



Public Document Pack

Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Local Plan Leadership Group Remote Meeting

Date: Thursday, 29th April, 2021

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Zoom - <https://zoom.us/>

Chair: Councillor G Bagnall

Members: Councillors M Caton, R Freeman, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light,
S Merifield, R Pavitt (Vice-Chair), N Reeve, M Sutton and M Tayler

Public Participation

At the start of the meeting there will be an opportunity for up to 10 members of the public to ask questions and make statements subject to having given notice by 2pm the working day before the meeting. Each speaker will have 4 minutes to make their statement. Please write to committee@uttlesford.gov.uk to register your intention to speak with Democratic Services.

Public speakers will be offered the opportunity for an officer to read out their questions or statement at the meeting, or to attend the meeting over Zoom to readout their questions or statement themselves

Members of the public who would like to watch the meeting live can do so [here](#). The broadcast will be made available as soon as the meeting begins.

AGENDA

PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**
To receive any apologies and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 4 - 5
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 LPLG Preferred Options Methodology and Work Programme** 6 - 30
To consider the Local Plan Project preferred options methodology and Work Programme
- 4 Feedback on Consultation on Theme 5: Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles** 31 - 48
To consider feedback on the First Consultation (Issues and Options) Theme 5: Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles.
- 5 Feedback on Consultation on Theme 6: Biodiversity** 49 - 65
To consider feedback on the First Consultation (Issues and Options) Theme 6: Biodiversity.
- 6 Decarbonisation and Water Resource Management** 66 - 74
To consider issues relating to, and proposed scope of work for, decarbonisation and water resource management.

REMOTE MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

Due to the Government's social distancing measures imposed in the wake of Covid-19, the way in which the public can participate in Uttlesford District Council meetings has changed. Meetings are no longer being held on site or in person and 'remote meetings' will be held on the virtual meeting platform Zoom until further notice. Members of the public are welcome to listen live to the debate of any of the Council's Cabinet or Committee meetings. All live broadcasts and meeting papers can be viewed on the Council's calendar of meetings webpage.

Members of the public and representatives of parish and town councils are permitted to speak or ask questions at meetings of the Local Plan Leadership Group. A maximum of 10 speaking slots are available on a first come, first served basis. You will need to register your intention to speak with the Democratic Services Officer by 2pm the working day before the meeting. Please register your intention to speak by writing to committee@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Agenda and Minutes are available in alternative formats and/or languages. For more information please call 01799 510510.

Facilities for people with disabilities

If you are deaf or have impaired hearing and would like a signer available at a meeting, please contact committee@uttlesford.gov.uk or phone 01799 510 369/410/467/548 as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

Telephone: 01799 510369, 510548, 510410 or 510467

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Agenda Item 2 Public Document Pack

LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor G Bagnall (Chair)
Councillors M Caton, R Freeman, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light,
S Merifield, R Pavitt (Vice-Chair), M Sutton and M Tayler

Officers in attendance: G Glenday (Assistant Director - Planning), B Kennedy (Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner), S Miles (Local Plans and New Communities Manager) and C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer)

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence.

Apologies for lateness were received by Councillor Lees.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The following minutes of the previous meetings were approved:

- 22nd February 2021
- 3rd March 2021

3 **FEEDBACK CONSULTATION ON THEME 4 - TRANSPORT**

The Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner presented a report on the comments received on the fourth consultation theme.

The fourth theme was on the topic of "Transport" and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 13 January 2021. Following the Forum, the theme was open for public consultation and in the first four weeks, 20 responses had been received.

Members discussed the findings of the ongoing consultation and the following was noted:

- Members recognised the need for a total review of transport infrastructure and to consider how this provides connectivity both within the district and to key facilities outside the district, such as major hospitals and job centres.
- When considering sustainable transport options, members encouraged officers to look at alternative modes of transport and raising the standard beyond traditional public transport solutions such as creating another bus route.
- Members identified the current gaps in the district's transport infrastructure, such as an unsuitable bus service and a lack of safe cycle

routes to connect settlements, and shared their suggestions for suitable improvements. Ideas included creating a fixed track busway, linking the Genome by cycleway to Cambridge, creating cycleways away or parallel to the road system and a county wide speed limit reduction to encourage cyclists in rural areas.

- Officers confirmed that they were engaging with other authorities on improvements to the district's transport infrastructure. This included discussions with East Herts District Council for improved access into Bishop Stortford and with the Greater Cambridgeshire partnership regarding an extension to the guided busway.
- Members queried the lack of information in the transport strategy about a minibus on demand service. Officers clarified that there is a role for an on demand service, however Essex County Council have had some funding issues and will look at the proposal as part of their county-wide review of the bus network, following the publication of the new government's bus strategy.
- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of responsiveness from the County in the past. It was discussed that the lack of an up to date Local Plan had made it difficult for the Council to have conversations with partners about upcoming developments and the infrastructure to support this.
- The Local Plan was a good opportunity to examine the connectivity between homes and employment opportunities.
- It was important to review other infrastructure, such as 5g, and ensuring that connectivity is provided into residential and commercial premises, rather than just to an area.

Members discussed the possibility of the Council funding their own transport infrastructure projects. Officers clarified that this would be possible, for example by using CIL or s106 funding, but this could only be achieved with an up-to-date Local Plan which would set out such a policy.

Following discussion on the consultation, the Local Plan and Communities Manager informed the group that officers were now taking the next steps in the Local Plan process to develop the guiding principles which will inform the new Local Plan and a paper will come to the group in due course.

The group also fed back their thoughts on the frequency of meetings and whether discussions of each theme was the best use of everyone's time.

Agenda Item 3

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group
Title: Local Plan Project Preferred Options
Methodology and Work Programme
Report Author: Stephen Miles, Local Plan & New
Communities Manager

Date:
29 April 2021

Summary

1. The report sets out the proposed methodology to preparing the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan over the next nine months and seeks agreement to a provisional work plan of meetings over the period.

Recommendations

2. The Group is invited to comment on the contents of the report to agree the provisional work plan for meetings until January 2022.

Financial Implications

3. The approved budget for the Local Plan in 2021-22 includes sufficient provision for the work needed as part of the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council.

Background Papers

- Uttlesford Local Plan Project Initiation Document (PID)
- Uttlesford Local Development Scheme (LDS)

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	The draft timetable builds in three stages for people to make representations on the draft Local Plan.
Community Safety	N/a
Equalities	Forthcoming policies will be subject to an Equalities and Healthy Impact Assessment (EqHIA)
Health and Safety	N/a

Human Rights/Legal Implications	Preparation of a local plan is a statutory duty. It needs to meet legal tests and comply with regulations.
Sustainability	Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objectives of the Council and the Local Plan will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/a

Situation

- On 20 October 2020 the Cabinet approved the Uttlesford Local Development Scheme (LDS) which provides for the preparation of the Local Plan for the district. The first stage of the work, Issues and Options, has been completed on time and in accordance with the approved Scheme. The next stage is the preparation of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (the Draft Plan) with the agreed timetable for formal consideration by this Group, Cabinet and Council being January and February 2022. In order to achieve this deadline it is necessary to set out the methodology and work plan for this Group between now and those dates.

Overview of Process

- It is vital that this Group provides clear direction during the preparation of the Draft Plan so that officers can carry out the technical work that is required to write the Draft Plan. The workload for the officers is significant especially as the Draft Plan is effectively a fresh whole new plan and not a revised version of the previously withdrawn Local Plan. It is also vital that decisions are made in accordance with the agreed timetable – any slippage in providing direction will mean that the key dates in the LDS will not be achieved.
- An overview of the process is set out in the diagram attached as Appendix 1. The officer work comprises four main workstreams each covering an extensive amount of activity. The site selection will involve many dozens of locations, some strategic in scale; over 52 separate elements of evidence (some of these will be major pieces of work – for instance on transport); engagement with landowners and promoters and fulfilling our statutory obligations of discussions with key stakeholders.

Role of Uttlesford Strategic Planning Objectives

8. In order for officers to assess sites and prepare draft planning policies it will be necessary to set some clear strategic planning objectives. This is identified as a role for the Cabinet informed by the deliberations of this Group. It is proposed that the objectives provide high level direction and are derived from the following:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF is a statutory requirement)
 - The approved Uttlesford District Council Corporate Plan
 - The Inspectors' findings on the withdrawn local plan
 - Feedback from the Issues and Options Stage
 - Other relevant sources (for instance best practice that arises from the longer term planning response to Covid-19)
9. It is important that these objectives are set at the outset of the development of the Draft Plan to steer the subsequent work and it is proposed to bring a report to the Group in May 2021.

Role of the Uttlesford Preliminary Outline Strategy

10. Once the Strategic Planning Objectives are established then it is recommended that the Local Plan Vision and first Outline Strategy is prepared for consideration by the Group in July 2021. This would provide a framework by which officers could assess potential sites and prepare policies. Like the Objectives, the Outline Strategy would be informed by the considerations above with additional input from the emerging evidence base, especially the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan baseline report.
11. The Vision and the Outline Strategy will be high level and will set out a broad approach to development in the district, it will not identify any specific sites. In essence the Strategy would provide a strategic context which can then be tested through the assessment of sites and preparation of the evidence base. If necessary the Strategy will be modified when the Regulation 18 Plan is drafted in response to evidence that will be obtained after July 2021.

Approach to Uttlesford Site Assessment

12. The site assessment process will be structured in accordance with the government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on land availability assessments. A full methodology for the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is provided in Appendix 2.
13. The SLAA methodology describes how sites will be identified from a range of sources, including the recent call for sites, and then assessed for their suitability, availability and achievability. The assessment will be used to inform plan-making,

and to demonstrate whether there is a five-year housing land supply for both plan-making and decision-taking.

14. The SLAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the SLAA to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority's requirements, but it is for the development plan to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.
15. A significant portion of the SLAA process can be completed upon expiry of the call for sites on 21 April 2021. However, as the Local Plan work progresses, it is likely that the assessment will need to be updated – for example, once the emerging spatial strategy is known.

Local Plan Leadership Group Work Programme

16. A suggested work programme for the Group is set out in Appendix 3. The work essentially falls into two main categories. The first stage takes place up until the end of July 2021 and provides the direction to the officers working on the site assessments and policy preparation. The second stage will be to receive, in a phased programme, the findings of the various evidence base studies, and to give further direction as to how this evidence should influence the Draft Plan.
17. The work programme represents a heavy workload for members of the Group, especially in reading, absorbing and commenting on all the evidence. Similarly officers will have an extensive amount of work to do and the programme seeks to create 'bite size chunks' of work to make the whole task manageable.

Officer Work Programme

18. In addition to the site assessment work and the preparation of the evidence base (which is inter-related to both the site assessments and policy preparation), officers will also need to engage with landowners and promoters of sites. This is especially important to ensure that the Council's objectives are met. The alternative is not to engage in which case the Local Plan will become a developer led set of proposals with missed opportunities to achieve our aims. This will also assist in addressing the Inspectors' concern around the deliverability of sites (particularly strategic sites). As starting this work as early as possible on the appropriate form, mitigation and supporting infrastructure will allow for more detailed work to be undertaken early on.
19. It is intended this stage of the process will follow the established protocol with meeting notes being kept and available for reference if required. Similarly the

work with other stakeholders (including neighbouring authorities, parish councils, and statutory bodies) will be subject to the same approach.

Conclusions

20. This paper sets out an ambitious programme of work for officers and members over the next eight months which is necessary to develop a Draft Plan to the timetable set out in the Council's LDS. The role of the Local Plan Leadership Group is initially to assist in the setting of objectives and an outline strategy, by deliberating and making recommendations to Cabinet. These recommendations will inform the work officers undertake in the assessment of sites against the objectives and strategy and the development of policies for the plan. The work of LPLG then moves onto receiving and considering the evidence base and deliberating the implications for the plan.
21. It is important to note that developing a plan is an iterative process, and as the evidence base emerges the members and officers should check that previous considerations still hold. However, care should be taken to keep moving forward otherwise there is a risk of delay and a prolonged period of speculative development in the district.

Risk Analysis

22.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the timetable proposed in the LDS slips	3 – there are unknown factors in the production of a Local Plan that require consideration and may result in slippage	4 – government intervention would significantly damage the reputation of the Council	The project plan supporting the LDS includes contingency periods to allow for unknown events to be dealt with. This is good practice.
That the local plan is found unsound at Examination and/or fails to meet the Council's objectives	3 – experience from earlier draft local plans demonstrates the risks in relation to soundness and in achieving the	4- failure to adopt the new local plan would significantly damage the reputation of the Council	The project plan and the methodology set out in this report are intended to support the Council's objectives and to substantially reduce the risks of an unsound plan.

