

Introduction

The Preferred Options Consultation November 2007 did not make any specific reference in Option 4 as to where the housing additional to the development north east of Elsenham might be located, although it did give a general guide of 750 dwellings in the larger towns and 250 dwellings in the villages. The purpose of this paper is to update the housing requirement and set out the broad distribution of growth under option 4; to consider the implications of this and how it performs in sustainability terms.

Housing Requirement

The RSS requires a minimum of 8000 dwelling to be provided between 2001 and 2021 and to plan for a continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy. Under the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) adoption of the Core Strategy is anticipated in 2011. The Council therefore needs to plan for sufficient housing for the period up to 2026. The table below shows that the Council need to plan for a minimum of 10,150 dwellings.

Housing Requirement

2001 - 2021		8,000
2021 - 2026	Roll forward RSS at annual rate of 430 a year	<u>2,150</u>
		10,150

Housing Supply

Meeting this housing requirement through the preferred option 4 will be achieved through

- Completed dwellings 2001-2009
- Sites with planning permission and selected sites from amongst those identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- New settlement on land north east of Elsenham
- New allocations

Completed Dwellings

3006 dwellings were completed between 2001 and 2009 based on Essex County Council's annual residential land survey and reported in Uttlesford's Annual Monitoring Report.

Sites with planning permission and sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

It is considered that 3228 dwellings will be developed during the plan period. This source includes 2843 dwellings on large sites (sites of 12 or more dwellings) with outstanding planning permission at 31st March 2009, and sites identified in the SHLAA as being deliverable. Government guidance in PPS3 states that sites with planning permission can be included within supply calculations, providing it can be demonstrated that sites are developable and likely to contribute to housing delivery within the period. This evidence is provided in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009), where each of the sites is assessed in terms of its suitability and deliverability, and has been judged to be appropriate to include.

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In Saffron Walden existing commitments and sites identified in the SHLAA and considered deliverable within the policies of the saved adopted plan total 1473 and include Bell College, Friends School, Ashdon Road, Jossaumes Depot and the remainder of Kiln Court in Saffron Walden. In Great Dunmow, the sites include Woodlands Park and the development rear of the High Street (Eastern Sector); the former infants school at Rosemary Lane and land off Springfields.

In the key villages such sites total 1370 dwellings. There are no existing commitments in Great Chesterford. In Newport the former County Depot on Bury Water Lane is under construction. In Stansted Mountfitchet there is an existing commitment at Rochford Nurseries, and an identified site in High Lane which has an expired planning consent. In Takeley there is an existing commitment at Priors Green, and existing commitments in Thaxted are the developments at Bellrope Meadow and Weaverhead Lane. In addition there are commitments or identified sites at Oakwood Park, Little Dunmow and in Great Easton, Leaden Roding and Little Canfield.

A list of all these sites can be found in Appendix 1.

In addition to these large sites, as at April 2009 there was planning permission for 384 dwellings on small sites (less than 12 units). Although it is recognized that not all sites will be developed, historic completion rates show that there is an average completion rate of 93 dwellings a year on small sites. It is therefore a safe assumption that at least 384 dwellings on small sites will be built by 2026.

New Settlement on land north east of Elsenham

The preferred option identifies a development of 3000 dwellings.

New allocations

Taking into account the above three components of supply new allocations of at least 916 dwellings are needed in order to meet the minimum requirement of 10,150 dwellings. The Council will therefore consider the distribution of 1000 dwellings.

The Options

The Preferred Options consultation document November 2007 proposed that the new allocations be distributed with 750 dwellings in the towns and 250 in the villages.

Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow are the two towns within the District. The preferred housing strategy (Policy DC2) includes the key villages of Great Chesterford, Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet, Thaxted, and Takeley. In addition to the key villages there are 18 villages with primary schools, of which half have a shop and a third an hourly bus service and the majority have a hall and public house. The Preferred Strategy considers such villages are appropriate for limited growth as there would be rural sustainability benefits. .

