

Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18)

Draft Version for Full Council October 2023

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The Purpose of the Draft Local Plan Consultation

Your views and ideas are especially important to us to help shape future development in Uttlesford. This includes good quality and affordable housing, jobs, safe, healthy and active communities with green and pleasant environments and supporting services and facilities. Therefore, comments on this draft Local Plan are essential to the process of plan preparation and critical to ensuring we develop the best plan for the district. The comments made by the public and other interested parties will help us to shape the final version of the plan to be published in the Summer of 2024.

We will be consulting on this document for a period of 6 weeks from Friday 3rd November 2023 to Friday 15th December 2023. We will also hold public drop-in sessions attended by members of the planning team. You can find out more about getting involved on our website, in local community publications and in local newspapers.

Further Community Stakeholder Forum events will be held to gather comments on the Draft Plan – the details of the events will be available via the consultation webpage (see below). We want to make the process as simple and as engaging as possible to enable everyone in the community who wants to contribute to the plans preparation, to be able to do so.

Please provide your comments to us by Friday 15th December 2023. The online portal is the preferred platform for comment and available on our website [\[insert link\]](#). Comments may also be provided by:

- Email: localplan@uttlesford.gov.uk
- Letter: Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER.

If you require any assistance, please telephone 01799 510 510.

1: Introduction

What is the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 to 2041

- 1.1 Uttlesford District Council has started the process of developing a new Local Plan for the district, which will replace the existing Adopted Local Plan 2005. The Local Plan is at the heart of the planning system, putting forward the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** for addressing climate change and setting out the Council's **Spatial Strategy** for meeting future development needs, including proposed site allocations, design principles and development management policies by which planning applications will be judged.
- 1.2 The aim of the Plan is to address the social, economic and environmental needs of the district, identifying positive opportunities for new homes, jobs, community facilities and infrastructure. To this end, the Local Plan will ensure future growth is accommodated in a sustainable manner by:
- conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment
 - placing climate change mitigation and adaptation at the heart of the strategy
 - achieving well-designed and aesthetically beautiful developments
 - supporting the local economy and future economic opportunities,
 - ensuring that development is accompanied by supporting infrastructure, such as new services and facilities, and
 - maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of residents and future generations.
- 1.3 The proposed **Spatial Strategy** and policies within this Local Plan respond to the issues and opportunities affecting the district, identified through detailed evidence being gathered or from previous stages of consultation, or by working with key stakeholders. The consultation into this draft Local Plan is an important stage in its development and any comments will help inform the next stage of the document to be published in the Summer of 2024.
- 1.4 Within the document, our policies are labelled as either 'Core' Policies (which are strategic policies) or, 'development' policies (which are non-strategic). The Core (or Strategic) Policies set out appropriate scales of development, and other key requirements to inform how development comes forward that are important for the district as a whole. The Development (or Non-Strategic) Policies provide a finer grain of detail and are generally more localised in their nature. Together, these policies will give the Council the basis upon which to shape how development comes forward to help meet the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives**.
- 1.5 The Local Plan, once adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan for Uttlesford (see below) and will be used to inform decisions on planning applications across the district, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Background

- 1.6 The Council began work on a new Local Plan in 2020 when we published the issues and options consultation. This consultation closed on 21 April 2021, and sought views

on the following main themes:

- Where we live
- Character and heritage
- Climate change
- Transport
- Leisure, culture and healthy lifestyles
- Biodiversity
- Local economy
- Homes, and
- Creating new places.

1.7 The Council also set up a Community Stakeholder Forum (CSF) to seek local residents' and interested parties' views and ideas on these themes. The outcome of the consultation and workshops can be found in a separate consultation statement report available on our website¹. These comments were used to develop the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** of the plan and have fed directly into the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18), i.e., this stage of the plan's preparation.

1.8 This Regulation 18 document sets out the Council's emerging draft Local Plan and preferred **Spatial Strategy** for consultation. We want people to engage fully in this process so that responses can be fed into the next key stage of the plan making process - the 'Publication' version of the plan, to be published in the summer of 2024 (known as the 'Regulation 19' process). It is envisaged that the Publication version of the plan will be submitted to Government at the end of 2024. So, this consultation in 2023, is a key opportunity to shape future sustainable growth in Uttlesford for its long-term future.

1.9 A Local Plan was previously submitted to the Secretary of State in 2019 but later withdrawn following concerns being raised by the Inspectors. The Inspectors letter is available on the Council website².

1.10 The Inspectors' main concerns regarding the withdrawn plan, included:

- not enough houses would be built in the early years of the plan – and we should allocate more small and medium sized sites to deliver early in the plan period
- the number of new settlements continuing to be built beyond the plan period resulted in an inflexible long-term strategy – we should allocate fewer new settlements that extend beyond the plan period
- costs, viability, and deliverability concerns – we should ensure that the plan is supported by work that demonstrates its deliverability, and
- the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) did not assess an option with a smaller number of new settlements – we should ensure that the SA for this plan considers all reasonable alternative options.

1.11 The Inspectors also stated that the primary consideration for the Council would be to allocate more small and medium sized sites which could deliver homes in the short to medium term and help to bolster the 5-year housing land supply, until any new

¹ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/Consultation-and-the-Community-Stakeholder-Forum>

² <https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s17756/Appendix%201%20-%20Inspectors%20Letter.pdf>

communities begin to deliver housing later in the plan period.

- 1.12 Given the Inspectors concerns over the plan submitted in 2019, it is particularly important the currently emerging Plan (the Local Plan 2041) is capable of being demonstrably sound and can be adopted without delay.

Why are we Producing a New Local Plan?

- 1.13 In addition to the reasons stated above, the Council's current Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and is undoubtedly now out-of-date. It is almost twenty years since the last plan was adopted. Since 2005, national policy and legislation has changed many times, including the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and subsequent amendments, which substantially changed the Government's approach to planning. This new national policy includes a requirement to review and update Local Plans every five years.

- 1.14 Furthermore, a new approach to calculating housing need, the number of new homes required within a Local Authority area, was introduced, known as the 'standard methodology' in July 2018.

- 1.15 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council has much less control over planning for its district than is desirable and appropriate for it as a 'Place Maker' under planning legislation and regulation and the policy 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' will generally apply. This presumes that development proposals will be approved unless they are fundamentally contrary to national policy. Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council's ability to do the following is more restricted:

- develop, or use its own policies to influence development in the district, including, for example making an appropriate contribution to delivering affordable housing
- develop, or implement its own strategy to shape development in the district, helping to ensure this is sustainable
- influence the delivery of infrastructure, ensuring that proposals make an appropriate contribution to the right type of services and facilities that are needed in the district or being delivered in the right places – it's much more difficult to plan effectively for infrastructure where speculative and unplanned development comes forward in a piecemeal manner, and
- ensuring that development makes an appropriate contribution to tackling climate change, delivering biodiversity net gain, and any other planning related policies the Council may wish to develop.

The Development Plan

- 1.16 The Local Plan 2041 prepared by Uttlesford District Council will be used to inform decisions on planning applications across the district, in conjunction with any Development Plan Documents (DPD's) relating to minerals and waste prepared by Essex County Council, and any Neighbourhood Plans prepared by the community.

- 1.17 These documents together make up the 'Development Plan' for the district (**Figure 1.1**). All planning applications will be determined in accordance with the

'Development Plan' taken as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.18 The Development Plan for Uttlesford District includes the Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP) prepared by Essex County Council as the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority (MWPA). These local plans set out the policy framework within which minerals and waste planning applications are assessed and explicitly require local planning authorities to consult the MWPA on all applications for non-mineral and non-waste related developments proposed within designated Mineral Safeguarding Areas, Mineral Consultation Areas and Waste Consultation Areas. This is to ensure those developments would not unnecessarily sterilise mineral resources or conflict and compromise the operation of permitted (and planned) minerals and waste developments and infrastructure.

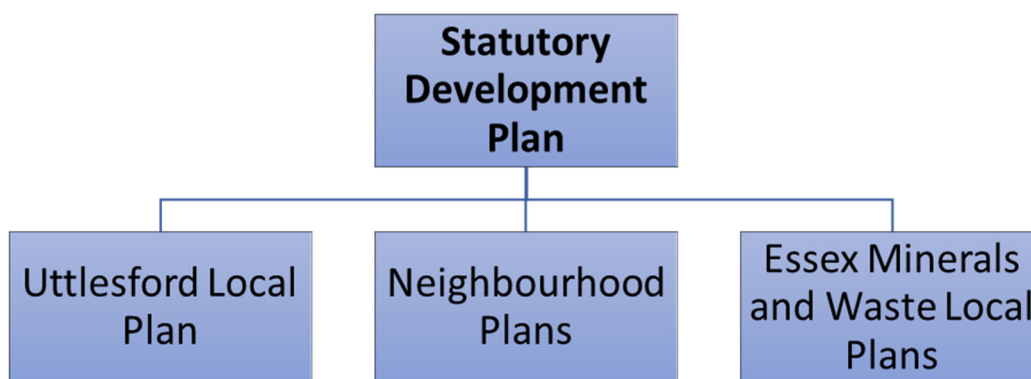


Figure 1.1: An illustration of the documents that make up the Uttlesford Development Plan

1.19 It is a legal requirement that Local Plans are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that they are kept up-to-date. Once the Local Plan has been adopted it will be reviewed every 5 years to ensure that the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** are being met.

Neighbourhood Planning

1.20 Neighbourhood Plans can be prepared by either Town or Parish Councils, or a Neighbourhood Forum and make up part of the 'Development Plan' for the district as described above. They can provide an important layer of planning for local areas and set out in more detail how a community wishes to see its area develop. There are currently 8 Neighbourhood Plans 'made' in Uttlesford for the following communities:

- Ashdon
- Felsted
- Great and Little Chesterford
- Great Dunmow
- Newport and Quendon & Rickling
- Saffron Walden
- Stebbing, and

- Thaxted

1.21 Where Neighbourhood Plans are prepared they must be in general conformity with the 'Strategic' policies set out in the Uttlesford District Local Plan 2021-2041 (these are referred to as 'Core Policies') in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012³.

1.22 The Council will continue to support communities who wish to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Details of how the Council can help with the preparation of plans are set out on the Councils website⁴. We encourage communities to consider this draft Local Plan, since being in conformity with it, will help to future proof their Neighbourhood Plans.

1.23 This Plan does identify 'housing requirement' figures for our Larger Villages and so there is an opportunity for these communities to take responsibility for planning for any 'non-strategic' (less than 100 homes) sites, if they wish to. This is discussed more in Chapter 8: Rural Area Strategy.

National Planning Policy

1.24 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development and is complemented by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which provides additional guidance for practitioners. The Framework sets out four elements of soundness that Local Plans are considered against when they are examined. To be sound, a plan must be:

- **Positively prepared** - The plan is based on a strategy which seeks to meet development and infrastructure needs
- **Justified** – The plan is the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence
- **Effective** – The plan is deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, and
- **Consistent with National Policy** – The plan enables the delivery of sustainable development.

1.25 The Council is aware of potential and emerging national policy changes however notes that 'transitional arrangements' state that:

- Local Authorities have until 30 June 2025 to submit plans under the existing legal framework, and
- Local Authorities have until 31 December 2026 for their plans to be adopted, with all independent examinations also having been completed by this point.

³ The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/637
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

⁴ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4917/Community-led-planning>

1.26 Local Authorities are being actively encouraged by the Government to continue the preparation of Local Plans under the current framework, to ensure a smooth transition to the new system. The Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan under the current system and to submitting this plan for examination prior to the deadline outlined above.

Statements of Common Ground

1.27 In developing the Local Plan, the Council has worked collaboratively with adjoining authorities, Essex County Council and other organisations (known as 'duty-to-cooperate' bodies) in responding to cross-boundary and strategic issues. This ensures the Council meets its 'Duty to Co-operate', which is a legal requirement of the plan making process. This collaboration has sought to resolve issues of a strategic nature and to ensure strategic priorities are coordinated and reflected in the Local Plan. The main matters addressed relate to transport, education, London Stansted Airport, and the recreational impact on Hatfield Forest.

1.28 Further details on the extent of collaboration can be found within the Statements of Common Ground, saved on the Council's website here⁵.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.29 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process tests how the plan, its spatial strategy, allocated sites and policies achieve sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report as 'development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'⁶.

1.30 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the SA process in respect of development plans is mandatory. It is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA) (European Directive 2001/42/EC). It is a legal requirement for the Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation but using a single appraisal process is appropriate.

1.31 The SA, incorporating the SEA, has been undertaken as an integral part of preparing this draft Local Plan and will assist with arrangements for monitoring and implementation at submission stage.

1.32 Full details of the iterative approach applied and the assessment outcomes can be found in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report of the Draft Uttlesford Local

⁵ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/duty-to-cooperate> TO BE UPDATED

⁶

World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, Our Common Future
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>

Plan (October 2023)⁷.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 1.33 The designation, protection and restoration of European wildlife sites is embedded in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Importantly, the most recent amendments (the Conservation of Habitats and Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019) take account of the UK's departure from the EU.
- 1.34 The Local Plan should be assessed in accordance with the Habitats Regulations to consider whether the policies or proposals are likely to have a significant effect on any habitats or species protected under the regulations located in or close to Uttlesford.
- 1.35 Assessments will be published at each stage in the Local Plan process. This draft plan is accompanied by the first stage in the process - a Screening Assessment and can be found on our website⁸.

Evidence Base

- 1.36 The Plan is accompanied by a wide range of evidence to support its preparation. The evidence is proportionate to the scale and stage of the Plan, as advised by national planning policy and guidance. All evidential studies are available on the Council's website⁹.
- 1.37 Further evidence will emerge following this consultation, and this will contribute to the next version of the Plan. Any changes to the Plan as a result of this consultation, or any new or revised evidence, will be clearly explained and justified at the next stage.

What Happens Next?

- 1.38 Following this consultation in Autumn 2023, we will review and take all comments submitted into account. Together with any further emerging evidence, and ongoing engagement, these views will help us to prepare the final version of the Plan that the Council wishes to submit to the Secretary of State (the Publication Version of the Plan). This will comprise the next stage of the plan's preparation and will be published for a further six-week period (the Regulation 19 stage). At that stage, any comments received will be submitted to the Secretary of State, alongside the Plan and the supporting documents.
- 1.39 Regulation 19 is the formal consultation stage of the plan making process prior to it being submitted to the Government who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to preside over an Examination into the Plan.
- 1.40 Should the Plan be "found sound" following its Examination it will be formally adopted and become part of the Statutory Development Plan for Uttlesford District

⁷ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4946/Sustainability-appraisal>

⁸ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4937/Environment>

⁹ <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

Council.

- Issues and options Completed
- Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) October 2023
- Submission Plan (Regulation 19) Summer 2024
- Submission to Secretary of State Winter 2024
- Examination 2025
- Adoption Early 2026

2: Spatial Portrait

Introduction

- 2.1 This Chapter provides an overview of the policy context that has informed the preparation of the Plan and summarises some of the key challenges and opportunities the Plan needs to help address. These inform the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** set out in Chapter 3 and in turn the remainder of the Plan.

Policy Framework

National

- 2.2 This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Plan has also considered other Government policy such as: the Environment Act 2021 and emerging policies that address climate change and energy efficiency. It is acknowledged that the Government have signalled there will be changes to the planning system, however this Plan is being prepared under the current legislative and policy framework (this is discussed more in Chapter 1).

Uttlesford and Beyond

- 2.3 Regionally, located in the north-western corner of Essex, Uttlesford borders three counties and shares planning issues and economic opportunities. The influence of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc touches the district as an outlier of the 'Cambridge phenomenon' and the dynamism and entrepreneurship stemming from the universities, science and biomedical research and business parks. The location of Uttlesford in the context of the supporting local authorities is shown in Figure 1.1.
- 2.4 Looking eastwards, the region continues to experience rapid economic growth, with an economy worth over £73bn, 320,000 new homes and 165,000 new jobs planned in the next 15 years. The region is a gateway between businesses in the Midlands, London and the North, and internationally. Its diverse economy has proved resilient with world class life sciences, clean energy, and agri-tech sectors, as well as ports, logistics and transport, digital and creative industries, financial services, and tourism. The vision of the regional umbrella transport organisation, Transport East¹, is for a thriving economy with modern, efficient, safe, and low-carbon transport network and a strategy based on:
- decarbonisation (transport generates 42% of carbon emissions in the region)
 - connecting growing towns and cities
 - unlocking international gateways, and
 - energising coastal and rural communities, including an evolving programme for connecting dispersed settlements.

¹ <https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/>

Neighbouring Authorities

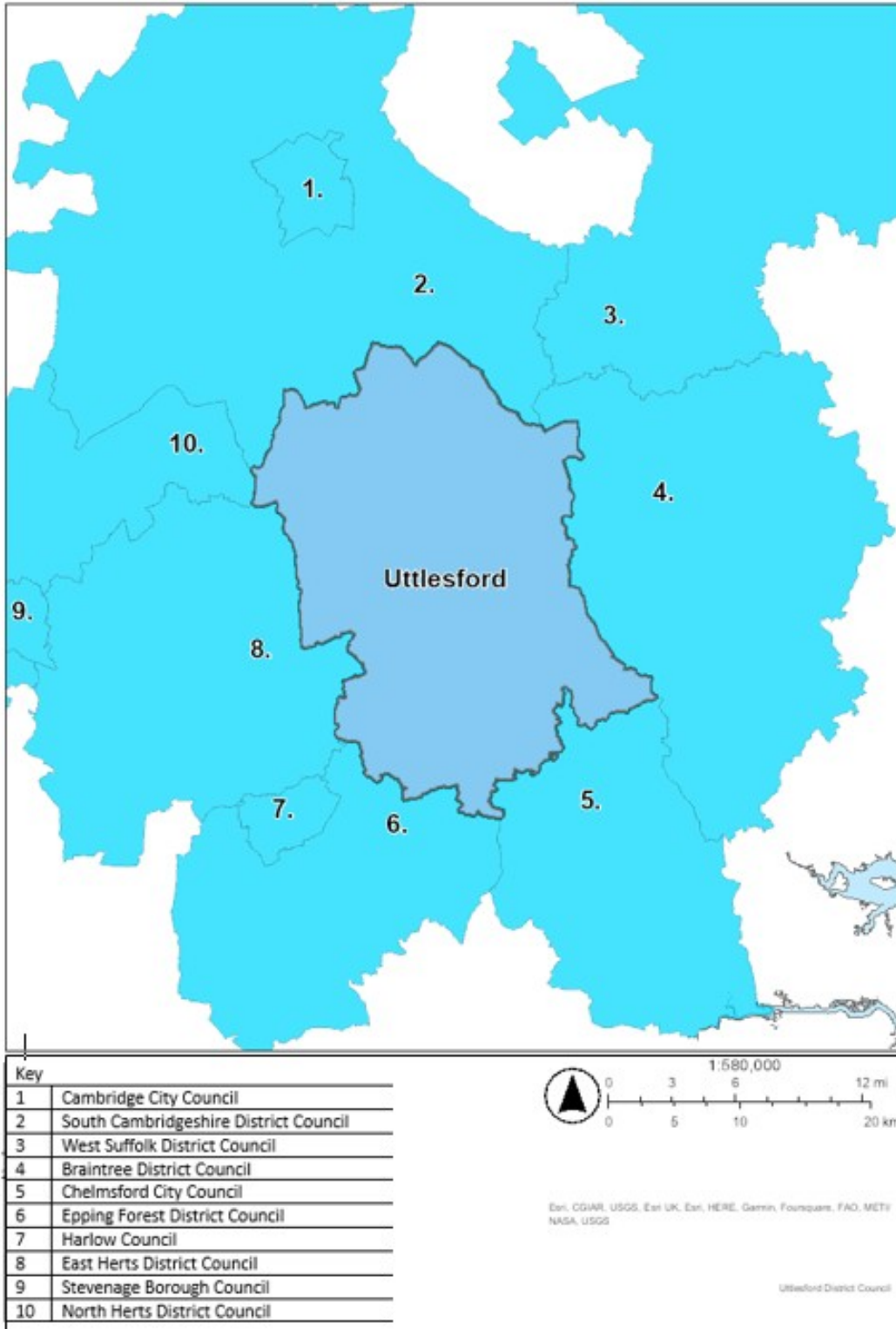


Figure 1: Uttlesford and its surrounding local authorities

- 2.5 The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)² which includes Uttlesford covers a wide area from Essex to Kent and east Sussex, with the Cambridge and Peterborough LEP bordering Uttlesford to the north. The SELEP Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy, *Working Together for a Faster, Smarter and More Sustainable Economic Recovery* has seven objectives:
- support business innovation
 - drive trade and growth
 - deliver a skilled workforce
 - improve digital and physical connectivity
 - clean growth at the heart
 - support equality, and
 - promote greater resilience in our places.
- 2.6 Government funding for LEPs is ending in 2024 although LEP's can continue locally if they choose to do so.
- 2.7 The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB)³ represents the economic ambitions of seven North Essex authorities – Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester City Council, Essex County Council, Maldon District Council, Tendring District Council and Uttlesford District Council – catalysing collective action to drive economic prosperity within all parts of the urban, rural and coastal region. It provides the strategic oversight of North Essex's diverse, inclusive and productive economic priorities, ensuring tangible actions are delivered to support residents' and businesses' goals and aspirations. Promoting the region's potential, the NEEB presents the strong strategic rationale for further central government and private sector investment, needed to deliver North Essex's long-term ambitions.