	Council's objectives		
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- 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

OVERVIEW OF DRAFT LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

APRIL – DECEMBER 2021

Officer Work									
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
CALL FOR SITES	SITE ASSESSMENT STAGE 1		SITE ASSESSMENT STAGE 2						DRAFT REG 18 WRITTEN
PREPARE STRATEGIC EVIDENCE			COMPLETE EVIDENCE BASE						
NEGOTIATE/DISCUSS/MASTERPLAN WITH PROMOTORS & LANDOWNERS			→						
CONSULTWORK WITH DTC STAKEHOLDERS			→						
LPLG Work									
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
AGREE METHODOLOGY	AGREE STRATEGIC PLANNING OBJECTIVES	CONFIRM HOUSING NUMBERS	STRATEGIC CONTEXT	RECEIVE VARIOUS EVIDENCE STUDIES					
			AGREE PRELIMINARY OUTLINE STRATEGY & SETTLEMENT HIERACHY	UPDATES ON DTC & DEVELOPER DISCUSSIONS					
Cabinet Decisions									
	May 27th	June 29th			September 2nd				
	AGREE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	CONFIRM HOUSING NUMBERS			AGREE PRELIMINARY OUTLINE STRATEGY & SETTLEMENT HIERACHY				

APPENDIX 3

PROVISIONAL LPLG WORK PLAN

APRIL – DECEMBER 2021

Red items on the Critical Path

Please also refer to High Level Timetable Chart in Appendix 1

Issues for Consideration. Agendas may vary.

29 APRIL 2021

- LPLG work programme April – December 2021
- Site Assessment Methodology
- Report back on next set of Issues and Options Themes: Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles and Biodiversity

25 MAY 2021

- Report back on final set of Issues and Options Themes: Local Economy, Homes and Creating New Places and Communities
- Summary of all Issues and Options Representations
- SA Scoping Report
- Strategic Objectives/ Guiding Principles

24 JUNE 2021

- Call for Sites response
- Confirm housing numbers including windfall assumptions
- Duty to Co-operate Update
- Update on Strategic Sites Discussions

29 JULY 2021 (reserve date 3 AUGUST)

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan Baseline (also to SID Group)
- Feedback from Third Parish Workshop including exception site discussion
- Reasonable Alternatives Sustainability Appraisal work
- Strategic Context (informed by Transport Study Strategic Issues, climate change work, and high level conclusions on landscape, heritage and employment work)
- Local Plan Vision and Preliminary Outline Strategy (following Strategic Objectives and SA)
- Approach to Settlement Hierarchy

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

- Heritage Study
- Hatfield Forest Strategy
- Update on Strategic Sites Discussions
- Duty to Co-operate Update

28 OCTOBER 2021 (reserve date 2 NOVEMBER)

- Employment Needs Study
- Retail Study
- Housing Types and Specialist Needs
- Sport, Recreation and Green Space Study
- Green Infrastructure

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

29 NOVEMBER 2021 (reserve date 2 DECEMBER)

- Landscape Study
- Transport Study
- Viability Study
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Part 2)
- Water Cycle Strategy
- Duty to Co-operate Update
- Update on Strategic Sites Discussions

DECEMBER 2021

- No meetings. Officers preparing Draft Reg 18 Plan for meetings in January and February 2022.

NOTE

Final reports on the Sustainability Appraisal, Equalities Impact Assessment and Climate Change Study will accompany the full Regulation 18 Local Plan.

In addition the draft Local Plan will be accompanied by Topic Papers and, where appropriate draft Memoranda of Understanding/Quality Collaboration Partnership proposals for the proposed strategic sites.

SP. 20.4.21



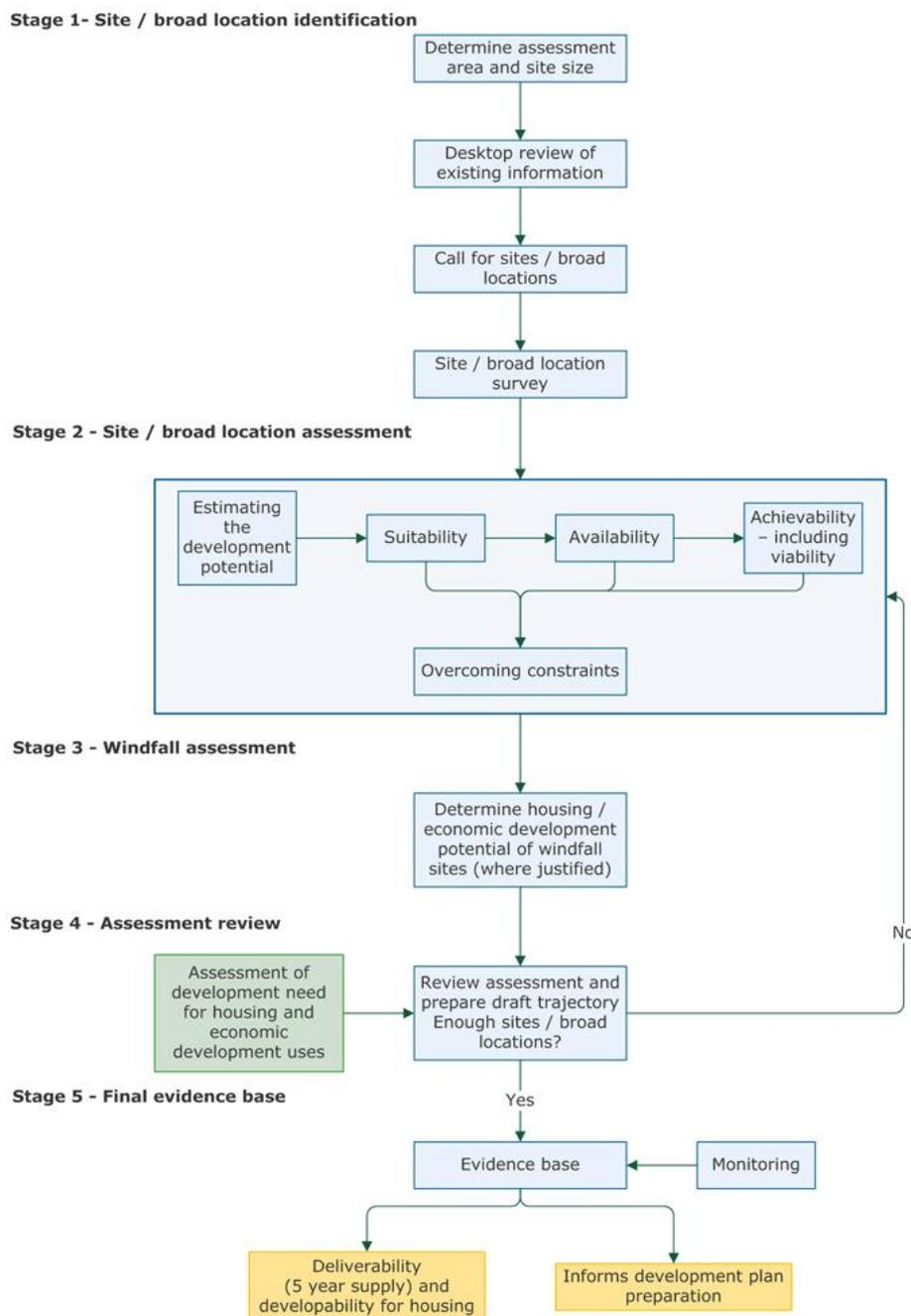
Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)

Methodology
April 2021

Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes how planning authorities should build a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment¹. Detailed guidance is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which clarifies that the process applies to economic land in addition to housing land. In issuing its call for sites, the Council made it clear that sites are sought for the full range of uses – including ‘green sites’ which may have benefits in terms of accessible open space, biodiversity gains and/or carbon absorption.

The land availability assessment methodology set out in the PPG is summarised in the flowchart reproduced below.



¹ NPPF paragraph 67

This document describes the Council's methodology, which is structured according to the guidance in the PPG. It may need to be adjusted and developed in more detail during the course of the site assessment process – for example, to take account of emerging strategies and policies. Any such adjustments will be fully documented in the final Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) report.

As explained in the NPPF, the SLAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the SLAA to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority's requirements, but it is for the development plan to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

The SLAA will be completed in time to allow a six-week technical consultation on a draft version, commencing in September 2021. The focus of this consultation will be on fact-checking and quality control. A full public consultation on the final version will take place alongside the Preferred Options consultation on the draft Local Plan, in spring 2022.

Stakeholders

The SLAA will be carried out with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, and in accordance with the statutory duty to cooperate². The stakeholders will include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes England
- Primary Care Trust
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Integrated Transport Authority
- Highway authority
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Local planning authorities in the housing market area
- Local planning authorities in the functional economic market area
- Landowners and promoters
- Local property agents
- Developers
- Local communities
- Businesses and their local representative organisations
- Parish and town councils
- Neighbourhood forums preparing neighbourhood plans

All stakeholders will be invited to comment on the final SLAA, which will be published alongside the Preferred Options consultation. In addition, the following stakeholders will be invited to comment on an earlier draft version to assist with fact-checking and quality control:

- Parish and town councils
- Neighbourhood forums preparing neighbourhood plans
- Landowners and promoters

² As set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Stage 1 – Site / broad location identification

Assessment area and site size

The area selected for assessment is the plan-making area – the district of Uttlesford.

The site size thresholds are as follows:

- Housing – 5 or more dwellings
- Economic development – 0.25 ha (or 500 m² of floor space) or larger
- Other development – no threshold

Unless otherwise stated, references to ‘sites’ should be taken to include broad locations which may be identified.

Identifying sites

Sites will be identified from a wide range of sources, starting with the desktop review outlined in the below table.

Type of site	Potential data source
Existing housing and economic development allocations and site development briefs not yet with planning permission	Local and neighbourhood plans Planning applications records Development Briefs
Planning permissions for housing and economic development that are unimplemented or under construction	Planning application records Development starts and completions records
Planning applications that have been refused or withdrawn	Planning application records
Land in the local authority’s ownership	Local authority records
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	National register of public sector land Engagement with strategic plans of other public sector bodies such as county councils, central government, National Health Service, police, fire services, utilities services, statutory undertakers
Sites with permission in principle, and identified brownfield land	Brownfield land registers (parts 1 and 2) National Land Use Database Valuation Office database Active engagement with sector
Vacant and derelict land and buildings (including empty homes, redundant and disused agricultural buildings, potential permitted development changes, eg offices to residential)	Local authority empty property register English Housing Survey National Land Use Database Commercial property databases (e.g. estate agents and property agents) Valuation Office database Active engagement with sector Brownfield land registers
Additional opportunities for un-established uses (eg making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks)	Ordnance Survey maps Aerial photography Planning applications

	Site surveys
Business requirements and aspirations	Enquiries received by local planning authority Active engagement with sector
Sites in rural locations	Local and neighbourhood plans
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Planning applications Ordnance Survey maps
Sites in adjoining villages and rural exceptions sites	Aerial photography Site surveys
Potential urban extensions and new free-standing settlement	

To ensure the process to identify land is transparent and identifies as many potential opportunities as possible, a call for sites was issued on 15 January 2021 with a submission deadline of 21 April 2021³. Details were published on the Council's website, circulated to those on the Local Plan contact database and publicised through adverts in the local press and social media posts.

³ Late submissions may still be considered to inform the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan, if received before critical tasks have been completed.

Stage 2 – Site / broad location assessment

Development potential

A site's development potential would typically be estimated using existing or emerging policies, including on density. However, the adopted Local Plan does not contain policies on density, while new policies are yet to emerge.

As a starting point, the site capacity provided in the data source will be used. If no capacity is indicated, the following assumptions will be applied to housing and economic development sites. To account for the varying nature of other types of site, a more tailored assessment is likely to be required.

Housing

Informed by assumptions used for the withdrawn Submission Local Plan, the densities in the following table are considered to reflect existing local densities. To ensure that sufficient sites are identified to meet the Council's requirement, the lower figure in each range will be used.

Location	Density	Justification
Within Saffron Walden or Great Dunmow	35-67 dwellings per hectare	Allows a mix of housing types comprising houses, terraces and flats
Within any other settlement	30-50 dph	Respects the rural character of Uttlesford
Adjacent to any settlement	30-50 dph	Respects the rural character of Uttlesford
New settlement	30-67 dph	Allows a mix of housing types comprising houses, terraces and flats

The estimation of development potential will be based on the net developable area of a site. Smaller sites will typically make use of existing roads and facilities, potentially enabling up to 100% of the site area to be developed. However, larger sites will require space for internal access roads, strategic open space and landscaping so the developable area will be reduced. Informed by assumptions used for the withdrawn Submission Local Plan, the ratios identified in the following table will be used to calculate the net developable area of each site.

Site size	Gross to net ratio
Up to 0.4 hectares	100%
0.4 – 2 hectares	90%
2 – 15 hectares	75%
15 hectares and above	60%

Economic development

Where the capacity of economic development sites is not provided, it will be estimated on the basis of the development density assumptions in *West Essex and East Hertfordshire Assessment of Employment Needs (Hardisty Jones Associates, 2017)*. The assumptions are as follows:

- Industrial development: 40% (4,000 m² per hectare)

- Office development (out-of-town): 40%
- Office development (in-town): 100%

Recalculating the development potential

The above approach is merely intended to facilitate an initial estimate of development potential. Once new policies emerge, the development potential for each site will be recalculated.

Assessing whether sites are likely to be developed

Plan-makers must assess the suitability, availability and achievability of sites, including whether the site is economically viable. A judgment can therefore be made as to whether a site is deliverable within the next five years, or developable over a longer period.

