



Public Document Pack

Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

Cabinet

Date: Thursday, 7th July, 2022

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Chair: Councillor P Lees

Members: Councillors A Armstrong, A Coote, J Evans, R Freeman, N Hargreaves, L Pepper, N Reeve and M Sutton.

Public Participation

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Public speakers will be offered the opportunity for an officer to read out their questions or statement at the meeting but are encouraged to attend the meeting to read out their questions or statement themselves. Those who would like to watch the meeting live can do so by accessing the live broadcast [here](#). The broadcast will be made available as soon as the meeting begins.

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AGENDA

PART 1

Open to Public and Press

1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

6 - 13

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022.

3 Questions or Statements from Non-Executive Members of the Council (standing item)

To receive questions or statements from non-executive members on matters included on the agenda.

4 Matters Referred to the Executive by the Scrutiny Committee or by the Council (standing item)

To consider matters referred to the Executive for reconsideration in accordance with the provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Rules.

5 Consideration of reports from overview and scrutiny committees (standing item)

To consider any reports from Scrutiny Committee.

6 Report of Delegated Decisions taken by Cabinet Members (standing item)

To receive for information any delegated decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the previous Cabinet meeting.

- No decisions to report.

7 Report on assets of community value determined by the Assets of Community Value and Local Heritage List Committee (standing item)

To receive for information any decisions made by the Assets of Community Value committee since the previous Cabinet meeting.

- No decisions to report.

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| 8 | Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 Quarter 4 Progress Report | 14 - 62 |
| | To consider the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 Quarter 4 Progress report. | |
| 9 | Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan | 63 - 272 |
| | To consider the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan report. | |
| 10 | Local Development Scheme | 273 - 287 |
| | To consider the report regarding the updated Local Development Scheme. | |

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

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)
Councillors A Coote, M Sutton, J Evans, R Freeman,
N Hargreaves and L Pepper

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager) and A Knight (Assistant Director - Resources)

Also in attendance: Councillors M Caton (Liberal Democrat and Green Alliance Group Leader), N Gregory (Chair of Scrutiny Committee) and G Smith (Conservative Party Group Leader).

CAB1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong and Reeve.

Councillor Pavitt gave his apologies as a guest of Cabinet (Leader of the Uttlesford Independents).

CAB2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 29 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

CAB3 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Smith asked whether the Leader anticipated remaining within the four week extension to the Local Plan.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that this was still under review and that she would update Members when she knew more.

CAB4 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Gregory provided a report on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee.

He informed Cabinet that the Scrutiny Committee had met twice since the previous Cabinet meeting. The Local Plan Scrutiny Meeting had reminded the Executive of the need to follow the agreed process in terms of the monitoring

and oversight of the Local Plan process as agreed by Full Council and this Cabinet in 2020.

They had noted that many aspects of the process were on time and that appropriate reports were being submitted to Local Plan Leadership Group.

They were subsequently informed of the second delay to the process and there was a lengthy discussion two weeks ago at the most recent Scrutiny Meeting attended by the Leader of the Council, who answered seventeen questions.

That discussion had identified a sharp distinction between negative delays to the Local Plan where things had gone wrong or not been properly anticipated, and positive delays where material changes in circumstances required consideration for the benefit of residents, the District and the Council. The Committee were mindful of that approach and would be keeping it under review.

He said that they would like more attention to the details of process and the formal reporting mechanisms but understood and sympathised with the reasons for the delays which appear to be sound and well based.

He thanked the Executive for their openness and clarity for the way the delays had been addressed and requested that Scrutiny Committee were kept updated regarding any future changes at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Gregory said that the Climate Change Action Plan was also discussed at the most recent Scrutiny meeting. The presentation had demonstrated that significant progress had been made with the Action Plan and this had been welcomed.

He noted that Members had hoped for further detail on specific expenditure both internal and in terms of grants received by the Council. They had asked for further clarity in identifying actions that have been achieved which were the responsibility of this administration and those that had been in process for a considerable period of time. He went on to detail examples of good and on occasion best practice demonstrated by South Cambridgeshire District Council in the implementation of their Action Plan. This had been referred to relevant Officers and the Portfolio Holder. He suggested that a series of meetings should be established with the Council.

Councillor Caton echoed Councillor Gregory's comments and noted his concern that consultations on some of the evidence base being reviewed, such as the car parking review that offer a short consultation period, would be restrictive for Parish Councils to return comments. He also noted his disappointment that at the last Energy and Climate Change Working Group (ECCWG) meeting the carbon footprint report was only circulated after the meeting had taken place. He noted that this substantive document should have been interrogated by the ECCWG and they had not had the opportunity to do so.

The Leader of the Council noted the general predisposition of individuals to respond to consultations in the last week of the consultation, irrespective of the period of consultation, although she noted Councillor Caton's comments.

The Leader said that this was the first time Uttlesford had established a portfolio concentrating on green issues. She noted that there were currently no designated staff in place, although they were being sought, and she agreed to continue to strive for improvements.

Councillor Pepper confirmed that she had submitted a further detailed report in the last few days which answered all the queries raised at Scrutiny.

Councillor Gregory said that all the queries raised at Scrutiny had not been addressed.

Councillor Pepper confirmed that she had provided:

- A detailed breakdown of expenditure
- An update regarding on street LED lighting, which is the responsibility of Essex County Council and was the last phase scheduled for upgrade in 2024
- The Green House Gas report was delayed while it was completed by Officers

Councillor Caton said that street lighting was not only a County Council responsibility, with Stansted Parish Council being responsible for 80% of their street lighting. He said that there was a need to be more flexible with the approach towards their involvement with LED lighting as there was substantial carbon emission tonnage available to the Council. He confirmed that 20 of the 290 street lights in Stansted had been upgraded and a further 20 were considered prohibitively complex as they were vintage style lighting.

Councillor Hargreaves drew Members attention to the recent press release which detailed the significant achievement of this Council in reducing CO2 emissions by more than 50%.

Councillor Gregory confirmed that Scrutiny Committee fully appreciated how difficult a portfolio Climate Change is and how hard it is to get and retain staff. He said that Councillor Pepper's latest report circulated to Members was an excellent campaigning document but still lacked specific detail as repeatedly requested by the Scrutiny Committee. He raised concern about the publicised remarks made relating to the reduction in carbon emissions. He said that the report detailed offsetting within the purchase of utilities and that there was a lack of evidence to support the execution of due diligence. He said that this came at considerable extra cost and that press releases should not be confused with the factual basis of reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Councillor Hargreaves explained that the cost of the green tariff would in the future be part of the general running costs of the Council. He confirmed that it probably would cost more to be greener, but that this was a necessary increase.

Councillor Pepper acknowledged that offsetting was not the best solution but was better than paying for fossil fuels; equally, it was better to pay for a green tariff rather than a black tariff.

**CAB5 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS
(STANDING ITEM)**

Cabinet noted the following Executive Decisions taken by the Leader:

- Additional S106 funding for the Foresthall Play Ground Improvement Project
- Freezing the Section 44a Relief
- Energy Rebate Scheme
- Carver Barracks Running Track – Longstop Extension.

**CAB6 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE
ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE
(STANDING ITEM)**

There were no decisions to report.

CAB7 SECTION 106 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDS

Councillor Coote presented the report on the Section 106 Housing Funds.

Councillor Freeman said that the challenge was the lack of Council owned land that houses could be built on. He recommended the purchase of land through compulsory purchase where necessary and recommended that Members sought out sites as they travel round the district.

Councillor Evans confirmed that a report on Essex County Council owned land is anticipated and may identify suitable land for development.

Councillor Caton noted that the call for sites had identified sites that the County Council had put forward, alongside some redundant depot land which could be considered for internal land transfer.

Councillor Lees that there were three parties interested in the land in question and that these would be democratically considered and voted upon.

Councillor Coote agreed with Councillor Freeman and confirmed that a white paper would be coming forward imminently about the compulsory purchase of land. He confirmed that it would be helpful if Members could identify sites of any size with potential.

Councillor Coote proposed approval of the report. This was seconded by Councillor Hargreaves.

RESOLVED: That the Section 106 Affordable Housing contributions are utilised within the HRA development programme.

Councillor Hargreaves presented the report on the Local Council Tax Support Proposal Scheme 2023-24.

Councillor Gregory commended the administration for providing the most generous tax support scheme in Essex and one of the most generous in the country. He asked whether Councillor Khan's amendment to the scheme for 2022-23 could be extended for 2023-24 in response to the cost of living crisis. He acknowledged that the overall financial situation must be considered but noted that the amendment was welcomed by the administration and had met with universal assent from Members.

Councillor Hargreaves said that this could be considered, but noted that additional proposals relating to one aspect of this support scheme would come forward to the July Full Council meeting.

Councillor Caton asked whether the Chancellor had provided additional funds for residents in greatest need.

The Assistant Director of Resources confirmed that the Chancellor had recently given additional funding to County Councils which was being cascaded down. She confirmed that £325,304 was received from the government to provide additional emergency support during the pandemic for claimants of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). Of that £19,870 remained and was eligible to be carried forward into the Funding for Exceptional Hardship Scheme with a budget of £17,000. She noted that the scheme was heavily promoted in 2021 but there had not been as much claim on the fund as was anticipated. She said that this small fund did not have the capability to provide much support to the 1800 LCTS claimants alongside any other resident that found themselves in exceptional hardship.

Councillor Coote said that he didn't disagree with Councillor Gregory, but noted that as a small Council with relatively few funds he believed that political parties should be pushed to help residents with these particular issues. He said that the party in power have the ability to really help and that the proposed tax support scheme was the best that could be achieved by this Council.

Councillor Evans asked whether the statistics were sufficiently detailed to enable Officers to compare the percentage of claimants in Saffron Walden with more rural claimants to identify where additional support would be best targeted. The Assistant Director of Resources confirmed that the data could be supplied broken down by town and parish.

Councillor Hargreaves proposed approval of the scheme. This was seconded by Councillor Coote.

RESOLVED: To approve that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 is consulted on the same basis as 2022/23:

- 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 carers on a low income.

CAB9 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES OF CABINET 2022-23

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the list of Appointments of Committees to Cabinet 2023-24. This was seconded by Councillor Pepper.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointments of Committees to Cabinet 2023-24.

CAB10 CABINET WORKING GROUPS - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cabinet considered Cabinet Working Groups' terms of reference.

Councillor Smith requested that a member of his party be added to the Community Services Review Working Group.

Members agreed to add a Member of the Conservative party to the Community Services Review Working Group. Councillor Smith confirmed that he would join the working group.

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the Cabinet Working Group Terms of Reference. This was seconded by Councillor Pepper.

RESOLVED: To approve the Cabinet Working Group Terms of Reference, subject to increasing the number of members to seven on the Community Services Review Working Group.

CAB11 APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET WORKING GROUPS

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the Appointments to Cabinet Working Groups. This was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointments to Cabinet Working Groups, subject to Councillor Smith being appointed to the Community Services Review Working Group.

CAB12 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Evans recommended that the representatives of the outside bodies were asked to provide an annual report.

Members agreed that this was appropriate.

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the Appointments to Outside Bodies. This was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

RESOLVED: To approve the Appointments to Outside Bodies

CAB13 APPOINTMENTS TO THE NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP AND THE WEST ESSEX WELLBEING JOINT COMMITTEE

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the Appointments to the North Essex Parking Partnership and the West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

RESOLVED: To approve the Appointments to the North Essex Parking Partnership and the West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee.

CAB14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was no need to exclude the press and public to discuss the next agenda item, as long as the commercially sensitive purchase price was not revealed.

CAB15 ACQUISITION OF SECTION 106 PROPERTIES BY THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Councillor Coote presented the report and welcomed the proposed purchase of nineteen additional properties by the Housing Revenue Account. He commended the Housing team for their hard work in bringing the proposal to Cabinet.

Councillor Gregory asked why the properties would be set at affordable rental rates, rather than social rents.

Councillor Coote said he would rather have offered social, not affordable, rent but that cost considerations made it necessary for this proposal.

Councillor Gregory asked whether the rent could be reviewed if the financial situation improved in the future.

Councillor Coote agreed that the rent could be reviewed at a later date.

Councillor Coote recommended that Members recommend to Full Council to approve the acquisition of Section 106 properties by the Housing Revenue Account. Councillor Evans seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED to:

- I. Approve the purchase by the HRA of 18 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flat from Barratts Homes as per the details outlined in the restricted report.

- II. Request that Full Council endorses the acquisition and to authorise the required borrowing.

The meeting ended at 19:55.

Agenda Item 8

Committee: Cabinet

Date:

Title: Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 Q4
Progress report

Thursday,
7 July 2022

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Neil Reeve, Portfolio Holder for the
Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy

Report Author: Richard Auty
Assistant Director – Corporate Services
rauty@uttlesford.gov.uk

Key Decision:
No

Summary

1. The Delivery Plan underpins the Corporate Plan and places key activities against the priorities of the Corporate Plan. This report sets out progress on the Delivery Plan between January 2022 and March 2022 (Quarter 4 2021/22). Where appropriate, updates also indicate further planned work against the corporate Plan priorities.

Recommendations

2. To note progress against the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan, attached at Appendix A.

Financial Implications

3. All financial implications arising from the delivery plan were reflected in the budget for 2021/22, as approved by Full Council on 23 February 2021.

Background Papers

4. 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

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation specific to projects within the delivery plan is undertaken when necessary.
Community Safety	Various actions within the plan highlight work relating to improving community

	safety.
Equalities	Equality impact assessments are undertaken in relation to specific projects, as necessary.
Health and Safety	Any health and safety implications resulting from actions or projects in the delivery plan are the subject of appropriate risk assessments, where necessary.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Any human rights or legal implications arising from individual projects within the delivery plan are assessed and addressed.
Sustainability	Any sustainability implications arising from individual projects within the delivery plan are assessed and addressed.
Ward-specific impacts	Any ward specific issues arising from individual projects within the delivery plan are identified.
Workforce/Workplace	Any workforce implications arising from individual projects within the delivery plan are assessed and addressed.

Situation

6. As agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2021, the 2021-25 Corporate Plan's priorities are:
 - Putting residents first
 - Active place-maker for our towns and villages
 - Progressive custodian of the rural environment
 - Champion for our district
7. For each of these priorities, varying subsequent points were also incorporated detailing the principles that inform the Corporate Plan, and how we will achieve the priorities.
8. Following the 2021-25 Corporate Plan, the 2021/22 Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (CPDP) sets out the significant actions/projects (outputs), expected outcomes and performance measures by which success will be measured during the 2021/22 year.
9. Appendix A sets out progress against each element of the CPDP at the end of Quarter 4 2021/22, covering at least the period January 2022 to March 2022, although in many instances the progress updates also describe activity earlier in the year and also give an indication of what is planned for the following year in order to give an holistic view of each priority.

10. Despite the current challenging circumstances, progress against most of the actions has continued over the last quarter. It should be noted that some actions included in the 2021/22 Corporate Plan Delivery Plan represent business-as-usual activities, and may not have specific activities listed against them.
11. Whilst Appendix A highlights progress has been made towards priorities, the following are drawn to members' attention as being of particular note:
- A new Housing Strategy was adopted and an action plan then produced to underpin it. The strategy and plan set out how the council can maximise opportunities to deliver the right housing to meet the needs of the district in the coming years.
 - Progress in workstreams set out in the Climate Change Action Plan
 - The council has self-assessed as reaching the "Achieving" level of the Equalities framework, an improvement on its previous position
 - Progress against the recommendations of the Planning Review, including constitutional changes recommended by the Planning Committee Member Working Group (PCMG) along with training for councillors and measures to support more timely decision-making.
12. All information in the delivery plan was correct at the time of writing (April to May 2022).

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Delivery Plan cannot be delivered	2	4	Resources have been allocated to the Delivery Plan and it will be monitored regularly at Cabinet. The COVID 19 epidemic has slowed progress in some instances, however we will endeavour to continue to progress outstanding actions during the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.
The Delivery Plan actions do not	1	3	Actions have been selected that are

further the Council's priorities as intended			considered most appropriate to support the Council's priorities; evaluation will be ongoing to reflect on whether the outputs achieve the outcomes expected.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Appendix A: Q4 Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Actions Report 2021/22.

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 - Quarter 4 2021/22 CPDP Update

Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
1. Take action on Climate Change				
<i>a. Adopt policies to meet new environmental national guidelines/standards as they emerge</i>	Develop a Climate Crisis Action Plan, prioritised by impact, cost, and deliverability.	Action Plan to be developed by 30 Sept 2021	Officer time in 2021/22. Funding allocated for the plan actions of £333K for 21/22	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services
<p>Comment: The Climate Change Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet 11 January 2022. Whilst the action plan itself has taken longer than anticipated to produce many of the actions have been progressed and a number completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 12 actions for delivery in March 2022 (Phase 2 of the Action Plan) 11 of which are complete • There are 13 actions that will be delivered by December 2022 (Phase 3 of the Action Plan) • There are 10 action points that fall in 2023, 2025 or are ongoing. <p>A considerable number of workstreams are under way and are detailed later in this document. Key achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of switching to a green tariff saving the equivalent of 29kg of CO₂e per household in 2021/22. • the creation of an eCitizen Science Biodiversity Study • securing around £1,268,000 of external funding to assist with domestic home improvements that will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions • £517,000 Defra funding secured to deliver a novel Market Town Clean Air Initiative. • the soft launch of a new communication website which helps engage residents on climate-related issues. • drafting a fleet decarbonisation plan that will set out how we can reduce our reliance on fossil fuels 				
<i>b. Drive policies to deliver low carbon buildings</i>	Implement policies that reduce the carbon footprint of new development	Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Crisis Action Plan (30 Sept 2021)	Within existing officer resources	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Interim Director of Planning

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
Comment: The Interim climate change guidance is in place and considered in regard to planning applications. The Climate Change Officer is working closely with the Local Plan policy team to develop the new Local Plan which will have climate change mitigation and adaptation at its core. The Climate Crisis Action Plan was approved by Cabinet on 11 January 2022. The Planning Policy Team is working on a climate change supplementary planning document (SPD) with a view to be adopted in line with the new local plan. The SPD will explain how to incorporate sustainability measures into planning and place-making.				
<i>c. Improve average energy efficiency of Council housing stock</i>	To be included in the Review of HRA business plan	Measurable improvement in energy efficiency of housing stock. Details to be included in the HRA business plan to be developed by 30 Sept 21	Within existing officer resources and subject to Business Energy and Industrial Strategy grants	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
Comment: A survey of all Council housing stock is underway by Uttlesford Norse Ltd. The purpose of the survey is to assess the current efficiency of UDC stock and to quantify the improvements that can be made to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon impact. The survey will not be completed until 2023 without additional resources being deployed through Uttlesford Norse Ltd (this is being explored). In recent years as part of ongoing improvements to our housing stock, 90 council owned properties have had heat pumps installed, 280 have had external wall insulation installed and solar panels have been installed on around 300 properties				
<i>d. Increase the number of trees in the district (and protect existing trees).</i>	Introduce a tree planting initiative in partnership with town and parish councils.	Detailed proposals to be included in Climate Crisis Action Plan	Climate Change Budget	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services
Comment: The Council continues to promote tree and hedge planting programmes and is providing funding from the Climate Change Emergency budget. All parish and town councils have been made aware that trees/hedging can be funded for any land they would like to put forward. A number of tree planting initiatives have been linked to the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and approximately 120 will be planted later in the year as a result.				
<i>e. Oppose a second runway at Stansted Airport</i>			Any policy proposals that might signal potential increase in runway capacity will be reported to members	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
Comment: There have been no policy proposals that might signal potential increase in the number of runways at Stansted Airport.				
<i>f. Set a Net Zero Carbon goal for the Council and implement supporting policies</i>	In making every policy decision, consider the opportunity to reduce the Council's carbon emissions, including:	Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Crisis Action Plan (30 Sept 2021)	Part of Climate Change Budget	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues
	Review viability of replacing Council vehicles & equipment with electric alternatives at end of life.	Review capital programme to consider vehicle replacement and acquisitions programme ahead of budget setting for 2022/23.	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget
		All handheld petrol driven council equipment (such as strimmer's), will transition to electric; 50 separate items of equipment by 31 Dec 2021.	Existing equipment budget	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan
		Conduct a study to investigate the feasibility of Electric Shuttle Buses for Saffron Walden and Dunmow by 31 Dec 2021	Climate Change budget	Assistant Director of Environmental Services
		Explore the option of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as an alternative to diesel for the Council fleet. If	£45,000 for the installation of suitable fuel tanks	Interim Director of Planning

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
		feasible implement by 31 December 2021		

Comment: A proposal to elaborate the ‘sustainability’ section of the checklist for reports going to committee/cabinet/council (excepting planning reports) is under consideration. This would provide guidance to assist decision-makers ensure that the climate impact of each decision is considered as an integral part of the decision.

A net Zero by 2030 target has been set for the Council’s own emissions. The Council’s vehicles and equipment account for approximately 50% of gross CO2 emissions, but after deduction allowed by the green energy tariff which offsets building emissions, they account for approximately 80% of the Council’s net emissions.

A draft fleet decarbonisation plan was completed on target, by the end of March 2022, and the next task is to further explore the emerging market for electrically powered HGVs, which is currently limited. There are longer term links to the development of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex which is underway and is a partnership of all waste collection authorities (districts, boroughs and city) and the Waste Disposal Authority (Essex County Council). This is relevant as there may be a requirement to change the method by which we collect recycling and waste, changing the specification of the vehicles used.

Fleet emissions account for just under half of our overall business emissions. It should be noted that it is unlikely that there is environmental or financial benefit in replacing fossil fuel powered vehicles that are not at the end of their useful life. The 21/22 and 22/23 capital programme includes replacement of:

- 5 Heavy Goods Vehicles – like for like replacements
- 3 Sweepers – like for like replacements
- 6 large vans / pickups – electrically powered alternatives will be trialled in March when test vehicles are thought to be available.
- 2 small vans. Likely to be replaced with electrically powered alternatives.

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<p>HVO fuel has been trialled in a number of our waste collection fleet vehicles and has proven to be a suitable alternative with no maintenance issues and similar performance. It has been concluded that HVO more expensive than regular diesel and there are significant questions about the true environmental cost of this product. If assurances can be obtained then the Council can swap to HVO in future with minimal impact other than cost.</p> <p>The Local Plan will address climate change through the strategic location of development and through policies. Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year. The Council will update the LDS in July 2022 ahead of presenting to Cabinet reflecting progress and minor changes to the publication date of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This will show the regulation 18 consultation commencing in July 2022 instead of June 2022 and allows for members to better consider the emerging evidence.</p> <p>Seventeen consultant studies are progressing, and this work will form the evidence base that will support the local plan. Recent reports to members have included the Sustainability Appraisal, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Water Cycle, Employment, Renewable Energy, Employment, Landscape Sensitivity, Strategic Flood Risk, Heritage Sensitivity, Transport and Retail Studies.</p>				
<i>f. Set a Net Zero Carbon goal for the Council and implement supporting policies</i>	Optimise the environmental opportunities at Little Canfield Business Park (LCBP)	Install a new vehicle washdown facility that recycles 90% of the water used. Install PV panels on the vehicle workshop	Within existing budget	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities Assistant Director of Environmental Services
<p>Comment: The new vehicle wash facility has been installed, and will be operational in late May. This will recycle water and therefore significantly reduce water consumption compared to the existing method of jet washing vehicles at Shire Hill and Dunmow Depot. PV panels are also in place on the vehicle workshop and will feed into the national grid when excess power is generated</p>				
<i>g. Increase walking, cycling and sustainable transport</i>	Improve connectivity for walking and cycling	Leverage S106 contributions and liaison with ECC to secure the implementation of additional walking and cycling facilities.	Within existing budget.	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<p>Comment: A Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan is due to be commissioned during 2022/23 and will build on residents' feedback gathered as part of the active travel survey carried out in 2021/22. The survey explored perceived barriers to active travel and opportunities to improve infrastructure. The plan will provide an evidence base for improvements that can then be achieved via S106 developer contributions. Projects can also be identified through the Local Highways Panel and subject to funding be delivered through that route.</p> <p>The Local Plan will address increases in walking and cycling through the location of development and through appropriate policies and infrastructure requirements. Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year. The Council will update the LDS in July 2022 ahead of presenting to Cabinet reflecting progress and minor changes to the publication date of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This will show the regulation 18 consultation commencing in July 2022 instead of June 2022 and allows for members to better consider the emerging evidence.</p> <p>Seventeen consultant studies are progressing, and this work will form the evidence base that will support the local plan. Recent reports to members have included the Sustainability Appraisal, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Water Cycle, Employment, Renewable Energy, Employment, Landscape Sensitivity, Strategic Flood Risk, Heritage Sensitivity, Transport and Retail Studies.</p>				
<i>g. Increase walking, cycling and sustainable transport</i>	Introduce EV charging point provision	Four 22kw fast charging posts with twin ports at London Road Council Offices by 30 Sept 21. Twelve 7kw charging posts across three car park sites (Chequers Lane, White Street, Crafton Green) by 30 Sept 21. Four 7kw charging points at Little Canfield Business Park by 31 October 2021.	Resources identified as part of the Climate Change Budget (and £15k capital programme and external grant funding)	Portfolio Holder for Planning & the Local Plan Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Interim Director of Planning Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities
<p>Comment: Charging points identified above have all been installed and have been operational as reported last quarter. Charging points have also now been installed and are ready for use at our Little Canfield site.</p>				

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<i>h. Recognise the district's 'greenest' businesses and developers</i>	Create a new category in the Uttlesford Business Awards	Awards event held and green businesses duly recognised	From existing resources	Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy Assistant Director of Resources

Comment: Due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19, this activity will be rescheduled to year 2 (2022/23) of the Economic Recovery Action Plan as business awards were not held in 2021. In the meantime, the council is supporting regional initiatives to help local businesses reduce their carbon footprint.

2. Conserve our natural resources

<i>a. Implement and enforce policies that protect water and reduce energy consumption</i>	<p>Include in Climate Change Action Plan</p> <p>Engage in Water Resources East's work on developing projects with the water industry to address over abstraction of the chalk aquifer and protect the district's chalk streams</p>	<p>Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Crisis Action Plan (30 Sept 21)</p> <p>The details of precisely what action might be required by UDC is not yet clear; engaging with WRE is the preliminary stage</p>	Resources identified as part of the Climate Change Budget	<p>Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues</p> <p>Assistant Director of Environmental Services</p>
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Comment: The Council is a member of Water Resources East, an organisation comprising more than 200 members which aims to develop a collaborative approach to water resource planning. It is anticipated that greater clarity on what will be required by UDC will be established over the coming year.

Consultants have been appointed to develop a Water Cycle Study (WCS) as part of the preparation of the Local Plan. This study will look at the availability of water resources for human consumption, its treatment and supply to homes and business, its use and consequently the generation of wastewater. It then looks at how wastewater is taken away, treated, and finally what happens when it is returned to the environment. A WCS is not a mandatory document, but Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are often encouraged by the Environment Agency (EA) to undertake them as part of the evidence base for a Local Plan. In some cases, Local Plans have been found unsound where there was insufficient evidence to show the local plan had taken into account the impact of growth on the aquatic environment. A WCS will provide that evidence, aiming to ensure development only occurs within environmental constraints, and helping to steer growth towards the most sustainable locations. They also promote early planning of water infrastructure so that it is in place prior to development being occupied, and boost engagement between LPAs and water companies. Work to complete the WCS is ongoing.

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<i>b. Drive programmes that increase biodiversity</i>	Include in Climate Change Action Plan	Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Change Action Plan Sept 21	Resources identified as part of the Climate Change Budget	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services
<p>Comment: The UDC Green Infrastructure Plan is in development by the Local Plan team with support from the Climate Officer. This includes policies on natural and semi natural green infrastructure balancing biodiversity recovery planning with public access to green spaces. As part of this UDC is actively participating in Natural England's beta version of the Green Infrastructure Mapping Tool for Local Plan making, having identified flaws in the underlying data with regards to the accessibility of the green spaces, for example not all mapped sites are available for public access.</p> <p>The Council has carried out a citizen science biodiversity survey to identify projects that could come forward immediately as well as in the longer term. The principle of this is to layer the citizen science data with the Green Infrastructure Plan and identify and deliver those projects which would be independent of the Local Plan and those projects which would sit with the Local Plan (for instance by being associated with developer contributions and site layout design).</p>				
<i>c. Support local energy production initiatives</i>	Develop local energy production initiatives	Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Crisis Action Plan Sept 21	Resources identified as part of the Climate Change Budget	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services
<p>Comment: A pilot project has been initiated in Littlebury and has been led by Saffron Walden Community Energy and Community Energy South, with support from UDC and ECC climate teams. The aim of the pilot project is to create a coordinated approach so that the future energy requirements of the settlement can be met by local infrastructure improvements. The project will also see the creation of individual property plans setting out how the efficiency of the home might be approved over time enabling the coordination of other home owner improvements. For example, if underfloor heating was required, it would be sensible to do the work required immediately before flooring was being replaced. An open day was held on the 23 April and was well attended by the local community. It is hoped that the Littlebury model will provide a scalable model that can be rolled out to other settlements across the district (or further afield).</p>				
<i>d. Implement programmes to reduce single-use plastics</i>	Develop the Chair's Charter to promote reduction in single use plastics and carbon footprint	The details are still being worked up but will initially focus on residents and communities. <i>The intended roll out to schools and then businesses</i>		Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
		<i>will need to be timed to ensure that they are able to engage fully in this promotion having regard to the pandemic related issues they will be managing for most of this year In addition it should be recognised that some businesses will have the added burden of new trading arrangements with the EU.</i>		
<p>Comment: The Chairman's Charter was Launched in May 2021. It has not been possible to promote the Charter within schools as originally planned during the year because of Covid restrictions. Sixteen trial dual waste bins have now been installed in Thaxted, Stansted, Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden, which will enable the public to dispose of recyclable waste in litter bins. The aim of the dual bins is to reduce the amount of recyclable waste going to landfill, and if the trial is successful other locations will be identified and added to the scheme. Later this (calendar) year there are plans to invite schools to get involved with the Charter, and pledge to both reduce their plastic waste, and investigate different ways to reuse and recycle. Alongside this there will be events including community litter picks, business awards and school competitions.</p> <p>A wider waste education plan has been drafted for 2022/23 which includes actions to promote the Charter, focuses on waste minimisation including single use plastics and wider environmental issues such as Climate Change. The plan will be implemented by the Waste and Recycling Officer during 2022/23 with target e-newsletters being sent out in late May 2022.</p>				
e. Work to reduce per-capita landfill in the district			Campaigns will be run, within existing resources, including Love food Hate waste campaign and Keep Britain Tidy National Litter Pick (11 th -27 th September 2021)	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<p>Comment: The Council has supported national and local campaigns to improve awareness of waste related issues. It supported the National Litter Pick by providing equipment and collecting waste from community-organised litter picks. A number of social media campaigns have also been run for example to specifically highlight contamination within recycling collections and will continue through the coming year.</p>				
<p>3. Protect and enhance our rural character and heritage</p>				
<i>a. Meet or exceed national standards for open and green spaces</i>	Policies to be developed through the Local Plan process	Timescales incorporated in the Local Development Scheme	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year. The Council will update the LDS in July 2022 ahead of presenting to Cabinet reflecting progress and minor changes to the publication date of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This will show the regulation 18 consultation commencing in July 2022 instead of June 2022 and allows for members to better consider the emerging evidence.</p> <p>Seventeen consultant studies are progressing, and this work will form the evidence base that will support the local plan. Recent reports to members have included the Sustainability Appraisal, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Water Cycle, Employment, Renewable Energy, Employment, Landscape Sensitivity, Strategic Flood Risk, Heritage Sensitivity, Transport and Retail Studies.</p>				
<i>b. Encourage positive planning that values and protects our heritage</i>			Heritage will continue to be protected using existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: The Local Plan will address heritage through the strategic location of development and appropriate policies. Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year. The Council will update the LDS in July 2022 ahead of presenting to Cabinet reflecting progress and minor changes to the publication date of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This will show the regulation 18 consultation commencing in July 2022 instead of June 2022 and allows for members to better consider the emerging evidence.</p>				

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
Seventeen consultant studies are progressing, and this work will form the evidence base that will support the local plan. Recent reports to members have included the Sustainability Appraisal, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Water Cycle, Employment, Renewable Energy, Employment, Landscape Sensitivity, Strategic Flood Risk, Heritage Sensitivity, Transport and Retail Studies.				
<i>c. Work with others to increase access to the heritage and history of our district</i>	Walden Castle project	Castle to reopen to the public early summer 2021 (Subject to Covid19 restrictions)	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure and the Arts Assistant Director of Corporate Services Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities
Comment: As reported in previous updates, Walden Castle was successfully re-opened, and the keep is open six days per week for visitors to enter and enjoy. The Museum has been working with the Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group, and the Castle was promoted through a leaflet and short film made by the HDG, as well as through guided tours by a local Blue Badge Guide. The Castle grounds continue to be used for a range of community activities, with plans in place for the Jubilee weekend.				

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<i>c. Work with others to increase access to the heritage and history of our district</i>	Saffron Walden Museum improvements	<p>Completion of National Lottery Heritage Fund Resilient Heritage Project by 30 April 21</p> <p>Completion of Fund-raising Strategy and Forward Plan for selected development option by 31 October 21</p> <p>Fund-raising and new approach to National Lottery Heritage Fund for significant Heritage Grant Stage 1 application by 31 March 22. Note: New grant scheme about to be rolled out so details of specific requirements uncertain at this stage.</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Sports, Leisure, and the Arts</p> <p>Assistant Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Comment: The Resilient Heritage project was completed earlier in 2021/22. An Expression of Interest was then submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a pre-requisite for major Heritage Grant applications, and was successful. This quarter the Museum has been preparing a Stage 1 Development Grant Application. The Museum Society's Museum Development Committee has received advice on fund-raising as part of the Resilient Heritage project and a fund-raising strategy has been drafted; the fund-raising campaign will start when the Museum achieves its Stage 1 grant award. The Museum's new Forward Plan 2022-2026 summarises the proposed course of the redevelopment and was approved by Cabinet in January 2022 after consideration by the Museum Management Working Group.</p>				
<i>d. Work with our rural partners and developers to maintain habitat and wildlife corridors</i>		Detailed proposals to come from the Climate Crisis Action Plan (Sept 21)	Resources identified as part of the Climate Change Budget	<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan</p> <p>Interim Director of Planning</p>

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member
<p>Comment: A Green Infrastructure Plan is in development by the Local Plan team with support from the Climate Officer. This includes policies on natural and semi natural green infrastructure balancing biodiversity recovery planning with public access to green spaces. As part of this, the Council is participating in Natural England's beta version of the Green Infrastructure Mapping Tool for Local Plan making, having identified flaws in the underlying data with regards to the accessibility of the green spaces, for example not all mapped sites are available for public access.</p> <p>The Council has carried out a citizen science biodiversity survey to identify projects that could come forward immediately as well as in the longer term. The principle of this is to layer the citizen science data with the Green Infrastructure Plan and identify and deliver those projects which would be independent of the Local Plan and those projects which would sit with the Local Plan (for instance by being associated with developer contributions and site layout design).</p>				
<i>e. Target littering and fly-tipping</i>	Support the National Litter Pick Support community litter picking groups	Community litter pick events take place	Through the Cleaner Essex Group and KBT we continually promote initiatives to help combat or clean up littering which remains an issue within the district.	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Environmental Services
<p>Comment: The Council supported the National Litter Pick by providing equipment and collecting waste from community organised litter picks. Enforcement Officers are also patrolling areas weekly bases whilst on district and are targeting monitoring at known hotspot fly-tipping locations. The Council is participating in a communications campaign which will use petrol pump advertising to promote anti-littering messages across Essex.</p>				
4. Take strong action on dealing with pollution				
<i>a. Increase air quality monitoring across the district</i>	Install 5 diffusion tubes at school sites to measure NO2 Install 2 tubes in proximity to Stansted Airport to measure hydrocarbons Publish annual Air Quality report	Installation of tubes and monthly collection of data Publication of Air Quality Report	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities

Progressive Custodian of our Rural Environment

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Member

Comment: The Environmental Health service has expanded its diffusion tube network to cover locations in the vicinity of schools. The annual Air Quality Status Report was published in Quarter 3 of 2021/22.

The service has been successful in applying to DEFRA for a range of projects to improve air quality in Saffron Walden. The Saffron Walden Clean Air Initiative (SWCAI) consists of a range of pilot schemes to assess the viability of e-bike hire and electric vehicle car clubs in the town. Funding has also been provided to improve awareness and change behaviour. This project is likely to commence in June and last for two years. Regular updates will be made to the Energy and Climate Change Working Group.

<i>b. Deliver reductions in pollution at identified problem areas</i>	<p>Identify problem areas through ongoing air quality monitoring</p> <p>Work with partners including Essex Highways to develop mitigation measures for those areas</p>	Acceptable levels of air quality at problem areas	Within existing resources	<p>Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues</p> <p>Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities</p>
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Comment: Measured air pollution in 2020, as set out in the Annual Air Quality Report published in September 2021, reduced significantly from previous years due to Covid-19 national lockdowns and restrictions. There were no measured exceedances of Air Quality Objectives in 2020 and this represents the fourth year running of no exceedances at identified problem locations and we anticipate this to continue. The Annual Status Report for 2021 is likely to be made available in July/August 2022. New regulations made under the Environment Act 2021 are anticipated in October and the service will work to assess levels of compliance.

In the meantime, many actions originally planned as part of the Air Quality Action Plan now also form part of a series of projects linked the Council's Climate Change Strategy. These will also link in with projects as part of the Saffron Walden Clean Air Initiative once resources are in place to deliver the planned work.

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 – Quarter 4 2021/22 CPDP Update

Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

<i>We Will:</i>	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>1. Masterplan our new communities for and with residents</i>				
<i>a. Use Locally Led Development Corporations to deliver sustainable new settlements</i>	Continue work on a new Local Plan. Ensure appropriate evidence is in place to support the Local Plan.	Achieve milestones for 21/22 in Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Within resources currently allocated. Further resources to be considered and possibly allocated – subsequent to review by and advice from EELGA	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<i>b. Provide the greatest level of influence and protection for communities adjacent to new settlements</i>				
<p><u>Comment:</u> Work continues to progress well with the intention of the Council submitting the local plan for Examination in 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted by the Council last year.</p> <p>At Scrutiny Committee in March, officers brought a supplementary report relating to the Local Plan timetable. This explained that the timetable for the Local Plan has always been ambitious, as it should be, so as to deliver a Local Plan for the district as quickly as possible. It was considered that there was a need for further work to explore variations on the emerging strategy, in order to develop the best Local Plan for the district that it can. This subsequently resulted in an adjustment to the timetable.</p> <p>With regard to locally-led Development Corporations, the Interim Director of Planning wrote to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in December asking to open a dialogue regarding the possibility of a Development Corporation for the strategic allocations within the Local Plan.</p>				
<i>2. Support our towns and villages to plan their neighbourhoods</i>				
<i>a. Deliver an outstanding planning and place-making capability with the right</i>	External reviews of pre-application processes, potential of planning	Final report conclusions by 30 April 2021	£240k ongoing allocated. Further ongoing resources may be requested –	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>capacity to create quality outcomes with and for all our communities</i>	obligations and engagement of town and parish councils and wider organisational review of the planning function	Improvement plan to be approved by 31 July 2021	subsequent to review by and advice from EELGA but this will need to be considered in light of the overall MTFS.	Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: A peer review of Planning was completed by consultants appointed by the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA). The review makes recommendations and contains all key actions. All recommendations were considered by Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet in October 2021. Scrutiny received a short report about the approach to implementation and some early progress the following month. A full progress update went to Scrutiny and Cabinet in February 2022. A further update will go to Scrutiny and Cabinet in September 2022.</p> <p>Since the update in February many more actions have been progressed on the pathways to improvement. Highlights include full agreement at Council to all of the constitutional changes recommended by the Planning Committee Member Working Group (PCMG). Changes address training for councillors, the scheme of delegation and measures to support more timely decision-making. At Planning Committee, the final agreed report templates are now in use, there is a formalised late item reporting system and questions and debate are now managed differently so that the public can follow the stages in the decision making process.</p> <p>In March Cabinet agreed a Draft Planning Obligations (S106) document as Supplementary Planning Guidance ready for consultation. It is being implemented operationally and provides clear and consistent guidance on S106 matters related to planning applications.</p> <p>Design Surgeries, which were piloted earlier in the year, are continuing and recently there was a Design Away Day for councillors and officers to visit schemes in Cambridge.</p>				
<i>b. Facilitate Neighbourhood Planning across the district through strong engagement with and support of all town and parish councils</i>	Officers to work pro-actively with Parishes to encourage more Neighbourhood Plans to be instigated and subsequently “made” to help communities shape their own areas.	Support for 8 neighbourhood plans already underway. Neighbourhood plans in 4 other areas already “made”. Facilitate workshop(s) for areas not yet commenced. Other NHP groups to promote benefits	Within existing resources Neighbourhood planning groups are encouraged to use resources of RCCE, <i>LOCALITY</i>	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
Comment: The Council continues to support Town and Parish Councils that want to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. This year one additional Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' for Newport, Quendon and Rickling. There are now four Neighbourhood Plans in place. Furthermore, the Council is supporting a number of emerging neighbourhood plans which are at different stages of reparation. Development Management remains committed to the engagement of town and parish councils at the earliest stage of pre-application discussions. Including pre-submission presentations to Planning Committee including Ward Members and Towns/parish Councils. The Protocol formalising how participating by Parish and Town Council takes place as part of the application process will be reported to Planning Committee in July 2022. Supplementing this are the continuing Parish Forums. A Forum took place on 29 March and focussed on the pressing issues of "designation" and enforcement				
<i>c. Implement policies which create better homes and neighbourhoods that meet or exceed national standards</i>	Policies to be developed through the Local Plan process	Timescales incorporated in the Local Development Scheme	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: In addition to the work on the Local Plan, summarised above in 'Masterplan our new communities for and with residents', the Council has also this year adopted Building for Healthy Life. The Uttlesford-specific version of a national document was made by Design for Homes, a local social enterprise which operates nationally to improve the design quality of new housing development, and was created to showcase examples of best practice within the district, to help reinforce the council's commitment to good design. The guidance seeks to address the concerns of local communities by setting standards which developers must meet in order to achieve planning approval. It includes a scoring system which will be used to assess the performance of a scheme against considerations such as natural connections, making the most of what's there, walking, cycling, public transport, healthy streets, green and blue infrastructure, parking, and character.				
<i>d. Work with partners and stakeholders to deliver new sports, play and community facilities</i>	Policies to be developed through the Local Plan process	Timescales incorporated in the Local Development Scheme	Within existing Resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: Appropriate commentary provided above in 'Masterplan our new communities for and with residents'.				
3. Secure greater benefits for our community from new development				
<i>a. Implement the Community Infrastructure Levy along with s106 to deliver strategic community projects and</i>				Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>greater local benefit from development</i>				Interim Director of Planning
Comment: This work will be picked up again when the Local Plan is at a stage to identify the necessary infrastructure to support development. Following the adoption of the Local Plan, council officers will be able to commence work on the Community Infrastructure Levy, which will take approximately two years.				
<i>b. Increase the transparency of the Section-106 Agreement process and councillor engagement</i>	Implement the Cabinet adoption of the Scrutiny recommendations regarding Section Obligations reported in May 2021.	<p>Creation of an Uttlesford Developers Contribution Document by end March 2022 for consultation and adoption by June 2022</p> <p>Adopt formal procedural approach for town and parish councils in S106s, Include reflection process with partners, before end March 2022.</p> <p>As part of the review of Planning Committee Reports to include consistent reporting of S106s of Major Planning Applications by December 2021</p> <p>Priority Populating of EXACOM database by end of March 2022 and subject to audit/GDPR launch public interface</p>	Some additional resources may be required specifically on the EXACOM data base matters.	<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan</p> <p>Interim Director of Planning</p>

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

<i>We Will:</i>	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
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Comment: In line with the S106 Pathway in the Planning Service Improvement Plan, funding is in place for the ongoing population of the EXACOM database, which captures and manages the agreements and finance in relation to S106. Orders have been issued and documents are being prepared for transfer to the database. This is the first big milestone stage. Data preparation and uploading will be carried out in the Public Interface stage of Exacom before it can be publicly accessible. In the meantime the council published its first Infrastructure Funding Statement in accordance with the law in December 2021.

The Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Guidance was agreed for consultation by Cabinet in March. The guidance is being used by the Development Management Team. S106 Templates have been prepared by the Legal Service and are now available on the council's website for applicants. Internal consultation processes are in place and there is early consultation with Legal on all major applications to ensure timely progress. Reporting of S106s Heads of Terms is a standard part of the new template reports for Planning Committee and is now standard practice.

<i>c. Ensure that strong Planning Enforcement holds developers to account</i>	Implementation of Enforcement Work Stream as recommended with the EEGLA review	Improved use of IDOX Enforcement Module for complainant, third tier updates, and generation of notices before March 2022 Reporting of enforcement matters (including narratives of interventions) to Planning Committee before end December 2021	Work will continue in accordance with enforcement policy	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
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Comment: Capacity to implement actions from the peer review was created within the team following a period of significant challenge relating to staffing issues. One vacant post had been filled and a further post had been created for a 12 month period and was offered to a candidate. Subsequently a permanent member of staff departed and the person who was to fill the temporary post was offered and took the permanent post. The service has as a consequence used the services of an agency person. Concurrently, an audit was completed in March 2022. All of the actions from that report have been incorporated into the Enforcement Pathway and are being implemented. Throughout March 22 there was a profile-raising exercise around the adopted Planning Enforcement Policy. This included training for officers and councillors, together with a Parish Forum at the end of that month. The Planning Enforcement Policy was also placed on a Planning Committee agenda as an information item.

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<p>Template training took place in Spring 2022 and work has commenced to create and update templates. Data cleansing work has been completed and the team is in the final stages of ensuring that the Planning Register contains all of the historic information that it is required to contain by law.</p> <p>The team are now in a position to prepare a report for Planning Committee highlighting the work of the team and identifying interventions, successes and completing an overview of the work of the team. This report is due at Planning Committee in May.</p>				
<i>d. Require developers to be considerate of the communities in which they build</i>	Implementation of Enforcement Works Stream as recommended with the EEGLA review	Production and Relaunch of Guidance around Development Sites and better use of Construction Management Plans.	Standard conditions are applied and monitored within existing resources; further recommendations may arise from the planning transformation action plan	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: Construction Management Conditions are being used to require developers to be considerate. Other measures to achieve this include the Parish/Town Council Liaison Forums, case officer overview, and engagement from the S106 & Enforcement Officer. Implementation of the Enforcement Pathway actions and the S106 Pathway Actions support this objective also. For instance the council does now have draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Guidance, awareness raising around the adopted Planning Enforcement Policy and training.</p>				
4. Work with the airport on issues of concern to communities				
<i>a. Seek a reduction in night flights</i>	Respond to the Government's night flights consultation (by 1 st October) and take part in the promised future evaluation by the Government of the costs and benefits of night flights.	A decrease in the number of permitted and actual night flights over time.	Respond to proposed changes within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: The council responded to the Government's night flights consultation, setting out its position in full. The response was prepared by the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel and ratified by Cabinet in September 2021. We await information on the promised future evaluation.</p>				

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>b. Implement programmes to reduce airport related village fly-parking</i>	Receive the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group into fly parking. Continue to work as part of the Stansted Area Transport Forum to use S106 funding to evaluate, publicise and implement appropriate schemes to prevent or reduce fly parking where it is detrimental to local amenity.	Final report of the T&F Group has been delayed. Cabinet will respond when the work is complete and further reviewed in light of the impact on travel of the Covid19 pandemic and continuing emphasis on sustainable transport in light of the climate crisis.	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: A full car parking review is now being carried out, (this was delayed due to impact of Covid 19 on parking and resources). Following a full procurement process, the contract was awarded to 'Parking Matters Ltd' in late March.</p> <p>This review will cover all aspects of parking for both on and off-street parking, including fly parking. Parking Matters will engage fully with staff and appropriate members throughout the process and a full report will be available in late summer to all members.</p> <p>At the beginning of 21/22 the Scrutiny Committee decided not to proceed any further with the fly parking workstream and therefore disbanded the task and finish group.</p>				
<i>c. Work to secure investment in sustainable transport to and from airport, including for local workers</i>	Continue to work as part of the Stansted Area Transport Forum to use S106 funding to start up appropriate services and to fund enhancements to existing services.	An increase in the percentage of airport passengers and staff travelling to and from the airport by sustainable transport as measured by CAA travel data.	Participation in Stansted Area Transport forum work will continue within existing resources.	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: The council continues to work as part of the Stansted Area Transport Forum (SATF). The SATF will be producing a new surface access strategy under a 43 million passengers per annum planning obligation, but at the moment the mode of transport share is skewed towards use of the private car because of Covid fears. Rail patronage has held up quite well, but bus use has really suffered. Therefore the first aim is to recover the services and then plan for growth.</p>				

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
5. Nurture employment and retail areas to create jobs and retain businesses				
<p><i>a. Protect and grow our town centres as economic hubs</i></p> <p><i>b. Increase tourist spend</i></p> <p><i>c. Support the creation of amenities that stimulate and facilitates local businesses, such as enterprise zones, business parks, office blocks, industrial areas, and start-up hubs</i></p> <p><i>d. Support the expansion and promotion of key relevant employment sectors for the district</i></p> <p><i>e. Work with partners to promote the economic opportunities of the London - Cambridge Innovation Corridor, Stansted Airport and our main transport corridors</i></p> <p><i>f. Work with the airport to increase local airport-based employment opportunities</i></p>	<p>An Economic Development Recovery Plan 2020-2023 was approved by Council in Dec 2020. The elements of the main themes of the plan will be delivered according to this plan in 2021/22. The main themes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business Engagement and Support 2. Information, Advice and Guidance 3. Skills and Training 4. Creating Jobs / Inward Investment 5. Create a Greener Economy 		<p>Within existing resources, including £355,000 allocated to the Business Recovery Fund for 2021/22</p> <p>Project management to be jointly procured through the North Essex Economic Board</p> <p>Inward investment work jointly commissioned through the Innovation Corridor Core group</p>	<p>Portfolio holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy</p> <p>Assistant Director of Resources</p>

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
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Comment:

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a serious impact on every aspect of economic development work and required a complete reassessment of all priorities. The council's work in this area has by necessity been dominated by creating, and enacting, an Economic Development Recovery Plan in order to support the district's business community rather than by the priorities originally set out in the Corporate Plan. An update of the actions for the recovery plan were presented to the Scrutiny Committee in November 2021.

