A qualifying person, defined as the person who prior to the grant of the consent owned and occupied the property within which the dwelling is to be built, or the spouse or dependant of such a person, or the widow or widower of such a person or
- b) A carer employed by or on behalf of a qualifying person.

**FEL/HN6** Outside the VDLs the development of a single supplemental dwelling wholly within the curtilage of an existing residential dwelling will be supported where Permitted Development Rights for the primary dwelling have been surrendered and the supplemental dwelling:

- i) Is essential to maintaining a familial or community link to an older person (or older people);
- ii) is smaller in height and size than the primary dwelling and its size appears consistent with its function as a supplemental dwelling having regard to the size of plot and location of the primary dwelling on the plot;
- iii) Is complementary to the primary dwelling and sensitively designed in terms of style and setting; and
- iv) When taken together with the primary dwelling, does not result in over-development or excessive density of the whole site by comparison with its surroundings.

## Housing Mix

- 5.4.64. **Support for Young Residents.** The Plan also recognises the need to offer scope for younger and less well-off members of the community to find an opportunity for independent living.
- 5.4.65. Felsted's population in relation to the national profile and the Uttlesford profile is comparatively much older. The average (mean) age of residents was 41.8 years (this compares with an average (mean) age of residents across the district 40.6 years. 20.9% of the parish's population was over the age of 60 at the time of the 2011 Census compared with 17% of the district's population.
- 5.4.66. In total there were 1,122 household spaces. Of these, 1,083 (96.5%) had at least one usual resident and 39 (3.5%) had no usual residents.
- 5.4.67. In terms of house sizes, the table below provides an indication of house sizes in the parish compared to the district and the country. The table indicates that the parish is well stocked with larger homes and under provided with smaller homes.
- 5.4.68. Meanwhile, 21.3 % of households in Felsted parish are one-person households with 13.3 % of these being aged 65 or over. Of the 71.77 % family households in Felsted parish, 13.8 % are aged 65 or over.
- 5.4.69. Together with the findings of the Felsted Housing Needs Survey published in 2017, the statistics below indicate a clear evidenced need for smaller homes to come forward in the parish during the plan period.

	Felsted		Uttlesford		England	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
All Household Spaces With At Least One Usual Resident <sup>16</sup>	1083		31316		22063368	
No Bedrooms	0		31	0.10%	54938	0.25%
1 Bedroom	50	4.62%	2258	7.21%	2593893	11.76%
2 Bedrooms	207	19.11%	6601	21.08%	6145083	27.85%
3 Bedrooms	330	30.47%	11375	36.32%	9088213	41.19%
4 Bedrooms	306	28.25%	7456	23.81%	3166531	14.35%
5 or More Bedrooms	190	17.54%	3595	11.48%	1014710	4.60%

## Local Housing Needs Survey

- 5.4.70. An Affordable Housing Needs Survey was commissioned by Felsted Parish Council from RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) in January 2016. The survey was completed in March 2016. Of 1,085 forms distributed a total of 347 were returned. In summary the findings were:

An identified need for:

- 12 units for open market
- 3 units for shared ownership
- 14 units for affordable housing
- 2 starter homes

<sup>16</sup> Source: Census 2011 Number of Bedrooms (QS411EW)

A recommendation from RCCE for the delivery of 14 affordable housing units as follows:

- 2 x 2 Bedroom Bungalows on the open market
- 2 x 2 Bedroom Houses on the open market
- 1 x 3 Bedroom Bungalow on the open market
- 1 x 3 Bedroom House on the open market
- 1 x 2 Bedroom House for shared ownership
- 1 x 2 Bedroom physically adapted bungalow at affordable rent
- 2 x 2 Bedroom bungalows at affordable rent
- 2 x 2 Bedroom houses at affordable rent
- 2 x 3 Bedroom houses at affordable rent

5.4.71. The report noted “a significant need identified for downsizing accommodation for older residents within the parish, something which should be considered for future development.”

