



Uttlesford Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

Summary Paper of Emerging Findings

Troy Planning + Design
For Uttlesford District Council

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1. Status and approach to the IDP

1.1 Status of the IDP

1.1.1 The IDP is a supporting document for the emerging Local Plan. The IDP covers the plan period up until 2033 although its content will be monitored and periodically reviewed.

1.1.2 The IDP takes a purposely strategic view of the infrastructure needs and requirements arising from the likely scale and distribution of future growth in the district. This is because there are: (a) different growth options associated with the existing towns and settlements, reflecting alternatives at Saffron Walden for example; and (b) a number of proposed new garden communities, not all of which will be selected as part of the preferred growth strategy in the Local Plan.

1.1.3 The IDP is thus very much a 'living document'. As more detail emerges as to the preferred scale and direction of growth, and the nature of the new garden communities, then it will be possible to revisit and update the IDP. Until that time the key infrastructure items are identified, as far as has been possible.

1.2 National policy context

1.2.1 The context for the IDP is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 156 states:

"Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:

- *the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- *the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities."*

1.2.2 Paragraph 162 goes on to state that:

"Local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:

- *assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands; and*
- *take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas."*

1.2.3 It is important to note that the IDP addresses 'strategic' infrastructure priorities as distinct from very localised infrastructure needs arising from individual planning applications. As such, the approach of the IDP is to assess the needs arising from larger identified sites which individually, or in combination, will contribute towards addressing the strategic objectives of the emerging Local Plan. It is acknowledged that there will also be growth arising from small, non-strategic sites which could be

significant in certain locations. Such growth could therefore represent a burden on existing infrastructure networks. However, even in such locations, it is unlikely that such growth will result in the need for additional strategic infrastructure, e.g. schools, medical facilities, utilities infrastructure. As such, it has not been addressed directly in the IDP although infrastructure providers have, in engaging with the IDP process, identified general burdens on existing infrastructure from growth which have been reflected in the study.

1.3 **Engagement with infrastructure providers**

1.3.1 Discussions, meeting and workshops have taken place with a variety of infrastructure providers both within the District Council and external organisations to develop an understanding of what infrastructure is needed. This process has enabled these infrastructure providers to think more strategically in terms of future provision and the challenges brought about by significant growth in the long term. In so far as the information has been made available, this IDP brings all these agencies' plans together in one document. This should encourage inter-relationships between parties and provides an opportunity to share information and align / coordinate infrastructure investment plans and programmes as well as potentially co-locate infrastructure. Organisations contacted as part of this IDP include:

- Abellio (Train Operating Company)
- Anglian Water
- Arriva Buses
- BT Openreach
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Essex and Kent Police
- Essex County Council (ECC) (covering all strategic functions, e.g.: schools, transport, waste etc)
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- Essex Superfast Broadband
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Fibre Wifi
- Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Economic Partnership (GCGP)
- Hertfordshire and West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) / National Health Service (NHS)
- Highways England
- MAG Airports: Stansted Airport
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Sport England
- Sustrans
- Thames Water
- UK Power Networks

1.4 Approach

1.4.1 This document has been written during a time of significant change, with the Government reforming many of the public services that are responsible for providing and planning infrastructure. This is likely to have an impact on provision, delivery and funding, and how the relevant organisations are able to respond in relation to future growth.

1.4.2 In addition, it is often difficult to be certain about infrastructure requirements so far into the future, as the detail of many development schemes is not currently known. Therefore, this IDP is intended to be a document which is regularly updated given the uncertainty and fluid nature of planning for infrastructure.

1.4.3 There are also other important principles regarding the approach and issues that the IDP has to recognise.

- The IDP does not seek to make up for historic deficits in infrastructure. However, there are instances where supporting growth might most effectively be achieved through the upgrading of existing facilities. This could include, for example, extending existing schools or enhancing current public transport services.
- Not all housing and employment growth planned for individual sites will attract specific additional infrastructure requirements that can be addressed through the development of that site alone. In most cases, the infrastructure needs that have been identified reflect the cumulative impact of growth in a wider area, e.g. based upon growth in and around existing settlements or proposed new garden communities.
- The assessment of infrastructure needs has been based upon the trajectory for development in the existing settlements and at the proposed new garden communities.
- The IDP, for most infrastructure items, presents the 'worst case scenario' in terms of needs. In the case of social, community, leisure and green infrastructure needs, this is because the methodology for establishing the scale of need is based on calculations per head of the population. In reality, much of the infrastructure that is provided in most locations will be provided either in the form of improvements to existing facilities or as co-located facilities. In particular, co-location is likely to become a growing trend which recognises the limited amount of funding available and, in more urban locations, a lack of land to provide all the requirements individually.
- Co-location is likely to take many forms. Schools are increasingly looking to raise revenue by hiring out sports pitches and other facilities outside of school hours. Equally, the shift in primary healthcare provision to larger health hubs means larger buildings that could share facilities with other health providers – opticians, dentists, physiotherapists, etc – but also equally with a range of other uses, both commercial and community, e.g. retail, community centres, libraries, etc. Indeed, the limited resources available for provision of, for example, library and community services has spawned many excellent examples of alternative types of provision with different management structures to those traditionally used.