Due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19 the work of the team has been dominated by the delivery of support grants to local businesses. The Economic Development Team continues to provide support to businesses hardest hit by the Covid 19 pandemic and promoting opportunities to local businesses and residents including business start-up support, training, and skills opportunities. This includes working closely with South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the best growth hub. North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) have continued to support the key activities across the north of the county and businesses can now self-refer for advice on Start Up, digital support and finance and debt management support. Three programmes are currently in place providing certified courses in IT, apprenticeships, and workplace training. These began in the New Year and will offer over 500 residents in North Essex the opportunity to become more digitally included, with job specific training and opportunities.

NEEB have awarded a contract to a specialist Low Carbon contractor to provide support and advice on how businesses can measure and reduce their impact on the environment. An advertising campaign is currently in progress encouraging businesses to sign up for the training.

Work to support the local tourism sector and to increase tourist spend in the district launched in quarter 4 with a new website www.discoveruttlesford.co.uk, a new app 'dscvr' with Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted included with their own pages. A marketing campaign has been underway since mid-February 2022.

6. Enforce good business standards in our district

a. Make sure that businesses and trades in our district meet the national standards and licensing required of them			Regulatory standards are applied, and enforced where necessary, in accordance with the enforcement policy, within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
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Comment: Regulatory standards are applied, and enforced where necessary, in accordance with the enforcement policy, and with regard to national recovery plans where published. Staffing resource remains challenging and is being closely monitored to ensure it remains sufficient to deliver statutory function. The council continues to foster good working relationships with businesses and as a result there is a high degree of compliance in the district.

7. Deliver more affordable homes and protect those in need in our district

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>a. Increase the number of affordable homes delivered and different tenure options including social renting</i>	Develop a new Housing Strategy and supporting policies that details how the Council will develop, acquire and enable the supply of affordable housing	New Housing Strategy adopted by 31 December 2021 (due to limitations on consultation events)	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
	Develop a new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan that confirms the capacity of borrowing through the HRA for the delivery of new council housing (including use of commuted sums, Right to Buy (RTB) receipts, loans and innovative funding models)	New HRA Business Plan adopted by Summer 2022 Delivery of 43 new homes in 21/23. Progress 63 new homes to planning permission stage in 22/23 Continue to identify opportunities for further provision. This forms part of the business as usual of the Housing and Planning Services		
	Regularly engage with local registered providers on their affordable housing delivery and identify barriers to further development, Ensure appropriate schemes deliver the required 40% affordable homes	Actions to be included in the Housing Strategy (31 Dec 21)		
	Incentivise community-led housing programmes to increase the number of Community Land Trusts	HE Grants applied for as applicable to qualifying schemes		

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
	<p>(CLTs) across the District, particularly within rural communities</p> <p>Explore Homes England (HE) grant opportunities as they become available</p>			

Comment: The new Housing Strategy was adopted in December and an Action Plan produced. This looks at how the council can maximise opportunities to deliver the right housing to meet the needs of the district over the coming years. The last year has seen another decrease in the number of affordable homes delivered via Housing Association partners on Section 106 sites, being only 28. It is hoped over the coming year this number will be back to target and over 130.

The impacts to the construction industry, due to the pandemic, have continued throughout the past year with disruption to supply chains and availability of labour. The Housing development programme has, however, completed 17 new properties this year, 16 at The Moors in Little Dunmow - 8 affordable rented houses and 8 social rented flats. The new tenants moved in during December and January. The council has also built a three-bedroom adapted bungalow in Elsenham.

Plans in 22/23 include delivering 27 new homes across two sites in Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden and a sheltered scheme at Walden place in Saffron Walden. The council is reviewing all garden reduction sites and progressing any of these that give potential for development. These are mostly single plots and to date two have received outline planning approval. The Housing Board has decided that these should be built for affordable housing, rather than being sold as private building plots.

The Housing Team is also looking for opportunities to bid on Section 106 developments and currently have a bid in for consideration on 18 flats on a site in the south of the district.

As discussed at the most recent Housing Board, a council-wide investment strategy will need to be agreed to increase council housing supply going forward. This needs to be done in conjunction with the Local Plan process, as landowners will want to receive a market value for their sites. The investment strategy will need to consider the setting up of a joint venture partnership so that both market housing and social housing can be provided, which will enable the appropriate market land value to be achieved. Funds to purchase sites will need to be made available as part of the joint venture agreement.

The mechanisms for delivering new council-owned housing will continue to be reviewed and funding opportunities through borrowing, commuted sums, Right to Buy receipts, grant funding and funds from the HRA will be maximised to support the delivery of council housing.

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>b. Refurbish our existing council homes to sustainable standards when required</i>	Continue with estate renewal and regeneration programmes whilst reducing the carbon footprint of those homes. Improve home energy efficiency across the Council's housing stock	Completion of stock survey		Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
Comment: A survey of all Council housing stock is underway by Uttlesford Norse Ltd. The purpose of the survey is to assess the current efficiency of UDC stock and to quantify the improvements that can be made to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon impact. The survey will not be completed until 2023 without additional resources being deployed through Uttlesford Norse Ltd (this is being explored). The council is not able to apply for grant funding until this work has been completed.				
<i>c. Reduce the number of empty homes</i>	Develop an Empty Homes Strategy	New Empty Homes Strategy adopted by 31 March 2022	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
Comment: An Empty Dwellings Policy was presented to the Housing Board in March. After consideration, a policy rather than a strategy was deemed appropriate. The policy sets out all available options to bring empty properties back into use and details a proposed risk-based approach for action. Cabinet approval will be sought for the policy during 22/23.				
<i>d. Ensure that landlords maintain high quality private sector housing conditions</i>	Review assistance available for landlords, including empty property owners	Revision of Housing Renewals Assistance Policy by 31 March 2022	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
Comment: The Environmental Health service held an online landlord forum in February. A review of the assistance policy has been delayed in part due to new guidance being released. Proposed changes to the assistance policy will be subject to consultation with partners during 22/23 and the matter will be referred to the Housing Board before being proposed to Cabinet for adoption. The policy sets out what funding is available for homeowners (including landlords) who want to make certain alterations and improvements to their properties but otherwise would be unable to afford to do so. It will also detail additional support for those with disabilities. It will ensure that the council plays a leading role in ensuring living conditions for vulnerable groups are improved.				

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>e. Ensure that services to protect vulnerable women and men who live in our district are accessible and appropriate</i>	<p>Fulfil tier 2 authority duty to cooperate as set out in Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p> <p>Review the Domestic Abuse Policy</p>		Support is delivered and monitored under existing framework, within existing resources	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health</p> <p>Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities</p>

Comment: Legislative changes in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Introduce a statutory duty on tier one local authorities in England to support victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation and a duty on tier two authorities to co-operate with tier one authorities in the fulfilment of their duties. The council's Communities Team is working with Essex County Council (ECC) to deliver those changes. Government funding, devolved from ECC, has enabled the council to continue funding a domestic abuse housing practitioner in partnership with Next Chapter, a commissioned service within Essex. The practitioner works within the Community Safety Hub and links closely with the Housing Department. This arrangement means that one to one support is being offered to victims of domestic abuse to ensure a smooth pathway for victims with advice on how to live safely and independently.

Funding will also be used to enhance the Sanctuary Scheme the council offers where appropriate. This allows the council to make the homes of victims and survivors of violence and abuse safe and secure so that they and their families can remain in their own homes, alleviating the disruption of relocating and allows them to retain the support of professional services, their family and the community when they are at their most vulnerable.

J9 training has been delivered to staff at UDC and to partner agencies, the voluntary sector, businesses and members of the community. The training sessions help to spot the of domestic abuse and support those affected through the domestic abuse initiative. Once trained the J9 logo can be displayed which alerts victims that they can obtain information which can help them access a safe place where they can seek information and use of a telephone.

Work continues with partners at Essex Children's Safeguarding Board and Essex Adults Safeguarding Board. Reviews are undertaken through both boards where there are concerns of neglect or abuse in children or adults and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively. Learning from this work informs the UDC staff training plan and helps to identify projects that can be delivered by the Communities Team and through the thematic groups of the Local Strategic Partnership.

8. Promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities

a. Work with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality	Deliver recommendations of the Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Identified recommendations of the Uttlesford Health and	Within existing resources plus Public Health Grant funding	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health
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Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia	Five Key recommendations of the strategy: Combatting loneliness and Social Isolation Supporting people to age well Enabling people to eat well and be active Alleviating winter pressures and fuel poverty Planning for healthy communities	Wellbeing Strategy implemented	Support is provided to the voluntary sector through the extensive grants programme, within existing resources Various parish council-organised civic pride events are supported within the existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Policy and Fire & Rescue Service Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities

Comment: The Community Response Hub, set up to point residents in Uttlesford to the advice and support available to them throughout the pandemic continues to help respond to concerns. Two community responders have been employed to co-ordinate and provide immediate help for those residents who find themselves in a position of crisis. The Response Hub had been the main focus for the Health and Wellbeing Board during Covid, however much of the work undertaken by the hub continued to address the recommendations of the strategy.

Befriending services were provided for those residents who were experiencing loneliness and feeling isolated from their friends and families, not only through the pandemic but into the recent recovery phase. 'Chatty benches' have been situated to allow people to sit and encourage conversation, the Men's Shed projects across the district are re-opening and a Tec Mates programme has begun in Saffron Walden. This is a programme that supports the use and uptake of digital technology and Technology Enabled Care (TEC) products and services which will help residents from falling into situations where they may require greater support from social care and health services. Through the Board, Active Essex were able to offer funding support to The Walking with Friendship dogs at Dunmow Dementia Club.

Eleven grants were awarded through the Health and Wellbeing Board which included Dunmow Stroke Club for Physical Activity, the Touch Point Stansted Bereavement Café and to Mind in West Essex for suicide awareness friends training.

Active place maker for our Towns and Villages

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
Uttlesford falls prevention programme is delivering face to face classes for residents that may be experiencing balance issues, mobility issues or at the risk of falling. Uttlesford Food Alliance has been set up with the objective to reduce food poverty/insecurity throughout the district. Once more established this group will develop a food alliance strategy to include food growing, community fridges, community cooking programmes and healthy eating initiatives.				
<i>b. Continue to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles</i>			The Council will continue to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health / Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
Comment: The Health and Wellbeing Board will look to review their strategy in 2022/23 in line with the county-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the 2022 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which looks at the current and future health care needs of the district. Uttlesford District Council is the lead body for the Health and Wellbeing Board and will continue to work as a partner to focus on preventative healthcare for its residents.				

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 Progress - Quarter 4 2021/22 CPDP Update

Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Champion for our District				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
1. Improve Uttlesford's connectivity				
<i>a. Hold ECC to account: Work to set the agenda for ECC highway maintenance and pothole fixing</i>	Promotion of links to services and responsibilities of ECC, as well as reporting mechanisms for potholes, footpaths, pavements and street light repairs	Enhanced reporting ensures most up to date and accurate information is available when key decisions are made	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Comment: Our website includes information and links to the relevant reporting mechanism on the Essex Highways website. Ensuring links are easy to find helps to ensure maximum reporting of problems, enabling the discussions with ECC to take place with the most accurate picture. Whenever and wherever in the district Essex Highways carries out work, we ensure that the information is shared via our own social media accounts. We share all relevant information about schemes and initiatives in the district across our social media channels, including road repairs and how to report faded lines, potholes etc.				
<i>b. Work with ECC and communities to develop the highway improvement schemes we need</i>			Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: The council continues to fulfil its influencing role in relation to the Essex Transport Strategy and the Local Transport Plan which stems from that strategy. The council continues to play an active role in the Highway Panel, a body made up of members of Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council which is responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highways schemes in the district. The Panel meets approximately quarterly and monitors progress on highways schemes which this year total £436,000.				
<i>c. Hold ECC to account to deliver what they promise</i>			Through regular contact with officers and members at	Leader

Champion for our District				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
			ECC, ensure that delivery in Uttlesford is as expected;	Chief Executive
Comment: Direct discussions at both member and officer level between UDC and ECC identify and escalate such issues as appropriate.				
<i>d. Promote and support sustainable transport initiatives, such as bus, rapid transport and rail upgrades</i>			Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: The Council is working with its transport consultants and Essex County Council to identify the highway improvements needed to support development. These will be required in the Local Plan.				
<i>e. Lobby Highways England to improve the capacity and safety of the M11</i>			Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: This key junction is impacted by development from beyond the district (and county) as well as being likely to be affected by development allocated in the Local Plan. This requires a joined-up approach to identifying solutions. The Council is working with partners to set up a group to lobby for improvements to junction 8 of the M11.				
f. Work with ECC and hold them to account to deliver rural superfast broadband in our district	Monitor the progress of the delivery by Superfast Essex and the provider	Target is 4,627 premises where full fibre broadband service has been installed and is ready for service by 31 Dec 2021. Half yearly reports will identify progress.	Monitor progress within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Assistant Director of Resources
Comment: The original target was not met due to delays caused by Covid lockdowns and what the district council considers to be an overambitious delivery plan, given the nature of the district. The original scope of properties has been reduced where Wayleaves (permission to access private land) cannot be obtained, and the reported 'high cost' properties, for example where a property is a long way from another property. Essex County Council's Superfast Broadband Board is in discussion with the provider Gigaclear, regarding the high-cost properties and formal action has now been taken to ensure that these properties are completed as per the original contract. Fortnightly meetings are in place to monitor the progress of the contract, deal with any issues arising and confirm the final delivery dates.				

Champion for our District				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
Uttlesford remains an active partner in the Essex and Herts Digital Innovation zone, an awarding winning partnership that includes Local Government, Health, Education and Private sectors working together to increase and improve access to high quality broadband services.				
2. Support our students, schools and libraries				
<i>a. Conduct a wholesale review of school transport to understand the gap in provision of what ECC provides</i>	Political representations to Essex County Council	Letter written to the county council by responsible Cabinet member		Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan
Comment: School transport is an Essex County Council function and it would be for the county council to conduct such a review. The district council will fulfil its influencing role by the responsible Cabinet Member writing to the county council setting out concerns and requesting a review takes place.				
<i>b. Ensure that developer contributions are collected for ECC to provide our local school and Early Years places</i>			Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
Comment: The council always collects developer contributions, where appropriate, in line with ECC education formula requirements. This is a well-established and ongoing area of work.				
<i>c. Create and support new services inside our libraries to increase their viability</i>				Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure, and the Arts Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Comment: Covid 19 restrictions has meant work to review district council operations from Uttlesford's libraries has not progressed. Currently, there is no physical customer service presence in any library as there was pre-pandemic. The focus has been on first restoring a front desk presence in the Saffron Walden council offices when it was safe enough to do so, but public uptake has been extremely low and consideration will need to be given to how customers can best be served at other district locations in 22/23 and beyond as the country moves into a post-pandemic phase.				

Champion for our District				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
3. Work with partners to keep the district safe				
<i>a. Work with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable to reduce crime on our area</i>	An annual strategic assessment will be produced to complement the Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner's vision for Essex. This Essex Police Strategic Assessment will focus on local data to ensure that safe and secure communities are at the forefront of the partnership work.		Work is undertaken with partners to produce the annual Strategic Assessment and deliver identified priorities; targets and milestones are contained in the specific action plans and reported in an annual report. Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Communities Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service Assistant Director for Housing and Environmental Health
<p>Comment: Collation of information and data from statutory partners is progressing to enable production of the Strategic Assessment for 22/23. The delivery plan for the priorities identified will sit alongside the assessment and lead the work for the coming year. This plan will inform the Office of the Fire Police and Crime Commissioner (OFPCC) of the work identified for the year.</p> <p>From the Strategic Assessment for 21/22, an end of year report will be available by June 2022 for the Police and Crime Commissioner to update on the work undertaken with grants received from the OFPCC over the 2021 period.</p> <p>Working with the Commissioner's Office allows us to work together on preventative projects that can be delivered locally. Funding has been sought for projects and has been used to fund the Reaching our Rural Communities project</p>				
<i>b. Continue to be an active partner of the Community Safety Partnership</i>			Work is undertaken with partner agencies within the Community Safety Partnership to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour; this includes partnership working with local councils and the PCSOs to address the fear of crime.	Portfolio Holder for Communities Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities

Champion for our District

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
			Targets are identified in the work plans. Within existing resources.	

Comment: Operation Sceptre, through which the Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership (CSP) took a vehicle out to parishes to encourage residents to dispose of their knives, has finished. The operation was in part a response to recent changes in legislation to knife possession, in particular ornamental knives. A permanent knife amnesty bin has been installed in Great Dunmow.

Uttlesford CSP has been recognised as a partner of Friends Against Scams and has recruited Scam Champions, including three district council staff. They in turn are recruiting 'Friends' who will assist the CSP in spreading awareness on how to protect each other against this type of crime which has risen throughout the pandemic period. A booklet for residents has also been produced and distributed.

The Reaching Our Rural Communities project continues to be well received by the farming and rural communities and the Office of the Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner (OFPC) has acknowledged this project as a good practice initiative. Community Safety Partners have been supporting Essex Council of Voluntary Youth Services and the OFPC's Violence and Vulnerability Unit with the consultation on the perception and fear of violent crime. The outcome report will inform CSP projects/work going forward. Community Safety Accreditation training will take place in February for officers within the Environmental Health and Communities teams in partnership with Essex Police.

4. Work to create a better local Health Service for residents

<i>a. Work with NHS on in-district local healthcare provision</i>			Work towards the Integrated Care Partnership will continue, within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
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Comment: In May 2020 Hertfordshire and West Essex became one of the 18 Integrated Care Systems (ICS) across the country. The Council is a partner in the ICS through the One Health and Care Partnership Board. The partnership is working to deliver improvements to the health and care of residents tackling everything from ante-natal care and end of life planning to making the best use of technology and reducing health inequalities so that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthier life.

From Spring 2021, it was announced that Integrated Care Commissioning Boards would take over the function of the existing Care Commissioning Groups but to date this has not happened and is now scheduled for July 2022. Uttlesford will be covered by an ICCB operating on the broader Hertfordshire and West Essex footprint.

Champion for our District

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead Cabinet Member
<p>Existing NHS England functions will be devolved to ICCBs. The ICCBs will though be underpinned by placed based partnership in which district councils are expected to play a key role bringing a public health perspective informed by their knowledge of their communities.</p> <p>Another major piece of local healthcare work delivered in partnership is the highly successful Covid vaccination and testing programmes which has seen council facilities used by NHS colleagues to deliver these services to thousands of people in the district. The vaccination centre at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre closed in March after vaccinating thousands of people over the last two years.</p>				
<i>b. Work to secure Addenbrookes, The Princess Alexandra Harlow, and Mid-Essex hospitals as our recognised local hospital providers</i>			Work towards the Integrated Care Partnership will continue, within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Communities Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service / Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
<p>Comment: These hospitals are our recognised local hospital providers. Council officers hold regular meetings with NHS colleagues and these hospitals are always recognised key health provision sites for this district. A cross-border meeting between the district council and representatives from the three On Health Care Partnerships is being arranged for early 2022/23.</p>				
<i>c. Deliver programmes to support our ageing population</i>	Review of community services to meet the needs of residents, including older people	As a result of the recent discussions on establishing a Cabinet task and finish group to support the Cabinet Member to undertake the review, the details have not yet been scoped.	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services/ Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
<p>Comment: A Community Services working group has been set up to identify the best way to deliver/commission support services for the elderly. The work of this group has been focused on the reopening of the day centres in Great Dunmow and in Thaxted to allow for future consultation with the community as to services that may be delivered from those venues. Thaxted's day centre has been renamed Pam's Place and is open two days a week to residents. A trust has been set up to run it. Dunmow continues to operate.</p>				

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2021/22 - Quarter 4 2021/22 CPDP Update

Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
1. Be a council that listens to and acts for residents				
<i>a. Increase the voice and influence of residents in planning and other Council matters</i>	Review the Scrutiny Committee's findings (when received) regarding major planning applications and planning obligations, pending completion of EELGA review	Planning Advisory Service (PAS) final report to Scrutiny by 30 June 2021 Planning Obligations final report to Scrutiny by 30 June 2021	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Local Plan Interim Director of Planning Assistant Director of Corporate Services
<p>Comment: As explained in previous Delivery Plan updates, a decision was taken, due to PAS being unable to complete its work, to progress the council's own review of the Stansted appeal process through the Scrutiny Committee. Terms of Reference were agreed by the committee and two independent people with appropriate professional backgrounds undertook the work. The final report is subject to the legal status of the appeal and cost discussions.</p> <p>A previous update of the Delivery Plan noted the planning obligations work is complete.</p> <p>The Developer Contributions supplementary planning guidance document was agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 for consultation. The guidance is now being used by the Development Management Team. A report to Planning Committee is programmed by the end of July to progress implementation of a protocol for parish and town councils for engagement with the Local Planning Authority and developers during the pre-application stage and when an application is under consideration.</p>				
<i>b. Administer public consultations that are effective, accessible, timely and high quality</i>	Undertake consultations and discussion groups as required throughout the year	Enables Members to take better informed decisions. Key consultations include on the draft local plan, budget	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Putting Residents First

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
		and Local Council Tax Support		

Comment: The budget consultation was completed according to schedule, giving the public and other stakeholders the opportunity to express their view on the relative priorities of different services the council provides. The results were incorporated into budget reports for Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council in January and February 2022.

As noted in previous updates, the LCTS consultation was conducted according to timetable, and the council received a prestigious award for its innovative online Community Stakeholder Forum as part of the Local Plan process. Other consultative mechanisms include the reinvigorated Parish Forum, which met at the end of March 2022 and ongoing engagement with stakeholder groups in areas such as equalities, health and wellbeing and climate change.

<i>c. Provide opportunities for young people</i>	Provide positive opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that keep them safe and support improved mental wellbeing. Work with Town and Parish Councils, voluntary sector partners, county youth service and schools etc. to encourage youth participation in the community.	As a result of the recent change to the Corporate Plan to expand the scope, the details of what is to be provided, when, etc. have not yet been scoped. The plan will evolve as the Covid19 related restrictions ease over time	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
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Comment: Existing Youth Council members continue to work with the Climate Change Working Group and recruit in schools and the community. Contact has been made with a new group of young people from Saffron Walden County High School and work continues to liaise with other schools and further recruit through their teacher/ school council networks. A cross-locality project in schools has been identified at the Children and Families Working Group to address concerns with young people's wellbeing and this is scheduled to start after the Spring half term. Specific issues include mental health, drugs & alcohol and safeguarding, specifically county lines.

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<p>Work has been undertaken with consultants The Cultural Engine to provide information on young people's activities particularly in relation to art and culture to enable mapping of youth activities for a report commissioned by UDC as part of the Local Plan process. Two young people-focussed community development projects are in progress in Stansted and Takeley and a third has been identified in Great Sampford. Work is being undertaken with Essex Children and Young People Service to engage young people with their parish councils with a view to create sustainable youth groups in existing facilities.</p> <p>The council is currently leading a discussion across Essex on how best authorities can provide dedicated priority access to jobs, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities to looked after children and care leavers.</p>				
<i>d. Improve the council's use of the web and social media to increase communication with residents</i>	To provide enhanced customer contact opportunities including self-service facilities at remote site and extended opening hours through the introduction of 'live chat'	<p>Public launch of live chat facility by 31 August 2021 as part of Uttlesford Moving Forward</p> <p>As part of Uttlesford Moving Forward, a review of self-service facilities for customers will be undertaken. The detailed project plan is not yet complete to expand on precise timing of the review.</p>	Within existing resources	<p>Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Comment: In quarter 4 the council piloted a bookable appointments system for some council services, focusing on those where residents need specialist advice. A 6-week pilot was run from the end of January whereby residents could book to speak to a Duty Planning Officer about initial planning enquiries. The pilot has come to an end and it is being evaluated with a view to how the system can most effectively be deployed in 2022/23. It is anticipated that there will be a number of other services that can be provided in this way and it will give greater certainty to residents who need specialist advice that they will be able to speak to someone who can help them, and provide a better level of customer service.</p> <p>LiveChat continues to provide a valuable additional customer contact channel for residents after successful launch in the previous quarter.</p>				
<i>e. Actively and positively engage with and listen to our town and parish councils</i>	Quarterly Parish Forum meetings	Agreed priority areas for discussion are scheduled in, with appropriate guests	The Local Councils' Liaison Forum is now well embedded as is the Planning Forum with	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
		arranged, and follow-up actions agreed as appropriate during those discussions.	Town and Parish Councils. Within existing resources.	Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service Chief Executive
Comment: The Parish Forum has been relaunched, following meetings between the chief executive and 53 of the 57 parishes over six evenings during January and February. The first whole-district meeting has been successfully held under the new arrangements, focusing as agreed with Parishes on highways issues, and attended by the ECC cabinet member for highways and senior ECC officers. The next round of meetings – in person, in four patch-based groupings, is scheduled for early summer 2022.				
<i>f. Support town and parish councils to better represent their communities</i>	Quarterly Parish Forum meetings	Mutual aid and support discussions are now intrinsic to the newly relaunched Parish Forum meetings	Essex Association of Local Councils regularly attend the Local Councils' Liaison Forum and provide presentations on best practice. Within existing resources.	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service Chief Executive
Comment: Those alternate meetings of the newly relaunched Parish Forum held in local patches are specifically designed to be smaller and more intimate, and to better facilitate peer support between neighbouring parishes, as well as collectively with the district council. UDC has also played a focused role on stimulating initiatives at a Parish level, such as facilitating meetings between the Parish/Town Councils in Dunmow and the DWP, the NHS and ECC.				
2. Deliver local government with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability				
<i>a. Implement a corporate change programme to increase accountability, transparency and democracy at the Council</i>	Complete a Governance review of the Constitution	Proposed updates to Constitution	Within existing resources	Leader Chief Executive
Comment: This work is underway, with a governance lawyer commissioned for the purpose, and is due to complete in summer 2022.				

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>a. Implement a corporate change programme to increase accountability, transparency and democracy at the Council</i>	Planning Committee working group to review arrangements for start time and/or geographical location of applications (north committee/south committee)	Review completed. Recommendations to be considered and adopted when possible, post COVID	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Local Plan Interim Director of Planning
<p>Comment: The cross-party Planning Committee Working Group was formally constituted by Full Council on 7 December 2021, thus completing the first milestone. It is progressing the recommendations from the EELGA Peer Review relating to Member Development and Planning Committee. It has considered matters such as committee templates, changes to the constitution relating to the scheme of delegation, training, call in periods and public speaking at Planning Committee. Council agreed all recommended changes to the constitution in March 2022. These are being actioned. The work of the PCWG is ongoing. In April the working group undertook to have the customer experience when viewing a committee remotely. Feedback from that together with recommended changes is being prepared.</p>				
<i>a. Implement a corporate change programme to increase accountability, transparency and democracy at the Council</i>	Implement delivery of Equalities Policy	Local Government Equality Framework level 2 to be achieved by 31 March 22	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities Assistant Director of Housing, Health and Communities
<p>Comment: Uttlesford District Council has adopted the Equality Framework for Local Government (ELFG) as its key delivery tool. The EFLG details five performance areas. These are: knowing your communities, leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment, involving your communities responsive services and customer care and a skilled and committed workforce.</p> <p>In addition, it has three levels of achievement, namely: 'Developing' - understanding the importance of equality 'Achieving' - delivering better outcomes 'Excellent' - making a difference</p> <p>At the end of 2021/22, the Council had reached the Achieving level. Community listening events, to engage with our communities, have taken place and further events have been planned for each of the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act. Feedback and data collected from these events help to increase knowledge of who our communities are and will ensure that we provide fair and accessible services and facilities, efficiently and effectively, to meet those diverse</p>				

Putting Residents First

We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<p>needs. We continue to celebrate equalities such as the Ageing Well Forum, International Day for Older People, LGBT History Month and Disability History Month through our website and social media platforms.</p> <p>The Equality & Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA) is a tool developed to ensure that all activity meets the needs of individuals and groups that use our services; whilst at the same time ensuring a person's chance of leading a healthy life is the same wherever they live and whoever they are. We want to ensure that the activities of the Council are 'fit for purpose' and meet the needs of Uttlesford's increasingly diverse communities and employees.</p> <p>The Council carries out an EqHIA on the services we deliver, our policies, functions, strategies, and procedures as part of the work on equality for local government. This includes existing policies, new policies or those which are being changed. They assess whether a proposed policy, procedure, service change or plan will affect people differently based on their protected characteristics and if it will affect their human rights.</p>				
<i>b. Seek external review of and recognition for positive change achieved by the Council</i>	Planning Advisory Service reviewing the process of major planning applications	Action plans to be developed once the outcomes of the review have been presented to Scrutiny Committee by 30 June 2021	Within existing resources and pending completion of EELGA review	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Local Plan Interim Director of Planning

Comment: A peer review of Planning was completed by consultants appointed by the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA). The review makes numerous recommendations, all of which were approved by Cabinet in October 2021, after the report was considered by the Scrutiny Committee earlier in that month. Scrutiny received a short report about the approach to implementation and some early progress in November 2021 and a progress update was reported to both Scrutiny and Cabinet in February 2022. The update contains progress on actions on each of the pathways for improvement. Pathways are due to be reported to Scrutiny in June 2022.

The Local Planning Authority was “designated” in February 2022 in relation to the quality of decision making on major applications. This means that too many major applications had been refused and the decision overturned at appeal. As a consequence, applicants may choose to have their major applications determined by the Planning Inspectorate. Resources are currently focussed on ensuring that officer reports are clear, explicit and deal with the lack of a 5 year housing land supply in a consistent manner. A Majors Action Plan is now required by DLUHC. This will be drawn from the actions already completed in the Peer Review pathways.

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<p>As mentioned elsewhere in this document, the Planning Advisory Service is unable to complete its work on major planning application processes and instead the council, through its Scrutiny Committee, has conducted a review of the Stansted appeal process.</p> <p>Also as mentioned elsewhere in this document, the council received external recognition when the Planning team won a prestigious planning excellence award for its innovative approach to community stakeholder engagement in the preparation of the Local Plan.</p>				
<i>c. Deliver a comprehensive continuing member development programme</i>			Opportunities for further development continue to be identified within existing resources	Leader Chief Executive
<p>Comment: Member development and training continues in areas such as planning, with regular sessions for committee members and briefings on key matters for the wider council membership. A previous update of the Delivery Plan noted that the chief executive had spoken with members about the need to develop a new sense of ‘shared endeavour’ between officers and councillors. Further development of this ‘shared endeavour’ will flow from the prioritised governance review above.</p>				
3. Be responsible with your money and mitigate the impact of government cuts				
<i>a. Be a self-sufficient Council that generates its own resources from local taxation (Business Rates and Council Tax) and commercial investments thereby removing the reliance on Central Government grants</i>	<p>To actively source commercial investments to support the council revenue streams</p> <p>Strengthen the governance of the Council’s investment management to ensure it meets the objectives of the commercial strategy</p>	<p>Complete the commercial investment portfolio of £300m, by end 2021/22.</p> <p>Quarterly reports to the Investment Board</p> <p>Development of a business plan for the portfolio as a whole and each asset individually by 31 December 2021</p> <p>Development of an Investment Protocol, to</p>	Within existing resources	<p>Portfolio holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy</p> <p>Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities</p>

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
		include ethical criteria for future acquisitions by 30 June 2021		
Comment: Changes to Government rules and the CIPFA Prudential Code mean that further new investments are not possible, and the council will ultimately have invested in the region of £275m in establishing the portfolio. Quarterly reports are taken to the Investment Board. Changes to Government rules will have a significant negative impact on Council revenues. The Commercial Strategy, approved in February 2022, identifies that consequently it may be possible that the Council will need to sell one asset by the end of 2022/23. The ethical investment protocol was agreed by the Investment Board in July, Cabinet in September and Full Council in December 2021. This protocol sets out the criteria the Council would use to ensure the ethical appropriateness of any future investment.				
<i>b. Deliver cost-effective and efficient services that live within the Council's means</i>	Actively monitor and report the cost effectiveness of the Council services Ongoing service reviews, including through Uttlesford Moving Forward (UMF) to ensure services are operating effectively and efficiently	Quarterly finance reports to Cabinet. Annual outturn report to Cabinet Outcome of the external audit UMF actions to improve existing operating methods and develop new ones	Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget Assistant Director of Resources
Comment: The final outturn reports for General Fund, Housing and the Capital programme for 2020/21 were presented to Cabinet in July 2021. The Audit was delayed due to resource issues with our External Auditors and only started in January 2022. The Quarterly 2021/22 forecast outturn budget positions were presented to Cabinet in November 2021 (Quarter 1), January 2022 (Quarter 2) and March 2022 (Quarter 3). The final outturn position for 2021/22 is being compiled and is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in July 2022. As part of the budget monitoring and reporting, service delivery is constantly reviewed to identify more efficient and cost-effective ways of working whilst being mindful of maintaining a high quality of service. The UMF project has been cancelled and replaced with Blueprint Uttlesford, this is a detailed change programme covering a number of themes focusing on customer requirements and how we can continue to deliver high quality services within the financial constraints impacting the council due to reduced funding.				

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>c. Constantly seek to improve the quality of contracted out services</i>			Contract monitoring is used to assure service quality, within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services Corporate Management Team
Comment: Contract management varies on a case-by-case basis. Additional resources have been identified in the 22/23 budget to enable enhanced contract management. This will ensure a consistent approach to contract management across the council. The leisure PFI contract is an example of where dedicated council resource leads to high quality contract management. Uttlesford Norse Services Ltd is an example of where dedicated contract management is required.				
<i>d. Apply for all relevant grants</i>			Grant applications are made regularly subject to the criteria, work required and likelihood of success, within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget Assistant Director of Resources
Comment: Officers work to ensure that the council applies for all relevant grants and external funding. Due to the Covid 19 emergency the grants are dominated by emergency funding packages to support the local economy, businesses, and the community as a whole. The Council has received a substantial amount of funding over the year and has allocated all the funding received to qualifying applicants. The Council is one of the top councils to 'spend' all its discretionary funding, ensuring that our local businesses and residents received the maximum support available. This funding is in excess of £20 million since the start of the pandemic.				
<i>e. Set a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to fund council services by a prudent mix of investment, services and tax income, while maintaining adequate reserves</i>	The MTFS is a working document and is constantly under review, when any financial risks or impacts are identified these will be assessed and if they have a significant impact on the current MTFS approved at Council in February 2021 a revised version will be produced and submitted to Members.	A revised MTFS ready for Council approval in February 2022	A MTFS that reflects the ambitions of the Council and the resources available to it is produced at least annually. Within existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget Assistant Director of Resources
Comment: The MTFS was reviewed during November 2021 and an updated strategy was compiled along with all other associated financial reports and strategies. The Council carried out a budget consultation to help inform the priorities going forward. The MTFS for 2022 to 2027 has been substantially revised to reflect the				

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
challenging financial position facing the council in the coming years. The MTFS and all associated papers were presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet and were approved by Council in February 2022.				
<i>f. Follow best practices for investment risk management and board composition</i>	Strengthen the governance of the Council's investment management to ensure it meets the objectives of the commercial strategy	<p>Quarterly reports to the Investment Board</p> <p>Development of a business plan for the portfolio as a whole and each asset individually by 31 December 2021</p> <p>Development of an Investment Protocol, to include ethical criteria for future acquisitions by 30 June 2021</p>	Within existing resources	<p>Portfolio holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy</p> <p>Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities</p>
<p>Comment: The Council has carefully structured governance around its investment strategy and portfolio, including appointing independent members to the investment board, non-executive directors to the board of Aspire (CRP) Ltd and commissioning external due diligence on any potential investment. Quarterly reports are taken to the Investment Board. An ethical investment protocol was agreed by the Investment Board in July, Cabinet in September and Full Council in December 2021. This protocol sets out the criteria the council would use to ensure the ethical appropriateness of any future investment. However, changes to Government rules will have a significant negative impact on Council revenues. The Commercial Strategy, approved in February 2022, identifies that consequently it may be possible that the Council will need to sell one asset by the end of 2022/23.</p>				

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:
Title:	Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan	Thursday, 7 July 2022
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	Key decision: No

Summary

1. The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan has been successful at examination. The Examiner's Report ([Appendix 1](#)) received on 28 April 2022 recommends that the Saffron Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum subject to the recommended modifications being made to the Plan. A schedule of the recommended modifications are presented in [Appendix 2](#). The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan with modifications is appended in [Appendix 3](#).

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet accepts the Independent Examiner's recommended modifications to the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan in full as set out in the Schedule at Appendix 2 and note the recommendation that the amended Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum of voters within the Parish of Saffron Walden to establish whether the plan should form part of the Development Plan for Uttlesford District Council.
3. That Cabinet approves the holding of a referendum relating to the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan and, that it will include all the registered electors in Saffron Walden Parish.

Financial Implications

4. The referendum will initially be funded by Uttlesford District Council at a cost of £13,531.86 for the examination. After the referendum UDC will be able to claim £20,000 funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which will cover the cost of the examination and the 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.
6. None

Impact

7.

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 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 and he has considered this Basic Condition and concludes that the NDP does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.
Sustainability	The plan deals with sustainability of the town and the Examiner has confirmed the sustainability of this Plan.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden Parish
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

8. The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for examination commencing 20 May 2021 following a six-week consultation period and a further two weeks to give all interested parties an opportunity to consider whether the new NPPF July 2021 had any implications for the Plan.
9. The examination was conducted via written representations (the examiner decided that a public hearing would not be required).
10. On 5 October 2021 the Examiner issued a Note of Interim Findings advising the identification of several matters that would significantly change the plan as originally produced. Saffron Walden TC and UDC provided the examiner with written clarifications.

11. A further Focussed Consultation on Significant Modification was undertaken from 1 March to 21 March 2022.
12. The examiner's report, detailing recommendations was received on 28 April 2022. (see Appendix 1).
13. Saffron Walden Town Council and Uttlesford District Council have worked together and agreed on the recommended modifications and produced a modified Draft Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 3).

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Potential intervention by the Secretary of State under Reg 31A(1) Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regs 2012; this must be requested in writing and with reasons by the Qualifying Body, i.e. SWTC, since the Council has failed to take a decision to send a plan to referendum within 5 weeks of the receipt of the Examiner's Report on 28 April 2022. A decision by cabinet was therefore required by 2 nd June 2022. Intervention has to be requested therefore likely risk at level 3	2 Based on the current Cabinet submission timetable a decision is likely to be made at the 7 July 2022 Cabinet Meeting.	Delay in holding a Referendum and the consequential implications (in particular judicial review from interested parties other than SWTC) regarding the lesser weight thereby attributable to the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan in the context of the Friends School, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4AL application to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate under reference UTT/22/1040/PINS.	Formal request for an extension of time sent to Saffron Walden Town Council on 7 June 2022 and on 8 June 2022 an extension of time granted to 7 July 2022 whilst reserving the right to write to the Secretary of State should a Decision be further delayed. Discussions regarding a provisional Referendum date have been held and subject to Cabinet approval this will take place on 15 th September 2022.

- 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

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036

Independent Examiner's Report

By Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FHEA FRSA AoU

28 April 2022

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Summary

I have been appointed as the independent examiner of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Plan covers the town of Saffron Walden and the hamlet of Little Walden. Saffron Walden is the larger of two market towns within Uttlesford District and acts as the area's administrative and commercial centre. With a wealth of historic buildings, this market town is well preserved, set in a valley.

The Plan has a clear vision and is supported by well-articulated objectives. It contains 32 policies covering a wide range of topics and has been ambitious in its aspirations and desire to plan the market town's future.

It has been necessary to recommend a large number of modifications including the deletion of a number of policies. These include the site allocations policies SW1 and SW3. Whilst this will come as disappointing news to those involved in the production of the Plan, there are no fatal flaws in the Plan's production which mean the Plan, as modified, cannot proceed to referendum. However, in my view, the number and scope of some of the modifications recommended significantly changed the submitted Plan. As a result, I advised that a short period of consultation be undertaken on the significant modifications in accordance with the NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners.

In the main the modifications have been made because the evidence base sitting behind the policies is limited or lacking in some way and / or the policy does not meet the basic conditions in other ways, for example it lacks the necessary clarity and precision to provide a practical framework for decision-making. I have set out my detailed reasoning under individual policies.

I appreciate that some of the modifications will come as a disappointment to those involved in the preparation of the Plan and be frustrating. I can see much work has been put into the production of the Plan over a long time period; in many ways it is an ambitious and comprehensive document. It has a good range of, and many, policies that will guide development in the area and be valuable.

Subject to my recommendations being accepted, my overall conclusion is that the Plan does meet the basic conditions and all the other requirements I am obliged to examine. I am therefore pleased to recommend to Uttlesford District Council that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified by my recommendations, can go forward to a referendum.

In considering whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area I see no reason to alter or extend this area for the purpose of holding a referendum.

Ann Skippers MRTPI
Ann Skippers Planning
28 April 2022

1.0 Introduction

This is the report of the independent examiner into the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan).

The Localism Act 2011 provides a welcome opportunity for communities to shape the future of the places where they live and work and to deliver the sustainable development they need. One way of achieving this is through the production of a neighbourhood plan.

I have been appointed by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) with the agreement of the Town Council (TC), to undertake this independent examination.

I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authority. I have no interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan. I am a chartered town planner with over thirty years experience in planning and have worked in the public, private and academic sectors and am an experienced examiner of neighbourhood plans. I therefore have the appropriate qualifications and professional experience to carry out this independent examination.

2.0 The role of the independent examiner

The examiner must assess whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other matters set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The basic conditions¹ are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area
- The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained European Union (EU) obligations²
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

¹ Set out in paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

² Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out two additional basic conditions to those set out in primary legislation and referred to in the paragraph above. Only one is applicable to neighbourhood plans and was brought into effect on 28 December 2018.³ It states that:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The examiner is also required to check⁴ whether the neighbourhood plan:

- Has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body
- Has been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation
- Meets the requirements to i) specify the period to which it has effect; ii) not include provision about excluded development; and iii) not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and that
- Its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I must also consider whether the draft neighbourhood plan is compatible with Convention rights.⁵

The examiner must then make one of the following recommendations:

- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum on the basis it meets all the necessary legal requirements
- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum subject to modifications or
- The neighbourhood plan should not proceed to a referendum on the basis it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

If the plan can proceed to a referendum with or without modifications, the examiner must also consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood plan area to which it relates.

If the plan goes forward to referendum and more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the plan then it is made by the relevant local authority, in this case UDC. The plan then becomes part of the 'development plan' for the area and a statutory consideration in guiding future development and in the determination of planning applications within the plan area.

³ Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018

⁴ Set out in sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act

⁵ The combined effect of the Town and Country Planning Act Schedule 4B para 8(6) and para 10 (3)(b) and the Human Rights Act 1998

3.0 The examination process

I have set out my remit in the previous section. It is useful to bear in mind that the examiner's role is limited to testing whether or not the submitted neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other matters set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).⁶

PPG confirms that the examiner is not testing the soundness of a neighbourhood plan or examining other material considerations.⁷ Some representations suggest additions or amendments to policies or even new policies. Where I find that policies do meet the basic conditions, it is not necessary for me to consider if further amendments or additions are required. It is not my role to rewrite the plan or to produce an alternative one except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other requirements I am obliged to examine.

PPG⁸ explains that it is expected that the examination will not include a public hearing. Rather the examiner should reach a view by considering written representations. Where an examiner considers it necessary to ensure adequate examination of an issue or to ensure a person has a fair chance to put a case, then a hearing must be held.⁹ I consider that all parties have had satisfactory opportunity to state their case.

I sent a Note of Interim Findings with Questions of Clarification (Note 1) to the TC and UDC on 5 October 2021. Note 1 is included as Appendix 2 to this report. In Note 1, I explained that I had identified a number of matters which I considered would significantly change the Plan as produced by the TC on behalf of the local community. I explained what these matters were and gave the TC an opportunity to consider whether they wished me to progress the examination or whether they wished to withdraw the Plan from examination so that these matters could be considered and remedied. The TC asked me to continue with the examination.

As part of Note 1, I also raised some questions of clarification. These were queries that were able to be dealt with by a simple exchange of written material between UDC, the TC and I. The answers received to these queries (all publicly available) have enabled me to examine the Plan without the need to hold a hearing.

In 2018, the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) published guidance to service users and examiners. Paragraph 2.12.6 of that guidance explains that examiners will not generally refer back to the parties on detailed revisions. However, where a modification is considered to be significant by the examiner there is a reasonable expectation that a description of the intended modification will be

⁶ PPG para 055 ref id 41-055-20180222

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid para 056 ref id 41-056-20180222

⁹ Ibid

publicised on the local planning authority's website, seeking comments, prior to recommending the change.

The guidance also explains that such changes can lead to concerns over community ownership as extensive modification may mean that the Plan is very different to that submitted by the community.

As I had already indicated that, in my view, some of the modifications I was likely to make were significant and changed the Plan significantly and as the TC had requested I continue with the examination, in accordance with the guidance, I asked UDC to organise a period of publicity. This correspondence is found in Appendix 3 and is Note 2 with further clarification provided in another note, Note 3 which can be found in Appendix 4 to this report. The guidance recommends that the description of the intended modifications are publicised on the local planning authority's website. I asked for this to be publicised for two weeks and invited comments during this period. UDC organised this consultation on the significant modifications between 1 – 21 March 2022.

This resulted in 55 responses. Many of these were auto-responses or out of office responses and I am grateful to UDC for sifting these responses from those making specific comments.

Some of those responses refer to a lack of transparency about the other modifications to be made. The NPIERS guidance is clear that the decision about whether or not a modification is significant lies with the examiner. Unless there are significant modifications, there is usually no consultation about the proposed modifications with any party. The consultation for significant modifications is also only suggested in guidance. However, I can see that the approach I took, particularly in relation to Policies SW24 and SW27 could have resulted in confusion and in retrospect I could have added a note to indicate that consequential amendments would be needed.

In line with the NPIERS guidance the TC was also given an opportunity to comment upon any representations made by other parties at the Regulation 16 consultation stage and I extended this to the publicity period for the significant modifications. There is no obligation for a qualifying body to make any comments; it is only if they wish to do so. The TC made comments at both stages and I have taken these into account.

Earlier in the examination process, before the consultation on the proposed significant modifications, the Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Given that the NPPF is a key document issued by the Secretary of State against which the Plan is examined, I suggested that a two-week period of consultation specifically on the newly published NPPF be held. This was to give all interested parties, UDC and the TC an opportunity to consider whether the new NPPF had any implications for the Plan. This consultation was held between 9 - 23 August 2021.

This stage of focused and additional consultation resulted in nine representations. The TC did not submit a representation on the new NPPF. The TC was also given an opportunity to comment on any representations received, but chose not to do so.

To summarise then, this Plan underwent consultation at the Regulation 16 stage between 15 February – 12 April 2021, a consultation in relation to the new NPPF between 9 – 23 August 2021 and a consultation in relation to the proposed significant modifications between 1 – 21 March 2022.

I am very grateful to everyone for ensuring that this complex examination has run so smoothly and in particular Demetria Macdonald at UDC.

I made an unaccompanied site visit to familiarise myself with the Plan area on 24 March 2022.

Where modifications are recommended they appear in **bold text**. Where I have suggested specific changes to the wording of the policies or new wording these appear in ***bold italics***.

As a result of some modifications consequential amendments may be required. These can include changing section headings, amending the contents page, renumbering paragraphs or pages, ensuring that supporting appendices and other documents align with the final version of the Plan and so on.

I regard these as primarily matters of final presentation and do not specifically refer to such modifications, but have an expectation that a common sense approach will be taken and any such necessary editing will be carried out and the Plan's presentation made consistent.

4.0 Neighbourhood plan preparation

A Consultation Statement has been submitted. It meets the requirements of Regulation 15(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Initial consultations took place in 2016 with a questionnaire to every household and business in the Parish and two events being held.

In 2017, a number of exhibitions and consultations were held and a further survey was conducted.

Throughout the process, a number of focus groups have been convened.

Articles were published in the local press. Activities were publicised via the local press, on Facebook and via the TC website. Minutes of meetings have been available on the website.

Pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation took place between 22 January – 10 March 2020. Both online and paper copies of the Plan were available. Articles in the local press and activity on Facebook advertised the consultation.

I consider that the consultation and engagement carried out is satisfactory.

Submission (Regulation 16) consultation was carried out between 15 February – 12 April 2021.

As explained, a short focused period of additional consultation was held on the NPPF (published July 2021) in August 2021 and a further short focused period of consultation was held on the proposed significant modifications in March 2022.

