

Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 1 Where you Live November 2020

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 11 November and the theme was then open for comment.

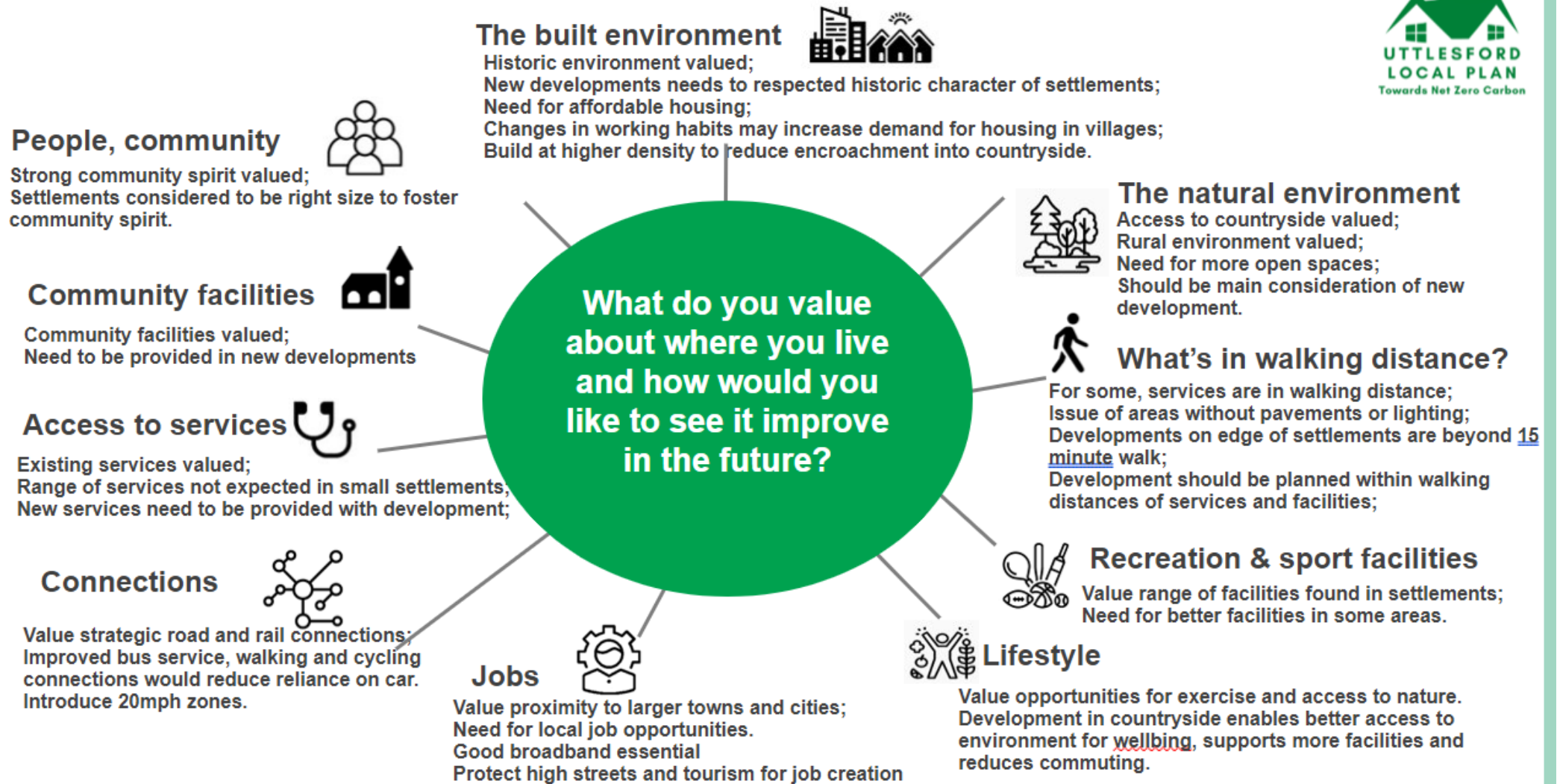
Between 11 November 2020 and 21 April 2021, 73 people and organisations responded to the theme.

What we have been told about 'Where you live'

The following is a summary of what people said they *value about where they live and how they would like to see it improve in the future.*

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

What you have told us about where you live...



Built environment: What do you like about the built character of where you live?

General comments

Value the spread of small towns and villages across District which have preserved much of the area's historical, cultural and community worth.

Is a 15 min neighbourhood appropriate to rural district? People like rural location/isolation of village life.

Newport PC support the idea of the 15-minute community.