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Six options as to how 1000 additional units can be distributed are assessed. In relation to the towns the options are to divide the development equally between the two or direct the majority of development to one or the other of the towns. There are numerous combinations as to how 250 dwellings could be distributed between the five key villages and the 18 villages. This ranges from concentrating development in any one of the key villages to an even distribution across the key villages and allowing for very limited development in the other villages in all options.

The six options being considered are:-

Option 4(i)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Concentrate 750 dwellings in Great Dunmow with minimal development in Saffron Walden.

160 dwellings dispersed through the key villages (average 30 dwellings per settlement)

90 dwellings dispersed through other villages

Option 4(ii)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Minimal development in Great Dunmow and concentrate 750 dwellings in Saffron Walden.

160 dwellings dispersed through the key villages (average 30 dwellings per settlement)

90 dwellings dispersed through other villages

Option 4(iii)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Split development equally with 375 dwellings in Great Dunmow and 375 dwellings in Saffron Walden.

160 dwellings dispersed through the key villages (average 30 dwellings per settlement)

90 dwellings dispersed through other villages

Option 4(iv)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Concentrate 750 dwellings in Great Dunmow with minimal development in Saffron Walden.

Concentrate development of 250 dwellings in any one of the key villages with minimal development in the other villages.

Option 4(v)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Minimal development in Great Dunmow and concentrate 750 dwellings in Saffron Walden.

Concentrate development of 250 dwellings in any one of the key villages with minimal development in the other villages.

Option 4(vi)

3000 NE of Elsenham

Split development equally with 375 dwellings in Great Dunmow and 375 dwellings in Saffron Walden.

Concentrate development of 250 dwellings in any one of the key villages with minimal development in the other villages.

Assessment of the Options

To determine the scale of development appropriate in the towns and key villages it is necessary to look at the degree to which each of the options achieves the sustainability appraisal objectives, the evidence of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as to deliverable and developable sites, the capacity of existing infrastructure and the Historic Settlement Character Assessment.

The overall conclusions from the Sustainability Appraisal is that options (i), (ii), and (iii) which distribute the development across the key villages help achieve more sustainability appraisal objectives than options (iv), (v) and (vi). This is because the impact on the Key Villages is minimised and the scale of development proposed at the villages is small enough to be absorbed by existing infrastructure and have minimal impact on the environment. Having development of up to 250 dwellings in a village would increase the impact on resources and the environment but not necessarily bring any benefits of infrastructure and facilities.

Objectives which seek the conservation of the historic environment and historic buildings favour option 4(i) directing development to Great Dunmow where development can take place with less impact on the historic character of the town than at Saffron Walden. Similarly the objective of improving school provision favours option 4(i) as Great Dunmow has more school capacity than Saffron Walden. In contrast, the objective of reducing waste and increasing recycling favours option 4(ii) as development in Saffron Walden would have easy access to the Civic Amenity Site. There are plans though to have a civic amenity site in Great Dunmow. Option 4(iii) which has the widest distribution of all the options best helps meet the objectives of meeting the District's housing need, and reducing inequalities between areas. Options 4(iii) and 4(iv) which propose development in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow best help meet the objectives of improving the vitality of the town centres. The objective of achieving energy conservation and minimising use of natural resources favours options (iv), (v) and (vi) which benefit from economies of scale.

The infrastructure capacity for the two towns and the key villages is set out in appendix 2.

The problems of placing significant development in Saffron Walden are the pressures it would place on existing green infrastructure, the secondary school, primary care, the impact on the road network/air quality and the work required to the sewage network. In relation to the sewage network, potential development sites are located primarily towards the east of the town away from the existing Waste water Treatment Works (WwTW) on the west thus increasing the cost of upgrading the network. Any development in Saffron Walden should provide additional green infrastructure, a new health centre, mitigate against the impact of the additional traffic through the town, upgrade the sewage network and provide sufficient children's play space to meet the needs of the development. It is not certain that providing these improvements

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would make a development of up to 750 units viable. In any event the scale of development is significantly short of making a new secondary school viable.

