

## CHAPTER 4.ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

### Paragraph 4.1

#### 4.1. The policies on economic activity have the following objectives:

- To ensure that provision is made for enough land to meet the structure plan requirement and enable the expansion of existing firms and the introduction of new employment;
- To ensure that a range of employment opportunities is available at key locations across the district and that alternative employment exists other than in the concentration on airport at Stansted;
- To enable opportunities for local employment close to where people live, which may potentially reduce travel to work;
- To help diversify the economy in the rural area and provide alternative income for farm based businesses.

### Representation of Support

**Ref.No: 163 Rep.No: 3**

**Representor:** Baker, Mantle Estates Limited **Agent (if applicable):** FPD Savills

It is considered particularly important that a range of opportunities is available throughout the District and that alternative employment exists other than in the concentration "on airport at Stansted". Whilst generous provision for employment activities is made within the airport development boundary, practically no provision is made beyond that boundary for important economic activity which arises in connection with the airport but not directly related to its aviation activities. Stansted Distribution Centre has already demonstrated that it can help meet these important requirements. Whilst the objection site extension to Stansted Distribution Centre will be available to all comers its location means that it can in a small way help to meet the demand arising from businesses directly associated with the airport.

### Objections

**Ref.No: 119 Rep.No: 22**

**Representor:** Proto Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Littman and Robeson

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Add in the first objective "good quality", after "enough" and add a fifth objective stating "to secure continued economic growth through recognising Stansted's potential in economic and accessibility terms"

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** A fifth objective should be added to reflect the need to secure continued economic growth and appropriately exploit the potential of the airport in economic and accessibility terms. This would include the effective accommodation of enterprises attracted into the vicinity of Stansted but not directly related to or associated with the airport itself. Technical annex B (employment) to the structure plan recognises this important factor. The first objective should also address the need for land to meet qualitative requirements.

### Paragraph 4.2

4.2. The increase in the amount of land for business uses in Uttlesford's two largest urban areas is determined in the structure plan. It requires that the total will increase by 16 hectares by 2011. At 2000, employment areas in Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden totalled 46.76 hectares. All these figures are net site areas, and exclude major distributor roads and strategic landscape buffers. This local plan indicates where land is proposed for development so as to achieve this increase in land for

**business uses. The total area proposed exceeds 16 hectares by 2.8 hectares. Some existing employment land is proposed for redevelopment by housing, and this has to be replaced.**

### **Objections**

**Ref.No: 218 Rep.No: 19**

**Representor:** Dale, Saffron Walden Friends of the Earth **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Query whether the 2.8ha stated is enough. There is already an imbalance with housing

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**Ref.No: 119 Rep.No: 23**

**Representor:** , Proto Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Littman and Robeson

**Amendment(s) Sought:** The first sentence should be rephrased so that it states: The increase in the amount of land for business uses in Uttlesford is determined in the Structure Plan

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The Structure Plan does not determine that all employment land or any particular amount should be accommodated in the two largest towns.

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### **Paragraphs 4.5 – 4.5**

- 4.3. There are sites committed for business parks at Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden. Both continue to be appropriate proposals. Both are on undeveloped land but there is no potential to accommodate employment development on previously developed land in Uttlesford.**
- 4.4. Saffron Walden has reasonable potential for employment growth. Key factors are some existing high tech employment, access to the trunk road network, access to Cambridge, London and Stansted Airport, limited commuting to Cambridge, and above average living environment. Great Dunmow shares some of the same advantages. The size of the local economy in both towns is small, however, and the past growth trend sporadic. These are limiting factors.**
- 4.5. A range of sites is needed. This will enable the high tech sector, with its greater growth potential in the longer term, to be accommodated on business park sites, as well as meeting the needs of the traditional manufacturing and distribution sectors.**

### **Objections**

**Ref.No: 163 Rep.No: 8**

**Representor:** Baker, Mantle Estates Limited **Agent (if applicable):** FPD Savills

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Amendment to para 4.3 "both are on undeveloped land but there are only a few small sites capable of accommodating employment development on previously developed land in Uttlesford".

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** It is misleading to say there is no potential to accommodate employment development on previously developed land in Uttlesford. The objection site is wholly previously developed land. Part continues in employment activities of a low grade nature based on the historic use of the site. The other part of the land further east has a chequered history of uses associated with the previous Elliotts site including storage, dumping and tipping. It is now almost wholly made ground and the total of the site which extends to 2.1 hectares can make a small but useful contribution to the recycling of damaged land into more effective use.

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**Ref.No: 219 Rep.No: 7**

**Representor:** Fletcher, English Heritage **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** These paras appear to suggest that existing employment sites are inappropriate for hi-tech industries. Many historic buildings are being successfully converted to accommodate such businesses. Rural districts such as Uttlesford do not need to compete with the Cambridge hi-tech cluster, but should seek to achieve sustainable mixed use schemes wherever possible which can be assimilated without damage to settlement character. The re-use of existing buildings, particularly where they are of townscape character can be a positive catalyst to securing continued vibrancy of town centres.