Delivering a 15 minute community does not require a new settlement. Existing settlements would benefit from selective small-scale development to provide affordable housing, local facilities and improved public transport.

Changes in working habits resulting from technology advances (notably fibre & Zoom) and accelerated by the Covid crisis are likely to increase demand for housing in rural villages. Equally, the climate crisis requires a significant shift away from the traditional commuting model of working.

We need to build houses fit for the 22nd century.

Chronic lack of affordable housing. Few suitable houses for young or low-income households. Need for affordable housing with mixed communities to avoid social isolation.

Character of area is being destroyed by unsustainable, poorly sited, dense, commercial and homogenous housing development.

Value volume and quality of historic assets. Value character of area and mix of old and new. Need to avoid identikit mediocrity.

Higher density should be considered in towns and larger villages to reduce encroachment into the countryside by continually adding to the periphery of settlements.

Settlement specific comments

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| Clavering | Value variety and low density. New development has increased traffic and exacerbated flooding and light pollution. |
| Great Chesterford | The village character is rural and interesting because the village has developed organically and has a range of house styles. |
| Great Dunmow | Value convenience of town offerings in countryside setting. Compact nature of town, easy walking and cycling. Neighbourhood Plan protects character, heritage, landscape and biodiversity. Concern over the future vibrancy and sustainability of the town centre and that increased employment commuting will make Gt Dunmow a dormitory town. Recent urbanisation has led to increased damage to rural surroundings. |
| High Roding | Value and wish to preserve village character – its rurality, history, spaces between buildings, linear shape. Change should not be to detriment of character and history of village. |

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| Little Easton | Value historic buildings and historic connections. Need affordable housing for local people. |
| Quendon and Rickling | Value the Green which acts as a focal point. Would like to see its use increased by other outdoor clubs. |
| Saffron Walden | Historic architecture of human scale and widely admired. Need more affordable housing. |
| Stansted Mountfitchet | Include trees in new housing developments. Value good facilities, green spaces, access to transport links. Although small has many positive attributes to enjoy. Peace and calm of technically private roads. Lack of road repairs makes it difficult for those on mobility scooters. |
| Thaxted | Value heritage. Negative impact of traffic; would like 20mph speed limit through village. |
| Various | New developments do not reflect vernacular style. Rural character of settlement. |

Natural environment: How easy is it for you to access nature?

General comments

Value agricultural countryside and green spaces. Value views of countryside from your home.

Value countryside, peace and the desirable village communities/street scenes – leafy, green space between houses, wildflower verges, village greens, ponds, dense high hedgerows, coppices and ancient woodland.

Environmental and sustainability factors should be main consideration of new development.

Uttlesford should be leader in Green recovery.

Lack of open spaces and parks. Need for greenspace and Country Park to relieve pressure on Hatfield Forest, need tariff on new housing to fund protection of Hatfield Forest.

To maintain natural environment only allow small pockets of development that keep trees and green spaces.

To improve natural spaces, plant more trees and wildflowers.

Countryside Protection Zone should be retained to prevent coalescence of housing and the airport.

Protect a swathe of countryside to join the greenbelt in the south, Hatfield Forest SSSI and the CPZ together.

The benefits of living in countryside area, such as access to the countryside, wildlife, a village feel etc are being eroded by over-development and industrial agriculture, with no real mitigations put in place.

Settlement specific comments

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| Elsenham | Rural character has been spoilt by recent development. |
| Great Chesterford | Can access countryside without using the car. |
| Great Dunmow | Value open spaces. Need to ensure new spaces provided in new development. Quick access to longer walking routes. Lanes and tracks for cycling. Value access to and views of Chelmer Valley. |
| Little Easton | Value rural environment. Promote restoration of Easton Park as country park for benefit of District and relieve pressure on Hatfield Forest. |
| Saffron Walden | Limited open space for leisure, need more open space. Value Audley End, Bridge End Gardens and the Common. |
| Takeley | Value rural character, wildlife. |
| Various | Value access to countryside from the village |

What's in walking distance? Can you walk to the places you need or like to go?

Lack of maintained and usable pathways between villages.

Local small businesses must be supported to keep the town going.

New developments within walking distance to schools, health facilities and other amenities should be supported, subject to the size and scale of the existing settlement and compliance with neighbourhood plan policies.

