

Corporate Plan - Delivery Plan 2022/23

Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Putting Residents First				
We Will:	Activities	Outputs/Milestones	Resources	Lead CM/ Officer
<i>1. Be a council that listens to and acts for residents</i>				
<i>a. Increase the voice and influence of residents in planning and other Council matters</i>	Consultation on the emerging Local Plan	Effective consultation on the regulation 18 Local Plan in summer 23. Publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan in spring/summer 2024.	Local Plan & New Communities team.	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Local Plan Director of Planning
<i>b Administer public consultations that are effective, accessible, timely and high quality.</i>	A full residents' survey will be commissioned and delivered to inform the Blueprint Uttlesford project in areas such as customer interaction and channel preferences	Residents' survey conducted and reported by the end of 2022.	Blueprint Uttlesford project team and Transformation Reserve – estimated cost of survey work is £15,000	Leader Chief Executive
<p>Comment: The Local Plan team is exploring means of public consultation over and above statutory requirements, building on the RTP1 award-winning community engagement work carried out during the early stages of plan preparation.</p> <p>The residents survey will not be taking place in 2022/23 due to the realignment of the Blueprint Uttlesford programme. The Council has still engaged with residents on their priorities through the annual budget consultation, which took place in the autumn.</p>				
<i>c. Provide positive opportunities for young</i>	Work through the Youth Strategy Group and the	Review funding streams with the aim of combining into a	Existing resources – Communities Team	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency

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<p><i>people to engage with their local community and do things that keep them safe and support improved mental wellbeing.</i></p>	<p>Youth Initiatives Working Group to align grant funding for local youth provision by March 2023</p> <p>Encourage and support existing clubs/activities within the district to apply for funding where appropriate. March 2023</p> <p>Set up multi school young people's consultation panel.</p> <p>Encourage further participation in the youth council by working with Councillors to identify where it would be most beneficial and feasible to involve young people in the council process and to identify training for those young people to be able to integrate fully.</p>	<p>single, bigger pot, by March 23</p> <p>Grant applications received and awarded throughout 22/23</p> <p>Panel established by June 22</p> <p>Refresh of Youth Council by June 22</p>		<p>Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service</p> <p>Interim Director, Housing, Health and Communities</p>

Comment: Work is currently ongoing with a number of organisations to establish sustainable volunteer led youth projects throughout the district. In Takeley an initial open evening attracted 72 young people, in Hatfield Heath/Broad Oak potential volunteers have attended two meetings with attendance from the youth service and the parish council, whilst discussions are developing with Carver Barracks to develop a joint initiative with young people from the villages of Debden and Wimbish. Initial conversations have also taken place with Swards End and Barnston regarding the establishment of new youth provision.

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<p>Through the Youth Initiatives Working Group, funding was provided to Saffron Walden Town Council for young people’s activities to support the Queen’s Jubilee whilst funding was also awarded to the World War 1 Aviation Heritage Trust for a flight simulator and history display to visit four locations to work with eight schools within the district to support the STEM agenda.</p> <p>The Youth Initiatives group also set aside monies towards a Covid support project. This initiative to date has allowed 30 young people to spend a day at the Essex Association of Boys and Girls Clubs facility at Layer Marney and a further 60 attended from Saffron Walden County High School. This initiative is open to all secondary schools.</p> <p>A recruitment campaign has been agreed with Stansted Airport College, Forest Hall and Saffron Walden County High schools to re-establish the youth council to pre pandemic levels of engagement. As part of this campaign, at the beginning of December students from SWCHS and Debden Primary school visited the UDC offices and heard from councillors about the work they do.</p>				
<p><i>d. Improve the council’s use of the web and social media to increase communication with residents</i></p>	<p>Launch the Let’s Talk Uttlesford community engagement portal which will improve the way we can interact with and gather feedback from residents on a wide range of topics</p>	<p>Go live scheduled for end of April 22, to be piloted with Climate Change work</p> <p>Evaluation of uptake by end June</p> <p>Further use to be scheduled through 22/23 including LCTS consultation in summer 22, subject to successful pilot</p>	<p>£12,500 set up and running cost, funded from Climate Change budget</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities</p> <p>Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of Environmental Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Comment: Six Climate Change projects currently promoted through Let’s Talk Uttlesford. These are due to be updated/refreshed and augmented now the new Climate Change team is in post. A successful short map-based parking consultation conducted on behalf of the Economic Development Team earlier in the year to inform the district-wide review of parking. The survey resulted in contributions from 182 people.</p> <p>The Local Council Tax Support Scheme 23/24 consultation ran over the summer, with an uplift in responses over the previous year's survey.</p> <p>The annual council spending consultation for the 23/24 budget was successfully delivered in September and October.</p>				

