

Committee: Planning Policy Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 26 November 2015

6

Title: Evidence base review and work programme

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Summary

1. This report provides an update on the evidence base work and forward work plan.

Recommendations

2. To note the officer update.

Financial Implications

3. All commissioned reports can be met from the Planning Policy budget and if necessary from the Planning Reserve.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	No formal consultation on this document although it is available as part of the committee papers.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/L

Situation

6. This report updates the Working Group on work to update and refresh the evidence base following previous reports on 23 February and 13 July 2015. A number of reports have been commissioned or are in the process of being commissioned. The four items to update the Working group are listed below:

Employment Land Review

7. The Council has tendered for the appointment of a consultant to update its 2011 Employment Land Review (ELR). Tender evaluation has taken place, and at the time of writing a bidder has been invited for interview. It is anticipated that the contract will run until April 2016, when the project will be concluded by a presentation to the Working Group of the updated ELR. A copy of the relevant extract from the Invitation to Tender is attached as Appendix 1.

Highway and Transportation Consultant

8. The Council has tendered for the appointment of a Local Plan transport consultant, and tender evaluation and interview has taken place. As a result, a recommendation on a contract award is to be made to Chief Officers. The contract will run for 2 years or so, enabling a full range of consultancy advice to be given to the Council up to and including the Examination in Public. A copy of the relevant extract from the Invitation to Tender is attached as Appendix 2.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

9. The first SFRA was undertaken in 2008 by JBA consulting. The Council has reappointed them to prepare a Level 1 SFRA update.
10. The scope of the Study is set out in Appendix 3. A draft report for consultation with UDC, Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority is expected in November and the final report in December 2015.

Green Belt Review

11. The Council issued a brief (Appendix 4) for carrying out a Green Belt review on 12 October 2015 via email and via the Council's website. The Council received four submissions and asked two companies to present in more detail. Following these presentations Arup have been appointed to carry out the work.
12. The work falls into two stages (as set out in the brief) with stage one expected to be reported to the Working Group in December and stage 2 in March 2016.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Council prepares an unsound Plan.	1 – The Council is preparing a Plan which is positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy	2 – The adoption of the Plan is delayed whilst additional work is undertaken.	That the Council ensures that the Plan meets the requirements of the NPPF and is justified by evidence.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1

EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW

INVITATION TO TENDER EXTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Invitation to Tender is issued by Uttlesford District Council in respect of a further competition conducted under Employment Land Review of the Pro5 National Consultancy Services Framework Agreement (reference 664).

Uttlesford District Council is seeking to appoint a consultant to carry out an employment land review update to consider the need for land and premises for employment purposes in the District up to 2033. For the purposes of the update, employment purposes are those contained in Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

BACKGROUND

The Council's most recent draft Local Plan (Pre-Submission Consultation April 2014) was withdrawn from the examination process following receipt of the Local Plan Inspector's conclusions at the end of 2014. A link to the relevant page of the Council's website is below:

<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/developinguttlesford>

The Council has now restarted the Local Plan preparation process with a "Call for Sites", which includes identifying sites of 0.25ha (or 500 m² floorspace) or above that may be suitable for employment development and/or mixed use development, and which the landowners are indicating could be brought forward for development prior to 2033.

The Council's last employment land review was published in 2011. That review was considered to be a good example of its kind by the Local Plan Inspector. He said that it provided:

"a clear market-based picture of the types and locations of sites which should (a) be newly allocated, (b) continue to be allocated/safeguarded, or (c) be reallocated for different uses" (Paragraph 3.17).

Links to the 2011 review report and appendices are below:

<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1708&p=0>

<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1709&p=0>

[The withdrawn plan's employment target was an additional 9,200 jobs for the period 2011-31, although the Local Plan Inspector noted that expansion of Stansted Airport to 35 million passengers per annum could, of itself, provide jobs growth of that order.](#)

The Council also publishes an annual employment land monitoring report which looks at the current position of allocated employment land and land with planning permission for employment uses. The last report was in October 2014:

<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2250&p=0>

The Council is currently preparing a new Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to supersede the 2013 SHLAA. A list of sites and maps are available. A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment is also being prepared, superseding the 2008 SHMA and its 2012 update. Further work has been commissioned by the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board (comprising members of East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils) to provide economic evidence that will be used to help calculate the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the SHMA. The work will look at the extent to which the SHMA area coincides with the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA).