Suitability – Initial assessment

A site can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

A basic level of information will be recorded for all identified sites. Depending on the data source, some of this information may not be readily available so enquiries may need to be made. The information, as described in the PPG, is as follows:

- Site size, boundaries, and location
- Current land use and character
- Land uses and character of surrounding area
- Physical constraints (e.g. access, contamination, steep slopes, flood risk, natural features of significance, location of infrastructure/utilities)
- Potential environmental constraints
- Consistency with the development plan's policies⁴
- Proximity to services and other infrastructure, such as public transport
- Where relevant, development progress (e.g. ground works completed, number of units started, number of units completed)

An initial suitability assessment will be carried out to confirm whether there are any sites which, when taking into account national policy and designations, are clearly not suitable for development. Such sites will be assigned an 'E' classification (see 'Site classification' below) and excluded from further detailed assessment. The criteria for the initial assessment are as follows:

- Proximity to Green Belt
- Proximity to the Countryside Protection Zone
- Proximity to a Protected Open Space
- Proximity to a Poor Air Quality Zone
- Which Environment Agency flood zone applies to the site?
- Which Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) flood zone applies to the site?

The initial suitability assessment also provides the opportunity to:

- Ratify inconsistent information gathered through the call for sites and desk assessment

⁴ As the new Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation, it is likely that limited/no information on this topic will be available initially. Once available, emerging policies will inform an updated SLAA.

- Gain an up to date view on development progress (where sites have planning permission)
- Obtain a better understanding of what type and scale of development may be appropriate
- Gain a more detailed understanding of deliverability, any barriers and how they could be overcome
- Identify further sites with potential for development that were not identified through data sources or the call for sites

Suitability – Detailed assessment

All sites that pass the initial suitability assessment will be subject to a detailed assessment, using the full list of criteria set out in Appendix A.

As parallel evidence-gathering and policy-writing work progresses, it is likely that criteria will need to be added, removed and/or amended. Even where criteria remain unchanged, the performance of certain sites may change. A couple of examples are described below:

- The call for sites submission form includes questions on the TCPA Garden City principles. These principles will eventually influence the vision, objectives and policies in the Local Plan, which are likely to result in additional suitability criteria. The questions were asked so that relevant information could be collected in readiness.
- In updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), the boundaries of flood zones across the District could change. The criteria would remain the same but the performance of certain sites would be altered according to the boundary changes.

Availability

A site can be considered available for development when, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. Call for sites submissions should include information to assist this assessment, although enquiries may need to be made by officers where details are lacking and for sites identified from other sources.

The following criteria will be used to assess availability:

Ownership/control

- Sole owner
- Multiple owners
- Availability confirmed by owner(s)
- Legal or ownership issues⁵

Amount of development which could be delivered, by time period

- Pre Year 1: Pre Apr 2024
- Year 1: Apr 2024-Mar 2025
- Year 2: Apr 2025-Mar 2026
- Year 3: Apr 2026-Mar 2027
- Year 4: Apr 2027-Mar 2028
- Year 5: Apr 2028-Mar 2029
- Years 6-10: Apr 2029-Mar 2034
- Years 11-15: Apr 2034-Mar 2039
- Post Year 15: Post Mar 2039

⁵ For example, whether formal agreements are in place to ensure that land outside of the direct control of the owner(s) is made available to support delivery.

Achievability

A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.

The following criteria will be used to assess achievability:

Market factors

- What is the market strength of the locality?
- What is the attractiveness of the locality, potential market demand and projected rate of sales?

Cost factors

- Are there any constraints – for example, flooding, noise or physical features – which need to be overcome, and where the cost of mitigation measures may prejudice viability?
- Are there any site preparation costs – for example, associated with topography, contamination or existing uses/buildings – which may prejudice viability?
- Are there any specific infrastructure requirements – for example, transport or utilities infrastructure – which may prejudice viability?

Delivery factors

- Including the developer's own phasing, what are the realistic build-out rates on larger sites (including likely earliest and latest start and completion dates)?
- Is a single developer, or are several developers, offering different housing products?
- What is the size and capacity of the developer?

Site classification

Once a site has been assessed against the suitability, availability and achievability criteria, it will be given a classification from A to E in accordance with the below table.

Classification	Description
A	These are sites which have planning permission and are generally considered deliverable within the first five years of the plan period.
B	These are sites that are considered deliverable/developable within the plan period but do not currently have planning permission. These sites are largely free from major physical and infrastructure constraints. The sites are broadly in line with national planning policy considerations and, once available, the development strategy of the emerging Local Plan.
C	These are sites where further work is needed to demonstrate the achievability or suitability of sites. This could include, for example, achieving a suitable access, mitigating impacts of noise or air pollution, mitigating against small parts of the site being subject to flooding, or minimising the impact on neighbouring uses or the landscape, historic or natural assets.
D	Sites in this category are likely to be broadly developable but not within the plan period. Sites may only become developable if others are built out so these sites represent future extensions, but this would require speculative consideration far beyond the 15 year plan period.
E	These sites are not considered developable and delivery is not considered suitable within 15 years for one or more of the following reasons:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from national policy leading to development in unsustainable locations • Development in settlement extensions being of a vastly disproportionate scale to the existing settlement • Sites contrary to the emerging development strategy (when available) • Sites contrary to Green Belt or Countryside Protection Zone protections, subject to any emerging reviews • Sites with insurmountable physical constraints e.g. flood risk, noise pollution • Sites with insurmountable availability issues • Sites with insurmountable achievability issues
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While the SLAA is merely a factual assessment, these site classifications will provide information to assist decisions on site allocations within the new Local Plan.

Engagement with site owners and promoters

It is likely that Council officers will need to liaise with some site owners and promoters to further their understanding of development potential. Any such engagement will take place in accordance with the approved *Local Plan Community Engagement Strategy 2021*⁶.

Updating the site assessments

As parallel work on the new Local Plan progresses, it will be necessary to update the site assessments – particularly in relation to the likely changes to the suitability criteria described above. It is therefore anticipated that the site classifications will also be subject to change.

⁶ In particular, paragraphs 5.20-5.22 and Appendix F

Stage 3 – Windfall assessment

The most recent evidence on windfall allowance is contained within *Topic Paper: Consideration of a Windfall Allowance for Uttlesford (March 2017)*. The topic paper considers the delivery of windfall sites over the 10-year period from 2006/7 to 2015/16, concluding that there is evidence to justify a windfall allowance of **70 dwellings per year**.

If the Council identifies broad locations for development in years 6-15, this windfall allowance may be used.

Upcoming work will examine the windfall allowance so it is possible the figure will change. If this is the case, the SLAA methodology will be updated accordingly.

Stage 4 – Assessment review

Once the sites have been assessed, the development potential of all sites can be collected to produce an indicative trajectory. This should set out the amount of housing and economic development that can be provided, and at what point in the future (i.e. within years 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 onwards).

If there are insufficient sites to meet objectively assessed needs (including the identified local need), the Council will need to reconsider its assessment of sites. This could include, for example, issuing a further call for sites, or changing the assumptions about development potential to ensure the most efficient use of land.

While the scenario is considered highly unlikely for the district of Uttlesford, if insufficient land remains it will be necessary to investigate how this shortfall can be planned for. If there is clear evidence that the needs cannot be met locally, it will be necessary to consider how needs might be met in adjoining areas through the process of preparing statement of common ground, and in accordance with the duty to cooperate.

Stage 5 – Final evidence base

The following outputs will be produced following the assessment:

- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps
- An assessment of each site or broad location, including:
 - Where these have been discounted, evidence justifying the reasons given
 - Where these are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when
 - An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available

The assessment will be made publicly available on the Council's website, accessible from the landing page at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/new-local-plan. The publication format will be designed for accessibility, and will include an interactive map.

The assessment will be used to inform plan-making, and to demonstrate whether there is a five-year housing land supply (for example, utilising sites in classifications A and B) for both plan-making and decision-taking.

Appendix A

Suitability criteria

Criteria marked with an asterisk (*) form the basis of the initial suitability assessment, which will subsequently be absorbed into the detailed assessment.

National policy constraints

- Does the site meet the definition of 'previously developed land'?
- Is the site within, adjoining or separate from a settlement?

Local policy constraints⁷

- Proximity to Green Belt *
- Proximity to the Countryside Protection Zone *
- Proximity to a Public Safety Zone
- Proximity to Important Woodland
- Proximity to a Special Verge
- Proximity to a Historic Landscape
- Proximity to a Local Historic Park/Garden
- Proximity to a Protected Lane
- Proximity to a Protected Open Space *
- Proximity to a Poor Air Quality Zone *
- Is the site designated/allocated within a made Neighbourhood Plan?
- Consistency with the emerging Local Plan spatial strategy (when available)

Flooding

- Which Environment Agency flood zone applies to the site? *
- Which Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) flood zone applies to the site?⁸ *
- Which surface water flood zone applies to the site?
- Which groundwater flood zone applies to the site?

Pollution

- Which aircraft noise contour applies to the site?
- Are there any potential noise issues?
- Is the site within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?
- Would development on the site increase movements through an AQMA?
- Which groundwater source protection zone applies to the site?
- If the site is ≥ 5 ha, is it within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel?
- If the site is ≥ 3 ha, is it within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for chalk?
- Is the site within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for brick earth or brick clay?
- Is the site within a Waste Consultation Area?

Natural environment

- Proximity to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)
- Proximity to European sites (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and/or Ramsar site)

⁷ Local policy designations will initially be based on the adopted Local Plan. It will be necessary to update the criteria and/or assessments as the new Local Plan progresses – for example, once the emerging spatial strategy is known.

⁸ An updated SFRA will be completed for the new Local Plan, and will inform an updated SLAA

- Proximity to National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
- Proximity to Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)
- Proximity to ancient woodland
- Proximity to Local Geological Sites
- Proximity to National Trails and public rights of way
- Is the site within an area noted for its high sensitivity to change, according to the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment?
- Is the site within an area noted in a Historic Settlement Character Assessment?
- Are there any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site?
- Which Agricultural Land Classification applies to the site?

Historic environment

- Proximity to scheduled monuments
- Proximity to archaeological sites
- Proximity to listed buildings
- Proximity to locally listed heritage assets
- Proximity to conservation areas
- Proximity to registered parks and gardens

Accessibility⁹

- Primary school walking catchment
- Secondary school accessibility catchments for:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport
- Sixth form accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport
- College accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport
- GP and health centre accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Public transport
- Hospital accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Public transport
- Fruit and vegetable retailer accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Public transport
- Local centres accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport
- Employment centres accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport

⁹ Accessibility catchments calculated using *Uttlesford Accessibility Analysis: TRACC Outputs*. A judgement will also need to be made regarding the safety and suitability of routes, and whether new infrastructure may be required.

- Bus and rail network walking catchments:
 - 1 service per hour
 - 4 services per hour
- Rail station accessibility catchments:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Public transport
- Is there a viable route from the site to the principal or strategic road network (B roads, A roads and motorways)?
- Are there any fundamental constraints affecting safe site access for road/path users?

Other land uses

- Would there be a net loss of open space, sports or recreational facilities?
- Would there be a net loss of employment land?
- Would there be a net loss of retail provision?
- Would there be a net loss of community facilities?
- If known, would any additional uses or infrastructure (including green infrastructure) be provided on site?

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group

Date:

Title: Feedback on Consultation on Theme 5:
Leisure, culture & healthy lifestyles

29 April 2021

Report Author: Joanna Hill, Planning Policy Officer
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Summary

1. This report feeds back on the comments received on the First Consultation (Issues and Options) Theme 5: Leisure, culture & healthy lifestyles (LC&HL).

Recommendations

2. That members note
 - the consultation responses and the Forum's views
 - potential actions to address issues
 - that no final recommendations will be made until all comments have been considered (consultation ends 21 April 2021)
3. That members, if desired, provide any feedback e.g. for officers to consider later when making final recommendations, for Forum members' reference.

Financial Implications

2. None at this stage.

Background Papers

3. The following papers are referred to:
 - Leisure, culture & healthy lifestyles consultation summary
 - Community Stakeholder Forum response to LC&HL consultation 10 March 2021

Impact

4. None

Communication/Consultation	Consultation is on going
Community Safety	n/a

Equalities	Forthcoming policies will be subject to an equalities and Health Impact Assessment
Health and Safety	n/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	n/a
Sustainability	Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objective of the Council
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	n/a

Situation

Background

5. In preparation to the formal consultation on a draft Local Plan the Council is consulting on a series of 9 themes. The starting point for the consultation on each theme is the Community Stakeholder Forum whose purpose is to inform, start a discussion and generate comment.
6. The fifth theme was on the topic of Leisure, culture & healthy lifestyles and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 27 January 2021. The Forum heard a presentation on *Planning Healthier Places* given by Julia Thrift, Director of Healthier Place Making at the TCPA. The presentation and a video of the Forum are available on the [website](#).
7. Following the Forum the theme was open for public consultation asking the general question of 'How can existing places and new development support health and wellbeing?'. People are invited to make comments up to the close of the whole consultation on all the themes on 21 April. However, comments received within the first four weeks were summarised and presented back to the Forum for comment and to this working group.

Summary of consultation responses

8. Between the 27 January and 24 February 2021, 25 people responded to the theme.
9. Appendix 1 is a summary of these comments. Common themes are shown on the infographic adapted from the consultation document. This is followed by a more detailed summary of the comments.

Community Stakeholder response

10. Appendix 1 was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10 March 2021. They were asked to consider if any of the comments were particularly pertinent or surprising.