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<p>Discussions are taking place to possibly use the Let's Talk platform to support the Local Plan team in some focussed consultations; Saffron Walden Museum as part of their development bid; and Housing for the bi-annual Housemark STAR survey of tenants and leaseholders.</p>				
<p><i>e. Actively and positively engage with and listen to our town and parish councils</i></p>	<p>Further develop the relaunched Parish Liaison Forum in order to ensure the meetings are relevant and useful for attendees</p>	<p>Hold two Forum meetings during 22/23 inviting representatives from all town/parishes. These meetings will be supplemented by smaller, localised meetings organised by parish/town councils themselves, with senior district council attendance</p> <p>Survey town and parish councils for their views on how the Forum could be improved even further by December 22</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>
<p>Comment: The relaunched Parish Forums, with the last round held in person in four different parts of the district have been extremely well attended with extensive engagement from dozens of parish chairs, members and clerks. Periodic email updates to all parishes from the chief executive have also been generally very well received.</p>				
<p><i>f. Support town and parish councils to better represent their communities</i></p>	<p>Consider subscribing to Parish Online, an easy-to-use mapping service which could be accessed by all town/parish councils</p>	<p>Decision on subscribing based on views of how useful this service would be.</p>	<p>Annual subscription is £3,100</p> <p>£5,000 to support initiatives identified</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Planning</p>

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	Establishing a small task and finish group with a handful of Parish representatives to develop their support and capability development needs particularly around planning	To establish summer 2022 with report back and discussion autumn 2022 and implementation thereafter		

Comment: The Director of Planning, in discussion with the Planning Committee Working Group, is to invite Parish Council planning leads to key Member training events. There will be senior Planning Officer representation at upcoming parish forums to assist with training and development needs.

An initiative emerging from Parish Forums was the establishment of a smaller working group of parish volunteers to discuss and agree what support and development they might collectively wish for around planning. Parishes would mutually support each other (e.g. sharing experience of developing Neighbourhood Plans) and be supplemented by up to £10,000 of support for other initiatives to be funded by UDC.

2. Deliver local government with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability

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<p><i>a. Implement a corporate change programme to increase accountability, transparency and democracy at the Council</i></p>	<p>Deliver the first year of the Blueprint Uttlesford corporate transformation project</p> <p>Review the equality objectives for the District Council to improve policy making and service delivery</p> <p>Implement delivery of the Equalities Policy ensuring the principles of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty are embraced.</p> <p>Recruit staff members to a cross departmental Corporate Equality Standards Working Group by September 2022</p> <p>Facilitate 'Celebrating Diversity Listening events' for the community to highlight the challenges some of our residents face living in the district.</p>	<p>Delivery of the savings required in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, currently estimated at £1m for 23/24</p> <p>Work with service areas to ensure awareness of the equality issues that impact on its daily business by June 2022</p> <p>Improve Level of Achievement attained under the Equality Framework for Local Government by March 23</p> <p>Appropriate staff recruited and working group established by September 22</p> <p>Facilitate seven listening events by March 23.</p>	<p>Blueprint Uttlesford Project Team</p> <p>Transformation reserve funding, subject to detailed business case in Spring 22</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities</p> <p>Interim Director, Housing, Health and Communities</p>

