

Planning & Environment COMMITTEE A G E N D A

**For a Meeting to be held on Tuesday 24th February 2026
at 7.30pm
at Champions Manor Hall, Hullbridge Road,
South Woodham Ferrers**

**Membership:
Councillor M O Brien Chairman
Councillor S Wilson Vice-Chairman**

Councillor J Birch	Councillor P Ferry	Councillor A John
Councillor P Price	Councillor I Roberts	Councillor A Shearring
Councillor M Sismey	Councillor D Thompson	Councillor F Knox

Local residents are welcome to attend this meeting. At the meeting, your elected Councillors will take decisions affecting YOU, the Community, and the Town. At the beginning of the meeting there is an opportunity for you to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business on the agenda. The public may participate for up to 15 minutes for this purpose. If you have any queries, please telephone the Town Clerk on 01245 321 817. Please join us.

**Karen Atkins
Town Clerk
18th February 2026**



- 1. Apologies if Absence**
To RECEIVE apologies for absence.
- 2. Dispensation considerations**
To consider any dispensations, as required. Standing Order 12. Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
Any Member declaring an interest is asked to state whether this is a pecuniary registerable or non-registerable interest. Clarification, if required, can be sought prior to the meeting with the Chairman or the Town Clerk.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
To APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2026 as a true record.

5. Public Questions

In accordance with Standing Order 3.e to allow up to 15 minutes for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business covered by the Committees terms of reference. At the close of this item members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Committee; Members with pecuniary interests will also not be permitted to speak, address the Committee on those interests and must leave the meeting when the item in relation to their interest is being discussed.

6. Budgetary Position

The budgetary position on 18/2/2026 is attached to the agenda.

7. Previous Planning Decisions and Appeals

To note the City Council planning decisions which differ from the Town Council recommendations will be circulated prior to the meeting.

8. Planning Applications

To consider and agree comments on the planning applications as detailed on the list circulated and displayed on the Town Council noticeboards and website.

9. Connectivity Tool for Planning Applications

Committee to receive a report and update on the Connectivity Tool.

<https://connectivity-tool-lite.dft.gov.uk/index>

10. Draft NPPF 2025 key Changes and implications for Chelmsford & South Woodham Ferrers Consultation

Committee to summarise the government's proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and highlight the implications for Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers (SWF), committee to consider a response to the consultation (closing **10 March 2026**).

11. Essex Wildlife Trust – The Fen

Following a recent site visit to the Fen by Essex Wildlife Trust, Committee to confirm attendance and key discussion points for a team's meeting scheduled in March 2026. This meeting will review the current lease agreement and consider any other relevant matters.

12. Items to Note

- Essex County Council has announced the launch of the new [Climate Action Plan 2025–2028](#), alongside the [Annual Report 2024-2025](#).
The new Climate Action Plan sets out how Essex County Council will deliver against the county's sustainability ambitions over the next three years. It builds on initiatives already underway from previous plans, while introducing new actions beginning in the 2025 financial year.
The Annual Report highlights the progress made since the last reporting period, using data, updates and case studies to showcase achievements since the Essex Climate Action Commission's report, *Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral*, was published in 2021. It also looks ahead, outlining priorities and planned actions for the year to come.
- Chelmsford City Council conducted a sweeping and clearing of the roadway was completed in Tanners Way in February 2026.
- The Bus Grant 336 Sunday service has been submitted along with letters of support.
- The Environment Officer is attending a Local Nature Recovery Partnership Workshop in Colchester on 23/2/26.
- A litter pick with Trinity St Marys school has been scheduled for the 26th March 2026 during the Great British Spring Clean campaign March13-29 2026.

13. Woodland Trees Project

Committee to receive a verbal update from the Environment Officer and consider the ongoing completion of the project.

14. Pet Scattering Copse Project

Committee to consider the report attached to the agenda.

15. John Cox

Committee to receive an update from the working party for the development and advancement of the John Cox project with revised quotations.

16. Policies

Committee to review and approve the following policies for recommendation to Council on 24th March 2026 -

- Environmental Waste & Recycling Policy
- Biodiversity Policy

17. Report to Council

To agree items for report to the next Council meeting is on 24th March 2026.

18. Media Coverage

To consider whether any items on this Agenda warrant a Media release.

19. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee will be on 31st March 2026 at 7.30pm.

