

Regulation 19 Local Plan

4 Housing

Policy H 1

Housing Density

Unless otherwise specified in a Neighbourhood Plan, housing development will be expected to achieve densities within the following ranges depending on the location of the development and taking into account the character of the area.

Location	Number of Dwellings per Hectare
Within the town Development Limits of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow	35-60
Within Development Limits of any other settlement	30-50
Adjacent to any settlement	30-50

Housing development will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the Design Policies D1-D10 set out in the Local Plan.

Housing Mix

4.9 It is important that the Local Plan provides for a choice and mix of housing across the District in order to create balanced and sustainable communities in relation to both the choice and mix provided on larger, individual sites and overall choice and mix of the towns, villages and new garden communities. Widening housing choice broadens the appeal of an area and helps in meeting the needs of existing residents. The Council will expect the mix of new residential schemes to reflect the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidence of need taking into account local character considerations and viability which will be assessed on a site by site basis. Evidence of scheme viability will need to be demonstrated at the time a planning application is submitted, or alongside a request for a variation of a S106 agreement on the grounds of viability if this becomes necessary.

4.10 The 2015 SHMA assessed the housing mix and tenure in terms of number of bedrooms for market and affordable housing. It was concluded that the majority of the need for market housing is for 3 and 4 + bedroom houses, whilst the greatest need for affordable housing units is for 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

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Policy H 2

Housing Mix

New housing developments will provide for a mix of house types and sizes to meet the different needs of the local area and the District as a whole including a significant proportion of 3 and 4+ bedroom market housing and 2 and 3 bedroom affordable housing to meet the needs of families as evidenced by the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment having regard to local character, significance of heritage assets and the viability of the development which will be assessed on a site by site basis

Subdivision of Dwellings

4.11 The character of an area may be adversely affected by subdivision of existing properties or change of use to multiple occupancy as a result of on-street parking, the use of garden space for car parking, an increase in overlooking of adjacent properties and general noise and disturbance. If a dwelling is within a flood risk area, subdivision creating a ground floor flat could mean a flat being created with no access to a first floor level for refuge. The potential adverse effects of the subdivision or multiple occupancy of residential properties will be controlled by Policy H3 below.

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Policy H 3

Subdivision of Dwellings and Dwellings in Multiple Occupancy

The subdivision of dwellings into two or more units or the change of use of dwellings to houses of multiple occupancy will be permitted provided that:

1. Sufficient car parking is provided in accordance with the Essex Parking Standards, Local standards and subsequent updates;
2. There would be no material overlooking of neighbouring properties;
3. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent design guidance for the occupiers of the newly-created units;
4. If the dwelling is located within a flood risk area, no residential unit is created without access to a first floor level for refuge;
5. The development would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area by reason of:
 - i. On street parking;
 - ii. The loss of garden space for use as car parking; and
 - iii. Unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.

Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

4.12 While extensions to the home reduce the stock of smaller, cheaper housing, an extension may be the only way many households can afford to secure the accommodation they need as their requirements change. Applications for residential extensions will be considered against all policies within the Local Plan, where relevant, but specifically against the policies set out in the Design section of the Local Plan, in particular Policy D3 - Small Scale Development/ Householder Extensions and Policy D1 - High Quality Design.

4.13 To help protect the character of Uttlesford's countryside and its Green Belt there is a need to control the amount and design of new development in the countryside. The construction of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a number of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of the individual properties and their surroundings. Applications for small scale residential extensions should be considered against Policy D3 of the Local Plan. Regards should

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also be given to Policy SP10 – Protection of the Countryside and Policy C1 – Protection of Landscape Character as well as the design policies in the Design section of the Local Plan.

Policy H 4

House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside and the Green Belt

House extensions and replacement dwellings beyond the Green Belt:

1. Proposals to extend or replace existing dwellings within the area designated as Countryside or Countryside Protection Zone will be permitted provided that the proposal would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding countryside or the open character of the Countryside Protection Zone by virtue of its siting, scale, height, character and design.
2. A replacement dwelling should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity or other environmental grounds indicate that a more appropriate location on the plot can be justified.

House extension and replacement dwellings within the Green Belt

3. House extensions will be permitted which would not result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling or harm the purposes of the Green Belt; and
4. Replacement dwellings should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling and will only be permitted if they are not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Both within the Green Belt and beyond it account will be taken of the size of the existing dwelling, the extent to which it has previously been extended or could be extended under permitted development rights, and the character of the area.

Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

4.14 Infilling between existing dwellings and the development of other village sites often provide opportunities for the provision of additional homes. However, care should be taken to make sure such development is appropriate, well designed and well related to its surroundings. This will be particularly important beyond development limits, where the sensitive nature of these sites requires development only be allowed where it will not adversely affect the local environment and where it will not lead to over development.

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It is also important to safeguard the interests of residents in surrounding houses by making sure that residential amenity such as large gardens, privacy and the character of the area is maintained.

Policy H 5

Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

Proposals for small scale residential development on sites in settlements without development limits will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. The setting of existing buildings, the natural and historic environment, and the character of the area are protected;**
- 2. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent guidance;**
- 3. The development would not have an overbearing effect or cause disturbance to neighbouring properties;**
- 4. There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties; and**
- 5. The resulting development would not result in unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.**

Affordable Housing

4.15 As explained in the Spatial Strategy in Section 3 of the Local Plan, since 2010 the Council has worked with Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire Councils to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). A SHMA was published in 2010 and updated in 2012 and 2015. The 2017 SHMA sets out an up to date and policy-compliant assessment of housing need across the Housing Market Area (HMA) for the period 2011-2033. It identifies that the four districts represent the most appropriate “best fit” for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire HMA.

4.16 The 2015 SHMA concluded that the combined level of housing need across the four local authority areas was 46,058 homes for the period 2011-2033. This figure was disaggregated amongst the four authorities.

4.17 The Government released new household projections in July 2016. These figures showed that, by 2033, the population of Uttlesford was likely to be greater than originally expected. Following the release of these figures, further work on the SHMA has showned that the housing requirement for the District has increased to at least 14,000 new homes by 2033.

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4.18 The 2017 SHMA identified that the affordable housing component of the District's total housing need is 19.5%. In the light of national policy which does not permit affordable housing contributions from sites of 10 units or less, it is considered appropriate to require developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings in order to ensure that the affordable housing need is met.

4.19 There are, and will continue to be, many households in Uttlesford lacking their own housing or living in housing that is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

4.20 For affordable housing to be relevant to those in housing need in Uttlesford it must be available, both initially and for subsequent occupancy, only to those with a demonstrable housing need.

4.21 The Council encourages meeting affordable housing requirements through one of its preferred Registered Providers (RP) who have the management abilities and local knowledge to effectively manage new affordable housing. Increasingly though there are a range of different types of affordable housing and developers and property managers as well as Registered Providers. The Council will consider a range of different types of affordable housing subject to it meeting the overall intention of affordable housing. Innovative affordable housing products and development designs will be supported particularly within the new garden communities.

4.22 Starter Homes can help to widen opportunities for home ownership for those households able to afford market rents but unable to afford to buy housing in the Housing Market Area. The Council is supportive of the model and awaits the publication of the Regulations. The SHMA found that Starter Homes are unlikely to be affordable to those households identified as being unable to afford market housing. The provision of Starter Homes are therefore considered as being additional to (and not part of) the affordable housing need.

4.23 The percentage and type of affordable housing on any given site may be subject to negotiation at the time of a planning application, to allow issues such as site size, sustainability and viability to be considered. An appropriate mix of tenures and property size would need to be agreed in the light of the most up to date housing need evidence and will be determined by local circumstances. The Council will set out in its Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and specific site layout and design requirements for affordable housing. Currently the tenure split is 71% affordable rent or social rented tenure and 29% shared ownership or intermediate housing tenure. Affordable housing units will be normally be distributed throughout the development in clusters of no more than 10 units, depending on the size of the development.

4.24 Requirements for affordable housing provision can render some schemes unviable, especially when faced with a downturn in the housing market or changes to funding. The viability of schemes is a key consideration. It is the responsibility of the applicant to commission a viability study by specialists to be agreed with the Council

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to prove that the affordable dwellings requirement as set out in the policy will make their scheme unviable and to propose alternatives to meet the requirements set out in Policy H6 below.

Policy H 6

Affordable Housing

Developments on sites which provide for 11 dwellings or more, or residential floorspace of more than 1,000 sq m (combined gross internal area), will be required to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings on the application site and as an integral part of the development. The council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.

Where it can be evidenced to the satisfaction of the Council that this requirement would render the development unviable the Council will negotiate an appropriate provision of affordable housing.

In exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be achieved, off-site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on-site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.

Affordable housing units will be distributed through the development in appropriately sized, non-contiguous clusters. The tenure mix of affordable housing should reflect the most up to date local housing need evidence and viability on individual sites.

Developers may not circumvent this policy by artificially subdividing sites. Where sites are sub-divided, the Council will normally expect each subdivision or smaller development to contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable housing which would have been appropriate on the whole or larger site.

To prevent the loss of affordable housing to the general housing market, the Council will, where appropriate, require long term safeguards to be in place to ensure the benefit of affordable housing will be enjoyed by successive occupiers. This will normally be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

4.25 As a consequence of the scale of affordable housing needs and the need to retain mixed and balanced communities, the Council will also exceptionally release suitable land in rural areas for local needs housing that would not otherwise normally receive planning permission.

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4.26 It is important to establish that a need exists and then to make sure that accommodation is made available for those people who have a genuine need for housing in the locality that they cannot meet in the market. Such people may for example, include existing residents who need separate accommodation locally, key workers or people who have longstanding links with the local community, such as people who used to live in the village but were forced to move away because of a lack of affordable housing, and people who need to move back into a village to be near relatives. 'Local' in this context means 'within the parish', principally, although the needs of those who live or work in an adjoining parish may also be accepted. This would particularly apply where a scheme is proposed in a larger village that would meet the needs of adjoining smaller communities. Properties need to meet an identified local need and be provided and maintained by a registered or other provider, to be agreed by the Council at an early stage. On some exception sites the Council may consider development that includes cross-subsidy from open market sales on the same site. The applicant would need to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that a mixed tenure scheme was essential to the viability and delivery of the development. The District Council will work with Registered Providers, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups in identifying suitable sites.

4.27 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of affordable housing including discounted market sale and intermediate homes to rent or buy. The Council supports the development of CLTs to meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies, CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

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Policy H 7

Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

Development of affordable housing will be permitted outside settlements on a site where housing would not otherwise normally be permitted, if it meets all the following criteria:

1. The development will meet a local need that cannot be met in any other way, as demonstrated by an up to date housing needs survey prepared within the last three years;
2. The development is of a scale appropriate to the size and facilities; of the settlement; and
3. The site adjoins the settlement;

The inclusion of market housing in such schemes will be supported provided that:

4. Viability assessments demonstrate that the need for the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the development; and
5. The proportion of market housing is the minimum needed to make the scheme viable.

Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

4.28 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF clarifies that Local Planning Authorities should identify and make provision for people wishing to build their own home. Enabling self and custom building provides an important opportunity to bring more choice into the housing market and enable people to design and build homes that meet their specific needs.

4.29 Self or custom build housing is identified as dwellings built (or commissioned) by someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least three years. The three years is relevant in terms of qualifying for self-build Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) exemption.

4.30 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires each local planning authority to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority area in order to build houses for those individuals to occupy as homes. The self-build register also provides information about the demand for such housing. This evidence should then be used to inform the Local Plan, consideration of planning applications and the disposal of public land.

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4.31 The Council will work with developers on sites where the delivery of serviced plots for affordable housing are negotiated to enable some of these to be offered for self-build where a need is identified.

4.32 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of self-build schemes. CLTs are non-profit, community based organisations run by volunteers that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community, are owned and controlled by the community and are made available at permanently affordable levels. The Council supports the development of CLTs to meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

4.33 The Council further recognises the opportunity of custom and self-build housing partly satisfying the affordable housing obligations from a residential development. Self-build development can provide for intermediate housing for rent or sale but would be subject to applying affordability and eligibility criteria. Several alternatives can be used to secure delivery. These include providing a specific number of fully serviced plots or homes that can be partly built out to be self-finished by purchasers. In all cases these should be made available to households in housing need with a relevant local connection and provided for sale or rent at an appropriate discount below market values. Affordable self-build properties should meet the definition for affordable housing provided by the Local Plan and Annex 2 of the NPPF for people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home on the open market.

4.34 Support for this growing sector can make a positive contribution to development within the District. Where areas of land are identified for self-build, either as part of a strategic development site, new garden community, or through other smaller scale or windfall development, good design principles will apply.

4.35 Masterplans and Plot Passports should be prepared that provide the parameters within which these new homes can be designed and build, allowing for individual interpretation, but within a framework that establishes the grain, scale and rhythm of new development.

4.36 Plot Passports are a summary of the design parameters for any given plot, helping private homebuilders understand what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission for the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The Passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built, as well as height restrictions and other details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.

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Policy H 8

Self-Build and Custom Units

Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported where they seek to address the need and demand for self and custom build housing and:

- 1. The site is located within development limits;**
- 2. Are of high quality design and accord with plot passports (where appropriate);**
- 3. Are constructed sustainably and are energy efficient; and**
- 4. Do not conflict with other policies in the local plan.**

Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported as part of the Garden Communities and strategic sites.

Where land is proposed for self and custom build plots located within Garden Communities and strategic sites, a design code and individual Plot Passports should be prepared and submitted to the Council for approval. Together, these will regulate the form of development, establishing building parameters such as heights, footprints, set-backs, densities and parking requirements. Neighbourhood plans may designate self and custom build sites where demand is identified.

In line with identified demand, a proportion of the self-build plots should be provided as affordable housing. These should be provided:

- 5. At an appropriate discount below market value; and**
- 6. To households in housing need with a relevant local connection.**

If Self or Custom Build plots are not sold after being marketed appropriately for 24 months, then they should remain on the open market as Self or Custom Build plots or be offered to the Council as land to deliver additional affordable housing. If there is no interest from the above after a further 12 months then the developer can build out the site as open market housing.

Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.37 Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 Housing Act (2004). ⁽¹⁷⁾states that every local housing authority must, when undertaking a review of housing needs in their District carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers residing in or resorting to their district. Local planning authorities are required to provide culturally suitable accommodation for all their community under the Housing Act (2004).

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4.38 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) (2015)⁽¹⁸⁾ requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets and provide a sufficient supply of sites for those families who meet the definition of ‘gypsy and traveller’ and ‘travelling showpeople’. Gypsy and traveller under the PPTS are defined as:

4.39 *“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:*

- a. *Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life;*
- b. *The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.*
- c. *Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.”*

4.40 Travelling showpeople are defined in the PPTS as:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.”

4.41 In partnership with the Councils across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, the District Council commissioned the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for gypsy and traveller and travelling Showpeople families. The latest GTAA was published in January 2018 and the baseline for the Uttlesford Study in 2016.

4.42 The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Uttlesford through a combination of desk-based research and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites. A total of 16 interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised and unauthorised sites and yards.

4.43 The GTAA identified that in the District there is a need for no additional pitches up to 2033 for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition contained in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; a need for up to 8 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may meet the planning definition; and a need for 10

17 [Available: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents)

18 [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(DCLG, 2015\).](#)

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additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition. No needs for travelling showpeople were identified. The Council is working with the other Councils in Essex to identify the need and the appropriate location(s) for transit provision.

4.44 The Council is committed to providing for the housing need of all of its community as required under the 2004 Housing Act. The Council will closely monitor the gypsy and traveller population and keep the evidence base on gypsy and traveller need and supply under review.

4.45 The Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address the identified need for Gypsy and Travellers who fall outside the definition of the PPTS as part of the Council's overall objective to meet district-wide housing needs. Any need that arises during the Local Plan period will be considered against the criteria based Policy H9 below, or if it proves necessary in the future, through the preparation of a specific site allocations plan.

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Policy H 9

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Planning permission for new Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites will be granted if the following criteria are met:

1. The applicant has adequately demonstrated a need for a site in the District and the number and type of pitches or plots proposed;
2. The site is located in a sustainable location, well related to a settlement with a range of services and facilities, including a primary school and healthcare facilities;
3. The site is located, designed and landscaped to minimise any impact on the natural, built and historic environment;
4. The site has safe pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the public highway and provides adequate space for parking, turning and servicing on site;
5. The site is not located in Flood Zone 3 and passes the Exception Test if the site is located in Flood Zone 2;
6. The site is, or can be, connected to physical infrastructure including drainage, water supply, power and other necessary utility services; and
7. The layout of the site and associated facilities including pitches/ plots, hard-standings, amenity blocks, vehicular and pedestrian access, play areas and boundary treatments are well planned to support health and well-being.

Plots for Travelling Showpeople should be large enough to accommodate the storage and maintenance of rides and equipment.

Accessible Homes and Housing for Older People

4.46 Uttlesford has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing over the Local Plan period. Essex County Council (ECC) is the provider of social services in the District. Its independent Living Programme is encouraging the provision of specialist accommodation in Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities. For Uttlesford District, ECC has set the target of delivering 73 self-contained additional units of specialist accommodation (33 through rental and 40 through ownership) to enable older people to live independently within the community by 2020. This is in addition to the requirement for communal establishments. The Independent Living target

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is set out in Essex County Council's Independent Living Position Statement (2016) ⁽¹⁹⁾. This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care, which is a considerably more expensive way of meeting the needs of older people, and can unnecessarily restrict independence within this age group.

4.47 Housing intended specifically for older people should be located where it is easy for residents to access community facilities and services, such as day-to-day shops and healthcare, and to be able to travel by public transport to larger centres to access a greater range of higher order facilities and services such as hospitals and libraries. If the day-to-day facilities and services are not available locally they should be available on site. Research has shown that the incorporation of certain design features in housing can have positive implications for the health and well-being of older people. In 2009 the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) published a report examining the design of housing for older people and made recommendations to improve it. This included 10 key design principles which are now known as the HAPPI principles and are considered best practice that should be adopted in the design of housing for older people. Bungalows provide a popular form of housing in Uttlesford which means that older people can downsize to accommodation that is fit for purpose but still maintains their independence. It also meets a need for those with a physical disability who require accommodation on one floor. The provision of 1 and 2 bed bungalows will be supported.

4.48 There is also a need to ensure that the needs of wheelchair users are met within the District. It is therefore essential that planning policy be provided to ensure that the needs of older people and wheelchair users are met over the Local Plan period. The Local Plan aims to give people more choice and control over where and how they live and receive care. Sites of 11 or more dwellings are therefore required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). This threshold reflects the likelihood that the costs associated with such provision may make smaller developments unviable. Where this would result in only a part dwelling being provided, it is expected that the total requirements will be rounded up. 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(3): Category 3 (Wheelchair Users Dwellings) to meet the needs of wheelchair users in the District.

19 [Independent Living Programme for Older People Position Statement October 2016.](#)

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Policy H 10

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Provision will be made for housing, including bungalows, that meets the needs of the ageing population and those with disabilities.

Housing designed specifically for older people should offer easy access to community facilities, services and frequent public transport, or where this is not possible facilities and services should be available on-site. Where possible schemes should be well-related and integrated with the wider neighbourhood. Subject to viability older people's housing developments should be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.

New housing must be designed and constructed in a way that enables it to be adapted to meet the changing needs of its occupants over time. For this reason the Council requires all new housing on sites of 11 or more dwellings (market and affordable) to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be required to meet Category 3 (M4(3)) requirements (Wheelchair user dwellings).

Only where circumstances exist where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is not practically achievable or financially viable to deliver will new development be exempt from this policy.

Specialist Housing and Care Homes for Older and Vulnerable People

4.49 Some people, such as the elderly or disabled, may need specialist housing provision, which is specially designed for their needs, and inline with the ten HAPPI principles. This can include extra care, sheltered and registered care homes for the elderly and disabled, as well as any other facilities for the homeless or those escaping violence. These uses generally fall within the C2 residential institutions or in some cases the C3 dwelling homes use class and this is determined usually by the amount of care available on site and whether the units are self-contained.

4.50 Many of the considerations for specialist housing will be similar to those of general housing, and development will need to take into account all relevant policies in this plan, but each use will have specific needs. For example, elderly or disabled accommodation should provide storage and charging points for wheelchairs/mobility scooters; whilst those accommodating children should have appropriate indoor and outdoor play space. In all cases, residents are less likely to have access to a private vehicle and so the nearby provision of shops and services is essential, in addition to good public transport links for trips further afield.

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Policy H 11

Specialist Housing

Specialist housing is defined as accommodation, which has been specifically designed and built to meet the needs of the elderly, disabled, young or vulnerable adults, and may include some elements of care and support for everyone who lives there.

Proposals for specialist housing will be permitted within development limits providing that all the following criteria are met:

- 1. Everyday services that users would expect to access, such as shops and health services should be available on site or should be located close by and be able to be accessed by a range of transport modes;**
- 2. Parking should be provided in line with the Council's approved standards;**
- 3. There is an appropriate level of private amenity space to meet the needs of residents.**

Sites beyond development limits will be favourably considered if in addition to the above criteria:

- 4. The site adjoins a settlement;**
- 5. The setting of existing buildings, the natural and historic environment and the character of the area are protected;**
- 6. The development would not have an overbearing effect or cause disturbance to neighbouring properties; and**
- 7. There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties.**

Agricultural / Rural Workers' Dwellings

4.51 The erection of a new dwelling for someone engaged in agriculture or rural activity who has to be available on the holding at all times is one instance where new buildings may exceptionally be permitted in the countryside.

