



## Public Document Pack

# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

## Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Thursday, 10th November, 2022

**Time:** 6.00 pm

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

**Broadcast:**

**Chairman:** Councillor N Gregory

**Members:** Councillors C Criscione, G Driscoll, V Isham, R Jones, P Lavelle,  
G LeCount (Vice-Chair), S Luck, G Sell and J De Vries

**Substitutes:** Councillors M Caton, P Fairhurst, R Pavitt and G Smith

### Public Speaking

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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**

5 - 11

To consider the minutes of the previous Scrutiny (Local Plan) meeting.

**3 Local Plan Progress Report**

12 - 20

To consider an update on the current progress of Local Plan preparation, together with a proposal to strengthen the documentation and presentation of future reporting.

## **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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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor N Gregory (Chair)  
Councillors C Criscione, G Driscoll, V Isham, R Jones, S Luck and G Sell.

Officers in attendance: D Hermitage (Director of Planning), P Holt (Chief Executive), A Lindsell (Democratic Services Officer) and S Miles (Local Plans and New Communities Manager).

Also present: Councillor J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan)

The Chair extended a warm welcome to the new Director of Planning.

## SC17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors LeCount and DeVries.

There were no declarations of interest.

## SC18 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 June 2022 were approved as accurate.

Councillor Isham noted that questions raised by Members at the 16 June Scrutiny meeting had not yet received any response.

Councillor Evans said that he intended to provide a response to the questions raised at the September Scrutiny meeting rather than at this Scrutiny Local Plan meeting.

## SC19 **LOCAL PLAN PROJECT MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 1**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented the report on risks and project management during Quarter 1 of the current financial year.

He said that the proposed change to the timetable would ensure a more robust analysis of sites and evidence base going into the Regulation 18 consultation.

He confirmed that a final draft of the transport evidence would not be finalised to inform the drafting of the plan, although it would be ready to publish for the consultation. This was being mitigated, by keeping in close contact with the transport consultants and the draft evidence would be sufficiently advanced to inform the plan.

He said that he met with Councillor LeCount to discuss the project plan, who had asked him to highlight to Members their discussion regarding continued improved Officer communication with Members and to note that he was content with progress being made.

Councillor Evans extended a warm welcome to the new Director of Planning and extended his thanks to the outgoing Interim Director of Planning for her assistance over the last eight months.

He said that the delay to the Local Plan process was disappointing, but not unusual. He noted that the Officer led initiative should dispel residents concerns that the delay was in any way politically driven. He encouraged colleagues to convey that message in their reports to Town and Parish Councils.

The Director of Planning agreed that the Plan's robustness was important and that legal advice prioritised robustness over speed.

The Chair confirmed that the delay to the Plan was for positive reasons.

Councillor Sell echoed Councillor Evan's welcome to the new Director of Planning. He acknowledged the consensus among Members to achieve as robust a Local Plan as possible. He asked whether a third option would be offered, if options would be presented in order of preference and when it would be clear what the options were.

He said that residents would not appreciate Uttlesford District Council's review of sites that had been refused on appeal, particularly where they had received huge local opposition.

The Chair agreed that communication was an important corporate duty.

Councillor Evans said that the preferred options could be two or could be some different viable permutations and would be made available in the autumn. He said that they wanted to extend the means of the consultation and modernise the Regulation 18 and 19 consultation process, to adopt a more media friendly approach to encourage public engagement.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that multiple options were likely to emerge in the Regulation 18 plan and that work carried out over the summer would identify which sites merited prioritising.

*The Chief Executive joined the meeting.*

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that it was worth remembering there was a difference between a planning decision and allocating sites in a new emerging policy plan.

Members discussed the importance of clear concise communications for residents and agreed that the Committee wanted to focus on providing accessible effective communication for residents who may have little background knowledge.

Councillor Criscione said that he remained uncomfortable about the delay and felt unprepared to comment as he had so few of the details. He asked what would happen if another land owner came forward with a site and whether that would cause further delay.

Councillor Evans said that they were trying to achieve a situation where risk was reduced. He said that further sites could always be put forward and indeed revoked at any stage and views would be taken in response to either. He said that they were following advice from the Queen`s Counsel and Barrister retained to provide advice on procedural matters.

