

Motion to Council proposing the development of an Evaluation Framework for the Uttlesford Sustainable Local Plan & Supplementary Planning Document

Motion proposed by: Cllr Vere Isham

MOTION:

This Council affirms that the principles of social justice (access, diversity, equity, participation, and rights); of economic justice (fairness and equality of opportunities); and of environmental justice (fair access to safe and healthy environments) for all residents lie at its core and that these values will guide the development of its Local Plan.

Therefore, this Council commits to creating a district in which all residents are fairly and equitably treated, providing opportunities which enable them to live healthy and fulfilling lives, and which is sustainable, resilient, ecologically diverse, and beautiful.

Council agrees to develop an objective evaluation framework which will benchmark the Local Plan for its sustainability and ensure Council's core values are adhered to. This benchmark testing will be overseen by an independent body, with Members' involvement and developed drawing on local and national expertise and on good practice elsewhere in the country.

Council also proposes the preparation of a Supplementary Design Document [SPD] to be developed concurrently with the Local Plan and implemented on its adoption. This will ensure that the Council's highest environmental standards are adopted and implemented in Uttlesford now and in the future.

Furthermore, Council aspires to implement the 11 Healthy Homes and Places Principles, (set out on page 7), promoted by the Town and Country Planning Association, creating the highest quality places for residents and a fitting legacy for future generations.

Council agrees that the following 20 tests form a starting point and baseline for the development of the evaluation framework and the SPD. These tests have been drawn from local and national experts; from research including climate change reports by the ECC Climate Change Commission; the Royal Town Planning Institute and Town and Country Planning Association and the Centre for Alternative Technology, as well as from policies implemented in other councils such as Cornwall, Crawley, South Somerset and North Kesteven.

The tests will make a detailed assessment of how the Local Plan and SPD will meet Council's core values; local and national climate change strategies; targets and action plans; and a detailed sustainability appraisal made on how:

- A) The Local Plan and SPD provide healthy and beautiful places for residents to live in as well as good employment, educational and leisure opportunities.
- B) The Local Plan and SPD address local natural and built environments; new green infrastructure including sustainable transport; renewable energy generation; waste management; land use and the local economy.
- C) The Local Plan and SPD meet Council's commitment to making climate change mitigation a priority and becoming a 'zero carbon' district by 2030.

All developments, all settlements and engineering works will be required to meet these tests; full carbon costs must be calculated when constructing all infrastructure and buildings, and low carbon technologies and local materials used.

The Built Environment

1. Real local housing needs:

To prevent excessive and unnecessary building and the loss of viable green or agricultural land, the assessment of real local housing needs must be based on accurate forecasts.

At least 40% affordable homes must be built with 5% disabled access bungalows. These houses must be built to passiv or similar standards,

be part of settlements and not detrimentally distinguishable from other houses.

2. Character and density:

The character and density of any housing settlement must guarantee the highest quality of life and wellbeing and be appropriate to the rural nature of the district and to the constraints of the medieval towns and villages. There must be a robust mechanism to guarantee that the towns will not reach a saturation point after which the quality of life, the provision of services and infrastructure will decline.

3. Design:

The design of houses and other buildings must conform both to the rural environment and to existing buildings in the district. Cars should preferably be parked in designated parking areas of any settlement, thereby giving preference and priority to green walkable streets for pedestrians and cyclists and enhancing air quality. New infrastructure must allow for the delivery of goods and parcels from defined parking areas by electric floats or vehicles powered by energy efficient technology.

4. Energy efficiency:

New buildings must be energy efficient, properly insulated and have renewable power systems such as solar panels, as well as heat source pumps. All new developments must meet passiv or equivalent standards of insulation. The Council will actively encourage all existing public, commercial and residential buildings to be retrofitted by the end of the plan period including insulation and solar panels to achieve energy neutrality.

5. Building materials:

All building materials must be low carbon, environmentally friendly and produced as locally as possible. Modular buildings should be encouraged and produced locally offsite for onsite assembly. Carbon emissions must be fully calculated when building to achieve 'zero

carbon' by 2030. Permeable surfaces should be used wherever possible.

6. Renewable green energy:

All energy for new settlements must be from renewable sources and could be produced partially onsite by/for individual houses as well as by privately or community owned companies for one or more settlement.

Solar panels must be fitted on all available roofs, multi-storey car park structures and industrial premises and commercial sites; heat source pumps established on community-owned land. As new technologies become available and viable, the plan should be updated to include the newer options.

7. Amenity green space:

Sufficient allowance must be made for amenity green space and a minimum of 5sqm of green space per bedroom must be provided for each new settlement. This is in addition to SUDS or other functional spaces and includes amenity, sports and play access. Sufficient allotments and community gardens must be allowed for to meet the needs of residents.