5.4.72. The 2016 Felsted Housing Needs Survey represents a snap shot in time and the Plan recommends that they are updated every 3 years. The need set out above indicates the need identified in 2016, which has since been met, rather than a future need.

5.4.73. Policy HN7 therefore encourages new developments to come forward that provide a mix of housing to meet any future locally identified need.

**FEL/HN7** New housing developments that provide a mix of house types and sizes to meet the identified need in Felsted and supports the increased provision of smaller, lower cost 1 and 2 bedroom or Starter Homes to meet the needs of our younger population will be supported.

The provision of homes suitable for the elderly wishing to downsize will also be supported.

Major Development proposals must be accompanied by an up-to-date housing needs assessment where one has not been conducted by a reputable source within the last 3 years to demonstrate how the development will meeting local housing need.

#### **Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening (HRA)**

5.4.74. In August 2018, Natural England advised Uttlesford District Council and Felsted Parish Council that the steering group for the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) have revised their identified Zones of Influence (Zols) following the undertaking of visitor surveys. Natural England advised Uttlesford District Council that the Zol for the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar had been increased to 22 km. This means the Zol stretches into the south eastern part of the Uttlesford District Council and Felsted Parish. Natural England’s position is that any new residential development within this part of Uttlesford District will have a likely significant effect on the sensitive features of the Blackwater Estuary. Once the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance and Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy has been adopted, all proposals within the Zone of Influence will be subject to a financial contribution in line with that strategy.

5.4.75. At the time of writing the RAMs was not yet adopted but once it is adopted, it will comprise a package of strategic mitigation measures to address the effects of residential development to be funded through developer contributions. In the meantime, until the RAMs is in place, Natural England’s advice to UDC is that recreational impacts of the residential schemes are assessed through a project-level Habitats Regulation Assessment.

- 5.4.76. Natural England's letter to UDC includes a template for the purpose of recording and assessing development schemes that fall within the Zones of Influence for the Essex Coast RAMS HRA. This includes a flow chart which concludes that for schemes which are not directly adjacent to a European designated site and provided the scheme is of 100 units or less, the scheme will not have adverse impacts on the integrity of the European sites provided that mitigation via a "proportionate financial contribution" which is "secured in line with Essex Coast RAMS requirements".
- 5.4.77. The intent of Policy FEL/HN8 is to ensure all schemes that come forward within the Blackwater Estuary Zone of Influence are accompanied by a project level HRA in order that development complies with the Habitats Regulations.

#### **FEL/HN8**

Any residential proposals that fall within the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site Zone of Influence shall either:

- be accompanied by the project level Habitats Regulation Assessment which will demonstrate that the development proposal will have no adverse effects on the integrity of the European site; or,
- in the case of the Essex RAMS SPD being adopted, be subject to a financial contribution towards avoidance and mitigation measures as specified in the Recreational disturbance and Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) for the Essex Coast.

### **5.5. Integrity, Character and Heritage**

- 5.5.1. Throughout the consultation, Parishioners wanted the Plan to ensure that where development is permitted it is complimentary to the character of the Parish as a whole and in particular to its heritage assets. There was particular antipathy towards high density development and ostentatious housing of the style found in other areas of Metropolitan Essex which are considered unsympathetic to a rural village setting.
- 5.5.2. To inform the Plan, Felsted Parish Council secured the support of AECOM (via Locality support for the neighbourhood planning process) to undertake a detailed heritage and character appraisal of the Neighbourhood Area. The appraisal resulted in the Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment (FHCA) which is now a key supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan and is available to view alongside the Plan. Development proposals should reflect the FHCA report and be subject to early consultation with the Parish Council to ensure that the valuable and unique historic character of our parish is being appropriately reflected in new development proposals.
- 5.5.3. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by ensuring that the historic characteristics of the Parish are preserved and enhanced through new development. The policies ensure that due account is taken of valued heritage assets and seek to minimise the harm caused by the saturation of signage and light pollution in the Parish. Additionally, the policies recognise the unique characteristics of each of the different settlements and hamlets in Felsted by seeking to minimise the impact of "urban sprawl" leading to coalescence.

