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Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

To all Members of Uttlesford District Council, you are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the District Council to be held as shown below to deal with the business set out in the agenda.

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

Council

Date: Tuesday, 6th December, 2022
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Chair: Councillor H Asker
Members: Councillors A Armstrong, G Bagnall, S Barker, M Caton, A Coote, C Criscione, A Dean, G Driscoll (Vice-Chair), D Eke, J Emanuel, J Evans, P Fairhurst, M Foley, R Freeman, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, G Smith, M Sutton, M Tayler and J De Vries

Public Speaking

At the start of the meeting there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements, subject to having given notice by 12 noon two working days before the meeting. A time limit of 3 minutes is allowed for each speaker.

Those who would like to watch the meeting live can do so by accessing the live broadcast [here](#). The broadcast will start when 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** 5 - 18
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 Chair's Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair.
- 4 Reports from the Leader and Members of the Executive** 19 - 32
To receive matters of report from the Leader and members of the Executive.
- 5 Questions to the Leader, Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs (up to 30 minutes)** 33 - 35
To receive questions from members for the Executive and committee chairs.
- 6 Matters referred from the Executive and the Council's committees**
To consider any reports referred from the Executive and the Council's committees and receive questions and answers on any of those reports.
- 6a Matters referred from the Executive: Local Council Tax Scheme Proposals 2023/24 and Consultation Responses** 36 - 65
To consider the Local Council Tax scheme Proposals 2023/24 and consultation responses.
- 6b Matter referred from GAP Committee: General Changes to the Constitution** 66 - 73
To note the updates and amendments made to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers.

7	Matters received about joint arrangements and external organisations	
	To consider matters concerning joint arrangements and external organisations.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No matters received. 	
8	Members' Allowance Scheme 2023-24	74 - 82
	To consider the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-24.	
9	Refreshment of the Evidential Trail Regarding the Council's Ability to Prosecute Offences under Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	83 - 89
	To consider the report regarding the ability to Prosecute Offences under Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.	
10	Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan	90 - 167
	To consider the report regarding the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan.	
11	Calendar of meetings 2023-24	168 - 169
	To note the calendar of meetings for 2023-24.	
12	Political Balance and Committee Appointments	170 - 173
	To consider the report regarding Political Balance and Committee Appointments following the by-election scheduled on 5 January 2023.	
13	Member Motion: Cambridge congestion charge consultation response	174
	To consider the Member Motion regarding the Council's response to the Cambridge congestion charge consultation.	
14	Member Motion: Council Tax Freeze	175
	To consider the Member Motion regarding a Council Tax Freeze.	
15	Member Motion: Anglian Water and Thames Water	176
	To consider the Member Motion regarding Anglian Water and Thames Water and the discharging of sewage in the district.	

MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

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The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part I which is open to the public. Part II includes items which may be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. You will be asked to leave the meeting before Part II items are discussed.

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Agenda Item 2

COUNCIL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor H Asker (Chair)
Councillors A Armstrong, G Bagnall, S Barker, M Caton, A Coote, A Dean, G Driscoll, D Eke, J Emanuel, J Evans, P Fairhurst, M Foley, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, G Smith, M Sutton, M Tayler and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), N Coombe (Locum Senior Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), D Hermitage (Director of Planning), J Reynolds (Assistant Director of Governance and Legal & Monitoring Officer) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: Ray Woodcock (Public Speaker)

C36 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mr Woodcock addressed Council. A summary of his statement is appended to these minutes.

C37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Criscione, Day, Luck and Freeman.

Councillor de Vries declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council in respect of Item 8.

C38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings on 19 July 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

In respect of C34, Councillor Sell asked whether the statement made by the Chief Executive was correct and whether all group leaders had been consulted on alternative speaking arrangements for the meeting.

In respect of C25, it was confirmed that Councillor Freeman had been in contact with Little Canfield Parish Council regarding parking issues in Prior Green. Councillor Lees confirmed that he had.

C39 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair provided a brief update on appointments she had attended since the previous meeting including events to mark the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II and a celebratory event in Great Dunmow.

C40 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Three reports from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities and the Portfolio Holder for Sports, Leisure and the Arts were noted.

Councillor Sell said he was concerned by the paucity of Cabinet Member reports and asked that each portfolio submit a regular update to each Full Council meeting.

In response, the Leader said that there was eighteen pages of questions and answers to the executive and there was a large amount of information on the website.

C41 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (UP TO 30 MINUTES)

Councillor Khan asked, in reference to Question One, if the Leader of the Council still had confidence in Councillor Evans leading the Planning Portfolio, and whether it was appropriate for him to continue to draw the special allowance for that role, given his failure to oversee the work.

Councillor Lees responded that the Cabinet worked incredibly hard and diligently, and that she stood behind her Portfolio Holder.

In reference to Question Two, Councillor Barker noted that there was more work to be done in regards to improving the Energy Performance Certificate ratings of the Council's housing. She looked forward to seeing the plans on how Uttlesford Norse intended to do this.

In reference to Question Three, Councillor Sell agreed that marking the 50th anniversary of the first elections to Uttlesford District Council was a matter for the new Administration. He suggested that officers noted the date, and if deemed appropriate, looked to mark the occasion in 2024.

Councillor Caton asked, in reference to Question Four, what was the interest rate chargeable on the recent loan from the Public Works Loan Board and what

would the resulting reduction in income to the Council be because of the increase in interest rates, if all £170million was borrowed at that rate.

Councillor Hargreaves responded that the interest rate from the Public Works Loan Board was about 4% and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services would confirm the precise figure.

He explained that it was difficult to predict where interest rates would go in the current political climate, but it would be considered as part of the budget planning as payments on some of the existing loans were scheduled to go into the next financial year. He offered no further predictions.

Councillor Smith asked, in reference to Question Five, for a breakdown of the figure provided of £5.9million which covered the last three withdrawn Local Plans. He asked how much of this was for the most recent withdrawn Local Plan in 2020.

Councillor Hargreaves responded that he would forward this information to Councillor Smith. He noted that the information is organised as year-by-year spending so the member would have to look at which years the plans were withdrawn to work out the costings.

Councillor Light asked, in reference to Question Seven, for the reopening date of the Garden Room Community Centre.

Councillor Lees said that they expected the centre to reopen around November, however the Council were still negotiating to 10-year lease with Saffron Walden Town Council. She suggested that Councillor Light contact Councillor Gadd on the Town Council and the Town Clerk for more information on their timeframes.

Councillor Light also asked, in reference to Question Eight, if Councillor Sutton could provide a progress update on the Youth Council and if re-establishing a working group would be of value.

Councillor Sutton said that schools had previously found it very difficult to involve their students in anything but their education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, they were now in a position where they wanted to become involved again. She also confirmed that efforts would be made to re-establish the Youth Council membership.

Councillor Fairhurst asked, in reference to Question Nine, if anybody was responsible and accountable for any of the issues raised in his initial question. He said he had asked simple questions and expected answers.

Councillor Lees said that the Administration was responsible but all Councillors had to work towards what was best for their residents. She said the Administration was responsible for implementing the manifesto it was elected on.

In response to further comments from Councillor Fairhurst regarding the absence of member accountability, Councillor Lees said that she took responsibility as Leader of the Council.

C42 MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

To consider any reports received from the Cabinet

C43 REPORT REFERRED FROM STANDARDS COMMITTEE: CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS SUMMARY

Councillor LeCount, Chair of the Standards Committee, presented the report regarding Code of Conduct Complaints.

In response to a question from Councillor Sell, Councillor LeCount said he would provide an answer in writing regarding the support available to the three parish councils referred to in paragraph 9.2 of the report.

The report was noted.

C44 REPORT REFERRED FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: ADOPTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor LeCount presented the report and proposed adoption of the Local Government Association's New Model Code of Conduct. He said the new Model Code factored in modern ways of working, such as the use of social media, and thanked the Assistant Director of Governance and Legal, Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Independent Persons for their work.

Councillor Jones seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Dean said he had abstained from voting at the Standards Committee meeting on the New Model Code as he felt insufficient time had been spent developing members understanding of the new Code and further work was required before adoption.

Councillor Hargreaves said the Nolan principles could not be incorporated wholesale into the Code as they were subjective, such as the principle of leadership.

Councillor Gregory said training and diligence would be required but it was incorrect to say that this should occur before the Code was adopted.

Councillor Jones said anything that strengthened the current Code was a positive development and endorsed adoption of the new Model Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED to adopt the Model Code (Appendix 1) and associated LGA Guidance.

C45 **REPORT REFERRED FROM THE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

Councillor Oliver, the Chair of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee, presented the report. He said that amendments were required to the scheme due to changes to personnel and staffing structures.

He proposed that members adopt the revised Scheme of Delegation and commended the report.

Councillor Barker seconded the proposal. She asked that the £3000 figure relating to New Homes' Bonus was corrected to reflect the £2000 agreed in the Budget.

In response to a question from Councillor Caton regarding the delegated authority of the Director of Planning to manage "all appeal activity", the Chief Executive said the constitutional changes before members needed to be agreed first before further amendments were applied in line with the recommendations of the Stansted Airport Scrutiny Review.

RESOLVED to adopt the revised Scheme of Delegation (Appendix A)

C46 **REPORT REFERRED FROM THE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022-2026**

Councillor Hargreaves presented the report regarding the Procurement Strategy 2022-26. He said the new strategy would enshrine national principles into the Council's working practices and a manager would be employed to monitor contract procurement.

He proposed that members approve the Procurement Strategy 2022 – 2026.

Councillor Evans seconded the proposal.

Councillor Khan commended the report and was pleased to see a strong theme of project management running through the proposed Strategy.

RESOLVED to approve the Procurement Strategy 2022-2026, as attached at Appendix A.

C47 **MATTERS RECEIVED ABOUT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

There were no matters to report.

C48 **SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Evans, the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan, presented the report on the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan, which had been approved at referendum on 15 September 2022.

He endorsed the report and proposed that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan be formally made as part of the statutory development plan for the District.

Councillor de Vries seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

In response to a question from Councillor Isham, Councillor Evans said locations had not been allocated for housing in the Plan but it had met the necessary criteria and the Examiner's modifications had been included.

In response to a question from Councillor Light, Councillors Evans and Merifield both said that this neighbourhood plan would carry "weight" in planning terms.

Councillor de Vries said the referendum result clearly demonstrated that this was the wish of the community. He urged members to support the proposal.

RESOLVED that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1) be formally made as part of the statutory development plan for the District.

C49 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Chair reordered proceedings to deal with time constraints. The meeting agreed to take Items 11 and 12 next, and would reconvene on Thursday, 13 October at 7.00pm to allow a full debate on Items 9 and 10.

The Chair moved to exclude the public and press to allow members to receive a confidential report.

RESOLVED to exclude the public and press due to consideration of reports containing exempt information within the meaning of section 100I and paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 part 1 Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972.

C50 **COMPLAINT UPHELD BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN**

The Chief Executive presented the report for information.

He took questions on the matter and recommended that members note the actions taken by officers in response to the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, both directly related to the individual complainant, but also to the neighbouring homes.

The report was noted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.50pm and would reconvene at 7.00pm on 13 October 2022.

C51 MEETING RECONVENED - APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The meeting was reconvened at 7.00pm on Thursday, 13 October 2022.

Councillor Driscoll, Vice-Chair of the Council, took the Chair in Councillor Asker's absence. He welcomed those present to the meeting and said he would be abstaining from voting this evening unless a casting vote was required.

Apologies were received for the reconvened session from Councillors Asker, Barker, Day, Lemon, Luck, de Vries, Criscione, Foley and Freeman.

Councillor Pepper declared a non-pecuniary interest as a former member of Stop Easton Park.

Councillors Isham and Dean declared non-pecuniary interests as members of Stansted Airport Watch (SAW).

Councillor Merifield declared a non-pecuniary interest as a former member of Save our Stebbing Group.

Councillor Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a former member of Stop Stansted Expansion (now known as Stansted Airport Watch).

C52 STANSTED AIRPORT COSTS

The Chair asked members whether they were content to discuss the general principles of the report in public session, or whether there was any need to exclude the public and press in order to debate the legally privileged information contained in the Part 2 report.

The meeting was content to remain in public session.

Councillor Evans presented the report. He said the purpose of the proposal was to reach a settlement with Stansted Airport Ltd (STAL) regarding the appeal costs, which the authority has been ordered to pay, and included a recommendation that further offers, including a Part 36 Offer under the Civil Procedure Rules, be made by the authority to STAL in full and final settlement of those planning appeal costs.

Councillor Hargreaves seconded the proposal. He commended the Chief Executive, Assistant Director of Governance and Legal and the Costs Lawyer for reducing the cost of the settlement. He said it was time to move on and make peace with the Airport, the district's largest employer.

Councillor Fairhurst said the Council had behaved unreasonably at the appeal hearing by changing the Planning Committee's decision from 'refusal' to 'approval with conditions'. He said the Resident's administration had paid the price for losing control of the process.

Councillor Reeve said he regretted the lost appeal but not for taking a stand against the Airport's expansion, which was in line with what the majority of residents wanted.

Councillor Isham said the Council had acted unreasonably in legal terms, as demonstrated by the Inspector's unhappiness with the Council's approach to the appeal, and punishment was to be expected. The defence strategy should have been in line with that of SAW and someone needed to take responsibility for this bungle.

Councillor Sell said the outcome of the appeal was not inevitable and the money could have been put to better use elsewhere. He said that responsibility could not be delegated and this was a failure of oversight.

Councillor Jones said this was a serious situation but the Council needed to learn from the process.

Councillor Smith said the Council had been misguided to overturn the original decision of the Planning Committee regarding Stansted Airport. In response to a question regarding total costs, he was informed that the final figure would be £2.1 million.

Councillor Pepper said central Government's stance on climate change and aviation had let residents down. She said climate change was already here and economic growth had to be sustainable.

Councillor Merifield said there was a risk of costs being awarded against the council on all planning appeals as part of due process, although such costs would not normally be brought to Council for approval.

Councillor Loughlin said it was not the Planning Committee's decision to refuse the application that was taken to appeal, but rather approval with "Condition 15". This was a mistake in the Council's defence strategy.

Councillor Bagnall said he agreed that the Council needed to be clear on its defence strategy but it was time to finalise this process in the most cost effective way possible and move on.

Councillor Light said there were warnings that the defence strategy would fail and those with a clear conscience should abstain from voting.

Councillor Dean said he was disappointed that the decision of the Planning Committee to refuse the application was manipulated at appeal to become "approval with conditions". He said the Portfolio Holder or Chair for Planning had to accept responsibility for this mistake.

In response to a question regarding the role of members during appeals, the Assistant Director of Governance and Legal said members were not to instruct officers on appeal matters per se but there was scope in bringing major issues back to members for decision. The Chief Executive added that this was covered during the Scrutiny Review and measures were already in place to bring such issues back to members if this was to arise again in future.

Councillor Lodge said he took responsibility for fighting back against the airport in line with residents' wishes and that it was the Conservative Government that was to blame.

Councillor Lees said the Council had been let down by the Government's lack of commitment to Climate Change and her members had a clear conscience.

Councillor Evans read out the proposal stated in the report.

Councillor Light called for a recorded vote.

Councillor:	For, Against or Abstain:
Armstrong	For
Bagnall	For
Caton	Abstain
Coote	For
Dean	Abstain
Driscoll	Abstain
Eke	For
Emanuel	For
Evans	For
Fairhurst	Abstain
Gregory	For
Hargreaves	For
Isham	Abstain
Jones	For
Khan	Abstain
LeCount	For
Lees	For
Light	Abstain
Lodge	For
Loughlin	Abstain
Merifield	For
Oliver	Abstain
Pavitt	For
Pepper	For
Reeve	For
Sell	Abstain
Smith	For
Sutton	For
Tayler	For

The proposal was approved with nineteen votes for and ten abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- I. That Council approve that the Chief Executive be given authority to make a revised CPR Part 36 offer (“the Part 36 offer”) to STAL in respect of the planning appeal costs in the sum of £2,050,000 in full and final settlement (being comprised of £2,000,000 in respect of the claim for costs itself, £0 in respect of VAT and £50,000 in respect of interest).
- II. That Council approve that the Chief Executive be given further authority to simultaneously make a second offer (“the all-in offer”) to STAL in respect of the planning appeal costs in the sum of £2,100,000, including all interest and costs incurred by STAL in negotiating this settlement.
- III. That Council agrees that, should STAL reject the offers in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, the Chief Executive is authorised to propose to STAL that the matter is dealt with via mediation. Likewise, if STAL offer to resolve the matter by mediation then the Chief Executive is authorised to instruct external expert advice as needed and to enter directly into such mediation with STAL (noting that any settlement potentially arising from mediation over and above the sums authorised in paragraphs 3 and 4 above would be subject to fresh approval by Council).
- IV. That Council approves the use of Reserves as set out in paragraph 7.

C53

MEMBER MOTION: MISHANDLING OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Councillor Isham presented his motion regarding the mishandling of the Local Plan process. He said there had been a lack of leadership and good governance at the Council and the administration had to be held to account. A further delay to the emerging Local Plan was not an acceptable outcome for the district and yet still no one would take responsibility He urged members to support his censure motion in light of this failure.

Councillor Caton seconded the proposal. He reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Loughlin criticised the process and said it had been shrouded in secrecy.

Councillor Coote said the Local Plan was not really a local process as the Council was constrained by national legislation and guidance. He said the

Administration were doing their utmost to produce a sound plan and local members needed to stick together.

Councillor Fairhurst questioned the governance surrounding the Local Plan and why it had been deemed “unfit” and delayed at such short notice. He said he trusted the Chairs of LPLG and Scrutiny; the failure was of the Administration as “no one had been at the wheel”.

Councillor Reeve said he was disappointed with the pause although it would allow time to develop policies in respect of infrastructure and the local economy.

Councillor Smith said it was hypocritical of the Residents’ Administration to not take responsibility for the failures of this process, considering their criticism of previous Local Plans. He said the district was exposed to development without a Plan in place and the Government would intervene if appropriate progress was not being made.

Councillor Pepper said the new Local Plan faced huge challenges in terms of infrastructure and sustainable economic development. However, she had faith that the new planning team would deliver a sound Local Plan.

Councillor Sell asked whether Scrutiny Committee had been misled as the reality of the situation did not mirror reports given at Committee. He also said that he felt “more in the dark” than he had during previous Local Plans. The Council did a lot right but this issue was also demonstrating a lack of leadership from the Administration.

Councillor Evans said no one wanted to see a delay in the process but he had been informed by the recently appointed Local Plan and New Communities Manager that the draft Plan was not ready for the Regulation 18 Consultation stage and therefore the timetable had been paused. He refuted criticism that this represented a failure of governance as he met with officers bi-weekly and had been told that the Plan was on track. The Local Plan process was extremely technical and it was for professional planning officers to quality check proposals. He thanked the Local Plan and New Communities Manager for bringing the issue to the Council’s attention.

Councillor Khan said it was a failure of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan as the delay was due to a lack of strategy and forward planning. He said no one wanted to take responsibility for this failure, which was costing residents dearly.

Councillor Gregory thanked those who had brought this censure motion to Council as there was a need to debate this issue. He said Councillor Evans was a good man but this was about the need for a Local Plan and there had been a failure of governance and due process. In order to make things right, he said LPLG and Scrutiny Committee would work more closely in future, and Cabinet would need to listen to Scrutiny Committee for there to be value in the process. He said he had confidence that Councillor Evans would turn the situation around.

Councillor Caton said a new Local Plan would protect the district against speculative development and another delay to the Regulation 18 Consultation was a failure of governance and leadership.

Councillor Isham was invited to conclude the debate. He said the motion was proportionate and not overly aggressive. There was a need to work together on the Local Plan and constructive criticism was a necessary part of the democratic process.

Councillor Light requested a recorded vote.

Councillor:	For, Against or Abstain:
Armstrong	Against
Bagnall	For
Caton	For
Coote	Against
Dean	For
Driscoll	Abstain
Eke	Against
Emanuel	Against
Evans	Against
Fairhurst	For
Gregory	For
Hargreaves	Against
Isham	For
Jones	For
Khan	For
LeCount	Against
Lees	Against
Light	For
Lodge	Against
Loughlin	For
Merifield	Against
Oliver	For
Pavitt	Abstain
Pepper	Against
Reeve	Against
Sell	For
Smith	For
Sutton	Abstain
Taylor	Abstain

The motion of censure was approved with 13 votes for, 12 against and 4 abstentions.

RESOLVED: In response to the Residents for Uttlesford (R4U) Administration's mishandling of the Uttlesford Local Plan over that past forty-one (41) months since the May 2019 local elections, at which R4U

took responsibility for delivering an Uttlesford Local Plan, Council resolves to censure the Administration for its failure to deliver a draft Regulation 18 Local Plan for consultation with the public of the district by an already revised deadline of November 2022. Council calls upon the Leader of Council and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan to:

1. Explain comprehensively why the Regulation 18 Plan will not be published by the previously committed date in November 2022, and whether there have been internal disagreements about the proposed spatial strategy within the ruling R4U Administration Group.
2. Explain why the public announcement about this delay in the Regulation 18 Local Plan's public consultation was made through a statement in the press on September 13th and was not formally agreed via a constitutionally proper, democratic decision-making route in public at a special meeting of the Cabinet, and why the Local Plan Leadership Group was side-lined by the press announcement and the cancellation of its own scheduled meeting.
3. Explain objectively whether the recently announced delay in the start of the Regulation 18 consultation risks yet further delay beyond February 2023 and until after the May 2023 District Council Elections, owing to the statutory pre-election purdah requirements.
4. Declare what steps will be taken by themselves to restore trust and confidence in this Council's handling of the Local Plan delivery between now and the May 4th 2023 Local Elections to minimise the development free-for-all in our towns, villages and countryside and to allay growing public concern that R4U has lost control of the district's future.

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm.

Summary of Public Statement(s)

Ray Woodcock

Mr Woodcock addressed Council on the subject of Essex County Council's (ECC) Health and Wellbeing Draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). He said ECC had asked him to promote the public consultation, which took place during January, although he questioned whether it was appropriate for a member of the public to be promoting such an issue. He asked whether UDC had responded to the survey. Mr Woodcock also spoke on the need for a licensed community pharmacy in Stansted Mountfitchet by Stansted Surgery and questioned the conclusions of the published PNA, which stated there were no gaps in pharmaceutical services in the locality. He said there was no recognition of the access issues that would prevent vulnerable members of the community from reaching existing pharmacies in Stansted. He asked for assistance on behalf of the local community.

Councillor Louise Pepper – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities Report to Full Council: 6 December 2022

Environment & Green Issues November 2022 update

Climate Change Staffing

Vicky Reed joined the Council as Climate Change Lead Officer in late October. Vicky has a wealth of programme management experience alongside excellent technical knowledge and will be coordinating the Council's Climate Crisis Action Plan. Recruitment to a second role that will support Vicky is also nearing completion.

The Zero Carbon Communities Grant Fund is a new grant that was launched in November with the aim of supporting community groups in Uttlesford take action on climate change.

Non-profit groups or organisations, including any town or parish council within the district, can apply for funding for new projects that are focussed on carbon emission reduction, community engagement in climate change, or ecological enhancement in your community



Community projects might include:

- **Community buildings** – for example, energy conservation or efficiency measures
- **Sustainable transport** – for example, community cycle parking or electric vehicle charging points
- **Nature and biodiversity projects** – this could include community allotment projects, or the restoration, creation, or enhancement of a community nature area
- **Other projects** – such as waste reduction projects, or community initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyle choices

A webinar to help interested groups understand the bidding process, funding criteria and potential projects was held on 15 November with over 20 attendees.

View a copy of the launch presentation https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11712/Zero-Carbon-Communities-Grant-launch-event-presentation/pdf/ZCC_Launch_Webinar_15_11_22.pdf?m=638042915520970000

The first round of funding is open until January 2023, with bids being assessed and finalised in February. Grants of between £1,000 and £35,000 are available. A second round of funding will follow later in the new financial year.

Further information about the Zero Carbon Communities Grant is available at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/zero-carbon-communities-grant. Or Email climatechange@uttlesford.gov.uk .

Tree Planting initiatives

As part of the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy initiative UDC is grant assisting tree planting for the participating parish councils of Hadstock, Hempstead, Wimbish, Widdington, Little Dunmow, and Hatfield Broad Oak. The JGC scheme was to be closed at the end of December this year, but it is King Charles' wish that the scheme be extended until the end of the current planting season March 2023.

As part of the tree planting initiative UDC is also supplying in total 43 trees and 100 hedging plants to Felsted, and Great Hallingbury Parish Councils. In addition, 3 trees are to be planted on UDC land at The Grove, Great Hallingbury.

It is anticipated that a second tranche of tree planting will be undertaken before the end of the current planting season. It is worth noting that interest from Parish Council's on tree planting has declined.

Local Cycling Walking Highway Improvement Plan (LCWHIP)

The council has committed, through the Climate Crisis budget, to developing a LCWHIP which will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The contract to help develop the plan is currently out to tender and will be evaluated and awarded in January.

Flitch Way Cycleway Study £4925

UDC has provided funding for the **Flitch Way Action Group (FWAG)**, for a proposal to investigation options for cycle links between the Flitch Way and the south side of Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and Start Hill.

How is UDC assisting with the Energy Crisis?

Making your home cheaper, warmer, and greener through funded energy-saving improvements



Could a free, fully funded Sustainable Warmth Grant transform your home and your carbon footprint?

Government-funded Sustainable Warmth grants up to £10,000 are designed to support those households most impacted by rising energy bills.

Funding is available for homeowners, private tenants and people in social rented accommodation who live in a home with a low energy (EPC) rating and have a household income of less than £30,000 a year, or unemployed and receive an income, health, or disability benefit.

For further information on this grant [Sustainable Warmth Grant Scheme Application Form \(est.org.uk\)](https://www.est.org.uk)

Is your home weather ready for winter?

With colder weather on the way, there are a number of steps that you can take to prepare your home and garden for severe weather.

There are some simple steps you can take to stay safe and healthy at this time of year – from preparing your home or business to taking care of yourself, your family, and neighbours.

[Visit the Met Office website for tips on how to get your home weather ready for](#)

winter WeatherReady - Met Office

UDC have a number of other energy websites: -

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5775/Energy-efficiency-what-you-can-do>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5771/Energy-efficiency-advice-for-landlords>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5772/Energy-Efficiency-and-Historic-Buildings>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5694/Domestic-and-commercial-energy>

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7986/Energy-rebate-exceptional-hardship-scheme>

The **Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford**, also offer an energy saving link.

<https://cvsu.org.uk/category/funding/>

Transport is Uttlesford's highest CO2 emitter.



Cycling

Walking

Rail

Bus

In Uttlesford **12%** of people commute by public transport, **1%** cycle, and **9%** walk.

Friends of the Earth says Uttlesford should aim to have 50% of people commuting by public transport, cycling, and walking by 2030.

With a decrease in traffic, air quality and pollution levels will dramatically **improve**

The government need to be prioritising spending on **active travel** and **public transport** rather than £27b on road building. Even when all vehicles have gone green, manufacturing still comes with a carbon footprint and causes congestion. Pollution from tyres is 1,000 times worse than emissions from a car's exhaust.

Public transport & 'active travel' is cheaper and more sustainable and 'active travel' is also better for your health and mental wellbeing.

N.B It will also cost more money for ECC on additional road repairs, rather than allocating money to upgrade existing roads (often in poor repair) and on new & existing footpaths, and cycle lanes.

However, walking & cycling won't be the preferred option during winter months (especially when it's pouring with rain) therefore, adequate public transport throughout the year, is essential.

It's imperative we promote bus travel throughout the district and make sure choices in sustainable travel options are available and remain a key priority.

Recycling, Waste and Resources

Work continues on the replacement for the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex. The new strategy is currently being developed and aims to deliver higher recycling rates and reductions in carbon emissions and will link to the principles set out in the new Environment Act. The strategy will set out how

Essex will manage waste over the next 25 years.

Essex County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority for Essex are leading the project, and all districts, boroughs and city councils are involved. A consultancy company, Richardo have been engaged and have developed a range of models that assess the impact of waste collection and treatment models across a range of criterion including carbon impact, environmental performance, financial cost, and public acceptability.

The draft strategy will be the subject of a public consultation exercise in the summer.

All Members will be invited to attend a workshop in January that will be focused on the emerging strategy and the potential collection options that the Council may wish to consider in future. The Council is reaching a point in time where our existing fleet will need to be replaced and this, alongside the strategy, new legislation and financial pressures will make service planning even more important.

In readiness for this trials of electrically powered vehicles, have been arranged for November and December. Last week an electric caged vehicle was used on street cleansing and grounds maintenance duties. In December two electric refuse / recycling lorries manufactured by Renault and Dennis Terberg will being trialled.

In January, the Council will no longer be able to use the Dunmow Waste Transfer Station that is operated by ECC. Instead, our vehicles will need to travel to Braintree twice a day to unload. Ahead of this change our current collection rounds have been refocussed and work reorganised to accommodate that major change with minimal impact on residents.

Waste Avoidance Education

In late September officers attended the Saffron Walden Eco Market on the Common and promoted recycling of food waste using the council's services alongside home composting and using wormeries. Alternative to many single use plastics where also on display linking back to the Chairmans Charter and raising awareness of this issue.

Finally, a new recycling guide has been produced and will be circulated to all residents ahead of Christmas as well as being available on the council's website for future reference. Christmas always impacts on collection arrangements, and these will be publicised through the guide, social media, press releases, communications with parish and town councils as well as adverts in local press.

Planning & Development – Urban workshop

On Saturday 22 October, UDC hosted an Urban Design workshop at St Mary's Parish Church in Saffron Walden. The purpose of the day was to share the aims and ambitions of the Design Code for the Local Plan and to hear feedback from residents across the district. Discussions focused on buildings, places and landscapes that create Uttlesford's distinctive character and how these could inspire future developments.

Some of the issues raised were concerning community facilities gaps and shortages in Uttlesford (schools, doctors, dentists & pharmacies). Congested narrow roadways that hinder emergency and refuse vehicles, limited public transport, lack of local employment, the importance of green space and nature (connecting green corridors) and protecting our rich heritage and rural setting.



Bike storage



Communal EV charging points



Communal parking

Some key infrastructure suggestions: -

- Good cycling & walking connectivity
- Cycle storage throughout developments (bikes aren't as easily stored at home).
- Off-street parking for families, disabled & the elderly a must.
- Communal parking for single & starter homes
- Separate parking for visitors
- Wide footpaths that cater for mums with small children and buggies, disabled wheelchairs users and the elderly and mobility scooters, providing safe connectivity onto our country roads and pavements.
- Senor on-street lighting in well-lit areas
- Good access to bus shelters on rainy cold days
- Good access for emergency services and refuse vehicles

Homes need to be future climate proof and should include **Heat pumps, EV charging points, Solar panels** (to offset EV charging points), **Electric cookers** (not gas!), **Low carbon materials** like timber and hemp for insulation and **Draft proofing housing** for mitigating extreme heat conditions (especially for the elderly, young and vulnerable). **SuDS (sustainable drainage systems)**, to manage surface water run-off. **Water efficiency** (optional requirement' of 110 litres per person per day in 'water stressed areas). Water abstraction is Uttlesford's greatest concern. Chalk streams are both rare and sensitive. Last year, the Cam and the Ouse, were the only principal rivers in England rated by the Environment Agency as exceptionally low. The East is also one of the driest parts of the UK. *Grey water recycling and harvesting of rainwater is therefore essential (water butts).*

Building in the right places and avoiding climatic impacts like flooding (*house insurance will become a problem in flood zones*).

We need parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for sport and physical activity which is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver the wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.



Access to healthier food for all members of a community to enjoy by providing land for allotments. Creating additional green biodiversity layouts that will encourage easy access to walk and cycle and will also benefit biodiversity enhancement and restoration.

Open green space is important for nature, our health and well-being



Uttlesford has 3,500 listed buildings and numerous conservation areas within the district. We need to safeguard Uttlesford's unique **rural** distinctiveness, character, and **rich** heritage and ensure we create safe, healthy, and attractive new settlements to live, work and visit.

UTTLESFORD HAS A RICH TAPESTRY OF ENGLISH HISTORY & RURAL CHARM



Local climate documentary

Cllr Pepper took part in a local documentary about climate change and how to save the world.

Here's the link to view

<https://eynon.media/home/district-15/>

Thank you
Cllr Pepper



One planet one race

Councillor John Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan
Report to Full Council: 6 December 2022

Local Plan

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has been notified of the new timelines for the emerging Local Plan and a meeting between senior officers and DLUHC officials took place in November.

DLUHC has offered consultancy services to assist facilitating Duty to Cooperate discussions with neighbouring districts and this will be taken up.

Newly implemented Local Plan oversight arrangements are now in place. This include fortnightly progress meetings between the Chair and Vice-Chair of the LPLG and the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Director of Planning and Interim Local Plans and New Communities Manager. This meeting is also being extended to include the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee on a monthly basis.

Dates for LPLG, Local Plan Scrutiny and LP Working Group meetings are now in place up until the end of the municipal year. At the most recent LPLG officers set out the refreshed methodologies that would now be used to assess sites going forward.

It is the intention to publish more material online in order to increase transparency. A number of evidence base documents are being uploaded to the council's website, including our water-cycle study, landscape and heritage studies, retail and employment studies. These are being published for information. Our small Local Plans Team is unable to enter into correspondence on their content at this point. Of course, there will be a full Regulation 18 consultation next year.

We have launched a consultation on our draft Developer Contribution (S106) Supplementary Policy Document (SPD). This SPD provides detailed advice on developer contributions, including the negotiation of Section 106 agreements, the charges for monitoring of obligations and detailed considerations on a range of infrastructure requirements such as affordable housing and community facilities. The consultation runs until 6 January 2023 (thus exceeding statutory consultation requirements - on account of the Christmas period).

Our Neighbourhood Plans Officer has supported three new Neighbourhood Plans so far this calendar year, with two successful referendums and two newly 'Made' plans in place. A third referendum (The Chesterfords) is due to take place in early December.

Our Design Code work is ongoing, and a number of events and tours have been arranged. These have been positively received. The team is looking to expand on this work by getting local schools and community groups (including of younger people) involved in the design code consultations in the new year.

Development Management & Enforcement

The development management team continues to work on the performance transformation programme in response to designation by DLUHC. In my last update report I noted that the designation of the Planning Service was due to unsatisfactory performance in the quality of decision making on major applications – in short 17% of our decisions on major applications were overturned at appeal in 2018-2020. The threshold for avoiding designation is 10% or below. As of November 2022, this figure is down to 10.45% but we have 6 major application appeals pending and it remains to be seen whether this figure may increase by year-end, depending on the outcomes of those appeals.