Whilst I make reference to some responses and not others, I have considered all of the representations and taken them into account in preparing my report.

5.0 Compliance with matters other than the basic conditions

I now check the various matters set out in section 2.0 of this report.

Qualifying body

Saffron Walden Town Council is the qualifying body able to lead preparation of a neighbourhood plan. This requirement is satisfactorily met.

Plan area

The Plan area is coterminous with the administrative boundary for the Parish. UDC approved the designation of the area on 13 December 2012. The Plan relates to this area and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and therefore complies with these requirements. The Plan area is shown on page 4 of the Plan, but I did not find the map to be clear. Therefore I recommend a new, clearer map be substituted.

- **Insert a clearer, more easily discernible map of the Plan area on page 4 of the Plan**

Plan period

The Plan period is 2021- 2036. This is clearly stated in the Plan itself although different dates are given in the Basic Conditions Statement. I have taken the dates to be the one specified in the Plan itself. This requirement is satisfactorily met.

Excluded development

The Plan does not include policies that relate to any of the categories of excluded development and therefore meets this requirement. This is also helpfully confirmed in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Development and use of land

Policies in neighbourhood plans must relate to the development and use of land. Sometimes neighbourhood plans contain aspirational policies or projects that signal the community's priorities for the future of their local area, but are not related to the development and use of land. If I consider a policy or proposal to fall within this category, I will recommend it be clearly differentiated. This is because wider community aspirations than those relating to development and use of land can be included in a neighbourhood plan, but actions dealing with non-land use matters should be clearly identifiable.¹⁰

6.0 The basic conditions

Regard to national policy and advice

The Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 20 July 2021. This revised Framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and updated in February 2019.

The NPPF is the main document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

In particular it explains that the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development outside of these strategic policies.¹¹

Non-strategic policies are more detailed for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development.¹² They can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment as well as set out other development management policies.¹³

The NPPF also makes it clear that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than that set out in strategic policies or undermine those strategic policies.¹⁴

¹⁰ PPG para 004 ref id 41-004-20190509

¹¹ NPPF para 13

¹² Ibid para 28

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid para 29

The NPPF states that all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence; evidence should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying policies and take into account relevant market signals.¹⁵

Policies should be clearly written and unambiguous so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals. They should serve a clear purpose and avoid unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area including those in the NPPF.¹⁶

On 6 March 2014, the Government published a suite of planning guidance referred to as Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This is an online resource available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance which is regularly updated. The planning guidance contains a wealth of information relating to neighbourhood planning. I have also had regard to PPG in preparing this report.

PPG indicates that a policy should be clear and unambiguous¹⁷ to enable a decision maker to apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. The guidance advises that policies should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence, reflecting and responding to both the planning context and the characteristics of the area.¹⁸

PPG states there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required, but proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken.¹⁹ It continues that the evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies.²⁰

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, Table 1 in the Basic Conditions Statement²¹ briefly sets out how each policy the Plan has responded to national policy and guidance.

Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

A qualifying body must demonstrate how the making of a neighbourhood plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.²² This means that the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of

¹⁵ NPPF para 31

¹⁶ Ibid para 16

¹⁷ PPG para 041 ref id 41-041-20140306

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid para 040 ref id 41-040-20160211

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Basic Conditions Statement page 11

²² NPPF para 7

the different objectives.²³ The three overarching objectives are:²⁴

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The NPPF confirms that planning policies should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.²⁵

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, Table 1 in the Basic Conditions Statement explains how each Plan policy helps to achieve sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF.²⁶

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

The development plan consists of the Uttlesford Local Plan (LP), adopted on 20 January 2005. UDC has helpfully provided a list of the LP 2005 policies which are considered to be strategic.

A Compatibility Assessment was also adopted by UDC in September 2012 for development management purposes which considered the compatibility of the LP 2005 with the NPPF published in 2012. By coincidence I carried out that assessment on behalf of UDC. I have also referred to this document in making my assessment of the relevance of the policies in the LP 2005, but have considered the more recently published NPPF.

Where I do not refer to any LP 2005 policies in my discussion of each Plan policy, I have concluded that there are none of direct relevance; either because they are not regarded as strategic by UDC or because their level of compatibility with the most recent NPPF means that the NPPF gives guidance as to the stance the Plan should take.

²³ NPPF para 8

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid para 9

²⁶ Basic Conditions Statement page 11

In addition the UDC website cites two changes since adoption; the first is that some boundary changes have been made to conservation areas; the second is that an amendment to parking standards has been made in 2009.

The Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017 also make up the current development plan for the area.

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, Table 1 in the Basic Conditions Statement refers to the relevant LP policies.²⁷

Emerging Local Plan

The draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2019 was withdrawn by Councillors and it was agreed to start work on a new plan at an extraordinary council meeting on 30 April 2020. This decision was taken in response to the Inspector's letter of 10 January 2020 and the independent Peer Review report from the East of England Local Government Association of 23 March 2020.

In March 2020, the Government announced that all authorities will be required to have an up to date Local Plan in place by December 2023. Work has begun on a new local plan, but is at an early stage.

There is no legal requirement to examine the Plan against emerging policy. However, PPG²⁸ advises that the reasoning and evidence informing the local plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which the Plan is tested. Furthermore Parish Councils and local planning authorities should aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan, the emerging Local Plan and the adopted development plan with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.²⁹

Retained European Union Obligations

A neighbourhood plan must be compatible with retained European Union (EU) obligations. A number of retained EU obligations may be of relevance for these purposes including those obligations in respect of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats, Wild Birds, Waste, Air Quality and Water matters.

With reference to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requirements, PPG³⁰ confirms that it is the responsibility of the local planning authority, in this case UDC, to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of the draft neighbourhood plan have been met. It states that it is UDC who must decide whether the draft plan is compatible with relevant retained EU obligations when it takes the

²⁷ Basic Conditions Statement page 11

²⁸ PPG para 009 ref id 41-009-20190509

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid para 031 ref id 11-031-20150209

decision on whether the plan should proceed to referendum and when it takes the decision on whether or not to make the plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

The provisions of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') concerning the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment are relevant. The purpose of the SEA Regulations, which transposed into domestic law Directive 2001/42/EC ('SEA Directive'), are to provide a high level of protection of the environment by incorporating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes.

The provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), which transposed into domestic law Directive 92/43/EEC (the 'Habitats Directive'), are also of relevance to this examination.

Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken to determine whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The HRA assessment determines whether the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site considering the potential effects both of the Plan itself and in combination with other plans or projects. Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, an appropriate assessment of the implications of the Plan for that European Site, in view of the Site's conservation objectives, must be carried out.

A Screening Determination Statement dated March 2020 has been prepared by UDC. This in turn appends a SEA and HRA Screening Report of January 2020. Although it is titled SEA Screening Determination it also covers HRA matters. Dealing with SEA first, the Screening Determination concludes that the Plan does not require a SEA.

Consultation with the three statutory bodies was undertaken on the Screening Report of January 2020 Included as Appendix 1 of the Screening Determination Statement. All three statutory consultees (Historic England (HE); Natural England (NE) and the Environment Agency (EA) agreed with the conclusions.

The Screening Determination Statement therefore concludes that the Plan does not require a SEA.

I have treated the Screening Report and the Screening Determination Statement to be the statement of reasons that the PPG advises must be prepared and submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.³¹

³¹ PPG para 028 ref id 11-028-20150209

Taking account of the characteristics of the Plan, the information and the characteristics of the areas most likely to be affected, I consider that retained EU obligations in respect of SEA have been satisfied.

Turning now to HRA, the Screening Determination Statement of March 2020 also addresses HRA. This explains that the nearest European sites are the Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which lies some 22km to the north west of the Plan area and the Lee Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) to the south west, some 27km away from the Plan area boundary.

The Screening Report concludes that there are no European sites or habitats close enough to the Plan area which need to be assessed for likely significant effects. The report concludes that the Plan will not have any likely significant effects either alone or in combination with other plans and projects on European sites and therefore screens the Plan out from requiring an appropriate assessment. NE was consulted and agreed with this conclusion.

The HRA Screening Determination therefore concludes the Plan does not require further assessment.

On 28 December 2018, the basic condition prescribed in Regulation 32 and Schedule 2 (Habitats) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) was substituted by a new basic condition brought into force by the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018 which provides that the making of the plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Habitats Regulations.

Given the distance, nature and characteristics of the nearest European sites and the nature and contents of this Plan, I agree with the conclusion of the Screening Determination Statement that an appropriate assessment is not required and accordingly consider that the prescribed basic condition is complied with, namely that the making of the Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Habitats Regulations.

Conclusion on retained EU obligations

National guidance establishes that the ultimate responsibility for determining whether a plan meets EU obligations lies with the local planning authority.³² In undertaking work on SEA and HRA, UDC has considered the compatibility of the Plan in regard to retained EU obligations and does not raise any concerns in this regard.

³² PPG para 031 ref id 11-031-20150209

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The Basic Conditions Statement contains a statement in relation to human rights.³³ Having regard to the Basic Conditions Statement, there is nothing in the Plan that leads me to conclude there is any breach or incompatibility with Convention rights.

7.0 Detailed comments on the Plan and its policies

In this section I consider the Plan and its policies against the basic conditions. As a reminder, where modifications are recommended they appear in **bold text** and where I suggest specific changes to the wording of the policies or new wording these appear in ***bold italics***.

The Plan is presented to a high standard and contains 32 policies. There is an eye catching front cover. The Plan begins with a short introduction and a helpful contents page.

1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

This is a helpful introduction to the Plan that sets the scene well. It sets out the background to the Plan and how it has evolved, explaining a Steering Group was established to lead its preparation. It explains the purpose and scope of the document in a clear and succinct way.

2. Saffron Walden Today

This section sets out the context of the Plan area highlighting key issues and directing the reader to further evidence documents.

3. Saffron Walden's Future

This section interestingly categorises the key themes from the public engagement stages into three; assets, opportunities and challenges. This then enables a lot of information to be captured and presented succinctly in this part of the Plan.

³³ Basic Conditions Statement page 34

The vision statement for the area is:

“Saffron Walden will retain its unique identity as a visually beautiful market town with its rich heritage, a large number of listed buildings and a number of historic green spaces within the town and across the parish. It will be a settlement of the highest environmental sustainability due to provision for pedestrians and cyclists, continued reduction in carbon emissions, encouragement of recycling and use of green energy. Movement within the town will be safe and easy and journeys by car will be minimised. Economic activity will develop so that as many residents as possible will be able to earn their livings in the town. The traditional long-established links with the artistic community will be maintained and its proximity to Cambridge will enable it to become a popular tourist destination. The existence of many local interest groups, combined with activities organised by residents demonstrates a high level of civic pride. Little Walden will maintain its separate identity and integrity as a rural village served by Saffron Walden.”

The vision statement is supported by five objectives. All the objectives are articulated well, relate to the development and use of land and will help to deliver the vision.

Each policy in the Plan is then usefully mapped against the objectives.

4. Future Housing Need in Saffron Walden

Policy SW1 SWNP Site Allocations

This part of the Plan indicates it brings forward three site allocations. Two of these sites were proposed in the now withdrawn emerging local plan. The third has the benefit of planning permission. There also seems to be reference to a fourth site in the policy but it is not clear to me what this is.

The Plan explains that various calls for sites were carried out by UDC as part of the work on the emerging local plan. Although that local plan has been withdrawn, and cannot be relied upon, this Plan makes two assumptions. Firstly, that landowners having put forward their sites would still wish to develop those sites. Secondly, that those sites identified as suitable for development during the local plan process were still suitable.

I am concerned that these assumptions were made and that a standalone site selection assessment was not carried out - or at least some review of work carried out on the emerging local plan if this was the starting point – to check its continued validity. The NPPF is clear that sites should be available, suitable and have likely economic viability.³⁴ I discuss this further below.

³⁴ NPPF para 68

Secondly, the Plan indicates that 1,460 new dwellings are required between 2011 – 2033, a position which, I understand, has been taken from the now withdrawn emerging local plan which cannot be wholly relied upon. Moreover, this stated position does not reflect the Plan period which is 2021 – 2036. It is therefore not clear to me what the housing requirement figure is for this important market town in Uttlesford's settlement hierarchy.

No indicative figure seems to have been sought from UDC given the lack of strategic housing supply policies as PPG urges.³⁵ Even exceptionally when a housing requirement is determined by the qualifying body itself, this needs to take account of relevant policies, the existing and emerging strategy and characteristics of the Plan area.³⁶ This has not been done to any great extent and I therefore cannot test any figure in this scenario as required by PPG.³⁷

Thirdly, despite a need for a considerable amount of development, the defined development limits for both Saffron Walden and Little Walden have not been reviewed; instead the defined development limits are brought forward from the LP 2005. It might well be that such a review would recommend retaining these boundaries, but this cannot be assumed.

Turning now to the policy, it refers to the now withdrawn local plan. The first part of the policy refers to SAF 1. I am not clear where this site is and the maps on page 27 of the Plan do not assist me. This part of the policy does not set out any numbers and there is a lack of evidence or explanation of key requirements. For example, the evidence to support 5% older persons housing.

The next part of the policy relates to SAF 3, land at Viceroy Coaches. This is a brownfield site in the town centre for up to 10 dwellings. The site is in a sensitive location as it falls within a Conservation Area, is adjacent to a registered park and garden and falls within the Air Quality Management Area. I note the SEA Screening Determination Statement, in turn referring to the SEA for the emerging, now withdrawn, local plan, found a number of negative impacts associated with this site including heritage, fluvial flood risk and surface water. The potential effects of developing the site seem to be left to be dealt with at planning application stage. Had a site assessment process being carried out these issues would have been at the very least picked up.

The next part of the policy refers to SAF 4; again it is not clear to me where or what this site is (although from subsequent correspondence to my Note of Interim Findings this is Jossaumes).

The policy then refers to land north of Shire Hill. In relation to land north of Shire Hill, subject of planning application reference UTT/17/2832/OP, the Plan explains that a spine road was an essential part of the development. The supporting text to the policy

³⁵ PPG para 009 ref id 41-009-20190509

³⁶ Ibid para 105 ref id 41-105-20190509

³⁷ Ibid para 104 ref id 41-104-20190509

states that any subsequent application would need to demonstrate it would not have any adverse impacts and “...must not rely on evidence provided in support of UTT/17/2832/OP.” It is not clear to me why the evidence for an extant planning permission cannot be relied upon. Again there is no explanation of some of the key requirements.

However of equal importance, is the basis for these site allocations. Whilst neighbourhood plans give communities power to shape the development and growth of their area, plans should be deliverable. PPG is clear that “proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken”.³⁸ Where neighbourhood plans contain policies relevant to housing supply, these policies should take account of the latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need.³⁹

PPG is clear that if a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development, an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria should be carried out.⁴⁰

Given that three sites were proposed as allocations in the emerging local plan, evidence would have been available as to their suitability for development. The emerging local plan was withdrawn and has no status and so whilst the evidence sitting behind it could have been used, it was, in my view, necessary to at least review that evidence and ensure it was still fit for purpose and that there were no better or alternative sites to consider. It was not sufficient to simply roll forward sites in the withdrawn local plan without such consideration and the fact that no selection or assessment process for the sites was carried out is, in my view, a fatal flaw.

Likewise in relation to the deliverability, I consider that some dialogue with the interested parties would have been useful to ensure that the sites chosen, after an appropriate selection process, were still available and viable to deliver.

I note UDC also expresses concern about the assumptions made in their representation indicating “...the availability, achievability and deliverability of these sites under consideration should have been checked rather basing site selections on assumption.” (SIC).

Furthermore it appears that some site allocations in the now defunct local plan have not been rolled forward. It seems some were, and others were not, brought forward. This also required explanation and a proper site selection and assessment process would have addressed this.

There is also no sense of how the Plan period relates to this housing provision. This concern is also expressed by UDC; their representation states “...it would be more appropriate to discuss numbers of dwellings expected to be delivered during the Neighbourhood Plan period i.e. 2021 – 2036.”

³⁸ PPG para 040 ref id 41-040-20160211

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid para 042 ref id 41-042-20170728

On a more detailed matter, PPG continues that policies on the size or type of housing required will need to be informed by evidence.⁴¹ As I have explained above, this unfortunately is not the case.

The fourth element of the policy rightly and positively indicates the housing growth is not a ceiling, but then restricts further growth to three scenarios. These are community-led development, development brought forward by a Community Land Trust or for schemes of 100% affordable housing.

These requirements do not take account of national policy and guidance. Whilst the lack of a ceiling or cap is welcomed, this element of the policy is very restrictive; again without explanation or justification. The NPPF states that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive.⁴² A number of criteria are set out for housing in the rural area including development that represents the optimal viable use of a heritage asset, development that would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its setting and so on.⁴³

With regard to this part of the policy, the NPPF is clear that even on rural exception sites which provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, some market housing can be provided to help facilitate this.⁴⁴

This part of the policy is also not in general conformity with LP 2005 Policy S1 which allows for development on sites on the edge of the built up area if compatible with its countryside setting. This strategic policy is another reason why it would have been useful to at least review the development limits of the town to see if they were still relevant.

The final part of the policy refers to infill development indicating it must meet the criteria of other policies. There is no indication to say whether infill development is supported or promoted or not. There is no need to indicate any such development should be in accordance with other policies in the Plan as the Plan is read as whole.

In my Note 1 (Appendix 2 to this report), I highlighted these concerns. The TC in their response indicates that the new sites are SAF 3, Viceroy Coaches, SAF 4, Jossaumes and Land at Shire Hall. The TC explain that standalone evidence was not carried out because SAF 3 and SAF 4 were included in a previous 'Call for Sites' and as they are brownfield sites remain valid allocations. The TC advise me that Land at Shire Hall had obtained planning permission and therefore could be included as an allocation.

The TC indicates that as two of the sites are brownfield and one has planning permission they are available for development.

⁴¹ PPG para 103 ref id 41-103-20190509

⁴² NPPF para 79

⁴³ Ibid para 80

⁴⁴ Ibid para 78

The TC also indicates that the housing figure was taken from the then emerging local plan and at the time of Plan production, there was no need to ask for an indicative figure. However, even if this is the case, the figure relied on, all be it in good faith, was out of kilter with the Plan period.

I have explained above in detail why the position the Plan takes is untenable.

Taking stock of all these issues, I am left with little option but to recommend deletion of this policy. I do not consider it meets the basic conditions and in particular it does not have regard to national policy and guidance or help to achieve sustainable development for the reasons given above.

Given this recommendation, I do not outline other modifications which would be necessary should this section be retained. These, in the main, pertain to inaccuracies in the supporting text and updates to the table on page 26 of the Plan and the maps. Further information on these updates can be found in the representation from UDC.

- **Delete Policy SW1 and its supporting section 4.1, paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.1.8 inclusive**
- **Consequential amendments will be needed including the deletion of Appendix 9**

Policy SW2 Protection of Views

A number of views have been identified through work on the Heritage and Character Assessment (HCA) as being of importance.

These views should be identified, numbered, described and clearly mapped. A series of maps and photographs on page 35 onwards of the Plan show some views, but it is not clear to me whether these are the same views as those generally identified in the HCA, where precisely these viewpoints are and how they relate to the included photographs.

Whilst then in principle a policy protecting views of importance is to be welcomed, particularly when evidenced through work on a HCA or similar, much more work is needed to be carried out for the policy to meet the basic conditions. At present it does not meet the basic conditions given its lack of clarity and precision; both are needed to ensure the policy provides a practical decision-making framework in order to have regard to national policy and guidance.⁴⁵

I note that UDC in the response to my Note 1 highlight the importance of this policy and the need for the additional work I have identified so that the policy is not recommended for deletion. I further note that the TC indicates this work can be undertaken and

⁴⁵ NPPF para 16

supplied. The issue is that this would have to be done outside the examination process i.e. the Plan would need to be withdrawn. As I have been asked to continue with the examination, then unfortunately I am left with only being able to recommend deletion of the policy.

- **Delete Policy SW2 and its supporting section 4.1, paragraphs 4.1.9 to unnumbered on page 39 inclusive**

Policy SW3 Site Allocation – Land at Viceroy Coaches to rear of 10 – 12 Bridge Street

I have explained in my discussion of Policy SW1 why the site allocations in the Plan do not meet the basic conditions.

This policy, specific to this site known as SAF 3 in the now withdrawn emerging Local Plan, should be deleted.

Even if this was not the case, to have two policies on the same site which both set out (different) requirements for development is unnecessary and confusing. In addition, there is no detailed map of the site, the policy sets out requirements for a “mixed community”, but there is no hint as to how a prospective developer might meet this criterion and the policy contains options. Overall this means the policy does not have the required clarity and also deals with issues outside the site boundary.

Furthermore the supporting text contains requirements which cannot be achieved through the planning system such as residents parking permits costs.

- **Delete Policy SW3 and its supporting text paragraphs 4.1.10 to 4.1.13 inclusive**

Policy SW4 Housing Mix on New Developments

The NPPF states that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements should be addressed to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting housing supply.⁴⁶ It continues that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.⁴⁷

This policy encourages a wide range of housing to meet local needs. It refers to a number of different evidence sources in the supporting text. The policy sets out the percentage proportion of house sizes sought, but these which do not appear to reflect the evidence set out in the Plan. I asked a query about this. In response the TC state that the District’s waiting list shows the highest social housing need is for 1 bed, then 2

⁴⁶ NPPF para 60

⁴⁷ Ibid para 62

bed, then 3 bed and then 4 bed houses. Indexed demand statistics from Rightmove then show the highest in demand are 2 bed.

UDC indicate that any policy requirements should be backed up by robust up to date evidence and that the requirements may be too restrictive both in the percentages sought and the lack of flexibility regarding changing needs.

I do appreciate the policy seeks a mix of housing sizes and is flexibly written relying on the most up to date evidence available and also has inbuilt flexibility of 10%. However, it is not clear to me where the percentage requirements have come from. Modifications are therefore made to address this concern.

The supporting text is also recommended for modification in three places. The first is in the interests of ensuring language used is inclusive. The second relates to a comment on UDC's Strategic Housing Market Assessment which seems to be without foundation given these types of assessment are carried out to the same standards nationwide. The third relates to an issue about charities not raising their rents or selling properties in the future; this is not something which can be controlled through planning.

With these modifications, I consider the policy will meet the basic conditions; it will have regard to the NPPF in particular by seeking to boost the supply of housing needed for different groups in the community, it will help to achieve sustainable development and especially its social objective of ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes are provided to meet the needs of present and future generations and be in general conformity with the LP 2005.

- **Reword the policy to read:**

"1. All residential development proposals should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs but also provides for balanced and vibrant neighbourhoods. *The specific mix should be based on up-to-date local evidence of need and take account of local circumstances and the nature of the surrounding area.*

2. The housing mix of affordable homes is to be determined by local housing need and policies set out by the planning authority.

3. Developments may not be subdivided into smaller parcels to avoid the housing mix policy."

- **Delete the words "Noting that people in receipt of LHA should be no different to people not in receipt of LHA, other than the fact they have lower household incomes" from paragraph 4.2.9 on page 43 of the Plan**
- **Delete the last sentence of paragraph 4.2.15 on page 45 of the Plan which begins "This the 2015 SHMA..."**
- **Delete the last sentence of paragraph 4.2.21 on page 47 of the Plan which begins "In order to use..."**

Policy SW5 Affordable Housing

The NPPF states that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements should be addressed to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting housing supply.⁴⁸

Affordable housing can only be sought in sites of ten or more dwellings or 0.5 hectare sites.⁴⁹ The policy recognises a dwelling number threshold but sets this at 11 or more and then introduces a residential floor space threshold in the policy and I am not sure how this has been derived. A modification is therefore made to correct the dwelling number threshold, remove the floor space threshold and to add in the site size threshold as set out in the NPPF.

The policy requires 40% provision. There is some evidence to support this and I asked UDC for their view on this figure. I am informed that the requirement of 40% aligns with District level evidence.

The policy then seeks to ensure that affordable homes are distributed throughout any scheme. Tenure mix is to be determined by the latest evidence. Artificial subdivision is resisted. The policy is flexibly worded in that it recognises viability considerations.

There is a further modification to make the wording used clearer.

With these modifications, the policy will have regard to the NPPF by seeking to boost the supply of housing needed for different groups in the community, it will help to achieve sustainable development and especially its social objective of ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes are provided to meet the needs of present and future generations and be in general conformity with LP 2005 Policy H9 insofar as it remains relevant.

- **Amend criterion 1. of the policy to read: “Development on sites which provide for 10 dwellings or more, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more will be required...”**
- **Delete the words “...strongly meets all the other objectives in the SWNP” from criterion 6. and replace with “...meets the objectives of the SWNP and complies with all relevant development plan policies.”**

⁴⁸ NPPF para 60

⁴⁹ Ibid Glossary

Policy SW6 Housing Density

Density is considered in this policy. It sets out that densities should be appropriate to the context of the site and include considerations such as location, scale, character and grain of built form.

The policy sets out average net densities for urban extension sites, infill sites and rural exception sites. There is some evidence for these figures, but not a great deal. However, the policy does permit higher densities if this can be justified on the site's context or specific use, where parking provision is satisfactory or there are other achievable solutions.

The NPPF is clear that planning policies should support development that makes efficient use of land.⁵⁰ It is also acceptable to distinguish between different areas of the Plan area. However, this policy seeks to distinguish between types of development. This seems to me to be without foundation as it is not based on the availability and capacity of infrastructure or services, location in terms of sustainable travel modes for example or the area's prevailing character or setting. These are all factors referred to in the NPPF⁵¹ in its discussion of achieving appropriate densities.

I have considered whether to modify it, but to do so would simply result in a repetition of the NPPF.

Therefore without sufficient or satisfactory evidence, the policy should be deleted as it does not meet the basic conditions; particularly it does not have sufficient regard to the NPPF and will not help to achieve sustainable development.

- **Delete Policy SW6 and its supporting text [paragraphs 4.4.1 – 4.4.4]**

5. Town Layout and Design

This section contains a number of references to the NPPF which has now been replaced by the one published in July 2021. I include a list of necessary modifications to bring this section up to date.

Paragraph 5.2.7 refers to the Conservation Area and a desire to preserve them in its current form. This does not meet the guidance in the NPPF or indeed the statutory provisions for Conservation Areas. A modification is therefore made to ensure this part of the Plan is accurate.

⁵⁰ NPPF para 124

⁵¹ Ibid

Reference is also made to the RTPI's Dementia and Town Planning publication; this has now been revised and so an update is also needed here. A further small addition is made in the interests of accuracy.

- **Paragraph 5.1.1 on page 53; paragraph 124 of the NPPF has now changed to paragraph 126 and the quote is different and so needs updating**
- **Paragraph 5.1.3 on page 53; paragraph 130 is now 134 and the contents have changed so this needs updating**
- **Delete the words "...which must be preserved in its current form." from paragraph 5.2.7 on page 56**
- **Update the date in paragraph 5.2.16 on page 58 from "2017" to "2020"**
- **Add "*and Public Health England*" to the list of endorsements in paragraph 5.2.17**

Policy SW7 Design

The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.⁵² It continues that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.⁵³

It refers to design guides and codes to help provide a framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design.⁵⁴

It continues that planning policies should ensure developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history whilst not preventing change or innovation, establish or maintain a strong sense of place and optimise site potential.⁵⁵

Policy SW7 is a long policy with numerous and varied criteria covering a wide range of issues. In essence, the policy seeks to deliver locally distinctive development of a high quality that protects, reflects and enhances local character leading on from LP 2005 Policy GEN2 in particular.

Six modifications are recommended. The first is to change the wording of criterion 2. to ensure there is clarity.

⁵² NPPF para 126

⁵³ Ibid para 127

⁵⁴ Ibid para 128

⁵⁵ Ibid para 130

The second is to delete reference to the nationally described space standard. The Government introduced national technical standards for housing in 2015. A Written Ministerial Statement (WMS)⁵⁶ explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. I also note the WMS states that neighbourhood plans should not be used to apply the national technical standard. This is echoed in PPG.⁵⁷

The third is to change criterion 5e); at present it requires infill development to preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting. This is a high bar to set; higher than the statutory protection for Conservation Areas for example and so a modification is made to make the policy more flexible and in line with national policy and guidance.

The fourth is to enhance clarity in criterion 6. It currently refers to “relatively large footprint” and whilst I understand the intention of this phrase it is open to interpretation.

The fifth is to alter the reference to street naming to the language used in the RTPI’s Dementia and Town Planning Practice Note so there is additional clarity in criterion 10.

Lastly, a criterion about trees is added to ensure the policy has regard to the new NPPF which makes it clear that it is the Government’s intention that all new streets include trees unless this would be inappropriate.⁵⁸

I note that Sport England and Anglian Water welcome this policy.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions in that it has regard to the NPPF, is in general conformity with LP 2005 Policy GEN2 and will help achieve sustainable development.

- **Change the word “Following” in criterion 2. of the policy to “Adherence”**
- **Delete criterion 4. h)**
- **Change the first “and” in criterion 5e) of the policy to “or”**
- **Add the word “major” before “...developments...” in criterion 6. of the policy and delete the words “...which have a relatively large footprint...”**
- **Reword criterion 10. to read: “There should be a hierarchy of street types to ensure developments are legible with clear signage at decision points.”**
- **Add a new criterion that reads: “include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be**

⁵⁶ Written Ministerial Statement 25 March 2015

⁵⁷ PPG para 001 ref id 56-001-20150327

⁵⁸ NPPF para 131

inappropriate and include trees elsewhere within developments where the opportunity arises.”

Policy SW8 Parking on New Developments

The NPPF is clear that if local parking standards are set, policies should take account of the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development, the availability of, and opportunities for, public transport, local car ownership levels and the need for provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.⁵⁹

The Plan explains that car ownership across Uttlesford District is higher than the national average. It is recognized that the availability of public transport is relatively poor. Much of the area is rural in nature. Therefore there is a high reliance on use of the private car.

The policy therefore refers to the Essex County Council Parking Standards Design and Good Practice document of 2009 and the Essex Design Guide in relation to both standards and design of car parking space and bicycle parking and future proofs any update to these documents.

UDC has adopted the Parking Standards Design and Good Practice. However due to nature of the District, local parking standards have been adopted in addition to the Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. Reference should be made to this in the policy.

It then details provision of electric vehicles. I raised a query on the details and asked for the rationale and evidence behind the details. The TC referred me to the NPPF, but unfortunately did not point me in the direction of any further detailed rationale. A modification to retain the reference, but remove the detail is therefore made.

A modification is also made to the supporting text to help future proof the requirements.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions, particularly helping to achieve sustainable development.

- **Add the words “*and UDC’s local parking standard for 4+ bedroomed dwellings.*” at the end of criterion 2.**
- **Revise criterion 3. to read: “All dwellings will *make provision for electric vehicle (EV) charging points.*”**

⁵⁹ NPPF para 107

- Amend the words “...must provide...” in paragraph 5.3.10 on page 63 of the Plan to “*make provision for*”

Policy SW9 Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design

As explained in my discussion of Policy SW7, the Government introduced national technical standards for housing in 2015. The WMS⁶⁰ explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings and should not be used to apply the national technical standard. This is echoed in PPG.⁶¹

The Plan acknowledges the position set out above. However the supporting text to the policy explains that the Plan sets out a non-binding policy on construction standards viewed as desirable.

I do not consider that this position meets the stance of the WMS; even if it were to be successfully argued that it does then having a non-binding policy within a development plan seems to me to create a lack of clarity and certainty within the Plan document.

For the above reasons, I recommend Policy SW9 and its supporting text be deleted. If desired it would be possible to include this information as a community aspiration in a separately identified part or appendix of the Plan with appropriate changes to reflect this new status.

- Delete Policy SW9 and its supporting text

Policy SW10 Accessible and Adaptable Homes

This policy seeks to provide for an ageing population. There is much to commend this approach, but, similar to the previous policy, the WMS does not allow neighbourhood plans to set such standards. I consider that the inclusion of a “non-binding” policy within the Plan is too confusing.

It would however be possible to include these elements as a community aspiration with appropriate changes to reflect this new status, or potentially to include those elements which do not set or encourage standards within a general design policy. It is not for me to rewrite the Plan, but this could be considered in an early or future review of the Plan.

Given the stance of the Government’s national policy and guidance on these matters, I am left with little option but to recommend deletion of the policy and its supporting text.

⁶⁰ Written Ministerial Statement 25 March 2015

⁶¹ PPG para 001 ref id 56-001-20150327

- **Delete Policy SW10 and its supporting text [paragraphs 5.5.1 – 5.5.10, but note wrong sequencing of paragraph numbers]**

6. Commercial Premises

The supporting text refers to the NPPF; some updating is needed in the light of the new NPPF.

A table in paragraph 6.3.8 on page 77 of the Plan lists the Use Classes against main town centre uses as defined in the glossary of the NPPF. Two changes are needed in the interests of accuracy; as far as I can see professional and financial services are not included in the NPPF's definition (despite now being in the same Use Class) and hotels are specifically included in the NPPF's definition.

UDC also points out a number of updates in its representation. Firstly, there is also a reference to garden villages; this needs to be updated given the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn.

Secondly, the Premier Inn referred to in paragraph 6.1.9 has now been constructed.

- **Paragraph 6.3.6 on page 75; paragraph 182 is now 187**
- **Remove the asterix to the fourth column of the table in paragraph 6.3.8 on page 77 of the Plan for professional and financial services**
- **Add an asterix to hotels to the fourth column of the table in paragraph 6.3.8**
- **Delete the penultimate sentence of paragraph 6.1.5 on page 72 of the Plan which begins "This may change..." and replace with a new sentence to read: *"It should be noted that the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn along with the concept of garden villages."***
- **Update paragraph 6.1.9 on page 72 by replacing "...has been granted planning permission." with "...has been constructed."**

Policy SW11 Town Centre Uses

This policy identifies primary and secondary frontages in the town centre which are shown on a map at paragraph 6.3.1. I am not clear how these frontages have been identified although from my site visit, they have been defined logically and appropriately bearing in mind what I saw on the ground.

The first element of the policy seeks to restrict ground floor uses in these frontages to the main town centre uses defined in the NPPF. This differs to the Use Classes Order brought in on 1 August 2021 which permits change to Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) subject to various criteria.

I appreciate that the policy was devised before the new Use Classes Order came about. The Plan rightly points out that Saffron Walden has a compact and vibrant town centre and I can understand why there is a desire to retain retail and other more commercial town centre uses in it. However, as far as I am aware, the only way to remove all or some permitted development rights (which are devised by the Government) is through an Article 4 direction of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

The NPPF contains guidance as to when Article 4 directions may be appropriate.⁶² It would be up to the TC to pursue this as a separate matter.

The second element of the policy is redundant given the first element is to be deleted.

The third element supports hotels subject to the policy on building design. This is unnecessary as all proposals will be subject to consideration against any relevant policies. This element can therefore be deleted.

The fourth element refers to the agent of change principle; whilst this is a welcome reference, it makes little sense to retain only this criterion and the principle is included in the NPPF.⁶³

The final element refers to hot food takeaways and indicates such proposals will be subject to considerations of impact on local amenity and public health. These are general considerations against which any such application would be assessed. Given this, and the fact the policy does not further indicate any steer on how such proposals would be considered against these criteria, the element is unnecessary to retain.

Therefore for the reasons given above, the policy should be deleted in order to meet the basic conditions. Changes to the supporting text are necessary as a consequence.

- **Delete Policy SW11**
- **Delete the second sentence of paragraph 6.3.1; all of paragraph 6.3.3; the associated map and the fourth sentence of paragraph 6.3.4 to end**

⁶² NPPF paras 51 - 54

⁶³ Ibid para 187

Policy SW12 Convenience Stores in Residential Neighbourhoods

Convenience stores are supported by this policy subject to three criteria. The Plan recognises that local facilities and services are important to provide people with everyday essentials. The criteria are impact on the town centre, accessibility and traffic levels.

It seems to me that this policy supports the NPPF's aim of providing the facilities and services communities need⁶⁴ and help to achieve sustainable development. The policy meets the basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.

Policy SW13 17 Market Hill & 29-31 Church Street

This policy relates to a Grade I listed building and gives guidelines for its potential reuse.

The first element of the policy seeks to minimise harmful or intrusive interventions and refers to a preference for freestanding fittings, activities that have a low fire risk and are not "messy".

The second element seeks to ensure compatibility between uses on the ground floor and first floors.

Local planning authorities, in determining planning applications, have no powers or responsibilities around fire safety of buildings or materials⁶⁵ and planning gateway one relates to high rise buildings. In some circumstances consultation will take place for example about the access arrangements for fire engines.

However, I have taken the wording of the policy to signal a concern about the compatibility of future uses in this historic building. I therefore recommend some modifications to the wording of the policy to ensure it meets the basic conditions, in particular have regard to the NPPF⁶⁶ and to help achieve sustainable development.

- **Reword the policy to read: "Any future uses of the building must be compatible with and sustain and enhance the historic significance of the building and be viable consistent with the building's conservation and enhancement. Substantial harm to or loss of the building should be wholly exceptional."**

⁶⁴ NPPF para 93

⁶⁵ Responsibility for fire safety during the development application process in England, RTPI, December 2017

⁶⁶ NPPF section 16

Policy SW14 Shopfront Design

The plan explains that the town centre falls within a Conservation Area. This policy seeks to ensure that any shopfronts make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and are of a high quality. It refers to an emerging Design Guide produced by UDC or any successor document. During the course of the examination, UDC endorsed a Shopfront Design Guide dated February 2022 on 9 February 2022.

Achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places is part of the social objective for sustainable development in the NPPF.⁶⁷ This policy seeks to establish design principles on a specific type of development setting out expectations. The NPPF places emphasis on high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places indicating this is fundamental to what the planning process should achieve.⁶⁸

The HCA also identified that the design of some shopfronts within the town centre could be an area for enhancement.⁶⁹

There is one modification to make to ensure that the recently endorsed Design Guide referred to is taken into account rather than just considered in relation to this policy. This modification will strengthen the link between the policy and the document.

With this modification, I consider this policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to the NPPF, being in general conformity with LP 2005 and Policy GEN2 in particular and helping to achieve sustainable development.

- **Change criterion 2. of the policy to read: “Uttlesford District Council sets out guidance for shopfront design in its *document Shopfront Design Guide February 2022* and (1) above should be read in conjunction with this document or any successor document and must be taken into account in developing and determining such proposals.”**

Policy SW15 Development of 56 High Street

This policy prevents the redevelopment of this site until a suitable replacement for the scout hall on the site is found. The second element of the policy then supports a comprehensive redevelopment scheme for a viable town centre use.

The NPPF indicates that planning policies should support the role town centres play by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ NPPF para 8

⁶⁸ Ibid para 126

⁶⁹ HCA page 33

⁷⁰ NPPF para 86

A representation on behalf of the landowner made at the time of the significant modifications consultation states that the scout hall is not within the same ownership. This means that the first element of the policy is not relevant and should be deleted along with references to this desire in the supporting text.

The second element of the policy refers to the comprehensive development of the whole site which is of course desirable, but I cannot find a plan or map of the area referred to in the Plan. I note that the next policy includes a desire for the possibility of a comprehensive scheme for the regeneration of George Street which could, at least in part, include this site. In any review of the Plan, the TC may wish to consider the benefit of a comprehensive policy dealing with this area as a whole, but in the meantime there is a lack of clarity in the policy which means it does not have regard to national policy and guidance and therefore does not meet the basic conditions.

- **Delete Policy SW15 and paragraph 6.5.4**

Policy SW16 Regeneration of George Street

This policy supports the regeneration of Nos 2-18 George Street setting out various criteria. The principle of the policy is acceptable but its wording is not clear enough.

With some modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by taking account of the NPPF's stance on promoting clear visions and strategies to allow regeneration in building a strong and competitive economy⁷¹ and creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.⁷²

- **Reword the first sentence of the policy to read: "Proposals to regenerate George Street *will be supported where the following criteria are met:*"**
- **Add the word "*residential*" before "...accommodation..." in criterion a)**
- **Move criterion c) to become a separate sentence at the end of the policy adding the words "*...would be welcomed.*"**

Policy SW17 Development of New and Existing Commercial Spaces

Policy SW17 covers a number of different issues. It supports the replacement and enhancement of existing industrial units, farm diversification and visitor accommodation.

⁷¹ NPPF para 82

⁷² Ibid para 126

I have some concern about how the policy is worded. At present, it supports proposals which, as an example, result in additional employment in respect of farm diversification, but this would give a carte blanche to all such proposals regardless of any other impacts they might have. In addition, it may be hard to quantify employment and this is not a common test of the acceptability of farm diversification however desirable this might be in this locality.

A modification is also made to the last criterion which refers to cladding and is therefore too restrictive given that other materials might well be as suitable.

A number of modifications are therefore recommended to ensure the policy meets the basic conditions.

There is then a section, 6.6 on page 83 of the Plan which contains a number of statements of support for various initiatives. In themselves these read well and are appropriate. However, some could be interpreted as policy statements and therefore it is important that their status is clear. They should be moved to a separate section of the Plan and clearly denoted as community aspirations. Some consequential amendments to the text will be needed. For example there is a reference to Policy SW11 which I have recommended for deletion.

- **Add the words “*Otherwise acceptable*” at the start of criteria 1., 2. and 3.**
- **Add the word “*particularly*” before “...supported.” in criteria 1. and 2.**
- **Amend criterion 4. to read: “New and renovated commercial buildings must be *constructed from appropriate and suitably coloured* materials that enables them to blend into the surrounding countryside.”**
- **Move section 6.6 on page 83 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations” ensuring that the reference to Policy SW11 is deleted**

7. Digital Connectivity

Policy SW18 High Quality Communications Infrastructure

Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well being.⁷³ The NPPF continues that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.⁷⁴

⁷³ NPPF para 114

⁷⁴ Ibid

This policy supports such provision. It therefore meets the basic conditions, particularly having regard to the NPPF and helping to achieve sustainable development. No modifications are therefore recommended.

8. Ecology

There are two issues raised in the supporting text in this section which require clarification. The first is that paragraph 8.3 on page 86 refers to public planting. I consider this to be a community aspiration and it should be moved to a separate section of the Plan.

The second issue relates to ownership of the land in relation to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) in paragraph 8.6. This is not a development and use of land matter and so again should be placed in a separate community aspiration section.

- **Move paragraphs 8.3 and 8.6 on page 86 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations”**

Policy SW19 Ecological Requirements for All New Domestic and Commercial Developments

The NPPF is clear that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, minimising impacts on, and providing net gains for biodiversity.⁷⁵

The policy and supporting text refers to TCPA Garden City Standards for the 21st Century and in particular guide 7 planning for green and prosperous places. My reading of these guides is that they apply to new garden communities. In response to a query on this, the TC has confirmed this is the case, but considers the guidance to be equally relevant to established towns. It may well be that the guidance would be applicable to Saffron Walden, but this needs consideration and explanation. As it stands, the references in the policy or supporting text are not relevant and therefore should be removed.

The policy requires SuDs on all developments. Although I note Anglian Water supports this stance, this position is contrary to current Government guidance which explains that SuDs should be incorporated in major developments unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.⁷⁶ A modification is therefore made to ensure the policy takes account of national policy and guidance.

A correction is made to the supporting text in referring to the CIRIA SuDs Manual.

⁷⁵ NPPF para 174

⁷⁶ Ibid para 169

Criterion 4. refers to the ownership of land which is not a development and use of land matter. A modification is therefore made to remove this criterion from the policy.

Anglian Water has suggested a modification to criterion 6. which I consider is appropriate given this would ensure that the foul drainage hierarchy is followed to be consistent with national policy and guidance.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions in that it will have regard to national policy and guidance and help to achieve sustainable development.

- **Delete criterion 1. from the policy**
- **Add the word “*major*” before “...developments...” in criterion 2. and the words “*unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate*” after “...developments...” in the same criterion**
- **Delete criterion 4. from the policy**
- **Change criterion 6. to read: “It is the preferred option that *foul drainage* for all new development is connected to the mains sewerage system.”**
- **Delete paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9 on page 87 of the Plan**
- **Change the words “...published in 2016...” in paragraph 8.7 on page 87 to “...published in 2015...”**

9. Infrastructure Delivery

The supporting text refers to paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF; these references should be updated to reflect the new NPPF.

There are a number of actions detailed on page 98 of the Plan. None of these relate to the development and use of land except for the desire to resist further significant development in the east of the town. This should be deleted and the others moved to a separate community actions section of the Plan.

- **Change the reference to paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF in paragraph 9.2 on page 89 to paragraphs 92 and 93 respectively**
- **Delete action 7) under paragraph 10.1.12 on page 98 of the Plan**
- **Move paragraph 10.1.12 on page 98 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations”**

10. Transport Infrastructure

Paragraph 10.1.5 on page 93 of the Plan refers to a map and images which then follow. I found it hard to read the numbers on the map. A modification is therefore made to assist with clarity.

- **Ensure that the map on page 94 of the Plan is clear and clearly shows the roads marked 1 -4 referred to on page 95 of the Plan**

Policy SW20 Promoting Walking and Cycling

This policy seeks to promote walking and cycling. This is in line with the NPPF which states that opportunities to promote walking and cycling and public transport use should be identified from the early stages of plan making and pursued.⁷⁷ It continues that planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.⁷⁸ Priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements within schemes and with neighbouring areas and then access to public transport.⁷⁹

However, some of the detail of the policy is problematic. Firstly, it seeks the retention of routes on site rather than the enhancement. This may well adversely affect the achievement of sustainable development. A modification is made to address this.

Secondly, the next part of the policy seeks to protect existing footpaths and pedestrian cut throughs through town. This may not always be possible, but it also and more importantly may prevent improvements and enhancements coming forward. This element is then recommended for deletion.

Thirdly, reference is made to Secured by Design, but this needs updating.

Fourthly, reference is made in criterion 3. to DFT user hierarchy guidelines, but these do not reflect the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF.⁸⁰ A modification is made to ensure the NPPF's hierarchy is substituted.

Lastly, there is a blanket requirement for all new streets in the Plan area to be designed to keep vehicles speeds at or below 20mph. Whilst reference is made in the Plan to the Manual for Streets and the Essex Design Guide, there is little specific or local justification for such a requirement. There is little option but to delete this criterion. This is not to say that such a requirement would not be appropriate or meet the basic conditions, but rather there is insufficient evidence put forward for it in this version of the Plan.

⁷⁷ NPPF para 104

⁷⁸ Ibid para 106

⁷⁹ Ibid para 110

⁸⁰ Ibid para 112

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions, particularly having regard to the NPPF and helping to achieve sustainable development.

- **Change the first sentence of the policy to read: “development proposals which retain, *enhance* or incorporate safe, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes on site *as appropriate* and which...”**
- **Delete criterion 2. a)**
- **Update the reference in 2. d) to Secured by Design to “*Homes 2019, Version 2, 2019*”**
- **Change criterion 3. a) to read: “The scheme design will conform to the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF which is to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement first, then facilitate access to high quality public transport as far as possible including catchment areas and facilities to encourage such use and private vehicles last.”**
- **Delete criterion 4.**

Policy SW21 Travel Planning

A travel plan is, according to the glossary in the NPPF, a long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

The NPPF supports the use of travel plans for all developments which will generate significant amounts of movement.⁸¹

Policy SW21 does not distinguish between the types of development which may require a travel plan. It instead focuses on measurable objectives, provision for funding and delivery of sustainable initiatives and the involvement of the Town Council.

Modifications are therefore recommended to ensure that the policy will meet the basic conditions, in particular, the guidance in the NPPF referred to above, and to ensure the policy relates to the development and use of land.

- **Add a sentence at the beginning of the policy before the three [existing] criteria that reads: “*Where developments will or are likely to generate significant amounts of movement and are required to provide a travel plan, it is expected that the travel plan will.*”**

⁸¹ NPPF para 113

- **Change criterion 1. to read: “*include provision, where appropriate, for the funding and delivery of necessary, sustainable travel initiatives.*”**
- **Delete criterion 2. and move if desired to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations”**
- **Consequential amendments will be needed**

Policy SW22 Improving Provision of Public Transport

This short policy expects developers to enhance public transport services and infrastructure to improve connections and accessibility to key destinations from the site.

Whilst I accept the desirability of this, the reality is that only obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development can be sought.⁸² A blanket requirement is not appropriate or feasible and may adversely affect the ability of the Plan to help to achieve sustainable development.

The policy is therefore recommended for modification so that it can meet the basic conditions.

- **Reword the policy to read: “*Where appropriate, developers will be expected to take every available opportunity to promote the use of public transport including identifying and protecting routes and delivering services and infrastructure to widen transport choice and accessibility to key destinations from the location of the site.*”**

Policy SW23 Vehicular Transport

This policy covers four different elements. The first element relates to congestion and air quality for any development beyond the east of the town’s development limits.

The second element refers to HGV movements and conditions restricting the timing of those movements. The NPPF is clear that the imposition of planning conditions should only occur where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.⁸³ It is impossible to say whether these tests could be met through on every application and so a modification is made to increase flexibility and ensure that the NPPF’s stance on conditions is taken account of.

⁸² NPPF para 57

⁸³ Ibid

The third element supports the provision of electric charging points. I note Highways England supports such an initiative, but UDC asks for further clarity. A modification is made to address this.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions.

- **Delete the word “...will...” and replace it with “...*may, if necessary and appropriate,*...” and delete the words “...the timing of ...” in criterion 2.**
- **Add at the end of criterion 3. “*across all development types.*”**

11. Open Space, Sports and Recreation

This section begins with a quotation from the NPPF which needs to be updated given the publication of the new NPPF. Other references to the NPPF also require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.