Any member who is unable to attend the meeting should send their apologies and reason to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 18/02/2026

Month No: 11

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
300 Environment General					
4325 Litter & Vegetation Control	837	3,500	2,663		2,663
4328 Tree Works	3,015	8,000	4,985		4,985
4505 Open Spaces Maintenance	2,899	2,500	(399)		(399)
4506 Open Spaces Maint. (John Cox)	10,541	13,000	2,459		2,459
4700 Street Furniture & Signage	1,750	4,000	2,250		2,250
4705 Hanging Baskets	12,394	13,000	607		607
4710 Roundabout Sponsorship	1,837	2,000	163		163
4715 Road Safety	0	1,800	1,800		1,800
4720 Fenn Maintenance	12,980	10,000	(2,980)		(2,980)
Environment General :- Indirect Expenditure	46,254	57,800	11,546	0	11,546
Net Expenditure	(46,254)	(57,800)	(11,546)		
310 Garden of Remembrance					
1300 Garden of Remembrance Income	17,621	14,300	(3,321)		
Garden of Remembrance :- Income	17,621	14,300	(3,321)		
4010 Water	147	150	3		3
4760 GoR Supplies	5,399	5,000	(399)		(399)
4765 GoR Maintenance	3,924	6,000	2,076		2,076
4770 GoR Security	5,166	5,200	34		34
Garden of Remembrance :- Indirect Expenditure	14,636	16,350	1,714	0	1,714
Net Income over Expenditure	2,985	(2,050)	(5,035)		
Grand Totals:- Income	17,621	14,300	(3,321)		
Expenditure	60,890	74,150	13,260	0	13,260
Net Income over Expenditure	(43,269)	(59,850)	(16,581)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(43,269)	(59,850)	(16,581)		

Planning Differences for Meeting 24th February 2026

There are no planning differences.

Planning Applications To Be Considered at Meeting 24th February 2026

26/05001/TPO	38	Finchland View	T4 Oak - Located in rear garden of property - Crown reduction by 3m. Reason: The current size of the tree would suggest, roots will soon be nearing foundations of the house.	AS
26/00084/CUPAMA	Block 15 To 17A	Reeves Way	Determination as to whether prior approval of the local planning authority is required for the change of use of Class E space to form 8 apartments.	MOB, MS & AS
26/00096/FUL	52	Overmead Drive	Proposed two storey rear extension & first floor side extension with internal alterations	IR
26/00025/FUL	1	Bandhills Close	Remove existing garden fence and relocate.	PF
26/00153/FUL	22	Willow Grove	Demolition of existing conservatory and construction of single storey rear extension.	DT
26/00169/FUL	60	The Spinnaker	Demolition of existing conservatory to be replaced with proposed single storey sunroom, conversion of loft over garage to form an at home study. Alterations to fenestration.	SW
26/00162/FUL	236	Hullbridge Road	Demolition of existing garage and lean to roof. Construction of single storey rear/side extension and garage. Removal of existing chimneys. Alterations to fenestration. Internal and external alterations.	JB

^Please note that we are not the Planning Authority for these details please sign up for application alerts in your area from Chelmsford City Council.

Connectivity Tool Lite for planning use

The DfT Connectivity Tool Lite provides quick, map-based scores showing how well any location is connected to key services by walking, cycling, driving and public transport. Because it uses a national, government-approved method, it offers a reliable way to judge whether a site is genuinely “sustainable”.

For the Town Council, it is especially useful when assessing developments near our boundaries. It helps identify:

- Whether a site has poor access to services, making it car-dependent.
- Where walking/cycling links are weak and need improvement.
- How new development would rely on South Woodham Ferrers’ facilities and roads.
- Evidence to request mitigation or contributions from developers.

In short, it provides a clear, objective measure to support planning comments, highlight cross-boundary impacts, and strengthen arguments for better infrastructure.

<https://connectivity-tool-lite.dft.gov.uk/index>

Draft NPPF 2025 Key Changes and Implications for Chelmsford & South Woodham Ferrers Consultation

For Councillors – January 2026

Purpose: To summarise the government's proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and highlight the implications for Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers (SWF), enabling councillors to decide whether to respond to the consultation (closing **10 March 2026**).

1. What the Government Is Proposing

The draft NPPF 2025 represents a major restructuring of the planning system. It introduces:

- A new national planning architecture
- Stronger national rules for decision-making
- Higher and more rigid housing requirements
- A tougher presumption in favour of development
- New policies on climate, energy, transport and the Green Belt
- A shift toward faster, more rules-based planning

The intention is to make planning more consistent, more predictable, and more delivery-focused.

