



Uttlesford Local Plan

Summary of Evidence Base



February 2015

Summary of Evidence

1. Metropolitan Green Belt

- Green Belt Scoping Review 2011

2. Employment

- Employment Land Review 2006
- Employment Land Review 2011

3. Air Quality

- Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Saffron Walden 2006
- Air Quality Progress Report
- Further Assessment of Air Quality in Saffron Walden 2011
- Air Quality updating and Screening Assessment
- Air Quality Progress Report
- Assessment of Uttlesford District's Local Plan on Air Quality in Saffron Walden 2013

4. Retail

- District Retail Study 2005
- Retail Capacity 2012
- Retail Capacity Update 2014

5. Flooding, Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment March 2008
- Water Cycle Study 2010
- Water Cycle Study 2012

6. Transport

- Comparative Transport Assessment 2010
- Essex Transport Strategy: Local Transport Plan for Essex 2011
- Local Plan Highways Impact Assessment 2013
- Local Plan Highways Impact Assessment 2014

7. Education

- Commissioning School Places in Essex 2012-2017

8. Infrastructure

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2014

9. Housing

- Technical Assessment – Objectively Assessed Housing Need 2013 and Update 2014
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment SHLAA 2012
- Housing Trajectory and Statement of 5 year Land Supply 2014
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 and 2012 update
- The over 50s Housing Needs Study 2011
- Housing Strategy 2012-2015
- Local Plan Sites Viability Assessment 2014
- Residential Windfall Report 2014

10. Historic Environment

- Historic Settlement Character Assessment 2007 and 2009
- Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2009
- Conservation Area Appraisals

11. Primary Health Care

- Health Profile 2012
- Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Uttlesford 2008

12. Open Space and Recreation

- Open Space, Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy 2012

13. Landscape

- Landscape Character Assessment 2006

14. Biodiversity

- Appropriate Assessment 2013
- Appropriate Assessment 2014
- Local Wildlife Sites Review 2007

15. Gypsy and Travellers

- Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2012
- Call for Sites

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1. METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

Green Belt Scoping Review (2011)

The review made the following observations:-

The existing detailed Green Belt boundary in Uttlesford was determined in 1995 by the adoption of the local plan.

Government planning policy was formally expressed in PPG 2: 'Green Belts' and was explicit that "...detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans.....should be altered only exceptionally". This also applies to emerging policy in the draft National Planning Policy Framework.

With regard to what might reasonably be considered to constitute exceptional circumstances sufficient to warrant changing an adopted Green Belt boundary, consideration of the Government guidance in conjunction with the overall aim of planning suggests that they may be as follows:

- a need to accommodate necessary growth when there is no other suitable land available; or
- a need to accommodate necessary growth when a Green Belt boundary has been long-established and in need of review in order to facilitate the sustainable growth of major urban areas.

Neither of these circumstances applies to Uttlesford given that:

- the Green Belt boundary is relatively recent (i.e. less than 20 years); and
- the vast bulk of the district is not within the Green Belt such that it should be possible to identify sufficient land to accommodate the necessary amounts of development in a sustainable manner without incursion into the Green Belt.

The review concludes that there is no scope to warrant a change to the Green Belt boundary in the district to accommodate development within the context of the emerging local development framework. This applies to both the extension of towns, both within and beyond the district boundary, and villages situated within the Green Belt and which have defined settlement limits in the adopted local plan.

Since the above review was undertaken the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) has been published and replaces PPG2. The NPPF retains the approach that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. The NPPF adds that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. The Scoping Review 2011 makes this assessment and concludes

that as the majority of the district's settlements lie beyond the Green Belt it should be possible to identify sufficient land to accommodate the necessary amounts of development in a sustainable manner without incursion into the Green Belt.

2. EMPLOYMENT

Employment Land Review (2011)

The review provides an assessment of the need for employment land need between 2011 and 2028. However, the review uses the results of the East of England Forecast Model which predicted job growth for Uttlesford as 9,200 over the period 2011-2031 which have been used to provide the floorspace and land requirements for the plan period up to 2031.

The review concludes:

- decline in the amount of manufacturing floorspace and land and a progressive increase in the need for offices and warehousing
- there is a lack of modern office accommodation to meet the needs of Saffron Walden
- there is a current surplus of B1(c), B2 and particularly B8 units in Saffron Walden
- most of the industrial estates in Great Dunmow are thriving
- the allocated Great Dunmow Business Park remains unimplemented
- there is a wish for 'strategic' warehousing with ready access to the M11 at Junction 8
- there is currently a strong market for high quality offices accessible from Junction 8 of the M11
- there is a surfeit of vacant new warehousing space available at Stansted Airport
- there is little prospect, if any, of the un- and under-used parts of the northern ancillary area at Stansted Airport being brought into beneficial use in the foreseeable future
- the development of the Chesterford Research Park is slowly progressing.

2011 Review suggests:

- Directing the office requirement to serve Saffron Walden to either Wendens Ambo or Newport in close proximity to rail
- Allocation of land for B1 at Gaunts End, Elsenham
- Identified scope for the warehousing to be located at Stansted Airport. In the event that this is not preferred warehousing to be located on a business park at Great Dunmow with longstanding allocation.

3. AIR QUALITY

Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Saffron Walden (December 2006)

The assessment found that real time monitoring and long term background monitoring clearly show that in the majority of the central part of Saffron Walden nitrogen dioxide levels are below the annual mean objective of $40\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ (21ppb). However the assessment identified three 'hot spots' which are of concern, two sites where traffic queuing and congestion together with narrow streets combine to produce higher emissions and poor dispersal, and one site where traffic queuing and congestion combine with relevant exposure close to road side. These sites were identified as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

2010 Air Quality Progress Report

The main air quality issues within the District following the first round of air quality assessments in 1998 to 1999 were found to be emissions of NO₂ and PM₁₀ from vehicles on the M11 and A120. Levels are exceeded at a site in Burton End, Stansted. Additional continuous monitoring is being carried out to assess whether there is any relevant exposure in the vicinity of this site close to the M11 and Stansted Airport.

Further assessment of Air Quality in Saffron Walden (May 2011)

The assessment found that the ongoing monitoring of NO₂ in the existing AQMAs confirms that exceedance levels are being breached. The 3 AQMA were therefore replaced with a much larger AQMA which includes one further hot spot where the NO₂ objective is exceeded. The purpose of enlarging the AQMA is to emphasise that effective measures to achieve improvement need to be deployed on a broader basis as well as site specific interventions.

2012 Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment

An Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) identifies any significant changes that may have occurred since the last round of Review and Assessment. The USA considers new monitoring data and emissions sources to determine whether there is a requirement for a Detailed Assessment for any of the pollutants applicable to Local Air Quality Management (LAQM).