#### **High Quality Design and Energy Efficiency**

- 5.5.4. The FHCA identifies five distinct Landscape Character Areas (LCA) which are shown on the maps LCA 1-5 in the Assessment (available on the website). They are also shown on Map 9.



- 5.5.5. The FHCA includes a detailed analysis of each LCA and, as part of this analysis, identifies positive aspects of character, issues to be addressed and sensitivity to change. It is important that applicants for developments in the Parish, when drawing up detailed proposals, refer to the FHCA to ensure schemes are compliant with policy ICH1.
- 5.5.6. The positive aspects of the Felsted NP area in terms of heritage and character are summarised below:
- A very strong local vernacular, specifically cream rendered frontages sometimes with pargeting, red tiled roofs, wooden front doors, external red brick chimney stacks and unique decorative features such as house names and external lights;
  - Distinctive clusters of settlement that flank the primary road network;
  - Survival of many historic buildings, some of which have been converted to residential use but retain the historic façade;
  - A landscape that includes much field boundary vegetation promoting a strong sense of enclosure therefore enabling a rural character to prevail in close proximity to settlements;
  - Links to the wider landscape through the network of public rights of way and “Quiet Lanes”;
  - The triangular green that sits at the centre of many settlements is a distinctive feature of the area and settlements are separated from each other by areas of open countryside;
  - The ‘heritage style’ palette of wayfinding signage promotes a rural and historic character; and
  - The prominence of mature specimen trees delineating field boundaries.
- 5.5.7. When preparing planning proposals, to ensure compliance with policy ICH1, the Felsted Conservation Area Character Appraisal (FCA), (produced by Officers of Uttlesford District Council and approved by Cabinet 13 December 2012), should be a “Material Consideration”. The FCA Character Appraisal includes additional planning controls which are important to the designated areas and accord with the statutory definition, including land or buildings that afford special interest.
- 5.5.8. The positive aspects of the FCA in terms of heritage and character are summarised below:
- The general character and setting of Felsted and elements that should be retained or enhanced;
  - The historical significance of 50 Listed Buildings and their setting;
  - The setting of the Grade 1 Holy Cross Church;
  - The large area of open space attached to the school which is visually very important and makes a significant contribution to spatial quality; and
  - The significance of specific features such as certain trees, hedges, walls, gates and railings.
- 5.5.9. Whilst energy efficiency targets are set nationally in Building Regulations, the Plan takes the opportunity to influence new development by supporting energy efficiency and renewable or new technology in proposals for new development.

**FEL/ICH 1** All development proposals should respect the character and heritage of the Neighbourhood Area and, where appropriate, bring about enhancements to that character. This means for all development:

- Sustaining, reinforcing or enhancing the positive aspects of Felsted's character as described in detail in the Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment and summarised in supporting text to this policy;
- Being locally distinctive through architectural quality, choice of materials, height, scale and layout;
- Maintaining and respecting visual integrity of the historical settlement patterns and identities within the Parish;
- Sensitive boundary treatment retaining where possible vegetated boundaries particularly those of native hedgerows and trees and incorporating boundary treatments that are sympathetic to local style and vernacular; and
- Following the 'energy hierarchy' in reducing energy demand before implementing renewable energy, or make the most of solar gain and passive cooling through the orientation, layout and design of the development.

For countryside locations:

- Sensitive treatment of the rural edge particularly around Felsted village with regard to impact on heritage assets and their setting including the surrounding landscape;
- All new build proposals outside the development limits shall be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment and appropriate landscape mitigation; and
- Any replacement dwelling in an area of low density and isolated buildings in a large plot should respond to and respect the setting and should enhance the character of the area.

For the Conservation Area:

Preserving or enhancing the heritage significance of the Conservation Area itself (including its setting) and the individual heritage assets within them (including their setting) and demonstrating due regard to the Felsted Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

## Heritage Assets

5.5.10. The Felsted Heritage and Character Appraisal identifies buildings that are of historic significance and make a positive contribution to the built environment of Felsted. These heritage assets are a mixture of Listed Buildings (afforded significant protection by other statutory tools) and those non-designated heritage assets. The Plan seeks to shape any future development which may affect them.

