

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Draft for Consultation

March 2019–September 2020

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, assisting economic, environmental and social progress for existing and future communities. Planning shapes the places where people live and work, so it is important that communities are able to take an active part in the process. Uttlesford District Council works to improve the quality of lives of people who live, work, or visit the District. One of the ways we do this is by talking to and hearing from individuals and organisations in Uttlesford about their concerns, ideas and ambitions.

1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared to explain how the Council will engage communities, businesses and organisations in the planning process.

The benefits of community engagement include:

- Resolving potential conflicts between parties at an early stage
- Generating local ownership and fostering community pride
- Creating a better understanding of local community priorities
- Introducing greater clarity and transparency in decision making

1.3 An Engagement Strategy will be prepared setting out in detail the engagement programme for the whole Local Plan preparation. It will explain the methods of engagement, how they will be tailored to each consultation stage, the needs of the community and other consultees.

COVID-19 Pandemic response

1.4 In July 2020, the Council published an Addendum to the 2019 SCI temporarily suspending parts of the SCI to take account of Government requirements in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This SCI incorporates these requirements.

The planning system

1.5 The current planning policy system consists of:

- National policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which

encourages a culture in which development plays a key role in meeting the needs and aspirations of the area. The NPPF (in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) still promotes a plan-led system whereby decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- Local policy in the form of the Local Plan, and other appropriate documents (produced by District Councils), Neighbourhood Plans (produced by Parish Councils and Neighbourhood ~~Forums~~ Steering Groups) and Minerals and Waste Plans (produced by County Councils).

2 What's it all about?

What is a statement of community involvement?

- 2.1 The main purpose of a SCI is to set out how the local community, businesses and other organisations with an interest in development in Uttlesford can engage with the planning system. It sets out how the Council will involve the community when preparing planning documents and deciding planning applications. When involving the community in the planning process, account will also be taken of any corporate guidance and strategies adopted by the Council.

Why is a statement of community involvement required?

- 2.2 Local planning authorities are required to produce a SCI under Section 18 (Part 1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019~~2~~) stated that Plans should:

"be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, business, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees." ~~Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made."~~
(Paragraph 155~~16~~c)

~~(2.3) In July 2018 a new NPPF was published that replaced the NPPF 2012. However, the transitional arrangements identified in the NPPF 2018 allow for Local Plans that are submitted on or before 24 January 2019 to continue to be examined under the NPPF 2012.~~

- 2.3 The previous SCI was adopted in ~~January (2018)~~ July 2019 and was updated in July 2020 to include the changes required during COVID-19 crisis. The Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the district ~~covering the period 2011-2033~~ which will contain the planning policies and proposals that will help shape the future of the District over the next 15-20 years. This new SCI will help to ensure that the new Local Plan takes into account recent legislative changes as part of its preparation.

- 2.4 In August 2020 the Government published a White Paper 'Planning for the Future' for consultation which would, if enacted into legislation next year as the Government intends, have a very significant effect on the process, content and timetable for making local plans. The Council will also make representations on the consultation White Paper proposals to government in the interests of the District as a whole.
- 2.5 In the context of the White Paper and need for the Council to carry out its current statutory duties as efficiently and effectively as possible the detailed work programme will be drawn up in such a way as to be appropriate under the present or proposed plan making regimes. The Council will keep abreast of legislative developments and keep residents and other stakeholders informed of the details and implications of changes as they arise.
- 2.6 The White Paper particularly advances the case to:

"move the democracy forward in the planning process and give neighbourhoods and communities an earlier and more meaningful voice in the future of their area as plans are made, harnessing digital technology to make it much easier to access and understand information about specific planning proposals. More engagement should take place at the Local Plan phase" (paragraph 1.12).
- 2.7 The timetable for the production of the Council's new Local Plan as set out in the Local Development Scheme being published concurrently with this SCI would, of course, be subject to change should the Government's proposals, set out in the White Paper, be translated in to law, new national policy and practice guidance next year. The early and more extensive issues and options stage proposed in the LDS aligns closely with the proposed plan-making process while being appropriate under existing arrangements. Accordingly, the Council can make early and effective progress with this initial stage without wasting resources or time.

3 Uttlesford's community

- 3.1 Our 'community' includes all of the individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate within the District. We recognise that the different groups that make up our community have different needs and expectations. They also have their own desires, capabilities and capacity to get involved. This SCI ~~Involvement~~ sets out to maximize the opportunities for everyone in the community to ~~get~~ be involved and their voices heard.

Table 1. Uttlesford's Community

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The interests of local communities are represented by county, district, parish and town councils, all have the capability to be involved. Specific interests can be represented by amenity or interest groups. The community is made up of individuals who have the ability and those who find it harder to be involved. ~~to respond in their own right; however particular sections of local communities can find it harder to get involved.~~

OTHER AGENCIES

Other organisations can provide valuable views regarding specific development plans. These organisations are easy to identify and generally have the capacity to be involved. Some may need support in understanding the Local Plan process and how it relates to their operations so they are able to contribute effectively.

