



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 22 January 2026
Time: 6.30pm
Location: Victory Hall, Hainault Road, Chigwell, IG7 6QZ

Members present:

Cllr. Elliot Costa (Chair)	Cllr Faiza Rivzi (Vice Chair)
Cllr. Osman Ali	Cllr Tosin Amuludun
Cllr Lisa Skingsley-Morgan	Cllr Debby Rye

Clerk to the Council:	Jason Selvarajah
Assistant to the Clerk:	Cllr Celina Jefcoate

Members of the Public and Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in accordance with Standing Orders 3 (i) and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, photographing, recording, broadcasting, transmitting or otherwise reporting the proceeding of a meeting may take place.

Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in the exercise of their functions, they must take note of the following: equal opportunities; crime and disorder; human rights; health and safety and biodiversity

PL194/25 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Rochelle Hodds, Cllr Erika Skingsley, Cllr Lorraine Clarke,

PL195/25 - OTHER ABSENCES

None

PL196/25 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Costa, Rizvi, Skingsley-Morgan and Rye declared a personal interest in item 7 ([EPF/2523/25](#) - Former MOD Site, Chigwell) on the basis the land was owned by a previous Parish Councillor. Cllr Costa confirmed he would exclude himself from the matter.

Cllr Skingsley-Morgan declared a personal interest in item 9 (2 Parklands Close) on the grounds she may know the applicant. She considered this would not impact her judgement and she would remain in the meeting

Cllr Rye declared a personal interest in item 11 (3 Hycliffe Gardens) on the grounds she may know the applicant. She considered this would not impact her judgement and she would remain in the meeting.

PL197/25 - MINUTES

Members received and confirm the minutes of the meeting held 13 January 2026 ([Appendix 1](#)) as an accurate record of what took place

PL198/25 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Twenty five members of the public were present

To **CONSIDER** the following applications received for the weeks ending 2 and 9 January 2026

PL199/25 - [EPF/2567/25](#) - Land South of Chigwell Rise, Chigwell, IG7 6AQ

Development of residential units (Class C3) and Flexible Class F2(b/E(e) use with provision of access, landscaping, vehicle and cycle parking, sustainable urban drainage systems and other associated works.

Twenty four members expressed an objection at the meeting, 14 written objections were received and two residents and one district councillor spoke in opposition raising the following points:

Chigwell Parish Council

Members **STRONGLY OBJECTED** to the proposal on the grounds it would represent major, permanent urbanising development on open land within the Metropolitan Green Belt and would conflict with the adopted development plan and national Green Belt policy. The Parish Council does not accept the applicant's attempt to re-characterise this site as "grey belt" for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 155. The correct starting point is that this is currently open countryside within the Green Belt at the settlement edge and the planning balance must give substantial weight to harm to Green Belt openness and permanence, consistent with NPPF paragraph 142 (Green Belt to be kept permanently open) and paragraph 153 (substantial weight to any identified harm).

The site's recent planning history is highly material and weighs against the current proposal. A cemetery scheme was refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal in December 2022. Although the use differs, that decision is important because the Inspector's reasoning was directed at this site's openness and the harm created by introducing built form, parking and internal road/track infrastructure, all of which were treated as harmful urbanising encroachment into the countryside and inconsistent with Green Belt objectives. The revised natural burial ground scheme was only allowed on appeal in May 2025 because it was fundamentally different in kind and effect. It depended on a low-key, natural appearance, minimal physical intervention, an absence of buildings and tight controls to avoid the very urbanising features that the earlier decision found harmful. The Parish Council is concerned that the applicant's narrative now seeks to treat that 2025 permission as if it diluted the Green Belt baseline or established a principle for residential development. It does not. It has not been implemented, it does not change Green Belt designation and it was acceptable only because of the absence of permanent built development, significant hardstanding, lighting and the day-to-day domestication of land that a housing estate inevitably brings. The current proposal is the opposite of what made the 2025 scheme acceptable and re-introduces, at far greater intensity and permanence, the same categories of harm that underpinned the 2022 dismissal.