5.5.11. In addition to the nationally Listed Buildings, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the following buildings as being important to the character of the conservation area: Felsted School Chapel, Stebbing Road; Felsted Preparatory School building between The Folly and Stewart House; Felsted Preparatory School building west of Stewart House; no. 5 Station Road; The Swan Public House; Barn Court, Braintree Road; house corner of Braintree Road Stebbing Road; The Chequers Public House.

5.5.12. In October 2018, Uttlesford District Council published its first issue of the Uttlesford Local Heritage

List. The List includes those buildings and structures considered to be locally important, but not protected by formal Listed Building status. Buildings and structures on the list are considered to contribute to the unique character and distinctiveness of an area. In order to be included on the Local List, buildings or structures must meet at least two of eight selection criteria, which are based on those established by Historic England in the Heritage Listing Advice Note 7.<sup>17</sup>

- 5.5.13. The Historic Village Centre is considered an important character area containing a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets which make an important contribution to the character of the Parish as a whole.

#### **FEL/ICH2**

Development affecting designated or non-designated heritage assets will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the justification and public benefit outweigh any harm to the historic significance of the assets. Proposals for development must demonstrate how the development will conserve and enhance the historic attributes in ways that are beneficial to maintaining the historic character of Felsted.

### **Signage and Light Pollution**

- 5.5.14. The character and feel of the Parish can also be harmed by inappropriate signage and damage by light pollution. Concern was expressed about the harm done to areas of heritage or scenic value by excessive street signs, road markings and unnecessary lighting detracting from the enjoyment of the night sky. These latter issues are outside the remit of the Plan but the Plan seeks wherever it can to exercise control of what is perceived by the community as pollution.

**FEL/ICH3** Sensitive designed signage will only be supported provided that the proposal alone, or in combination with other signage, does not cause harm to the character or appearance of any heritage assets or the Historic Village Centre.

**FEL/ICH4** Development proposals must limit the impact of overhead cables and light pollution from artificial externally visible light sources.

### **Avoiding Coalescence**

- 5.5.15. The character and integrity of the Parish is threatened by coalescence, both from developments on its boundaries and between settlements within the Parish. The AECOM Report highlights the risk of coalescence, particularly through the extension of some of the larger settlements within the Parish and the threat that this causes to the historical settlement pattern.
- 5.5.16. Throughout the consultation, parishioners were keen that the Plan appropriately recognises that the

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<sup>17</sup> Uttlesford District Council's Local Heritage List: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/heritagelist#criteria>

individual settlements and hamlets in Felsted are given due recognition for their distinctive architectural and landscape characteristics. Development proposals that sever the gaps between settlements could serve to cause considerable harm in terms of local distinctiveness between each settlement/Green within the Parish and with neighbouring settlements.

- 5.5.17. The Plan seeks to avoid development that would merge the Parish of Felsted with the Parishes of Flitch Green, Great Leighs, Great Notley, Rayne or other settlements along the Parish boundary.
- 5.5.18. Policy **ICH5** offers protection from development that causes coalescence, defined as “urban sprawl” that will reduce the landscape gaps between individual settlements within the Parish and/or settlements within adjacent parishes.

<p><b>FEL/ICH5</b> Development that would result in, or increase the risk of, coalescence of Felsted hamlets with any other settlement and/or hamlets within the parish or any neighbouring parishes including the areas on Map 9 will not be supported.</p>
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## 5.6. Supporting the Rural Economy



*Figure 15 Farmland in Mill Road*

- 5.6.1. An objective of the Plan is to recognise the need to protect and encourage the rural economy and to offer local employment by providing suitable opportunities for business and to help encourage younger people to remain in the Parish. These aspirations go to the heart of ensuring that the Parish remains a vibrant community offering employment opportunity within its boundaries.
- 5.6.2. It is recognised that small-scale businesses (including farming) are integral to the rural economy. A thriving rural economy in one settlement or Parish can support a whole network of satellite parishes and also provide important local employment opportunities.
- 5.6.3. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by providing support to existing and new employment opportunities whilst ensuring that the character of the Parish is retained and enhanced and that new development does not cause harm to visual or residential amenity.