4.52 Applications for planning permission in such circumstances will need to demonstrate that the agricultural or rural enterprise or intention to engage in one is genuine and will be sustained for a reasonable period of time that is sufficient to warrant a dwelling in the countryside where it would not otherwise be permitted. Applications should include clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a

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sound financial basis. It will also be necessary to establish that the enterprise needs one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times, for example to provide essential care to animals or processes at short notice and to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or produce.

4.53 Such dwellings may be exceptionally permitted in open countryside only because of the needs of the enterprise. Before permission is granted there has to be a clearly established existing need.

4.54 In these cases dwellings will normally be modest in size, in line with the function of providing appropriate care, and be related to the needs of the holding in terms of its scale. The test is a stringent one. The application must demonstrate that new residential accommodation is essential for the enterprise, and not just convenient.

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Policy H 12

Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings

An agricultural/rural workers' dwellings will be permitted if it meets the following criteria:

1. the dwelling is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise to enable one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times;
2. the enterprise is economically viable to the extent that it can sustain the dwelling proposed;
3. the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;
4. the size and location of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier; and
5. the proposed dwelling should satisfy other planning requirements including access arrangements, energy efficiency, siting and impact on the countryside and flood risk.

In granting planning permission the Council will:

6. make sure that the dwellings are kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists; and
7. remove the permitted development rights.

An occupancy condition restricting the occupancy of a dwelling to a person employed or last employed in agriculture or rural worker will not be removed unless the council is satisfied that:-

8. the long term need for the dwelling has ceased; and
9. there is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in agriculture or other rural work in the locality

Employment 5

Introduction

5.1 In order to deliver the Local Plan objectives, the employment strategy aims to positively support the growth and location of businesses in the District, safeguard existing employment land where appropriate and allocate additional employment land at key locations as an integral part of garden communities and other areas of housing growth.

5.2 Uttlesford falls within two Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas which provide a context for the Council's employment strategy. The South East LEP and the Greater Cambridge/ Greater Peterborough LEP. The LEPs are essentially enabling bodies. The South East LEP seeks, as one of its stated objectives, to strengthen the rural economy and support the competitive advantage of the strategic growth locations within the LEP area, of which London Stansted Airport is one. The Greater Cambridge/Greater Peterborough LEP's priority areas are advocating and influencing improvements to transport infrastructure, enabling business led skills and improving the work readiness of the unemployed in target areas, promoting enterprise growth and innovation, improving international promotion and increasing inward investment.

5.3 The Local Plan is linked to the council's Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2021⁽²⁰⁾ which was approved by the council in February 2018. It has the following aims for the district.

5.4 The central aim for this Economic Development Strategy is to deliver the Council's sustainable business growth priority. Where "sustainable business growth" means:

- More business start-ups;
- More businesses relocating into the district;
- More expansions of existing businesses;
- More local jobs for local people;
- Thriving town and village centres; and
- More people working from home and home based businesses.

5.5 In addition to setting out work delivered by the Economic Development Team and many other teams across the Council, this strategy focuses on four areas:

1. Supporting the expansion and promotion of key sectors in the local economy. Initially this will be life sciences, research and innovation; the rural economy; and the visitor economy which includes the town centres;

20 [Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2018-21 \(UDC, 2016\)](#). Available: Uttlesford%20Economic%20Development%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20

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2. Maximise the local and regional opportunities that arise from the location at London Stansted Airport;
3. Establishing local economic strategies for each of the three proposed new garden communities in the district; and
4. Support the delivery and exploitation of high levels of connectivity including superfast broadband.

Employment Land Requirements

5.6 The policies in the Local Plan have had full regard to the Employment Land Review Update 2017. In planning terms, employment land usually refers to 'B Class' uses and includes:

- B1(a) - Offices;
- B1(b) - Research and Development;
- B1(c) - Light Industry;
- B2 - General Industry; and
- B8 - Storage and Distribution.

5.7 The ELR considers the need for land and premises for employment uses falling within the categories of offices, manufacturing and warehousing and the Local Plan makes land provision for these uses. Other types of employment (e.g. health, education or retailing) will be provided in the District as part of the development which is planned, but these are not specifically provided for in employment policies contained in this section of the Local Plan.

5.8 Research and Development (R&D) falls within the remit of the ELR study but it is not office space, manufacturing or warehousing. R&D is an especially important sector within London to Cambridge corridor, for example the Biosciences are a key part of this sector. Jobs that are provided in R&D (for instance at the Chesterford Research Park) will contribute to the total for the District. The future of economic development at Chesterford Research Park will be within the Research and Development use classes and associated activities and facilities. The Council will continue to monitor the development proposals and completions at the Research Park.

5.9 Chesterford Research Park is a 100 hectare site 2.5 miles north of Saffron Walden. It is occupied by mostly B1 (b) R&D (Research & Development) use buildings set in an enclosed area of parkland on a hilltop location overlooking the Cam Valley around a former mansion which dates from around 1870. The Current Masterplan for Chesterford Research Park makes provision for an additional 35,300sqm (gross) of R&D floorspace with outline planning permission granted for 25,361sqm, with a further potential for

Employment 5

approximately 92,900sqm on site. The current employment density is in the order of 35.5sqm. per worker. The additional 35,300sqm could be expected to provide over 900 jobs. Policy LtChe1 details the type of development proposals that would be considered acceptable at Chesterford Research Park.

5.10 The nature of recent trends in employment space change indicate increases in the total amount of office and warehouse floorspace and a fall in the amount of manufacturing floorspace. This is a reflection of the picture both regionally and nationally. The ELR identifies the amount of employment land and floorspace needed during the Local Plan period and makes recommendations as to where it should be located within the District.

5.11 The 'Economic Evidence to Support the Development of the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for West Essex and East Herts'⁽²¹⁾ note provides forecasts which take account of the potential variations away from the 'baseline' forecast over and above the base line scenario found in the East of England Forecast Model (EEFM⁽²²⁾); a 'medium' baseline scenario and a 'higher' baseline scenario. These two scenarios reflect the impact on employment in Uttlesford if growth scenarios at London Stansted Airport are realised.

5.12 There is a total of 38 employment clusters in the District totalling 256 hectares in size consisting of B use class, non B-use and vacant sites. Applying plot ratios to the existing identified floorspace provides an estimate of 80.5ha of industrial land and 99,000sqm of office floorspace occupied in Uttlesford District⁽²³⁾.

Jobs Growth

5.13 The October 2017 West Essex and East Hertfordshire Assessment of Employment Needs, assessed two potential growth options in relation to jobs growth in Uttlesford District over the Local Plan period at slightly higher levels than previous studies:

- Moderated Baseline Growth: Assumes 327 net additional jobs per annum. (JPA) in Uttlesford
- Preferred Scenario: Based on historic share of the total SHMA Area: Equating to 727 jobs per annum

5.14 Based on the 727 JPA growth figure, it can be assumed that approximately 16,000 jobs will be provided over the Local Plan period. Of these, 1,500 jobs will be in office, manufacturing and warehousing over the Local Plan period.

21 <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5438&p=0>

22 East of England Forecasting Model 2014 <http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/EEFM>

23 Tables 7.1 and 7.3, ELR 2017

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5.15 The B-use class component of jobs growth is around 10% of the overall growth in Uttlesford District over the Local Plan period. The majority of jobs growth in the Local Plan period will therefore occur in non-B use class Employment uses (such as retail, education, services, etc).

5.16 Using data from the Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES), for the period 2011-2016, Uttlesford District has consistently met the 665 JPA jobs target and therefore there is not an overall shortfall in the overall jobs target at the start of the Plan Period. Chart 1 indicates that despite a small dip between 2012-2013, there was strong recovery from 2013 to 2015. This consistency, provides a firm foundation for the estimated job growth estimations and employment land requirement calculations across the district in the local plan period.

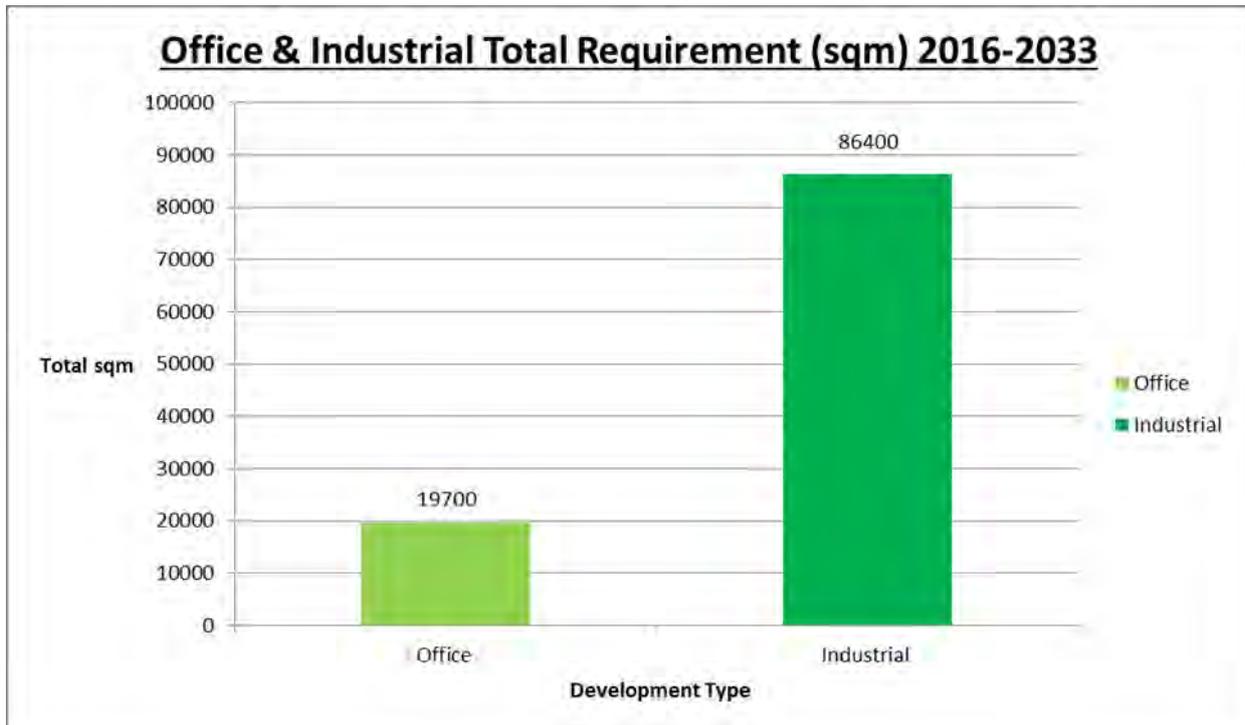
Chart 1



5.17 Office Floorspace Requirements: The total land required in the plan period of 2016-2033 plan period is 2-5ha for office use (dependant on area density as Uttlesford contains a combination of rural and urban areas) and 22ha for industrial land. When combined with the plot ratio calculation, there is a net requirement for 19,700sqm of office space and 86,400sqm of industrial space as indicated in Chart 2.

Chart 2

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Office & Industrial Total Requirement (sqm) 2016 - 2033

Employment Land Supply Allocations Delivery

5.18 There is 49,000sqm of employment floorspace available at sites where planning permission is already in place. This further contributes to the portfolio of sites available to assist meeting the delivery targets of premises B1, B2 & B8 uses. Many of these sites will deliver new employment premises to meet short and medium term needs. Other sites will be delivered in the longer term ensuring that the district has a plentiful and sustainable supply of employment land for the plan period.

Office / Industrial Remaining Sites Final Total	Size m2
Office & Industrial	48,983

BREAKDOWN

The following part of the:

(a) Office / Industrial Deliverable assumed within the **EARLY** part of the plan period.

Office / Industrial With Planning Permission – Estimated for Early Delivery	Size m2
Office	5,148
Industrial	15,874
Office Industrial	2,108
SUBTOTAL	23,130

(b) Office / Industrial Deliverable assumed within the **LATE** part of the plan period.

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Office / Industrial With Planning Permission – Estimated for Late Delivery	Size m2
Office	14,424
Industrial	11,429
SUBTOTAL	25,853

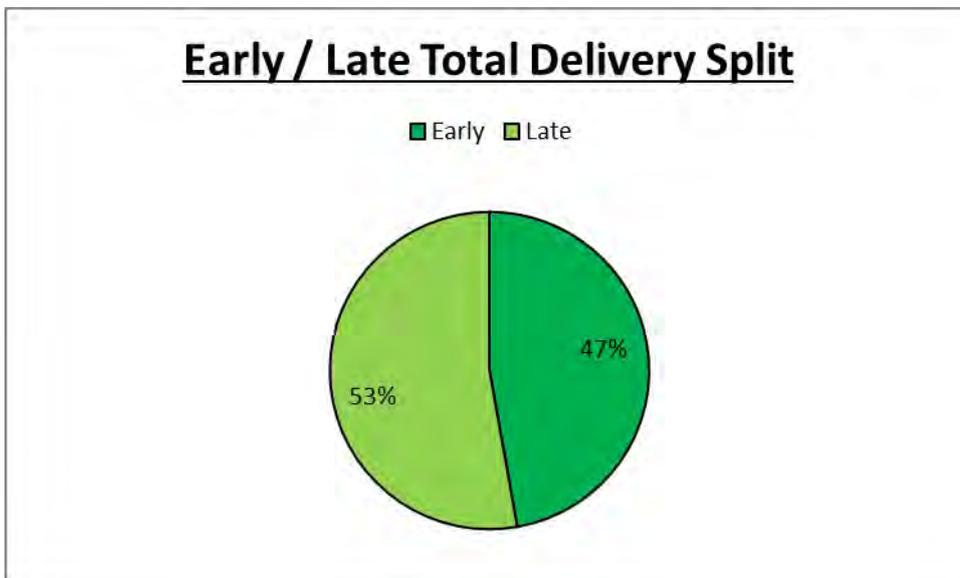
(a+b) Office / Industrial Split 2018-2033

Office / Industrial With Planning Permission Total	Size m2
Office	19,572
Industrial	27,303
Office / Industrial	2,108
TOTAL	48,983

5.19 The council estimates that the midpoint of the plan period looking forward is around 2025. Working from this midpoint, it can be estimated how the 49,000sqm of employment land will be delivered over the plan period. However, inevitable variance in the economic climate will change the delivery rate to some extent, so the charts below are for indicative purposes only and are subject to change and additional sites coming forward to those already allocated.

5.20 The total delivery split indicates that slightly more employment land will be delivered in the latter part of the plan period as shown in Chart 3. Chart 4 indicates that office space will more likely be delivered in the later part of the plan period and Chart 5 indicates that slightly more industrial space will be delivered in earlier on in the plan period.

Chart 3



Early / Late Total Delivery Split

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Chart 4

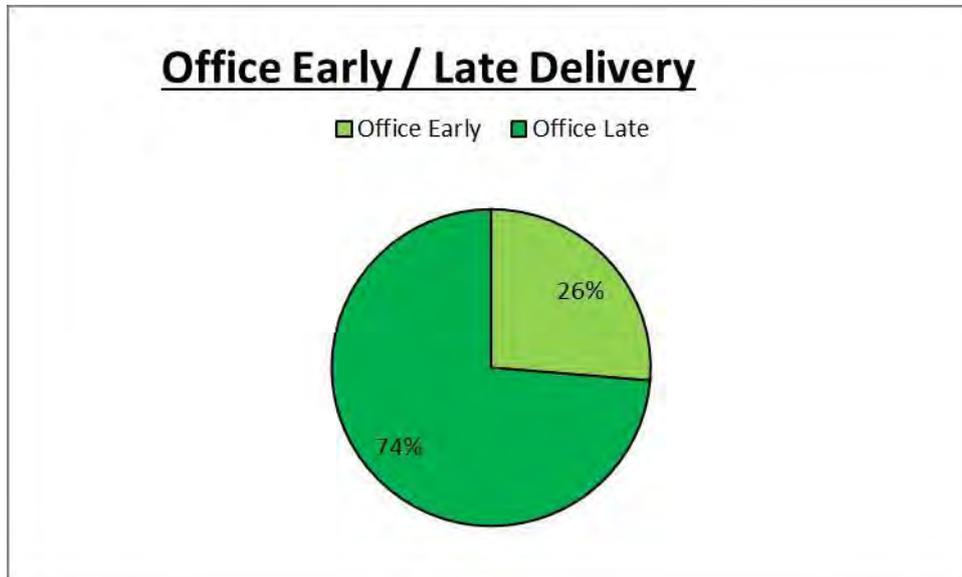


Chart 5



Industrial Early / Late Delivery

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5.21 There will be an additional 1,100 office jobs created between 2016 and 2033. Taking into consideration the jobs growth of office floorspace based on the 'medium' growth scenario, the ELR has calculated that 21,000 sq.m of additional office floorspace is required over the Local Plan period.

Office Floorspace	Medium Scenario
Existing Provision	
Total Stock of office Floorspace (Occupied + Vacant) 2016	99,000 sq.m
Forecast Provision	
Gross Requirement for office floorspace 2016-2031	120,000 sq.m
Net Requirement	
Forecast Provision - Existing Provision	21,000 sq.m
Source: ELR Table 7.1: Net additional Office Floorspace Requirements 2016-2033	

5.22 As part of this, the ELR identified a demand for small-sized office units and affordable flexible business space. Equally, the ELR and Employment Land Monitoring published in October 2014⁽²⁴⁾ highlight the loss of B1a (office) floorspace as a result of permitted development rights. This is being driven by the demand for housing alongside high residential land values within the District. Permitted development rights allow for the conversion of B1a use class (office) to C3 use class (residential) without planning permission.

Industrial Land Requirements

5.23 The ELR groups 'warehousing' and 'manufacturing' (B1c, B2 and B8 Use Classes) into an 'Industrial' land requirement. Whilst there will be 700 additional jobs created in the warehousing sector during the Local Plan period, there is a loss of 700 jobs in the manufacturing sector over the same period. There is therefore no net jobs growth in the industrial sector over the Local Plan period.

5.24 However, there is still a requirement to provide 10.2ha of 'industrial land' between 2016 and 2033 due to the demand for 'Industrial' land being driven primarily by B8 warehouse and distribution uses taking advantage of London Stansted Airport within the District and good strategic road connections in the south of the District (A120/M11 Corridor).

Industrial Land Use	Medium Scenario (ha)
Existing Provision	
Total Industrial Land (Occupied + Vacant) 2016	80.5
Forecast Provision	

24 Employment Land Monitoring (UDC, 2014). Available: <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2250&p=0>

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Industrial Land Use	Medium Scenario (ha)
Gross requirement for industrial land 2016-2031	90.7
Net Requirement	
Net requirement for industrial land 2016-2031	10.2
Source: ELR Table 7.3: Net Additional Industrial Land Requirement 2016-2033	

5.25 An assessment of the prevailing situation in the local commercial market has highlighted the following issues:

- There is a surplus of vacant new warehousing space available at London Stansted Airport and little prospect of the un-used and under-used parts of the North Stansted Employment Area at the airport being brought into beneficial use in the early part of the Local Plan period. The southern ancillary area is reserved for airport related development only;
- There is an acute lack of modern office accommodation to meet the needs of Saffron Walden. Potential sites in and around the town are limited and rental values may mean development is not viable;
- There is a current surplus of industrial and particularly warehouse units in Saffron Walden, partly as a result of the recession and partly because of the difficulty of access to the M11;
- Most of the industrial estates in Great Dunmow appear to be thriving with high occupancy rates. A long standing employment allocation at land west of Chelmsford Road has consent for a mixed use scheme comprising 370 dwellings and 2.1ha of B1, B2 and B8 Employment Land; and
- There is an aspiration for “strategic” warehouse and distribution depots in locations with ready access to Junction 8 of the M11.

5.26 The employment strategy for the key employment locations within the District will address these issues.

Previous Completions

5.27 The completions for the period 2011-16 have been taken into consideration when determining the final need period for the remaining Local Plan period 2016-33.

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5.28 Between April 2011 and April 2016, approximately 23,900 sq.m of B-use class employment floorspace has been developed in the district. This is broadly consistent with the annual requirement for B-use Class employment land over the same period.

Opportunities within Existing 'Clusters' assessed in the ELR

5.29 There are a number of opportunities within existing employment sites within the district, either through intensification of uses or limited expansion of these sites. The re-development of the Ridgeons site at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden is a primary example of further intensification on an existing employment site.

5.30 There are a total of 38 'safeguarded' employment sites located in the district, with some of the sites having further potential to redevelop the sites whilst with others there is no potential for further redevelopment or intensification. Appendix 6 of the Local Plan provides a schedule of existing employment sites in the district.

5.31 All of the 33 sites identified in the Employment Land Monitoring document of October 2014⁽²⁵⁾ are designated as 'safeguarded employment sites' under Policy EMP1. Redevelopment and intensification for employment uses on site will be supported where the need can be demonstrated for their intensification and expansion. These sites will be retained for Employment use as described under Policy EMP1.