The USA for Uttlesford District Council concludes that a Detailed Assessment or any additional monitoring is not required for any pollutant. Exceedences of the annual mean NO₂ Air Quality Objective (AQO) occurred at two non-automatic monitoring sites within the District but both of these sites are located within an existing AQMA. The monitoring undertaken within the District has shown that there were no other exceedences of the AQOs.

2013 Air Quality Progress Report

The 2013 Progress Report of new monitoring data has shown that exceedances of the Nitrogen Dioxide annual mean objective from data collected by Diffusion Tubes occurred at three locations within the current AQMA in the district in 2012.

Assessment of Uttlesford District's Local Plan on Air Quality in Saffron Walden - Nitrogen Dioxide Dispersion Modelling Report (Jacobs; October 2013)

An assessment of the Local Plan on Air Quality in Saffron Walden (Jacobs, 2013) to model the air quality at four key junctions was undertaken for the proposed development scenario opening years of 2018 and 2026 to determine whether air quality was expected to comply with the air quality standards for NO₂ in the relevant opening years, and to assess the significance of changes in air quality by comparing a “do-minimum” and “full” schemes in each year. The report found that there are significant differences between the predicted NO₂ concentrations depending on the adjustments made to take into account the rate of reduction in vehicle emissions over the long term. This reflects the uncertainty associated with predicting air quality many years in to the future.

Using one method emissions are predicted to exceed acceptable levels at all four junctions whilst using the other method emissions are within acceptable levels at all junctions. After September 2014 new vehicles will need to comply with the more stringent Euro VI emissions standards. The rate at which these Euro VI vehicles replace non-compliant vehicles currently on the road is not known, and the impacts on air quality are yet to be fully understood. It is likely that after 2015 actual future year concentrations would be expected to fall somewhere between the calculated results for the two methods.

4. RETAIL

District Retail Study December 2005

The study found that the main centres (Saffron Walden; Great Dunmow; Thaxted; Stansted Mountfitchet) were healthy, trading well with a relatively low vacancy rate. They were pleasant environments and served many functions such as shopping, leisure, business and services appropriate to their size.

The study found that there was a large leakage from the towns, especially comparison retailing to neighbouring higher order centres. A greater proportion of convenience goods expenditure was retained within the district.

The study found that there was capacity for additional comparison goods floorspace in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, and a modest requirement for more convenience goods floorspace in the district as a whole.

The study recognised that accommodating such expansion was difficult as all existing centres appear to have limited physical potential for expansion.

Retail Capacity Study January 2012

The Study provides assessments of retail need at 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2028.

The study found that Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow perform a main food shopping role and Saffron Walden attracts a significant proportion of comparison expenditure whilst Great Dunmow has a limited role in comparison goods.

In Saffron Walden there is a requirement for a small main food supermarket or a medium sized discount operator towards the end of the plan period. As adjacent parking would be desirable no suitable town centre sites were identified. The only potential town centre redevelopment sites could merely accommodate a small top-up supermarket. The study found that there is no requirement in the immediate future for a supermarket in Great Dunmow although the introduction of a new operator would improve consumer choice. The study considers that a new small store in Stansted Mountfitchet would be justified by retail need in the area and the objective of reducing travel, particularly by car.

Saffron Walden has lost out to competing centres for comparison goods however this is seen as a result of no redevelopment sites being available rather than reflecting poor potential. The study considers that the market would respond positively to development opportunities in Saffron Walden. Great Dunmow is seen as having limited attraction for comparison shopping, and the change necessary to significantly improve its relative attraction is unlikely given the proximity of Chelmsford and Bishops Stortford. There is a shortfall in provision of retail warehousing in Uttlesford area, resulting in people making long distance journeys to meet their requirements. The study considers that new provision should be focused on Saffron Walden, and as it is to meet the needs arising across the district, the scheme should be located on the south side of the town.

Retail Capacity Update (2014)

The study provides an update to the 2012 study and continues the data horizon through to 2031. The study concludes that by 2031 additional retail sales area will be required in the district.

In Saffron Walden there is a requirement for an additional 6,392 sq m comparison sales floorspace which should be directed to developments within / extensions to the central shopping area. Additional supermarket floorspace is also required in Saffron Walden, between 561 sq m and 949 sq m net in 2021, rising to 1,553 – 2,630 sq m net in 2031. Saffron Walden is the only centre with market credentials to attract retail warehouse operators. It is expected that provision for this would be made on a site within or on the fringes of the town with good road access. The results of the study showed the floorspace requirement for retail warehouse space raised to 5,080 sq m in 2031.

In Great Dunmow the principle requirement is for convenience good facilities. In order to remedy, at least in part, the substantial leakage of such expenditure to more distant facilities an additional small supermarket would be justified within the plan period. The service floorspace requirement for businesses such as cafes, restaurants, banks, hairdressers would be expected to be located in

town centre shopping frontages. In Stansted Mountfitchet the report suggests that a proportion of sales might be retained by a medium sized food store, the nature and scale of which would be informed by market evidence.

5. FLOODING, WATER SUPPLY AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment March 2008

The SFRA was prepared in accordance with the best practice of the time, Planning Policy Statement Development and Flood Risk (PPS25).

The SFRA identified that the significant source of flood risk within the District was fluvial, with only a few incidences of groundwater and sewer flooding. The majority of the district (96.7%) falls within Fluvial Flood Risk Zone 1 which equates to a flood event with less than 0.1% chance of occurring in any given year. 1% of the district falls within flood Risk Zone 2 and 3a; and 2.3% falls within Flood Risk Zone 3b. The latter being land which functions as a floodplain. Surface water flooding is most likely to occur in the urban areas. Across the district there are a number of culverts which present a flood risk as a consequence of blockage or collapse.

The SFRA assumes a 20% increase in 100 year event to represent the possible future effects of climate change. The impact of climate change on peak rainfall intensity may exacerbate localised drainage problems. The SFRA does not consider the effects of this rise in rainfall intensity as a result of climate change. However, it is recommended that detailed Flood Risk Assessments and Drainage Impact Assessments accompanying planning applications include the effect of climate change on rainfall intensity as well as peak river flow.

The SFRA contains an overview of the flood risk issues for each of the District's Growth Options, the 9 options contained in the Policy Choices and Options for Growth 2007 consultation, in table 10.1. For all growth options proposed it should be possible to avoid developing within flood zones 2 and 3, therefore eliminating all but the very extreme fluvial flood risk. The main issue with all development is their ability to increase surface water runoff. For each of the growth options outline the use of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) and mitigation measures should enable runoff rates to be maintained or lowered so as to not increase the risk with Uttlesford.

Stage 2 of the Water Cycle Study (see below) identified that there was risk from surface water flooding at 11 of the development sites proposed in Draft Local Plan June 2012. In most cases this flooding related to flood risk from ordinary watercourses that run through the proposed sites.