As requested by DLUHC, on 3 October 2022 the Planning Service submitted its Performance Improvement Action Plan to the Secretary of State. DLUHC officials responded on 10 November 24, 2022 and found it,

“...encouraging to see that a number of proposed actions have already been completed on immediate actions and efforts are being made to take forward some of the medium to longer term actions, particularly in relation to recruitment and introducing a new pre-application process”.

A meeting with DLUHC officials is scheduled for December to discuss next steps.

The position with regard to minor application appeals is that only 2.45% of decisions were overturned as of November 2022. This is far below the 10% threshold.

In order to facilitate the actions in-train we need a stable complement of staff. We are currently advertising eleven vacant posts across the Planning Service (including two new posts of Conservation Officer and Ecologist, and three vacant posts in our Local Plans Team), with interviews planned in December and early January. Interviews for a replacement Transport Policy Planner are already scheduled. The team is also offering work experience placements for the first time since before the pandemic and will be attending upcoming careers fairs to promote planning and building control careers at Uttlesford.

The team is currently reviewing the pre-application service and other paid-for services in order to assist with budget pressures. The pre-application advice service will be relaunched in the new year. Our pre-application and PPA advice service has generated some £193k in way of fees so far this year.

In terms of planning enforcement, four enforcement notices have been served over the past few months. Three of these have been appealed against and thus enforcement action is required to be held in abeyance until the outcome of the appeal. The time it takes to investigate a breach of planning control, negotiate with the landowner, draft and serve notices, wait for them to take effect (usually 21 days), allow reasonable time for a breach to be remedied and then (if applicable) wait for the outcome of appeal, makes for a slow end-to-end process. However, we do have three earlier cases with firm enforcement notices in place that will now proceed either to prosecution in the courts or other direct action being taken.

Building Control

Lastly, our Building Control Team Service has won 80% of building control contracts in the district again this quarter. This is exceptionally high for a council building control function that operates in a competitive market where there are 28 'Approved Inspectors' also operating in the area (i.e. private companies licensed to provide Building Control services). The team further remains on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in respect of urgent and dangerous structure callouts (e.g.. bridge strikes, building collapses etc).

Councillor Arthur Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing **Report to Full Council: 6 December 2022**

Following on from my last report in July, in which I highlighted those areas which we are working towards improving, I am pleased to report that real progress is being made.

We are now beginning to see improvements in the delivery of the repairs and maintenance service delivered by Uttlesford Norse. At an operational and senior management level there has been a refresh of our partnership relationship. The Council facilitated a successful 'Fresh Start' team building event, which was attended by Council officers, UNSL staff and senior management from both organisations. The focus of the day was to reinforce the shared aims of the partnership and have open discussions on what improvements are required to the way the service is delivered. Staff worked together to generate recommendations on the actions which need to be taken to drive service improvements for our tenants, and these are in the process of being delivered.

These actions include a clearer process for managing repairs complaints and dealing with Member enquiries about repairs, increasing the level of staff resources in the UNSL depot, having a clearer set of service standards, so that everyone is clear what services will be delivered and to what standard, and making sure that there is always a member of the UNSL team available to take calls from UDC housing staff, so that queries can be dealt with immediately.

In early November, a new interim Partnership Client Manager joined the Council, for the purpose of providing expert technical advice to the Council and a 'hands on' approach to managing the contract. The new Partnership Client Manager is based at the Newport Depot and works closely alongside UNSL colleagues, and well as being the 'eyes and ears' of the Council on a day-to-day basis. The Council has set up new weekly in-person 'touchpoint' meetings with UNSL management, to ensure that the contract is robustly managed, and this has opened the door for an effective, joined-up approach to delivering outcomes for council tenants. Complaints are discussed at the meetings and any issues or blockages can be quickly ironed out, with staff being held to account where agreed actions have not been taken.

In this way, new issues can also be addressed quickly. For example, in response to the latest issue of damp and mould highlighted in the media, a new approach has been immediately agreed, whereby all repairs requests which involve damp and mould are immediately escalated as high priority and extra resources are being brought in by UNSL to deal specifically with these issues. The Council has five ongoing complaints about damp and mould, and these are being addressed speedily and robustly.

There has been a special focus on improving performance in health and safety compliance following the Council's self-referral to the Regulator. The position reported by UNSL is improved since the position it reported at the time of the self-referral in August 2022. To seek assurance on the accuracy of performance reported by UNSL to the Council, the Council has employed a specialist compliance company to carry out a full validation of all reported performance, which will include

making sure that every property is on the right compliance programme and then checking all the certification for properties, to make sure this is in order. In this way, the Council will be assured of its true position, and this will be shared with the Regulator once the project completes in a few weeks' time. Health and Safety compliance performance as reported to the Council by UNSL is monitored weekly and there have been notable improvements in reported gas and electrical safety testing. We have seen gas performance for individual homes achieve 100% in November and where a check goes out of compliance, legal action is now being taken straight away. The number of homes reported by UNSL as being out of a 10-year electrical safety testing programme has reduced from 59 at the time of self-referral – there are now only 15 cases where the tenant is still refusing access and the Council is seeking injunctions to enter the properties and carry out the checks. The use of injunctions, rather than starting repossession proceedings to gain access, will achieve results more quickly and is a more proportionate response. Council teams have been really supportive of this effort and the corporate Customer Service Team has also been making calls to tenants for this purpose. The Council's aim is to achieve the best practice standard of electrical safety checks at least every five years. The number of expired five-yearly checks to individual homes has dropped from 720 at its peak in August/September, to under 480 and these checks have been carried out alongside the current programme, so that more homes do not fall out of compliance.

At a more strategic level, we are working closely with the senior management from UNSL and Norse, to make sure that their contractual obligations are being met. Of high priority is the stock condition survey of all council homes, so that we have an up-to-date record of all our homes and the works which need to be carried out to them to ensure they meet all current requirements, and are of a modern standard, including efficient heating systems. Norse have provided an assurance that the surveys will all be carried out within the agreed timescale of five years from the start of the partnership. This will be closely monitored by the Council, to make sure it happens.

The repairs and maintenance services are not the only housing service under review. A new Complaints process is in development for all housing complaints and Member enquiries. This will ensure that when an issue is raised, it is managed efficiently and within a clearly defined timescale. The timescales for responding to and managing complaints are set out by the Housing Ombudsman Service and the Council must comply with these timescales. All complaints must be acknowledged in writing within five working days of the complaint being received by the Council. All responses to complaints must be provided within 10 working days of the complaint being logged, unless the complaint is particularly complex, in which case there can be one extension of a further 10 working days. If any further extension is needed, this must be agreed with the complainant and if no agreement can be reached, this must be referred to the Housing Ombudsman for a decision. Where the complainant is unhappy with the Council's response to their complaint, the complaint can be escalated to the second stage and the same rules as above will apply. To make sure officers meet these standards, all complaints will be monitored by the Council and CMT will soon be making a decision on how this will be managed.

The Housing Team is also preparing for the new regulatory standards, which will come into force from April 2023. All services are being reviewed, to make sure they meet the new standards, and a new legally required tenant satisfaction survey will be carried out from next year.

I am sure that all my fellow Councillors agree that providing more good quality, affordable housing is of key importance. I am pleased to say that our housing development programme is making progress. However, we are mindful of the strains on the HRA this year, due to the additional spending arising from the various projects as I have described earlier and the additional cost of service delivery which all businesses face, arising from macro-economic challenges. Examples include the increased costs of staffing, fuel and building materials and other components used for carrying out repairs.

I am pleased to confirm that work is progressing well on site at Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden, with handover anticipated March/April 2023. This site will deliver 14 homes.

Our new development at Rookery Close, Great Chesterford is progressing well, with handover anticipated 7th December 2022. The site will deliver 13 new homes including a 3-bedroom bungalow specifically adapted to meet an identified family's needs.

We also started on site at Walden Place early in November 2022. We will be creating two additional flats and new communal facilities.

The council is in contract with Barratt David Wilson Homes for 18 one bedroom and one 2-bedroom apartment on their site in Great Dunmow. These dwellings will be delivered in April/May 2023 and March 2024.

The sheltered housing site at Parkside, Saffron Walden, is now empty, and a planning application has been submitted with a committee date set for January 2023. The Architects for this project have developed a scheme of 24 flats for the over 60s with a mixture of 1 and 2 bedrooms, including 2 wheelchair standard flats. Funding options for the new developments are under discussion at the current time and we are hoping to attract a financial contribution from Homes England – although this has yet to be agreed.

Other developments in the future pipeline include Alexia House, Great Dunmow, Takeley Day Centre and garage site, and a number of garden reduction sites, whereby we have taken a creative approach to building more homes on existing HRA land.

The housing team is proactively looking for new opportunities to build more homes in the future and in the coming months, a fresh appraisal of all HRA land will be carried out, so that we can take every able opportunity to utilise our own land. We also recognise that we need to push for more partnership working and in the New Year, we will be inviting local stakeholders, including developers and housing association to become part of a refreshed Strategic Housing Forum led by the Council, so that we can explore more ways to work together to deliver more affordable homes for local people in housing need.

I am also pleased to report that our housing team continues to work really hard to support our existing tenants who, like many people, are really starting to struggle in these difficult economic times. So far, our rent collection remains strong and through

continuing to help tenants address their financial worries early on, either directly, or by referring them to other organisations, we hope that tenants will be able to maintain regular rent payments.

Ending on a really positive note, I am delighted that the Council recently won at the Essex Housing Awards as part of the Mid Essex Rough Sleeper Initiative Partnership. This partnership was set up to solve rough sleeping and single homelessness, through providing interventions which helped to bring people off the streets and help them settle into accommodation with the right type of support, training and employment.

Uttlesford District Council Meeting 6 December 2022

Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

Written responses to be published on 5 December 2022

1. By Councillor Criscione to Councillor Lees - the Leader of the Council:

“Can I please have details of the present staff headcount by department and details of how many positions are unfilled for each department? Please identify how many staff in post are Uttlesford Employees and how many are agency or other third-party staff.”

2. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Armstrong – Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure and the Arts:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

3. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Sutton – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

4. By Councillor Loughlin to Councillor Freeman – Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services:

“How do you intend to protect the community services and Council services for which you, as portfolio holder, are responsible now that such a huge deficit, as much as £5 million, has been forecast and which is bound to have a disastrous impact on the residents of Uttlesford and many of the community benefits they rely on?”

5. By Councillor Khan to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“Given the forecast £5m black hole and cuts to the budget because of the R4U led Administration’s management of Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council, as Lead Member for Housing, what your current management plans are to ensure a quality Housing service for Uttlesford residents.”

6. By Councillor Khan to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“Following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, caused by mould in his home that his parents rented from Rochdale Borough Wide Housing, could you provide the following information:

- How many residents by ward have complained about damp issues since May 2019 and how many of the problems identified since 2019 have been fixed?
- How many damp surveys have been undertaken by Uttlesford District Council of council owned properties since May 2019?”

7. By Councillor Isham to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

8. By Councillor Smith to Councillor Evans - Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan:

“It was reported that in July the Government had requested an action plan setting out how UDC intends to exit Designation, and that this was required urgently. Can you confirm when this was submitted and what response has been received to date.

Will the Council be kept informed of progress in this action plan via Cabinet or the Planning Committee?”

9. By Councillor Fairhurst to Councillor Lees – the Leader of the Council:

“On Tuesday November 28, 2022 we were informed by senior officers that there was a black hole in Uttlesford District Council finances despite an exposure to £280 million which was supposed to support Uttlesford District Council finances.

We were told that any discussions of this black hole would be held in secret Part 2 council meetings, but any suggestion of commercial risk must be weighed against the democratic right of residents to know how the Council has exposed them to the likelihood of reduced services.

Can you tell us how it can be democratically justified to hide the truth of the dire financial situation at Uttlesford District Council from residents on the eve of an election?”

10. By Councillor Light to Councillor Lees – the leader of the Council:

"In light of the most recent delay to the Local Plan, why were 3.5 years wasted on this Plan when it was so clearly destined for failure from the outset?"

11. By Councillor Light to Councillor Sutton - Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service:

"Can you please update this Council on the progress of the Youth Council, when the last meetings were held, the political and civic work the Youth Councillors are involved in and how they are engaging with Members of this Council?"

12. By Councillor Caton to Councillor Pepper – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities:

"Given the Senior Management Team is forecasting a black hole in the Council's future financial strategy requiring £5m cuts to the budget over the next five years because of the current administration's management of the council's finances, can you tell the Council what your plans are to safeguard the vital Climate Change Action Plan and Equalities activities that you are responsible for as portfolio holder?"

13. By Councillor Caton to Councillor Lees – the Leader of the Council:

"As Councillor Lees is aware the Senior Management Team (SMT) of officers forecast that any new administration elected at the May 2023 local elections will have to cut expenditure by £5m by the end of their term.

What plan of action does Councillor Lees and the Cabinet have to ensure that any incoming administration has the up to date information to enable it to take informed decisions on their priorities and the Council's finances by the summer 2023 deadline suggested by the SMT?"

Agenda Item 6a

Decision Maker: Council

Date: Tuesday 6th
December 2022

Title: Local Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals
2023/24

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget
Cllr Neil Hargreaves

Report Author: Angela Knight, Assistant Director - Resources
aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. There is a requirement to annually review the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme and propose changes to the scheme for the following financial year. The decisions made, even if no change is proposed, must then be consulted upon before a decision is taken at Full Council in December on the final scheme for the following financial year.
2. A consultation has been carried out during the summer of 2022 on the scheme proposals, to retain the contribution rate at 12.5% and continue to protect Vulnerable and Disabled residents and Carer's on a low income.
3. The consultation was carried out via an online form and widely promoted on our website, social media and a press release to all local media and newspapers. The consultation will be available in paper form on request.
4. The total number of responses received were 48 and this included four from preceptors.
5. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 18 Uttlesford continues to have the lowest percentage contribution requirement of any authority in Essex. This demonstrates that whilst the council has had sufficient funds to support the scheme it has done so.
6. In 2013/14 when the original scheme was introduced the contribution rate was set at 8.5%. This increased in 2014/15 to 12.5% and it has remained at this rate for each subsequent year.
7. The Exceptional Hardship Fund is available to support residents and claimants who are suffering financial hardship.
8. Cabinet reviewed the scheme proposals for the 2023/24 LCTS scheme alongside the consultation report at their meeting of 20 October and agreed to recommend the scheme to Council for approval.

Recommendations

9. The Council is requested to approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 as set out below:
- I. The contribution rate is frozen for the ninth consecutive year at 12.5%.
 - II. The Council continues to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carer's on a low income.

Financial Implications

10. Detailed in the main body of this report.

Background Papers

11. None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Proposals subject to public consultation and discussions with major preceptors
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	An equalities impact assessment will be completed as part of developing final proposals for decisions by Cabinet and the Council later in the year.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with relevant legislation.
Sustainability	The objective is to achieve a financially sustainable set of arrangements.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	Ongoing demands on the Revenues & Benefits, Housing and Customer Service teams

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

12. LCTS replaced Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from 1 April 2013. The Council has adopted a scheme which has the following key elements:
- a) Pensioners on low income protected from adverse changes (as required by Government)
 - b) Disabled people, Carer's and blind people on a low income receive discretionary protection from adverse changes
 - c) Working age people previously on full CTB pay no more than 12.5% of the council tax bill

- d) £25 per week of earned wages income disregarded from assessment (to provide a work incentive)
- e) Child Benefit and Child Maintenance disregarded from assessment (to minimise exacerbation of child poverty, or accusations of same)
- f) Hardship Policy to enable additional support for extreme hardship cases

Essex Sharing Agreement

13. An Essex wide income sharing agreement was entered into with all billing authorities and major preceptors at the time of implementation of the new LCTS scheme.
14. The main principles of the agreement are to ensure a joint approach in maximising income collection, reduce fraud, ensure compliance, and increase the taxbase.
15. By working proactively on fraud this ensures that our tax base is maintained at the maximum level generating extra revenue for both the major preceptors and billing authorities.
16. Preceptors receive a share of all income generated for Council Tax and this is allocated through the Collection Fund at year end.
17. The increased income generated specifically from these activities and internal decisions made by UDC each year is monitored by ECC, and the preceptors have agreed to share their element of the increased income with the Local Authorities. The level of share back is reviewed annually.
18. The major preceptors also provide funding through this agreement for;
 - a) an officer to ensure the efficient administration of the LCTS scheme and provide claimants with dedicated support in debt management.
 - b) two officers to work directly on all areas of fraud and compliance within Council Tax.
 - c) contributions towards the Exceptional Hardship Scheme which has a £17,000 annual budget (£10,000 UDC element), plus Essex County Council provide an additional £5,000 for admin support.

Contribution Rates across Essex

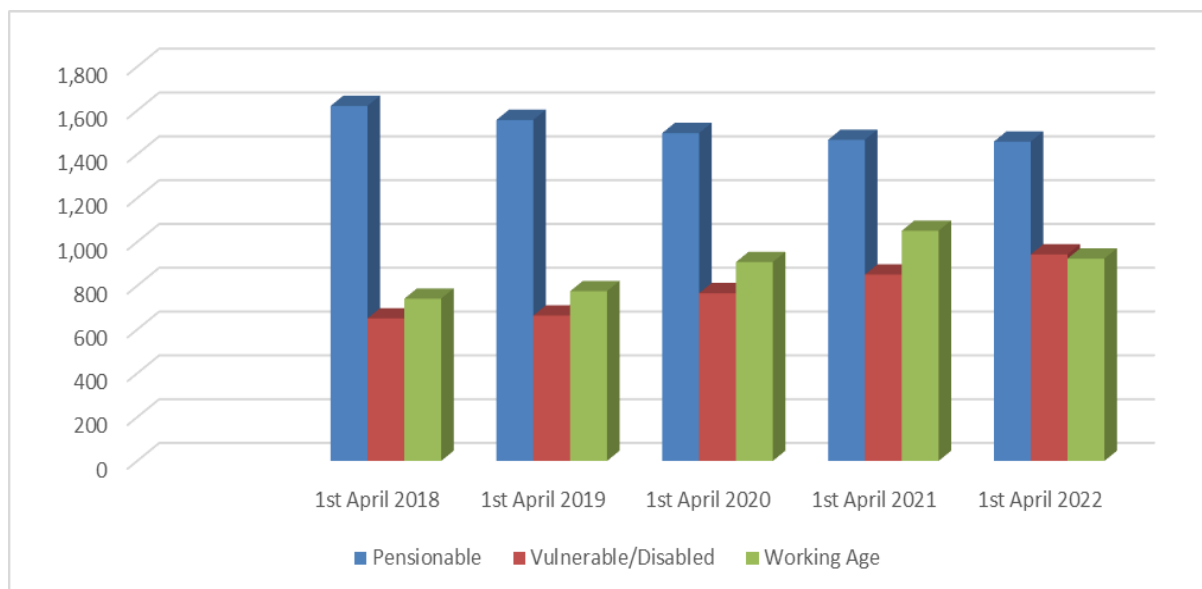
19. The council has the lowest percentage contribution rate within Essex with the highest being set at 30%. The contributions across Essex Local Authorities have remained consistent since 2017.

Contribution Rates 2022/23			
	%		%
Basildon	25	Harlow	24
Braintree	24	Maldon	20
Brentwood	25	Rochford	25
Castle Point	30	Southend-on-Sea	25
Chelmsford	23	Tendring	20
Colchester	20	Thurrock	25
Epping Forest	25	Uttlesford	12.5

Caseload

20. The following table and graphs provide an analysis of each category of claimant and how the caseloads have changed over the past 5 years.

	1/4/18	1/4/19	In year movement	1/4/20	In year movement	1/4/21	In year movement	1/4/22	In year movement
Pensionable	1,621	1,557	-64	1,497	-60	1,466	-31	1,458	-8
Vulnerable/Disabled	651	664	13	766	102	851	85	943	92
Working Age - Employed	341	323	-18	331	8	337	6	297	-40
Working Age - unemployed	400	452	52	577	125	714	137	627	-87
Total Claimants	3,013	2,996	-17	3,171	175	3,368	197	3,325	-43



21. An increase in the number of vulnerable and/or disabled recipients continues to be seen.

22. Since April 2020, increases across all claim types can be directly attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is promising to see that, from April 2022, a decrease in the requirement for working age support is starting to be seen.

Increases to the Contribution Rate

23. The Band D equivalent used in this table for the calculation of the increase in contribution rate is estimated based on the 2022/23 Band D equivalent multiplied by the average increase over the previous two years (3%).

24. The table below sets out the financial impact of an increase to the contribution rate to both preceptors and claimants and is shown in 2.5% increments. Each 2.5% increase will generate additional income of £42,499, of which the council will receive £5,949.

25. It is impossible to identify and calculate precise figures as the contribution level varies dependant on the claimant's financial circumstances. The financial gain and the claimant cost impact are based on all working age claimants paying a 12.5% contribution.

Percentage Contribution	Average liability income due	90% Collection Rate	Increase @ 2.5% increments	Additional Cost to claimant	
				per year	per week
12.50%	£236,108	£212,497			
15%	£283,329	£254,997	£42,499	£46.00	£0.88
17.50%	£330,551	£297,496	£84,999	£91.99	£1.77
20%	£377,773	£339,995	£127,498	£137.99	£2.65

Reducing the Contribution Rate

26. A reduction of 2.5% to the contribution rate will reduce income by £38,710 and will reduce the taxbase for all preceptors including Town and Parish Councils. Reducing the taxbase has the following impacts.

- a) To reduce the contribution is not in the spirit of the sharing agreement (detailed in paragraphs 11 to 16 above), where we have committed to an Essex wide agreement which includes the commitment to maximise our taxbase. The additional income from the Essex Sharing agreement, would be reduced.
- b) Town and Parish Councils will have to increase their precepts to offset the reduction in taxbase to meet their budget requirements.

Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)

27. The Council holds a ring-fenced budget specifically to support all residents who are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances, and you do not have to be eligible for LCTS to make an EHF claim. The EHF is supported by the major preceptors as part of the Essex Sharing Agreement.

28. The annual budget held for this fund is £17,000 with UDC contributing £10,000 and the major preceptors contributing £7,000. In 2020/21 the Council received £325,304 hardship funding from Government to provide additional support to those on the lowest income during the Covid Pandemic. There was £19,870 of this funding unspent and this is being carried forward to provide extra support for those suffering financial hardship.

29. The EHF is subject to award criteria and supports all residents who find themselves in financial difficulties, you do not have to be in receipt of LCTS to qualify, making this scheme fully inclusive to all residents. Full details can be found using the following link: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ehf>

30. It is recommended that the EHF fund is used to provide additional financial support to residents rather than reducing the contribution rate.

Full cost of LCTS scheme (estimated)

31. The following table shows that the forecast financial position for UDC in 2023/24 is an estimated net cost of £467,624. The costing has been based on caseload as of 1 April 2022, the 2022/23 band D equivalent and the 12% share back on current predicted collection rates.

£'000	LCTS County, Fire and Police		UDC
	Expenditure 2022/23	Share	Share 2022/23
LCTS Discounts	3,975,729	3,419,127	556,602
Major Preceptors Income share back (12%)	0	0	(89,000)
Net of LCTS Scheme & Discounts	3,975,729	3,419,127	467,602
Staff support costs (Fraud, Compliance and Recovery)	120	103	17
LCTS Hardship Scheme	17	7	10
LCTS Hardship Scheme - ECC Admin support	0	0	(5)
Total Net Cost	3,975,866	3,419,237	467,624

32. Caseload levels might decrease during 2022/23 but it is predicted that they will remain at levels higher than pre-pandemic. It is difficult to accurately predict the outcomes for 2023/24 but it is hoped that the economy will recover during 2022/23 and the need for LCTS will decrease.

Consultation

33. The consultation ran for the period 20 June to 5 September 2022 and the full consultation report is attached as Appendix A.
34. The consultation was carried out using an online form using an open text box format requesting views on the proposals to maintain the contribution rate at 12.5% and to continue to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carer's on a low income. For those who do not use digital services, paper copies were available on request.
35. The consultation was extensively publicised via a press release to all local media and newspapers, E-newsletters were sent to all the subscribers on our mailing lists. In addition, the consultation was promoted on Facebook and Twitter in July, with reminders in August.
36. The major preceptors, (Essex County Council, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner) and Town and Parish Councils were sent an email directly inviting them to provide their views on the proposals.
37. The consultation received a total of 48 responses (28 responses last year), 44 responses from residents (26 last year) and 4 from preceptors (2 last year).
38. The submitted comments show that 28 responses were supportive of the scheme proposals and a further 13 felt the scheme should be amended or extended, the remainder did not comment specifically on the proposals of the scheme. Full details of all responses are included in the attached report.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Assumptions about costs and income levels are incorrect	3 - a high degree of variability and estimation is involved	3 - adverse or favourable cost affecting the council budget/collection fund	Monitor trends closely and review scheme each year to make necessary adjustments.
Cost of living crisis	2 – claimant levels increase	2 – cost of the scheme will increase	Monitor caseload

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 District Council September 2022

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

A summary report of the survey about the proposed Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme for Uttlesford for the financial year 2023-2024.

In April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. The government required councils to protect pensioners so that they would receive the same level of support as they did under Council Tax Benefit. This means that LCTS has applied only to working age people.

The proposed scheme

Uttlesford District Council has been consulting local residents regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (the Scheme) since 2012 during which time the scheme has undergone various changes. For the financial year 2023/2024, the council has proposed that the scheme is set on the same basis as that for 2022/2023, namely to:

- freeze the contribution rate so that the amount that LCTS claimants pay towards their Council Tax bill will be kept at 12.5%. This remains the lowest contribution rate in Essex
- continue to protect pensioners, the vulnerable and disabled residents and their carers on a low income

Consultation

As in previous consultations, respondents were asked to consider the proposals and provide their views in an 'open text box'.

The survey also invited (but did not require) participants to provide their name and a contact email address so that they



could be kept up to date with the results of the consultation and decision on the proposed scheme. Participants were also asked to identify if their response was on behalf of an organisation (such as major preceptors).

The online survey was run as a web form on the Uttlesford District Council “Lets talk” consultation platform. This could be accessed via a direct link or from the main website home page, directly from the platform itself or from links sent out in various promotions, publicity and newsletters.

Promotion

The survey ran from 20 June to 5 September 2022.

At the start of the consultation period emails inviting participation in the survey were sent directly to:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex - Policing and Community Safety
- all town and parish councils in the district

The survey was widely publicised to the citizens of Uttlesford who were encouraged to take part.

A press release was distributed to all local media and newspapers on 23 June and a reminder release went out on 2 August.

It was included in the *District News* e-newsletter on 11 July that was sent to a total of 9,431 recipients.

Social media promotion went on throughout the consultation period with a total 9,998 reach, 323 engagements and 44 shares.

A reminder letter, promotional materials and paper forms were sent to all town and parish councils on 20 July.

Those people who do not use digital services were offered the option of requesting a paper copy of the survey and proposals to be sent out by post (details were provided on the website, in the press releases and in all publicity).



Results – overall submissions

The overall response rate for the survey was up 71.4% on that undertaken in 2021.

Overall submissions	Result counts 2022 (percentage)	Result counts 2021 (percentage)	Result counts 2020 (percentage)
Total number of paper forms returned	3 (6.25% of total responses)	0	0
Total number of web forms / direct emails submitted	45 (93.75% of total responses)	28 (100%)	27 (100%)
Total number of comments received	48	28	27



Results – submitted comments summary

General consultees

Of the submitted comments, 28 (or 58.3% of all the comments received) either directly supported the proposals for 2023-2024 or could clearly be interpreted as such. This is comparable to the 57.1% of comments received in 2021 that supported the scheme proposed for 2022-2023.

A further 13 comments suggested expanding or making amendments to the proposed scheme.

Notable this year are the number of references to the cost of living crisis, or to providing additional support to the most vulnerable in the district.

3 people who responded to the consultation chose to provide a view not directly relevant to the proposed LCTS scheme. These comments covered:

- making people on any kind of disability scheme a priority
- help for working single parents
- a report of alleged benefit fraud

Preceptors

4 preceptors also responded to the consultation. Of these, 3 support the proposed scheme. Thaxted Parish Council, though, asked that their objection to the proposal to remove the subsidy grant from the parish council be noted.



Comments received from preceptors

The response rate from preceptors was up 100% in comparison with the survey undertaken in 2021.

Overall submissions	Result counts 2022 (percentage)	Result counts 2021 (percentage)	Result counts 2020 (percentage)
Number of responses on behalf of/from representatives of preceptors	4 (8.3% of total responses)	2 (7.1% of total responses)	3 (11.1% of total responses)

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Debden Parish Council

We support UDC's proposal for LCTS claimants to pay towards their Council Tax bill a maximum of 12.5%.

Elsenham Parish Council

Elsenham Parish Council support freezing the contribution rate at the same as last year.

Thaxted Parish Council

Thaxted Parish Council asks you to note its objection to the proposal to remove the subsidy grant from the parish council, which is not in keeping with the general principle of the grant scheme given by Central Government to principle authorities. A copy of a letter from Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Local Government dated February 2015 can be found in the link as below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parish-funding-for-local-council-tax-supportscheme> and is also further enclosed for your convenience.

You will note from the letter the specific request from Kris Hopkins MP for the grant to be passed to town and parish councils, he further notes in his letter to Leaders of Billing Authorities that "it is essential they (town and parish councils) receive all the funds due to them in order to carry out their activities"

The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) also notes the following on its website:



“In 2013/14 and 2014/15 the Department for Communities and Local Government have paid Billing Authorities a combined total for each financial year of £3.3 billion to officially refer on to parish councils in their areas to minimise the reduction of parish precept revenue following the diminution of average council tax bases in parished areas over the last two years. Accordingly, In 2014/15 most Billing Authorities nationally passed on the Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) mitigation grant to parishes in their areas, but 15 did not. We lobbied the Government very hard to ensure that it put pressure on Billing Authorities to pass across to all parishes in their areas the maximum amount of LCTSS parish mitigation grant in 2015/16.”

Should UDC choose not to honour the intent from DCLG, it is not only in clear breach of the guidance and request from DCLG but is also acting outside of the essence and intention of the whole Local Council Tax Support Scheme process of how grants received from Central Government should be forwarded to town and parish councils.

It is further noted within UDC Minutes of 3rd May 2016 that “The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that the 2015 consultation survey had revealed that 93.3% of responses had supported the protection of the parish council grant. However, they would not necessarily have been aware of the financial implications of this arrangement”

It is exceptionally clear and demonstrated from the results of the 2015 consultation that the public is content with the LCTS subsidy continuing to be forwarded to town and parish councils for its intended purpose.

The loss of any funding will have a detrimental effect on Thaxted Parish Council continuing to provide and improve services to the residents and at a time when the Council is still settling its finances after taking on several services that have been devolved from Uttlesford District Council to us such as the Public Toilets and car Park.

The Parish Council therefore wishes to register its fierce objection to the withdrawal of this much needed grant to both town and parish councils. Please therefore consider this letter a formal response to the LCTS consultation process.

Saffron Walden Town Council

Saffron Walden Town Council considered the 2023/24 Local Council Tax Support Scheme report included within the consultation at the Full Council meeting on 11/07/2022. It was unanimously agreed to support the proposals included in the report.



Comments received from general consultees

Comments generally in favour of the proposed scheme

Comment 1

I support the proposals

Comment 2

I agree it should continue as it has this year to protect the vulnerable.

Comment 3

I support the scheme

Comment 4

I agree with the proposed scheme. I am a beneficiary of the scheme myself and greatly appreciate the support that UDC offers to people on low incomes.

Comment 5

Agree full support should be given to those with low income whatever age they are.

Comment 6

It seems fine.

Comment 7

I agree with proposals for the 2023/24 scheme.

Comment 8

It should continue.

Comment 9

I absolutely agree.



Comment 10

The most vulnerable need our support. I would pay a little more. As many will suffer with the cost of living crisis.

Comment 11

I agree with the proposals.

Comment 12

I am fully supportive of the scheme continuing but would like further considerations to be made for residents who may be struggling to pay energy bills. Maybe further reductions for those also in fuel poverty?

Comment 13

Any continued help from LCTS helps - especially for the vulnerable and elderly and low paid.

Comment 14

I agree.

Comment 15

Agree with a freeze.

Comment 16

I agree that this should continue.

Comment 17

Agree.

Comment 18

As a local family who have recently been deceased of my partner of 22 yrs (our bread winner and my boys father) and has had no income since January 2022 I support this proposal. We will sink if no help is provided.

Comment 19

I agree with the proposals. But the council should also be supporting people more in the cost of living crisis with help for heating and food bills.



Comment 20

I recommend leaving at the present level, at the very least.

Comment 21

Councils should help the vulnerable as much as is possible.

Comment 22

This is a good scheme and will help those who need it most.

Comment 23

Agree.

Comment 24

Absolutely Agree - I wish we could do more , with the Cost of Living Crisis.

Comment 25

As a family who pay council tax, I fully support this scheme and would be happy to pay 1% more - as if all did that we could help further.

Comment 26

As someone who grew up poor- This scheme proposed is as it should be - could we do more

Comment 27

Keeping the same support as the current 2022 scheme.

Comment 28

Yes, approve.



Comments received suggesting the proposed scheme be expanded or amended

Comment 1

That seems ridiculous that I have to struggle to pay my council tax in full yet others pay only 12.5 %. How is that fair. 50% maybe. No wonder I have to pay so much.

Comment 2

The scope of the scheme is too wide and will still not include the many who are property rich but money poor. There is a large proportion of the elderly who do not receive the full pension (born prior to 1952) & have saved a little money. They now find themselves having been frugal all their lives getting little return for their small investments as rates are SO LOW. The small amount of savings they have to pay for funeral and repairs to home has excluded them from any financial help. But all around them they see new home owners enjoying historically low interest rates on their mortgages. They have disposable income. They do not! Anything that may address this inequality must be good.

Comment 3

Should be at least 25%.

Comment 4

I feel that it's time to increase the amount paid to 15%. This is still a lot less than other areas and is 88p a week.

Comment 5

Pensioners are seeing inflation linked increases in income, many working in the private sector are not. It is unreasonable to continue to disproportionately recover from those working when non working people are receiving larger annual increases in income.

Comment 6

It is all very well supporting people who are on benefits but they get loads of help already. What about those of us who work sometimes 2 or more jobs but still have to pay for everything and we get no help at all it's like everywhere else if you try to help yourself you get nothing. The council should be helping all people who need it with their council tax and other bills otherwise what is the point.