The Chief Executive said that the nature of the process was fluid and that it would be irresponsible to not consider any new large site identified or put forward as it arose.

He said that there was no guarantee that the new unnamed site would remain as an option and work was being undertaken to ascertain whether it was viable. The site would be exposed to proper scrutiny as soon as possible and a robust explanation provided as to why it warranted the extended timetable.

The Chair asked the Chief Executive whether the identification of a further new site would justify a further delay.

Councillor Criscione said that he felt that the recent presentation by the Local Plans and New Communities Manager had not been well received by Members and asked how this could be avoided in the future to ensure that the Local Plan could reach consultation.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that consultation was key and that feedback had identified that the presentation had not offered enough opportunity for Members to ask questions. He explained that Officers were working to communicate better with the Local Plan Leadership Group (LPLG). He noted that Officers were pro-actively looking for sites and that it was through this work that the opportunity had arisen.

Following a question from Councillor Criscione the Local Plans and New Communities Manager confirmed that Officers had been in touch with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to notify them that there may be possible changes to the timetable and offering to meet and discuss these changes as they arose. He said that when the previous draft Local Plan timetable had not allowed the Council to meet their adoption deadline the DLUHC had been content as long as progress continued to be made. He confirmed that progress was currently being made.

Councillor Isham said that the call for sites process required a comprehensive understanding of the district to identify the infrastructure and any related issues. He said if the Council had defined the district with clarity first then unviable sites would have been easily ruled out.

He asked what the rules were surrounding meetings between the Council and land owners or developers,.he asked who attended them and who wrote the

agendas and minuted the meetings. He said that there should be a record of who met with whom and what was said.

Councillor Evans confirmed that Members were not involved with meetings with land owners and developers.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager confirmed that notes were taken of meetings with landowners and developers and would be published when appropriate.

He said that the methodology adopted for assessing sites for development was taken to the LPLG in April 2021 around the time that the call for sites closed.

Councillor Criscione questioned whether information that arose from discussions with developers was shared with the LPLG to demonstrate that there was democratic accountability within these discussions.

Councillor Evans reiterated that the decision making process for the LPLG was by recommendation to Cabinet and that matters of detail could be addressed at that time. He said that all actions would be transparent and that any discussions involving Members would be identified in advance as part of the process.

The Chair asked Councillor Evans whether there was democratic accountability and if so where it was demonstrated.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that general democratic accountability was demonstrated through the regular meetings with Councillors Evans and Bagnall who were appraised of key points.

He said that the discussions with the large site promoters in October 2021 were as a result of exploring a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them. Democratic accountability was demonstrated when Officers took the MOU through Cabinet and fed back to LPLG on the outcome of the discussions. He said that in early 2022 the decision was made not to pursue the MOUs with those site promoters, in line with the outgoing Interim Director of Planning's advice.

The Chair summarised that there was democratic accountability which was exercised by Officers through briefings and meetings with the Chair of the LPLG and the portfolio holder for Planning.

Councillor Isham said that it did not sound like there was a well designed and practiced process and that he did not feel like this was a defined well trodden path of officers carrying out their duty to feedback meetings to Members.

The Chief Executive said that there was a very clear chain of democratic accountability set out in the framework of the Local Plan. He said that at the stages that were exploratory and developmental and that required both objectivity and a huge degree of technical and professional understanding, knowledge and detail they were rightfully carried out by Officers and experts



employed by the Council. These led to the key milestones set out clearly in the Plan.

There was clear accountability for the actual decisions that rightly belonged in the remit of Members. The exploratory and developmental discussions did not lead to done deals or irrevocable decisions. They informed the package that was fed back to Members. No interim decisions were taken to rule things out.

Councillor Isham said Members had insufficient background information to provide clarity to enable them to make sound decisions.

Councillor Luck said that he was happy with the debate and grateful for the clarification given by the Chief Executive.

Councillor Driscoll asked how the Plan could be driven forward when Members were told that the transport evidence would not be available in time for the Local Plan programme.