5.32 Policies are also contained in the Local Plan which will allow the change of use of redundant agricultural buildings to employment uses in order to provide more employment in rural areas.

Existing Commitments

5.33 The latest available monitoring data (April 2016) demonstrates that there is approximately 49,000 sq.m of commitments in the district. These vary from larger sites such as the development at Start Hill to smaller scale office developments. These existing commitments will make a contribution towards meeting the overall level of Employment need in the District over the Local Plan period, although further allocations are required to meet the overall employment requirement.

Saffron Walden

5.34 The nature of recent trends in employment space changes indicates increases in the total amount of office and warehouse floorspace and a fall in the amount of manufacturing floorspace. This is a reflection of the picture both regionally and nationally. The ELR identifies the amount of employment land and floorspace needed during the Local Plan period and makes recommendations as to where it should be located within the District.

25 Uttlesford District Council Land Monitoring Document October (UDC 2014) Available: <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2250&p=0>

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Great Dunmow

5.35 A 20ha mixed use scheme to the west of Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow (UTT/13/1684/OP) has recently been granted planning permission for 370 dwellings and 2.1ha of B1, B2 and B8 Employment space.

Gaunts End, Elsenham

5.36 Planning permission has recently been granted for a substantial B1 (a) office development next to the established industrial estate in this location (Trisail Towers). This prestigious office development has the potential to bring substantial economic benefits and is likely to attract further investment.

Start Hill, Great Hallingbury

5.37 The existing site at Start Hill is close to, and has good access to the M11 at junction 8.

5.38 An extension to the east of the existing site has recently been completed. This comprises 6no units which provides a mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses totalling around 1ha.

Proposed Sites for Additional Employment Allocations

5.39 Whilst existing commitments in the district will make a substantive contribution towards the overall employment requirement over the Local Plan period, in order to meet the overall employment need there is a requirement to allocate additional employment sites within the District.

Garden Communities

5.40 The three new Garden Communities will each deliver a range of B-use class employment opportunities on site. Other employment opportunities such as educational, healthcare, retail and community uses, as part of a comprehensive development to support self-containment as far as possible will also be provided. In accordance with TCPA guidelines, Garden Communities will have a wide range of local jobs within easy commuting distance from homes. The exact scale and nature of the employment opportunities will be determined through the masterplanning of each new Garden Community.

London Stansted Airport (North Stansted Employment Area)

5.41 A site is allocated for approximately 55ha of B1/B2/B8 employment use.

Chesterford Research Park

5.42 The development of the Chesterford Research Park is progressing in accordance with the masterplan approved by the Council, albeit at a slower rate than originally anticipated. It provides research and development space and ancillary office accommodation. Current estimates are that completion will take 12-15 years. There is

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potential to expand the site to accommodate future requirements for R & D floorspace and associated activities and facilities, and develop links to the new garden community at North Uttlesford.

Other Employment Issues

5.43 In addition to the locational requirements above, Policy SP4 seeks to address other needs in order to facilitate business growth and development within the District.

Training

5.44 The Sustainable Community Strategy identified that many businesses have difficulty recruiting people with certain skills. Where these shortages relate to modern skills such as IT training, it should be possible to identify them and address the problem. This would help to provide a local workforce better suited to the needs of modern businesses, making the District a more attractive location for them. It could also facilitate higher income levels than might otherwise be achieved by the workforce locally and reduce the level of out-commuting. Stansted Airport is also developing as a centre of Further Education within Uttlesford. A new Further Education College will open on the Airport site in autumn 2018. This college will run courses in aviation and business services, engineering and aircraft maintenance and hospitality, retail and events management. These will offer opportunities for local people to improve their career prospects.

5.45 Notwithstanding the difficulties identified by the sustainable communities strategy with recruiting people with modern skills such as IT Training, this should not detract from measures needed to support traditional industry sectors such as construction and engineering.

Electronic Infrastructure

5.46 Modern day technology and business requirements are such that, in order to be able to function and compete in the business marketplace, businesses need ready access to the internet and to be able to access it speedily. This effectively means access to superfast broadband; Uttlesford however is a rural District and significant parts of it have either slow or traditional broadband coverage, as the only option is satellite broadband or radio broadband, the former which tends to be slow and expensive and can be affected by poor atmospheric conditions.

5.47 The Council is aware of the potential importance of broadband to the local economy, particularly in rural areas and has therefore provided financial assistance to a company to deliver a radio broadband service for businesses and residents in the District by way of additional transmitters. With radio broadband only physical obstructions such as tall buildings or tall trees could affect the signal. The Council will also continue to work with Essex County Council in relation to its strategic roll-out programme for superfast broadband across Essex.

5.48 Further information on broadband provision over the Local Plan period can be found in Policy INF3.

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5.49 Such infrastructure will also facilitate greater opportunities for people to work from home which will both benefit the local economy and have the potential to reduce the levels of commuting.

Sustainable Work Practices

5.50 The policies in the Local Plan support alternative work practices which reduce the need to travel, including working from home.

Tourism

5.51 Uttlesford has a high quality built heritage and rural environment with over 3,700 Listed Buildings and 36 Conservation Areas. The location of London Stansted within the District provides an international gateway for tourism and it is important to support and develop the tourism business opportunities within the District. Further information can be found in Section 6 (Retail).

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Policy EMP 1

Employment Strategy

To accommodate new employment opportunities in the District, the Council will:

1. Support B-use, Non B-use and complimentary sui generis use class employment opportunities at the three new Garden Communities at Easton Park, West of Braintree and North Uttlesford;
2. Support general business, industrial and warehousing uses (other than those which constitute 'strategic warehousing') on 55 hectares of land in the North Stansted Employment Area;
3. Support and protect the provision of airport related commercial uses within the airport boundary as set out in Policy SP11;
4. Enable and support the further development of Research and Development space and associated activities and facilities at Chesterford Research Park as specified in Section 13 (Non Residential Allocations). The development of this site could include a research institute;
5. The existing Principal Employment Areas set out in Appendix 6 as shown on the Policies Map shall be protected for B1, B2, B8 or complimentary sui generis uses. Once developed, strategic allocations containing B1, B2, B8 or complimentary sui generis uses are safeguarded as Principal Employment Areas. Changes of use or redevelopment within the employment areas and sites which would result in a loss of floorspace for economic development uses will be resisted;
6. Existing employment sites which are considered to be no longer suited to these uses, and which will be made available for other purposes, are identified in the Allocations Policies;
7. The Council will seek to mitigate any adverse effects upon any businesses displaced as a consequence. The planning reasons which may warrant the release of other land currently occupied by offices, factories or warehousing will be identified in the Development Management Policies;
8. The manner in which proposals for locating non-employment uses on existing industrial estates will be assessed is set out in Policy EMP2;
9. The Council will work with education providers and business representatives to encourage the provision of educational and vocational training courses which match the skills required by new and emerging businesses;

Employment 5

10. The Council will support the provision of small scale office units to accommodate the needs of small sized businesses including 'incubator' and 'grow on space'; and
11. The Council will continue to work with key stakeholders and providers to improve access to high speed and next generation information technology infrastructure across the District throughout the Local Plan period by supporting, enabling and, where necessary and practical, assisting its provision.

Existing Employment Areas

5.52 Existing and proposed employment areas which are to be retained in these uses are identified on the Proposals Map. The policy also sets out the requirements that would have to be met in order to warrant making an exception to the policy of retention and permitting changes of use to non-employment uses. The policy recognises that there is a significant amount of employment in complimentary sui-generis uses, e.g. builders merchants which should be protected as part of the overall employment strategy.

Policy EMP 2

Existing and Proposed Employment Areas

Existing and proposed employment areas identified as such on the policies map will be safeguarded for offices, warehouses, industrial and complementary 'sui generis' uses. Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use or redevelopment or extension of sites or premises in these areas for uses other than those identified above in exceptional circumstances where either criterion a) is met or criteria b) and c) are met:

- a) The proposed use provides an essential community benefit which demonstrably cannot be located elsewhere within the area it serves;
- b) The proposed use would not conflict with any existing or potential other employment uses in the employment area in terms of environmental, traffic generation or any other planning matters; and
- c) Where the applicant is able to provide demonstrable proof that the employment use is no longer viable. The non-viability of employment uses would need to be proven by a marketing and an independent assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 5.

Non-Estate Employment Uses

5 Employment

5.53 A significant number of employment uses in the District are not on industrial estates, which reflects the predominantly rural and dispersed nature of the District. Examples include factories or storage depots in residential areas or situated along main road frontages in towns and villages. Such uses may be relatively small or quite large and make an important contribution to the local economy so it is desirable that they be retained if at all possible. But such uses may come under considerable pressure for redevelopment and a change of use, usually to housing, which realises an enhanced land value. Whilst such pressure will be resisted in the interests of the local economy, there will be certain instances where an exception to this rule is warranted. The following policy sets out the overall approach to such uses and the circumstances in which such exceptions may be acceptable.

Policy EMP 3

Non-Estate Employment Uses

Employment sites located outside the identified employment areas but within development limits should be retained for employment use. Exceptions to this may be permitted where the applicant is able to provide demonstrable proof that the employment use is no longer viable.

The non-viability of employment uses would need to be proven either by marketing or an independent assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 5.

Rural Economy

5.54 Rural areas play an important role in the economy of Uttlesford. Protecting employment sites and providing new employment opportunities in the rural areas can help prevent the decline of traditional rural employment and address the issue of increased out-commuting. The role of existing employment areas is recognised and these should be retained in accordance with Policy EMP1.

Employment 5

Policy EMP 4

Rural Economy

Proposals which sustain and enhance the rural economy by creating and/ or safeguarding businesses and jobs will be supported where they are of an appropriate scale to their location, protect the environmental quality and character of the rural area and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The following types of development are considered to be acceptable:

1. Schemes for farm diversification involving small-scale business and commercial development that contribute to the operation and viability of the farm holding;
2. Small-scale tourism proposals, including visitor accommodation;
3. Proposals that recognise the economic benefits of the natural and historic environment as an asset to be valued, conserved and enhanced;
4. The expansion of businesses in their existing locations dependant upon the nature of the activities involved and provided the development does not conflict with other policies in the Local Plan;
5. Small scale employment development to meet local needs;
6. The use of land for agriculture, forestry and equestrian activity;

The re-use of rural buildings will be supported provided that; and

7. The redevelopment of a rural building does not lead to the conversion of annexes and buildings into separate dwellings.

6 Retail

Introduction

6.1 The retail strategy is to provide a broad range of retail and other facilities in the town centres, maintain their roles and enhance the historic nature of the town centres which attracts people to visit them. The Uttlesford Retail Study (May 2018) ⁽²⁶⁾ underpins the approach identifying when retail needs arise and how these can be met sustainably without harm to the town centres. The study notes that new facilities have recently come forward, although opportunities remain to improve the retail offer. These opportunities will exist where proposals meet convenience needs and some comparison needs locally minimising travel outside the District. Policies in the Local Plan will seek to protect the character of the towns and villages so that they continue to provide an attractive environment which encourages people to visit them.

6.2 The District's two main towns are Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, both traditional market towns while Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted provide local centres. All the centres benefit from the tourist offer of the District. The Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy (2018-2021) ⁽²⁷⁾ puts in place a focused strategy and measures to assist its centres including identifying funding opportunities and support for town teams. Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow centres each have town teams while Stansted Mountfitchet local centre has an Economic Development Working Group. The Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan 2016 was made on 8 December 2016 and includes policies on protecting and enhancing Great Dunmow town centre

6.3 Saffron Walden is the largest town in the District serving an extensive rural hinterland with the widest range of shops and facilities. The town centre also has a significant supporting services sector closely related to tourism. It has a Waitrose supermarket in the town centre with Tesco and Aldi stores outside the centre of the town. There is a Homebase store and Ridgeons, a builder's merchant on the edge of the town. Granite Retail Park, Thaxted Road, has permission for retail warehouses and a garden centre.

6.4 Great Dunmow is an important focus for residents who live in the southern part of the District. It has a smaller range of shops and services in the town centre including a small Co-operative store and a Tesco supermarket outside the centre of the town.

6.5 The Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow food superstores capture nearly all the main food-shopping spend in the District. Saffron Walden attracts a significant proportion of expenditure on comparison spend albeit for lower order goods. This offer is however under pressure from larger centres especially Cambridge and Chelmsford. Great Dunmow has a much smaller comparison retail offer that only extends locally.

6.6 Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest retail centre in the District. It has a much more limited range of shops, including a Tesco Express and a Co-operative store in the local centre but because it is so close to Bishop's Stortford most residents from this part of the District will shop there for anything other than basic day to day shopping.

26 <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4126/Retail>

27 [Uttlesford Economic Development Strategy And Action Plan 2018 – 21.](#)

Retail 6

Thaxted offers a limited variety of retail uses. Thaxted's primary function is to provide a service to the local population as well as tourists. Weekly street markets are held in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Thaxted.

6.7 Outside the main centres retailing is limited and the range of facilities varies from village to village, some only have a pub, others may have a shop and/ or a post office. In some villages there is a broader range of facilities. There continue to be losses due to economic circumstances, change of use etc. Village services remain important to the vitality of local communities and the Local Plan seeks to address the loss of village services where possible.

6.8 There is a range of fashion and other outlets landside at London Stansted Airport but this is unlikely to represent a realistic shopping destination for most people.

6.9 Outside the District key centres like Cambridge, Chelmsford and Harlow and the smaller centres of Braintree, Haverhill and Bishop's Stortford provide a much wider range of shops, services and recreational opportunities and there is a loss of expenditure to these nearby centres.

Retail Strategy

6.10 The Uttlesford Retail Study (May 2018) provides an up to date assessment of retail. In relation to the main centres the key issues are as follows.

Saffron Walden

6.11 Vacancy rates in the town generally remain relatively low, which would suggest that Saffron Walden is a healthy town centre.

6.12 In Saffron Walden there is a case for providing some additional comparison floorspace (clothes, shoes, furniture, electrical goods) given interest from retailers to secure representation in the town and from customers for expanded and improved facilities. Two Development Opportunity Sites are proposed within the town centre to facilitate new development and redevelopment for retail and other town centre uses. Planning permission has been granted for 2,973 sq.m of retail warehousing at Thaxted Road Granite Retail Park. The need for further comparison retail outside the town centre will need to be carefully considered in the light of impacts on vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

6.13 In relation to convenience floorspace (food and drink) new food retail facilities have recently opened including an Aldi superstore and a Tesco Metro improving the retail offer of the town. The retail study shows this additional floorspace has increased the number of residents shopping locally, reduced unnecessary travel, and encouraged walking. Further new convenience floorspace should be provided in line with Policy RET1 and should take into account identified need and impact on the town centre.

6 Retail

Great Dunmow

6.14 Evidence suggests that it would be unreasonable to plan for any significant additional comparison floorspace in Great Dunmow. A small Opportunity Site is proposed incorporating the post office sorting yard and the Council's depot off New Street and potentially the parking area to the rear of 48 High Street. The Council recognises land ownership and configuration issues on the site but equally its value to town centre expansion encouraging additional town centre uses and presence of a local town team in helping support proposals. In terms of convenience floorspace planning permission exists for 1,400sqm of additional floorspace to allow for a medium sized main trader as part of the existing permission for the Chelmsford Road. Further new convenience floorspace should be provided in line with Policy RET1 and should take into account identified need and impact on the town centre.

Stansted Mountfitchet

6.15 Stansted Mountfitchet is primarily a convenience shopping centre. A Development Opportunity Site is proposed to the east of Cambridge Road incorporating Crafton Green to enable the provision of additional town centre uses.

New Garden Communities

6.16 New local centres will be key to providing for the day-to-day needs of the new garden communities. These new local centres will provide top-up shopping and access to services and facilities as well as social interaction. These local centres will be particularly important for people who are less able to travel to the towns within Uttlesford as well as the larger towns and cities beyond Uttlesford. Masterplanning will address these issues in line with a town centre first approach as set out in Policy RET1 below. It is important that these local centres ultimately provide the type and range of retail and commercial uses necessary to serve and support the new communities.

Retail 6

Policy RET 1

Town and Local Centres

New retail, employment, leisure and cultural uses will be supported and focused in the town and local centres as defined on the Policies Map.

Taking into account the Council's Retail Study 2018 and any subsequent update to that Retail Study during the Local Plan Period, new retail floorspace will be supported where it is directly consistent with identified need.

To ensure the vitality and viability of Uttlesford's existing town and local centres the location and scale of development will need to be consistent with the following hierarchy with larger scale development focused on the town centres:

1. Town Centres

- a. Saffron Walden
- b. Great Dunmow

2. Local Centres

- a. Stansted Mountfitchet
- b. Thaxted

3. Proposed Local Centres

- a. North Uttlesford Garden Community
- b. Easton Park Garden Community
- c. West of Braintree Garden Community

Convenience floorspace capacity arises by 2033 for a small to medium sized foodstore in Saffron Walden and a large sized foodstore in Great Dunmow.

There is capacity for additional comparison floorspace in Saffron Walden by 2026, amounting to 5,000 sq.m (net). There is no capacity in Great Dunmow for comparison floorspace by 2026.

The type and scale of retail development within the new garden communities should be commensurate with their scale and will be determined through the masterplanning process for each garden community.

The presumption therefore is that new retail development is first provided in the existing town centres with a preference to preserve their vitality and viability. However, retail in the Garden Community Local Centres is important to achieving the garden city principles.

6 Retail

The Location and Impact of New Retail Development

6.17 In accordance with Paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the District Council will apply a sequential test to applications for main town centre uses. The main town centre uses, as defined in the NPPF, should be located in the town centre, then in edge of centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available, should out of centre locations be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference will be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. The District Council and the applicant will demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale. In accordance with the NPPF the District Council will also require an impact assessment to be submitted with proposals that exceed 1,000 sqm (net).

Policy RET 2

The Location and Impact of New Retail Development

Any proposals for retail and other town centre uses outside the defined town and local centres or other sites allocated for those uses must demonstrate compliance with the impact and the sequential tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. A Retail Impact Assessment must accompany proposals that exceed 1,000 sq.m (net) in Uttlesford district.

Town and Local Centres

6.18 The town centres of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow and the local centres of Thaxted and Stansted are identified on the Policies Map. Retail uses in Stansted are split between two locations – Cambridge Road and Lower Street and Policy RET2 will apply to both. For the purposes of this policy, town centre uses are defined under the NPPF as including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, culture, community and residential development needed in towns. The Town and Local Centres include Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages. The Primary Shopping Frontages are the retail 'core' of the centre where the majority of footfall and activity occurs. These are the main shopping streets which attract the most shoppers and therefore the District Council wishes to retain Class A1 shops along these streets. The secondary shopping frontages extend from the primary shopping frontages to the edge of the town or local centre and provide a mix of town centre uses, such as restaurants, commercial services and leisure facilities, which provide a supporting role for the centre as a whole. The District Council will expect details of the marketing to be submitted with any application for the change of use of ground floor units along the primary shopping frontages to non-A1 class uses including associated town centre uses/food and drink. The requirements for marketing are set out in Appendix 5. This will be subject to the current permitted development rights and prior approvals system.

Retail 6

6.19 Residential uses can add to the vitality of the town centre and the District Council will support the change of use of upper floors to residential within the centres. Mixed schemes on development sites could also include a residential element but the Council would expect to see town centre uses at ground floor level on the street frontage.

6.20 Tourism is an important economic activity in all centres as a result of visitor attractions like Audley End House on the edge of Saffron Walden, the Guildhall in Thaxted and the Castle in Stansted Mountfitchet. Events such as the Music Festival and Morris Weekend in Thaxted also attract significant numbers of visitors. Development which supports this tourism function like art galleries, craft workshops, cafés, and bed and breakfast accommodation would be appropriate development within the centres.

Policy RET 3

Town and Local Centres and Shopping Frontages

Along Primary Shopping Frontages as identified on the Policies Map, change of use (that require planning permission) of the ground floor to non-A1 uses will only be permitted if the applicant is able to demonstrate that the unit is not viable as an A1 shop use. The change of ground floor uses (see the definition in the NPPF) to uses falling outside the definition will only be permitted if the applicant is able to demonstrate that the unit is not viable as a main town centre use. The non-viability of the unit would need to be proven by marketing and an independent assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 5.

Along Secondary Shopping Frontages as identified on the Policies Map change of use of A1 shop units to town centre uses of retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses will be permitted. The change of ground floor uses from main town centre uses (see the definition in the NPPF) to uses falling outside that definition will only be permitted if the applicant is able to demonstrate that the unit is not viable as a main town centre use. The non-viability of the unit would need to be proven by marketing and an independent assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 5.

Along both Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages change of use to residential will be allowed on upper floors. Mixed use schemes with a residential element will be appropriate within the town and local centres. Development that would contribute to the tourism function within these centres will be supported where it conserves or enhances the character of the townscape.

Loss of Shops and Other Facilities

6.21 Within the towns, but outside the designated town and local centres and in the villages, individual shops, small parades of shops and other facilities like public houses, places of worship, village halls and health services provision are important to the local communities they serve. Some villages also have specialist outlets like antique shops,

6 Retail

garden centres and restaurants which may contribute to the tourism economy. There have been continued losses of services in recent years through conversion to other uses, mainly housing. It is important to recognise that some facilities perform a number of functions and their closure could result in a significant loss to the community and more travel as a result, e.g. rooms in pubs or places of worship used by local groups as meeting rooms, children's nurseries etc.