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<p>Comment: The Chief Executive has scoped and launched a five year-plus change programme, Blueprint Uttlesford. Updates have been provided to councillors and staff during the year. This change programme addresses both the delivery of Medium Term Financial Strategy targets and also cultural change.</p>				
<p>A refresh of the Equalities Policy including a review of the equality objectives will be started in the new year. This work will be in consultation with departments across the council to ensure awareness of the impact of equality issues on each service. Further Equality and Health Impact Assessment training will be taking place in January 2023 to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the council and continue to make sure that our policies, procedures and practices are inclusive for all.</p>				
<p>A new menopause policy has been developed and training with an accreditation programme began in October 2022.</p>				
<p>Further listening events are planned with the next theme in the new year being LGBTQ+. Discussions have taken place with secondary schools in the district to ensure engagement with young people and to gather ideas around the format of the event that would work in the school environment. The aim of the event will be to celebrate diversity with the people of Uttlesford and bring the community together, to increase awareness of LGBTQ+ inclusion for people who work with young people or care for young people whilst helping the council understand what the community thinks of the district's services, facilities and opportunities.</p>				
<p><i>b. Seek external review of and recognition for positive change achieved by the Council</i></p>	<p>An LGA Peer Review into the Blueprint Uttlesford change programme is an option that will be developed at a later, appropriate stage of its delivery to help provide this kind of objective external benchmark.</p>	<p>Commissioning of peer review. Timescales to be confirmed</p>	<p>The peer review would be funded from the Transformation Reserve</p>	<p>Leader Chief Executive</p>
<p>Comment: The Council has been recognised objectively in award schemes ranging from planning consultation to housing improvements for a resident with disabilities.</p>				
<p><i>c. Deliver a comprehensive continuing member development programme</i></p>	<p>Scope further work on a continuing member development programme, including addressing risks around continuity of member experience around planning and licensing.</p>	<p>Development of appropriate programme for members by Summer 22 with targeted delivery pre-2023 election and a full development cycle from May 23</p>	<p>Member training budget</p>	<p>Leader Chief Executive</p>

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	Continue the existing improvements with increased all member and party group leader briefings.			

Comment: The independent expert report into the handling of the Stansted airport expansion proposal and subsequent planning appeal threw up a wide range of issues which were collated into an action plan in which the member-level interventions were approved by Full Council alongside the operational changes listed by the Chief Executive. Work is underway making such changes, and this will fully inform the new member development programme for all 39 councillors elected in May 2023, regardless of whether new or re-elected.

3. Be responsible with your money and mitigate the impact of government cuts

<i>a. Be a self-sufficient Council that generates its own resources from local taxation (Business Rates and Council Tax) and commercial investments thereby removing the reliance on Central Government grants</i>	<p>Manage the commercial asset portfolio to maximise the income for the Council</p> <p>Continue to develop new buildings at Chesterford Research Park through Aspire (CRP) Ltd</p> <p>Evaluate the option of reducing the portfolio by one asset</p>	<p>Seek to maximise the value of the existing Stane Retail Park asset through the acquisition of phase 2 by December 2022</p> <p>Approve the funding for the commencement of at least two new buildings on the Park by 31 March 2023</p> <p>To enable the profit to be used to fund capital projects and thereby reducing the MTFS revenue shortfall forecasts by 31 March 23</p>	<p>Additional borrowing in accordance with Government and CIPFA guidance</p> <p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Portfolio holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy</p> <p>Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget</p> <p>Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities</p>
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Comment: Two new buildings at Chesterford Research Park have had funding approved for design work to enable planning permission to be sought. Current market volatility may necessitate the need to retain all assets within the portfolio in the short term.