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**POLICY E1 – DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND**

**Provision is made for a net increase of about 20 hectares of land for business, general industry, storage or distribution development within the plan area, excluding land within the Stansted Airport boundary.**

The following sites, defined on the Proposals Map, are proposed for employment development as indicated in the following table:

<b>Site</b>	<b>Site area (net in hectares)</b>
<b>Great Dunmow Business Park</b>	<b>9.60</b>
<b>Saffron Walden Business Park</b>	<b>5.40</b>
<b>Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden</b>	<b>3.76</b>
<b>London Road, Great Chesterford</b>	<b>0.89</b>

**Representation of support:**

**Ref.No: 118 Rep.No: 6**

**Representor:** Bryant Projects **Agent (if applicable):** DLP Consultants Ltd  
 We welcome the continued allocation of land at Great Dunmow Business Park for future employment development. We consider that this location close to the Great Dunmow souther bypass the A120 Chelmsford Road intersection and well related to the TownCentre and principal established areas of housing development is an important component in the future economic well being of the town, We consider that the Local Plan should seek to promote and encourage its early implementation following completion of the bypass.

## Objections

**Ref No: 69 Rep No 1**

**Representor:** Wilcox **Agent (if applicable)**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Inadequate transport infrastructure - in particular Ashdon Road is a narrow residential road which is effectively one way for much of its length. The need for the development is not proven.

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Deletion of allocation and policy SW3.

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**Ref.No: 86 Rep.No: 1**

**Representor:** Bucknell, Landowners **Agent (if applicable):** Andrew Martin Associates

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Allocation of land at Saling Airfield for medium to long term employment and other development.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Ashdon Road is not suitable for a business park. It is not a strategic transport route and is not very well served by public transport links and development of the site for employment uses would be detrimental to the surrounding environment, not least through heavy goods vehicle movements along narrow residential streets. There are other sites within the District that are more suitable for development as a business park both in location to transport links and also in environmental impact terms. Land at Saling airfield is proposed as an alternative to the Ashdon Road allocation in association with the development of a new settlement.

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**Ref.No: 92 Rep.No: 6**

**Representor:** Old Road Securities, Audley End Estates **Agent (if applicable):** Andrew Martin Associates

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Replace Saffron Walden Business Park with land northeast of Wendens Ambo

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Paras 4.2 and 4.8 indicate a net increase of 20 ha in employment land provision beyond that required and recommended through the Structure Plan. Notwithstanding the over supply of employment land the 5.4 ha at Ashdon Road is not suitable for development as a business park. The Ashdon Road site is not on a strategic or major highway route. It is unsuitable for heavy goods vehicle movements via narrow residential streets. Development for larger scale employment purposes would have a detrimental impact on environmental conditions and amenity to local residents. There are other sites within the District that are more suitable for development as a business park both in relation to transport links and also in environmental impact terms. Land north east of Wendens Ambo is more suitable for development as a business park.

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**Ref.No: 92 Rep.No: 8**

**Representor:** Old Road Securities, Audley End Estates **Agent (if applicable):** Andrew Martin Associates

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Re-allocate an element of land forming the Ashdon Road Business Park specifically for homeworking.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Uttlesford provides a high quality environment within which people chose to live and work. Nevertheless a large number of people within Uttlesford, including Saffron Walden commute to their places of work with resulting detrimental impacts resulting from private motor vehicle journeys and associated pollution. It therefore makes sense that people should be encouraged to reduce the number of journeys and this can be achieved through the support of homeworking. Suitable land should be allocated within the emerging local plan as suitable for live-work units providing modern communication facilities within new home/office environments. Uttlesford District Council should be pro-active in identifying suitable sites for homeworking. Land at Ashdon Road, currently allocated as a business park would be ideal for at least an element of home working. The site is close to the numerous services and community facilities available within Saffron Walden.

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**Ref.No: 119 Rep.No: 24**

**Representor:** Proto Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Littman and Robeson

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Delete references to the four sites and urgently review opportunities in the administrative area for locations more appropriate to meeting economic and travel saving requirements. In this regard it is noted that there is no potential to accommodate employment land requirements on previously developed land.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** None of the four identified sites meet the criteria for securing economic and employment growth. There are adverse site specific factors relating to all sites to a greater or lesser extent. They will fail to meet the structure plan requirement because of their qualitative limitations. In this regard it is noted that para 4.4 suggest key factors to site selection. Most of the identified sites score very poorly against these factors. It is also noted that a range of sites is needed with a specific reference to enabling the hi-tech sector to be accommodated on business park sites. None of the proposed sites will effectively cater for enterprises attracted into the vicinity of Stansted but not directly related to the airport itself.