Councillor Evans said that the transport study was being undertaken and the topic was being led by one of the Essex County Council Officers seconded to the Council. He said that he and Councillor Bagnall were shortly attending a meeting to see the documents that formed the basis of the advice from the expert. Draft advice would be relied on to allow fine tuning to be done but the actual substance of the reports would have been completed by the time a recommendation would be made based upon them.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that transport was specifically highlighted because it took a particularly long time due to the high degree of technicalities. He said that the risk would be mitigated by keeping in close contact with the expert to ensure that the Council was aware of and fully understood the emerging findings. These would be in a sufficiently advanced state to be relied upon before Officers came to a view on the Plan.

He said that there was an option to wait until the transport evidence was complete but would require a further delay to the timetable.

The Chair requested that an update on the transport evidence be provided at the September Scrutiny meeting.

Councillor Sell requested clarity on the MOUs. He said that the big six identified in the call for sites were key to the Local Plan and that he would be surprised if none of the six reached the final process. He asked whether a single settlement was actively being considered as part of the process.

The Chair suggested that question should be asked at LPLG.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that it was not appropriate to discuss individual sites and confirmed that MOUs stopped being explored as they were generating too much work, although they would be revisited at a later stage.

Councillor Isham said that significant draft proposals were made before the latest site was identified and must have been undertaken without properly understanding the transport matrix. He asked on what basis were evaluations being made, particularly as there were already known traffic issues in the area.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said this highlighted an area to work on over the summer so Members could understand the plan, the process and the recommendations that would be coming to them.

The Chair requested that a report be brought to the September Scrutiny meeting.

Following a question from Councillor Criscione, the Chief Executive agreed that the onus was on the LPLG to take on board the respective views of their party colleague's views and filter information and opinions through the LPLG with regard to the workshops planned in July and August.

The Chair said that Councillor Pavitt had written to him with questions which were more relevant to LPLG and asked Councillor Evans to refer them to LPLG for detailed answers.

Councillor Evans agreed and detailed the questions:

- Whether land should be prioritised for food production.
- Rivers and sewerage.
- Whether river valleys could be especially valued as nature corridors and exclusion zones within a particular distance from the water courses.

He said that the questions would be addressed within the technical evidence, and would now come back to LPLG and suggested that DEFRA could additionally be asked to consult.

Following questions from the Chair, the Local Plans and New Communities Manager confirmed:

- That the transport study would take into consideration cross border issues in particular major trunk roads that had a significant impact on the district
- The water cycle study gave consideration to the water needs of the district, the condition of the water course and aquifers and the sewerage infrastructure.

The Chair thanked the Local Plans and New Communities Manager and his small team for all their work in the past year. He said that the reason that the Plan was so robust was very impressive.

He highlighted the need for clear rather than technical communications to residents to enable them to understand what was being done in their name.

#### RESOLVED:

- I. The Committee noted the conclusions of the report on risk and project management and endorsed the proposed actions.
- II. The Committee noted the draft letter update to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for Quarter 1 of the current financial year. It was agreed that the Local Plans and New Communities Manager would circulate the redrafted letter to Councillors Sell and LeCount for approval prior to dispatch.

SC20 **APPOINTMENT TO THE STANSTED AIRPORT TASK & FINISH GROUP**

The Chair proposed that Councillor Drisoll replaced Councillor Coote on the Stansted Airport Task and Finish Group.

This was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED: Councillor Driscoll was appointed to the Stansted Airport Task and Finish group to replace Councillor Coote

*The meeting ended at 8.34pm.*

# Agenda Item 3

**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:**

**Title:** Local Plan Progress Report

10 November 2022

**Report Author:** John Clements, Interim Local Plans & New Communities Manager

JClements@uttlesford.gov.uk

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## Summary

1. This Report provides an update to current progress on Local Plan preparation, together with a proposal to strengthen the documentation and presentation of future reporting.

## Recommendations

2. That the Committee
  - a. notes the current situation outlined in the Report; and
  - b. provides any guidance it may wish to give on improving the effectiveness of reporting and documentation of Local Plan progress.