STATUTORY STAKEHOLDERS

There are certain groups that we have are required to involve. These include Historic England, Environment Agency, Highways England, Natural England, Essex County Council and parish/town councils.

DEVELOPERS AND LANDOWNERS

Developers are already involved in the planning system and will seek to be involved. Most can be easily identified from previous involvement and have the capability to be involved. Landowners will be keen to understand and consider the implications of any policies/decisions in order to protect their rights to develop or protect their land and its value. Both groups will be supported in being more actively involved in the Local Plan.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service providers include local health trusts/clinical commissioning groups, schools, utility and transport providers, emergency services, community development organisations and others. All of these can be easily identified and have the capacity to be involved in the Local Plan process. However we will seek to involve them only when it is relevant for them.

BUSINESS SECTOR

Local businesses range in size from the self-employed and small businesses to larger organisations. Their capacity to be involved also varies. Larger organisations may have the capacity to get more actively involved, whilst smaller organisations may need support in understanding the planning system, how it relates to them and how they can get involved. The Council will continue to improve its engagement with the business community.

4 Principles of engagement

4.1 This section sets out the general principles of community engagement. Undertaking consultation is a fundamental part of the planning process.

4.2 Uttlesford's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 sets a vision of 'Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play', and four strategic objectives namely: 2017—2021 (2017) sets out the headline objective to promote thriving, safe and healthy communities. Improving community engagement is outlined in the Corporate Plan as a core action to achieve this goal.

Putting residents first;

Active place maker for our towns and villages

Progressive custodian for our rural environment

Championing our district

4.3 In relation to the first objective listed above, the result being that residents will know their views have been listened to; they will feel they have the opportunity to influence the decision making; they will report increased levels of trust and confidence in the way the Council conducts its business and manages its resources.

4.4 The Corporate Consultation Strategy contains the Council's Consultation Charter the principles of which can be summarised that all consultations undertaken by the Council should be:

- Clear – Clear and concise questions are asked and consultees are clear why we are consulting and how we are using their feedback.
- Effective – The appropriate methods and resources are used in consultation so that the information produced is both useful and used
- Inclusive – The diverse range of groups from all corners of Uttlesford are included in consultation
- Consistent – High standards of consultation are used throughout the council whenever consultation is carried out
- Co-ordinated – Consultation is planned, avoids duplication and maximises, where possible, opportunities for joint consultation.

4.5 Our key principles of engagement are:

- Integrity: Engaging the community and stakeholders in the early formative stages of plan-making, providing sufficient context and information to enable consultees to give 'intelligent consideration' of the consultation along with adequate time for

response, as well as giving and demonstrating conscientious consideration of responses before decision are made. ~~with a genuine willingness to listen and be influenced.~~

- Visibility: making a real effort to make those who have a right to participate aware of what is going on to facilitate recognition and enhancement of a sense of identity with the local area, creating a local sense of pride and greater sense of 'community'.
- Accessibility: Using appropriate methods and channels to reach ~~Reaching out to and cater for~~ those whose voices are seldom heard, being inclusive, fair and representative in the plan-making process.
- Transparency: Making all submissions public and disclosing all data unless there is a specific reason to make them exempt. ~~for not doing so.~~
- Disclosure: The Council will disclose all relevant material and content and in return residents should disclose the full range of local opinion.
- Fairness: The Council will make objectively assessments and interpretations of consultation responses and make decisions ~~consider all comments received through consultations on policies and make appropriate changes that are~~ representative of the spread of local opinion.
- Publication: Providing the right for participants to receive ~~opportunity for feedback on the final output and on eventual outcome of the process. the Council will consider all comments received through consultations on policies and made appropriate changes accordingly.~~
- Empowering communities through supporting localism, supporting neighbourhood planning plan-making and other community-related planning activities.
- Ensuring consultation is worthwhile and achieves value for money by balancing cost, time constraints and available Council resources.
- Encouraging pre-application advice, by advising applicants to discuss future development proposals prior to submitting a planning application. This should include discussion with the local community on significant proposals.
- Undertaking Encouraging meaningful consultation by applicant with community, before applications for major development are submitted.
- Continued engagement with community and stakeholders after a decision has been made on a planning application including S106 issues.

5 Plan making

- 5.1 The Council is responsible for plan making. Plan making sets out how an area will develop over time and provides a guide for future development. This part of the SCI sets out the Council's standards and approach for consulting Uttlesford's community in the preparation of, and revisions to, plans and explains who, how and when the Council will consult when preparing planning policy documents.
- 5.2 The legal requirements for consultation and community involvement in plan making are set by the Government in legislation including The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended), the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) (as amended). This legislation sets out the procedure to be followed by local planning authorities in relation to the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents including who is to be consulted and which documents must be made available at each stage of the process. However, the legislative requirements do not specify how communities or stakeholders should be involved and accordingly the Council has ~~there is~~ flexibility as to how it ~~and to what detail the Council~~ undertakes ~~its own process of~~ engagement. Furthermore, the scale and extent of consultation may vary depending on the subject of the planning document. This section of the SCI sets out how the Council will meet these legal requirements.