Comment 7

I don't think they should pay any, I appreciate that's probably not possible - great initiative

Comment 8

The payment contributions need to increase were all struggling and the financial burden of this scheme should not continually be loaded on those that pay the full amount / tax payers.



Comment 9

Give even more support.

Comment 10

I can't help feeling that a wealthy area like Uttlesford should be doing more to help people who are struggling. Why make it that people in real need have to still pay 12.5%, surely Uttlesford can afford to cover the whole amount so that they pay 0%. And what about other shemes. This only helps people with their council tax now with rising energy costs there are going to be a lot of people especially pensioners who will not longer be able to afford to heat their homes. You should be doing something for them now, not thinking about it for some time next year.

Comment 11

How can the rate for a single person living alone not have a 50% discount in annual bill ?
I live in a 2 bed of app on my own but next door also a 2 bed has 5 people ?

Comment 12

I feel that, with the cost of living increase as high as they are, not only the most vulnerable should be given priority. ALL residents should be considered, despite their income or disability.

Families and pensioners who are sitting just above the threshold for discounted rates are usually the hardest hit.

12.5% is a very low contribution rate and should be revised and potentially increased.

Comment 13

Many years ago now I read in the local paper that despite Uttlesford being a relatively wealthy area there were people in all the villages near me suffering hardship.

It must be a lot worse in today's tragic circumstances and a feel that the support scheme lifeline must remain in place and be increased if possible. Council tax is not fair and many more benefits should be added to bring it up to date.



Comments received not specifically commenting on the proposed scheme

Comment 1

I believe that people on any kind of disability scheme and pensioners whose only income is state pension should be priorities. Then families on low income, UC etc.

Comment 2

As a single parent working more than 50 hours a week earning just over £32,000 a year and qualifying for absolutely nothing in benefits or council tax help I am struggling and will be in a worse position this winter with rising fuel costs! Where is the help for her working single parents who don't sponge off the state and sit on their backsides all day?

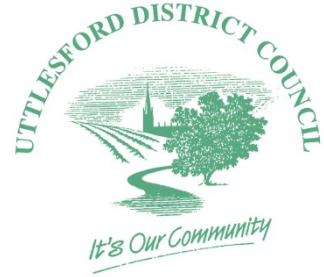
Comment 3

This needs to be applied in a firm but fair manner. I agree that there are households that need support but I personally know of a female who has ridden and abused this scheme for well over 6 years. For 3 of those years she lived in a Static Home on a stable yard avoiding paying for any Council tax.

She then moved to Cutlers Green and now lives in Henham and has used her physical and earnings capacity to live off benefits since I first met her.

By claiming that she cannot work full hours she keeps herself below the radar by working on the books for a minimum amount of hours and then topping her money up by working cash in hand jobs out of hours. At one stage she was earning well over £2300 per month and getting benefits paid, Pip, reduced Council Tax and working credits. She sees the "help" that she gets as a right not a privilege.

She is an example that I'm sure if we all looked is not isolated. This is why I believe that any scheme to assist should be rigorously enforced to weed out these people who see it as a way to make money rather than have a genuine need.



Uttlesford District Council

Equality & Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA)

Document control

Title of activity:	<i>Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24</i>
Lead officer:	<i>Angela Knight, Assistant Director – Business and Change Management Corporate Services</i>
Approved by:	<i>Adrian Webb, Director of Finance and Corporate Services (S151 Officer)</i>
Date completed:	<i>21 October 2022</i>
Scheduled date for review:	<i>Reviewed annually in line with the annual consultation and scheme proposals</i>

Does the EqHIA contain any confidential or exempt information that would prevent you publishing it on the Council's website?	No
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Please note that EqHIAs are **public** documents and must be made available on the Council's [EqHIA webpage](#).

When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the activity a policy, strategy, procedure, project, new or change in service, initiative or other's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

When the EqHIA is completed send a copy to the following email address - EqHIA@Uttlesford.gov.uk

1. Equality & Health Impact Assessment Checklist

Please complete the following checklist to determine whether or not you will need to complete an EqHIA and ensure you keep this section for your audit trail. If you have any questions, please contact your Divisional Equality Lead. Please refer to the Guidance in Appendix 1 on how to complete this form. **When EqHIA is completed send a copy to the following email address EqHIA@Uttlesford.gov.uk**

About your activity

1	Title of activity	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24		
2	Type of activity	To set the annual criteria for the scheme		
3	Scope of activity	The scheme criteria are reviewed annually, and proposals are subject to consultation with all residents and preceptors in the Districts		
4a	Are you changing, introducing a new, or removing a service, policy, strategy or function?	No	If the answer to <u>any</u> of these questions is 'YES', please continue to question 5.	If the answer to <u>all</u> of the questions (4a, 4b & 4c) is 'NO', please go to question 6.
4b	Does this activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon people (9 protected characteristics)?	Yes		
4c	Does the activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon any factors which determine people's health and wellbeing?	Yes		
5	If you answered YES:	Please complete the EqHIA in Section 2 of this document. Please see Appendix 1 for Guidance.		
6	If you answered NO:	<p><i>Please provide a clear and robust explanation on why your activity does not require an EqHIA. This is essential in case the activity is challenged under the Equality Act 2010.</i></p> <p><i>Please keep this checklist for your audit trail.</i></p>		

Completed by:	Angela Knight, Assistant Director – Business and Change Management Corporate Services
Date:	21 October 2022

2. The EqHIA – How will the strategy, policy, plan, procedure and/or service impact on people?

Background/context:

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme sets the criteria for reduced payments of council tax for households on low incomes. It also includes additional support for pensioners, vulnerable and disabled residents and their carer's.

Who will be affected by the activity?

The scheme is available to all households in the district subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

Protected Characteristic - Age: Consider the full range of age groups

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Positive	
Neutral	✓
Negative	

Overall impact:

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

The scheme is available to all ages who are liable for payment of council tax.

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Disability: Consider the full range of disabilities; including physical mental, sensory and progressive conditions

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Positive	
Neutral	✓

Overall impact:

Negative		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme is available to all vulnerable and disabled residents who are liable for payment of council tax.		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		

Protected Characteristic - Sex/gender: Consider both men and women		
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact:
Positive		
Neutral	✓	
Negative		
		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme does not include any criteria relating to sex or gender.		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		

Protected Characteristic - Ethnicity/race: Consider the impact on different ethnic groups and nationalities		
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact:
Positive		
Neutral	✓	
Negative		
		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme does not include any criteria relating to Ethnicity or race.		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Religion/faith: Consider people from different religions or beliefs including those with no religion or belief

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Overall impact:

Positive

Neutral

✓

Negative

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

The scheme does not include any criteria relating to Religion or Faith.

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Sexual orientation: Consider people who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Overall impact:

Positive

Neutral

✓

Negative

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

The scheme does not include any criteria relating to Religion or Faith.

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Gender reassignment: Consider people who are seeking, undergoing or have received gender reassignment surgery, as well as people whose gender identity is different from their gender at birth

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Overall impact:

Positive

Neutral

✓

Negative		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme does not include any criteria relating to Religion or Faith.		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		

Protected Characteristic - Marriage/civil partnership: Consider people in a marriage or civil partnership		
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact:
Positive		
Neutral	✓	
Negative		
		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme does not include any criteria relating to marriage or civil partnerships.		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		

Protected Characteristic - Pregnancy, maternity and paternity: Consider those who are pregnant and those who are undertaking maternity or paternity leave		
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact:
Positive		
Neutral	✓	
Negative		
		<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:		
The scheme does not include any criteria relating to pregnancy, maternity or paternity		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		




Socio-economic status: Consider those who are from low income or financially excluded backgrounds	
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>	Overall impact:
Positive	
Neutral	✓
Negative	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	
Evidence:	
The scheme is focused on supporting households who are on low incomes	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	
Sources used:	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	

Health & Wellbeing Impact: Consider both short and long-term impacts of the activity on a person's physical and mental health, particularly for disadvantaged, vulnerable or at-risk groups. Can health and wellbeing be positively promoted through this activity? Please use the Health and Wellbeing Impact Tool in Appendix 2 to help you answer this question.	
<i>Please tick (✓) all the relevant boxes that apply:</i>	Overall impact:
Positive	✓
Neutral	
Negative	✓
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	
Do you consider that a more in-depth HIA is required as a result of this brief assessment? Please tick (✓) the relevant box	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Evidence:	
The scheme provides financial support to low-income households which is aimed at reducing the financial burden and stress on households who are struggling financially.	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	
Sources used:	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>	

3. Outcome of the Assessment

The EqHIA assessment is intended to be used as an improvement tool to make sure the activity maximises the positive impacts and eliminates or minimises the negative impacts. The possible outcomes of the assessment are listed below and what the next steps to take are:

Please tick (✓) what the overall outcome of your assessment was:

	<p>1. The EqHIA identified <u>no significant concerns</u> OR the identified <u>negative concerns</u> have already been <u>addressed</u></p>		<p>Proceed with implementation of your activity</p>
	<p>2. The EqHIA identified some <u>negative impact</u> which still needs to be <u>addressed</u></p>		<p>COMPLETE SECTION 4: Complete action plan and finalise the EqHIA</p>
	<p>3. The EqHIA identified some <u>major concerns</u> and showed that it is <u>impossible to diminish negative impacts</u> from the activity to an acceptable or even lawful level</p>		<p>Stop and remove the activity or revise the activity thoroughly. Complete an EqHIA on the revised proposal.</p>

4. Action Plan

The real value of completing an EqHIA comes from the identifying the actions that can be taken to eliminate/minimise negative impacts and enhance/optimize positive impacts. In this section you should list the specific actions that set out how you will address any negative equality and health & wellbeing impacts you have identified in this assessment. Please ensure that your action plan is: more than just a list of proposals and good intentions; sets ambitious yet achievable outcomes and timescales; and is clear about resource implications.

Protected characteristic / health & wellbeing impact	Identified Negative or Positive impact	Recommended actions to mitigate Negative impact* or further promote Positive impact	Outcomes and monitoring**	Timescale	Lead officer
Health & Wellbeing Impact	Both positive and negative	<p>The scheme aims to support households on low income, so provides a positive impact although there are some households who do not qualify but may still be struggling financially</p> <p>The council holds an additional Exceptional</p>	<p>The outcome is to support low income households in payment of council tax and minimise council tax arrears and residents' debt levels.</p> <p>This is monitored quarterly by the KPI/PI's on collection rates and debt levels. Also, data on the number of claims for additional support.</p>	Annually reviewed	Angela Knight – Assistant Director – Business and Change Management

		Hardship Fund (EHF) which is open to all households who find themselves struggling financially.			
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Add further rows as necessary

* You should include details of any future consultations and any actions to be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts

** Monitoring: You should state how the impact (positive or negative) will be monitored; what outcome measures will be used; the known (or likely) data source for outcome measurements; how regularly it will be monitored; and who will be monitoring it (if this is different from the lead officer).

5. Review

In this section you should identify how frequently the EqHIA will be reviewed; the date for next review; and who will be reviewing it.

Review:

The review will be conducted annually in line with the review of the scheme proposals and consultation process.

Scheduled date of review:

October 2023

Lead Officer conducting the review:

Angela Knight – Assistant Director – Business and Change Management

Agenda Item 6b

Committee: Full Council

Date: Tuesday,

Title: Proposed Amendments to the
Uttlesford District Council Constitution

6 December 2022

Report Author: Jane Reynolds
Assistant Director
Governance and Legal / Monitoring Officer
JReynolds@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. Three reports recommending a suite of constitutional amendments were taken to the last GAP Committee on the 29th of September 2022 as follows:
 - 1.1 Regulation of Investigatory Powers
 - 1.2 Scheme of Delegation
 - 1.3 A report dealing with general amendments some of which were informed by good practice, and some required by legalisation and to provide clarity
2. The contents of the Reports at 1.1 and 1.2 were adopted at the last Council meeting on the 11 October 2022.
3. The report at paragraph 1.3 referred to the following areas where amendment was recommended:
 - 2.1 The provisions in the Council Procedure Rules relating to abridgment of time for calling extraordinary meetings
 - 2.2 The Officer Employment Rules (relating to Statutory Officer Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures)
 - 2.3 Councillor role descriptions
 - 2.4 The functions and terms of reference of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee, and the Standards Committee
 - 2.5 The provisions in the Council Procedure Rules relating to motions.
4. On consideration of the report at 1.3 members requested that the report be deferred in order to look in more depth at the proposed changes. Not all changes were essential (those at 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5) and members requested further consideration by Committee and, or, that members were consulted more widely if the changes affected their member or Committee roles.

- Members were advised that amendments proposed at 2.1 and 2.2 above were essential amendments.

Recommendations

- That the Committee note this update to the report at paragraph 1.3 and the amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers which will be made to the Constitution as outlined in appendix one below.
- That the Committee note the amendments shown in paragraph 13 made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers which will be made to the Constitution as outlined in appendix two below.

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications deriving from this report.

Background Papers

- GAP Committee Report and Minutes 29th September 2022.

Impact

-

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

- Since the GAP Committee of the 29 September 2022 some consultation has taken place as members requested regarding 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 above. In addition, since that time, more good practice guidance has emerged in a number of areas. Having considered the feedback and the emerging practice guidance it would be more efficient to separate these non-essential issues out from those that require

immediate change and consider this piece of work post elections when the Council may well have some new members and will form new Committees.

12. The Monitoring Officer proposes to report on these issues again post elections and has under delegated authority in the meantime made the required essential but minor amendments to the Constitution found at appendix 1 of this report.
13. In addition as part of our ongoing review of the Constitution and not reported on at the last GAP Committee, Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires the Council to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions. This duty will be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee. To achieve this amendments were needed to the Constitution to regularise this. The Chair of Scrutiny has been consulted and the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority has made the amendments shown at appendix 2 of this report.
14. This report is to be considered at the GAP Committee on 30 November 2022.

Risk Analysis

14. The proposed amendments to the Constitution create little risk to the Council.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1	1	1	Changes made mitigate any risk.

- 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.

Please note text highlighted in yellow indicates where text has been added.

Appendix 1

PART 4 – RULES OF PROCEDURE

RULE 3 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

3.1 Calling extraordinary meetings.

Those listed below may request the proper officer to call Council meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:

- 3.1.1 the Council by resolution;

- 3.1.2 the Chair of the Council;
- 3.1.3 the Monitoring Officer,
- 3.1.4 the Section 151 Officer; and
- 3.1.5 any five members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Chair of the Council and he/she has refused to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition.

3.2 **Business**

The summons to the extraordinary meeting shall set out the business to be considered. No business other than that set out in the summons shall be considered at that meeting.

RULE 4 TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive and notified in summons.

RULE 5 NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS

- 5.1 The Chief Executive will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear working days before a meeting, the Chief Executive will send a summons signed by him or her by post or by e-mail to every member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

5.2 **Meetings convened at short notice**

Meeting of the Council may only be convened at less than five clear working days' notice whereby reason of special circumstances which shall be specified in the summons, the meeting is required to be called at that time as a matter of urgency.

PART 4 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION RULES

RULE 5 NOTICES OF MEETING

Unless Rule 5.2 of the Council Procedure Rules applies, the Council will give at least five clear working days' notice of any meeting by posting details of the meeting at the Council Offices,

London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER (“the designated office”) or publishing on the council website.

RULE 6 ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS BEFORE THE MEETING

Unless Rule 5.2 of the Council Procedure Rules applies, the Council will make copies of the agenda and reports open to the public available for inspection at the designated office at least five clear working days before the meeting. If an item is added to the agenda later, the revised agenda will be open to inspection from the time the item was added to the agenda. Where reports are prepared after the summons has been sent out, the Chief Executive shall make each such report available to the public as soon as the report is completed and sent to councillors. In the event of Rule 5.2 being applied, the agenda and reports shall be published as soon as possible.

Part 4 Section 2, of the Constitution: Officer Employment Rules

8. Disciplinary procedure for relevant officers

8.1 The provisions of this rule are applicable to the dismissal of, and the taking of any disciplinary action against, (a) the Council’s head of paid service, (b) its chief finance officer and (c) its monitoring officer (defined for the purposes of these provisions in rule 8.2(b) below). The provisions of this rule should be read in conjunction with the relevant provisions of the Council’s Disciplinary Policy, in which the additional procedural steps that will be followed are set out.

8.2 In the following paragraphs

- (a) “the 2011 Act” means the Localism Act 2011(b);
- (b) “chief finance officer”, “disciplinary action”, “head of the authority’s paid service” and “monitoring officer” have the same meaning as in regulation 2 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001;
- (c) “independent person” means a person appointed under section 28(7) of the 2011 Act;
- (d) “local government elector” means a person registered as a local government elector in the register of electors in the authority’s area in accordance with the Representation of the People Acts;
- (e) “the Panel” means a committee appointed by the authority under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for

the purposes of advising the authority on matters relating to the dismissal of relevant officers of the authority;

- (f) “relevant meeting” means a meeting of the authority to consider whether or not to approve a proposal to dismiss a relevant officer; and
- (g) “relevant officer” means the chief finance officer, head of the authority's paid service or monitoring officer, as the case may be.

8.3 A relevant officer may not be dismissed by an authority unless the procedure set out in the following paragraphs is complied with.

8.4 The authority must invite relevant independent persons to be considered for appointment to the Panel, with a view to appointing at least two such persons to the Panel.

8.5 In paragraph 8.4 “relevant independent person” means any independent person who has been appointed by the authority or, where there are fewer than two such persons, such independent persons as have been appointed by another authority or authorities as the authority considers appropriate.

8.6 Subject to paragraph 8.7, the authority must appoint to the Panel such relevant independent persons who have accepted an invitation issued in accordance with paragraph 8.4 in accordance with the following priority order-

- (a) a relevant independent person who has been appointed by the authority and who is a local government elector;
- (b) any other relevant independent person who has been appointed by the authority;
- (c) a relevant independent person who has been appointed by another authority or authorities

8.7 An authority is not required to appoint more than two relevant independent persons in accordance with paragraph 8.6 but may do so.

8.8 The authority must appoint any Panel at least 20 working days before the relevant meeting.

8.9 Before the taking of a vote at the relevant meeting on whether or not to approve such a dismissal, the authority must take into account, in particular—

- any advice, views or recommendations of the Panel;
- the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal; and
- any representations from the relevant officer.

8.10 Any remuneration, allowances or fees paid by the authority to an independent person appointed to the Panel must not exceed the level of remuneration, allowances or fees payable to that independent person in respect of that person's role as independent person under the 2011 Act.

Appendix 2

Article 6 - Scrutiny Committee

6.3 Specific Functions - Scrutiny Committee

- 6.3.1 conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- 6.3.2 consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- 6.3.3 question members of committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the district;
- 6.3.4 liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- 6.3.5 assist the Council and the executive in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- 6.3.6 review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the executive, committees and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and in more general terms;
- 6.3.7 carry out the functions assigned to a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee pursuant to Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006;
- 6.3.8 review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in

relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;

- 6.3.9 question members of the executive, committees and chief officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- 6.3.10 make recommendations to the executive, committees and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- 6.3.11 review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
- 6.3.12 question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent); and
- 6.3.13 exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by the executive or committees

Agenda Item 8

Committee: Council

Date:

Title: Member Allowance Scheme Review 2023-24

Tuesday,
6 December 2022

Report Author: The Independent Remuneration Panel:
Diane Drury (Chair), Linda Riley and Brigid Dyson; assisted by
Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager
bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk
Clare Edwards, Democratic Services Officer
cedwards@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. The Council is required to maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make annual recommendations as to the level of the Basic Allowance and the type and level of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs).
2. In making a scheme of allowances, the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of an independent panel but is not bound by them.
3. This report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the Members' Scheme of Allowances for the year 2023/24.

Recommendations

That the Council:

- I. Adopts the recommended scheme of allowances for the year 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A to the report, effectively increasing the current level of basic allowance and all existing special responsibility allowances (SRAs) by 3.00%.
- II. Continues with the current individual SRAs for Portfolio Holders in 2023/24.
- III. Notes the importance of the Carers Allowance Scheme to encourage those with caring responsibilities to become Councillors.

Financial Implications

4. There would be additional cost to the Council due to the 3% increase in the level of the basic and special responsibility allowances. The estimated cost of implementing this rise is an increase of £9677.36.

Background Papers

- 5. [National census of local authority councillors 2022 | Local Government Association](#)

Census information from Uttlesford District Councillors

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Members had the opportunity to complete the Census of local authority councillors 2022.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

The Independent Remuneration Panel

- 6. The Panel this year consists of, Diane Drury (Chair), Linda Riley and Brigid Dyson, who was recruited in the summer and joined the Panel for this review.
- 7. In conducting its appraisal, the Panel were mindful of the cost of living crisis and the extra financial burden this placed on members of the community, Councillors and the Council. The Panel felt their decision was particularly difficult this year due to the conflicting factors of wanting to increase the basic allowance, to ensure remuneration did not act as a disincentive to residents

from various backgrounds in becoming Councillors, and the understanding that many residents were struggling financially in the current economic climate and rising inflation.

Summary of the Review

8. The IRP took into consideration information from the National Census 2022 which provided up to date national statistics as well as local data relating to Uttlesford District Council (UDC).

The total response rate for UDC was 25 out of 39 Councillors which equates to 64% of Councillors responding.

The Panel reviewed the Census and noted the largely comparative results between national and local data. The data was also consistent when compared with the results of the IRP's own survey conducted during the previous review.

The following data was noted: -

- a. Overall, the average number of hours spent on council work was consistent with the national average of approximately 22.5 hours per week.
 - b. The main reasons stated for why Councillors stood were comparable for both UDC respondents and the national data. The two main reasons given for standing were to serve the community and to change things within the district.
 - c. 36% of UDC respondents had caring responsibilities compared to 45.9% nationally.
9. The Panel also asked for a comparison of mileage rates. The mileage rate is set by HMRC and is therefore the same across all Councils, the current rate is 45p per mile.

- a. The total mileage claimed in each year from 2018 until 2022 is below, the year runs from May to April.

Year	Total Mileage Claimed	No. of Councillors to Claim
2021/22	£2,748.55	13
2020/21	£216.00	5
2019/20	£7,853.40	23
2018/19	£9,614.30	12

The Covid pandemic has an effect on each of the years apart from 2018/19.

10. The Carers allowance, which includes childcare, varied across local authorities, but UDC was the only authority which did not set an hourly rate or a maximum claim, although valid receipts are required. The Panel commended the generous nature of the scheme and requested that it be highlighted in the run-up to the election in May 2023.

Basic Allowance

11. The aim of the payment of the basic allowance is that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary but that financial recompense is available to elected members to avoid a disincentive for anyone wishing to come forward to serve their local community.
12. The basic allowance takes account of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the Council. It also acts as the starting point for the calculation of all SRAs as these are expressed as multipliers of the basic allowance.
13. UDC's basic allowance is in the middle range of the Local Authorities that were used for the benchmarking exercise. For consistency, the same councils that have been used in previous reviews were selected:
 - a. Benchmarking for the basic allowance was undertaken.

Authority	Basic Allowance
Uttlesford	£5,346.49
Epping Forest	£4,300.00
South Cambridgeshire	£5,148.00
East Herts	£5,428.79
Braintree	£5,154.00
Stevenage	£8,160.00
Chelmsford	£6,111.00
Hertsmere	£6,287.00

14. The Local Government staff pay award is a helpful measure for the Panel to consider when setting the basic allowance, although the link to the staff pay award has not been formalised to maintain flexibility. The staff pay award for 2022-23 has been agreed and a one year increase of £1,925 on all spinal column points will be awarded. For the lowest paid staff, this means an increase of 9.4% and for the highest paid 1.6%.
15. The Panel is also mindful of inflation when considering their decision in respect of the basic allowance; the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 9.9% in the 12 months to August 2022.
16. After consideration the Panel decided that a rise of 3.00% was justified. The following factors contributed to their decision:
 - a. The economic climate is volatile and inflation has increased to 9.9% compared to the previous year's increase of 2.9%. The Panel were aware that they could not fall too far behind the rate of inflation in order to avoid larger increases in the future but, considering the financial struggles that many residents faced, they agreed it should not be raised any higher than the 3.00% proposed. The Panel were also

mindful of the provision for any individual to forego their allowance, partially or in full, during their deliberations.

- b. The Panel did not want the Basic Allowance to be a barrier or disincentive to people considering standing as Councillors, however they felt that if the generous care allowance was considered alongside the rise in basic allowance the overall package may encourage those with caring duties to consider becoming a Councillor. The Panel noted that with the 3% increase, the basic allowance would still be in the mid-range in comparison to benchmarked Local Authorities.
- c. The staff pay award was on a sliding scale with the lowest paid receiving the equivalent of a 9.4% increase. This contributed to the Panel's decision to propose raising the basic allowance by 3%.

Portfolio Holder's Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

- 17. In 2019, the Cabinet increased from 5 members to the maximum 10. However, Cabinet members voluntarily agreed to a 45% reduction (£3,468,00 claimed, entitled to £6305.45).
- 18. In previous reviews the Panel considered that the voluntary reductions were potentially unsustainable in budgetary terms and a collective SRA should be explored in the lead up to the next scheduled district election in May 2023.
- 19. It should be noted that the collective allowance would not include the Leader or the Deputy Leader as they have a separate allowance and only one special responsibility allowance can be taken per person. This leaves a maximum of 8 Portfolio Holder allowances despite the fact that the Deputy Leader tends to have other portfolio responsibilities.
- 20. Further benchmarking data was requested by the IRP to assist with their recommendations:
 - a. The Panel was interested in the number of Cabinet Members in similar Local Authorities to see whether UDC was an outlier when it moved from 5 to 10 Cabinet Members and then to the current 9. The table below shows that other authorities have similar numbers.

Authority	No. Cabinet Members
Uttlesford	9
Epping Forest	10
South Cambridgeshire	8
East Herts	8
Braintree	9
Stevenage	8
Chelmsford	5 (+5 deputies)
Hertsmere	8

- b. Benchmarking for Portfolio Holders allowance was also carried out: -

Uttlesford	£6,415.80
Epping Forest	£6,450.00

South Cambridgeshire	£7,862.00
East Herts	£9,780.96
Braintree	£10,308.00
Stevenage	£11,218.00
Chelmsford 5 (+5 deputies)	£12,534 (£6,267)
Hertsmere	£13,906.00

21. The Panel considered the results of the benchmarking data and felt that, at a minimum, the collective pot would have to constitute 8 individual Portfolio Holder SRAs, or the Scheme could be at risk of becoming a disincentive.

22. The Panel discussed the introduction of a collective SRA for Portfolio Holders and decided that the individual SRA should be retained. On balance, the current scheme provided a degree of flexibility and autonomy to each Portfolio Holder, within the parameters of the regulations, which a collective pot may not afford.

The Panel noted the provision to forgo an allowance, partially or in full, and felt that this decision should remain in the gift of individual members. Therefore, the Panel proposed that the individual Portfolio Holder allowance should be raised by 3%, in line with the basic allowance and all other SRAs.

Looking forward

23. The Panel have requested that the Carers' Allowance be more widely advertised in the lead up to the 2023 local elections. It is proposed that the Members' Allowance Scheme, with specific attention paid to the Carers' Allowance, be shared with Group Leaders in the lead up to the nomination process, and that the scheme be highlighted at prospective councillor events.

24. Diane Drury, who has been an IRP member since 2018, has completed her term and will be leaving the Panel at the end of this review. The Democratic Services Manager would like to put on record his thanks to Mrs Drury for her commitment and dedication to each review and her excellent chairing of the Panel.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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<p>That member allowances do not continue to be set at a realistic level reflecting duties undertaken, which may deter future prospective councillors</p>	<p>2 – allowances paid to elected members do not reflect the time commitment and level of responsibility demanded</p>	<p>3 – the Council may not be able to attract a diverse range of councillors that reflect the makeup of the community they serve.</p>	<p>Adoption of suitable levels of allowances taking account of relevant commitment and responsibility of members</p>
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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.

PROPOSED MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2023/24

All councillors receive the basic allowance unless they request otherwise. Special responsibility allowances, such as that of the Chair of the Council, are paid to those who hold responsibility for these positions.

Allowance	Amount
Basic Allowance	£5,506.88
Chair of the Council	£4,405.51 + civic expenses
Vice Chair of the Council	£2,202.76
Leader of the Council	£13,491.88
Deputy Leader of the Council	£7,158.95
Portfolio Holders	£6,608.27
Overview/Scrutiny and Ordinary Committee Chairs	£3,854.83
Chair of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	£4,130.18
Members of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	£254.16 (to be paid in a municipal year when at least ten meetings of the Committee take place in a purely regulatory capacity; a payment will be made to members attending at least 50% of those meetings).
Chair of Planning Committee	£4,130.18
Members of Planning Committee	£508.33
Substitute members of the Planning Committee	£127.08 (to be paid in a municipal year when a substitute member of the Planning Committee has attended at least 25% of meetings of that committee).
Chair of Standards Committee	£2,202.76
Main opposition group leader	£3,854.83

Other opposition group leader	£2,202.76
Independent representatives on the Standards Committee or the Statutory Officer Discipline and Dismissal Panel	£550.68
Panel members of Independent Remuneration Panel	£550.68

Explanatory notes about how the Special Responsibility Allowances are calculated:

Chairman of the Council - 80% of the basic allowance

Vice-Chairman of the Council - 40% of the basic allowance

Leader of the Council - 245% of the basic allowance

Deputy Leader of the Council - 130% of the basic allowance

Members of the Executive - 120% of the basic allowance

Chairmen of overview, scrutiny and ordinary committees - 70% of the basic allowance

Chairman of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee - 75% of the basic allowance

Members of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee - 3, 8-hour days at the daily rate (calculated by dividing the basic allowance by 65, 8 hour days, equivalent to 520 hours per annum)

Chairman of Planning Committee - 75% of basic allowance

Members of the Planning Committee - 6, 8-hour days at the daily rate (calculated by dividing the basic allowance by 65, 8 hour days, equivalent to 520 hours per annum)

Substitute Members of the Planning Committee – 25% of the SRA for members of the Planning Committee

Chairman of the Standards Committee - 40% of the basic allowance

Leader of the largest opposition group - 70% of the basic allowance

Leader of all other opposition groups - 40% of the basic allowance

Independent members of the Standards Committee or the Statutory Officer Discipline and Dismissal Panel - benchmarked to 10% of the basic allowance

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel - benchmarked to 10% of the basic allowance (although this allowance is not reviewed by the Panel and is agreed independently by the Council)

Committee: Full Council

Date: Tuesday,

Title: Refreshment of the evidential trail regarding the Council's ability to prosecute offences under Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

6 December 2022

Lead Member: Councillor Lavelle, Chair of the Licensing and Environmental Committee

Report Author: Elizabeth Smith, Solicitor.
esmith@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. This report is submitted to advise Members regarding the steps required to provide up to date evidence of the Council's adoption of Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1967

Recommendations

2. That Members a) resolve to confirm the resolution in this regard dated 31st January 1989 and b) that the steps required under S45 of the 1976 Act to publicise the making of the said resolution are undertaken

Financial Implications

3. As part of its statutory responsibilities the Council regulates those hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and operators who choose to licence within the District of Uttlesford. This includes a large number of Home to School Transport contractors (HtST) working in various locations throughout England.
4. Part II of the Act contains a number of powers including that to bring a prosecution for a number of offences created by the Act. If the adoption of the Act and the publicization of that adoption cannot be properly evidenced, then the prosecution will fail and the Council could be found liable to pay the Defendant's legal costs.

5. Background Papers

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

- a. Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- b. Byelaws made under S68 Town Police Clauses Act 1847, S171 Public Health Act 1875 and S15 Transport Act 1985 in respect of hackney carriages, confirmed by the Secretary of State on 5th May 1987.

- c. Minutes of meeting of Policy and Resources Committee dated 17th January 1989 recommending the extension of the licensing regime to the private hire vehicle trade. (Appendices A1 and A2)
- d. Minutes of Full Council dated 31st January 1989 resolving to accept the recommendation set out at c) above. (Appendix B)
- e. Newspaper advertisements and copy covering emails as required by S45(3) (a) and (b)

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	None.
Community Safety	The purpose of the HC/PHV licensing regime is to ensure the safety of the travelling public and the Council takes this responsibility very seriously.
Equalities	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The European Convention of Human Rights sets out 18 Convention rights incorporated into UK law by S1(3) Human Rights Act 1998 and set out in full in Schedule 1 Part I thereof. Article 3 states as follows:- Everyone has the right to “life, liberty and security of person”.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

- 8. The Council licenses some 1981 HC/PHV drivers and 74 operators and since approximately 70% of the former are engaged on HtST contracts throughout England it is regarded as being essential that the full range of powers under Part II of the 1976 Act are available to officers. The powers under all of the legislation relating to this activity are not automatically available and have to be specifically adopted by local authorities. Those relating to hackney

carriages (“taxi”) were adopted by the making of byelaws in 1986/7 and they were extended to private hire vehicles (popularly known as “minicabs”) in 1989.

9. S45 of the 1976 Act prescribes the procedure that must be followed in order secure this. The resolution to adopt the provisions of Part II of the Act must be made by the local authority involved and notice of intent to make that resolution must be advertised for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper. Notice must similarly be served on the date of the first publication, upon all the Parish Councils within the District of Uttlesford.
10. In order to validly prosecute an offence under the Act the Council must be able to prove all the requirements of S45 have been met.
11. Due to the age of the original resolution the Council finds itself unable to prove the advertising and service requirements were complied with. Inquiries have been made of other authorities finding themselves in this position, and Buckinghamshire Council (the successor body to Aylesbury Vale Council, the Respondent in the leading case in the area) advise that given the age of the legislation that this is not uncommon and that the simplest mode of resolving the problem is passing a confirmatory resolution and re-publicising the same. Members are thus respectfully requested to do this and it is confirmed the advertisements and copy correspondence with Parish Councils will be placed in safe storage with the Byelaws, a copy of this report and the minutes of this meeting.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
(1) A prosecution might be dismissed with costs against the Council in default of this resolution.	Since the problem has been identified no prosecutions have been brought but officers wish to do so as soon as possible.	Serious misconduct might go unsanctioned.	Adopting these recommendations without delay

- 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 A1 - Minutes Policy and Resources Committee, 17th January 1989, recommending the extension of the licensing regime to the private hire vehicle trade.



328

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at 7.00 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES
SAFFRON WALDEN on 17 JANUARY 1989

Present:- Councillor P M Macphail - Chairman.
Councillors M H Caton, R P Chambers, R A E Clifford,
S P G Collins, Mrs D M Haggerwood, H B Hughes, J Hurwitz,
E A Kiddle, D M Miller, S W Neville, N G Prowse, H W Pugh,
A R Row, J C Stevens, K L Tivendale and D A Westcott.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors
Mrs M R Davey and R Glover.