The Parish Council considers the “grey belt” case is unproven and misapplied. The site is not previously developed land and the seasonal and intermittent activity of a boot sale does not convert an open field into “grey belt”. The applicant therefore relies on the alternative limb of the definition, claiming the land does not “strongly contribute” to Green Belt purposes. That is directly at odds with the Council’s own evidence base. In the Epping Forest District Green Belt Assessment Stage 2 (2016), the wider parcel identified as 035.7 is assessed as making a strong contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging and to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, with the report’s “strong contribution” definition describing land that serves as a critical gap/space with an open perception and without significant barrier features and countryside that is not separated from the wider countryside by significant barriers. The Parish Council’s position is that the proper starting point is the Council’s published evidence, which identifies very high harm from release. The applicant has not provided a convincing parcel-specific justification for treating this land differently. The repeated emphasis in the submission that Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill are “villages not towns” is not a reliable basis to downplay Green Belt purposes in practice. This land functions as open countryside at the settlement edge and its development would be encroachment and sprawl whether the neighbouring settlement is labelled a village or a town.

In any event, even if members were to accept a “grey belt” classification, paragraph 155(a) requires more than a site-only narrative. It requires the decision maker to be satisfied that the development “would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan”. A large, unallocated housing estate on open Green Belt land at the edge of Chigwell would, by its very nature, undermine openness and permanence and would weaken the plan-led approach to Green Belt release. The Parish Council also notes that the “grey belt” gateway excludes land where the application of NPPF policies relating to habitats sites provides a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. Given the unresolved Habitats Regulations position in relation to Epping Forest SAC and in-combination impacts acknowledged within the submitted material, it is not open to the applicant to assume that gateway is satisfied.

The Parish Council is also concerned that the application documents show an intention for this scheme to facilitate further development beyond the red line. The Design and Access Statement explicitly labels land to the south as “Potential Future Development” and indicates “future connections” through the application site. That is a material consideration in Green Belt terms because it signals a risk of incremental “creep”, with the current proposal creating a new engineered edge, access arrangements and development form that could later be used to argue that adjoining Green Belt land is now “logical” or “contained” for release. The Green Belt’s essential characteristics are openness and permanence and the Parish Council considers that designing the estate to enable onward expansion is fundamentally inconsistent with those objectives.

The Parish Council is not satisfied that the proposal demonstrates compliance with the adopted Local Plan policies that protect landscape character and the countryside. Policy DM3 requires that development proposals will be permitted where it is demonstrated the proposal will not cause significant harm to landscape character, and Policy SP6 seeks to protect and enhance the character of the countryside. The Parish Council considers that the scale, layout and domesticating effect of 232 houses, estate roads, lighting pressure in practice, engineered SuDS features and year-round activity would materially alter the character of this currently open land and introduce permanent urbanising influence into the Green Belt. This is not a minor adjustment; it is a fundamental change from open countryside to a housing estate.

The Parish Council does not accept that any “very special circumstances” exist to justify this proposal. National policy is clear that new housing in the Green Belt is, by definition, inappropriate development unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to openness, and it is not enough for an applicant to list general benefits that could be delivered elsewhere. In this case, the harm would be permanent and fundamental: the change from open countryside to a large housing estate with buildings, roads, lighting, parking areas, engineered drainage and domestic gardens. That is a lasting loss of openness and a clear encroachment into the countryside.

The Parish Council also rejects the suggestion that a higher affordable housing offer is, by itself, capable of outweighing the Green Belt harm. The applicant points to a 10 percentage point uplift above the Local Plan requirement (50% instead of 40%) and seeks to present this as decisive. The Parish Council recognises the importance of affordable homes, but it does not accept that an uplift of this kind automatically amounts to “very special circumstances”, especially where the site is Green Belt land that the Council’s own evidence base identifies as causing “very high” harm if released (Parcel 035.7). If developments could routinely justify major Green Belt release simply by adding a modest uplift in affordable housing, Green Belt policy would quickly become meaningless. The purpose of the Green Belt is to remain open and permanent. The loss proposed here is irreversible. The affordable housing uplift, while beneficial, does not repair or replace the openness and countryside function that would be lost.

This point is reinforced by the site’s recent appeal history. The natural burial ground was only allowed because it avoided the very urbanising features that would harm openness. The current proposal introduces those features at scale and permanently. The Parish Council considers that the scale of Green Belt harm is so great, and so directly contrary to the Council’s own evidence base for Parcel 035.7, that it cannot be “compensated” by an affordable housing uplift of 10%.