It is also likely that the Council will commission sectoral employment projections for the District for the analysis period 2011-2033 using consultants who have carried out similar work for Epping Forest District Council.

PERIOD OF CONTRACT

It is estimated that the Contract shall commence w/c 7th December and is expected to be completed by no later than the end of April 2016.

2. SPECIFICATION OF SERVICE

1. Consultancy Advice Required

The appointed consultant will work and assist the Council with the following main tasks:

- 1.1 The update will be part of the evidence base that will inform the Council's new Local Plan, which it is anticipated will be adopted in 2017. The update will help the Council to draw up employment land policies and allocations in its new Plan.
- 1.2 The update should be carried out in accordance with guidance set out in Planning Practice Guidance – "Housing and economic land availability assessment", including the 5-stage methodology. The update will use the 2011 review as a starting point supplemented at least by the 2014 monitoring report. The update should take into account both the SHMA and FEMA areas.
- 1.3 The consultant will provide a final report containing conclusions and recommendations by the end of April 2016 and will make a presentation to the Council's Planning Policy Working Group. The conclusions should include an assessment of whether the employment strategy included in the Pre-Submission Consultation April 2014 remains appropriate either in total or in part.

2. Project Objectives and Outcomes

The requirements above relate to ongoing work, and will involve the preparation of technical and non-technical papers as required in collaboration with Uttlesford District Council.

Appendix 2

TRANSPORT CONSULTANT

INVITATION TO TENDER EXTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Invitation to Tender is issued by Uttlesford District Council in respect of a further competition conducted under the Highways, Transport & Logistic Lot of the Pro5 National Consultancy Services Framework Agreement (reference 664).

Uttlesford District Council is seeking to appoint a transport consultant to assist it in carrying out a transport assessment of its new Local Plan. The transport assessment process is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the on-line Planning Practice Guidance “Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking”. A link to both is attached below:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

Background

Uttlesford is a large rural district of about 64,750 hectares and a population of 79,443 (2011 Census). It is located in North West Essex, with the market towns of Saffron Walden (population 15,500) and Great Dunmow (population 8,830) situated in the northern and southern parts of the District respectively. Stansted Airport lies within the District, just northeast of the Hertfordshire town of Bishop’s Stortford. The airport has a current throughput of about 21.5 million passengers per annum (mppa), and has planning permission to expand to 35mppa.

The M11 runs south to north through the western part of the District from south of Junction 8 at Bishop’s Stortford to Junction 9 / 9A at Great Chesterford / Stump Cross. The A120 runs west to east across the southern part of the District from Bishop’s Stortford to Braintree on a new alignment opened earlier this century. Because of the rural nature of the District, car ownership levels are high, and public transport is limited. The West Anglia Main Line from London Liverpool Street to Cambridge runs south to north through the District with a dedicated branch line serving Stansted Airport. Some local bus services in the southern part of the District benefit from added demand from Stansted Airport, meaning that they run at a higher frequency and earlier and later than otherwise might be the case.

The current plan for the District is the Uttlesford Local Plan, which was adopted in January 2005. The Council’s most recent draft Local Plan was withdrawn from the examination process following receipt of the Inspector’s examination conclusions at the end of 2014. Two of the Inspector’s concerns were firstly the impact of the linked settlement at Elsenham upon the local highway network and, secondly, the lack of adequate mitigation of congestion at M11 Junction 8 taking into account demand that would be placed on it by future development within Uttlesford, Harlow, East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest districts.

The Council has now started to prepare a new Local Plan. It is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted in 2017 and will run to 2033. One of the Council's first tasks has been to identify initial "areas of search" for possible locations for new settlements and/or town/village extensions.

