

**Committee:** Local Plan Leadership Group

**Date:** 3 March  
2021

**Title:** Feedback on Consultation on Theme 3:  
Climate Change Issues and Options

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## Summary

1. This report feeds back on the comments received on the First Consultation (Issues and Options)

## Recommendations

2. That members note
  - a. the consultation responses and the Forum's views
  - b. potential actions to address issues
  - c. that no final recommendations will be made until all comments have been considered (consultation ends 24 March 2021)
3. That members, if desired, provide any feedback e.g. for officers to consider later when making final recommendations, or for Forum members' reference.

## Financial Implications

4. None at this stage.

## Background Papers

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

## Impact

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Communication/Consultation	Consultation is on going
Community Safety	n/a
Equalities	Forthcoming policies will be subject to an equalities and Health Impact Assessment
Health and Safety	n/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	n/a
Sustainability	Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objective of the Council
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	n/a

## Situation

### Background

2. In preparation to the formal consultation on a draft Local Plan the Council is consulting on a series of 9 themes. The starting point for the consultation on each theme is the Community Stakeholder Forum whose purpose is to inform, start a discussion and generate comment.
3. The third theme was on the topic of Climate Change and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 9<sup>th</sup> December. Sam Kennedy, Director of Environment & Climate Action at Essex County Council made a presentation to the Forum and then points raised in the presentation were discussed. Sam Kennedy's presentation and a video of the Forum meeting are available on the [website](#).
4. Following the Forum's meeting, the theme was open for public consultation asking the general question of what are the issues surrounding Climate Change, and what options are there to enact meaningful change. People are invited to make comments up to the close of the whole consultation on all the themes on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Comments received within the first four weeks are summarised and presented back to the Forum for comment and to this working group.

- Summary of consultation responses
  5. Between the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and 20 January 2021, 31 people responded to the theme.
  6. Appendix 1 is a summary of these comments. Common themes are shown on the infographic adapted from the consultation document. This is followed by a more detailed summary of the comments.
- Community Stakeholder response
  7. Appendix 1 was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10 January 2021. They were asked if they wished to provide any views on the comments and issues raised.
  8. The Forum felt that sustainable energy development infrastructure such as solar farms would need careful consideration to ensure the impact upon the skyline, historic landscape and countryside views within the district are protected.
  9. The Forum were concerned the implementation of sustainable living options would not subsume efforts to create affordable housing, and that where possible both affordable housing and sustainable homes should be worked upon in conjunction with one another.
  10. There were no responses on the use of sustainable construction materials such as timber which acts a carbon sink, within the meeting.
  11. There was a preference for putting housing near existing transport infrastructure to reduce vehicular use and expanding upon existing housing settlements where possible.
  12. There was a strong discussion and number of responses indicating greater education and information surrounding sustainable living standards and green infrastructure should be made available to encourage an increase in the uptake of sustainable lifestyles.
  13. Responses also suggested the cost of climate change enhancements should be shared amongst all parties involved in the implementation of development.
  14. Solar panels should be fitted on new homes as a pre-requisite and efforts should be made to retrofit existing housing stock with solar panels.
- Officer comments
  15. The heritage and landscape of the District is very important to residents and its character should be an important factor when considering sustainable
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development infrastructure projects. The Council will have to consider producing policies and guidance for the protection of heritage assets and the setting/ significant views of our existing settlements. This can be informed by landscape and built form character assessments.

16. In respect of a development strategy the consultation response indicated support for expanding upon existing and established settlements with nearby transport links and increasing these networks. The council will have to consider the size of existing villages and market towns and whether there is capacity to increase these to accommodate further development. The discussion and comments also mentioned delivering new settlements, and expanding sustainable transport infrastructure to serve these. It will be necessary to look at what is needed to support existing communities, the benefits of development and impacts on character and heritage.

17. The suggestion to introduce a policy to encourage sustainable energy generation within new developments will require policy and guidance in the form of an SPD for developments to reference. The Council should also consider the potential to encourage the retrofitting of homes with solar panels where possible.

18. The requirement for additional infrastructure to reduce car movements was highlighted. The suggestions included greater cycle paths, expanding bus, rail and train networks and increasing connectivity between existing settlements.