The Parish Council also raises substantial concerns on highways and parking, because the proposal appears to be predicated on reduced car use without providing a parking and management strategy that is proven, enforceable and robust. Local Plan Policy T1 expects development to minimise the need to travel and promote sustainable modes, but it also requires development to be properly planned so that transport impacts are not simply displaced onto surrounding streets. The submitted documents defer key details of parking controls and enforcement to a later “finalised” car parking management plan. In the Parish Council’s view, members are being asked to accept a reduced parking provision without the detail that would demonstrate how overspill and nuisance will be prevented in practice. On the figures presented, the parking offer is materially below the Essex Parking Standards (2024) for a site that is partly moderate connectivity and partly low connectivity, where car ownership remains significant. The Parish Council considers that a shortfall of this scale is likely to lead to overspill parking on surrounding roads, pressure on local junctions and increased conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, contrary to the objective of safe and suitable access and the Local Plan’s transport aims.

The Parish Council also considers the cycle parking strategy is not compliant with the Essex standards in an important respect. While the applicant asserts that residential cycle spaces broadly follow a “per bedroom” approach, the standards also require that at least 10% of cycle parking is designed for non-standard cycles such as cargo bikes, adapted cycles and tricycles. The scheme indicates only two cargo bike spaces, which falls well short of 10% of the total cycle provision and is not remedied by general statements about covered stores unless the applicant can demonstrate, with dimensions and specifications, that a substantial proportion of private stores are genuinely suitable for non-standard cycles. This matters because non-standard cycle provision is part of making active travel realistic for families and people with mobility needs, and the current shortfall undermines the credibility of the proposal’s “reduced car dependence” narrative.

The Parish Council has concerns about the robustness of the Biodiversity Net Gain evidence. The BNG report contains a basic factual error in identifying the local planning authority, alongside inconsistencies in the description and scoring of baseline hedgerows. Most significantly, it confirms that new hedgerows shown on the proposed habitat plan are not included in the statutory metric because long-term ownership and management are “uncertain”, despite giving a total length of 2.219 km. In the Parish Council’s view this is a material omission and indicates that part of the ecological offer is not yet secured for the required 30-year period. The Parish Council also questions whether the assumed habitat condition outcomes are realistic within a heavily used residential environment without a detailed, enforceable and funded 30-year management and monitoring regime with clear triggers and remedies if target conditions are not met.

The Parish Council is further concerned that the Habitats Regulations position is not resolved and should be treated as a fundamental constraint rather than a matter capable of being dealt with by a standard financial contribution. EFDC, as competent authority, must be able to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC, alone and in combination, before permission can be granted. The submitted material acknowledges that further work is required on in-combination traffic effects, and the Parish Council considers it would be premature and legally risky to proceed to an approval in the absence of a completed and robust Appropriate Assessment and secured mitigation capable of demonstrating no adverse effect on integrity.

Finally, the Parish Council cautions against over-reliance on the applicant’s “demonstrable unmet need” case to justify Green Belt release. The Local Plan is recently adopted and establishes the district’s spatial strategy and Green Belt approach. This site is not allocated for housing and lies within the Green Belt. Approving major development here on the basis of disputed housing land supply and a contested “grey belt” interpretation would undermine the plan-led system and set an unwelcome precedent for incremental erosion of the Green Belt at settlement edges.

For all of these reasons, the Parish Council considers the proposal conflicts with the development plan and national policy. The development would cause substantial harm to Green Belt openness and permanence, it is inconsistent with the Council’s own Green Belt evidence base for Parcel 035.7, it reverses the careful, low-impact basis on which the natural burial ground was allowed, and it raises unresolved concerns on SAC impacts, parking and deliverability of the claimed BNG outcomes. The Parish Council therefore requests officers refuse this application.

The Parish notes that the comments of the QRP panel, officers pre-app advice and the basis on which planning application EPF/1449/25 have not been published or provided despite requests. The Parish Council expect these to be published by EFDC and reserve the right to submit further comments once these are available

PL200/25 - [EPF/2523/25](#) - Former MOD Site, Chigwell

Revised siting and orientation of the previously approved dwelling; and new, independent vehicular access from Roding Lane to replace the previously approved access.

One member of the public spoke in favour

Members **NOTED** the applicant was known to the majority of members and **AGREED** to delegate the matter to officers to review and submit comments.

Officers comments on behalf of the Council are as follows:

Chigwell Parish Council objects to this application because it introduces a materially different and more intrusive form of development in the Green Belt than previously assessed. The revised scheme relies on the formation of a new access lane into the site and associated turning/parking areas, which are engineering operations and create a domesticated approach road and hardstanding within open countryside. In the Parish Council's view the submission fails to demonstrate that the cumulative effect of these works, together with the dwelling, gates and increased residential activity, would preserve Green Belt openness and avoid conflict with Green Belt purposes, contrary to Local Plan policy SP5 and DM4 and the Green Belt provisions of the NPPF, which require substantial weight to be given to any Green Belt harm.