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**Ref.No: 144 Rep.No: 4**

**Representor:** Bryant Homes Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Vincent and Gorbing

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Reconsider the strategy with a view to locating development closer to Stansted Airport.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The Stansted Airport area is an obvious location for employment development. Employment development close to Stansted would be likely to be the most sustainable location in the District and would maximise opportunities for utilising sustainable forms of transport. Employment development close to Stansted would also help to bring more prosperity and jobs to the area. By concentrating development close to the airport, where it is most needed the impact on the wider area will be minimised. Alternative strategies of spreading development around the district will impact on a wider area.

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**Ref.No: 147 Rep.No: 3**

**Representor:** Rolfe, Great Chesterford Parish Council **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** The 0.89 hectare site on London Road is within the Development Limit and potential site for domestic development. The Parish Council do not wish to change potential use to employment devevelopment

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The parish council is not aware of any need for further employment development and has already requested that the former Swaine Adeney site to the rear of this site be retained for employment, thus creating a mix of development in this area.

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**Ref.No: 156 Rep.No: 8**

**Representor:** White, Saffron Walden Town Council **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The present plan specifically identified the site at Ashdon Road for development as a light industrial site. The Town Council supported the inclusion of the idea of providing a business part site in 1991 as it was thought that such a site was both necessary and desirable. However the site has not been developed and the town council believes that with the proposals for Chesterford Park the site should be reallocated in such a way to ensure that the replacement designation would allow for a substantial amount of public open space. A new policy SWTC1 is suggested. The Town Council believes that the District Council should continue its policy of encouraging non -conforming industrial sites to relocate where practicable.

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**Ref.No: 159 Rep.No: 6**

**Representor:** Robson, Widdington Parish Council **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** The provision should state not more than 20 hectares. New sites should not be approved until existing capacity is exhausted

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** This does not go far enough.

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**Ref.No: 163 Rep.No: 7**

**Representor:** Baker, Mantle Estates Limited **Agent (if applicable):** FPD Savills

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Include land at the Stansted Distribution Centre within policy E1 - 2.1 Hectares

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The objection site should be listed as one of those making a contribution to the provision of employment land development opportunities. The investigations of a landscape architect and a highways consultant identifies no unacceptable harm which could arise out of the development of the objection sites for employment purposes. As previously developed land it should therefore be incorporated within policy E1. This specific detailed investigation follows the advice of the previous local plan inspector.

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**Ref.No: 186 Rep.No: 5**

**Representor:** Siemens Pension Fund **Agent (if applicable):** Colliers CRE

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Policy E1 should be amended to include the potential for employment development on land at Folly Farm, Great Dunmow

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:**

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**Ref.No: 189 Rep.No: 2****Representor:** Exors of D Cock **Agent (if applicable):** Strutt and Parker

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Policy E1 should be amended to take account of the growing needs for great Dunmow by releasing additional land for employment, specifically taking into account the land at the south of Hoblongs Industrial Estate as a preferred location.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Additional employment land should be allocated in Great Dunmow. Object to exclusion of land south of Great Dunmow, adjoining Hoblongs Ind Estate, which is suitable for employment purposes. The site is prominent when entering the town and therefore development as a civic amenity site and depot, as current application would be detrimental.

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**Ref.No: 216 Rep.No: 2****Representor:** Bailes, Hertfordshire County Council **Agent (if applicable):****Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** You have allocated employment land for business parks at Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden. These business parks have presumably been allocated for general business use but could accommodate airport related employment uses if there were a demand for this.

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**Ref.No: 219 Rep.No: 8****Representor:** Fletcher, English Heritage **Agent (if applicable):****Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Business Park allocations on edge of town and out of town sites should be examined very carefully. The sustainable development framework for the east of England emphasises the need for mixed use development in town centres and the efficient use of buildings.

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**Comments on Objections to Policy E1 & Supporting Text**

*The vision of the Structure Plan is that new development will be focussed primarily within the built up area of the larger towns so as to make the best use of previously developed land and buildings, wide range of facilities and choice of means of transport. Thus the countryside will be strongly protected from inappropriate development, and people will have less need to travel and will do so over shorter distances.*

*In line with Regional Planning Guidance, West Essex remains an area of restraint in terms of future urban development, with the M11 motorway route being considered as a corridor largely for movement only and not for urban growth.*

*Apart from Harlow and Stansted Airport the county strategy provides for strong restraint upon further development. Harlow, which is identified in the Strategy as a Priority Area of Economic Regeneration (PAER), is the primary economic driver for West Essex and plays a vital strategic function in accommodating new development arising from Stansted Airport's expansion. The strategy concentrates only direct and associated airport employment uses to within the airport site itself.*

*This strategic approach is reflected in the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan which generally directs development to the urban areas and applies a rural restraint policy elsewhere.*

*It is considered that the sites identified in Policy E1 offer the best opportunities for employment growth in the District. They are well related to the major urban areas of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow. They have access to the trunk road network and the railway in the case of Great Chesterford. They do not lead to the loss of open countryside. However the traffic impact and lack of interest in Ashdon Road Saffron Walden is recognised. It is therefore proposed to identify 0.6 hectares of the site for business use and the remainder as a reserve housing site safeguarded to meet future housing need or brought forward if required to meet structure plan housing requirements before 2011(see Housing Chapter). In order to continue to meet the Structure Plan requirement it is proposed to identify part of the Newton Works site, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow for employment purposes. This site does not compromise the District Strategy. A relatively minor adjustment is also proposed at Chesterford Park.*