- What happens next

19. The consultation on this theme remains open until 24 March 2021.

20. Officers and the Forum will consider any feedback made by members at this meeting. Final recommendations, taking into account all comments on all themes will be prepared after the close of consultation in March. The Council will use the comments to determine its vision, strategy, policies and prepare the draft Local Plan.

21. Early comments made on Theme 4: Transport will be presented to the next meeting of the Working Group.

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## Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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Insufficient regard is given to the comments received on the consultation	1 Little	Could lead to unsound plan.	Members and officers to carefully consider results of consultation, and clearly explain reasons for decisions made.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Appendix:

## **Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021**

### **First Consultation: Theme 3 Climate Change**

#### **Introduction**

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 9 December and the theme was then open for comment.

Comments received by Wednesday 20 January are summarised below and common themes are shown in the diagram.

These comments will be presented to the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10 February and Local Plan Leadership Group on 3 March.

Comments received after 20 January 2021 up to the close of consultation on 21 April 2021 will be brought together in a document summarising comments from all nine themes, the Council's response and how the issues raised in the comments will be reflected in the Draft Local Plan.

Between 9 December and 20 January, 31 people responded to the theme.

#### **What we have been told so far**

The following is a summary of people's views on the actions needed to forestall the impacts of climate change.

To read all the representations in full please go to the [Consultation Portal](#).



### Sustainable Construction Methods

- Improve sustainability of new builds
- Zero Carbon Housing
- Reports demonstrating CO2 use during construction phase of a development



### Biodiversity

- Destruction of habitats
- Loss of diverse range of wildlife species locally
- Increase requirement for planting schemes within development
- Loss of established pathways

### Loss of Agricultural Land



- Retain agricultural land to increase food security domestically
- Reduce occurrence of placing green infrastructure projects on productive agricultural land

### Parks and Open Spaces



- Increase available public open spaces and parks
- Increase planting in public parks

# Climate Change

Discussion surrounding issues and potential options

### Improved connectivity



- Improve transport connections between villages and rural areas



### Flood Risk

- Minimise building upon floodplains
- Improve drainage systems within district



### Harm To Landscape

- Concerns regarding the implementation of green infrastructure at the cost of compromised landscape views from footpaths and pedestrian paths
- Concerns regarding the industrialisation of the location
- The views and appearance of the location are valued
- Rural Environment is valued

### Improve sustainable transport methods



- Reduce reliance on private vehicular use
- Provision greater green transport infrastructure
- Increase cycle and walking routes



## Education

### Issues

- Lack of public awareness surrounding individual responsibilities
- Lack of education of sustainable ways of living

### Options

- An education programme to educate the general public on individual responsibility to reduce carbon emissions
- Create a department within the local authority to oversee actions and enforcement of carbon reduction, sequestration strategies and reduction initiatives
- Build out an exemplar carbon sequestering affordable housing scheme, for use to demonstrate and for use as an education tool for developments
- Support training and employment opportunities within energy & natural systems e.g. growing hemp, woodwork, wool for insulation etc.
- Signify in meaningful ways how individual responses to climate change provide adjust its effects
- Encourage education amongst builders regarding climate change and carbon emissions irrespective skill level

## Sustainable Construction Methods

### Issues

- Development at construction phase is not scrutinised for good practice with regards to lowering carbon emissions
- Sustainable materials are currently no conditioned for use within newly built housing schemes
- Sustainable housing is not currently given the same weight/importance as providing affordable housing

### Options

- Raise Building Standards
- Construct buildings with lower energy requirements
- New builds fitted with latest requirements for energy efficiency within homes (however this should not be at the expense of affordable housing)
- Zero carbon housing prioritising natural forms of ventilation, cooling etc. to reduce reliance on air conditioning units
- New builds should be required to include higher levels of thermal insulation
- A higher percentage of recycled materials should be used within construction
- Energy efficiency standards for new homes should be prioritised through prohibiting materials and methods which are not carbon neutral
- Build low carbon social housing
- All new housing, industrial developments and alterations should enforce fitting solar panels where practical
- Building Regulations should be enhanced to included more detailed requirements for achieving higher energy efficiency standards and for the consideration of design and materials to be used
- a full audit at completion of the building to check and sign-off that the construction fully complies with the specification
- Developers should provide a document detailing energy consumption for new builds and the CO2 produced during construction