### **Start-up and small businesses**

- 5.6.4. There are a range of businesses in Felsted (see Evidence Base) which operate at a small-scale. In order to support the ongoing economic sustainability of the Parish (and that of nearby Parishes), the Plan provides for suitable small-scale business development in the Parish which does not have adverse impacts on local residential amenity.

**FEL/RE1** The development of start-up and small business enterprises on 'brown field sites' or within the curtilage of existing business sites (as shown on Map 10) will be supported where the road and communications infrastructure can support the size and additional volume of the business traffic and there being no adverse impacts on local residential amenity.

### **Loss of employment uses**

- 5.6.5. To protect the economic sustainability of the Parish, the Plan resists the loss of employment and business opportunities which are valuable assets to the local community. Local employment opportunities also reduce the level to which Felsted is a "commuter" village, where those who live in the village travel elsewhere for work. Through the continuation of local employment opportunities,

the Plan contributes to economic and also environmental sustainability.

**FEL/RE2** The change of use away from business premises (Use Class B) to any other use will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer demand for the use to which the premises are committed. Evidence shall be required for a period of no less than 12 months of an active marketing campaign from estate agents detailing exactly how, where and when the property was advertised, the number of sales particulars sent out, details of any inquiries made, and some professional assessments of the market value of the property in its business (Class B) use.

### Re-use of rural buildings

- 5.6.6. The enthusiasm for encouraging business development is tempered by concerns about the potential impacts on infrastructure, specifically the road network, which is particularly unsuited to high volumes of commercial traffic or heavy goods vehicles.

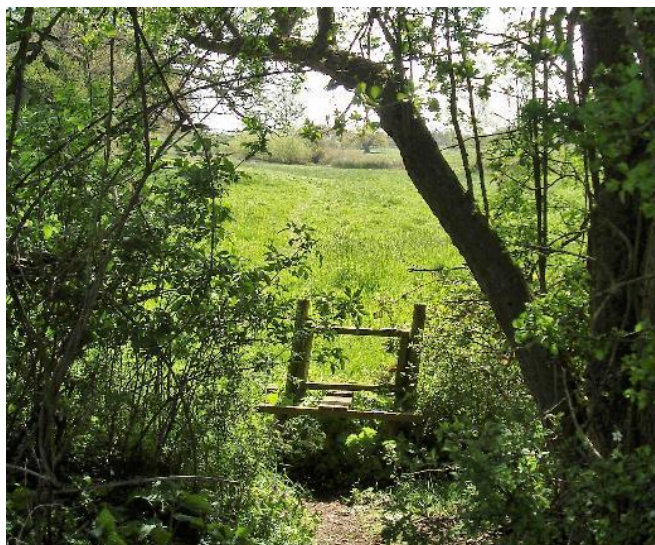
**FEL/RE3** Development proposals for the reuse of existing rural buildings that create new employment opportunities or prevent the loss of existing employment opportunities will be supported, where the road and communications infrastructure can support the size and volume of the business traffic and there being no adverse impacts on residential amenity.

### Home working

- 5.6.7. The government's commitment to better internet connectivity for rural communities creates a welcome and valued opportunity for more people to work from home. Whilst this is broadly welcomed and supported, there is a need to ensure that domestic premises used for home working should not become a nuisance to neighbours.
- 5.6.8. The SG acknowledges that many proposals associated with home working do not generate a requirement for planning permission, given that a material change of use may not have taken place. Nevertheless, there will be some proposals that do require planning approval, and policy RE4 therefore lends support to proposals that enable home working where local residential and visual amenity will be maintained.

**FEL/RE4** Development that enables home working will be supported where it does not change the overall character of the property's use as a residential dwelling, remains an ancillary use, and does not harm local residential or visual amenity.