11. The CSF considered the feedback to be very good, even if from only 25 responses, and were mostly in agreement. Additional points were made regarding:

- The desire for the tourist information service in Saffron Walden to cover the interests of the whole district, not just Saffron Walden
- The importance of provision of sporting and exercise activities for girls and women
- The desire to create a welcoming atmosphere and to meet the needs of people who may come here, not those who already live here; and to encourage and embrace diversity and multi-culturalism

12. The comments are summarised in Appendix 2

Officer comments

13. The rural context of Uttlesford and strong value placed on open space in the consultation responses highlights the importance of the open space assessment, standards and policies required to protect and enhance existing open spaces and deliver new open spaces

14. The consultation responses so far point to some key areas of work that spatial strategy and policies should seek to consider:

- Mapping and creating a network of open spaces
 - linking existing open spaces, public rights of way (PROW), footpaths and new spaces
 - delivery of safe, traffic free walking/cycle (and equestrian) greenways
- Further scrutinizing the open space evidence base and standards to assess access any imbalance in the diversity and distribution of open space/green spaces across the district, including:
 - Parks & gardens
 - Amenity greenspace
 - Natural and semi-natural greenspace
 - Provision for children and young people
 - Allotments/community food growing

15. The Council may wish to further consider usage and accessibility of open space within a rural context including:

- how the Local Plan responds to evidence gaps in open space
- protection and provision of open space within a 15 to 20-minute rural neighbourhood or a village cluster

16. There is a strong connection between an extensive open space network and active travel (walking, cycling), and healthy lifestyles.

17. Whilst residents acknowledge and value the visual amenity of agricultural land and footpaths through it, the Council may wish to seek to consider potential innovative policies to deliver greater accessibility to natural and semi-natural open space, protect and enhance biodiversity and greater benefit and use of the 'Countryside' by all e.g. via biodiversity credits and local nature recovery strategies being introduced via the Environment Bill
18. The impact of development on Hatfield Forest remains an important issue for development strategy in terms of:
- Protecting the Hatfield Forest as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR), from further harm
 - Consideration of the need and opportunity for a new country park or nature reserve to provide alternative open space to the forest
19. With regard to culture, there is pride and support in some excellent facilities and reference to a breadth of formal and informal organisations and events across the district and the benefit they contribute to quality of life in Uttlesford. The cultural network of venues, skills and events is little documented or promoted. The Council could look to examine how arts and culture support the local economy, contribute to health and wellbeing, skills and development and contribute to placemaking and the distinct identity and experience of Uttlesford

What happens next

20. The consultation on this theme remains open until 21 April 2021.
21. Officers and the Forum will consider any feedback made by members at this meeting. Final recommendations, taking into account all comments on all themes will be prepared after the close of consultation in April. The Council will use the comments to determine its vision, strategy, policies and prepare the draft Local Plan.
22. Early comments made on the final themes 6-9 will be presented to subsequent meetings of the Working Group.

Risk Analysis

23.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Insufficient regard is given to the comments received on the consultation	1 Little	3: Could lead to unsound plan.	Members and officers to carefully consider results of consultation, and clearly explain reasons for decisions made.

- 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.

Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 5 Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles January 2021

Summary of online consultation – first four weeks

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 27 January and the theme was then open for comment.

Comments received by Wednesday 24 February are summarised below and common themes are shown in the diagram.

These comments will be presented back to the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10 March and the Local Plan Leadership Group (date to be confirmed).

Comments received after 24 February up to the close of consultation on 21 April 2021 will be brought together in a document summarising comments from all nine themes, the Council's response and how the issues raised in the comments will be reflected in the Draft Local Plan.

Between 27 January and 24 February 2021, 25 people responded to the theme.

What we have been told so far

The following is a summary of what people said about how existing places and new development support health and wellbeing.

To read all the representations in full please go to the [Consultation Portal](#).

What you have told us so far about . . .

How can existing places and new development support health and wellbeing?

Healthy lifestyles

How can we enable you to take more exercise, eat healthily and nurture mental wellbeing?

- Better support for day centres and community centres
- Provision for active travel
- Ensure all year round use of public spaces
- Put health and wellbeing at the heart of planning decisions
- Ensure facilities promised are delivered
- Further enable healthy eating
- Provision for people in need
- Design for mental wellbeing



How could open space be made more accessible or improved?

Leisure

- Expand and link up with existing open space networks
- Improve the Fitch Way
- Prioritise walking, pedestrians and improve paths
- Create cycle/walking/equestrian greenways
- Need for greater clarity on access
- Provide access to open space beyond footpaths on agricultural land
- Greater protection for open spaces
- A new nature reserve
- Permit exercise classes to operate free of charge in public green spaces
- Ensure developers deliver amenity space promised
- Provide more seating in public places



What buildings and spaces encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation?

- A mix of facilities for all
- Protection of existing community green spaces and creation of new ones
- A new country park
- Make health, wellbeing and a sense of community a priority for new development
- Address health and income inequalities



What types for sport, recreation and play facilities should we prioritise?

- Provision of facilities to suit different needs
- Address shortfalls and inadequacy

Culture



What arts and cultural facilities do you value? Does Uttlesford lack venues for culture, arts and adult education and if so what and where are they needed?

- Uttlesford is a beautiful, rural area with a rich historic and cultural heritage
- Saffron Screen & Hall are wonderful facilities but there is under-provision elsewhere in the District
- Over 50 voluntary organisations in Stansted, Mountfitchet Castle and Stansted Hall
- The non-conformist chapel in Thaxted is in need of repair and could act as a venue for Thaxted Festival
- Poor provision for theatre
- More performance and live music venues
- Important role of churches as a source of cultural and emotional support



Leisure

How could open space be made more accessible or improved?

Expand and link up with existing open space networks:

- Enhance and expand publicly accessible open space for ALL users - walkers, cyclists, equestrians and the less mobile.
- Create a traffic-free off-road network, linking the PROW network, other open spaces and plug gaps
- Not much wrong with the current set up. Take care not to damage what we have.
- Better interconnectivity may encourage pub use

Improvement of the Flitch Way:

- The western section is disconnected from the eastern section at Great Dunmow
- Connect and improve to be accessible to ordinary walkers and cyclists
- Reconnect the Flitch Way via a multi-user safe off-road bridleway through Dunmow
- It will enable HRS (Helena Romanes School) students to cycle and walk to school in safety when the school moves to Buttleys Lane
- Several sections are only accessible to those wearing hiking boots or mountain bikes
- Secure funding to surface the route and provide safe road crossings and a bridge over the River Chelmer
- Restore and convert buildings along the route for use as community areas, like the partially used space at Rayne Station

Prioritise walking, pedestrians and improve paths:

- Take walking and pedestrians seriously. Narrow, or missing, pavements and high traffic speeds make walking very unpleasant in some areas (e.g. Audley Road in Saffron Walden)
- Paths should be well maintained, and those closest to village centres to be safe for the elderly
- Create designated walks in every village. Start near toilet provision and include plenty of seating en route

Identify and create cycle/walking/equestrian greenways:

- The Local Plan should include explicit pedestrian and cycling route plans
- More bridleways
- Ensure provision for safe off-road routes for horse riders too. Equestrianism is the second largest contributor to the rural economy after agriculture. It contributes over £5 million to the Essex economy and supports many rural industries. It is enjoyed in particular by women and girls. Both these groups are poorly served by many of the sports facilities in Uttlesford.
- Cycle groups too tend to be predominantly male. Cyclists have had access to bridleways since 1968. The drive to create cycle tracks is a welcome contribution to the need for improved sustainable travel but where cycle tracks are created, they should include provision for horse riders

Need for greater clarity on access:

- Although Uttlesford has a large quantity of open space it is not clear how much is actually available for public enjoyment. I find that I never sure of the status of country paths on private or agricultural land. Finding a clear map for walks is a challenge
- Easily accessible maps (physical and online) of footpaths in the district and car parking on key walking routes

Provide access to open space beyond footpaths on agricultural land:

- Rural farming areas is fine for walking/jogging, provided public rights of way exist and paths are maintained. However, these facilities are insufficient – because disabled persons, and poorer persons who are time-poor are likely excluded from access
- Footways and bridleways provide the only open space

Greater protection for open spaces:

- Areas around existing towns and villages MUST have the added protection that is afforded by green belt status
- Residents must be given certainty that agriculture land they enjoy as part of their recreation is not going to be covered in houses. Ancient woodland, natural habitats MUST be protected for future generations. We will not have the opportunity to reverse decisions once construction is underway
- More and more green open spaces are being developed. These housing developments are large with houses very close together and not a tree in sight. Many fields that used to be enjoyed for a daily walk are now developed. Walking around a housing estate is depressing and not good for our wellbeing

A new nature reserve:

- Similar to Rye Meads in Hoddesdon, RSPB Fowlmere or Wicken Fen. Provision could be made within Easton Park and some stretches of the Chelmer

Permit exercise classes to operate free of charge/ nominal cost in public green spaces:

- Fees are prohibitive for bootcamp or exercise classes to operate on Saffron Common. It should be full of yoga, tai chi, classes for the elderly, circuit training etc which generate the best health returns when they are professionally led

Protect and enhance biodiversity:

- Gardens, allotments, wildlife are important factors in Uttlesford's leisure time. Watching deer roam, buzzards wheeling in the sky, yellow hammers darting around hedgerows, bats on a summers evening all contribute to rich diversity. Planning decisions must reflect & support this diversity

Ensure developers deliver amenity space promised:

- Holding developers to their original plans and proposals for amenity space through planning approval and conditions would be hugely benefit

More seating in public places:

- Benches are needed around the village on which to rest, sit and talk.
- There is a lack of covered spaces where people can meet safely and sit and chat
- A meeting circle with fixed seats at 2m intervals as a memorial to the pandemic

Need to protect Hatfield Forest:

- The National Trust (NT) owns and manages Hatfield Forest providing opportunity for informal recreation
- There are no public footpaths and there is a charge to park. The Forest cannot be considered as truly public. Evidence has shown that the increased use of the forest is damaging the designated/protected features
- Natural England has put the Forest at risk of losing its 'unfavourable, recovering condition' due to excessive impacts of footfall
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace in the district is predominately provided by Hatfield Forest. The Local Plan cannot rely on the existence of Hatfield Forest in

meeting requirements relating to the provision of open space and green infrastructure.

- The Council must prepare a robust and up to date evidence base including an Open Space Assessment of the quantity and quality of existing open space and future open space requirements, based on future housing provision, to inform a strategic solution to address the recreational pressure impacts to the designated site
- Future provision based upon existing provision (as recommended in the 2019 Open Space Study Standards Paper) is not an appropriate method of calculation as it does not take into consideration local circumstances
- The Council's evidence should identify shortfalls and pressure at existing sites
- Recreational pressure could be addressed through:
 1. Provision of alternative high quality natural/semi-natural greenspace on site for all new major residential developments.
 2. Provision of a destination site such as a new country park offering a multifunctional space with a range of facilities as an alternative to Hatfield Forest. This needs to be close enough to Hatfield Forest to divert pressure away from the Forest and delivered early in the plan period
 3. A contribution sought for monitoring and mitigation from new housing developments within an established Zone of Influence for the Forest
- These recommended measures are set out in the 'Hatfield Forest Visitor Survey and Impact Management Report 2018'

Incremental change:

- Radical new thinking is not required. Improve the public footpath network, maintain it better and make it more cohesive; advertise it far more clearly; Put money into improve current leisure facilities. But largely they are fine. People move here to be in the countryside, do not spoil it.

What buildings and open spaces encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation?

Provision of a mix of facilities:

- Green spaces, footpaths and access to the countryside should be considered as important as formal leisure facilities, gyms, swimming pools and formal play areas
- There are many types of buildings and open spaces that encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation: market stalls, streets of independent shops, pubs, interest groups that meet online or in-person, sports facilities, village halls, churches, playing fields and playgrounds, concert halls and music venues, museums, gardens. Community spirit relies on people having time to speak to neighbours, organise gatherings and have locations to meet and hold activities

Provision of facilities for all:

- More activities in the local community for young children/toddlers and parents
- Leisure centres/gymnasiums are important for all the community. Those who are older, fatter, or less fit should not be made to feel inferior

Protection of existing community green spaces and creation of new ones:

- Community green space, accessible for all, with seating & availability of refreshments, for gathering, socialising and events is lacking

- Existing community green spaces are precious; they allow diverse people to mix intergenerationally, socialise, sit down, relax and play
- Conflict exists between greedy developers/landowners who seek to develop housing on community open space, even well-used spaces
- Community land to grow food, fruits and vegetables etc helping the area become more self-sustainable. A place for people to come together, help out, volunteer and reduce our carbon footprint. Accessible to people of ages and from all walks of life. This would do wonders for people's mental health, give a sense of purpose and community spirit. Somewhere locals could plant trees, whether it be to celebrate a new joiner to this world, a bereavement, a birthday

Proposal for a new country park:

- The 2019 UDC Open Space Assessment Report identified that 75% of Natural & Semi-natural Open Space is provided by Hatfield Forest which is under severe threat from overuse. Alternative facilities are urgently needed
- Restoration of the medieval Easton Park and surrounding ancient woodlands is an ideal alternative within 5 kms. The intention of the Agreement of 1939 is to keep the Park as an open space and a nature sanctuary
- UDC has the responsibility to protect the park for the next 50 and 500 years
- The benefits of a large park have been demonstrated by the success of Hylands Park under the tenure of the Chelmsford City Council
- As a rural district, Uttlesford needs to promote, preserve and develop its rights of way as free accessible means for everyone to enjoy outdoor exercise, take pleasure in our countryside and connect with each other as a community
- It sits perfectly with the council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030

Make health, wellbeing and a sense of community a priority for new development:

- Conflict exists between development profit versus community need for green space, community space, and amenities. If our health and wellbeing are priorities, then the latter need must take precedence
- The 15-minute neighbourhood requires facilities that promote social cohesion, community activities and support for the lonely are within 15 minutes walk of the vast majority of Uttlesford residents
- Small developments should be encouraged to be "communities" rather than just potential building sites

Address health and income inequalities:

- Stark health inequalities (TCPA & Marmot reviews 2010 & 2020) afflict the poorest harshly, including BAME and disabled groups. Poverty is on the rise in Uttlesford, as evidenced by our busy Food Bank
- Offer all benefit-claimants free-of-charge access to UDC's Lord Butler Leisure Centre and free parking at Uttlesford owned car-parking facilities

Specific places:

- Thaxted park could be enhanced to get the most out of it for all ages
- Stansted: Bloor site - static play structures were installed 12 months ago in the Children's play area, but they are still under water and unusable. Trees have still not been planted nor a footbridge into Pennington Lane

What types for sport, recreation and play facilities should the Local Plan prioritise?

