

## Uttlesford Locality Board: Minutes

Uttlesford District Council, 23 January 2017

Attendees: Cllr Susan Barker (UDC/ECC), Monica Bird (ECC), Maggie Cox (UDC), Hilde Dahmer (ECC), Dawn French (UDC), Cllr Ray Gooding (ECC), Roger Harborough (UDC), Cllr John Lodge (ECC/UDC), Cllr Howard Rolfe- Chair (UDC), Cllr Julie Redfern (UDC), Cllr Lesley Wells (UDC), and Adrian Webb (UDC).

Apologies: Cllr Simon Walsh (ECC)

1. **Welcome and introductions** Cllr Rolfe welcomed all present.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record.
3. **Secondary School places in Uttlesford** Monica Bird gave an update on secondary school places. She presented the information given to head teachers on 'meeting the demand for school places in Essex – 10 year plan'. This looked at existing demand, future projections and the options for meeting the demand. The information was presented as a graph for the four secondary schools and showed forecast demand to 2026/27 i) without any additional housing ii) including new housing with planning permission. The projections didn't take account of any new housing that might be proposed in the emerging Local Plan. This information would be helpful for future planning and Councillor Rolfe suggested adding a red line to the graph to plot the indicative developments.

There was significant housing growth planned for Great Dunmow. The graph for the Helena Romana school showed the pinch points for increased demand and when expansion was planned. There was currently an 8-form entry, which could be expanded to a maximum of 1500 pupils on the existing site, before the new school site would be required. Cllr Rolfe suggested that the red line on this graph should show the developments included within the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan.

The Joyce Franklin Academy and Saffron Walden County High School were experiencing the greatest demand for spaces, whilst there was capacity at Forest Hall Academy. This situation was being addressed by adding an additional form of entry, but also looking to change the admission policies. Saffron Walden County High was currently consulting on a new policy that would give priority to local connections and it was hoped that the other schools would take a similar approach.

**Action** To look at the primary school data at a future meeting when there was more up to date information available.

**4. Child Poverty Update**

Hilde Dahmer gave a short presentation on child poverty, the causes and impact and how it could be reduced. (see slide pack for further details). She explained the work being done by ECC on tackling hidden poverty, which was affecting working families. The main emphasis was on the role of education in breaking the circle. On that subject members were pleased to note that over 90% of children now attended a school that was either good or outstanding. ECC was also doing positive work to support families and new parents. The data showed that Uttlesford performed better than other Essex Authorities in all areas, with the exception of fuel poverty. Members asked for more information on this subject.

**Action** To circulate information explaining the measurement behind the figures and the action being taken by ECC to address the problem.

**5. Update on Uttlesford Local Plan**

Cllr Rolfe said that UDC had paused the Local Plan timetable, and was undertaking additional work prior to submission in 2018. This included a review of the housing number to take account of more recent population projections, a sustainability appraisal of the options, transport improvements and the viability and deliverability of the different options. Once the technical work had been completed the council would consult on the strategic issues before the submission of the draft Plan.

Cllr Gooding asked about UDC's plans for business development, given its position on the strategic transport routes. He said that employment should be provided for residents in conjunction with housing growth to avoid Uttlesford becoming a commuter district. He was informed that the recently published Employment Strategy had identified areas for business development in the District, of note was the proposed employments park to the north of Stansted Airport. These opportunities were not just for UDC residents, but also for inward commuting. This would have traffic implications, particularly in relation to the M11 junction 8.

Cllr Gooding asked if UDC was considering the CIL option to fund future contributions to education provision. He was particularly concerned about services that fell outside of core provision and didn't receive Section 106 funding. Roger Harborough said the council was aware of the likely constraints on the use of S106 expected in the White Paper, and was looking at the option of CIL funding through the Plan preparation process.

**6. 2017/18 budgets**

Cllr Gooding said that ECC's biggest budget pressure was in relation social care. It was proposing to levy the 3% social care precept but there would be no further increase to Council Tax. Cllr Rolfe thought that ECC had missed an opportunity as an increase could have gone some way to meeting the savings target. Members also drew attention to underfunding of the Essex Police force and the need for funding for highways, transport and rural bus services.