DCLG Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

The technical guidance defines the flood zones and classifies land uses by their flood risk vulnerability. In order for climate change to be taken into account, it sets recommended national precautionary sensitivity ranges for peak rainfall intensities and peak river flows. Sensitivity testing of the flood map produced by the Environment Agency, using the 20% from 2025 to 2115 allowance for

peak flows, suggests that changes in the extent of inundation are negligible in well-defined floodplains, but can be dramatic in very flat areas. This can increase the frequency of flooding and result in land being classified in a higher risk zone.

Water Cycle Study (Stage One Scoping and Outline Strategy) 2010

The outline strategy tests the four development options identified in the Preferred Options Consultation November 2007.

Water Cycle Study (Stage 2: Detailed Strategy November) 2012

The detailed strategy provides an assessment of water supply, water quality, sewerage and flood risk management issues to enable growth to 2028 and beyond.

Water Supply

The Outline Strategy identified that the Environment Agency class the surface water and groundwater resources within the District as over-licensed and over-abstracted, meaning that there is no additional water available for supply. It is therefore vital for policies to encourage conservation of water in new and existing residential and commercial buildings. At the time of the study Three Valleys Water (TVW) supplied the District with water from a combination of groundwater and surface water abstractions, some of which are outside the District, allowing additional water to be transferred into the District to accommodate the proposed growth. As the proposed growth is most likely to be located around the market towns and key service centres, TVW are confident that the potential development sites can be supplied without the need for major infrastructure upgrades. Option 4 (new settlement at Elsenham) however may result in large-scale development in new rural locations, requiring extensions to the TVW trunk main network, entailing significantly higher costs.

At the time of the Detailed Strategy water is supplied by Veolia Water Central and it was confirmed that high levels of water efficiency are still required but that VWC are confident that the potential development sites can be supplied without the need for major infrastructure upgrades.

Wastewater Capacity

There are 27 Wastewater Treatment works (WwTW) within the district. The Outline Study considers the capacity of the treatment works and the environmental capacity of the river system to take the discharge in relation to the options proposed in 2007. At this stage, Option 1 appears to be most favourable option as it minimises the length of new strategic sewers required and would not result in a significant increase in discharge to the River Stort, which would be the case with large scale development at Elsenham. This option also avoids development in the potentially cost prohibitive areas of Newport and Thaxted. However, should other development pressures prevent UDC from realising Option 1, the capacity in the Takeley catchment may be able to be utilised (providing adequate upgrade are made to the sewerage system). Anglian Water Services are planning to upgrade the process capacity at Great Dunmow WwTW, however the timescale for these upgrades (2014/15) means that any additional growth

here (above Option 4 levels) may be delayed until 2015–2020, and will require further process upgrades and a revised discharge consent.

The Detailed Strategy considered the capacity issues of the WwTW for the market towns and key villages. The treatment works at Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet, and Felsted do not have the process capacity to accommodate the proposed development. Only the works at Takeley, Great Easton and Great Chesterford have sufficient capacity. The proposed development cannot be accommodated within existing discharge consents at Great Dunmow, and Newport; and flows need to be verified at Great Easton. Saffron Walden does not require new consent but upgrades are required at the WwTW to improve capacity. None of the works have capacity within the sewerage network and upgrades would be required to accommodate future development.

Environmental Capacity

The District is located at the headwaters of four river catchments and as such the dilutive capacity of the watercourses to receive increased discharges from WwTW is limited.

The Outline Strategy set out that the development options proposed large scale development in three of these catchments. The River Stort and Cam are listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and a number of nationally and locally important water dependant environmental sites are located on these rivers. Therefore the River Chelmer is initially assessed as having the higher capacity to accept increased discharges. Water companies will have to meet stringent discharge consent standards which will impact on the feasibility of development at the more sensitive sites.

The Detailed Strategy explained that it may be not viable using conventional technology to improve the downstream water quality at Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet. However, it is achievable by conventional processes at Great Easton, Newport and Great Chesterford. With the exception of Great Dunmow, achieving the requirements of the Water Framework Directive with the proposed growth is not any more difficult than the current consented position. The level of constraint at Great Dunmow depends on whether future upgrades take place and the volume of any future flow transfers to Felsted WwTW.

6. TRANSPORT

Comparative Transport Assessment (January 2010)

The Assessment was prepared following the consultation on Preferred Options 2007 and to inform the Further Consultation on Preferred Options February 2010.

Uttlesford is a rural district where car ownership exceeds the national average. The assessment stresses that the car is therefore the preferred mode of transport for most people. There is no clear destination draw in Uttlesford, and therefore, any residential development of a substantial size is likely to disperse people across the district and beyond in terms of employment, shopping and leisure destinations. Locations close to the Strategic Road Network offer a benefit by providing a fast, easy connection to many

destinations and by reducing traffic on local roads. Whilst it is unlikely developments would take direct access onto the Strategic Road Network due to policy objections, there is a benefit in the sites being close.

Given the district's rural nature there are limited existing public transport services and the services are infrequent at the majority of locations. Smaller villages will have 1 or 2 buses daily whilst the larger key villages have an hourly service.

Uttlesford has a high frequency of commuters travelling to London and other close by towns (i.e. Cambridge, Bishops Stortford) by train, therefore the presence of a station will lead to an option of travel other than the car.

Essex Transport Strategy: Local Transport Plan for Essex (2011)

The Essex Transport Strategy sets out the counties vision for transport, the outcomes they aim to achieve over a fifteen year period, policies for transport and the broad approach to implementing these.

Essex is fortunate to have good transport connections by road, rail, air and sea. Within Uttlesford there is the nationally important M11 and A120 and one of the three main rail lines which radiate from London through Essex. The district also contains one of the two major 'International Gateways' in the County with the UK's third busiest airport at Stansted.

The County Council needs to ensure that good connectivity is maintained between the main employment centres, the national transport network, and to the rapidly expanding ports and airports. The County Council must also ensure that there is provision for sustainable transport to tackle persistent congestion problems within main towns and on our main inter-urban roads.

The County Council aim to reduce the impact of travelling, especially by car, on the environment by; reducing the carbon intensity of travel in Essex, reducing pollution from transport to improve air quality in urban areas and along key corridors, and protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment.

None of the Strategic Transport Priorities are within Uttlesford

Transport priorities for the West Essex

- Improving access to and from the M11 corridor;
- Tackling congestion and improving the management of traffic in Harlow town centre;
- Providing the transport improvements needed to support housing and employment growth;
- Improving the attractiveness of bus services;
- Improving cycling networks and walking routes and encouraging their greater use;

- Improving the attractiveness of public spaces and their ease of use;
- Working with Transport for London to improve the journey experience of Essex residents using the Central Line underground services;
- Improving access to Stansted Airport by low carbon forms of transport.