2. Key National Changes (Summary)

A. National policies override local policies more often

- Decision-making policies are now separate from plan-making policies.
- Local policies that conflict “in any way” with national decision-making policies get very limited weight.
- Older Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will be easier to override.

Implication: Local discretion narrows; national rules dominate.

B. Stronger presumption in favour of development

- Refusal threshold rises from “significantly and demonstrably outweigh” to “substantially outweigh”.
- Within settlements, the presumption is very strong.
- Outside settlements, development must meet stricter tests but is still easier to justify than before.

Implication: More applications approved, especially on appeal.

C. Higher housing need figures

- New formula: 0.8% of existing housing stock, not household projections.
- 35% urban uplift removed but replaced with a stronger affordability adjustment.
- Harder for councils to argue for lower numbers.

Implication: Chelmsford's housing requirement will rise.

D. Five-year housing land supply reinstated for all

- No exemptions for recently adopted plans.
- If supply falls short, the presumption applies automatically.

Authorities with weak supply will lose appeals more often such as Maldon.

E. Affordable housing becomes a strategic lever

- Schemes offering more than policy-required affordable housing may receive flexibility on market mix or off-site delivery.

Developers may use affordable housing to negotiate faster approvals.

F. Green Belt → Grey Belt reforms

- Weak-performing Green Belt parcels can be treated as Grey Belt.
- Development is not inappropriate if “Golden Rules” are met.
- Brownfield in the Green Belt can be intensified.
- New support for transport-led growth around railway stations.

More Green Belt release around Chelmsford is likely.

G. Local Plans must be more strategic

- Plans must focus on where growth goes, not detailed development management wording.
- Plans delivering less than 80% of new housing need must be restarted.

Chelmsford’s Local Plan review must be ambitious and deliverable.

H. Economic development given “substantial weight”

- Data centres, labs, logistics, gigafactories and similar sectors receive strong national support.

Harder to refuse major employment schemes, even outside settlement boundaries.

3. Chelmsford

Chelmsford becomes a “growth authority”

The combination of higher housing need, Grey Belt release, and a stronger presumption means:

- More pressure to deliver high housing numbers
- Expectation to intensify Chelmsford urban area
- Greater scrutiny of any attempt to limit growth
- More appeals allowed where supply is weak

Local Plan review must change

Chelmsford's emerging Local Plan will need to:

- Focus on spatial strategy, allocations, and infrastructure
- Remove duplicated national policies
- Identify Grey Belt around Chelmsford
- Demonstrate a credible housing trajectory

Town centre and transport corridors

National policy strongly supports:

- Higher densities
- Mixed-use redevelopment
- Active travel and public transport priority
- Urban intensification

Chelmsford city centre and key corridors will face increased development pressure.

4. South Woodham Ferrers

SWF remains a designated growth location

The strategic allocation north of the town becomes even more important because:

- It is deliverable
- It is unconstrained by Green Belt
- It aligns with national policy for rail-linked towns

If Chelmsford struggles to meet housing need in the city, national policy may push for:

- Higher densities within the SWF allocation
- Additional edge-of-settlement sites
- Intensification around the station and town centre

Policies that simply repeat national wording will carry little weight.

Policies that specify local design, public realm, green spaces, and walking/cycling links will remain important.

Climate, flood risk and the Crouch

New national policies strengthen:

- Surface water management
- Green/blue infrastructure
- Flood resilience
- Low-carbon design

This supports SWF's case for strong infrastructure requirements in the northern growth area.

E. Transport and town centre vitality

National policy favours:

- Rail-linked intensification
- Active travel networks
- Mixed-use town centre development

This aligns with SWF's existing strategy but raises expectations for delivery quality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

Pet Scattering Copse Project, Garden of Remembrance.

Current Local Authority operators

There are at least 5 local authorities I could find, who provide scattering areas;

Three examples are:

The London Borough of Lambeth, who have a dedicated area at Streatham Cemetery and have upgraded their services to relate to the new demand for pet areas. This is relatively new but has taken off very well so far and was visited by the E & L Officer.

Sandwell Council provide a dedicated scattering area for pets. Unlike Lambeth they do not offer a cremation service which has been operational since 2015.