- **Add the words “...*and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.*” after the word “...communities...” in paragraph 11.1.1 on page 106 of the Plan**
- **Change the reference to NPPF paragraph 96 in paragraph 11.1.3 to NPPF paragraph 98**
- **Change the reference to paragraph 100 in paragraph 11.1.3 to paragraph 101 and substitute the word “Identifying” at the start of the second sentence with “*Designating*”**
- **Change the references to paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF in paragraph 11.1.3 to paragraphs 102 and 103 respectively**

Policy SW24 Allotments

The NPPF recognises allotments as a way of enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles.⁸⁴

This policy requires all new residential development to provide 2 square metres of allotments space per person, either on or off site. A financial contribution can be made in lieu. However, the Plan points out that Saffron Walden exceeds the amount of allotment space based on the UDC Open Space Assessment Report dated 2019. It is then difficult to justify this requirement without further evidence even though I note UDC’s support in principle for this.

⁸⁴ NPPF para 92

Reference is also made to the emerging local plan which had a similar requirement, but has now been withdrawn and this reference should now be removed from the Plan.

Secondly, the policy seeks the designation of allotments in the UDC Open Space Assessment Report as Local Green Spaces (LGS). Although Appendix 5 is referenced, it is not clear to me from the Plan where these spaces are given they are included in a long list of open spaces and they are not mapped clearly in the appendix given there is no key to the maps and again other types of spaces are shown on the maps. The maps are also at a very small scale making accuracy as to the boundaries of the spaces difficult. Even giving the benefit of the doubt and indicating that five allotments are proposed to be designated, the issue is more problematic than an identification and mapping one.

This is because the NPPF explains that LGSs are green areas of particular importance to local communities.⁸⁵

The designation of LGSs should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.⁸⁶ It is only possible to designate LGSs when a plan is prepared or updated and LGSs should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.⁸⁷

The NPPF sets out three criteria for green spaces.⁸⁸ These are that the green space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, be demonstrably special to the local community and hold a particular local significance and be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land. Further guidance about LGSs is given in PPG.

However, the policy clearly states that the allotments will be protected from development “unless accessible, enhanced compensatory provision is made”. This then means it would be possible for these spaces to be lost within the Plan period subject to their satisfactory replacement. This indicates to me it is therefore not the spaces themselves which are demonstrably special or hold a local significance but the use as allotments. I suspect the policy has muddled the designation of LGSs with a desire to protect the amount of allotment land available.

Thirdly, the policy seeks the designation of three additional allotments identified outside the Report as LGSs. As before, there is little evidence to support such a designation and in any case the policy allows these spaces to be replaced.

For the reasons given above, I do not consider satisfactory evidence has been put forward to either identify the proposed spaces clearly or to demonstrate how the proposed LGSs meet the criteria in the NPPF satisfactorily.

⁸⁵ NPPF para 101

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid para 102

The policy therefore does not meet the basic conditions and should be deleted.

- **Delete Policy SW24 and its supporting text (paragraphs 11.2.1 to 11.2.8 inclusive) and the associated appendices (appendices 5 and 6)**

The next section of the Plan refers to the NPPF and its references need updating.

- **Change the reference to paragraph 97 of the NPPF in paragraph 11.3.1 to paragraph 99**

Policy SW25 Playing Fields and Sports Halls

The first element of this policy supports the provision of a multi-sport site subject to an accessible location. The NPPF seeks to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which, amongst other things, enable and support healthy lifestyles.⁸⁹

The second element of this policy seeks developer contributions towards sports provision using Sport England's calculations. I note that Sport England welcome this policy and the references to the calculators and that UDC raise no objection to this approach.

Whilst other approaches could be taken to the provision of sports facilities in the town, the NPPF states that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important to the health and wellbeing of communities as well as delivering wider benefits to nature and helping to address climate change.⁹⁰ This policy does help to plan positively for such facilities.

The policy meets the basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.

Policy SW26 Community Halls and Centres

The supporting text to this policy explains that all of the existing local community spaces are well used. The first element of the policy therefore seeks to ensure that major developments with a forecast of 1500 population or more provides a new community centre or hall. Whilst the NPPF supports the positive planning of social, recreational and cultural facilities⁹¹, there must be some basis for setting such a standard in this Plan.

⁸⁹ NPPF para 92

⁹⁰ Ibid para 98

⁹¹ Ibid para 93

The second part of the policy requires the extension or other enhancement of existing facilities to address the additional demand or to contribute to a fund for new facilities as required.

The NPPF is clear that plans should set out the contributions expected from development.⁹² This includes infrastructure of this type. Planning obligations can only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.⁹³ Where policies set out such contributions it is expected viability has been assessed.⁹⁴

Whilst there is a detailed discussion of the need for such facilities in the Plan area, there is little on the viability and deliverability of such requirements. These requirements would form part of a wider package of infrastructure sought by UDC. I do not consider either element meets the basic conditions.

The last element of the policy refers to 56 High Street indicating that the Scout Hall will be lost and contributions, presumably financial or land, will be needed to replace it. It is not clear to me what this part of the policy addresses and in any case, other policies in the Plan deal with this particular site. This then is unnecessary as it duplicates policies and can be deleted.

- **Delete Policy SW26 and its supporting text (paragraphs 11.4.1 to 11.4.5 inclusive)**

Policy SW27 Open Space for Informal Recreation

The NPPF specifically refers to open spaces in setting out its social objective in relation to the achievement of sustainable development.⁹⁵ It indicates that planning policy should plan positively for the provision of open space, amongst other things, to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.⁹⁶

Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport is important for the well-being and health of communities as well as delivering wider benefits for nature and supporting efforts to address climate change.⁹⁷

The NPPF is clear that any need for open space should be based on robust and up to date assessments.⁹⁸

⁹² NPPF para 34

⁹³ Ibid para 57

⁹⁴ Ibid para 58

⁹⁵ Ibid para 8

⁹⁶ Ibid para 93

⁹⁷ Ibid para 98

⁹⁸ Ibid

This policy seeks to achieve a number of things; it firstly sets out a standard for informal recreation based on per head of population. Like the previous policy, there is little information on deliverability or viability.

The second element sets a standard for developments of 50 plus units, requiring the design and location to be agreed with the Town Council. There is no evidence to support the requirement and it would be impractical for all sites to be agreed with the TC when they are not the determining body. Nevertheless some elements of this requirement can be retained as they set out good planning principles. This also applies to the third, fourth, fifth and sixth elements (there are two fifth elements in the policy).

The last element of the policy (criterion 6.) seeks to designate the amenity green space identified in the UDC Open Space Strategy and additional spaces identified as part of work on the Plan as LGSs.

It is not clear which spaces the Plan seeks to designate as LGSs. Appendix 5 contains details of “accessible green space”, playgrounds, parks and gardens and natural/semi-natural green space. These are difficult to discern on the maps in the appendix.

Appendix 6 seems to identify a further 12 areas for designation. There is a table on page 148 of the Plan which sets out the areas against the criteria for designation in the NPPF. There is insufficient information to justify the designations even if these were clear. For example, in seeking to meet the demonstrably special to the local community and local significance criteria, the table indicates “well used” for many of the proposed LGSs.

Whilst I accept that some of the spaces may well be suitable for designation as LGSs and meet the criteria, there is such a lack of clarity and information about the proposed designations, that I cannot reach the conclusion with any degree of certainty that these do meet the criteria in the NPPF.

Even if they did, the NPPF is clear that designating land as LGS should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.⁹⁹ Given my earlier comments about the housing strategy put forward by the Plan, I cannot be certain that to designate these spaces would have regard to this part of the NPPF.

Therefore I am left with little option but to delete this element of the policy.

Turning now to the supporting text, this states at paragraph 11.5.11 that green space adjacent to main roads will not be permitted in the future. This is a policy statement which appears in the supporting text and should be modified.

⁹⁹ NPPF para 101

Paragraph 11.5.13 refers to the Town Council's desire to be owners and custodians of suitable open space and sets out requirements. This is not a development and use of land matter.

- **Delete criterion 1.**
- **Delete the first and second sentences of criterion 2. and change the [existing] last sentence of this criterion to read: "*Play areas must be in locations central to the development, be well-overlooked and built in durable materials.*"**
- **Change criterion 3. to read: "*The provision of amenity green space must be in a single...*" [retain as existing to end]**
- **Delete [existing] criterion 6., any associated supporting text [including paragraph 11.5.15] and appendices 5 and 6 [note both appendices are recommended for deletion in an earlier modification in relation to Policy SW24]**
- **Change the second sentence of paragraph 11.5.11 on page 118 of the Plan to read: "*This is to be avoided* in future developments."**
- **Move paragraph 11.5.13 on page 118 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called "Community Aspirations"**

Policy SW28 Public Rights of Way

The NPPF is clear that planning policy should protect and enhance public rights of way and access including through opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links.¹⁰⁰

This policy seeks to ensure that public rights of way are protected and can continue to be enjoyed. Whilst this is a laudable aim, the policy wording effectively restricts development. The supporting text, which I discuss later and make some amendment to, is clear that development adjacent or along routes is not welcomed.

Often development is the means of securing enhancements to existing routes or a way of providing new routes or connections between routes. The blanket restriction in the first element of the policy does not meet the basic conditions; it does not take account of national policy or guidance and may hinder the achievement of sustainable development.

The second element of the policy relates to development which would be visible from a public right of way. It seeks to ensure that this is a consideration in any planning

¹⁰⁰ NPPF para 100

determination and that landscaping could help with any such impacts. This latter element would seem to protect and promote the use of rights of way with their known benefits to health and the social aspect of sustainable development in particular.

Paragraph 11.5.21 on page 123 of the Plan makes a statement that any development along or adjacent to a route known as Beechy Ride would be detrimental. This is a statement of policy and should be amended to ensure that the Plan has clarity.

Another statement of policy is to be found in the next paragraph. A modification is made to this statement in the interests of clarity.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions for the reasons given above.

- **Delete criterion 1. of the policy**
- **Change the last sentence in paragraph 11.5.21 on page 123 of the Plan to read: “Any development along or adjacent to *this* route *must be carefully considered in relation* to the amenity value of the route.”**
- **Change the third sentence in [the first numbered] paragraph 11.5.22 on page 123 of the Plan to read: “Development *should consider the mitigation of any adverse effect on the amenity value of a footpath which could include the provision of landscaping for example.*” and delete the next sentence which begins ““Substantial” ...”**
- **Consequential amendments will be needed [for example criteria numbering]**

Policy SW29 Land of Value to the Natural Environment

Any area of environmental value in the Plan area has been mapped as part of the work carried out on the Plan. These areas are mapped at Appendix 8. I find the small scale of the map difficult to decipher. In addition the supporting text to the policy indicates that there is a table of the areas; I cannot find this in Appendix 8.

The policy designates the areas identified as LGSs. There is no list of the areas and no evidence to demonstrate how they meet the criteria in the NPPF for LGSs.¹⁰¹ The wording of the policy then only permits development which would enhance the value of these sites and /or increases the overall area of the sites. This again does not reflect the stance of the NPPF on LGSs. As a result this element of the policy does not meet the basic conditions and is recommended for deletion.

¹⁰¹ NPPF paras, 101, 102 and 103

The second element of the policy supports the creation of publicly accessible woodland. This is an acceptable policy stance given that the NPPF indicates that planning policy should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the benefits of trees and woodland.¹⁰²

Paragraph 11.5.23 refers to conservation covenants; the support given in the Plan amounts to a community aspiration and should be moved to a separate section of the Plan.

- **Delete criterion 1. of the policy and Appendix 8**
- **Move paragraph 11.5.23 on page 124 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations”**
- **Consequential amendments will be needed including the deletion of [the second numbered] paragraph 11.5.22 on page 123 of the Plan**

12. Arts and Cultural Facilities

Policy SW30 Arts and Cultural Facilities

There is little doubt of the importance and contribution the arts make to Saffron Walden; this is described in this section of the Plan.

The NPPF recognises that planning policy should provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that communities need to improve health, social and cultural well being.¹⁰³ Part of its social objective in the achievement of sustainable development is to support communities’ health, social and cultural well being.¹⁰⁴

Policy SW30 has three elements. The first element supports public art subject to site-specific considerations. There are no criteria or indication as to what these considerations might be or when public art might or might not be acceptable. There is therefore a lack of clarity in this element and without any criteria it has limited value as a development management tool. As a result it is recommended for deletion.

The second element supports a cinema or arts centre in the town centre or at or near the Fairycroft site. This gives a clear indication for support for such a facility and Fairycroft House is discussed in the supporting text.

¹⁰² NPPF para 174

¹⁰³ Ibid para 93

¹⁰⁴ Ibid para 8

The final element seeks contributions from development for arts and arts facilities. As explained elsewhere in this report, developer contributions can only be sought where they meet certain criteria.¹⁰⁵

Plans should set out the contributions expected from development, but this should include setting the level and type and be sure that deliverability is not adversely affected.¹⁰⁶

There is no reference to any such contributions in the supporting text and aside from the identification of gaps in provision, no indication as to what these contributions may consist of. Given this lack of detail or explanation, this element of the policy is too generalised and lacks the required clarity.

The supporting text to this section refers to an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry. The document referred to is dated July not June 2017. Paragraph 12.15 offers support for the change of use to an arts centre; this is a statement of policy which is contained in the policy itself and so there is no need to duplicate it here. In addition the use classes changed and so the use classes referred to are out of date.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions.

- **Delete criteria 1. and 3. from the policy**
- **Change “June” in paragraph 12.3 on page 125 of the Plan to “July”**
- **Delete the last sentence in paragraph 12.15 on page 127 of the Plan which begins “Applications for change of use...”**

13. Education

Policy SW31 Education

The NPPF states the importance of having enough school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities.¹⁰⁷ It urges local planning authorities to take a positive approach to this need and to widen choice in education.¹⁰⁸

This policy has four elements. The first offers blanket support for early years provision where there is a local need. Such blanket support may have unintended consequences

¹⁰⁵ NPPF para 57

¹⁰⁶ Ibid para 34

¹⁰⁷ Ibid para 95

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

and lead to otherwise unacceptable development. This would not meet the basic conditions.

The second element requires land in two planning applications (UTT/13/3467/OP and UTT/17/2832/OP) to be retained for educational or community use unless or until required for educational use. A representation on behalf of the landowner of this site explains that the signed S106 agreement relating to UTT/17/2832/OP includes provision for the specified land to be reserved for educational purposes for a fixed period of ten years. In the event the land is not required within that time frame, the land would then be offered to the Town Council for community or open space use. The wording of the policy (and the supporting text) does not accurately reflect this scenario.

The third element relates to the library. The criterion simply resists change of use. There are no criteria to guide developers as to what alternative uses might be appropriate. Whilst I understand the desire to retain this facility, the blanket resistance to any changes of use does not meet the basic conditions as this might scupper the achievement of sustainable development.

The fourth element supports a separate sixth form college and the expansion of the County High School onto a separate site. This again offers blanket support with no criteria to indicate suitable sites or locations. This might inadvertently result in unacceptable development. This lack of clarity and potential to hinder the achievement of sustainable development means this criterion does not meet the basic conditions.

- **Delete Policy SW31 and its supporting text (paragraphs 13.1 to 13.11 inclusive)**

14. Healthcare

Policy SW32 Healthcare

The NPPF states that planning policy should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well being of the community.¹⁰⁹ This also forms part of the social objective of the achievement of sustainable development in that accessible services reflecting current and future needs are fostered.¹¹⁰

Policy SW32 supports the provision of a health centre in the town subject to four criteria. These are appropriate criteria to ensure that the location of such a facility is accessible to all.

A combined community health centre at the existing community hospital is also supported.

¹⁰⁹ NPPF para 93

¹¹⁰ Ibid para 8

The policy meets the relevant basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.

Appendices

A number of appendices follow.

Appendix 1 is a list of strategic policies in the LP 2005.

Appendix 2 contains information about the air quality management area. This is referred to in various parts of the Plan.

Appendix 3 is a transport “wish list”. This is referred to in section 10.2 of the Plan.

Appendix 4 contains information about SuDs.

Appendix 5 is the open spaces audit. I have recommended deletion of this appendix.

Appendix 6 contains proposed LGSs. I have recommended deletion of this appendix.

Appendix 7 contains community centre survey responses and is useful to retain.

Appendix 8 is land of environmental value. I have recommended deletion of this appendix.

Appendix 9 contains extracts of policies in the now withdrawn ELP and the policy which this appendix sits alongside has been recommended for deletion. I have recommended deletion of this appendix.

Plan Monitoring and Delivery

Whilst monitoring and review is not currently a requirement for neighbourhood planning, the measures contained in this section are to be welcomed.

8.0 Conclusions and recommendations

I am satisfied that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan, subject to the modifications I have recommended, meets the basic conditions and the other statutory requirements outlined earlier in this report.

I am therefore pleased to recommend to Uttlesford District Council that, subject to the modifications proposed in this report, the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed to a referendum.

Following on from that, I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area. I see no reason to alter or extend the Plan area for the purpose of holding a referendum and no representations have been made that would lead me to reach a different conclusion.

I therefore consider that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan area as approved by Uttlesford District Council on 13 December 2012.

Ann Skippers MRTPI

Ann Skippers Planning

28 April 2022

Appendix 1 List of key documents specific to this examination

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036

Basic Conditions Statement October 2020

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination Statement March 2020 (UDC) which includes the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Consultation Statement undated

Heritage and Character Assessment October 2018 (AECOM)

Saffron Walden Bus Survey Report - July 2018 by David Corke

Uttlesford Local Plan adopted January 2005

Essex Design Guide (ECC)

Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009 (ECC and EPOA)

Air Quality Action Plan 2017 – 2022 (UDC)

The SuDs Manual (CIRIA)

TCPA Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guides for Creating Successful New Communities guide 7 planning for green and prosperous places 2017 (TCPA)

UDC Open Space Assessment Report February 2019 (Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd)

UDC Shopfront Design Guide February 2022

And other evidence available on the Town Council's website www.saffronwalden.gov.uk

List ends

Appendix 2 Note of Interim Findings with Questions of Clarification (Note 1)

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Note of Interim Findings from the Examiner to the Town Council and Uttlesford District Council

Having completed my initial assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan), I am writing to the Town Council (TC) and Uttlesford District Council (UD) to set out my interim findings.

Unfortunately I have identified a number of matters which I consider will significantly change the Plan as produced by the TC of behalf of the local community. I understand this will be disappointing news to those involved in the production of the Plan. I therefore want to ensure that I present a rounded picture of these matters to help the TC and LPA make an informed judgement as to how best to progress the Plan.

Main Matters

1. Policy SW1 (SWNP Site Allocations) makes a number of site allocations. However, it relies wholly on work carried out on the now withdrawn emerging Local Plan. There is no standalone work or at the very least a review to check the validity of this untested evidence. It is not clear to me why some sites in the emerging Local Plan have come forward whilst others appear not to. Furthermore there is no evidence, given the assumptions made, that the sites selected are still available, suitable and are likely to be economically viable.

Secondly, there is no clarity over the housing figure requirement the Plan is to meet. It does not appear that UDC have been asked to provide a housing figure and so there is no way of knowing whether the Plan meets its housing requirement.

Thirdly, and this is related to the second point above, the Plan does not satisfactorily deal with its Plan period which runs from 2021 – 2036 in relation to housing supply.

Fourthly, even if the approach of the Plan and the proposed site allocations were to be found to meet the basic conditions, there is insufficient evidence to support some of the key requirements in the site allocation policies. An example of this is the 5% older persons 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings required for SAF 1.

Taking all these points singly and together, means that it is likely I would have little option but to delete the relevant policies and section of the Plan resulting in a Plan that would not deal with housing supply or contain any site allocations.

2. Policy SW2 (Protection of Views). A number of views have been identified through work on the Heritage and Character Assessment (HCA) as being of importance. These views should be identified, numbered, described and mapped. A series of maps and photographs on page 35 onwards of the Plan show some views, but it is not clear to me whether these are the same general views as identified in the HCA, where these viewpoints are and how they relate to the photographs or the work carried out on the HCA. Much more work would need to be carried out for the policy to meet the basic conditions. This work may mean that consultation would have to be redone. However, if the work is not carried out, this policy is likely to be recommended for deletion.
3. There are likely to be a significant number of recommended modifications. The two examples above give a flavour of the reasons why. At the present time, eight policies are

likely to be recommended for deletion (these include what I regard to be key policies in the Plan, for example in relation to the identification of Local Green Spaces), 11 policies are recommended for modification and you will see a list of queries on a number of other policies in the next heading on this note "other issues" which may result in modification or even deletion to these policies.

In the main the deletions of, and modifications to, policies are either due to a lack of sufficient and/or appropriate evidence to support them and/or to ensure they have regard to national policy and guidance, particularly in relation to the necessary clarity and precision needed to provide a practical framework for decision-making.

Given this, and the number of queries below on other policies, I would like to give the TC and UDC an opportunity to consider the best way forward.

Other issues – questions of clarification

During the course of an examination, it is not unusual for me to have a number of questions of clarification. These are usually queries which can be readily dealt with by an exchange of correspondence.

4. Policy SW4 (Housing Mix on New Developments). There is a lot of supporting text for this policy, but the policy requirements do not seem to reflect the supporting evidence. I invite comments on this from both the TC and UDC.
5. Policy SW5 (Affordable Housing). Does UDC have any comments about the requirements set out in this policy; are they appropriate?
6. Policy SW8 (Parking on New Developments). Please could the rationale/evidence for the electric vehicle charging points requirements be explained?
7. Policy SW14 (Shopfront Design) refers to a Shopfront Design Guide being produced by UDC. Please could UDC confirm whether this has now been adopted and if so, please provide a copy?
8. Policy SW19 (Ecological Requirements for All New Domestic and Commercial Developments). (a) the policy refers to TCPA guidelines, but I think these relate to new communities; is this correct? Please could you provide a copy of the guidelines referred to; (b) please explain what is meant by not-for-profit housing which is redevelopment of land and the rationale for the footprint proviso in the exception; (c) please check the date of the latest CIRIA SuDs Manual; (d) are the requirements in the CIRIA SuDs Manual and the Essex SuDs Design Guide referred to in criterion 3. the same?; if not, how should this requirement in the policy be reconciled?
9. Section 10 (Transport Infrastructure) refers to a number of documents in relation to highway impact and the air quality management area. (a) please provide the source documents so I can readily find the source of the evidence quoted; (b) the Air Quality Action Plan seems to contain more than the seven measures referred to in the supporting text; why have only seven been referred to?

10. Policy SW20 (Promoting Walking and Cycling) refers to Secured by Design New Homes 2014; is this the latest version? The supporting text refers to 2019.
11. Paragraph 10.3.5 refers to a review report carried out by Dr. Corke; the link is not working for me so please can a copy of this report be provided?
12. Policy SW23 (Vehicular Transport). The policy refers to the Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment October 2013; is this document the most recent and the most appropriate assessment to use?

Conclusion

It will be apparent that there are a number of issues in the Plan which, in my view, will require modifications that will come as a disappointment to those involved in its production and result in a Plan very different to that submitted to UDC. These may in themselves be regarded as significant changes. This may mean that further public consultation would need to be carried out.

In making this statement, I have kept in mind the guidance in the NPIERS Guidance to service users and examiners which indicates that "Examiners will not generally refer back to parties on these detailed revisions. But where the modification may necessitate a change which in the opinion of an examiner would be significant, there is a reasonable expectation that a description of the intended modification will be publicised on the local planning authority's website, seeking comments, prior to recommending the change. Significant changes may typically require further work to be undertaken, particularly in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment." (paragraph 2.12.6 of the Guidance).

I am conscious that the NPIERS Guidance indicates that what might constitute a significant change will be for me to determine in the context of the Plan examined, but that such changes can lead to concerns over community ownership of the Plan.

Whilst this Plan is not examined through NPIERS, I consider it helpful to refer to that Guidance.

It is also important to recognise that I must ensure I am not rewriting the Plan (and indeed would not wish to do so) in making modifications.

Possible courses of action to consider

There are therefore two ***possible courses of action*** to consider:

- A. I carry on with the examination once you have responded to the queries of clarification set out above. This is likely to result in a report that recommends the Plan proceeds to referendum, but with many modifications. It is possible that the number and type of modifications may be regarded as significantly changing the intent and nature of the Plan's contents requiring a short further period of consultation. A timescale for receipt of the answers to the queries would need to be agreed between us all; the usual period is two weeks with other milestone dates being set out for all parties to minimise any further delays to the examination.
- B. The Plan is withdrawn from examination and no further work is carried out by me on the examination. This would allow the TC and UDC to work together on remedying the

deficiencies of the Plan. Once and if the Plan was to be (re)submitted to UDC in a revised form with revised supporting documentation at some point in the future, I could be appointed again to undertake the new examination (with the agreement of all parties including me) or another examiner could be appointed as preferred. No timescales would be needed.

I have considered whether to hold an exploratory meeting or hearing to consider these issues. I see no immediate benefit to any party in holding a meeting or hearing at the present time as I have set out the issues and options as I see them in detail above.

In the light of the above, I would like to give the TC the opportunity to consider my comments above and the best way forward.

At this point in time I am not asking the TC or UDC to address the queries posed above. They are simply there to illustrate the concerns about some aspects of the Plan to help the TC to make an informed choice.

I am also not seeking, and will not accept, any representations from other parties regarding this matter at this stage.

I have not yet made a site visit to the area. I will not spend any further time on the examination until the TC and UDC have had an opportunity to come back to me with their preferred course of action.

I realise this will be an important consideration for the local community. Once the TC has had a chance to consider the options moving forward, including holding any discussions with UDC, please let me know how you wish to proceed. Please respond by **Wednesday 20 October**. If a little further time is required, for example to coincide with a TC meeting, please let me know.

Should you decide you would like me to proceed, please then let me know a reasonable timescale for receipt of the responses to the queries set out above. This would usually be a period of about two weeks.

This note will be a matter of public record and should be placed on the relevant websites.

With many thanks,

Ann Skippers MRTPI
Independent Examiner
5 October 2021

Appendix 3 Note re Significant Changes (Note 2)

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Note from the Examiner to the Town Council and Uttlesford District Council

I wrote to the Town Council and Uttlesford District Council (UDC) on 5 October 2021. This was called "Note of Interim Findings". This explained that I had found a number of matters requiring modification which would, in my view, significantly change the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) as submitted. I outlined a number of options in terms of a way forward which included the withdrawal of the Plan from examination to allow those deficiencies to be addressed.

The Town Council confirmed on 10 November that they wished to continue with the examination.

The Note of Interim Findings referred to NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners. This states: "Examiners will not generally refer back to parties on these detailed revisions. But where the modification may necessitate a change which in the opinion of an examiner would be significant, there is a reasonable expectation that a description of the intended modification will be publicised on the local planning authority's website, seeking comments, prior to recommending the change. Significant changes may typically require further work to be undertaken, particularly in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment." (paragraph 2.12.6 of the NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners).

In my view I will be making a number of modifications to the Plan which can be regarded as significant.

The significant modifications I propose are the deletion of the following proposed Policies:

- SW1 Site Allocations (lack of satisfactory evidence and clarity)
- SW2 Protection of Views (lack of satisfactory evidence and clarity)
- SW3 Site Allocation (as per Policy SW1)
- SW6 Housing Density (lack of satisfactory evidence)
- SW9 Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design (presented as a non-binding policy so lack of clarity as to status and acceptable elements cannot be retained as it has not been consulted upon as policy)
- SW10 Accessible and Adaptable Homes (as per Policy SW09)
- SW11 Town Centre Uses (lack of clarity and satisfactory evidence)
- SW24 Allotments (lack of clarity and satisfactory evidence)
- SW26 Community Halls and Centres (lack of satisfactory evidence on viability and deliverability)
- SW31 Education (lack of clarity/would not achieve sustainable development)

Individually with the exception of Policies SW1 and SW3, none of the other policies to be deleted might be regarded as significant modifications by themselves. The proposed deletion of Policies SW1 and SW3 are significant, as these two policies together constitute the housing supply and site allocations. However, taken

cumulatively and alongside the number of proposed policy deletions, even bearing in mind this is a complex and ambitious Plan, means that the Plan put forward for referendum will be significantly different to that put forward by the Town Council and the community at submission stage.

The description of the intended modification alongside brief reasons for these significant changes are outlined in my Note of Interim Findings and summarised above. A number of other policies are also proposed to be modified.

In accordance with guidance to examiners in paragraph 2.12.6 in Part 2 of the NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners, I now intend to seek comments on these proposed significant modifications to the Plan.

The guidance states that in these circumstances there is a reasonable expectation that a description of the intended modifications (which I have provided above) will be publicised on UDC's website, seeking comments, prior to recommending the changes. There is no requirement for any further publicity, but I am happy for both Councils to publicise this matter further if they wish to do so. However, this should not mean a delay in publicity. A period of two weeks should be allowed for comments. Please can this publicity period start as soon as possible. I have included, in separate correspondence, a suggested timetable to ensure there is no further delay to the examination.

I will only accept comments on these significant modifications and will accept no other correspondence on any other aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan. During this consultation period, both Councils are welcome to make comments on these proposed significant modifications if they wish to do so.

Ann Skippers
Independent Examiner
7 February 2022

Appendix 4 Note (of Clarification) (Note 3)

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Examination Note from the Examiner to the Town Council and Uttlesford District Council

Further to my Examination Note 2 of 7 February 2022, I am now writing to address a request from Saffron Walden Town Council (TC) to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to clarify that Note.

Briefly, the history is that I wrote to the TC and UDC on 5 October 2021. This was called "Note of Interim Findings". This explained that I had found a number of matters requiring modification which would, in my view, significantly change the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) as submitted. I outlined options in terms of a way forward. I explained that I considered I would be recommending a number of significant changes to the Plan and that, in line with NPIERS Guidance to service users and examiners, 2018 (the Guidance), a description of those significant changes would be publicised on the local planning authority's website seeking comments prior to recommending the changes.

My Note of 7 February 2022 sets out what those significant changes are and requests that the publicity period be started. A separate email set out a suggested timescale for progressing the Plan as the TC indicated it wished me to continue with the examination.

Most of the ten policies proposed for deletion are recommended for deletion due to a lack of satisfactory evidence. The TC has asked whether it can submit evidence at this stage.

Firstly, it is usual for additional evidence only to be submitted in exceptional circumstances; this is confirmed in the Guidance.

Secondly, if the evidence is not already in the public domain, the public has not had an opportunity to consider it.

In order to assist the TC to see whether the evidence is already available and within the public domain, I set out here further information about the proposed significant modifications. The full reasoning will be set out in my report should the policies still be proposed for deletion after the publicity period has been held.

- Policies SW1 and SW3 Site Allocations (lack of satisfactory evidence and clarity). The emerging local plan has now been withdrawn. In these circumstances, in line with national policy and advice, an indicative housing figure should be requested from UDC. The Plan then would work to that housing figure (which itself would be examined) with its proposed site allocations. There is no indication that such a housing figure has been sought. The Plan period does not tie up with the local plan period so the Plan cannot use those figures. There is then no evidence that a site selection and assessment process has been undertaken. There is no information on whether the sites subject to these policies are still suitable and available. There is little explanation of the key requirements sought for each site even if the sites were found to be appropriate.
- SW2 Protection of Views (lack of satisfactory evidence and clarity). Whilst a Heritage and Character Assessment has been undertaken, there is a lack of clarity

and precision around identifying, numbering, describing and mapping the views subject of the policy.

- SW6 Housing Density (lack of satisfactory evidence). There is insufficient evidence to support the densities sought.
- Policies SW9 Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design and SW10 Accessible and Adaptable Homes are presented as non-binding policies so there is a lack of clarity as to their status. Any acceptable parts of each policy which might have been able to be retained through modification cannot be retained as there has been no consultation on these as policies.
- SW11 Town Centre Uses (lack of clarity and satisfactory evidence). It is not clear on what basis or how the frontages have been defined.
- SW24 Allotments (lack of clarity and satisfactory evidence). There is no evidence to justify the requirement sought. The policy seeks designation of allotments as Local Green Spaces. There is no evidence to show how each of the proposed spaces meets the criteria set out in the NPPF.
- SW26 Community Halls and Centres (lack of satisfactory evidence on viability and deliverability). There is no evidence to support the standard sought or satisfactory consideration of viability and deliverability for the contributions sought.
- SW31 Education (lack of clarity/would not achieve sustainable development). All four elements of the policy are not considered to meet the basic conditions; the first and last elements offer blanket support which may lead to unacceptable development. The second does not reflect the current planning position of the site in question. The third does not offer guidance to developers on what alternative uses may be appropriate.

The Guidance explains it is the responsibility of the qualifying body to ensure all evidence relied on to justify the policies has been provided. I appreciate evidence can be time consuming and costly to produce and should always be proportionate to deal with the matter in hand. Deletion of policies is always a last resort.

As the Guidance recommends I have brought my concerns about various aspects of the draft Plan to the attention of the TC and UDC. I am inviting comments on the proposed significant modifications. Even if the TC considers the necessary evidence is available and already within the public domain, it can only be accepted at this late stage if there are exceptional circumstances to do that. I am not aware of any such circumstances at this time.

I trust this further information is helpful to all parties.

Ann Skippers
Independent Examiner
15 February 2022

APPENDIX 2: SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SCHEDULE OF EXAMINER’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan – Schedule of Examiner’s Recommendations

DOCUMENT PAGE/POLICY	EXAMINER’S RECOMMENDATION	EXAMINER’S REASON/S	OFFICER RECOMMENDATION AND REASON
Saffron Walden NP: Page 4			
Examiner’s Report: Page :9 Compliance with matters other than the basic conditions	Insert a clearer, more easily discernible map of the Plan area on page 4 of the Plan	The Plan area is shown on page 4 of the Plan, but I did not find the map to be clear. Therefore, I recommend a new, clearer map be substituted.	Agree The Plan Area needs to be clearly shown for the reader to clearly identify and understand the area covered by the neighbourhood plan.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 25 -33			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 17 - 21: Policy SWNP Site Allocations	Delete Policy SW1 and its supporting section 4.1, paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.1.8 Inclusive	<p>The site allocations were based on the withdrawn Local Plan and no standalone site selection assessment or review was carried out to check the continued validity of the sites in terms of availability, suitability and likely economic viability.</p> <p>The housing requirement is stated as 1,460 new</p>	<p>Agree No site assessment was undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed allocations are suitable, available and achievable and meet the housing requirement, vision and draft objectives of the neighbourhood plan. The allocations are not based on proportionate robust evidence as directed by the Planning Policy Guidance (para 040). This policy does not meet basic conditions.</p> <p>There is no clarity on the housing requirement for Saffron</p>

		<p>dwelling for the period 2011 –2033 whilst the Neighbourhood plan period is 2021 –2036. Not clear what the housing requirement is for the Saffron Walden.</p> <p>No indicative figure was sought from UDC and therefore no way to test any figure as required by Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)</p>	<p>Walden for the plan period 2021 – 2036 because the 1,460 dwelling requirement was based on the now withdrawn emerging Local Plan. An appropriate housing needs assessment need was not undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 67 requires the Local Planning Authority to provide an indicative figure if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. No indicative figure was requested by the neighbourhood planning body. Since no indicative figure was requested, the onus was on the neighbourhood plan body to carry out a housing need assessment and this was not undertaken.</p>
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	Consequential amendments will be needed including the deletion of Appendix 9.	Delete Appendix 9	Agree Appendix 9 is unnecessary and meaningless because the emerging Local Plan was withdrawn in May 2020.
		Development Limits for both Saffron Walden and Little Walden were not reviewed despite the considerable amount of proposed development.	Agree Saffron Walden and Little Walden Development Limits should have been reviewed to confirm whether the Developments Limits were still viable despite the considerable amount of development.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 29 – 30			
Examiner's Report: Pages 18 Policy SAF 1	Delete Policy SW1 and its supporting section 4.1, paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.1.8 Inclusive.	<p>Location of site not clear even on maps on page 27 of the Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>No number of dwellings is set out and lack of evidence or explanation for key requirements e.g. no evidence to support 5% older persons housing</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The map on page 27 is an excerpt from the withdrawn plan and at such a small scale that the location of site SAF1 is not clear.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>The Plan does not provide any evidence to support the requirement of 5% older person housing. Such a requirement has be supported by a robust evidence for a policy criterion. This policy does not meet basic conditions.</p>

Saffron Walden NP: Pages 30 – 31			
Examiner's Report: Page 18 Page 18: Policy SAF 3 – Land at Viceroy Coaches	The negative impacts on the site including heritage. Fluvial flood risk and surface water could have been identified had a site assessment been carried out.	The site is in a sensitive location as it falls within a Conservation Area, is adjacent to a registered park and garden and falls within the Air Quality Management Area. I	Agree The criteria pertinent to this site could have been included in this policy had an appropriate site assessment been undertaken during plan preparation. The policy as drafted would not support sustainable development.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 31 - 33			
Examiner's Report: Pages 18 - 19 Page 18: Policy SAF 4 - Jossaumes	No clarity of where or what the site is. Clarity provided in response to Note of Interim Findings	The policy refers to SAF 4; again it is not clear to me where or what this site is (although from subsequent correspondence to my Note of Interim Findings this is Jossaumes).	Agree Policy SAF 4 as presented is very confusing in that it comprises two different i.e. Jossaumes and Land at Shire Hill. This policy should be deleted as there are two sites within a single policy and there is no clarity in the policy.
Examiner's Report: Pages 18 Page 18 - 19: Land at Shire Hill	The site has extant planning permission and Neighbourhood Plan does not provide evidence why evidence for an extant planning permission can be relied on.	The policy then refers to land north of Shire Hill. In relation to land north of Shire Hill, subject of planning application reference UTT/17/2832/OP, the Plan explains that a spine road was an essential part of the development. The supporting text to the policy states that any subsequent application would need to demonstrate it would not have any adverse	The extant planning permission still stands, and the plan provides no evidence on why this permission cannot be relied on. Also, no evidence is provided to support the Policy's additional requirements (criteria).

		impacts and “...must not rely on evidence provided in support of UTT/17/2832/OP.” It is not clear to me why the evidence for an extant planning permission cannot be relied upon. Again, there is no explanation of some of the key requirements.	
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 34 - 39			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 21 - 22: Policy SW2 - Protection of Views	Delete Policy SW2 and its supporting section 4.1, paragraphs 4.1.9 to unnumbered on page 39 inclusive	The site comprises two policies setting out different development requirements. No site plan is provided and a requirement for a mixed development is set out without criteria for the requirement.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This policy does not have the required clarity and also deals with issues outside the site boundary.</p> <p>The supporting text contains requirements which cannot be achieved through the planning system such as residents parking permits costs.</p> <p>This policy does not meet basic conditions.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 41			
Examiner’s Report: Page 22: Policy SW3 - Site Allocation – Land at Viceroy Coaches to rear of 10 – 12 Bridge Street	Delete Policy SW3 and its supporting text paragraphs 4.1.10 to 4.1.13 inclusive	The site comprises two policies setting out different development requirements. No site plan is provided and a requirement for a mixed development is set out without criteria for the requirement.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This means the policy does not have the required clarity and also deals with issues outside the site boundary.</p>

			Furthermore, the supporting text contains requirements which cannot be achieved through the planning system such as residents parking permits costs.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 42 - 48			
Examiner's Report: Page 22 - 23: Policy SW4 - Housing Mix on New Developments	Reword the policy to read:		Agree
	1. All residential development proposals should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs but also provides for balanced and vibrant neighbourhoods. The specific mix should be based on up-to-date local evidence of need and take account of local circumstances and the nature of the surrounding area.	This policy encourages a wide range of housing to meet local needs. It refers to a number of different evidence sources in the supporting text. The policy sets out the percentage proportion of house sizes sought, but these which do not appear to reflect the evidence set out in the Plan.	Although the policy relies on up-to-date evidence it has an inbuilt inflexibility and does not have supporting evidence of the percentage requirement.
	2. The housing mix of affordable homes is to be determined by local housing need and policies set out by the planning authority	Criterion renumbered	For accuracy. Criterion renumbered to avoid duplication in numbering.
	3. Developments may not be subdivided into smaller parcels to avoid the housing mix policy."	Criterion renumbered	Renumbered for accuracy
	• Delete the words "Noting that people in receipt of LHA should be no different to people not in receipt of	The first is in the interests of ensuring language used is inclusive.	Agree

	LHA, other than the fact they have lower household incomes” from paragraph 4.2.9 on page 43 of the Plan		All policy wording should be inclusive.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete the last sentence of paragraph 4.2.15 on page 45 of the Plan which begins “This the 2015 SHMA...” 	The second relates to a comment on UDC’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment which seems to be without foundation given these types of assessment are carried out to the same standards nationwide	<p>Agree</p> <p>The statement no foundation because the assessments are standardised.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete the last sentence of paragraph 4.2.21 on page 47 of the Plan which begins “In order to use...” 	The issue about charities not raising their rents or selling properties in the future; this is not something which can be controlled through planning.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This issue is not about development and use of land and cannot be controlled through planning.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 48 - 51			
Examiner’s Report: Page 24: Policy SW5 Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend criterion 1. of the policy to read: “Development on sites which provide for 10 dwellings or more, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more will be required...” 	The policy recognises a dwelling number threshold but sets this at 11 or more and then introduces a residential floor space threshold in the policy and I am not sure how this has been derived.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The Policy is modified to correct the dwelling number threshold and to add a site size threshold in line with the NPPF. This modification ensures that this criteria meets the basic conditions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Delete the words “...strongly meets all the other objectives in the SWNP” from criterion 6. and replace with “...meets the objectives of the SWNP and complies with all relevant development plan policies 		<p>Agree</p> <p>This modification ensures that this criteria meets the basic conditions by ensuring that the criterion complies with all relevant development plan policies.</p>

Saffron Walden NP: Pages 52-			
Examiner's Report: Page 25: Policy SW6 Housing Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete Policy SW6 and its supporting text [paragraphs 4.4.1 – 4.4.4] 	<p>Policy seeks to distinguish between types of development without foundation as it is not based on the availability and capacity of infrastructure or services, location in terms of sustainable travel modes or the area's prevailing character or setting.</p> <p>Therefore, without sufficient or satisfactory evidence, the policy should be deleted as it does not meet the basic conditions; particularly it does not have sufficient regard to the NPPF and will not help to achieve sustainable development.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>NPPF factors required for consideration of setting densities have not been considered in this policy. This policy does not have regard to the NPPF and Planning Policy Guidance.</p> <p>This policy as drafted does not meet basic conditions and should be deleted.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 53 - 58			
Examiner's Report: Pages 25 – 26: Town Layout and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 5.1.1 on page 53; paragraph 124 of the NPPF has now changed to paragraph 126 and the quote is different and so needs updating 	<p>This section contains a number of references to the NPPF which has now been replaced by the one published in July 2021. I include a list of necessary modifications to bring this section up to date.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>This is necessary for accuracy to reflect latest NPPF issued July 2021.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 5.1.3 on page 53; paragraph 130 is now 134 and the contents have changed so this needs updating 	<p>Paragraph 130 is now 134 and the contents have changed so this needs updating.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>This is necessary for accuracy to reflect latest and correct paragraph contents according to the NPPF July 2021 .</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete the words "...which must be preserved in its current form." from paragraph 5.2.7 on page 56 	This does not meet the guidance in the NPPF or indeed the statutory provisions for Conservation Areas.	Agree This modification ensures that this paragraph is accurate and had regard to the NPPF and statutory provisions for Conservation Areas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the date in paragraph 5.2.16 on page 58 from "2017" to "2020" 		Agree For the sake of accuracy. Correction of a wrong date.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add "and Public Health England" to the list of endorsements in paragraph 5.2.17 	Add "and Public Health England" to the list of endorsements	Agree Additional information relevant to supporting text.
Saffron Walden NP: Page 59 - 61			
Examiner's Report: Pages 26 – 28: Policy SW7 Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the word "Following" in criterion 2. of the policy to "Adherence" 	Change the wording of criterion 2. To ensure there is clarity.	Agree Modification is to ensure clarity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete criterion 4. h) 	The Government introduced national technical standards for housing in 2015. A Written Ministerial Statement (WMS)56 explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. I also note the WMS states that neighbourhood plans should not be used to apply the national technical standard. This is echoed in PPG.	Agree Deletion ensures removes a criterion that is not in accordance with PPG as well as Written Ministerial Statement Neighbourhood plans should not set additional technical standards or requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the first “and” in criterion 5e) of the policy to “or” 	Criterion 5e); at present it requires infill development to preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting. This is a high bar to set; higher than the statutory protection for Conservation Areas	<p>Agree</p> <p>The modification is made to make the policy more flexible and in line with national policy and guidance.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the word “major” before “...developments...” in criterion 6. of the policy and delete the words “...which have a relatively large footprint...” 	Criterion 6 currently refers to “relatively large footprint” and whilst I understand the intention of this phrase it is open to interpretation.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The modification is made to provide clarity to the criterion.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reword criterion 10. to read: “There should be a hierarchy of street types to ensure developments are legible with clear signage at decision points.” 	Alter the reference to street naming to the language used in the RTP1’s Dementia and Town Planning Practice Note so there is additional clarity in criterion 10.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The modification is made to provide clarity to the criterion.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a new criterion that reads: “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.” 	A criterion about trees is added to ensure the policy has regard to the new NPPF which makes it clear that it is the Government’s intention that all new streets include trees unless this would be inappropriate.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This addition ensures that the policy has regard to the NPPF July 2021.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 61 - 63			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 28 – 29: Policy SW8 Parking on New Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the words “and UDC’s local parking standard for 4+ bedroomed dwellings.” at the end of criterion 2. 	Due to nature of the District, local parking standards have been adopted in addition to the Parking Standards Design and Good Practice for dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. Reference should be made to this in the policy.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The local parking standard is important to reflect the district’s high reliance on private car use due to its rural nature.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revise criterion 3. to read: “All dwellings will make provision for electric vehicle (EV) charging points.” 	I raised a query on the details and asked for the rationale and evidence behind the details. The TC referred me to the NPPF, but unfortunately, did not point me in the direction of any further detailed rationale.	Agree Modification ensures that reference to provision of electric vehicles is retained in the policy without the unsubstantiated details.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Amend the words “...must provide...” in paragraph 5.3.10 on page 63 of the Plan to “make provision for” 	A modification is also made to the supporting text to help future proof the requirements.	Agree Modification ensures flexibility in policy wording.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 64 - 67			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 29: Policy SW9 Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete Policy SW9 and its supporting text 	<p>The WMS explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings and should not be used to apply the national technical standard. This is echoed in PPG.</p> <p>The Plan acknowledges the position set out above. However, the supporting text to the policy explains that the Plan sets out a non-binding policy on construction standards viewed as desirable.</p> <p>I do not consider that this position meets the stance of the WMS; even if it were to be successfully argued that it does then having a</p>	Agree Contrary to the Written Ministerial Statement dated 25 March 2015 and the PPG this policy sets additional technical standards which does not meet basic conditions. Deletion of this non-binding policy provides clarity and certainty to the Plan.

		non-binding policy within a development plan seems to me to create a lack of clarity and certainty within the Plan document.	
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 68 – 70			
Examiner's Report: Pages 29 – 30: Policy SW10 Accessible and Adaptable Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete Policy SW10 and its supporting text [paragraphs 5.5.1 – 5.5.10, but note wrong sequencing of paragraph numbers] 	There is much to commend this approach, but, similar to the previous policy, the WMS does not allow neighbourhood plans to set such standards. I consider that the inclusion of a “non-binding” policy within the Plan is too confusing.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The WMS does not allow neighbourhood plans to set such standards.</p> <p>The deletion of this “non-binding” policy removes confusion and provides clarity to the plan.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 71 - 77			
Examiner's Report: Pages 30: 6. Commercial Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Paragraph 6.3.6 on page 75; paragraph 182 is now 187 	Paragraph 182 is now 187	<p>Agree</p> <p>For accuracy to reflect the correct paragraphs in the NPPF July 2021.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Remove the asterix to the fourth column of the table in paragraph 6.3.8 on page 77 of the Plan for professional and financial services 	Professional and financial services are not included in the NPPF's definition (despite now being in the same Use Class)	<p>Agree</p> <p>For accuracy to reflect the new Use Classes Order 2020.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Add an asterix to hotels to the fourth column of the table in paragraph 6.3.8 	Hotels are specifically included in the NPPF's definition.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For accuracy to reflect the new Use Classes Order 2020.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete the penultimate sentence of paragraph 6.1.5 on page 72 of the Plan which begins “This may change...” and replace with a new sentence to read: “It should be noted that the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn 	There is also a reference to garden villages; this needs to be updated given the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Updating required given that the emerging local plan refencing garden villages was withdrawn in 2020.</p>

	along with the concept of garden villages.”		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Update paragraph 6.1.9 on page 72 by replacing “...has been granted planning permission.” with “...has been constructed.” 		<p>Agree</p> <p>Updating required since the Premier Inn has been constructed.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page78			
<p>Examiner’s Report: Pages 30 - 31:</p> <p>Policy SW11 Town Centre Uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete Policy SW11 	<p>The policy seeks to restrict ground floor uses in these frontages to the main town centre uses defined in the NPPF. This differs to the Use Classes Order brought in on 1 August 2021 which permits change to Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) subject to various criteria.</p> <p>I appreciate that the policy was devised before the new Use Classes Order came about. The Plan rightly points out that Saffron Walden has a compact and vibrant town centre and I can understand why there is a desire to retain retail and other more commercial town centre uses in it. However, as far as I am aware, the only way to remove all or some permitted development rights (which are devised by the Government) is through an Article 4 direction of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The permitted development rights can only be removed by Article 4 directions and therefore this policy is redundant and should be deleted.</p>