Provision of facilities to suit different needs:

- There need to activities appropriate to the demographics of the local population. Families with young children will probably make use of playgrounds, many adults would value gym facilities and access to team sports, while the older generation might want the social contact and lighter exercise of bowls clubs or golf
- Providing a wide range of activities aimed at teenagers could be difficult in small rural communities, they may benefit from more centralised activities based around schools
- It seems that swimming, rugby, hockey, badminton, squash, gymnastics and bowling in general are not well catered for. Further analysis may be required to establish demand, if additional facilities were to be provided

Address shortfalls and inadequacy:

- We are desperately short of sports facilities. Play spaces need upgrading. Too many developments pay lip services to play needs and sports. Plans need to be tougher on green space provision being usable
- Stansted: Existing facilities are totally inadequate. Stansted needs more recreation space, a football pitch, a cycle track. It has well used skatepark, tennis and bowling facilities. Stansted has 3 allotment sites - these are fully taken up

Culture

Arts and cultural facilities people value

Overall:

- Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall are wonderful facilities but there is definitely an under-provision elsewhere in the district
- For the size of population there are a surprising number of museums in the District. It is mainly Saffron Walden museum that gets any publicity. There needs to be a properly co-ordinated tourist information service for the District as a whole
- Uttlesford is as a place to enjoy leisure, culture and a healthy lifestyle. A beautiful, rural area with a rich historic and cultural heritage. The key question is whether planned developments preserve and improve the well-being of residents or damage it. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that recent developments have contributed to a better quality of life for us all

Stansted:

- There are still some 50 voluntary organisations in the village e.g. the History Society etc.
- Mountfitchet Castle which is a commercial venue which caters for school group visits
- Stansted Hall - The Arthur Findlay College which is the headquarters of the Spiritual Movement and which offers facilities unequalled anywhere in the world in the Spiritualist movement as a residential centre for the study of Spiritualist philosophy and religious practice

Thaxted:

- The wonderful non-conformist 'chapel' is in need of major repairs and a new use. It would make an excellent local theatre and opera venue allied to the Thaxted Festival

Does Uttlesford lack venues for culture, arts and adult education and if so what and where are they needed?

- Saffron Walden has a magnificent concert hall but poor provision for theatre. The Town Hall is unsatisfactory in many ways, although the Fairycroft team do brilliantly to make it work for musicals, but a flexible, theatrical space for amateur performing arts is needed
- Uttlesford, particularly the southern area, would benefit from some additional cultural facilities similar to the South Mill Arts centre (formally Rhodes Arts Complex), Bishop Stortford, and a place to develop arts and craft skills similar to Parndon Mill in Harlow
- More live music venues etc, but practicalities especially transport, make it difficult
- We need more performance spaces, including music venues, theatres and cinemas, close to town centres. More public art would be great (sculpture trails?) and affordable galleries for local artists (even our library is too expensive for printmakers to exhibit in due to minimum commission per item). Perhaps vacant retail space can be repurposed? It is great to see arts courses going on in the area to encourage active participation. Clubs and societies need public buildings for meetings at affordable prices. We have many village halls which are ideal for this but fewer venues in towns in relation to their populations
- Insufficient attention is paid to the role of the church as a centre of community. Every village has one and they are often a source of cultural and emotional support. There is a danger of creating vast areas of housing without a communal heart
- Most organised cultural activities rely on individuals and groups having the time and skills to make an event happen. They can be supported by the district and parish councils through funding and smoothing the path through red tape which can make events rather difficult to arrange
- Stansted: No cultural venues in Stansted. Events can use a small number of halls
- Given that each rural community cannot have a full range of social, leisure and cultural activities close at hand, transport becomes critical to allow access to those activities. Ideally this should be public transport and it needs to provide services at times that fit with demand. This is especially true for older age groups living in the more remote areas who will be discouraged from using private vehicles during winter evenings on unlit and winding rural roads
- Developers renege on their promises to create community facilities of one sort or another. What can UDC do to improve matters?

Healthy lifestyles

How can we enable you to take more exercise, eat healthily and nurture mental wellbeing?

Better support for day centres and community centres:

- Continued support of Day Centres is crucial to the wellbeing and health of the elderly and other vulnerable groups. They are surely cost effective in terms of reducing the mental health impacts of loneliness
- The community acquisition of the Railway Arms provides an example of how a pub can become the hub of a community with mother and toddler groups, repair shops, a sensory garden, games for children and teenagers, community events and celebrations, book clubs... UDC should support such community projects where pubs

are liable to closure around all the villages of Uttlesford as a way of promoting health and wellbeing

- Churches and church halls could be designed as flexible spaces for use every day of the week, as the Baptist Church is in Saffron Walden. Grants should assist them to become energy efficient or to support the removal of pews to create flexible spaces

Provision for active travel:

- Improve the footpath network by developing a proper strategy which considers where people might want to go and might be persuaded to walk instead of driving
- Providing alternatives to car use for school runs, shopping and commuting, including cycle lanes and safe pedestrian routes. Current provision is woeful
- There is a pressing need for greater connectivity within the network of public rights of way in Uttlesford through the creation of new multi-user tracks (bridleways) to encourage residents and visitors to walk, cycle, ride and drive horses both to promote mental and physical health and to encourage sustainable travel to work and school
- A well-connected recreational network is vital so that ALL users can enjoy - including equestrians
- The district relies on the countryside and PROW network of footpaths for allowing people to get out walking, however many of these footpaths are in a very poor state and are virtually impassable during the winter months
- A 'country path' in Dunmow is used by developers as part of their 'selling strategy' as a walking cycling route, but has had little investment and is now suffering as a result of this and increased footfall. It is flooded and boggy in parts and does not encourage walking for any but the surest footed

Ensure all year round use of public spaces:

- The local park in Dunmow is a quagmire during the winter due to increased footfall and does not have a continual path network thus making it virtually impossible to cross with a pushchair or young children
- New developments must be made to contribute to the existing open spaces to improve and sustain them for the increased usage, and also provide additional open space that is suitable for year round use with suitably surfaced paths/tracks

Put health and wellbeing at the heart of planning decisions:

- If development can only be achieved at the expense of poor air quality, dangerous roads, an unhealthy sedentary lifestyle and unsustainable energy usage in contravention of the UK's commitment to achieving net zero, it should not happen
- This means no developments until there are much better public transport links to where people work, meaning frequent and affordable bus and cycle links to train stations to Cambridge and London
- Developments must be required to have ground source heat pumps instead of carbon-emitting boilers, solar panels instead of cheap roofing, a frequent bus route and/or cycle lane within easy reach and preferably be built on brownfield not greenfield sites
- Large houses identical in size and style are built close to each other in strict rows are adverse to health and wellbeing. Much better care must be taken in design, layout and space in such developments of the rate of, mental illness is not to rise. Look at the design in Uttlesford already there. Use that as a model. Look at the nature of the place you want to develop. Don't allow these monstrous new developments. Mental illness and other related, problems will soar if development continues in this way. If

you want to create unified communities, you need very small diverse homes to compliment not overwhelm what is already there.

Ensure facilities promised are delivered:

- Where developers are required to provide amenities such as tree planting, playgrounds, playing fields and so on these should be put in place before building commences
- Any developer reneging on commitments, or planting trees that subsequently die (for example) should not be allowed to develop any more housing in the district until remedied.

Further enable healthy eating:

- Markets with fresh fruit and veg, fish are a positive attraction. Saffron Walden market is outstanding, Dunmow and Thaxted provide opportunities to buy and eat well. Encourage a market 'offer' in other centres e.g. Stansted, Felsted, Newport
- Encourage farmer's markets or farm shops
- Events like Fete de la Musique combine arts, food and retail for residents and visitors
- Allocate allotments in new developments where demand can outstrip supply
- Healthy eating and eating less meat is linked to climate change. Uttlesford does not appear to have any vegetarian or vegan restaurants
- Child-obesity is rising – are fast-food outlets restricted near schools?

Provision for people in need:

- Can schools have more funding to offer poorer school children: breakfast clubs, milk at breaks & affordable nutritious healthy school lunches, run non-for-profit but for the benefit of seeing children grow up healthy?
- Poverty may leave parents no time or money to feed their children well. As a society we should ensure that all children get good nutritious food while in school
- Covid19 mental health children's crisis: can schools receive funding for a mental health specialist to share across a group of schools? All children would benefit.
- UDC Wellbeing Index: an Index could show the level of our wellbeing resources in parishes, to help identify what's missing. Perhaps this can be done by looking at Health & Wellbeing Plans prepared by parishes
- The TCPA presentation identified that loneliness, poor diet, poor quality homes, and poor environments damage our communities. These issues hurt poorer people most. Unemployment and poverty are rising; working poor may earn under £10/hour. The local plan should facilitate healthy lifestyles
- Encourage employers to pay workers at least their appropriate minimum wage, and preferably a more generous living wage

Design for mental wellbeing:

- There are two key elements – decent living conditions and social contact
- Housing mix should therefore be carefully considered in the Local Plan.
- At the lower end of the affordability scale provide more smaller, affordable units, but with gardens, which are a great mental stimulus
- Social contact will come about through the formation of local interest groups. They require facilities to meet so there needs to be a strategy for community buildings. Most villages have one but they are often not very inviting!

Place specific:

Stansted:

- Good range of services but little room for expansion of village centre
- Organisations offer health walks. There is the Romeera Centre and 3 allotment sites
- Not much open space, culture or leisure facilities for its size
- Residents travel to Bishop's Stortford because it is nearer
- Little provision for team sports
- A football pitch and cycle track/ Safe cycle lanes are needed
- No open space in Foresthall Park and nothing west of B1383
- Footways and bridleways provide the only open space.
- Benches are needed around the village on which to rest, sit and talk
- There are no public WCs.

It is acknowledged that Uttlesford is already ahead of the rest of the county in being a place where people are more prosperous, tend to have a good lifestyle, better health and employment.

Other considerations

Request to consider Neighbourhood Plans (NP):

- Felsted NP
- Thaxted NP

[NB Great Dunmow also has a made Neighbourhood Plan]

CSF response to Theme 5 Consultation Summary
Leisure, culture & healthy lifestyles
10 March 2021

Leisure:

Equestrian – Please check contribution of equestrian to contribution to the economy.

Sporting activities for women and girls – this was made in relation to equestrian.
This should be examined for all sporting activities, because of obesity issues.

It is important to have low cost, or at least some low cost, or low cost for those in need to have access to fitness classes.

Hatfield Forest under unsustainable pressure will continue. Easton Park would be an ideal alternative. Agreement to preserve it as an open space. Don't know if councillors intend to respect that agreement or not.

Culture:

Tourism is funded by Saffron Walden town council, if we solve that there would be better coverage across the district.

I went to a community listening event yesterday, 95% of Uttlesford is white – there are black, Asian and minority residents – should be an audit of the history and contribution of abolition of slavery here.

Create a welcoming and universal atmosphere here. Could also have diversity events. Celebrate the BAME of Uttlesford. Could research the history of for eg Saffron Walden and the role of the Quakers in the abolition of slavery.

Using pubs as a community hub.

e.g. Coach & Horses in Newport – this is used for this and the garden is important and we need to keep them and protect them.

I wanted to second the comment of multi-cultural events. Like Cumbria, we were at risk of being a mono-culture. Need to meet needs of people who may come here, not just the people who live here already, may require some community capacity building.

I completely agree on the importance of culture, multi-culturalism and the richness of our culture. In ancient Greece it was compulsory for everyone to attend the theatre.

Some areas have put culture at the heart of their Local Plans.

Healthy Lifestyles:

Some very good stuff given only 25 responses and some very good ideas
Debateable how many ideas will make it into policy. Many village halls, it would be useful to have a refurbishment budget. Churches too, it would be a good way forward to encourage greater usage.

Cultural venues are easy to build, the trick is sustaining it once it is built. The shared facilities are clever, this massively cuts the cost.