## 5.7. Protecting the Countryside and Wildlife



*Figure 16 The Saffron Trail – towards Leez Priory*

5.7.1. Felsted is renowned for its rural setting which is enjoyed both by residents and visitors. Respecting the countryside is of fundamental importance to the Parish. The community demands measures to protect wildlife and the countryside. The Plan seeks to put the environment at the centre of planning policies. It requires consideration to be given to:

- improving access;
- protecting vistas;
- protecting open spaces; and
- maintaining existing and new natural assets.

5.7.2. The policies in this section help to deliver the Vision for Felsted by protecting and enhancing the historic countryside character of the Parish, including its individual settlements and hamlets. Green infrastructure and the natural environment is offered protection and the Public Rights of Network will be enhanced to the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

### **Landscape and Countryside Character**

5.7.3. The Parish of Felsted lies within a high-quality agricultural countryside landscape. The preservation of the landscape character of Felsted is important to the community, providing as it does the backcloth to the individual greens and hamlets that make up the parish.

5.7.4. The countryside character of Felsted is integral to the unique identity of the Parish and should be protected for its own sake, as well as the important contribution that it makes to health and well-being, through the opportunities it provides for outdoor sport and recreation.

5.7.5. Open and green spaces in the Parish make an important contribution to the overall character of Felsted, as well as providing opportunities for outdoor sport, recreation and play. This contributes to the health and well-being of the Parish, as well as providing opportunities for increased social interaction and community cohesion

**FEL/CW1** The countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development which results in the interruption or severance of the landscape character of the countryside, including important views and vistas, traditional open spaces and including that which results in the coalescence of the individual greens and hamlets in Felsted or our parish with surrounding parishes, will not be supported.

Development will only be supported where it includes mitigation measures that minimise the visual impact of the development through appropriate screening and design and where it includes measures to enhance the landscape character.

### **Felsted Fen**

- 5.7.6. The recently designated Nature Area adjacent to Felsted Fen is intended to be a uniquely valued amenity. The Plan seeks to protect its diverse fauna and flora and ensure, subject to any requirement identified through VA5 in relation to the need for a burial ground, it remains otherwise undeveloped throughout then Plan period.

- 5.7.7. Felsted Fen is a designated Local Wildlife Site (reference UFD276) and the designation states:

*Although planted with Willows, this site retains a valuable fen-like vegetation of abundant Pond-sedge, Purple Loosestrife, Angelica, Soft Rush, Comfrey, Giant Horsetail and Nettle. Situated in the flood plain of the River Chelmer, this vegetation type would formerly have been more widespread but has been largely lost due to drainage or other developments. It is likely that the site extended northwards before being used for tipping.*

**FEL/CW2** The area defined on Map 11 is designated as a Nature Area important to the local community which will be protected from development, with the exception of development supported by Policy FEL/VA4.

### **Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways**

- 5.7.8. The Parish is served by an extensive network of Public Rights of Way, including footpaths, byways, bridleways and cycleways. It is vital to the Parish that these are protected and where possible enhanced, as at present they are sometimes poorly maintained.
- 5.7.9. The amenity of the existing bridleways is greatly valued by horse riders but the network does not provide a circular route without the necessity of riding on some of the busier roads in the Parish. Whenever development takes place, the Plan requires every effort to be made to improve the bridleway network with the aim of creating a route that minimises the need for horses to be ridden on or across public roads.
- 5.7.10. Every opportunity should be taken to develop, enhance and connect Public Rights of Way and other path routes to a wider network, to local services/facilities (e.g. schools, GP Surgery) and to incorporate these as green corridors/ infrastructure. New developments should be located where these can be linked to services, facilities and infrastructure by a range of transport options including footpaths and cycle networks and that development should protect existing cycling, walking and



equestrian routes.

- 5.7.11. The Plan recognises the importance to the community of the extensive Right of Way network in the Parish and seeks to ensure that it receives the highest level of protection and, where possible, enhancement.