There are four key strategic priorities:

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents
2. A Green and High Growth Economy
3. A Dynamic and Connected Region
4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

- 2.8 Stansted Airport has a significant impact on the district, with the area around it experiencing considerable housing and employment pressure, with accompanying transport challenges. Owned by the Manchester Airports Group (MAG) it is required to prepare a Master Plan for its ground-based transport activities and to help provide the rationale for the transport investment necessary to enable its growth.
- 2.9 MAG's overall ambition is to create positive airline relationships, world class facilities and service; to improve the airport's competitive position over the long term, making the most effective use of the runway and infrastructure to help provide more choice of destinations and airlines. The Airport commits to minimise the impact of noise and to invest in energy efficient and low carbon technologies with the aim for airport operations to become carbon neutral. Its expansion plans will have significant impact on local employment opportunities and economic spin-off, including the consented Northside site for 65,000m² employment uses. There are associated plans for improvements to long distance bus and rail services, the motorway junction and local road network, to ease the growing traffic congestion. Access to and around the

² <https://www.southeastlep.com/>

³ <https://neeb.org.uk/>

airport at Junction 8 and from the A120 are potential constraints to growth without early mitigation in the short-medium term.

- 2.10 The railway line from London to the region has a spur to Stansted Airport and connects Uttlesford's western sector with five stations on the West Anglia main line, benefitting airline passengers and commuters to London or Cambridge.
- 2.11 Essex County Council has several initiatives that impact on Uttlesford's spatial growth strategy. The County Council is a key partner in its strategic role for infrastructure and service provision and as the Highway Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, Lead Authority for education, Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, Lead Adviser on Public Health, responsibilities for Adult Social Care (housing needs of older people and adults with disabilities), and the provision of libraries. Since 2020 it is playing a leading role for Essex authorities by delivering the recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission.
- 2.12 Across Essex the Planned Housing Growth over the next 20 years is for around 160,000 dwellings. The County Council draws on considerable experience in supporting districts in master planning, stewardship of environmental and community infrastructure, and urban design and strategic issues through the long-established Essex Design Guide and with a focus on garden community principles and working toward net zero carbon emissions.
- 2.13 The County Council in its role as the Highways Authority is reviewing policy on street hierarchies and technical design standards and exploring how to emphasise sustainable travel, particularly given the rural nature of much of the north of the County. In November 2022, the County Council commenced updating the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) to 2050⁴. This first stage is aiming to achieve milestones against four strategic themes:
- decarbonisation
 - supporting People: Health, Wellbeing, and Independence
 - creating Sustainable Places and Communities, and
 - connecting People, Places and Businesses.
- 2.14 Wider in scope are two separate but related projects looking at the overall 'health and wellbeing' aspects of Liveable Neighbourhoods Implementation Planning and the Walkable Neighbourhoods project funded by the Climate Action Commission, on how to encourage walking and cycling to access services, leisure activities and places of employment. This resonates with the emerging Design Code for Uttlesford which challenges low density neighbourhoods and dominance of public space by the car. The School Streets Commission deals with creating safe routes to schools and School Safety Zones around new schools.
- 2.15 The Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) was set up in mid-2020 to address the national Climate Change Commission goals to achieve net zero carbon by 2050⁵. The Commission comprises around thirty experts from a range of professions covering new and existing buildings, heritage areas, biodiversity and the environment, flooding, behaviour modification, larger scale development and public realm, sustainable transport, schools and fuel poverty. Its first report in July 2021 set

⁴ Essex County Council. Local Transport Plan 4, 2011, <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-transport-plan>

⁵ Essex Climate Action Commission, Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral (2023)

out more stretching carbon and greenhouse gas reduction targets than the Government's to lead and quicken the pace to carbon emission reduction in the county. The reports recommendations are now incorporated into a Climate Action Plan with a focused delivery programme over the coming years.

Uttlesford Today

- 2.16 Uttlesford is a large rural district located in the northwest corner of the historic county of Essex. It covers a total land area of around 250 square miles and has a population of just over 91,000. The district is situated along the M11 trunk road, which runs from north to south and connects Cambridge and London. Additionally, the A120 crosses the district from east to west, connecting it to Braintree in the east and Stansted Airport and Bishops Stortford at Junction 8 of the M11 in the west of the district.
- 2.17 Since 2011, the population of Uttlesford has grown at a rate of 14.9%, which is faster than the average for England as a whole, which has grown by 6.6%. There are of course other council areas that have grown more than Uttlesford, including nearby Cambridge that has grown by 17.6% over the same period.
- 2.18 The age structure of Uttlesford shows the proportion of people aged 65 and over has increased by 36%, since 2011. In 2021, 20.2% of people in Uttlesford were aged 65 and over, compared to England's average of 18.6%. Uttlesford is a dispersed district, ranking as the sixth least densely populated area in the East of England and roughly equates to one person living on each football pitch-sized area of land. The population is distributed so that approximately 40% of people live in the three most populous settlements: Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, and Stansted Mountfitchet. The remaining population resides in the surrounding rural hinterlands, comprised of numerous hamlets and villages of varying sizes.
- 2.19 Uttlesford is an affluent area, which is ranked the 8th least deprived local authority in England⁶. The median house price for the district in 2022 was £459,000, which is 67% above the national average⁷. House prices in Uttlesford have increased by 62% (from £176,000) over the last decade. This sharp increase in house prices, in line with the national trend, has worsened the ratio between house prices and full-time earnings in the district, as measure in terms of wages. This has meant that the median house price in Uttlesford has become 13.2 times higher than median full-time earnings⁸.
- 2.20 The three key settlements provide the focal points for and main service centres to the surrounding rural Hinterlands.
- 2.21 Saffron Walden is in the north-west corner of the district and is the largest town in Uttlesford and forms the main administrative and commercial centre for the district. It has a population of 17,018, as of 2021, and is a good example of a preserved medieval market town with a wealth of listed buildings. The town forms a nucleated settlement, focused on a market square and common, which sits within a bowl on the rolling landscape of the river Cam. Saffron Walden is located next to Audley End Estate that makes up much of the land surrounding the town.

⁶ ONS (2019) Mapping income deprivation at a local authority level. Available online: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/mappingincomedepriavationatalocalauthoritylevel2019> (Accessed 28.04.2023)

⁷ Jgconsulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. [ADD LINK.](#)

⁸ Jgconsulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. [ADD LINK](#)

- 2.22 Great Dunmow is the second largest settlement in Uttlesford, it is a market town and the focal point for the south-eastern part of the district. It is characterised by an historic settlement core centred on Parsonage Downs and the High Street. The town contains a variety of building styles and periods including 16th and 17th century housing, a former Guild Hall and numerous 19th century houses. It too has a large inventory of listed buildings. The town sits along the A120 corridor on the midpoint between Bishops Stortford and Braintree.
- 2.23 Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest settlement in Uttlesford. It has an historic core and with the construction of the railway the village increased in size. The 20th and 21st centuries have seen considerable development south of the railway line, especially with the redeveloped Rochford nurseries. The village is located just north of Bishops Stortford and to the west of Stansted Airport, having extensive connections to the M11 and A120 transport corridors.

Key opportunities and challenges:

- providing sufficient housing including affordable housing for people to rent and to part-purchase through shared ownership schemes
- providing specialist housing and social care infrastructure to meet the needs of an ageing population
- to redress the balance of dwelling sizes by increasing the number of smaller properties in accordance with the latest evidence
- improving access to a greater range of sports and cultural facilities particularly for young people
- to ensure a balance of sustainable growth which protects countryside around the key settlements and the airport from encroachment by new development, and
- to develop and continue to sustain the creative and cultural economy in the district.

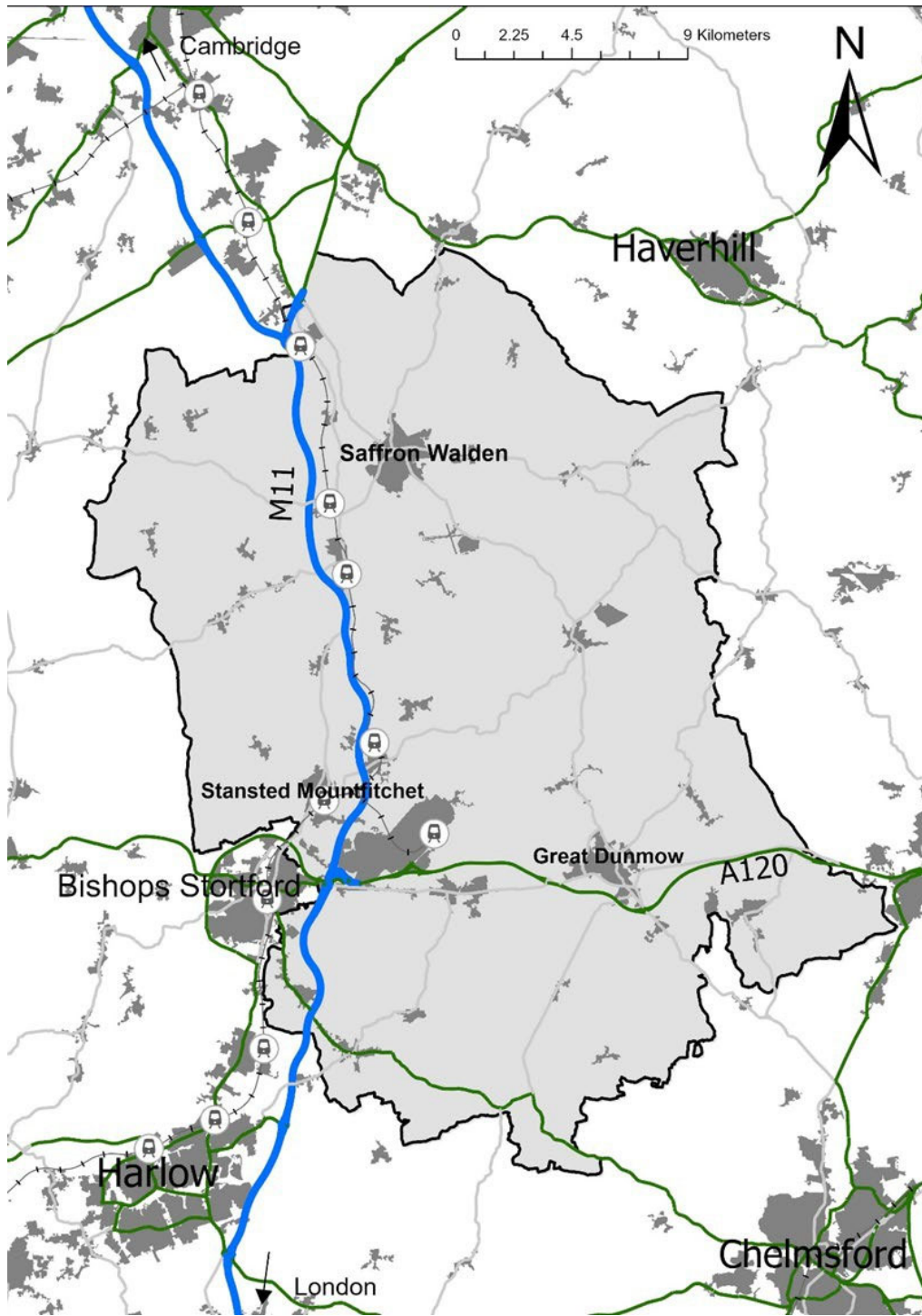


Figure 2.1: Contextual Map of Uttlesford

Environment

- 2.24 Part of the district is located on a low ridge of chalk hills that run from the southwest to the northeast of the district through rolling countryside. This makes for a globally unique⁹ fluvial environment in the district of chalk streams, which are shown in **Figure 2.2**. There are two chalk streams in Uttlesford which are one of the rarest habitats globally, and around 85% of these are found in England. Currently, only a small section of the chalk streams in Uttlesford are designated as a conservation area, this being Debden Water SSSI.
- 2.25 Uttlesford also includes a range of important sites and habitats that help support biodiversity. They are recognised from a range of local and national designations. Examples of designated sites in Uttlesford include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and non-statutory protection through National Nature Reserves (NNR) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS). There are 14 nationally designated sites in the district, consisting of 12 SSSI's, 2 NNRs and 299 CWS's: set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites of Uttlesford

Sites of Special Scientific Interest	National Nature Reserve
Hales and Shadwell Woods	Hatfield Forest,
Debden Water	Hales Wood
High Wood	
Little Hallingbury Marsh	
Garnetts Wood / Barnston Lays	
Ashdon Meadows	
Hall's Quarry	
Nunn Wood	
Quendon Wood	
Elsenham Woods	
Hatfield Forest	
West Wood	

- 2.26 Hatfield Forest is located just south of Stansted Airport and it extends over 403ha of mixed deciduous woodland and parkland. It was notified as an SSSI in 1985, is the largest SSSI in Uttlesford and it is the only remaining example of an intact Royal Hunting Forest. The woodland extends just beyond the SSSI designation at 424ha. It is a truly unique landscape which is a mix of wood pasture, semi natural broadleaved woodland, scrub and plantation woodland¹⁰. The woodland is managed by the National Trust and is an important recreational resource in the district. It currently faces pressure from visitors, particularly in winter months where paths can be damaged contributing towards habitat loss¹¹.

⁹ Skykes, T., Gething, K. and Stubbington, R. (2022) Why does the protection of 'England's rainforest's matter so much? World Economic Forum. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/chalk-streams-england-rainforests-protection> (Accessed: 27.04.2023).

¹⁰ Clarke, A. (2015) Hatfield Forest 5 year conservation management plan.

¹¹ Saunders et al (2018) Hatfield Forest Visitor Survey and Impact Management. Footprint Ecology. Available at: <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/EX0033%20-%20Hatfield%20Forest%20Visitor%20Survey%20and%20Impact%20Management%202018.pdf> (Accessed: 27.04.2023).

2.27 A climate and ecological emergency was declared in Uttlesford in 2019¹². This committed us to achieving net zero by 2030 in the Council's operations and to protect and enhance our local biodiversity. Biodiversity focus and action in Uttlesford has mainly been confined to conservation areas, however there are examples of thriving biodiversity in other locations. The district's chalk streams are a growing area of biodiversity concern¹³.

Key opportunities and challenges:

- contributing to the Council's corporate declaration of the climate and biodiversity emergency using the planning process to apportion and distribute growth in the most sustainable locations that maximise opportunities for sustainable travel
- ensuring new buildings meet the highest fabric and energy efficient standards through stringent planning controls, monitoring and enforcement processes, which will also reduce fuel bills
- to develop a programme with The National Trust that preserves the value of Hatfield Forest and mitigates visitor pressure and impact, along with increasing access to other Green Infrastructure and accessible open spaces
- to create a country park in collaboration with enterprising landowners which could also function as a publicly owned habitat bank for biodiversity, nature recovery, public amenity, visitor facilities, and benefit from community governance. This would also help to mitigate the visitor pressures at Hatfield Forest, and
- protecting river corridors from inappropriate development and exploring opportunities for improving public access to these important corridors for health and recreational value.

¹² Uttlesford District Council, Climate Crisis Strategy, 2019. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>

¹³ WWF (2014) The state of England's Chalk Streams. Available online: http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_chalkstreamreport_final_lr.pdf

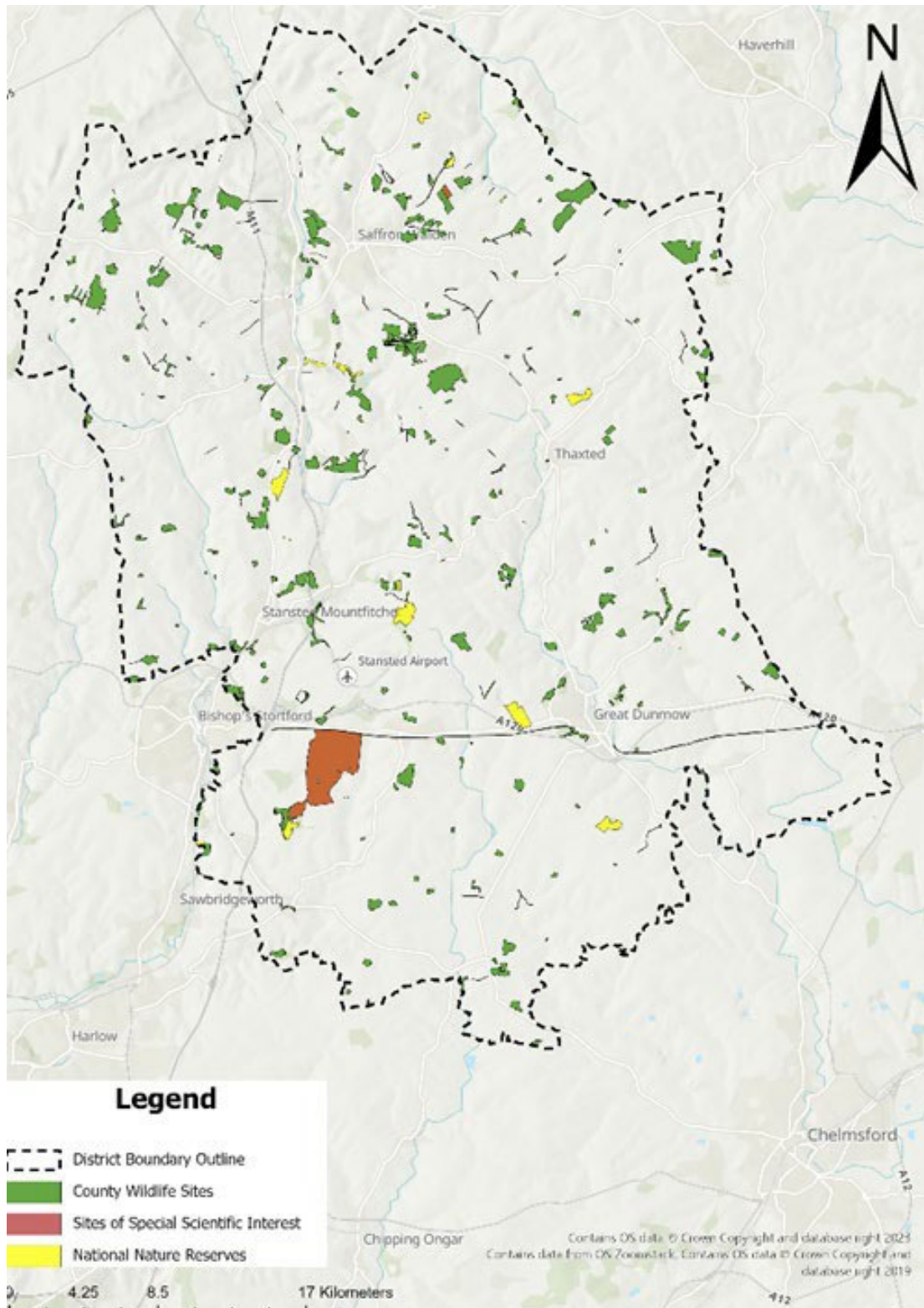


Figure 2.2: Environmental context of Uttlesford

Economy

- 2.28 Uttlesford is a well-connected district, as explained elsewhere in this chapter, and this is a key factor in the areas business sectors. The largest economic drivers in the district are Stansted Airport and Chesterford Research Park, which are regionally and nationally significant.
- 2.29 The districts vibrant market towns, rural centres and the rural economy are also important to the area's economy, as centres for retail, heritage and culture, leisure and tourism and business. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data (2021), Uttlesford has 63.2% of its population recorded as economically active. This means that Uttlesford has 45,738 employees, of which the largest sector is wholesale and retail (12.7%), followed by construction (11.1%). This is then followed by other sectors such as real estate, education, and scientific/technical activities.