Fewer problems exist by placing the development in Great Dunmow. There is currently spare capacity in local schools, both primary and secondary. The town is well connected to the primary route network and will benefit from the north west bypass when opened. Connection to the sewage network is helped by the existence of two pumping stations and the potential of diverting additional flows to Felsted WwTW. However, if Felsted works was found to be unable to expand to take the additional waste, a new treatment works would be needed to serve the Great Dunmow catchment. The development would generate the need for additional health care services including land and premises to accommodate the related provision.

By splitting the development equally between the two settlements it is uncertain whether the scale of development would be sufficient to overcome the infrastructure problems in each of the towns.

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Appendix 1 - Sites with planning permission and sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) @ April 2009

Identified sites	Estimated / Outstanding Capacity (net)	UTT Ref No. SHLAA Ref No	Comment u/c = under construction
GREAT DUNMOW			
Woodlands Park	947	Various	u/c
Site of former Dunmow infants school	30	0216/08	
37-75 High Street	50	1185/02	u/c
Off Springfields	20	0900/04	
Land off Riverside	8	GreatDUN25	
Perkins Garage, Stortford Rd	5	GreatDUN26	
Council Depot, New Street	10	GreatDUN30	
	1070		
SAFFRON WALDEN			
Kiln Court	32	1382/01	
Jossaumes	25	SAF18	
Paxtons Depot	13	SAF20	
Little Walden Road	15	Adopted Policy SW7 SAF12 (part)	
Former Bell College School Buildings (South Road)	65	SAF15	(Estimate 1.3ha at 50d/ha)
Butler Hall at Former Bell College (Peaslands Road)	50	SAF14	(Estimate 1ha at 50d/ha plus 1 ha open space)
South of Ashdon Road	150	SAF01	(includes 75 on contingent site)
Land at Friends School, Mount Pleasant Road	53	SAF16	
	403		
VILLAGES			
Great Easton – Brocks Mead	5	0727/78	u/c
Little Dunmow – Oakwood Park	183	0302/96 & others	u/c
Leaden Roding – Holloway Crescent and garage site	5	L-ROD5	
Little Canfield - Former DJR Cars site, Dunmow Road	11	LtCAN3	
Stansted/Birchanger – Rochford Nurseries	479	2265/07 0204/05 & others	u/c
Stansted – Land at Mont House	4	STA04	
Newport – Former Highways Depot, Bury Water Lane	14	0028/08	u/c
Takeley/Lt Canfield Priors Green including “Island Sites”	646	0816/00 & others	u/c
Thaxted - Bellrope Meadow	10	0977/06	u/c
Thaxted – Cowell & Cooper Site, Weaverhead Lane	14	1650/08	u/c
	1371		
ALL SETTLEMENTS			
Small sites of less than 11 units with planning permission	384		

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Settlement	Green Infrastructure • Outdoor sports • Children's play space Amenity green space Source: Green Space Strategy Audit 2006 (UDC)	Health Source: NHS West Essex	Emergency Services	Education @ 2013 Forecast Source: Schools Organisation Plan 2008-2013	Highways	Waste and Utilities - sewage network Source: Water cycle study stage 1	Waste water treatment works (WwTW) Source: Water cycle study stage 1
Great Dunmow	Existing shortfall in outdoor sports and Children's play space. Town well served by amenity green space	14 GP in 2 surgeries 2 dental surgeries (incl 1 NHS) 30-50 minutes public transport travel time of Major hospital	Police, fire and ambulance stations	Primary – 90 surplus Secondary –217 surplus	No significant problems	Proposed Civic amenity site. Sufficient water supply to meet demand. Sewage network has adequate capacity to accommodate commitments. Development would require upgrades or new strategic sewers	WwTW at capacity and nearing discharge limit an will be exceeded by current allocations. Additional capacity will be required, unless flow is diverted to Felsted following upgrades
Saffron Walden	Existing shortfall in all green infrastructures	15 GP in 3 surgeries 8 dental surgeries (incl 3 NHS) 40 - 60 minutes public travel time to a major hospital.	Police, fire and ambulance stations	Primary – 177 surplus Secondary - -43 Deficit	3 Air Quality Management Areas - junction of High St/ George Street - junction of High St/ Castle Street - junction of Thaxted Rd/ East Street/ Radwinter Rd	Civic Amenity Site. Sufficient water supply to meet demand. Sewage network at capacity. Development would require extensive upgrades or new strategic sewers. Linear distance	Process capacity unlikely to be an issue. Water quality of River Cam likely to be an issue