Officers in attendance:- J F Vernon, R Bolton, J B Bosworth, G L Field,
A A Hearn, J Mercer, M T Purkiss and R F Scaife.

379 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D E Collins,
R G H Eastham, A C Streeter, A D Walters and J A Wright.

380 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 1988 were received,
confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(1) Parish Warding - Stansted Mountfitchet

Further to Minute 295 it was confirmed that the principle of warding
had been agreed and the way in which it was to be implemented would be
the subject of consultations with the Stansted Parish Council.

381 PROVISION OF A CEMETERY IN GREAT DUNMOW

Great Dunmow Parish Council were concerned that arising from the
expected increase in population there would soon be a need for
additional burial space within their Parish. The Parish Council felt
that this Council should be responsible for providing any additional
land.

The Committee was advised of the legislation relating to the provision
of cemeteries. Whilst there might be a case for the Council to assist
in the acquisition of suitable land it should not be involved in the
maintenance or upkeep of cemeteries.

RESOLVED that the Officers investigate the cost of acquiring land
for cemetery purposes in Great Dunmow.

382 HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Under the provisions of the Transport Act 1985 this Council had, since
1 January 1987, administered the issue of Hackney Carriage Vehicle
Licences and Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences. At the present time
there were 10 licensed vehicles and 16 licensed drivers. Members
considered a comprehensive report and were advised that the licensing
of Hackney Carriage vehicles and drivers had worked well during the
first two years of operation.

P. Rose

*Examined alongside the original & certified to be a true
copy thereof. Elizabeth Smith, Solicitor, Saffron Walden 2/11/22*

INITIALS

However, the Stansted Airport development would substantially increase the volume of business and it was considered that the time was now right to extend the licensing system to private hire vehicles and drivers. The situation at the Airport would need to be discussed with East Hertfordshire District Council and Stansted Airport Limited.

At the present time there were no designated Hackney Carriage ranks within this District. The provision of ranks would improve the service to the public and could also alleviate the problem of some taxis parking in public car parks awaiting radio call outs.

Of particular concern was the requirement for the Council to ensure that applicants for licensed drivers were "fit and proper" persons to hold a licence. There was no satisfactory way of checking non-disclosure of criminal convictions.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 An approach be made to the Local Member of Parliament and through the Association of District Councils for Police assistance in the vetting of applicants for licensed drivers of Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles.
- 2 At present no change be made to the fees charged by the Council in connection with the issue of licences. Future increases in fees should be based on the principle of recovering the Council's administrative costs.
- 3 That the provision of taxi ranks in the four major urban areas and at Stansted Airport be further investigated by the Officers and a report submitted to a future meeting and
- 4 the system of licensing be extended to cover private hire vehicles and private hire drivers.

383 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

(i) Vehicle replacement - tenders for refuse collection vehicles

At its meeting on 6 December 1988 the Environmental Health Committee had been advised that in order to comply with the law relating to permitted loading of vehicles two 22 tonne vehicles equipped with lift axle capable of carrying a 10 tonne load had been purchased at a total cost of £113,150 which exceeded the budget estimate by £8,150. It was further proposed to fit lift axles to the remaining 2 vehicles to increase their loaded gross weight to 19½ tonnes at a total cost of £8,800.

Approval was therefore sought to waive Standing Orders with regard to contracts in respect of the purchase of two 22 tonne vehicles equipped with lift axles and for a supplementary estimate of £8,800 to fit 2 existing refuse collection vehicles with lift axles.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 standing orders relating to contracts be waived and

INITIALS

2 a supplementary financial year

384 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 1989/90

Further to Minute 295 t Programme for 1989/90 -

RECOMMENDED that now submitted, be a

385 COMMITTEE BUDGET 1989/90

The Committee received i year and

RESOLVED that the be approved.

386 BUDGET AND RATE PROSPECTS

The Committee gave consid for the coming year whi Whilst 1989/90 was the f terms was above the 1974, be lower. The general expenditure per head to increase only by the ra population had been absor

The main subjective of h substantive increases we charges. Members were a and how these were refle

Net expenditure in 1989/ grant for the year red £2,794,000, equivalent to of 9.3p or 51%. It mitigated by drawing £168 for the fact there was a year. The effect of this 26p. It was contended t balance and there was c drawn upon to lessen the to use was a subjective in March. However, a D probable for the coming likely increases and Co seconded that :-

An Member/Officer Workin structure and management changes in the Council's need for a corporate plan

COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON WALDEN on 31 JANUARY 1989

Present:- Councillor R P Chambers - Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, R T K Aldous, N J Belcher,
M H Caton, Mrs P J Chater, R A E Clifford, D E Collins,
Mrs M R Davey, A Dean, Mrs I Delderfield, R G H Eastham,
H D Free, R Glover, R D Green, Mrs D M Haggerwood,
Mrs A B Harding, R Hawkins, H B Hughes, J Hurwitz,
A J Ketteridge, E A Kiddle, P M Macphail, Mrs J E Menell,
D M Miller, S W Neville, N G Prowse, H W Pugh, A R Row,
J C Stevens, A C Streeter, Mrs P L Thorburn, K L Tivendale,
Miss E M Walsh, A D Walters, D A Westcott, Mrs E M Whitehead,
R M Wood and J A Wright.

Officers in attendance:- J F Vernon, R Bolton, G L Field, J Grayson,
A A Hearn, R F Scaife, I M Sharpe and J Unwin.

396 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S P G Collins,
P G Leeder and R B Tyler.

397 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 November 1988,
were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

398 **STANSTED AIRPORT**

With reference to Minute 306, members asked whether it had yet been
possible to hold either of the meetings which had been proposed. The
Chief Executive Officer confirmed that arrangements had been made for a
meeting with the Manager of Stansted Airport in February.

399 **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The report of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on
17 January 1989 was received.

(i) Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles

With reference to the third recommendation of Minute 382 it was
confirmed that parish councils would be consulted in connection with
the provision of taxi ranks in the District.

(ii) Capital Programme 1989/90 - 1991/92

With reference to Minute 384 Councillor Free mentioned proposals which
he believed were being considered by South Cambridgeshire District
Council for development in the Stump Cross area. He suggested that the
need for a car park at Swan Meadow, Saffron Walden, would no longer be
clear and proposed that the provision in the Capital Rolling Programme
for the Swan Meadow Car Park Scheme should be removed. The amendment
was seconded but on being put to the vote was lost.

RL

INITIALS

*Examined alongside the original & certified to be a true copy thereof.
Elizabeth Smith, Saffron Walden 2/11/22*

Agenda Item 10

Committee:	Council	Date: Tuesday, 6 December 2022
Title:	Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan – Decision to Make Plan	
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor John Evans, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan	
Report Author:	Demetria Macdonald Planning Policy Officer dmacdonald@uttlesford.gov.uk	

Summary

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a right for communities to draw up neighbourhood plans. Ashdon Parish Council, with support and advice from the District Council, has produced a neighbourhood which has subsequently undergone a successful independent examination and Referendum. This report considers whether the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan should be **made** (the Neighbourhood Plan legislation's term for adopted) by Uttlesford District Council as part of the statutory Development Plan.
2. A neighbourhood plan once "made," forms part of the statutory development Plan and sits alongside the Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005. Should planning permission be sought in areas covered by the adopted Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan, the application must be determined in accordance with both the neighbourhood plan and Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Recommendations

3. To recommend to Council that the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (**Appendix 1**) be formally **made** as part of the statutory development plan for the District.

Financial Implications

4. The examination cost £5,060.16 and the Referendum cost £5,009.72 which will both be initially funded by Uttlesford District Council. The Council will be able to claim up to £20,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which will cover some of the cost of the examination and referendum.

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	The plan has undergone significant community involvement in its preparation.
Community Safety	The plan deals with community safety and will have a generally positive effect on residents' health and wellbeing through its objectives and policies.
Equalities	The Plan aims to meet the needs of all residents in the Parish. The Examiner considered this Basic Condition and concluded that the Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU (European Union) obligations and human rights requirements.
Health and Safety	The Plan and policies promote the health and well-being of the residents.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	This matter has been considered by the Examiner under Basic Conditions and concluded that the NDP (Neighbourhood Development Plan) does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.
Sustainability	The plan deals with sustainability of the parish and the Examiner confirmed the sustainability of this Plan.
Ward-specific impacts	Ashdon
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. The parish of Ashdon was designated as a neighbourhood plan area on 01 May 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan Group gathered evidence and undertook significant consultation. Pre-Submission consultation under Regulation 14 was undertaken from 17 September 2021 – 31 October 2021. The Public Consultation (Regulation 16) was undertaken by the Council from 14 April 2022 to 30 May 2022.
8. The Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for Examination on 01 June 2022. The examination was conducted via written representations as the Examiner decided that a public hearing would not be required.
9. The Examiner's Report, detailing recommendations was received on 13 July 2022.
10. On 01 September 2022 Cabinet having considered each of the recommendations made by the Examiner resolved that the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan be modified as set out in the Examiner's Report and progress to Referendum.
11. A referendum was held in Ashdon Parish on Thursday 20 October 2022 posing the following question to eligible voters:
 - *“Do you want Uttlesford District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Ashdon to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”*
12. 29.6% of registered electors recorded votes, 209 votes were cast of which 184 or **88.0%** were in favour of 'Yes' and 25 or 11.9% votes in favour of 'No.' It was therefore declared that more than half of those voting had voted in favour of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan.
13. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, following the outcome of the referendum it is now for the District Council to '**make**' the neighbourhood plan so that it formally becomes part of the development plan for Uttlesford District Council.
14. Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) sets out the requirement for a local planning authority when it comes to making a neighbourhood plan. It states that:

“(4) A local planning authority to whom a proposal for the making of a neighbourhood development plan has been made –

(a) must make a neighbourhood development plan to which the proposal relates if in each applicable referendum under that Schedule (as so applied) more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan, and

(b) if paragraph (a) applies, must make the plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held.

- *(6) The authority are not to be subject to the duty under subsection (4) (a) if they consider that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention of the rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998)."*

15. As a result of the outcome from the referendum and in accordance with the legislation the Council is legally required to bring the plan into force following the successful referendum. It is recommended that the plan is formally made by the Council to become part of the development plan for the district and to help determine applications in the parish.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Neighbourhood Plan is not made within 8 weeks of holding a successful Referendum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little – The Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan is being considered for adoption within 8 weeks of the Referendum held on 20 October 2022. 	The Council will be in breach of its statutory duty under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and be open to a Judicial Review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council must adopt the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan within the statutory 8-week period since there are no legal challenges.

- 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.

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036

Referendum Plan



Ashdon Parish Council
July 2022





Ashdon Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering
Group supported by Modicum Planning and
Places4People Planning

ASHDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Referendum Neighbourhood Plan - July 2022

The Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan was commissioned by the Parish Council in 2019, who then created a separate Steering Group to project manage and facilitate the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan for Ashdon.

The Steering Group comprised one Parish Council member and five local residents. It has received professional planning support from Modicum Planning and Places4People Planning Consultancy.

Funding was provided by the Parish Council, Uttlesford District Council and Locality Grant funding.

Invaluable guidance on drafting the Plan was provided by Rachel Hogger (Modicum Planning) working with Uttlesford District Council and Ian Poole (Places4People) who critically reviewed our draft plan and helped us to finalise the Plan and guide us through the final consultation process.

Advice and feedback were provided by Planning Policy Officers at Uttlesford District Council.

The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal was undertaken by Alison Farmer of Alison Farmer Associates. The Housing Needs Assessment was conducted by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE). The Ashdon Design Code was produced in conjunction with BEAMS Limited building on the invaluable work done by our army of Streetscape volunteers.

On behalf of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group we thank all who have contributed to bringing this plan to fruition not least the community of Ashdon for participation in the creation of this important document for the Parish.

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

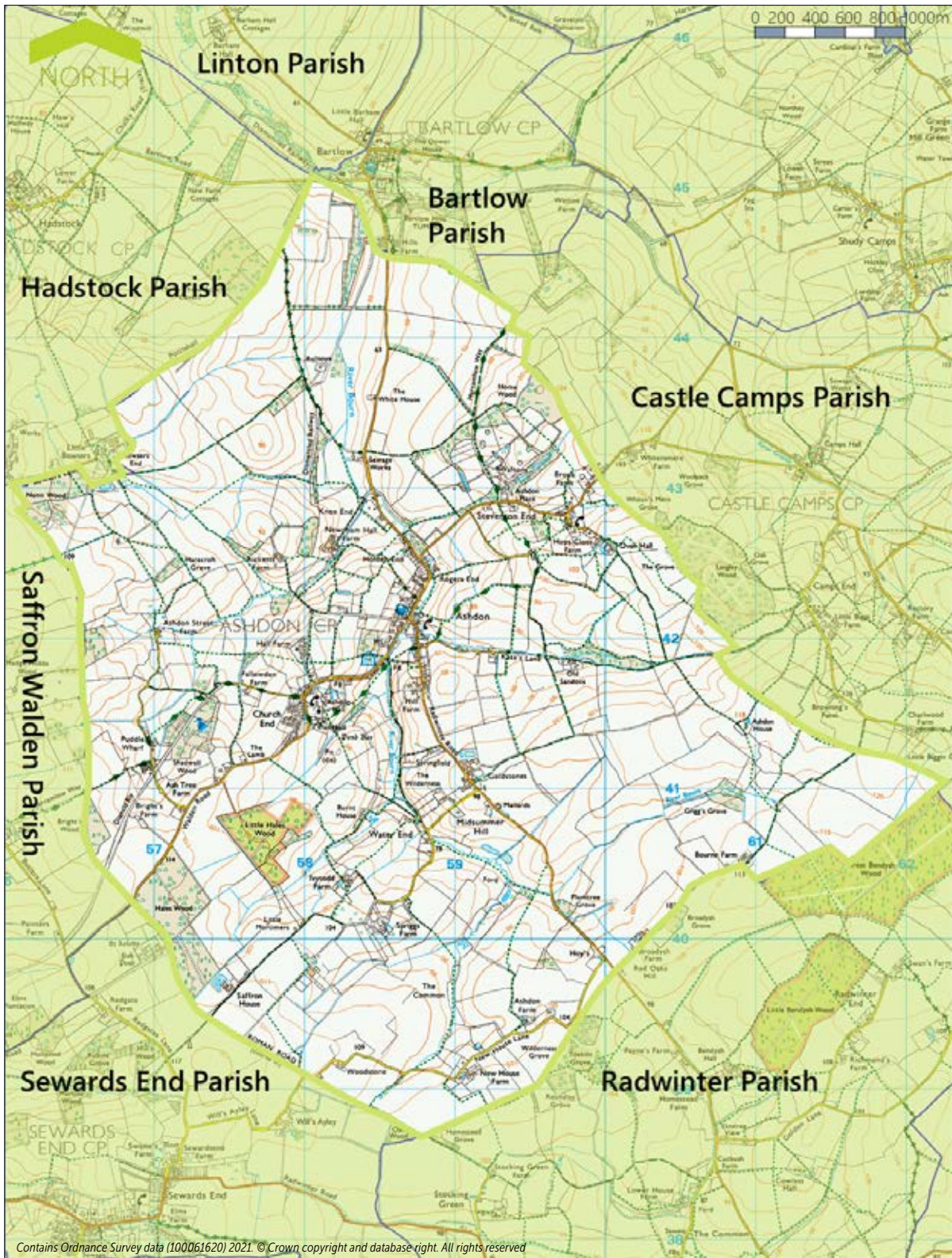


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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, which establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. These Plans, when properly “made”, become part of the legal planning framework for the designated area.
- 1.2** A Neighbourhood Plan is, therefore, a community-led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It is about the use and development of land and contains a vision statement, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.
- 1.3** Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to produce their own Neighbourhood Plans enabling local people to have a say as to how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated Neighbourhood Plan Area, which contains all or part of the administrative area of a town or parish council, that council is responsible for the preparation of the Plan. Neighbourhood Plans cannot contradict the main government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.4** A Neighbourhood Plan for Ashdon:
- gives us the opportunity to provide an Ashdon-specific context to inform Uttlesford’s planning decisions;
 - becomes even more important in informing planning decisions;
 - provides the opportunity for the local community to decide where housing should be built.
- 1.5** Taking on board what we heard from the first consultation with residents, Ashdon community:
- wants a say in what any new housing should look like and how it fits into our historic and natural environment;
 - has its own housing needs to address;
 - wants to ensure sufficient village services and amenities remain to support our community;
 - wants to protect what our community values most about our Parish;
 - wants our children and grandchildren to inherit what we enjoy today!
- 1.6** In 2019 the Parish Council made the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and a small group of volunteers was formed to prepare it. On 1 May 2019 the Neighbourhood Plan Area, following the Parish boundary, was designated by Uttlesford District Council. The area is illustrated on **Map 1**. The Plan period is 2020 to 2036.



Contains Ordnance Survey data (100061620) 2021. © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved

Map 1 - The Neighbourhood Plan Area

Community Engagement

1.7 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan we used lots of different ways to engage and stay engaged with our community, even during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-21. As well as our comprehensive website, we:

- held public consultation events;
- carried out resident surveys;
- held streetscape training and walkabouts;
- had a stall at All Saints Church open day and the village Safari Supper event;
- published quarterly articles in the village magazine;
- created a Facebook group;
- distributed door-to-door fliers;
- published posters and banners;
- invited adjacent Parish Councils to our consultations, and;
- made phone calls with local groups.

A separate Consultation Statement identifying the details of the engagement we've undertaken and how it's shaped the Plan has been published as part of the submission of the Plan to Uttlesford District Council.

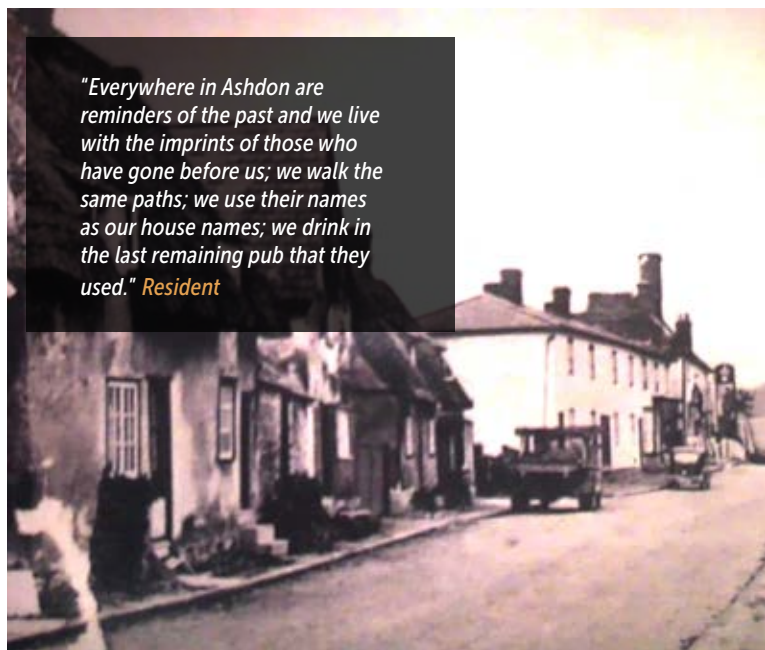
1.8 The key milestones of our process are summarised in the table below:



2. ASHDON PAST AND PRESENT

Ashdon past

- 2.1 The name Ashdon probably derives from the original words meaning 'hill overgrown with ash trees'. *"An ancient landscape with subtle qualities. Wide views from open roads on high plateau contrasts with the enclosed nature of wooded areas in valley bottoms."* Chris Blandford, Landscape Assessment of Uttlesford District 2006.
- 2.2 Ascenduna (Ashdon) has an entry in the Domesday Book as a manor held by Ailid. In 1016 it was the probable site of the Battle of Assandun, fought between Canute and Edward Ironside, arguably a more important battle than the Battle of Hastings fifty years later. In the meadow below All Saints Church are the buried remains of the medieval village, which was relocated further down the river valley and out into the Ends when the Plague decimated the population.
- 2.3 Ashdon was primarily an agricultural village, self-contained with services and crafts that were supported by the land and its workers. Ashdon Railway Halt was opened in 1911 along Fallowden Lane at Church End, some distance from the main village. The line was closed in December 1964 and thereafter quickly dismantled.
- 2.4 The village was at the forefront of social housing and has four developments, Carters Croft bungalows, Tredgetts, Churchfields and All Saints Close. In all 47 affordable homes for those with local connections have been built in the village for rental or shared ownership, a proud record for a small village.
- 2.5 There have been several books written about Ashdon, 'Annals of Ashdon' by Robert Gibson, 'Ashdon' by Angela Green, Spike May's 'Reuben's Corner' and 'Five Miles From Bunkum', a no-holds-barred account of the village from the viewpoint of a lad growing up here in the first half of the last century, in a time now lost.





Ashdon present

2.6 To understand Ashdon Parish is to understand its topography and hydrology. Ashdon has a very close relationship between built form, topography and watercourses which form a distinctive setting to its built-form. Ashdon is a small rural community set in rolling open countryside tucked into the north-west corner of Essex, closely bordered by the counties of South Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. The Parish covers 21 square kilometres of mainly agricultural land.

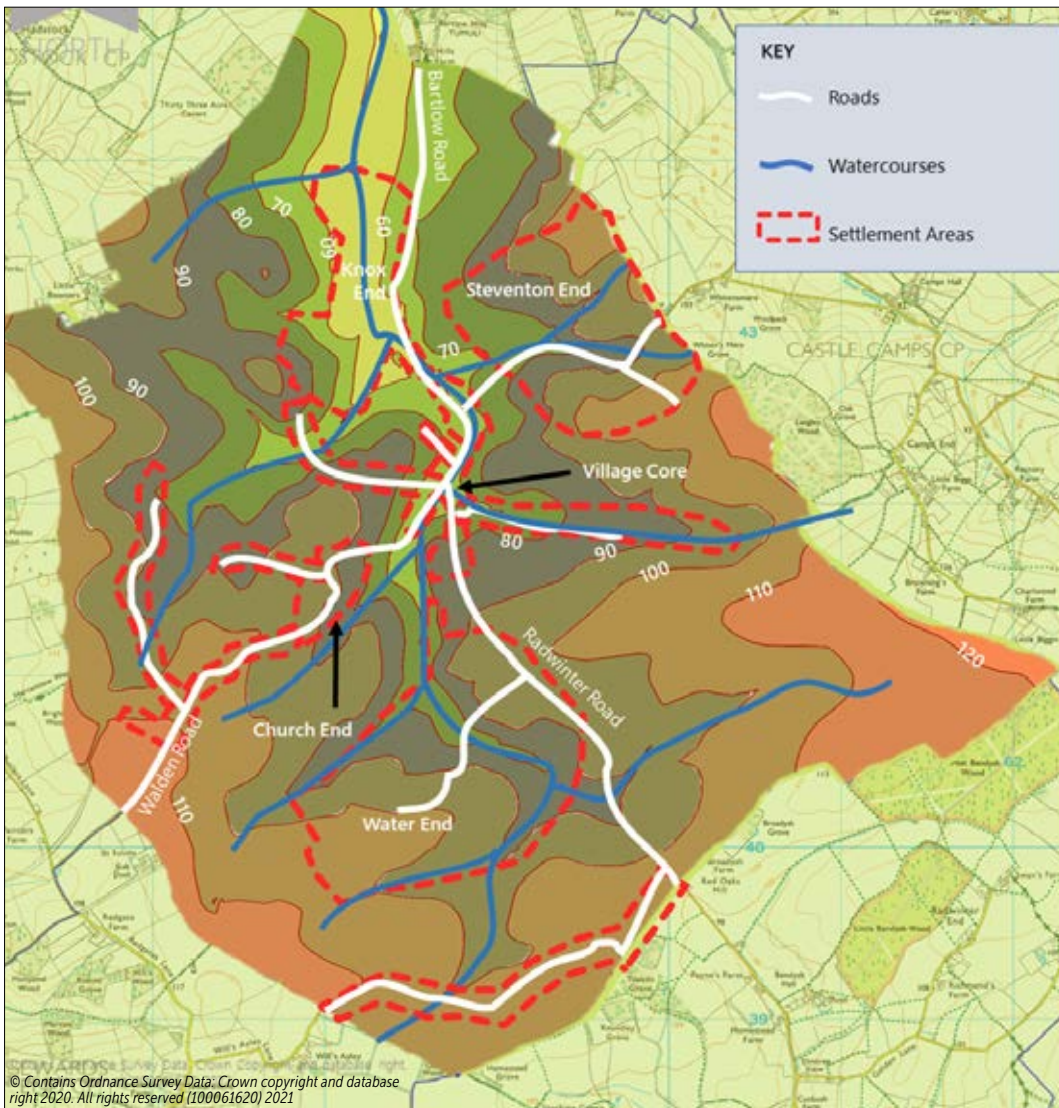
2.7 Ashdon is remarkably hilly for Essex. Ashdon village is folded into a river valley and the main settlement is strung out along the River Bourne with outlying settlements or Ends and scattered farms reflecting its agricultural heritage. With the steep valley sides, there are issues with flooding from the River Bourne and

surface water run-off, exacerbated in recent years by extreme weather events due to climate change. The network of springs in the Parish can also cause localised groundwater flooding issues.

2.8 As the main village drops towards the river, the tree screening is very apparent with housing hidden in the valley. The major historic landmarks of All Saints Church and the Windmill sit proud on high ground and can be clearly viewed from many locations in the Parish. The topographical map (**Map 2**) shows the location of Ashdon in the valley of the River Bourne. The locations of the 'Ends', the lanes of the village, and the watercourses, are all shown.



Ashdon Museum (set up and run by voluntary enthusiasts) contains a valued local collection that provides a fascinating representation of Ashdon's crucial agricultural and social history. Further social history is represented by the remains of Ashdon Halt on the former route of the railway from Saffron Walden to Bartlow found at the end of Fallowden Lane, and the presence of up to six pubs in the village (now only one recently reopened).



Map 2 - Contour Profile of the Parish

Settlement form and character

2.9 Ashdon Parish has a rich built heritage. It has two Conservation Areas, 66 listed buildings and Uttlesford District Council has designated five local heritage assets. Of the listed buildings, 21 are to be found in the two Conservation Areas of which about a third have thatched roofs. Whilst the village is still surrounded by agricultural land, it is now owned by fewer farmers, who care for and look after the countryside. There has been organic growth over the centuries.

2.10 The historic landscape features include a number of ancient woodlands, copses and coverts. Ashdon Parish has about 64 hectares of ancient woodland and three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)- Hales and Shadwell Wood, Nunn Wood and Ashdon Meadows (locally known as Ryelands and located in Water End). There are green wildlife corridors that feed right into the middle of the village which is



surrounded by ancient hedges and trees. The oak tree at Ashdon Hall is reputed to have been spared felling when timber was needed to build the roof at King’s College Chapel in Cambridge.

2.11 The views from the valley tops are far-reaching with wide East Anglian skies and “*the horizon joins the sky in a rare state of freedom.*” Green spaces are treasured such as the Donkey Field in the middle of the village and the grassed area at Guildhall Way, where the children play on summer evenings. Footpaths and bridleways are a key feature with 63km of Public Rights of Way and by-ways. They provide a much-welcomed source of rural recreation for residents of the Parish and beyond.

The residents of Ashdon

2.12 The most recent estimate of Ashdon’s population was 929 in mid-2019, a 4% increase over that recorded at the time of the 2011 Census. The age breakdown of residents compared with Uttlesford District is illustrated in Figure 1.

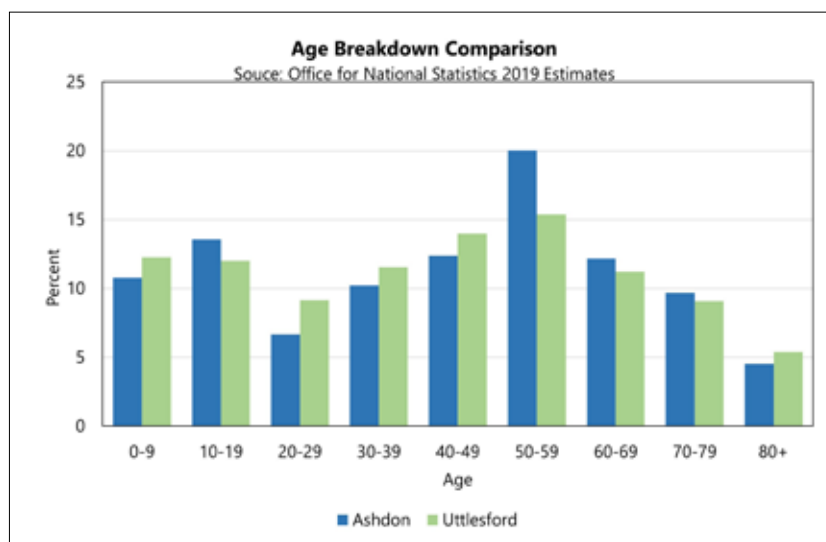


Figure 1 - 2019 Age Breakdown Comparison

2.13 The housing tenure of the Parish, compared with Uttlesford and Essex, based on the now dated 2011 Census, is illustrated in Figure 2. It demonstrates a lower proportion of homes in Ashdon are owner-occupied when compared with the District and County.

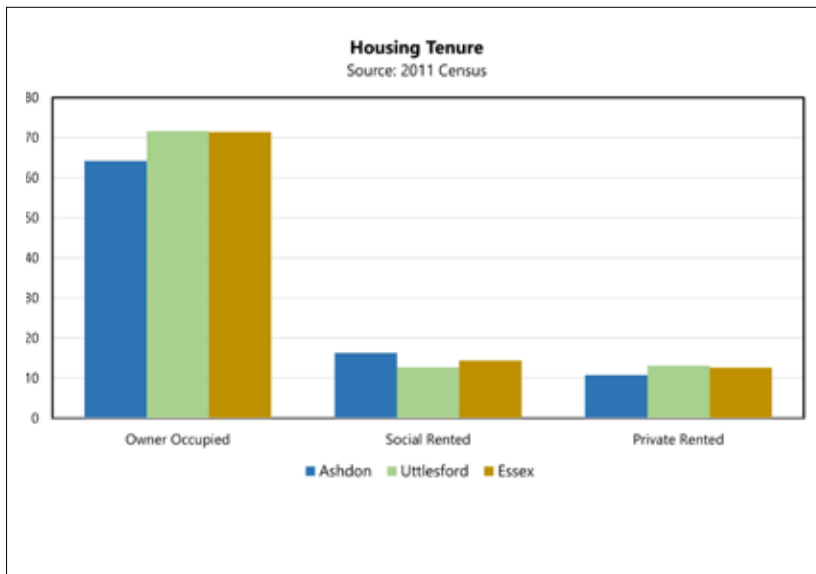


Figure 2 - 2011 Housing Tenure Comparison

Community and services

- 2.14 Community spirit is still strong in Ashdon and there are many clubs and societies. Village events such as Open Gardens, the Safari Supper, amateur dramatics and the Fun Run are very popular and well attended.
- 2.15 The village is fortunate to have the Ashdon primary school for 4-11 year olds, and the village hall and the village museum, although the village shop has now gone and the last pub in the village (the Rose and Crown) has recently reopened. All Saints Church and the Baptist Church provide important pastoral care to the community. Marpa House, a Buddhist retreat and meditation centre is valued by the community. The play areas and allotments are important village facilities.
- 2.16 There is an excellent plant nursery - Beeches- in the village which is popular with gardeners far and wide.
- 2.17 The nearest towns are Saffron Walden (5 miles), Linton (4.3 miles) and Haverhill (9 miles) for access to doctors' surgeries, libraries, banks, and shops etc.

Employment

- 2.18 Various businesses are run in redundant farm buildings and the old National School building; others work from home or outdoors such as farmers and agricultural workers, tree surgeons and landscape gardeners.

Transport

- 2.19 Ashdon is relatively rurally isolated with a virtually non-existent bus service so residents are effectively 100% dependent on the car for transport to access necessary facilities. The nearest train station is Audley End, just over 5.5 miles distant. Ashdon is suffering from the increase in magnitude and speed of traffic in recent years.
- 2.20 The Parish is unfortunately overflowed by aircraft from Stansted Airport, day and night, and this causes noise nuisance and pollution. The residents have been acutely aware of the difference during the Covid pandemic, the skies and the views are clear, they can hear the birds and the river is running sparkling clean.



3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 The key issues facing Ashdon Parish have been identified from the first public consultation with the Ashdon community in October 2019 and from the documentary evidence collated by the community. It is these key issues which form the themes and the basis of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2 Some of the priorities identified as important for residents are not actually achievable through land-based planning policies or are not directly within the remit of the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan. Ashdon Parish Council, with the help of the community, aims to address these wider priorities as free-standing projects, separate to but informed by the Neighbourhood Plan. These are highlighted as Community Aspirations under each theme in the Plan.

Key issues highlighted from the October 2019 consultation

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's aim throughout has been to be merely facilitators and enablers in making the Plan 100% community led. Therefore, everything has been built on the comments, views, concerns and wishes of everyone who has participated in the process.

3.4 At the first consultation event in the village hall in October 2019, residents were asked what they liked about Ashdon, what they disliked and what they would like to change. The following themes were highlighted by the Community:

Natural and Historic Environment

- retaining the rural character of Ashdon with its historic landscape and buildings and unique hilly landscape and openness of the village;
- the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways are well used and highly valued;
- the footpaths and bridleways, along with the clean air and great views, contribute greatly to the health and wellbeing of the community;

- policies to protect biodiversity and reduce the impact of global warming are important to the community.

The distinctiveness of Ashdon can be protected by:

- paying particular attention to views to and from Ashdon Parish settlements and footpaths,
- ensuring that the Development Limits of settlements are respected,
- preserving the distinctiveness of the Ends,
- protecting the rural lanes,
- preserving and enhancing green corridors which lead into the centre of settlements,
- preserving and enhancing the open spaces in the centre of settlements.



"Growing up in Ashdon I loved the open fields and rural spaces. I particularly loved the Donkey Field in the middle of the village where I remember playing with other kids in the village when it snowed. Overall, however, the most amazing part of Ashdon was the amazing rural views that give the village character and made it an amazing place to live." Resident

Housing

We identified:

- a need for small housing units to enable young people to stay in Ashdon;
- a need for affordable housing units for single-person households and growing families;
- a need for bungalows or adaptable housing units to allow older residents to downsize from family homes;
- a desire to ensure that new housing and extensions are in keeping with their setting;
- a need for tree and hedgerow screening and use of traditional materials;
- a need to improve on safe pedestrian connectivity between Church End and Ashdon village core;
- a desire for low impact/sustainable development.