London Stansted Airport

- 2.30 London Stansted Airport is the biggest single-site employer in the East of England and is currently the second busiest airport in the UK, providing over 12,000 jobs across over 200 companies and contributing £1 billion annually to the national economy. The airport offers some advanced manufacturing jobs and logistics/warehousing activities, as well as retail, hotel and other ancillary functions linked to a major airport. Since 2013, the Airport has been owned and operated by Manchester Airport Group (MAG).
- 2.31 Stansted Airport also contributes to education provision in the district with the opening of Stansted Airport College in 2019. The college is a partnership with Harlow College, and runs courses in aviation and business services, engineering and aircraft maintenance, hospitality, retail, and events management. The college offers opportunities for people to improve their career prospects and access jobs at the airport.
- 2.32 The Airport gained permission to grow its capacity to 43 million passengers per annum along with associated improvements to the road infrastructure and sustainable transport obligations. The significance of its role in the district will continue to grow. The growth in employment opportunities at the airport will have implications for traffic movements. The Local Plan will take this into consideration, alongside the impact in the surrounding countryside and work with the airport to ensure that economic and employment benefits are accessible to all communities across the district. The airport is a multi-modal transport hub and improving access to the airport interchange, particularly for cyclists, walkers and public transport users should be a priority to be explored further.

Chesterford Research Park

- 2.33 This is a research park located in the north of the district that forms part of the high skilled – Cambridge 'phenomenon' that relates to the high-skilled/ technical sector linked to Cambridge and its university. It is made up of 250 acres of parkland that contains facilities for various biotechnical, pharmaceutical, and technical R&D companies of many sizes. The park builds on 60 years of research and is a significant contributor to the high skilled economy in Uttlesford. The park provides around 32,000 m² of commercial floorspace and in 2021 there are 26 existing tenants. The site is owned by Aspire (a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council) and Aviva Investments with development managed by Church Manor Estates PLC.

Key opportunities and challenges:

- accommodating large scale and regionally/nationally important employment areas at Stansted Airport and the Great Chesterford Research Park whilst reducing impact on the local transport network and ensuring good access to jobs for Uttlesford residents, and
- to work with the Skills College at the Airport, and elsewhere, to ensure every opportunity for local people to train and retrain for the range of job opportunities that will increasingly become available with airport and associated spin-off expansion.

Transport and Infrastructure (including Health and Education)

- 2.34 The district is a key transport focal point between London and Cambridge with ease of access to both cities. Its location on this important innovation corridor makes it one of the fastest growing areas in the UK. In the west of the district, the M11 motorway runs from north to south while the A120 dual-carriageway runs east to west across the south of the district. The transport network provides connections between the key settlements in Uttlesford with the villages and hamlets, albeit many of these are via minor roads.
- 2.35 In Uttlesford, there are many transport issues identified with noticeable congestion hotspots across the district, particularly including Junction 8 on the M11, where work is currently under way to increase the capacity of this junction, with works scheduled for completion in November 2023. There are also challenges associated with the A120 and there is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Saffron Walden, although it is understood this no longer meets the criteria to be designed and is expected to be removed in due course.
- 2.36 In Uttlesford there is a single rail line that serves Uttlesford from north to south. This line connects between London and Cambridge and to/ from Stansted Airport. Within the district there are stations at Stansted Mountfitchet, Elsenham, Newport, Audley End (Wendens Ambo) and Great Chesterford, with a branch line that serves Stansted Airport.
- 2.37 Car ownership in the district is very high with 38.0% of the district owning two or more cars, which is higher than the average for England of 26.1%. This is the highest car ownership in Essex which in some places can be a necessity due to the nature of the public transportation network in Uttlesford. Common with many other parts of the Country, transport is the key carbon emitter in the district, therefore a reduction in vehicle usage would help make a strong contribution to the challenges associated with climate change.
- 2.38 The health of people in the district is generally better than the average for England. In 2021, 86.7% of residents described their health as very good or good, which compares favourably to the figure for England of 82.2%. In 2019 Public Health England conducted a report into the health profile of Uttlesford
- 2.39 At the time of the 2021 census, 13.8% of residents had no formal qualifications, which also compares favourably with the average for England of 18.1%. Uttlesford residents also achieved higher than average higher education qualifications with 36.6% of Uttlesford achieving this; the average for England is 33.9%. As of 2023

there are 4 state secondary schools and 38 state primary schools located widely through the district.¹⁴

Key opportunities and challenges:

- contribute towards reducing car and vehicle dependency and maximise opportunities for sustainable modes of travel
- helping to ensuring that congestion is addressed, particularly at Junction 8 of the M11 and on the A120, by National Highways as the principal agency in collaboration with other stakeholders to reduce impact on Uttlesford's road network and in a timely manner to accommodate the predicted growth associated with the airport, district and wider region
- to exploit, through encouraging sustainable business development and expansion, the locational advantages afforded by the railway line links between London, Cambridge, and the Midlands, M11, links to the coastal ports and airport to promote and develop active travel initiatives and ensure that cycling and walking infrastructure is provided and/ or improved
- addressing the needs for community infrastructure and services amongst rural settlements with dispersed catchment populations whilst aiming to maintain the viability and vitality of services in our villages and hamlets
- to locate a new secondary school in an appropriate location that minimises students' need for travel and meet the capacity arising existing and new developments
- ensuring a sufficient supply of childcare and early learning opportunities in accordance with new growth patterns, and
- balancing health facility and service provision with new growth patterns

Heritage

- 2.40 Uttlesford is fortunate to benefit from a rich heritage, that is diverse and spans several periods of history. The district contains over 3700 listed buildings (around a third of those in Essex) and various prehistoric sites such as Barlow Hills and the Nine Stones. It also contains a great number of medieval buildings and churches including St Mary's Church in Saffron Walden and Thaxted Guildhall. The listed buildings include a range of houses, churches, schools, shops, castles, archaeological sites, and walls and the oldest continually occupied dwelling in Essex. In addition to this there are many non-listed buildings and structures that are locally significant and contribute to the extensive built heritage in Uttlesford.
- 2.41 In Uttlesford there are 38 Conservation Areas, these consist of many village and market town centres in the district which contain a diverse array of listed buildings which contribute to the built heritage of Uttlesford. An example of a large Conservation Area is in great Dunmow where much of the high street is designated because of its rich heritage.
- 2.42 Uttlesford boasts a rich collection of heritage assets that reflect its historical roots. These assets include a diverse collection of architectural and natural treasures. An example of this is Audley End Estate, located on the outskirts of Saffron Walden. It is a grand Jacobean house with extensive gardens surrounding it. Other assets of note are Thaxted parish church which dominates the skyline of the settlement being built

¹⁴ Snobe (2023) Find All Schools in uttlesford. Available online: [Best Schools in Uttlesford \(2023\) \(snobe.co.uk\)](https://www.snobe.co.uk/best-schools-in-uttlesford-2023/)

in the 12th century. The heritage of Uttlesford extends into nature with Hatfield Forest being the finest preserved royal hunting forests in England.

Key opportunities and challenges:

- the form, materials, layouts and streets associated with historic buildings can influence locally distinctive contemporary architecture e.g. The Avenue in Saffron Walden
- finding opportunities for new development to help the viability of existing mixed-use buildings and enabling effective re-use, and
- incorporating historic buildings/monuments into new places/open spaces to enable them to be understood and enjoyed, including becoming centerpieces/way-markers in new development.

Cross Border Relationships

- 2.43 The district works closely in partnership with Essex County Council and is surrounded by the local authorities of East Herts, Epping Forest, Chelmsford, Braintree, and South Cambridgeshire. The closest towns beyond the district are Bishops Stortford and Braintree which both lie close to the district's southern boundaries, whilst Cambridge, Chelmsford and Harlow are also accessible and provide a greater range of facilities and services. Further afield is London with good transport links to the district by both road and rail. The southwest of the district includes the outer edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt around Bishops Stortford, Hatfield Heath, Little Hallingbury and Stansted Mountfitchet.
- 2.44 The Localism Act 2011 sets out the 'duty to co-operate' which applies to all local planning authorities in England. The duty requires that councils set out planning policies to address strategic issues and that councils and public bodies “engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis” to develop strategic policies including consideration of joint approaches to plan making.
- 2.45 The Council has constructive processes in place to ensure that we co-operate with organisations and neighbouring authorities on strategic planning matters. This collaborative process provides a strong basis to develop effective working arrangements to help prepare a sound plan and to assist in aspects of its delivery. Joint working helps to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs can be met wholly within a particular plan area or should be met elsewhere.

3: SPATIAL VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Spatial Vision

- 3.1 Our **Spatial Vision** describes the future we are seeking to create for Uttlesford by 2041. It provides a clear vision for the district's future and is both ambitious, yet achievable to help us deliver good growth, support sustainable development, address the challenge of climate change, protect the environment, respect the district's heritage, whilst also supporting local communities and businesses.
- 3.2 The **Spatial Vision** has been influenced by many factors including the issues and needs of our places, evidence we have gathered, and what our local communities, stakeholders and businesses have told us.

Our Spatial Vision for Uttlesford in 2041

Uttlesford will be 'the best place to live, work and play'. The district will continue to be known for its beautiful rolling countryside, its market towns and villages with a rich heritage, and a strong cultural offer. Uttlesford residents will continue to enjoy a high quality of life with a range of well-designed settlements that provide high quality services to residents and visitors. Uttlesford will thrive as a well-connected rural district that benefits from the economic opportunities it presents, while also protecting the rich natural and cultural environment that gives the district its distinct character.

Environmental

Uttlesford will embrace the changes required to be net zero carbon, enabling us to live, work and play within the limits of the environment. This will include new build to be net zero ready by 2030. Development will be managed to ensure climate change is addressed and sustainable development is achieved. Development will be located in ways to optimise opportunities for delivery of new infrastructure and use of public and active transport. New development will link homes with jobs, be of high-quality design and focus on sustainable construction and materials.

There will be greater biodiversity and increased woodland. The rivers and streams of Uttlesford will be protected and enhanced, and together with green infrastructure, contribute to a network of blue and green corridors for the benefit of wildlife and people. Hatfield Forest will be part of this network, however it will also be protected from overuse.

Economic

Uttlesford will have a thriving, diverse, resilient economy that operates at a local, national, and international scale. As the East of England's largest employment site, Stansted Airport will be supported but with great emphasis on ensuring its environmental impacts are managed and mitigated where they cannot be avoided. The north of the district will benefit from appropriate improved links into the high-skilled 'Cambridge phenomenon', supporting economic growth at Chesterford Research Park and elsewhere.

Social

The housing needs of local people will be met and the people of the district will be healthier, happier and able to meet most of their day-to-day needs locally within a community that is good for their health and wellbeing. High quality design will help protect and enhance the intrinsic character and built heritage of Uttlesford's towns, villages, and the wider environment.

Strategic Objectives

- 3.3 To achieve our **Spatial Vision**, we have established a series of **Strategic Objectives** grouped under the ‘environmental’, ‘economic’ and ‘community/social’ headings that run throughout the Plan. These central themes are consistent with the Government’s objectives for the planning system to achieve sustainable development.
- 3.4 The **Strategic Objectives** are shown by **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Strategic Objectives informing the Uttlesford Local Plan 2041

Theme	Strategic Objectives
Environmental	Minimise the environmental impact of development.
	SO1: To Plan for the climate and ecological emergency, mitigate the impacts from development, including reducing energy usage of new builds.
	SO2: Protect high-quality and locally defined valued landscapes by ensuring new development conserves and enhances landscape assets and achieves high quality design standards.
	SO3: Protect and preserve the natural environment. Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of Uttlesford’s natural capital assets, such as soils, woodlands, hedges and ponds to capture and store carbon as well as providing for appropriate access for health and recreational value with effective multifunctional Green Infrastructure. Restore the natural ecology of the district’s chalk streams and rivers.
	SO4: Protect water resources. Deliver developments that efficiently use local resources, particularly water by prioritizing water resilience and sustainable consumption, that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves.
	SO5: Protect the highest quality agricultural land whilst being mindful of needs for rural employment and diversification.
Economic	SO6: Protect and enhance the historic environment, including protecting and enhancing heritage assets and archaeology.
	Allocate sufficient land to accommodate development needs.
	SO7: Recognise the influential role of the District’s employment offer, including Stansted Airport/ Northside and Great Chesterford Research Park, by embracing the planned expansion, whilst seeking to maximise their sustainability and the needs for infrastructure.
	SO8: Maintain economic development opportunities. To promote a strong, diverse, resilient, sustainable, and competitive economy and range of employment and learning opportunities and a multi skilled workforce across a range of sectors including tourism, high-tech, biotech, research and development, aviation, agricultural diversification and rural business.
Community/	Provide adequate and timely infrastructure to support development.

Social	SO9: Help sustain existing and deliver new local community facilities and services through development to promote healthy, sustainable and safe communities.
	SO10: Meet the identified housing needs and an appropriate contribution of affordable housing.
	SO11: Prioritise increased opportunities for safe travel by public transport and active travel in new development.

4. Spatial Strategy

Introduction

- 4.1 Implementing the **Spatial Vision** for Uttlesford District up to 2041, as shown by Chapter 3, will be through our **Spatial Strategy** that informs decision making about the location and nature of future development in our district. The Spatial Strategy identifies the appropriate level of housing to plan for, the amount of employment land to meet our needs in order to maintain and develop our local economy and to provide a range of services, as well as the facilities and infrastructure we need. It also ensures we address the challenges of climate change, support biodiversity net gain, achieve sustainable development and to protect the environment.
- 4.2 Our **Spatial Strategy** for Uttlesford is shown by **Figures 4.1** and **4.2**.
- 4.3 The Spatial Strategy is underpinned by five core (strategic) policies:
- **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change** – which sets out criteria for development to ensure it responds to the challenge of climate change appropriately
 - **Core Policy 2: Meeting Our Housing Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing, ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
 - **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in Uttlesford according to their role and service function
 - **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across Uttlesford in appropriate locations, and
 - **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** – which ensures that new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

Area Strategies

- 4.4 We have also developed four **Area Strategies**, which ensure we plan appropriately for different parts of Uttlesford, taking account of what makes them locally distinctive and focused on their individual needs. These are set out in Chapters 6 to 8. The four Area Strategies are for:
- North Uttlesford, including Great Chesterford, Newport and Saffron Walden
 - South Uttlesford, including Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley
 - Thaxted, and
 - The Rural Areas (i.e., any policies that apply to the rest of the rural district)

District Wide Policies

- 4.5 Finally, we have developed some district-wide policies that apply to Uttlesford as a whole and these are set out in Chapters 9 to 11. These policies are needed to

complement the Spatial Strategy and Area Strategies to help ensure the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives can be delivered successfully. These policies are locally specific and are important to help us meet the Plan's objectives.

- 4.6 The policies from the previous Uttlesford Local Plan, adopted in 2005, have been replaced and updated by the policies set out in this Plan, and for that reason, there are no saved policies from the previous plan. A list of how the 2005 Plan policies have been superseded is shown by **Appendix 1**.

Uttlesford Local Plan 2041 – Spatial Strategy	
<p>North Uttlesford – Including: Great Chesterford, Newport and Saffron Walden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saffron Walden is identified as a Key Settlement to reflect its status as the largest town within the district where the majority of services and facilities are provided along with the widest range of retail. • Growth at Saffron Walden will complement the existing settlement, forming high-quality sustainable development, well connected to the wider settlement, providing appropriate services and facilities, including additional capacity for the existing secondary school. • Great Chesterford and Newport are recognised as Local Rural Centres reflecting their importance in the Settlement Hierarchy and their sustainability, good public transport connections including railway stations. • Great Chesterford Research Park will provide a key location for the expansion and provision of high quality employment use, supported through the development masterplan.
<p>South Uttlesford – Including: Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet, and Takeley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are recognised as Key Settlements to reflect the roles they play within Uttlesford as two of our three largest and most sustainable settlements. • Both Stansted and Great Dunmow are historic settlements that have traditional strong townscape character. It is therefore important their identity is protected, and the quality of the townscape is enhanced. • Takeley is recognised as a Local Rural Centre. Development here must deliver high-quality and sustainable development, picking up on the local character and its rich and varied heritage features, providing for a coherent and comprehensive approach to planning for the settlement and provide a new local centre along with a range of new services and facilities, including a primary school, secondary school and health centre. • Development at Takeley must deliver sustainable connections to the public transport interchange at Stansted Airport and beyond, including the wider employment areas at the airport. • It is important that growth within all these settlements is high quality and sustainable, but also supports the delivery of new services, facilities and infrastructure to benefit the existing communities as well as any new residents. • The development must also provide for extensive areas of open space including comprehensive buffers for the heritage assets and the creation of public space or park to help relieve pressure on Hatfield Forest. Heritage, both natural and built assets should be protected or celebrated by good landscape design, settings as well as appropriate design. • Improvements to access and usability of the Flich Way in the south as a strategic linear route that could be used more for east-west connectivity will be expected. • The planned expansion of Stansted Airport and large-scale increase in warehousing provision will provide a key focus for employment, with improvement to local sustainable transport.

Thaxted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaxted is also recognised as a Local Rural Centre to reflect its role within the wider rural eastern part of the district, where additional development is limited to support the vitality and viability of the community and its services and facilities, including by helping to maintain its public transport connectivity. • The high quality of Thaxted’s built environment is easily recognisable and it is particularly important these qualities are protected. • New services and facilities will also be provided including a new primary school.
Rural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth across the rest of the district will be more limited, focusing on meeting local community and business needs and helping to support the vitality of these more rural settlements. • Proposals for new dwellings will be directed towards the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well connected than the smaller villages. • Development in the open countryside will not be permitted unless consistent with the exception policies in this Plan or within national policy. In the south of the District, the Green Belt will be maintained, with no new allocations proposed in the Green Belt.

Figure 4.1: Uttlesford Local Plan 2041 – Spatial Strategy

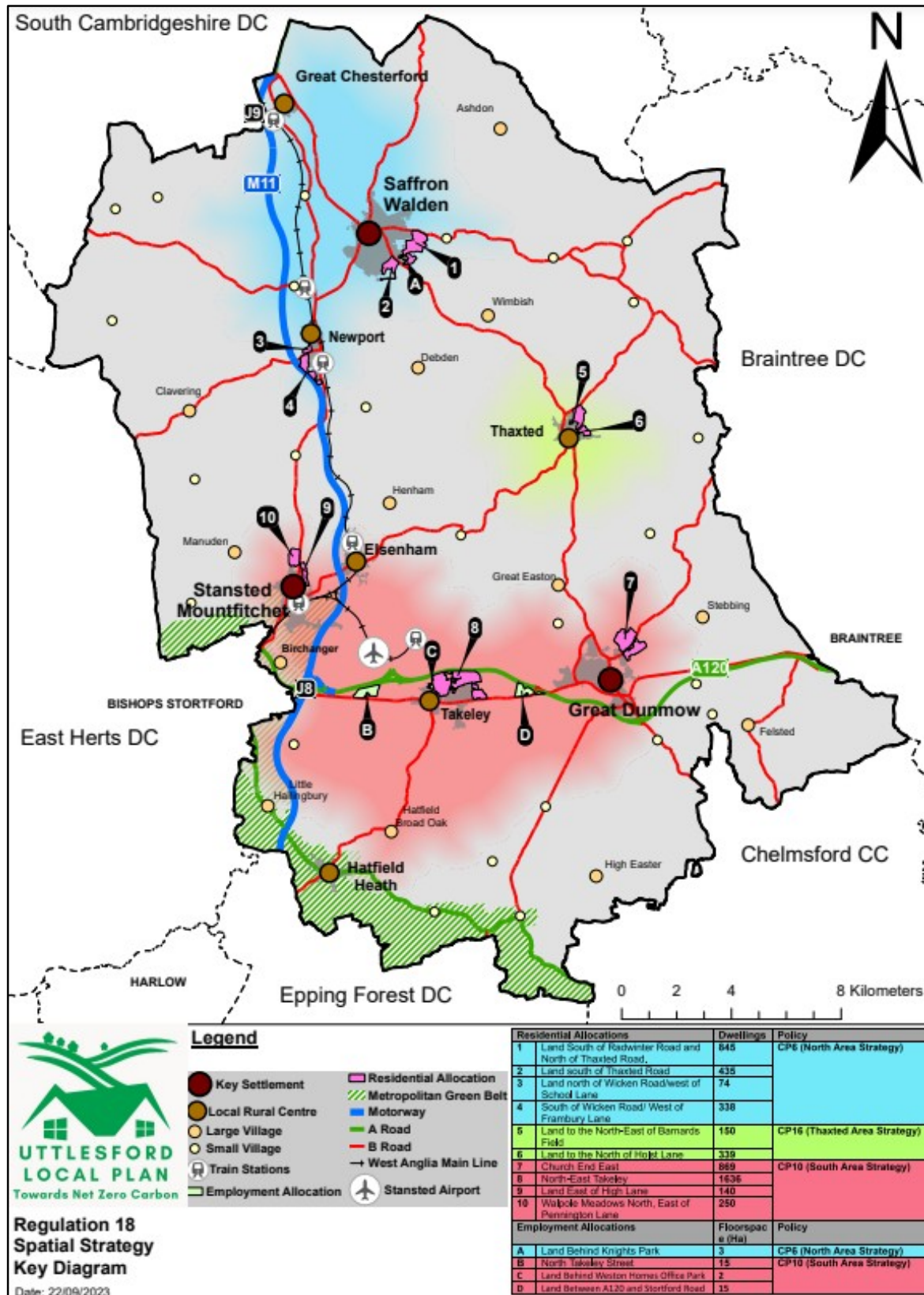


Figure 4.2: Key Diagram – Uttlesford’s Spatial and Area Strategies

Responding to Climate Change

- 4.7 There is overwhelming scientific consensus that we are experiencing significant climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ratified a report in 2023¹ on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. It highlights the urgency for action and has generated a high level of concern. The UK's national commitment is set by the Climate Change Act 2008, updated in 2019² and legislates that the UK must be net zero carbon by 2050. It includes a series of carbon budgets to ensure that the UK does not emit more than its allowance between now and 2050. This legal requirement is underpinned by the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) report '*Net Zero: The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming*'³.
- 4.8 Key measures to achieve Net Zero include:
- 100% low carbon/renewable electricity by 2050
 - ultra-efficient energy use in new homes and non-domestic buildings
 - ambitious programme of retrofit of existing buildings
 - electrification of small vehicles
 - reduction in waste and non-biodegradable waste to landfill, and
 - significant afforestation and restoration of land
- 4.9 Furthermore, there is growing concern over the cost of fuel and increasing fuel poverty. The planning process can influence the use of energy through policy controls over the energy use and space heating standards in new buildings. Increasing this 'fabric efficiency' to as high a level as possible, and then requiring any additional energy needs to be met from renewable sources goes a long way to ensure a net zero building.
- 4.10 However, the energy standards required by the current Building Regulations 2021 (Part L)⁴ are not strict enough for new homes to be net zero. We need to require higher standards through our Local Plan to achieve this. Improving the design of a building by reducing the extent of heat loss areas, the amount of junctions and gaps, and by optimising elevation design for winter solar gains are considered as essential components of an energy efficient design; such measures need to be required of all new buildings.
- 4.11 The Local Plan will therefore require that new buildings are designed and built to be Net Zero Carbon in operation. They must be ultra-low energy, using energy much more efficiently, be fossil fuel free, and generate renewable energy on-site to at least match annual energy use. We need also to try to reduce their 'embodied carbon' during construction and their long-term environmental impact, for example how building materials are re-used. Without these requirements we are adding to the problem of retrofitting in the future such as the need for boiler replacement.