6.22 The District Council is generally unable to prevent the loss of these facilities unless planning permission is required e.g. for a change of use/subject to Permitted Development (PD) rights. Where planning permission is required the Council will apply the tests in Policy RET3 below. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the use is no longer viable. The requirements for marketing etc. are set out in Appendix 5. It is important that communities make good use of local facilities to make a sound case for refusing changes of use. The policy below will apply to all services and facilities. Facilities which the community feels are important to their social well-being can be listed as Assets of Community Value. Where these facilities are listed as an Asset of Community Value additional requirements apply as set out in Appendix 5.

Policy RET 4

Loss of Shops and Other Facilities

Beyond the defined Town and Local Centres change of use (that require planning permission) of shops and other community facilities including those identified in the list of Assets of Community Value will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:

- 1. There is no significant demand for the facility within the catchment area;**
- 2. The facility is not financially viable;**
- 3. The marketing criteria in Appendix 5 has been met; and**
- 4. Equivalent facilities in terms of their nature and accessibility are available or would be made available nearby.**

New Shops in Rural Areas

6.23 In villages where there is interest in opening a new shop the District Council will allow provision outside development limits where no sites are available within the development limits, providing the chosen site is next to the village, residents can walk to the new shop and the scale of the new shop would be in keeping with its location. Applicants will be expected to define the catchment area which the new shop is intended to serve. If there are existing shops within this catchment area applicants will need to submit a report with the application showing what the likely impact (if any) will be on these existing businesses. The District Council will encourage community run schemes

Retail 6

and schemes which provide a mix of facilities which might include a shop, post office, meeting rooms, internet access and possibly local transport hub, e.g. for community run transport schemes, and interchange for cyclists to use public transport. This policy does not relate to settlements which have a Town or Local Centre as identified on the Policies Map.

Policy RET 5

New Shops in Rural Areas

For settlements where a Town or Local Centre is not identified, planning permission will be granted for new shops on sites beyond development limits where all the following criteria are met:

- 1. The proposal is of a size compatible with the catchment area it is intended to serve;**
- 2. The site is well related to the village and has the potential to reduce the need for travel by car;**
- 3. There would be no adverse impact on existing shops within the catchment area;**
- 4. There would be no adverse impact on the character and amenity of the area including visual intrusion, noise and traffic generation; and**
- 5. There are no suitable alternative sites within development limits.**

7 Transport

Introduction - test text added

7.1 Transport is a key issue in the District with above average long distance car commuting and impacts on strategic and local transport infrastructure. There are also noticeable strategic and local congestion hotspots around the District, for example Junction 8 of the M11 and Saffron Walden that has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

7.2 The Uttlesford District Council Transport Study 2017 provides an up to date evidence base to inform the overall approach to transport in the District. The study sets out a sustainable approach to travel in the District based on:

- Implementing national and local transport policies to encourage sustainable travel;
- Traffic impact of different scenarios, patterns of growth and accessibility; and
- Impact on strategic infrastructure and measures needed.

7.3 Account has been taken of development in other districts and the Local Transport Plans for Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire County Councils.

7.4 The study shows that even with no Local Plan development congestion increases due to:

- Committed developments within the District and adjacent Districts; and
- Attractiveness of distant employment locations by car.

7.5 It is important that the pattern of Local Plan growth minimises the need to travel and offers the best opportunities for sustainable transport modes. Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow both provide key services to a wide rural hinterland but have constraints to how much further growth can be accommodated especially the former. New garden communities have therefore been identified along with some growth in towns and villages to provide a sustainable pattern of growth and minimise the need to travel. However, it is acknowledged the bridleway network is fragmented with opportunities for improvement including non-motorised multi-user paths. For sustainable travel modes the Study found:

- Average rail use with most use on rail corridors;
- Low bus use and bus services that are challenging to operate on a commercial basis with most services centred on London Stansted Airport, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow;
- Low cycle use and limited cycling infrastructure but with some planned improvement including Saffron Walden and the Flich Way; and
- Walking mode share reasonably high with a well-connected network in the towns.

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7.6 The UDC Transport Study notes the opportunities for more rail use including access to rail in the Garden Community accessibility criteria.

7.7 The work builds on the Uttlesford Cycling Strategy 2014 ⁽²⁸⁾ and the 2018 draft that has guided development and infrastructure provision in the plan. This includes cycling measures that would provide a core network in Saffron Walden and improve cycling on the A120 corridor.

7.8 The UDC Transport Study and the Saffron Walden Transport Assessment 2013/14 [Updated 2017] ⁽²⁹⁾ consider the more detailed impacts of development on the transport network including the towns of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow. For Saffron Walden it identifies an alternative to the present cross town route along B1052 London Road/ B1053 Radwinter Road/ B184 Thaxted Road route, thus providing increased opportunities for traffic to avoid the town centre. Measures to divert traffic from the centre will help to reduce vehicular pollution and manage air quality in the AQMA. However, the eastern link road that was originally envisaged is now challenging to deliver. Some elements of the strategy, such as Peaslands Road corridor, do remain beneficial measures.

7.9 The update in 2017 explains that more traffic would be expected on an eastern link that would make the Lindens site unsuitable for that purpose anticipated in the 2014 work. A number of other options were tested involving an eastern link but in each case unacceptable traffic impacts were found.

7.10 The update also indicates that without a link road development on part of the Kier site (150 dwellings) Land East of Thaxted Road would have acceptable impacts. This location complements the specific measures that will be delivered from existing Section 106 contributions and relevant future Section 106 contributions. A transport assessment and air quality assessment would be required to confirm these assumptions as part of the planning application process. Beyond this scale of development more sophisticated traffic modelling would be required. The scale and cost of further work is beyond the current round of plan making and will be a matter for a Local Plan review. As a result, the County Council and the Council are exploring ways of looking at longer term growth via a separate Saffron Walden Town Transport Study that would inform a future review of the Local Plan.

7.11 The Transport Study found that the new garden communities at North Uttlesford, Easton Park and West of Braintree have the least traffic impact, the best accessibility and have the most potential for sustainable transport compared with other alternatives. Impacts on the Strategic Road Network, including that outside the District, is considered including the need for a proportionate approach to improvements.

28 [Uttlesford Cycling Strategy \(ECC, 2014\). Available: http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4625 &p=0](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4625 &p=0)

29 [Uttlesford Local Plan Transport Study Addendum Report \(2017\)](#)

7 Transport

7.12 Car ownership in the District is high. In a rural District like Uttlesford where many people live in smaller settlements and facilities are concentrated in centres outside of the District and in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and the larger villages the strategy needs to provide access to alternative modes of travel while at the same time recognising that the car will continue to play an essential role in the daily lives of most residents. Equally the use of active sustainable travel modes varies greatly across the District. The District Transport Study Technical Notes (2017)⁽³⁰⁾ highlights that on average for travel to work 11% is by active mode of which 91% is walking. However 22% is by active modes in Saffron Walden 13% in Great Dunmow with 5% in most villages and less in more isolated parts of the district. Walking is by far the most popular active travel mode. Cycling is however more popular for recreational use.

7.13 Areas for growth are identified where people will have the best access to facilities and the opportunity to make best use of public transport. The Council will work with developers, the bus and rail operators and Essex County Council to ensure that existing services are improved in terms of frequency, penetration and timetable information and that public transport provides a realistic and convenient form of travel for residents which is self-sustaining in the long term.

7.14 New development should be linked to existing services and facilities including workplaces, schools, town centres, greenspaces and the countryside beyond by well designed, attractive and safe cycle and pedestrian routes. Where segregated paths cannot be delivered due to, for example funding or land availability multi user paths will be encouraged for pedestrians, cyclists, and where appropriate horse riders in consultation with the British Horse Society.

7.15 The Flitch Way is a linear country park which runs east west through the District along the old railway line from Hatfield Forest to Braintree. The Flitch Way is, for the majority of its length, a Bridleway where walking, cycling and horse riding is allowed. The park provides safe, off road, cycling and walking for most of its length but there is a gap in the old railway through Great Dunmow and cyclists and walkers have to find an alternative route through the town. Cyclists are expected to cycle along the B1256 through the High Street and down Chelmsford Road. The walkers' route is along Highfield and down Chelmsford Road. The Council will work with the developers of sites to the west and south of Great Dunmow and other partners like Great Dunmow Town Council, Essex County Council and the Flitch Way Action Group to develop quieter, more attractive routes for walking and cycling to link the two parts of the Flitch Way.

Modal Shift

7.16 The dominant mode of travel in Uttlesford is the car. Travel to work is heavily car based at 71% of trips, with journeys by train and by foot around 10% each, and levels of cycling and bus journey are negligible. The existing modal share reflects the predominantly rural nature of the district with a disperse pattern of small settlements, relatively long journey distances precluding walking and cycling and limited sustainable travel infrastructure. The Local Plan will ensure that developments that generate

30 [Uttlesford Transport Study - Technical Notes \(2017\)](#)

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significant movement such as the new garden communities are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. The new garden communities will be required to deliver a mix of uses and key facilities such as employment, education and retail within walking distance of most residential properties to minimise the need to travel. Change in travel mode will be delivered through planning conditions and travel monitoring in accordance with Local Plan policies. Given the predominantly rural characteristics of the district, aspirations for the future level of use of sustainable modes need to be realistic and achievable. Essex County Council's Guidance Notes for a Residential Travel Plan identifies targets between a 5% and 10% reduction in single occupancy car use over a set period. Alternatively, where baseline data is already considered to be at a reasonable level, it may be accepted that the target should aim to maintain the baseline. For employment ECC targets 3-5% reduction in drive alone commuting. For Garden Communities a more ambitious shift away from single occupancy vehicle trip is required to reduce the impact on the highway network. Travel plans must be supported by a robust series of measures, infrastructure, incentives and penalties to ensure delivery.

Travel Plans

7.17 Applications for major new development sites will be required to submit clear proposals in a travel plan for reducing travel to work by car, for Garden Communities such plans should address a step change in non-car use including the masterplan process. Demand responsive travel options like taxi buses and car pools will be supported and the Council will continue to work in partnership to provide community transport schemes like Uttlesford Community Travel which provides transport for people who, through age, disability or rural isolation find it difficult to access public transport.

7.18 As part of the travel planning process developers will be required to provide a Travel Plan Coordinator and make financial contributions for the annual monitoring of travel plan performance against agreed targets for an agreed time period following occupation of the development. In addition, bond payments will also be sought to cover the provision of supplementary sustainable travel infrastructure and measures in the event that agreed targets are not met. The detailed content of Travel Plans will be site specific and will need to be agreed with the highway and planning authorities at the planning application stage but generally set out the process for monitoring future travel behaviour and the site-specific strategies and measures to influence modal choice with a view to reducing dependency upon the private car. Developers will be required to fund (via S106 Agreements) measures and/ or infrastructure improvements required to mitigate the direct transport impacts of developments. This will include funding for items such as Smarter Choices as set out below.

7.19 Travel Plans should address the following:

- Encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car and better manage private car usage in order to reduce environmental impacts for all journeys associated with the proposed development;

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- Include 'smarter choices' (e.g. car sharing, car clubs, teleworking, teleconferencing, home shopping, electric vehicle infrastructure, etc) to help change the way people travel;
- Deliver long-term commitments to changing travel habits by minimising the percentage of single occupancy car journeys associated with the proposal and maximising the proportion of trips made by public transport and community vehicles, by car share, on foot and by cycle;
- Identify and achieve the support of stakeholders for the Travel Plan and encourage a sustainable transport culture, which will develop and grow with time;
- To educate residents and employees regarding the health benefits of walking and cycling;
- To seek to reduce traffic generated by development to a lower level of car trips than would occur without the implementation of a Travel Plan; and
- Promote healthy lifestyles and vibrant communities.

7.20 Applications should comply with the current Essex County Council Highways Development Management Policies (ECC, 2011)⁽³¹⁾ and Essex Parking Standards Design and Good Practice (ECC 2009).⁽³²⁾ Applications also need to take account of Essex Design Guide, Developer Guide to Infrastructure Contributions, Public Rights of Way Guide and Bus Strategy documents.

7.21 Passenger transport arrangements outlined at a high level in the transport evidence done in conjunction with ECC will be pursued further in more detailed Transport Assessments accompanying the planning application for the Garden Communities.

31 [Essex County Council Highways Development Management Policies \(ECC, 2011\).](#)

32 [Essex Parking Standards Design and Good Practice \(ECC, 2009\).](#)

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Policy TA 1

Accessible Development

Development and transport planning will be co-ordinated to reduce the need to travel by car, increase public transport use, cycling and walking and improve accessibility and safety in the District while accepting the rural nature of the District. The overall need to travel (especially by car) to meet the day to day service needs will be minimised. Development proposals will be located in close proximity to services and make use of sustainable forms of travel (walking, cycling and public transport) to fulfil day to day travel needs as a first requirement. To achieve this:

1. The capacity of the access to the main road network and the capacity of the road network itself must be capable of accommodating the development safely and without causing severe congestion;
2. Development will maintain or improve road safety and take account of the needs of all users, including mobility impaired users;
3. New development should be located where it can be linked to services and facilities by a range of transport options including safe and well designed footpaths and cycle networks, public transport and the private car;
4. Development should be located where it can provide safe, attractive, direct walking and cycling routes between new developments and schools / other community infrastructure, together with appropriate design for these new facilities that encourages and delivers sustainable travel;
5. Existing rights of way, cycling and equestrian routes (designated and non-designated routes and, where there is evidence of regular public usage, informal provision) will be protected and, should diversion prove unavoidable, provide suitable, appealing replacement routes to equal or enhanced standards ensuring provision for the long-term maintenance of any of the above;
6. A Transport Assessment will be required on all developments creating significant impact on the highway to assess the impact and potential mitigation required; and
7. Appropriate and safe networks, as defined by the Essex Local Transport Plan, will be provided to allow for increasingly independent travel by vulnerable road users to allow such individuals to provide for their own travel needs.

7 Transport

Policy TA2 - Sustainable Transport

Sustainable modes of transport should be facilitated through new developments to promote accessibility and integration into the wider community and existing networks. Priority should be given to cycle and pedestrian movements and access to public transport. Development proposals should provide appropriate provision to maximise modal shift potential for all the following transport modes:

1. **Pedestrian (including disabled persons and those with impaired mobility), through safe, accessible, direct and convenient design and layout of routes within the new development and wider pedestrian network. Safeguarding existing Public Rights of Way and promoting enhancements to the network, where appropriate, to offer appropriate routes for walking, cycling, horse riders and recreational opportunities;**
2. **Cycling, through safe design and layout of routes integrated into the new development and contributing towards the development and enhancement of the cycle network and provision of secure cycle parking and where appropriate, changing and shower facilities;**
3. **Public transport, through measures that will improve and support public transport and provide new public transport routes;**
4. **Community transport, through measures that will promote car pools, car sharing and voluntary community buses, community services and cycle schemes;**
5. **Servicing, refuse and emergency vehicles where viable and practical; and**
6. **Facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles (see Policy TA3 below)**

Electric Charging Provision in Development

7.22 Although rural in character the District suffers from traffic congestion and air pollution. Saffron Walden has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) with an Air Quality Action Plan. This Plan encourages new development to deliver high standards of sustainable design. Opportunities to minimise the adverse impacts on the environment by all development should be encouraged, especially where they minimise impacts on air quality. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) have set out a UK strategy to ensure that by 2050 nearly every new vehicle purchased in the UK will be an ultra-low emission vehicle. Pure electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles are therefore anticipated to take an increasing share of the new car and van market over the next 40 years. The Government's new air quality plan says it will end the sale of all "conventional petrol

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and diesel cars” by 2040. The car industry anticipate that the uptake will increase rapidly before then with further measures rolled out under the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill. The use of electric vehicles is an important measure in reducing emissions locally with provision of necessary infrastructure essential. It is important therefore that new development seeks to encourage continued growth and respond to such change.

7.23 Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that developments should be ‘designed where practical to incorporate facilities for charging and plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles’. Planning policies should sustain compliance with, and contribute towards, EU limit values and national objectives for pollutants, taking account of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites (paragraph 124, NPPF).

7.24 In order to promote a greater role for plug-in vehicles the Council will support development proposals which seek to encourage the use of electric vehicles. To assist understanding on how this could be achieved in new development the table below sets out how infrastructure could be provided in new development. For flatted development a minimum provision is needed to ensure access to charging facilities. This would normally be 10% subject to demand. If demand is limited, provision should take the form of future proofing measures such as appropriate wiring.

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Policy TA 2

Provision of Electric Charging Points

The following provision of charging points will be required:

Provision of Charging Points/ Parking Bays in New Development (including Conversions)	
Houses	One charging point per house with garage or driveway
Flats (50 units)	One parking bay marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with charging infrastructure and cabling (subject to minimum provision as above).
Flats (50 units)	Further dedicated charging bays totalling 2% of the total provision.
Other Development (50 Bays)	One parking bay marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with charging infrastructure and cabling.
Other Development (50 Bays)	Further dedicated charging bays totalling 2% of the total provision.
Phasing	Standard provision (as set out above) could be supplemented by the installation of groundwork/ passive wiring at the commencement of development in order to enable further installation to match demand.

It should be noted that where charging facilities are shared (for example through the development of flats) that any provision of infrastructure should also include arrangements for the future operation and maintenance of the facility.

In addition for new flat schemes need to provide future proofing measures, such as appropriate wiring (i.e. wired ready to fit) to ensure that demand for electric vehicles can be met as this increases over time.

Vehicle Parking Standards

7.25 A realistic approach is needed. Many communities within the District do not have access to regular and frequent public transport and using the car is the only practical way of getting to work, accessing services and making leisure trips. Car ownership levels are relatively high and limiting parking within residential development will not necessarily discourage car ownership and is more likely to displace parking onto the

Transport 7

road and/or encourage parking on pavements, verges etc which detracts from the street scene and can be an obstruction to buses, waste collection and emergency vehicles and cause problems for pedestrians, particularly those with limited mobility. It is important that adequate car parking is provided in new developments. The Council approved the Essex County Council document "Parking Standards, Design and Good Practice" in January 2010 with further amendments in February 2013 for use in development management and parking provision for new development will be expected to meet these or any other standards approved by the Council.

Policy TA 3

Vehicle Parking Standards

Development will be permitted where the number, design, location, size and layout of vehicle parking spaces proposed is appropriate for the use and location, as set out in relevant parking standards approved by the Council. If the proposal is a use for which there is no relevant approved standard the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the number of parking spaces being provided is appropriate for the use and location.

7.26 The District requires improvements in transport infrastructure to cope with the impacts of growth. The strategic elements of these are listed in the above studies and are summarised below.

7 Transport

Policy TA 4

New Transport Infrastructure or Measures

The provision of new or enhanced transport infrastructure and initiatives will be pursued and implemented in partnership with the relevant transport providers. Developer funding for or provision of highway and transportation works and measures will be sought as appropriate. The following measures have been identified and others will come forward through assessment of specific sites.

Walking and Cycling Improvements

1. **Wenden Road Cycle Route Scheme - Saffron Walden to Audley End station cycle route improvements were delivered in 2015.**
2. **Great Chesterford to Saffron Walden Cycle Route Scheme: with the aim of connecting Saffron Walden via Littlebury to Great Chesterford and then on to Hinxton providing a link to cycle routes to Cambridge.**
3. **Fritch Way Improvements – New walking and cycling connections planned south of Great Dunmow.**
4. **M11 Junction 8 – Walking and cycling routes and crossing facilities to be incorporated as part of planned junction improvement scheme to improve connectivity for these modes.**
5. **Schemes within the Essex Cycling Strategy and Uttlesford Cycling Strategy.**

Rapid Transit Corridors

6. **Support sustainable transportation connectivity between Braintree – Great Dunmow, Stansted Airport and Bishop's Stortford. Support connectivity to Cambridge from the north of the district.**

Rail Improvements

7. **West Anglia Mainline - Cambridge to Stansted Improvements:– Greater Anglia recently secured new long-term franchise to operate services. New rolling stock to increase capacity of existing services into London, limited additional services (although outside of peak periods), Wifi and customer service enhancements will be introduced. Improved accessibility for and to rail stations that will serve new developments including cycle parking in those developments (Policy TA4), cycle and pedestrian routes and bus infrastructure.**
8. **Braintree Branch line - Cressing Loop:- Network Rail has accepted the need for a passing loop at Cressing to allow two trains to pass on the single line thereby doubling service capacity between Braintree and**

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London. Work is expected to commence during Control Period 6 (2019 to 2024). An additional passing loop north of Witham station is also included in Control Period 6 investment.

Strategic Highway Improvements

9. Essex County Council in conjunction with Highways England produced a short to medium term improvement to increase traffic capacity at M11 Junction 8. A scheme is planned for joint funding by Highways England's Growth & Housing Fund and the Local Economic Partnership. A preliminary scheme has been approved by Highways England for further detailed business case assessment. A longer term major improvement is also being developed by the Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils with Highways England for a Road Infrastructure Strategy bid. ECC have produced and validated a sophisticated traffic model to test options from which a scheme can be derived.
10. Cambridgeshire County Council are currently undertaking a detailed Study of the A505 regards future improvements.