Planning policy documents

- 5.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) requires local planning authorities to prepare a statutory development plan that will guide future development within their area. It identifies the locations for housing, employment and other development.
- 5.4 The development plan includes adopted local plans and made neighbourhood plans. The local plan sets out the vision and core policies for the future development of a district. Neighbourhood plans set out a vision and policies to shape the development and growth of a local area for a 10, 15 or 20 year period. Once a neighbourhood plan is made and brought into force, it becomes part of the development plan. A local planning authority may also produce supplementary planning documents (SPDs).

~~(5.5) In addition to producing a new Local Plan covering the whole of the district, the council is also planning on producing Strategic Growth Development Plan Documents~~

~~for each of the Garden Communities in the Local Plan. These documents will set out the detail of how the Garden Communities will develop. The DPDs supporting the Garden Communities will be key documents that will set out how these large strategic sites will be developed, as well as how they will interact with surrounding communities. There will be meaningful engagement with local communities in the production of the DPDs to ensure they can be involved in the planning of these sites, particularly how they will interact with these surrounding communities.~~

- 5.5 The local plan and Garden Community DPDs are is a statutory documents subject to independent examination. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) are prepared to expand policy or provide further detail to the policies in the development plan. They are not subject to independent examination. SPDs are a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process that will make sure that social, economic and environmental considerations are fully ~~taken into account~~considered at every stage of preparation for each development plan document and Supplementary Planning Document. When a local plan is published to allow representations to be submitted the SEA/SA will be published for comments at the same time.
- 5.7 Where a SEA/SA is produced outside of an update to the Local Plan, the SEA/SA will be published for comments to be submitted. Unless the SEA/SA points towards conclusions which suggest the Local Plan is not pursuing the most appropriate strategy to deliver its objectives, the Local Plan would not be republished for another period for representations to be submitted.
- 5.8 The development plan for Uttlesford is currently made up of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), the Essex County Council (ECC) Minerals Local Plan (2016 2014), the ECC Essex and Southend on Sea Waste Local Plan (2014 2017), and the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (2016), ~~and the~~ Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan (2019) and Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (2020). The Council is presently preparing a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2040 2011-2033.
- 5.9 There are also a number of emerging neighbourhood plans in Uttlesford, including: ~~Felsted~~ Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan; Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan; Little Easton Neighbourhood Plan, Newport and Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan; Radwinter Neighbourhood Plan Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan; Stansted Mountfitchet Neighbourhood Plan, Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan ~~and Radwinter~~

Neighbourhood Plan. Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan was made in February 2019 after a successful Referendum on 25 January 2019.

If the referendum votes in favour of the plan, it will join those documents that make up the Development Plan for Uttlesford.

- 5.10 The Council has a number of adopted SPDs which are available on the Council website. ~~More information on these can be found on the planning policy page of the Council's website⁴.~~ The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) also requires the Council to maintain a timetable for the preparation and review of the development plan. This is referred to as a Local Development Scheme (LDS) and is available on the Council website. ~~Uttlesford's current LDS can be found at:~~

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4969/Local-Development-Scheme>

- 5.11 The Council will support and encourage communities to develop their own community led plans - Parish Plans and/or Village/Town Design Statements. The Council will continue to work with the Rural Community Council of Essex to encourage this type of participation.
- 5.12 The Council is has undertaken ~~undertaking~~ a project of updating the , Conservation Area Appraisals, serving Article 4 Directions and compiling a Local Heritage List. ~~These Any new appraisals, Directions or Local Listings~~ will be subject to consultation and consideration will be given to the use of a range of engagement methods listed in paragraphs 5.21-5.25 below.

When can you get involved?

- 5.13 To generate broader and richer conversations to inform more effective and legitimate decision making, the Council is keen to enlist partner agencies with a view to pooling resources, ideas, communication channels and contacts and, making innovative uses of new digital engagement and visualisation tools.
- 5.14 The key informal and formal opportunities for communities to be ~~to get~~ involved in the preparation of planning policy documents are set out in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

⁴<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplan>

Table 2. The Local Plan and other Development Plan Documents

KEY






Informal engagement



Formal consultation



Referendum

The Local Plan		
Preparation stage	What happens	Key time to get involved
Development of the evidence base <u>Examination of issues and options , needs and aspirations</u>	Background research and evidence gathering to inform the emerging plan. <u>Inform stakeholders and the public that the plan is being produced.</u> <u>Extensive and inclusive engagement with residents and other stakeholders.</u>	
Preparation of the Local Plan (Regulation 18)	Inform stakeholders and the public that the plan is being produced and <u>Formally</u> consults on the <u>preferred option draft plan published for a six week period to allow representations to be made.</u>	
Publication (Regulation 19)	After taking into account the representations received on the (Regulation 18) <u>preferred options draft plan</u> , the plan is <u>formally</u> published for a six-week period to allow representations to be made (<u>to be considered during the Independent Examination</u>). Any Addendum to the Regulation 19 plan shall be published for a six week period to allow representations to be made.	