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2023, AR6 Synthesis Report. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

² Climate Change Act 2008, 2019, Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

³ Climate Change Committee, 2019, Net Zero: The UK's contribution to Stopping Global Warming. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>

⁴ The Building Regulations (2021), Approved Document L. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conservation-of-fuel-and-power-approved-document-1>

- 4.12 In 2019 the Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and prepared an Action Plan⁵ of project ideas to try to address some of the climate change measures that will be required. The Action Plan is under review and is focusing on achievable measures such as electric vehicle charging, and support for community-based initiatives, providing funding for projects that can demonstrate tangible outcomes.
- 4.13 One of the areas of considerable concern to local people is the biodiversity value and ecological status of much of the land in the district where agriculture dominates the landscape and fragile chalk stream ecosystems have been endangered through pollution and over-abstraction. Our Plan includes policies to protect the natural environment but also to encourage increased access to open space and semi-natural habitats areas. A critical requirement of the Environment Act 2021 refers to the relatively new concept of Biodiversity Net Gain aimed at enhancing the natural environment through development projects.
- 4.14 The final main component of climate change impact is transport, particularly by the private car. Our Plan places emphasis on the need to reduce this, to support public transport and to encourage connected walking and cycling routes. In these ways settlements and new development become more sustainable.

Climate Change & Sustainability Statement

- 4.15 In order to ensure a comprehensive approach to sustainability, applicants will be required to submit a **Climate Change & Sustainability Statement**⁶ that addresses all aspects of climate change covering details of the approach listed below and in **Table 4.1**, and in accordance with **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change**:
- adaptation to climate change
 - water efficiency and water management
 - scheme design and site waste management to reduce the amount of construction waste, maximise the reuse and recycling of materials (including reuse of existing buildings where these exist, as far as suitable and feasible)
 - use of materials and embodied carbon (considering the district-wide Design Code)
 - the green and blue infrastructure strategy, the County's Nature Recovery Network, protection of the chalk stream ecology, tree planting, biodiversity net gain, and long-term stewardship and funding
 - land, water, noise and air pollution
 - sustainable transport, mobility and access
 - health and well-being, including open space, culture, accessibility.

Note: Operational energy policies are dealt with separately in the Energy Strategy and/or Essex County Council 'net zero spreadsheet'.

⁵ Utlesford District Council, 2019, Climate Crisis Strategy. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>

⁶ A template for the CCSS is available from the ECC Essex Design Guide website, November 2023 – Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>

Table 4.1: Topics expected to be included within the Climate Change & Sustainability Statement according to the type and scale of development.

Topic for Climate Change & Sustainability Statement	New development of 1-9 dwellings or 100-<1000m ² GIA	New major development (10+ dwellings or 1,000m ² + GIA)	Major refurbishment & change of use
Adaptation to climate change	✓	✓	✓
Water efficiency and water management	✓	✓	✓
Site waste management to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of construction waste • Maximise reuse & recycling of materials 	✓	✓	✓
Use of materials and with reference to embodied carbon (consider the District-wide Design Code)	✓ *	✓	✓ *
Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, the County's Nature Recovery Network, protection of the chalk stream ecology, tree planting, biodiversity net gain, and long-term stewardship and funding	✓	✓	✓
Land, water, noise and air pollution	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable transport, mobility and access	✓	✓	✓
Health and well-being, including open space, culture, accessibility	✓	✓	✓

*Less detail required unless substantial demolition/ extension is involved.

Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change

Development proposals must demonstrate how they mitigate the impacts of climate change and support an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, including the following measures:

- i. locating and laying out development to reduce the need to travel by clustering trip origins and destinations between homes, jobs, services
- ii. providing high quality sustainable travel infrastructure and coordinating between development sites in the vicinity to address cumulative impacts and achieve connectivity of routes
- iii. locating electric vehicle charging points to maximise ease of access and safety when in public areas
- iv. promoting sustainable design and construction, and the re-use of materials and reduction in waste in a 'circular economy' approach to development
- v. implement the cooling hierarchy into building design and show how building design is resilient to current and future climate impacts e.g., balancing winter solar gain and summer cooling using natural methods such as shading and natural ventilation, to avoid a need for active air conditioning (with reference to **Core Policy 24: Overheating**)
- vi. accelerating the expansion of renewable and low carbon energy generation within the district (with reference to **Core Policy 23: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development** and **Core Policy 26: Renewable Energy Infrastructure**)
- vii. use of materials with low embodied carbon as far as possible (with reference to **Core Policy 25: Embodied Carbon**)
- viii. promoting the efficient use of natural resources (e.g., water and soil) including surface water management systems such as SUDs, and water efficiency measures in buildings (with reference to **Core Policy 35: Water Supply And Protection Of Water Resources**)
- ix. ensuring that new developments are provided with recycling and waste disposal infrastructure
- x. promoting and maintaining a network of connected, accessible and multi-functional green spaces, including Local Green Space, to include biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery as appropriate and encouraging tree and hedgerow planting.

All applications for new development of 1 or more dwellings or greater than 100sqm of non-residential floorspace, and all major refurbishment and major change of use, is expected to demonstrate the above by submitting a Climate Change & Sustainability Statement covering the topics and level of detail proportionate to the scale of the development as per **Table 4.1**.

Residential development over ten units and non-residential development over 1000sqm floorspace or 0.5ha will be required to cover more detail and a wider range of topics in the **Climate Change & Sustainability Statement**, setting out their approach towards health and wellbeing, as well as how their proposals reflect adaptation to and help to combat climate change issues in relation to net zero carbon development, sustainable transport, nature and green infrastructure, energy, water, waste and construction methods.

Meeting Our Housing Needs

- 4.16 The Local Plan 2041 seeks to meet housing needs; to provide homes and access to the housing market and to deliver affordable housing for those priced out or unable to access housing at market prices. It also seeks to provide a mix and type of housing that will help meet the needs of the whole community.
- 4.17 With these aims, the Plan makes provision for at least 14,377 new homes to be delivered during the plan period (2021 to 2041) as set out in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs**. This reflects the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing for Uttlesford District up to 2041 as identified in the updated Local Housing Need Assessment (2023)⁷. The figure of 13,680 new homes represents the identified housing requirement, however the Plan makes for provision in excess of the housing requirement to provide for flexibility and contingency.

Sources of Housing Supply

- 4.18 A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the Plan period. These will include:
- strategic allocations made within the Plan (sites of 100 or more dwellings)
 - any existing planning commitments
 - non-strategic allocations (sites of 99 or fewer dwellings) that may be included in the final version of this Plan and/or that are identified through Neighbourhood Plans (refer to Core Policy 2), and
 - sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in this Local Plan 2041. These are sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.
- 4.19 The strategic allocations listed in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs** and outlined in more detail within the Area Strategies are central to the delivery of the Local Plan 2041 and our Strategic Objectives for Uttlesford.
- 4.20 To identify the strategic allocations, the Council has followed a comprehensive selection process, which began with an assessment of land at each of our most sustainable settlements (shown by our updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – HELAA)⁸. This approach helped to identify broad locations that offered the most suitable locations for development, which were then comprehensively tested, including by the Sustainability Appraisal, Transport Assessment, Viability Study, Landscape Sensitivity and a number of other technical evidence studies, including for heritage⁹.
- 4.21 The scale of development at the identified strategic allocations will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.
- 4.22 Overall, the Plan makes provision for more housing than the identified requirement. This is to ensure there is supply headroom, to provide greater Plan

⁷ UDC, Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2023. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/article/4941/Housing>

⁸ UDC, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), 2023. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/article/4941/Housing>

⁹ Background evidence for the Local Plan is available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>

resilience and flexibility, and to help ensure the Plan can achieve and maintain a five-year housing land supply, as required by national policy.

Core Policy 2: Meeting Our Housing Needs

The housing requirement for Uttlesford District is for 13,680 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2021 and 2041.

The Plan provides for at least 14,377 dwellings by 2041 in the interest of providing for flexibility and contingency.

5,076 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. 1,000 dwellings will be delivered through non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages. Additional dwellings (for example windfalls) will also be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process. The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown in the following table:

Table 4.2: Uttlesford Housing Requirement and Housing Supply 2021 to 2041

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (April 2021 to March 2041)		13,680
Housing completions (April 2021 to 1st April 2023)		980
Housing Supply	Known Commitments (as at 1 st April 2023)	5,722
	Strategic Allocations	5,076
	Non-Strategic Allocations	1,000
	Lapsed Permissions Assumption	-51
	Windfalls	1,650
	Lapsed Permissions Assumption	-51
Total Housing Supply		14,377

Strategic Allocations

Development will be supported at strategic allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown in **Appendix A** and in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan taken as a whole. A collaborative and comprehensive masterplanned approach will be expected with consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The following tables show how the level of housing required through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 4.3: Strategic Allocations identified for North Uttlesford

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Newport	Local Rural Centre	North of Wicken Road/ West of School Lane	74
		South of Wicken Road/ West of Frambury Lane	338
Saffron Walden	Key Settlement	Land south of Radwinter road, north of Thaxted road.	845
		Land south of Thaxted road	435
Total			1,692

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Table 4.4: Strategic Allocations identified for South Uttlesford

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Great Dunmow	Key Settlement	Church End East	869
Stansted Mountfitchet	Key Settlement	Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane	250
		East of High Lane North	140
Takeley	Local Rural Centre		1,636
Total			2,895

Table 4.5: Strategic Allocations identified for Thaxted and Rural Uttlesford

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Thaxted	Local Rural Centre	Land to the North- East of Barnards Field	150
		Land to the North of Holst Lane	339
Total			489

Non-Strategic Allocations

Development will also be supported at non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages where development meets the requirements to be set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendices 2 to 4**) or within Neighbourhood Plans, and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Non-strategic allocations at Larger Villages will either be identified in this Plan, adopted Neighbourhood Plans, or future parts of the Local Plan, in accordance with the identified housing requirement figures for the Larger Villages as shown within Chapter 8: **Rural Area Strategy**.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.23 The Settlement Hierarchy (**Core Policy 3**) defines the settlements across Uttlesford into four tiers based on an assessment of their population size, the number and range of facilities and services, their characteristics, accessibility, local employment opportunities and their functional relationship with their surrounding areas (see below). Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role as defined by Core Policy 3.
- Key Settlements
 - Local Rural Centres
 - Larger Villages
 - Smaller Villages
- 4.24 The Local Plan 2041 protects and enhances the services and facilities provided by the Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and our Larger Villages and ensures that any new facilities, homes and jobs are focused on these settlements. This will help to ensure the delivery of sustainable development because:
- these settlements provide the best range of services and facilities, and new development will help to support and enhance them
 - locating new homes in these communities with the best services and facilities and jobs will enable the residents in the new homes to access them by walking, cycling and public transport, so reducing the need to travel by car
 - it will enable more affordable homes to be built where there is most need, and
 - the main service providers, including Essex Integrated Care Services , the County Council and emergency services, prefer this approach because it will help them to deliver their services more effectively.
- 4.25 The Settlement Hierarchy provides a new categorisation for all settlements. The sustainability of the hierarchy has been reviewed to ensure that new development is focused in the most appropriate locations. The hierarchy allows for greatest flexibility in the largest and most sustainable locations, but is more restrictive at the smallest and least sustainable settlements.
- 4.26 Some development in smaller rural settlements can be very important to preserve their vitality and viability, but this needs to be carefully managed to ensure that the pattern of development overall is sustainable. For example, ensuring the strategy supports the maximum possible use of sustainable modes of transportation.

Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy

Development will be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and Settlement Classifications as set out below:

Key Settlements:

Key Settlements are defined as settlements that have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the district through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Local Rural Centres / Small Towns

Local Rural Centres are defined as either small towns or large villages with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside of the Key Settlements.

Larger Villages

Larger Villages are defined as settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.

Smaller Villages

The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily to meet local needs.

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The Settlement Classifications Are:

Classification	Settlement	Type of Development
Key Settlements	Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet	There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Key Settlements, Small Towns and Larger Villages.
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns (*)	Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport, Takeley/ Prior's Green, Thaxted	Development outside the existing built areas of these settlements will only be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2041 or has been allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan, or future parts of the Local Plan.
Larger Villages	Ashdon, Birchanger, Clavering, Debden, Elder Street, Felsted, Great Easton, Hatfield Broad Oak, Henham, High Easter, Little Hallingbury, Manuden, Stebbing	
Smaller Villages	Aythorpe Roding, Barnston, Berden, Broxted, Chrishall, Elmdon, Farnham, Flitch Green, Great Hallingbury, Great Sampford, Hempsted, High Roding, Langley, Leaden Roding, Lindsell, Little Canfield, Little Dunmow, Little Easton, Littlebury, Quendon & Rickling, Radwinter, Swards End, Wendens Ambo, White Roding, Widdington	At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. in keeping with local character, and ii. proportionate in scale, and iii. meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.
Open Countryside	Those villages not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the Open Countryside.	Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

(GB) These settlements are washed over by Green Belt. (*) These settlements are inset to the Green Belt. (Part GB) These settlements are partly in the Green Belt.

Meeting Business and Employment Needs

- 4.27 Uttlesford includes a number of significant employment sites and employers, including Stansted Airport and Great Chesterford Research Park, but is proportionally also home to a large number of micro-enterprises when compared to the East of England and England as a whole.
- 4.28 The largest sectors in Uttlesford by the proportion of total employment in 2019 were Transportation and Storage (20.0%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (11.1%), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Administrative Support (both 8.9%). Other sectors that recorded greater than 5% of total employment included Manufacturing; Education; Accommodation and food (all of which accounted for 7.8%), Construction and Human health & social work (both accounted for 6.7%). The sectors reflect the importance of Stansted Airport to the local economy, plus the north-south M11 corridor which offers strong road and rail connections to Cambridge and London¹⁰.
- 4.29 Uttlesford has seen relatively rapid employment growth in recent years, outperforming surrounding areas in comparative terms and the following form the main strands that contribute to the economy of Uttlesford:
- London Stansted Airport and environs
 - Chesterford Research Park
 - vibrant market towns and rural centres
 - the rural economy, and
 - the visitor economy.
- 4.30 Stansted Airport is undoubtedly one of the most important contributors to the local economy, both directly and also through the supply chain and supporting services. The airport secured planning permission to expand to 43 million passengers per year in May 2021, and the approval in August 2023 of the Northside permission will significantly expand the airport's warehousing floorspace.
- 4.31 Another key local economic driver in Uttlesford is Chesterford Research Park located in the north of the district nearer to Cambridge. Chesterford Research Park provides laboratory and office space for biotechnology, pharmaceutical and technology R&D companies. Current occupiers include AstraZeneca, Isogenica, Microbiotica and Biomodal. Chesterford Research Park is Uttlesford's most prominent R&D facility, has planning permission to expand further, and the owner intends to expand further still over the plan period.
- 4.32 Office demand is focused generally on local SME businesses and particularly space of up to 140sqm, although the rise of hybrid working has affected office floorspace demand. It is reported that that outstanding requirements are all for small and medium-sized units, with little demand for larger HQ office space. The local market in Saffron Walden is focused typically on units of 46-140sqm. Some inquiries from small businesses are reported, for satellite offices thus providing an alternative to commuting to London or Cambridge.
- 4.33 A lack of industrial supply is noted in Uttlesford and more generally within 10 miles of Bishops Stortford with a 99.6% occupancy level within the industrial

¹⁰ ADD REFERENCE

market. Demand outstrips supply and there is a need to bring forward new development. There is demand for industrial space in a range of small, medium and large size bands across the district including from established manufacturing businesses. Additional supply is needed, particularly close to M11 Junction 8, which is the area of strongest occupier demand. Demand exists for smaller rural premises across the district and around the smaller towns and villages.

- 4.34 The latest evidence relating to business and employment needs is contained within the 2023 Employment Needs Update which updates the 2021 Employment Needs and Economic Development Evidence Report¹¹.
- 4.35 The Employment Needs Update recommends allocating the residual Chesterford Research Park area for research and development to deliver the masterplan in full, which would meet Uttlesford's research and development needs in full over the plan period. The Park masterplan sets out the potential for around 93,000 sqm for research and development uses of which approximately 32,500 sqm of space is already occupied.
- 4.36 The updated evidence identifies an overall need for office floorspace of 43,200 sqm or 14.14 ha over the period to 2041. Taking into account the latest monitoring data on completions and commitments (including the Stansted Northside permission) the residual need to be met through new allocations is 4.4ha. The report recommends making an allocation of 3-5 ha around Stansted / Gaunts End / Takeley alongside supporting windfall sites at the Key Settlements of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet.
- 4.37 Regarding industrial land the report recommends that 235,000 sqm of floorspace is provided during the plan period, of which 153,800 sqm is beyond Stansted. Broadly, the non-strategic floorspace at Northside is considered adequate to meet Stansted-specific business needs of 81,000sqm; therefore the need for the remainder of Uttlesford is 153,800sqm or 34ha.
- 4.38 Taking into account completions and commitments there is a residual need for 30.4 ha industrial land to meet local Uttlesford needs. Of this it has been recommended that industrial allocations are made at Great Dunmow (5-10ha); Saffron Walden (up to 5ha) and 15ha in the Stansted vicinity around Takeley, Bishop's Stortford borders, Stansted Mountfitchet and Birchanger.
- 4.39 Allocations to meet R&D, office and industrial needs are made in **Core Policy 4**, with further details provided in the relevant Area Strategies.

¹¹ UDC, Employment Needs Update (2023). Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/article/4936/employment>

Table 4.6: Uttlesford Employment Land Supply at 11th September 2023

Component	Employment Land (hectares)	
	Office	Industrial
Need 2021 – 2041	21.7	52.2 (of which 34.1 is local/non-Stansted)
Completions and commitments (excluding Northside)	11.7	3.7
Residual need	10	25-30
New Strategic Allocations in this plan	21.5	33
Balance to be met from windfall/non-strategic development	0	0

Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

Over the Plan period 2021-2041 the land requirement for office and R&D development is 27.7ha and industrial development is 52.2ha. In order to meet this requirement, a further 10ha is needed for office development and 25-30ha is needed for industrial development beyond known completions and commitments (figures correct at 11th September 2023).