		Development) (England) Order 2015. The second element of the policy is redundant given the first element is to be deleted.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete the second sentence of paragraph 6.3.1; all of paragraph 6.3.3; the associated map and the fourth sentence of paragraph 6.3.4 to end 	This policy identifies primary and secondary frontages in the town centre which are shown on a map at paragraph 6.3.1. I am not clear how these frontages have been identified although from my site visit, they have been defined logically and appropriately bearing in mind what I saw on the ground.	<p>Agree</p> <p>No evidence has been provided to support the slight increase of primary and decrease of secondary frontages shown on the map.</p> <p>Deletion of the Policy will ensure the Plan meets basic conditions.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 78			
Examiner's Report: Pages 32: Policy SW12 Convenience Stores in Residential Neighbourhoods	No modifications are recommended.	This policy supports the NPPF's aim of providing the facilities and services communities need ⁶⁴ and help to achieve sustainable development. The policy meets the basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy meets the basic conditions.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 79			
Examiner's Report: Pages 32: Policy SW13 17 Market Hill & 29-31 Church Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reword the policy to read: "Any future uses of the building must be compatible with and sustain and enhance the historic significance of the building and be viable consistent with the building's conservation and enhancement. Substantial harm to or 	This policy relates to a Grade I listed building and gives guidelines for its potential reuse. I have taken the wording of the policy to signal a concern about the compatibility of future uses in this historic building.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Recommended modifications ensure that the policy meets the basic conditions, in particular have regard to the NPPF and to help achieve sustainable development.</p>

	loss of the building should be wholly exceptional.” •		
Saffron Walden NP: Page 80			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 33: Policy SW14 Shopfront Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change criterion 2. of the policy to read: “Uttlesford District Council sets out guidance for shopfront design in its document Shopfront Design Guide February 2022 and (1) above should be read in conjunction with this document or any successor document and must be taken into account in developing and determining such proposals.” 	One modification to make to ensure that the recently endorsed Design Guide referred to is taken into account rather than just considered in relation to this policy. This modification will strengthen the link between the policy and the document.	<p>Agree</p> <p>With this modification, this policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to the NPPF, being in general conformity with LP 2005 and Policy GEN2 in particular and helping to achieve sustainable development.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 80 - 82			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 33 - 34: Policy SW15 Development of 56 High Street	Delete Policy SW15 and paragraph 6.5.4	<p>This policy prevents the redevelopment of this site until a suitable replacement for the scout hall on the site is found. A representation on behalf of the landowner made at the time of the significant modifications consultation states that the scout hall is not within the same ownership. This means that the first element of the policy is not relevant and should be deleted along with references to this desire in the supporting text.</p> <p>The second element of the policy refers to the comprehensive development of the whole site</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The lack of clarity in the policy which means it does not have regard to national policy and guidance and therefore does not meet the basic conditions.</p>

		which is of course desirable, but I cannot find a plan or map of the area referred to in the Plan. I note that the next policy includes a desire for the possibility of a comprehensive scheme for the regeneration of George Street which could, at least in part, include this site.	
Saffron Walden NP: Page 83			
Examiner's Report: Page 34: Policy SW16 Regeneration of George Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repword the first sentence of the policy to read: "Proposals to regenerate George Street will be supported where the following criteria are met:" • Add the word "residential" before "...accommodation..." in criterion a) • Move criterion c) to become a separate sentence at the end of the policy adding the words "...would be welcomed." 	This policy supports the regeneration of Nos 2-18 George Street setting out various criteria. The principle of the policy is acceptable, but its wording is not clear enough.	<p>Agree</p> <p>With the recommended modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by taking account of the NPPF's stance on promoting clear visions and strategies to allow regeneration in building a strong and competitive economy and creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 83			
Examiner's Report: Pages 34 – 35: Policy SW17 Development of New and Existing Commercial Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the words "Otherwise acceptable" at the start of criteria 1., 2. and 3. 	I have some concern about how the policy is worded. At present, it supports proposals which, as an example, result in additional employment in respect of farm diversification, but this would give a carte blanche to all such proposals regardless of any other impacts they might have. In	<p>Agree</p> <p>The recommended policy modification ensures that only proposals with the desired impacts will be supported.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the word "particularly" before "...supported." in criteria 1. and 2. 		<p>Agree</p> <p>Addition of the word particularly will indicate that these two</p>

		addition, it may be hard to quantify employment and this is not a common test of the acceptability of farm diversification however desirable this might be in this locality.	policies will be received and supported favourable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend criterion 4. to read: “New and renovated commercial buildings must be constructed from appropriate and suitably coloured materials that enables them to blend into the surrounding countryside.” 	The last criterion which refers to cladding and is therefore too restrictive given that other materials might well be as suitable.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The modification provides flexibility to the criterion policy which is currently too restrictive and would not meet basic conditions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move section 6.6 on page 83 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations” ensuring that the reference to Policy SW11 is deleted 	A section, 6.6 on page 83 of the Plan which contains a number of statements of support for various initiatives. In themselves these read well and are appropriate. However, some could be interpreted as policy statements and therefore it is important that their status is clear. They should be moved to a separate section of the Plan and clearly denoted as community aspirations. Some consequential amendments to the text will be needed.	<p>Agree</p> <p>These initiatives have been moved to the Appendices in consultation with Saffron Walden Town Council (Qualifying Body).</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 85			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 35 -36 Policy SW18 High Quality Communications Infrastructure	No modifications are therefore recommended.	The NPPF continues that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile	<p>Agree</p> <p>This policy meets the basic conditions, particularly having regard to the NPPF and helping to achieve sustainable development.</p>

		technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.	
Saffron Walden NP:Pages 86 – 88			
Examiner's Report: Page 36 – 37. Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move paragraphs 8.3 and 8.6 on page 86 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called "Community Aspirations" 	Paragraph 8.3 on page 86 refers to public planting. I consider this to be a community aspiration and it should be moved to a separate section.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Public planting is a community aspiration and should be moved to the Community Aspirations section in the Appendices section.</p>
		The second issue relates to ownership of the land in relation to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) in paragraph 8.6. This is not a development and use of land matter and so again should be placed in a separate community aspiration section.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Ownership of land is not a development and use of land matter and should be moved to the Community Aspirations section in the Appendices section.</p>
Examiner's Report: Page 36 – 37: Policy SW19 Ecological Requirements for All New Domestic and Commercial Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete criterion 1. from the policy 	The policy and supporting text refers to TCPA Garden City Standards for the 21 st Century and in particular guide 7 planning for green and prosperous places. My reading of these guides is that they apply to new garden communities. It may well be that the guidance would be applicable to Saffron Walden, but this needs consideration and explanation. As it stands, the references in the policy or supporting text are not relevant and therefore should be removed.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The TCPA Garden City Standards for the 21st Century and in particular guide 7 planning is not applicable to Saffron and criterion 1 should be deleted.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Add the word “major” before “...developments...” in criterion 2. and the words “unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate” after “...developments...” in the same criterion 	The policy requires SuDs on all developments. Although I note Anglian Water supports this stance, this position is contrary to current Government guidance which explains that SuDs should be incorporated in major developments unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. ⁷⁶	<p>Agree</p> <p>The modification ensures that the policy takes account of national policy and guidance.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete criterion 4. from the policy 	Criterion 4. refers to the ownership of land which is not a development and use of land matter.	<p>Agree</p> <p>A modification is therefore made to remove this criterion from the policy.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change criterion 6. to read: “It is the preferred option that foul drainage for all new development is connected to the mains sewerage system.” 	Anglian Water has suggested a modification to criterion 6. which I consider is appropriate given this would ensure that the foul drainage hierarchy is followed to be consistent with national policy and guidance.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Modification will ensure that the foul drainage hierarchy is followed to be consistent with national policy and guidance.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9 on page 87 of the Plan 	Paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9	<p>Agree</p> <p>These paragraphs should be deleted as they cause confusion as the SWNP adopts a policy and targets without the appropriate assessments.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the words “...published in 2016...” in paragraph 8.7 on page 87 to “...published in 2015...” 	Correction of publication date.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Publication date corrected for accuracy.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 89 - 90			
9. Infrastructure Delivery Examiner’s Report: Pages 37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the reference to paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF in paragraph 9.2 	Correction of paragraphs	<p>Agree</p>

	on page 89 to paragraphs 92 and 93 respectively		References should be updated to reflect the paragraphs in the NPPF July 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete action 7) under paragraph 10.1.12 on page 98 of the Plan 	This should be deleted.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The action is not related to development and land use except for the desire to resist further significant development in the east of the town.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Move paragraph 10.1.12 on page 98 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations” 	This should be moved to a separate community actions section of the Plan (except for Action 7).	<p>Agree</p> <p>These actions (apart from action 7 should be moved to a separate community actions section of the Plan.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages- 91 - 102			
10. Transport Infrastructure Examiner’s Report: Pages 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ensure that the map on page 94 of the Plan is clear and clearly shows the roads marked 1 -4 referred to on page 95 of the Plan 	A modification is therefore made to assist with clarity.	<p>Agree</p> <p>A clearer map will provide clarity.</p>
Examiner’s Report: Pages 38 – 39 Policy SW20 Promoting Walking and Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the first sentence of the policy to read: “development proposals which retain, enhance or incorporate safe, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes on site as appropriate and which...” 	However, some of the detail of the policy is problematic. Firstly, it seeks the retention of routes on site rather than the enhancement. This may well adversely affect the achievement of sustainable development. A modification is made to address this.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The proposed modification will ensure retention and enhancement will achieve sustainable development as well.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete criterion 2. a) 	Secondly, the next part of the policy seeks to protect existing footpaths and pedestrian cut throughs through town. This may	<p>Agree</p> <p>The deletion of criterion may encourage both improvements and enhancements of existing</p>

		not always be possible, but it also and more importantly may prevent improvements and enhancements coming forward. This element is then recommended for deletion.	footpaths and pedestrian cut-throughs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the reference in 2. d) to Secured by Design to “Homes 2019, Version 2,2019” 	Secure by Design needs updating.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For accuracy this should be updated to Homes 2019, Version2, 2019.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change criterion 3. a) to read: “The scheme design will conform to the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF which is to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement first, then facilitate access to high quality public transport as far as possible including catchment areas and facilities to encourage such use and private vehicles last.” 	Reference is made in criterion 3. to DFT user hierarchy guidelines, but these do not reflect the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF.	<p>Agree</p> <p>A modification is required to be made to ensure that the NPPF’s hierarchy is substituted for the DFT user hierarchy guidelines.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete criterion 4 	There is a blanket requirement for all new streets in the Plan area to be designed to keep vehicles speeds at or below 20mph. Whilst reference is made in the Plan to the Manual for Streets and the Essex Design Guide, there is little specific or local justification for such a requirement.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This criterion should be deleted as there is insufficient evidence put forward in the Plan.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 101 - 102			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 39 – 40 Policy SW21 Travel Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a sentence at the beginning of the policy before the three [existing] criteria that reads: “Where 	Policy SW21 does not distinguish between the types of development which may require	<p>Agree</p> <p>Modifications recommended ensure that the policy will meet</p>

	developments will or are likely to generate significant amounts of movement and are required to provide a travel plan, it is expected that the travel plan will:"	travel plans. It instead focuses on measurable objectives, provision for funding and delivery of sustainable initiatives and the involvement of the Town Council.	the basic conditions, by ensuring that the policy relates to the development and use of land in line with NPPF guidance.
	•Change criterion 1. to read: "include provision, where appropriate, for the funding and delivery of necessary, sustainable travel initiatives."	Policy SW21 does not distinguish between the types of development which may require travel plans.	Agree Modification introduces flexibility in the policy wording.
	•Delete criterion 2. and move if desired to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called "Community Aspirations"	Focuses on measurable objectives, provision for funding and delivery of sustainable initiatives and the involvement of the Town Council	Agree This criterion does not deal with development or use of land should be deleted or moved to a Community Aspiration Section of the Appendices.
	•Consequential amendments will be needed	Consequential amendments will be needed	Agree Amendments required to renumbering of criteria to reflect deletion of criterion 2.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 102 - 103			
Examiner's Report: Page 40 Policy SW22 Improving Provision of Public Transport	•Reword the policy to read: "Where appropriate, developers will be expected to take every available opportunity to promote the use of public transport including identifying and protecting routes and delivering services and infrastructure to widen transport choice and accessibility to key destinations from the location of the site."	Whilst I accept the desirability of this, the reality is that only obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development can be sought. A blanket requirement is not appropriate or	Agree Modification ensures that the policy is flexible and helps to achieve sustainable development.

		feasible and may adversely affect the ability of the Plan to help to achieve sustainable development.	
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 104 – 105			
Examiner's Report: Pages 40 – 41 Policy SW23 Vehicular Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete the word "...will..." and replace it with "...may, if necessary and appropriate,..." and delete the words "the timing of ..." in criterion 2. 	The second element refers to HGV movements and conditions restricting the timing of those movements. The NPPF is clear that the imposition of planning conditions should only occur where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.	Agree Modifications introduce flexibility into the policy and ensures that planning conditions are necessary and relevant to the development and can meet the basic conditions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add at the end of criterion 3. "across all development types." 	The third element supports the provision of electric charging points. I note Highways England supports such an initiative, but UDC asks for further clarity. A modification is made to address this.	Agree This addition to the criterion 3 provides clarity so that this requirement is applied to all types of development.
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 106 - 107			
Examiner's Report: Page 41 Open Space, Sports and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add the words "...and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change." after the word "...communities..." in paragraph 11.1.1 on page 106 of the Plan 	A quotation from the NPPF which needs to be updated given the publication of the new NPPF. Other references to the NPPF also require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.	Agree For the sake of accuracy and updating to reflect latest NNPF.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the reference to NPPF paragraph 96 in paragraph 11.1.3 to NPPF paragraph 98 	A quotation from the NPPF which needs to be updated given the publication of the new NPPF. Other references to the NPPF also require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For the sake of accuracy and updating to reflect latest NNPF.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the reference to paragraph 100 in paragraph 11.1.3 to paragraph 101 and substitute the word “Identifying” at the start of the second sentence with “Designating” 	A quotation from the NPPF which needs to be updated given the publication of the new NPPF. Other references to the NPPF also require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For the sake of accuracy and updating to reflect latest NNPF.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the references to paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF in paragraph 11.1.3 to paragraphs 102 and 103 respectively 	A quotation from the NPPF which needs to be updated given the publication of the new NPPF. Other references to the NPPF also require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For the sake of accuracy and updating to reflect latest NNPF.</p>
Saffron Walden NP Pages 108 - 109			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 41 - 43 Policy SW24 Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete Policy SW24 and its supporting text (paragraphs 11.2.1 to 11.2.8 inclusive) and the associated appendices (appendices 5 and 6) 	<p>The Plan points out that Saffron Walden exceeds the amount of allotment space based on the UDC Open Space Assessment Report dated 2019. It is then difficult to justify this requirement without further evidence.</p> <p>The policy clearly states that the allotments will be protected from development “unless accessible,</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Deletion of policy and supporting text is supported because no satisfactory evidence has been provided either identify the proposed spaces clearly or to demonstrate how the proposed spaces meet the criteria in the NPPF satisfactorily.</p>

		<p>enhanced compensatory provision is made". This then means it would be possible for these spaces to be lost within the Plan period subject to their satisfactory replacement.</p> <p>I suspect the policy has muddled the designation of LGSs with a desire to protect the amount of allotment land available.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Change the reference to paragraph 97 of the NPPF in paragraph 11.3.1 to paragraph 99 	Reference to the NPPF require correction in the interests of accuracy and updating.	<p>Agree</p> <p>For the sake of accuracy and updating to reflect latest NNPF.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 110 - 114			
Examiner's Report: Pages 43 Policy SW25 Playing Fields and Sports Halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The policy meets the basic conditions, and no modifications are recommended.. 	This policy meets basic conditions.	<p>Agree</p> <p>This policy as drafted meets the basic conditions hence no modification.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 115 - 116			
Examiner's Report: Pages 43 - 44 Policy SW26 Community Halls and Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delete Policy SW26 and its supporting text (paragraphs 11.4.1 to 11.4.5 inclusive) 	<p>Whilst the NPPF supports the positive planning of social, recreational and cultural facilities, there must be some basis for setting such a standard in this Plan.</p> <p>Planning obligations can only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Evidence for setting a standard is not provided and requirement of contributions not in line with NNP criteria.</p>

		the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.	
Saffron Walden NP: Page 117 - 120			
Examiner's Report: Pages 44 - 46 Policy SW27 Open Space for Informal Recreation	Delete criterion 1.	This policy seeks to achieve a number of things; it firstly sets out a standard for informal recreation based on per head of population. Like the previous policy, there is little information on deliverability or viability.	Agree No information or provided to support deliverability or viability.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete the first and second sentences of criterion 2. and change the [existing] last sentence of this criterion to read: "<i>Play areas</i> must be in locations central to the development, be well-overlooked and built-in durable materials." 	There is no evidence to support the requirement and it would be impractical for all sites to be agreed with the TC when they are not the determining body. Nevertheless, some elements of this requirement can be retained as they set out good planning principles.	Agree No information or provided to support the requirement. However, location of new play areas should be retained as it is a good planning principle.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change criterion 3. to read: "<i>The provision of amenity green space</i> must be in a single..." [retain as existing to end] 	There is no evidence for the requirement in the first part of the criterion.	Agree Deletion of the open space is supported as there is no evidence provided to demonstrate the requirement. However, the location of the of open space is retained as it is a good planning principle.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete [existing] criterion 6., any associated supporting text [including paragraph 11.5.15] and appendices 5 and 6 [note both appendices are recommended for deletion in an 	The last element of the policy (criterion 6.) seeks to designate the amenity green space identified in the UDC Open Space Strategy and	Agree Deletion of criterion 6 and Appendices 5 & 6 is supported because there is no evidence

	earlier modification in relation to Policy SW24]	additional spaces identified as part of work on the Plan as LGSs.	provided to demonstrate the requirement.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the second sentence of paragraph 11.5.11 on page 118 of the Plan to read: “This <i>is to be avoided</i> in future developments.” 	This is a policy statement which appears in the supporting text and should be modified.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Modification provides clarity by removing policy statement from supporting text.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move paragraph 11.5.13 on page 118 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations” 	This is not a development and use of land matter.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The plan should only be limited to development and use of land matter otherwise such statements should be in a clearly labelled Community Aspirations section.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page 121 - 123			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 46 - 47 Policy SW28 Public Rights of Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete criterion 1. of the policy 	The policy wording effectively restricts development.	<p>Agree</p> <p>The plan should not restrict development and does not meet basic conditions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the last sentence in paragraph 11.5.21 on page 123 of the Plan to read: “Any development along or adjacent to this route must be carefully considered in relation to the amenity value of the route.” 	This is a statement of policy and should be amended to ensure that the Plan has clarity.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Modification provides clarity.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the third sentence in [the first numbered] paragraph 11.5.22 on page 123 of the Plan to read: “Development should consider the mitigation of any adverse effect on the amenity value of 	A modification is made to this statement in the interests of clarity.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Modification provides clarity.</p>

	a footpath which could include the provision of landscaping for example.” and delete the next sentence which begins “Substantial” ...”		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequential amendments will be needed [for example criteria numbering] 		Agree Criteria renumbering required for accuracy.
Saffron Walden NP: Page 123 - 124			
Examiner’s Report: Pages 47 - 48 Policy SW29 Land of Value to the Natural Environment	Delete criterion 1. of the policy and Appendix 8	<p>There is no list of the areas and no evidence to demonstrate how they meet the criteria in the NPPF for LGSs.</p> <p>The wording of the policy then only permits development which would enhance the value of these sites and /or increases the overall area of the sites. This again does not reflect the stance of the NPPF on LGSs. As a result, this element of the policy does not meet the basic conditions and is recommended for deletion.</p>	Agree Criterion one does not meet the NPPF criteria for Local Green Space designation and should be deleted together with the corresponding Appendix 8.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move paragraph 11.5.23 on page 124 of the Plan to a separate section or appendix of the Plan called “Community Aspirations” 	Paragraph 11.5.23 refers to conservation covenants; the support given in the Plan amounts to a community aspiration and should be moved to a separate section of the Plan.	Agree Paragraph 11.5.23 reflects the community’s aspirations for the future and does not relate to the development and use of land and should be included in the Plan in a separate section of the

			<p>plan clearly <u>identified as</u> Community Aspirations</p> <p>Retention of paragraph 11.5.23 ensures that community aspirations are taken seriously and reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequential amendments will be needed including the deletion of [the second numbered] paragraph 11.5.22 on page 123 of the Plan 	<p>Amendments will be needed including the deletion of [the second numbered] paragraph 11.5.22 on page 123 of the Plan</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Renumbering and deletion of paragraphs is essential for correct sequential numbering and accuracy in the final document.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 125 - 127			
<p>Examiner's Report: Pages 48 - 49</p> <p>Policy SW30 Arts and Cultural Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete criteria 1. and 3. from the policy 	<p>Criterion 1 lacks clarity in that no criteria or indications have been provided as what might be site - specific considerations and this would be of limited value as a development management tool. Criterion 3 -does not meet the requisite criteria for seeking developer contributions.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Criteria 1 and 3 do not lack clarity in that: Criterion 1 has limited value for a development management decision maker: and</p> <p>Criterion 3 –The following criteria for seeking developer contributions have not been met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. <p>Criteria 1 and 3 do not therefore meet basic conditions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change “June” in paragraph 12.3 on page 125 of the Plan to “July” 	The All-Party Parliamentary Group Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry document date is wrong	<p>Agree: Correction of date for the sake of accuracy.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the last sentence in paragraph 12.15 on page 127 of the Plan which begins “Applications for change of use...” 	The Use Classes changed, and the use classes referred to are out of date.	<p>Agree: The Use Classes changed and came into force on 1st September 2020 and the classes referred to are outdated.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 128 129	•		
Examiner’s Report: Pages 49 - 50 Policy SW31 Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete Policy SW31 and its supporting text (paragraphs 13.1 to 13.11 inclusive) 	Blanket support for early years provision may lead to unacceptable development. Policy wording does not accurately reflect a signed S106 agreement to retain land for educational purposes for a period of 10 years. Blanket resistance to and changes of use to the Library does not meet basic conditions. Blanket resistance for an extension of a sixth form college with co criteria indicating suitable sites or locations might result in unacceptable development and hinder sustainable achievement.	<p>Agree Policy lacks clarity and flexibility and may potentially hinder the achievement of sustainable development. The policy does not meet basic conditions.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Page130	•		

Examiner's Report: Pages 50 - 51 Policy SW32 Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy meets the relevant basic conditions, and no modifications are recommended. 		<p>Agree</p> <p>Policy SW32 has regard to the NPPF paragraph 93 which supports the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing of the community. The Policy meets the relevant basic conditions and does not require any modification.</p>
Saffron Walden NP: Pages 131 - 157			
Examiner's Report: Page- 51 APPENDICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 is a list of strategic policies in the LP 2005. 	Retain	<p>Agree</p> <p>This is an accurate list of the Local Plan 2005 Strategic Policies as provided by Uttlesford District Council Planning Policy Department.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 2 contains information about the air quality management area. This is referred to in various parts of the Plan. 	This is referred to in various parts of the Plan.	<p>Agree</p> <p>Information is provided by the District Council.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 3 is a transport "wish list". This is referred to in section 10.2 of the Plan. 	<p>This is referred to in section 10.2 of the Plan</p> <p>Sometimes neighbourhood plans contain aspirational policies or projects that signal the community's priorities for the future of their local area but are not related to the development and use of land. If I consider a policy or proposal to fall within this</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Clearly differentiated as Community Aspirations.</p>

		category, I will recommend it be clearly differentiated.	
	•Appendix 4 contains information about SuDs.	Retain	Agree Contains factual information on SuDs
	•Appendix 5 is the open spaces audit. Deletion recommended.	Although Appendix 5 is referenced, it is not clear to me from the Plan where these spaces are given they are included in a long list of open spaces, and they are not mapped clearly in the appendix given there is no key to the maps and again other types of spaces are shown on the maps. The maps are also at a very small-scale making accuracy as to the boundaries of the spaces difficult.	Agree Appendix 5 should be deleted because it does not clearly identify the spaces and other types of spaces are also shown. Like the supporting text Appendix 5 does not provide any evidence to support designation of the allotments.
	•Appendix 6 contains proposed LGSs. Deletion recommended.	Appendix 6 seems to identify a further 12 areas for designation. There is a table on page 148 of the Plan which sets out the areas against the criteria for designation in the NPPF. There is insufficient information to justify the designations even if these were clear. For example, in seeking to meet the demonstrably special to the local community and local significance criteria, the table indicates “well used” for many of the proposed LGSs.	Agree There is insufficient evidence to justify LGS designations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 7 contains community centre survey responses and is useful to retain. 	Retain because appendix contains resident's responses to the community centre survey.	Agree Important to retain because the response in the Appendix reflects residents' views on community centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 8 is land of environmental value. I have recommended deletion of this appendix. 	The areas designated as Local Green Spaces mapped in Appendix 8 are not clear, no list of the areas is provided. The wording of the policy does not reflect the NPPF stance on LGS. NPPF criteria for LGS designation not met.	Agree No evidence is provided to demonstrate how the areas identified as Land of Value to the Natural Environment meets the NPPF criteria. And basic conditions..
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 9 contains extracts of policies in the now withdrawn ELP and the policy which this appendix sits alongside has been recommended for deletion. 	The now withdrawn ELP and the policy which this appendix sits alongside has been recommended for deletion and therefore Appendix 9 is redundant.	Agree The Emerging Local Plan was withdrawn in 2020 and the allocations and policies have no relevance to this Neighbourhood plan.
Saffron Walden NP: Page 158			
Examiner's Report: Page 51: Plan Monitoring and Delivery	Whilst monitoring and review is not currently a requirement for neighbourhood planning, the measures contained in this section are to be welcomed.	The measures contained in this section are to be welcomed.	Agree Plan Monitoring and Review is good practice for a Plan and important for any future reviews of the plan.

REFERENDUM PLAN



SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2021-2036

A DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR THE PARISH OF
SAFFRON WALDEN



REFERENDUM PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The Civic Parish of Saffron Walden was designated as the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Area by Uttlesford District Council on 13 December 2012. A full page map showing the full extent of the parish is below, made using: OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The basic conditions of neighbourhood planning and other considerations have been met as prescribed by Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act).

For further information on the technical legal details concerning the preparation of the plan (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the Basic Conditions Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established in 2016 and individuals and groups either volunteered or were invited to be part of the NP process. The NP team includes Town Councillors, Town Council officers and a number of local volunteers, each with specialist local knowledge including local heritage, architecture, infrastructure, commerce and the arts. The wide range of skills, experiences and interests of the team helps to ensure that there is a fair and diverse representation of views and opinions helping to form the NP. All the volunteers are Saffron Walden residents, or people living nearby who play an active part in Saffron Walden civic life. The Neighbourhood Plan went through formal and informal consultations.

For further information on the technical legal details concerning the consultation of the plan (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the Consultation Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.

Uttlesford District Council considered the plan and it was determined that neither a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) nor an Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required for the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.

For further information on the technical legal details concerning the SEA and HRA (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the SEA – HRA Screening Determination Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.

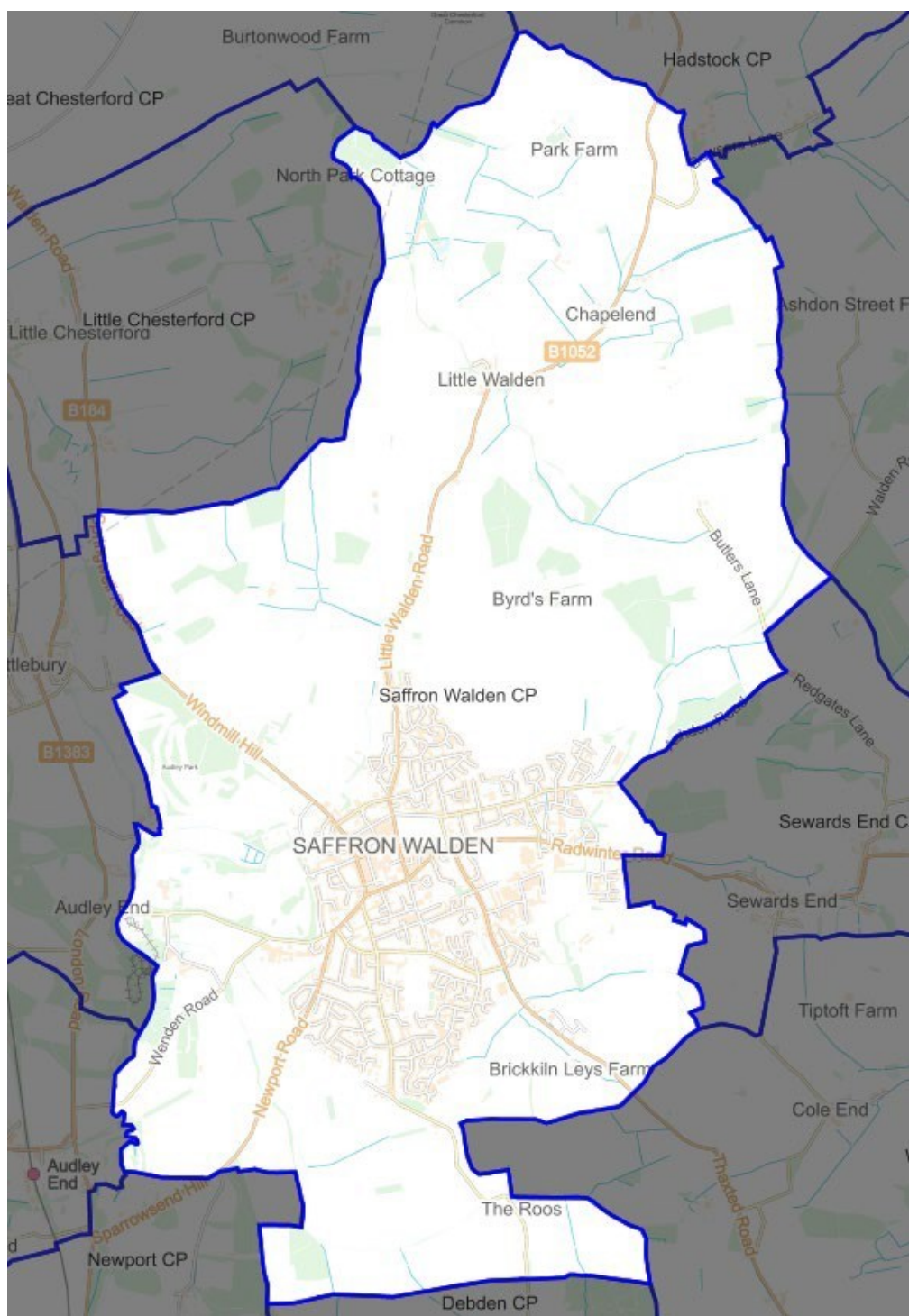
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1. WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a document which is drawn up at a community level, and which gives the community the direct power to develop a vision for its neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of the local area. For this Neighbourhood Plan the whole parish of Saffron Walden has been designated as the 'neighbourhood area'. This includes both the town of Saffron Walden and the hamlet of Little Walden. Unless otherwise specified, references to "Saffron Walden" encompass the whole parish.



SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



1.2 Introduced by the Localism Act 2011, neighbourhood plans are not a legal requirement but a right. The SWNP 'Qualifying Body' was Saffron Walden Town Council. A neighbourhood plan has to meet legal requirements, and then explain how they were met in a Basic Conditions Statement. The Basic Conditions Statement for this plan has been agreed by Uttlesford District Council.

1.3 Once a Plan is "made" (has been voted for by the community), all new development and growth should meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan lasts for 15 years, after which time it should be reviewed. It can be reviewed at any point before the 15 years is up, if appropriate to do so.

1.4 Government guidance on Neighbourhood Plans states that *"A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the Local Plan once it has been approved at a referendum. At this point it comes into force as part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (see section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)."*¹

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND A LOCAL PLAN?

1.5 There is a hierarchy of development plans.

1.6 At the top is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was first published in 2012 and was last updated in February 2019. Written by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, it sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these should be applied. From time to time the planning policies are adjusted and it can be considered that planning regulations are immediately updated as these adjustments are made.

1.7 In the middle is the Local Plan (LP). This is written by the District Council (Uttlesford in the case of Saffron Walden). It takes into account the general policies of the NPPF and sets out the District Council's planning policies for Uttlesford, and how they should be applied. The current Local Plan was created in 2005 and a new one is being drafted at the time of writing this plan.

1.8 At grassroots level, a Neighbourhood Plan sits beneath these two. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot contradict either the National Planning Policy Framework or the Strategic (key) Policies in the Local Plan.

¹ Further technical information on neighbourhood plans can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#what-is-neighbourhood-planning>

WHAT CAN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACHIEVE?

1.9 The core purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan is to plan for future residential and commercial building development. This includes the locations that will be acceptable, the types of buildings that can be constructed, and stipulations on build standards and aesthetics.

1.10 It sets out focused, specific and appropriate planning policies for the Neighbourhood, with a level of local detail that would not be possible at national or district level.

1.11 A successful Neighbourhood Plan makes it very clear what sort of development the community wants, and therefore adds greater clarity and definition to local needs, providing evidence-based policies for planning committees and other decision-making bodies. It also provides early guidelines on what the community expects from developers.

WHAT IS THE FORMAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS?

1.12 *“Provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force.”* – A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act - Communities and Local Government Publication.

1.13 Saffron Walden Town Council is the designated authority able to prepare a neighbourhood plan in Saffron Walden.

1.14 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established in 2016 and individuals and groups either volunteered or were invited to be part of the NP process. The NP team includes Town Councillors, Town Council officers and a number of local volunteers, each with specialist knowledge including local heritage, architecture, infrastructure, commerce and the arts. The wide range of skills, experiences and interests of the team helps to ensure that there is a fair and diverse representation of views and opinions helping to form the NP. All the volunteers are Saffron Walden residents, or people living nearby who play an active part in Saffron Walden civic life.

1.15 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 (as amended), this Plan must satisfy “basic conditions” before it can come into force. It must:

- Have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- Not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU regulations; and
- Not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

1.16 In addition, this Plan must meet the prescribed legal requirements. This statement confirms that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 (referenced throughout this document as “SWNP”), which will be submitted by Saffron Walden Town Council, meets all the necessary requirements.

HOW WAS THE SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN RESEARCHED?

1.17 The SWNP Steering Group carried out quantitative and qualitative research into the core local issues to be addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan. This included:

- Public consultation events which Saffron Walden residents were invited to attend and give opinions and suggestions;
- Information stands at community events at which Saffron Walden residents were invited to give opinions and suggestions;
- Feedback and comments from WaldenPlan.org, the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan website;
- Information and updates in the local press and magazines;
- Focus Groups, at which local experts were invited to submit concerns and suggestions regarding their professional fields;
- Regular ongoing meetings with representatives of local organisations;
- A report on the Heritage and Character Assessment of Saffron Walden written by AECOM;
- Consultation with the Local Authority (Uttlesford District Council);
- Review of Evidence and Background Studies which inform the preparation of the Uttlesford Local Plan;
- The existing Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005;
- Surveys sent to a long list of potential stakeholders in the following fields / areas of interest (listed here in alphabetical order) : Access/Disabled; Community groups; Developers; Education providers; Economic planners; Emergency services; Environmental organisations; Faith organisations; Government bodies; Healthcare

providers; Housing Associations; Local Government (elected members and officers); Sports providers; Transport organisations and Utility companies.

1.18 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement details the input provided by stakeholders and research conducted by the Steering Group.

2. SAFFRON WALDEN TODAY

HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF SAFFRON WALDEN

2.1 The Heritage and Character Assessment², carried out by AECOM (2018), broke the parish into four distinct character areas.

THE TOWN CENTRE

2.2 Saffron Walden is the largest town in the District of Uttlesford and is the administrative and commercial centre. This very attractive town is one of the finest preserved examples of a medieval market town, with a wealth of listed buildings in the town centre and Conservation Areas which cover much of the town.

2.3 The town centre has a market square surrounded by medieval streets. It has a diversity of architectural styles and a street layout which together document the historic development of the town. It includes the Common, which is officially registered as a village green and has a turf-cut maze which is listed as a scheduled monument. Walden Castle and the Repell Ditches are also listed as scheduled monuments. Amongst many fine buildings, the town centre hosts the Town Hall, St Mary's Church, Bridge End Garden and Jubilee Gardens, and the old Corn Exchange which is now the library. A great number of buildings in the town centre are listed; with approximately 320 listed buildings or groups identified on the National Heritage List for England. This high concentration of nationally significant buildings contributes to the uniqueness of Saffron Walden.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

2.4 The residential neighbourhoods are characterised by predominantly inter-war through to current day residential housing estates with mostly semi-detached and terraced houses. The main roads cut through the neighbourhoods and lead directly to the town centre. Away from the main roads, streets are mainly quiet cul-de-sacs. Schools, an industrial area and supermarkets are located within the residential neighbourhoods.

RURAL LANDSCAPE

2.5 The rural landscape is characterised by rolling open arable land which is accessible to the public to enjoy via a network of public rights of way, which includes the HarCamLow Way. In the hamlet of Little Walden, dispersed farm houses and associated buildings, and cottages serve to complement the sense of openness and remoteness from development.



HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

2.6 The historic landscape comprises Audley End House, the surrounding and associated parkland designed by Lancelot “Capability” Brown, and the immediate surrounding area which includes the golf club and St Mark’s College.

2.7 As well as having immense aesthetic appeal, Saffron Walden also benefits from good schools and a charming town centre. It has a very active and friendly community which is often remarked upon by visitors and newcomers to the town.

2.8 Saffron Walden is accessible to both London and Cambridge, with the M11 motorway and Audley End railway station being a few miles outside the town.

2.9 The Heritage and Character Assessment regards views into and out of both the Conservation Areas and the countryside as being key assets of the parish. The key risk identified for all areas was any development which might impede the views. Accordingly, the SWNP maps the key views.

DEVELOPMENT IN SAFFRON WALDEN OVER THE PAST DECADE

2.10 The sum of the town’s attributes offers such an attractive proposition that new and existing housing is relatively easily sold to people wishing to escape the larger urban conurbations, especially London and Cambridge.

2.11 The high quality of amenities in the town has contributed to a virtuous circle, as development has brought in more residents, who in turn have become clients for the amenities and so by any measure Saffron Walden can be described as a thriving market town. It is regularly listed amongst the best places to live nationwide.

2.12 Whilst the increased population brings additional and welcome participants to the town’s activities and consumers to the town’s businesses, the property purchasing power of incomers outbids that of existing residents and of many people who work locally. Affordability of housing has consequently become a key local issue, reported both in public consultations and in official Strategic Housing Market Assessments commissioned by the District Authority. A Halifax report in 2018 stated that Saffron Walden was the 9th most expensive market town in the UK in which to buy a home³.

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/uk-house-prices-market-towns-england-halifax-property-index-housing-buckinghamshire-a8603206.html> [Accessed July 2020]

2.13 There is a widely-held perception that infrastructure development has not kept pace with housing development and that the town is “at capacity”. The road network is constrained by the physical structure of the medieval street plan and highways assessments have not identified any possible alterations which would materially reduce congestion or improve air quality. The busiest junctions are at capacity, or are forecast to be at capacity by 2033⁴. Despite the increases in population in the last ten years, the town has not had the proportionate addition of essential infrastructure such as schools, doctors’ surgeries, playing fields or other open spaces. Roads, education and healthcare are the responsibility of other authorities, however the SWNP identifies need and requests improvements are made to meet the needs of the town.

THE COMMUNITY OF SAFFRON WALDEN

Population	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	15,504	16,719 (1)	+7.8%
Uttlesford	79,443	86,200 (2)	+9%
England	53,012,456	55,619,430 (3)	+5%

Dwellings	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	6,510	7,361 (4)	+13%
Uttlesford	31,316	38,159 (5)	+22%
England	22,063,368	23,900,000 (6)	+8%

Average Population per Dwelling	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	2.4 (7)	2.4	
Uttlesford	2.5	2.3	-11%
England	2.4	2.3	-3%

Sources:

- (1) This was the ONS estimate in 2017, although the actual figure is likely to be higher since then given the part construction and occupation of two major new housing developments.
- (2) UDC data gathered in preparation of the next Local Plan
- (3) Office for National Statistics estimate at 30 June 2017
- (4) UDC Council Tax Base at 22 March 2018 not including partially completed dwellings
- (5) UDC Council Tax Base at 4 July 2018 not including partially completed dwellings
- (6) ONS estimate at 30 June 2017
- (7) The UDC sports strategy, published 2019, uses a population per household rate of 2.4 for its calculations, so for clarity the SWNP also uses this figure.

⁴ https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/2362/Local-Plan-Highway-Impact-Assessment/pdf/131008_UDC_LP_Highway_Final.pdf?m=635169173501500000 [Accessed July 2020]

2.14 Uttlesford has had a much higher increase in the number of dwellings than England has had as a whole, +22% compared to +8%. The population has also increased, although not by as much: +9% in Uttlesford compared to +5% in England as a whole. The average number of people living in each dwelling has dropped in both Uttlesford and England as a whole; however the drop has been greater in Uttlesford.

2.15 Forecasted changes in the population, as relevant to housing need, are published in the Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-2021 (Dec 2015). Page 13 states:

- *“The Uttlesford District is projected to increase from 83,500 people to 105,800 by 2035.*
- *The number of residents living in the district who are aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 15,800 people to 28,000.*
- *Growing ageing population with 1,070 people aged over 65 in Uttlesford are thought to have dementia. This figure is estimated to rise to 1,920 by 2030.*
- *70% of the population own their own home.*

Our population is getting older, living longer and requiring greater care. This is already having implications for the housing market. Requirements for extra care, residential homes and a specialist dementia facility are needed to meet these needs.”

2.16 High house prices are an issue in Saffron Walden. The Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-2021 (Dec 2015) quotes:

- *“Average house price of £450,300 compared to regional average of £299,400 (August 2015)*
- *Average house price is 18 times the average income.*
- *Average income in Uttlesford is £24,575 per annum.*

The evidence base shows that house prices are high in Uttlesford and incomes low, meaning that mortgages are unaffordable for a large percentage of our population. This places a strain on the Council’s housing stock and the private rented sector. Young people, families and those providing our key services (for example care staff, teachers, cleaners etc.) are moving out of Uttlesford away from family and support to be able to buy their first home.”

2.17 Uttlesford is a rural district where household car ownership is recognised as being higher than the national average. In the 2011 Census the average number of vehicles per household was 1.2 nationally, 1.4 in Essex and 1.7 in Uttlesford. This reflects the rural nature of the majority of Uttlesford and the relatively sparse public transport provision. According to the 2011 Census, 76% of residents in Uttlesford commute to work by car.

2.18 According to the 2015 UDC Strategic Environmental Assessment⁵, almost half of all residents in Uttlesford travel to work outside the district, and just under half of all jobs in the area are taken by people living elsewhere. House prices, traffic volumes and busy commuter trains are further evidence that a significant number of residents of Saffron Walden commute out each day to achieve higher incomes than are generally available in the parish or in Uttlesford as a whole. Conversely, local employers report that a significant number of the key services in Saffron Walden are supplied by people commuting into the town each day, for lack of housing affordability within the town.

⁵ Place Services: Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report: Annex B – Baseline Information July 2015 (page 29)

3. SAFFRON WALDEN'S FUTURE

3.1 In order to ensure that the SWNP addresses the issues which are important to the residents of the parish, the survey questions and the focus groups asked people to describe their thoughts about development in relation to the following topics:

- Saffron Walden's heritage;
- Housing types, housing and development design and spatial planning and design;
- Transport and getting around;
- Green infrastructure;
- The local economy and business including retail and consumer, professional services, tourism and light industrial;
- Mental and physical health;
- Arts;
- Education and skills; and
- Sport and physical activity.

3.2 It was inevitable that some issues arising from public consultations were conflicting because not everyone wants the same thing for the future of the parish. For example, some survey respondents expressed concern about the aesthetics of new developments while others focused on high house prices. Some welcomed development that may enable them or family members to stay living in the town, while others thought the town was too big already.

3.3 Some issues that arose could be viewed as both a positive and a negative. For example, on the positive side, and as an asset to Saffron Walden, the schools offer a very high standard of education. On the other hand, this attracts new families to the area resulting in the schools being at capacity. This is something that can be mitigated when addressed at the early stages of planning applications.

3.4 Naturally many of the issues which emerged from the surveys, the focus groups and from primary evidence documents overlapped more than one topic. For example, the issue of high school run traffic volumes overlaps the areas of spatial planning, transport capacity issues and physical health.

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan team recognised that many of the issues and concerns raised by residents during the initial public surveys and consultations are not technically planning issues, because they cannot be resolved by planning solutions or policy. Therefore, it is clear that some issues listed in this section technically sit outside the SWNP. Nonetheless they provided a critically important insight into public opinion and thus provided a useful lens through which to assess and determine the direction of travel. They are included here for that reason.

3.6 The recurring comments made in public consultations have been summarised into the following categories:

- **Assets to Saffron Walden**, which the SWNP seeks to protect for future generations.
- **Opportunities for Saffron Walden**, which the SWNP seeks to embrace for the benefit of future generations.
- **Challenges for Saffron Walden**, where improvement or mitigation measures are required to create a sustainable future for Saffron Walden.

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

SAFFRON WALDEN'S ASSETS – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

1. Saffron Walden is a market town with a town centre which provides a range of services and commerce to an extensive rural catchment area.⁶
2. Saffron Walden has an excellent range of independent and interesting shops, which makes for a commercial centre which offers a novel experience to visitors.⁷
3. Saffron Walden has well-regarded schools.⁸
4. Food and drink offers are successful in the town, seen in the success of individual market stalls, the occasional French market (predominantly food), and in the large number of cafes and restaurants operating in the centre.⁹
5. Saffron Walden has a strong community feel.¹⁰
6. The town contains a variety of historically and aesthetically interesting architecture and attracts tourists and new residents from outside areas.¹¹
7. Saffron Walden sits in a bowl and the views from Saffron Walden out to the surrounding countryside are a key part of Saffron Walden's appeal.¹²
8. The town is rural and this feel is supported by a number of important greenspaces in and around the town which are both formal and informal.
9. Saffron Walden has a strong offer of art-related activities which support health and a community spirit.
10. The Slade watercourse is a wildlife asset.

SAFFRON WALDEN'S OPPORTUNITIES – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

11. Saffron Walden has a strong performance art community which could be built upon as a revenue source.¹³

⁶ This opinion is supported by **Uttlesford District Council Regulation 19 Local Plan 2018, para. 2.5** and **(Uttlesford) District Retail Study Savills, May 2018 Update, para. 2.41** "the centre's function [is] one of meeting the main food shopping requirements of the town in its wider hinterland and a significant proportion of the comparison retail needs of the Study".

⁷ This opinion is supported by **(Uttlesford) District Retail Study Savills, May 2018 Update, para. 3.7** "Saffron Walden [has] a reasonably wide representation of comparison traders, most of which are independent."

⁸ This opinion is supported by **Ofsted** St Mary's CofEVA Primary School Good (2017), RA Butler Infant School Good (2015), RA Butler Junior School Good (2017), St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Good (2018), Saffron Walden County High School Outstanding (2013), Katherine Semar Junior School (no results listed at time of writing), Katherine Semar Infant School (no results listed at time of writing), Dame Bradbury's (Independent Primary School)

⁹ This opinion is supported by revenue generated by Saffron Walden Town Council Market.

¹⁰ Saffron Walden has a regular programme of free events arranged by voluntary groups, a strong voluntary sector, and community centres well-booked for clubs, groups and classes.

¹¹ This opinion is supported by the Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre

¹² This opinion is supported by the Heritage and Character Assessment

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

12. Tourism could play a larger part in the economy.¹⁴
13. The town is located on the London /Cambridge corridor. New technology will find wide applications which will encompass work, and work/life balance, transport, health and education. A well-educated community, and proximity to Cambridge and London, gives Saffron Walden the opportunity to adopt an agile approach and benefit from future investment and benefits.
14. The evening economy could be more vibrant and there is support for a more café-style culture.
15. Many residents in Saffron Walden actively support, or at least accept, the need for development.

SAFFRON WALDEN'S CHALLENGES – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

HOUSING COSTS

16. Homes are too expensive for many residents of the town. The average house price in Uttlesford is 18 times the average income.¹⁵
17. There are not enough one and two and three bedroom homes so it is difficult for starter families and singles to live and remain in the town.¹⁶

HOUSING DESIGN

18. The style of architecture of new builds is rarely original and new estates in Saffron Walden are largely indistinguishable from other new build developments anywhere else in the country.
19. There isn't enough off-road parking on developments for the cars required for each household, so cars are inevitably parked along the street. This creates congestion, can be an obstruction for emergency vehicles and detracts from the vision originally presented by the developers.
20. New build houses tend to be small, so garages get used for storage rather than for parking, with cars ending up along the street.
21. Recently built gated developments reduce the social interactivity and connectivity in their locations in town.

¹³ **Saffron Walden Arts Trust** and various performing groups regularly present performances. **Saffron Screen** has a current business plan which would support expansion should space become available. **Saffron Hall** has regular fully booked events.