- New developments must provide better insulation as well as greater noise barriers
- Create new garden communities which contain necessary facilities and are within walking distance to larger settlements that benefit from reliable transport systems to major areas.
- Costs of enhancements should be shared amongst landowners, developers, buyers and possible subsidies
- Minimise waste during construction

## Sustainable Design

### Issues

- Housing built are not energy efficient
- Housing developments do not encourage sustainable energy generation or consumption

### Options

- Commercial buildings should include solar panels on roof tops
- Greater discussions during design stage regarding biodiversity, landscape and carbon (climate change) mitigation strategies
- Public buildings and car parks should include solar PV panel installations
- Mitigation of effects of development on climate change should be discussed at design phase
- Increase viability of rainwater harvesting within new build development sites
- Energy recycling should feature more prominently within the design stage of buildings, particularly office and commercial buildings
- Minimise waste during the operational phase of the development scheme
- Monitor energy use of housing development
- Designs of new builds should incorporate as much natural light as possible
- Prioritise developments which facilitate working from home
- Require carbon free energy generation installations on all new developments such as solar and geothermal generators and requiring charging points for electric vehicles onsite

## Site Allocations

### Issues:

- Development in sites of sparse development with low connectivity encourage private car use
- Concerns regarding urban sprawl
- Loss of valuable habitat space

### Options:

- Location of proposed sites for housing to be built should connect to existing settlements
- Reluctance to permit development which will result in the loss of woods, forests and habitat land which act as carbon sinks, contribute to offset greenhouse emissions
- Prevent development outside of existing towns and villages
- Resist development which are for 2+ dwellings which rely upon vehicular travel
- Build more local, denser communities with local facilities rather than sprawling out of town development

- Resist urban sprawl
- Encourage walkable villages
- Resist large scale housing developments within rural villages with limited travel options/sustainable transport infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions
- Development should be strategically placed along rail corridors and close to stations, bus services and local amenities
- No development in close proximity to water courses, water table level, foul and surface water drainage
- Expansion of existing settlements, rather than creation of new housing developments
- Create new towns, containing carbon neutral affordable homes

### Harm to Views and Landscapes

#### Issues:

- Destruction of landscapes
- Concerns regarding Cutlers Green Solar Farm proposal and its impact to the rural landscape
- Wind farms are detrimental to landscapes and the existing views of the countryside
- Concerns the historic landscape of Uttlesford will be impacted upon by the inclusion of sustainable energy infrastructure such as wind farms and solar farms
- Increased industrialisation of Uttlesford Landscape
- Views from footpaths and pedestrianised paths will be compromised due to the large scale energy developments
- Green infrastructure projects will blight the landscape and convert the countryside landscape into an industrialised landscape

#### Options:

- Encourage green infrastructure projects on sites that are unproductive and of low value with regards to landscapes and views

### Sustainable Transport

#### Issues:

- Village and country lanes are currently experiencing traffic pollution and a volume of traffic for which they are unsuited to.
- There is currently limited public transport infrastructure across the district for cycling and walking

#### Options

- A North exit straight onto the M11 from the A120 instead up directing traffic towards the Birchanger roundabout to reduce congestion
- Housing should be positioned within walking/cycling distance to a railway line – taking into account planned and existing transport schemes
- Carbon footprint of housing should be calculated to include travel required to work and facilities.
- Encourage active travel connections and the provisions of green public transport methods such as electric trains

- Increased connectivity of footpaths and cycleways between villages
- Provide a network of smaller scale public transport methods such as minibuses
- Buildings should be permitted where there are methods of transport that reduce the reliance upon vehicles.
- Invest in electrical charging points across the district
- Provide a reliable bus service
- Reduce reliance on cycling alone to reduce private car use
- Implement green transport systems within new large scale development sites
- Increasing cycle infrastructure may not reduce unsustainable transport use as the climate and cold weather prohibits cycling
- Limit available parking on streets to discourage multicar ownership
- Cross working and sharing of ideas across authorities should be heightened to promote greater integration of transport infrastructures such as roads, cycling paths, pedestrian routes and the pedestrianisation of areas
- charger installations in towns where off-street parking is limited
- Developers should provide greater links with larger scale developments and main towns
- Increase rail connectivity between villages to reduce reliance on vehicular use
- Provide free parking within housing sites on the outskirts of larger towns, as well as safe storage units for cycles to reduce traffic within main towns such as Saffron Walden
- Increased and more efficient cycling infrastructure should be implemented