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Settlement	Green Infrastructure • Outdoor sports • Children's play space Amenity green space Source: Green Space Strategy Audit 2006 (UDC)	Health Source: NHS West Essex	Emergency Services	Education @ 2013 Forecast Source: Schools Organisation Plan 2008-2013	Highways	Waste and Utilities - sewage network Source: Water cycle study stage 1	Waste water treatment works (WwTW) Source: Water cycle study stage 1
						from south eastern side is approx 2km, new sewer may be longer dependant on route.	
Great Chesterford	Well served with outdoor sports provision. Shortfall of children's play space and amenity space	2 branch surgeries No dentist 40-50 minutes public transport travel time of major hospital	None Served by Saffron Walden	Primary - -13 Deficit Secondary SWCHS -43 deficit	No major issues	No capacity except for very small scale development	Sufficient capacity
Newport	Well served with outdoor sports provision. Shortfall of children's play space and amenity space	1 surgery of 5 GPs No dentists 30-50 minutes public transport travel time of major hospital	Retained fire station Mobile police unit Otherwise served by Saffron Walden	Primary – 34 surplus Secondary -1 deficit	No major issues	Limited capacity. Upgrade costs could be prohibitive if development located some distance from WwTW	Sufficient capacity
Stansted Mountfitchet	Existing shortfall in all green infrastructures.	1 surgery of 5 GPs 2 dental surgeries (incl 1 NHS) 20-40 minute public transport travel time of major hospital	Police and fire station within the village and ambulance station at M11 Junction.	Primary - -35 deficit Relocate and expand St Mary;s School to Forest Hall Park (Rochford Nurseries) Secondary –36 surplus	Local transport network affected by airport traffic.	Capacity for limited development with minimal localized upgrades	Upgrade of Stansted WwTW required to accommodate development at Elsenham.

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Settlement	Green Infrastructure • Outdoor sports • Children's play space Amenity green space Source: Green Space Strategy Audit 2006 (UDC)	Health Source: NHS West Essex	Emergency Services	Education @ 2013 Forecast Source: Schools Organisation Plan 2008-2013	Highways	Waste and Utilities - sewage network Source: Water cycle study stage 1	Waste water treatment works (WwTW) Source: Water cycle study stage 1
Takeley	Well served with outdoor sports provision. Shortfall of Children's play space and amenity space.	No surgery 1 dental surgery 30-50 minutes public transport travel time of major hospital	Mobile police unit Otherwise served by Stansted and Great Dunmow	Primary – 143 deficit Relocation and expansion of school to Priors Green site. Secondary Helena Romanes 217 surplus	No major issues	Rising main may need upsizing	Sufficient capacity
Thaxted	Existing shortfall in all green infrastructures.	1 surgery of 6GPs 1 dental surgery 30-50 minutes public transport travel time of major hospital	Mobile police unit Otherwise served by Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow	Primary – 11 deficit Secondary Helena Romanes 217 surplus SWCHS -43 deficit	No major issues	No additional capacity	Consent for additional capacity being applied for.