1.4.4 Whilst it is important to recognise such changing ways of providing services, it is extremely difficult for an IDP to be definitive about what these could be. There are too many options open as to how this is provided and this could therefore have a significant impact on needs and costs. However, such provision, particularly on larger strategic sites such as the proposed 'garden settlements' where new health hubs and schools are to be provided, should be recognised as the way such infrastructure needs will be provided over the plan period.

1.5 Types of infrastructure

1.5.1 The term 'infrastructure' covers a wide range of services and facilities provided by public and private organisations. The definition of infrastructure is outlined in section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The Uttlesford IDP covers a mix of physical, social and green infrastructure, including:

Physical infrastructure:

- Transport
- Utilities
- Water
- Waste

Social infrastructure:

- Schools and other educational facilities
- Health and social wellbeing
- Emergency services
- Social and community (including libraries, allotments and community halls)

Green infrastructure:

- 'Designed landscapes' (including Country Parks)
- Natural / semi-natural green space

1.6 Categorising infrastructure

1.6.1 The infrastructure detailed within the IDP has been categorised as either:

- **Critical:** Delivery of the identified infrastructure is critical and without which development cannot commence (e.g.: some transport and utility infrastructure).
- **Necessary:** The identified infrastructure is necessary to support new development, but the precise timing and phasing is less critical and development may be able to commence ahead of its provision (e.g.: schools and health care).
- **Important:** Delivery of the identified infrastructure is important in order to help build sustainable communities, but timing and phasing is not critical over the plan period (e.g.: libraries, green infrastructure and youth provision).

2. Physical infrastructure

2.1.1 There are some key challenges and risks to growth associated with the need for physical infrastructure in the district. These are summarised below:

M11 Junction 8:

2.1.2 Junction 8 of the M11 is already under pressure. It has been identified as a problem junction by Highways England with a severe level of congestion. Whilst interim solutions have been funded a solution will be required for it to be able to accommodate traffic associated with additional growth over the plan period (and beyond). A scheme is likely to appear in the next Road Investments Strategy.

2.1.3 An improved Junction 8 is considered a critical piece of infrastructure and until it is in place, represents a risk to growth.

Access to areas of growth from the strategic highway network:

2.1.4 Access to areas of new growth and development from the strategic road network are considered critical pieces of infrastructure. In particular:

- Upper levels of growth would place pressure on the road network in Saffron Walden, exceeding capacity at a number of junctions during the plan period.
- Improvements to the road network in Great Dunmow, primarily in and around the town centre, may be needed in the plan period.
- Growth at Great Chesterford will likely exacerbate pressure on the A505 (in South Cambs). Improvements to the A505 are however required with or without Great Chesterford coming forward as a new garden community and so is not seen as a constraint to development.
- Birchanger, which is located in close proximity to M11 Junction 8, would generate adverse impacts on the M11 and A120.
- The current permitted scale of growth at Stansted Airport can be accommodated within the interim solutions to M11 Junction 8. However, additional junction improvements would be required for any further growth (over and above 35MPPA).
- Although access from the A120 into the proposed garden settlement at Easton Park is considered achievable, the current scheme being promoted only shows a single point of access to serve a new settlement of 10,000 new homes. As a minimum, two access points will be required, which will help ensure network resilience. Unless an additional access point onto the strategic highway network can be identified and delivered, access to Easton Park is a risk to scheme delivery.
- Access to the proposed garden settlement at Elsenham is considered difficult to achieve given the complexities associated with access to the M11 (a new junction might be needed but would be difficult to deliver) and the

A120 (which would be convoluted given the need to route around Stansted Airport). It thus presents a major risk to development in this location.

- Further growth at Takeley, as proposed through the new garden community, would be difficult to achieve given additional pressures that would be placed on M11 Junction 8. This is a risk to development at this location.
- Access to the strategic road network from the proposed Chelmer Mead new garden settlement is considered difficult to achieve, with no direct links to the A120 possible. This is a risk to development in this location.
- Access to the A120 from the proposed West of Braintree new garden community is considered feasible, though does require the two separate proposals (Boxted Wood and Andrewsfield) to be considered together and impacts on the A120 at Great Dunmow to be further assessed.

Sustainable access:

- 2.1.5 Alongside the access arrangements outlined above, all major growth locations would be required to deliver a package of sustainable travel measures, including bus, walking and cycling routes. These are all considered necessary items of infrastructure. It is important that any passenger transport services provided or amended are deliverable and viable in the long-term.

Rail:

- 2.1.6 Improvement to rail services are considered necessary. Although there are a series of projects being explored at the moment which could increase capacity and frequency, further consideration of the preferred scale and distribution of growth in the district may need to be factored into further improvements, including station access improvements. This however is not considered a risk to growth.