*The structure plan states that the employment land provision figures are indicative only and should not be regarded as rigid quotas. Any proposals to develop sites for employment purposes in addition to E1 will be considered against other policies in the plan.*

*The site at Wendens Ambo lies in the open countryside adjoining the village with its conservation area to the south and an Important Woodland and Historic Parkland to the north. Development of this site would introduce urbanisation within a rural area, away from a centre of population.*

*The site south of Hoblongs Industrial Estate is currently the subject of an application for a civic amenity site and depot and a decision is awaited but it is considered that this is a suitable site for these uses. (See Part Two Great Dunmow)*

*The strategic strategy is to direct employment attracted by Stansted Airport to Harlow to assist the economic regeneration of the town. It is therefore not appropriate to promote significant employment land within the vicinity of Stansted Airport. The identified sites are able to accommodate airport related employment uses.*

*It is accepted that the site west of Stansted Distribution Centre is appropriate for employment purposes. It will bring a small parcel of despoiled land into productive use as an extension to an existing employment site.*

### **Recommendation**

*Amend Policy E1:*

*Delete Saffron Walden Business Park, 5.4 ha and*

*Include: Chesterford Park extension site area # ha*

*Newton Works, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow site area 0.9 ha.*

*Off Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden site area 0.6 ha;*

*Stansted Distribution Centre extension site area 2.1 ha*

*Make consequent amendments to the text.*

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## **POLICY E2 – SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYMENT LAND**



**The following key employment areas identified on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded from redevelopment or change of use to other land-uses:**

- a) **Existing employment areas of 1.0 hectares and over located within the main urban areas of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet;**
- b) **Existing employment areas of 0.5 hectares and over in the key rural settlements of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Takeley and Thaxted;**
- c) **The sites identified in Policy E1;**
- d) **The site at Chesterford Park identified in Policy S5.**

**The development of employment land for other uses outside the key employment areas will be permitted if the employment use has been abandoned or either of the following apply:**

- e) **It is a change of use that would not prevent the building changing back to employment use in the future;**
- f) **The present use harms the character or amenities of the surrounding area.**

### **Representations of Support**

**Ref.No: 72 Rep.No: 1**

**Representor:** Norwich Union Life and Pensions **Agent (if applicable):** CGMS Limited

Policy E2 seeks to retain key employment areas, including Chesterford Research Park, in employment use. This policy is supported.

**Ref.No: 92 Rep.No: 7**

**Representor:** Old Road Securities, Audley End Estates **Agent (if applicable):** Andrew Martin Associates

In accordance with BIW4 of the adopted Structure Plan, existing employment uses within Uttlesford District should be safeguarded from redevelopment or change of use to other land uses. The existing Ashdon Road Commercial Centre is such a site that should be safeguarded for employment purposes. Furthermore there is scope for expansion within the south-western area for additional employment uses.

**Ref.No: 143 Rep.No: 2**

**Representor:** Kennedy, David Wilson Estates **Agent (if applicable):**

The principle of seeking to protect important employment sites is supported. If travel to work distances are to be reduced, there needs to be local employment opportunity. Such opportunity would not be achieved by allowing the development of such sites for housing development.

**Ref.No: 147 Rep.No: 2**

**Representor:** Cookson, Great Chesterford Parish Council **Agent (if applicable):**

We support the safeguarding of existing employment land within Great Chesterford. We are still concerned to improve the parking position. The current situation is dangerous. We are liaising with Essex County Council Highways Department.

**Ref.No: 156 Rep.No: 9**

**Representor:** White, Saffron Walden Town Council **Agent (if applicable):**

The Town Council supports this policy but would like it strengthened to prevent employment areas gaining change of use for edge of town shopping facilities.

**Ref.No: 164 Rep.No: 6****Representor:** Bellway Homes **Agent (if applicable):** FPD Savills

The councils intention to generally safeguard existing employment sites in villages such as Thaxted should be supported since the presence of such sites ensure that new housing in the settlement would be more sustainable. The contribution that the Sampford Road site can make to home working opportunities ensures that the home and work place are brought closer together thereby creating a much more sustainable form of development.

**Objections****Ref.No: 19 Rep.No: 4****Representor:** British Telecom **Agent (if applicable):** RPS Chapman Warren

**Amendment(s) Sought:** (g) evidence can be submitted to the Local Planning Authority which demonstrates that there is no demand for the site or employment land in this location.(h) It can be demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for employment use (based on location, access, impact on adjoining properties etc) and alternative uses can be shown to result in improvements to the surrounding area.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Policy does not give any flexibility to allow consideration of circumstances where it would be unreasonable to safeguard employment land. Additional criteria should be added to the second half of Policy which relates to employment outside of key employment areas. These should consider the suitability of the site and changes in the market for employment land.

