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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Tuesday, 27th May 2025**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors

J.	Robertson	(Chairman)
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman) (arrived 6.15 p.m.)
J.M.	Coleman	(arrived 6.08 p.m.)
L.	Headley	
R.	Playle	
A.	Sloma	
E.	Williams	
G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)
S.	Puckey	(Open Spaces Admin Assistant)

The Chairman explained that he was sad to announce the death of Mr Green who had been attending Planning and Transport Committee Meetings for a number of years as well as partaking in Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. Barlow and Councillor Ramage. Councillor Adelaja was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held on 13th May 2025 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **INTERESTS**

Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council. Later in the meeting Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute 7 - 25/01015/TPOCON as he knew the owner of the property and Councillor J C Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 12 - Rivenhall Waste Management Site as he worked for Suffolk

County Council and dealt with waste and recycling issues as well as having worked with Indaver on the Bee Squared project.

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

5. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Planning Officer said that details of a bus survey had been received. Residents were asked to complete an online survey or attend in person from 16th to 27th June 2025 at either Basildon, Billericay, Chelmsford, Colchester or Harlow. She considered that the elderly for whom a bus service was a life line were being disenfranchised.

She said that as part of the Speed Indicator Device survey, they had noticed that the surface on the footpath in Hatfield Road had not been repaired. She had sent a photograph to Essex County Councillor Derrick Louis asking if it could be repaired as part of his Member Led Scheme. He had explained that only a bus length would be repaired. She had also mentioned the proliferation of pot holes in Hatfield Road but each needed to be reported separately.

She had received a project update from the National Grid about the Norwich to Tilbury upgrade. Apparently targeted community consultations had now taken place and an application for a development consent order was being prepared.

As requested at Minute 316(a) from the last Meeting, she had contacted Community Sergeant Simon Jesse to look into speeding from the A12 slip north to Gershwin Boulevard but he considered speeding would only be a perception.

Councillor J M Coleman entered the Chamber at 6.08pm.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

6. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

25/00957/HH

6 Whiteways Court, Witham

Proposed single storey rear extension

NO OBJECTION

25/01091/HH

25 Albert Road, Witham

Proposed single storey rear/side infill extension, addition of window to first floor rear elevation & installation of roof light to existing extension

NO OBJECTION

7. PART 2 APPLICATIONS

25/00962/LBC

The White Horse PH, Church Street, Witham

Proposed repairs and like for like replacement of windows/doors.

NO OBJECTION subject to the recommendation of the Listed Buildings Officer

Councillor J. C. Coleman entered the Chamber at 6.15pm.

25/00798/FUL

9 – 13 Newland Street, Witham

Conversion of first floor & loft space incorporating the insertion of 3 no. roof lights, into 9 no. rooms for use as an HMO. Repairs to roof and windows.

Members supported the idea of converting space above businesses on the High Street into dwellings, however there was concern about the high density of dwellings at the location and the small amenity living space proposed. The Members further supported the Fire Service's concerns on this occasion.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds of fire safety and the high density of proposed dwellings with small amenity living space but would look favourably if the density of dwellings was reduced.

25/01015/TPOCON

24 Chipping Hill, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area. Reduction of cedar by 3.5m. Reduction of Lime by 4m.

Councillor Playle declared an interest as he knew the owner of the property and would not vote.

The Tree Warden had advised that whilst some sympathetic pruning was justified he considered that as the lime tree was large, pruning would only encourage further growth. The cedar should only be reduced by 2m although there should be flexibility to allow for restorative shaping.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that the amount of reduction was too great. A small amount of pruning to the Lime tree and a reduction of 2m to the Cedar would be considered acceptable and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

25/01102/ADV

Land north of Colchester Road, Witham

Signage to include: 5 x internally illuminated fascia signs & 3 x internally illuminated totem signs. Members welcomed the new business to Witham but were mindful that the light may impact the local area.