A total of 54 hectares of land is identified for future development at the following strategic allocations:

Table 4.5: Local Plan 2041 Employment Allocations

Site Name	Type of Site (Uses Class)	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Chesterford Research Park	E(g)(ii)	18.3
Great Dunmow / Takeley – Land Between A120 & Stortford Road	E(g)(i) office / E(g)(ii) R&D / E(g)(iii) / B2 Industrial	15
Saffron Walden – Land North of Thaxted Road (Rear of Knights Road)	E(g)(iii) / B2 Industrial	3
Takeley – North of Takeley Street	E(g)(iii) / B2 Industrial	15
Gaunts End	E(g)(i) office	3
Total		54.3

Planning Applications for employment and business development will be supported at the allocated sites where they meet the requirements to be set out within the next version of this Plan and in accordance with the Area Strategies.

The small-scale residual need will be met through windfall development in accordance with **Core Policy 48: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites** and where supported by Neighbourhood Plans.

In addition to the sites identified for new employment development, a number of existing strategic employment sites have been identified in the Area Strategies. These sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with **Core Policies 45 and 46**.

Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

- 4.40 Providing adequate supporting infrastructure is one of the most important ways the Local Plan can contribute towards achieving a sustainable local economy, as well as meeting the Plan's Climate Action and Healthy Place-Shaping objectives. The Spatial Strategy focuses development in the most accessible parts of the district thus helping to ensure the Plans proposals are well served by transport links and the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure.
- 4.41 The Council's approach to infrastructure planning in the district will identify the infrastructure required to meet the district's growth, to support the strategic site allocations and to ensure delivery by:
- working with partners, including central Government, and other local authorities, to provide physical, community and green infrastructure
 - identifying infrastructure needs and costs, phasing of development, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery
 - completing a Developer Contributions SPD to set out the Council's approach to the provision of essential infrastructure including affordable housing, education, transport, health, flood defences and open space, and
 - requiring development proposals to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met in a timely way, including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.
- 4.42 Essential Infrastructure is that which is required to make development happen in a timely and sustainable manner. Such infrastructure is therefore needed to ensure that the impacts of development are mitigated and that new development comes forward with necessary supporting facilities. Not investing in this infrastructure may result in delays to development coming forward. Examples of essential infrastructure associated with developments are roads, public transport improvements, schools, and foul water upgrades.
- 4.43 Other Infrastructure is that which is important to meet the overall cumulative need of development but is not seen as likely to prevent an individual development coming forward in the short-term.
- 4.44 The Area Strategies set out in Chapters 5 to 8 include policies to help us plan for some of the key infrastructure requirements within each part of the district, and where necessary, also for safeguarding land to ensure that the delivery of these schemes will not be compromised.
- 4.45 Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertakings and/ or other agreements as secured through planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.
- 4.46 We will secure funding for any in-kind infrastructure through Planning Obligations where they are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposal.
- 4.47 The Council will pool planning obligations where the infrastructure relates to more than one development site and is required to make more than one

development site acceptable in planning terms. Strategic infrastructure could also be pooled.

- 4.48 The Council's approach to delivering infrastructure will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a revised Supplementary Planning Document for Section 106 and will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.
- 4.49 Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.
- 4.50 Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/ or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all other relevant policies of this Plan.

If infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence the Council will:

- i. prioritise developer contributions for essential and then other infrastructure in line with the definitions as set out in Paragraphs 4.42 and 4.43 and the detail of the requirements outlined in the IDP, and/ or
- ii. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, or
- iii. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere including CIL.

The Council's Delivering Infrastructure Strategy will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a Supplementary Planning Document for Section 106 agreements that will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.

Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to delivery new development.

Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertaking and/ or other agreement as secured through the planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.

5. North Uttlesford Area Strategy

Introduction

- 5.1 This Chapter focuses on the Key Settlement of Saffron Walden and the Local Rural Centres of Great Chesterford and Newport. These are the largest settlements in the northern part of Uttlesford and together form the North Uttlesford Area Strategy. This strategy helps to provide a spatial dimension to the Local Plan and make it easier for readers interested in particular parts of the district to understand what is being proposed. All three settlements are located on or adjacent to the M11 corridor that runs north-south through the western edge of Uttlesford, and the valley of the River Cam. The area also contains a number of smaller villages (such as Littlebury and Wendens Ambo) although our policies affecting the more rural areas are set out in Chapter 8: Rural Area Strategy.
- 5.2 Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the district, which is an important medieval town containing many historic buildings of note and includes a Conservation Area which covers large portions of the central and north-eastern extents of the town. The town has the largest retail and service offer in the district and as such functions as a Key Settlement. This offering includes several schools, sports and leisure facilities, shops and supermarkets, a GP surgery, a community hospital, along with various other services and facilities available to the public. It has seen considerable expansion in recent years particularly to the south and east of the Town, although infrastructure provision has not always kept up with this expansion. It is essential that any new development provides a comprehensive range of new or additional infrastructure services and facilities to help redress this.
- 5.3 The Audley End Estate is situated to the west of the town and comprises the house itself along with large sections of land in the vicinity which provides a natural barrier to the western extent of Saffron Walden. The historic, natural and attractive characteristics of the estate make it an important asset to the area, which should be protected from any development pressure. The nearby railway station located at Wendens Ambo provides good access to Cambridge and London, but is located approximately 3 miles from the town, so it is essential that public transport and cycling connections between the town and the station are maintained and, wherever possible, enhanced.
- 5.4 Great Chesterford is located in the northern most part of Uttlesford being close to the border with neighbouring South Cambridgeshire District. The settlement benefits from a railway station located at its heart with excellent connections and the wider area contains a number of key employment sites. These contribute to the high-tech and bio-tech cluster, that partly lie in South Cambridgeshire and partly within Uttlesford, such as Great Chesterford Research Park. Great Chesterford Research Park was initially constructed approximately 60 years ago and since then, has continually provided high-skill employment opportunities to the residents of Uttlesford and South Cambridgeshire, particularly surrounding the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries. There are some significant heritage assets in the area including a large cluster of listed buildings along High Street, South Street and Carmel Street, with a Conservation Area designation also covering this historic core. Abutting the settlement to the north-east, lies a Scheduled Monument designation, comprising a Roman fort, Roman town, Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Whilst the settlement is close to the M11 Junction 9 – the volume of traffic using this route and development pressure in the wider area (outside of Uttlesford) highlights the

importance of ensuring any longer-term proposals adequately test and mitigate any impacts associated with the Stumps Cross junction, A11 and M11 Junction 9.

- 5.5 Newport is the other Local Rural Centre located in the northern part of Uttlesford that is also a highly attractive medieval settlement. The settlement benefits from a railway station with excellent connections to the north and south, a good range of shops, a secondary school and a primary school. A high proportion of the designated heritage assets within Newport are situated along High Street. Reflective of this, the Newport Conservation Area is broadly linear, running north-south along this route. Abutting the very north-eastern extent of Newport lies the Historic Park and Garden designation of Shortgrove Hall. This is a well landscaped park formed in the 18th Century. The statutory protection afforded to this historic park and its rural setting ensure that it should be protected from development pressure.
- 5.6 Given the importance and relative size of these settlements in Uttlesford, along with the range of services and facilities they provide, and the associated opportunities for maximizing walking, cycling and public transport use to access services, facilities and employment; these settlements are considered to be amongst the most sustainable locations for growth within the district. For these reasons, there are strategic development proposals at Saffron Walden and Newport, but due to various constraints, no strategic growth is proposed at Great Chesterford.
- 5.7 Following the delivery of the proposed allocations, discussed later in this Chapter, the settlements will continue to be thriving places; acting as important service centres for their surrounding catchments. The historic character and attractive landscape settings will have been maintained. New development will have been successfully integrated with the settlement, alongside additional infrastructure provision, improving self-sufficiency. Meanwhile, new residents contribute to sustaining the services and facilities also valued by existing communities.

How the North Uttlesford Area Will Change by 2041

- 5.5 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought for within North Uttlesford:
- the provision of both primary (3 form entry) and secondary provision (a new sixth form centre) in Saffron Walden and the expansion of primary and secondary provision in Newport
 - the provision of around 1,692 dwellings across Saffron Walden and Newport.
 - up to 3 hectares of employment provision in Saffron Walden in the form of expansion to the retail park at the 'Land north-east of Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden'
 - development which achieves high quality design, conserving the historic environment and landscape setting of the settlements
 - comprehensive packages of infrastructure enhancements towards new health care, open space and leisure facilities
 - transport improvements including improved bus frequencies
 - enhanced facilities at both Saffron Walden (Audley End) and Newport railway stations, along with a link road provided between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road, and
 - high quality walking and cycling links from the proposed allocations connecting to Newport and Saffron Walden centres and the railway stations.

Housing

- 5.9 The plan proposes around 1,280 homes at Saffron Walden and 412 at Newport. This is important to ensure the Local Plan supports sustainable development and supports infrastructure delivery where it has maximum benefit to existing as well as new communities especially given the shortcomings in planning for infrastructure in Uttlesford in the past.
- 5.10 It is also important we provide support for our retailers, businesses and existing services and facilities so we help to maintain the viability and vitality of our most sustainable communities. As an increasing number of people work from home, ensuring that new residents can easily access local facilities by sustainable modes of travel not only helps to reduce the need to travel but also boosts the local economy, along with providing affordable housing where the need arises (i.e., in our existing main settlements).
- 5.11 Development at Saffron Walden provides an opportunity to provide substantial new education facilities, including a 3-form entry primary school that will provide for some of the recently committed development as well as the newly proposed allocation. This approach is preferred by Essex County Council as Education Authority as opposed to providing two smaller and separately located schools. The development will also provide a new Sixth Form Centre for Saffron Walden County High School, thus enabling secondary expansion in the town. The secondary school here is already the largest in the district, but expansion helps to prevent the need for pupils to travel further afield.
- 5.12 Moreover, within the proposed allocations, provision has been made for the delivery of a link road which connects Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road, thereby alleviating pressure from vehicular traffic within the constrained town centre and facilitating greater connectivity. The Saffron Walden allocations will also provide a range of proposed green and open spaces, including formal play areas, semi-natural spaces, and landscape corridors. The Plan is also proposing a substantial Country Park to the east of Saffron Walden to ensure appropriate open space is easily accessible to our communities across the district, while further Country Park's are proposed within the South Uttlesford Area Strategy.
- 5.13 Similarly, the proposed development at Newport helps to address the shortcomings in infrastructure provision, with proposed provision of a range of central green areas that combine existing ecological assets, new publicly accessible spaces, and include measures to enhance biodiversity. Additionally, new footpath connections are proposed within the sites which better connect Newport with the Public Right of Way network to the west, including Harcamlow Way. As part of the allocations, land is also proposed for a flexible, non-residential facility, within which future applicants should explore possibilities for providing a new leisure/community use which would relate well to the existing Newport Primary School.
- 5.14 There is no development proposed at Great Chesterford for a variety of reasons, including constraints associated with the M11 junction and the historic environment. There may be development potential at Great Chesterford in the longer term, particularly in proximity to the railway station, but this would require access from neighbouring South Cambridgeshire, and so this might be something that could be investigated in a future plan.

- 5.15 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the proposed allocations have been selected¹.
- 5.16 The policy requirements (**Appendix 2**) ensure that a comprehensive masterplanning approach is taken, whereby new development is not to be delivered piecemeal but as part of cohesive approach. Planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the allocations and the existing settlement, well-connected green infrastructure, and high quality public open spaces that benefit all existing as well as future residents.

Economy

- 5.17 There has been strong employment growth within Uttlesford in recent years, particularly associated with Stansted Airport and the Northside scheme has recently been consented. Employment growth in the north of the district has been more limited to smaller developments, but expansion is proposed in Saffron Walden for 3 ha at Land North-East of Thaxted Road for industrial uses. This is consistent with the Economic Needs Assessment (2023)² that identified a need at Saffron Walden for up to 4 ha. In relation to office space, there is considered to be sufficient flexibility provided by repurposing of vacant or underused floorspace with no requirement for additional allocations for office space.
- 5.18 The evidence also noted that spending by visitors is an important source of income for the district and much of this comes from the historic market towns particularly Saffron Walden.
- 5.19 The Chesterford Research Park is located to the north of Saffron Walden and to the east of Little Chesterford. The research park was originally a crop protection research centre but over the last sixty years, it has developed into a research park for biotechnology, pharmaceutical and technology firms. The research park provides a somewhat unique employment offering within the Uttlesford context and there is the potential for additional development plots within this cluster to attract international investment, thereby building upon the high-skilled employment opportunities generated at this site. Whilst this Local Plan does not make any specific proposals for expanding this site, the Plan does provide flexibility to support economic development of unallocated sites within **Core Policy 48** should this become required.
- 5.21 Outside of the plan area, to the north of Great Chesterford, is the Welcome Genome Campus which currently has consent for up to 150,000 square metres of employment floorspace and up to 1,500 dwellings. Although outside the scope of this Local Plan, the Government's proposals for substantial development in the Cambridge area in the longer term are likely to become a factor that will need to be considered in a future Local Plan process. Given the significant constraints on development in Cambridge in the short to medium term, for example related to water supply, it is considered there is too much uncertainty around these matters to consider any firm proposals for more strategic development within the current Plan.

¹ UDC, Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper, 2023. Available at: **TO ADD**

² UDC, Economic Needs Assessment, 2023. Available at:
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4936/Employment>

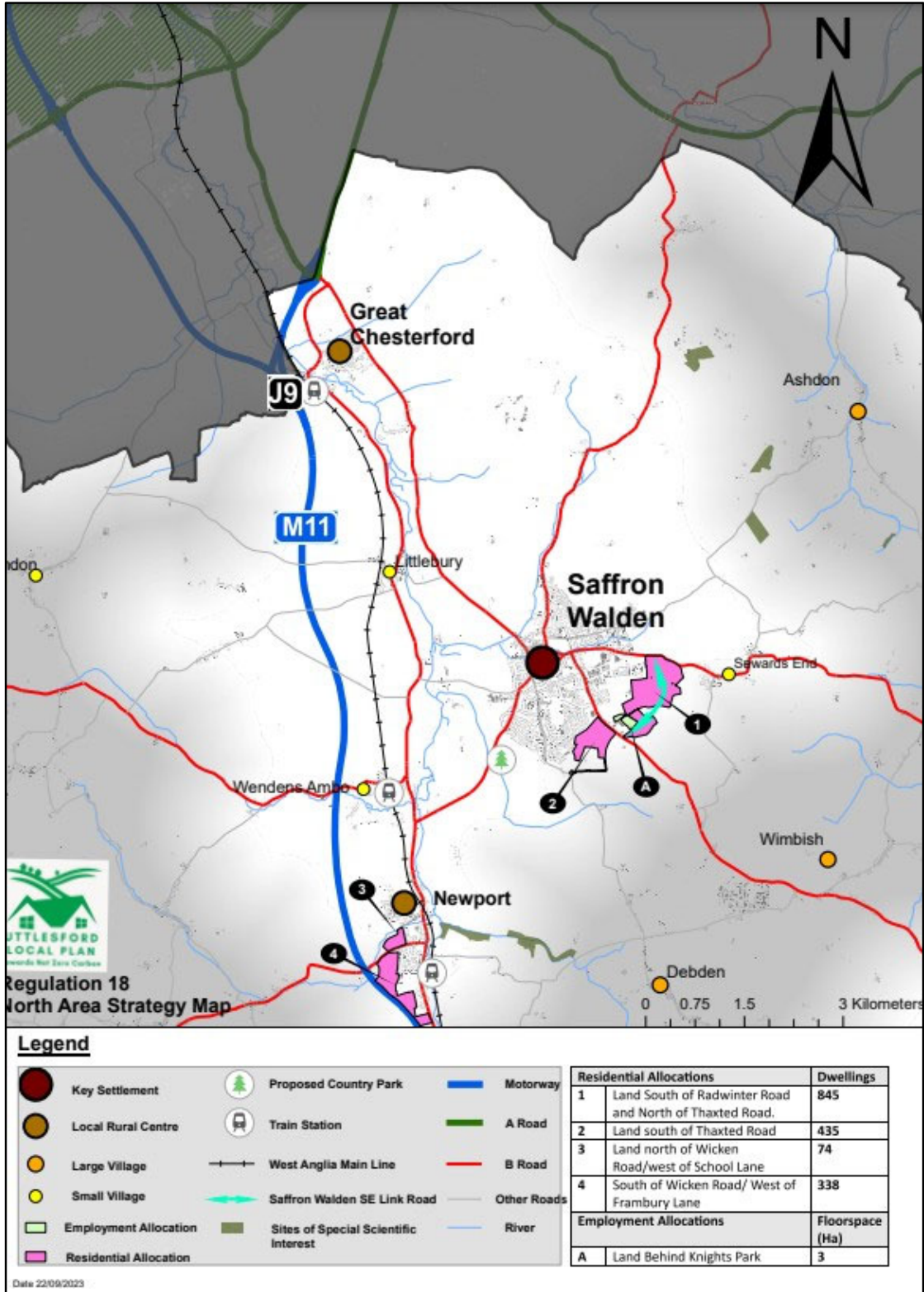


Figure 5.1: Area Strategy Map

Core Policy 6: North Uttlesford Area Strategy

Our over-arching priorities for North Uttlesford Area are to secure the aligned delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure required to help achieve sustainable development, improve self-sufficiency for each settlement by enhancing its vitality and viability, as well as maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices.

Development in the North Uttlesford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

Housing Delivery

Around 1,692 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through this Plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendix 2**) and is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the North Uttlesford Area, through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 5.1: North Uttlesford Area Strategy Housing Allocations

Settlement	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Newport	North of Wicken Road/West of School Lane	74
Newport	South of Wicken Road/West of Frambury Lane	338
Saffron Walden	Land south of Radwinter road, north of Thaxted road.	845
Saffron Walden	Land south of Thaxted road	435
Total		1,692

Employment

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45**. Three hectares of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 46** on the following strategic employment site:

Table 5.2: North Uttlesford Area Strategy Employment Allocations

Settlement	Site Name	Hectares
Saffron Walden	Land north of Thaxted road (Rear of Knights Park)	3
Total		3

Proposed Strategic Development Sites

Newport

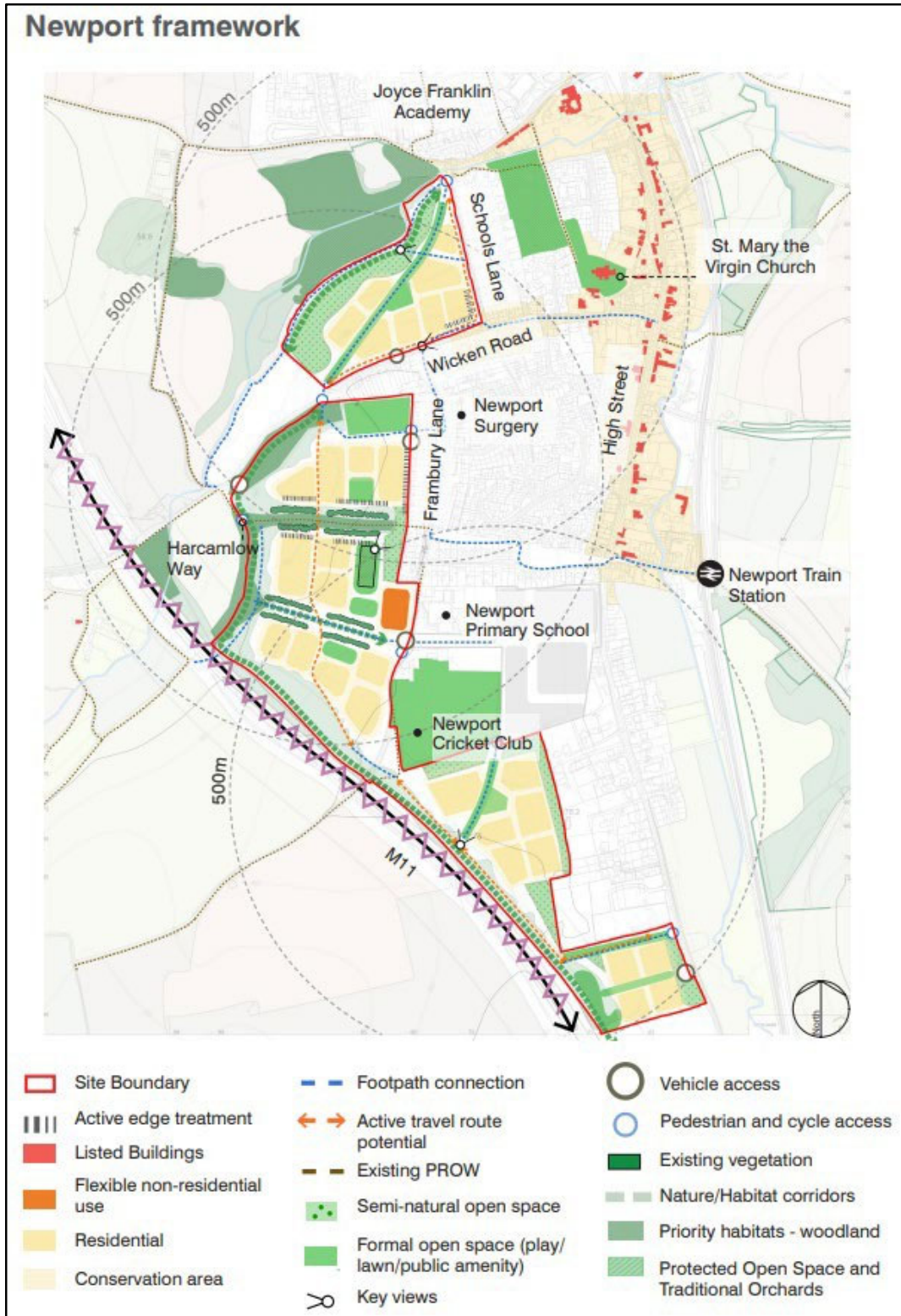


Figure 5.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Newport

5.22 The proposed allocations within **Figure 5.2** seek to cumulatively deliver around 412 dwellings along with green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure. These allocations deliver a level of growth which can support the vitality of Newport and provide essential new facilities whilst also being well integrated into the town and protecting its important historic character. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

Land North of Wicken Road:

- maximise key views of St. Mary's the Virgin church and create a strong interface with the conservation area
- retain existing vegetation and trees whilst integrating new habitat/nature corridors
- establish additional pedestrian accesses to, and connectivity between, the PROW network beyond the site
- develop a central open space that is overlooked by buildings and connected by legible direct links throughout the development
- create safe and overlooked pedestrian links in the site, with a focus on providing safe walking routes between the site and the school, and
- improve footway and crossing infrastructure, including exploration of a reduction of the Wicken Road speed limit.