<https://www.scips.org.uk/news/latest-news/1565-pet-memorial-garden-unveiled-sandwell-valley-crematorium>

Bath and Northeast Somerset Council

A quiet corner of Haycombe Cemetery has been set aside as a final resting place for pets and has been in operation since 2015.

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/pet-cemetery>

Religious concerns

The Rev'd J King has no objection to this, and this is confirmed via Lambeth Palace theologian's department. This is not consecrated ground, as no Bishop has recorded this in the parishioner records. The area remains separate from the main garden and no mixed burials of remains will be permitted.

Other Groups

The Blue Cross animal charity has said they think this a "lovely idea" and are supportive as well as 2 local vets, who have said they believe the service would be useful to local people. The local bereavement service coordinator has said she welcomes the idea of this, as many people can be as attached to their pets as a member of the family and that this gives them an area to go to and to use. She believes this will be very popular with residents. The local baby loss support group also has no objection to the possible project.

Cost

The cost would be £2,500.00 for the project, this includes if required safety caps for the fixing bolts to make them safe.

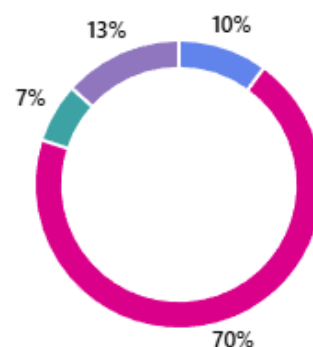
Public Feedback

We carried out a survey based on, an online survey completed via a link shown on our website, via a QR code scan placed at the Garden of Remembrance and through paper versions handed out by our ESO.

The results of the survey are that:

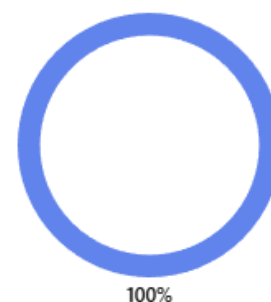
Category of respondents

- I am not a pet owner and have not had a pet
- I am a pet owner and have owned pets in the past (adulthood)
- I am a pet owner and have not had pets before
- I have had pets in the past, but no longer have them



Support for project

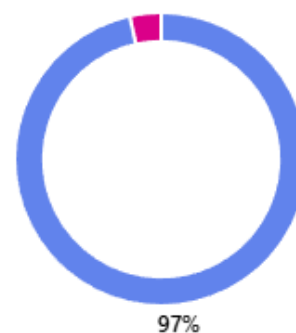
- I support this idea, (if you support this, please go to question 3)
- I do not support this idea (you are not required to answer question 3)



Likely user of this

3. If you support this idea, would you consider using it?

- Yes
- No



Environmental Waste and Recycling Policy

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council considers the protection of the environment to be of major importance. Environmental protection is an integral part of efficient management of the Council's activities. High standards are to be applied by all those who work in or use the Halls or meeting rooms, complying with all legislation, codes of practice and official guidance relevant to environmental protection.

The Town Council will promote awareness of the principles and objectives of environment protection by ensuring all users, volunteers and staff are familiar with this environmental commitment and its objectives on recycling as follows:

Waste and recycling

The Council aims to reduce the production of waste wherever possible, including unnecessary packaging and single-use plastics and encourage re-use, repair and recycling of materials.

We provide clear systems for waste separation, ensuring rubbish and recycling are disposed of safely and responsibly in our buildings. At least one bin will be dedicated to the disposal of recycled materials.

Materials and Resources

While a target solution may work in some circumstances, in others the policy should be an indicator of the commitment without target due to scales and time constraints.

Buy products, including cleaning materials which are made in accordance with the principle of using material in a sustainable way and use locally made goods where practicable. Laws on hygiene and food handling must still be followed.

What can and cannot do. We can all do even a small amount to help reduce our waste, and what steps are already in place and process and procedures are being taken to help with the bigger picture. We cannot change everything and everyone, but reducing waste will help our parish or town to be a part of a bigger scheme. Supporting organisations such as Love Food Hate Waste, in promoting reusing food and not throwing away items that can be reused. Our foodbank box could be used for sealed, in date nonperishable foods for which hirers do not want for example.

Reduce use of paper while maximising that from sustainable sources and recycled material.

The Council supports sensible and proportionate use of paper as part of wider resource management. While digital storage and communication are encouraged where practical, we recognise that paper use varies depending on events, workload and staffing. We will continue to reduce paper use, (print on both sides where possible), though as it is largely recyclable, it is an environmentally sustainable product.