**FEL/CW3** Any new development on or adjacent to an existing Public Right of Way or which is clearly visible from a Public Right of Way must consider the appearance of the proposal from the Right of Way and incorporate green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts.

Enhancements or extensions to the network, for example through improving accessibility or connectivity, will be supported and may be required where a scheme is likely to increase usage. Proposals that will block or sever the network without adequate diversionary measures or equivalent alternative provision will not be supported.

### Biodiversity

- 5.7.12. The Plan directs developers to the Essex biodiversity Validation checklist produced by ECC Place Services, which is a requirement for all planning applications considered a major development as defined by Article 8(7) of The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.<sup>18</sup>

### Green Infrastructure

- 5.7.13. To protect the rural nature of the Parish the Plan provides a green infrastructure green spaces policy. The green infrastructure in Felsted provides a valuable natural heritage to accompany the rich and diverse built heritage found in the different settlements in the Parish. Green infrastructure contributes to social sustainability by enhancing health and wellbeing through ready access to the countryside, for opportunities for recreation. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has outlined that public open space and green infrastructure is inherently valuable to the cultural and social life of communities, helping to facilitate a sense of place and enhance local identity.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the Landscape institute argues that there are 5 key principles that encapsulate the important links between landscape and health:

- Health places improve air, water and soil quality, incorporating measures that help us adapt to, and where possible mitigate, climate change
- Healthy places help overcome health inequalities and can promote healthy lifestyles
- Healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing antisocial behaviour, isolation and stress
- Healthy places optimise opportunities for working, learning and development
- Healthy places are restorative, uplifting and healing for both physical and mental health conditions.<sup>20</sup>

- 5.7.13 In addition green infrastructure contributes to climate change mitigation objectives through reducing run-off and mitigating against the risk of flooding, helping to enhance air quality through carbon capture and providing opportunities for wildlife. Throughout the consultations, Parishioners asked

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.placeservices.co.uk/resources/natural-environment/essex-biodiversity-validation-checklist/>

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Social Value of Public Spaces:  
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/37319/download?token=NZo6ukzy&filetype=full-report>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/PublicHealthandLandscape\\_CreatingHealthyPlaces\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/PublicHealthandLandscape_CreatingHealthyPlaces_FINAL.pdf)

that consideration be given to protecting our valued countryside. The Plan includes a policy that supports the consideration and inclusion of green infrastructure objectives in development proposals in order for them to contribute positively to the environmental and social sustainability of the Neighbourhood Area.

- 5.7.14 Natural England has produced a guide which seeks to ensure that everyone, irrespective of where they live, has access to high quality, natural greenspace. The guide builds on and reviews the ANGSt standard, developed in the 1990s, which establishes distance standards for accessible, natural greenspace within close proximity to residential areas.<sup>21</sup> Policy CW4 seeks to ensure that developments make a positive contribution to Green Infrastructure networks within the Parish, providing guidance of how this may be delivered and achieved.

**FEL/CW4** All development proposals should seek to extend or enhance Green Infrastructure Networks within the Neighbourhood Area. Proposals will be supported where they:

- Protect and enhance existing green spaces and/or create new green/open spaces;
- Improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces through green corridors and/or improvements to the Public, Rights of Way, and cycle and footpath networks;
- Enhance the visual characteristics and biodiversity of green spaces in close proximity to the development;
- Ensure their landscape schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision and other amenity requirements contribute to the connectivity, maintenance and improvement of the GI Network;
- Meet the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards wherever possible and what they can do to address any local deficiency in provision of green space;
- Take into consideration the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) and natural flood management, which will enhance biodiversity and ecosystems; or
- Consider the multi-functional use of local green spaces as part of the Green Infrastructure (GI) network.

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<sup>21</sup> Natural England's ANGSt Guide:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605111422/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east\\_of\\_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605111422/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east_of_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx). Or  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/357411/Review8\\_Green\\_spaces\\_health\\_inequalities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357411/Review8_Green_spaces_health_inequalities.pdf)