Land at Pond Cross Farm, Frambury Lane:

- utilise the PROW as a key feature of the development and create new PROWs that connect the sites to the landscape adjacent to the M11
- ensure pedestrian and cycle routes connect development parcels that are separated by areas of open space and landscape within the site
- explore providing an additional community use near the existing primary school
- provide a range of central green areas that combining existing ecological assets and new publicly accessible spaces and include measures to enhance biodiversity
- explore creating a strong interface with the western most section of Frambury Lane
- retain long distance landscape views to and within the site, to avoid any impact of development on existing views of the historic core of Newport, including views of the Church from higher ground, and
- prioritise pedestrian and cycle access and connectivity between the site and Newport High Street and Train Station.

Saffron Walden

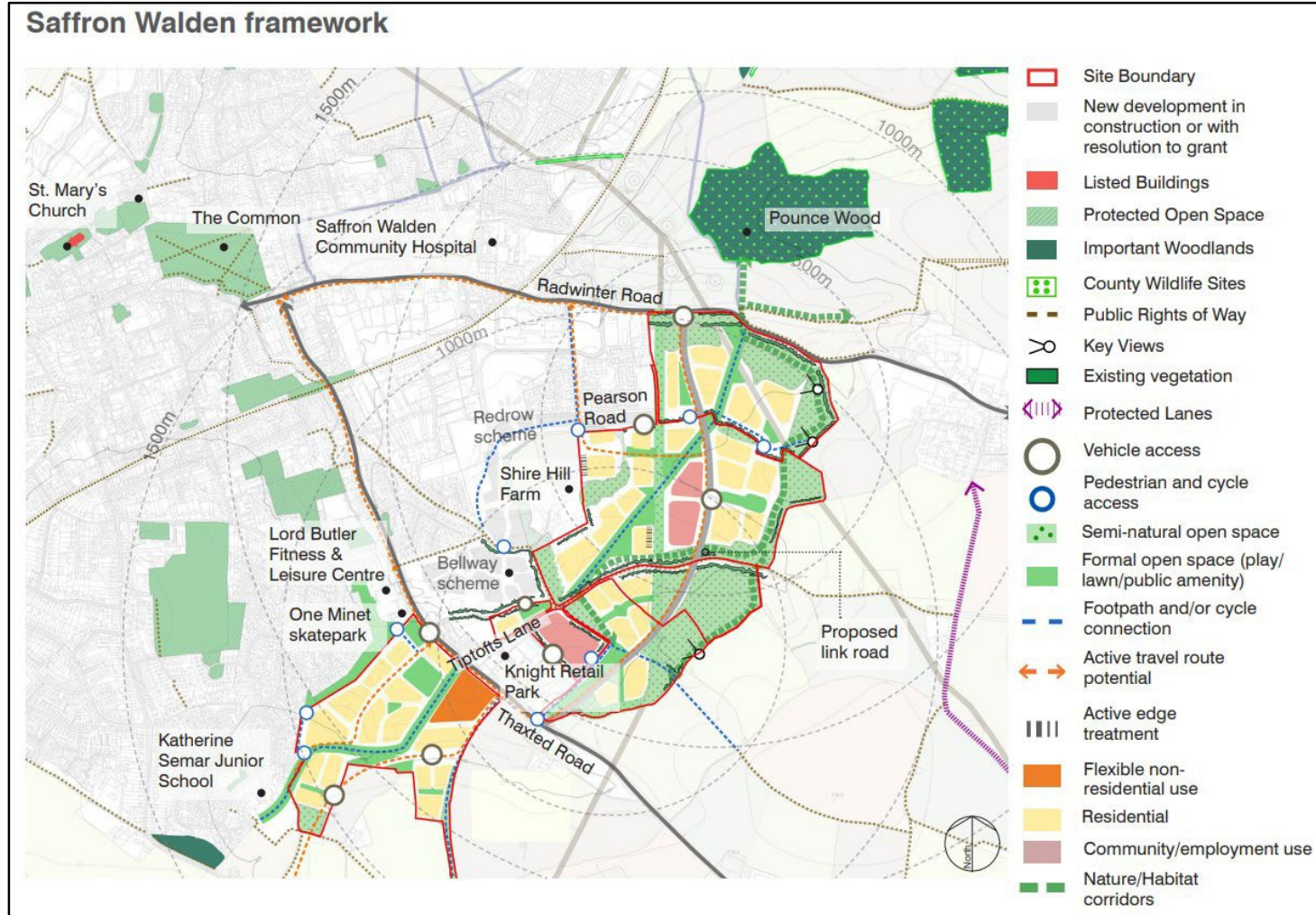


Figure 5.3: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Saffron Walden

5.23 The figure above shows the proposed allocations within Saffron Walden which seek to cumulatively deliver up to 1,280 dwellings, a new 3F/E primary school, a new sixth form centre, green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure including a link road to the east of the town. These allocations propose a level of growth which can ensure that new and existing residents of Saffron Walden benefit from sufficient school places, better transport connectivity, open and green space, whilst protecting the historic features and qualities of the town. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

- maximising key views towards Saffron Walden, St Mary's Church and Pounce Wood from higher ground at the western end of the site
- provide multiple points of pedestrian access to the PROW that runs along the southern edge of the site, providing key active travel routes, and explore upgrading the PROW to a byway to include access for cyclists
- provide a network of green spaces that are interconnected through legible pedestrian links. These spaces should be overlooked by homes and/or community facilities
- provide a mixed-use area on the site. This area should be accessible to all visitors and well connected by all modes of transport. The mixed-use area could include an educational facility supporting a 3FE primary school
- be connected by road infrastructure that serves as a multi-modal corridor suitable for all vehicles
- provide vehicle access to Radwinter Road and from Parsons Road and the prospective Redrow development into the site to the east of Shire Hill Farm, avoiding utilities constraints, and
- retain existing hedgerows and vegetation that define site boundaries and edges, and maximise the use of existing trees within the sites as a key landscape features.

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the North Uttlesford Area.

5.24 To ensure we deliver sustainable and active travel within Newport and Saffron Waldon, the proposed allocations will be required to contribute to strategic transport improvements, including the delivery of active travel routes and infrastructure, improvements to bus services and infrastructure and the provision of car clubs and e-bikes. This will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. Consideration should be given to providing and enhancing active travel connections to rail stations and schools.

5.25 These interventions will ensure that the development proposals provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resultant from the development proposals.

5.26 In Saffron Walden development sites will be required to deliver a multi-modal corridor connecting Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road and Debden Road. This road will provide connectivity between the sites and serve as the primary 'estate road' access. The road is required to be delivered in full to relieve pressure from some of the key junctions and routes in the town that would result from development traffic. The road will act as a local distributor and be built to a specification suitable for all vehicles including buses and HGV's. It will provide a cycling and walking route built to LTN 1/20 standards and appropriate infrastructure for bus services.

5.27 The multi-modal link road corridor will be built to the appropriate highway design standards and take into account the design principles in the Uttlesford Design Code.

- 5.28 Development proposals will ensure that a future onward connection of the route from Debden Road to Newport Road is facilitated and considered in all site design proposals.
- 5.29 It is therefore important that these and the wider range of requirements affecting the site proposals as shown by the following Core Policy are brought forward.

Core Policy 7: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the North Uttlesford Area

In order to deliver the growth in the North Uttlesford Area, highway infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Essex County Council.

Transport infrastructure in North Uttlesford will be required as follows:

- i. a multi-modal link road in Saffron Walden linking Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road and Debden Road for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians
- ii. financial contributions towards improvement bus services between Great Chesterford, Newport and Saffron Walden and Cambridge, allowing for an increased frequency of services
- iii. enhancements are required to existing routes and/or delivery of new active travel and bus connections to Newport and Audley End rail stations. Enhancements may also be required for interchange facilities at rail stations, and
- iv. deliver strategic cycling and walking infrastructure improvements as identified in the Uttlesford and Essex LCWIP

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the North Uttlesford Area

- 5.30 There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 7** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 8: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the North Uttlesford Area**, set out below.

Core Policy 8: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the North Uttlesford Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following transport schemes as listed by **Core Policy 7**.

- a multi-modal link road in Saffron Walden linking Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road and Debden Road for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (to be shown by maps in **Appendix 6** and the Policies Map)* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 6** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport scheme, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Essex County Council and other relevant parties.

Delivery of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the North Uttlesford Area

- 5.31 Planning for Climate Change and for Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) are fundamental considerations of the Local Plan and development proposals will be required to show how GBI provides the framework for the design and layout of development proposals in accordance with **Core Policies 38 and 39** on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain. A particular characteristic of North Uttlesford is the rolling chalkland landscape and its chalk streams with their vulnerable habitats and water flow.
- 5.32 The Harcamlow Way is a long-distance footpath and should be incorporated in the development proposals around Newport. Where routes cross the railway line or M11 every opportunity should be made to enhance existing connections for cycling as well as walking to reduce the barrier to movement for active travel and nature.
- 5.33 In order to accommodate the need for amenity, recreation, access to open space and general compliance with Natural England standards (e.g., at least 0.5 hectares within 15 minutes of homes) it is proposed to create a new Country Park adjoining the proposed development allocation at Saffron Walden as proposed in our draft Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy³. Although all development proposals will provide areas for play and local access it is the scale of a Country Park that is particularly required in the northern area to be provided at Saffron Walden. This offers an opportunity for the interpretation of the unique landscape and heritage as well as its underlying archaeology, scheduled ancient monuments and former settlements.
- 5.34 Tree cover is relatively poor in the north and habitats are fragmented; a key GBIS aim is to enhance tree cover, including new and replacement hedgerows and orchards. Objective SO1 from the GBI Strategy seeks to improve the habitat connectivity, in particular, where significant gaps in the habitat network have been identified around Saffron Walden. Tree planting will address another GBI objective to support tree planting on less productive agricultural land and along river corridors, enhancing biodiversity and mitigating against the effects of climate change.
- 5.35 The allocation in Saffron Walden also provides opportunities for making important contributions to biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure through measures such as ensuring good permeability between new development sites and existing developments, and by providing green infrastructure to provide habitat. Any proposed development must consider potential for green infrastructure provision to connect to and support habitat networks connecting beyond the site boundary to the Ancient Woodland site and designated LWS at Pounce wood.

³ UDC, Green and Blue Infrastructure Study, 2023. Available at:
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4937/Environment>

- 5.36 The proposed allocation North of Wicken Road/West of School Lane is adjacent to the local wildlife site Wicken Water Marsh and this allocation represents an opportunity to enhance this site by providing broadleaved/riparian woodland planting along the site's northern boundary, strengthening the existing habitats to the north of the site and aiding flood risk reduction. Within the allocation itself there are also opportunities to provide a centrally located play space, as well as open space, and wider opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure within the streetscape through the planting of street trees, hedges and wildflower verges.
- 5.37 The larger allocation slightly further to the south gives multiple opportunities for enhancements. The site contains an existing allotment and there is a habitat corridor along its western/southern boundary with the M11 and it is important development protects the existing allotment space and provide new community spaces near the primary school (including additional community growing space, play space and greenspace). Furthermore, there are opportunities to create a focal point with good connections to Frambury Lane, incorporate provision of a significant amount of natural/semi-natural greenspace with good access links for rest of Newport.

Core Policy 9: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the North Uttlesford Area

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the North Uttlesford area as shown by maps in **Appendix 9-12** and to be shown on the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects (including their enhancement and on-going management costs) identified in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the North Uttlesford area, including:

- i. improving access to the River Cam and its tributaries
- ii. improving the ecological condition of the River Cam and its tributaries
- iii. improving green linkages along the River Cam
- iv. extending and enhancing Public Rights of Way across allocations
- v. protecting and enhancing areas of chalk grassland
- vi. protecting and enhancing traditional orchards
- vii. protecting and enhancing species rich chalk grassland verges, and
- viii. creation of a country park to serve residents in north Uttlesford.

North Uttlesford Area - Heritage

- 5.38 The Northern Uttlesford Area is rich in history, both in its urban and rural environments. The presence of numerous designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, and historic parks and gardens, means that development, both within the proposed allocations and beyond, must be sensitively located, planned and constructed to take account of these valuable assets.
- 5.39 There is evidence of definitive settlements within Uttlesford dating back to the Bronze Age, however, more extensive remains exist from later periods, including Roman Britain. In particular, Uttlesford contains the second largest walled Roman town in Essex at Great Chesterford, with evidence of Roman burial sites and historic farmsteads also located within the North of the District. Consequently, future developments should be aware of, and respond to, the archaeological sensitivities at the site in question, so that this cultural heritage can continue to be preserved and recorded.

- 5.40 Much of the present rural and urban landscape within North Uttlesford originated in either the medieval or late Saxon period. Settlements such as Saffron Walden and Newport have medieval origins, resulting in many medieval buildings and churches which are still present today. These roots are reflected both in the architecture within the settlements, but also their urban grain. Therefore, it is important that new development is brought forward in a manner which preserves the historic significance of nearby heritage assets on which they may have affect, but also prioritizes a heritage led approach which integrates well with the existing pattern of development by way of density, layout, scale etc. Many of the settlements within North Uttlesford have designated conservation areas, which outline the historic and visual significance of the respective places, as well as how future development can preserve and enhance the surrounding environment.
- 5.41 Throughout the post-medieval period, many of the aforementioned settlements were expanded to accommodate increased industry and population, meanwhile several large parks and landscaped gardens were created. Some, such as Audley End, were on the sites of former religious establishments whilst others were associated with halls and manorial estates. These parks form a critical feature of the North Uttlesford landscape and are utilized by both local residents and visitors. It is important that the open character of these parks and their surroundings is maintained so that they continue to be attractive destinations, but also to preserve their visual qualities in the context of the wider historic landscape.
- 5.42 The proposed allocations are required to be designed in a manner which reflects site specific heritage constraints and opportunities, including the retention of key views, use of active frontages, and the provision of open spaces and green infrastructure in positive locations. However, all development should respond to the historic character of this part of the district. To ensure this, all development which affects heritage assets will be considered under **Core Policy 62: The Historic Environment**, other relevant policies within this Plan and relevant national policy.

6. South Uttlesford Area Strategy

Introduction

- 6.1. The South Area Strategy covers the corridor that extends east to west from Stansted Mountfitchet to Great Dunmow and includes the settlement of Takeley. It is a strategically important employment and transport corridor, largely following the A120, and contains a variety of land uses, landscapes, biodiversity and heritage assets. Its role as a transport corridor is focused on the A120 that links Stansted Airport and the M11 at Junction 8 to Braintree and beyond.
- 6.2. The area's economic importance is focused on the larger scale industries' associated with airport cargo, passenger trips and commercial activities in and around the Stansted Airport area. The emerging Northside commercial development has recently been consented for 195,000 sqm and adjoins the airport. The two road arteries connect at Junction 8 of the M11 motorway, and to the railway stations on the Cambridge to London West Anglia line at Stansted Mountfitchet, and the multi-modal transport hub at Stansted Airport itself.
- 6.3. The countryside is rolling, agricultural and dissected by three river systems draining into the Rivers Chelmer, Roding and Stort that create a variety of habitats with considerable scope for enhancement along agricultural margins and the development proposed on farmland. The area has a rich and long history and heritage with several hundred listed buildings. Hatfield Forest Nature Reserve is a SSSI, containing a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This major visitor attraction currently suffers from overuse and lack of choice in public parkland amenity spaces and it is therefore essential the Local Plan supports the creation of a new Country Park along with more localised improvements to green infrastructure and open spaces, to help reduce any impacts on Hatfield Forest.
- 6.4. The area is a popular place in which to live with easy access to London and Cambridge three 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans cover parts of the South Strategy area at Great Dunmow, Felsted and Stebbing, whilst the Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley Neighbourhood Plans are currently being prepared as is designation of a Conservation Area at Smith's Green.
- 6.5. Beyond Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are our next largest settlements, which provide for the largest range of services and facilities, and as such are classified as 'key settlements'. Great Dunmow is situated about 6 miles east of Stansted Airport, north of the A120 dual carriageway. The parish is largely rural, however there is significant development pressure due to the town's proximity to Stansted Airport and London, the M11 motorway and the A120. Great Dunmow has its origins in roman times and there are over two-hundred listed buildings within the town.
- 6.6. Stansted Mountfitchet is situated near the border between Essex and Hertfordshire. The town relies on nearby settlements for large scale retail and leisure opportunities, and employment opportunities at Stansted Airport, Bishop Stortford and London. Stansted's origins as a settlement date back to Saxon Briton whilst the occupation of Stansted Mountfitchet castle, which now comprises a Schedule Ancient Monument, long pre-dates this. The southern edge of the settlement is bordered by a Metropolitan Green Belt designation, which prevents coalescence between the built form a Stansted, Birchanger and Bishops Stortford.

- 6.7. Takeley is classified as a 'Local Rural Centre' which represents the second highest level of services and facilities and provides an opportunity to support highly sustainable development. The settlement has seen piecemeal development in recent years and new strategic scale development in this plan provides an opportunity to provide a comprehensive and high-quality scheme that incorporates large areas of open space, protects the historic and environmental assets, but also provides for a new local centre and infrastructure such as schools and health facilities. With improved cycle and pedestrian access to the public transport interchange at Stansted Airport and nearby existing and proposed strategic employment sites, this provides one of the best opportunities for sustainable development in the district.
- 6.8 The South Area Strategy aims to provide new housing, community facilities and employment sites respecting the existing characters and heritage settings like Hatfield Forest's ancient royal hunting grounds, Smiths Green, Church End village and the Flitch Way long distance recreational route along the former railway line.

How the South Uttlesford will change by 2041

- 6.9 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought for within the South Uttlesford Area:
- the provision of a new secondary school at Takeley to serve the settlement and surrounding catchment and to complement the new secondary school already planned at Great Dunmow. There will also be new primary schools at Takeley and at Great Dunmow
 - the provision of around 2,895 new dwellings on four strategic sites (one at Takeley for around 1,636 dwellings, one at great Dunmow for around 869 dwellings and two sites at Stansted Mountfitchet for around 390 dwellings in total). The development will include around 1,000 affordable homes.
 - to provide active travel linkages between the proposed development sites and the existing settlement facilities, including improved connections for walking and cycling between Takeley and the public transport interchange at Stansted Airport and between key employment sites
 - significant areas of new green infrastructure, open space, areas for enhancing and protecting biodiversity, including a new Country Park in the Takeley and Great Dunmow areas to reduce pressure on Hatfield Forest
 - protection of significant areas around Stansted Airport (Countryside Protection Zone) to preserve its 'rural' character and ensure there is no coalescence with any of the nearby settlements
 - to plan for 33 hectares of strategic employment space in the South Uttlesford Area to meet identified need related to the area, its settlements and related to the airport
 - development which achieves high quality urban design and protects the historic nature of the settlements, and
 - support greater footfall within the retail centres in Takeley, Prior's Green and Great Dunmow and to help boost the local economy.

Housing

- 6.10 There has been significant new housing growth along and adjacent to the corridor in recent years. It is important however that infrastructure is delivered to support any growth and the proposed allocations in this Local Plan will help to address any existing shortcomings.