Local Highway Improvements

11. The District Council will continue to work with Essex County Council to deliver transport measures in Saffron Walden to support movement across town and more sustainable travel behaviour especially to provide opportunities for traffic to avoid the centre.
12. New developments will be assessed for their impacts on the network and where necessary, capacity, safety and enhancements to transport provision will be required from the developer to mitigate the impact on the network or linking to the network, this may include schemes within the Uttlesford Transport Study.

8 Infrastructure

Introduction

8.1 Making sure that development is supported by the necessary community facilities, utilities and transport infrastructure is essential to creating sustainable communities. The term 'infrastructure' covers a wide range of services and facilities provided by public and private organisations. The definition of infrastructure is outlined in Section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and NPPF Annex 2. Key infrastructure is summarised below - this is not an exhaustive list:

- Physical infrastructure: Transport; utilities; water; and waste.
- Social infrastructure: Schools and other educational facilities; health; social well-being and emergency services; and community (including libraries, allotments and community halls).
- Green infrastructure: 'Designed landscapes' (including Country Parks) and natural/semi-natural green space.

8.2 This section of the Local Plan provides the overarching framework for the delivery of infrastructure to support growth in Uttlesford and specific infrastructure policies for: open space and sport, health and well-being, and electronic communications. Other sections of this Local Plan include policies that set out requirements for specific types of infrastructure including transport and the environment.

8.3 A combination of funding sources will be sought to bring forward the infrastructure required to support the implementation of this spatial strategy. The Council will work closely with infrastructure and service providers and other relevant partners including Essex County Council, Highways England, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England to identify infrastructure needs and to make sure that those needs are met. It is important to identify viable solutions to delivering infrastructure, where appropriate through the use of phasing conditions, interim measures and the provision of co-located or multi-use facilities. The Council will have regard to studies such as the Open Space, Sports Facility Development Strategy (2016)⁽³³⁾, the Playing Pitch Strategy (2012)⁽³⁴⁾, detailed Water Cycle Study,⁽³⁵⁾ Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2017)⁽³⁶⁾, and the Local Plan Highway Study (2014)⁽³⁷⁾ which identify infrastructure needs. A detailed Water Cycle Study (WCS) has been carried out for the Anglian Area finding that NUGC and West of Braintree are acceptable with no phasing restrictions

33 [Sports Facilities Development Strategy \(PLC, 2016\). Available: http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5608&p=0](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5608&p=0)

34 [Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy \(The Landscape Partnership, 2012\). Available: http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1718&p=0](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1718&p=0)

35 [Water Cycle Study \(Arcadis, 2017 and 2018 Available at https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4121/Infrastructure](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4121/Infrastructure)

36 [Infrastructure Development Plan \(Troy Planning, 2017\). Available: http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7052&p=0](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7052&p=0)

37 [Highway Impact Assessment \(ECC, 2014\). Available: https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4125/Transport](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4125/Transport)

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necessary. For the Thames Area (Easton Park) viable solutions have been identified going forward. In considering the potential requirements from development on ECC services and infrastructure reference should be made to the ECC Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2016)⁽³⁸⁾ or amended versions.

8.4 Policy INF1 below sets out the broad requirements for the delivery of infrastructure to support development. The site allocation policies set out requirements for individual sites. Some infrastructure may need to be delivered by a number of sites. Phasing of development will need to be considered to take account of infrastructure. Some infrastructure will have benefits for residents beyond the development site such as off-site highway junction improvements; new sewerage treatment works; open space and sports facilities. Some infrastructure such as school halls, libraries and playing fields can be used by the wider community. Infrastructure will be funded through developer contributions payable by developers towards on and off-site infrastructure provision and through other funding sources including service providers and Government funding, where available. The Council will consider the potential for one or more local delivery vehicle/s to be established to assist with the delivery of the new garden communities including the related infrastructure.

8.5 In assessing new infrastructure requirements, developers are encouraged to provide evidence as to whether existing infrastructure can be used more efficiently, and/ or whether the impact of development can be reduced through promoting behavioural change.

38 [The Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(2016\)](#).

8 Infrastructure

Policy INF 1

Infrastructure Delivery

Development must take account of the needs of new and existing populations. It must be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to meet the needs arising from the development. This is particularly important for the new garden communities.

Each development must address physical, community, social and green infrastructure.

In assessing capacity, developers will provide evidence as to whether existing infrastructure can be used more efficiently, or whether the impact of development can be reduced through promoting behavioural change.

Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal in a timely manner. It must further demonstrate that such required capacity will prove sustainable over time physically and financially.

A combination of funding sources will be sought to deliver the infrastructure required to deliver the spatial strategy. Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity, to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the Council and the appropriate infrastructure provider. Such measures include (but not exclusively):

1. Financial contributions towards new or expanded facilities/their maintenance;
2. Direct provision or construction of new provision;
3. Off-site capacity improvement works; and/or
4. The provision of land.

Developers and land owners must work positively with the Council, neighbouring authorities and other infrastructure providers throughout the planning process to ensure that the cumulative impact of development is considered and then mitigated, at the appropriate time, in line with their published policies and guidance.

Planning obligations and phasing conditions will be required where necessary to ensure that development meets the principles of this policy.

The council may consider introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and would implement such for areas and/or development types where a viable charging schedule would best mitigate the impacts of growth. Section 106 will remain the appropriate mechanism for securing land and works along with financial contributions where a sum for the necessary infrastructure is not secured via CIL.

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For the purposes of this policy the widest reasonable definition of infrastructure and infrastructure providers will be applied. Exemplar types of infrastructure are provided in the glossary appended to this Plan.

Exceptions to this policy will only be considered whereby:

5. It is proven that the benefit of the development proceeding without full mitigation outweighs the collective harm;
6. A fully transparent open book viability assessment has proven that full mitigation cannot be afforded, allowing only for the minimum level of developer profit and land owner receipt necessary for the development to proceed;
7. Full and thorough investigation has been undertaken to find innovative solutions to issues and all possible steps have been taken to minimise the residual level of unmitigated impacts; and
8. Obligations are entered into by the developer that provide for review at appropriate interval(s) and appropriate additional mitigation in the event that viability improves prior to completion of the development.

Protection, Enhancement and Provision of Open Space, Sports Facilities and Playing Pitches

8.6 The protection, enhancement and provision of recreational public open space, indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches can contribute to healthy and active lifestyles. Making sure there is enough recreational open space and indoor and outdoor sports facilities meet current needs and the additional requirements arising from any new development is one of the key aims of the Local Plan. The needs of the District have been assessed in the Uttlesford Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy (2012) and the Sports Facilities Development Strategy (2016) which has identified a deficiency in the amount of public open space and the number of playing pitches, sports facilities and allotments. The Council has commissioned a Sports Facilities and Recreation Strategy (incorporating a Playing Pitch Strategy) which will be completed in April 2019.

8.7 The 2012 strategy found that there are only three public parks and gardens within Uttlesford - Bridge End Gardens, Jubilee Gardens and The Common. These are all in Saffron Walden. The District also contains a number of natural & semi natural green spaces, and amenity green spaces. Most settlements are within 400 metres of an amenity greenspace. There is an irregular pattern of natural and semi-natural greenspace across the District and there is a poor level of provision in many parishes. There is a dispersed pattern of provision for children and young people and the majority of parishes contain at least one play area. A large proportion of the District is within 4 kilometres of the nearest allotment site. There are areas in the north-west, north-east and small areas along the south-east and south-west boundaries of the District which have no allotment provision. There is also a deficiency of allotments around Takeley and the Priors Green development.

8 Infrastructure

8.8 To meet the needs of the current and projected increase in population arising from the development, additional sports facilities are required as set out in the most up to date Strategy and open space standards

8.9 Policy INF2 below is concerned with protecting and enhancing the playing fields, open spaces, allotments and sports facilities which already exist and making sure that enough amenities and facilities are provided in the future. The policy protects not only facilities which are still in active use but also those which are not in active use, for example due to ownership. It also applies to development that would prejudice the use of land as playing fields, open space, allotments or sports facilities.

8.10 Planning permission will only be granted for a development or a change of use of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land including playing fields when it can be demonstrated that the land or buildings are surplus to requirements, or where equivalent or better replacement facilities are provided. The Sports Strategy will be used to determine whether a site or facility is surplus to assessed need. In the absence of an up to date Sports Strategy a robust assessment of local need for the local catchment will need to be submitted demonstrating that there is a surplus to the requirements in a locality and the catchment of the facility and that the site has no special significance to sport or recreation.

8.11 If replacement facilities are proposed these must be at least as good as those lost in terms of location, quantity, quality and management arrangements. They must also be made available before development of the existing site begins.

8.12 New residential development will need to provide formal and informal play space and sports facilities which meet open space standards and sports facilities (Indoor and outdoor) as set out in the Sports Strategy. All provision needs to be in an accessible location to the users.

8.13 The provision of open space, sports facilities and playing pitches should be considered in consultation with the local community. This should include the approach to the ownership and maintenance of the open space and facilities in the longer term to ensure they remain viable and continue to meet their intended function. In addition, formal and informal green space should be provided in new development and existing areas maintained and where possible improved. Where possible green spaces should be linked to each other and to the countryside beyond development boundaries to maximise biodiversity benefits. Exceptionally open space can be provided within floodplains and can assist in minimising flooding of more vulnerable developments.

Infrastructure 8

Policy INF 2

Protection, Enhancement and Provision of Open Space, Sports Facilities and Playing Pitches

Existing facilities for recreation, sport and play together with formal and informal open space will be safeguarded and enhanced.

Development will only be permitted if it would not involve the loss of open space for recreation, including allotments, playing pitches or sports facilities, except if:

- a. An up to date Sports Strategy or an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or**
- b. Replacement facilities will be provided of an equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity and in a suitable locations, to serve the needs of the area; and which will be made available before development of the existing site begins; or**
- c. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.**
- d. In the case of school and college grounds, the loss through development may be permitted where the development meets a demonstrable educational need and protects playing fields in accordance with Sport England policy**

Uttlesford District Council has, working with Sport England, commissioned a Sports Strategy. Development proposals will take into account the findings of this study and provide new sports facilities in line with the recommendations from this study.

Where the Sports Strategy identifies a community need which can be met through existing school and college sports facilities, this will be encouraged.

In accordance with the most up to date Sport Strategy new development will be required to make appropriate on-site provision or financial contributions to off-site provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

Unless specified in the relevant site allocation policy, publicly accessible open space or improvement to existing accessible open space provision will be in accordance with the following standards. Financial support for the continued maintenance of the facility will be secured by planning obligation.

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Open Space Requirements			
Type of Provision	Level of Provision (Square metres per person)	Threshold for On-Site Provision	Threshold for Off-Site Provision
Amenity Greenspace	10	All development of 10 dwellings or over	All developments under 10 dwellings and development of 10 dwellings or over where on-site provision is not possible
Provision for children and young people (LAPS, LEAPS and NEAPS)	2	All development of 10 dwellings or over	All development under 10 dwellings and development of 10 dwellings or over where on-site provision is not possible
Allotments	2	All development of 10 dwellings or over	All development under 10 dwellings and where on-site provision is not possible.

Health and Well-being

8.14 A person's health and well-being is inextricably linked to socio-economic and environmental factors such as the quality, accessibility and sustainability of the physical environment. The way in which an area is planned and managed can have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life, health and well-being.

8.15 The Council is committed to improving the health of its communities, as highlighted within the Corporate Plan 2018-2022. The Council has prepared the Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-22.⁽³⁹⁾ A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old. It is one which supports healthy behaviours and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community and, where appropriate, encourage:

39 [Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2017-22\)](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6953&p=0)
Available: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6953&p=0>

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- Active healthy lifestyles that are made easy through the pattern of development, good urban design, good access to local services and facilities; green open space and safe places for active play and food growing, and is accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.
- The creation of healthy living environments for people of all ages which supports social interaction. It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

8.16 Public Health England's Health Profile for the District, which was updated in 2016⁽⁴⁰⁾, indicates a rise in levels of overweight and obesity. More than half of adults living in Uttlesford are either overweight or obese, which is attributable to a range of factors, including low levels of physical activity, and access and availability of unhealthy and energy dense foods, including hot food takeaways. This trend is similarly correlated with increasing levels among children.

8.17 The Foresight Obesity System Atlas (2007)⁽⁴¹⁾ indicates that physical activity can be categorised as recreational, domestic, occupational and as a means of transportation; the more opportunities there are to be active in each of these categories, the more likely it is for activity to occur. Furthermore, the exposure, abundance, convenience and energy density of food offerings similarly contributes to the wider determinants of overweight and obesity.

8.18 In 2008, the Children's Food Trust produced a 'temptation town' measure of the ratio of 'junk food' outlets (including hot food takeaways and confectionery shops) to secondary schools. Whilst temptation to eat fast food is only partly influenced by the availability and accessibility of fast food outlets, it may also be influenced by other factors which influence eating behaviour, such as advertising, marketing, economics, and peer group pressure. Nevertheless, reports indicate that some takeaways located near schools may target school children by selling foods within their price range and offer special deals.

8.19 The Council and its partners will create opportunities to provide safe, healthy, active lifestyles by requiring a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to seek contributions towards new or enhanced provision of infrastructure, ensuring developments are designed to encourage safe walking and cycling, and provide consciously-designed open space, sport, recreational facilities and services and facilities to create opportunities and reduce barriers associated with healthy living.

40 [Uttlesford's Health Profile \(Public Health England, 2016\).](#)

41 [Tackling Obesities: Future Choices- Obesity System Atlas \(Foresight, 2007\).](#)

8 Infrastructure

8.20 Healthy living can be promoted through the design of a development and the facilities provided. Most new housing developments and large scale non-residential developments will have a potential impact on the capacity of health services and facilities that are provided in the District. Some types of development, e.g. residential care homes, are likely to place higher demands on local health services. The extent of these impacts needs to be assessed to make sure that an adequate level of health and other related services is provided for new development and the community as a whole.

8.21 The Council will liaise with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group or any successor body when assessing the scope and scale of likely impacts and the nature of mitigation required.

8.22 Development and infrastructure which supports the improvement of physical and mental health in the Uttlesford District is strongly encouraged. On strategic sites, the Council, developers, health care providers and other relevant partners will work in partnership to integrate planning, transport, housing, environmental and health provision to promote healthy lifestyles and support and enhance health care provision.

8.23 The Council will request a HIA to be prepared where appropriate to accompany new development proposals in accordance with the advice and best practice for such assessments as published by the Department of Health and other agencies, such as the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other NHS organisations across Essex. Negative impacts should be avoided and the opportunities for positive impacts to be maximised should be factored in early to the design stages of development, where applicable.

8.24 The Council will require a HIA to be prepared for all Use Class A5 developments – Hot Food Takeaways. Subject to the findings of the HIA restrictions may need to be applied through conditions to proposals of new hot food takeaways within 200 metres of primary or secondary schools in order to reduce exposure to energy dense foods and promote the health and well-being of school pupils. Hours of opening may be limited to after 5 pm on school days and lunch time opening may only be permitted where schools within 200 metres do not allow pupils to freely leave the school premises during lunch breaks.

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Policy INF 3

Health Impact Assessments

New developments which are designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles and help to reduce health inequalities in the District will be supported.

The following development proposals should undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA):

1. Residential development (Class C3) proposals of more than of 50 units;
2. Non-residential development of more than 1,000 sqm;
3. Residential care homes and nursing homes (Class C2);
4. Hot food takeaways (Class A5); and
5. Any application requiring an EIA due to the incorporation of Human Health and Populations from May 2017.

The HIA should set out the impact on health and well-being resulting from a proposal and any demands that are placed on the capacity of health facilities arising from the development.

Where significant impacts are identified, planning permission will be granted where infrastructure provision and/ or funding to meet the health service requirements of the development is provided and/ or secured by planning obligations.

The Council will require HIAs to be prepared in accordance with the advice and best practice for such assessments as published by the Department of Health, Public Health and other agencies, such as the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other NHS organisations across Essex.

Restrictions may need to be applied through appropriate planning conditions to reduce any negative impacts occurring in relation to hot food takeaways (Class A5) subject to HIA findings.

Early discussion with the Planning team is strongly advised around any HIA. Advice and guidance is available from Public Health and other Health Partners on these.

High Quality Communications Infrastructure

8.25 Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure such as ultrafast broadband and mobile communication supports sustainable growth. This type of infrastructure

8 Infrastructure

has evolved considerably and forms an important part of a communities' access to services and facilities. It also can assist businesses to remain competitive, attract new companies to an area and promote flexible ways of working and living. This is particularly important in a largely rural area such as Uttlesford.

8.26 Upgrades to existing and new communications infrastructure, including ultrafast broadband and mobile communication will be strongly supported, including masts, buildings and other related structures, to harness the opportunities arising from new high quality communications.

8.27 Superfast and ultrafast broadband consists wholly or partially of optical fibre elements and can be referred to as 'fibre-based' broadband. The technology for broadband is constantly developing. The best and most up to date broadband infrastructure should be used in new developments.

8.28 The Government has committed to improving broadband access. As part of this commitment the Superfast Essex Programme aims to extend the fibre broadband network as far as possible in Essex. The objectives of the programme are to ensure that at least 2Mb/s download speed is available across Essex and to achieve 'superfast' speeds of 24 Mb/s or more where possible. The Programme aims to extend superfast broadband coverage to 97 percent of the County by 2020. The superfast broadband target for Uttlesford is that 95% of business premises should be able to access fibre based superfast broadband by the end of 2019.

8.29 The purpose of Policy INF4 below is to ensure that new developments are provided with superfast broadband but it is recognised that due to the District's rural nature there will be some properties and areas where it may be uneconomic to provide superfast broadband via fibre to serve small numbers of properties. In these circumstances, alternative technologies to provide broadband such as fixed wireless technology or radio broadband should be considered.

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Policy INF 4

High Quality Communications Infrastructure and Superfast Broadband

New development proposals should demonstrate that they are served by up to date communications infrastructure. As a minimum, new proposals should be directly served by up to date superfast broadband.

All new dwellings and non-residential buildings must be served by a superfast broadband⁽⁴²⁾ connection, installed on an open access basis. Where this service is fibre based it is anticipated that it will be directly accessed from the nearest BT exchange and threaded through resistant tubing to enable easy access to the fibre for future repair, replacement or upgrading, unless the applicant can demonstrate that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In those cases, the developer will ensure that a superfast broadband service is made available via an alternative technology provider, such as fixed wireless or radio broadband.

Applications for new or the expansion of existing communications infrastructure (including telecommunications and superfast broadband) are supported subject to the following criteria:

1. Opportunities for sharing sites and/ or combining the proposal with existing or committed masts, buildings or related structures have been explored.
2. The proposal has been sympathetically designed, sited, landscaped and camouflaged to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding area.
3. The proposal has been designed to minimise disruption should the need for maintenance, adaption or future upgrades arise.
4. The proposal meets International Commission guidelines.⁽⁴³⁾

The Council will support investment in high quality communications infrastructure and superfast broadband, including community based networks, particularly where alternative technologies need to be used due to the rural nature of Uttlesford.

42 As new versions of broadband (such as Ultrafast) become available, provision must be made for the best possible speed and using the latest technology

43 The International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection is an independent organisation which provides scientific advice and guidance on the health and environmental effects of non-ionising radiation to protect people and the environment. More information is available here:

<http://www.icnirp.org/en/home/index.html>

9 Design and Construction

Introduction

9.1 The achievement of high quality design is a core principle of the NPPF. It states that ‘good design is indivisible from good planning’. The importance of design of the built environment and its contribution to making better places for people is emphasised.

9.2 Good design has a major role in contributing to the quality of life. Good design goes beyond the look of buildings and considers: the mix of uses and activities that help create lively and interesting places; the local character and distinctiveness of a place, reflected through its landscape and building materials for example; contributing to healthy lifestyles by making it easy for people to move by foot and by bike; fostering a sense of community through well designed, functional and attractive public spaces; and enhancing the quality of environment.

9.3 In short, good design will help create high quality, safe and successful places in Uttlesford where people enjoy living, working and visiting. Successful places are those⁽⁴⁴⁾:

- Having a complementary mix of uses and activities;
- Being fit for purpose, accommodating uses well;
- Encouraging easy movement;
- Including successful public space;
- Being able to adapt to changing needs and circumstances;
- Being efficient in how land and other resources are used;
- Having an appearance that is appealing and appreciated; and
- Having a distinctive, positive identity and sense of place.

9.4 This section of the Local Plan establishes general policies that guide the design of all development in the district and then focuses on the requirements for the new garden communities and strategic development sites. These policies will need to be read in accordance with any future guidance that might be published by the Council at a later date, including for example any location specific or thematic design guidance. The Applicant will also have regard to the Essex Design Guide, which provides specific information about local character and distinctiveness and provides key principles which should be applied to any new development⁽⁴⁵⁾. Furthermore, design guidance in ‘made’ neighbourhood plans, where relevant to a particular proposal, will also need to be considered and addressed in any design response.