A report on these initial "areas of search" was presented to the Council's Planning Policy Working Group at its meeting on 27th July 2015. A link to the meeting documents is attached below:

<https://uttlesford.cmis.uk.com/uttlesford/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/174/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/679/Meeting/6318/Committee/1987/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

[The Council has undertaken an initial "Call for Sites" exercise, looking for sites which could be brought forward by 2033 and which could:](#)

- [i\) accommodate 5 dwellings or more,](#)
- [ii\) provide 0.25ha \(or 500m² floorspace\) of commercial development, or](#)
- [iii\) accommodate 1 or more Gypsy and Travellers' pitches.](#)

[The Council has required that a transport assessment is provided for all candidate sites over 500 dwellings and / or 2500m² of commercial development, and that transport information proportionate to the size of the development be provided for smaller sites.](#)

[The following table sets out the suite of existing models that Essex Highways use for transport assessment within the District:](#)

<u>Model name</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>M11 J7A</u>	<u>M11 J7-J8 + SW portion of Uttlesford</u>	<u>"VISUM", helping with the assessment of the proposed M11 J7A. Uses mobile phone data to provide trip information together with traffic data collected on roads and junctions across the area to reflect actual flows.</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Being commissioned</u>
<u>Uttlesford Local Plan model (used for the Highway Impact Assessment)</u>	<u>Uttlesford</u>	<u>Spreadsheet model. Traffic distribution based on census information, including journey to work, but also includes data collected on the ground to reflect actual flows and movements.</u>	<u>3 yrs</u>	<u>Live and available</u>
<u>M11 J8</u>	<u>Junction and immediate approaches</u>	<u>"Linsig" model – computer based for modelling traffic signal operation, based on traffic data and journey to work data.</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Being updated with data from M11 J7A model.</u>
<u>A120 / B1383 (Bishop's Stortford bypass)</u>	<u>Junction only</u>	<u>"Arcady" computer based model for modelling roundabouts from actual traffic data and journey to work data and information provided by developers.</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Available for use</u>

2. SPECIFICATION OF SERVICE

1. Consultancy Advice Required

The appointed consultant will work wherever possible with Essex County Council's partnership consultant, Essex Highways, and will assist with the following main tasks:

1. Providing a high-level transport assessment of the initial "areas of search" to provide evidence to assist with site selection, with subsequent more detailed assessments as the areas are narrowed down and providing a final transport assessment of the selected sites;
2. Putting together a local plan transport assessment work programme. The programme will identify key milestones to ensure that the deadline set by the Government for the preparation of local plans in HM Treasury's Productivity Plan is met;
3. Interpreting modelling requirements, advising on the scope of transport modelling required and specifying modelling runs. It is not expected that the appointed consultant would carry out any modelling work;
4. To come up with measures that will mitigate any identified severe impact or impacts of development on the transport network. All forms of transport should be considered as possible mitigation;
5. Where necessary, assisting planning officers at "Duty to Co-Operate" meetings with adjoining local authorities, other meetings with developers and Essex County Council, and meetings of the Council's Planning Policy Working Group;
6. Assistance with the preparation and giving of evidence at the Examination in Public;
7. Providing a "critical friend" review of the Highway Impact Assessment dated October 2013 and March 2014 prepared by Essex Highways, and
8. Commenting on transport issues raised at the previous Examination in Public and relevant local appeals for major residential development to inform the production of the transport assessment and mitigation measures proposed.

Appendix 3

Appendix 4



LOCAL PLAN GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT 2015-16 INVITATION TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

1. Background

1.1 Uttlesford District Council is currently in the early stages of work on a new Local Plan for the District. All work on the emerging Local Plan is subject to scrutiny at public meetings of the Council's Planning Policy Working Group (PPWG), an advisory panel comprising 10 District Councillors. For details and membership of the PPWG, see www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ppwg.

1.2 To inform decision-making on the Local Plan, the Council is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to prepare a Green Belt Assessment for the whole of the area lying within the District as part of the evidence base which will inform the development of a new Local Plan for the area.

1.3 The Uttlesford Green Belt covers 3,810 hectares, representing approximately 8% of the total area of the District. A map of the Green Belt is attached at **Appendix A**.

Areas of Search

1.4 Uttlesford District Council is at the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan for the District. To ensure that it has *'made every effort objectively to assess and then meet development needs'* (National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 17) the Council has agreed to assess a number of **'Areas of Search'** across the District, as shown in **Appendix C** (an inset map showing in more detail the edge of Bishop's Stortford, which lies within the Uttlesford Green Belt, is shown in **Appendix D**.)

