

UDC – PPWG 29 June 2017

My name is Mike Young. I live in Wimbish and speak in a personal capacity. I am also a chartered accountant.

Work on the Local plan began in 2006, eleven years ago. Constant delays have meant the numbers of houses required increased each year. Five years ago we would have been talking about 300 homes a year rather than the current figure of over 600.

But building in the district continued at a fast pace. Over the last 15 years Uttlesford has built proportionately more houses than almost any other district outside of London, rivalled only by Corby and Milton Keynes.

Now the district is proposing to continue that trend. Over the next 15 years it is proposed that Uttlesford remain one of the fastest expanding districts in the country.

Over the period as a whole, we leave everyone behind.

Of course it can be argued that an attractive area will attract development. But the same can be said about our neighbouring authorities and yet their projected growth rates are much lower than Uttlesford's. Why should Uttlesford's be so much higher? We need a clear explanation as to why our district's expansion is to be 50% higher than our neighbour's.

But some of us feel the figures are too high. Over the last 18 months a colleague, Ken MacDonald, and I have continually raised questions about the figures. We have never received satisfactory answers. After 18 months we are still asking the same questions.

I will give one example. After the figures are calculated an addition is made for what are termed market signals. This has resulted in an uplift of 20%. But I can find no valid justification for this. A figure of 10% would seem appropriate and the effect would be to remove the need for one of the three garden settlements.

This is just one of many queries we have raised without a satisfactory response. Our points are not questioned, not challenged, and not refuted. They are simply ignored. Freedom of Information requests are refused (although neighbouring districts have been more helpful) or just ignored – I have two overdue at the moment.

Recently, following advice from consultants the housing figure was increased again but details were not given and as always no-one can explain the calculation. Actually the latest independent consultant and the representative from the Planning Advisory Service both stated that they could not follow the calculation or the allocation to Uttlesford.

I would ask that before the Plan process continues any further that the council fully satisfies itself that the massive growth projections being put forward are fully justified.

Michael Young

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Wimbish