Adrian Webb reported that UDC was likely to be proposing a 2% increase in Council Tax on a £12m budget. The budget showed a surplus for 2017/18 but in future years there would be more significant funding issues. He said UDC was negotiating on an investment opportunity and depending on the outcome a revised MTFS would be taken to the May/June Cabinet meeting.

**7. UDC Peer Challenge**

Dawn French said that the report of Uttlesford the Peer review had now been received, together with an action plan that would be considered at Council on 23 February.

In terms of UDC's relationships with its partners, it appeared to be generally highly regarded although communication could be improved. As Uttlesford was generally an affluent area, the focus on the absence of deprivation did appear to seem to affect the mind-set for attracting funding, but there were still pockets of deprivation within the district that needed to be addressed.

The review also considered the issue of economic development, and the need to speak up about opportunities in the district. As UDC did not currently have the same financial problems as other districts, its challenge was to improve efficiency, modernise and innovate. She said the Peer Review had been useful experience and the council had received a generally positive report.

**8. Reforms to Essex Partnership Board and Essex Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Board considered two reports concerned with reforms to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Essex Partnership Board. There was a general view that the groups had become reporting bodies rather than taking effective action. The proposal was to redefine their purpose and activity and to consider the alignment between the two Boards. One suggestion was to establish an Essex assembly, which would meet twice a year and set out the high level vision. There would also be increased emphasis on working at a district level.

**9. Feedback from key meetings**

Councillor Rolfe reported on the recent meeting of the Essex Chief Executives and Leaders. The meeting had received a presentation from the Essex Economic Commission on the growth and infrastructure framework for Essex.

In relation to Devolution, the process had been paused, due to the lack of agreement between the authorities about the requirement for an elected mayor. The group was waiting for clarity from the Government on this issue.

**10. Agenda for next meeting**

The next meeting to be held in June 2017 at the UDC offices – date TBC. The following subjects were suggested

- Transport/Bus services
- Public Health
- Police - To consider inviting the new PCC

**Additional information appended to minutes: extract of mail from:**

Peter Fairley, Head of Policy and Strategy People [<mailto:Peter.Fairley@essex.gov.uk>]

**Sent:** 26 January 2017 14:39

### **What's behind the measurement for fuel poverty (i.e. definition) used in the presentation?**

Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LIHC indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

There are three key elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor:

- Household Income
- Household Energy Requirements
- Fuel Prices

The data is released annually by the Department for Business, Industry and Energy.

We know that there are additional issues in rural areas that contribute towards fuel poverty. For example, the work on the Essex Rural Strategy suggested that there is an estimated 5,000 homes in rural areas across Essex that are not on the main gas grid. We do not have information for Uttlesford

- **What's being done to tackle fuel poverty in Uttlesford and throughout Essex?**

#### ***Essex Energy Switch***

The County Council co-ordinates and promotes the Essex Energy Switch scheme, which enables residents and businesses to save money on their energy bills. There's no cost to register and there is no cost to switch.

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Pages/Energy-Switch.aspx>

Anyone who pays an energy bill can take part. As well as homeowners this includes tenants and customers on pre-payment meters. Over the last two years, residents and businesses have saved £2m from their bills.

During the 2015 Energy Switch, a total of 5,146 Essex residents (not including Southend and Thurrock) signed up to the scheme, of which 349 were from the district of Uttlesford.

During the 2016 Energy Switch, 332 out of a total of 5,210 Essex residents were from the district of Uttlesford.

The 2017 Energy Switch campaign is currently open until 14 February. We don't yet have access to the full break down of residents that have signed up to the Essex Energy Switch 2017, however 96 residents have already registered via the Uttlesford District Council website. The district council is well-placed to advertise the scheme locally.

### ***Essex Energy Partnership***

The Essex Energy Partnership is a consortium of Essex local authorities of all tiers, and Registered Provider partners. Its purpose is to deliver Green Deal, Energy Company Obligation funding and related programmes for the residents and businesses of Essex through sharing knowledge and partnership working.

The outcome of this work will support local strategic priorities, including better health outcomes, carbon reduction, fuel poverty and improving the decency of both private and public sector stock.

A project plan was agreed between Essex partners and is available here:  
<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4683&p=0>