Settlement specific comments

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| Barnston | A 'neglected corner' with no amenities. |
| Clavering | Dispersed village but most village services within walking distance. some roads without pavement or lighting. |
| Great Chesterford | Primary school, village shop, doctor's surgery and mobile library all within walking distance. A post office would enhance the village. |
| Great Dunmow | Trade needs people to be able to park but create bike routes and rights of way, 20mph zone. Cars should become slow-moving 'guests' in a people-focused town. Small town but large enough to provide all amenities in walking distance. |
| Newport | Basic facilities are within walking distance, but local food shopping may be more expensive. Cars are seen as essential as people want choice. |

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| Saffron Walden | Wide range of services accessible. Developments on the edge are beyond 15 minutes' walk. |
| Takeley | Community buildings, shops, job opportunities. |
| Various (Newport/Clavering) | Walkable community not easily achieved in linear / dispersed villages. |

Recreation and sport facilities: What are recreation facilities like in your area? How could they be improved?

Settlement specific comments

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| Clavering | Has range of facilities in village. The village has good facilities, but some are in decline as there are not enough volunteers to run them. |
| Great Chesterford | Value integrated open spaces. |
| Great Dunmow | Has good facilities for town of this size. |
| Priors Green (Takeley/Canfield) Saffron Walden | Lack of open space, distant from facilities in Takeley. Need for more and better leisure and sports facilities. Value sports facilities and Fairycroft House. Appreciate Saffron Hall but can be intimidating to young people. |
| Takeley | Has sports pitches and clubs. |

Lifestyle: Does where you live enable you to live a healthy lifestyle? If not, what would help?

General comments

A good work-life balance, healthy diet & physical exercise may be unaffordable to key workers.

Horse riding and associated care of horses can be part of a healthy lifestyle and there are psychological and social benefits from equestrian activities. There is a need for safe bridle ways and the connecting up of the currently disjointed rights of way (British Horse Society).

Seeing the countryside from your home enhances sense of wellbeing.

More development in the rural area would enable people to enjoy a better quality of life in terms of access to the environment and for exercise but would enable more facilities to be provided in villages, which would hopefully reverse the trend of commuting to urban areas and high car usage.

Settlement specific comments

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| Clavering | Easy to access physical activity, nature, allotments for fresh food. |
| Great Dunmow | Opportunities for exercise, fresh food and be mentally active. |

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| Hadstock | Whilst there are social networks some people might be socially isolated. |
| Little Easton | Value peace, pollution free, risk free and healthy environment. |
| Takeley | Opportunities for healthy lifestyle. |

Jobs: Are there work opportunities in your area?

General comments

Value proximity to larger towns and cities.

Lack of job opportunities.

Focus on which industries would be useful to encourage here and get a solid plan together to support it fully.

Provision of good broadband essential to allow remote working.

Policies to protect high street and tourism would help job creation.

Settlement specific comments

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| Saffron Walden | Need for more local jobs. |
| Great Dunmow | Lack of job opportunities. |
| Little Easton | Most residents commute. Value other benefits of rural living than being able to walk to work. |
| Clavering | Minimal opportunities. Need to travel out of village. |
| Takeley | Job opportunities at airport and able to commute by train from Stansted or Bishop's Stortford. |

Connections: Can you use sustainable transport – train, bus, cycle, walk?

General comments

Value strategic connections (M11, rail-line, airport).

Need to have more emphasis of sustainable travel. Anecdotal evidence of greater demand for new walking and cycling routes useable throughout the year and for all levels of accessibility.

Public transport connections poor and expensive making a car cheaper and easier; lack of foot and cycle paths. Most people will use their cars most of the time.

Low-cost transport options required and delivered early in development.

Cycle paths could be provided through the Environmental Land Management Scheme.

Introduce 20mph limit in towns and villages.

Any growth will need to be supported by infrastructure.

Settlement specific comments

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| Ashdon | Would like to see cycle path between village and Saffron Walden. |
| Barnston | Benefits from good express bus service but less useful local service. Village would benefit from by-pass and all-weather footpaths to access services. |
| Clavering | Limited sustainable opportunities, a car is essential. A reliable and frequent bus service is a priority. |
| Great Dunmow | Poor connections to rail. Need to ensure town centre not overwhelmed by traffic but for cyclists and pedestrians to take precedence, to encourage more people out of cars and connect to the town with safe, pleasant cycleways. |
| Hadstock | Poor bus service, lorries and traffic making walking hazardous. |
| Little Easton | Value walking and cycling in local area otherwise car required. |
| Saffron Walden | Poor walking and cycling connections; poor public transport links. need safer streets and better connectivity. Able to cope without a car, there are two bus routes serving the southern part of town, a bus to Cambridge, train service to Cambridge, London and Stansted. Need for bus connections to train station to be better coordinated. |
| Takeley | Primary school walkable, good bus service, road access to M11, rail stations at Stortford and Airport. |

Access to services: How easy is it to access essential services?