44 Source: The Design Companion for Planning and Placemaking, Transport for London (Urban Design London), 2017. This document supports and extends national Planning Practice Guidance and is intended for use by all those involved in the planning and placemaking process to help secure higher standards of urban design and the delivery of better practice

45 [The Essex Design Guide \(ECC, 2018\)](#).

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Design and Local Distinctiveness

9.5 Towns and villages in the district have grown over time, historically responding to their location and cultural heritage, the surrounding landscape and built form, and with traditional materials reflecting the geology of the wider area. These elements shape the character of the built form.

9.6 The pattern of development varies across the district. In larger settlements the historic core has been surrounded by more recent development. The smaller villages retain their historic pattern with more limited evidence of expansion.

9.7 Local characteristics should be identified through site analysis plans prepared as part of any planning application or development framework, and be used to frame a positive place-based response. A design-led response to development, referencing good practice principles⁽⁴⁶⁾, will help create successful places. Where new development is proposed in Uttlesford it should be of a high-quality, irrespective of scale or use. The Essex Design Guide notes that new neighbourhoods ‘should have a defining character, with distinctive features or materials that make it distinguishable from other areas of the development’⁽⁴⁷⁾. Another important aspect of high quality design is community safety, including crime reduction. In order to maximise community safety development should seek to adhere to the guidelines set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance and the Secured by Design guides⁽⁴⁸⁾.

46 [Building for Life \(Built for Life, 2015\)](#).

47 [The Essex Design Guide \(ECC, 2018\)](#).

48 [Secured by Design Initiative Design Guides \(Association of Chief Police Officers\)](#). Available: <http://www.securedbydesign.com/industry-advice-and-guides>

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 1

High Quality Design

All new development in Uttlesford should contribute to the creation of high quality places through a design-led approach underpinned by good design principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal. Development proposals should be informed by Building for Life 12 and other good practice principles, including the Essex Design Guide. All buildings, spaces and the public realm should be well-designed and display a high level of architectural quality which responds positively to local context. Development should refer to Secured by Design principles to reduce crime and encourage safer communities.

Proposals for new development should seek to optimise the capacity of the site by responding appropriately to the scale, character and grain of the existing built form. Proposals should also demonstrate how they respond to the landscape, local and longer-views and the natural and historic environments..

Development should integrate well with existing neighbourhoods, positively contributing to the public realm and street environment, creating well connected, accessible and safe places. Development should provide for a rich movement network and choice of routes.

Development should result in healthy places which prioritise active travel and provide opportunities for and access to facilities for sport and physical activity.

All development within residential and mixed use areas, including town and local centres, should have active frontages, particularly at street level, and provide a clear distinction between areas of public and private realm.

Proposals for new development should demonstrate how they respond to and enhance the amenity value of an area through consideration of matters such as overlooking, natural light, micro-climate, outlook and amenity space. Equally, proposals for new development should meet the nationally described space standards⁽⁴⁹⁾ and the necessary dwelling mix, privacy, daylight and sunlight for future occupiers.

New buildings should be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, so that they can respond to changing social, environmental, economic and technological needs. New development should be designed such that it does not prejudice future development or design of adjoining sites. Consideration should be given to smart technology solutions that support high quality design outcomes.

49 Department for Communities and Local Government, Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards, March 2015 (Updated May 2016)

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In residential neighbourhoods and mixed use areas, including town and local centres, the townscape impacts of any large floorplate developments will be minimised through incorporation of finer grain frontages that wrap around the larger unit. This approach also applies to large surface and multi-storey car parks as well as servicing areas in these locations.

9.8 The quality and provision of car parking can be a major determinant on the quality of place, particularly in residential areas. If it is not provided in the right place, it is unlikely to be used properly. The location and provision of parking should respond to basic urban design principles, with on-plot and on-street parking provided in close proximity to the home. Rear courtyards should be avoided. Where parking is provided on-street, consideration should be given to using different materials to define the use of different areas. Where possible, unallocated on-street parking provision, which is more land-efficient than parking courts, should be provided. The growth of on-line (internet) sales will result in an increasing number of delivery vehicles parking up in residential areas. The design of on-street parking should consider the provision of short stay drop-off areas.

Policy D 2

Car Parking Design

Parking within new residential development should be designed such that it is conveniently located and overlooked so that it can be used in the way it is intended for, avoiding informal parking that undermines the quality of the street environment. Parking should be unobtrusive, with garages (where proposed) set back from the building line and street trees used to soften the visual impact of parked cars, particularly on street. The use of permeable surfaces for areas of parking will be supported.

9.9 Much development that takes place will be small scale and involve extensions to existing properties. These also impact on the quality of place and local amenity. Applications for such development in Uttlesford should demonstrate how they respond to the local context and do not unduly impact upon neighbouring amenity.

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 3

Small Scale Development/ Householder Extensions

Proposals for small scale development, including extensions to existing buildings, must be of a high standard of design, responding to or improving the site and surrounding area.

The scale, height and massing of any development or proposed extension should relate to the surrounding area and existing buildings.

All new residential developments should accord with appropriate space standards.

New development should avoid detrimental impacts on occupiers of surrounding properties, particularly in terms of noise, privacy, overshadowing and access to natural daylight.

Garden Communities and Strategic Development Sites

9.10 Proposals for large scale development, including the new garden communities and other strategic development sites (comprising those in excess of 100 residential units), should be informed by a masterplan that comprises part of a development framework for the site. This should place the site in its wider context and avoid narrowly looking at landownership boundaries.

9.11 The development framework should be prepared and agreed by the Council prior to any application for development being submitted. In the case of the new garden communities the development frameworks will be prepared as development plan or supplementary planning documents and adopted by the Council.

9.12 The development framework should establish the design principles for the sites, including its integration with existing areas and neighbourhoods, connections and linkages allowing movement for all, the location and mix of uses, and provision of community infrastructure and green space.

9.13 The development framework should help create places of distinct character and variety, responding to local building types and materials, how the place will be used and need to adapt over time.

9.14 Consideration should be given to a sensible and logical approach to phasing, such that new development works well from the outset, with the impact of ongoing development on new and existing residents minimised.

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9.15 In addition to the development frameworks, the Council will require a set of design codes to be prepared for the strategic development sites and new garden communities. These can either form part of the development framework, or comprise a condition to the granting of outline planning permission, requiring submission of a code before submission of any reserved matters.

9.16 Design codes can be used to provide greater certainty and control over design quality in the long term. The NPPF says that local authorities should consider their use where they could help deliver high-quality outcomes. The design codes should cover building heights, depths and widths, street typologies and landscape treatments. The code may also include details of façade treatments.

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 4

Development Frameworks and Codes

Development frameworks shall be prepared for the garden communities and all strategic development sites for approval by the Council prior to submission of any planning application. In the case of the new garden communities the development frameworks will be prepared as development plan or supplementary planning documents and adopted by the local planning authority. Where sites subject to a development framework crosses multiple land ownerships, the different landowners should work together to prepare a joint development framework that demonstrates how comprehensive development will be delivered.

The development frameworks should demonstrate how good placemaking can be achieved through establishment of:

1. A clear vision and concept for the garden community or strategic development site.
2. A development and land use plan showing the mix and type of development to come forward, including the broad locations of necessary supporting services, including local centres, open space, play and sports space, health and education.
3. Framework plans establishing the intended form and grain of development, character areas, densities and building typologies.
4. A movement plan establishing the street hierarchy and typologies, and sustainable transport measures prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.
5. A green infrastructure plan setting out the network and typology of green spaces, links, flood mitigation areas and areas of ecological importance.
6. A phasing and delivery plan, demonstrating a logical pattern of development that helps build community with supporting facilities provided at the right time.

Development frameworks should be informed by best practice landscape and urban design principles. Applications for the new garden communities and strategic development sites should demonstrate how they respond to best practice through submission of a Building for Life 12 assessment (or a later equivalent).

Design and Construction 9

Development frameworks should outline how infrastructure will be delivered and the mechanisms by which Landowners will work together to deliver those infrastructure items.

Prior to the approval of any reserved matters or grant of detailed planning permission the Council will require a Design Code to be prepared for the garden community or strategic development site. Planning applications should demonstrate how they comply with the Design Code.

Shopfronts

9.17 Shopfronts can contribute much to the locally distinctive character of towns and villages. They are important elements in the townscape and can contribute significantly to the attractive quality of any street scene. The design of new shopfronts should reflect this, and seek to preserve or enhance and be appropriate to, the character and appearance of the building and its location. New shopfronts should respect the design of the building and not obscure, damage or harm , existing architectural features.

9.18 Existing shopfronts that contribute to the appearance or special interest of a building or the street scene should be retained. Particularly in listed buildings or conservation areas, or where they are of design or historic significance in their own right or as part of a group. Any modifications necessary should be sympathetic to the original design.

9.19 The Council will seek to protect existing shopfronts that make a positive contribution to the appearance and local distinctiveness of an area, for example through their architectural and historic merit. Special regard will be given to the need to preserve the appearance of shopfronts, taking into account the quality of design,historic importance and location. Good examples of shopfronts should be retained wherever possible.

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 5

Shopfronts

The Council will support the retention and enhancement of historic shopfronts and other shop fronts of quality that contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of the locality and historic environment.

Shopfront alterations which detract from the public amenity due to poor quality design or inappropriate scale, proportions, materials or detailing will not be supported.

Proposals for new shopfronts will be supported where they are of a high quality of design and preserve or enhance the amenity of the locality, including the character and appearance of built and historic environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the guidance set out in the Council's supplementary planning document for shopfront design.

9.20 The NPPF reinforces the role and importance of design review, which is a way of assessing the design quality of new developments by an independent panel of experts to help support high standards of design.

9.21 Guidance on the Design Review process can be found via the Design Council Cabe⁽⁵⁰⁾ website.

9.22 In Uttlesford, it is envisaged that all strategic applications will be subject to design review. Schemes subject to review will include residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals, infrastructure, community facilities, public realm and open space proposals.

50 [Design Council Cabe, Design Review:
http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/cabe-design-review](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/cabe-design-review)

Design and Construction 9

Policy D 6

Design Review

The Council will require emerging schemes for the new garden communities and other strategic development sites to be assessed through design review. Equally, and as appropriate, smaller sites in important and or sensitive locations will also be subject to design review. The Council will refer schemes to the East of England Design Review Panel operated by Shape East. The Council encourages design review to take place early in the process to allow scope for input into the emerging design. The final scheme submitted to the Council should include a report on the design review process and how the scheme has responded to this.

9.23 Innovative design, that raises the standard of design in Uttlesford, but which also promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness, is welcome. Contemporary design approaches may be acceptable where it responds positively to context.

Policy D 7

Innovation and Variety

The Council will actively encourage development proposals that establish bespoke design solutions and residential typologies as opposed to application of standard 'off-the-shelf' housing types and layouts. Schemes that respond to and reinterpret local design cues are welcomed as well as consideration of smart technology solutions. The Council encourages applicants to run design competitions to generate a high quality architectural response to building design and layout.

Sustainable Design and Construction

9.24 All development in Uttlesford will be expected to make use of the best available sustainable design and technology. Proposals for development are expected to minimise the use of resources, mitigate against and be resilient to the impact of climate change. Current BREEAM standards for new construction BREEAM UK, Non-domestic Buildings (United Kingdom), Technical Manual SD5076 4.1, 2014 should be used for assessing the sustainability of new, non-residential buildings. The Home Quality Mark <http://www.homequalitymark.com> has been developed by BREEAM to provide an indication of the quality and environmental performance of a new home. Housebuilders are encouraged to use this assessment method.

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 8

Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals for new development are required to embed sustainable design and construction techniques from the outset.

Applications for development will need to demonstrate accordance with the appropriate Building Regulations and or BREEAM standards in force at the time of submission. Housebuilders are encouraged to register for assessment under the Home Quality Mark.

This should show how resource efficiencies and climate change adaptation measures will be incorporated through aspects such as the layout of the proposed development, orientation, massing, landscaping and building materials. Green roofs, walls and other similar measures are encouraged where appropriate.

Waste, recycling and storage areas should be provided. Equally, systems that reduce water consumption and allow for the reuse of grey water is encouraged. Development will not increase flood risk on or off the site.

Development should maximise the opportunities for using of on-site renewable forms of energy.

9.25 Climate change is a global issue which has the potential to have significant environmental, social and economic impact on the UK. Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the NPPF expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. Thus, the policies below seek to minimise energy use within the built environment and thus reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

9.26 In setting out these policies, the Council is mindful that that the Government's Planning Practice Guidance allows latitude for local plans to set local requirements for sustainability targets subject to normal conventions relating to viability.

Energy Hierarchy

9.27 Reducing the net energy consumption of a building can be achieved in a number of ways. Some of these can be relatively expensive and also result a significant amount of embodied energy being introduced to the building. Thus, adopting the wrong approach could easily result in an energy reduction strategy which impacts the overall viability of the project and may therefore not be enacted.

9.28 The Council therefore requires that energy efficiency measures are considered in the following order:

Design Optimisation

Design and Construction 9

9.29 Adjusting building orientations, glazing proportions and external shading are often cost neutral at design stage but can have a significant impact on the finished building's energy demand. Suggested considerations are:

1. Adopt a building orientation which optimises solar gain.
2. Adopt an appropriate amount of glazing on different facades to optimise solar gain whilst minimising losses. As a starting point, rough guidelines for glazing limits as a proportion of external wall areas are:
 - i. South Elevations: no more than 25%;
 - ii. West and East Elevations: No more than 20%; and
 - iii. North Elevations: As little as is practicable.
3. Include external shading or eaves overhangs on southern elevations in order to reduce the risk of summer overheating (and thus reduce cooling loads).

Fabric Improvement

9.30 Heating, cooling and renewable energy technologies typically have a useful lifetime of around 20 years. However, the fabric of a building is likely to be in place for at least 50 years and often for much longer. In terms of return on investment, it therefore makes sense to invest in the fabric first. Improving the fabric performance to reduce energy use in the first place also means that when renewable energy sources are introduced, they are able to reduce the building's net energy use to a much lower level. Suggested improvements are:

- Increase the amount and/or performance levels of insulation in the walls, roof and floors (in that order);
- Improve the thermal performance of the glazing by fitting higher specification double glazing or triple glazing;
- Seek to design out cold bridging – this is a reduction or discontinuity in the insulation layer which typically occurs at the junctions of walls/ floors/ roofs.;
- Improve the building's air tightness levels; and
- Consider introducing Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery systems to improve heating efficiency.

Renewable Energy Sources

9.31 Having reduced energy demand through design optimisation and fabric improvement, the introduction of renewable energy sources have the potential to reduce the net energy consumption of the building to near zero levels. As these technologies often have an aesthetic impact, careful consideration should be given to their location and positioning, particularly within conservation areas. Consideration should be given to the following technologies:

- Solar Photovoltaic Panels

9 Design and Construction

- Solar Thermal Panels
- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Ground Source Heat Pumps
- Biomass Boilers

Energy Targets

9.32 Government guidance indicates that councils may require compliance with energy standards that exceed the Building Regulations. Having applied the Energy Hierarchy set out above, it is considered that carbon emission rates well below those set out in current Building Regulations are achievable whilst maintaining the viability of developments.

9.33 Targets for Dwelling Emission Rates (DER) are therefore set out in the policy below.

Design and Construction 9

Policy D 9

Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Development proposals for both commercial and residential buildings should demonstrate that they have applied the Energy Hierarchy, as set out in the Local Plan and, in doing so, have achieved a Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) which is 19% lower than the Target Emission Rate (TER) required by Building Regulations Part L 2013 Edition⁽⁵¹⁾.

Evidence should be provided in the form of an Energy Assessment which, as a minimum should include the following:

1. A calculation of the energy demand and carbon dioxide emissions for the proposed buildings using approved Building Regulations software and carried out by a qualified energy assessor;
2. Evidence that, as far as practicable, the development's design has been optimised to take into account solar gain, glazing proportions and external shading (Design Optimisation);
3. Evidence that, as far as practicable, the development's fabric performance has been improved to minimise energy loss (Fabric Improvement);
4. Evidence that renewable energy sources have been considered and incorporated into the development where it is feasible and economic to do so; and

These requirements will apply unless it can be demonstrated that they would make the development unviable.

Highly Energy Efficient Buildings

9.34 Whilst Policy D9 will ensure a high level of energy efficiency in the district's new buildings, there is the potential to go considerably further and create buildings which achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption. The Council seeks to encourage such developments.

51 Currently Approved Document L1A: Conservation of fuel and power in new dwellings, 2013 edition and Approved Document L2A: Conservation of fuel and power in new buildings other than dwellings, 2013 edition. DCLG March 2014 (as amended)

9 Design and Construction

Policy D 10

Highly Energy Efficient Buildings

Development proposals which demonstrate that the proposed buildings have a net emission rate of zero or below, or are proposed to be certified Passivhaus buildings, are encouraged, and will be considered favourably.

Environment 10

Introduction

10.1 This section of the Local Plan sets out policies for the historic environment, the natural environment, flood risk, natural resources and environmental protection.

The Historic Environment

10.2 In Uttlesford the historic environment is a rich, complex and irreplaceable resource. It has developed through a history of human activity spanning many thousands of years. Some of the resource is hidden in the form of archaeological deposits. Other elements such as the historic landscape are the highly visible result of many years of agricultural, industrial and commercial activity and are referenced in Policy C1 Protection of Landscape Character. The “built” part of the historic environment is equally rich with towns, villages and hamlets set in the gently rolling countryside. There is a wealth of fine buildings, many of them ancient and listed and these buildings with their varied styles and methods of construction span many centuries.

10.3 The historic environment is a fundamental part of the District’s environmental infrastructure but it is sensitive to change and needs to be properly understood to make sure it is managed and conserved. There may be opportunities to enhance the historic environment and it is important that these are realised. It is equally important that adverse impacts associated with development, whether they are direct such as new building or indirect such as traffic generated by development are minimised.

10.4 The Council will continue to work in partnership with archaeology, design and other specialists to make sure that only development which protects and enhances the historic environment is approved.

10.5 The Council has carried out a series of Conservation Area Appraisals leading to management plans and some communities have produced their own design advice through Town and Village Design Statements. New development will be expected to comply with such advice where this has been approved by the Council.

10 Environment

Policy EN 1

Protecting the Historic Environment

Development will be supported where it preserves or enhances the significance of the historic environment.

Development proposals for the re-use of heritage assets will be favourably considered where the proposals represent the optimum viable re-use and are consistent with their conservation. In determining applications, the council will require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Relevant historic environment records should be consulted, and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Proposals will be considered against the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the historic environment can bring.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, the council requires developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and a field evaluation.

Proposals to introduce energy efficiency and renewable energy measures affecting heritage assets will be weighed against harm to the significance of the heritage asset and the wider historic environment.

The Council will work proactively to safeguard heritage assets identified on the Local Buildings at Risk Register and the national Heritage at Risk Register by using statutory powers to secure urgent works and repairs as necessary, where there is identified harm, immediate threat or serious risk to its preservation.

The Council will continue to work alongside owners and relevant partners including, Essex County Council, Historic England and other heritage bodies to secure their restoration and optimum viable re-use.

Design of Development within Conservation Areas

10.6 There are 37 individual Conservation Areas in the District distributed across 31 parishes. It is important that the development pressures on the District are managed in ways that protect and enhance the built environment and avoid inappropriate development. The Council has produced and published Conservation Area Appraisals for all the conservation areas and applied Article 4 directions in a number of settlements as appropriate to limit certain permitted development rights within these areas.

Environment 10

10.7 Within a Conservation Area, most renewable energy equipment can be installed on or within the curtilage of a non-listed building without planning permission. Where planning permission is required the policy identifies the criteria which need to be met to make sure there is no loss of the special interest or significance of the Conservation Area.

10.8 Development adjacent or even some distance from a conservation area may impact on the setting of that conservation area and subsequently the significance of the heritage asset. Applications for development outside of the conservation area which would impact upon its character and setting need to refer to the Conservation Area Appraisal, and justify how the proposed development would conserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area as identified in the appraisal.

Policy EN 2

Design of Development within Conservation Areas

Development will be permitted where it conserves or enhances the character and appearance of the features of a Conservation Area including plan form, the relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open areas and their enclosure, the grain or significant natural or heritage features. Outline applications will not be considered. Development involving the demolition of a structure which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area will not be permitted.

Development will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. There is no detrimental visual impact and no substantial pollution of any type (air, water and ground, noise);**
- 2. It does not damage key views in, out or within the Conservation Area, including very visible secondary elevations;**
- 3. There is no loss of character or historic significance of the Conservation Area;**
- 4. There is no detrimental impact on the sustainability of communities and economic vitality; and**
- 5. It makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.**

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Policy EN 3

Protecting the Significance of Conservation Areas

Development outside of the conservation area which might otherwise affect its setting will only be permitted where it is not detrimental to the character, appearance or significance of the Conservation Area and does not adversely affect listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets, either within or outside the Conservation Area.

Development Affecting Listed Buildings

10.9 There are over 3,700 Listed Buildings or structures in the District. This represents about one quarter of the number of listed buildings in Essex which is itself one of the most richly endowed of all English counties. In addition, any building or structure within the curtilage, which belonged with the main building when it was listed, and which was built before 1 July 1948, is also viewed as a Listed Building. Features listed in this way are referred to as 'Curtilage Listed'.