¹⁴ This opinion is supported by **Visit England** Audley End House (English Heritage) received 150,591 visitors in 2015 and 165,799 visitors in 2016, an increase of 10.1%, and **Saffron Walden Bid Campaign** (referencing trial event in which Saturday visitors to Audley End were offered free transport to and from the town centre) "The Horse and Carriage Trial in July 2017 and vintage bus (December 2017) brought over 1,000 people into town and more than 1/5 of them said they would not otherwise have visited".

¹⁵ This opinion is supported by facts reported in the **Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21** – (see section on housing for further details).

¹⁶ This opinion was widely supported by the Neighbourhood Plan survey, in which 76% of votes supported more 2 and 3-bedroom houses being built. 6% were against this suggestion, and 18% were neutral.

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 22. None of the developments in Saffron Walden are “eco-builds” or built to Passivhaus standards (where very little energy is used for heating or cooling).
- 23. New developments have solid paved parking which has limited permeability.
- 24. House extensions are very popular in Saffron Walden, including on the newest developments less than 4 years old, reducing the garden sizes and putting more pressure on the communal green spaces for play and general recreation.¹⁷

INFRASTRUCTURE

- 25. Infrastructure improvements have not happened in step with past housing development and many residents are disillusioned with regard to further development and feel that the town is too big already.
- 26. The volume of traffic using the medieval road structure of the centre of the town has led to traffic congestion and accompanying air quality issues which are not easily resolved because the roads cannot be widened.¹⁸
- 27. During peak hours and during term time, congestion on many roads and junctions is much heavier than outside of term times, which indicates that the school run generates many car journeys.
- 28. Highways schemes¹⁹ seem to be designed only to speed up traffic, which directly conflicts with measures which would be implemented were pedestrian and cyclist safety at the top of the agenda.
- 29. The vast majority of new houses have been built on the East of the town which is difficult for the road network to support, given that the external destinations in highest demand (Audley End train station in Wendens Ambo, the M11 and Cambridge) are accessed via the West of the town. All traffic must pass through the centre of the town as there is no relief road.²⁰
- 30. Saffron Walden has higher than acceptable levels of air pollution and the town centre is subject to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 31. HGVs have access through town which causes damage to streets and buildings, high levels of pollution, and creates a road environment which is unfriendly to cyclists and pedestrians, as long vehicles can’t turn corners without mounting kerbs and/or making several manoeuvres.
- 32. Public transport options for workers commuting into town are limited.²¹

¹⁷ This opinion is supported by the 10 or so planning applications per fortnight for home extensions which are presented to the Saffron Walden Town Council Planning and Road Traffic Committee, the vast majority of which are approved. This would be equivalent to roughly 260 home extensions per year.

¹⁸ This opinion is supported by **Essex Highways** Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment 2013.

¹⁹ For example, removing parking from Peaslands Road, with the intended effect of speeding up traffic.

²⁰ Land ownership constraints and protected designations such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Parkland around the town have meant that the only land coming forward for development has been to the east of the town. This has led to far more development in the east than would have been recommended had development land also been available to the west.

²¹ For example – no late buses from Saffron Walden to nearby Ashdon after 2.30pm, making it possible to commute in to SW by bus but not to get back in the evening.

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

33. The town has poor public transport links which means that not only is it hard to commute out of the town without using a private car, it is also difficult to come in as a visitor.²²
34. Non-car driving residents needing access to hospital for appointments are recommended by the NHS to use the Uttlesford Community Travel Service which is run by volunteers.
35. There are not enough connections between town and surrounding countryside for access on foot or by bicycle.
36. Recent new developments are not well connected by footpaths to the rest of the town, which encourages driving thus compounding the problem of traffic volumes.²³
37. There is little cycle parking available in the town centre, and hardly any dedicated cycling infrastructure in the parish.²⁴

HERITAGE ASSETS

38. The historic buildings in Saffron Walden are very close to the edge of narrow roads and are regularly struck and damaged by vehicles.²⁵
39. Vibration from traffic causes damage to old buildings.

ARTS AND CULTURE

40. Saffron Walden does not have an arts performance space that is large enough, or that can be booked for long enough, for full staged productions to be viable.
41. Saffron Walden does not have a space to host large arts exhibitions.
42. Cost of hire of rooms and availability of storage space is an issue for arts groups.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

43. Saffron Walden has a lack of recreational facilities for organised sports and informal activities relative to the population size.²⁶

²² This opinion is supported by the **Uttlesford District Transport Study December 2016 page 20, para 3.3.3 Table 1 – 2011 Census: Mode of Travel to Work (Usual Residents)** *“The data reflects the rural nature of the majority of Uttlesford and the relatively sparse public transport provision. For many residents the car is the only feasible mode of transport.”*

²³ This opinion is supported by a map showing missed opportunities for connectivity in Section 5.

²⁴ This opinion is supported by **Uttlesford District Cycling Action Plan March 2018** which identifies improvements to this.

²⁵ Buildings are regularly damaged, and some building owners report that they now find it difficult or impossible to insure their buildings. Town Council owned CCTV cameras occasionally struck by high vehicles.

²⁶ This opinion is supported by the **Uttlesford Open Space Strategy 2012** which identified a number of additional recreational facilities that should be established with contributions from developers to meet demand.

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

44. There is no provision for many sports activities in town, with rugby being mentioned most frequently in public consultations.²⁷
45. There is a lack of community halls and facilities.²⁸

GREEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE

46. There is no in-town provision specifically for dog walking.
47. Saffron Walden does not have enough accessible open space.²⁹
48. There is a good network of out of town cross-field footpaths for ramblers to the north and the east of the town, but no real network of bridle-paths.
49. Gardens on new build estates are smaller than on older estates, reducing the green footprint of the town as it expands and increasing the pressure on public playgrounds.
50. As greenfield sites are developed additional pressure is placed on the green lung spaces within the town which are essential to an urban area.
51. Wildlife corridors and natural habitats are decreasing within the Neighbourhood Plan zone as greenfield sites are developed.
52. Residents of new developments often find that the green spaces are not of good quality.
53. New housing developments are relatively cramped with less space for street and garden trees than on older developments. This can be seen from the 'rooftop view' of the town.

EDUCATION

54. There is a sense that schools at all levels are at capacity.³⁰

HEALTH

55. There is a sense that doctors' surgeries are at capacity.³¹
56. There is no walk-in health centre.

²⁷ The Saffron Walden rugby club is based in Henham 8.5 miles away for lack of pitches in Saffron Walden. All sports clubs report that they have to use facilities out of the parish to meet the needs of their members.

²⁸ The Neighbourhood Plan group surveyed groups with halls for hire (for example Church halls) and they all reported to be working at capacity and often having to turn down booking requests.

²⁹ This opinion is supported by **Fields in Trust** which recommends 3.2ha per 1,000 of population which would equate to a requirement of approximately 54ha in Saffron Walden. Current provision in Saffron Walden is around 15ha.

³⁰ There are instances of children not getting into their first or closest school.

³¹ There can be a wait of 4-5 weeks for an appointment.

RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

BUSINESS AND LOCAL ECONOMY

57. Bricks and mortar retailers are under threat from internet shopping trends (as they are everywhere in the country). The challenge is finding ways to keep the town centre vibrant.
58. Many people consider that there are too many charity shops in the centre of Saffron Walden and cite high rent and rates as a cause of this.
59. The town does not have many high street shops so when not ordering online, local shoppers will naturally travel outside the area when wanting to visit these types of stores whether for a specific purchase or for a leisure shopping outing.
60. The cost of parking in town is too expensive for many people who commute into Saffron Walden (those who cannot afford the cost of living in the town itself).
61. Signage to Saffron Hall and Saffron Screen is not clear enough for out of town visitors.
62. Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall are out of the centre and therefore events held there do not generate a positive knock-on impact on the evening economic activity of the town centre.

VISION STATEMENT

3.7 During the public consultations, the Neighbourhood Plan team gained a comprehensive understanding of the issues that are important to the people living and working in the Saffron Walden Civil Parish.

3.8 This understanding enabled the Neighbourhood Plan team to create a vision for the future of Saffron Walden, as follows:

Saffron Walden will retain its unique identity as a visually beautiful market town with its rich heritage, a large number of listed buildings and a number of historic green spaces within the town and across the parish. It will be a settlement of the highest environmental sustainability due to provision for pedestrians and cyclists, continued reduction in carbon emissions, encouragement of recycling and use of green energy. Movement within the town will be safe and easy and journeys by car will be minimised. Economic activity will develop so that as many residents as possible will be able to earn their livings in the town. The traditional long-established links with the artistic community will be maintained and its proximity to Cambridge will enable it to become a popular tourist destination. The existence of many local interest groups, combined with activities organised by residents demonstrates a high level of civic pride. Little Walden will maintain its separate identity and integrity as a rural village served by Saffron Walden.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

3.9 The vision informed the Neighbourhood Plan core objectives.

Objective 1

Saffron Walden will be an economically active and self-sustaining town, offering equal opportunities to all.

Objective 2

Saffron Walden's residents will be able to live as healthily as possible.

Objective 3

Saffron Walden will be an environmentally sustainable town.

Objective 4

Saffron Walden's heritage assets, high quality landscape and conservation areas will be protected or enhanced.

Objective 5

Saffron Walden will retain its market-town feel and community spirit.

Each policy within the SWNP addresses one or more of the following core objectives.

Policy		Meets objectives				
		1	2	3	4	5
HOUSING						
Housing mix on new developments	SW1	✓	✓	✓		✓
Affordable housing	SW2	✓	✓	✓		✓
DESIGN AND LAYOUT						
Design	SW3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parking on new developments	SW4		✓	✓	✓	✓
COMMERCIAL PREMISES						
Convenience stores in residential neighbourhoods	SW5	✓			✓	✓
17 Market Hill & 29 - 21 Church Street	SW6	✓			✓	✓
Shopfront design	SW7	✓			✓	✓
Regeneration of George Street	SW8	✓			✓	✓
Development of new and existing commercial spaces	SW9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CONNECTIVITY						
High quality communications infrastructure	SW10	✓				
ECOLOGY						
Ecological requirements for all new domestic and commercial developments	SW11		✓	✓	✓	



TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE						
Promoting walking and cycling	SW12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Travel planning	SW13		✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving provision of public transport	SW14	✓	✓	✓		✓
Vehicular transport	SW15		✓	✓	✓	✓
OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION						
Playing fields and sports halls	SW16		✓	✓	✓	✓
Open space for informal recreation	SW17		✓	✓	✓	✓
Public rights of way	SW18		✓	✓	✓	✓
Land of value to natural environment	SW19		✓	✓	✓	✓
ARTS AND CULTURE						
Arts and cultural facilities	SW20	✓	✓		✓	✓
HEALTH						
Healthcare	SW21	✓	✓			✓

4. HOUSING

4.1 HOUSE SIZES

4.1.1 It is important that the SWNP plans for the right size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in the parish.

THE CURRENT STOCK OF HOMES IN SAFFRON WALDEN

4.1.2 A significant proportion of existing housing stock at the 2011 Census was of detached and semi-detached family houses. The Census registered 57% detached or semi-detached properties, 23% terraced houses and 20% flats/maisonettes.

4.1.3 Recent development (going back to slightly before the Census in 2011) in Saffron Walden has been heavily weighted towards larger properties particularly in the open market category. The newest developments have been constructed as follows:

Open Market Housing:

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
0	40	179	174	38	431

Affordable Housing (combining affordable rent and shared ownership)³²:

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
44	109	42	9	0	204

Source: Developer plans and Uttlesford District Council Housing Department

4.1.4 Many smaller homes in Saffron Walden have been extended, as it can be cheaper and more convenient to extend a home rather than move. This has further reduced the stock of smaller homes.

WHAT SIZE HOMES DO PEOPLE NEED?

4.1.5 Public surveys and consultations for the SWNP always show a demand for “smaller” and “more affordable” homes. In order to test whether the survey results show a true picture of demand, the SWNP looked at the local authority evidence base to assess

³² Note that a care home was provided as part of an affordable housing contribution, not included in these numbers due to the specialist nature of the dwelling.

demand for affordable housing, and private sector market data to assess demand for open market homes.

4.1.6 The local authority housing waiting list shows that social housing need is highest for 1, then 2, then 3, then 4 bedroom houses.

The local authority housing waiting list in Uttlesford is as follows (as at 23/07/2018)³³

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
581	291	102	30	0	1004

Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Department

4.1.7 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (*housing benefit*) is assessed and paid at a rate which depends on the household size. Around half the people eligible for housing benefit are in work, but do not earn enough to afford rent without subsidy. Around half the people in employment and in receipt of LHA qualify for a two-bedroom rate, while almost all the people out of work and qualifying for LHA receive a one-bedroom rate.

The number of people in Uttlesford in receipt of LHA is as follows (as at 07/03/2019)

Employment Status	1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.
Employed	20	85	41	17	0
Unemployed	133	20	12	2	0

Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Department

4.1.8 This data clearly shows by a considerable margin that the dominant household sizes in Uttlesford, where the household is counted as employed, require 2 or 3 bedrooms.

4.1.9 To assess private sector demand, a bespoke data research project was commissioned from Rightmove, which was asked to provide data on what sizes of property were being searched for, and where the search originated; whether it was inside or outside the town of Saffron Walden itself. The data is from searches which resulted in actual enquiries to estate agents, in order to eliminate any potential skew caused by idle browsing. The data covered the 12 months to 31st March 2019.

4.1.10 The Rightmove figures show that prospective buyers from outside the area greatly outnumber prospective buyers from within the area, with 96.5% of the searches coming from outside compared to 3.4% coming from within Saffron Walden.

³³ Households classed as in housing need bands A-D (i.e. not including band E)



Enquiries through Rightmove ranked by percentage of searches (note that this adds up to 99.9% through rounding)

House size	Percentage of searches leading to enquiry with estate agent	Origin of the search (identified by IP address of searcher)
2 bed	32.6%	Outside Saffron Walden
3 bed	31.8%	Outside Saffron Walden
4 bed	24.7%	Outside Saffron Walden
5 bed	4.2%	Outside Saffron Walden
1 bed	3.2%	Outside Saffron Walden
3 bed	1.5%	Within Saffron Walden
2 bed	1%	Within Saffron Walden
1 bed, 4 bed, 5 bed	0.3% each	Within Saffron Walden

4.1.11 The figures also show that 66.9% of searches are for 2 or 3 bedroom homes, while 29.5% of searches are for 4 or 5 bedroom homes. This means that recent housebuilding, in which roughly 219 2 and 3 bedroom houses have been built, compared to 212 4 and 5 bedroom houses, is out of kilter with the market demand.

4.1.12 This is backed up by the indexed demand statistics, which further break down demand between houses and flats, as follows:

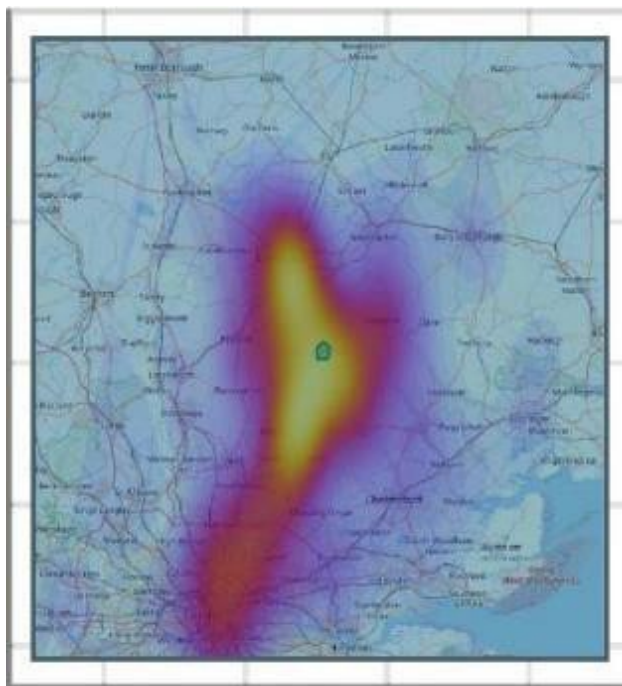
Indexed demand through Rightmove, as measured by email enquiries over 12 months

Property enquiries from lowest to highest measured as demand relative to supply

- 2 Bedroom house 4.0 (highest demand relative to supply)
- 3 Bedroom house 2.7
- 4 Bedroom house 2.2
- 5 Bedroom house 2.1
- 2 Bedroom flat 2.0
- 1 Bedroom flat 1.8
- 3 Bedroom flat 1.0 (lowest demand relative to supply)

This research shows that in Saffron Walden, houses are more in demand than flats. 2 bedroom houses on the market receive twice as many enquiries as 2 bedroom flats, and almost twice as many enquires as the next most sought after sized property, which is a 3 bedroom house.

4.1.13 This 'heat map' produced by Rightmove shows that the M11 corridor from inside London and up to Cambridge is the origin of most enquiries. The "house" icon is Saffron Walden.



4.1.14 This migratory trend is confirmed and identified in the UDC 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which notes that larger houses tend to be sold to newcomers to the area, and that they have higher buying power than existing residents. The recent trend therefore has been for larger houses to be built to satisfy this market segment. Therefore, despite the market demanding far more 2 and 3 bedroom houses than 4 and 5 bedroom houses, developers have been able to sell 4 and 5 bedroom houses by marketing them widely.

4.1.15 While the overall supply of dwellings in Saffron Walden has increased since the 2011 Census, the skew towards larger homes has meant that the provision has not satisfied demand, local or otherwise, and it has not satisfied the immediate needs for housing across all ages and incomes. Neither has it taken into account future trends including an aging population or the generally shrinking population per household.



4.1.16 Housing need in Uttlesford has been set out in the 2015 UDC Strategic Environmental Assessment³⁴. The data in the assessment confirms the Rightmove research. This table is copied from page 14 of the assessment:

Table 15: Size mix of housing requirement, 2007 – 2021

All Housing		
1 bedroom	1300	12.2%
2 bedroom	2100	24.6%
3 bedroom	3200	40.5%
4 bedroom	1200	18.0%
5 + bedroom	300	4.7%
Sub-total	8100	100.0%

4.1.17 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that Saffron Walden can accommodate a diverse range of age groups and types of households, and that it can retain second generations of residents. Over the plan period, the SWNP seeks to rebalance the supply of housing towards smaller homes, in line with local demand, which is in itself in line with national trends.

4.1.18 Development is irreversible and the SWNP wishes to ensure that best possible use of land is achieved to support the future sustainability of the parish. Open land has a social, economic and environmental value, and this value should only be lost to development if on balance the benefits of the development outweigh the benefits of the open land. If the type of development required by the planning policies is not immediately deemed viable then it is preferable to pause development rather than to continue with inappropriate development. Inappropriate development uses up valuable land to the long-term detriment of the parish.

4.1.19 The SWNP sets policy on the mix of housing sizes. This is because many people are obliged to seek social housing if they only need and can afford a one-bedroom property, because the open market is not providing (enough) one-bedroom properties. Just because the open market finds it more profitable to deliver bigger properties, this does not mean that there is low/no demand for open market one-bedroom properties.

In a classic economic model, there would be no barriers to supply and therefore the open market would provide all products which buyers want to buy. The housing market is different to the classic economic model in that there is a 'raw material' barrier to supply – namely the availability of land and planning permission to build upon it. Therefore, the lack

³⁴ Place Services: Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report: Annex B – Baseline Information July 2015 (page 14)

of supply of open market one-bedroom properties is something which can only be addressed by policy. It is desirable to address it with policy because forcing people to seek social housing when they don't necessarily need it is an unnecessary cost to the public sector, which diverts resources away from either other people in need of social housing, or from other public sector services.

POLICY SW1 HOUSING MIX ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1. All residential development proposals should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs but also provides for balanced and vibrant neighbourhoods. The specific mix should be based on up-to-date local evidence of need and take account of local circumstances and the nature of the surrounding area.
2. The housing mix of affordable homes is to be determined by local housing need and policies set out by the planning authority.
3. Developments may not be subdivided into smaller parcels to avoid the housing mix policy.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5

4.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4.2.1 The issue raised most frequently in public consultations with regard to housing was that of affordability. The Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21 states that the average Uttlesford house price is 18 times the average Uttlesford income, which is £24,575. 60% of Uttlesford residents earn below £34,000pa and 40% earn below £25,000. ³⁵

³⁵ Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21

4.2.2 New build homes sell for a premium; a new build house costs on average £573,000 in Uttlesford, much higher than a new build house in the wider region which costs around £357,800.³⁶

4.2.3 The last draft Local Plan notes para 4.3 page 78, *“because of high house prices there are some members of the population, particularly younger people and those on low to modest incomes, unable to access the housing market. High housing costs have also led to a growing number of households who do not necessarily require subsidised affordable housing, but due to inflated house prices, are financially restricted from entering the private housing market.”* This comment remains true despite the withdrawal of the draft Local Plan.

4.2.4 Lack of supply of smaller homes has a high cost to the public purse in the form of need for social housing and housing allowance.

4.2.5 ‘Affordable housing’ has different meanings to different audiences. In the main, ‘affordable housing’ is understood by the general public as being the type of housing that isn’t too expensive for the average person to live in.

4.2.6 However, in strict planning terminology, ‘affordable housing’ is a precise description for housing which is subsidised and either rented or owed, and provided to eligible households. There is a precise way of calculating prices for affordable housing; as a broad- brush description it is housing that is 20% below open market prices. The full definition is set out in the NPPF³⁷. Information on what qualifies a household as eligible is available on the Uttlesford District Council website³⁸.

4.2.7 The SWNP uses the strict planning terminology definition of ‘affordable housing’, because this is a quantifiable measure and the only legally workable definition which can be used in a neighbourhood plan. Nonetheless, it recognises that even the 20% discount on market rates still places the prices above the reach of many.

4.2.8 The 2017 UDC SHMA identified that the affordable housing component of the District’s total housing need is 19.5%. In the light of national policy which does not permit affordable housing contributions from sites of 10 units or less, it is considered appropriate to require developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings to ensure that the affordable housing need is met. The SWNP adopts this reasoning and evidence.

4.2.9 Developments of 11+ homes have to provide 40% of them in the form of affordable housing. 70% of these are Affordable Rent and 30% are Shared Ownership. Affordable Rent housing is subject to the Right to Buy rules and can be transferred to the open market after only three years from completion.

³⁶ Source data: Uttlesford Housing Market Report – June 2018 (Q1)

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³⁸ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing>

4.2.10 The Community Land Trust model is gaining traction nationally as a method of safeguarding in perpetuity homes which have the same purpose as the traditional affordable rent housing, without the risk of transfer to the open market. Community Land Trusts are therefore the preferred delivery model for affordable housing, over and above housing associations which are subject to Right to Buy regulations.

4.2.11 If the disparity between what is needed and can be afforded locally, and what has more recently been built is not addressed, there is a very real risk that Saffron Walden will become a dormitory town. This would further increase both inward and outward commuting, thus worsening air quality, and be damaging to the overall social structure and community feel that the town currently enjoys and which makes it so attractive in the first place.

POLICY SW2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Development on sites which provide for 10 dwellings or more, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more will be required to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings on the application site and as an integral part of the development.
2. In exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be achieved, off-site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on-site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.
3. Affordable housing units will be distributed through the development in appropriately sized, non-contiguous clusters. The tenure mix of affordable housing should reflect the most up to date local housing need as defined by the planning authority.
4. Sites may not be artificially subdivided. Where sites are sub-divided, each subdivision or smaller development will contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable housing which would have been appropriate on the whole or larger site.
5. Residential proposals which do not meet the Neighbourhood Plan's affordable housing requirement of 40% will only be supported if the proposals are justified by an open book assessment of viability.
6. Where this policy makes the scheme unviable, careful consideration will be given to the overall scheme, and the scheme should be refused unless it meets the objectives of the SWNP and complies with all relevant development plan policies

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5

5. TOWN LAYOUT AND DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The NPPF Section 12 *Achieving Well Designed Places* puts significant weight on the design aspect of the planning process:

NPPF Paragraph 126: “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

5.1.2 Saffron Walden has grown over time, with the historic core surrounded by more recent development. The historic core contains a blend of styles from previous eras, and a large part of the town is designated Conservation Area. The surrounding developments are built in a style that reflects the more generic approach of national housebuilding companies. Some approaches to the town are characterised by older style industrial buildings, which limit the aesthetic appeal of the approach.

5.1.3 It is notable that the NPPF not only seeks to protect areas which are already considered to be attractive or “good design”, but also seeks to improve areas which are not.

NPPF Paragraph 134. “Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design⁵², taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes”

5.1.4 Saffron Walden is a small town and it can relatively easily be crossed from one side or end to the other on foot by a reasonably fit person. This human scale is important because it emphasises the need for design in all locations to be well-considered. The quality of design of all developments, both residential and commercial, will be given equal importance. Housing design must be appropriate to the scale, character and grain (scale of layout) of the existing built form; however, a site bordering existing poor design will not be a reason to allow additional poor design. Instead it must seek to improve its immediate environment.

5.1.5 The Essex Design Guide, first published by Essex County Council in 1997, and last revised in 2018, is a very useful document which contains well-reasoned design guidance for developers, and local and neighbourhood plans, without being prescriptive. In its own words: *“It is used as a reference guide to help create high quality places with an identity*

specific to its Essex context. The 2018 edition seeks to address the evolution of socioeconomic impacts on place-making". The Essex Design Guide as most recently amended is considered to be suitable for the architectural vernacular of Saffron Walden.

5.1.6 The Urban Place Supplement is a supplementary document which builds on the Essex Design Guide with a particular focus on developments of over 50 dwellings per hectare. It is appropriate for developments in the centre of Saffron Walden.

5.1.7 Both documents outline ways in which neighbourhoods can be created so that residents and visitors are encouraged to walk or cycle instead of traveling by car; to eliminate the creation of dead areas which would encourage crime; to reduce the negative impact on feeder roads; and to assist the elderly, less mobile or those with dementia to engage with the wider community.

5.1.8 Building for Life 12 (BfL12) was designed in 2012 in response to the National Planning Policy Framework's commitment to build more homes and better homes. It describes itself as a *"government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live"*.

5.1.9 BfL12 sets out 12 urban design criteria in the form of questions. It gives recommendations of things to consider and recommendations of things to be avoided, and is a very simple framework for assessing developments.

5.2 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFFRON WALDEN

5.2.1 More recent housing developments in Saffron Walden have not generally been built to the standards proposed by the Essex Design Guide, either in terms of the architectural style of the buildings or of the estate layouts. The image below demonstrates a missed opportunity in development layouts in terms of layouts and porosity (how many ways in or out of the development there are). The policy SW7 provides specific direction and policies on the design of footpaths and layouts.



5.2.2 This development (Tudor Park) on the eastern edge of the town illustrates the problems of a lack of vision at development stage and therefore missed opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes. It has a single access point for vehicles and pedestrians at the north of the development. There was no provision for a pavement to the west of the development so pedestrians immediately have to cross a busy road to go anywhere. Residents have noted that if pedestrian links had been created to the south, it would be a very quick walk to the nearest supermarket. Instead, they have to walk north up and out of the development, cross Ashdon Road, walk along the pavement to the north of Ashdon road, cross back over Ashdon Road, then walk down Elizabeth Way, and then turn left along Radwinter Road towards the store. Faced with such a journey, many may well choose to take the car instead. Similarly, no link was made to the west of the development, which could have been an opportunity to create a 'quiet route' for pedestrians. The red lines illustrate potential links which could have been made. New developments must be designed so as to prioritise and encourage physical activity and walking and cycling. Sport England and Public Health England's Active Design Guidance³⁹ provides useful information on how this can be achieved, as does the Essex Design Guide.

5.2.3 As has been identified in the Heritage and Character Assessment, the street scene aesthetic varies throughout the town. The centre of the town has a mix of older architecture from various periods and the Conservation Area designation affords these streets a high degree of protection. Elsewhere the town is characterised by pockets of land which have

³⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

been developed for housing at different times and in the prevailing styles of the 1920s and onwards.

5.2.4 The SWNP recognises that there is the potential for the more modern developments to evolve in the same way, so that where buildings on a development may currently look very much the same, in future years as renovations and improvements take place, the streets may come to also have what has been described as a “pleasing jumble” of styles of architecture.

5.2.5 To ensure that neighbourhoods remain pleasant places in which to live, infill buildings will be resisted if they have a detrimental impact on the amenities enjoyed by their immediate neighbours, or if they are visually detrimental to the overall street scene.

5.2.6 The SWNP seeks to protect the Conservation Areas from small incremental changes which individually could be overlooked, but which in aggregate can result in a noticeable step-change of appearance. The visual aspect of the older parts of the town has changed many times over the centuries, and now they demonstrate a rich heritage. A local design guide for Saffron Walden may be published by the Town Council as a supplementary planning document.

5.2.7 The special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas can be derived from many different aspects including the scale, style and materials of the buildings, the historic street pattern, street frontages and building lines, boundary structures, street furniture, trees and open spaces. The Heritage and Character Assessment notes the wide range of buildings representing various styles and materials coming together to create a unique townscape. The mosaic of different building styles including pargetting and flint detail to some buildings and varied roof lines is typical of the plot by plot development of the historic core of the town, in great contrast to the uniform appearance of new build developments on the edge of the town. Consideration must be given to the form of new or replacement street furniture within the Conservation Areas. For example, new or replacement street lighting must match the existing styles. The Historic England publication *Streets for All*⁴⁰ deals with the aesthetics of successful public realm design and its principles are not limited to historic neighbourhoods. This publication should be consulted before changes are made, and ideally would be a basis for making ongoing improvements.

5.2.8 Any development which includes more than ten dwellings is considered by the SWNP to be substantial relative to the size of the town and has the potential to have a considerable impact on the overall aesthetics of the town. It must make a positive contribution to the town’s architectural vernacular.

⁴⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

5.2.9 The SWNP notes that of the 356 households on the Uttlesford housing waiting list for Saffron Walden as at 2018, 33% are over 60⁴¹. The Uttlesford Viability Study June 2019 concludes that land values in Saffron Walden are such that accessible and adaptable homes may be built without impact on viability.

5.2.10 Gated communities are contrary to the objective of retaining a sense of town-wide community spirit and they restrict pedestrians and cyclists from using 'quiet routes'.

5.2.11 Having an adequate amount of home living space is vital and the Nationally Described Space Standards set out what is considered as a reasonable minimum for a good standard of living. Adoption of the Space Standards is appropriate for Saffron Walden, which, as a small market town, naturally doesn't have the same level of public indoor leisure spaces that larger towns have, such as shopping malls and cinemas.

5.2.12 Saffron Walden has a lack of public parks, with many housing developments being further away from public open space than the Fields in Trust guidelines⁴². In the absence of the ready availability of public parks and gardens, private gardens gain extra importance for the health and well-being of residents.

5.2.13 Government guidance on design allows for design to be considered at the outline application stage of planning: *"Applications for outline planning permission seek to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable before fully detailed proposals are put forward, However, design is often considered at this stage in order to assist community engagement, inform an environmental impact assessment or design and access statement (where required) and provide a framework for the preparation and submission of reserved matters proposals. In some instances, it may be appropriate as part of the outline application to prepare and agree a design code to guide subsequent reserved matters applications. Design quality cannot be achieved through an outline planning application alone. Outline planning applications allow fewer details about the proposal to be submitted than a full planning application, but can include design principles where these are fundamental to decision making."*⁴³ It is entirely appropriate for design to be considered for future development in Saffron Walden for two reasons. First, the heritage and appearance of the parish is exceptional and at risk from insensitive development. Second, the land surrounding the town is at a higher level than the rest of the town and so any development on it will be visible from tens of miles away. This is already the case with the 'Manor Oak' development. In order to prevent development of poor design, a design code will be agreed for new developments, in line with government guidance on design. The

⁴¹ Data provided by UDC

⁴² Amenity green space should be available 480m from dwellings, parks and gardens 710m, and natural and semi-natural green space 720m

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design> Paragraph 10 Reference ID: 26-010-20191001

demonstration of a design-led approach will be in the Design and Access Statement (in the case of developments of 10 dwellings or more) or in the Design Statement (in the case of developments of under 10 dwellings).

5.2.14 Approximately one in three people will suffer from dementia and Dementiastatistics.org estimates that the annual cost to the UK of dementia is £26 billion, and this is expected to rise to £55bn by 2040⁴⁴. The symptoms of dementia include difficulties in thinking, with memory loss, and using language.

5.2.15 The difficulties experienced by people with dementia and their carers can be reduced when their surroundings are not confusing. The Royal Town Planning Institute's 2020 publication *Dementia and Town Planning* describes six broad urban planning principles which, if considered throughout the design process, help to reduce confusion.

5.2.16 These planning principles have been endorsed by the Alzheimer's Society, Public Health England and the Essex Design Guide. Additionally, the Royal Town Planning Institute notes that following these six principles makes urban design and layouts more pleasant for everyone, and not just for people with dementia and their carers.

5.2.17 Saffron Walden has the aim of becoming a "dementia-friendly" town, and the SWNP works towards this objective by ensuring that all urban design changes, whether domestic or commercial, acknowledge and respond to the six planning principles to create an environment which is:

- a) **Familiar** - functions of places and buildings are obvious, any changes are small scale and incremental;
- b) **Legible** - a hierarchy of street types, which are short and fairly narrow. Clear signs at decision points;
- c) **Distinctive** - a variety of landmarks, with architectural features in a variety of styles and materials. There is a variety of practical features, e.g. trees and street furniture;
- d) **Accessible** - land uses are mixed with shops and services within a 5-10-minute walk from housing. Entrances to places are obvious and easy to use and conform to disabled access regulations;
- e) **Comfortable** - open space is well defined with toilets, seating, shelter and good lighting. Background and traffic noise should be minimised through planting and fencing. Street clutter is minimal so as to not impede walking or distract attention; and
- f) **Safe** - footpaths are wide, flat and non-slip, development is orientated to avoid creating dark shadows or bright glare.

⁴⁴<https://www.dementiastatistics.org/statistics/cost-and-projections-in-the-uk-and-globally/>

POLICY SW3 DESIGN

1. All development in Saffron Walden must contribute positively to the parish's sense of place through a design-led approach underpinned by good design principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal, and must comply with the other detailed policies, and the Supplementary Design Guide for Saffron Walden should this come forward during the period of the plan.
2. Adherence to the Design and Access Statement or Design Statement will be a condition of approval of outline planning applications.
3. All planning applications for development with the potential to impact on the Conservation Areas and/or heritage assets including listed buildings will be accompanied by a Heritage Statement that describes the significance of the Conservation Area and/or heritage assets and assesses the impact of the development. This includes planning applications outside the Conservation Areas but which will impact on any of the Conservation Areas and/or heritage asset for example because of the generation of additional traffic or the impact on views.
4. Developments and extensions of buildings and spaces must demonstrate that they:
 - a) Display a high level of architectural quality which responds positively to the best of Saffron Walden's context and distinctive character by maintaining and promoting the distinctive local vernacular, by using complementary materials and by ensuring that height and scale is in keeping with neighbouring properties;
 - b) Evidence a positive response to the landscape, local and longer views and the natural and historic environments;
 - c) Integrate well with existing neighbourhoods while seeking, where appropriate, to improve the aesthetic of the immediate area;
 - d) Refer to Secured by Design principles to reduce crime and encourage safer communities;
 - e) Create well connected and accessible new streets which provide for a rich choice of routes, prioritising and encouraging active and sustainable travel. In the case of doubt on this matter the Essex Design Guide or any other locally applicable design guide will be referred to for best practice;
 - f) Have active frontages, particularly at street level, and provide a clear distinction between areas of public and private realm;

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Policy SW3 Design

- g) Respond to and enhance the amenity value of an area through consideration of matters such as overlooking, natural light, micro-climate, outlook and amenity space, both for existing neighbours and future residents; and
5. Infill development will be supported subject to it meeting the following criteria:
 - a) Maintains a high level of amenity for occupiers of surrounding properties and provides for the amenity for future occupiers of the proposed development, particularly in terms of noise, privacy, overshadowing and access to daylight;
 - b) Respects the existing street scene;
 - c) Reflects prevailing boundary treatments;
 - d) Provides adequate parking, bin storage and access arrangements; and
 - e) Preserves *or* enhances Saffron Walden's heritage assets and their setting
 6. Any major developments (including car parking facilities) in the scale and context of Saffron Walden will have their impact minimised through appropriately detailed frontages that wrap around the unit.
 7. While all residential schemes must contribute positively to the quality of Saffron Walden as a place, any developments of more than 10 dwellings will demonstrate how a scheme does this through a completed Building for Life 12 assessment.
 8. All new outline applications will be subject to the creation of a design code at outline planning permission stage, and adherence to the design code at reserved matters and build-out stages will be a condition of approval.
 9. Gated communities will not be permitted except in cases where the housing caters for groups of people classed as "vulnerable".

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Policy SW3 Design

10. There should be a hierarchy of street types to ensure developments are legible with clear signage at decision points.
11. Three-storey housing will be acceptable, other than in settlement edge locations, and subject to the building height and form respecting and complementing the buildings and landscape in the immediate vicinity. Buildings higher than this would not normally be supported unless the surrounding buildings and context make them appropriate.
12. Garden and outdoor spaces must conform to the Essex Design Guide guidelines.
13. Street furniture, including lighting, must be designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings, and where possible to propose an improvement to the aesthetics of the area. *Streets for All* should be consulted before changes or additions are made.
14. Minimising Flood Risk: Development proposals will comply with flood risk assessments and management requirements set out in the National Planning Framework and Planning Practice Guidance and the Uttlesford Strategic Risk Assessment to address current and future flood risks from all relevant sources with appropriate climate change allowances. All new development proposals will need to demonstrate that adequate foul water treatment and disposal exists or can be provided in time to serve the development. Policy SW19 deals specifically with Sustainable Drainage Systems.
15. 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

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5

5.3 PARKING DESIGN ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

5.3.1 Car ownership across Uttlesford is higher than the national average, reflecting its rural location and limited public transport network. At the Census in 2011 83% of households in Saffron Walden reported ownership of at least one car or van, compared to 75% of households across England as a whole. In Saffron Walden 78% of travel to work is by private car.

5.3.2 The 2005 Local Plan states *“Uttlesford communities lack high quality public transport. In common with many other rural communities, using the car is the only practical way of getting to work, accessing services and making leisure trips. Car ownership levels are relatively high and existing car parking provision is well used. It is important that car parking for new development is adequate. Where there is a lack of off-street parking on older residential areas this results in a high level of on street parking. In some localities this results*

in obstruction of roads and footpaths, causing particular problems for those with limited mobility. The level of parking on new developments should neither exacerbate existing parking problems in communities nor create problems where they do not presently exist.” There is evidence that this is still the case, and car parking availability remains a contentious issue in the town⁴⁵.

5.3.3 Bus services in Saffron Walden are limited, with many services finishing mid-afternoon, so are not useful for commuters. They are even more limited on Saturdays and on Sundays there are no buses at all. Buses in Uttlesford are difficult to run as a commercial venture and therefore are largely subsidised. Services tend to run close to the point where the subsidy per passenger is at the limit of viability. Essex County Council funds are under pressure, and bus provision is not a statutory requirement, making it an obvious place for cost savings. Bus services are not forecast to increase in Saffron Walden and the use of private vehicles is not forecast to decline.

5.3.4 Saffron Walden residents tend to rely on the private car to access other services and facilities:

Healthcare: Saffron Walden has two doctors’ surgeries, but one is on two sites, with one of the sites being in Great Chesterford, some 4.5 miles away and only accessible by car. Saffron Walden retains its community hospital which offers some specialised outpatient appointments, for example x-rays and audiology, and has geriatric in-patient wards. For more general round the clock healthcare, for example walk-in health care, A&E, maternity, surgery and general wards, Saffron Walden residents must travel to Cambridge.

Food shopping: Saffron Walden town centre has a mid-sized Waitrose. On the edge of the town to the east is a mid-sized Tesco store which also has a petrol station, and there is an Aldi on the edge of town to the south. The nearest supermarket in “superstore” format (including clothing and home goods) is 12 miles away in Haverhill.

5.3.5 Despite hopes that private car ownership and use will reduce over time, the SWNP must take a pragmatic approach to the reality that any change will not be immediate. Higher needs for private vehicles and long distances travelled by commuters will make initiatives such as car sharing clubs, for example, less immediately feasible in market towns and rural locations.

5.3.6 For the timescale of the SWNP, it is assumed that private vehicle use will remain more or less at current levels, and policies on parking reflect this.

⁴⁵ For example, the 2019 campaign by residents of Museum Street to obtain additional residents’ parking spaces, after 19 resident permits were issued for 6 spaces.

5.3.7 It is anticipated that any surplus parking spaces generated by the policies below will be regularly used by delivery vehicles.

5.3.8 Good parking design is therefore an important part of urban planning in Saffron Walden. Poor design can very much detract from the overall street scene, whereas good design can promote the sense of the neighbourhood as a friendly space. Alongside the *Essex Design Guide*, the Essex Works Publication *Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009* sets out standards and examples of layouts which work well, and which are supported by the SWNP. Departure from these standards is to be considered a rare exception rather than a rule, and applications which request a departure from these standards will be examined closely in the context of the locality and nature of the development.

5.3.9 Tandem parking (where cars are parked one behind the other) is to be discouraged where the street layout might in reality encourage on-street parking instead for convenience. Where on-street parking is not possible, tandem parking works well.

5.3.10 Ownership of electric vehicles will increase throughout the plan period and beyond and housing must be designed with charging requirements in mind. Thus, all developments make provision for either actual electric charging points or the ducting for future charging points, so as to avoid expensive and disruptive retrospective installation.

5.3.11 Bicycle parking needs to be secure and covered to encourage people to use bicycles regularly. High density developments characterised by smaller footprints and small storage space will not have enough space for bicycles to be stored within the home.

5.3.12 Delivery vehicles on tight time schedules and taxis dropping off or picking up passengers will always need to park as close as possible to the destination dwelling. The street layout of new developments should not be so narrow that these temporary vehicle parking manoeuvres block the whole street.

POLICY SW4 PARKING ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1. All new developments must provide for parking spaces for residents and visitors as per the Essex Works publication *Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009* or later equivalent.
2. All new developments will demonstrate how they refer to the Essex Design Guide 2018, or later equivalent for layout of vehicle and cycle parking spaces *and UDC's local parking standard for 4+ bedroomed dwellings*.
3. All dwellings will make provision for electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

6. COMMERCIAL PREMISES

6.1 OVERVIEW OF PROVISION

6.1.1 The town centre of Saffron Walden provides a range of services to an extensive rural catchment area. The town provides vital facilities for the Uttlesford District such as schools, health services and nearly all the local area's food shopping needs.

OFFICE SPACE

6.1.2 Having assessed office space provision in Saffron Walden, the previous draft of the Local Plan stated that (Paragraph 5.25) *"There is an acute lack of modern office accommodation to meet the needs of Saffron Walden. Potential sites in and around the town are limited and rental values may mean development is not viable"*. The research behind this statement, and this comment remains true despite the withdrawal of that draft.

INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

6.1.3 The main industrial area of Shire Hill is just one mile from the town centre and therefore within walking distance of all of the housing areas. Other smaller industrial areas are also within walking distance of the housing. On the east side of the town is Ridgeon's, a builders' merchant, and the south of the town has a new development which will host several big-box retailers. Regarding industrial space, the previous draft of the Local Plan notes in Paragraph 5.25 *"There is a current surplus of industrial and particularly warehouse units in Saffron Walden, partly as a result of the recession and partly because of the difficulty of access to the M11."* The research behind this statement, and this comment remains true despite the withdrawal of that draft.

RETAIL OFFER

6.1.4 A fine example of a vibrant market town, Saffron Walden town centre hosts over 200 independent shops, restaurants and cafés, together with many well-known national retailers, cafés and restaurants. The market on Tuesdays and Saturdays draws locals and visitors to the town. The town has three mid-sized supermarkets (Tesco, Waitrose and Aldi) and several smaller convenience size stores.

6.1.5 The District Council commissioned a retail study by Savills as background evidence for the Local Plan. The study, updated in May 2018, forecasts the following needs to have arisen by 2026:

- an additional mid-sized convenience store; and
- an additional 5,370m² retail space for comparison shopping (non-food).



These numbers are additional to the recently developed out of town retail space at Knight retail park. The retail study update assumes that the existing towns and villages will accommodate all of the retail requirements of the garden villages and that the garden villages do not have their own retail provision. It should be noted that the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn along with the concept of garden villages. It is not clear therefore that there is a need in Saffron Walden for additional convenience retail space.

6.1.6 The Uttlesford Retail Study Update notes that the centre of Saffron Walden, which accommodates much of the existing comparison floorspace in the district, is characterised by old, historic fabric, many listed buildings and embraced by Conservation Areas. It further notes that the ability of such units to increase their efficiency is considered to be very limited. Therefore, opportunities to create modern retail space within the town centre should be seized.

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

6.1.7 The town has many old buildings and two public gardens that are tourist attractions, as well as Saffron Hall concert hall, Saffron Screen, Saffron Walden Museum, and the Fry Gallery. Audley End House which is maintained by English Heritage, and Audley End Mini railway, are nationally significant visitor attractions and are within two miles of the town centre. The One Minet skate park attracts people from a very wide area and regularly hosts competitions.

6.1.8 Ongoing projects by the Tourist Information Office and business groups encourage tourists to visit the town. The 200,000 visitors per year to Audley End House, and the many hundreds of thousands of annual visitors to Cambridge have been identified as potential additional consumers for Saffron Walden's retail and hospitality businesses. Spending by additional tourists may help to offset the increasing appeal of online shopping which has been identified as a general threat to bricks and mortar retailers everywhere.

6.1.9 A Premier Inn hotel has been constructed.

6.2 COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 The economic objective of the SWNP is for Saffron Walden to be economically active and as self-sustaining as possible. It must be desirable for residents and tourists to visit, shop and work in, without inappropriate development detracting from the historic and commercial appeal of the town.

6.2.2 In order to achieve this objective, and assessing current provision and use of commercial spaces, the SWNP identifies the following priorities:

- To promote the development of a widespread range of commercial use classes, including retail premises and hot food dining-in establishments in the town centre that enhance the appeal of the town to residents and visitors;
- To support initiatives that increase footfall in the town, including tourism that generates income;
- To encourage development of facilities for new start-up businesses; and
- To support proposals that enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of commercial units, both in use and vacant, for existing and new businesses.

6.2.3 In April 2019, the Gambling Commission launched the new National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms⁴⁸. The future prevention plan foresees a range of universal measures which will protect the whole population, including placing *“regulatory requirements/restrictions on product, place and provider”*. The Gambling Commission Report *“Gambling participation in 2018: behaviour, awareness and attitudes”* of 2018 found that 79% of respondents *“were of the view there are too many opportunities to gamble nowadays”* and *“71% considered gambling is dangerous for family life”*. Saffron Walden has two gambling operators, and the SWNP is not supportive of planning permission being granted for additional operators.

6.2.4 Hot food takeaway premises sit in a planning category which would include all kinds of food once permission is granted. In assessing planning applications for additional hot food takeaways, consideration will be given to the likely impact on local amenity and public health.

⁴⁸ <http://www.reducinggamblingharms.org/>

6.3 CHANGE OF CLASS FOR COMMERCIAL SPACES

6.3.1 The retail environment of Saffron Walden represents both an asset and an opportunity to the town.

6.3.2 Main town centre uses are defined by the NPPF as including: retail development; leisure; entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses; offices; and arts, cultural and tourism development.

6.3.3 In efforts to promote housebuilding, as well as to bring vitality to town centres where it is lacking, the NPPF encourages a mix of residential and commercial use within town centres. This NPPF policy may be most relevant to, and helpful for the rejuvenation of, the centres of large (and possibly post-industrial) towns which are combating decline. In contrast the small market town of Saffron Walden has a compact and busy town centre, immediately bounded on all sides by housing. Many stores require the first floor for storage and office space, and removing this may in turn make the store on the ground floor unviable.

6.3.4 Town centre use of space should not decline in provision, as once lost it is hard, if not impossible, to return a domestic dwelling into commercial space, and keeping an interesting town centre for residents and visitors is key to the economic survival of Saffron Walden. Article 4 Directions will be sought to support the policy on town centre uses. Applications for 'pop-up' or temporary town centre uses for vacant commercial premises, and changes of use class, for example for arts or youth organisations, will generally be supported, in the context of keeping the town centre vibrant, adaptable and, critically, open as a central meeting point for residents and visitors.

⁴⁹ The map is based on the UDC eLP town centre map, with slight increase of primary frontage and decrease of secondary frontage, where this can be justified by current uses at the time of writing the SWNP. The outline showing the footprint of the town centre is identical. The UDC map was in turn based on the Uttlesford Retail Study Update 2018 Appendix 8 – Main Town Centre use Class Map
https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/8151/Uttlesford-Retail-Study-Update-Appendix-8-Main-Town-Centre-Use-Class-Maps-May-2018-/pdf/Appendix_7i_-_Uttlesford_Retail_Study_Update_2018_App_8_Main_Town_Centre_Use_Class_Maps1.pdf?m=636632065276700000

6.3.5 Consideration must always be given to the concept that the town centre is first a commercial centre, and commercial ventures that are in line with the objectives of the SWNP will be supported. For example, visitors to Saffron Walden who come for Audley End House or Bridge End Gardens may be persuaded to turn a day trip into a weekend if the evening economy offers restaurants. Residential development in suitable locations will attract people who value having an evening economy on their doorstep. The 'agent of change' principle is described in paragraph 187 of the NPPF: *"existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed."* Application of the agent of change principle ensures the continuing viability of commercial premises, particularly those that serve the hospitality economy. Similarly, local residents' objections to new premises applications in the town centre, for example, should be considered carefully against the wider potential benefits of the proposed new business.