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**Ref.No: 93 Rep.No: 7****Representor:** Hastoe Housing Association/Springboard HA **Agent (if applicable):** Oldfield King Planning

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Urge the inclusion of this exception in Policy E2

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** In a number of local authorities the opportunity is taken to allow affordable housing as the only exception to employment use on employment sites. In view of the need for affordable housing we believe a similar approach would be appropriate in Uttlesford

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**Ref.No: 119 Rep.No: 25****Representor:** Proto Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Littman and Robeson

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Delete preamble text after "will be permitted" add having regard to whether and add g) the site is qualitively constrained and unlikely to be of reasonable interest to a range of market sectors.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The second part of the policy is unduly restrictive. Non-key employment areas ought to be subject to a more relaxed regime relating to change. Many are of poor quality

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**Ref.No: 166 Rep.No: 1****Representor:** Pyatt, Woodhall Estates (UK) Ltd **Agent (if applicable):** FPD Savills

**Amendment(s) Sought:** b) Existing employment areas of 0.5 hectares and over in the key rural settlements of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Takeley and Thaxted (except Sampford Rad, Thaxted)...the development of employment land for other

use outside key employment areas and at Sampford Road, Thaxted will be permitted if the employment use has been abandoned or....."

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Our objection is based on the second suggested criteria "key existing employment sites will be safeguarded" The reason for this objection is that this site in Thaxted is unique. The objectors current intentions are to seek to implement a hybrid scheme which has been allowed on appeal. However it must be recognised that this hybrid scheme has only come about as a result of 20 years or so failure by several different owners to bring development forward in a commercially acceptable fashion. It would be quite wrong in the case of this unique site having regard to the difficult history to impose possible further handicaps should the current hybrid scheme prove impractical to deliver for some reason.

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**Ref.No: 189 Rep.No: 1**

**Representor:** Exors of D Cock **Agent (if applicable):** Strutt and Parker

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Include land south of Great Dunmow, adjoining Hoblongs Ind Estate, within settlement boundary and identify as being suitable for employment purposes.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Object to exclusion of land south of Great Dunmow, adjoining Hoblongs Ind Estate, which is suitable for employment purposes. There is additional pressure for employment land to be allocated in light of new A120 and Airport growth. Great Dunmow should take majority of allocation. E2 suggests that employment land should be safeguarded. However certain sites should come forward to allow sustainable locations for commercial opportunities. This would have the added benefit of releasing poorly located or historic industrial land for alternative uses including residential.

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### Comments on Objections to Policy E2 & Supporting Text

*One of the aims of the Structure Plan is to promote a more prosperous, vigorous and competitive local economy by providing attractive sites and premises to meet the needs of existing firms, growing businesses and inward investors. The reason behind safeguarding existing employment land is that these sites usually possess the necessary infrastructure and services to enable new economic development to take place quickly. Their retention within urban areas reduces the need to find Greenfield sites, and also contributes towards sustainable development patterns. Policy E2 provides the necessary local context to Structure Plan Policy BIW4*

*It is considered important in providing the balance in housing and jobs that the key employment sites are protected. In relation to Sampford Road Thaxted, Local Policy 2 reflects the hybrid nature of the scheme which has planning permission.*

*The strength of the residential land market in the district means that employment sites are attractive for other types of alternative development and once lost from the employment sector are unlikely to return. It is therefore considered inappropriate for the policy to include a criteria requiring evidence of no demand. Furthermore, in an area of strong economic activity it is considered that there will be a demand for employment land but in exceptional circumstances 'need' can always be taken into account as a material consideration.*

*It is considered appropriate to safeguard the existing Stansted Distribution Centre as the extension would be covered by virtue of the cross reference to sites identified in E1.*

**Recommendation:**

*Amend policy to include Stansted Distribution Centre and make subsequent changes to supporting text.*

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**Paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11**

**4.10 Farming continues to be important as an economic activity in the countryside locally. The land is highly productive under arable crop regimes. However, farm businesses increasingly need to find ways of diversifying so that they develop new sources of income to offset the long term trend of falling prices for crops. These will include non-agricultural activities. The scale and character of these activities needs to be sensitive to the character of their setting and protect or enhance it.**

**4.11 Alternative uses of farmland might include farm-based attractions, field sports areas and camping and touring caravan sites, equestrian centres, garden centres, golf courses, stud farms and livery stables and water based activities. Policy S7 says there will be strict control on new building. Existing buildings should be re-used, where possible, to provide any accommodation needed in association with alternative uses.**

**Representation of Support**

**Ref.No: 206 Rep.No: 10**

**Representor:** Walker, Uttlesford LA21 Group2 **Agent (if applicable):**

The Farming, Wildlife & Countryside Group of Uttlesford Local Agenda 21 UK accept text of paragraph 4.11 as drawn.