1.5 The blue ovals in Appendix A represent areas to be assessed in terms of potential for a new settlement. The mauve shapes represent areas to be assessed in terms of potential for urban extensions to towns. The orange shapes represent areas of search to be assessed in terms of potential extensions to Key Villages with a reasonable range of services and facilities (defined as *"Major focus for development in the rural area – suitable for a scale of development that would reinforce role as provider of services to a wide rural*

area.”). The green dots represent Type A Villages with a some limited services or facilities, for example a school (defined as “*Villages with primary school with some local services, e.g. village hall/pub/shop – suitable for a scale of development that reinforce role as a local centre.*”)

1.6 The Areas of Search provide an assessment framework to ensure that equal consideration is given to all the reasonable options and to ensure that the District Council is able to prepare a fully justified Local Plan.

1.7 The following Areas of Search overlap the Green Belt in whole or in part:

- **Area of Search 4:** M11 Junction 8 – North-West (new settlement option)
- **Area of Search 5:** M11 Junction 8 – South-East (new settlement option)
- **Area of Search 11a:** between the Stansted Road industrial estate in Bishop’s Stortford and the A120 town bypass
- **Area of Search 11b:** to the south of Beldams Lane in Bishop’s Stortford, and north of the Sewage Treatment works
- **Area of Search 13:** Hatfield Heath (Key Village)
- **Area of Search 13:** Stansted Mountfitchet (Key Village)
- **Area of Search 14:** Birchanger (Type A Village)
- **Area of Search 14:** Little Hallingbury (Type A Village)
- **Area of Search 14:** Leaden Roding (Type A Village)
(Note: The Study should assess the whole Green Belt within Uttlesford and not just the Areas of Search)

1.8 A Landscape Character Assessment was completed for the District in 2006 and this identified a number of distinct character areas, as shown in **Appendix B**. The consultants may wish to use these areas as a starting point for the identification of parcels for assessment (see Section 4 below).

2. Cross-Boundary Green Belt issues

2.1 Uttlesford District is located within the East Hertfordshire/West Essex grouping of authorities including East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, and Harlow Districts. Each District is partially covered by Green Belt and each District Council is either preparing or has prepared a separate Green Belt Assessment/Review.

2.2 As part of the Study the consultants should review the methodology and approach of the studies prepared for East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, and Harlow Districts. The consultants should also consult each of these Local Planning Authorities on the proposed methodology for Uttlesford, and also on the draft conclusions. The methodology proposed for Uttlesford should be compatible with that of these other Districts, and should enable easy read-across and consistency in interpretation.

2.3 East Hertfordshire’s Green Belt Review and background reports (September 2015) are available [here](#) (District Planning Executive Panel, 10 September 2015).

2.4 Epping Forest District Council’s emerging Green Belt work is [here](#) (Cabinet, 3 September 2015).

2.5 Harlow Council's emerging Green Belt work is not yet published.

3. Aims of the Study

3.1 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that: *“Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.”*

3.2 *Green Belt Review* is understood as the whole process leading to changes in the boundaries. *Green Belt Assessment* is understood as an evidential study of the extent to which different parts of the Green Belt meet the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 80).

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.3 The main aim of the study will be to prepare an assessment of the District's Green Belt against these five purposes, in sufficient detail to enable the Council to make informed decisions, should it decide to amend the Green Belt through its new Local Plan. The study should clarify what is meant by each of the five purposes, and how they will be applied in practice.

3.4 National Policy is clear that the Local Plan strategy is the main consideration in terms of deciding whether or not the exceptional circumstances exist to justify alterations to Green Belt:

Paragraph 84: 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.

Paragraph 85 (extract) When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should...ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;

3.5 A second aim of the study will be to clarify the types of development which could fall within the scope of 'exceptional circumstances', to assist the Council's

decision-making process in this respect. The guidance should include case-studies and examples of how this has been assessed elsewhere at Examination in Public of Local Plans, and matters which could fall within the definition of 'sustainable development' (NPPF Paragraphs 84 and 85) in this context.