10.10 The Listed Buildings in the District vary widely both in age, character and their vernacular materials. Clay tile, slate and long straw thatch are used for roof materials. The stock of buildings with long straw thatch is big enough to be a cluster of regional architectural importance which it is important to retain and repair with long straw when needed. Although timber framed buildings predominate, some historic buildings are constructed of brick and stone. External finishes include many excellent examples of pargetting, flintwork and weatherboarding. Every period from before the Norman Conquest is represented, but over 40% of all Listed Buildings date from the 17th century.

10.11 When considering the special architectural or historic interests of a Listed Building the following are broad examples of what will be taken into account: - the structural frame or fabric; the plan form; roofing material; external cladding; the proportion, detail and arrangement of doors and windows, interior floor plans; interior finishes and features of special interest to the building. Proposals to remove later additions which detract from the significance of the building with a view to replacing these with features which better reveal the significance of the heritage asset e.g. the replacement of non-original windows will normally be treated sympathetically provided the design and quality of the materials, etc respects the historic nature of the building.

10.12 Proposals for the conversion of a Listed Building may result in a form of development which would not normally be allowed e.g. conversion to a dwelling outside development limits. Such a proposal maybe approved if the applicant can demonstrate that the conversion scheme is the most appropriate way to secure the future of the listed building and the conversion can be carried out in a sympathetic manner without damage to the fabric, setting or architectural and historic interest of the building.

Environment 10

10.13 Whilst some minor measures to improve the energy efficiency of a Listed Building can be undertaken without the need for consent any works which would affect the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building would require Listed Building consent. Applicants are advised to have early discussions with the Council's Conservation Officer.

10.14 Applications for development affecting a Listed Building need to describe the significance of the Listed Building or structure affected including any contribution made by their setting and should explain how the proposal would preserve its special character and significance. This should be proportionate to the asset's significance

Policy EN 4

Development affecting Listed Buildings

Development affecting a Listed Building should be in keeping with its scale, form, character, materials and surroundings. Demolition of a Listed Building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, or alterations that impair the special architectural or historic interest of a Listed Building will not be permitted.

In cases where planning permission might not normally be granted for a change of use favourable consideration will be given to conversion schemes that represent the most appropriate way of conserving the Listed Building, its architectural and historic characteristics and its setting.

Development involving the installation of renewable energy equipment on a Listed Building will be acceptable if the following criteria are met:

- 1. Locations other than on a Listed Building have been considered and dismissed as being impracticable;**
- 2. There is no irreversible damage to significant parts of the historic fabric; and**
- 3. The location of the equipment on the Listed Building would not cause harm to its character or appearance.**

Scheduled Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance

10.15 There are 79 Scheduled Monuments in the District, shown on the policies map. Any work which might affect a scheduled monument either above or below ground level will require consent from Historic England. Within the District, over 4,000 sites of archaeological interest are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Essex County Council. These sites are not shown on the policies map and enquiries should be made to the County Archaeologist. The Historic Environment

10 Environment

Record represents only a fraction of the total. Many potentially important sites remain undiscovered and unrecorded. Archaeological sites are a finite and non-renewable resource. As a result it is important to make sure that they are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed.

10.16 The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether the monument is scheduled or unscheduled. There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important sites and their settings. The need for development affecting archaeological remains of lesser significance will be weighed against the relative significance of the archaeology.

10.17 Applicants proposing development affecting a scheduled monument or site of archaeological significance need to consult Historic England's National List for England (NHLE) and explain how the significance of the heritage asset will be affected. The developer will be expected to fund the pre-application survey work and any agreed preservation or recording work.

Environment 10

Policy EN5 1

Scheduled Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance

Where nationally important archaeological assets, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there will be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ for example through modification of design, layout, drainage, landscaping or the siting and location of foundations. The Council will seek the preservation in situ of archaeological assets unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss or all of the following apply:

1. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
2. No viable use of the site itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
3. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
4. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

In situations where there is evidence to suggest that historic assets or their settings would be affected, an archaeological field assessment should be submitted as part of any planning application. The assessment must define the significance of the assets and the impact of the proposed development thus allowing an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. In the circumstances where preservation in situ is not possible or feasible, then development will not be permitted until a programme for excavation, investigation and recording has been submitted and agreed by way of a pre-commencement condition.

Historic Parks and Gardens

10.18 There are seven Historic Parklands, Parks or Gardens identified on the Policies Map whose character remains relatively intact and are included in the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The desirability of preserving historic parks and gardens and their settings is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether the park or garden is designated or undesignated. Development which would substantially harm Audley End Park as a Grade I historic park and Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Walden as a Grade II* historic garden will only be acceptable in wholly exceptional circumstances.

10.19 Applications for development affecting a designated historic park or garden need to refer to the Historic England Register and explain how the proposed development preserves and where appropriate enhances the design, character, appearance and historic significance of the District's registered parks and gardens and how the proposed development impacts on the significance of the registered parks and gardens.

10 Environment

Policy EN 5

Historic Parks and Gardens

Development will be permitted provided it sustains and enhances the significance of Historic Parks and Gardens such as their principal or associated buildings and structures, formal and informal open spaces, ornamental gardens, kitchen gardens, plantations and water features.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance

10.20 The District benefits from a wealth of non-designated or listed buildings that are considered to be locally significant and make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Uttlesford. This may be due to their historic, aesthetic, evidential or communal value, or a combination of these factors. This may include houses, shops, schools, village halls, churches and even important walls, railings or fingerposts.

10.21 The Council's Local List of Heritage Assets identifies assets which although not statutorily listed make an important architectural or historical contribution to the local area and merit protection from development which adversely affects them. Non-designated assets of archaeological interest and parks and gardens are considered under policy EN7.

10.22 The Council may identify new heritage assets at any stage of the planning process and their identification would be a material consideration in any planning decision.

Environment 10

Policy EN 6

Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance

The planning authority will seek to ensure the retention, enhancement, and viable use of heritage assets of local interest. Whilst not enjoying the full protection of statutory listing, the design and the materials used in proposals affecting these assets should be of a high standard and in keeping with their character and local significance.

Development proposals which would have an adverse impact upon the character, form and fabric of the heritage asset of Local interest and/ or would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the asset will be resisted. Development proposals will instead seek to enhance the heritage asset of Local interest

Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

10.23 The strategy is to protect and enhance biodiversity within the District working with partners including the Essex Biodiversity Project and the Essex Wildlife Trust and through controls on development to reduce potential impacts on sites which may have importance for biodiversity.

10.24 Uttlesford has a range of important sites and habitats for biodiversity, recognised through designations, from national to local importance. Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance are identified on the Policies Map and these represent a tiered network for the conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity within the district. There are no European or international wildlife sites in Uttlesford, but there are sites in neighbouring districts and the Council has taken account of the impact of development in Uttlesford on these sites through its Habitats Regulations Assessment. Sites within Uttlesford include the statutorily protected national designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the non-statutorily protected Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites. Sites with protected species, important habitats and sites which are important for their historic landscape interest will be protected and where possible enhanced.

10.25 There are 14 nationally designated sites made up of 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 2 National Nature Reserves (NNR).

10.26 There are 280 locally important nature conservation areas which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS). Many of these are ancient woodlands but there are also good examples of grassland habitats. There are 42 special road side verges which are protected for their flora. There are 18 proposed Local Geological Sites (LoGS) which range in size from single erratic boulders to quarries. All these sites are identified on the Policies Map.

10 Environment

10.27 SSSIs and NNRs have the maximum degree of protection from development because the type and/ or quality of habitat means it is unlikely that it can be replaced elsewhere or its loss compensated for. Locally designated sites also make a significant contribution to the biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure of the District. Because there are a large number of them and they are distributed across the District they act as a network of sites allowing the movement of wildlife between sites as well as creating the distinctive landscape character of Uttlesford of woodland, verges and greens and water bodies. Developments that can make a positive contribution to the network of sites by habitat creation linking sites will be positively considered, especially if it contributes to the Essex Wildlife Trust Living Landscape initiative. Advice on incorporating biodiversity in developments can be found on the Essex Biodiversity Project website.⁽⁵²⁾

10.28 Development proposals with water edge frontages including rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds should make provision for ecological buffer strips with a view to protecting and where appropriate enhancing water dependent habitats and species.

10.29 Where development proposals will be carried out on land with a watercourse currently culverted, opportunities for de-culverting and restoration to an open watercourse should be sought as a means of creating blue infrastructure and enhancing development site.

10.30 Hatfield Forest at 403ha is the District's largest SSSI and it is also a National Nature Reserve. Hatfield Forest is a medieval hunting forest of mixed deciduous woodland and parkland and extends beyond the SSSI designation. The forest provides an important recreation resource to the residents of Uttlesford and is a strategic area of green infrastructure which is important to protect. Hatfield Forest faces existing pressure from visitors, particularly in the winter months when paths in the forest can be damaged and habitat loss has occurred. Any increase in visitor numbers needs to be carefully managed so as to minimise impact on the forest.

10.31 Although not protected by national legislation development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland will be refused.

10.32 An ecological survey and impact assessment will be required for any development affecting or with the potential to affect:

- A national or locally designated site;
- Protected species;
- Species on the Red Data List of threatened species; and
- Habitats suitable for protected species or species on the Red Data List.

Environment 10

10.33 Ecological surveys and impact assessments must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Field surveys must be conducted at the optimum time for the species. Further information can be obtained from the Natural England Standing Advice for Protected Species.

10 Environment

Policy EN 7

Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Council will seek to optimise conditions for wildlife and habitats to improve biodiversity and tackle habitat loss and fragmentation.

Development proposals will be supported where they protect and enhance sites internationally, nationally and locally designated for their importance to nature conservation, ecological or geological value as well as non-designated sites of ecological or geological value. An ecological survey will be required to be submitted with the application if the development site affects or has the potential to affect any of the following:

1. An internationally designated site, for example Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site.
2. A nationally designated site; for example: SSSI's & National Nature Reserves.
3. Locally Designated Sites; for example: Local Wildlife Sites.
4. Protected species;
 - a. Species on the Red Data List of threatened species; and
 - b. Habitats suitable for protected species or species on the Red Data List.

Where a site of International designation for nature conservation importance is adversely affected by the proposals, permission will be refused unless the District Council is satisfied that: there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, which could be of a social or economic nature, sufficient to override the harm to the site; there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest relating to human health, public safety or benefits of primary importance to the environment.

A biosecurity protocol method statement will be required for all development proposals where there is potential to impact sites protected for biodiversity importance to ensure the introduction of invasive non-native species of both flora and fauna is prevented.

Development proposals which would result in significant harm to a biodiversity or geodiversity interest will only be considered after alternative sites that would result in less or no harm have been assessed and discounted. In the absence of alternative sites development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated against, appropriate compensation measures will be sought.

Environment 10

To ensure that mitigation or compensation measures, which may include Biodiversity Offsetting, take place these will be secured by conditions or planning obligations upon any approval that may be granted and will need to include financial support for continued maintenance.

If significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity cannot be adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, permission will be refused. The design of development should incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity or geodiversity value of the development site.

Such measures should include making a contribution to the network of biodiversity sites, including open spaces and green infrastructure and water bodies which make links between habitats and support wildlife. Measures should also attempt to link wildlife habitats together, improving access to, between and across them.

These measures will be secured by condition or planning obligations upon any approval that may be granted and may need to include a biodiversity management plan and financial support for continued maintenance.

Measures to enhance biodiversity should be designed so as not to increase the risk from bird strike to the operation of aircraft at London Stansted Airport; where appropriate the implementation of a bird hazard management plan will be secured by condition or planning obligation.

Open Spaces and Trees

10.34 There are open spaces of high environmental quality in many of the towns and villages. Such spaces may include village greens, commons, or large mature gardens. Locally important open spaces may also be identified in Neighbourhood Plans, other community led plans or Conservation Area Appraisals. Some of these open spaces maybe registered as Assets of Community Value. Sometimes, the land may have been left in a state of untidiness but, nevertheless, the existence of the space maybe important to the character of the area, to biodiversity and as an area of natural greenspace. Retention of the space would also enable its full environmental potential to be realised through an enhancement project. Such areas are generally protected by excluding them from defined development limits. The need to protect similar areas within settlements is equally important and significant areas of open space are shown on the Policies Map. Other smaller spaces of importance will also be protected where development would be inappropriate, but it is not practical to identify all of them. Sometimes community facilities may be proposed on open space. If a successful design can be achieved, a limited loss of open space may be permitted.

10.35 Where the principle of development is acceptable it should avoid the loss of features that are prominent elements and enhance the local environment, such as healthy mature trees.

10 Environment

Policy EN 8

Open Spaces

Development proposals will not be permitted which will harm the character of, or lead to the partial, cumulative or total loss of protected traditional and non-traditional open spaces including village greens, commons and other visually important spaces as defined unless:

- 1. The open space uses can be satisfactorily replaced in terms of quality, quantity and access with an equal or better standard than that which is proposed to be lost; and**
- 2. The re-provision is located within a short walk (400m) of the original site.**

In the case of school and college grounds, development may be permitted where it meets a demonstrable educational need and does not adversely affect playing fields or other formal sports provision on the site in accordance with Sport England Policy.

Where replacement open space is to be provided in an alternative location, the replacement site/facility must be fully available for use before the area of open space to be lost can be redeveloped.

10.36 The NPPF encourages local authorities to protect ancient woodlands and veteran or aged trees. Ancient woodland is defined as an area that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD and such areas exist within Uttlesford. Veteran trees are particularly valuable for biodiversity due to the large amount of deadwood that they may contain. These trees are defined by Natural England to be, 'A tree which because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value culturally, in the landscape or for wildlife.'

10.37 Ancient woodlands and veteran trees represent an important constituent of green corridors across the district since they have a high inherent biodiversity value.

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Policy EN 9

Ancient Woodland and Protected Trees

Development resulting in the partial, cumulative or total loss or deterioration of ancient woodland (as shown on the Policies Map) or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland or visually important groups of trees and fine individual specimens, will only be permitted unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Development proposals affecting ancient woodland or veteran trees will be expected to mitigate any adverse impacts, and to contribute to the woodland's or veteran tree's management and further enhancement via planning conditions or planning obligations.

Flood Risk

10.38 All development should be located in areas at low risk of all forms of flooding. The main risk in the District is from river or fluvial flooding. Development in certain locations can cause flood risk elsewhere as a result of increased runoff. Surface water run-off from new development should be controlled as near to the source as possible and ideally within the boundary of the development. Just over 96% of the District lies within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of fluvial flooding. The scale of development required in the Local Plan period can be provided on land which is at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding and all new built development is expected to be located in this zone. When locating development and placing development within a site, all forms of flooding should be considered. The sequential test will be used to ensure new development takes place in the areas with the lowest probability of all forms of flooding and, where necessary, the exception test will be used. Full details of the sequential and exception tests are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 10.34 page 132).

10.39 A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for new development sites in accordance with the Environment Agency's Standing Advice. All major development should include a drainage strategy which should be submitted for review for the Lead Local Flood Authority which is in line with their requirements. The Council will work with developers and the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to achieve sustainable local flood mitigation measures as part of development. Any residual risk should be able to be safely managed with safe access and escape routes where required and access by emergency services.

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10.40 The Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2016)⁽⁵³⁾ and the Environment Agency's Risk of Surface Water Flooding Maps⁽⁵⁴⁾ show the flood risk across the District. Essex County Council Environment, Sustainability and Highways as Lead Local Flood Authority for Essex under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010⁽⁵⁵⁾ and, along with the district councils, must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development when carrying out flood risk management functions, in accordance with the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2013).⁽⁵⁶⁾

10.41 Policy EN11 seeks to avoid flood risk to people and property where possible, and manage residual risk through location, layout and design, taking account of the impacts of climate change on changing flood risk. This includes making space for water by directing development to areas at lowest flood risk first, protecting sites required for flood risk management and the use of sustainable drainage systems as appropriate - as set out in Policy EN12.

53 [Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(JBA consulting, 2016\). Available: http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5545&p=0](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5545&p=0)

54 [Long-term Flood Risk Maps \(Environment Agency, 2018\). Available: https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map)

55 [Flood and Water Management Act \(2010\). Available: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents)

56 [Essex local Flood Risk Management Strategy \(2013\) by Capita Symonds. Available: https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Local_Flood_Risk_Management_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Local_Flood_Risk_Management_strategy.pdf)

Environment 10

Policy EN 10

Minimising Flood Risk

Development proposals will comply with flood risk assessment and management requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance and the Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to address current and future flood risks with appropriate climate change allowances.

A sequential approach will be applied to all proposals in order to direct development to areas at the lowest probability of all forms flood risk on the Environment Agency's Risk of Water Flooding Map in order to avoid flood risk to people and property, unless the proposal has met the requirements of the sequential test and the exception test.

All new development will need to demonstrate that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing properties, and proposed development is (or can be) safe and shall seek to improve existing flood risk management.

All proposals for development of 1 hectare or above in Flood Zone 1 and for development in Flood Zones 2 (or 3a) must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment that sets out the mitigation measures for the site and agreed with the relevant authority. Development in Flood Zone (3a or) 3b, the functional flood plain must accord with those categories in Table 3 Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification which are described as appropriate for this Flood Zone.

A flood risk assessment must also accompany proposals where it may be subject to other sources, and forms, of flooding or where other bodies have indicated that there may be drainage problems.

Surface Water Flooding

10.42 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)⁽⁵⁷⁾ are designed to reduce the potential impact of surface water drainage discharges from both new and existing developments. SuDS aim to replicate natural systems of surface water run-off through collection, storage, and cleaning before releasing water slowly and reducing the possible risk of flooding. This is in contrast to previous conventional drainage systems that bring about rapid run-off which may result in flooding, associated pollution and potential contamination of groundwater sources. Examples of the type of system that can be provided for large-scale developments are reed beds and other wetland habitats that

57 [Sustainable Drainage Systems: Design Guide \(ECC, 2016\)](http://flood.essex.gov.uk/media/1277/suds-guide_april-2016.pdf). Available: http://flood.essex.gov.uk/media/1277/suds-guide_april-2016.pdf

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collect, store, and improve water quality along with providing a habitat for wildlife. For smaller developments SuDS could comprise a green roof or rainwater harvesting techniques.

10.43 The benefits of SuDS are such that it is important that they form an integral part of development proposals wherever relevant. The optimal level of runoff is that which would occur if the site had not been developed (i.e. a greenfield site). The achievement of this level is important to all sites regardless of which flood zone they are located in. Applicants should take account of SuDS guidance produced by Essex County Council in accordance with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 or other relevant guidance.

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Policy EN 11

Surface Water Flooding

All new development will incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Such systems will be expected to provide optimum water run-off rates and volumes taking into account relevant local or national standards and the impact of the Water Framework Directive on flood risk issues.

SuDS may not be appropriate if there are known contamination issues on site, or if the soil drains poorly and would inhibit the use of infiltration SuDS, but not the use of attenuation SuDS. Only where there are inappropriate soil or geological conditions and/ or engineering difficulties, should alternative methods of drainage be considered. If alternative methods are to be considered adequate assessment and justification should be provided and consideration should still be given to pre and post development runoff rates. If this is not possible it will be necessary to demonstrate why it is not achievable.

Development proposals adjoining main rivers, ordinary watercourses and culverts should be set back to provide a suitable buffer in accordance with the relevant published guidance. Developments should not compromise the ability of organisations responsible for maintaining watercourses from accessing and undertaking works.

The Council will seek to restore/ de-culvert rivers through the determination of planning applications when and where the opportunity arises. Retrofitting of SuDS and how they will be maintained will be required as part of any planning application.

SuDS systems should be designed so as not to increase the bird hazard risk or the safe operation of London Stansted Airport or the movement of aircraft; where appropriate the implementation of a long term maintenance of SuDS plan and of a bird hazard management plan will be secured by condition or planning obligation.

SuDS systems should be designed to avoid harm to nationally important archaeological assets, whether scheduled or not.

Protection of Water Resources

10.44 Water supply in Uttlesford is managed and delivered by Affinity Water. The area supplied by Affinity Water is divided into three regions and eight water resource zones (WRZ) and Uttlesford falls within their Central Region and the Stort WRZ. Every 5 years Affinity Water publishes a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) which shows how the company plans to supply enough water to meet demand over the next

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25 years. The most recent was published in June 2014. Affinity Water are due to publish a replacement for the current 2014 Water Resource Management Plan/WRMP 19 in summer 2018.

10.45 The Affinity Water Final Water Resource Management Plan 2015-2020⁽⁵⁸⁾ notes that in agreement with the Environment Agency water abstraction will be reduced by 5% by 2020, leakages cut, to take into account of growth of 6% over its operating area. Between 2015 and 2020 investment in infrastructure will increase by more than £500 million to ensure high quality water to customers. Water use in Uttlesford is high. The current average per capita consumption for the Affinity Water Central Region is 161.27 litres per person per day (l/p/d) for existing customers, compared to a national average of 147 l/p/d and 121.92 and 126.19 in the East and South East Affinity Regions where higher levels of metering have been achieved. Changes to Building Regulations in 2010 require that the potential consumption of someone occupying a new home must not exceed 125 l/p/d.