Community and Community Spaces and Facilities

We identified:

- the loss of village facilities in recent years, most notably the closures of the village shop and the Rose and Crown, the last remaining pub (now reopened!);
- the need to encourage young families to the village was expressed in the support for the village primary school, a key part of the local community;
- the loss of some outdoor sports clubs;
- the need for possible increased capacity at the village hall in the future as the village grows;
- strong support for the village allotments and the adjoining meadow area to be used as community space.



Traffic and Sustainable Transport

We identified:

- the need to address the increased volume and speed of traffic in Ashdon village core and Church End.
- Ashdon being used increasingly as a 'rat-run' for traffic to and from Haverhill, Stansted Airport, Cambridge and Saffron Walden.
- heavy lorries are increasingly using the unsuitable small rural roads which result in erosion and damage to the verges and sunken historic lanes.
- pedestrian safety is a key issue on some of the busier roads where pavements are lacking and speeding drivers are putting pedestrian lives at risk.
- even where pavements are in place some are in poor repair due to traffic mounting the pavement to pass traffic coming in the opposite direction.
- parking is highlighted as an issue, particularly around the school at school drop off/pick-up times with the resulting implications for pedestrian safety and traffic congestion.
- the extensive footpath network is valued as a key asset for the community for recreational and well-being purposes.
- in wetter months this footpath network is impractical as a means of getting around the village for any purpose other than recreation.
- very limited bus service to or from the village making it effectively 100% car dependent for access to facilities.
- a cycle path to Saffron Walden was suggested as a possible means of reducing the carbon footprint, although a suitable route would need to be found and this may be problematic.
- the provision of more local employment opportunities could help to reduce the carbon footprint of the residents, although due to the rural nature of Ashdon Parish, this would not have a significant impact.



Flooding Issues

We identified:

- the River Bourne makes the village of Ashdon vulnerable to flooding;
- unfortunately, this river floods more frequently than would be expected for a river of this size and this is often exacerbated by surface water flooding;
- networks of springs in the area also lead to localised groundwater flooding even on the top of hills;
- it is important that any new developments should not exacerbate flooding issues;
- desire for the Ashdon Flood Group to be re-established (now back up and running!) and more active river management undertaken, and for flooding to be viewed in the context of global warming.



Further work undertaken to build on key issues raised at the first consultation

3.5 In response to the issues raised at the first consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group commissioned several key pieces of work to gather more information to inform the appropriate direction of the Plan. Though our findings are dealt with in more detail in the relevant sections of the Plan, an overview is given in **Table 1**.

Table 1 - Neighbourhood Plan evidence summary

Key Piece of Evidence	Purpose of the Work	Key Findings
Housing Needs Survey (Rural Community Council of Essex)	To establish present and future housing needs of householders with connections to the Parish.	<p>41% response rate (147 households):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for a small development (4-8 homes) of affordable housing prioritised for local people; • support dropped considerably for development of purely open market properties with comments around sustainability especially with regard to poor public transport and local facilities; • concerns around development not respecting local vernacular and environment; • acknowledgement that some new housing could support sustainability of primary school.
Ashdon Landscape Appraisal (Alison Farmer Associates)	To provide a robust evidence base to support the development of policy within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. To assess the sensitivity and capacity of the Parish to accommodate housing/ employment development. To provide a robust understanding of the character and qualities of the Parish to enable sound judgements as to the sensitivity and capacity of land to accommodate housing/ employment development. To provide guidance on opportunities for landscape enhancement and green infrastructure which collectively help shape a vision for the Parish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the settlements within the Ashdon Parish have limited capacity to accommodate housing development; • a number of sites may be able to accommodate appropriately designed housing; • due to the area's special qualities, appropriate development is most likely to comprise small scale schemes rather than a single larger development; • employment opportunities are limited. There may be some scope for live/work units associated with redundant farm buildings at Church End or possibly within the wider Parish; • any employment development of this kind would need to carefully consider the visibility of development from the wider landscape and indirect characterising effects on rural lanes as a result of access and traffic.

Key Piece of Evidence	Purpose of the Work	Key Findings
<p>Ashdon Character Assessments (Streetscape assessment volunteer working party) (including village walkabouts)</p>	<p>To describe the distinctive character of Ashdon and those aspects of its built and natural environment that the community most value. It focuses on the built environment of Ashdon.</p> <p>To inform good design in the Parish and to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan by describing the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</p> <p>Identification / recording of the key features that combine to give the built area of the Parish its local distinctiveness and unique identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the special environment of the Parish, both natural and built, are rated highly by residents; the public views are extremely highly valued; only a few eyesores and negatives were recorded.
<p>Ashdon Footpath Survey (Hugh V Feldman - Ashdon resident)</p>	<p>To provide a comprehensive description of the extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and byways which make up the 64km of Public Rights of Way in the Parish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unique historical network of Public Rights of Way enjoyed by the Ashdon residents and the wider community; a natural green space environment essential for outdoor recreation and well-being.
<p>Second Community Consultation Questionnaire</p>	<p>Following cancellation of the second face-to-face consultation due to the Covid pandemic, this questionnaire checked if the community's views from the first consultation had been interpreted correctly, gathered views on how our lives have changed in the pandemic and sought clarification on the draft Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 166 questionnaires were returned; 98% of residents agreed with the draft Vision with very strong support for all the draft objectives too.
<p>Various group specific surveys- School, community facilities and business</p>	<p>To gather further specific information on issues identified at the first consultation.</p>	<p>Additional detail gathered which has informed planning policy and/or community actions.</p>

Key Piece of Evidence	Purpose of the Work	Key Findings
Ashdon Design Code (with Beams Limited)	To build on the detailed results of the Character Assessments to help planners, architects and developers respond to the policy context of this Neighbourhood Plan. This will enable them to put forward designs appropriate to the natural and historic environment setting of Ashdon Parish.	A proactive planning tool providing detailed design guidance based on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision for Ashdon and thus the aspirations of the Ashdon community.
Flooding in the Parish of Ashdon (The Ashdon Flood Group)	To summarise topography features, flood events, current and proposed mitigation measures, and District and National flooding guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashdon is prone to flooding • fluvial, surface and groundwater flooding more frequent in recent years; • extreme weather events more common increasing frequency of flooding; • amelioration measures proposed to reduce flooding incidents.

3.6 In addition to evidence-based work driven by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, other existing technical evidence is also relevant in terms of informing the direction of the Plan including:

- Ashdon Conservation Appraisal, Uttlesford District Council, 2013
- Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Final Report, JBA Consulting 2016
- Flood Mapping Study of River Bourne in Ashdon, JBA Consulting for Uttlesford District Council, 2018.
- Local Wildlife Site Review, Uttlesford District Council, 2007



4. CONTEXT FROM NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the July 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Plan documents relevant to Ashdon. The Plan must be appropriate having regard to national policy and be in broad conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies which must be considered in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In July 2021, the Government published a Revised NPPF. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that 'plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development' but that this presumption does not hold if the adverse impact demonstrably outweighs the benefits of any development.

4.4 The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans: -

- should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and
- should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.

The Local Plan

4.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the current status of the Uttlesford Local Plan. At the time of preparation, the adopted 'local plan document' for the Neighbourhood Plan Area is the 2005 Uttlesford Local Plan. Although significantly out-of-date it does, together with the more recent NPPF, provide the starting point for considering planning applications across the District. It contains policies relating to the location of development and protection of environmental features.

4.6 The draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2019 was withdrawn in April 2020 following its rejection by the Government Inspectorate. In March 2020, the government announced that all authorities will be required to have up-to-date Local Plans in place by December 2023. Uttlesford District Council has commenced the preparation of a new Local Plan which will cover the period to 2040. An Issues and Options consultation took place between November 2020 and April 2021. Consultation on the draft Plan is anticipated in Spring 2022 followed by the final draft a year later. The Neighbourhood Plan is expected to have been completed before the Spring 2022 draft Local Plan is published.

4.7 At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan there is every indication that Ashdon will remain low in the settlement hierarchy due to its reliance on the car for transportation and the loss of further facilities, most notably the shop, in the last few years.

The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)

4.8 The Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP) identifies sites and locations for mineral development within Essex up to 2029 and introduces policies to manage this type of development. Areas in the north and south of the Neighbourhood Plan Area are within a Mineral Safeguarding Area due to the presence of either chalk, sand and gravel deposits beneath the ground. These areas are subject to a minerals safeguarding policy (Policy S8 of the Minerals Local Plan), which seeks to prevent mineral deposits being unnecessarily sterilised by non-mineral development.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017

4.9 The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP) sets out how Essex and Southend-on-Sea aim to manage waste up to 2032 and introduces policies to guide waste management. It seeks to deal with waste more sustainably by guiding the development of waste management facilities, encouraging recycling and reducing reliance on landfill.

5. ASHDON FUTURE

Ashdon Parish Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

5.1 In March 2020, a Focus Group consisting of eight volunteers, recruited at the first consultation event, met for a Focus Group training session led by Uttlesford District Council officers. The Group concentrated on all the data gathered by the Neighbourhood Plan process to date to produce a SWOT analysis and then a draft Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A friendly and active community with many clubs and societies. <p>Amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good range of community facilities; Good opportunities for outdoor recreation; Extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, and key green spaces. <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good broadband with further improvement expected soon. <p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of housing reflecting historic and organic growth of the village; 3 affordable housing developments. <p>Character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct and unique strong built historic environment within an undulating topography with attractive rural landscape and uninterrupted views in and out of village; Housing hidden in valley fold and well screened by small woods, native trees and hedgerows; Two historic village cores with historic Ends and many historic landmarks and sunken lanes; Mature trees and established hedgerows throughout the Parish; Boundaries to properties are often hedged helping to anchor properties in the wider landscape setting. <p>Pollution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air and low levels of light pollution. <p>Wildlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich abundance of wildlife with wildlife corridors feeding into centre of village. 	<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing population. <p>Amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of shop and facilities for younger people and teens. <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlying parts of the village/Parish not connected to mains sewer; Poor mobile phone reception in parts of village. <p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High cost of housing and still a shortage of affordable housing for local people. <p>Isolation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural isolation from services and facilities. <p>Getting around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding pedestrian safety and speeding traffic; Heavy traffic damaging verges; Limited opportunities for safe on-street parking; Limited, and non-existent after 3pm, bus service. <p>Flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High risk of surface water flooding and river flooding. <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to work outside village without a car.

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Design statement/policies for the village to preserve its unique setting in the landscape-any new housing should be sensitively landscaped and located; • Designate and protect key green spaces in the village; • Remove intrusive road signage and trench overhead cables. <p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build small number of sustainable, affordable housing for local people to maintain a balanced community;. • Include home working space. <p>Getting around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify solutions for improving pedestrian safety, safe parking and speeding traffic. <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of superfast broadband to whole village. <p>Flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Flood Group to find solutions to alleviate risk of flooding and surface water run-off. <p>Amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more facilities for older children and young people; • Creation of a village shop/café. <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more rural businesses to locate in village to provide sustainable employment; • Promote more home working. <p>Climate Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address challenge through planting and sustainable carbon neutral buildings; • Encourage more children to walk to school. <p>Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote more local amenities and outdoor recreation. 	<p>Character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to road verges and character of narrow sunken rural lanes caused by large, heavy vehicles; • Concerns over threat of speculative development and insensitive development out of character with existing village houses - particularly outside the existing Development Limits and that which may compromise the setting of the two Conservation Areas. <p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing house prices forcing out local people; • Conversion of bungalows to houses depriving older residents of opportunity to downsize. <p>Getting around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further cuts to already very limited public transport services. <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses vulnerable to power cuts due to overhead wire cables. <p>Flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of climate change on flood risk from river and surface water runoff; exacerbated by development and hard landscaping. <p>Amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding viability of school and closure of clubs and societies run by an ageing population. <p>Pollution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased light pollution and loss of night skies from development. • Noise and pollution from airport expansion and traffic.

Vision

5.2 Using the SWOT analysis, the Focus Group then went on to debate and produce the following Vision for Ashdon:

VISION

Over the Plan period Ashdon will evolve whilst retaining and enhancing its natural and historic rural environment and continue to be inhabited by a vibrant sustainable community

This was tested in December 2020 in the Parish wide public consultation questionnaire when 98% of respondents agreed with this Vision statement.

Objectives

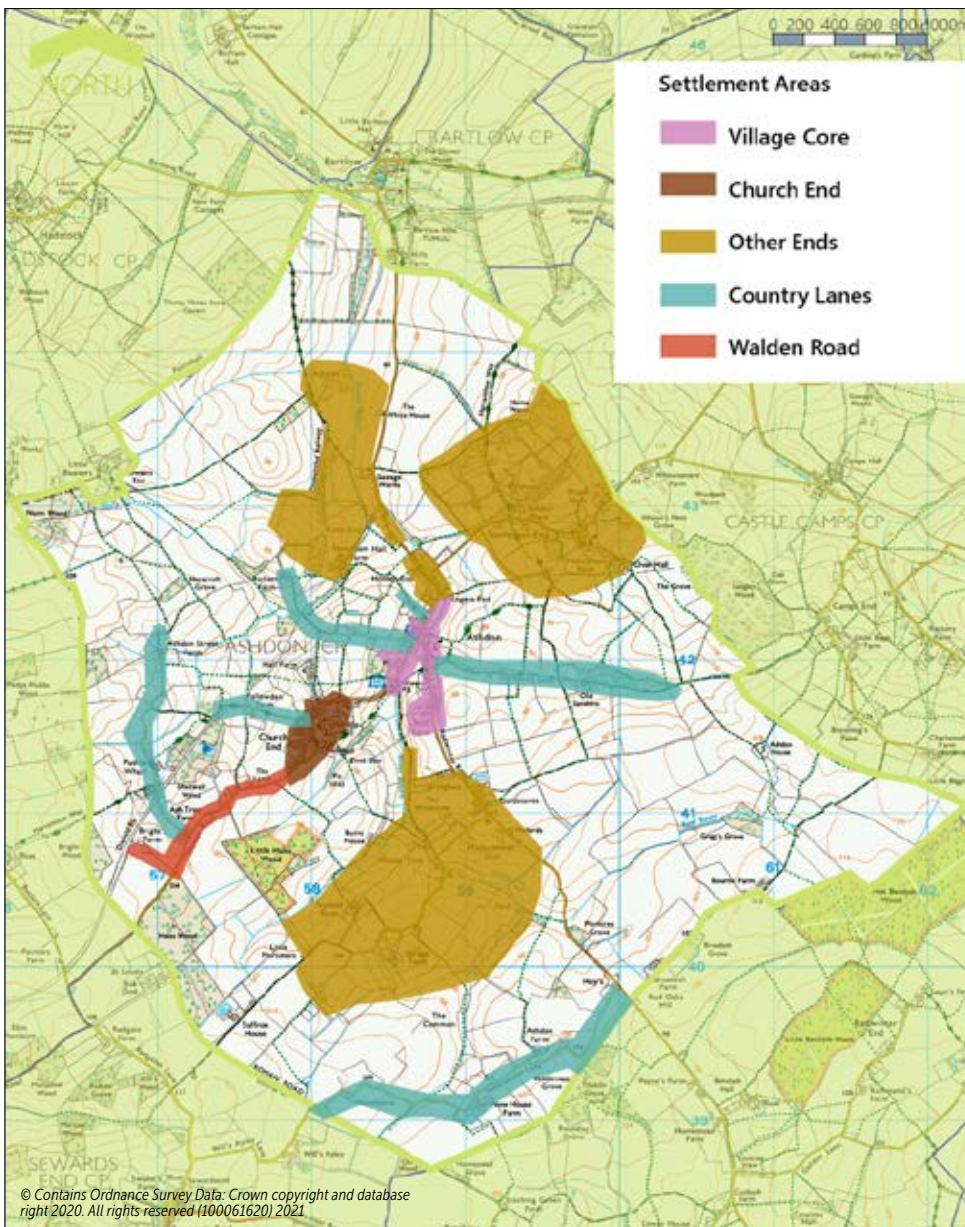
5.3 Underpinning this Vision are eleven objectives addressing the key issues facing Ashdon Parish during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Village character objectives
Any new development in the Parish will be modest in scale and appropriate to meeting village needs.
Any new development will deliver high quality design and be appropriate and sensitive to neighbouring buildings and landscape setting.
The unique hilly landscape and openness of the village with its close connection to the rural landscape will be protected; this includes key views.
Climate change and biodiversity objectives
The NP will address the challenge of climate change at our Parish level. As part of this it will anticipate the impact of increased frequency of heavy rainfall when planning for flood management solutions for the village.
The NP will aim for new development to have a low carbon footprint (covering energy demand, building materials, construction process etc) and support innovative solutions.
The NP will plan to maintain and promote local ecosystems to protect wildlife, trees and hedgerows.
Vibrant community and 'getting around' objectives
Affordable housing should be available to meet the needs of local people.
Promote a vibrant community in which it is easier to get around – both within the community and in and out of the village.
Promote health and wellbeing of the community by protecting and improving opportunities for outdoor recreational activities.
Promote maintenance and enhancement of local facilities, clubs and societies.
Employment objectives
Promote and enhance local employment opportunities.

5.4 Individual policies and community aspirations have been developed within the components of the Plan underlying each objective. Unlike the planning policies, the community aspirations have no statutory status and will not be used in the determination of planning applications.

6. SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SPATIAL POLICY

6.1 The settlement in Ashdon Parish is made up of several historic settlements in a rural landscape setting. The settlement is concentrated in Ashdon village core and in Church End. There are also a series of historic 'Ends' some of which have been incorporated into Ashdon village core (Rogers End and Holden End) and some of which retain their distinct identity – Water End, Steventon End and Knox End. Throughout the Parish there are several historic sunken lanes, some adjoining Ashdon village core (Kates Lane, Rectory Lane and Dorvis Lane), one adjoining the Church End settlement (Fallowden Lane) one in Water End (Spriggs Lane), two in Steventon End (Overhall Lane and Mill Lane) and some further afield (Puddlewharf Lane and New House Lane). There are also scattered farmsteads and other dwellings on the main road into the Parish from Saffron Walden (the Walden Road). The above settlement areas are illustrated on Map 3.



Map 3 - Ashdon Settlement Pattern

6.2 The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal included an assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of land surrounding the settlements of Ashdon village core and Church End to accommodate housing/employment development. The Appraisal revealed that these settlements have limited capacity to accommodate such development “due to the area’s special qualities, appropriate development is most likely to comprise small scale schemes rather than a single larger development.” More widely, the “Ends” have a distinct quality where, for example, the Appraisal noted for Water End that “The buildings sit down within the folds of the landscape (closely associated with the river) and are not widely visible except from adjoining valley slopes. Overall, this end has a rural backwater quality.”

6.3 The adopted Local Plan (2005) defines Development Limits around the two main built-up areas of the Parish. Given that there is no requirement to make provision for significant growth in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the Development Limits, as illustrated on Maps 4 and 5, are those in the adopted Local Plan. The principle of development within the Development Limits is accepted where its impact on the built and natural environment, services, infrastructure (including flooding impact) and highways is acceptable.

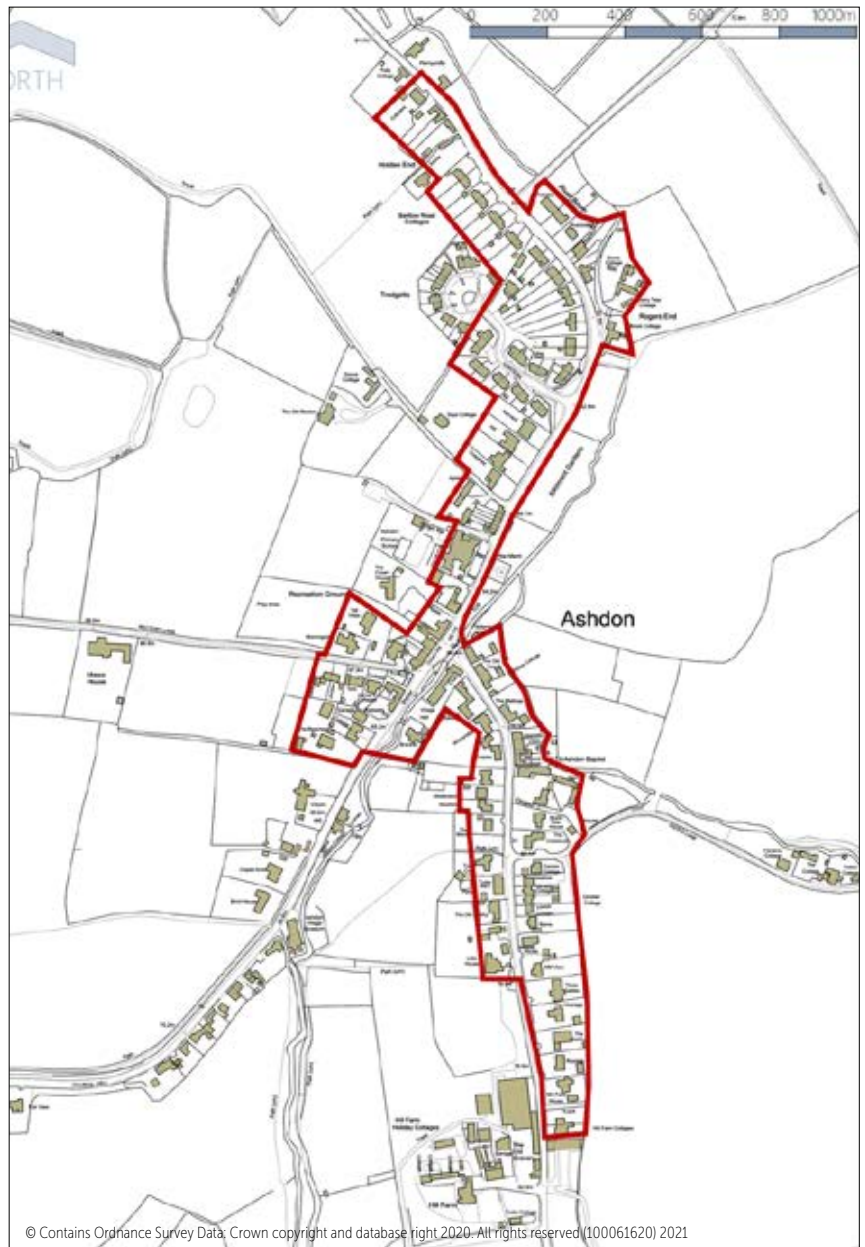
6.4 Development proposals coming forward outside the Development Limits will be regarded as countryside locations and proposals will only be supported where there is a demonstrated need for the development in line with policies in the NPPF.

POLICY ASH1- A SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR ASHDON

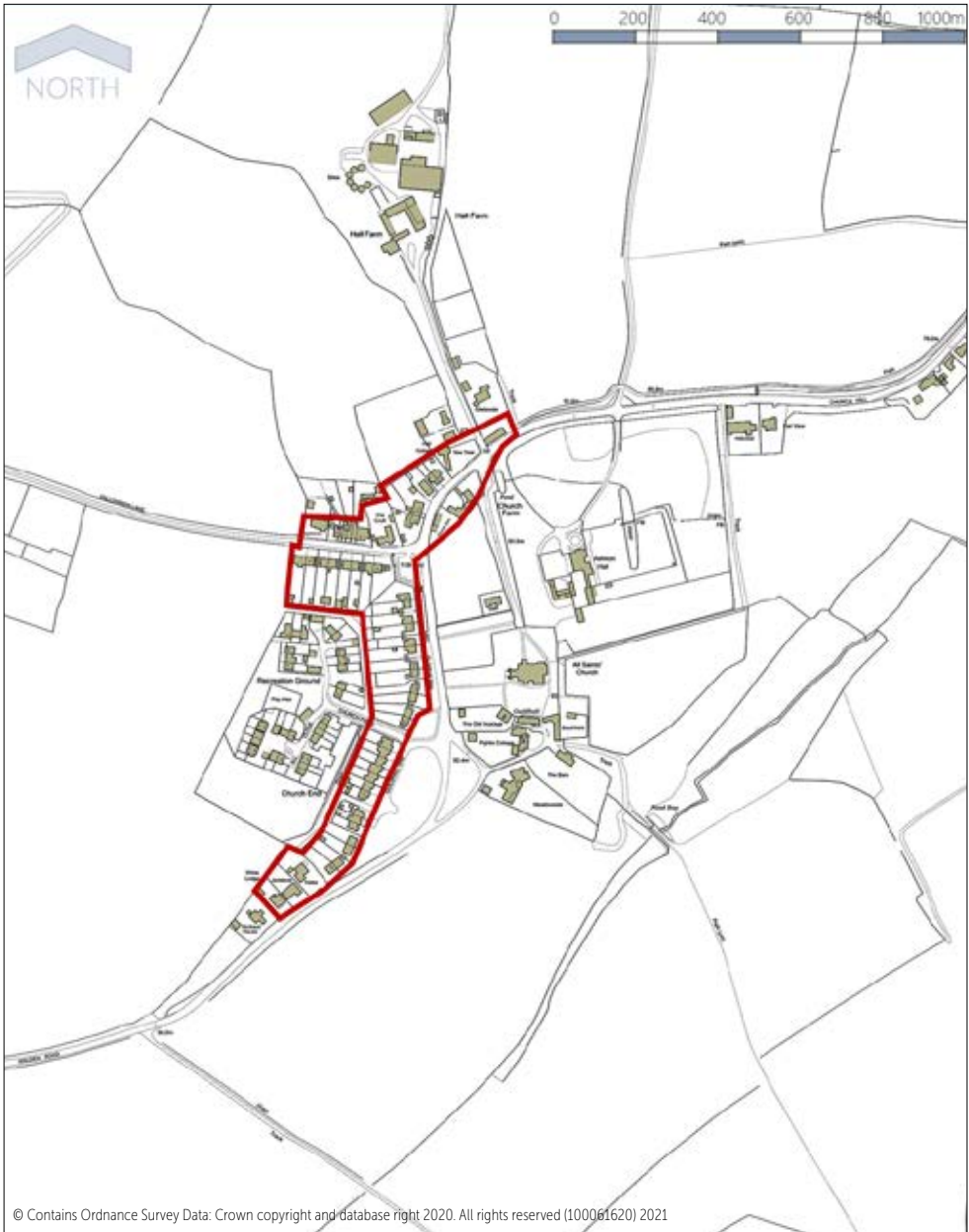
The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Ashdon’s position in the District’s Settlement Hierarchy.

Development Limits, as defined on the Policies Map, identify the extent of land which is required to meet the development needs of the Parish.

Proposals for development located outside the Development Limits will only be permitted where they are in accordance with National and District level policies.



Map 4 - Ashdon village core Development Limits



Map 5 - Church End Development Limits



7. HOUSING

Objective

Affordable housing should be available to meet the needs of local people

Ashdon's housing requirement

- 7.1 The 2005 adopted Local Plan for Uttlesford District Council does not allocate any housing sites in the Parish. It identifies Ashdon as an 'Other Village' (with defined Development Limits drawn tightly around the built-up parts of Ashdon village and Church End) and support, in principle, infill development within these boundaries "*if the development would be compatible with the character of the settlement and depending on the location of the site, its countryside setting.*" It allows for affordable housing on rural exception sites outside the Development Limits, if it would meet all the following criteria: -
- 100% of the dwellings are to be affordable and provided through a Registered Social Landlord;
 - the development will meet a particular local need that cannot be met in any other way;
 - the development is of a scale appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the settlement; and
 - the site adjoins the settlement.
- 7.2 In more recent years, the policies specific to housing delivery in the 2005 Local Plan have been found to be out of date, with houses outside Ashdon's Development Limits (eg on Radwinter Road) being approved as the District Council could not demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Between 2011 and March 2020 there were 13 new homes completed in the Parish.
- 7.3 In accordance with Paragraph 66 of the NPPF, the Parish Council requested an indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan Area from Uttlesford District Council. In June 2021 the District Council indicated that, having regard to the Ashdon Housing Needs Survey, the minimum requirement between 2020 and 2036 is 15 dwellings. The District

Council also indicated that there were planning permissions in 2020 for 15 additional dwellings and that the minimum requirement has been met.

- 7.4 Given the village's position in the Local Plan settlement hierarchy and that the indicated minimum housing requirement has been met, the Neighbourhood Plan does not identify new housing allocations but recognises that additional dwellings are likely to come forward during the period to 2036 that are compliant with planning policies.

Future housing opportunities

- 7.5 Notwithstanding existing planning permissions, it is likely that there will be opportunities for additional housing in the Neighbourhood Plan Area during the lifetime of the Plan. Although it is not always apparent, from time-to-time opportunities arise within the Development Limits for infill plots or the redevelopment of houses, perhaps to demolish buildings to create a suitable plot. The principle of developing new housing within the Development Limits is supported by **Policy ASH1** but all such proposals will need to be in accordance with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan, especially in terms of impact and design. While there is a presumption against the development of new housing outside the Development Limits, there may be opportunities for the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential uses across the Parish. In most instances, these conversions do not require planning permission subject to meeting certain limitations and conditions. However, conversions can result in a detrimental impact on the landscape where external paraphernalia that comes with residential uses is introduced, in particular excessive outdoor lighting. Careful consideration should be given to the potential impact of conversions on the landscape, including the impact on the key features of important views identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. Conversion of barns and outbuildings can result in a loss of breeding sites for birds and bats.

Housing mix

- 7.6 The 2019 first public consultation highlighted the following factors with regard to housing mix:-
- There is a need to continue to ensure that Ashdon has a balanced housing stock with smaller houses.
 - Housing suitable for older people should continue to be available to enable downsizing within the Parish. The conversion of existing bungalows is seen as a worrying trend.
 - Housing should be provided at a scale which is appropriate to the character of the Parish and will enable new residents to integrate easily into village life.
 - New development must be small and be integrated into the community rather than creating communities within the community.

7.7 Ashdon needs more young people and families for the community to be sustainable and to support the local school. However, the current shortage of affordable housing is seen as denying some young people and families the opportunity to live in the village. The village also needs homes for elderly villagers wishing to downsize and remain in Ashdon and universally accessible homes.

7.8 New housing developments coming forward in the Neighbourhood Plan Area should be specifically aimed at meeting Parish needs at the time (Policy ASH2). This will help enable local people to stay in the Parish at different stages of their lifetime and for older residents to downsize to smaller properties if desired. It is particularly important that the stock of smaller homes is increased in the Parish. The provision of housing choice will assist in ensuring a range of needs are met.



POLICY ASH2 - HOUSING MIX - MEETING LOCAL NEEDS

Housing development must contribute to meeting the existing and future needs of the village. A mix in the size and type of housing is desired, taking into account the content of the 2015 West Essex and Herts Strategic Housing Market Assessment needs for Uttlesford or any later published data, which seeks a majority of 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

Affordable housing

- 7.9 Affordability of housing remains a significant barrier for many seeking their own homes. Government figures indicate that, in Uttlesford, average house prices are more than 11 times the average household income, meaning that many newly-formed households are excluded from the housing market. Recent statistics from Zoopla, the house price aggregator, suggests that the average price paid for a home in Ashdon for the 12 months to August 2021 is £626,875; the average for Essex is £391,912.

7.10 One way that the planning system can address this problem is through the provision of affordable housing as defined by the NPPF and set out in the Glossary. Affordable housing schemes can primarily be delivered through a percentage of a larger development of more than 10 dwellings or on a site of 0.5 hectares, or, as an exception, small-scale schemes, including entry level homes for purchase on rural exception sites outside the Development Limits where housing would not normally be permitted.

7.11 The Government's Affordable Homes definition includes social rented and shared ownership provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. The definition also includes First Homes which the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (August 2021) defines as:

- "discounted market sale units which:*
- a) *must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;*
 - b) *are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below);*
 - c) *on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,*
 - d) *after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London)."*

7.12 The Local Plan policy for the delivery of affordable housing as part of larger schemes is now significantly out-of-date, but given that the Neighbourhood Plan does not make provision for developments of 10 or more homes in Ashdon, there is no need to address this matter in the Plan.

7.13 The 2019 first public consultation highlighted that, whilst Ashdon already has 4 affordable housing schemes, there is still a need for more affordable housing to meet the needs of residents. In October



2019, the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) were engaged by the Parish Council to establish present and future housing needs of householders within the Parish. The survey had a 41% response rate, which is well above the county average of 25%.

7.14 There was good support for a small development, with 88% stating they would be supportive of a small development (4 - 8 homes) of affordable housing for local people. 71% would remain supportive if one or two open market houses were to be included in the development. Support dropped considerably when asked about developing a site for purely open market properties with only 40% being in favour. There was also a notable amount of comment around the sustainability and suitability of any development in the Parish, especially with regards to public transport and local facilities. Some felt that the village had "done enough" with regards to providing affordable housing yet some welcomed it. There were concerns around development that does not respect the local vernacular and environment as well as an acknowledgement by some that new housing could give the village a boost, in particular with regards to sustaining the primary school. There were large amounts of comments around the desire for housing to be prioritised for local people (including the existing schemes in the Parish) specifying that there is a need for housing for the elderly as well as for families.

7.15 Twenty-two respondents completed the RCCE questionnaire fully expressing a housing need and providing appropriate financial data. There was also evidence of a younger generation coming through, whose needs were hard to identify at this time due to their age. Three households were considered capable of accessing open market housing, which left 16 households seeking affordable housing, the majority of which are required within the next 5 years.

7.16 The main reason respondents had a desire to move to alternative accommodation was to set up their first/independent home, with 11 out of the 22 (50%) households citing this option. Two-bedroom households were the most preferred property size. Only two households confirmed they are on the local authority housing register and four respondents stated they had additional specific housing requirements. Following general planning guidance, and as a result of RCCE's analysis of the 2019 data provided, RCCE suggested an affordable rented recommendation of up to 7 units of mixed size. Two respondents answered that they have special housing needs, leading to a recommendation that bungalows or ground floor properties be considered for two of the affordable rented homes.

7.17 There was also a strong desire from those in need to own their own property. Upon reviewing the financial situation of those aspiring to open market and shared ownership properties, RCCE assessed potentially 8 would be suitable for the shared ownership tenure which leads to a recommendation of 4 units. Residents of Ashdon Parish need to be on the Uttlesford District Council Housing Register in order for them to be considered for local needs affordable housing schemes in the future. Surveys like that undertaken by the RCCE in 2019 will need to be up-to-date when considering the development of an affordable housing scheme as the data can soon become inaccurate.