3.6 The study should also clarify and provide further guidance on the distinction in national policy between 'very special circumstances' (which applies to planning applications in the context of existing Green Belt) and 'exceptional circumstances' (which applies to forward planning for Local Plans).

4 Two-Stage Reporting Requirement

4.1 The assessment should be undertaken in two stages. The first stage will be to establish the full methodology and detailed assessment framework. The support of Members will then be sought before proceeding to Stage 2, which will be to carry out the assessment in accordance with the agreed methodology, and to populate the assessment tables presented at Stage 1. Stage 2 should be integrated into Stage 1 to form a single report as the final output. The consultants should be available to present both the stage 1 and stage 2 work to the Planning Policy Working Group evening meetings.

4.2 **Stage 1: Methodology and Assessment Framework** should set out:

- A general introduction to the national policy context and legal interpretations, including the difference between 'very special circumstances' and 'exceptional circumstances';
- The assessment criteria used for each of the purposes of Green Belt set out in national policy;
- Explanation of how villages will be considered in Green Belt terms (national policy only refers to 'neighbouring towns' and the 'setting and special character of historic towns');
- Methodology for delineation of parcels;
- Parcels for assessment, mapped and numbered ;
- Cross-boundary matters and how any consultation responses have been addressed;
- Empty template matrix of the assessment of parcels against Green Belt Purposes;
- Strategic assessment of the Green Belt land in the context of its function as part of the London Green Belt; and
- Any other relevant matters.

4.3 In preparing the assessment parcels the consultants should take particular care to ensure that each is sufficiently delineated to avoid risk of subsuming sub-areas which might have distinct Green Belt characteristics and result in differing conclusions.

4.4 The consultants will be required to undertake site visits and appraisal of each of the identified parcels and demonstrate in the report how this appraisal has informed the conclusions in respect of each parcel.

4.5 Stage 2: Conclusions should set out:

- everything in the Stage 1 document;
- completed matrices showing the findings for each parcel in Green Belt terms as an Area of Search, and including a clear justification;
- consideration of the suitability in Green Belt terms of any SHLAA sites which lie within the Green Belt;
- completed and colour-coded summary maps of the conclusions for each area of search, for each of the purposes of Green Belt;
- Further guidance on 'exceptional circumstances' and implications for the Local Plan strategy and
- Commentary on the East Herts, Epping Forest and Harlow Council Green Belt reviews and their relationship with this study.

4.6 The outputs and deliverables for the commission will be as follows:

- Stage 1 Methodology Report and Detailed Assessment Framework;
- Stage 2 Conclusions Report incorporating Stage 1 report;
- Site visits for each parcel and completed appraisal forms;
- Consultation with other Local Planning Authorities in the Housing Market Area (East Herts, Harlow, and Epping Forest) on the draft methodology, and also on the draft conclusions;
- Attendance at two evening meetings of the Planning Policy Working Group; and
- Attendance at Examination in Public (if necessary).

5. Submission of Proposals

5.1 All proposals should include:

- A schedule of rates and costs;
- A project timetable to deliver the review on time;
- Names of the consultant or consultants who would be involved, their experience of this type of work and their qualifications to carry it out;
- Examples of the same or similar type of work undertaken;
- Agreement that intellectual property rights for data from the research will rest with the Council;
- A declaration of any conflicts of interest. This should include a separate declaration of any conflicts of interest in Chelmsford City, Braintree District, South Cambridgeshire District, East Hertfordshire District, Epping Forest District and Harlow District Council areas; and
- Names and addresses of two referees.

5.2 The Council will assess all bids in accordance with the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
Cost	50%
Understanding the requirements of the project	20%
Similar work undertaken	20%
Methodology	10%
	100%

5.3 Each consultant will be awarded a score from 0-5 against each criterion by each assessor where 0 = no evidence and 5 = fully evidenced, to which the weighting will then be applied. The consultant scoring the highest aggregate score will be appointed.