**Objections**

**Ref.No: 206 Rep.No: 9**

**Representor:** Walker, Uttlesford LA21 Group2 **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** The Farming, Wildlife & Countryside Group of Uttlesford Local Agenda 21 UK would like to see the words "under arable crop regimes" eliminated at the second sentence and the words "for crops" eliminated at the end of the second sentence.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Limiting the farming reference to arable is unduly restrictive

**Comments:**

*This minor modification is accepted.*

**Recommendation**

*Amend text to refer to 'crops'*

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**POLICY E3 FARM DIVERSIFICATION: ALTERNATIVE USE OF FARMLAND**

**Alternative uses for agricultural land will be permitted if all the following criteria are met:**

- a) **The development includes proposals for landscape and nature conservation enhancement;**
- b) **The development would not result in a significant increase in noise levels or other adverse impacts beyond the holding;**
- c) **The continued viability and function of the agricultural holding would not be harmed;**
- d) **The development would not place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural road network (in terms of traffic levels, road safety and amenity).**

### **Representations of Support**

**Ref.No: 156 Rep.No: 10**

**Representor:** White, Saffron Walden Town Council **Agent (if applicable):**

The Town Council supports these proposals

**Ref.No: 213 Rep.No: 5**

**Representor:** Herrman, CPREssex **Agent (if applicable):**

CPREssex Supports the positive criteria in policies E3 and E4 and is particularly in favour of the requirement that all listed criteria should be met.

**Ref.No: 38 Rep.No: 5**

**Representor:** Gosling & Robson Trusts **Agent (if applicable):** Bidwells

Support policy which is practical and reasonable in relation to clients concerns as landowners

**Ref.No: 159 Rep.No: 1**

**Representor:** Robson, Widdington Parish Council **Agent (if applicable):**

This policy should be firmly adhered to a serial applications can severely damage the future of the Countryside for agricultural use.

**Ref.No: 208 Rep.No: 16**

**Representor:** Muller, English Nature **Agent (if applicable):**

EN supports the positive approach in criteria (a) to the sustainable diversification of farmland. Such measures allow for improvements to semi-natural habitats and landscape features. In tandem with policy ENV7 this policy appears to provide a robust approach to the protection and enhancement of nature conservation where development proposals located in Uttlesford's wider countryside are made.

**Ref.No: 227 Rep.No: 14**

**Representor:** Barrell, Environment Agency **Agent (if applicable):**

### **Objections**

**Ref.No: 206 Rep.No: 11**

**Representor:** Walker, Uttlesford LA21 Group2 **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** In criteria d) insert words "countryside character" between "road safety" and "and amenity".

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Farming, Wildlife & Countryside Group of Uttlesford Local Agenda 21 UK wishes to see maximum protection given to our country lanes, especially their tranquillity and access for informal leisure uses.

**Comments:**

*This minor amendment would give further clarity on the issues to be considered.*

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**Ref.No: 212 Rep.No: 5**

**Representor:** Locke, Uttlesford Area Access Group **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Add criteria E) to Policy E3 "it will be accessible to all, to ensure social inclusion."

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The group felt a new criteria should be included

**Comments:**

*Relevant General Policies are proposed to be amended to take this into account. General Policies are applicable to all development proposals.*

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**Ref.No: 219 Rep.No: 9**

**Representor:** Fletcher, English Heritage **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** This policy encourages many activities which would be harmful to countryside character. While PPG7 clearly seeks rural diversification this policy is too permissive in its scope and its wording.

**Comments:**

*The Local Plan must accept the changes in farming and countryside practices. It is considered that the criteria in the policy and other policies elsewhere in the plan are sufficient to protect the character of Uttlesford's countryside.*

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**Ref.No: 222 Rep.No: 3**

**Representor:** Young, Go-East **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** We suggest that Policies E4 and H5 are combined with E3 to provide a comprehensive rural development policy along the following lines. The District Council will support development for: farm diversification which enhances the rural economy without damaging service provision in local villages. - the re-use/conversion of rural buildings for small scale enterprises and or visitor accommodation: the re-use/conversion of rural buildings to residential use where it is demonstrated that every attempt has been made to secure a suitable commercial re-use. New buildings for small scale industrial and commercial development within or adjoining villages: the provision of rural services within or adjoining villages.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** E3 is very restrictive in the way it looks at farm diversification. Farm diversification or business development on a farm site may or may not change the use of the farmland. It is quite possible for IT development or commercial business use to be considered farm diversification and yet not affect agricultural land. Alternative use of farmland could also be the growing of alternative crops such as energy crops (miscanthus and short rotation coppice) and pharmaceutical crops. Policy E3 is too restrictive in its wording. Policy E4 does not approach rural diversification in a positive way and both E4 and H5 are repetitive in their criteria. Neither E4 or H5 add value to the planning system as the criteria listed are identical to that in PPG7.