NO OBJECTION subject to the light being off from 10pm to 6am to reduce light pollution and for the benefit of wildlife.

8. REVISED PLANS

There were no revised plans to consider.

9. DECISIONS

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

RESOLVED That the decisions be received and noted.

10. TACKLING SPEEDING IN WITHAM/20s PLENTY

- (a) A map was received showing areas which could be included in 20mph zones. It was acknowledged that a blanket 20mph would not be popular or reasonable in Witham but there were areas which would benefit. It was noted that new estates were built as 20mph zones, and Members were keen to introduce it to legacy housing estates with one entrance/exit. Members agreed to start small to make the project more deliverable and chose the Humber Road Estate in South Witham and the Grove Estate in North Witham as areas they would like to progress in the first instance.

RESOLVED That the Humber Road and Grove Estate be taken forward to implement 20s plenty.

- (b) A report was received regarding positions for Speed Indicator Devices. Members were keen to look additionally at Rickstones Road and Maldon Road but agreed to start with two on Flora Road and one on Hatfield Road. As it had been over 6 months since SID quotes had been sought, the actual signs would be reviewed, before new quotes sought.

RESOLVED To progress with Flora Road and Hatfield Road as locations for Speed Indicator Devices

RESOLVED That Members review the proposed signs and new quotes sought for Speed Indicator Devices

11. SHOP FRONTS

Members felt that as guardians of our town, it was important to ensure that businesses respected that the high street was in a conservation area.

RESOLVED that the guidelines be sent out again to Councillors and that the issue be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

12. RIVENHALL WASTE MANAGEMENT SITE

Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had worked for Suffolk County Council and dealt with waste and recycling issues; and had meetings with the company concerned regarding the Bee Square project.

A report was received. Members were disappointed at having no response to the two-week extension request to comment on the planning application variation to conditions. It was noted that there was still an error with the County Council planning search engine. Members acknowledged that steps had been taken by the company to make the site more visually acceptable, including tree planting, and that the ash created was being recycled in construction products. Members were concerned that the company was continually reneging on their planning conditions. Members recognised that additional waste from outside Essex was needed to keep the fires burning 24/7 and that this was likely to come from Hertfordshire. Concern was also expressed that there was commercial conflict as Essex County Council was the main contractor. However, particular concern was expressed about the increased vehicle movements and lack of obvious emergency planning procedures, given that the main route to the facility was via the A120 which had frequent disruption and therefore there was the very real potential for an HGV log jam. Further concern was raised about the change to condition 40/41 and the potential noise monitoring from every 5 to 15 minutes.

RESOLVED to write to Essex Highways outlining the Members' concerns and asking that Town Council's representations be considered despite the deadline having passed.

13. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN MALDON ROAD

A report was received regarding safety improvements to the pedestrian crossing in Maldon Road. Members were worried about the problems with visibility of signage and road markings around the pedestrian crossing. The issue of road markings had already been raised with Essex Highways; however it was felt necessary to raise again and to sensitively approach the local residents about their trees and bushes which obscure the signs.

RESOLVED to hand deliver letters to the residents whose bushes overhand the signage requesting them to cut back the vegetation.

RESOLVED to inform Essex Highways that there was concern about the road markings of the crossing.

14. ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IN SPA ROAD

A report was received regarding road safety improvements in Spa Road. Members noted that young people from the skate park run down the grassy slope and across the road to Asda. It was considered that there was a need for a barrier to prevent running or falling into the road and an island to act as a refuge to those who cross there.

RESOLVED to write to Derrick Louis to ask him to support Members to progress this road safety issue.

15. LOCAL PLAN

A verbal report was received by a Member who attended a recent meeting. It was noted that most of the suggestions for development by Witham Town Council were accepted. Members mentioned in particular the proposals for Cut Throat Lane and the opportunity to provide small apartments for single people.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.14 p.m.

Councillor J. Robertson
Chairman
GK/SP/28.5.2025