6.3.6 In order to protect the vibrancy of town centres, the NPPF instructs planners to use a 'town centre first' hierarchy when allocating uses for sites. This means that the first choice for new retail space should always be in the town centre. Should space not be available, the next choice should be the edge of the centre. Allocating and building retail sites in out of town locations should be seen as a last resort.

PLANNING CLASSES

6.3.7 Property is categorised by planning use class, as set out in the table below.

Previous Class	New Class	Use	*Main Town Centre uses as per NPPF
A1	E	Shops and retail outlets	*
A2		Professional and financial services	
A3		Food and drink	*
A4		Drinking establishments	*
A5	Sui Generis	Hot food and takeaway	*
B1	E	Business offices	*
B2-B8	No change	Industrial	
C1	No change	Hotels	*
C2	No change	Residential – specific residents e.g. care homes	
C3	No change	Residential – dwelling house	
C4	No change	Residential – houses in multiple occupation	
D1	F1 or F2	Non-residential institutions, including health, education, museums, libraries, places of public worship	*
D2		Entertainment and leisure	*
Sui Generis	No change	Uses which do not fall into any of the other categories.	

6.3.8 It is preferable for there to be no more than two gambling operators licensed in Saffron Walden at any one time.

6.3.9 Non-viability of a given use as a reason for an otherwise unacceptable change of Class must be proven by marketing and a robust independent assessment. Uttlesford District Council sets out requirements for this process.

6.3.10 Whilst welcoming the ‘town centre first’ objective of the NPPF, the SWNP makes an exception to this rule for convenience stores which may be built in residential areas. By providing everyday essentials locally to where people live, these shops can be a lifeline to the elderly and less mobile and can help to reduce traffic.

POLICY SW5 CONVENIENCE STORES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. Proposals for convenience stores integrated into residential neighbourhoods will be supported subject to the following:

- a) They will not undermine the viability or vitality of the town centre;
- b) They are located and designed to encourage access on foot or by bicycle, or near to a bus stop; and
- c) They will not exacerbate traffic levels in the neighbourhood.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5

6.3.11 17 Market Hill & 29-31 Church Street (The Old Sun Inn) is a Grade I listed building and is particularly special to the town centre. Any usage of the building must be respectful of the delicate fabric of the structure, and therefore the building has its own policy. Without setting a definitive list of uses it is appropriate to consider the impacts of each use, and the policy gives guidelines for consideration.



Photo reproduced from UDC website



POLICY SW6 17 MARKET HILL & 29-31 CHURCH STREET

Any future uses of the building must be compatible with and sustain and enhance the historic significance of the building and be viable consistent with the building's conservation and enhancement. Substantial harm to or loss of the building should be wholly exceptional.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5

6.4 SHOPFRONT DESIGN

6.4.1 Saffron Walden's town centre lies within a Conservation Area, and a great part of Saffron Walden's appeal lies in its visual charm. A balance must be sought between accepting change and innovation, while retaining the character and grain of the historic environment.

POLICY SW7 SHOPFRONT DESIGN

1. Alteration, reinstatement or enhancement to historic shopfronts and other shop fronts will not be supported unless they:
 - a) contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of Saffron Walden's historic environment; and
 - b) are of a high quality of visual design, are of an appropriate scale and proportion, and use appropriate materials and detailing.
2. Uttlesford District Council sets out guidance for shopfront design in its document Shopfront Design Guide February 2022 and (1) above should be read in conjunction with this document or any successor document and must be taken into account in developing and determining such proposals.

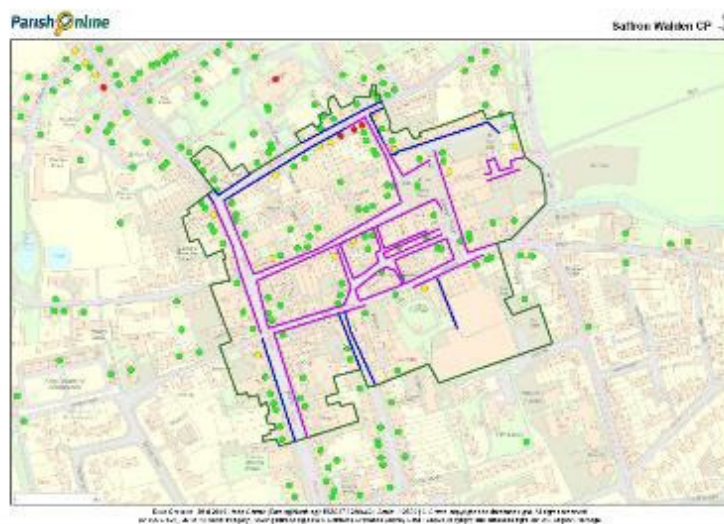
This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5

6.5 DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION OF COMMERCIAL SPACES

6.5.1 The SWNP would like to encourage the provision of modern office space which would be attractive to start-ups wishing to benefit from the proximity to London and Cambridge. It recognises that industrial premises which require large volumes of space are unlikely to be attracted to Saffron Walden because of the distance from the M11 and the high value of land, although it is hoped that specialised manufacturing may be encouraged to stay and grow.

6.5.2 Many of the offices in the town centre are above shops in buildings with small footprints. Most of the buildings are old and many are listed, as is demonstrated in the map

below (green dot is Grade II, yellow is Grade II* and red is Grade I). The challenges of converting these to modern office spaces are considerable, and ten have been converted to residential spaces between 2016 and 2019, with further conversions in the pipeline. Any opportunity to renovate additional spaces for commercial use would be of benefit to the town and would be welcomed.



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

6.5.3 There is opportunity for the redevelopment of some town centre sites. This will be supported, subject to the developments being for commercial use, so as to retain the commercial viability of the town as a whole. Ideally ground floors will be retail/hospitality and upper floors will be modern office space. Development along these lines will be supported subject to any impact on the character of Conservation Area being positive.

6.5.4 16-18 George Street (shown below) is a potential site for redevelopment. Except on this particular strip, the pavements on the road are particularly narrow and the road is heavily used by HGVs. Despite being in the town centre, businesses on the street do not always receive the foot traffic they need to remain viable. Proposals for the regeneration of George Street would be supported.



Photo taken by SWNP





Photo taken by SWNP

POLICY SW8 REGENERATION OF GEORGE ST

Proposals to regenerate George Street will be supported where the following criteria are met

- a) Redeveloping numbers 2-18 to include town centre A1 uses on the ground floor and residential accommodation on the first floor;
- b) Implementation of traffic restrictions to make the road more attractive to pedestrians, visitors and shoppers;
- c) Retention and sensitive redevelopment of the building that was formerly The George pub (now the Nemonthron);
- d) Sustainable drainage systems and water re-use and recycling to be incorporated if possible.

Development of the site as part of a wider development to include 56 High Street would be welcomed.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5



POLICY SW9 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND EXISTING COMMERCIAL SPACES

1. Otherwise acceptable proposals for the replacement or refurbishment of existing industrial units which will result in greater viability, adaptability and energy efficiency will be particularly supported.
2. Otherwise acceptable proposals for farm diversification involving small-scale business and commercial development which will provide additional employment will
3. Otherwise acceptable proposals to convert residential accommodation to additional visitor accommodation will be supported, provided that adequate parking is made available.
4. New and renovated commercial buildings must be constructed from appropriate and suitably coloured materials that enables them to blend into the surrounding countryside

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5

7. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

7.1 Having an efficient connection to the internet will help to enable residents to access up-to-date technologies for their lifestyles, businesses to flourish to their maximum potential, and children and students to gain the skills they will need to access future employment opportunities.

7.2 Installing the best possible technology at the point of building, in a manner which allows for easy upgrades, will be the most efficient way of delivering these connections.

POLICY SW10 HIGH QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. All new homes and commercial premises shall include superfast fibre connectivity, being Full Fibre to the Premises/Home (FTTP/H) or equivalent or better successor, which will allow residents and businesses a choice of at least two independent providers.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objective 1

8. ECOLOGY

8.1 Except for the limited number of brownfield sites within Saffron Walden, the rural location of the parish means that most new developments are built on land that was formerly open fields.

8.2 Development must compensate for this loss of environment for wildlife and prevent excessive urbanisation of the town's location by implementing planning measures which will maintain the town's rural feel and enhance the wildlife. For example, simple measures such as hedgehog holes in fences will allow for wildlife corridors.

8.3 Development must contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment by ensuring that planting is connected and by replacing lost green infrastructure at a greater ratio than that which is lost.

8.4 Every square metre of new buildings and roads removes land which previously had natural drainage, which makes the installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) essential to replace this natural soakaway function. The Environment Agency specifies the most appropriate SuDS for each development, with the core principle being that any drainage system must not pose a risk to groundwater quality and must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination. Further requirements for consideration, and resources for further information, are listed in Appendix 4. A sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is designed to promote a best practice approach to reduce the potential impacts of surface water flooding with respect to existing and new developments. It replaces the conventional and traditional ways of surface water management and provides a system which mimics the natural ways to manage surface water. SuDS schemes maximise the above ground features which broadly covers four major principles to manage surface water runoff; water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity. Incorporating SuDS mitigates the risk of flash flooding, water pollution, water scarcity, improve landscape with use of multi-benefit space and enhance biodiversity. The use of rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling as part of new developments should mitigate the climate change consequences such as water scarcity and flooding

8.5 The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), in association with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), has published The SuDS Manual. This manual, published in 2015, describes in detail the additional benefits of drainage systems alongside flood mitigation, which include enhanced amenity value for the area through good design and opportunities for enhanced biodiversity through careful planting. As well as identifying the benefits of well-designed SuDS, it provides practical advice and planning checklists on achieving these benefits, which makes this document an essential resource for developers.

8.6 Proposals to plant trees in public spaces will be supported where this will improve, or at least not detract from, the amenity of the space for current users.

8.7 The SWNP must consider impacts upon water quality brought about by development: consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the water quality in the local area. Connecting all properties to the mains sewerage system as the preferred option will enhance water quality as this follows the drainage hierarchy. This seeks to treat foul water at a water recycling centre and to steer developers away from less environmentally beneficial forms of disposal such as septic tanks and cess pits. Further benefits to the water environment can be achieved by; reducing misconnections to the surface water system; reducing contaminated surface water run-off and reducing spills of pollutants. All of these approaches could all help to enhance the natural environment.

⁵⁰ Guide 7: Planning for green and prosperous places, accessible at tcpa.org.uk

POLICY SW11 ECOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL NEW DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Sustainable drainage systems will be installed in all major developments unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate and will be proportionate and appropriate to the site, where possible to promote the use of multifunctional space to create a healthy environment for people.
2. Sustainable drainage systems will be planted with appropriate plants to encourage a biodiverse habitat, and designed for maximum amenity, using the guidelines and checklists of the CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015 or its successors, and the Essex SuDS Design Guide.
3. Water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting and surface water harvesting should also be incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply.
4. It is the preferred option that foul drainage for all new development is connected to the mains sewerage system
5. Hedgehog holes should be provided in fences to allow for wildlife to increase its range and access to gardens and green spaces in the town. Roosting, nesting and bat boxes should be provided on all new developments.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4



9. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

9.1 A Neighbourhood Plan may only deal with planning matters. In the most simplistic terms, this means matters which involve planning applications for the development and the use of land.

9.2 As well as the design and layout of the building works, the planning authority must take into consideration the surrounding infrastructure and, where necessary, make provision of additional infrastructure a pre-requisite for the development itself. The NPPF sets out the relationship between the provision of such infrastructure and the planning process in Section 8: “Promoting healthy and safe communities”:

NPPF Paragraph 92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, [...];*
- b) are safe and accessible, [...]; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, [...]*

NPPF Paragraph 93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

9.3 In very practical terms much of this infrastructure is delivered through developer contributions in the form of Section 106 agreements (S106), or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), or a combination of the two. Whilst the process of calculation of each is different, the end result of both is a financial contribution which is linked to and mitigates the impact on existing infrastructure which is caused by new development. At the time of adoption of the SWNP, the District Council uses S106 and is reviewing the introduction of CIL. The SWNP supports the introduction of CIL.

9.4 Developer contributions are dealt with by the planning authority; however, a neighbourhood plan may describe what additional infrastructure is required to make proposed development sustainable, and how it ought to be delivered.

9.5 The following sections, on transport infrastructure, sport and recreation, arts and cultural spaces, and education and healthcare facilities set out measures which are in part beyond the direct control of the Neighbourhood Plan, but which should form the basis of infrastructure delivery as implemented by the district and county councils.

10. TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

10.1 INTRODUCTION

10.11 1 The NPPF requires development plan makers to consider transport infrastructure:

NPPF Paragraph 102: “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.”*

NPPF Paragraph 103: “The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”

10.12 Traffic congestion in Saffron Walden is of great concern, particularly in relation to transport in the east of the town, as businesses find it less appealing to use sites in the east because access is difficult. Employment sites in the east of the town are important for the economy and surrounding congestion must not become a factor which causes their loss.

10.13 The high level of congestion has meant that the key junctions in the centre of the town operate over capacity and as a result much of Saffron Walden is designated as an Air



Quality Management Area (AQMA).⁵¹ The District Council has a statutory obligation to monitor the air quality, to seek ways to improve the air quality, and to report to DEFRA on progress.

Map showing the AQMA, which corresponds with the busiest streets for traffic as illustrated above.

10.14 In practice, the ambitions of planners to plan positively to reduce traffic congestion and to improve air quality in Saffron Walden are limited by the following cascade of constraints:



- Public transport networks are relatively poor, reflecting its position in a rural area. County Council funding for public transport is under pressure, and spending is forecast to reduce rather than to increase;
- As a consequence of limited public transport availability, it is very difficult to manage day to day living without the means of private transport. Therefore, car ownership and use in Saffron Walden is relatively high compared to the national average (83% of households have access to a vehicle, compared to 75% in England as a whole).

⁵¹ Appendix 2 provides further information on the AQMA.

- In parallel to the above, the imbalance between the cost of housing in the town and the average wages paid in Saffron Walden mean that high volumes of residents commute out each day to achieve the salaries necessary to afford housing in Saffron Walden. Meanwhile many people who work in Saffron Walden cannot afford to live in Saffron Walden so commute in from elsewhere each day. Inevitably almost all of these people travel by private car.
- The key destinations of Cambridge, Harlow, the M11 (for London) and Audley End Station can only be accessed from the North, West and South of the town whilst the greatest portion of the town, and the area which has seen almost all of the recent development, is towards the east.
- The streets through which most traffic must filter when travelling in or out of the town are simply the original medieval cart tracks, paved over. They go through the historic core of the town and are narrow, leaving little room for pavements. Cars jostle for space and lorries physically block the streets, and regularly strike the listed buildings. The streets are unsuitable for modern-day levels of traffic.
- Finally, various transport assessments have been carried out by Essex Highways (the most recent and fully comprehensive being the Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment October 2013, and subsequent reviews and updates). Each one has failed to find a solution, with the conclusion of each being that the medieval layout of the town, with all routes eventually directing traffic through the AQMA, makes it impossible to resolve the air quality simply by re-routing, and/or speeding up the traffic. The Impact Assessment conclusions note: *“The analysis suggests that if all the [proposed] measures were implemented, some of the key junctions in the Saffron Walden road network would be likely to accommodate the additional traffic resulting from the ULP [Uttlesford Local Plan] developments. However, three junctions in the town would continue to operate over capacity, and it has not been possible to identify further enhancements due to highway land constraints. These are: High St/George St; High St/Church St; Mount Pleasant Rd/Debden Rd”*.

10.15 The images below illustrate these constraints:



Photographs of the roads marked 1-4 on previous map.

1. Castle St – has parking on the right and single file / one-way traffic on the left with narrow pavements



2. Church St/High St – is single lane but widens to two lanes at the junction. However, the junction is narrow so it is difficult for two larger sized cars (or a car plus a van) to exit at the end simultaneously. The pavements are narrow.



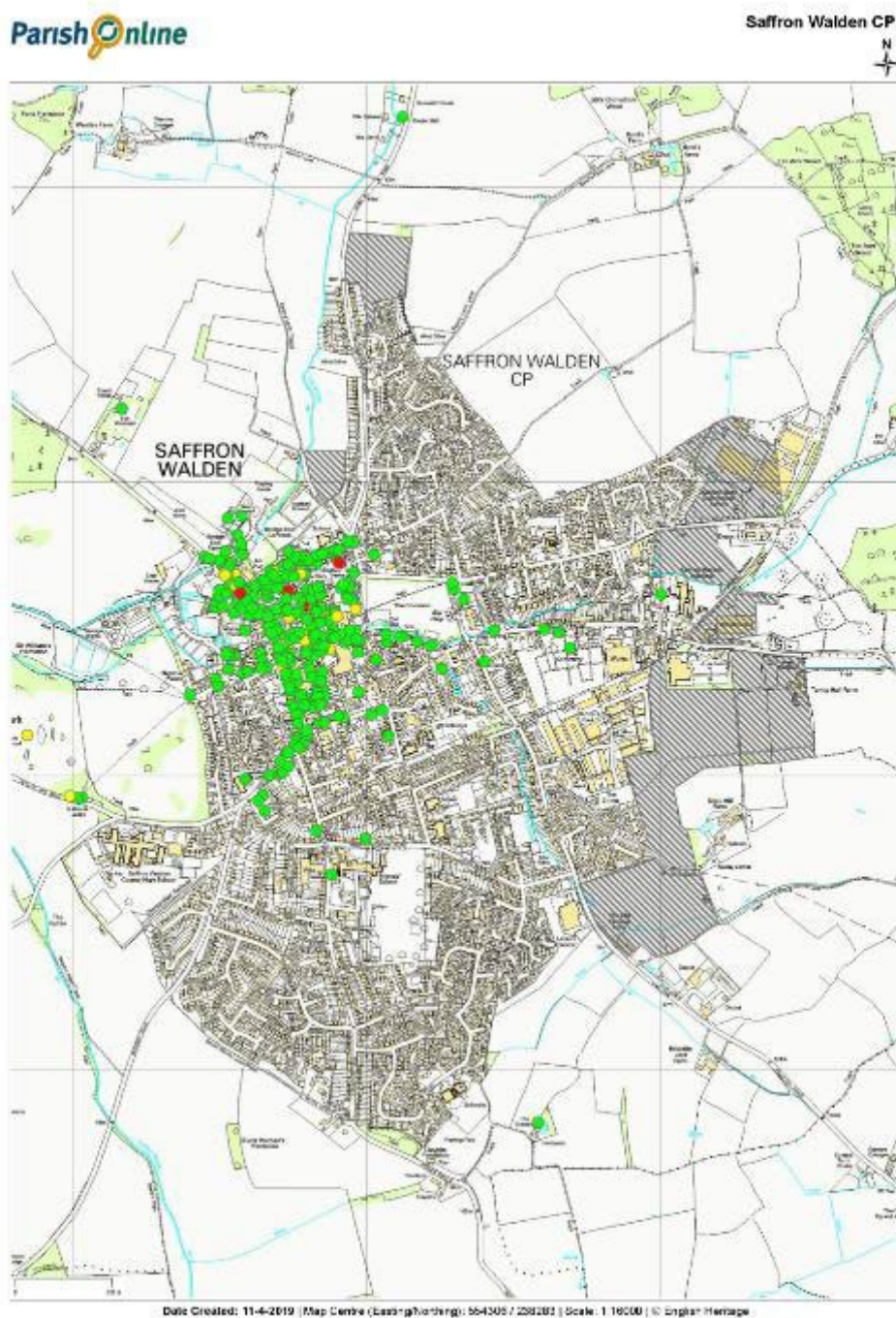
3. George St/High St has space for single file /one-way traffic and very narrow pavements. Whilst the space accommodates cars, lorries must cross the kerb and they regularly strike the buildings either side of the junction as they turn.



4. Audley Road is single lane and one way but widens to two lanes at the end



Map showing the location of the listed buildings, which are predominantly in the busiest streets for traffic.



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

10.16 The ECC Saffron Walden Traffic Study Update of May 2017 shows that committed development and allocated sites will leave the core junctions in Saffron Walden over capacity by 2031. The conclusion of the update states: *“Following a very simplistic assessment of further major infrastructure and development it is also concluded that, should any further development sites be promoted to the south and east of the town more sophisticated traffic modelling would be required in order to identify the traffic impacts and infrastructure required to mitigate those impacts. This could form part of a Local Plan review of the town, at which time modal shift opportunities would be explored.”*. Rather than waiting for a Local Plan review to explore ways of encouraging people to walk or cycle rather than drive, the SWNP makes its own proposals.

10.17 The various transport assessments carried out by Essex Highways conclude that encouraging more people to walk or cycle as often as possible for journeys made within the town would be the only way to improve air quality and congestion. The 2013 Impact Assessment says: *“In addition to the identified mitigation measures, it is recommended that demand management methods are investigated in order to reduce overall traffic flows in the town. Activities such as travel planning [...] would help to improve awareness of alternative travel modes and encourage a shift towards non-car modes of travel and reduce traffic congestion in town”*. This is a logical conclusion which would apply to any market town.

10.18 As required by DEFRA, the district council has in place an Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022 (AQAP), with seven measures identified as key to success.

10.19 Of the seven measures, three involve encouraging public and private fleet operators to switch to low emission technology. Naturally the SWNP is supportive of these.

10.1.10 One of the measures involves improvements around infrastructure for vehicles:

- *To work with ECC Highways to develop a scheme of measures aimed at improving junction capacity within the AQMA identified to be necessary as part of the emerging Local Plan once adopted.*

The SWNP is supportive of this, provided that the improvement to junction capacity does not have unintended consequences, for example:

- Any measure which speeds traffic through one junction may lead to more traffic idling at the next junction;
- Measures which result in increased traffic in the town centre or where there are a substantial number of people or historic buildings;
- Infrastructure changes which remove parking to speed up traffic can be undesirable because they make walking and cycling feel less safe, ultimately reducing the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists and increasing traffic to fill the space available, at the same time returning congestion and pollution to previous levels; and

- Changes which create one-way systems can be undesirable because they create longer journeys and thus additional congestion and pollution, as well as adversely affecting sustainable transport uses.

10.1.11 The remaining three measures involve aspirations around sustainable transport. They are:

- *To work with ECC to facilitate the provision of new cycle/pedestrian routes and cycle storage and promote the routes available.*
- *To assist ECC in working with local schools and businesses in the review and upgrading, or developing and promotion of travel plans.*
- *To encourage ECC to procure bus services with integrated timetables, high quality facilities, and a frequent and reliable service linked to the rail service at Audley End. Information on Public Transport services to be readily available in UDC buildings and via the website. To encourage ECC to set emission standards for new and existing buses.*

The SWNP fully supports these aspirations and makes proposals in practical detail which can convert them from aspiration to reality.

10.1.12 Other aspects of the SWNP also aim to address traffic congestion and associated pollution issues including:

- Policies SW1 and SW2, which seek to improve affordability of housing to reduce in-commuting for jobs in town;
- Policies SW8, SW9 and SW10, which seek to encourage the creation of more highly-paid roles in Saffron Walden to reduce out-commuting;
- Policy SW5, which seeks to encourage convenience stores in neighbourhoods so as to reduce car journeys for small shopping trips; and
- Policy SW4 which seeks to maximise the number of charging points in the town, to help encourage residents and commuters to switch to electric vehicles.

10.2 IMPROVING SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

10.2.1 In addition to improved air quality, an increased take-up of sustainable modes of transport will help improve the physical and mental well-being of the community as a whole, through exercise and the sense of community that is gained by walking and cycling.

10.2.2 A well-connected neighbourhood can encourage sustainable journeys. Where connections that can be made on foot or bicycle are quick and convenient, people are more likely to choose these modes of travel. Where footpath connections are not short, residents may find themselves forced to take longer routes and consequently choose to travel by car.

10.2.3 In order to achieve the SWNP objectives, the town must offer an excellent walking and cycling network between and throughout the residential areas and the town centre, with special consideration to be made for school children and the elderly.

10.2.4 The SWNP proposes a “wish list” of infrastructure solutions which would make walking and cycling more attractive in the town. This has been drawn up by local residents, particularly families with children, and is listed in Appendix 3. The SWNP encourages Essex Highways to engage and consult with these proposals. If the District Council adopts the Community Infrastructure Levy and a long-term infrastructure delivery plan is drawn up these proposals should form an integral part of the plans.

10.2.5 The *Manual for Streets* published by The Department for Transport (DfT) sets out a user hierarchy to be applied to the design process, with pedestrians being considered first when designing, building, retrofitting, maintaining and/or improving streets.⁵²

10.2.6 The *Manual for Streets* states that works to streets should be designed to keep vehicle speed at or below 20mph in streets and places with significant pedestrian movement unless there are overriding reasons for accepting higher speeds⁵³. This is backed up by the *Essex Design Guide* and is policy across Essex.

10.2.7 For clarity, all streets within the development limits of Saffron Walden are considered to already have, or wish to attract, significant pedestrian movement. Therefore, the SWNP supports all streets, both existing and yet to be built, being designed to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20mph. Some methods of achieving this, for example speed bumps, have since been discovered to be counter-productive. Thus, when designing new schemes, the best-known methods for achieving slower traffic speeds should always be used, bearing in mind the experiences of other local authorities which have already rolled out this measure.

10.2.8 In previous years, police policy was sometimes to object to porosity of developments on grounds that porous developments make it easier for crime to be committed and for criminals to escape along alleyways. Since then the police have issued new guidelines *Secured by Design – New Homes 2019*. These guidelines recognise that permeable developments are better for residents, and that it is possible to ‘design in’ crime reducing measures, for example by ensuring that all footpaths are well lit, are set out where they are overlooked, and surrounding landscaping planting is low. Moreover, as the police make increasing use of drones (something supported by 84% of the population according to DfT research⁵⁴) a good network of footpaths need not be an obstacle to catching criminals.

10.2.9 Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, has the final say in which highways schemes may be implemented. The barriers to the implementation of new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are largely due to financial constraints. The SWNP is supportive of projects that will provide separate space for walking and cycling between Saffron Walden and neighbouring settlements, which is away from motorised road traffic and encourages creative thought on how these may be funded and implemented.

⁵² Manual for Streets Table 4.1

⁵³ Manual for Streets paragraph 6.3.19

⁵⁴ *Department for Transport Research and analysis Transport and transport technology: public attitudes tracker* published 26th October 2018

POLICY SW12 PROMOTING WALKING AND CYCLING

1. Development proposals which retain, enhance or incorporate safe, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes on site as appropriate and which appropriately mitigate the impact of additional transport movements in the parish created through the development scheme will be supported.
2. New developments must meet the following criteria:
 - a) New footpaths, footways and cycleways are designed and built to a standard that they can be adopted by Essex County Council Highway Authority, or as an exceptional measure by Saffron Walden Town Council via a dedication under Section 30 of the Highways Act. In the event of the latter Saffron Walden Town Council will seek a reasonable funding contribution for future maintenance;
 - b) All new developments are designed to be permeable, in order to encourage and enable pedestrians and cyclists to walk or cycle by the shortest route; and
 - c) Footpaths on new developments conform to recommendations made by Homes 2019, Version 2, 2019 or a later equivalent.
3. For developer contributions to any off-site highways schemes or improvements:
 - a) The scheme design will conform to the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF which is to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement first, then facilitate access to high quality public transport as far as possible including catchment areas and facilities to encourage such use and private vehicles last.
 - b) Until or unless an up to date highways study is carried out, when prioritising schemes selecting schemes for funding, consideration should be given to the Uttlesford Cycling Action Plan or the SWNP infrastructure schemes.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5

10.2.10 Travel Plans are projects run with the aim of encouraging people to adopt environmentally sustainable ways of getting about. Developers must deliver them for significant developments, and schools and businesses are encouraged to have up to date plans for their employees and pupils.

10.2.11 The SWNP supports and encourages effective Travel Plans, and the Town Council, which has the longest-term interest in the well-being of the citizens in the town, is keen to deliver travel plans in cases where otherwise they would be delivered by a developer or a company which is based elsewhere.

10.2.12 Travel plans must include measurable objectives.

POLICY SW13 TRAVEL PLANNING

Where developments will or are likely to generate significant amounts of movement and are required to provide a travel plan, it is expected that the travel plan will:

1. Include provision, where appropriate, for the funding and delivery of necessary, sustainable travel initiatives.
2. Travel plans must have measurable objectives.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

10.3 IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

10.3.1 Buses have a positive impact on the environment if they are used by many people, even if the technology they use is not the most environmentally friendly. If they are not heavily used then they only have a positive impact on the environment if the technology is environmentally friendly. If they are both heavily used and have environmentally friendly technology then they have an extremely positive impact on the environment. Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) technologies for other fleets both public and private would improve the air quality in Saffron Walden.

10.3.2 A recurring theme during public consultations was complaints over the timetabling of the bus services in and around Saffron Walden. A lack of Sunday services and the way that buses to and from the railway station are closely timetabled, with long gaps in between, was of particular importance to the respondents. Provision of buses must include the hamlet of Little Walden as well as Saffron Walden town.

10.3.3 At a national level, bus services are usually subsidised by public authorities. Stansted airport is located in Uttlesford, which means that Essex's spend on buses in Uttlesford is higher than elsewhere because the airport is a regional destination, although this may or may not be of direct benefit to Uttlesford residents. In general, public spending on public transport greatly favours residents of London over people living everywhere else in the country. The Institute for Public Policy Research reported in November 2018 on the public spending per capita for public transport.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ <https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/transport-spending-has-risen-twice-as-much-per-person-in-london-than-in-the-north-since-launch-of-northern-powerhouse>

All figures are in real terms. Figures include capital and revenue; local and central government. Table: Public transport spending per person by region, real terms

Region	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
London	£693	£701	£906	£929	£1,019
East	£253	£265	£348	£330	£402

10.3.4 The UK government has committed to move to a net zero carbon emissions economy by 2050. People living in rural areas such as Uttlesford will always have to travel by vehicle for many journeys because the distances involved will often prohibit walking and cycling. In the long-term all private vehicles should be environmentally friendly. It will take a while before the charging infrastructure is in place for all road users to take this up and for the national stock of vehicles to evolve so that it is a financially feasible option for all drivers to make the switch. Therefore, in the medium-term transitional period at least, it is reasonable to expect that provision of public transport must be enhanced, and therefore it is reasonable for the SWNP to campaign for increased funding and provision of public transport.

10.3.5 Bus services fall under the remit of Essex county Council. A comprehensive review and report of the bus services was carried out for the SWNP by Dr David Corke in July 2018 and the recommendations therein are supported by the SWNP.⁵⁶ Furthermore the SWNP will advocate to ECC to implement the recommendations, or the recommendations made in any subsequent report by Dr Corke.

POLICY SW14 IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Where appropriate, developers will be expected to take every available opportunity to promote the use of public transport including identifying and protecting routes and delivering services and infrastructure to widen transport choice and accessibility to key destinations from the location of the site

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5

⁵⁶ <http://www.corke.biz/Walden%20Bus%20Report.pdf>



10.4 RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

10.4.1 Heavy goods vehicles moving through Saffron Walden have impacts other than pollution:

- The roads are too narrow for the length of the vehicles, which means that they cannot turn some corners without crossing the kerb, putting pedestrians at danger of being knocked down;
- The weight of the vehicles shakes the listed buildings within the Conservation Areas causing structural damage;
- The height of the vehicles causes them to occasionally clip the facades of the buildings which are very close to the road, causing severe damage and potentially rendering these listed buildings uninsurable; and
- The weight of the lorries damages the surface of the roads⁵⁷, especially in cases where multiple manoeuvres are required to make a left or right-hand turn in a tight space.



This photo taken in the summer of 2018 shows a lorry turning right into George Street from the High Street, and crossing the kerb, almost clipping the adjacent listed buildings. This illustrates the

⁵⁷ Source: Campaign for Better Transport: Lorries cause more damage to roads than cars (13.3.2017), "the Generalized Fourth Power Law is the most commonly agreed method to approximate the relative impact of vehicles on roads [...] a six-axle, 44-tonne truck is over 138,000 times more damaging than a typical, small, 1 tonne car (such as a Ford Fiesta) with two axles."



unsuitability of the medieval streets for heavy goods vehicles. Moments before this picture was taken, a mobility scooter user on the pavement had a narrow escape from being hit by the lorry. Large numbers of lorries use this junction each day making the pavement dangerous for pedestrians.

10.4.2 A last-mile delivery service or other consolidated delivery initiative which would potentially reduce heavy goods traffic through the town centre would benefit people and buildings, reduce congestion and improve air quality. The location of a depot for such a development would naturally need to be carefully considered so as not to create unintended consequences and worsen traffic.

POLICY SW15 VEHICULAR TRANSPORT

1. Further developments which are beyond the east of the town's development limits and which will generate additional traffic movements through the town will only be supported if:
 - a) It can be demonstrated that they will not increase congestion by the capacity measures used in the Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment October 2013; and
 - b) It can be demonstrated through an Air Quality Assessment, that the proposed development takes account of, and mitigates as necessary and appropriate, any impacts of air quality on achieving a suitable residential environment and also any impacts of development upon the objectives of the designated AQMA.
2. Development proposals likely to generate HGV vehicle movements through the town centre may if necessary and appropriate be subject to planning conditions restricting those movements. -
3. The provision of charging points for electric vehicles for private, commercial and public transportation electric vehicles will be supported across all development types.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

11. OPEN SPACE, SPORTS AND RECREATION

11.1 INTRODUCTION

“If physical activity was a drug it would be regarded as a miracle”

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England

11.1.1 As well as protecting existing open space and sports and recreational buildings and land, government policy requires planners to continually review the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities and to plan positively for additional provision where there is need:

NPPF paragraph 98: “Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.”

11.1.2 Uttlesford District Council produced a Sports and Open Spaces strategy via a suite of documents dated 2019.

11.1.3 Subject to three considerations, The NPPF allows Neighbourhood Plans to identify and designate Local Green Space:

NPPF Paragraph 101: “The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.”

NPPF Paragraph 102. “The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) 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*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

NPPF Paragraph 103: Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”

11.1.4 The quantity standard recommended to UDC in the Uttlesford District Council Open Space Standards Paper is summarised on page 12 of that paper and is reproduced below:

Table 3.4.3: Recommended quantity standard

Typology	Quantity standard (hectares per 1,000 population)
Parks & gardens	0.10
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.81
Amenity greenspace	1.60
Provision for children & young people	0.10
Allotments / community food growing	0.20

11.1.5 Parks and Gardens are described in the Assessment as *“urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes) which provide accessible high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.”*

11.1.6 Natural and semi natural greenspace includes woodland, scrub, grassland and other similarly natural environments which assist with wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

11.1.7 Amenity Greenspace is described in the Assessment as *“sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreations spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.”*

11.1.8 Open space which is of a size which makes it fit for purpose can include the areas fitting or overlapping the categories “parks and gardens”, “natural and semi natural greenspace” and “amenity greenspace. An example is The Common, which has areas fitting into each category. For this reason, the combined quantity of provision is considered in the SWNP. By this method, Saffron Walden ought to have 7.61ha per 1,000 of the population. A holistic approach to considering the needs of people and the environment would determine the actual layout and usage of any sites coming forward, as well as any re-purposing of current space.

11.1.9 Provision for children and young people is currently predominantly delivered as playgrounds.

11.1.10 Population in Saffron Walden is most recently estimated as 16,719 and the UDC Open Space Standards Paper uses an average of 2.4 residents per household.

11.2 FORMALLY MARKED PLAYING FIELDS AND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

CURRENT PROVISION

11.2.1 Provision of sports facilities in Saffron Walden has declined over recent years. Walden (Friends) School was a private school with large playing fields located in the centre of the town. The school went into administration in 2017 and the site was sold to developers. At the time of writing, the site is not developed; nonetheless the gates remain closed to sports groups which now do not have the benefit of the space. The swimming pool was drained and may now be permanently damaged. The SWNP opposes the loss of these playing fields and notes that they are protected by the NPPF, as well as the Local Plan.

NPPF Paragraph 99. "Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use."

11.2.2 The land next to Ridgeons to the east of the town was developed into 167 dwellings and commercial buildings (planning application: UTT/16/2701). It had been the location of a youth U11/U12 (9v9) football pitch. The development caused the loss of this pitch and provided in its place a 5v5 pitch. Sport England objected to the planning application. The 5v5 pitch which was provided in its place is inadequate for use for football because it is under the correct size (does not have runoff space) and is perched on the plateau at the top of a steep hill on all sides, with an approximate drop of 2 storeys. The small space provides a very good view over the town and is popular with dog walkers but cannot be described as an adequate 5v5 football pitch because of the unsuitable location and design.



11.2.3 At the same time, no sports facilities have been provided by other recent developments in Saffron Walden, apart from the Persimmon Homes development.

11.2.4 The Open Space Assessment Report 2019 catalogues the outdoor sports facilities space in Saffron Walden as covering 3.48ha.

11.2.5 The UDC May 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan confirms SWNP research on the state of provision of outdoor sports facilities in Saffron Walden. It states that there is a:

- A shortfall of grass football pitches of varying sizes;
- A shortfall of 2 full size floodlit 3G football pitches;
- A shortfall of provision for cricket;
- Insecurity of tenure for Saffron Walden rugby club which is based outside of SW, and has no space within the town, and notwithstanding this, an overall shortfall of provision for rugby; and
- A shortfall in tennis courts.

The Saffron Walden Scout District further notes that there is a shortfall of open space for activities such as camping, backwoods cooking, pioneering and so on.

11.2.6 The December 2018 UDC Sports Facilities and Recreation Strategy – Indoor Needs Assessment confirms SWNP research on the state of provision of indoor sports facilities in Saffron Walden. It notes that throughout Uttlesford “Unmet demand for sports halls in Uttlesford roughly equates to 6.4% of the total demand” (page 47). It goes on to note that “Lord Butler Leisure Centre [is] operating at 97% capacity. This means that [it is] operating at uncomfortable levels and [is] probably contributing to the over-stretched capacity levels.”

11.2.7 The report goes on to note that the majority of sports halls are located on education sites and are unavailable during the day, and that a significant proportion of time is given over to outdoor sports in sports halls which reduces the availability for specific indoor sports (page 56). It concludes that increasing outdoor sports provision would improve availability for indoor sports.

11.2.8 There is a project currently in hand to convert a football pitch at County High School into a 3G football pitch which will fulfil half of those requirements as identified by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan.

11.2.9 Swimming facilities are assessed by the Indoor Strategy as being broadly sufficient across Uttlesford. However, this finding is inconsistent with the fact that the Saffron Walden Swimming Club (Saffron Seals) is at capacity and has to run a waiting list for new members, since the closure of the Walden School pool. The Indoor Strategy further notes that “it may

be more convenient for residents in the western part of the authority to use neighbouring authority pools as they may be viewed as more accessible” (page 65 of the Indoor Strategy).

CLOSING THE DEFICIT AND MEETING FUTURE NEEDS

11.2.10 In order to meet demand, identified by their own waiting lists and confirmed by the UDC Sports Strategies, the Saffron Walden sports groups have identified the need for a multi-sports campus, which would achieve economies of scale by hosting several different sports across one site, as well as solving important shortages in capacity by providing modern sports facilities.

11.2.11 According to research carried out by Sport England⁶⁰ one in five people in England have a long-standing limiting disability or illness. It notes that *“Disabled people say they are nearly twice as likely to be physically inactive (43%), compared with non-disabled people (21%). This inequality increases sharply as the number of impairments a person has increases, with 51% of people with three or more impairments inactive. If these population disparities are not addressed, the inequalities that already exist for disabled people will increase.”*⁶¹ Sport England strategy⁶² is to encourage facilities that take a proactive approach to increasing participation by disabled or less-able people.

11.2.12 Early stage scoping projects considered by the Saffron Walden sports groups for a multi sports campus consider that it could include around 3 rugby pitches (2 to be floodlit) and 8 junior and training pitches for rugby and football. This level of provision would enable the Rugby Club to apply to the Rugby Football Union for funding for a 3G pitch. It could also include 6 further fields for training and provision for an athletics track and field training and events. It could further include a cricket pitch for the 2nd XI, and a building which would host a sports hall, clubhouse facilities and a demountable competition standard pool. In addition, walking and running trails would also be included as part of the scheme. Saffron Striders, the running club would be able to use the facilities and therefore accept new members under the age of 17, who are currently excluded for insurance reasons because the club has to train on the pavements through the town. Likewise, WALDENTri, the triathlon club would also have a safe and permanent base to operate from. A climbing wall would be welcomed by those who prefer to participate in individual sports. Ensuring that all new facilities would be accessible for less-able and disabled athletes would be key to the design process.

11.2.13 The sports clubs and Saffron Walden Town Council are currently reviewing options for sites. Requirements for the site include accessibility by active travel modes and acceptability in planning terms (to include matters such as impact on landscape and from lighting). Land adjoining Bridge End Garden and Windmill Hill would be an example of a good location for this project, as it is in a good location for access and has been rejected by the UDC as a location for housing. This land is privately owned by a trust connected to the

⁶⁰ <https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/disability/mapping-disability/>

⁶¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/disability/why-sport-for-disabled-people-matters/>

⁶² <https://www.sportengland.org/media/13245/sport-england-towards-an-active-nation.pdf>

Fry family (who also own Bridge End Garden, on lease to SWTC). Another parcel of land which has been identified as being potentially suitable is the field immediately to the south of the Green Mile (land next to the leisure centre) with access from Thaxted Road. This belongs to the developer Kier.

11.2.14 A multi-sports campus would be subject to a community use agreement to ensure the facilities afford the widest possible access to everyone in the community.

11.2.15 All development must contribute towards the creation of new or the improvement of existing sports facilities. This would be carried out via Section 106 agreements or CIL contributions.

11.2.16 The May 2019 UDC Playing Pitch Strategy recommendation (g) “*Secure developer contributions*” sets out the clear steps that must be taken to determine the appropriate level of contribution:

“For playing pitches, the Council should use Sport England’s Playing Pitch New Development Calculator as a tool for determining developer contributions linking to sites within the locality. This uses team generation rates (TGRs) from the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth. It then converts this into pitch requirements and gives the associated costs (both for providing the provision and for its life cycle).

The PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPS findings are taken into consideration and that consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs. This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused, such as single grass pitch football sites without adequate ancillary facilities or new cricket/rugby grounds located away from existing clubs. Instead, multi-pitch and multi-sport sites should be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and subsequent maintenance. Section 106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.”

11.2.17 Contributions from developers may take the form of money or an equivalent value of land, depending on which is more appropriate for the circumstances.

POLICY SW16 PLAYING FIELDS AND SPORTS HALLS

1. Plans for a multi-sport site with associated sports hall, clubhouse and indoor pool will be supported, subject to the location being accessible by active travel modes and acceptable in planning terms.
2. Developer contributions will be sought to contribute towards sports provision, and the calculation will be subject to the Sport England Playing Pitch New Development Calculator and Sport England's Facilities Calculator or its successor.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5



11.3 OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION AND BIODIVERSITY

CURRENT PROVISION

11.3.1 The value of sufficient open space is not to be underestimated. The organisation Fields in Trust has quantified the value of open spaces and has identified in its 2018 report: “Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces” that across the UK adequate provision of green space amounts to a saving to the NHS of £111 million per year.

11.3.2 Adding together the sites identified in the Open Space Assessment Report, and additional sites identified by the SWNP, Saffron Walden has 19.388ha of open space for informal recreation, i.e. 1.16ha per thousand people. This includes spaces classed as Amenity Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace.

11.3.3 Combining the recommendations for Amenity Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Saffron Walden should have 7.51ha per thousand people which equates to 126ha in total. Therefore, the deficit is estimated to be around 107ha.

11.3.4 Recent provision in Saffron Walden has suffered from two key problems. The first is that additional provision has been vastly insufficient to mitigate the additional demand created by development. The second is that where provision has been made, it has been delivered in piecemeal parcels, often individually so small as to be unusable.

11.3.5 New developments tend to provide Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), which are small playgrounds with slides and so on, suitable for young children.

11.3.6 New developments generally also designate Local Areas for Play (LAPs) which are public open space as separate to play areas. In reality however, these are typically small parcels of land which are ‘left over’ from the developer’s preferred layouts. Their small size makes them of little use for recreation, perhaps enough for very small children to play, but not enough for adults or older children to use for recreation. At best they could be left in a natural state and would serve a purpose of environmental benefit, however this would not then be a LAP.

11.3.7 A case in point is Tudor Park, recently completed on the East of Saffron Walden (UTT/1572/12). These pictures and figures illustrate the problems referred to in paragraph 11.3.6 above.



These “LAP” spaces measure approximately 18m² (on the left) and 27m² (on the right). This size of LAP is inadequate for the purposes of recreation and therefore should not count as amenity greenspace. This development of 130 houses might accommodate 312 people (at 2.4 people per dwelling). These spaces should have provided 2.37ha of open space. Instead there was just 0.0045Ha, and that was broken down into two sections so small as to be unusable.

11.3.8 The SWNP considers that the litmus test question for whether a site is suitable for consideration as an open space for informal recreation is “Can several people use it at once for activities such as flying a kite and throwing a ball for a dog?”. If the answer is no, then it is likely to be too small to be useful for and counted as recreational space, although it may serve as a small piece of land of environmental value if for example the grass inside the fence was left long.

11.3.9 Optimum layout for public open space is an important matter and should be planned in as an integral part of the development layout, rather than just using space not wanted for housing. Where one or two fields are being developed, for example, a sensible planning method would be to put all on-site open spaces together in one central location, to ensure a maximum amenity standard and therefore optimum use.

11.3.10 The layout of the Manor Oak development places the green space adjacent to the main road, which makes them dangerous and severely limits their use. This is to be avoided in future developments.

11.3.11 Modern housing developments have much smaller gardens than older developments did. This places additional pressure on public space to provide for recreation and the wider environment.

11.3.12 In order to create a healthy environment for Saffron Walden, all new development must provide adequate outdoors space for informal recreation. Even by applying the standards in the UDC Open Space Assessment report, the current deficit will not be removed, however from this point forwards it will not worsen. In order to meet the new standards, each new development must provide 75.1m² per person of green open space for informal recreation⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ 7.51ha per thousand of population = 75,100m² per thousand of population = 75.1m² per person



POLICY SW17 OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION

1. Play areas must be in locations central to the development, be well-overlooked and built in durable materials.
2. The provision of amenity green space must be in a single well-placed location and not divided into small pockets. The “Litmus Test” as described in paragraph 11.5.9 must be considered. It must also be usable; any area which is unusable, sloping or by a road should not be counted towards the greenspace requirements.
3. A fenced and dedicated dog park in Saffron Walden would be welcomed.
4. Community projects to create or regenerate outdoors community amenity space will be welcomed for consideration.
5. Development land may not be divided into separate parcels so as to reduce the overall size of the development and reduce liability for provision for amenity space.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

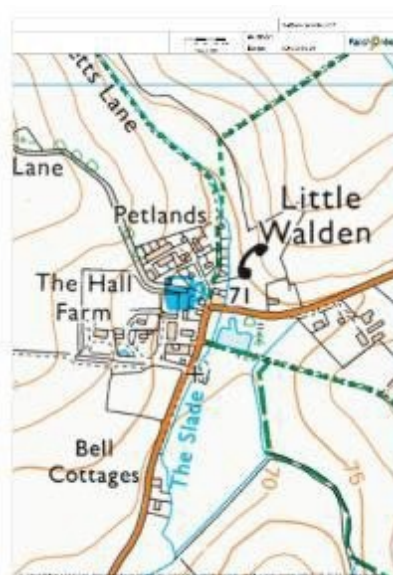
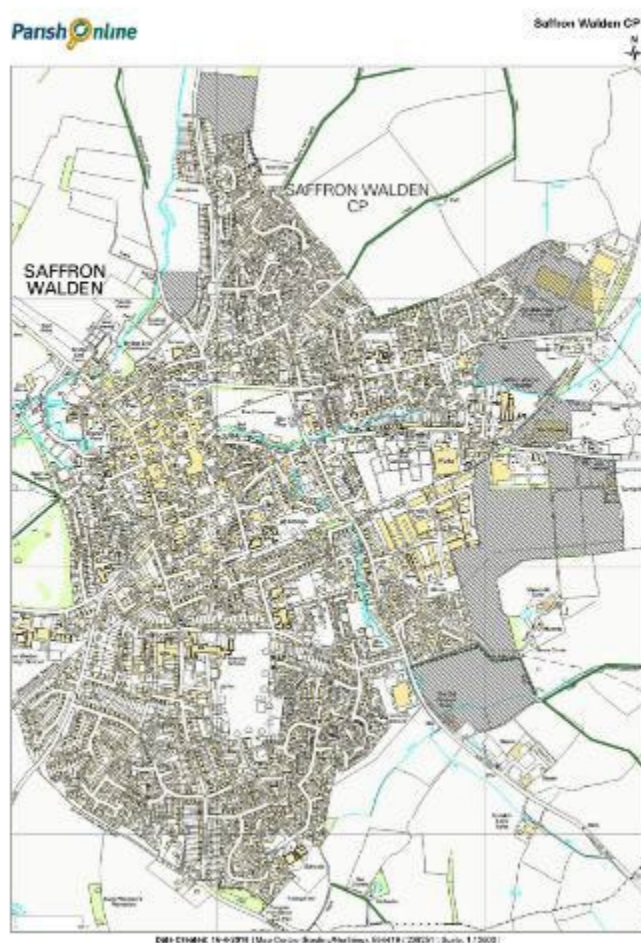
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

11.3.13 As Saffron Walden expands it becomes harder to access public rights of way across open space. While new consented development requires the preservation of rights of way, there is a huge difference in the amenity provided by a footpath through a housing development compared to a footpath at the side of a field. The picture below shows in green the footpaths radiating out through the open fields from Saffron Walden, and the greyed-out sections show areas consented for development.