**Comments:**

*It is considered that policies E3, E4 and H5 balance development needs and concerns for environmental protection. A composite policy is not considered appropriate.*

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**Recommendation**

*Amend policy E3 criteria d) to read 'road safety, countryside character and amenity', amend para 4.10 from 'under arable crop regimes' to 'for crops'*

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**POLICY E4 – RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS**

Policy E4 – Re-Use of Rural Buildings

**The re-use and adaption of rural buildings for business uses, small scale retail outlets or for tourist accommodation will be permitted in the countryside, including the Metropolitan Green Belt, the Countryside Protection Zone and beyond, if all the following criteria are met:**

- a) **The buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction;**
- b) **They are capable of conversion without major reconstruction;**
- c) **The development would protect or enhance the character of the countryside or its amenity value and not result in a significant increase in noise levels or other adverse impacts;**
- d) **The development would not place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural road network (in terms of traffic levels, road safety and amenity).**

**Representations of Support**

**Ref.No: 156 Rep.No: 10**

**Representor:** White, Saffron Walden Town Council **Agent (if applicable):**  
The Town Council supports policies E3 and E4

**Ref.No: 10 Rep.No: 7**

**Representor:** Turner, National Trust **Agent (if applicable):** Community and Regional Planning Services  
The National Trust supports E4

**Ref.No: 191 Rep.No: 2**

**Representor:** Warren, East of England Tourist Board **Agent (if applicable):**  
EETB strongly supports the inclusion of tourism accommodation as an appropriate re-use of a rural building as it provides a means of developing tourism without the need for new building

**Objections**

**Ref.No: 38 Rep.No: 1**

**Representor:** Gosling & Robson Trusts **Agent (if applicable):** Bidwells

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Substitute for "business uses" - "employment (including business) uses"

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** We question why the word "business" features in the policy instead of "employment".

**Comments:**

*The primary objective is diversification of rural businesses rather than employment generation. No change.*

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**Ref.No: 183 Rep.No: 7**

**Representor:** Canon, Sworders Agricultural **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** There needs to be clarification of certain phrases.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** There is a need for such a policy that especially encourages farm diversification projects in the local plan and it is felt that the inclusion of this policy should be supported. The policy is also in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 and in particular the accompanying amendment notes published in March 2001. The policy and in particular sections c) and d) are considered to be too vague, determining what degree of noise or impact that could be considered significant would prove difficult to quantify. In addition there needs to be clarification as to "unacceptable pressures" on the road network.

**Comments:**

*The policy allows some flexibility of interpretation and avoids arbitrary limits. It will depend on the local context whether a particular level of noise or other effect is significant.*

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**Ref.No: 188 Rep.No: 4**

**Representor:** Raiswell, Sport England **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Would wish to see sport and recreation identified as a use which may be acceptable within existing rural buildings particularly where it would meet an identified local need

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** No reference to sport and recreation in this policy.

**Comments:**

*Rural buildings could be acceptably reused for sport and recreational purposes and the policy should be reworded to reflect this.*

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**Ref.No: 189 Rep.No: 3**

**Representor:** Exors of D Cock **Agent (if applicable):** Strutt and Parker

**Amendment(s) Sought:** E4 should be downscaled for small scale business use respecting the needs of the countryside, and not placing undue pressure on the rural highway network while allowing 'strategic allocations' within the larger settlements such as Great Dunmow to expand.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Object to exclusion of land south of Great Dunmow, adjoining Hoblongs Ind Estate, which is suitable for employment purposes. E4 detracts from the larger commercial opportunities within the urban settlements. Reuse of rural building for employment should be on small scale and must not compete with planned Business Parks such as in Gt Dunmow which have opportunity to expand more quickly and in a sustainable way.

**Comments:**



*It is appropriate for the Local Plan to allow for and promote Business Parks within the urban areas at the same time as enabling the conversion of buildings for business uses in the rural areas. Both have an important part to play in the economy of the District and it is not considered that the policies conflict with each other.*

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**Ref.No: 206 Rep.No: 12**

**Representor:** Walker, Uttlesford LA21 Group2 **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** In criteria d) insert words "countryside character" between "road safety" and "and amenity".

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Farming, Wildlife & Countryside Group of Uttlesford Local Agenda 21 UK wishes to see maximum protection given to our country lanes, especially their tranquility and access for informal leisure uses.

**Comments:**

*This minor amendment would give further clarity on the issues to be considered*

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**Ref.No: 208 Rep.No: 8**

**Representor:** Muller, English Nature **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Policy is amended to reflect the same positive approach as that stated in E3 (a) [ie protect and enhance] and include reference to protected species like bats and barn owls and their statutory legal protection. Cross reference policy to GEN7.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Omission of reference to potential for nature conservation and landscape enhancement and also the dependance of certain protected species on rural buildings

**Comments**

*These comments are accepted and criteria c) can be amended to include nature conservation and the supporting text expanded to include reference to protected species. Guidance on the use of the GEN policies in relation to all developments will be set out at the beginning of the Plan.*

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**Ref.No: 209 Rep.No: 3**

**Representor:** Three Valleys Water Plc **Agent (if applicable):** Freeth Melhuish

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Add to para 4.12. For example built structures such as existing water towers covered reservoirs, pumping stations might have portential for a variety of business uses or conversion to residential.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Acknowledgement within the written justification to policy E4 that buildings such as water company towers, pumping stations depots within the rural area would, in principle be suitable for alternative uses, such as business use or housing. Whilst the majority of the water company sites within the District are fully operational and are unlikely to be decommissioned within the short term it would be appropriate for the emergent local plan to confirm within the written justification to the Plan that these built structures represent the sort of opportunities to be found in the countryside where re-use for business purposes would, in principle be acceptable.