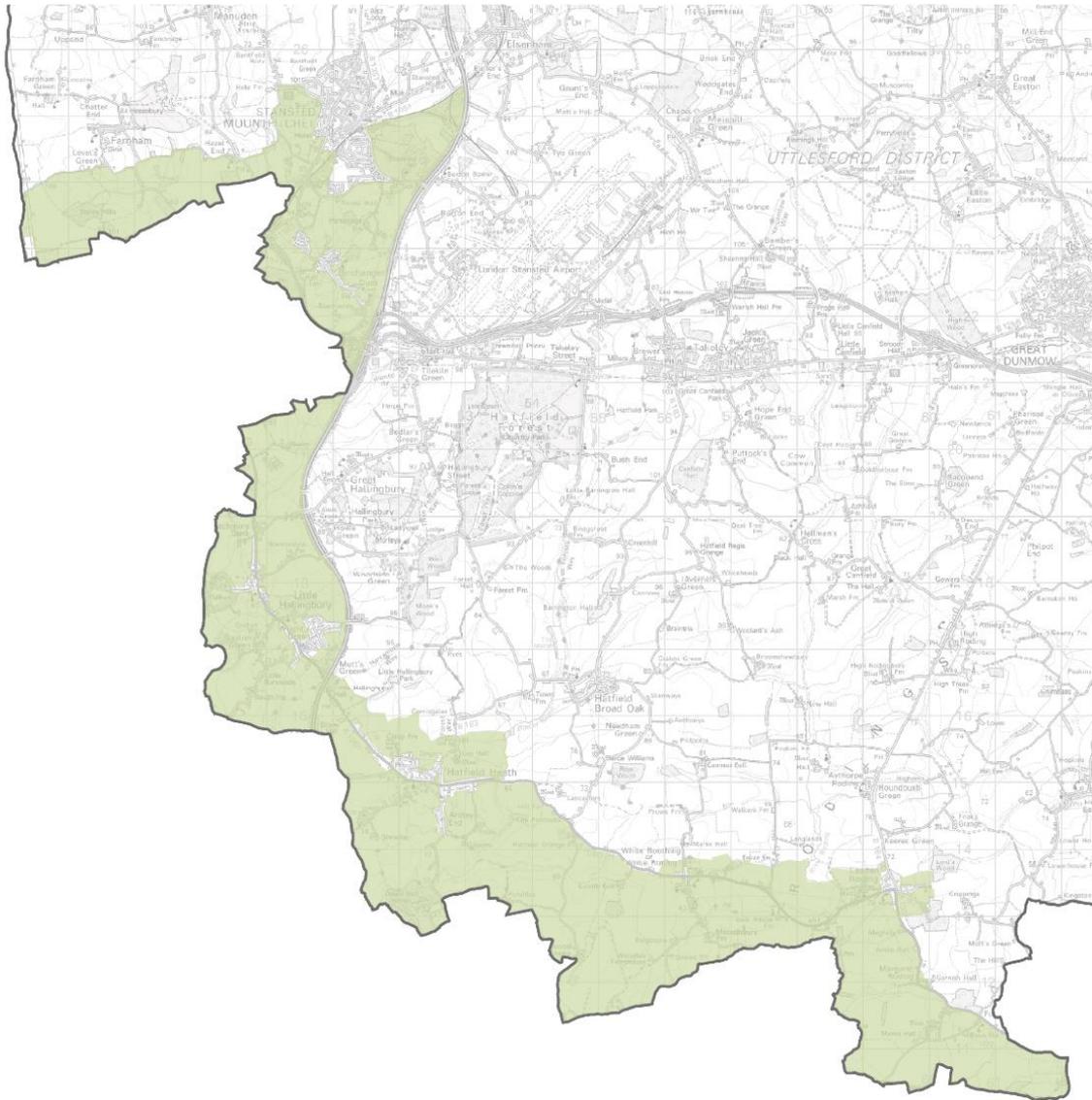
5.4 The timeline for the contract process will be as follows:

Invitation to bid issued	12 October 2015
Deadline for receiving questions	16 October 2015
Deadline for submission of bids	26 October 2015
Initial evaluation completed	28 October 2015
Interviews and presentations	w/b 2 November 2015
Intention to award notification	6 November 2015
Formal award of the contract	w/b 9 November 2015
Commencement of the contract	w/b 9 November 2015
Receipt of final report	Ideally by February 2016