8. Shops and facilities:

Shops, services and facilities must be available within a 15-minute walk or safe cycle within all larger settlements. Interconnectivity between villages and towns to access facilities must aim to be no more than a 15-minute electric car ride away.

9. Recycling and waste:

All new settlements must allow for comprehensive recycling areas to encourage healthy and full recycling. District waste must be managed with zero carbon emissions, landfill reduced to a minimum and more energy produced from waste as new technologies emerge.

10. **Fuelling stations:**

Each existing and new settlement must have some publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) fuelling points and the EV equivalent of the current coverage of petrol stations in the district should be maintained or expanded.

11. Topsoil:

Quality topsoil from all developments must be preserved wherever possible and reused in developments to secure biodiversity and soil quality. No peat should be used.

12. Tree planting:

At least one quality native tree appropriate for the area must be planted within settlements for each new bedroom built in the district, with a minimum of three trees per new dwelling. All trees planted must have maintenance contracts to ensure their best chance of survival.

13. Preservation of the rural landscape:

The preservation of the rural landscape must be maintained and where possible key upland vistas must remain unaltered. For each bedroom in a development 1.5 running metres of new indigenous hedges must be planted or replanted if they have been removed for construction purposes.

14. Rural character:

The district's rural character must be differentiated from the urban by ensuring that each dwelling has sufficient amenity space. Thus, a minimum quota of garden and green space should exceed that currently defined by the Essex design guide which references urban areas.

15. Water:

No developments are to be permitted in areas where water has been over-extracted or there is a known shortage. Water use in all houses must feature water capture through grey water, rainwater and other methods including green roofs. Dried streams and water courses must be restored through bank planting and dams.

The Natural Environment

16. Biodiversity:

Biodiversity must be protected, valued, and enhanced: agreed UN targets require 30% of the land to be formally protected. As part of the

local plan and the climate strategy, Uttlesford must seek to increase its wildlife habitats throughout the plan period, creating wildlife corridors, animal crossings under or over all new roads, and wildlife areas in woods, meadows, and hedgerows. The local plan must ensure there is no loss of biodiversity and identify suitable areas for protection and for the creation of new wildlife zones in settlements and in the countryside.

Local nature reserves must be established, and new water courses and ponds dug. Natural green spaces must be located within and outside settlements and include wild natural zones, existing and new woodland, and country parks. Countryside farm parks with public access should be established where traditional mixed farming techniques and sustainable ecology can flourish.

17. Agriculture:

Most of the land in Uttlesford is devoted to agriculture. The council must work with farmers and partner with the NFU, agricultural colleges and groups such as the Soil Association to support the transition to sustainable farming practices such as agroecology and permaculture and better water management which will enhance food security.

Green Infrastructure and the Local Economy

18. Sustainable transport:

Sustainable transport modes such as railways must be close to settlement sites. Transport modes must include rural electric bus services connecting villages and towns with services running at least hourly. Active travel is required to reduce private car usage: cycle and walking networks must connect villages and towns safely and include quiet lanes throughout the district. The Local Plan must provide for connecting all the district cycle paths by the end of the plan period.

19. District energy:

The production of district wide renewable energy must be part of the strategy for Uttlesford to become a zero-carbon district. This must include strategic positioning of different forms of renewable energy such

as solar farms, wind farms and biomass and other renewable technologies, and enable the creation of community energy and heat networks.

20. Green economy and investment:

The Local Plan must provide opportunities for the post fossil fuel world, creating research and manufacturing facilities for new green technologies, and actively seek inward investment enabling a green economy to flourish with new jobs and a skilled workforce.

TCPA 11 PRINCIPLES

All new homes:

1. Must be safe in relation to the risk of fire.
2. Must have, as a minimum, the liveable space required to meet the needs of people over their whole lifetimes, including adequate internal and external storage space.
3. Must provide access to natural light in all main living areas and bedrooms.
4. Must be designed to be inclusive, accessible, and adaptable to suit the needs of all, including the designed surroundings.
5. Should be built within places that prioritise and provide access to sustainable transport and walkable services, including green infrastructure and play space.
6. Must secure radical reductions in carbon emissions in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.
7. Must demonstrate how they will be resilient to a changing climate over their full lifetime.
8. Must be built to design out crime and be secure.
9. Must be free from unacceptable and intrusive noise and light pollution.

10. Must not contribute to unsafe or illegal levels of indoor or ambient air pollution and must be built to minimise, and where possible eliminate the harmful impacts of air pollution on human health and the environment.

11. Must be designed to provide year-round thermal comfort for inhabitants.