## Financial Implications

3. None.

## Background Papers

4. Uttlesford Local Plan Project Initiation Document (PID)

## Impact

5. As per table:

Communication/Consultation	More effective Local Plan Scrutiny documentation should aid communication, including the ability of interested parties to better appreciate the progress of the Local Plan's preparation.
Community Safety	n/a
Equalities	n/a
Health and Safety	n/a

Human Rights/Legal Implications	n/a
Sustainability	n/a
Ward-specific impacts	n/a
Workforce/Workplace	n/a

## Situation

6. The Local Plan preparation work programme is currently being reorganised and detailed to meet the revised timetable recently agreed by Cabinet, and guidance received from the Portfolio Holder and Local Plan Leadership Group Chair.
7. In the light of the recent events and concern about the effectiveness of past oversight of the Local Plan process, the Local Plans and New Communities Manager is looking to develop improved documentation for the routine reports to Scrutiny Committee. This will aim to increase transparency and insight and add qualitative emphasis alongside the continued use of the more quantitative focus of the traditional task and risk register and associated documents. The format for these is proposed to be discussed and agreed with the Scrutiny Committee Chair in advance of presentation to the next Scrutiny Committee.
8. It is recognised that the effectiveness of progress reporting is as much about openness and honesty in reporting as in the structure of the documentation. The Interim Local Plans Manager is fully committed to that. For this to be sustained in the longer term this will require the Scrutiny Committee to be maintained as a 'safe' environment for such openness, and to recognise the challenging complexity, inherent uncertainty and non-linear nature of local plan-making.
9. In advance of the task and risk documentation being updated to reflect the revised work programme the following *informal* update (adapted from that previously provided to the Corporate Oversight Board) is provided.
10. REVISED LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION TIMETABLE
  - a. Revised timetable and Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been agreed by Cabinet
  - b. A revised Local Development Scheme reflecting the agreed timetable will be published shortly.
11. REVISION OF SCRUTINY AND LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP ARRANGEMENTS
  - a. The Director of Planning and Interim Local Plans Manager have met informally with the Leader, Cabinet Member and LPLG Chair to discuss issues around this. In response to their seeking advice on some of the

relevant issues, their attention was drawn to (and copies provided) the Report to UDC by East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) about local plan preparation oversight and governance arrangement.

- b. The Director and Local Plans Manager met with lead Members on 28<sup>th</sup> October where the Leader, Cabinet Member, and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee and LPLG agreed proposed revisions to arrangements.

## 12. PROJECT PROGRAMMING

- a. Leading Members and officers agree that publishing officer recommendations on Draft Plan proposals such as site allocations in advance of the elections – the pre-election period - would risk elements (e.g. particular sites) becoming campaign issues, whether for or against, more than they would perhaps inevitably be. It would also conflict with LGA and Cabinet Office advice. It should be for whatever administration is formed following the elections to consider the plan as a whole and make its decisions accordingly.
- b. The result of this is that the officer recommendations of specific site allocations (both existing settlements and new growth areas) in the proposed Consultation Draft Local Plan will be being presented effectively for the first time in June 2023. As such it is quite likely that the new administration will be unable to agree the officer recommendations, and any variations from these, at a single sitting, and this may delay the consultation on the plan beyond the August launch recently agreed. (This would, however, have the benefit of avoiding consulting almost wholly in the summer holiday period, which various Members have raised concerns about.)
- c. The above arrangements do pose some challenges and constraints to the sequencing and focuses of Local Plan team work that officers had previously envisaged;
  - i. Officers are now reconfiguring the developing work programme, and indications of agenda items for the planned LPLGs and Working Group meetings over the November to March period, in the light of this, and hope to have this substantially further evolved over the coming days.
  - ii. Officers are awaiting advice on whether we would be obliged to release politically sensitive information, and especially partial/incomplete information without its full context, under Fol etc. in the run up to and during the election, which may further constrain the work programme.

### 13. SITE ASSESSMENTS

- a. Officers are effectively re-running the site assessment process, in the light of serious concerns from Members, parishes and officers about the reliability and comprehensiveness of the work in that area to date.
  - i. A number of factors have led to this, including (a) an apparent previous lack of written methodology; (b) exacerbated by staffing changes resulting in successive staff working on these complex tasks with different understandings and interpretations of how it should be handled; and (c) past team leadership reportedly prioritising 'completing' site assessments over team members' concerns about the soundness of the data against they were being assessed.
  - ii. Officers have established a small 'sub-team' of three to focus on this work, to bring very substantial relevant experience to bear on the challenge, and provide relief and assistance to the relatively inexperienced planner who was most recently tackling parts of this alone, but who does have hands-on awareness of existing shortcomings and challenges.
  - iii. A written methodology for the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) part of the process has been completed and will be presented to the next LPWG (10 November), likely with a couple of 'worked examples' so that Members can better understand the process. The leader of this work group advises me this stage of the task should be completed by Christmas.
  - iv. A written site selection methodology is in preparation, and a draft of this is planned to be presented to the LPLG on Feb 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a complex and iterative task: the choice of 'available' sites from the previous process, with their various merits, demerits, challenges and opportunities, have to be considered within each existing settlement, between existing settlements, and the overall potential quantum from existing settlements against the available (or otherwise) strategic growth 'new communities' sites. It is now envisaged that this stage will not be completed to the point of a set of officer recommendations until May.