## Sustainable Energy

### Issues

- Concerns regarding the sustainability of the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport and energy consumption
- Dumping of aviation fuel
- Current reliance on petrochemicals

### Options

- Increase use of natural & local products, including water recycling
- Provide greater grants that are more widely available to allow existing housing stock to be retrofitted with more energy efficient and sustainable methods of insulation energy generation
- Encourage commercial buildings to use sustainable forms of energy generation
- Solar electricity should be a preferred method for heating and to provide heater water
- Concerns regarding the destruction of environment through the implementation of solar farms on green field.
- solar panels should not be positioned on steep hillsides and should be screened with hedge
- Existing gas boilers should be replaced by heat pumps or hydrogen systems
- All public buildings should have solar panels. Small businesses & retail should be encouraged to install them
- The use of solar panels should be encouraged on new developments but large scale plants should be restricted to 'brown field' sites, sites of limited agricultural value
- Offshore wind turbines should be favoured to reduce impact to landscape
- Reduce night flights and dumping of aviation fuel

## Flood Risk Mitigation

### Issues:

- Building upon flood plains will reduce their viability as a flood defence mechanism

### Option:

- Flood plains should not be built upon to ensure they are viable for their intended use

## Light Pollution

### Issues:

- External lighting, used where not necessary

### Options:

- Use of external lighting, where not essential should be removed
- Increased focus on external light use within development schemes

## Public & Green Space provisions

### Issue:

- Pandemic has increased use of open spaces, therefore a greater level of open and green spaces throughout the district should be strategised

### Options:

- Increased planting within public open spaces to increase biodiversity rather than mown lawns etc.
- Link hedgerows and increase movement corridors within open spaces to provide greater mobility for wildlife

## Listed Buildings

### Issues:

- High density of listed buildings within district which are restricted from increasing the energy efficiency of their home

### Options:

- Review restrictions on listed buildings to improve the sustainability of these due to the high density of these within the district
- Listed building consent needs to be relaxed to enable better insulation & green energy installation
- Green infrastructure projects may damage/harm the settings of listed buildings

## Landscaping Schemes

### Issues:

- Destruction of landscapes will contribute to global warming

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### **Options:**

- Larger developments should provide fully detailed and enforceable sets of conditions to incorporate landscaping, hedgerows, trees and wild areas within their schemes

## **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems**

### **Issues:**

- Increased levels of flooding
- Flooding events in recent history, have blocked roads in Clavering, Wicken, Bonhunt and Newport.
- Increased levels of rainfall have led to higher rates of flooding within the area, this needs addressing through

### **Options**

- The implementation of drainage systems across the district

## **Use of Brownfield Sites**

### **Issue**

- Use of high grade, productive land for green infrastructure projects

### **Options**

- Solar energy schemes could be positioned within disused brownfield sites
- larger scale developments should be sought within areas of 'brown field' land or on land with low agricultural / landscape value
- Brown field sites, Grade 3 land and disused airfields should be used for solar farming rather than agricultural land

## **Biodiversity**

### **Issues:**

- Concerns regarding destruction of wildlife habitats
- Loss of established pathways
- potential introduction of new hazards to wildlife

### **Options**

- Increase solar farms within the district as they increase biodiversity, encourage wildflowers and pollinators to improve populations of insects and wildlife
- The planting of trees, plants and hedging should be required within new developments
- Prohibit the removal of veteran trees which sequester more carbon than younger trees
- Increase conifers within settlements which offer overwintering birds and insects habitat space
- Increased planting schemes which encourage local wildlife populations

## **Agricultural Land**

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### Issues:

- Concerns regarding loss of arable farmland
- Green infrastructure projects may result in the loss of productive farmland

### **Options:**

- Retain agricultural land and reduce the use of these sites for renewable energy sites, such as solar farms
- Retention of agricultural land, secures the viability of UK produce following Brexit and COVID-19 and provide food security
- Seek financial compensations from agricultural landowners who are permitted to build or sell land for development and thus increase carbon emissions.
- Work with farmers to reduce chemical input and increase biodiversity & soil protection
- Permit renewable energy infrastructure on roofs rather than agricultural land