7.18 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs. To deliver affordable housing through exception sites the following would be required:

- A need established; and
- A willing landowner prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and

- A registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to fund and manage a scheme.

7.19 In the Public Consultation process it was felt that if further affordable housing is to be provided in Ashdon then there should be provision for those with a strong local connection to have preferential access to such housing. For the purposes of determining proposals under Policy ASH3, the following definition, adapted from the Uttlesford Choice Based Lettings Scheme, shall be used:

An applicant must meet at least one of the following criteria a-e below

- a. *Have lived in the Parish for either:*
 - *Six out of the last 12 months or*
 - *Three out of the last five years;*
- b. *Have permanent paid work in the Parish*
- c. *Have an immediate family member who has lived in the Parish for at least five years. Immediate family members include:*
 - *Parents;*
 - *Adult children;*
 - *Brothers or sisters;*
 - *Other family members who are providing on-going support.*

If immediate family members live in the Parish but have been here for less than 5 years and are able to provide evidence that the applicant needs to live near them for support, then this residence requirement for family members may be reduced.

- d. *Need to be near special medical or support services, which are only available in the District.*
- e. *Other special circumstances as agreed by a Housing Services Manager*

7.20 Affordable housing has to address the requirement for starter and family homes with adequate gardens and shared green space. The properties may be for rent, to buy or shared ownership. In order to ensure a cohesive community in Ashdon it is important that affordable housing units are integrated fully into the village as a whole by providing good connectivity to Ashdon village centre.

7.21 Policy ASH3 provides an enabling policy for the consideration of exception site affordable housing proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area and sets out the criteria that will need to be taken into account in making decisions for such applications.

POLICY ASH3 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase and starter homes (as defined by paragraph 72 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside the Development Limits, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:

- i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and
- ii. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the Parish at open-market prices; and
- iii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated connection to Ashdon, as defined in paragraph 7.19 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.

These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.

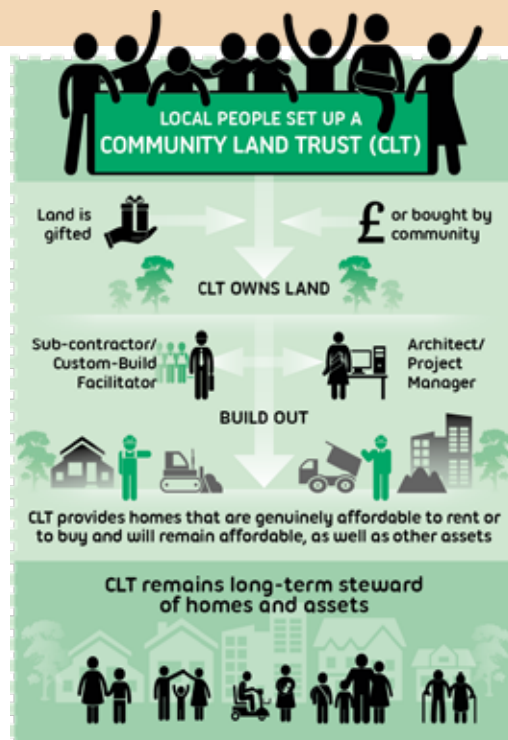
Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.

In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be supported where it can be demonstrated:

- a. that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and
- b. the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.

Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.

7.22 One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community for all time is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT). These are a form of community-led housing, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier.



SOURCE: National Community Land Trust Network



8. PARISH CHARACTER - NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

The unique hilly landscape and openness of the village with its close connection to the rural landscape will be protected; this includes key views

Any new development will deliver high quality design and be appropriate and sensitive to neighbouring buildings and landscape setting

Any new development in the Parish will be modest in scale and appropriate to meeting village needs

NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Landscape setting

8.1 Ashdon is a rural Parish, where the changing texture of the landscape is visible in the contrasts of its verges, fields, woodland and hedges; the boulder clay plateau is cut through in many areas by secret chalk streams hidden below the vegetation. The landscape is influenced by the underlying chalk geology and drainage patterns characteristic of northwest Essex and separate from those found in nearby South Cambridgeshire. The principal valley is that of the River Bourne (tributary of the Rivers Granta/Cam). The landscape diversity is reflected in the variety of materials and colour used in its buildings. Overall, this is a character area with a strong sense of place, and a strong sense of tranquillity. The main area of settlement today is nestled in the river valley around Crown Hill at the confluence of several tributaries of the river resulting in a widening of the valley floor. Viewed from the higher plateau areas which surround Ashdon the settlement is largely hidden, folded into the valley and well populated with trees.

8.2 The 2006 Landscape Character Appraisal for Uttlesford prepared by Chris Blandford Associates noted for the area including Ashdon that *"This strongly rolling landform rises to a broad, open plateau, dissected by small streams whose valleys give great variety to the countryside. This produces a landscape character of upland with wide-open vistas on the ridge tops, and also enclosed wooded areas*

in the valley bottoms. Patches of ancient woodland remain. The tree cover is mainly deciduous, with blocks of trees and hedgerows framing channelled views. The land appears in good condition, with many strong hedgerows and verges well maintained, although large-scale arable farming has left a legacy of many broken hedges on field boundaries."

8.3 The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal (2020) provides an understanding of the sensitivity and capacity of the Parish to accommodate new growth; it identifies special qualities to be conserved and enhanced; and includes a detailed settlement and landscape analysis which is useful in informing an appropriate approach for the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.4 The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal noted that the distinctive landscape of the Parish falls into three character areas according to the topography:

- **River valleys** where there is extensive tree growth as the land was not considered suitable for agriculture, and the trees prosper with adequate water. Ancient routes and lanes follow the valleys.
- **Valley sides** which do support arable agriculture, but where the gradients are steep; to the south and west of Ashdon village the ancient field patterns and hedgerows form an intimate setting and are largely preserved. To the north of the village, where the valley widens, the arable fields are larger with some loss of hedgerows evident.
- **Higher plateau** areas that surround the main settlement on three sides. These are characterized by intense arable agriculture and scattered settlements originating in long established clusters of farm buildings. Areas of ancient woodland survive.

8.5 The settlement in Ashdon village core, and in the strongly incised valley landscape of the central north-south axis of the Parish, is almost exclusively and unobtrusively located in the valley bottoms or on the lower slopes of the valley sides, resulting in a very close connection between the settlement and the landscape.

8.6 Locating any new development at an appropriate height within the topography of the valley is one of the most important factors determining the appropriate locations for additional building in Ashdon. At present, most building is either located in the valley bottoms or on the surrounding plateau areas, examples from the 20th Century illustrate the visual impact of building on valley sides.

8.7 The nature of the landscape is such that the Neighbourhood Plan Area is particularly vulnerable to inappropriately located or unscreened development on high ground. The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal specifies the range of contour heights appropriate for development in each area of the village in order to avoid intrusive visual impact. In addition, there are examples of 21st Century developments in elevated positions in Church End and on Walden Road which illustrate the impact of full 2 storey height buildings in such a location.

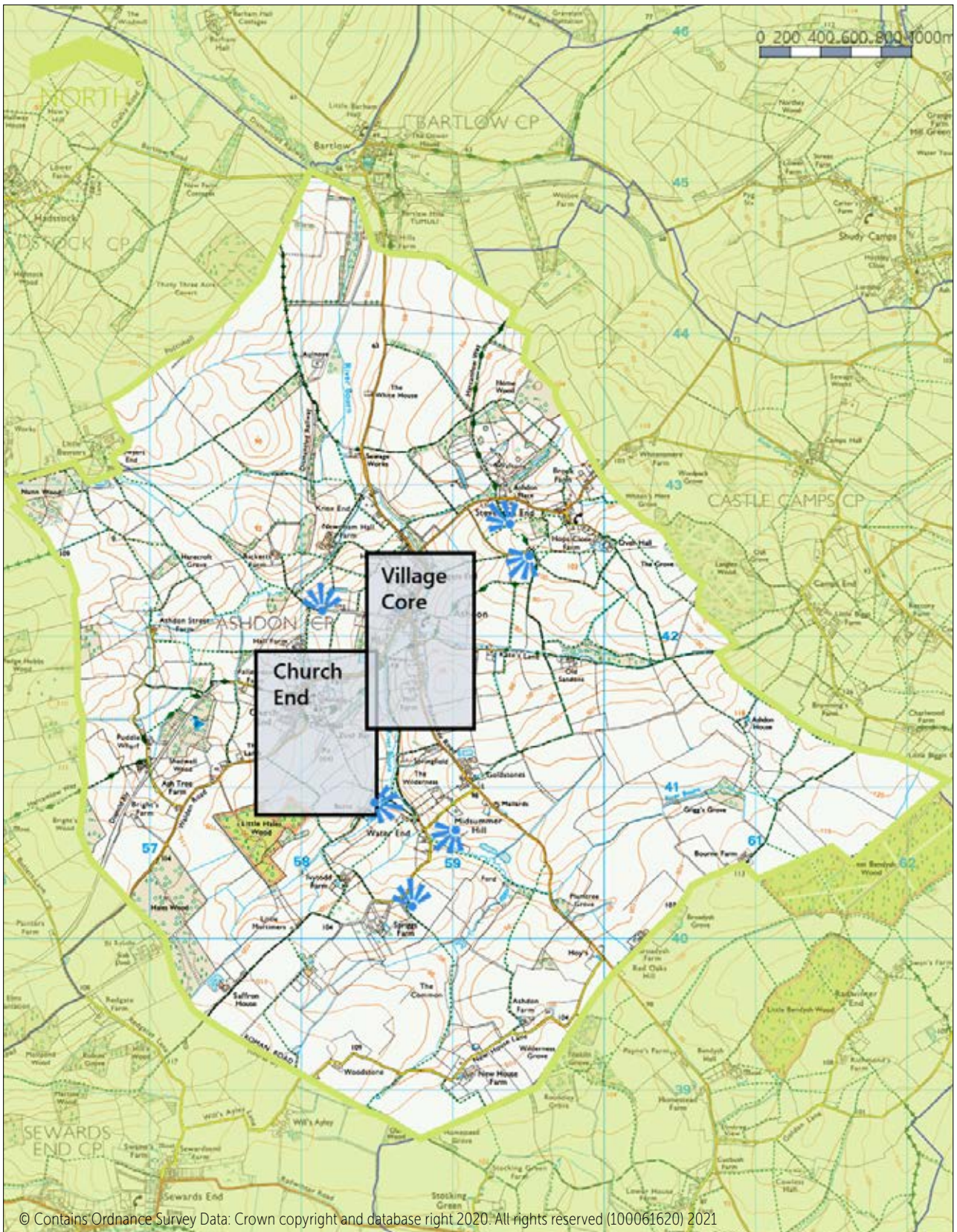
8.8 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should be "....*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape.*" The Framework also states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, "*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes....*" The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal provides robust evidence that demonstrates the importance of the landscape and should be referred to where a proposal is likely to have an impact on it.



Important views

8.9 The topography of the Ashdon landscape is such that it lends itself to creating several views into, out of and within the built-up areas of the Parish, as identified in the separate Assessment of Important Views and illustrated on **Maps 6, 7 and 8**. Development that does not have regard to these views and their significance can have a major impact on the built heritage and landscape of the wider area. To minimise the potential for such impacts, development proposals inside and outside the Development Limits should identify how they take account of the potential impact on the key features of identified important views which are identified in the assessment referred to above. They should be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal or other appropriate and proportionate evidence which demonstrates how the proposal can be accommodated without having a detrimental impact, by reason of the building's scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the built-up area.



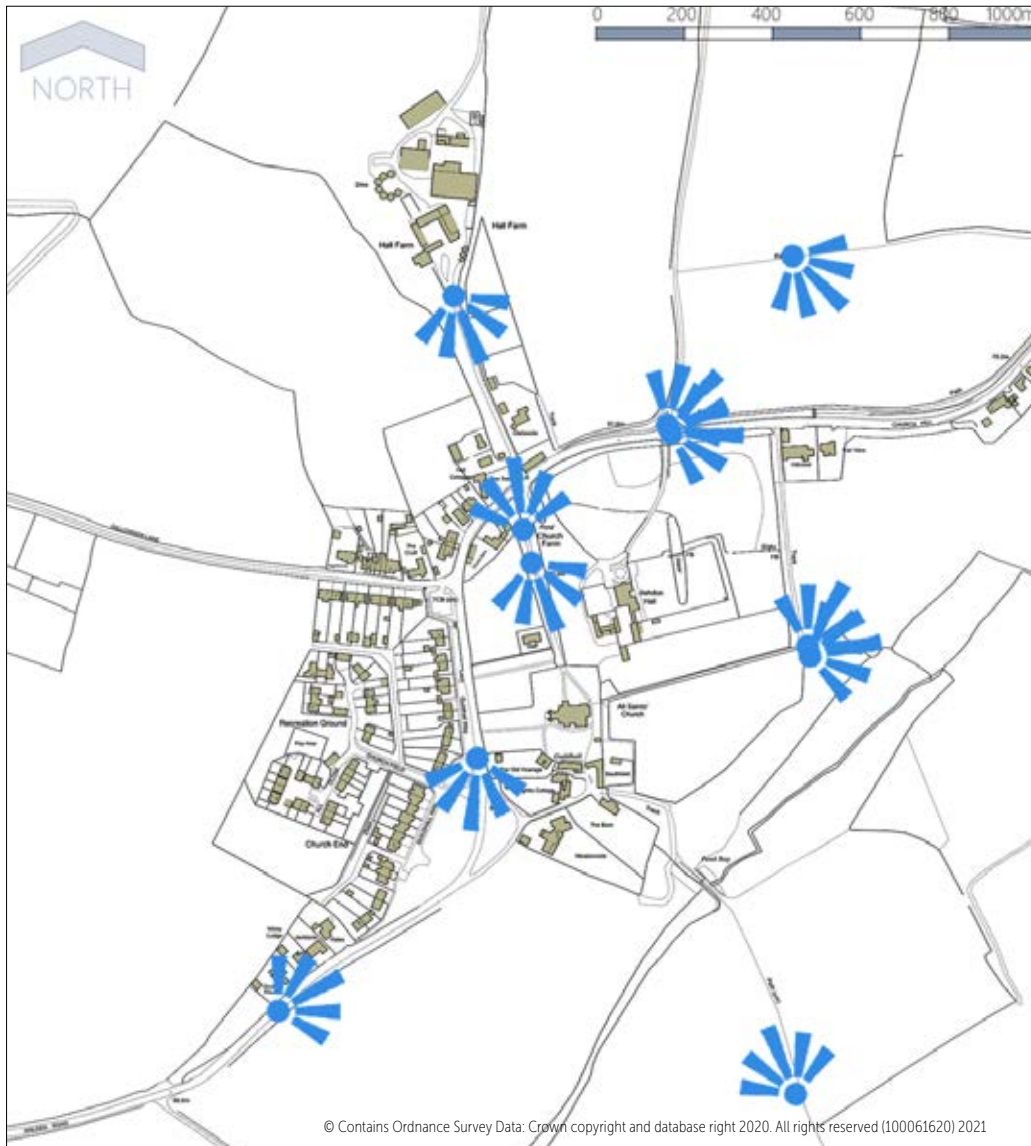


Map 6 - Important Views in the wider Parish (detail on inset areas in Maps 7 and 8)



Map 7 - Important Views, Village Core





Map 8 - Important Views, Church End

POLICY ASH4 - PROTECTING ASHDON'S LANDSCAPE SETTING AND IMPORTANT VIEWS

Proposals must, proportionate to the development, demonstrate how the landscape characteristics of the site and its vicinity have been considered in preparing the scheme.

Important views from public vantage points, either within the built-up area or into or out of the surrounding countryside, are identified on the Policies Map. Any proposed development should not detract from and look to enhance the key landscape and built development features of those views as identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Assessment of Important Views document.

Proposals outside the Development Limits, and proportionate to the scale of development, must demonstrate, through a Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, how the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside, for example by reason of the building's scale, materials and location, without having a detrimental impact on the landscape characteristics of the site and its setting.

Proposals that result in an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape setting of the area will not be supported unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated, through a project level Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, that the resultant impact on the landscape character, referenced to the Ashdon Landscape Appraisal, can be mitigated.

Settlement gaps

- 8.10** As identified earlier, the Parish is defined by a number of "Ends" and their importance was confirmed in the December 2020 Public Consultation questionnaire when 81.3% of respondents thought that the historic distinctiveness of the Ends should be preserved. Each of these Ends has a distinctive feel and position within the landscape that is valued by the residents. All the Ends have a significant number of listed and historic buildings and origins as medieval halls or farm-based hamlets that appear on old maps (1777, 1880); detailed information on the character, buildings and layout of each of the Ends is given in the Ashdon Character Assessment 2020.
- 8.11** Importantly the Ends are physically separated from the adjoining parts of the village enhancing the feel of entering a new and distinctive part of the settlement. Clear settlement gaps exist as shown on the Policies Map. Church End is in an elevated position and the first part of the village entered from Saffron Walden after crossing the agricultural plateau. There remains a distinct and important settlement gap with adjacent trees and fields as the road (Church Hill) drops downhill from Church End through a green 'tunnel' and open fields into the valley, and the village core.
- 8.12** Settlement gaps are also clear between Steventon End and the junction of Camps Road with Bartlow Road, between Knox End and Holden End, and between Midsummer Hill and Hill Farm on Radwinter Road, and between Midsummer Hill and Water End in the valley.
- 8.13** Protecting these settlement gaps are key to keeping and reinforcing the distinctive character of Ashdon. In the past, development (20th Century) has been permitted which has resulted in the blurring of the separation between Holden and Rogers Ends and between Rogers End and the Conservation Area of the village core. The allotment field, allotments, and the river itself still preserve where the separation once occurred and allow views to the wider landscape.

POLICY ASH5 - SETTLEMENT GAPS

The Plan identifies settlement gaps which separate the distinct settlements (the Ends). They are shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals shall, where appropriate, demonstrate how they would safeguard the settlement gaps and not cause their erosion.



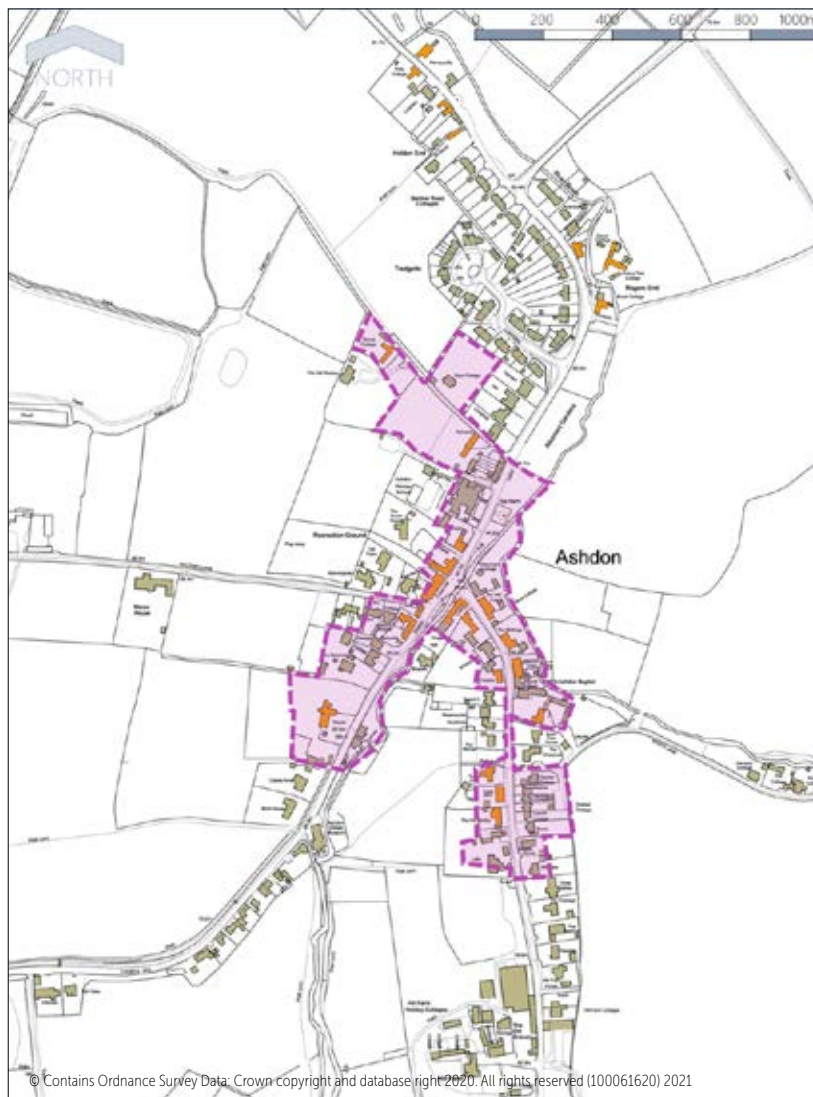
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Heritage assets

- 8.14** The rich heritage of Ashdon is one of the key elements in the quality of the local environment. Listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments are collectively known as “*heritage assets*” and are protected from harm by Government legislation. It is important that the development pressures on Ashdon are managed in ways that enable the built environment to be protected and enhanced and inappropriate development avoided.
- 8.15** Ashdon has two Conservation Areas (Ashdon village core and Church End) and 66 listed buildings scattered throughout the Parish; 21 listed buildings are within the Conservation Areas (about a third of these have thatched roofs) (See current list in **Appendix 1**). The majority of the built form in each of the

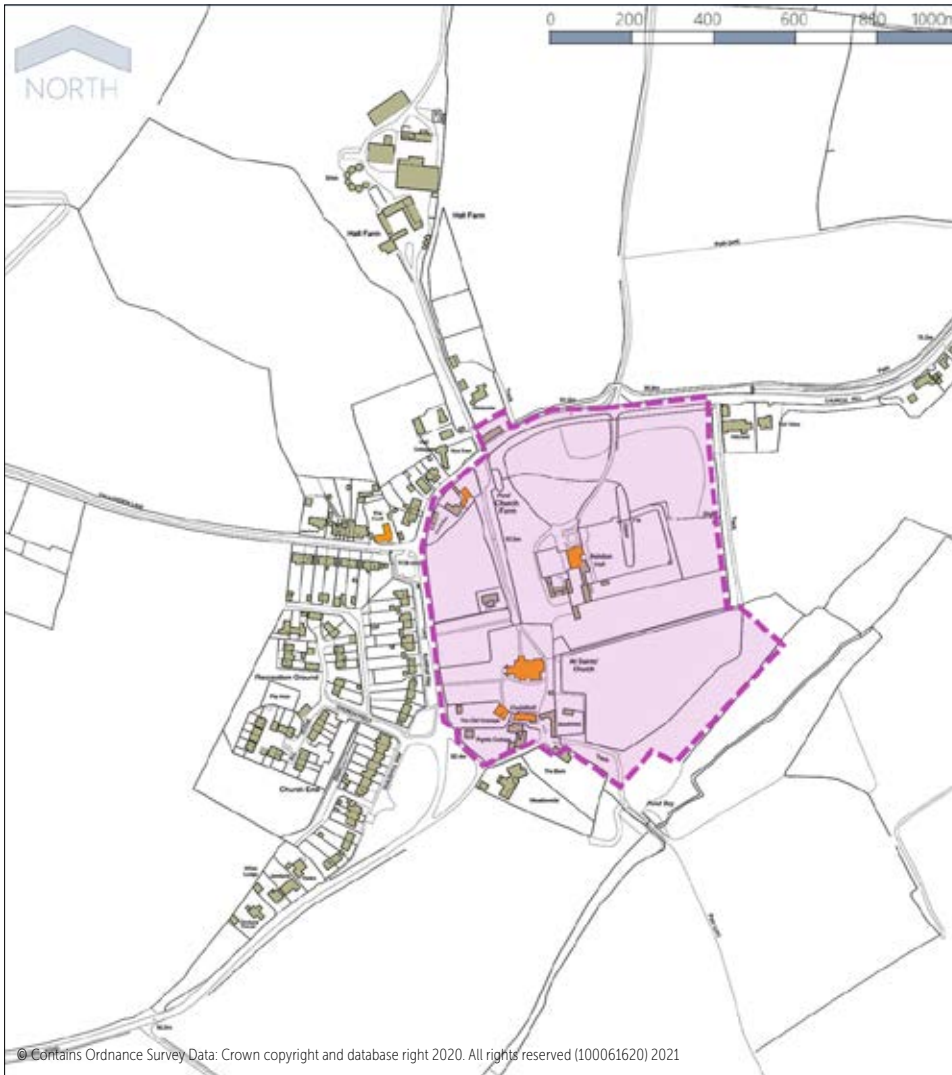
Conservation Areas is Listed; this includes iconic community buildings such as All Saints’ Church (Grade I), the former Guildhall (Grade II*), and the old part of the village hall (previously the Conservative Club). There is also the Scheduled Monument southeast of All Saints’ Church, comprising the former site of the medieval village. An appraisal of the Conservation Areas was made by Uttlesford District Council (Ashdon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals - 2013) and is available to download on their website.

- 8.16** Ashdon village Conservation Area is focussed in the valley on Crown Hill, the present centre of the village, and dominated by listed residential buildings. Church End Conservation Area sits above the valley on the upper slopes, historically centred around All Saints Church and graveyard surrounded by listed buildings and open spaces and the mature trees associated with Ashdon Hall and its landscaped grounds. The two Conservation Areas are linked by tree-lined Church Hill. The setting of the Conservation Areas is key to the look and preservation of these historic areas.



Map 9 - Village Core Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

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**Map 10 –
Church End Conservation Area
and Listed Buildings**

8.17 Additionally, as noted in **Appendix 1**, there is a strong representation of listed buildings in the wider village, in Ends and Lanes (see Ashdon Character Assessment). Often these have origins in the farms and estates of the agricultural past, or in the structures that served them, such as the Windmill.

8.18 The historic environment is also enhanced by many buildings or structures without an Historic England Listing. At the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, Ashdon has nine non-designated heritage assets on Uttlesford District Council’s Local Heritage List, details in **Appendix 1**. The NPPF explains that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in the determination of any planning application. A balanced judgement will be needed, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

8.19 The character and construction of the heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, are quite variable. Many follow the traditional construction methods used for farmhouses and farm buildings

which are often of a timber construction using materials available from the coppiced woodlands surrounding the village.

8.20 In terms of vernacular buildings within the Parish, some date from the 16th Century, comprising timber framed and plastered construction with thatched, tiled or slate roofs. There is a high preponderance of old thatched cottages within the valley locations of Knox End, Holden End, Rogers End, Water End and Ashdon village core. There is an attractive terrace of brightly painted cottages, known as Collier Row. A prominent feature building located at Church End, is the flint knapped former National School with brick detailing and bell tower.

8.21 Other buildings that make an important contribution to the character are the current Primary School on Crown Hill, a late 19th Century red brick construction with decorative blue brick banding, and the Baptist Church on Radwinter Road constructed of red brick with arch detailing and slate roof. Also, on Radwinter Road are black timber-boarded barns reflecting the rural character of the village. Across the village there

are also numerous buildings or structures within the curtilages of Listed Buildings that are important features and contribute to built character. Similarly, the tall front boundary wall [red brick] of Claves is a defining feature of the street scene along with a stone marker, highway directional signs, and Grade II Listed telephone kiosk all of which are key features.

8.22 Heritage assets are invaluable and irreplaceable; they are a resource that is both fragile and finite. Key built landmarks, some of which are designated heritage assets which contribute to sense of place and orientation, were identified in the Ashdon Landscape Appraisal. They include the following:

- a) Thatched cottages*, Holden End and Water End
- b) The Old Rectory*, Rectory Lane, Ashdon
- c) Terraced Cottages (Collier Row) on the main street, Ashdon

- d) Ashdon primary school on the main street, Ashdon
- e) Rose and Crown pub* on Crown Hill, Ashdon
- f) Village museum, Church Hill, Ashdon
- g) Flint knapped Former National School*, Church End
- h) Ashdon Hall*, Church End
- i) All Saints Church*, Church End
- j) Ashdon Windmill (the Windmill), Steventon End
- k) Waltons, Place Farm* and stable complex*, Steventon End

* buildings with Historic England or Local Heritage Listing

8.23 Whilst Local Heritage Listing provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site is on a local list means that its conservation as a heritage asset is an objective of the NPPF and a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application.

POLICY ASH6 - CONSERVATION AREAS

Development within, or which has potential to affect the setting of, the Conservation Areas as identified on the Policies Map will be assessed against the content of the Ashdon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (2013) and any subsequent adopted Appraisal.

Proposals for development within a Conservation Area should:

- a. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the Conservation Area alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance;
- b. Preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- c. Be of an appropriate design, scale, form, height, massing and position;
- d. Retain features important to settlement form and pattern such as open spaces, plot divisions, position of dwellings, hierarchy of routes, hierarchy of buildings, and their uses, boundary treatments and gardens; and
- e. Use high quality materials and methods of construction which complement the character of the area.

Proposals for development which affect the setting of a Conservation Area should be considered against criteria a), c) and e) above.

Proposals which involve the demolition of non-listed buildings that make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area, including those identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, should demonstrate:

- i. The building is structurally unsound and beyond technically feasible and economically viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or
- ii. All measures to sustain the existing use or find an alternative use/user have been exhausted.

In all cases, proposals for demolition should include comprehensive and detailed plans for redevelopment of the site.

8.24 The 20th Century white railings supported on concrete posts, many erected as safety features relating to the River Bourne, are a feature of Ashdon. Although not of particular historic interest or merit they do add to Ashdon's overall quality. If the railings or posts are not maintained the visual qualities of the centre of the Conservation Area would be eroded.

Community Aspiration 1 - White Railings

The white railings supported on concrete posts should be kept in good condition and painted on a regular basis.

Settlement character and design

8.25 It is important that new buildings and extensions are well thought through in terms of design and delivery of high-quality places (**Policy ASH 7**), to ensure a high level of residential amenity and successful community cohesion over the Plan period. It is very important that the design and layout of new development facilitates the creation of a cohesive, safe and pleasant environment where new occupants feel comfortable integrating with their immediate neighbourhood as well as Ashdon as a whole.

8.26 It is clearly evident from the community consultation undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan that many residents are concerned about the potential scale of the housing growth in Ashdon and the impact of the growth on the existing character of the settlements. In the December 2020 public consultation questionnaire 97% of respondents agreed that development proposals should not result in unacceptable loss of, or damage to, significant trees, woodlands or hedgerows during, or because of development (other than in exceptional circumstances where a community benefit outweighs their loss).

8.27 The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal provides a useful analysis of existing character across all settlements in the Parish, with section 6.1 listing the "*Special Qualities to Conserve and Enhance*" and section 6.2 the "*Changes to Avoid*."

Village Gateways

8.28 In the December 2020 public consultation questionnaire, 86.1% of respondents agreed that the four road entrances into the main settlement areas of Ashdon village core and Church End should be important as "*first impressions*" and determine the sense of arrival, setting the scene coming into the built-up areas.

8.29 The entry by vehicle into the settlement areas of the village is an important aspect of the 'feel' of the village. In Ashdon it marks the transition from open countryside, with fields, hedgerow, woodland, and extensive views, to the intimate and historic environment of the village centre. The gateways are detailed in the Ashdon Landscape Appraisal **figures 3 and 4** and are classified as "*an initial gateway, where there is a sense of approaching a settlement and where development is sporadic or on one side of the road only, and a main gateway where there is a definite sense of arrival reinforced by a road junction or development occurring on both sides of the road*." See **Maps 11 and 12**.

8.30 In Ashdon the appearance of the gateways has remained largely unchanged. They are dominated by mature trees and vegetation, older properties which may be set back from the road, and simple signage.





Map 11 – Village Core Gateways



Map 12 - Church End Gateways

POLICY ASH7 - DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

Planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the design principles in the **Ashdon Design Code**, as appropriate to the proposal.

In addition, and as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals will be supported where:

- a. the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area, including gateways as defined on the Policies Map, are maintained and enhanced, having particular regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessments;
- b. there is no loss of open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area;
- c. taking mitigation measures into account, important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features identified in the Ashdon Landscape Appraisal are not adversely affected;
- d. the design and materials have regard to the **Ashdon Design Code** and do not adversely change the character of the site or its setting;
- e. designs, in accordance with standards, maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided within the plot;
- f. they make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards;
- g. suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband is included;
- h. one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created is provided;
- i. they are located so that users and nearby residents will not be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, light or other forms of pollution unless adequate mitigation can be incorporated as part of the proposal;
- j. include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate, and include trees elsewhere within developments where the opportunity arises.

Overhead wires

8.31 Ten out of the 15 Character Areas in the Ashdon Character Assessments 2020 reported "*Overhead cables on poles detract significantly from historic rural setting in some locations.*" This includes the Conservation Areas, and in several Lanes and Ends. This is especially true at Crown Hill where, apart from this, the built form is unchanged since pre-utility times. (Also highlighted by Ashdon Conservation Area Appraisal 2013)

Community Aspiration 2 - Overhead Wires

Seek opportunities to route overhead wires underground to improve streetscape where feasible; this might be particularly relevant where new development is proposed or if significant repair is required.

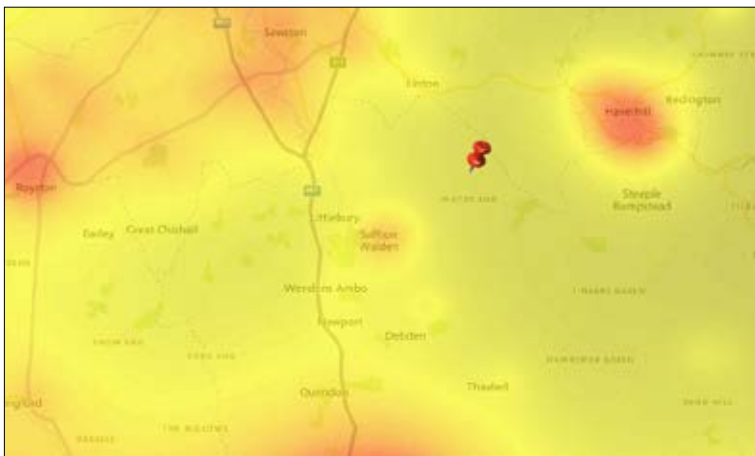


Light pollution

8.32 Many residents want to maintain the rural nature of the village and prevent light pollution and increasing urbanisation. In the December 2020 public consultation questionnaire 87.9% of respondents felt that unnecessary light pollution should be avoided in order to preserve the dark skies of Ashdon. Any new dwelling or alteration to an existing dwelling should ensure that lighting is kept to a minimum to avoid light spillage. While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over lighting. This is particularly sensitive in elevated positions.