Further information

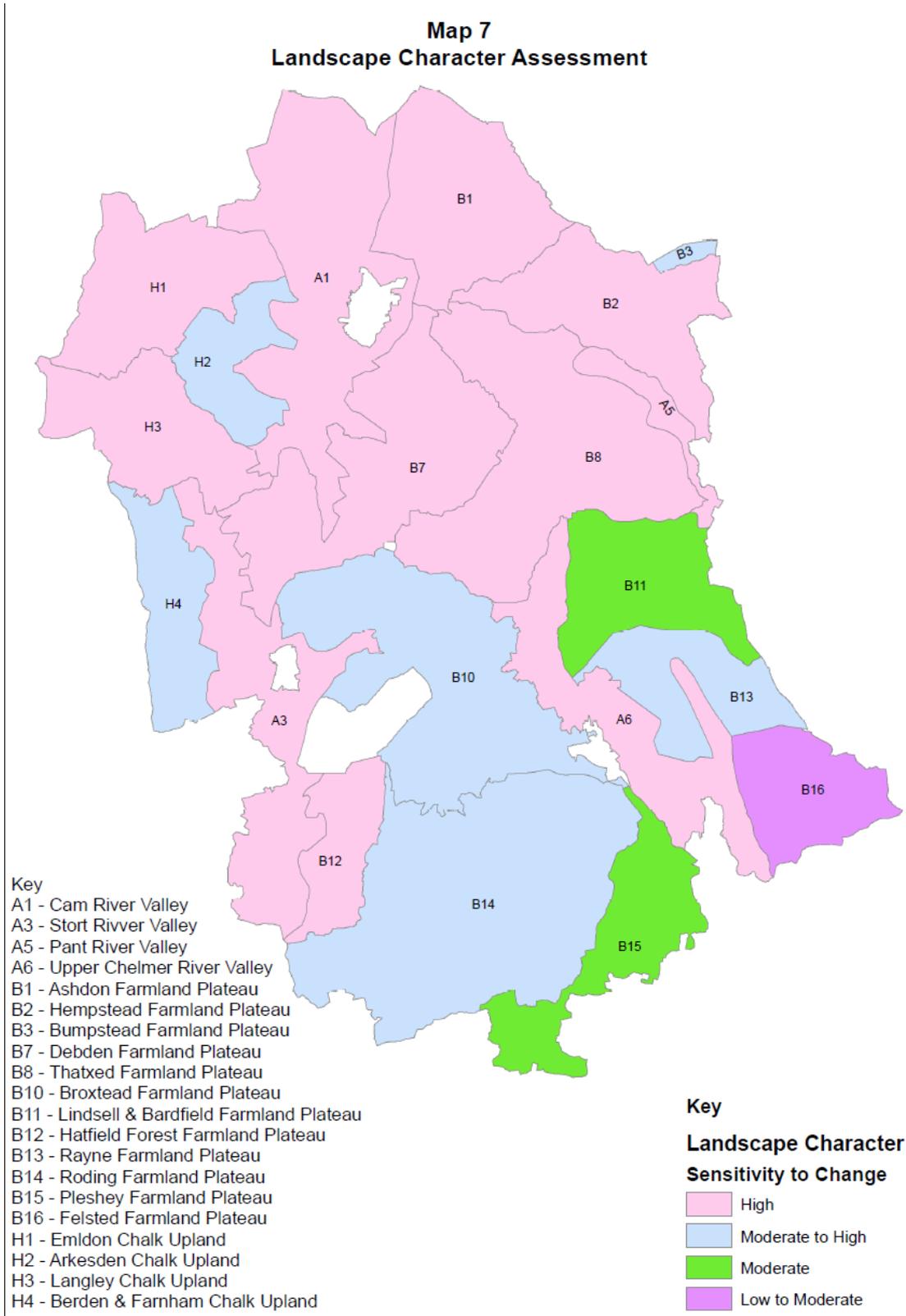
5.5 Please contact either Andrew Taylor (ataylor@uttlesford.gov.uk, 01799 510601 for further information.