- 6.11 To deliver the homes and infrastructure outlined above, the Local Plan provides for around 2,895 additional homes at four proposed strategic sites at Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley/ Little Canfield. These allocations are set out in **Core Policy 10** and **Figures 6.1, 6.2** shown below.
- 6.12 The policy requirements (**Appendix 3**) ensure that a comprehensive master-planning approach is taken to planning for the strategic sites to ensure the development forms part of cohesive approach. Planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the allocations and the existing settlements, well-connected green infrastructure, and high quality public open spaces that benefit all South Uttlesford residents.
- 6.13 The proximity of new development in well serviced locations near existing communities and the enhancement of services will help to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of existing settlements. A high proportion of local housing will be affordable and available in different tenures with specialist housing including those that are suited to our ageing population and people who wish to rent.
- 6.14 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the proposed allocations have been selected¹.

Economy

- 6.15 The South Uttlesford Area will continue as a significant location for employment, particularly associated with the airport, including the recently consented scheme at Northside, located on the north-western side of the airport for 195,000 sqm for a range of B1 (industrial) uses and anticipated to provide around 3,000 jobs. Growth in passenger numbers at the airport and the new terminal facility will also provide for further employment in this area.
- 6.16 This Local Plan proposes three new strategic employment sites to meet the identified need in proximity to Stansted Airport, but also being easily accessible to the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres in this area. These sites are listed in **Core Policy 4** and provide for around 33 hectares. The site **Great Dunmow/ Takeley** south of the A120 between Great Dunmow and Takeley should also include a public transport mobility hub, which is discussed more later in this Chapter.

¹ Uttlesford District Council, 2023, Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

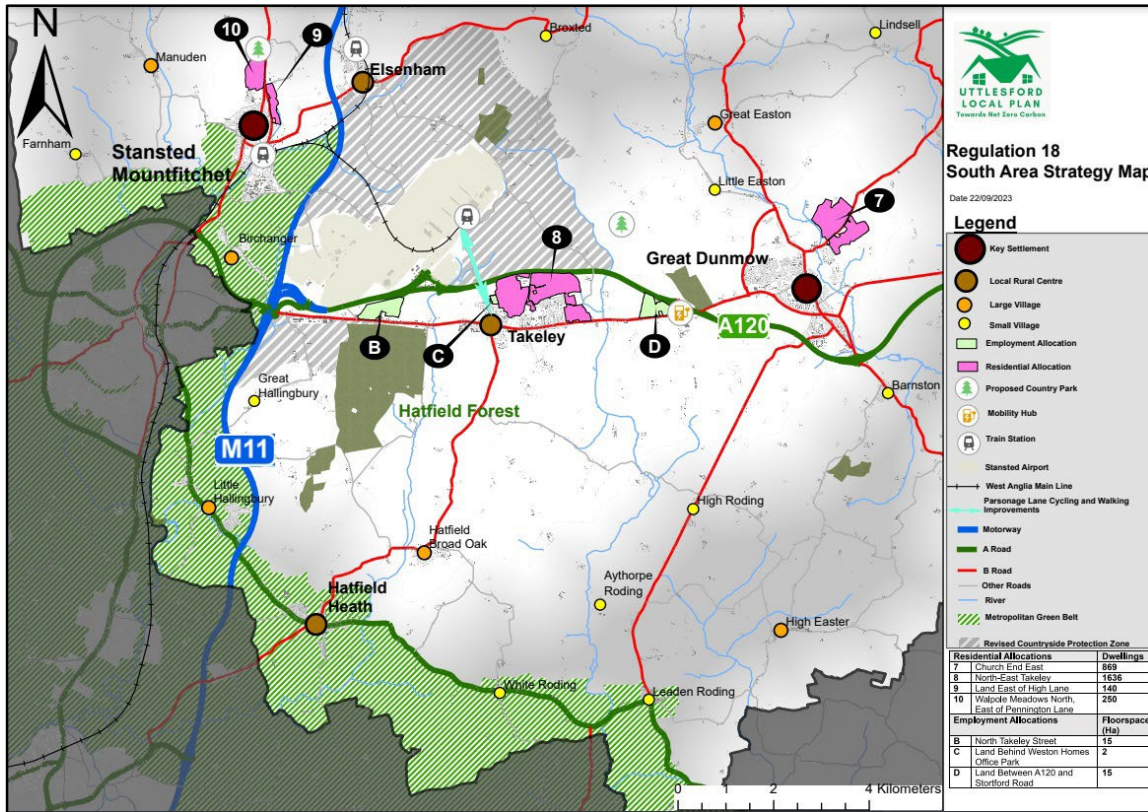


Figure 6.1: Area Strategy Map

Core Policy 10: South Uttlesford Area Strategy

Our overarching priority for the South Uttlesford Area is to support the strategic roles of the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres by delivering a balance of housing, employment and a range of infrastructure, whilst protecting the environmental and historic assets and maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices.

Development in the South Uttlesford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

Housing Delivery

Around 2,895 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through this Plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendix 3**) and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the South Uttlesford Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 6.1: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Housing Allocations

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	No. Dwellings
Stansted Mountfitchet	Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane	250
Stansted Mountfitchet	East of High Lane North	140
Takeley/ Little Canfield	NE Takeley	1,636
Great Dunmow	Church End East	869
Total		2,895

Employment

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45**. 33 hectares of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 4** on the following strategic employment sites:

Table 6.3: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Employment Allocations

Settlement	Site Name	Hectares
Takeley/ Little Canfield	Land Between A120 and Stortford Road	15
Takeley	North Takeley Street	15
Gaunts End	Gaunts End	3
Total		33

Proposed Strategic Development Sites

Great Dunmow

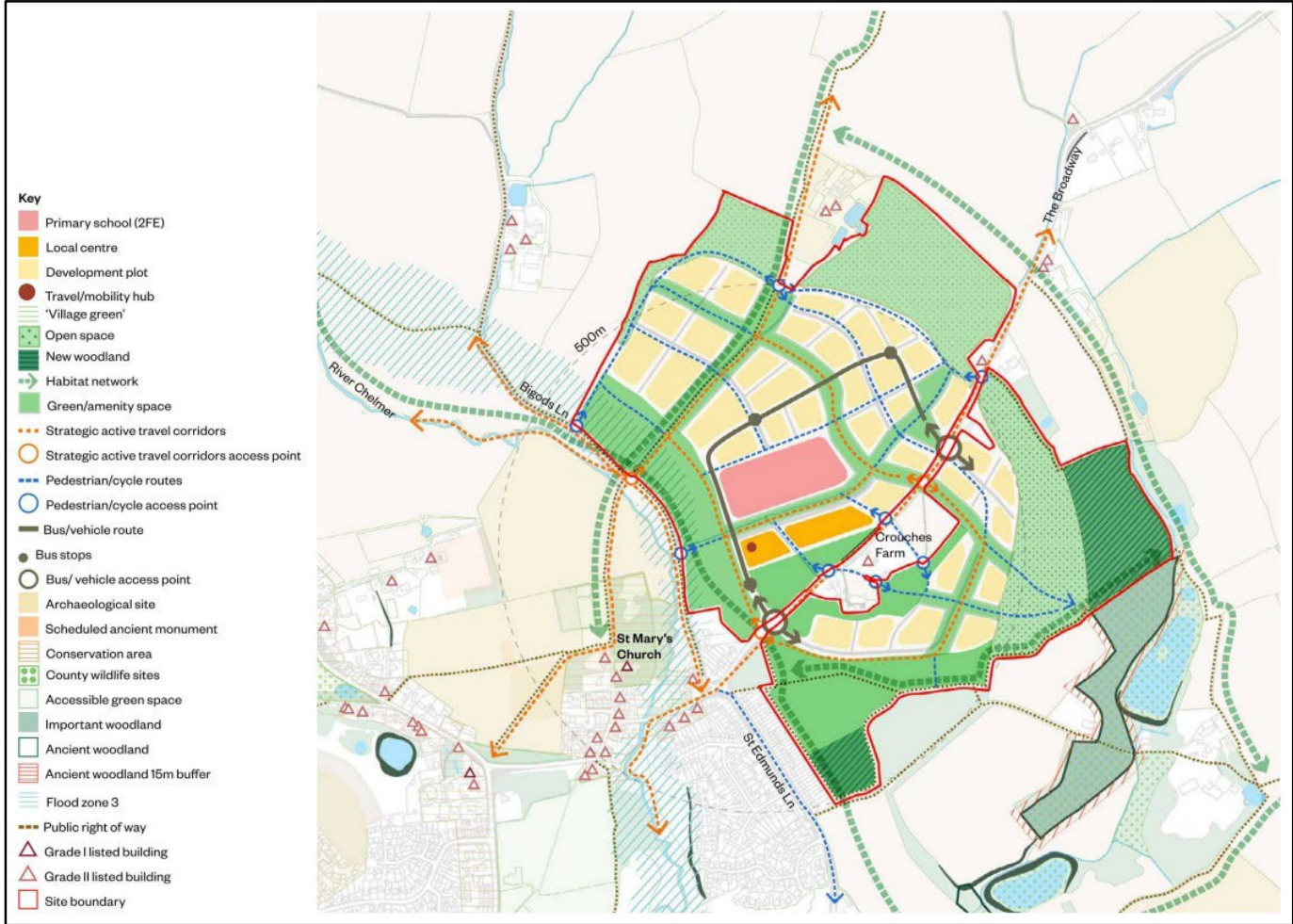


Figure 6.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Great Dunmow

6.17 The proposed allocation within **Figure 6.2** seeks to deliver around 869 dwellings in a new valley side neighbourhood extension for Church End, structured around a new riverside park extending around the site to provide public access and amenity to new and existing residents, along with a local centre of community uses and small retail units. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

- a new local centre organised around a new riverside public park should be located on the northern parcel to serve new and existing residents. This new centre should maintain a visual connection to the setting of the Grade II Listed Crouches Farm
- streets should be organised along and follow contours to form a network of continuous, interlinked routes
- a new primary school is to be provided adjacent to the local centre and along a bus route
- create extensive areas of green and blue infrastructure across the site that are capable of supporting biodiversity, including an expansion of the existing woodland to the east of the site
- attractive and functional open spaces to facilitate social interaction and public amenity, and
- permeability for pedestrians from the site into the existing Public Rights of Way network and wider rural landscape.

Stansted Mountfitchet

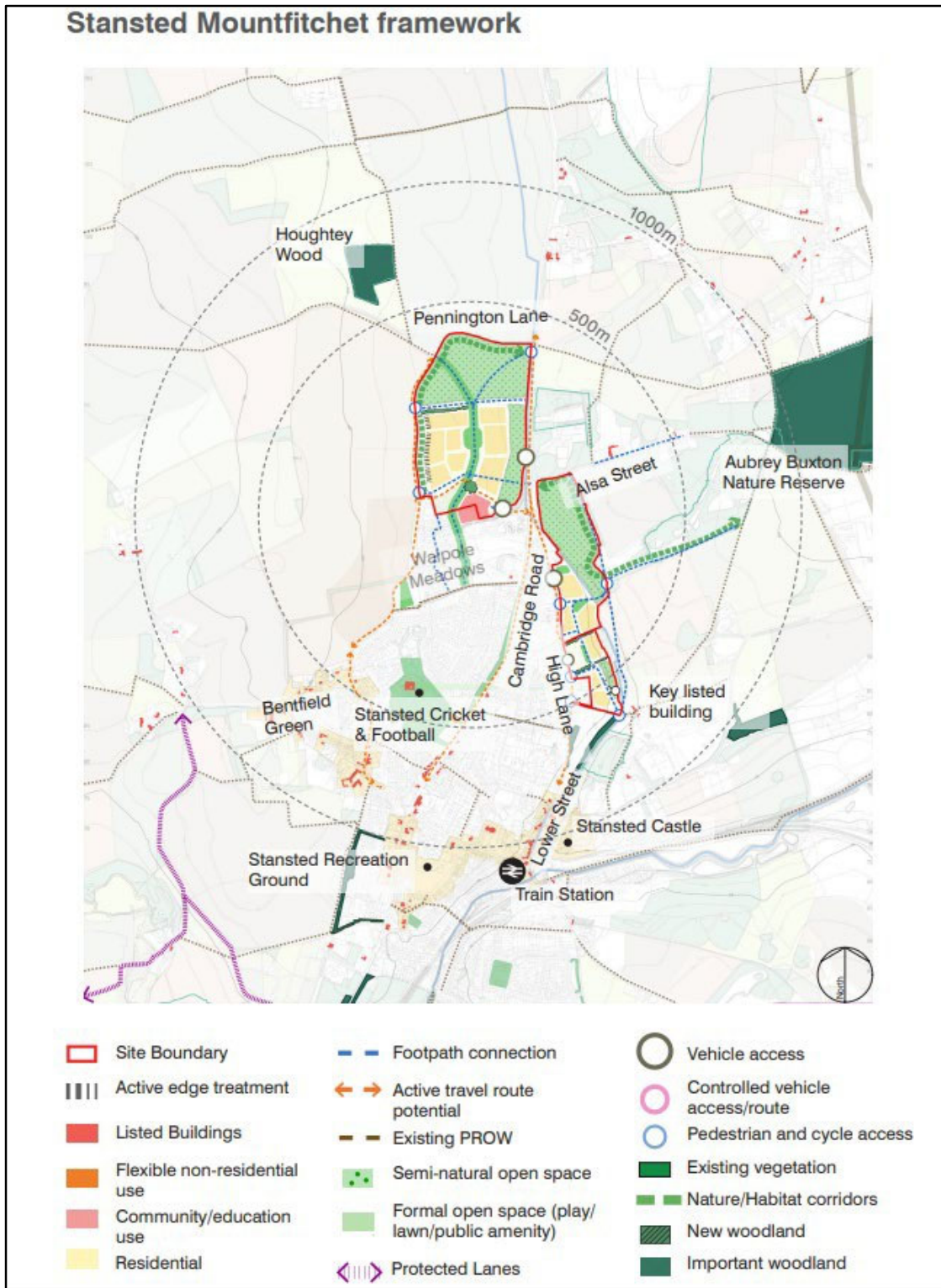


Figure 6.3: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Stansted Mountfitchet

6.18 The proposed allocations within Figure 6.3 seek to cumulatively deliver around 390 dwellings, green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure. These allocations deliver a level of growth which can support the vitality of Stansted Mountfitchet and provide essential new facilities whilst also being well integrated into the settlement and protecting its important historic character. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

- enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the town centre and Cambridge Road by developing active routes that can be easily accessed from all points of the development including the large open space in the north of the development
- provide an additional community use such as an educational building or health and leisure facility that is easily accessible by walking distance to surrounding developments within 20 minutes
- provide a large green space in the north of both sites that is accessible by 10 minutes to surrounding homes, and create a green pedestrian link that connects the sites with the public rights of way (PROW)
- provide a new 2 Form Entry Primary School for the new development here and to assist with planning for the wide catchment along with making provision for expanding the existing secondary school
- create areas of green and blue infrastructure across the site that are capable of supporting biodiversity. These spaces should link with the PROW to the east and beyond to the County Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserves, and
- conserve and enhance the setting of the listed buildings. Development should seek to establish how key views of the landscape are protected and equally how the development impacts views into the settlement from the landscape to the east.

Takeley

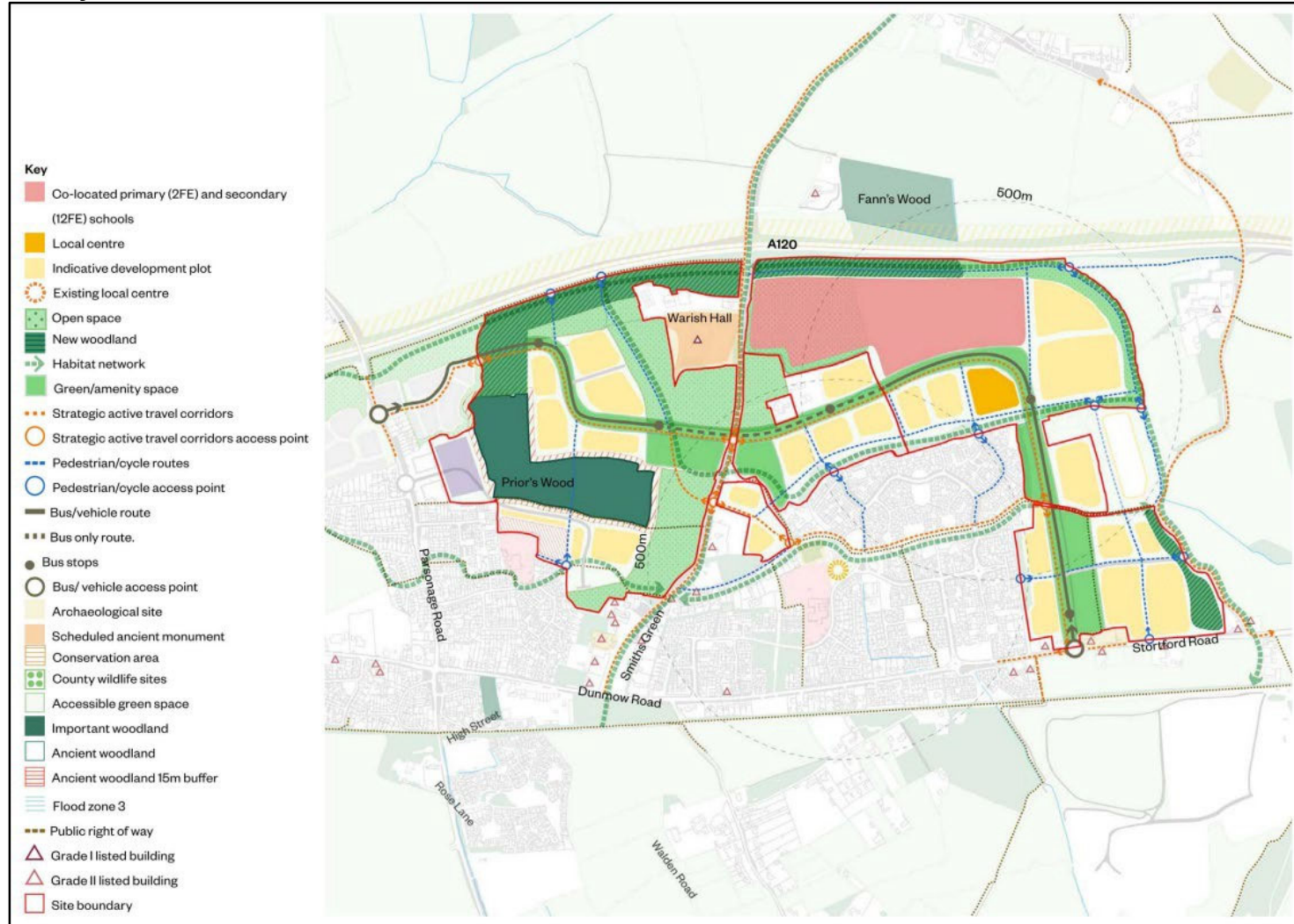


Figure 6.4: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Takeley

- 6.19 The proposed allocation within Figure 6.4 seeks to deliver around 1,636 dwellings, within integrated neighbourhoods, enhancing the vitality of Takeley and the wider area. It is recognised that part of the allocation falls within the neighbouring parish of Little Canfield, and it is important that the separate identity of Little Canfield is maintained. The allocation provides for a comprehensive package of open space, green infrastructure, protection for environmental and heritage assets as well as providing important new infrastructure and a local centre for the area. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:
- a new primary school, adjacent to a new local centre and on a public transport corridor
 - a new Secondary school along the north-eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to new local centre and on a public transport corridor
 - a new local centre in the eastern parcel positioned to maximise its catchment, providing for a range of uses including for health care, whilst also minimising any adverse impact on the existing local centre at Little Canfield
 - the new neighbourhoods should be arranged around a green wedge at the centre along Smiths Green Lane providing amenity for new and existing communities and by providing extensive open space and protection for the environment and heritage assets, and
 - an active travel and public transport spine should be provided connecting the new neighbourhoods and new local centre.