Transport priorities for rural areas

- Supporting the economy of our historic rural towns and villages, extensive coastline and varied countryside.
- Providing support for transport in rural areas to ensure that access is provided to employment, education, healthcare and food shopping.
- Ensuring that people in rural areas are able to access important services (including shopping, healthcare, library facilities, etc.), without needing to travel long distances.
- Minimising the impact transport has on the character of our rural areas.

Local Plan Highways Impact Assessment (2013)

This assessed eleven junctions in Saffron Walden, five junctions in Great Dunmow, three junctions in Newport and M11 Junction 8.

In Saffron Walden, a number of the junctions were shown to be over-capacity in 2026 with committed development in place. The assessment found that the proposed link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road would help to relieve congestion at the Thaxted Road/Radwinter road and High Street/Audley End Road junctions. However would lead to the junctions on Peaslands Road, Mount Pleasant Road and Borough Lane experiencing an increased flow as traffic routes via the south of the of the town centre. Additional mitigation measures are therefore required to enable delivery of the plan.

Mitigation measures include the implementation of a northbound traffic restriction on Thaxted Road, north of the junction with Peaslands Road in order to reduce the flow on the Thaxted Road approach to the junction with Radwinter Road. A second measure was a similar north bound traffic restriction on Debden Road at the junction with Mount Pleasant Road and Borough Lane. Other mitigation measures have been devised and assessed to reduce the traffic on the junctions along the Mount Pleasant/Peaslands/Debden Road route.

Of the eleven junctions assessed, taking into account the committed and proposed development sites and mitigation measures, nine have been found to be either unchanged or are expected to have improved capacity as a result of the infrastructure changes proposed. The two junctions which would be expected to have slightly less capacity with the Local Plan development in place are Mount Pleasant /Debden Road and the Newport Road/Audley End Road.

In Great Dunmow the conclusion is that the addition of the Local Plan traffic to the network would result in slightly reduced capacity at one junction - the B1256/A120 Interchange northern roundabout. TPA consultants on behalf of the Smiths Farm development have devised mitigation measures at the Hoblongs junction. This involves a major rearrangement of the junction. It would enable northbound traffic from the A120 interchange to head into Great Dunmow via Chelmsford Road without the need to turn into a minor road. It would also incorporate a two lane route running southbound from the junction to the A120 interchange and so providing more capacity on that approach. The conclusion is that the proposed revised layout at Hoblongs and the completion of the bypass to the west of Great Dunmow would provide suitable mitigation against the impact of additional traffic in the town arising from the proposed development.

The junction assessments undertaken in Newport have found that all junctions modelled would operate within capacity in all scenarios and therefore no mitigation measures would be necessary.

Some traffic arising from development in Great Dunmow will feed into the M11/A120/Stansted Airport junction. This has been modelled with its existing layout and the layout that includes mitigation measures as specified in the Stansted G1 planning approval. The mitigation measures do not result in significant improvements in the operation of the junction and it would be expected to experience significant delays in 2026 with committed and G1 development in place. The addition of the Local Plan development results in a worsening situation. Essex Highways recommend that further work is done to identify additional improvements at the junction.

Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment (2014)

The Local Plan impacts were assessed for the traditional weekday peak hours within each key area. Two future years, 2018 and 2031 have been assessed with a base year of 2012. The impact of all the Local Plan proposals over the wider network was then assessed in order to ascertain their likely impact on the strategic road network, specifically on the A120 and M11 Junction 8.

In Saffron Walden 11 junctions were assessed and the various measures resulted in either no overall change in junction capacity or an improvement over the 'without ULP development' scenario. The exception is the Mount Pleasant Road / Debden Road junction which is expected to experience delays on both the southern and western arms as a result of the re-routing of traffic caused to the traffic restriction mitigation measures.

Five key junctions have been assessed in Great Dunmow, two of which have required mitigation measures. The Hoblongs junction improvement scheme combines an improvement to both the B1256 / Chelmsford Road junction and the intersection of the B1256 with the A120 grade separated junction. The Stortford Road / Rosemary Lane mini roundabout is shown to be approaching capacity

but it is likely this will be relieved by the Dunmow bypass, and the reassignment of some traffic over and above that assumed in the study so no mitigation is proposed.

Formal highway assessments of the cumulative effect that developments and site allocations in Elsenham would be likely to have on the local highway network have not been undertaken. However, mitigation measures have been proposed, including demand management, improvements to Hall Road, and a western link towards the B1383. A more detailed study using a detailed highway assignment route choice model would provide more confident predictions of the large site allocations impact, and it is recommended that this is provided as part of any planning application submission.

The analysis of the impact of the Local Plan on the strategic road network has concentrated on the M11 J8. The assessment has been done assuming that the Stansted Airport G1 (35mppa), Bishops Stortford North development, and background growth is in place.

The previously identified mitigation measure has been revised, which provides a new exit from the motorway service area onto the eastbound A120, improves this section of the A120 between J8 and the A120/A1250 roundabout, and also provides improved capacity on the approaches to the A120/A1250 junction. However, as a strategic junction, it is anticipated that even with the mitigation measures in place, J8 will be over capacity in 2031 without the ULP traffic. It is emphasised, is overly robust, as it does not allow for any changes in travel choices, routing, journey timing or destination changes. The subsequent assignment of ULP traffic to the junction, particularly that arising from the Elsenham site, is subject to significant variation, and with sensitivity testing, only a very broad conclusion can be reached about its future capacity without more detailed highway assessment modelling with route choice capacity.

The Junction 8 mitigation measure, which is likely to cost in the region of £5m, would free capacity at the junction for all traffic. As such, funding contributions should not be linked to any one development site. Essex County Council, as highway authority, will also be applying for funding to support M11 corridor schemes, which include J8, from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan.

7. EDUCATION

Commissioning School Places in Essex 2012 - 2017

This report takes into account committed developments but not sites proposed in the Draft Local Plan June 2012.

Many of the primary schools across the district are estimated to have a deficit of school places or negligible additional capacity over the next 5 years once existing planned development is taken into account. However demand for reception places in the mid west of

the District (Debden/ Radwinter/ Sampford/ Wimbish areas) is predicted to reduce over the next 5 years which would result in increased surplus capacity across the schools.

In October 2012 St Mary's CE (Foundation) Primary School relocated to a reserved site on the Foresthall Park development and expands from 210 to 300 places to accommodate additional children from the new housing development. In September 2012 Takeley (Foundation) Primary School relocated to a reserved site on the Priors Green development and expanded from 210 to 330 places to accommodate additional children from the new housing development. Further housing is predicted on the new developments. Pupil numbers are being closely monitored and discussions are on-going with the schools about the timing for implementation of phase 2 of buildings works to increase the number of pupil places at the schools.