10.46 The detailed Water Cycle Study (April 2018)⁽⁵⁹⁾ show an overall increase in residential water demand of some 3042m³/day to 2033 based the preferred option for change in water demand. Affinity Water have identified a number of feasible options to balance supply and demand including schemes to reduce leakage, install more customer meters and encourage better use of water with minimal wastage. Affinity Water have also identified possible schemes to provide additional water resources from groundwater, surface water and transfers from neighbouring water companies

10.47 The Council is unlikely to be able to have much influence on the consumption rates in existing properties but it can influence consumption in new homes through planning policy so in order to reduce consumption it is considered that all new homes should meet a target of 110 l/p/d. This can be achieved through the specification and installation of water efficient fixtures such as dual flush toilets, spray taps and showerhead flow regulators. The Council can also influence consumption rates in its own housing stock. For non-residential uses the Council is not intending to specify a standard across all uses as there maybe variations in requirements between uses. However, all applicants will be expected to demonstrate how water efficiency will be achieved in their development.

10.48 The Environment Agency prepares Catchment Management Abstraction Strategies that monitor existing abstractions to understand water balance/availability – to ensure enough water for people and the environment. The 4 strategies covered in the detailed Water Cycle Strategy are;

- Cam and Ely Ouse
- Combined Essex
- Roding Beam and Ingrebourne
- Upper Lee

58 Uttlesford Water Cycle Study Phase 1 Update-30.04.18

59 Final Water Resource Management Plan 2015-2020 (Affinity Water, 2014, P. 105)

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10.49 Ground water provides a third of the drinking water in England and Wales, and it also maintains the flow in many of the rivers. Affinity Water Central Region abstracts 60% of the water supply from groundwater sources. It is therefore crucial that these sources are looked after to make sure that the water is completely safe to drink. The Environment Agency publishes information on the areas where contamination of ground water is a critical issue because they are near abstraction sites where water is drawn off for potable supply. There are a number of ground water protection zones in Uttlesford, under the reaches of the Cam, in the Pant Valley, the Chelmer Valley, and in the Stort Valley as shown on the Policies Map. A major aquifer lies under most of the northern half of the District.

10.50 Development must minimise its impact on the environment by adopting environmental best practice and necessary measures to limit pollution to acceptable limits. The ability of wastewater infrastructure to deal with the increased load arising from development is an important issue in protecting water resources, particularly the increase in the discharge rate from the sewage treatment works into rivers. It is therefore important to make sure that sufficient infrastructure exists or will be made available.

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Policy EN 12

Protection of Water Resources

Development will be supported where it is designed to minimise consumption of water, protect and enhance water quality and protect water resources.

All new residential development should achieve a water efficiency target of 110 litres per person per day and development should also make adequate and appropriate provision for water recycling. The extent to which water consumption is reduced will be monitored against the current national or local targets. Major development applications will need to demonstrate the relevant measures that the scheme incorporates and the anticipated levels of water consumption. The proposed measures will need to result in the current targets being met in order to be acceptable.

Development will be permitted where it will not cause contamination of groundwater, particularly in the protection zones shown on the Policies Map, or contamination of surface water. Where there is the potential for contamination effective safeguards must be in place to prevent deterioration in current water standards.

Planning permission will only be granted for developments which increase the demand for off-site service infrastructure where:

1. Sufficient infrastructure or environmental capacity already exists; or
2. Extra capacity can be provided in time to serve the development which will ensure that the environment and the amenities of local residents are not adversely affected.

When there is a lack of capacity and improvements in off-site infrastructure are not programmed, planning permission will be granted where the developer funds appropriate improvements which will be completed prior to occupation of the development, or where the water company confirms the off-site infrastructure can be provided in a timely manner.

The use of deep soakaways (including boreholes or structures that bypass the soil layers) for surface water disposal will not be permitted unless the developer can show:

3. There is no viable alternative
4. That there is no discharge of pollutants to groundwater; and
5. Pollution control measures are in place

Environment 10

Minerals Safeguarding

10.51 Minerals resources are finite and can only be worked where they naturally occur. Mineral resources of national and local importance need to be protected and safeguarded. In Uttlesford this includes mainly chalk in the north of the District and sand and gravel in the south. Mineral resources also need to be protected from incompatible/sensitive development nearby which might constrain mineral production in the future. Minerals Safeguarded Areas (MSAs) and Minerals Consultation Areas (MCAs) are included in the Local Plan and are shown on the policies map. MSAs identify areas on mineral deposits considered to be of national importance. MCAs include each safeguarded permitted mineral development and site allocation and can include a zone of up to 250m around the site. The Minerals Planning Authority (Essex County Council) will be consulted on relevant applications within the MSAs and MCAs. Policies relating to minerals and mineral sites are set out in the Minerals Local Plan prepared by Essex County Council.

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Policy EN 13

Minerals Safeguarding

Where development proposals fall within a Minerals Safeguarding Area the Local Planning Authority will consult the Minerals Planning Authority where the site is greater than:

- 5 hectares for Sand and Gravel
- 3 hectares for Chalk
- 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay

Non-minerals proposals which exceed these thresholds should be supported by a minerals resource assessment to establish the existence or otherwise of a mineral resource of economic importance. Consultation with the Essex County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority must be undertaken on development exceeding these thresholds in accordance with the adopted Minerals Local Plan.

The Local Planning Authority will consult the Minerals Planning Authority on any relevant application within a Minerals Consultation Area.

Development will only be supported where it does not unnecessarily sterilise minerals resources or conflict with the effective working of permitted minerals development or Preferred Mineral Site.

Environmental Protection

10.52 New development can have a negative impact on the environment and property through its potential to pollute. Furthermore, opportunities for new development, particularly on previously developed land, can be constrained by existing pollution issues. The overall aim of environmental protection policies is to ensure the sustainable and beneficial use of land. Within this aim, polluting activities that are necessary for society and the economy should be minimised and subject to appropriate controls in order to reduce their adverse effects and contain them within acceptable limits. There is already legislation and policy in place to help control pollution, including the Environment Act 1995, which gives local authorities' powers to control pollution and address contaminated land including ways to deal with cumulative impacts of development.

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Pollution

10.53 The planning system plays a vital role in making sure all new development takes into account pollution levels and ways to minimise these. Pollution can come from many sources, including light, noise, air, odour and vibrations, all of which can have a damaging effect on the local environment, amenities and health and well-being of residents and visitors.

10.54 All development will be assessed on the level of pollution it would generate and the effect it would have on the surrounding area including the natural and historic environment. Assessments will be made in relation to the benefits of the development, such as job creation, affordable housing, and sports provision, against the degree of impact caused by the development.

10.55 The Council will expect the development to mitigate any negative effects caused and also take into account any controls and mitigation measures that could reasonably be imposed by condition e.g. hours of operation.

10.56 Developments sensitive to pollution such as homes and schools will not be permitted in areas where they would be adversely affected.

Policy EN 14

Pollutants

The potential impacts of exposure to pollutants must be taken into account in locating development, during construction and in use.

Planning permission will not be granted where the development and uses would cause adverse impact to occupiers of surrounding land uses or the historic and natural environment, unless the need for development is judged to outweigh the effects caused and the development includes mitigation measures to minimise the adverse effects.

Developments sensitive to pollutants will be permitted where the occupants would not experience adverse impact, or the impact can be overcome by mitigation measures.

Air Quality

10.57 Saffron Walden has an AQMA that contains some road junctions where there is a risk that levels of nitrogen dioxide do not meet the national air quality objective. The Council will promote measures to improve air quality and will only support development if it would not prejudice achievement of the national air quality objectives.

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Where possible development should contribute to improvements in air quality. The Council will bring forward proposals to address poor air quality in the AQMA through the UDC Air Quality Action Plan 2017 - 2022⁽⁶⁰⁾.

10.58 Poor air quality is also experienced alongside the M11 and the A120. A zone 100 metres on either side of the central reservation of the M11 and a zone 25 metres either side of the centre of the A120 have been identified to which Policy EN16 applies. Since both zones run through the countryside where there is strict control on new buildings it is unlikely there will be many proposed developments close to either road.

10.59 When determining whether adverse effects are significant, reference will be made to the requirements set out within current UDC Air Quality Technical Planning Guidance.

60 [Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022 \(UDC, 2017\)](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7346&p=0). Available: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7346&p=0>

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Policy EN 15

Air Quality

Development will be permitted where:

1. It can be demonstrated that it does not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from emissions to air; or
2. Where a development is a sensitive end-use, that there will not be any significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity arising from existing poor air quality,.

Applicants must demonstrate that:

3. There is no adverse effect on air quality in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) from the development;
4. Pollution levels within hte AQMA will not have a significant adverse effect on the proposed use/users;
5. Development has regard to relevant UDC Air Quality Technical Guidance;
6. Development within or affecting an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) will also be expected to contribute to a reduction in levels of air pollutants within the AQMA;
7. Development will not lead to an increase in emissions, degradation of air quality or increase in exposure to pollutants at or above the health based air quality objective;
8. Any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality are appropriately mitigated; and
9. The development promotes sustainable transport measures and use of low emission vehicles in order to reduce air quality impacts of vehicles.

Applicants shall, where appropriate prepare and submit with their application, a relevant assessment, taking into account guidance current at the time of application.

Where development proposals would be subject to unacceptable air quality standards or would have an unacceptable impact on air quality standards they will be refused.

Where emissions from the proposed development approach EU Limit values or national objectives the applicant will need to assess the impact on local air quality by undertaking an appropriate air quality assessment. The assessment shall have regard to guidance current at the time of the application to show that the national objectives will still be achieved.

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Larger development proposals that require a Travel Plan and Transport Assessments/Statements as set out in Policy TA1 will be required to produce a site based Low Emission Strategy. This will be a condition on any planning permission given for any proposed development which may result in the deterioration of local air quality and will be required to ensure the implementation of suitable mitigation measures.

Contaminated Land

10.60 The principle of sustainable development means that, where possible previously developed land (also known as brownfield sites) including those affected by contamination should be brought back into use. Any proposal on previously developed land needs to take proper account of potential contamination. Mitigation measures, appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed development and which protect the water environment during remediation will need to be agreed.

Policy EN 16

Contaminated Land

Development on a site where the land is known or suspected to be contaminated will be permitted providing that a risk assessment, site investigation, remediation proposals and timetable for remediation are provided and satisfactorily overcome the identified risk, including any potential risk of pollution of controlled waters (including ground water).

Specifically, applicants must demonstrate that the risk assessment, site investigation and remedial works have regard to and are in compliance with current UDC Contaminated Land Technical Guidance.⁽⁶¹⁾

Noise

10.61 This policy aims to make sure that wherever practicable, noise sensitive developments are separated from major sources of noise such as road, rail and air transport and certain types of industrial development.

10.62 The Civil Aviation Authority annually produces Noise Exposure Contours⁽⁶²⁾ for London Stansted Airport which are available on their website. Calculation of exposure to aircraft noise takes into account the level of use of each departure route and glide

61 [Land Affected By Contamination: Technical Guidance for Applicants & Developers \(Essex Contaminated Land Consortium, 2014\)](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1915&p=0). Available:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1915&p=0>

62 [Stansted Airport Noise Strategy & Action Plan 2013-2018 \(Building on a Sound Foundation\)](http://mag-umbraco-media-live.s3.amazonaws.com/5346603/2016-noise-contour-stansted.pdf). Available:

<http://mag-umbraco-media-live.s3.amazonaws.com/5346603/2016-noise-contour-stansted.pdf>

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path, the number of aircraft movements on each path and aircraft type. Noise contours are calculated for each year, and can be provided for future scenarios using assumptions when required. Monitoring of air noise will help to make sure that the policy continues to be applied to the most appropriate area. Noise sensitive developments include residential uses.

10.63 Aircraft movements are a particular major source of noise in Uttlesford. London Stansted Airport Noise Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2018 (Building on a Sound Foundation) sets out what controls there are on noise generated by departing and arriving aircraft (Sections 5.1 and 5.2). The Strategy also sets out what controls there are on aircraft noise generated by ground operations (Section 5.3) and what the night noise restrictions are (Section 5.4). The Action Plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least every five years and whenever a major development occurs affecting the noise situation.

Policy EN 17

Noise Sensitive Development

Development will be permitted unless:

- 1. The occupiers of surrounding land or the historic and natural environment is exposed to unacceptable adverse levels of noise and/or vibration (as defined within Uttlesford District Council's Noise Impact Technical Guidance⁽⁶³⁾). Potentially noisy developments will be located in areas where noise will not be of significant consideration or where its impact can be minimised by mitigation.**
- 2. The future occupants of noise sensitive development would experience adverse levels of noise and/ or vibration disturbance (as defined by Uttlesford District Council's Noise Impact Technical Guidance)**

Specifically applicants, where reasonable and proportionate, according to the end-use and nature of the area and application, must demonstrate that:

- 3. Development has regard to the current Uttlesford District Council's Noise Assessment Technical Guidance and is assessed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority**

Any sources of noise and vibration generated by the development are adequately mitigated to prevent loss of amenity for existing and future occupants and land uses.

63 [Noise Assessment Technical Guidance \(UDC, 2017\)](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6973&p=0). Available: <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6973&p=0>

10 Environment

Light Pollution

10.64 There is a potential conflict between keeping lighting to a minimum in order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties, protect the character of the countryside, reduce harm to wildlife and maintain the visibility of the night sky whilst ensuring adequate lighting to meet safety, security and operational objectives. Lighting can also extend the opportunity for outdoor sport activities in the winter months when there is limited daylight.

10.65 Lighting schemes must therefore be designed carefully to prevent light spillage and glare and to represent the minimum necessary for operational and security purposes. Schemes will be considered against the latest national guidance and lighting standards including the Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (2011)⁽⁶⁴⁾

Policy EN 18

Light Pollution

Proposals for external lighting will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- 1. It does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring uses or the wider landscape;**
- 2. The level of lighting and its period of use is the minimum necessary for security and operational purposes;**
- 3. Low energy lighting is used in conjunction with features such as movement sensors, daylight sensors and time controls;**
- 4. The alignment of lamps and provision of shielding minimises spillage, glare and glow, including into the night sky;**
- 5. There is no loss of privacy or amenity to nearby residential properties and no danger to pedestrians and road users; and**
- 6. There is no harm to local ecology, intrinsically dark landscapes and/ or heritage assets.**

The Council will seek to control the times of illumination including limiting the hours of use for external lighting of all the development.

64 [Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light \(Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2011\)](http://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/obtrusive-light) can be accessed on the website of the Institute of Lighting Professionals here: www.theilp.org.uk/documents/obtrusive-light

Countryside 11

Introduction

11.1 As set out in the Spatial Strategy (see Section 3) of the Local Plan, the strategy for the rural areas in Uttlesford is to promote a sustainable rural economy and to address any issues of rural deprivation while at the same time protecting the important countryside assets including agricultural land, historic and landscape features and biodiversity. Strategic Policy SP10 – Protection of the Countryside in the Spatial Strategy section sets out the principle of the protection of the countryside for its intrinsic character and beauty. Policy SP10 also sets out the approach to development in the Green Belt and the London Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone.

11.2 This section of the Local Plan sets out more detailed policies that will be applied when considering planning applications for development in the Countryside. These policies relate to: protection of landscape character; re-use of rural buildings; change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden; and new community facilities within the countryside.

Landscape Character

11.3 The District is made up of three main types of landscape. The largest area is the farmland plateau landscapes which are gently rolling landscapes with medium to large arable fields but well wooded in places. The landscape is cut into by river valleys providing in places long distance views across the valleys. The open nature of the skyline of the ridge tops is particularly visually sensitive to new development. There are four river valley landscapes in Uttlesford based on the Rivers Cam, Stort, Pant and Upper Chelmer. The valleys have flat or gently undulating valley floors and are served by several tributaries. The open skyline at the top of the valley slopes is particularly sensitive to change through development, as are the more intimate views between the lower slopes and the valley floor. The North West corner of the District is characterised by chalk upland landscapes which are rolling landscapes of broad round back ridges. They are characterised by expansive arable farmland providing panoramic views. The open nature of the skyline of the chalk ridge tops is particularly visually sensitive to change. Each of these landscape character types can be subdivided into Landscape Character Areas and 26 of these areas have been identified in Uttlesford. Detailed profiles of the Landscape Character Areas setting out the visual, historic and ecological characteristics, sensitivities to change and planning guidelines are set out in the Landscape Character Assessment for Uttlesford (Chris Blandford Associates; 2006)⁽⁶⁵⁾.

11.4 The landscape holds evidence of human activity in Uttlesford stretching back at least 50,000 years. Some irregular shaped fields are pre 18th Century but are probably of medieval origin and some maybe older. Larger more regular fields can be evidence of fields enclosed in the early post medieval period and later in the 18th and 19th Century as part of the parliamentary Enclosure Act. A number of small commons and linear roadside greens can also be found; the former have all been enclosed but the latter still largely survive as wide road side verges.

65 [Landscape Character Assessment \(Chris Blandford Associates, 2006\). Available via the UDC website: https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4109/Environment](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4109/Environment)

11 Countryside

11.5 Throughout Uttlesford there is a network of minor roads which evolved in Roman and Saxon times when the area was first settled so they follow the contours of the landscape. They are of historical importance because they retain their original alignment linking ancient settlements. They are infinitely variable and picturesque. Some are sunken lanes with steep banks indicating that they are the routes of early settlers; others are broad byways indicating that they are early coaching routes. The lanes are identified on the Policies Map.

11.6 Although the following policy will be most frequently used when considering applications within the countryside there may be instances where development within or on the edge of settlements can have an impact on the broader landscape. This policy will apply to development within and beyond development limits.

Policy C 1

Protection of Landscape Character

Development will be permitted provided that:

1. **Cross-valley views in the river valleys are maintained with development on valley sides respecting the historic settlement pattern, form and building materials of the locality;**
2. **Panoramic views of the plateaux and uplands are maintained especially open views to historic buildings and landmarks such as churches;**
3. **It preserves and enhances the historic settlement pattern, especially scale and density, and that it uses materials and colours that complement the landscape setting and landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape;**
4. **It preserves and enhances the landscape pattern and structure of woodland areas, hedgerows and individual trees and does not diminish the role they play in views across the landscape;**
5. **It preserves and enhances the historic landscape character of field patterns and field size, greens, commons and verges;**
6. **No material harm is caused to the form and alignment of protected historic lanes; and**
7. **It preserves and enhances the landscape significance and better reveals cultural and heritage links**

Countryside 11

Re-use of Rural Buildings

11.7 Buildings in the countryside, including listed and non-designated buildings outside the defined development limits of settlements, are an integral part of both the landscape and the local economy. It is therefore important to facilitate their reuse but in a manner which makes a positive contribution to both the rural landscape and the rural economy. In May 2013 the Government made changes to the Permitted Development rights to allow the change of use of agricultural buildings under permitted development for a range of uses subject to certain criteria being met. The policy below will only apply to those cases where planning consent is required. The first part of the policy determines a series of priorities in terms of the preferred use of rural buildings and the second addresses the quality and character of the building. The implications of the policy are that not all buildings will necessarily be appropriate for another use.

Policy C 2

Re-use of Rural Buildings

The re-use of rural buildings (where permission is required) outside the defined development limits will be permitted provided that:

- 1. The buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction;**
- 2. The buildings are capable of conversion without major reconstruction or significant extension;**
- 3. The buildings are not of an essential agricultural need to support an existing rural enterprise and the buildings loss would not result in additional buildings being required;**
- 4. The development would protect or enhance the character of the countryside, its amenity value and its biodiversity and not result in a significant increase in noise and light levels or other adverse impacts; and**
- 5. The development would not place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural network in terms of traffic levels, road safety, countryside character or amenity.**

Change of use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Garden

11.8 Proposals to change agricultural land to domestic garden will be acceptable where there is no material change to the character or appearance of the surrounding countryside and should not create wedges of domestic garden intruding into an agricultural landscape. Proposals could include, for example, unworkable corners of fields. Proposals should include appropriate boundary treatments like native hedges or

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post and rail fencing which do not have the effect of urbanising the area or changing the openness of the countryside. If structures in the new garden, like sheds etc, would change the open character the Council may impose conditions removing permitted development rights when granting planning permission.

Policy C 3

Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Garden

Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden will be permitted if the proposal, particularly its scale and means of enclosure, does not result in a material change in the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

New Community Facilities within the Countryside

11.9 In line with the Essex Rural Strategy 2016 – 2020 (RCCE 2016) and successor documents published by Essex Rural Partnership the Council seeks to promote vibrant, mixed and sustainable rural communities. Applications to provide and/or improve community facilities in the District will be favourably considered, providing the scale of the development is proportionate to the size of the catchment population it serves. Community facilities include buildings such as village or community halls, youth clubs, places of worship, education, childcare facilities and healthcare facilities.

Policy C 4

New Community Facilities within the Countryside

The provision of new or replacement outdoor sport, recreational or community facilities is considered acceptable beyond development limits.

Facilities will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. The need for the facility can be demonstrated;**
- 2. The need cannot be met on a site within the development limits; and**
- 3. The site is well related to the settlement.**