The Parish Council is concerned that earlier acceptability conclusions are being undermined. Permission EPF/1416/23 for fencing/gates and access alterations was assessed on the express basis that no new hard surface would be introduced beyond the gates, which was a key factor in the trees and landscape assessment. The current application now introduces a formed access route beyond the gates and into the site, representing a material change in both impact and extent which has not been properly justified or mitigated, and which risks an urbanising effect on this rural frontage, contrary to SP6, DM3, DM5 and DM9.

Soft landscaping is a further fundamental concern. The soft landscaping approved under EPF/2330/23 reflected the original access arrangement, yet none of that previously approved soft landscaping is shown on the new layout and no updated, coordinated landscaping scheme is provided to address the revised access alignment and turning areas. This omission prevents proper assessment of visual impact, screening, rural character and biodiversity outcomes and is contrary to SP6, DM1, DM3, DM5 and DM9. It also raises doubt that the revised proposal would be at least as well contained and assimilated as the extant scheme.

The Parish Council also considers that the new access corridor is likely to require vegetation removal and ongoing management to create and maintain visibility and manoeuvring requirements, together with excavation and construction that could harm boundary trees, hedgerows and the established green verge character of Roding Lane. The submission does not provide sufficient arboricultural, landscape or drainage detail to demonstrate that these impacts can be avoided, and it therefore conflicts with DM1, DM3, DM15, DM16 and DM21. Access is a planning matter insofar as safe and suitable access must be demonstrated in accordance with the NPPF; however, the applicant's reliance on alleged private access-rights difficulties is not, in itself, a planning justification for additional Green Belt harm.

The Parish Council notes that the applicant purchased the site with an extant planning permission and now advances "landlocking" as the driver for a new access arrangement. That context strengthens the concern that the application is seeking to use the planning system to resolve a private dispute or convenience issue rather than to deliver a scheme with no greater Green Belt impact. For these reasons, the Parish Council asks that the application be refused unless the applicant can demonstrate, with robust evidence, that the revised access works preserve openness, do not suburbanise the Green Belt and are accompanied by a complete replacement soft landscaping scheme at least equivalent to that previously approved.

PL201/25 - [EPF/2600/25](#) - 27, Brook Way, Chigwell, IG7 6AW

Conversion of Garage into Habitable Room; single storey rear infill extension; front porch; table-top pitch roof with side/front roof lights, rear, sides and 2no. front dormers.

Chigwell Parish Council:

No objection

PL202/25 - [EPF/2273/25](#) - 2, Parkland Close, Chigwell, IG7 6LL

Demolition of existing detached dwelling house. Erection of new dwelling with basement and two full storeys above ground, with additional accommodation in the roof.

Two members of the public spoke against the proposal.

Chigwell Parish Council

Members **STRONGLY OBJECTED** on the grounds that this level of enlargement represents an unacceptable overdevelopment of the plot which would result in a harmful and incongruous form of development in this part of Parkland Close.

The proposal fails to respect the character of the street scene and does not demonstrate that it will sit comfortably within the established pattern of development. Members NOTED the absence of a credible street scene.

On its face, the scale and intensity of the scheme is wholly out of keeping with the local area. The internal layouts indicate a very substantial dwelling. The Parish Council considers this amount of accommodation to be dominant and harmful to the prevailing character, contrary to Local Plan Policy DM9 and NPPF 2024.

The Parish Council is also concerned about the impact on neighbouring residential amenity, including an increased sense of enclosure, loss of outlook and the potential for overlooking arising from the enlarged height and bulk, the roof accommodation and the overall intensity of the building's accommodation. The applicant indicates the replacement dwelling would sit close to shared boundaries (stating 2m) which raises the risk that the increased mass will be experienced as overbearing from adjoining gardens and windows. The Parish Council does not consider that the application is supported by a sufficiently rigorous assessment to demonstrate compliance with plan policy, relying instead on broad assertions that there would be no overbearing or loss of daylight/sunlight.

In addition, the basement proposal raises serious concerns about construction impacts and potential effects on neighbouring land and structures. The Basement Impact Assessment confirms that the boundary on each side is approximately 1.5m from the proposed basement, that the excavation would be approximately 3–4m deep, and that excavation is within 3m of the adjoining building such that Party Wall procedures are required. While the report concludes that impacts can be controlled and a light "damage categorisation", it also confirms its understanding of ground conditions is based on a desk study. Given the proximity of neighbouring properties, the Parish Council considers that the potential for disturbance and risk (including vibration, noise, ground movement, drainage and construction traffic impacts) has not been satisfactorily addressed to the level required for confidence, particularly in light of Policy DM9's explicit expectation that proposals address amenity impacts including "vibration" and "noise".