11.3.14 The public rights of way within Saffron Walden and especially around the built-up areas of the town are an important asset. They provide a free-to-access escape from traffic and thus provide health and wellbeing benefits. The SWNP aims to retain these public rights of way. In retaining these rights of way, the SWNP recognises that it is not only the existence of the right of way, but also the setting, which provides the enjoyment, which must be safeguarded.

11.3.15 Where a development proposal is in a location on or near to any public right of way, careful consideration will be required for what impact the proposal may have on it and whether there is an opportunity to enhance the public right of way.

Maps showing public rights of way around Saffron Walden and Little Walden



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521



11.3.16 The HarCamLow Way is an especially important trail stretching 141 miles which provides opportunity for walking, cycling and horse riding. It is described by the Long Distance Walkers Association as *“A figure-of-eight walk, mainly on tracks and green lanes passing many places of historic interest, crossing low hills, woods and arable land via Standon and Manuden to meet the cross-over point at Newport. It continues through Saffron Walden and over the low Bartlow Hills to Horseheath and the Fleam Dyke, to enter Cambridge, the return route passing through Melbourn and Chrishall to Newport, continuing via Debden, Thaxted, Takeley and Hatfield Forest.”*⁶⁶

11.3.17 Where the HarCamLow Way adjoins Saffron Walden to the north east of the town, it passes around arable fields and travels along the brow of a hill at highest point on that side of town. Without travelling far along the path away from the built-up area, it is possible to enjoy views stretching clearly over the whole of Saffron Walden and to the countryside beyond as is illustrated in the photos below.



11.3.18 Where the HarCamLow Way adjoins Saffron Walden to the West it passes along a public right of way through Audley End Park and then turns south along a route also known as Beechy

⁶⁶ www.ldwa.org.uk

Ride. All sections of the route, whether to the north east or south west of the town are very well used by local walkers and cyclists. Saffron Walden's location as a point on this route also has potential as an additional generator of tourism. Any development along or adjacent to this route must be carefully considered in relation to the amenity value of the route

11.3.19 The amenity value of a public right of way or footpath that runs between fields is considerably greater than that of a footpath that runs along a built-up area. The tranquillity of a rural setting, and the local wide and sweeping views and sense of open space is lost when the adjacent spaces are developed. Development should consider the mitigation of any adverse effect on the amenity value of a footpath which could include the provision of landscaping for example. It should be bordered on either side by wide swathes of natural planting, such as might be suggested as appropriate for the location by Essex Wildlife Trust. This will screen off the development and provide the users with the sense that they are still in the countryside. This will also serve the dual purpose of creating a wildlife corridor.

POLICY SW18 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

1. Development that will be clearly visible from a public right of way should consider the appearance of the proposal from the right of way and incorporate substantial green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

11.3.20 Saffron Walden as a whole has no publicly accessible woodland. Both the environment and the population would benefit from the creation of woodland which is freely available for the public to visit. The Woodland Trust has conducted research into the benefits of publicly accessible woodland, and recommends:

- That no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size; and
- That there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes.⁶⁷

POLICY SW19 LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. The creation of a publicly accessible woodland adjacent or very close to the town of Saffron Walden would be supported.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5

⁶⁷ Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard: Published in *Residential developments and Trees A guide for planners and developers* January 2019

12. ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

12.1 The strong arts and culture community in Saffron Walden is an asset to the town and continuing support for it meets the objectives of the SWNP.

12.2 On an economic note, public art and cultural events can and do boost and build upon the town's aesthetic appeal, increasing local and visitor footfall and providing commercial opportunities for local businesses. This helps the town to remain economically active and self-sustaining.

12.3 Public art and cultural events contribute to helping people live healthy lives. An Inquiry Report published in July 2017 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing delivered three key messages: 1) "The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived." 2) "The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health." 3) "The arts can help save money in the health service and social care".

12.4 This finding is endorsed by Government planning policy

NPPF Paragraph 93: "To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;"

12.5 Publicly accessible art and cultural events help to sustain the market town feel of Saffron Walden, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Proposals for cultural events will be supported, especially those that can be accessed by individuals and families on low incomes.

12.6 The town benefits from a strong and varied diary of community events, all free to attend, including: a tri-annual 8-day carnival, a tri-annual Maze Festival, and the tri-annual Fete de la Musique. The market square hosts an annual Dance in the Square, Cinema in the Square and Christmas Lights events. The annual firework display is held on The Common

12.7 The town also has the Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden Castle and the Museum, Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Hall (a globally recognised concert hall) and a local community cinema, Saffron Screen. An English Heritage site, Audley End House, lies just outside the town. Local amateur theatre groups stage performances at the Town Hall.

12.8 Most of the events and organisations are staffed wholly or in great part by volunteer groups including Saffron Arts Trust, Saffron Walden Initiative, Saffron Walden

Round Table, Saffron Hall Trust and Saffron Walden Community Cinema Ltd, and numerous other arts groups.

12.9 The arts and culture groups have identified gaps in infrastructure which, if filled, would enable them to further broaden their offer. These gaps include more space for studio bookings, art and cultural exhibitions, stage shows and concerts, and more capacity for film screenings.

12.10 Saffron Walden Museum is the district museum service for Uttlesford, operated by Uttlesford District Council under a management agreement with Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (a registered charity). The grounds of the Museum, a grade II listed building, built in 1834, sit in the bailey of Walden Castle, and the whole site is a Scheduled Monument. Historic England has carried out a major conservation project to enable the Castle keep to be opened to the public. The Museum has long-term plans for upgrading and expanding its offer and has already been granted Resilient Heritage lottery funding. This funding will enable the Museum to explore ways to develop and improve the Museum building (sympathetically to and within the restrictions of its site), and to develop and improve its service and activities, with the aim of increasing visitors, community engagement, income and sustainability, and ultimately to solidify its position as the 'heritage hub' of the town and the district. The SWNP fully supports this project.

12.11 Saffron Screen is a 200-seat single screen community cinema based at County High School. The service it provides is constrained by the fact that it shares a hall with the High School; for example, it cannot get new films because they must be shown for 7 consecutive days and the hall does not have the bookings capacity to offer this. Ideally, in order to achieve economies of scale for management, and provide the fullest programme, it seeks a site whereby it can have 3 screens of approximately 160, 120 and 80 seats. A further flexible area could be used for other events such as exhibitions, courses, and meetings. A café/bar area would be essential for revenue and to enhance the visitor experience. The current location at the High School is on the edge of the town, so visitors tend to drive to it and then return straight home after the screening. A new site within the town would encourage people to walk or use the town centre public car parks and this would boost the evening economy in the town centre

12.12 Fairycroft House is an arts and media centre within the town. A 19th Century building, formerly a large home, since the 1950s it has hosted youth activities and in 2016 was sold by Essex County Council to a Community Interest Company (CIC). It serves all age groups and offers a range of arts and media activities including music, singing, dance and drama, as well as youth counselling services. It has soundproofed rooms for bands to practise, a professional-level recording studio, and larger multi-use rooms. The CIC has plans for expansion over the next two years (from 2019) and has identified a number of changes that can be made to the building which will increase capacity and extend the possibilities for usage for various events and classes.

12.13 The Tourist Information Centre (TIC), run by the Town Council, provides a huge service to visitors and residents, with ticket sales and other services for residents complementing the services for visitors. Some 118,000 people visit the TIC each year. The space currently available to the TIC is limiting expansion of services.

12.14 Current planning policies seek to transform town centres away from being 'retail-only' spaces and more towards being 'community gathering' spaces. These community gathering spaces will include retail, work, leisure and living units, and can return town centres to the vibrant locations they were before large out-of-town sites became dominant.

12.15 As a way of filling the gaps in the cultural infrastructure as identified by the arts groups, and to meet with current planning policy thought, the SWNP would welcome the construction of additional multi-purpose arts centre space in Saffron Walden. A town centre location for this would be essential to encourage cross-usage with other arts venues and local businesses and to ensure that the town centre as a whole can gain a maximum benefit from the project.

12.16 Fairycroft House successfully provides arts groups with space for classes, rehearsals and performances. For the purpose of policies on arts facilities, the footprint of the Fairycroft site is considered to be 'town centre'.

POLICY SW20 ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

1. A community cinema and/or an arts centre would be supported, subject to it being in a town centre location or at or next to the Fairycroft site

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,4,5

13. HEALTHCARE

13.1 Alongside the medical practices, the NHS has responsibility for provision of healthcare and sets the rates that developers pay to mitigate additional demand created by development. NHS property Services will work with the clinical commissioning group and NHD bodies to understand the relationship growth has with their services and what this means for preparing a development strategy.

13.2 Healthcare provision in Saffron Walden is provided by two GP surgeries and some services available at the Community Hospital. The hospital has one geriatric wards but otherwise offers out-patient care only. The nearest maternity services are at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge (14 miles away), and Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow (33 miles away) and for mental health services patients must either travel out of town or see staff who travel into the town specifically for appointments. The nearest walk-in health centre is in Bishop's Stortford (11.5 miles away) and the nearest 24hr and A&E care is in Cambridge.

13.3 Both GP practices are split across two sites, with one in Saffron Walden and the other in Great Chesterford, 4.5 miles away. Both practices are based in old buildings which are not easily enlarged. Public consultation for the SWNP revealed high levels of concern that doctors' surgeries are overstretched and that the town needs a bigger and more sophisticated 'state of the art' health centre.

13.4 The response made by the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to a major planning application in 2018 (UTT/18/0824/OP) confirms that primary healthcare provision in Saffron Walden is already under capacity by almost 500m².

13.5 Saffron Walden has several dental practices; however, in consultations residents regularly note that there are not enough NHS appointments available. Additional NHS practices would be welcomed.

POLICY SW21 HEALTHCARE

1. Planning applications and provision for a community health centre in the town of Saffron Walden will be supported, subject to the following criteria:
 - (a) The site is accessible by public transport;
 - (b) The site is accessible on foot;
 - (c) The site is accessible by car; and
 - (d) Sufficient parking is provided.
2. The creation of a combined community health centre at the current community hospital will be supported.

This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,5



APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN (2005) POLICIES “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING:

- Policy S1 Development Limits for the Main Urban Areas
- Policy S3 Other Development Limits
- Policy S4 Stansted Airport Boundary
- Policy S7 The Countryside
- Policy GEN 1 Access
- Policy GEN 2 Design
- Policy GEN 3 Flood Protection
- Policy GEN 4 Good Neighbourliness
- Policy GEN 6 Infrastructure Provision to support Development
- Policy Gen 7 Nature Conservation
- Policy E1 Distribution of Employment Land
- Policy E2 Safeguarding Employment Land
- Policy ENV 1 Design of Development within Conservation Areas Policy
- ENV 5 Protection of Agricultural Land Policy
- ENV 7 The Protection of the Natural Environment (Designated Sites)
- Policy ENV 9 Historic Landscapes
- Policy ENV 10 Noise Sensitive Development and Disturbance from Aircraft
- Policy H 1 Housing Development (Not consistent with NPPF – LPA required to identify 5-year land supply with additional 5% buffer, increased to 20% if there is a record of persistent under delivery of housing)
- Policy H 3 New Houses within Development Limits
- Policy H 9 Affordable Housing
- Policy H 11 Affordable Housing on “Exception Sites”
- Policy LC 2 Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities
- Policy RS 1 Access to Retailing Centres
- Policy RS 2 Town and Local Centres
- Policy RS 3 Retention of Retail and Other Services in Rural Areas
- Policy T 1 Transport Improvements

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING POLICY OF THE ESSEX MINERALS LOCAL PLAN (2014) “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- POLICY S8 Safeguarding mineral resources and mineral reserves

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING POLICY OF THE ESSEX AND SOUTHEAST ON-SEA WASTE LOCAL PLAN (2017) “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- POLICY 2 Safeguarding waste management sites and infrastructure

Since December 1997 each local authority in the UK has been carrying out a review and assessment of air quality in their area. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the next few years. The aim of the review is to make sure that the national air quality objectives will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. These objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.

If a local authority finds any places where the objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area there.

In 2012 further monitoring of air quality in Saffron Walden resulted in a larger AQMA being declared which covers the central area of the town. The figure below illustrates the radius.

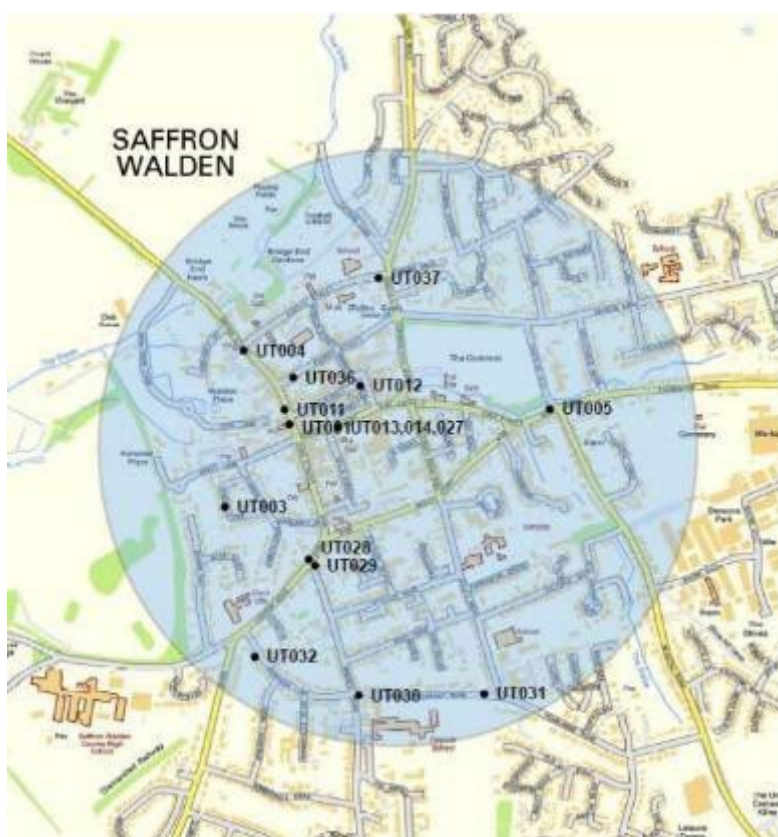


Figure 3 Map of AQMA Boundary showing diffusion tube locations

APPENDIX 3 – TRANSPORT WISH LIST

Sustainable development must take into account the health and well-being for future generations as well as meeting immediate needs.

For reasons of improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, sustainable development is therefore inextricably linked to the reduction of private car journeys and a “modal shift” towards walking and cycling as much as possible, and towards public transport where distances are too far for these first options.

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan supports the following infrastructure improvements to help encourage people to walk or cycle for shorter journeys. This is not an exhaustive list and is in no particular order.

FOR CYCLISTS

	Location	Description
1.	Battle ditches from Abbey Lane to Saxon Way -	Widen existing tarmac path to permit cycle path (no need to separate) along top of battle ditches, as per 1998 ECC Cycle Strategy proposal, which establishes continuity between the town centre and the cycle route along Wenden Road (via Abbey Lane, the battle ditches and Saxon Way)
2.	Abbey Lane	Make two-way for cycling up to High St junction
3.	Gold St	Make 2-way for cyclists. Enables cyclists to reach the town centre from the south avoiding the High St / George St junction
4.	Audley Road	Make 2-way for cyclists between Station Street and Fairycroft Road (change of signs and signage on carriageway or formal path as preferred)
5.	Market Row	Make 2-way for cyclists
6.	Museum Street	Make 2-way for cyclists
7.	London Road / Gibson Gardens	Remove cycle prohibition on cut through behind UDC offices
8.	King Street	Possibly introduce an advisory lane or just allow 2-way cycling (change of signs and signage on carriageway)



9.	South Road	Make 2-way for cyclists (change of signs and signage on carriageway - space for formal cycle path in parts potentially?)
10.	Market Hill	Make 2-way for cyclists (change of signs and signage on carriageway - no space for formal cycle path)
11.	High St / Park Lane	Cycle access on cut through between High St and Park St - dropped kerb if not installed as part of High St crossing
12.	Ashdon Road	On wide pavement on south side, delineate part as cycle path between Elizabeth Way and Hollyhocks Road - should just require white line and carriageway markings
13.	Hinxton to Saffron Walden	Introduce cycle route
14.	Wimbish to Saffron Walden	Introduce cycle route

FOR PEDESTRIANS

	Location	Description
1.	Church Street / Museum street / Market Hill	Improve the crossing facilities at this junction
2.	Debden Road junction w. London Road	Improve the crossing safety at this junction e.g. by introducing a pedestrian refuge
3.	Audley End Road between Copperfields and County High School	Improve the desirability of this footpath; upgrade the surface from mud to tarmac and add lighting
4.	Market Square	Part or wholly pedestrianise
5.	Junction of Castle Street and High Street/Bridge Street	Improve the crossing safety at this junction
6.	Raised table across Ashdon Road at De Bohun Court	Formalise crossing point by e.g. by making it a zebra crossing
7.	Junction of Highfields and Ashdon Road	Make it safer to cross Ashdon Road at the bottom of Highfields
8.	Little Walden Road by Caton Lane	Add double yellow lines to make this junction safer
9.	Ashdon Road north side between Whiteshot Way and Harvey Way	Formalise desire line (mud path) and install tarmac footway

10.	Ashdon Road crossing next to Harvey Way	Install a zebra crossing
11.	Ashdon road roundabout next to Clutton Road and De Vigier Avenue	Improve the crossing safety at this junction e.g. by introducing a pedestrian refuge
12.	High Street crossing between Park Lane and King Street	Install a pedestrian crossing
13.	Newport Road	Pedestrian crossing near Beeches Close
14.	Little Walden Road crossing adjacent to Pound Walk	Install a pedestrian crossing
15.	Landscape View crossing between Rowntree Way and Hill Top Lane	Install a pedestrian crossing
16.	London Road near UDC offices	Install a pedestrian crossing
17.	Whole town of Saffron Walden	Introduce 20mph speed limits to improve safety throughout town.

APPENDIX 4 – DESIGN OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should always be carefully considered in discussions with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

However, any drainage system must not pose a risk to groundwater quality and must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination.

The Environment Agency sustainable planning services provides the following general requirements:

“

1. *Infiltration SuDS such as soakaways, unsealed porous pavement systems or infiltration basins shall only be used where it can be demonstrated that they will not pose a risk to the water environment;*
2. *Infiltration SuDS have the potential to provide a pathway for pollutants and must not be constructed in contaminated ground. They would only be acceptable if a phased site investigation showed the presence of no significant contamination;*
3. *Only clean water from roofs can be directly discharged to any soakaway or watercourse. Systems for the discharge of surface water from associated hard-standing, roads and impermeable vehicle parking areas shall incorporate appropriate pollution prevention measures and a suitable number of SuDS treatment train components appropriate to the environmental sensitivity of the receiving waters;*
4. *The maximum acceptable depth for infiltration SuDS is 2.0 m below ground level, with a minimum of 1.2 m clearance between the base of infiltration SuDS and peak seasonal groundwater levels; and*
5. *Deep bore and other deep soakaway systems are not appropriate in areas where groundwater constitutes a significant resource (that is where aquifer yield may support or already supports abstraction). If deep soakaways are proposed you should contact us, as an environmental permit maybe needed.*

Further information can be found in the SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753, 2015), the Susdrain website (<http://www.susdrain.org/>) and the draft National Standards for SuDS (Defra, 2015).

Foul Drainage from new developments should connect to the public mains sewer, wherever possible. Government guidance contained within Planning Policy Guidance and building regulations drainage and waste disposal approved document H provides a hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted in the following order:

- *Connection to the public sewer;*
- *Connection to a private sewer, communicating with a public sewer;*
- *Either a septic tank or another wastewater treatment system; and*
- *A cesspool*

If you are unable to connect to the mains sewer, your planning application should outline how you will deal with foul drainage discharge. You should include evidence as to why it is not possible to connect to the mains system, including details of any prohibitive costs. Please note that some 'non-mains' foul drainage systems will require an environmental permit, as well planning as permission.

“



APPENDIX 5 – COMMUNITY CENTRE SURVEY RESPONSES

	1. Do you have any indoors space or spaces that can be hired by community groups or clubs?	2. What sort of activities is the space used for?	3. How many days/hours per week is the space available for hire?	4. Roughly speaking, what is your occupancy rate?	5. If you find that you turn bookings down because of capacity or suitability of use, please describe the issues.	6. Please let us know here if you have any other comments or suggestions regarding indoor community spaces in Saffron Walden.
Almshouses	Yes	Various groups use it. We do not accept parties for young children. Current examples are craft clubs, yoga, drama and bingo	available most times – have to phone to check.	Sometimes booked	turn bookings down if the Trustees are having meetings or the booking is for a noisy activity (have to take into account the residents living here)	
URC Hall	Yes	A wide range. Pre-school, Yoga, U3A Art, Line Dancing, Badminton, Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Girls' Brigade, plus ad hoc, parties, quiz nights, socials etc. Some of these are church-affiliated, most are not.	6 ½ days/week	generally booked	Generally booked' becomes 'fully booked' in the context of weekday evenings. We have recently had to turn away a number of applications	Pressure for this sort of space has increased considerably since the closure of the Friends School
Golden Acre Community Centre	Yes	Sports clubs, performing arts, pre-school classes, language classes, polling station christening receptions & wakes	The hall is available 9am – 9pm 7 days a week	always fully booked	We do not have the time available that people want as the hall is so busy.	We need another Community Centre that is available like the Golden Acre for people to book time slots for their classes, especially a hall that is on one floor with no steps for disabled facilities
Lord Butler Leisure Centre	Yes	Sports and a meeting room	7 days	GENERALLY FULLY BOOKED DURING THE EVENINGS AND ONLY SOMETIMES BOOKED DURING THE DAY (WEEK DAYS).	WE ONLY TURN BOOKINGS AWAY IF WE HAVE NO AVAILABILITY.	

New Life church	Yes	(e.g. sports, arts/crafts, hobby or games clubs, performing arts, pre-school, services for the elderly)	The room at the front can be hired out every day except Sunday morning. We have our own Toddler Group on a Wednesday morning too. The room is also hired out in the evenings.	generally booked	Sometimes I have had to turn people away as some days seem to be more popular than others! Plus, as we are a church, certain activities are not allowed on the premises.	
Parish Rooms	Yes	Church Groups, Sunday school, Youth Groups, Mothers Union etc, Uniformed groups i.e. Rainbows, brownies and guides; Community Choir, Children's dance and movement group, baptism parties etc, church functions	5 days per week and occasionally on Saturdays			
RA Butler School	Yes	Evening lettings e.g. sports clubs	Mon-Fri 5pm - 8pm, some daytime availability during school holidays	Already booked on the days needed, limited timings available		
Saffron Walden County High School	Yes	Sports in the sports centre and performing arts in the small drama hall	The space is available Monday – Saturday every week apart from 2 weeks closure at Christmas and bank holidays. We also may have to close if there is a big school event such as Open Evening. The hours are 6pm – 10pm Monday – Friday and 8am – 1pm on Saturday	Always fully booked with regular users	We turn people away purely because the available space we have is fully booked.	We have had lots of enquiries from Dance groups, Badminton Groups and theatre groups but we are unable to accommodate because we have limited space and availability.

Quaker Meeting House	Yes	Lectures, meetings, exercise classes, yoga, rehearsals, counselling	8am-10pm	Majority of hires are in evenings when it is generally booked. At other times it is partly booked.	Sometimes we don't have space available when people need it and will turn down bookings which we think are inconsistent with Quakers values. Other than that parking is the only issue.	
Town Hall	Yes	meetings, concert & shows, sales, fashion shows and open events, Pilates, yoga, kids acting classes, training meetings	6 days a week, 7 by negotiation	generally booked	The building being old does not warrant big musical events the capacity does not allow this, also we have things on that are booked years in advance so we have to turn away because of availability at the time.	Another community centre in the town that does not have as many restrictions as an old building gives in term of size and disabled access would be a very welcome space in Saffron Walden

APPENDIX 6.1 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – MEASURES TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES

Additional signage to point visitors to the town's car parks would be supported. Installation of high-speed electric charging points will be supported. The provision of public toilets at Swan Meadow Car Park would be supported.

Increased levels of home working are supported by the SWNP and, to enable this, the SWNP also supports and encourages the installation of high-speed broadband across the parish.

Proposals that provide a means for temporary office working spaces, light industrial units and pop-up shops to open to test new business concepts will be supported. This might include reduced rents and or rates, and or shorter leases.

Measures to encourage visitors to Audley End House to visit Saffron Walden town centre will be supported. This could include initiatives such as free shuttle bus services. Similar measures to encourage future residents of the proposed North Uttlesford Garden Community to visit Saffron Walden for business and leisure would also be supported.

Measures which promote greater use of the market square as a social gathering space will be supported.

Measures which promote the narrow streets and passageways of The Rows and The Cockpit would be supported. These are the remnants of the medieval streets and should be protected and could be enhanced.

Saffron Walden Town Council holds the Market Charter and has the rights to all stallage in the open air (private or not) within the parish of Saffron Walden. Centuries ago the market footprint was much larger than it is today. Any extension to the footprint of the market, if requested by suitable traders who would enhance the town's commercial offer, would be welcomed.

RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

To restrict the movement of HGVs through both the historic core and residential outer areas of the town

APPENDIX 6.2 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – ECOLOGY

Public planting must support bio-diversity. A preference should be given to planting which supports local wildlife and consideration should always be given to planting specimen trees which may grow more slowly but which contribute more to the environment over time than "quick fix" plants. UK-grown plants pose the least risk of the spread of disease and should be used.

Where underground SuDS are constructed it is sometimes the case that public open space is on the surface in the same location. Underground SuDS should be designed so that ownership of the land above can be transferred to the public sector if appropriate, while the SuDS can remain privately owned.

Ownership and custodianship of open green spaces should primarily be taken on by the Town Council. Very small parcels of land on new developments which are of little public value should not be permitted. The Town Council has a policy of adopting green spaces wherever possible to avoid residents being obliged to pay service charges for their upkeep, subject to the space and land being appropriate for use and adequate contribution being made by the developer towards future upkeep. An adequate contribution is defined as being the value required for 20 years of maintenance.

APPENDIX 6.3 COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – TRANSPORT

The detailed actions of the SWNP on transport are:

IMPROVING SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

- 1) To campaign for improved pavements and crossings;
- 2) To campaign for cycling infrastructure;
- 3) To campaign for all streets to have 20mph speed limits; and
- 4) To campaign for time limiting restrictions on movements of HGVs through the town.

As a measurable goal, the town should be safe enough for most children in Year 6 (the final year of primary school) and above to walk to school independently. This will reduce the number of cars doing the school run which will significantly cut congestion and pollution in the town. Anything that improves safety for children should improve safety for all.

IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 5) To campaign for improved local and national public transport connections; and
- 6) To insist on developments (past and present) making best use of contributions towards public transport provision

As a measurable goal, public transport should be better timetabled, more frequent, run later in the evenings and operate seven days a week.

RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 7) To restrict the movement of HGVs through both the historic core and residential outer areas of the town

As a measurable goal, traffic and air quality will not be worse at the end of the SWNP period than at the start, and ideally will be better.

TRAVEL PLANS

In all cases the Town Council should be approached and given the opportunity to express an interest in co-ordinating the travel plan.

APPENDIX 6.4– COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS -ENERGY EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

13% of UK emissions come from our homes, and the emissions created by heating our homes and businesses account for almost a third of UK emissions. The Climate Change Act passed in 2008 committed the UK to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels.⁴⁶ The Government has since then stated an ambition that the UK will be carbon neutral by 2050. At the time of writing the SWNP this has not been backed up by legislation which might, for example, enforce zero carbon emission building standards, except in London. It is expected that this will be rolled out across the UK during the SWNP period.

Energy efficient design is a thoughtful process which helps a home use less energy for heating and cooling. An example is the Passive House (or Passivhaus) standard, in which buildings use very little or no energy. Energy efficient houses can be built in a wide variety of ways, as appropriate to the materials and the location.

Renewable energy is generated from continually self-replenishing natural resources. Households and developments can install renewable technology or micro generation / low carbon technology to generate their own energy, as an alternative to buying all their energy from suppliers. Larger developments would benefit from on-site energy generation.

It is likely that in the future more widespread energy efficient design and increasing implementation of renewable energy will provide residents with sustainable low running cost and low carbon impact homes. When starting a new building from scratch, or extending or adapting an existing building, the greatest results will be achieved through consideration of the following factors in this particular order:

- Design optimisation (e.g. considering how best to orient the building, where to place windows or provide shade)
- Fabric improvement (e.g. building in the most effective insulation)
- Installation of renewable energy sources (e.g solar panels)

This is known as the Energy Hierarchy.

⁴⁶ HM Government: The Clean Growth Strategy – Leading the way to a low carbon future

Water resources in the whole of Uttlesford are stressed and planned development will put additional pressure on an already limited supply. The April 2018 Uttlesford District Water Cycle Study describes this and sets out the need for robust policies on water conservation as follows: *“The Uttlesford District is partly underlain by a chalk aquifer of regional importance and the Environment Agency currently class the surface water and groundwater resources within the District as over-licensed or over-abstracted, meaning that there is no additional water available for supply. This highlights the importance of further developing policies to encourage the conservation of water in new and existing dwellings and commercial properties.”* (Paragraph 1.1). New development proposals must include proposals for water re-use and recycling including rainwater harvesting. Which captures surface water runoff in a storage tank or pond. The water can be treated if required, then supplied to properties through a dedicated pipe network. These systems can be combined with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance allows latitude for local plans to set local requirements for environmental sustainability targets, subject to the development schemes remaining financially viable. Neighbourhood plans are not allowed to set higher energy efficient standards than the Local Plan. Nonetheless the SWNP sets out construction standards viewed as desirable.

Where new development or building extensions or conversions is deemed to be acceptable following other policies in the SWNP, design and construction to these aspirational standards is strongly encouraged:

1. Development proposals are encouraged to demonstrate how they have implemented the principles and requirements set out below, unless the proposal is for non-residential development of 1000m² or more and it achieves a BREEAM Outstanding rating. All development proposals are encouraged to meet paragraph 9, below.
2. Land and building should be reused wherever feasible, and where local character and distinctiveness can be enhanced by so doing.
3. Materials arising through demolition and refurbishment, including excavated soil and hardcore, should wherever possible be reused and recycled within the site.
4. Development is encouraged to prioritise the use of materials and construction techniques that have smaller ecological and carbon footprints, help to sustain or create good air quality, and improve resilience to a changing climate where appropriate.
5. Where technically feasible, green roofs and/or walls should be incorporated into the building to improve water management, provide space for biodiversity and aid resilience

and adaptation to climate change.

6. The lifecycle of buildings and public spaces should be considered, including how they can be adapted and modified to meet the changing social and economic needs and how materials can be recycled at the end of their lifetime.

7. Developments should embed waste, recycling and storage areas into and integral part of their design

8. The Energy Hierarchy should be implemented within the design of new buildings, by prioritising fabric first, passive design and landscaping measures to minimise energy demand for heating, lighting and cooling.

9. Development proposals are encouraged to demonstrate, for example through an Energy and Climate Statement, that they will achieve the following:

a) A 19% carbon reduction improvement upon the requirements within Building Regulations Approved Document Part L 2013, or achieve any higher standard than this that is required under subsequent national planning policy or Building Regulations;

b) Provision of on-site renewable energy generation, or, should it become available, connection to a renewable or low carbon community energy scheme, that contributes to a further 20% reduction in the residual carbon emissions subsequent to (a) above.

c) Calculate Indoor Air Quality and Overheating Risk performance for proposed new dwellings, and implement a recognised quality regime that ensures that the 'as built' performance matches this calculation.

10. All newly constructed buildings are encouraged to achieve an estimated water consumption of no more than 110 litres/person/day.

11. Water reuse and recycling and, rainwater harvesting and surface water harvesting should also be incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply.

12. Community energy schemes will be supported, subject to the design and location being sensitive to local built and natural landscapes and environment.

13. To future-proof the SWNP: If or when the Local Plan, or national planning practice guidance or Building Regulations supersedes these provisions with higher standards or newer technologies, or permits them to be required, development will be required to meet the higher standards and/or use the newer technologies.

APPENDIX 6 5 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS - LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In 2018 the Government published a 25 Year Environment Plan to protect and enhance the environment and landscape. As an element of this, The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs is considering introducing legislation for conservation covenants. Conservation covenants will be agreements made between a landowner and a responsible body requiring either party to do or not do something on land. They will be made for the public good, and for the purpose of conserving, protecting, restoring or enhancing: (1) the natural environment, including flora, fauna or geological features of the land; (2) the natural resources of the land; (3) cultural, historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic features of the land; or (4) the surroundings, setting or landscape of any land which has any of these features. The conservation covenant may contain provision for public access to the land concerned. Conservation covenants once in place become material considerations for planners, and the SWNP supports their creation in any relevant area in Saffron Walden parish.

APPENDIX 6.6 –COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS - OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION AND BIODIVERSITY

Ownership and custodianship of open green spaces should primarily be taken on by the Town Council. Very small parcels of land on new developments which are of little public value should not be permitted. The Town Council has a policy of adopting green spaces wherever possible to avoid residents being obliged to pay service charges for their upkeep, subject to the space and land being appropriate for use and adequate contribution being made by the developer towards future upkeep. An adequate contribution is defined as being the value required for 20 years of maintenance.

PLAN MONITORING AND DELIVERY

1. Two measures will be in place to promote the monitoring and delivery of the SWNP.
2. The Chair of the Town Council Planning and Transport Committee will report to the Full Council on progress of delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan at the Annual Meeting.
3. The Policies in the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan will be referenced in all Town Council responses to planning applications.



Committee: Cabinet

Date:

Title: Local Development Scheme

Thursday, 7 July
2022

Portfolio Holder Councillor Evans, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan

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

Key decision:
No

Summary

1. The Council has already started work on a new Local Plan, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the draft timetable for producing the Local Plan.

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet adopt the LDS of the Local Plan.

Financial Implications

3. The approved budget for the Local Plan in 2022-23 includes sufficient provision for the work needed through to the end of March. Adequate provision will need to be made in preparing the budgets for 2023-24 and 2024-25 in the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy.
4. The proposed changes to the timetable will extend the period for which the district is at risk of speculative development, this will extend the period during which the Council is likely to face further appeals.

Background Papers

5. No additional papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	The draft timetable builds in three stages for people to make representations on the draft Local Plan.
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact

Health and Safety	No impact
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Preparation of a local plan is a statutory duty. It needs to meet legal tests and comply with regulations.
Sustainability	N/a
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/a

Situation

7. The Council has already started work on a new Local Plan, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the draft timetable for producing the Local Plan.
8. The timetable within this LDS builds in two stages of consultation and then a third opportunity for representations to be made.
9. The first stage of consultation (Issues & Options) allowed for an extensive series of conversations with the community and other stakeholders to allow them to inform the development of the plan. This stage of consultation won a RTPI regional award for excellence for the way it engaged with residents and other stakeholders.
10. Following this stage of consultation the Council has been considered what has been said and has been drafting a 'preferred options' style plan. To support this stage of the plan, substantial evidence base has been and is being developed to support the proposed strategy, policies and allocations.
11. Following the preferred options consultation the Council will consider what changes are appropriate taking into account the representations made. The Council will then publish a final 'submission draft' plan, inviting representations on it. These representations along with the draft plan will then be sent to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.
12. A project plan has been prepared to support this timetable. This project plan will evolve over time and as necessary, the LDS will be updated. The Local Plan Project Board will monitor adherence to the Project Plan and any necessary interventions to maintain planned progress. The Leadership Group and Scrutiny Committee will be advised by the Board of any significant issues.
13. The most recent change to the timetable, reflected in this updated LDS allows for the evaluation and consideration of an additional, late emerging, option. Officers and key members consider that this option is a realistic option that is worthy of exploration, and it is best to include it in the regulation 18 consultation rather than it potentially appear in the regulation 19 publication period without previously being consulted upon.

14. Changing the Local Plan timetable is not an unusual occurrence in Local Planning Authorities across the country.

Risk Analysis

15.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The proposed changes to the timetable extend the period for which the district is at risk of speculative development	4 – there will be a longer time before a Local Plan is adopted	2 – the longer time period before which a Local Plan is adopted will mean the district is at risk of speculative development for longer	Exploring this option will allow for the exploration of a potentially more sustainable pattern of development, allowing for a better case to be put for the plan at examination. Any opportunities to 'make up' the time following the regulation 18 consultation will be taken.
That the timetable proposed in the LDS slips	1 – there are unknown factors in the production of a Local Plan that require consideration and may result in slippage	4 – government intervention would significantly damage the reputation of the Council	The project plan supporting the LDS is actively managed by the Council's Scrutiny Committee.
That the government introduces a new system for producing Local Plans	4 – the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill includes some significant changes	3 – the changes currently proposed could result in a radically different Local Plan	The Council will monitor further consultation and changes.

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.

Logo

Uttlesford Draft LDS 2022

This Uttlesford draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Uttlesford District Council on **7 July 2022**. It is the sixteenth LDS produced by the Council. It replaces the previous LDS, dated 20 October 2020.

Preface

This Uttlesford draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Uttlesford District Council on 7 July 2022. It is the sixteenth LDS produced by the Council. It replaces the previous LDS, dated 20 October 2020.

If you require any further information regarding the LDS, please contact a planning policy officer by email planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk

The LDS will be kept up to date on a regular basis.

This LDS is produced under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Uttlesford Draft Local Development Scheme 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS provides information on the Development Plan Documents (DPD) that the Council intend to produce to form its planning policy framework for the District. It also sets out the timetable for their production. At this time the Council is proposing one DPD – the Local Plan.
- 1.2 This Uttlesford LDS sets out the timetable for the Councils DPD work for the period 2020 to 2024. It explains when the Council intends to reach key stages in the preparation of its Local Plan. This LDS replaces the Uttlesford LDS which was adopted on 20 October 2022. It is intended to help the local community and all our partners interested in development and the use of land and buildings in Uttlesford to understand what plans the Council has and intend to produce. Current planning documents are set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The new Local Plan 2020 – 2040 is to be produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated guidance. The detail and timetable outlined in section 2 below accord with current legislation and guidance. Additionally, In May 2022 the Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which would have significant effect on the process, content and timetable of local plans. The Council will keep abreast of legislative developments and policy consultations, and keep residents and other stakeholders informed of the details and implications of changes as they arise.
- 1.5 Government Planning policy is set out in The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (NPPF) and associated Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The NPPF states that: *“The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings” (para 15).* While this objective may well remain the form and content of local plans as expressed in the NPPF and PPG is also subject to change in line with legislation as referred to above.
- 1.6 The range of planning policy documents is set out in Appendix 2.

2. New Local Plan 2020 -2040

- 2.1 Following withdrawal of the previously emerging Local Plan, the Council recognises it is important to make good progress on a new Local Plan for adoption at the earliest opportunity. There are a number of stages involved in producing a Local Plan as a DPD. This process allows for opportunities for the public to be involved, early resolution of conflicts and objections, gathering robust evidence, consultation on the scope of the plan and then on a draft plan prior to submission and an Independent Examination. The stages in producing the Local Plan, and the intended timing of these stages are set out in Table 1 below.

Timetable

- 2.2 The Council is determined that throughout the production of the Plan there is an inclusive engagement of residents and all key stakeholders. This LDS includes an extended 'issues and options stage' over Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021. The views that emerged during this period were considered and informed the drafting of the vision and objectives and preliminary outline strategy that are now being used to inform the next draft of the Local Plan (the 'Preferred Options' plan). The Preferred Option consultation will make clear the other options considered and why the preferred option(s) were chosen, together with the evidence underpinning the Plan to ensure a transparent and inclusive process. This will take place before the proposed Submission Plan is published.
- 2.3 The timetable for the production of the Council's new Local Plan as outlined in table 1, of course, be subject to change should it be required as a result of the Government's proposals in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, and any future new national policy and practice guidance. Under the current and proposed plan making process, the early and more extensive issues and options stage set out in this LDS aligns closely with the proposals outlined in the White Paper. Accordingly the Council can make early and effective progress with this initial stage without wasting resources or time.
- 2.4 The Council has a project plan and more detailed work programme, designed to achieve the LDS timetable above. These are monitored through the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Subject Matter and Geographical area of the new Local Plan

- 2.5 The Council is required to set out the subject matter and geographic extent of DPDs, in this case the Local Plan, (by virtue of section 15 (2)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The Council intends that the Uttlesford Local Plan will cover the whole administrative area of Uttlesford District Council and will replace the saved policies of the Local Plan 2005 currently in force in Uttlesford.
- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in July 2021, continues to include a strong expectation that Local Planning Authorities will prepare plans which positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. In line with NPPF it is intended that the Uttlesford Local Plan will include:
- strategic policies setting out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development,
 - make sufficient provision for a number of key land uses including housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure, community facilities and other commercial development,
 - infrastructure for transport and other key utilities,
 - policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure,
 - planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.7 Whilst not forming part of the Local Plan, the Council has/will produce other documents to support the preparation and implementation of Local Plan policies, these include:
- A detailed evidence base,
 - Statement of Community Involvement,

- Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environmental Assessment,
- Local Plan Policies Map,
- Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance,
- Authority Monitoring Reports.

- 2.8 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill includes proposals to publish national level Development Management Policies, which where there is conflict, will outweigh local level policies. If these changes are brought to completion, this is likely to influence the content of the emerging plan.

3 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tax on new development, which helps fund a wide range of strategic infrastructure needed to support growth, such as public transport, parks and community facilities. The Council has previously explored introducing a CIL. In 2014, external advice was that the government was reviewing CIL and it would be prudent to await the outcome before committing resources to preparing a CIL. In 2019, work commenced on a CIL to support the then emerging Local Plan. The Council wishes to maximise the contribution of development towards growth and was intending to bring forward a CIL charging schedule to be Examined following the conclusion of the Examinations into the Local Plan itself. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out the intention to replace CIL in favour of a locally-set infrastructure levy. In these circumstances it is judged prudent to wait until the outcome of the Government's proposals are known before embarking on this course of action and it is therefore not included in this LDS.
- 3.2 If CIL remains then active consideration will be given to amend the LDS accordingly. In any event the Council will be updating its evidence base in respect of infrastructure deficits and requirements to support the Local Plan and this would also form the basis of the evidence to support a CIL charging schedule.

4 Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.1 Neighbourhood plans are led and prepared by the community, not the Council, (although the Council has a statutory role to provide advice and support to those producing a plan and at prescribed stages in the plan making process). Through these plans local communities have the power to influence the future of the places they live and work.
- 4.2 Neighbourhood Plans do not need to be included in this LDS as they are not prepared by the Council. However, they do form part of the Development Plan once adopted and are therefore relevant to future decision making. Furthermore, it is understood the Government intends to maintain the legislation and guidance regarding the preparation and adoption neighbourhood plans, irrespective of the proposed changes to local plans and the status of current neighbourhood plans is included in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Draft timetable for production of Uttlesford Local Plan

[illegible]

Issues & Options preparatory work	Blue
Preferred Options preparatory work	Green
Pre-submission preparatory work	Orange
Submission preparatory work	Pink
Submission	Grey
Examination	Yellow
Adoption	Black
Consultation & Publication	Red
Governance	Light Grey

APPENDIX 1

Table 2: Adopted Planning Policy Documents (as at July 2020)

Document Title	Status	Geographical area	Role and content	Adoption date
Uttlesford Local Plan 2005	Policies saved by the secretary of state in 2007 remain part of the development plan for the district.	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the vision, objectives and overall strategy for the spatial development of Uttlesford up to 2011	2005
Essex Minerals Plan 2014	DPD	Administrative area for Essex	Sets out the vision, strategies, policies and sites for considering minerals developments in Essex up to 2029.	2014
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017	DPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford and Southend-on-Sea	Sets out the vision, strategies, policies and sites for considering waste in Essex and Southend-on-Sea up to 2032.	2017
Felsted Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plan	Felsted Parish	The plan sets out a vision for the future of the parish and planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications locally in Felsted.	2020
Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plan	Great Dunmow Parish	The plan sets out a vision for the future of the parish and planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications	2016

			locally in Great Dunmow.	
Newport Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plan	Newport, Quendon & Rickling Parishes	The plan sets out a vision for the future of the parish and planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications locally in Newport, Quendon and Rickling.	2021
Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plan	Thaxted Parish	The plan sets out a vision for the future of the parish and planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications locally in Thaxted.	2019

Table 3: Other Adopted Documents (as at July 2020)

Document Title	Status	Geographical area	Role and content	Adoption date
Accessible Homes and Playspace	SPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the Council's advice for Lifetime Homes, Wheelchair and Accessible Housing, and Accessible Playspace.	November 2005
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	SPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the Council's advice on the measures that they can include in new development to reduce energy use.	October 2007
Home Extensions	SPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the Council's advice on extensions to homes.	November 2005

Replacement Dwellings	SPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the Council's advice on replacement dwellings.	September 2006
Urban Place Supplement to the Essex Design Guide	SPD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Sets out the Council's advice on Design	March 2007
Statement of Community Involvement	LDD	Administrative area for Uttlesford	Statement setting out the Council's commitments on consulting the public. Includes Neighbourhood planning guidance and commitments.	March 2021
Essex Coast RAMS SPD	SPD	Felsted and Stebbing; Great Dunmow South & Barnston; High Easter & the Rodings	Protect internationally important and legally protected bird habitat sites from the direct and indirect impacts of recreational disturbance arising from housing development and population growth	September 2020
Building for Healthy Life	Guidance	Administrative area for Uttlesford	This design guidance sets the standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The guidance is based on 'Building for a Healthy Life', a government-endorsed industry standard, and will be used to inform decisions on planning applications.	October 2021
First Homes Planning Advisory Note	Guidance	Administrative area for Uttlesford	This Planning Advisory Note (PAN) provides guidance to applicants	March 2022

			on how Uttlesford District Council will apply the government's policy on First Homes.	
Shopfront Design Guide	Guidance (to be adopted as SPD)	Administrative area for Uttlesford	This shopfront design guidance provides detailed advice on local shopfront design, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repair or refurbishment of existing shop-frontages - reinstatement of lost frontages and details - introduction of new shopfronts 	February 2022
Interim Climate Change Planning Policy	Guidance	Administrative area for Uttlesford	This document aims to ensure that development contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation.	February 2021

APPENDIX 2

A2.1 In summary, the local planning policy may comprise the following:

- **Development Plan Documents (DPDs):** These are documents (often referred to as 'Local Plans') that form part of the statutory development plan for the area. They are prepared by the relevant plan-making authority and are subject to independent examination by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. For Uttlesford, as at July 2020, they are the saved policies of the Local Plan 2005, the Essex Minerals Plan 2014 and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017. Essex County Council is currently reviewing the Minerals and Waste Local Plans. The Council intends to start work on a new Local Plan for the district.
- **CIL Charging Schedule:** The proposals for development in the new Local Plan will need to be supported by investment in necessary infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will identify each piece of infrastructure that is needed and set out the mechanism for delivering these items. One source of funding could be the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and this document would include the 'charging schedule' setting out how much money developers will be expected to contribute toward infrastructure provision from developments in certain parts of the district using a formula based on £ per sqm of floorspace. The Council had appointed consultants to undertake this task for the now withdrawn Local Plan, this work has been put on hold for now, and the Council will keep it under review as the new Local Plan develops.
- **Policies Map:** This is a map on an Ordnance Survey base for the whole of a local planning authority's area which shows where policies in DPDs apply. The Policies Map may include inset maps for particular areas to show information at a larger scale. The Policies Map is updated each time that a DPD is adopted.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** These can cover a wide range of issues on which the local planning authority wishes to provide guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in its DPDs. They do not form part of the statutory development plan and are not subject to independent examination. The district council can decide to produce an SPD on any appropriate subject whenever the need arises. There is no requirement for this LDS to set out a timetable for the production of any SPDs
- **Neighbourhood Plans:** Local communities, including Parish and Town Councils, can prepare Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) putting in place policies to guide the future development of the area. Any NP must be in general conformity with the 'strategic policies' in DPDs and with national policy. NPs are not able to propose lower levels of development than those set out in up to date DPDs but could propose higher levels, or offer other detailed policy proposals. It is up to local communities to decide if it wants to produce a

Neighbourhood Plan and so it is not appropriate for this LDS to specify when, or for where, they will be produced. Any NP, if adopted, has the same status as a DPD.

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** This is a document that explains how the local planning authority will engage the community in the preparation, alteration and review of planning documents, and in development management decisions. It is required to specify how and at what stages people will have the opportunity to be involved in planning for their area. The SCI is being review to inform work on the new Local Plan.
- **Authority's Monitoring Report:** This is a report which must be produced by the local planning authority (on an annual basis) to explain how the LDS is being implemented and the extent to which policies in the DPDs are being achieved.
- **Local level guidance:** These is local guidance produced to assist the understanding of policies or provide further guidance on particular areas. They do not form part of the statutory development plan and are not subject to independent examination. There is no requirement for this LDS to set out a timetable for the production of any local level guidance.