General comments

Value good health, education and other services and proximity to larger towns and cities.

Difficult (time and cost) to access services such as Job centres. One is needed in the district.

Refuge from domestic violence needed.

The site of Homebase Saffron Walden should be safeguarded as a key DIY retail site.

Settlement specific comments

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|-------------------|--|
| Clavering | Reasonably self-supporting. Has shop, school and pub in village, other services 3-4 miles away. Visiting healthcare would be useful. The village hall could be refurbished to provide a healthcare room to present day standards. |
| Great Chesterford | Developments on periphery not integrated with village centre and have inadequate physical connections. |
| Great Dunmow | Value shops making themselves different and special. |

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| | Need improved access to medical facilities. Services under pressure due to recent growth. New development should provide additional services. |
| Hadstock | No shop or pub and so reliant on car. |
| Little Easton | Value services in Gt Dunmow and Thaxted. Do not expect services in small village. Would like village shop and better bus service. |
| Newport | The station, shops and services has made the village attractive to development but there have been no infrastructure improvements. The surgery and school are over subscribed. |
| Saffron Walden | Need for easily accessible medical care. |
| Stansted Mountfitchet | Has a good range of services. |
| Stebbing | Difficult if you do not have a car |
| Takeley | The primary schools are oversubscribed, no secondary school, no doctors' surgery. No additional services provided with new development. |
| Thaxted | Village is remote from services, inadequate public transport and no local employment. School is at capacity and unacceptable waiting time for surgery appointments. Adequate provision for existing size of village but further growth would put undue pressure on local services. |

Community facilities: Are there places near where you live to meet, exercise, hold groups and activities?

General comments

Value libraries for quiet space to study, free access to computers.

Community facilities needed in new development to prevent isolation and encourage community cohesion.

Settlement specific comments

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| Ashdon | Play facilities in village are important and should be retained. |
| Clavering | Has halls and church. |
| Great Dunmow | Value facilities for public and private functions. |
| Hadstock | Would like community hub with drop in facilities. |
| Little Easton | Value community facilities which are within walking distance. Potential to increase use of facilities. |
| Takeley | Has halls and church. |

People and community: Who lives in your area, is there a sense of community and what makes that?

General comments

Lack local vision for Uttlesford - need devolved democratic power leading a strong community, providing for itself and living respectfully in balance with our environment and with each other.

A vision is needed as Uttlesford is currently a poorly linked, rural commuter district with high per-capita carbon emissions. Uttlesford should be the most sustainable rural district in the UK.

Settlement specific comments

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| Berden | Village has a sense of togetherness as a community. |
| Clavering | Village has strong sense of community and passion for locality. Many retirees, few young families due to limited and expensive housing. |
| Great Chesterford | The village is the right size to have a sense of community. There are thriving societies and other groups. |
| Great Dunmow | Value community spirit and broad mix of people. |
| Little Easton | People have made conscious choice to live in small village community. |
| Saffron Walden | The town has a strong community spirit with active participation. |
| Takeley | Village has sense of community but falls to a small minority of dedicated individuals to nurture and sustain the community spirit. |

Consultee Specific Comments

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| Anglian Water | <p>Would encourage that a holistic and integrated approach to water management forms part of the local plan strategy and incorporates the development of 'water smart communities' with the aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance liveability by contributing to green street spaces and high-quality open space,• Promote the sustainable use of water resources and infrastructure to enable growth,• Build resilience against the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events,• Contribute to natural capital and biodiversity through multi-functional water features, and• Deliver water efficient homes to reduce household bills and support affordability. |
| Imperial War Museum Duxford | Need to take into consideration the constraints and impacts of building near an active airfield and to include safeguarding zone as part of the new local plan. |

Essex County Council The Essex Housing Strategy 2021-2025 has a number of strategic goals relevant to this theme.

- Enabling people to live independently,
- Growing Essex while protecting the best of the county

ECC aims to ensure that there is sufficient social and community infrastructure in place.

Site Promoter comments

'Parsonage Green'
Great Dunmow
(Pigeon Capital
Management)

The critical need for housing needs to be balanced against the need to protect Uttlesford's existing environmental assets and significantly reduce carbon emissions. The proposed spatial strategy needs to focus new homes towards its most sustainable settlements such as the Market Town of Great Dunmow and to a lesser extent Saffron Walden. Around these settlements there are opportunities to plan positively so that homes, jobs and services and facilities are within close proximity to one another and there are feasible alternatives to using the car.