The Local Plan		
Preparation stage	What happens	Key time to get involved
Submission (Regulation 22)	The <u>local plan</u> document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination along with other key supporting documents.	
Examination (Regulation 24)	<p>An examination is held by an independent Inspector. The Inspector will assess the soundness of the Local Plan. Those people who submitted representations at the (Regulation 19) stage are entitled to be heard at the examination.</p> <p>Any main modifications the Inspector considers necessary to make the plan sound would be subject to sustainability appraisal and consultation.</p>	
Publication of Inspector's Recommendations (Regulation 25)	The Local Authority publish the Inspector's recommendations and give notice to all persons who requested to be notified that the recommendations are available.	
Adoption (Regulation 26)	If the Inspector finds the Local Plan sound, the Council will proceed to adopt the Local Plan. This may include modifications recommended by the Inspector.	

Table 3. Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plans		
Preparation stage	What happens	Key time to get involved
Neighbourhood Area Designation	An application for neighbourhood area designation will be publicised for six weeks (unless the area to which the application relates is the whole of the area of a parish council and is wholly within the area of one local planning authority, in which case the Council does not have a choice other than to approve the area).	
Preparing a Draft Neighbourhood Plan	The qualifying body gathers baseline information, engages and consults those living and working in the neighbourhood area, and starts to prepare the draft neighbourhood plan	
Pre-Submission (Regulation 14-21)	<p>The qualifying body publicises the draft plan for <u>a minimum of six weeks to bring it to the attention of people who live and work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area.</u></p> <p><u>The qualifying body consults "Consultation Bodies", adjoining parish councils, voluntary bodies, racial, ethnic or national groups, religious groups, persons carrying on business in the area and interests of disabled persons.</u></p> <p><u>A draft report is sent to the local planning authority (LPA).</u></p>	
Publicising the Submission Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16-22)	The qualifying body submits the neighbourhood plan to the local planning authority (LPA). The LPA publicises the neighbourhood plan for a <u>minimum</u> period of six weeks. The LPA notifies consultation bodies and <u>everyone who made representation as referred to in the consultation statement.</u>	

Neighbourhood Plans		
Preparation stage	What happens	Key time to get involved
<u>Submission of Plan proposals to Examination (Regulation 17 24)</u>	<p><u>The local planning authority submits plan proposal and representations to the Examiner. Publicises the name of the appointed Examiner and submits a copy of any representations received at Regulations 14 and 16.consultations.</u></p> <p>An examination is held by an independent examiner. The examiner will assess if the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions</p>	
<u>Publication of Examiner's Report and Plan Proposal Decisions (Regulation 18)</u>	<p><u>The local planning authority publicises the Examiners report on the website as soon as practicable after it is received.</u></p> <p>The examiner Examiner's <u>report</u> will form a view on whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions. This may include modifications. If the Council propose to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner, the Council will notify relevant parties including those who were previously consulted and invite representations for a period of six weeks</p>	
<u>Decision on a Plan Proposal (Regulation 19)</u>	<p><u>The local planning authority will publicise on their website their decision to make the neighbourhood development plan. The publication should include the decision and reasons for making that decision and details of where the decision can be inspected. .A copy of the decision will be sent to the Qualifying Body and any person who asked to be notified.</u></p>	
<u>Publicising of Neighbourhood Development Plan "Made Plan" (Regulation 20)</u>	<p><u>The local planning authority publicises the decision that a plan has been made, publishes the Neighbourhood Development Plan, details where the plan can be inspected and notify all persons who asked to be notified. .</u></p>	

Neighbourhood Plans		
Preparation stage	What happens	Key time to get involved
Referendum	<p>The Council is responsible for <u>organising the Referendum. The Council must publish an information statement and notice of the referendum and declare the results.</u></p> <p>Subject to the neighbourhood plan meeting the basic conditions, the Council will issue a decision on if the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum</p>	
Adoption (Regulation 25)	<p>If the <u>majority of those who vote in a referendum are in favour then the plan must be made/adopted by the local planning authority within 8 weeks of the Referendum</u> neighbourhood plan receives the majority of the vote the neighbourhood plan will be brought into force</p>	

5.15 As SPDs do not have development plan status, they are not subject to the same process of submission and independent examination as the local plan or neighbourhood plans. However, consultation plays an important role in the production of SPDs. The methods of engagement considered for planning documents as set out in paragraphs 5.21-5.25 below ~~(page 19)~~ also apply to SPDs. The consultation period will involve at least one round of engagement with a minimum consultation period of four weeks. Following consideration of responses and amendments to the SPD as appropriate, the SPD would then be adopted by the Council. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations (2012) (as amended), prior to adoption a consultation statement will be prepared outlining the persons consulted during SPD preparation, a summary of the main issues raised during the consultation and how those comments have been addressed. An adoption statement will also be prepared and made available to view, together with the SPD as soon as reasonably practicable following adoption.

How will you be kept informed of the development of planning policy documents?