For all of these reasons, Chigwell Parish Council requests that planning permission is refused due to the unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and the inadequate demonstration that neighbouring amenity (including privacy and basement-related impacts) would be protected.

PL203/25 - [EPF/2578/25](#) - 1-23 St. Winifreds Close, Chigwell, IG7 5PU

Erection of one-storey upward extensions to both residential blocks to provide 5 x 2 bed units and part-retrospective permission for associated parking.

Chigwell Parish Council:

Members **OBJECTED** on the grounds that it would intensify use of a confined residential cul-de-sac where parking and vehicle circulation are already limited, and where any shortfall would quickly spill onto the highway.

The proposal has not shown that parking provision would be sufficient for the additional flats and their visitors, having regard to the Essex Parking Guidance (2024) and the need for safe, convenient and workable arrangements. The predictable result to the shortfall is overspill onto the carriageway, informal areas and verges, reducing road width, creating conflict with pedestrians and undermining safety and amenity for existing residents.

There are also highway safety and access concerns. Cul-de-sacs rely on clear space for turning, servicing and emergency access. Additional vehicle movements and parking pressure increase the risk of obstruction, reduced visibility and difficulty for refuse vehicles, deliveries and emergency services, particularly at peak times when residents and visitors arrive together. The proposals do not provide adequate reassurance that safe access and turning can be maintained.

Construction impacts are a further concern. These works in a tight close will bring contractor parking, deliveries and loading/unloading, and could displace resident parking. If construction activity cannot be managed wholly within the site without relying on the public highway and surrounding spaces, there is a real risk of obstruction, loss of access and hazards for pedestrians, including children and those with limited mobility. The scheme should not proceed without a fully workable and enforceable construction and logistics plan that prevents overspill and protects highway safety and residential amenity.

The proposal also raises amenity issues. Additional upper-floor accommodation and any elevated external areas can lead to overlooking, loss of privacy and increased noise and disturbance in a quiet residential setting. The application has not adequately demonstrated that these impacts would be acceptably mitigated.

Finally, the Parish Council remains concerned about wider impacts on the character and appearance of the area and the protection of existing landscaping and trees. The development should only be supported if it can be clearly shown, through secured measures, that it will not harm the established character of the close or its green setting.

PL204/25 - [EPF/0027/26](#) - 3, Hycliffe Gardens, Chigwell, IG7 5HJ

Single and two storey rear extensions, removal of garden stores and replacement of garage doors with window.

Chigwell Parish Council

No Objection

PL205/25 - [EPF/0032/26](#) - 52, Fontayne Avenue, Chigwell, IG7 5HF

Proposed two storey rear and side extension with loft conversion fit out.

Chigwell Parish Council

No objection although members **NOTED** the absence of a credible street scene.

PL206/25 - [CC/EPF/87/25](#) - Well Park School, School Lane, Chigwell, IG7 6NN

The provision of 7no. car parking spaces, the creation of harstanding/paths within the site and the installation of 3no. air source heat pumps, water tank and external lighting

The Council **OBJECTS** to applications which may result in inappropriate development in Green Belt whether with or without special circumstances. The Council, therefore, **OBJECTS** to this application. If, however, all relevant Officers deem this application acceptable, whether with amendments or not, then the council is willing to waive this objection

To **NOTE** and **COMMENT** if appropriate, the following Approval of Details Reserved by A Condition. This type of application is needed where a condition in a planning permission or a listed building consent requires details of a specified aspect of the development which wasn't fully described in the original application. These details need to be submitted for approval before the development can begin

PL207/25 - None

To **NOTE** and **COMMENT** if appropriate, Lawful Development Applications - If a property owner wants to be certain that the existing or proposed use or development of a building is lawful for planning purposes or that their proposal does not require planning permission, they can apply for a 'Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development' (CLEUD) or a 'Certificate of Lawful Proposed Use or Development' (CLPUD)

PL208/25 - None

APPEALS

To consider and **AGREE** the Council's response/further action

PL209/25 - None

PL210/25 - ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD TO THE NEXT MEETING OR ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A DECISION TO BE MADE

PL211/25 - DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Confirmed as Thursday 12 February at 6.30pm

The meeting closed 7.10pm