Source: 2016 New World Atlas of Sky Brightness (www.lightpollution.info)



Light pollution data for Ashdon (marked by pin). Zenith sky brightness info (2015)
 Coordinates 52.05642, 0.31252
 SQM 21.14 mag./arc sec²
 Brightness 0.378 mcd/m² Artif. bright.
 207 μcd/m² Ratio 1.21 Bortle class 4
 Elevation 72 meters

8.33 Paragraph 185 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should: *"limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."* Artificial lighting of development, while increasing security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact. Proposals for lighting in developments will only be supported where they have been designed to minimise wider light pollution and its impact on residential amenity and the wider "dark skies" environment.

POLICY ASH8 - LIGHT POLLUTION

Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife, subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.

Excessive glazing in elevated positions should be avoided if this results in light spillage beyond the site.

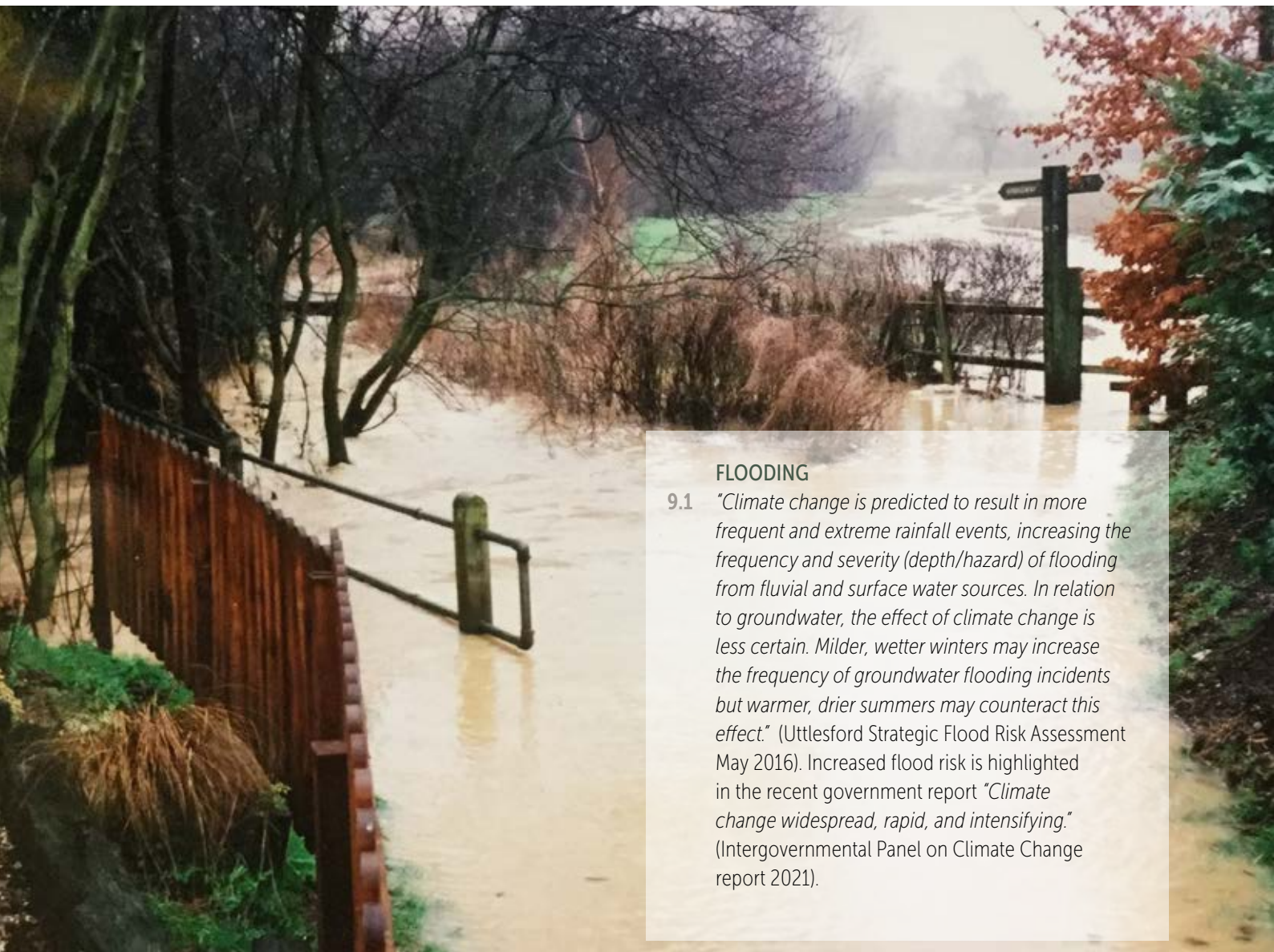
9. CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Objectives

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) will address the challenge of climate change at our Parish level. As part of this it will anticipate the impact of increased frequency of heavy rainfall when planning for flood management solutions for the village.

The NP will aim for new development to have a low carbon footprint (covering energy demand, building materials, construction process etc) and support innovative solutions.

The NP will plan to maintain and promote local ecosystems to protect wildlife, trees and hedgerows



FLOODING

- 9.1 *“Climate change is predicted to result in more frequent and extreme rainfall events, increasing the frequency and severity (depth/hazard) of flooding from fluvial and surface water sources. In relation to groundwater, the effect of climate change is less certain. Milder, wetter winters may increase the frequency of groundwater flooding incidents but warmer, drier summers may counteract this effect.”* (Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment May 2016). Increased flood risk is highlighted in the recent government report *“Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying.”* (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2021).

- 9.2 There is a long history of flooding in Ashdon, mainly associated with the River Bourne as the river flows through the village. Flood Zones 2 and 3 run through the centre of Ashdon as illustrated on **Map 13**. The topography of the river valley means that surface water run-off and ground water saturation run directly into the watercourse in the base of the valley. There are numerous springs, some running all year and others flowing as the water table rises. Ground water seepage combines with blocked drains to exacerbate the issues. There are regular surface water flow routes, such as Church Hill and the Radwinter Road, which cause damage to the road surface.
- 9.3 Over the years residents have had to evacuate their homes for months at a time and vehicles have been written off due to the damage caused by flood events. The village is regularly cut off by flooded roads.
- 9.4 Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016 states that *"the downstream impact of developing Ashdon has the potential to impact flows entering River Bourne"*. This, combined with the Assessment's view that climate change will *"result in more frequent and extreme rainfall events"*, gives Ashdon residents cause for alarm. This was evidenced at the public consultation when 86.7% of residents thought that the following objective was very important: *"The NP will address the challenge of climate change at our Parish level. As part of this, it will anticipate the impact of increased frequency of heavy rainfall when planning for flood management solutions for the village."*
- 9.5 New development is only required to mitigate for any impact that it might cause and cannot be asked to rectify pre-existing flooding issues. The NPPF provides a sequential approach that should be considered when proposing the location for new development, especially housing. Generally, development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. **Policy ASH9** addresses these important matters. It comments that development proposals will not be permitted, unless the applicant has satisfied the safety requirements in the Flood Risk National Planning Policy Guidance (and any successor). These include

the 'sequential test'; where needed the 'exception test' and also a site-specific flood risk assessment that addresses the characteristics of flooding and has tested an appropriate range of flood event scenarios (taking climate change into consideration). This should address as a minimum: finished floor levels; safe access and egress; an emergency flood plan; identification and provision of surface water exceedance routes; flood resilience/resistance measures; any increase in built or surfaced area; and any impact on flooding elsewhere, including sewer flooding. In a more general sense development proposals should exhibit the three main principles of flood risk, in that, they should be safe, resilient and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

POLICY ASH9 - FLOOD RISK

Proposals for new development, or the intensification of existing development, in Flood Zones 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and will not be permitted, unless the applicant has satisfied the safety requirements in the Flood Risk National Planning Policy Guidance (and any successor).

Proposals for all new development will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Proposals should, as appropriate include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include:

- wetland and other water features, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/recreational areas, and biodiversity benefits; and
- rainwater and stormwater harvesting and recycling; and
- other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved.



Map 13 – Flood Zones in Ashdon

BIODIVERSITY

Protecting and enhancing our existing natural environment assets

9.6 The important wildlife habitats within the area comprise ancient woodland, semi-natural chalk grassland and the chalk stream valleys. Ancient woodland is the most biodiverse terrestrial habitat in the UK, and chalk streams are globally rare (in the UK they are concentrated in the east and south). The protection and enhancement of these natural environment assets is in accordance with Essex County Council Green Infrastructure Strategy.

9.7 There are a total of 13 wildlife sites in the Parish that are recognised to be important for nature conservation because of the specific species present and the habitat that is represented. They are:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

Shadwell Wood (Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve) with part of Hales Wood (National Nature Reserve) SSSI, Ashdon Meadows SSSI, and Nunn Wood SSSI;

County Wildlife Sites (Local Wildlife Sites):

Bright's Wood
Hales Wood South
Little Hales Wood
Shadwell Wood West
Burnt House Meadow
Home Wood
Grigg's Grove

These County/ Wildlife Sites are designated by Uttlesford District Council (Local Wildlife Site Review, 2007)

Special Verges

One along Walden Road and two in Sprigg's Lane, Water End (all designated by Uttlesford District Council, Essex Wildlife Trust and Essex County Council).

The location of these is illustrated on **Map 14**.

Habitat protection

9.8 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that "*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.*" The "*Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystems*



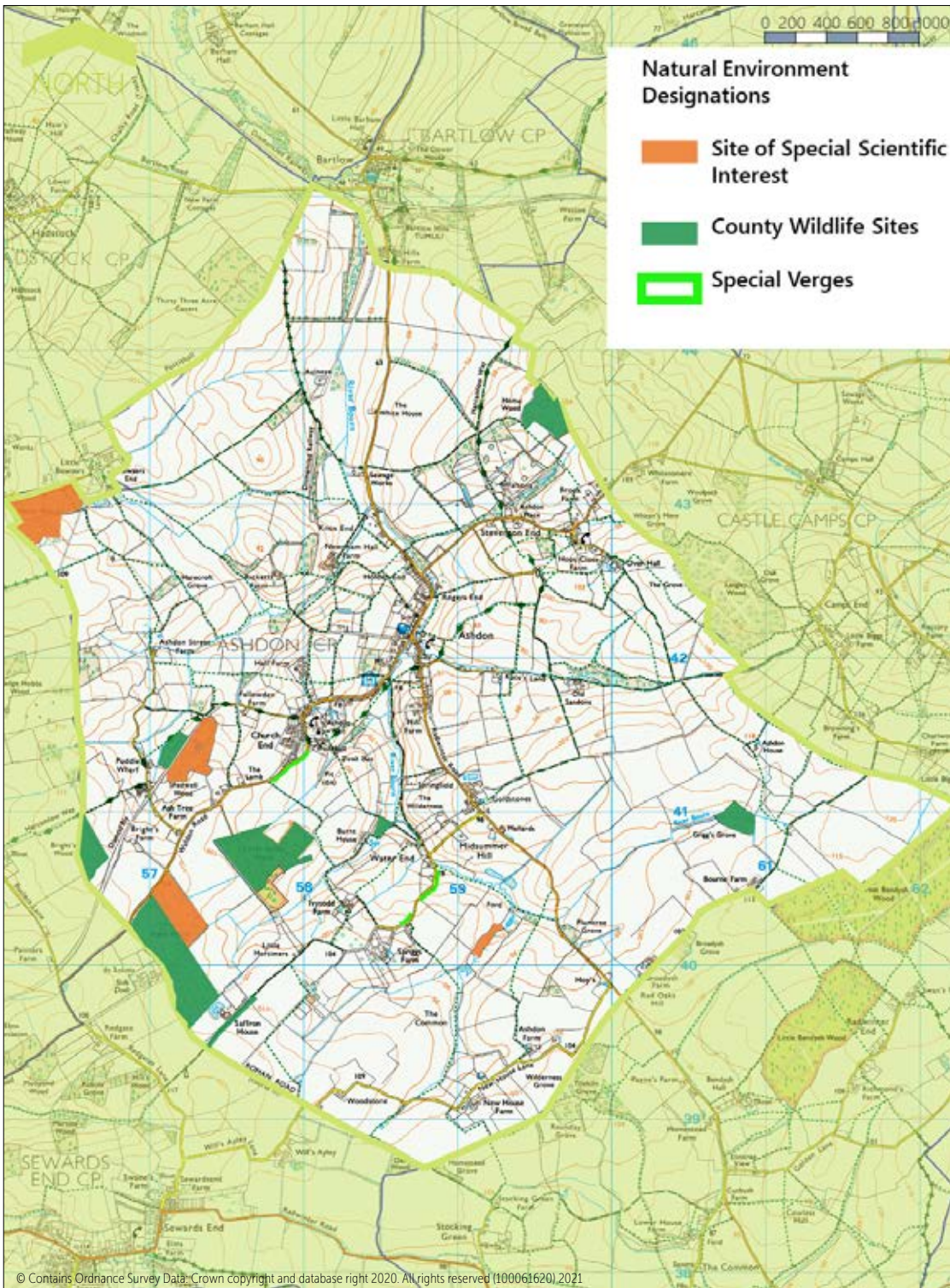
services" strategy mandates a 10% biodiversity net gain requirement on new development.

9.9 Loss of natural habitats can have a significant detrimental impact on the wider landscape and on opportunities for maintaining and improving the biodiversity of the area. Any loss of features such as trees, hedgerows or ponds as part of a development will therefore be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the resultant benefits of the development outweigh such a loss. In such circumstances, a mitigation scheme will be required as part of the proposal that provides the equivalent or better features on site.

Green corridors

9.10 In the second public consultation 96.9% of respondents thought that the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to maintain and enhance the connectivity of all green corridors (providing a means of travel and a breeding ground for wildlife). Wildlife green corridors include all linear features, such as verges, grassland, hedgerows and woodland, that provide wildlife with connectivity and a relief from the highly managed, species-poor agricultural landscape.

9.11 Vital to the rural landscape of Ashdon is the sinuous vegetation of the valley of the River Bourne and its tributaries which penetrates deep into the settlement providing corridors of green for the enjoyment of wildlife and residents alike. In the agricultural landscape ancient trees and hedgerows are scattered between the patches of woodland, dividing the fields, lining the Rights of Way and the river valleys, and reinforcing the feeling of a rural and unspoilt landscape.



Map 14 – Designated Natural Environment Assets

9.12 There are unbroken green corridors from the Museum south along the river to Water End and beyond, along Kate's Lane and its stream, and along Rectory and Dorvis Lanes. These, and the ancient hedgerows with regular mature trees, provide areas easily accessed for recreation, and benefit wildlife.

dispersal and mixing with neighbouring populations; this is essential for a healthy and sustainable ecosystem. The bridleway which follows the valley of the Bourne underneath the trees to Water End (Rock Lane) is one of the most ancient and well used Rights of Way in the Parish.

9.13 It is essential that the biodiversity of the Parish is able to spread along wildlife-friendly corridors to allow for



9.14 Uttlesford District Council's Wildlife Review (2007), together with Essex Wildlife Trust, identified chains of semi-natural habitat where the dispersal of species is likely to occur more freely than in other parts of the District. One of the chains identified included Shadwell to Hales Wood where a 'bridge' could be created to link the woodlands with belts of new planting or the strengthening of existing hedgerows, and the creation of permanent grassland headlands adjacent to important road verge grassland strips. As noted above, a 'Special Verge' is already designated along the Walden Road on this side of Ashdon.

9.15 Wildlife corridors and ecosystems can be enhanced by improving recognition and management of these areas, and by new planting to widen the corridor and provide vegetation of varying types and ages. The Bourne valley sides have been sown with grass to mitigate river pollution and flooding; this has widened the corridor and had noticeable benefits for barn owls and hares.

Fragments of Chalk Grassland

9.16 Verges are chalk grassland remnants. They are managed for wildlife and also act as wildlife corridors. Lowland meadows of chalk grassland once covered much of the landscape. Sadly, now only remnants of chalk grassland remain in the Parish, although it is perhaps the habitat that has a genuine chance of being recreated with the correct management. Burnt House meadow is a recognised local wildlife site which is also chalk grassland.

POLICY ASH10 – BIODIVERSITY AND HABITATS

Development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, important trees, hedgerows, wildlife corridors and other natural features including the chalk stream and ponds.

Where such losses or harm is unavoidable:

- i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated to clearly outweigh any impacts; and
- ii. suitable mitigation measures, that may include equivalent or better replacement of the lost features, will be required.

Mitigation proposals should form an integral part of the design and layout of any proposal, and that development will be landscape-led having appropriate regard to its setting, context and ongoing management.

Where new access is created, or an existing access widened through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.

Proposals will be supported where they integrate improvements to biodiversity which will secure a measurable net gain as part of the design through, for example,

- a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- b) the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Ashdon's traditional trees and hedgerows);
- c) the installation of bird and bat boxes; and
- d) restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks.

Community Aspiration 3 - Verge Management

Encourage Essex County Council (Essex Highways) to mow all verges after flowers and grasses have seeded (unless considered a road safety risk), thereby promoting development of new flora-rich verges and increasing biodiversity during the growing season.

Community Aspiration 4 - Tree Preservation Orders

To extend the number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) to more of the important trees in the Parish.

Community Aspiration 5 - New Hedgerows

Encourage the planting of new native hedges



POLICY ASH11 - CHALK STREAMS PROTECTION

Proposals that would result in additional surface water run-off into the chalk streams (River Bourne and its tributaries) will not be supported unless accompanied by a watercourse and surface water drainage appraisal and commensurate measures which will avoid and/or mitigate contamination of the watercourse.

Community Aspiration 6 - Chalk Streams

The Parish Council to connect with the Cam Valley Forum and with landowners to monitor and improve the quality of the spring-fed River Bourne.



Development and run-off into the River Bourne

9.17 Chalk streams are a rare habitat noted for the clarity of the water and the populations of aquatic plants, fish and invertebrates. The River Bourne is a chalk stream and sensitive to contamination from runoff. Any development proposals should be mindful of this. It is a tributary of the River Granta/Cam and is fed from a spring line and from runoff. In Ashdon the streams are not always in the best condition due to agricultural runoff and other pollutants, but there are good populations of small fish, and current and historical records of the declining brown trout. Poor irregular management of adjacent woodland is not helpful as too much shade and debris are counter indicated.

9.18 The watercourse ecosystem supports specialized birds and mammals, most notably kingfishers are a regular and exciting sight, and the recently resurgent otter may also be in the valleys.

9.19 The importance of the chalk streams in the wider local area is now being recognized – in 2021 the Government created a Chalk Streams Working Group following pressure from our neighbours – South Cambridgeshire MP, Water Resources East (<https://wre.org.uk/>) and the Cam Valley Forum (<https://camvalleyforum.uk/>).



10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Objectives

Promote health and wellbeing of the community by protecting and improving opportunities for outdoor recreational activities

Promote maintenance and enhancement of local facilities, clubs and societies.



10.1 Ashdon is a vibrant community with clubs, community groups, and various organizations and individuals creating a village calendar containing a wide variety of events and activities. Many of these rely on the provision of services and indoor spaces that are maintained in the village and, indeed, on a healthy supply of volunteers. The main issues for groups that operate in community buildings is difficulty in finding available times that suit (especially in buildings that have a separate 'main' function), inadequate size of the space and lack of adequate storage for equipment. Loss of facilities and inadequate provision for young people were also mentioned in the public consultation responses.

Assets of Community Value

10.2 There are the following community assets in Ashdon Parish:-

1. Rose and Crown Public House
2. Ashdon Windmill
3. Allotment gardens

Indoor community spaces

10.3 The Trustees or management committee of the various venues were asked to complete a short consultation questionnaire (December 2020). The results of this consultation are summarised in the Indoor Community Space Consultation Questionnaire document, which records the average usage of each space, a summary of the management structure and funding support for the venue, and an indication of their aims with respect to enhanced provision of community space in the future.

10.4 In summary, although there are several significant indoor community spaces in Ashdon, some historic and others much newer, most are quite constrained in the service that can be offered to the village. A major issue which was highlighted is the limited capacity and the absence of adequate storage space, mainly for sports equipment and catering needs (furniture and tableware).



Local Services

10.5 Concern and comments about essential local facilities were expressed by many residents. Particularly the village shop (now closed) and the pub (recently closed). The village does have a thriving commercial plant nursery, a limited mobile Post Office service (1 hour per week) and two service garages. Currently plans for a new shop/hub are underway and the pub has recently reopened.

POLICY ASH12 – VILLAGE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Proposals that would result in the loss of services and facilities (or premises last used for such purposes) and which support the local community will only be supported where:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable and is not likely to become viable. Supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
- b. it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

Proposals for the enhancement of the existing services and facilities will be supported subject to there being no significant adverse impact on the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and the amenity of residents.

Community Aspiration 7 - Village Shop

To secure the relocation and re-opening of a village shop/village hub

Community Aspiration 8 - Reopening the Pub

To support viable plans for the Pub that protect the Listed Building and continue to maintain its function as the village pub.

Open green spaces

- 10.6** Green spaces in the village are an important part of Ashdon's character and should continue to be valued and protected. 98.8% of respondents regarded this objective as very important or fairly important, with 83.6% regarding it as very important. The open green spaces in Ashdon are highly valued by the community and form a vital part of the amenities available for the leisure time and well-being of the residents.

- 10.7** In the December 2020 public consultation questionnaire 61.9% of respondents thought that there is a lack of facilities for children and young people in the Parish. Other comments suggested in the context of playing fields that there wasn't sufficient provision for older children - tennis and/or basketball court.

- 10.8** There are two play areas in the village:

- Rectory Lane - play equipment for under 16s. Open space for ball games (football nets and a basketball net are provided).
- All Saints' - playground equipment for young children, an outdoor gym, picnic area, and basketball net

In addition, there is a football field and cricket pitch, both on privately owned land, available to local clubs.

Community Aspiration 9 - Rectory Lane Playing Field

Improved access to Rectory Lane Playing field to allow step-free access for push chairs and wheelchairs. This is of particular importance to allow equality of access for the physically disadvantaged.

Community Aspiration 10 - Outdoor Community Spaces

To encourage use and enhancement of existing outdoor community spaces, and support creation of additional outdoor spaces.





Local Green Spaces

10.9 The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Space should not be used simply to block development.

10.10 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in **Policy ASH13** and are illustrated on the Policies Map.

10.11 The identification of these spaces as LGS means that development is restricted to that which has to be demonstrated as being essential for the site, in line with the Green Belt policies defined by the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation. **Policy ASH13** follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Uttlesford District Council. In particular, it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy'

POLICY ASH13 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map.

Village Core, Rectory Lane and Radwinter Road

1. Children's play area with equipment, green space and picnic area off Rectory Lane
2. Wildflower meadow - Beeches Nursery
3. War memorial and picnic area with trees and benches
4. Allotments
5. Banks and flat, entrance to Carters Croft
6. Donkey Field /Bidwells meadow with Millennium Oak

Church End

7. Children's play area with equipment
8. Picnic area and amenity space
9. Green space with fitness trail and multi-use games area (MUGA)
10. Church End Green, Guildhall Way verges and bus shelter triangle
11. Churchyard

Steventon End

12. Steventon End Green
13. Curtilage of windmill

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

(the numbers in the Policy relate to the numbers on the Policies Map).

11. HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Objective

Promote a vibrant community in which it is easier to get around - both within the community and in and out of the village

11.1 The Neighbourhood Plan can do little to influence public transport provision or speeding traffic, but we can lobby for improvements. However, we continue to be supportive of any initiative that encourages sustainable transport. We can support some specific initiatives.

Traffic, pavements and connectivity

11.2 65% of questionnaires from the first public consultation listed traffic as an issue for Ashdon with traffic being mentioned as a particular issue by all age groups. The following issues were highlighted:

Traffic:

- Speeding traffic- particularly Radwinter Road, Church End and Church Hill- the need for some form of traffic calming measures to ensure that the 20mph and 30mph speed limits are adhered to.

- Ashdon has become a rat-run for traffic to and from Stansted airport, Haverhill and Cambridge.
- Large lorries using our narrow country roads are contributing to the erosion of our verges and sunken lanes.
- Traffic around the school at school drop off and pick up is problematic due to lack of parking facilities at the school.

Pavements and lighting:

- Lack of pavements - specifically pavements are needed outside Clayes, Church Hill to connect Church End with Ashdon village core, Bartlow Road and Radwinter Road
- Poor repair of existing pavements – notably Radwinter Road
- Poor street lighting at the exit to Carters Croft and at Collier Row.

Map 15 highlights the current speed limits in the village and the traffic speeding black spots where current speed limits are frequently ignored, and pedestrians feel unsafe.

11.3 Requests were made for additional pavements in areas of the village where speeding traffic was felt



to be particularly bad, and pedestrians felt most vulnerable. This makes walking on the road, often with young children and prams, extremely dangerous.

Churchfields and All Saints development to the Ashdon village core including the school)

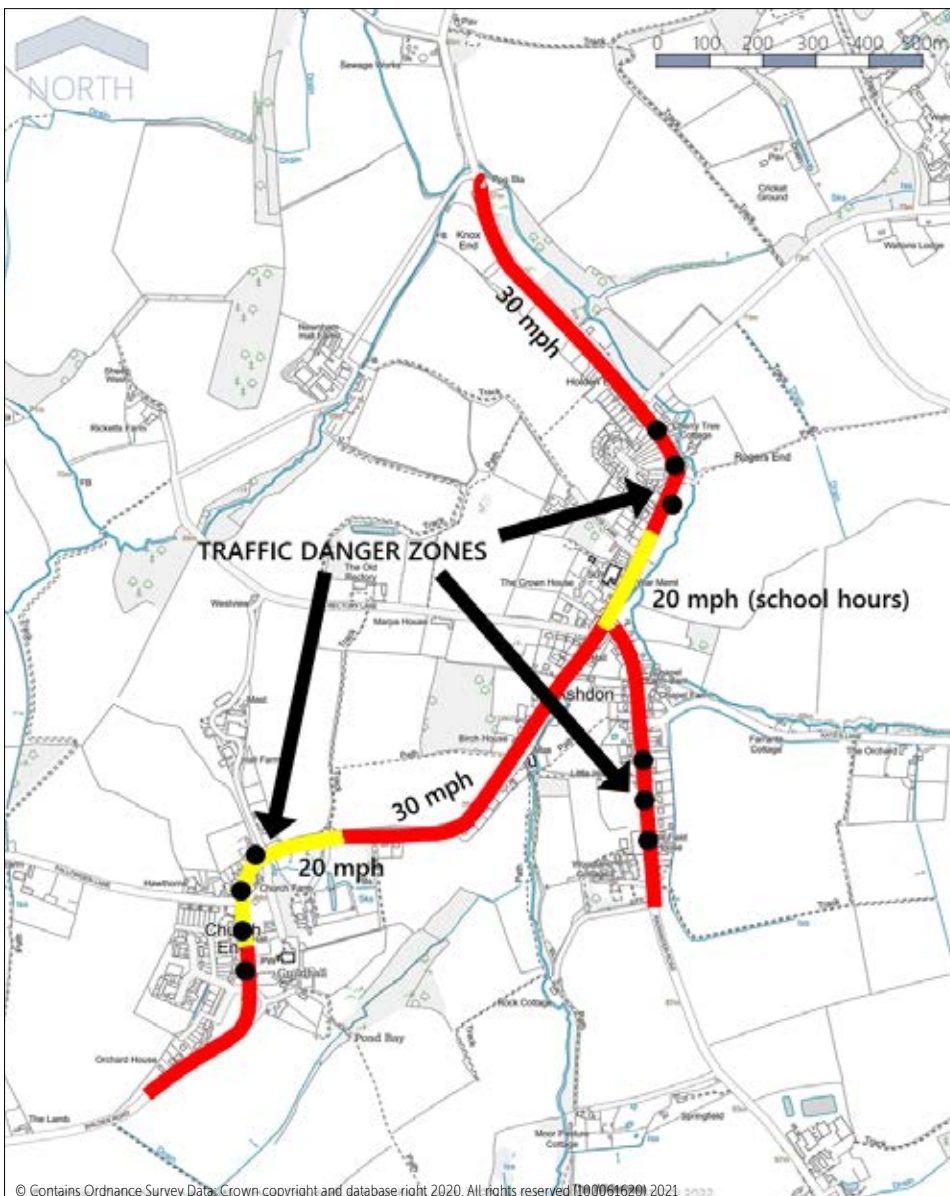
- 87.4% of respondents were in favour of a new pavement outside Clays.

11.4 As part of the second public consultation, a specific question was asked on areas mentioned most often in the first public consultation as needing a pavement :-

- 95.1% of respondents were in favour of a path that connects Church End and Church Hill avoiding the dangerous bend by the All Saints Church (the provision of such a pavement would improve the connectivity of the

11.5 In addition the following areas were mentioned by respondents as areas where a safe pavement is needed due to volume, speed and size of traffic:-

1. Radwinter Road up to the children’s nursery
2. Bartlow Road- Rogers End towards Camps Road (to Steventon End)
3. Bartlow Road- opposite old Bricklayers Arms – Holden End
4. Steventon End to the village



Map 15 - Current speed limits and traffic danger zones

11.6 However, comments were also made on not 'urbanising' the rural environment with too many pavements. Traffic calming measures may be more appropriate where pavements are not possible (Radwinter Road) or where pavements may create a too 'urbanising' effect (road to Steventon End).

Community Aspiration 11 - Traffic and movement around the village

Parish Council to seek to work with the County Council to:-

- increase the pavement links in the village
- install sensitively designed traffic calming measures on Church Hill blind bend, Crown Hill, Radwinter Road, Holden and Rogers End and road to Steventon End in consultation with residents and local farmers and businesses
- seek to repair pavements on Radwinter Road

Public Rights of Way

11.7 Ashdon Parish has a very extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. In our public consultations there was very strong support for this access to the countryside; the paths were widely mentioned as being a key aspect of the pleasure of living in Ashdon with 40% of respondents specifically mentioning this network. Whilst it is extensive, its use for 'the daily



POLICY ASH14 - PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Any new development on or adjacent to an existing Public Right of Way or which is clearly visible from a Public Right of Way must consider the appearance of the proposal from the Right of Way and, as appropriate to the relationship between the development and the Public Right of Way, incorporate green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts.

Enhancements or extensions to the network, for example through improving accessibility or connectivity, will be supported and may be required where a scheme is likely to increase usage.

commute' or to access services is limited due to the rural nature of these routes some of which are impassable in the wetter months without the correct footwear and change of footwear when reaching the destination!

11.8 The paths are very well used, and generally well maintained, although on occasion widths become restricted due to overgrown vegetation. During the Pandemic the use of the footpaths increased substantially, and many residents have emphasised how important this has been for their health and mental well-being. There are numerous studies of the psychological benefits on mental health of spending time in a green space. Social prescribing is a relatively new idea in which working in woodlands and the green landscape is prescribed by doctors to combat depression and loneliness. In addition, studies show that trees accelerate patient recovery (<https://nhsforest.org/evidencebenefits>), promote community health, and can be used in healthcare prevention.

The Lanes, including Protected Lanes

11.9 The 2005 Local Plan identified and protected certain byways and narrow enclosed high-banked lanes across the District as they are important elements in the character of the countryside. Currently, New House Lane is the only lane in Ashdon that was reconfirmed with protected status at the last review by Uttlesford District Council in 2012. It is a narrow winding lane with verges of wildflowers and wide-



ranging views due to its elevated position on the edge of the Parish.

- 11.10** Radwinter Road previously had Protected Status but, despite scoring highly on historic/settlement/aesthetic features and on biodiversity, it lost historic integrity (loss of hedgerows) in the 2012 review illustrating the vulnerability of even Protected lanes.
- 11.11** The sunken and historic lanes are single track and form valued features of the Parish and may be vulnerable to change as a result of new development, particularly as some of them start from the village core. They are all dead ends (apart from New House Lane) which can result in problems from vehicles passing each other and for large vehicles turning. The biodiversity (flora) on the verges in Water End Lane has been recognised by Essex Wildlife Trust with two substantial lengths of verge designated 'Special' due to the presence of nationally important flora (see the report Natural Environment and Biodiversity in the Parish of Ashdon (2021) www.ashdonplan.co.uk)
- 11.12** The Ashdon Landscape Appraisal noted that *"Protected Lane status may not in itself be enough to secure the long-term future of these important historic landscape features. Future management considerations should therefore be given to exploring options and partnerships for influencing user behaviour and applying intelligent and positive measures of highway management that will serve to encourage local journeys to be made on bicycle or foot, and for recreation, and reduce the impact of vehicles on the historic fabric of lanes, whilst maintaining their local character."*
- 11.13** In the December 2020 public consultation questionnaire specific questions were asked about the Lanes and 93.3% of respondents supported designating Rectory Lane and Dorvis Lane as Protected Lanes. These two lanes start from the village core and their integrity as historic lanes is largely intact with high banking and ancient hedgerows and mature trees.

POLICY ASH15 – PROTECTED LANES

Proposals that would have an adverse environmental impact upon Protected Lanes, as defined on the Proposals Map, including eroding their character will not be supported. Any proposals which would give rise to a material increase in the amount of traffic using Protected Lanes will not be supported.

- 11.14** Residents were also asked if other lanes should be protected and the response was overwhelming, basically such that all lanes in the Parish were mentioned. Clearly to designate all lanes would water-down the meaning and purpose of designation but, notwithstanding this, it is essential that their rural character is not diminished through the loss of hedgerows and an over-engineered solution to highways problems.
- 11.15** The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the specific lanes and byways by preserving, as far as possible, the trees and hedgerows, banks, ditches and verges which contribute to their character, and by resisting development proposals which have a detrimental effect upon them.

Community Aspiration 12 - Increase the Protection of the Lanes

The Parish Council will:

- i. seek the appropriate management of verges from erosion through increased traffic and large vehicles;
- ii. where possible protect verges from erosion by vehicles and, enhance biodiversity with season appropriate mowing and management (also helps wildlife in hedges);
- iii. seek extensions to the Special Verge designation with Essex County Council;
- iv. consider installing regular posts to prevent vehicles riding up the banks;
- v. seek to increase the number of protected lanes.



Public transport

11.16 79.5% of respondents to the first public consultation questionnaire raised sustainable transport matters for Ashdon. 19.2% mentioned the lack of sustainable transport options with the reliance on the car to get to work, college and local facilities. The lack of an effective bus service is a key issue for the Parish. In the second public consultation questionnaire, specific questions were asked to assess the usage of the current bus service. The results confirmed that the current bus service did not provide an effective means of transport to and from the Parish. No respondent used the current bus service every day; only 4.3% used it weekly and a staggering 95.7% have never used the service.