5.16 Throughout the process of preparing planning policy documents, from the earliest stages through to adoption, community and stakeholders will be kept informed of progress as follows:

- The Local Development Scheme²
- The planning policy page of the Council's website³
- Reports to Cabinet and Council⁴

A database of all interested parties wishing to receive information on key consultation stages is maintained by the Council. If you wish to be added please contact the Planning Policy Team at the Council by email: planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk
Information on GDPR/UDC Privacy Notice can be found at the following [website](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5156/Privacy-notice-and-cookies)
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5156/Privacy-notice-and-cookies>

5.17 Information about neighbourhood plans in Uttlesford is retained on the Planning Policy page of the Council website. Details of current emerging neighbourhood plans and where more information can be obtained is set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Examples of emerging neighbourhood plans in Uttlesford

Neighbourhood Plan	More information
Felsted Neighbourhood Plan	http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/felstednp http://www.felstednp.org.uk/
Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ashdonnp https://www.ashdonplan.co.uk
Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan	http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/chesterfordsnp http://greatchesterford-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/

² <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4969/Local-Development-Scheme>

³ <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/planningpolicy>

⁴ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5019/Decision-records-and-notice>

<u>Little Easton Neighbourhood Plan</u>	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/leastonnp
Newport and Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan	http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/nqrnp https://www.facebook.com/Newport-Quendon-Rickling-Neighbourhood-Plan-2001363280090063/
Radwinter Neighbourhood Plan	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/radwinternp
Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4963/Saffron-Walden-Neighbourhood-Plan http://www.waldenplan.org/
Stansted Mountfitchet Neighbourhood Plan	http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/stanstednp https://www.stanstedneighbourhoodplan.com/what-is-the-plan
Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan	http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/stebbingnp https://www.stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/

Key stakeholders and community groups

- 5.18 The Council is required under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) (as amended) to consult ‘specific consultation bodies’ and other interest groups which cover the whole range of voluntary, community, special interest, amenity and business interests, referred to as ‘general consultation bodies’.
- 5.19 The list ~~below~~ in Appendix 1 refers to key types of groups rather than listing every individual group and organisation. The lists are not exhaustive; the Council maintains a comprehensive list of consultees which is updated regularly.
- 5.20 The duty to co-operate was introduced in the Localism Act (2011) and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. This means that the Council must seek to actively engage neighbouring councils and a range of other agencies when preparing and reviewing its planning policies, particularly in relation to strategic priorities and cross-boundary issues. The Council will produce a Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance which will be made available for inspection as part of the Local Plan Examination process.

Engagement methods on planning policy documents

- 5.21 The consultation and community involvement methods applied will be proportionate to the nature of the planning policy document being prepared.
- 5.22 **INFORMATION:** The Council will provide information on what the Council is doing, what stage it is at in the preparation of the documents, where documents can be inspected, and how people can get involved.
- Notices on the councils' website, and advertising through other methods such as social media, news releases, Council publications or press adverts.
- 5.23 **CONSULTATION:** Consultation will take place informally during the research stages of documents and formally during the publication stages where people can comment on the Council's proposed policy direction.
- Written / email consultations with 'specific consultation bodies' and appropriate 'general consultation bodies' and other relevant stakeholders (see appendix 1) and people who have requested to be kept informed.
 - Consultation documents will be available to view on the Council's websites, and at Council offices. At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 resulting in either the fully or partial closure of principal office, community information centres and libraries, documents will be available on the website.
- 5.24 **PARTICIPATION:** Inviting representations through:
- Public consultation events if appropriate to the nature of the consultation either in person or virtual via appropriate IT platforms.
- 5.25 ~~The Council will carry out participation events such as workshops and forums where people can be more actively involved where appropriate. Every effort will be made to undertake the consultation outside August and the end of year holiday period. However, where this is unavoidable, due to the need to make progress on development plan preparation we will seek to ensure that a reasonable part of the consultation period extends beyond these holiday periods.~~
- ~~(5.26) Local exhibitions will be considered in locations relevant to the subject of consultation, in accessible buildings. The Council will work with the premises provider in identifying suitable rooms.~~
- 5.26 ~~A communications and engagement plan~~ An Engagement Strategy will also be prepared setting out in detail the engagement programme for the whole Local Plan preparation. It

will explain the methods of engagement, how they will be tailored to each consultation stage, the needs of the community and other consultees. where it is appropriate to the scope of a planning document. For each stage of the planning documents preparation this plan It will contain the following:

- The principles of community engagement on the Local Plan
- How the Council will engage with partners, town and parish councils, key groups, infrastructure providers, residents, businesses and landowners and developers.
- ~~The key milestones for plan making along with key dates for consultation, indicating when people will be involved.~~
- Outline the specific consultation and engagement methods of how people are to be involved and how they can respond.
- ~~Provide details of document availability.~~
- Roles and responsibilities
- Explain how feedback will be provided and how comments will be taken into account.