Stansted – there are no public toilets. They are critical. Who is responsible for providing them?

There are no public toilets in Newport either, even at the station. People say it's not necessary, but I'm not sure that is correct.

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group

Date:

Title: Feedback on Consultation on theme 6:
Biodiversity

Thursday, 29 April
2021

**Report
Author:** Stephen Miles, Local Plans and New
Communities Manager
smiles@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. This report provides feedback on comments received during the community consultation including through the Community Stakeholder Forum (CSF) on the First Consultation (Issues and Options) Theme 6: Biodiversity.

Recommendations

2. That members note: -
 - the consultation responses and the Forum's views,
 - potential actions to address issues,
 - that the consultation ended on 21st April 2021, but no final recommendations will be made until all comments have been considered including to all nine themes and a comprehensive planning response is required.
3. That members provide further commentary for officers to consider when making final recommendations, and for referral to the Forum for information.
4. None at this stage in the Local Plan preparation process.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

- None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation with the community is ongoing through social media channels, newsletters the CSF as and through public meetings,
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	virtual and actual looking to the future.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Access to healthy living and the role of biodiversity in this is a key plank of the Local Plan and ensuring equality of access to such amenity and Nature will be one of its underlying objectives. The Plan itself will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.
Health and Safety	The Local Plan will be subject to a safety audit
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	Biodiversity is a key component in addressing climate change because of its role in mitigating carbon emissions, carbon storage and keeping in balance the natural ecosystems, as well as providing healthy outdoor places of value to communities. Local Plan policy will address these issues.
Ward-specific impacts	This report relates across the whole District
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

Background

7. In preparation for the formal consultation on the draft Local Plan the Council has been consulting on a series of nine themes since October 2020. The Community Stakeholder Forum was set up with a range of representation to focus discussion and to elaborate on a wider variety of views on each topic. The aim is to inform and to help encourage debate and consideration of each topic following from which officers will use the Local Plan to address issues raised.
8. The sixth theme was on the topic of Biodiversity. This was added later in the programme at the specific request of CSF and members of the public because of its importance in the landscape and rural economy of the District. It was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10th February 2021. The Forum heard a presentation by Dr Andrew Lovett, Director of Learning & Teaching in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia. The presentation and a video of the Forum are available on the [website](#).

9. Following the Forum, the theme was open for public consultation, and comments made on the website over ensuing four-week period reported back to the Forum on 10th March. The Forum discussion was structured around four question areas:
- i. The value of biodiversity to our quality of life – how can we protect and improve our natural and green spaces?
 - ii. The role of biodiversity in addressing climate change – how can careful land management the countryside and villages and towns encourage biodiversity?
 - iii. Thinking strategically across the District boundaries and local areas – how can we connect nature areas?
 - iv. How can we use the Local Plan to manage, protect, enhance our natural assets; how could the local Plan provide for Nature?

Summary of consultation responses

10. There were 20 respondents who made a wide range of pertinent points summarised in the Appendix. When this was fed back to the Forum, they made additional points:
- i. The importance of an integrated approach to land management and the role of landowners and farmers in enhancing biodiversity
 - ii. The desire to consider the value of water to Nature as a whole and particularly where there is summertime scarcity (as well as localised flooding)
 - iii. The importance of soils and the soil structure to biodiversity and the need to protect this in considering types of development proposals.

Officer comments

11. The persistent emphasis made during this consultation on the rural context of Uttlesford and the value placed on its open space, access to nature and underlying appreciation of its role in climate change mitigation brings to the fore the need for sensitive and integrated land use and management planning policies. The ability to measure existing situations, apply emerging standards of environmental net gain and introduce stewardship of places of value will need to be considered carefully. It will be important to apply enforcement to the implementation of the policies to ensure that developers' strategies and proposals are enacted, funded, and maintained for many years.
12. There are key areas of work either underway within the Local Plan preparation or being considered to assist this:
- Mapping the areas of biodiversity value
 - Preparing a strategy for Biodiversity to include enhancement, connectivity, protection across the District

- Policies to devise ways to integrate biodiversity into development proposals whether this is for habitats or individual species, and to create opportunities to enhance nature potential such as green roofs
- Understanding methods of measuring biodiversity to assist monitoring its enhancement and 'net gain'
- Preparing a water management strategy looking at the Water Cycle and courses from a climate change and biodiversity perspective as well as water as a human resource
- Looking at biodiversity and its impact from solar farms and other more intrusive uses of the countryside
- Examples good biodiversity practice and policy making in the UK and further afield
- Exploring the connections with open space strategy, sports and recreation, and healthy lifestyles to ensure developments are appraised from these multiple but integrated perspectives
- How access to and protection of valued places of biodiversity value such as Hatfield Forest as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR), and further afield can be achieved, addressing to the Habitats Regulations
- Consideration of the need and opportunity for a new country park functioning also as a nature reserve
- Consider the links to the local economy in the green business and skills sector, rural crafts, and farm management.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That sufficient protection of local places of biodiversity value or under threat is not achievable	2	3	The Local Plan, working with local communities, will seek to designate areas special areas of value to be enhanced or protected in development proposals. This will require policy backing

That inadequate ecological or habitat compensation is not achieved where development adversely impacts on areas with biodiversity value	1	3	Locally policy will require on/off-site mitigation and enhancement measures and appropriate land management to maintain biodiversity value through policy detail and landowner agreements
Difficulties in measuring Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) may impact on its achievement	1	2	The Government is devising metrics to assess BNG and this will be a policy requirement supported by national planning advice and environmental legislation

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

Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 6 Biodiversity February 2021

▪ **Introduction**

- The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 10 February and the theme was then open for comment.
- Comments received by Wednesday 10 March are summarised below and common themes are shown in the diagram.
- These comments will be presented back to the Community Stakeholder Forum on 24th March and Local Plan Leadership Group on a date to be confirmed.
- Comments received after 10 March up to the close of consultation on 21 April 2021 will be brought together in a document summarising comments from all nine themes, the Council's response and how the issues raised in the comments will be reflected in the Draft Local Plan.
- Between 10 February and 10 March 2021, 20 people, WildThaxted, a major developer's representative and a Parish Council responded to the theme.
- The general feel for topic can be expressed in one respondent's quote from the Dasgupta Review : *“Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all depend on our most precious asset: Nature” such that we need to “Change our measures of economic success to guide us on a more sustainable path”.*

- **What we have been told so far**
- The following is a summary of what people said about how we can create and enhance natural assets and biodiversity across the district.

- To read all the representations in full please go to the [Consultation Portal](#).

- **Summary of Comments**

- 1) Environmental legislation
- 2) Developer obligations: Biodiversity targets and net value enhancement
- 3) Local Plan policy and site designations
- 4) Restoring and enhancing biodiversity
- 5) Road verges
- 6) Stewardship and agricultural land practice
- 7) Access to Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- 8) Creation of Parkland Flooding and Water Control
- 9) Tree Planting
- 10) Engaging Farmers and Land Ownerships
- 11) Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plans
- 12) Education, Advice, Support Services
- 13) Solar farms
- 14) Light pollution
- 15) Detailed response on water management

- **(1) Environmental legislation**

- The excellent presentation by Andrew Lovett highlighted key issues in the context of pending changes in legislation before the local plan is finalised:
 - NPPF and the Environment Bill,
 - changing political scene e.g. Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (notably Protecting our Natural Environment).
 - Environment Bill and Local Nature Recovery Strategies/Environmental Land Management Scheme

- **(2) Developer Obligations: Biodiversity targets and net value enhancement**

- Supportive of the role that biodiversity has in reducing the environmental impact of developments and mitigating climate change, with integration of green spaces, nature, and wildlife into new developments,
- Slow down the approval of new developments to protect land; and insist that large scale development schemes include green areas, paths for walking and reduce concrete over green spaces
- The best way to maintain biodiversity is to restrict development to brownfield sites
- Encourage developers to regard biodiversity seriously not tokenistic e.g. allotment, benches, a few trees, with any grassed area treated as a contribution to "green space" even if it is unsuitable as natural habitat, therefore incentivise the provision of high quality green infrastructure, improve biodiversity and integrating properly green

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infrastructure including parks, playing fields, woodlands and gardens, sustainable drainage features and planting alongside roads and streets. Its multiple benefits include a strong sense of place, water management, reduce flood risk, and mitigate the overall impact of development and enhance biodiversity.

- Classify green space according to its biodiversity value in new planning applications with weighting attached to its quality
- Ecological reports must be prepared by truly independent experts and cover the total impact on soils, water sources, animals, and plants. Developers or their ecology consultants should be required to use the Biodiversity Net Gain Metric Calculator available via Natural England (published August 2020) or explain why it is inappropriate in their case.
- Developers should be required to match building acreage with woodland acreage, owned and managed by local communities
- Developers must give consideration of movement of wildlife, hedgehogs ('hedgehog highway' linking gardens with appropriately sized fencing holes.), shrews, birds etc which move between gardens; incorporate ponds for fishing, stocked with British species; tank rainwater run-off
- Require Developers to include more greenery in landscape proposals e.g. green walls, green roofs, hedges, double native tree cover with mandated policy on the amount of greenery so there is a net gain and extended to ALL development of whatever size
- Role of Master Planning to ensure connectivity between habitats, presence of existing natural resources with a presumption of protection made for them and clarity over definition of a “net gain” in biodiversity.
- **(3) Local Plan Site Designations, Policy and Protection**
 - supportive of Uttlesford’s approach to create and enhance natural assets through strategic policies within the Local Plan, and as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure environmental objectives are delivered to meet the needs of new and existing communities and future generations
 - a multifunctional approach should be used by Uttlesford District Council towards biodiversity and green infrastructure to deliver enhanced biodiversity, nature improvements whilst also providing benefits to sustainable development e.g. SUDS pond for drainage, wildlife habitat and an attractive outlook and amenity space. Use planning policy to secure and mandate this multi-functional green space within and beyond development sites e.g. homes to be within 0.5 km of a quality green space.

- Strategy- There needs to be a team tasked at creating a proactive and restorative 'big plan' up front and in advance of development proposals , identifying all aspects of nature from hedgerows to overgrown alleyway, wasteland, existing corridors, hedgehog routes, frog crossings and deer crossways. This will also help to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity overall
- Councils should adopt rewilding policies and identify suitable sites for increasing biodiversity
- The Local Plan must specify how biodiversity targets will be measured and differentiate between poor quality green space and high value habitats,
- LPA to seek greater powers to enforce biodiversity targets.
- Encourage small rural industries e.g. using coppiced timbers
- The Local Plan should identify new sites for nature reserves, parklands, and pathways that could form natural highways
- to preserve and protect as much of the existing environment as possible e.g. Hatfield Forest and ancient woodland, Chalky Meadow and Mosscofts Meadow in Thaxted following local community documentation surveys
- Uttlesford has a paucity of designated wildlife sites, with nearest Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Discovery Centre 30 miles away from Thaxted, and no bird hide on any nature reserve site within the District. Identify sites of importance and designate them in the Local Plan with policies on sensitivity and capacity to absorb development.
- well-connected to other green spaces and networks. By ensuring that landscape areas and green spaces connect to the existing network of green infrastructure elements (e.g. waterways and wildlife corridors) at a strategic and local level allows for a joined up and complimentary approach to both nature and development.
- Stop building on farmland
- Stop the expansion of Stansted
- **(4)Restoring and Enhancing Biodiversity**
 - restore habitats for species once common in our areas e.g. suitable for Yellow Hammers, Hedgehogs and Great Crested Newts, and develop ecological corridors to join up existing spaces, allowing wildlife, pollinator friendly planting, vertebrates,

small mammals and birds to move and expand their habitats, 500m wide and to include farmland and hedgerows.

- establish new areas of woodland managed to provide income e.g. coppicing and contribute to carbon sequestration
- Carbon should be used as a value and not just monetary values so viability and the assessment of development proposals should be considered from a carbon sequestration or net reduction basis. It is crucial to develop and agree the metric which has yet to be finalised nationally.

▪ (5) Roads and Verges

- Cross boundary working on Nature with adjoining authorities e.g. major roads can be crossed by tunnels
- Wildflower planting on verges within Highways adopting appropriate management practices, as well as along private roads
- Broaden the protected verges initiative. ECC to formulate specific policies as to how they should manage their verges with a view to improving habitat quality
- Consider wildflower planting in all public areas including school fields, cemeteries etc

▪ (6) Stewardship and Agricultural Land Practice

- Sustainable stewardship practices should be encouraged in respect of trees, hedgerows, field margins, wildlife cover, ponds.
- Farmland to adopt sustainable practices with high proportion of Natural Green Infrastructure, mandated through planning or government policy using best scientific research to advise.
- Developers should finance and set up experienced land management company with adequate funding and not expect the residents' management company to be responsible. Should be agreed pre-construction.
- Proper land maintenance essential to avoid failed systems with flooding on the site or neighbouring ones, damage to habitats.