**Comments:**

*Accept that the policy should be supported by text which clarifies the term Rural Buildings.*

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**Ref.No: 212 Rep.No: 6**

**Representor:** Locke, Uttlesford Area Access Group **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Add criteria e) the development will be accessible to all, to ensure social inclusion.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** The group felt that a new criteria should be included

**Comments:**

*Relevant General Policies are proposed to be amended to take this into account. General Policies are applicable to all development proposals.*

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**Ref.No: 213 Rep.No: 6**

**Representor:** Herrman, CPREssex **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** The final sentence in the adopted policy C5 should be retained in the new policy E4 "in the Green Belt proof of redundancy of the building may be required"

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** CPREssex notes with regret that this policy does not include the final sentence of Policy C5 in the current Adopted Plan. That sentence reads "in the Green Belt proof of redundancy of the building may be required" and we object to its omission.

**Comments**

*Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 on Green Belt states that it should not normally be necessary to consider whether the building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purpose. Evidence that the building is not redundant in its present use is not by itself sufficient grounds for refusing permission for a proposed new use. The policy is considered to accord with government guidance.*

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**Ref.No: 219 Rep.No: 10**

**Representor:** Fletcher, English Heritage **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:**

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** This policy should include criteria relating to the conservation of historic farm buildings.

**Comments:**

*Policy ENV2 Development affecting Listed Buildings provides the appropriate protection.*

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**Ref.No: 107 Rep.No: 2**

**Representor:** Rosper Estates Limited **Agent (if applicable):** Birketts

**Amendment(s) Sought:** New policy E5 should be included within the plan. "The redevelopment of existing established sites within the countryside for commercial

purposes will be favourably considered where: 1) the existing buildings still have considerable life; 2) The redevelopment would lead to a significant environmental improvement in the site.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** Policies within the plan concerning "businesses in the countryside" are too restrictive. In particular the policies would appear to preclude re-development of existing buildings within the countryside. There will be circumstances in the Countryside where established sites/buildings could be redeveloped for appropriate uses leading to significant environmental improvement thereby enhancing the appearance of the countryside. This is recognised in the current plan and should be reflected in the new plan.

**Comments:**

*The District Strategy is to that there should be strict control on new buildings in the countryside. This is consistent with the structure plan and national planning policy. It would therefore be inappropriate to have a new policy as suggested.*

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**Ref.No: 183 Rep.No: 10 0**

**Representor:** Cannon, Sworders Agricultural **Agent (if applicable):**

**Amendment(s) Sought:** Policies covering farm diversification and a separate policy for farm shops must be included within the Local Plan. These policies should reflect national policy and government encouragement for farm diversification.

**Reason(s) for Amendment(s) Sought:** It is recognised by Government in it's March 2001 amendment to PPG7 that there is an increasing importance to farmers of diversification into non-agricultural activities and that local authorities should take a positive approach to farm diversification proposals. A policy like policy C4 from the Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan should be included. A policy should also be introduced to encourage the development of farm shops in the countryside as they have been a successful form of farm diversification in many areas whilst providing a valuable service to the community.

**Comments:**

*It is considered that policies E3 and E4 make provision for the development of farm shops and an additional policy is not required.*

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**Recommendation on Policy E4 and supporting text**

*Amend policy as follows:*

*The re-use and adaption of rural buildings for business uses, small scale retail outlets, leisure uses or for tourist accommodation will be permitted in the countryside, including the Metropolitan Green Belt, the Countryside Protection Zone and beyond, if all the following criteria are met:*

- a) The buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction;*
- b) They are capable of conversion without major reconstruction or significant extension;*
- c) The development would protect or enhance the character of the countryside, its amenity value or its biodiversity and not result in a significant increase in noise levels or other adverse impacts;*

- d) *The development would not place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural road network (in terms of traffic levels, road safety, character and amenity).*

*Supporting text to refer to protected species and give examples of what is meant by term rural buildings i.e. more than just farm buildings..*

#### **Paragraph 4.13**

**Many small businesses are started by people working in their own homes and information and communication technology is likely to increase the incidence of home-working. This could help address the issue of unsustainable journey to work patterns. Home-working does not necessarily require planning permission. Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a home for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a dwelling.**

#### **Representations of support**

**Ref.No: 227 Rep.No: 15**

**Representor: Barrell, Environment Agency Agent (if applicable):**