Table 5. Engagement methods considered for planning documents

	Method	Purpose	Resources
INFORMATION	Media e.g. Publicity in local newspapers; articles in parish magazines; <i>Uttlesford Life</i> magazine ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness Reaching wide audience • Publicising how to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency • Staff time to prepare material
	Internet Uttlesford website, emails, <i>Keep me posted</i> e-newsletter; Facebook and Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date information about progress and how to get involved • Access to documents to meet minimum requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency • Posting information online is low cost once established

⁵ <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/uttlesfordlife>

	Leaflets and posters Promoting the consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness • Reaching wide audience • Publicising how to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium cost efficiency • Production of material can involve significant costs • Staff time to prepare and distribute material
	Letters to statutory bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet minimum requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium cost efficiency • Staff time to write and administrate posting
	Mailing List of persons and companies wishing to be notified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping people up to date on key stages and how to get involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency electronically • Low cost efficiency through the post. Staff time to write and administrate posting
CONSULTATION	Documents Available to view and comment on via the Council's on-line consultation portal objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minimum requirement in allowing everyone the opportunity to comment on draft documents via a range of methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency • Staff time updating the on-line consultation period
	Documents Available for inspection at principal and other offices and libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minimum requirement in allowing everyone the opportunity to comment on draft documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency • Staff time may be needed to answer questions
	Questionnaires Paper and electronic format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus consultation on key questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency in electronic format • Low cost efficiency in paper format • Staff time to collate responses

	Parish/town council meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching community groups through existing meetings • Gain understanding of views regarding a specific area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost efficiency • Staff time to attend meetings and prepare any material
	Town and Parish Council Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement of local councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/medium cost efficiency • Staff time to attend and prepare material
	Pre-existing Forums such as Uttlesford's Tenant Forum ⁶ and Business Exchange Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information and canvass opinion from selected groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/medium cost efficiency • Staff time to attend and prepare material
	Local Strategic Partnership meetings⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement of the Local Strategic Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/medium cost efficiency • Staff time to attend and prepare material
	Citizens Panel⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help gain more understanding of public concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/medium cost efficiency • Staff time to attend and prepare material
PARTICIPATION	Focus groups (selected groups of participants with particular characteristics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for area based or topic specific discussions and presentation of options • Help gain more understanding of public concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/medium cost efficiency • Staff time to attend and prepare material

⁶ <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/tenantforum>

⁷ [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5138/Uttlesford-Futures\(LSP\)](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5138/Uttlesford-Futures(LSP))

⁸ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5497/Citizens-Panel>

	Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing together representatives from different sectors to be actively involved in identifying issues/options and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium/high: Time is needed for preparation Specialist skills may be required
	Local exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating the key messages about the planning document being consulted upon and encouraging people to put forward their views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost efficiency Preparation of materials and staff time

Feeding information into decisions

- 5.27 The information and comments the Council obtains through participation and consultation with the community and stakeholders will be used to inform the Council's decisions and shape any documents produced.
- 5.28 ~~Formally made~~ **Formal** comments will need to be made either through the consultation portal (if the document is published on the portal), by email or by letter. Respondents are required to provide their name and contact details, preferably email. They will be added to a database which will be used to keep people informed of the next stages in the plan making process. Anonymous comments will not be accepted.
- 5.29 All comments are registered on the consultation portal and are available to view at <http://uttlesford-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal> Representor's name and organisation, if appropriate, are shown against the comment. Contact details remain confidential.
- 5.30 **Consultation Statement:** The Council will produce a Consultation Statement which will summarise the main issues raised through ~~as a result of~~ consultation on planning policy document consultations and how these have been addressed.
- 5.31 It is the responsibility of the planning policy team to prepare planning policy documents, undertake consultation, consider the comments and recommend actions to the **Planning**

~~Policy Working Group (PPWG)~~ Local Plan Leadership Group (LPLG) and Cabinet, and then implement Members' decisions, ~~the decisions of Members~~. The recommendations ~~should~~ will clearly explain the reasoning for the recommendation taking into account the views of stakeholders and consultees.

- 5.32 Cabinet is responsible for approving plans and related documents for consultation and submission. Full Council is responsible for approving the submission and adoption of the Local Plan. Any future changes to the delegation of decisions will be set out in the Council procedures and standing orders.
- 5.33 All documents produced will be available at the Council's principal office and on the Uttlesford website. Planning documents which are being consulted upon will also be sent to the Council's other offices, and local libraries. At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 resulting in either the fully or partial closure of principal office, community information centres and libraries, documents will be available on the website.

6 Planning applications

- 6.1 Involving people in planning application process allows them to influence development as it is being designed and helps to resolve issues more meaningfully.

The pre-application stage

- 6.2 All applicants are encouraged to discuss future development proposals with the Council prior to submitting a planning application. Our development management team can advise on the general acceptability of proposals before they are submitted and explain what information is likely to be required to enable the determination of an application. Further information is contained in the Council's Planning Application Guidance Notes and a Planning Application Checklist. These are available on the Council's website⁹.
- 6.3 Applicants are encouraged to involve the community ~~early on their planning applications.~~ Early engagement with local people before a formal application has been submitted as this will help to address issues and early on may help to avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage. At times of Government restrictions relating to Covid-19, applicants are encouraged to discuss the approach with the case officer.