- Keep as much undisturbed topsoil as possible, be seeded with appropriate wildflowers rather than turf and managed accordingly. Soil to be tested regularly and be used to maximise carbon sequestration.
- **(7) Access to Open Space and Green Infrastructure**
 - Shortage of open space in Uttlesford, (UDC Open Space Assessment Report, February 2019, and Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy of 2020), with heavy dependence on Hatfield Forest and hence advocate the preservation and restoration of Easton Park for the wellbeing of local communities
 - Variable distribution of publicly open space with more Green Infrastructure in the south such as woodlands and grass than in the north with more agriculture, shown in the ANGST standard (Accessible Natural Greenspace).
 - Public Rights of Way give poor access to GI for disabled and people with reduced ability or time to walk far (e.g. poorer, key or shift workers. So, in areas below the ANGST benchmark of 4, UDC should prioritise the development of a local park, with green spaces, flower meadows, and access to nature accessible for all to enjoy.
 - **(8) Creation of Parkland**
 - Support the idea to create a park on the proposed Easton Park ‘new town’ site and in any case its restoration for the wellbeing of local communities. It is an ancient medieval park, one of the largest in Essex with presumed 1939 planning agreement to protect it (*Note from UDC- legal opinion currently being sought on details and parameters of this*). Easton Park is encircled by ancient woodlands, High Wood, Stone Hall, The Lays, The Gardens of Easton Lodge and the Conservation Area which together provide a wildlife habitat and open space with potential for the Essex Forest Initiative, The Queen’s Green Canopy initiative to mark the Platinum Jubilee, and flagship for Uttlesford and Essex.
 - Identifying land in the Local Plan for the creation of another public park in Uttlesford to relieve the pressure on Hatfield Forest.
 - The Lawton Review stresses the need for ‘more and bigger sites to be protected for nature conservation’ as the most effective way to protect biodiversity but relatively few opportunities for larger sites.
 - **(9) Flooding and Water Control**

- (See also full response at end of this paper on water management)

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- Requirement for a proactive (not reactive) drainage and flood management plan in all new and existing developments to counter regular flooding of many roads and villages due to blocked drains. Likely to get worse because of weakening Gulf stream and stormier British winters
 - New developments to have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) mandated in planning policy. Must be built exactly to design and maintained for the life of the development by an appropriate body clearly responsible, funded and committed (see (6) above)
 - Depletion of the River Cam biodiversity because of pollution from sewage discharge by water companies (work done by CURAT, raising awareness of the continually reducing water levels in the upper River Cam chalk stream)
 - Consider rainwater and greywater use with inadequate water supply and pressure of more housing
 - Natural water management by storing water in woodland and flood plains to release a constant, significant flow e.g. alongside the railway when entering Newport from the south; should undertake a feasibility study by experts in suitable locations
 - Water companies and water pollution to be closely monitored especially of the River Cam
- **(10)Tree Planting**
- All developments to include significant tree and hedge planting programmes and to ensure that their planting and ongoing management are properly enforced. Developers should be required to include a plan to enhance the biodiversity to include replacement X2 of any removed trees or hedges
 - Should require a proper management plan and adequate resourcing to be made available to maintain tree planting
 - tree planting must be in the right places, with the right trees so as not to be detrimental to productive farmland. Impact of deer culling?
 - Engage Essex Forest Initiative to increase planting across sectors
 - Maintain distance from Ancient Woodland like Alsa Wood Elsenham and Hatfield Forest. is under extreme pressure but still UDC allows development along its boundary

- UDC to explore using LIDAR tool as a project to map of trees and hedgerows as presented by the speaker. Necessary where developers might chop trees down prior to planning permission. Need, from a biodiversity (and Climate Emergency) viewpoint, to preserve mature trees which are proven to cleanse air of CO2
- **(11)Engaging Farmers and Land Ownerships**
 - As custodians of land they must be supported and work in partnership if we are to hope to increase biodiversity because agricultural actions have a big impact on biodiversity.
 - Need clarity on who owns green infrastructure in Uttlesford and whether it is publicly accessible. Footpaths are not always well signposted, and woodland is often kept private.
- **(12)Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plans**
 - Neighbourhood Plans should include a register of natural assets and policies on protection and enhancement of local resources.
 - Engagement role for Local people and nature groups in maintaining and monitoring progress.
 - Every Parish to have a biodiversity action plan and ensure they are executed. They would undertake a nature audit identifying important sites using local wildlife enthusiasts looking for opportunities to enhance, protect or amalgamate sites. Works could be undertaken as a part of a policy linked to s.106 obligations
 - Reintroduce incentives for '*Town in Bloom*' activities encouraging pollinators
 - Capture local enthusiasts and development local biodiversity engagement programmes to involve local people in protection and enhancement projects.
 - Ref Made Neighbourhood Plan (<https://www.felsted-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Felsted-NP.pdf>), which was a major project spanning several years
- **(13)Education, Advice, Support Services**
 - Engage with an organisation like Plantlife, (<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk>) or WildEast who is influential among farmers (<https://www.wildeast.co.uk>)?
 - Provide education and advice on green roofs, vertical planting, suitable trees etc.

- Educate all residents and anyone working within UDC area on value of biodiversity, use campaigns, education, competitions
- **(14)Solar Farms**
 - should only be allowed if they enhance biodiversity and treated as temporary solutions with solar panels designed to be removable in future.
 - solar farms and their competition with food production could be alleviated with perimeter trees and hedgerows, wildflower planting between panels to benefit insect diversification and bird life and reduce carbon emissions so long as the scheme is properly managed.
 - stop 'planting' solar panels on agricultural land but should be mandatory on all new housing and all commercial property.)
 - consider Solar Community Interest Companies that generate energy for the local communities.
 - **(15)Light pollution**
 - reduce excessive light pollution by reducing the output of lamp standards; LEDs can be turned down with no detrimental effects to public safety
 - exclusion of all non-essential external lighting.

- (16) *In addition there was a full response about local flooding and amelioration measures from one resident who said, in response to our question and copied verbatim here (summarised above):*

Question: Thinking about the issues and questions raised in the diagrams below, use this page to tell us how we can create and enhance natural assets and biodiversity across the district. If you wish you can send us a photograph or image illustrating your response.

B1383 Flooding.

Introduction.

There has recently been regular flooding or pockets of standing water on the B1383 between Sparrows End and Newport. As the road is a major route through Uttlesford, it has several key functions; local traffic, an alternative route when there are problems with the M11 between Stumps Cross and Birchanger, and probably the most significant route for emergency vehicles servicing the local area and for their access to the M11.

Whilst there has been exceptional rainfall over the last two or three months that has caused the flooding, all predictions are that this will happen more often in the future. Under these circumstances it would be understandable if the County Council were investigating the possibility of improvements to drainage along this stretch of road.

There seems to be a general acceptance that the flooding happened because the River Cam 'burst its banks'. The Cam did not burst its banks and it did not come anywhere near the height of the road. I live in between the river and the road (approximately 100 metres from the flooding) and would know about it if it had. The water that flooded the road drained off the field between the road and the railway line (in addition to the rainfall directly on to the road).

'Improving' drainage from the road will speed up the flow of this water to the River Cam, increasing the flow of the river, and add to problems downstream in Littlebury, Little Chesterford and Great Chesterford. Making this statement without local knowledge, it appears to an outsider that Ickelton and Hinxton are less affected by increased river levels.

Accompanying the water down from the field is a large quantity of silt, which is the main part of the problem with flooding as the existing drains become blocked. Large amounts of mud are deposited on the road, requiring work by the council even after the water has drained off. Any drainage system would need to address this problem.

Credit is due to English Heritage for managing the flow of the river through Audley End (and thereby protecting the villages further downstream) by allowing the Cam to flood over the extensive grounds at the front of the house. It is a natural flood plain which regulates the flow of the river.

Any work to the drainage for the road will almost inevitably mean extensive works to the road itself. As these are all eye watering expensive, there will be an inevitable reduction in works elsewhere due to finite resources. There may be an opportunity to address the issue in a more creative way that fits with the Government's ambitions regarding the environment.

Given the cost of initial works and ongoing maintenance costs, an alternative way of preventing, rather than curing the flooding should be investigated. If a prevention option *could* address the

national and local government aspirations to make a step change in sustainability and environmental improvements, plus a significant saving on on-going maintenance costs, surely it should be considered and investigated.

Any journey around the area during the recent heavy rainfall, particularly in the Wimbish, Debden, Henham and Widdington areas, plus the high ground around Langley, would have demonstrated why these areas are the source of the rivers Cam, Chelmer and Stort*. In these areas, water is stored in woodland, ponds, ditches, and fields, which presumably gradually drains off over time to feed these rivers, and possibly adds to the aquifer from where some domestic water is sourced. This water storage is significantly diminished when drainage is used to protect arable land at lower levels.

A recently produced document by the friends of the Upper Cam (known as CURAT - curat.org.uk) was an excellent summary of the challenges to the health of the Cam due to reduced flows. As well as abstraction, the rapid release of rainwater from the surrounding countryside is causing an irregular flow. Irregular means short periods of excessive flow, but more often that the water levels are too low to sustain the biodiversity expected in a chalk stream (yes, the upper reaches of the Cam are designated as a chalk stream).

It is well known that woodland and uncultivated land retain water and release water much more slowly than cultivated land. Walking the hills in the area are a clear demonstration of this release in action – all the areas where drainage channels (as opposed to holding areas) have been dug have resulted in flooding further down, usually, but not always, in the fields or roads at a lower level. Farming is a vital part of our local economy, and a very significant part of the future of our environmental ambitions. The government is recognising this by moving subsidies and grants from production (or non-production) to incentives to farm in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

The proportion of farmland in Uttlesford is significantly higher, at over 66% of green space, than the rest of Essex (the lowest being under 11%), whilst the proportion of accessible green spaces in Uttlesford is the lowest in Essex, under 14% of total land area. This compares with, at the other end of the scale, 49%. (This information extremely well laid out by Prof Andrew Lovett of UEA at the recent Uttlesford Council Biodiversity Forum Theme 6). Obviously, the main driver of these variations will be the suitability of land for farming, but an attempt at rebalancing will not significantly affect overall productivity.

If a fair price were offered for the land to the west of the B1383 between Newport and Sparrows End and up to the railway line (if it was 50 acres at, say, £7,000 per acre, it would be £350,000...how much would the works to the road and ongoing maintenance cost?), a little bit of earthworks – creating a few ponds - lots of volunteer labour to rewild the area, a potential solution to the flooding the B1383 could result in a wonderful amenity for the people of Saffron Walden, Newport and the surrounding areas.

Planting young, bare root trees would be cost effective and achieve the maximum carbon uptake during the growing phase. The creation of the new wild area would provide innumerable project and forest school opportunities for all schools, colleges, and nursery schools, plus be a community activity which we all need. It would be part of regulating the flow of water down to the Cam, rather than adding to the volatility. It isn't a game changer, but it will be part of the solution rather than worsening the problem. Doing nothing because we can only do a little is not an option.

A track through the reclaimed area to Audley End station, carrying on to the cycle route up to Saffron Walden, would encourage cyclists and pedestrians who are currently unwilling to take their life in

their hands and risk riding or walking alongside the traffic currently speeding between Sparrows End and Newport.

*some suggest the source is to the west of Stansted Mountfitchet.

Summary.

This piece is written from a position of little knowledge, which is obviously a dangerous thing. The prompt has been the extensive experience of cycling and walking around the area and seeing the impact of the exceptional rainfall in different areas and environmental conditions.

Some excellent work was done by CURAT, raising awareness of the continually reducing water levels in the upper River Cam, which also reminded me that the upper Cam is officially designated as a chalk stream – no surprise when looking at the quarry to the south of the village.

Storing water in woodland and flood plains will release a constant, significant flow, which is going to be an increasingly important part of our environmental and sustainability ambitions.

We already have a perfect example of this effect of natural water management, which is alongside the railway when entering Newport from the south. It may or may not be unrealistic to expect rewilding this area to solve the flooding problem on the B1383, but at worst, any costs would be justified by having restored accessible natural habitat. Should it be successful, there are many opportunities to create more of these areas.

- Surely a feasibility study by experts would be worthwhile, especially if major works are being considered?

Agenda Item 6

Committee: Strategic Infrastructure Development Group
Local Plan Leadership Group

Date: 29 April 2021

Title: Decarbonisation and Water Management: Scope of Work

Report Author: Lois Bowser, Principal Planner
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Summary

1. The report sets out the issues relating to and the proposed scope of work to address how the Local Plan can address climate change mitigation, resilience, adaptation and achieving net zero carbon and water resource management in preparing the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan. The Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group received a presentation from Greater Cambridge on 1st March on decarbonising the electricity grid and in the context of addressing climate change how this was being integrated in the local plan process including assessing their emerging spatial strategy. Uttlesford Members share similar strategic climate change ambitions and as advised by the Project Review Group are also looking outward to partnership working and alignment on key areas of infrastructure. This report recommends an approach to addressing climate change issues within the context of both this wider perspective and what is feasible within the parameters of the local plan process

Recommendations

Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group

2. (1) The Group is invited to comment on the contents of the report on the scope of work proposed
3. (2) To agree that Brief be prepared to commission consultants to undertake work on establishing baseline, targets, and appropriate policy areas integral to climate change, water resources and decarbonisation matters
4. (3) To consider how to work strategically including potential joint working with the Greater Cambridge Authority and other strategic organisations as relevant

Local Plan Leadership Group

5. To note the contents of the report.

Financial Implications

6. The approved budget for the Local Plan 2021-22 includes sufficient provision for the commission and associated work as part of the Council's approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Background Papers

- Uttlesford Local Plan Project Initiation Document
- Uttlesford Local Development Scheme
- Council approved Interim Climate Change informal policy, February 2021

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	The draft Local Plan timetable builds in stages for representations on the draft Local Plan but this work will need to be completed by the end of this year.
Community Safety	N/a
Equalities	N/a
Health and Safety	There is no direct implication but the work on water management will cover scarcity and localised flooding that may have a health or safety impact.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The preparation of the local plan is a statutory duty and must meet legal tests and comply with regulations.
Sustainability	The focus of proposed study is sustainability and the mitigation of climate change; it explores how the local plan can contribute to the corporate goal.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

8. On 20 October 2020 the Cabinet approved the Uttlesford Local Development Scheme and as we approach the end of the initial Issues and Options/Call for Sites consultation we are shortly to move into the next stage in the preparation of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan. In relation to climate change we require an evidence base to support the Local Plan to help ensure that our District's settlements, connectivity, public realm, landscape and the essentially rural nature of much of its economy and land use respond

to the Climate Emergency and deliver net zero carbon development. The Council's climate emergency ambition is to achieve net zero carbon across the district by 2040 though this needs to be viewed in the context of the Government's announcement on 20th April 2021 that their Carbon target is to be brought forward by 15 years and that there is to be a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035. Government has highlighted electric car travel, low carbon heating and renewable energy through electricity as some of the key planks to this ambition.