- 11.17** The following reasons were cited as enablers to use the service more often:-
1. Needs to be more frequent and reliable
 2. Needs to cover commuting hours to Saffron Walden, Audley End and Cambridge
 3. More services to Saffron Walden in the middle of the day to allow a 2 or 3 hour trip
 4. Affordability needs to be improved
 5. More bus stops
 6. Better timetable
 7. New service to Cambridge Park and Ride or to Linton to connect with Bus 13 to Cambridge/ Haverhill

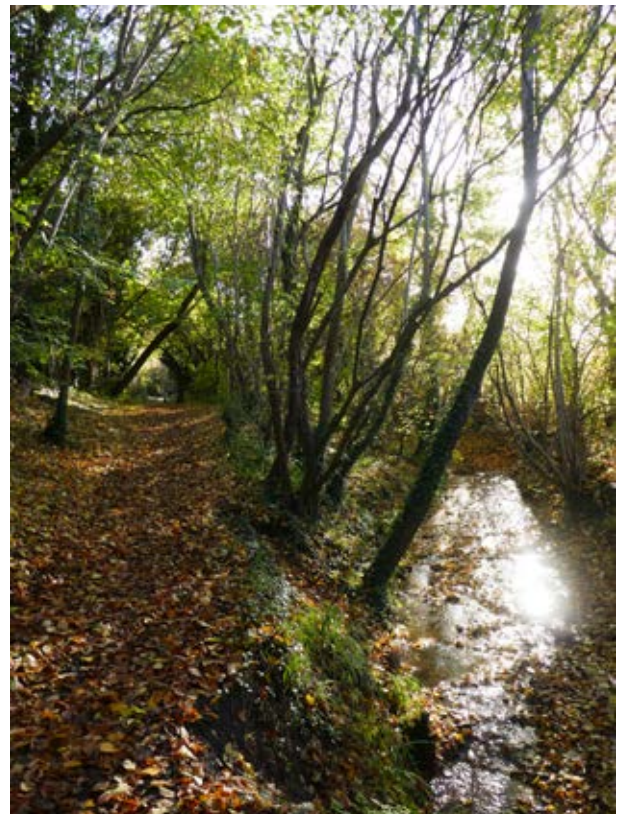
11.18 Ashdon is, in effect, a Parish which has 100% car dependency for access to public services and facilities. Smaller buses were suggested to make a service more economical to run. But until such a service is deemed economically viable Ashdon will continue to remain rurally isolated as far as public transport is concerned.

Cycle routes

11.19 In the second public consultation 87.1% of respondents were supportive of an off-road cycle route from Ashdon to Saffron Walden with 63.6% saying they would actually use the route for the following purposes:-

Commuting to work	5.7%
Shopping	35.2%
Social and Leisure	21.3%
Fitness	37.7%

11.20 The Harcamlow Way may be a possible route for such a cycle route in the future but a lot of work will be needed to bring such a route to fruition. In particular, the views of local landowners need to be gathered and considered as well as those of potential users.



12. EMPLOYMENT

Objective

Promote and enhance local employment opportunities

- 12.1** At the first public consultation it was flagged that working locally would reduce traffic and carbon footprint. In the second consultation 84% of respondents were supportive of encouraging more local employment opportunities.
- 12.2** There are very few employers within the Parish. Community engagement during the preparation of the Plan shows that only 9.4% residents work within Ashdon and 16.9% within ten minutes of Ashdon. However, a growing number of people are working from home at least for some of the time with around 50% of those responding saying that this will continue post COVID-19 Pandemic. The installation of superfast broadband to the rest of the Parish should continue to make homeworking more feasible going forward. Some farms have diversified over time and no longer focus solely on agricultural enterprise.
- 12.3** There may be some scope for further commercial development utilising and converting agricultural buildings. However, where new buildings are proposed, it is important that they reflect the rural and agricultural building styles typically found in the area.
- 12.4** Such change of use can change the character of the landscape, especially where floodlighting is required. Where such proposals require planning permission, careful consideration will be given to the potential impact of the development on the wider landscape and the potential for light pollution in the countryside.



POLICY ASH16 - FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Proposals for new business development in redundant farm buildings will be supported where the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, heritage assets and the highways network.













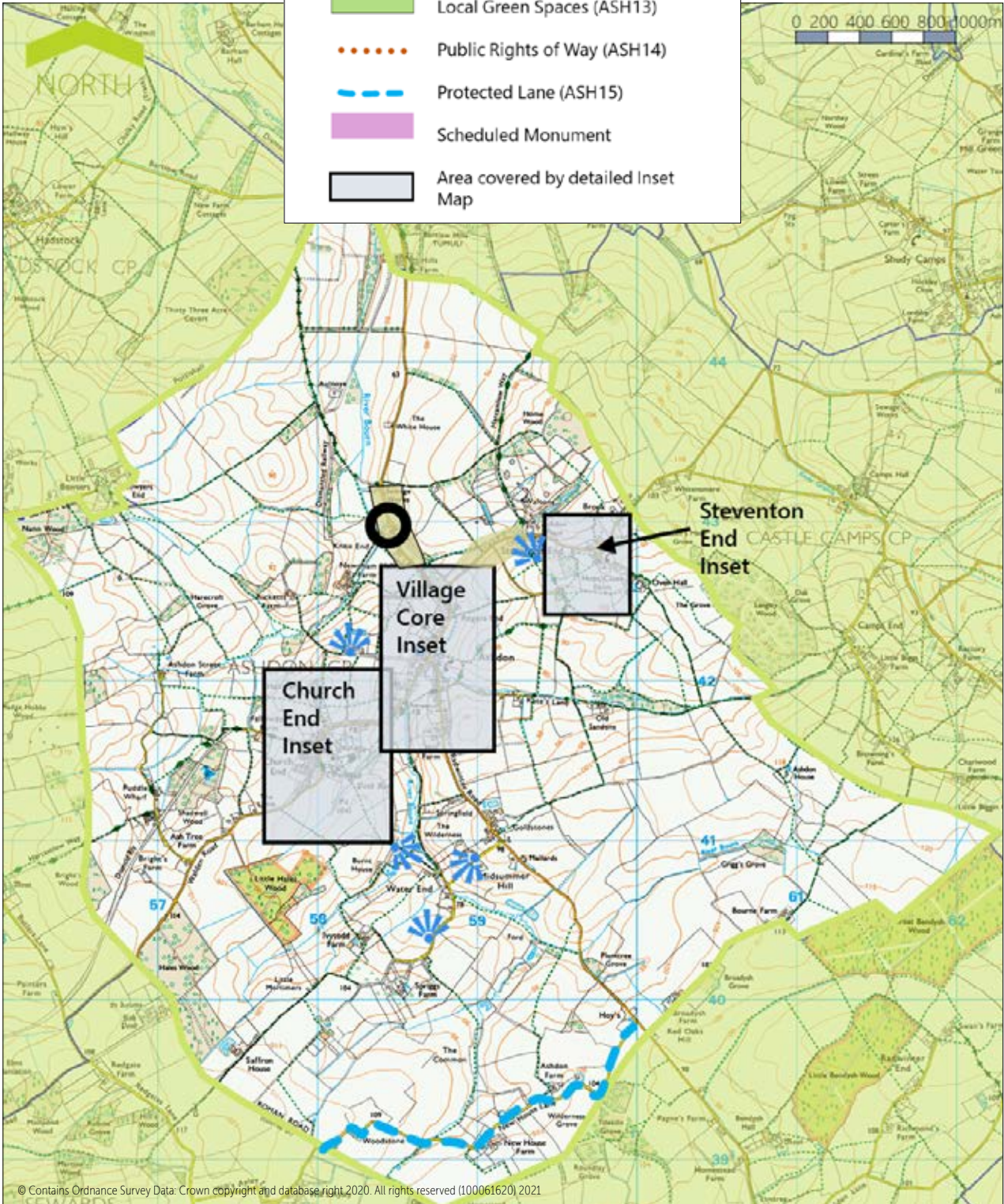
Tourism

- 12.5** The extensive network of footpaths and bridleways across the Parish encourages an increasing number of walkers/riders/tourists into the Parish. The excellent plant nursery, the village museum and the windmill all attract visitors. Passing cyclists also are frequent visitors to the Parish. The village features in various books on local history and is now being seriously regarded as the site of the Battle of Assandun 1016. The Harcamlow Way passes through the Parish and Shadwell Wood is open as a Nature Reserve. Ashdon events such as open gardens attract many visitors annually. Additional service employment could be provided if visitors could help to support local facilities such as a village hub and the village pub.
- 12.6** Some 74% of respondents to the second consultation were supportive of promoting Ashdon Parish as a destination for visitors if this might help local businesses and provide more facilities for residents and visitors.

POLICIES MAP

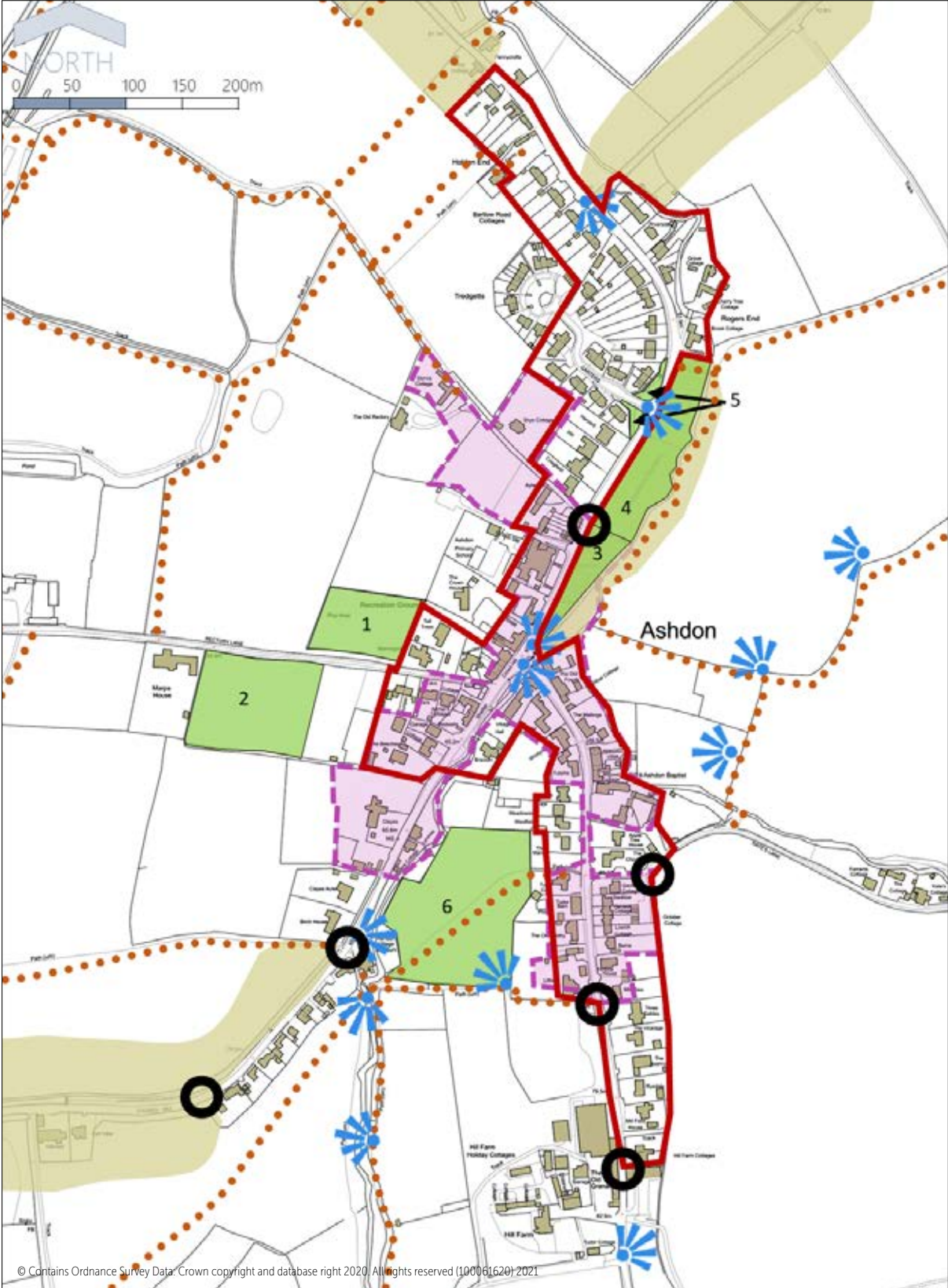
Policies & Inset Maps Key

-  Development Limits (ASH1)
-  Important Views (ASH4, ASH7)
-  Settlement Gaps (ASH5, ASH7)
-  Conservation Area (ASH6)
-  Gateways (ASH7)
-  Local Green Spaces (ASH13)
-  Public Rights of Way (ASH14)
-  Protected Lane (ASH15)
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Area covered by detailed Inset Map

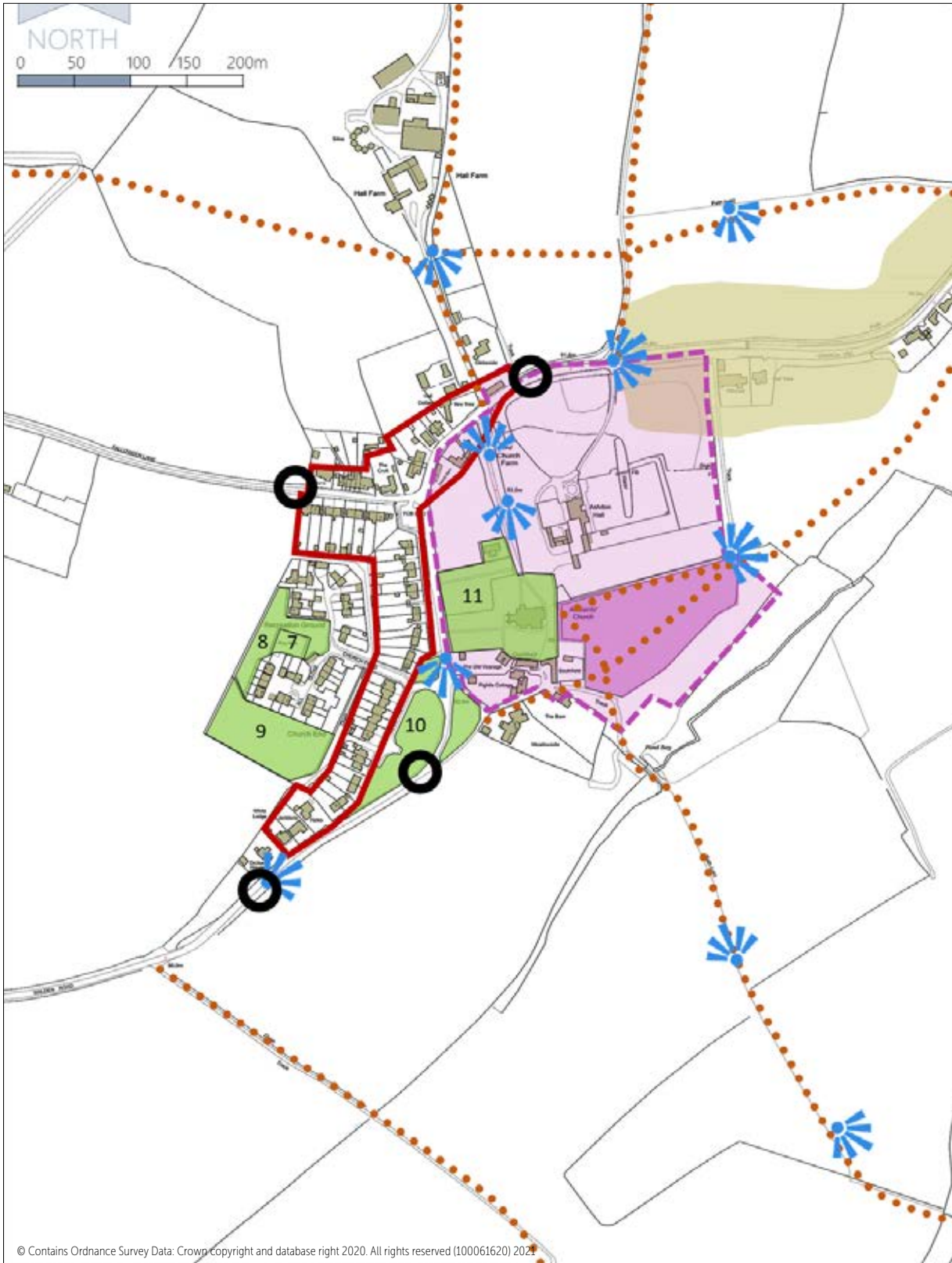


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VILLAGE CORE INSET MAP



CHURCH END INSET MAP



STEVENTON END INSET MAP



APPENDIX 1: LISTED HERITAGE BUILDINGS, LOCAL HERITAGE LISTING AND ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Statutory Listed Buildings in Ashdon (www.historicengland.co.uk) The entries below are as they appear in the Historic England list; Steventon End is the correct spelling of the location of some buildings, not Stevington. Several properties are now known by different names from those used in this list.

Grading	Location
I	Church of All Saints, Church End
II*	Guildhall, Church End
II	The Rectory, Rectory Lane
II	Deans Cottage, Rock Lane, Water End
II	Bridge Cottages, Rock Lane, Water End
II	Springs, Rock Lane, Water End
II	Walts Cottage, Stevington End
II	Keepers Cottage, Stevington End
II	Place Farm farmhouse, Stevington End
II	Barn to south west of Place Farm armhouse fronting road, Stevington End
II	Stable block to south of new house, Waltons Park, Stevington End
II	Stable to south west of the New House and the flat to south west of the new house, 3 Stevington End
II	Newnham Hall
II	Barn to south west of Newham Hall
II	Spriggs Farmhouse
II	Juniper, Bartlow Road
II	Penny Crofts, Bartlow Road, Holden End
II	Grove Cottage, Bartlow Road, Rogers End
II	Thristalls, Bartlow Road
II	Aylwards, Dorvis Lane
II	The Cottage, Kates Lane
II	Ashdon Post Office, 5 Main Road Crown Hill Cottages 1 2 and 4 Main Road
II	The Clayes, Main Road
II	Abercorn Villas, 3 Radwinter Road
II	Goldstones, Radwinter Road
II	Tudor Croft, Radwinter Road
II	Former Hoys Farmhouse to west of Redoaks, Radwinter Road
II	Ashdon Street Farmhouse
II	All Saints Cottage, Bartlow Road, Holden End
II	Polly Cottage, Bartlow Road, Holden End
II	Mansard, Bartlow Road, Knox End
II	Cherry Tree Cottage, Bartlow Road, Rogers End
II	Old Vicarage, Church End

Grading	Location
II	Church Farmhouse, Church End
II	Dorvis Cottage, Dorvis Lane
II	Ashdon Conservative Club, Main Road
II	Redwells, Main Road
II	The Old Fox, Radwinter Road
II	Abercorn Villas, 1 And 2 Radwinter Road
II	Turpins, Radwinter Road
II	Barn to south of Tudor Croft fronting road, Radwinter Road
II	Summer Hill, Radwinter Road
II	Walton's Cottages 1 And 2, Waltons Park, Stevington End
II	Wall and archway linking Numbers 1 and 2 Walton's Cottages and Stable Block to south of the new house, Waltons Park, Stevington End
II	Barn To north west of Woodstone, Newhouse Lane
II	New House Farm, New House Farm Lane
II	Springfield, Radwinter Road
II	K6 Telephone Kiosk, Crown Hill
II	The Croft, Fallowden Road, Church End
II	Barn 35 metres south west of Goldstones, Radwinter Road
II	Windmill, Stevington End
II	Chapel Farmhouse, Radwinter Road
II	The Bricklayers Arms Public House, Bartlow Road, Rogers End
II	Archers, Main Road
II	Thatchings, Radwinter Road
II	The Old Smithy, Radwinter Road
II	Ricketts Farmhouse, Rectory Lane
II	Rectory barn to east of The Rectory, Rectory Lane
II	Ivytodd Farmhouse, Water End
II	4 And 5 Bartlow Road, Holden End
II	Knox Cottage, Bartlow Road, Knox End
II	Ashdon Hall, Church End
II	Rose and Crown Inn, Main Road
II	Archers Cottages, 1 And 2 Main Road
II	The Maltings, Radwinter Road
II	Ashdon War Memorial, Village Green, Church Hill

Local Heritage List (UDC 2018)

Ashdon Baptist Church and Railings, Radwinter Road Ref: 005

Ashdon primary school, Bartlow Road Ref: 006

Skye Cottage, Dorvis Lane Ref: 007

Former National School Building, now Lucy King Curtains, Church Hill Ref: 008

Additions to Local Heritage List (UDC 2nd Edition 2021)

Village Pump, Crown Hill Ref:406

The Moor Pasture Cottage (former watermill), Radwinter Road Ref: 407

Ashdon Halt, Fallowden Lane, Church End Ref: 408

Bartlow Station marker stone, Walden Road Ref: 409

Directional signpost, Walden Road/Radwinter Road Ref: 410

Unlisted building of note – the old railway bridge (OS 581 435) remains in good condition in Knox End where it carries the access lane to Lang Meadows (formerly Aulnoye).

Assets of Community Value

All Assets are in the Parish of Ashdon and are listed because 'The current use furthers the social wellbeing or interests of the local community' (Officer Comment)

Rose and Crown Public House, Crown Hill	Public House
Ashdon Windmill and car park, Steventon End	Windmill and car park (tourist attraction)
Allotment Gardens	Allotments

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing: The NPPF defines affordable housing as “*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:*” Definitions are set out for a) affordable housing for rent; b) starter homes; c) discounted market sales housing; and d) other affordable routes to home ownership.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Asset of Community Value: Land and/or property of importance to a local community which is subject to additional protection from development under the Localism Act 2011. The District Council holds the Register and local communities. A building or piece of land is an asset of community value if it is at least partly within Uttlesford district and its main use has recently been to further the social wellbeing or social interest of the local community and it could do so in the future.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Biodiversity: Describes the range and variety of living organisms within an ecosystem. It can include all living organisms, plants, animals, fungi and bacteria and is often used to indicate the richness or number of species in an area. Such an area can be defined at different levels across the globe or be limited to a local area such as a parish.

Buildings of local significance: Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Development Limits: These are defined in the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005. . Development Limits are a planning term and the Limits do not necessarily include all buildings within the boundary.

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Habitat: The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

Heritage asset: A term that includes designated heritage assets (for example, listed buildings, Conservation Areas, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority.

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Infrastructure: The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (for example, buildings, roads and power supplies) necessary for development to take place.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area which in this case is Uttlesford District Council.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

Neighbourhood Plans: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites for affordable housing: Sites for affordable housing development in rural locations where market housing would not normally be acceptable because of planning policy constraints. Homes can be brought forward on these sites only if there is a proven unmet local need for affordable housing and a legal planning agreement is in place to ensure that the homes will always remain affordable, will be for people in housing need, and prioritised for those with a strong local connection to the Parish.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) that requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Use Classes: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.

Wildlife corridor: A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations of plants and animals.

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036

Referendum Draft Plan

Ashdon Parish Council
July 2022




**ASHDON
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2023/24

Committee	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Council	23 Annual		18			10		5		26 Budget	5 Reserve	23	21 Annual
Cabinet		29			21		2	14		13	19	18	
Scrutiny (for call in)			13			5	16					4	2
Scrutiny		15			7		30		11	6		16	
Governance, Audit & Performance		27			28		28			1	26		
Planning		7, 21	5	2, 30	27	25	22	13	10	7	6	3	1
Reserve Planning			19		13	11	8						
Licensing & Environmental Health	25				26				23				
Standards		12				30					11		

Please note the following:

- 1) Scrutiny (for call-in) refers to Scrutiny Committee meetings which might happen, depending on whether the Committee decides to examine a decision made by Cabinet.
- 2) Meetings are nominally held in the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER but are subject to change.

	2023								2024					
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Tu				1 Summer Hols										Tu
We				2 Planning			1					1 Planning		We
Th		1 Half Term		3 Summer Hols			2 Cabinet			1 GAP		2 Scrutiny C-I		Th
Fr		2 Half Term		4 Summer Hols	1 Summer Hols		3	1		2	1	3		Fr
Sa		3	1	5	2		4	2		3	2	4		Sa
Su		4	2	6	3	1	5	3		4	3	5		Su
Mo	1 Early Bank Holiday	5	3	7 Summer Hols	4	2	6	4	1 New Year's Day	5	4	1 Easter Monday	6 Bank Holiday	Mo
Tu	2	6	4	8 Summer Hols	5	3	7	5 Council	2 Substitute day	6 Scrutiny	5 Council	2 Easter Hol	7	Tu
We	3	7 Planning	5 Planning	9 Summer Hols	6	4	8 R Planning	6	3 Christmas Hol	7 Planning	6 Planning	3 Planning	8	We
Th	4 Elections	8	6	10 Summer Hols	7 Scrutiny	5 Scrutiny C-I	9	7	4	8	7	4 Scrutiny C-I	9	Th
Fr	5	9	7	11 Summer Hols	8	6	10	8	5	9	8	5 Easter Hol	10	Fr
Sa	6	10	8	12	9	7	11	9	6	10	9	6	11	Sa
Su	7	11	9	13	10	8	12	10	7	11	10	7	12	Su
Mo	8	12 Standards	10	14 Summer Hols	11	9	13	11	8	12	11 Standards	8 Easter Hol	13	Mo
Tu	9	13	11	15 Summer Hols	12	10 Council	14	12	9	13 Cabinet	12	9 Easter Hol	14	Tu
We	10	14	12	16 Summer Hols	13 R Planning	11 R Planning	15	13 Planning	10 Planning	14	13	10 Easter Hol	15	We
Th	11	15 Scrutiny	13 Scrutiny C-I	17 Summer Hols	14	12	16 Scrutiny C-I	14 Cabinet	11 Scrutiny	15	14	11 Easter Hol	16	Th
Fr	12	16	14	18 Summer Hols	15	13	17	15	12	16	15	12 Easter Hol	17	Fr
Sa	13	17	15	19	16	14	18	16	13	17	16	13	18	Sa
Su	14	18	16	20	17	15	19	17	14	18	17	14	19	Su
Mo	15	19	17	21 Summer Hols	18	16	20	18	15	19 Half Term	18	15	20	Mo
Tu	16	20	18 Council	22 Summer Hols	19	17	21	19	16	20 Half Term	19 Cabinet	16 Scrutiny	21 Annual Council	Tu
We	17	21 Planning	19 R Planning	23 Summer Hols	20	18	22 Planning	20	17	21 Half Term	20	17	22	We
Th	18	22	20	24 Summer Hols	21 Cabinet	19	23	21 Christmas Hol	18	22 Half Term	21	18 Cabinet	23	Th
Fr	19	23	21	25 Summer Hols	22	20	24	22 Christmas Hol	19	23 Half Term	22	19	24	Fr
Sa	20	24	22	26	23	21	25	23	20	24	23	20	25	Sa
Su	21	25	23	27	24	22	26	24	21	25	24	21	26	Su
Mo	22	26	24 Summer Hols	28 August Bank Holiday	25	23 Half Term	27	25 Christmas Day	22	26 Council	25	22	27 Bank Holiday	Mo
Tu	23 Annual Council	27 GAP	25 Summer Hols	29 Summer Hols	26 L&EH	24 Half Term	28 GAP	26 Boxing Day	23 L&EH	27	26 GAP	23 Council	28	Tu
We	24	28	26 Summer Hols	30 Planning	27 Planning	25 Planning	29	27 Substitute day	24	28	27	24	29	We
Th	25 L&EH	29 Cabinet	27 Summer Hols	31 Summer Hols	28 GAP	26 Half Term	30 Scrutiny	28 Christmas Hol	25	29	28	25	30	Th
Fr	26	30	28 Summer Hols		29	27 Half Term		29 Christmas Hol	26		29 Good Friday	26		Fr
Sa	27		29		30	28		30	27		30	27		Sa
Su	28		30			29		31	28		31	28		Su
Mo	29 Bank Holiday		31			30 Standards			29			29		Mo
Tu	30 Half Term					31			30			30		Tu
We	31 Half Term								31					We

Key
Cabinet
GAP
L&EH
Planning
Scrutiny
Scrutiny C-I
Standards
Reserve Planning

Page 1 of 1

Agenda Item 12

Committee: Full Council
Title: Political Balance and Committee Appointments following the by-election on 5 January 2023
Report Author: Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager
bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk

Date: Tuesday, 6 December 2022

Summary

1. This report anticipates the need to review the political composition of the Council following the by-election in the ward of Great Dunmow South and Barnston scheduled for 5 January 2023.
2. In order to negate the need for an Extraordinary Council meeting, it is proposed that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, agree committee appointments in accordance with the Political Balance calculation following the by-election on 5 January 2023.
3. A report for information will be taken to the next Full Council meeting in February detailing Political Balance and committee appointments. This will be shared with all councillors in advance of said meeting, once agreement is achieved with Group Leaders as soon as practicable after the result of the by-election is announced.

Recommendations

4. That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, agrees committee appointments in accordance with the Political Balance calculation following the by-election on 5 January 2023, as necessary.

Financial Implications

5. Costs associated with an Extraordinary Council meeting will be resourced from existing budgets.

Background Papers

6. 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

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	None.
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Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The political balance calculation is in accordance with Local Government Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

8. A by-election has been scheduled for 5 January 2023 in the ward of Great Dunmow South and Barnston, following the resignation of Councillor Day on 7 November 2022.
9. Nominations for candidates standing in the election will close on 6 December 2022. At the time of writing, it is not possible to anticipate the permutations of the calculation as candidates, and their political affiliations, have not yet been confirmed.
10. The Local Government Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review the representation of the different political groups at the Annual Meeting or as soon as practicable thereafter. It further requires them to allocate the seats on their committees to political groups represented in accordance, so far as reasonably practicable, with the following four principles of proportionality:-
 - a) that not all seats on the body concerned are allocated to the same political group;
 - b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;
 - d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

11. In addition to the Annual Meeting, the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (Regulation 17) specifies when political balance must be reviewed by a local authority. This includes formal notice from a member wishing to join a political group after the filling of a casual vacancy.
12. Officers anticipate that the result of the by-election will be announced late on 5 January 2023. In the event that the successful candidate wishes to formally join an existing political group within Council, the Council will be mandated to review political balance and make changes to committee appointments accordingly as soon as practicable.
13. The next scheduled meeting of Full Council is on 21 February 2023. Therefore, an Extraordinary Council Meeting would be required in January in order to review political balance and make any changes to committee appointments, as necessary.
14. Although the exact permutations of the political balance calculation cannot be known at this stage, as the list of candidates standing for election has not been confirmed, it can be said that if the successful candidate joins an existing Political Group other than the majority group, there will be at most two committee seats changing between Groups. In the event the successful candidate joins the majority group, the political balance calculation agreed at the previous Annual Meeting will be retained, although the Group Leader will still be required to appoint the newly elected member to an applicable committee.
15. In order to negate the need for a decision at an Extraordinary Meeting in January, which, in effect, will be bound by the legislative requirements of the Local Government Housing Act 1989 cited in paragraph 10, and in accordance with the committee appointments put forward by Group Leaders, it is proposed to authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, to agree committee appointments in accordance with the Political Balance calculation following the by-election on 5 January 2023, as necessary. In the event agreement cannot be reached, the Monitoring Officer will call an Extraordinary Meeting
16. If Council is minded to approve this recommendation, a Political Balance and Committee Appointments report will be circulated to all members as soon as agreement between Group Leaders is attained. The same report will be presented at Full Council in February for information.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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<p>The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (Regulation 17) stipulates that Council must review political balance following formal notice from a member wishing to join a political group after the filling of a casual vacancy.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>To review political balance in accordance with the principles of proportionality as set out in the Local Government Housing Act 1989. It is proposed to authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, to review political balance and approve committee appointments in accordance with said balance, following the by-election on 5 January 2023.</p>
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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.

Agenda Item 13

Member Motion, Full Council 6 December 2022: Congestion Charge Motion

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is consulting on proposals to transform the way people travel in, out and around Greater Cambridge. The consultation closes at midday on 23 December 2022.

All vehicles moving in and out of a proposed Sustainable Travel Zone would pay a flat daily charge between 7am and 7pm on weekdays. The proposed charge for private cars is £5 a day.

The zone charge would cover the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, home to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Royal Papworth Hospital and the Rosie Maternity Hospital. Some exemptions and discounts are proposed eg for visits to A&E, but not for general hospital attendances to outpatients, inpatients, maternity, for friends, relatives and carers, or to work there. Low income discounts are proposed but would be mean tested and exemptions on medical grounds would require a medical assessment.

The Air Quality Report for Cambridge covering 2020 shows no exceedances of statutory limits anywhere since 2017, year on year pollution reductions, and the roadside monitor near Addenbrookes showed less than half the legal NO2 limit and also on a reducing trend.*

Proposed motion concerning the Cambridge congestion charge proposals:

'The council requests the chief executive to respond to the consultation expressing this council's serious concern about the financial impact and stress of the proposals on the many patients, carers, visitors and staff from Uttlesford for whom alternatives to car transport are not realistic

The GCP is to be strongly requested to exclude the Cambridge Biomedical Campus from any congestion charge implementation.'

Proposer: Cllr Sutton

Seconder: Cllr Hargreaves

* Hills Road 4 monitor No 70 at 16.7 vs legal limit 40.

Member Motion, Full Council 6 December 2022: Council Tax-Freeze

In light of the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast that real household disposable income will fall by 7.1% between 2021/22 and 2023/24, worsening the existing Cost Of Living Crisis and further squeezing the vulnerable and low to middle income families, this Council resolves to

1. In principle, freeze its share of the Council tax for the 23/24 financial year at the current (2022/23) level following discussions with the S151 Officer regarding how to target the rebate towards lower and middle income families.
2. Ask other preceptors to take similar action;

Council also notes

- A) The Lib Dem and Green budget amendment passed unanimously last year that gave a £100 grant to 863 households cost £86,300 and was funded from the MTFs Reserve. The cost of a freeze on UDC's share of the Council tax in 2023/24 benefiting households in the district is estimated to be £180,000 and similarly would be funded from reserves.

Proposer: Councillor Caton

Agenda Item 15

Member Motion, Full Council 6 December 2022: Anglian Water and Thames Water

Motion:

To request that this Council calls on Anglian Water and Thames Water to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and answer questions about the discharging of raw sewage into the rivers in our region and inform members of their plans to deal with sewage as soon as practicable.

Proposer: Councillor Isham