Water infrastructure:

- 2.1.7 Provision of water infrastructure is critical and could be a risk to the spatial distribution of growth in the local plan period. Although it is considered that growth in the existing towns and settlements can be accommodated, upgrades will be required to the foul sewerage network. Growth at the proposed new garden communities will place additional burdens on foul water capacity over and above this.
- 2.1.8 Major upgrades and new water supply infrastructure will be required for the new garden communities. The detail of what is required will need feeding into the next round of the asset management plans for Anglian and Thames Water, which run from 2020 – 2025.
- 2.1.9 The delivery of technical and feasible solutions also needs considering alongside environmental concerns. The EA has advised that the level of discharges into water courses is currently at its limit and that additional permits for increased discharges may not be granted. Therefore, growth without appropriate water infrastructure, particularly at the garden settlements, is a major risk to delivery.

Electricity network:

- 2.1.10 It is considered that in the short term sufficient capacity exists within the electricity network to accommodate growth. However, to support the upper end of development in the proposed garden settlements, and depending upon which garden settlements come forward in the Local Plan, new network and or primary substations would be required at Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Easton Park and West of Braintree. Localised reinforcements would also be required at Takeley and Birchanger. This infrastructure is considered necessary but is not thought to be a risk to development.

Gas, waste and broadband services:

- 2.1.11 Provision of gas, waste and broadband services are all considered necessary but do not pose risks to the scale and distribution of growth in the local plan period.

3. Social infrastructure

3.1.1 Social infrastructure in this IDP includes education (comprising early years and childcare, primary and secondary schools), healthcare, emergency services, libraries, community centres, allotments and open space / play and leisure provision. Emerging findings are summarised below:

Education:

3.1.2 Education is considered to be necessary infrastructure. Where new development is to take place in existing towns and settlements existing facilities may need expanding. Equally, and where new development is of a certain size, then new facilities may be required: the scale of growth in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow will likely require new primary school provision. Where new primary schools are provided, it may also be possible to incorporate new early years spaces with these.

3.1.3 There are though challenges in Thaxted and Takeley where scope to expand existing schools is limited. Alternative arrangements in these locations would need to be considered. These settlements also pose challenges for secondary school needs generated from development: pupils would need to travel away from the towns for schooling. Elsewhere, extensions of existing secondary schools will be required. This could be challenging in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow though where existing school sites are constrained.

3.1.4 Education provision within the proposed garden communities could help provide for needs. School place provision in these has been determined in line with guidance established by Essex County Council: the package of infrastructure outlined by site promoters for the garden communities is broadly in accordance with this guidance. Provision in each of the garden communities would be linked to particular trigger points and require financial contributions and provision of land.

Health care:

3.1.5 Health care provision is currently undergoing change and the CCG for the area (Herts and West Essex) is preparing a Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP), part of which includes a new digital programme and facilities combined with other services.

3.1.6 It is thought that a new hub facility would most likely be needed in Great Dunmow and that the proposed garden communities should include health centres. The exact size and type of provision will though be determined following more detailed understanding of the scale and type of growth to come forward in different locations across the district.

3.1.7 Healthcare provision is categorised as necessary infrastructure.

Other social infrastructure items:

- 3.1.8 Beyond education and health there are no major risks to growth associated with the provision of social infrastructure. Contributions will be required to new community centres and youth facilities, which could comprise co-located buildings with libraries and health provision. These are categorised as important infrastructure items.
- 3.1.9 Allotments, open space, play and leisure facilities should be masterplanned into new development areas in line with general standards for provision. However, and subject to future models, some of this could be provided alongside or within new school sites.

4. Green infrastructure

- 4.1.1 Existing research demonstrates that a high proportion of households in the district have limited access to natural greenspace. Furthermore, there is an identified need for a new Country Park in the district, which would both increase provision and access, but also relieve pressure on the Hartfield Forest.
- 4.1.2 The proposed new garden communities, by their very nature, include good levels of greenspace provision and some of these also allow for provision of a new Country Park.
- 4.1.3 A key outstanding question is how the Country Park(s) would be managed and maintained; that is whether they would be retained within the control of the landowners or whether they would be transferred to the County / District to run. The Great Notley Country Park in Braintree is a good example of a successful facility run by the County and which could be a model to be considered in Uttlesford.
- 4.1.4 The Flitch Way, which follows the route of the former railway between Braintree and Stansted, forms an important part of the network of green infrastructure in the district. It provides for cycling and walking connections. Access to this and improvements to the quality of the route would be sought, particularly from those areas of proposed growth close to the Flitch Way, including garden communities at Easton Park and West of Braintree.
- 4.1.5 The green infrastructure items outlined above are considered necessary infrastructure. Their form and nature of delivery will be further considered through the preferred options process and the next level of detail that will emerge as the preferred new garden communities are identified. There are no major risks to growth in relation to Green Infrastructure, however the quality and effective coordination of its planning and delivery will be a key determinate in realising quality place-making in the local plan period.