Application stage

- 6.4 Once the application is submitted, the Council must publicise it, consult the relevant parish or town council, and allow people the opportunity to contribute their views in writing or online. The legal requirements for consultation on submitted planning applications is set by the Government in legislation including The Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order (2015) as amended. These are set out in more detail below. All applications are publicised via the Council's website under Application and Decision Search¹⁰. In addition all applications are publicised through a neighbour notification letter or if that is not appropriate by a site notice. At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 the agent/applicant may be

⁹ <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/planningapplicationforms>

¹⁰ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4863/Comment-or-search-for-a-planning-application>

asked to display these on site. Table 5 sets out those circumstances when a site notice or notice in a newspaper is required in addition to the neighbour notification letter.

Table 5. Engagement on planning applications

Type of development	Publicity required
Development where the application is accompanied by an environmental statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* • Council website
Departure from the development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* • Council website
Development affecting a public right of way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* • Council website
Major development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* or neighbour notification • Council website
Development affecting a listed building or its setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* or neighbour notification • Council website
Development affecting a conservation area or its setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in the local newspaper • Site notice* or neighbour notification • Council website
Other development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site notice* or neighbour notification
– Certificate of Lawfulness of proposed use or development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statutory requirement to consult

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certificate of Lawfulness of existing use or development – Approval of details/Discharge of Conditions – Non-material amendments 	
–	<p><u>* At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 the agent/applicant may be asked to display these on site.</u></p>

Table 7. Consultation periods on planning applications

Method of publicity	Consultation period
Notice in a local newspaper	21 days from the date of publication
Site notice	21 days from the date that the notice was first displayed
Neighbour notification letter	21 days from the day on which the notification letter was delivered
Website	21 days from the date of publication
Revised plans	Where revised plans are submitted as part of a planning application these will be given a reduced consultation time period, if consultation is required. An application already on an agenda may be withdrawn from the agenda to allow further consultation

- 6.5 In cases where neighbours are to be notified this will be undertaken in writing, either electronically or by letter. The Council will put up site notices when required and also publish planning applications online. Town and Parish councils (and, where appropriate on significant applications, known residents' associations and local community groups) are notified of individual planning applications in their area. If the planning officer

considers the development is likely to have a wider impact, neighbouring parish councils may also be notified.

6.6 Applicants are required to publicise applications where:

- An environmental statement is submitted, after the application has been made to the Council
- Certain types of development for agriculture, forestry and for the demolition of buildings

6.7 Prior to submission or during determination of an application, discussions will be held between planning officers, and applicants and representative of the parish council to discuss issues such as infrastructure, amenities and matters subject to any S106.

Determining planning applications

6.8 Planning applications are determined against the Development Plan and other material considerations. Often, planning permission may be granted subject to conditions to ensure that the development is acceptable, or to prevent certain impacts or activities arising from the proposal. There are two ways decisions are made on planning applications determined by the Council: these are by the Planning Committee and through delegated decisions.

6.9 **Planning Committee:** The Planning Committee comprises elected Councillors and is responsible for making decisions on applications received by the Council, excluding those which fall within delegated powers unless the application is called in by a councillor for determination by Planning Committee.

6.10 Committee reports are available five working days before Committee. On applications reported to Committee the Council operates a policy of public speaking. Details on how to get involved in meetings can be found on the website under Meetings and the Public or by contacting a democratic services officer on committee@uttlesford.gov.uk 01799 510369. At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 meetings take place virtually using Zoom and public speaking is still facilitated with the same rights and rules applying. If a speaker is unable to use Zoom, it is possible to dial into a virtual meeting by telephone or a statement can be read out on their behalf.

6.11 **Delegated decisions:** The Council receives a large volume of applications each year, and it is impractical for all applications to be determined by the Planning Committee. Planning legislation permits the Council to delegate the determination of certain planning applications to officers rather than the Planning Committee. The scheme of delegation

is set out in the Council's Constitution available on the website site (<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5028/Constitution>), Part3 – Page 31, whereby officers are not empowered to deal with:

Approval of Major Applications (as defined by the GDPO) in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted and approval of applications of more than 5 dwellings elsewhere.

- 6.12 Committee and delegated reports set out the relevant local and national policies; town/parish council comments, comments of consultees, comments of representations; and an appraisal of the issues to be considered in determining the application. If an application is recommended for approval the report will set out any conditions and Heads of Terms for the S106 obligation.
- 6.13 A decision notice will be sent to the applicant, explaining the reasons why a planning application has or has not been granted planning permission. Notification of the decision will also be sent to the Parish Council and to those members of the public who have made representations. Planning decisions are published on the Council's website under the relevant planning application number. The accompanying officer reports, which set out the planning considerations and make a recommendation of approval or refusal, may also be obtained online.
- 6.14 **Appeals:** If an application is refused or not determined within statutory timeframes, the applicant may exercise their right to appeal. When the Council is notified of an appeal by the Planning Inspectorate, the Council will notify interested parties of the appeal and provide a copy of comments made on the application to the Planning Inspectorate. Interested parties will be advised on how they can participate in the appeal process, including venue and time of any informal hearing or public inquiry. At times of Government restrictions due to Covid-19 hearings and inquiries will take place virtually and participants will be informed on how they can participate.