Temporary solutions will continue to be explored with schools in the locality of Flitch Green and Felsted and solutions developed to accommodate additional children from the Flitch Green development. No further housing on the Flitch Green development is forecast at this time. Pupil numbers will continue to be closely monitored to assess whether there is a long term requirement for additional places or whether the numbers will drop back as is historically the pattern in areas of new development.

Secondary Schools Pupil numbers in Uttlesford are forecast to increase over the next five years once forecast pupils from new housing are taken into account. The two schools to the north, Newport Free Grammar and Saffron Walden County High, are both heavily oversubscribed. The overall total of pupil numbers in the district is set to rise further as a result of the housing developments at Great Dunmow, Little Dunmow, Stansted and Takeley. Demand for secondary school places will be monitored by Essex County Council and proposals will be developed with the Uttlesford secondary schools about a way forward to address the level of growth expected from around 2017 onwards.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

The report states that all of the largest development allocations warrant significant elements of infrastructure provision which are essential pre-requisite to development going ahead. This involves the necessary highway improvement and sewerage/sewage capacity enhancements and, in some instances, community facilities such as schools and community centres.

The provision of highway improvements is often necessary to make sure that the impact of development is acceptable. Any such improvements should be in place prior to the new development coming into use, this is not expected to be problematic as there are unlikely to be any practicalities that will delay the implementation of the necessary improvements unduly.

Enhancement of the capacity of sewerage networks and waste water treatment works is, however, a matter for the relevant water authority. The water companies are the providers of this infrastructure and must incorporate specific schemes into their investment

programmes. This may have implications for the phasing of development. There may, however, be exceptions to this is the cost of the works is so relatively modest that it can be absorbed by the water companies or if the works are developer-funded.

Other infrastructure, such as educational and other community facilities will need to be phased into the delivery of individual projects. This will necessitate determining when the facility will be required and incorporating this requirement into a legal agreement accompanying the planning permission.

The delivery of infrastructure will be monitored through S106 monitoring, the Annual Monitoring Report and the housing trajectory.

9. HOUSING

Technical Assessment – Objectively Assessed Housing Need (October 2013) and Update (April 2014)

The Council examined a range of scenarios in determining its objectively assessed need.

The Council considers that it's objectively assessed need is that identified by the 2010-based SNPP and concludes that there are no demonstrable reasons why it should not meet its objectively assessed housing need.

The 2010 based SNPP produces the highest dwelling requirement and whilst its assumptions may be subject to review in the light of the 2011 Census, its relatively buoyant household formation rates will ensure that these projections are the most appropriate basis in planning for growth in Uttlesford. It accords with National Planning Policy Framework in that it meets household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change. The assessment shows that a jobs based housing need constrains population and household growth. There are no legitimate reasons to vary the assumptions made in the official population and household projections. Furthermore, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see below) shows that in order to meet its affordable housing need a housing requirement based on the trend based forecast provides the greatest amount of affordable housing. The evidence has shown that by constraining the population growth, this similarly constrains the number of houses provided, impacting on the age profile of the district, and would result in fewer jobs, which together is contrary to the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole. The evidence has shown that there is sufficient land to meet the housing, business and other development needs of the District and that any constraints to the infrastructure can be overcome and the infrastructure can be provided to meet this need.

The appropriate assessment of the plan under the Birds and Habitats Directives has determined that none of the site allocations, strategic policies and development management policies will have a significant effect on any of the following:

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)

- Or Ramsar Site

Uttlesford District does not contain any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or National Park. Furthermore there is sufficient land beyond or land which would not have a detrimental impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Metropolitan Green Belt, Local Green Space, designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding to meet its objectively assessed housing need.

Uttlesford Council has not been approached by any authority under the Duty to Cooperate to assist them in meeting their objectively assessed housing need.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment SHLAA (2012)

This Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2012 updates the SHLAA 2011, taking into account the annual Residential Land Availability Survey 2011-12 and any additional information received during the year.

It is a study of potential housing on sites within the district over a 15 year period reflecting the period covered by the Council's 5-Year Land Supply Statement 2012. Year 1 is therefore 2013/14. Capacity deliverable prior to Year 1 is that estimated to be built on the SHLAA sites in the year 2012/13. The 2012 SHLAA considered 311 sites, which includes 31 new sites identified from representations received on the June 2012 consultation on Draft Proposals for a Local Plan. The 2012 SHLAA identifies sites which could accommodate 5443 houses on sites deliverable in the first 5 years and 3188 houses on sites developable in the latter part of the plan period. In addition the SHLAA considers 6 sites for new settlements which could provide between 2500-6000 homes. There are sites which could provide a further 3611 dwellings on land subject to constraints which could easily be overcome.

Housing Trajectory and Statement of 5-year Land Supply 2014

The Council's Housing Trajectory and Statement of 5-year Land Supply 2014 shows that there has not been a record of persistent under delivery of housing and therefore the 5-year land supply includes a 5% buffer. The trajectory also shows that the requirement of the East of England Regional Plan 2001 – 2013 is 4620 and the number of dwellings provided within this period is 4901. There has therefore been an oversupply of 281 dwellings and there is no need for the new Local Plan to make up a backlog in provision. The statement of 5-year land supply shows that Council's overall target over the next 5 year period is 2885 dwellings which includes making up the shortfall of 133 dwellings from 2013/14 and the frontloading of 5%. The Council estimates that 3592 dwellings will be provided over the next 5 years which provides the District with 6.2 years of supply.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 and 2012 update

Uttlesford has worked with Brentwood, Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Harlow in preparing a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the London Commuter Belt East/M11 Sub-region (LCB East). A 2012 Update has been prepared for the

eastern authorities within the sub-region, namely East Herts, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford. The update provides an assessment of housing need for between 2011 and 2033.

A SHMA allows the Council to understanding of how housing markets operate. Analysis undertaken by the SHMA suggests that there are two substantial sub-markets covering most of this area – Cheshunt/A10 to the west of the area and Harlow/M11 to the east of the area. Uttlesford falls mainly within the Harlow and M11 corridor sub-market, however the northern part of the district centred around Saffron Walden falls within the Cambridge sub-market and the south-eastern edge of the district falls within the Chelmsford sub-market area.

The assessment found that 400 households (1.4%) in the district are in 'housing need' and 3,300 households in the district are considered to be 'unsuitably housed'. The assessment highlights the lack of housing options for households earning £35,000 and below and that there is an overwhelming need for rented properties to satisfy households that earn under £35,000. In Uttlesford 11% of those living in the social rented sector were overcrowded and less than 7% of private rented households were overcrowded.