Agreed Council 19th March 2024

Review March 2026

The Council will:

- Use sustainably sourced or recycled paper where possible.
- Encourage digital storage of documents where appropriate. Store documents in electronic archives. Avoid printing hard copies for storage in filing cabinets. Use digital versions of books, files, and documents.
- Promote the use of reusable products instead of one-time-use products.
- Add items such as waiting lists or interment lists etc to electronically stored, encouraging electronic ticketing for events, reducing paper use by QR code scanning on purchaser's mobile devices.

Support local!

Support local businesses where possible and allow them the opportunity to quote for work while encouraging them to minimize waste and encourage items to go for recycling.

Waste Generated

Cardboard should be recycled in sacks, along with paper which is non-confidential.

Food Waste

Food waste bins or bags will be provided in kitchen areas for new rules and procedures required under forthcoming national recycling legislation due to take effect in 2027, ensuring our waste management systems remain compliant and up to date.

Legislation

We commit to following local and national legislation, and to comment or consult with outside bodies where appropriate. Consult and ask. We will continue to seek advice from Councils, County Councils and other ecological groups. We continue to work with the Essex Waste Partnership.

Review and promote

Look at schemes introduced or currently operating to get a view on how successful it is, and how we can improve it. Promote the use of recycling or green disposal of our users. Work with the Local Waste Partnership on joint projects.

Agreed Council 19th March 2024

Review March 2026

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Duty imposed on parish and town councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will take into consideration the protection and conservation of biodiversity within the town.

The World Wildlife Fund defines Biodiversity as all the different kinds of life that is found in one area - the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive including food, clean water, medicine, and shelter. But as humans put increasing pressure on the planet, using and consuming more resources than ever before, we risk upsetting the balance of ecosystems and losing biodiversity.

The Environmental Improvement Plan was published in 2018 as a 25-year vision setting out Government strategies for improving the natural environment. In January 2023 the plan's first five-yearly update was undertaken placing a biodiversity duty on Parish and Town Councils.

The Town Council is required to understand what the biodiversity duty is and consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity by agreeing appropriate policies that can be delivered through an action plan. That plan must be reviewed within 5 years of its inception or previous revision, or more often if appropriate.

2. OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE

There are three strategies that must be considered as part of the Town Council's requirement to comply with its biodiversity duty:

Local Nature Recovery Strategies:

[Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies)

Preparing local nature recovery strategies is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021. Each strategy will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map

existing areas for nature and proposals for creating and improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

Species Conservation Strategies:

These strategies will help safeguard the future of at-risk species, find the best ways to comply with existing obligations to protect species and improve their conservation status.

Protected site strategies:

These strategies involve protecting and restoring species and habitats in protected sites and provide ways to overcome off-site pressures, like nutrient pollution, in the wider catchment.

The biodiversity duty lies principally with Town and Parish Councils that own and run land and buildings. It requires them to foster opportunities for biodiversity issues to be addressed such that there is significant improvement both in existing environments and in new ones that are created by re-organisation or via planning permissions.

As the Town Council manages land and buildings, it will be required to initiate biodiversity strategies.

In addition, the Town Council will be expected, as appropriate, to influence 'biodiversity net-gain' by encouraging developers, domestic gardeners, nature conservancy organisations and other organisations and landowners to improve biodiversity.

3. SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE THE TOWN COUNCIL MAY INFLUENCE ITS BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Planning:

The Town Council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats. It will support protection of sensitive habits from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.

Town Council Buildings and Land

The Town Council will, as far as is possible, conserve the biodiversity of the land it manages. It will adopt beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work. Special care will be taken in the specification of its grounds maintenance planning to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.

Public Awareness:

The Town Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where possible, communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website, social media and Council publications.

Residents:

The Town Council will, where possible, encourage residents to enhance their biodiversity contribution by providing such things as nest boxes and bird feeders, holes in fences for hedgehogs and amphibians to pass, planting for butterflies and bees, wildlife ponds, corners of the garden and areas of grassland and wildflowers left to nature.

Specialist Groups:

Various areas will be protected by other legislation but the Town Council, where appropriate and welcomed, will find constructive ways of being involved in actions needed to improve site conditions in partnership with specialist groups such as the Essex Wildlife Trust and Bird Aware.

General Commitment:

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council undertakes to work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish. The Town Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Adopted by Council 18 March 2025
Reviewed March 2026.