Appendix A: Uttlesford Green Belt

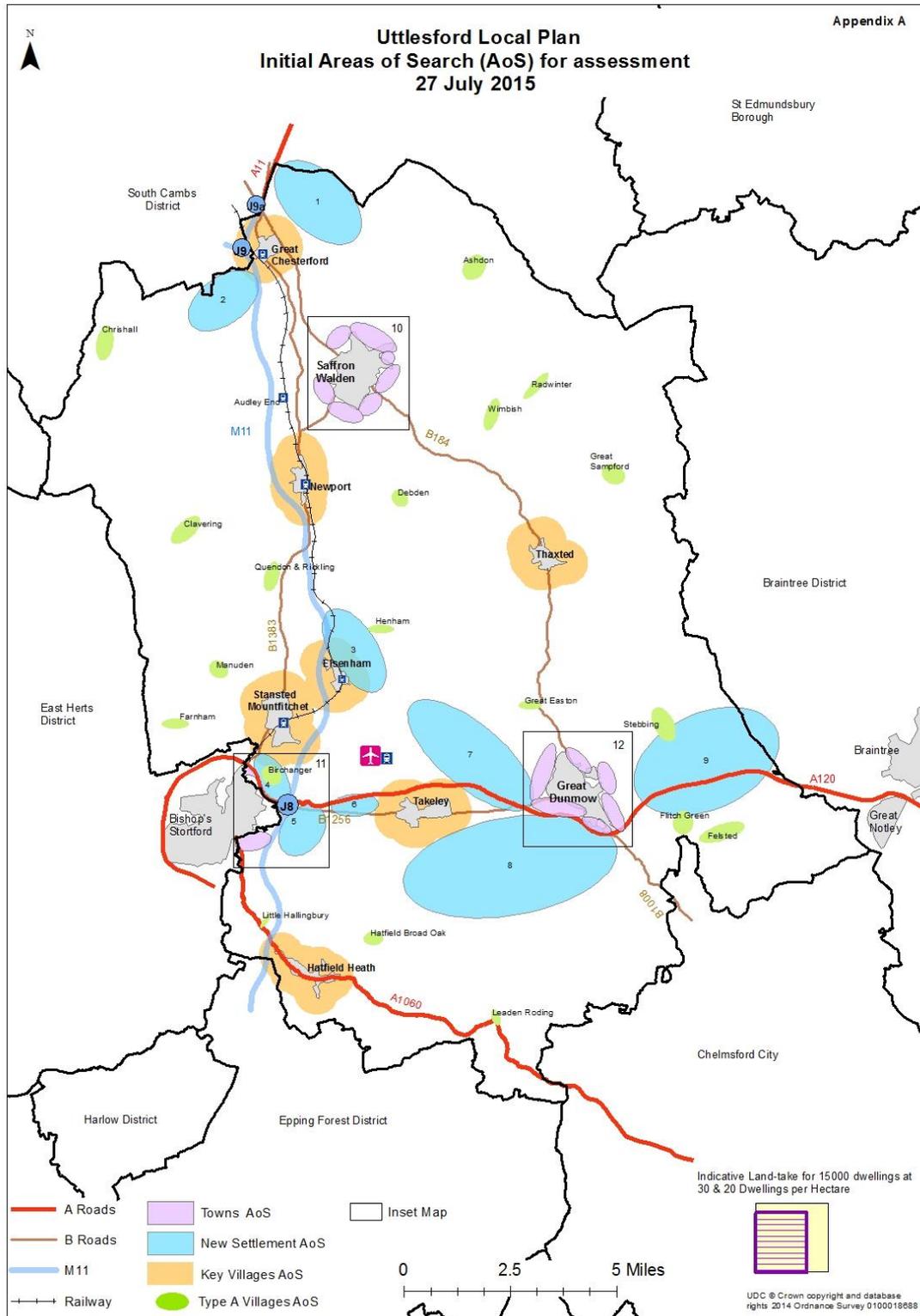


Appendix B: Landscape Character Areas

**Map 7
Landscape Character Assessment**



Appendix C: Areas of Search – District Wide



Appendix D: Areas of Search – Edge of Bishop’s Stortford (within Uttlesford District)