The 2012 update concludes that using the trend based projections of the 2010 based SNPP the total housing requirement for Uttlesford is 11,500 for the period 2011 – 2033. The requirement for additional affordable housing is a large proportion of this overall requirement for Uttlesford. The tenure mix of the overall housing requirement changes with house prices - the higher the house price the greater the need for affordable housing. In Uttlesford, only around 10% of the stock sells for under £150,000 with around 50% selling for more than £250,000. The SHMA modelled the overall requirements based upon 2007/8 average prices and the long term trends. Uttlesford requires 70% affordable housing based on 2007/8 prices which were at the peak of the cycle. However under the longer term trends of house prices the requirement drops to 48%. The 2012 update of the SHMA revised the requirement to 54% which reflects 2011/12 house prices. The SHMA also estimates dwelling size for new building by tenure. 89% of market housing should be for 3 and 4 bed houses. For all social housing about 65% should be 1 and 2 bed and 35% 3 and 4 bed properties. Households requiring 1 and 2 bed properties are likely to be either older person households, single parents, couples with our without children and single people. Older person households may require support to stay in their existing house or may wish to move to sheltered housing. Frail older people will require more specialist housing and higher levels of support can be provided through Extra Care Housing.

The over 50s Housing Needs Study 2011

This Housing Needs Study was carried out in Uttlesford in 2011. Forms were sent out within the Uttlesford Life magazine to ensure district wide coverage. The study had 1,116 respondents, representing a useable amount of information. Only 6.9% of respondents stated that they did not feel Uttlesford required more housing for the over 60s. 45.8% were unsure and 47.2% thought that more housing for the over 60s was needed. Over 38% of households were either in affordable housing, renting, or still had a mortgage. 93% of households were living in a home with two or more bedrooms, and three quarters of respondents were currently living in a

house. 44% of respondents said that they would consider downsizing in the next 10 years, and 32% of households said that if they were to move, they would be looking to move into affordable housing. If the sample size is representative of the district, this could potentially equate to around 3,000 people over 60, looking to move to affordable housing in Uttlesford in the next ten years. 18.5% of households stated that they were currently in receipt of benefits, and over 40% of respondents are currently marginally able to afford, or cannot afford the costs of running their household.

The report recommends that there is a need for new over 60s housing in Uttlesford. Given the need for affordable over 60s housing, the Council's affordable housing policy should apply to new over 60s developments.

According to the study, suitable housing for the over 60's should include

- One/two bedrooms apartment or bungalow
- Near shops and amenities
- Have good public transport links

Housing Strategy 2012 - 2015

The objectives of the strategy are

- To meet the housing requirement for Uttlesford and to make sure that the housing being provided creates balanced communities by delivering sustainable, safe, attractive and healthy places to live while meeting local housing needs in terms of type and tenure including affordable and special needs housing
- To provide and maintain accommodation that meets the needs of older people living in Uttlesford.
- Maintain our housing to a high standard ensuring our tenants have a good quality of life

There are approximately 32,611 properties in the Uttlesford District. 28,286 of these are in the private sector and almost 2,852 are owned by the Council. Smaller numbers are owned by Registered Providers and the Ministry of Defence.

Affordability of housing is still a problem in Uttlesford; in 2010 the ratio of lowest quartile mean house price to mean household income was 10.3, worse than the affordability ratio for the East of England (7.7). This makes owning a home very difficult for first time buyers and those on low incomes. The lack of private rented properties in Uttlesford has meant that rents charged are high.

This has implications for low earners and those living on Local Housing Allowance. As at November 2012, there were 1357 applications on the housing register, of those applications 669 are in a band higher than E and therefore classed as being in housing need. The register shows a demand for a mix of properties, this includes 1 and 2 bedroom older persons bungalows to release larger family accommodation, 1 and 2 bedroom flats and family sized 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

There are a number of supported housing schemes in the District but there is a requirement to replace some schemes which are no longer fit for purpose and provide additional schemes in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

The district has a high ageing population, with varying levels of need. There is a requirement for 1 and 2 bed bungalows for those with low needs to move on from larger council properties. There is also a requirement to meet the medium/high need of older

people in Uttlesford. The Council's main priority is to provide an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden however a second scheme in Great Dunmow would help meet the increasing need we have in the District.

Local Plan – Sites Viability Assessment (2014)

This report tests the viability of 14 major proposed developments in the district and their ability to meet the proposed Local Plan and other planning policy requirements. The study methodology compares the residual land values of the fourteen major developments to appropriate benchmark land values. If a development incorporating the Council's policy requirements generates a higher residual land value then it can be judged that the Council's requirements will not adversely impact of viability.

The study concludes that the majority of schemes are viable at current values and are able to meet the Council's requirements in terms of affordable housing and sustainability. The four schemes that are not currently viable are likely to become viable over the medium term following modest real growth in sales values. A flexible approach to application of affordable housing targets will ensure the viability of development is not adversely affected over the economic cycle. The report states that the Council's existing sustainability requirements would not adversely impact on viability. However, adoption of higher sustainability standards would require flexible application in the short to medium term to strike an appropriate balance with other policy requirements.

Residential Windfall Development 2014

Historical evidence shows that windfall sites make a contribution to the number of annual completions. It is also considered that in the light of available sites and planning policy windfall sites will continue to be permitted and built in the future.

Since 2001 the number of dwellings permitted and built can vary considerably from year to year. This is inevitable by the very nature of windfall sites as larger sites unexpectedly become available for development. However, the average number of windfall dwellings completed annually is 46. Over the 13 years 42% of windfall sites permitted have been developed. The council has recorded the number of completions on sites of 5 or less dwellings since 2005/6, which demonstrates that over the last 9 years an average of 80 dwelling are built on small sites. With an annual average completion rate of 46 dwellings on windfall sites and 80 dwellings on all small sites, a windfall allowance of 50 dwellings based on rounding the windfall completion rate is considered conservative but realistic.

10. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic Settlement Character Assessment (2007 & 2009)

This study provides a detailed assessment of the historic environment within the two towns (Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden), the four key villages which have a Conservation Area (Great Chesterford, Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted) and

Henham which would be impacted upon by Option 4. The assessment considers a) the historic core of the settlement and its relationship with the built up area of the town as a whole and b) the quality and general function of the landscapes in and adjacent to the settlement.

Saffron Walden

New development on the northern approach via the B185 and Windmill Hill; the B1383 approach and Audley End Road, and selected sites within the built up area would have a particularly seriously detrimental effect on parts of the historic core. The sites identified in the adopted local plan at Ashdon road for employment and housing are appropriate designations in terms of their visual impact in respect of the historic core and the town as a whole. The visual effect of development between the Kilns development and Rylstone Way would be neutral. The visual effect of development in other locations would be damaging and would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness in their respective locations. The edges of the town at Radwinter Road, Ashdon Road, and Thaxted Road are the three least attractive edges where commercial buildings, generally of mediocre to poor visual quality, detract from their immediate surroundings.