9. Consultants will need to reflect this. Officers would use local and national targets to inform future SPDs and guidance notes such as refinement of the informal SPD on climate change, future Neighbourhood Plans, and crucially local plan policy on topics such as decarbonisation, green infrastructure, water management and renewable energy.
10. Moreover we should also recognise that we need to look beyond the boundaries of the District in relation to green and carbon infrastructure, and to explore where working with other authorities in the sub-region, at Essex and particularly Greater Cambridge will add value and robustness to our approach. To this end officers are actively engaged in the Essex Climate Change Commission, and have a meeting arranged with Greater Cambridge to explore joint working on these issues.
11. An essential part of infrastructure and a particular issue for the northern and western parts of the district is water management: its supply, transport, storage, river course flows and extraction, usage, disposal, and underlying infrastructure including technologically SMART monitoring. The Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) will address the infrastructure deficit and demand issues. However, there is a wider concern over the *management* of land and water and at a wider scale to produce a plan that is environmentally sound and achieves its climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience objectives.

Overview of a Strategic Approach

12. In order to use the Local Plan to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience we recognise that we need to embrace working with stakeholders, communities and co-operate with strategic partners to consider several issues:
 - Through the Local Plan to secure a sustainable spatial distribution of growth in the District that optimises use of materials, water, travel patterns to reduce carbon impact whilst achieve viable delivery and practical, timely, funded associated energy and water infrastructure. This may use decarbonisation as a criterion in the preferred options assessment reflecting the approach in operation at Greater Cambridge.
 - Have regard to the RTPI advice in "*Planning for a Smart Energy Future*" that "the pace of technological innovation suggests planning strategies should avoid prescribing technologies, so as to avoid limiting the use of emerging and future technologies that best fit local need, opportunity and economic

viability”. Our proposed Strategy should allow for future development phases and technological advance that will dovetail with the IDP.

- the regulation of development from a climate change perspective, beyond basic Building Regulations to help meet tough targets (more quickly) together with a conditional imposition of a monitoring and review process to ensure compliance and effectiveness.
- how to facilitate commercial scale renewable energy and solar infrastructure and improvements to support the grid such as energy storage, community networks, rural economic diversification.
- How to ‘offset’ any remaining emissions from new build where developer contributions could be spent on retrofitting existing buildings, heritage areas, public realm as part of a locally based offsetting scheme, possibly in partnership with a scheme with the County or Greater Cambridge?
- Assess the potential for the designation of areas that will serve to sequester carbon, in addition to enhancing biodiversity and water management, working with landowners and environmental managers.

13. In consideration of the preferred spatial option regarding carbon impact and appropriate sound policies, the Local Plan should address the following issues for which we need consultancy advice:

- i. The need to apply a targeted and evidenced set of viable policies that minimise the use of embodied and operational carbon across sectors including renewable energy generation for heating/cooling, and power, waste control, transport, building fabric, all water usage, green infrastructure. These policies will embrace those relating to health and wellbeing, land management, biodiversity, and digital technology
- ii. The requirement to reduce carbon in existing stock and to maximise carbon sequestration e.g. through tree planting. Retrofitting existing buildings and particularly in heritage areas will rely on parallel programmes of activity, grant funding and the cooperation of land and property owners. However, where new development proposals adjoin or encompass existing buildings there is opportunity to address the ambition to achieve net zero carbon more holistically, working with developers
- iii. How to ensure that not only are new buildings and public streets and spaces designed from a net zero carbon perspective but also their implementation, system monitoring, operation and system maintenance. In our approach to the local and ‘green’ adequate skills and companies with the know how to implement and maintain new systems and to drive and invest in new technology. This background and supporting hard and soft infrastructure will approach beyond the District boundaries and but needs to be planned for and promoted through the Local Plan and strategic working

Water Management

14. The consultancy commission would need to look at water management from a water catchment perspective, working with water companies, the Environment Agency and Greater Cambridge regarding the River Cam/Granta.

15. The work would cover:

- Water supply v demand
- Potable water supply and efficiency of use
- Surface water management, SUDs, and local Flood Risk
- Rainwater harvesting – domestic, commercial, highway, farmland
- Wastewater (foul)– collection, disposal, treatment capacity
- River and ground water quality, abstraction, wildlife
- National standards and water company guidance/strategy
- New or upgraded infrastructure, costed, location
- Planning policy and accommodating growth
- The extent to which the district could become ‘water neutral’ with no net increase in water demand between the current use and once development over the plan period has taken place i.e. technology needed to deliver water-efficient development, availability, funding, feasibility, and crafting policy to enshrine this.
- Potential water retrofitting programmes to match mandatory national standards for new housing development
- Water needs by agriculture for green/blue abstracted and grey water uses in an integrated water management strategy- water capture, rainwater harvesting, flood mitigation, targeted irrigation techniques, drought tolerant crop types etc and how planning policy can encourage this.

Draft Scope of Commission

16. Officers would ensure close liaison with the IDP consultants whose brief includes an assessment of new or adapted infrastructure to take account of climate change matters. This Brief would require:

- i. A context review of literature, innovative approaches from utility providers and good practice examples on the ground and other local plan policy such as the new London Plan. This will set out the role of the local plan in delivering net zero carbon development identifying the extent to which the plan can influence development, behaviour and decarbonisation. We will need a working definition of Net Zero Carbon and statistical analysis of carbon (and GHG) emissions by land use or sector.
- ii. Clarification of robust carbon reduction targets relating to the role of the built environment and green infrastructure, management /stewardship in delivering net zero carbon, how to maximise renewable energy within environmental and technical constraints.
- iii. Review of existing and anticipated standards in energy and water usage deriving from building regulations, BREEAM and legislation such as the Environment Bill and Future Homes standards etc

- iv. An overview of potential for technological response and innovation for infrastructure requirements from utility companies, land managers, green sector business – working with the IDP consultants.
- v. An assessment of implications of the spatial strategy on carbon emission and ability to achieve the net zero carbon targets with preferred growth patterns; as above, consideration of need for a carbon offset fund to assist retrofit, viability, heritage areas etc.
- vi. Advice on a monitoring system for the implementation and operation of designs and buildings approved through the planning process to ensure compliance; check that targets are *en route* to achievement with corrective measures as appropriate; consideration of the role of the developer e.g. potential use of penalties/bonds to enforce this.
- vii. An assessment of the feasibility of achieving net zero carbon for different types of development: residential, non-residential, new build, redevelopment of existing, all with regard to the preferred spatial growth strategy. This will include cost implications of net zero carbon development and other policy requirements including upfront costs for the developer and potential running cost savings for residents, building occupiers/operators, electricity grid reinforcement/ smart energy - in liaison with IDP consultants.
- viii. Develop an approach/guidance that seeks out methods for carbon sequestration, working with farming communities with greatest opportunity for gain in an integrated approach to resources management benefiting water, biodiversity, and rural economic diversification

Officer Work Programme

17. In relation to this proposed commission officers' primary role would be to

- Undertake further discussions with adjoining strategic interests and particularly the Greater Cambridge Authority
- Agree the scope of a brief and procure consultants
- Manage the project, to time and budget and work with stakeholders and partners as appropriate
- Consider the outcome of the work, report to Members and integrate into the draft Plan. The Appendix adds detail to this work regarding work activities and timescales.

Conclusions

18. There are clear gaps in our understanding of the existing situation regarding water resource management and reducing the different sources of carbon embodiment and emissions across the District. We need to establish the baseline, clear goals and a pathway that is informed by processes of assessment of the submitted site development

proposals and preferred options to help address the Council's corporate goals around climate change. Undertaking this study will form part of the evidence that will work alongside the sustainability and viability assessments of the Local Plan and form an essential baseline to achieving the core goals of the Council.

Risk Analysis

19.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the commissioned work is not completed in time	2 –there may be delay in refining the brief or in identifying a suitable consultant that will cause delay.	4 – without this study it will be difficult to formulate appropriate policies and undertake a carbon-based assessment of the spatial strategy and site proposals	The brief will be completed and ECC will issue the tender as a priority under the existing SLA, benefitting from our recent based experience on six similar exercises
It may take time to identify common ground and to an agreed timeframe with Greater Cambridge Authority (GCA)	2	2	Early discussion with the GCA will identify areas of mutual benefit and a combined project team will be set up to co-ordinate, oversee there and assess the implications in local plan terms of the outcome
The work may identify issues that are difficult address in the local plan	3	2	Any proposals and projects required to address issues identified will be considered in relation to sound and appropriate policies. Where this is not the most appropriate approach through the development process the Council's Climate Change Working Group can complement the role using its budget, the newly appointed Climate Change Project Officer to undertake specific projects and complement the policy and spatial focus of the local plan.

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: Using the Local Plan to Provide the Infrastructure to Support the Council's Decarbonisation and Net Zero Goals *DRAFT activities*

Stage	Activities
<i>I- Establishing the Carbon Reduction Pathways</i>	
I-1	20. Commission research study into establishing the current carbon baseline as far as possible for the whole district for the performance of existing buildings, transport movements, agricultural practices, and other land uses, considering GHG where relevant
I-2	21. Identify an 'as is' pathway to decarbonisation assuming limited growth
I-3	22. Identify clear carbon targets and trajectory for their achievement including Retrofit
I-4	23. Identify the water cycle, stress areas, supply, and demand for existing residents, trends
I-5	24. Identify water company strategies and (SMART) funding projects over the next 5-10 years to take account of capacity required for 14,000 homes
I-6	25. Identify key issues and how they can be addressed through planning
I-7	26. Identify good practice examples in the carbon areas of waste, water, energy, Green Infrastructure, transport, build construction, retrofit, heritage areas. land management, construction supply and waste
	27.
<i>II-Testing the Growth Scenarios for Impact on Achieving Net Zero Carbon and Greenhouse Gas Reduction</i>	
II-	28. Consultants to take each spatial strategy option and assess with regard to impact on carbon emissions reduction, including potential for new technology, transport, and active travel modes, and to maximise (community) renewable energy generation and storage and minimise water use and loss. This work would be alongside financial viability studies in the IDP commission.
II-2	29. Separately assess impact of green infrastructure and biodiversity gains and integrate with decarbonisation recommendation
	30.
<i>III-Carbon Footsteps for the Preferred Option- Target Timeline and Policies</i>	
III-1	31. Identify key actions required regarding spatial strategy, need for policy areas, further technical and evidence-based work if necessary, including good practice elsewhere in Local Plan policy and DPD/ SPD, TPCA RICS, RTPi and ECAC; technical feasibility assessments as necessary
III-2	32. More detailed viability as necessary
III-3	33. Consider developer sustainability/energy/water checklist
III-4	34. Carbon offset fund across District/County?
35.	36.
<i>IV-Deliverability – Local Plan policies, Funding, Projects, Community Engagement and Leadership</i>	
IV-1	37. Identify measures essential prerequisites to successful integration including engaging with community, parishes, developers, landowners, utilities, business enterprise, skill centre; identify sources of external funding; Communications Strategy; behaviour modification and education; political and local leadership, detailed viability
	38.

Possible Timeline

<i>April 2021</i>	<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Jun 2021</i>	<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Aug 2021</i>	<i>Sep 2021</i>	<i>Oct 2021</i>	<i>Nov 2021</i>
Agree scope of work	Agree approach with SIDG and Climate change Working Group	Set up Project management team and ensure liaison with IDP	Baseline reporting on existing emissions,	Initial carbon assessment against growth options	Refine Testing against emerging spatial strategy to identify carbon impact and policy/ measures following Cabinet decision	Draft local plan policies and identify need for SPD/DPD/ sustainability checklist	Incorporate in draft Local Plan
Prepare Consultancy Brief(s)	Procure external expertise	Baseline studies of existing carbon, solar, renewable energy picture across the District	Potential policies for new build and placemaking including best practice elsewhere; identify opportunities for GHG reduction	Report to Cabinet for 2 nd September (settlement hierarchy and outline strategy)	Outline feasibility and Viability assessments	Identify need and potential sources of external funding	Work with Climate Change Working Group on landowner and developer agreements, community engagement etc