Outside the planning application process

- 6.15 **Prior approvals:** The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (2015) (GPDO) allows for specific changes of use subject to a prior approval process. The Council will consult adjoining neighbours as required by regulations for all prior approvals. Up-to-date guidance on prior approvals, including neighbour notifications can be found on the [planning portal website](#).

- 6.16 **Permissions in principle:** The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations (2017) and the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order (2017) require local planning authorities to prepare and maintain registers of brownfield land. The Order provides that sites entered on Part 2 of the new brownfield registers will be granted permission in principle. Permission in principle will settle the fundamental principles of development (use, location, amount of development) for the brownfield site giving developers/applicants more certainty. A developer cannot proceed with any development, however, until they have also obtained technical details consent. The technical details consent will assess the detailed design, ensure appropriate mitigation of impacts and that any contributions to essential infrastructure are secured. Both the permission in principle and the technical details consent stages must be determined in accordance with the local development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations. The Council will meet the statutory requirements for consultation including contacting parish and town councils under the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) in relation to permissions in principle.

7 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 This SCI will be subject to review ~~to ensure the community involvement techniques used are successful. As the success of~~ as the community involvement techniques are monitored and reviewed, and the findings are used to inform community involvement practices and procedures in ~~the results will be fed into~~ the preparation of future stages of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents and ~~the~~ consideration of significant planning applications.

8 Contact us

- 8.1 For more information on this Statement of Community Involvement please contact us at:

Planning Policy Local Plan and New Communities Team

Uttlesford District Council
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 4ER



Tel: 01799 510541 ~~510346~~ or ~~01799 510454~~ or ~~01799 510637~~

Email: planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk

Glossary

Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) A report monitoring the effectiveness of the development plan. Monitoring information will be published on the website as soon as practicable

Consultation Bodies The consultation bodies are set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Development Plan The development plan consist of the Development Plan Documents produced by Uttlesford District Council, (or jointly with neighbouring authorities), Essex County Council and any Neighbourhood Plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Document (DPD) A document setting out Uttlesford District Council's planning policies and proposals. DPDs are subject to community involvement, consultation and independent examination.

Independent Examination Development Plan Documents are subject to an examination by a planning inspector to rigorously test legal compliance and overall 'soundness'.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) The LDS sets out the timetable for preparing the.

Local Plan The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the community.

Material Consideration A material consideration is any planning matter which is relevant to a particular case.

Minerals and waste development plan documents DPDs prepared by Essex County Council with regards to mineral extraction and waste management

Neighbourhood Planning A new tier of the planning system, introduced under the Localism Act 2011, to give communities more control over the future of their area.

Neighbourhood Plan A type of Neighbourhood Planning, which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a defined neighbourhood area. A Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Local Plan, undergo Examination and a Referendum. After adoption, they are part of the statutory development plan and are used (alongside other policy documents) to determine planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers, both in drawing up plans and making decisions about planning applications. It must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Additional detail is given to the NPPF through **Planning Practice Guidance** which is the governments on-line, web based guidance on national planning policies.

Planning Inspectorate (PINS) The Planning Inspectorate holds independent examinations to determine whether or not DPDs are 'sound'. The Planning Inspectorate also handles planning and enforcement appeals.

Prescribed Bodies The bodies subject to the Duty to Cooperate are prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Section 106 Agreements A binding legal agreement requiring a developer or landowner to provide or contribute towards facilities, infrastructure or other measures, in order for planning permission to be granted. Planning obligations are normally secured under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Sound/soundness This describes where a DPD is considered to 'show good judgement' and also to fulfil the expectations of legislation, as well as conforming to national policy. A sound plan is

- Positively prepared;
- Justified;
- Effective; and
- Consistent with national policy.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) The SCI is a document explaining to the community how and when they can be involved in the preparation of the planning policy documents and the determination of planning applications, and the steps that will be taken to encourage this involvement.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) An SEA is an iterative assessment of the environmental effects of policies and proposals contained in Local Plans.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) SPDs are not subject to an independent examination and do not have 'development plan' status, but are intended to elaborate upon the policies and proposals in DPDs. They can be used as a 'material consideration' in the determination of planning applications.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) An SA is an assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects of policies and proposals within Local Development Documents.

Sustainable Development Development that is in accord with economic, social and environmental objectives. Development that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a collaboration of organisations including the district council, the county council, the local health service and the emergency services. LSPs allow public bodies to work together on projects they wouldn't be able to do on their own.

Appendix 1: Key Stakeholders

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Electronic Communications Operators
- National Grid
- UK Power Networks
- Water and wastewater undertakers
- Homes England and ~~Communities~~ Agency
- ~~Hertfordshire and West Essex~~ Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Highways England
- Essex County Council
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Essex and Kent Police
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- Parish and town councils, including those within the District and those that adjoin the District
- Adjoining district councils, such as Braintree District, Chelmsford City, East Hertfordshire District, North Hertfordshire District, Epping Forest District and South Cambridgeshire District councils
- Adjoining county councils – Cambridgeshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council
- Greater London Authority