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<p><i>b. Deliver cost-effective and efficient services that live within the Council's means</i></p>	<p>Blueprint Uttlesford project plan and business case to set a schedule of activities to review all areas of income and expenditure over a five year period.</p> <p>Establish a project team</p>	<p>Implement phase 1 of the project plan and carry out reviews on the identified areas of income and expenditure. The target net budget reduction for the financial year 2022/23 is £1m. This is projected to be identified by the Autumn to enable the outcomes to be included in the 2023/24 MTFS.</p> <p>A detailed project plan setting out the work by phases will be developed. Reports and updates on progress will be presented specifically on the outcomes of Blueprint Uttlesford.</p> <p>In addition, the normal quarterly reports will be presented as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget forecast outturn reports to Cabinet. • Annual outturn report to Cabinet • Annual MTFS and Budget 	<p>Project Team</p> <p>Corporate Management Team</p> <p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services</p> <p>Leader</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Assistant Director of Business and Change Management</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome of the external audit 		

Comment: The Blueprint Uttlesford project timeline has been realigned over a longer time period; this is due to the updated information received on the Government Funding Reforms which have been delayed by two years. The impact of the reforms had a significant impact on the council's level of funding which had been built into the MTFS approved by members in February. In addition, increases in inflation and cost of borrowing means that the deficit is larger than originally forecast and has an impact on earlier years in the saving programme. Work continues on ensuring the services are delivered effectively and efficiently with more time allocated to the consideration of the savings options and providing plans to be implemented for 2023/24 onwards.

The quarterly budget monitoring continues to identify areas of savings and provide financial information on alternative methods of service delivery. The latest forecast outturn was presented to members in December.

<i>c. Constantly seek to improve the quality of contracted out services</i>	Establish a contract monitoring service	New officer structure in place to monitor and help manage existing and future contracts by July 2022	Existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services Corporate Management Team
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Comment: Work is complete on establishing the structure that will deliver improved contract management. A manager has been appointed and other posts will be filled early in 2023.

<i>d. Apply for all relevant grants</i>	Research and identify all grants available to the council	Grant applications are made regularly subject to the council meeting specified criteria.	Existing resources	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget Assistant Director of Finance Assistant Director of Business and Change Management
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Comment: As part of the ongoing budget management, budget managers and accountants work together to identify any available grants and ensure that the resource and information required is available to support any submission and maximise the award. In the first quarter of 2022/23 a bid was successfully submitted for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The £1 million funding, over three years, will be used to support communities and develop skills in people. At the end of

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November the council submitted a further bid to the Rural England Prosperity Fund, which is linked to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and hope for a successful result in the new year.

<i>e. Set a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to fund council services by a prudent mix of investment, services and tax income, while maintaining adequate reserves</i>	<p>The MTFS is produced annually setting out the 5-year financial position for approval by Council in February.</p> <p>This is a live document and will be updated if there are any significant changes to the Council's financial position during the year.</p>	<p>The MTFS will be reviewed in line with the work programme of Blueprint Uttlesford.</p> <p>It is expected an updated mid-year MTFS will be submitted to Council, setting out the impact of the project work carried out in the first half of the year.</p>	Existing resources	<p>Portfolio Holder for Finance and Budget</p> <p>Assistant Director of Finance</p>
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Comment: As discussed in 3b above the MTFS approved in February has been reviewed in line with the delay in the Government's funding reforms. The budget and MTFS preparation for 2023/24 and the following four years began in September and incorporates the new financial information available. This will provide an updated position and allow a new project timeline for Blueprint Uttlesford.

<i>f. Follow best practices for investment risk management and board composition</i>	Continue to ensure best practice is followed	To provide assurance and minimise risk with the commercial portfolio.	Existing Resources	<p>Portfolio holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy</p> <p>Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities</p>
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Comment: As discussed in 3b above the MTFS approved in February has been reviewed in line with the delay in the Government's funding reforms. The budget and MTFS preparation for 2023/24 and the following four years began in September and incorporates the new financial information available. This will provide an updated position and allow a new project timeline for Blueprint Uttlesford.