### 14. STRATEGIC 'NEW COMMUNITIES'

- a. In the light of the apparent severe challenges to delivery of each of these, and some doubt about the remaining validity of some of the previous assumptions and 'scoring' of aspects of these sites, the Local Plans Manager is seeking to do a somewhat fast-paced sense check of how realistic and feasible/desirable each is. Officers are seeking to move beyond the 'issues and options' stage previous work seemed to be stuck in and identify a working assumption that will enable more

effective progress, inform evidence gathering, and development of strategy, without closing off the potential to change course later in the light of further evidence or political choices.

- b. Our principal planner, who is very experienced in large scale development planning (but who has only been at Uttlesford 4 months) will lead on this area of strategic work.
- c. She and the Local Plans Manager are meeting with the promoters, agents or landowners of each of the leading contenders, to clarify their seriousness and any further work they have done to bring their proposals towards fruition. Of the three main 'contenders' we have met one, are meeting another next week, and have one further of these to organise.

#### 15. SPATIAL STRATEGY

- a. This is the heart of a plan. It is both the result of, and the cause of, the choices in the plan, especially those in relation to site and area policies and allocations. It therefore cannot be decided at the outset, nor left to the last minute, but must be continuously developed and refined in an iterative process with the emerging results of work, and more particularly thinking, in the various more detailed aspects of the plan. Unless the spatial strategy can be confidently and succinctly explained, it is most unlikely that a district local plan is sound.
- b. It was not at all clear, previously, as to what the spatial strategy was within the now aborted 'Preferred Options' consultation document'. This may be the result of being unclear about which choices of development etc. options/locations were being actively pursued (and why), and a hesitance to express recommendations that might not find political favour.

#### 16. DUTY TO COOPERATE

- a. In the past few weeks officers have held meetings, mainly but not exclusively focused on transport issues, with Essex, South Cambridgeshire, Braintree, Chelmsford, East Herts, Stansted Airport (MAG), National Highways, and (only arguably DtC related) Homes England.
- b. These meetings have been sobering, highlighting both the scale of the challenge UDC faces in solving its severe transport infrastructure challenges to the scale of growth needed, and the apparent general relative disinclination of many of the other authorities with whom we have important 'strategic' connections with to actively engage with UDC's challenges.



- c. The lack of capacity of Junction 8, M11, along with other factors, could be a significant inhibitor for any strategic growth in the south of the District, and hence any possibility of having a means of meeting the Local Plan housing target. The local plans team will need to take a leading role in encouraging affected authorities (and perhaps other organisations) to contribute to the likely circa £250k cost of an options study of potential long term solutions to improve capacity at M11 Junction 8. National Highways have indicated they are likely to make some contribution to this. UDC will likely need to commit early to a significant contribution if it is to have any hope of persuading others to do so. It is suggested that any solution will cost upwards of £100 million. Stansted Airport is committed to a £60 million upgrade of the junction when they reach their airport passenger number trigger (likely in a few years). That upgrade would purely deal with the airport's additional demand on Junction 8, and not accommodate any traffic from substantial housing growth. The airport has, though, I informally indicated that they are willing, in principle, to contribute that £60m towards a more fundamental re-modelling of the Junction which could accommodate both the airport's and housing growth. Clearly this is a significant opportunity, not just for itself but the likelihood this would greatly help pulling in additional funding towards the remaining £40m+, but will need timing alignment and delivery certainty if it is to be realised. Hence there is additional pressure to try to secure the option study with the minimum of delay.