Great Dunmow

New development at The Downs, the Chelmer Valley, the Stebbing Road approach, and land on the northern approach, dependent on scale and location, would most likely result in a detrimental impact on the historic core, seriously eroding parts of the Conservation Area and its setting and identity. In relation to all sectors, except land to the south east, north of the A120, the conclusion reached is that development would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of Great Dunmow.

Great Chesterford

New development in all sectors excepting the Ickleton Road approach and the London Road approach from the south east would result in a detrimental impact on the historic core to varying degrees. The effects would be greatest in respect of open spaces within the historic core and conservation area.

In relation to all sectors, except land to the south east of Stanley Road and Four Acres, the conclusion reached is that development would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of Great Chesterford.

Stansted Mountfitchet

Development in some sectors, such as land between Birchanger village and Forest Hall Road for example, although removed by distance from the historic core, could result in the loss of long views of landmark buildings whilst others such as development on the approach from Manuden would have a direct and seriously detrimental effect on Bentfield Green conservation area.

Apart from the above considerations the general conclusion reached in relation to the various approach roads to Stansted Mountfitchet is that development would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the settlement.

Newport

New development in sectors to the east at Debden Road, to the north east and the land to the north of Wicken Road, dependent on scale and location would most likely result in a detrimental impact on the historic core, seriously eroding parts of the Conservation Area and its setting and identity.

In relation to the above sectors and the majority of the land in sectors to the north west and south west of the village, the conclusion reached is that development would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the settlement

Thaxted

Development on many of the approach roads would be inappropriate as views of the church spire and/or the windmill would be compromised.

It is considered that appropriate redevelopment of the Molecular Products site would positively and significantly improve the sense of place and local distinctiveness by removing existing development that has a seriously detrimental effect on the southern part of the historic core. Similarly, sensitive and small scale residential redevelopment of part of the Claypits Farm complex is considered appropriate.

In relation to land between Bardfield Road right round to Watling Lane the conclusion reached is that development would have a detrimental impact on parts of the historic core. Development on the approach roads of all sectors would extend development into the open countryside beyond clearly defined limits, diminishing the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the settlement.

Henham

Land to the west and south along Mill Road is the only area identified where, subject to retention of trees and hedges, the effect would at worst be neutral and at best improve the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the settlement.

It is accepted that whilst the quality of new development can be designed to reduce detrimental effect, new development in all sectors, excepting limited development to the south of Hall Close and along Chickney Road would result in a detrimental impact on the historic core to varying degrees. The effects would be greatest in respect of any development that would occur within, or on the periphery of land to the south and north of Old Mead Road, the approach from Henham Lodge and Pledgdon Hall.

In relation to all sectors except land to the west and south along Mill Road, the conclusion reached is that significant development would diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of Henham.

Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project (2009)

The Project considers the sensitivity, diversity and value of the historic environment within the District.

The project divides the District into 12 Historic Environment Character Areas, each of which is further subdivided into Historic environment Character Zones, providing information which can be used at a site by site level.

Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA)

The following CAA's have been carried out and approved:

- Arkesden (2012) – the boundary of the conservation area has been extended.
- Ashdon (2013) – no changes were made to the conservation area boundary in Ashdon, however an additional conservation area was added at Church End Ashdon.
- Audley End (2014) - the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Bentfield Green (2014) - no changes were made to the conservation area boundary
- Clavering (2007) – the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Elmdon (2014) - the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Felsted (2012) – the boundary of the conservation areas has been extended
- Great Canfield (2014) - the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Great Chesterford (2007) – the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Great Dunmow (2007) – the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Great Easton (2014) – the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Great Hallingbury (2014) - no changes were made to the conservation area boundary
- Great Sampford (2013) – the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Hadstock (2014) - the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Hatfield Broad Oak (2013) – The boundary of the conservation area been extended
- Hazel End (2014) - the boundary has been amended with some additional areas and exclusions
- Hempstead (2013) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Henham (2012) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- High Easter (2013) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- High Roding (2014) – the boundary of the conservation area has been reduced
- Littlebury (2011) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Little Dunmow (2014) – no changes were made to the conservation area boundary
- Manuden (2012) – the conservation area has been extended
- Newport (2007) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Radwinter (2013) – no changes were made to the conservation area boundary
- Saffron Walden (2012) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Stansted Mountfitchet (2007) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Stebbing (2010) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Thaxted (2012) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions

- Wendens Ambo (2013) – the boundary has been amended with additional areas and exclusions
- Widdington (2013) – no changes were made to the conservation area boundary

11. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Health Profile 2012

The health of people in Uttlesford is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 1,200 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average. Life expectancy is 4.2 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Uttlesford than in the least deprived areas. Over the last 10 years, all cause mortality rates have fallen. Early death rates from cancer and heart disease and stroke have fallen and are better than the England average. About 13.7% of Year 6 children are classified as obese, lower than the average for England. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment, alcohol-specific hospital initiation stays among those under 18 and breast feeding initiation are better than the England average. Estimated levels of adult 'healthy eating', smoking, physical activity and obesity are better than the England average. The rate of road injuries and deaths is worse than the England average. Rates of sexually transmitted infections, smoking related deaths and hospital stays for alcohol related harm are better than the England average. The incidence of malignant melanoma is higher than average. Priorities in Uttlesford include improving access to services, improving public transport, road safety and carbon emissions, and reducing the fear of crime.

Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Uttlesford (2008)

In general, the health of the people in Uttlesford is good. Compared to the national picture, fewer residents consider themselves to have a limiting long-term illness and life expectancy is longer.

Uttlesford has high rate of low birth weight babies, and the rates of children having the MMR immunisation are below the WHO recommendation. The growing prevalence of obesity among the child population is an important public health issue and a national priority.

In the future, we will see dramatic increases in the numbers of older residents with, for example, mobility problems, suffering from depression or dementia.

The number of people with mental health problems is also set to increase. Uttlesford has the lowest proportions of their working age population claiming benefit / allowances for a mental or behavioural disorder, and some of the lowest prevalence rates for mental health disorders. Yet Uttlesford has the second highest rate of mental health admissions to hospital for its population in Essex. This may suggest a significant proportion of the population suffering from mental health problems but not being identified earlier enough to avoid admission to hospital.

Uttlesford has lower rates of people with disabilities compared to other areas in Essex but as the population ages, more people will need support. In addition, more children with complex and multiple disabilities are surviving into adulthood.

Although the choices Uttlesford people make about diet, exercise, smoking and drinking tend to be better than elsewhere in the UK, the biggest preventable contributors to health inequalities and future service demand still remain obesity, smoking and alcohol misuse.

To help overcome the issues raised by the evidence the plan needs to ensure that adequate primary health care facilities are provided close to where housing and commercial growth is concentrated and within or near to established key service centres where existing facilities are more accessible and new facilities can be provided to serve a wider catchment.

12. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy (2012)

Open Space

There are only 3 public *parks and gardens* within Uttlesford and all are located within Saffron Walden.

Most settlements are within 400m of an *amenity greenspace*. Deficiencies in quantity occur predominantly in the towns and main villages.

There is an irregular pattern of *natural and semi-natural greenspace* across the district and there is a poor level of provision in many parishes. Deficiencies in quantity occur predominately in the rural parishes.

There is a dispersed pattern of *provision for children and young people* and the majority of parishes contain at least one play area. Deficiencies in quantity occur predominantly in the towns and main villages.

A large proportion of the District is within 4km of their nearest *allotment* site. There are areas in the north-west, north-east and small areas along the south-east and south-west boundaries of the district which have no provision. There is also a deficiency at the centre of the District around Takeley and the Priors Green development.

Sports Facilities

There are sufficient sports halls and swimming pools within the district. Although there is no quantitative deficiency of athletics tracks, synthetic turf pitches, indoor bowls greens, indoor tennis courts demand for such facilities should be kept under review. In relation to Outdoor bowls greens, outdoor tennis courts, squash courts, golf courses, health and fitness centres and village and community hall use for sport, existing provision could be improved and refurbished as appropriate. To meet the needs of the increase in population arising from the development additional sports facilities are required in all types apart from indoor tennis where additional demand is insufficient to justify specialist provision and an athletics track where the need would be served by facilities in neighbouring areas.

Playing Pitches

There are a sufficient number of adult football pitches and mini soccer pitches and cricket pitches across the district but a deficiency in junior football pitches and rugby pitches to meet current needs. To meet the needs of the increase in population arising from the development additional junior football, mini-soccer, cricket and a rugby pitch would be required.

13. LANDSCAPE

Landscape Character Assessment (2006)

The Assessment was undertaken with Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Maldon Councils.

The assessment divided Uttlesford into 3 main types of landscape, which themselves are subdivided into a total of 26 landscape character areas, setting out the visual, historic and ecological characteristics, sensitivities to change and planning guidelines.

The largest of the landscape character types is the farmland plateau landscapes which are gently rolling landscapes with medium to large arable fields but well wooded in places. The landscape is cut into by river valleys providing in places long distance views across the valleys. The open nature of the skyline of the ridge tops is particularly visually sensitive to new development.

There are 4 river valley landscapes in Uttlesford based on the Rivers Cam, Stort, Pant and Upper Chelmer. The valleys have flat or gently undulating valley floors and are served by several tributaries. The open skyline at the top of the valley slopes is particularly sensitive to change through development, as are the more intimate views between the lower slopes and the valley floor.

The North West corner of the District is characterised by chalk upland landscapes which are rolling landscapes of broad roundback ridges. They are characterised by expansive arable farmland providing panoramic views. The open nature of the skyline of the chalk ridge tops is particularly visually sensitive to change.

14. BIODIVERSITY

Appropriate Assessment (2013)

There are no sites within the district that have been designated for their nature conservation value at the European level; however four lie within the 15km buffer zone:

- Lee Valley Rye Meads SPA & Ramsar
- Lee Valley Amwell Quarry SPA & Ramsar
- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC

- Epping Forest SAC

One further site has been assessed beyond the 15km buffer zone due to the possible 'in combination' effect:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA, Ramsar & part of the Essex Estuary SAC

The assessment considered the effects of the proposed development sites on

- Recreation use:-

The European Sites are situated beyond the distance recommended by Natural England for accessible greenspace and whilst theoretically it is conceivable that residents of Uttlesford may travel to one of the identified sites it is considered unlikely as Uttlesford is a rural authority where residents have immediate access to open countryside. Within Uttlesford there are no Statutory Local Nature Reserves. However there are nine Essex Wildlife Trust reserves as well as accessible land owned by Essex County Council, National Trust, English Heritage, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust. Sites within easy access to the settlements proposed for development include the Flich Way Linear Country Park which runs through Great Dunmow from Braintree to Start Hill, Hallingbury; Hatfield Forest which provides a 410ha woodland and parkland within 6 miles of Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet and 7 miles from Elsenham; and Audley End Park a 75ha site on the edge of Saffron Walden.

Nonetheless, Local Plan policies should seek to avoid loss of recreational open space within the District, encourage sufficient access to existing open spaces, and make provision for new space within or nearby to allocated residential sites.

- Atmospheric pollution

According to the Department of Transport Analysis Guidance 2012 any development beyond 200m from the road centre the contribution of vehicle emissions to local pollution levels is not significant. As there are no European Sites within 200m of any of the roads in the District, NOx emissions resulting from vehicle movement associated with the Pre Submission Local Plan need not be considered further.

- Water resources

Development in the Great Dunmow area would feed into the Great Dunmow Wastewater Treatment Works which discharges into the River Chelmer which in turn flows through Chelmsford and Maldon and eventually into the Blackwater Estuary. However, despite the potential connectivity with the European Sites the construction and operation of any development will be required to comply with Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidelines, and the distance between the District and the European Sites is such that any negative effects are highly unlikely.

The screening concluded that no policies or allocations would have an impact on the integrity of a protected European Site, either in isolation or in combination with each other or other relevant plans and documents.

Local Wildlife Sites Review 2007

The review reassessed selected Local Wildlife Sites in two broad corridors – the West Anglian railway route between Bishop's Stortford and Great Chesterford; and the A120 between Bishop's Stortford and the district boundary near Rayne, Braintree; which were selected as areas under most pressure from development. A number of sites were changed; 9 new sites added and 7 downgraded to Potential Local Wildlife Sites. Most changes arise because the site has been wither under or over managed.

The sites are sporadically distributed right across the district and are generally either grassland or woodland habitats.

15. GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS

Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2012)

The assessment quantifies the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This is in terms of residential and transit sites, and bricks and mortar accommodation.

The Assessment calculates a need for 26 pitches to be provided until 2033 which is mainly derived from overcoming issues of existing overcrowding as well as newly forming households.

Gypsy and Traveller Call for Sites 2012

In October 2012 the Council carried out a Call for Gypsy and Traveller sites. 11 responses were received, 10 of which suggested potential sites. 9 of these were new sites; one suggested an extension to an existing site, and one letter requested a site previously put forward for this use be retracted as the owners wished to pursue other options.

The Council has commissioned, as part of an Essex wide joint working programme, a Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment. This document will replace the Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment November 2009. It will look at existing provision across Essex and assess the accommodation and housing related needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The results of the assessment will inform the allocation of sites/pitches in Uttlesford. Publication of the Needs Assessment is anticipated July 2014.

In July 2014 the Council appointed consultants to carry out an assessment of existing sites and those suggested in the 2012 Call for Sites to identify sites to meet the need in the District.