#### 17. DM (and other) POLICIES

- a. These require a review and significant refining, which will be (a) a time-consuming task, and (b) quite how the task might be tackled is a conundrum officers will be applying themselves to (the reasons for these two challenges are outlined below). This, we had envisaged taking place during the pre—election and election period, after the work on site selection had been largely concluded, this policy revision work, and identifying a means by which it can be done, must now be brought forward.
- b. There are currently far too many proposed policies, and it is not at all clear which are the priorities. There is a lack of integration and cross-referencing across different policy areas. The almost 100 policies alone, without supporting text, run to 80 plus pages, (the same as the whole of the 2005 local plan, including explanatory text). The policies tend to be too long, unfocused on their intended use by DM staff (and members of the Planning Committee) and developers and the public.
- c. The intention to engage, as far as possible, the experience and perspective of our DM colleagues in refining these. It is difficult to achieve much of this in practice, given the constant immediate pressures DM staff face. The Local Plans Manager has shared the

compendium of policies (without supporting text) with Nigel Brown, DM Manager, seeking his advice on how we could break down the task, and at what stage, to maximise the chance of any meaningful amount and quality of input from them.

- d. There is little direct experience of DM among the Local Plan team staff apart from the Manager (and that mainly long ago), though several have some 'policy user' experience gained through submitting planning application in, e.g. previous consultancy work.

## 18. TOPIC CHAPTERS

- a. As with the DM etc. Policies (above) this work needs to commence soon as a result of the changed expectations of the sequencing of the site allocations work.
- b. The 'Preferred Options' consultation document ran to 338 pages of text (i.e. without the maps and appendices etc.), and over 113,000 words in total (444 of which were repetitions of the word 'transport'). No DM officer, householder developer, even SME builder/developer, is going to be able to read a plan of that length. As a result of that a plan in that form would be much less influential than it might otherwise be.
- c. At that length it would also be of limited use to parish councils and the lay public as an adopted plan to identify what could or should get planning permission, let alone the basis for a consultation as intended.
- d. That said, there is a lot of specialist knowledge and useful information in those chapters. They, or some adaption of them, might usefully be repurposed in future as Supplementary Planning Guidance, Background Papers for the Local Plan examination.
- e. The immediate task is to edit or rewrite them to make useful content for the Draft Local Plan, for which it is salutary to return to the definition of a plan as comprising (a) policies, and (b) written justification (and (c) a policies map). The policies (see previous section) should stand on their own. The chapters are the writing that should justify those policies.
- f. Achieving this should be a less challenging task than be a less detailed challenge than the Policies, but is nonetheless a lot of work simply as a result of the sheer volume of material which will need to be reviewed, condensed and reformulated. In practice this is likely to need to incorporate extraneous material that may currently be included in the draft policies, and reassign policy intentions that have inadvertently been included in the non-policy text.

## 19. RELATED 'NON-LOCAL PLAN' WORK

- a. Recent activity and achievements include
  - i. Two successful Neighbourhood Plan Referendums, one plan 'made' (brought into force).
  - ii. A Design Code consultation workshop/tour last weekend received praise from attendees.
  - iii. A Draft Developer Contributions (Section 106) SPD is being finalized, following Cabinet approval in February, and will be published for consultation very shortly.

## 20. STAFFING

- a. We managed to appoint at short notice a very experienced Interim replacement for a Career Grade Planner who left UDC last month.
- b. Our transport planner left UDC two weeks ago. We will sorely miss his expertise and deep understanding of the transport and other strategic challenges we are facing, and his contacts and familiarity with our duty to cooperate partners and transport consultants, etc. A non-transport planner in the team has been assigned responsibility for keeping a watching brief on transport matters and attend relevant meetings until a replacement is appointed (which may take some time due to the arrangement with Essex CC to host this post and second to UDC). We have also managed to secure our former transport planner temporarily for a half day a week on a consultancy basis to provide us with transport advice, which is likely to be invaluable in this period where a lot of transport modelling is being undertaken for us to test and/or develop strategic growth options. He can then provide a handover to the replacement, likely Feb 2023.

## Risk Analysis

21. This risk analysis relates to the current Local Plan progress situation, and reflects the severe challenges of both the planning situation in Uttlesford, and the scale and complexity of tasks and demanding timescale facing a small team with vacancies and recent rapid staff turnover.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
3	3	3	3

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.