Stansted Airport

- 6.20 The growth in Stansted Airport as a transport hub, commercial and hospitality centre and as a stimulus to economic spin-off, research and product design, manufacturing and ancillary services underlines its role as the country's second busiest airport. Additional long-haul passenger numbers will impact on transport movements in the area for travelers and for employees. The range and diversity of employment opportunities at the airport is welcomed and encouraged.
- 6.21 Sustainable transport choice to and from the airport should be available over the 24-hour period, building on existing services and improving routes. It is expected that in the shorter-term subsidy and other support for users of bus services will be required to facilitate convenient access to employment opportunities.
- 6.22 The functional local use of the airport as an economic and transport hub is encouraged. This requires continued collaboration with the management of the airport and agreement on the master plan for the surface transport arrangements on the non-highways' authority airport land to include improvements to local transport infrastructure, safe cycling and walking access particularly around the A120 Start Hill roundabout and Junction 8 arising from airport-related growth. For these reasons, a route for improved pedestrian/ cycle connections between Takeley and the airport is set out later in this Chapter.
- 6.23 Of importance to achieving an acceptable expansion of airport-related activity is to retain control over the character and amenity experienced in and derived from the surrounding countryside between the airport and villages as well as the required and regulatory standards for noise, air pollution, and public safety etc. The NPPF requires the consideration of transport and air quality issues from the early stages of plan-making and development proposals to address known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility for new development, particularly by active travel and public transport. Accordingly, the Local Plan's Area Strategies are

directing development towards areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

- 6.24 Support will be given to appropriate aviation-related development proposals and the airport's contribution to the local and national economy. The Council will seek clear mitigation measures effectively addressing any aviation related environmental or health concerns.
- 6.25 The Councils approach to development proposals within the airport's safeguarded areas are set out in **Core Policy 11**. This seeks to ensure that any development is appropriate, not unreasonably impacted by the airspace, and that the Airport Operator is given due consultation.
- 6.26 Air safeguarding areas refer to a designated zone of exclusion, in which the Airport Operator can, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority, consult on development proposals to protect the environment surrounding the airport from development. Reasons for preventing development would include activities that have the potential to impact the airports safe operation, or sensitive development that would likely be negatively and inappropriately impacted by the aerospace itself. Safeguarding ensures:
- buildings and structures in the area do not pose a danger to aircraft
 - the integrity of radar and other electronic aids to navigation are not affected
 - inappropriate lighting is not present, to avoid confusion with aeronautical lighting
 - no increase in wildlife risk (e.g., bird strikes)
 - operations that could create interference through construction processes are prevented, and
 - aircraft are not impacted by potential 'glint and glare' from development (e.g., solar panels).
- 6.27 The safeguarded airspace around Stansted measures approximately 6.5 nautical miles (12 km) in radius, centred around the Airfield Reference Point, the mid-point of the main instrument runway. Airport-related development within the safeguarded area, and elsewhere, must be held to the same standards as other development, as set out within the supporting policies.

Aircraft Noise

- 6.28 Aircraft noise is generally exempt from the general noise nuisance controls. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the control of aircraft noise. However, the Civil Aviation Authority indicates the overall policy is that noise issues are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise.
- 6.29 In order to determine whether or not any specific development is likely to increase 'noise nuisance' from aircraft, the Council will seek to assess the impact of that development in terms of:
- the number, location, duration and frequency of aircraft activities and movements
 - the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with individual aircraft activities and movements

- the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with overall aircraft activities and movements
- seasonality of aircraft activities and movements, and
- the time of day at which aircraft activities and movements take place.

6.30 Where planning permission is granted for development, the Council may impose conditions in accordance with the NPPF noise guidance and **Core Policy 43: Noise**.

Core Policy 11: London Stansted Airport

The Council will support the continued use of London-Stansted Airport.

It will consult with the airport operator on proposals in the aircraft's safeguarded areas, as shown by the Policies Map and **Appendix 5**. Development that may be a hazard to aircraft operation and/ or safety will not be permitted.

In consultation with the airport operator, the Council will ensure that:

- i. areas included in airport safeguarding areas are protected from development, and
- ii. sensitive uses such as housing, education and hospitals are not located in areas significantly affected by aircraft noise without acceptable mitigation measures.

Development proposals at the airport should include mitigation measures to address any environmental and health impacts, particularly in respect of noise, air quality, health, and climate change in compliance with other Development Plan policies.

Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone

6.31 The Uttlesford 1995 Local Plan introduced a 'Countryside Protection Zone' (CPZ) policy that identified land parcels around the airport that would be protected from development in order to safeguard the 'rural' nature and setting of Stansted. It was also included in the 2005 Local Plan. This has been partly successful and despite significant development at the airport, now the Country's second busiest airport, its surroundings remain predominantly rural.

6.32 This plan is seeking to support sustainable development, and thus it is important that any strategic housing and employment development is located where they reduce the need for travel and maximize opportunities for sustainable travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport. On this basis, it is proposed that the CPZ area is amended to ensure the rural setting of the airport continues to be protected, but that the sustainable development proposed by this plan is removed from the areas protected by the 1995 policy (**Core Policy 12**).

6.33 It is considered that the approach proposed strikes an appropriate balance between preserving the rural setting of the airport, which supports sustainable development in accordance with national and local priorities to support the climate change emergency. **Appendix 8** includes maps showing the CPZ area as set out in the 2005 plan and as proposed to be amended by this Plan.

Core Policy 12: Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone

An area around Stansted Airport (the Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone) is protected from development to preserve the 'rural' character of the area around the airport. The area is shown by the Policies Map and **Appendix 8**.

Within the defined area, development will only be supported where, either of the following apply:

- i. new buildings or uses would not promote the coalescence between the airport and the existing or allocated development in the surrounding countryside within the CPZ, and
- ii. the proposal would not adversely affect the open characteristics of the CPZ.

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the South Uttlesford Area

- 6.33 To ensure we deliver sustainable and active travel within the South Uttlesford area, the proposed allocations will be required to contribute to strategic transport improvements including the delivery of active travel routes and infrastructure, improvements to bus services and the provision of car clubs and e-bikes. This will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. Consideration should be given to providing and enhancing active travel connections to rail stations and schools.
- 6.34 These interventions will ensure that the development proposals provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resultant from the development proposals.
- 6.35 The Local Plan supports the enhancement of the Stansted Airport transport interchange including enhancements to the wider bus network and train services. Collaboration with the airport is important to manage the importance of this facility for the airport, whilst also enabling sustainable access (walking/ cycling) from nearby Takeley and proposed Sustainable and Public Transport Hub to be located between Great Dunmow and Takeley. This facility will enable better access to more strategic transport routes from the nearby settlements, enabling safe access via walking, cycling or more localised bus connections.
- 6.36 There are two railway stations in this area, at the Airport and at Stansted Mountfitchet. It will be important to deliver enhancements to the public transport interchanges together with improved walking and cycling connections to the stations including improved infrastructure at the stations.
- 6.37 The South Area benefits from a good network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). All new developments will be required to improve the connectivity and attractiveness of routes in the vicinity of the development site, and to provide new routes where indicated in the proposed site allocation master-plans.
- 6.38 Of particular importance is the Flitch Way, a strategic footpath (NCN16) utilising the former railway line that ran between Braintree and Bishops Stortford 1869 -1952. An assessment of issues relating to the condition and function of the Flitch Way has been completed² and a full costed programme of works to include its role as a wildlife

² Transport Initiatives, 2023, Flitch Way Links – Options Study. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

corridor is anticipated during 2024. Once a costed programme has been agreed, developers will be required to contribute to its implementation.

- 6.39 The overall aim of this Plan is to reduce the impact of car use by making it easier for people to access services locally and sustainably or by digital means, shifting modes by supporting people to switch from private car to active and passenger transport. This complements the aims of Net Zero Carbon growth and requires collaboration with developers in the master planning to locate and design new development to reduce the need for people to make carbon intensive transport trips in the future. Active sustainable transport plans will be required for each strategic site. Proposals should be in accordance with the County Highways Authority Local Transport Plan (2011)³ and take into account the proposals set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWiP) (i) study (2023)⁴ and the Local Transport and Cycling Works Improvement Plan (DATE)⁵.
- 6.40 It is therefore important that transport improvements are made within the South Uttlesford Area as set out within the following **Core Policy 13**.

Core Policy 13: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the South Uttlesford Area

In order to deliver the growth in the South Uttlesford Area, highway infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Essex County Council.

Transport infrastructure in South Uttlesford will be required as follows:

- i. a multi modal corridor for public transport and active travel between Takeley and Stansted Airport public transport interchange, including improvements along Parsonage Road to improve connectivity for cyclists and offer priority for bus services. This will include new active travel connections through the airport to the transport interchange
- ii. creation of a Sustainable and Public Transport Mobility Hub adjacent to the proposed strategic employment allocation at Canfield End providing appropriate and convenient access to the B1256/A120 junction
- iii. Flich Way upgrade - safety, access, interpretation, multi-functional surface and eco- management
- iv. explore B1256 Dunmow/Stortford Road as a secondary vehicular route and as a sustainable travel route following on from the A120 sustainable transport study
- v. deliver enhancements at Stansted Mountfitchet rail station to the public transport interchange together with improved walking and cycling connections to the station including, improved infrastructure at the station
- vi. new vehicular accesses at Takeley onto Parsonage Lane and from Stortford Road

³ Essex County Council, 2011, Local Transport Plan. Available at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-transport-plan>

⁴ Tetra Tech, 2023, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

⁵ ADD REFERENCE

- vii. improved access to Great Dunmow centre from the proposed development site, including review of roles of Bigods Lane (and possible extension using bridleway to B184 at Bowyer's Bridge as a later phase)
- viii. localised highway mitigation and junction improvements at Church End and St Edmunds Lane in Great Dunmow, including measures to improve active travel
- ix. appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures at Junction 8 and Start Hill roundabout area, as recommended in the transport evidence, and
- x. the delivery of a new bus route and active travel corridor through the Takeley and Great Dunmow sites.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area

6.41 There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 13** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area**, set out below.

Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following transport schemes as listed by **Core Policy 13**.

- land for the delivery of a multi modal corridor for public transport and active travel Pedestrian/ Cycle link between Takeley and Stansted Airport transport interchange
- creation of a Sustainable and Public Transport Mobility Hub adjacent to the proposed strategic employment allocation at Canfield End providing appropriate and convenient access to the B1256/A120 Junction, and
- Flich Way upgrade, including to safety, access, interpretation, multi-functional surface and eco- management.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (to be shown by maps in **Appendix 6** and the Policies Map)* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 6** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport scheme, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Essex County Council and other relevant parties.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) and Biodiversity

- 6.42 Outside the main three settlements the landscape in the South Area is characterized by gently rolling, open, arable farmland, small river valleys and water courses, dispersed settlements and historic landscape features.
- 6.43 There are several important and protected habitats, including designated sites such as Hatfield Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and High Wood SSSI with fragmented areas of Ancient Woodland distributed throughout, such as Priors Wood and Markshill Wood, as well as designated Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. This fragmentation undermines the wildlife value, and it is an aim of Local Plan to seek new planting or connections between woodland where habitat and environmental conditions permit.
- 6.44 The water courses and rivers that run through this area should be protected with riparian vegetated “10m buffer-strips” to help to shade and buffer pollutants entering from runoff, controlling erosion, and providing good habitat and nutrient input in line with **Core Policy 36**. The River Chelmer defines much of Great Dunmow’s eastern boundary, with its valley located in Flood Zone 3 for fluvial flood risk. The river also represents the western boundary of the proposed development site, and there is potential for enhanced biodiversity as part of the Country Park to be provided within the site.
- 6.45 The Metropolitan Green Belt protects areas of open countryside in the south-west to Stansted Mountfitchet and further south around Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath, White Roding and Leaden Roding. Hatfield Forest is the largest area of woodland in the district with over 1,000 acres of ancient medieval hunting forest of coppices and wood pasture. However, the Council’s 2023 evidence base on leisure and open space.⁶ revealed that the district is short of ‘natural and semi-natural green spaces’ open to the general public, and 75% of this limited provision is accounted for by Hatfield Forest.
- 6.46 The Flitch Way, with over 220,000 people living within two miles of the 15-mile recreational route National Cycle Network Route 16 (NCN 16) following the former railway line from Braintree to Bishops Stortford, and running along the northern boundary of Hatfield Forest, providing traffic-free connections to the park and opportunities for habitat connectivity. Currently, there is no continuous traffic-free onward connection for the Flitch Way through Great Dunmow although the NCN16 has an on-road route along Chelmsford Road and the B1256.
- 6.47 The Harcamlow Way, a 227km long-distance walking route (LDWR) traverses western parts of the District between Cambridge and Harlow and passes through the northern section of the Takeley site and along the southern side of the A120. Local green spaces include Takeley Cricket Club, Smith’s Green and Takeley Sports Field.
- 6.48 The key challenges for this South Area Strategy for the green and blue infrastructure network are:
- areas of localised flood risk
 - Limited and fragmented woodland cover and limited habitat connectivity
 - Existing recreational pressures on country parkland
 - Limited access to semi-natural greenspaces

⁶ ADD REFERENCE

- Recorded poor water quality in some watercourses.
- 6.49 It is expected that development proposal will follow a green and blue infrastructure-led approach. This places the natural and managed environment at the core of the development. The Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy aims to achieve the multi-functional uses of created and improved green areas in and around new and existing settlements. It is recognised that better connected habitats enable species to colonise new microhabitats, expand the network and contribute to enhanced climate resilience, helping to meet one of the aims of the Local Plan.

Core Policy 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the South Uttlesford Area

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the South Uttlesford area as shown by maps in **Appendix 9-12 and to be shown on the Adopted Policies Map.**

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects (including their enhancement and on-going management costs) identified in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the South Uttlesford Area, including:

- i. creation of a Country Park of not less than 12ha across the two sites at Walpole Meadows and High Lane at Stansted Mountfitchet.
- ii. The creation of a Country Park of not less than 20 ha that will stretch in a continuous parkland of public open space from the north, near to Marks Farm around the eastern edge, and along the River Chelmer alongside Bigods Lane to the track to the north. Public access will be created through it and will continue as a green route from Marks Farm south towards the River Chelmer. This landscaping and habitat creation/enhancement should take place in the first phase of the development to allow time for it to mature as far as possible for the enjoyment of residents. The developer will make an endowment contribution towards the future maintenance of the park to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.
- iii. new woodland planting will be required to strengthen and extend the boundary woodland areas as and where appropriate, and elsewhere opportunity be taken to provide new habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain, in accordance with the GBI Plan.
- iv. a network of green routes for active travel, in addition to the bus route, will be provided to access and link the development plots, the community hub and the Country Park as illustrated in the Concept Master Plan.

South Uttlesford Areas Heritage

- 6.50 Each of the settlements within the South Uttlesford area has a distinct heritage which has visually influenced their architecture, pattern of streets, density, and public open spaces. The Local Plan seeks to deliver much-needed new homes and infrastructure, whilst ensuring this is done in a manner which preserves the unique historic character of these settlements and their wider landscape setting. It is therefore key that we recognise and accommodate the designated and non-designated heritage assets within these settlements which contribute towards this historic character.
- 6.51 The south of Uttlesford houses several Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Stansted Mounfitchet Castle, the Warrens at Hatfield Forest, and Canfield Castle. The location and scale of development proposed throughout the Local Plan must ensure that the sensitivity of these sites is protected, given that they provide an important insight into our medieval and pre-medieval history. The built heritage of

these settlements is of equal importance. Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet, and Takeley each house a large number of listed buildings, which are typically clustered around the historic core of the settlement.

- 6.52 At Stansted, this relates to Bentfield End, Silver Street, Chapel Hill and the Lower Street areas, which is reflected by the presence of a Conservation Area which covers large sections of these routes. Similarly, Great Dunmow benefits from a Conservation Area designation along Stortford Road, High Street and northwards up to Parsonage Downs, owing to the high concentration of listed buildings along these routes. Whilst Takeley does not have a designated Conservation Area, there is a cluster of listed buildings which run along Smiths Green, leading to the Warish Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument at the northern extent of this lane.
- 6.53 The setting of these listed buildings and presence of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Takeley have played a significant role in directing where built development is, and isn't, located within the proposed allocation at Takeley. The design requirements and illustrative masterplan held in **Appendix 3** have been designed to ensure green open spaces are centred around these historic assets, to best preserve their significance and setting. Similar philosophies have been applied at all allocations within the South Uttlesford area, with the protection of the fabric, setting and views of heritage assets being a major priority in the plan-making process.

7. Thaxted Area Strategy

Introduction

- 7.1 Thaxted is situated within the eastern extent of the district and is unique in that, unlike all other Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres, it does not lie along either the M11 or A120 corridors. Instead, Thaxted's location, scale, and extent of facilities serves to support the comparatively rural surrounding settlements. It is proposed that a modest amount of growth is delivered within Thaxted across the Local Plan period, to ensure that the vitality of the settlement and local community it supports is maintained, whilst also contributing to some infrastructure improvements.
- 7.2 Thaxted has an historic core with a high concentration of listed buildings, owing to its medieval origins. Located on rising ground in the east of the district, the settlement is centred around the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, the Guildhall and Clarence House. The Grade II* listed Thaxted Windmill is also an important landmark. More recently, 20th and 21st century developments have increased the size of Thaxted to the north and east.
- 7.3 The heritage value and design quality of Thaxted's built environment is well established, with a Conservation Area covering much of the western side of the settlement, where there is the highest concentration of listed buildings. It is therefore essential that the Council protects and, where possible, enhances these qualities when planning any development at Thaxted. The settlement edge of Thaxted is broadly divided into two parcels; gently undulating arable fields to the east of Thaxted, and steeper valley sides of the River Chelmer to the north and west of Thaxted.
- 7.4 Within the settlement itself, the B184 acts as the main linear through route, as well as the high street which hosts several retail stores, food and drink outlets, a pharmacy, library, and accommodates a weekly market. Along this key movement corridor, residences are situated at an increased density resulting from the prevalence of terraced housing.
- 7.5 Moreover, along the B184 and situated at the top of a hill, the church acts as a backdrop to what is a distinctive street scene. Varied rooflines and local vernacular give the centre of Thaxted an historic and attractive character. As the road continues up the hill to the church, the built form follows the curve which creates a sense of arrival to the church and the surrounding space.
- 7.6 Beyond the centre, the B184 connects Thaxted with Saffron Walden approximately 8km to the north-west and with Great Dunmow approximately 9km to the south. An hourly bus service links these three settlements between Mon-Sat, with a further hourly bus service running through Thaxted via Debden between Saffron Walden and Stansted Airport on Mon-Sat.
- 7.8 It is important that future development within Thaxted is brought forward in a sustainable, attractive manner, and in accordance with other relevant policies held within the Local Plan. Modest development over the plan period can help to maintain the viability of the local bus services, provide a boost to local business, retailers and employers, provide some affordable housing within the settlement and make a contribution to improving services and facilities available. More specifically, development within Thaxted must respond to the existing high-quality architecture within the historic core of the village, so as to preserve the exemplary nature of

Thaxted's built environment. Where development would relate to or impact the setting or views of any designated heritage assets, it will need to be demonstrated that the conservation setting of these assets was integral to the formulation of any proposal, so that the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of these assets can continue to be enjoyed by existing and future residents. For these reasons, no development is proposed to the south, west or north of the settlement, with high-quality and sensitive development proposed only to the east.

- 7.9 Beyond the management of local constraints, development should seek to maximise opportunities to provide enhancements to existing infrastructure, whilst ensuring new residences are properly integrated with the existing active travel and green infrastructure networks.
- 7.10 Following the delivery of the proposed allocations, Thaxted will continue to be a thriving Rural Centre providing an important service centre role for the surrounding rural catchment. Its historic character and attractive landscape setting will have been maintained. New development will have been successfully integrated with the settlement and will have been provided alongside additional education provision, improving the self-sufficiency of Thaxted. Meanwhile, new residents will help to sustain the services and social life of the existing community.

How the Thaxted Area Will Change by 2041:

- 7.11 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought for within Thaxted:
- the provision of a new 1 F/E primary school on a site sufficient to allow for the expansion to a 2 F/E school subject to future demand
 - the provision of around 489 new dwellings on two proposed strategic development sites in the east of the settlement, including around 171 affordable dwellings
 - to provide active travel linkages between the proposed development sites and the existing settlement facilities
 - new convenient pedestrian connections between the existing settlement and the Public Rights of Way network to the east of the village
 - new green infrastructure to support attractive urban environments, public amenity space, and enhancements to biodiversity
 - transport improvements including the increased frequency and quality of bus services
 - development which achieves high quality urban design and protects the historic nature of the settlement, and
 - greater footfall within Thaxted's high street, resulting in a more attractive and viable retail environment.
- 7.12 Given the importance of the historic environment in Thaxted and topographical challenges which would constrain development to the south, west and north of the settlement, the proposed strategy is to only support modest development at Thaxted to the east of the settlement. In doing so the proposed strategy minimises the potential for harm to the valued historic and landscape setting of the town, as development adjoins the more contemporary settlement edge. Moreover, by allocating land to the east of the settlement, the proposed primary school which would benefit not only new residents, but also the existing communities.

Housing

- 7.13 To deliver the homes and supporting infrastructure outlined above, the Local Plan identifies two proposed allocations to the east of Thaxted. The location and extent of these allocations can be viewed within **Figures 7.1** and **7.2** with further details set out in **Core Policy 16: Thaxted Area Strategy**. Development proposals in these locations that accord with the Core Policies set out in this plan, including the site-specific requirements in **Appendix 4**, will be supported in principle.
- 7.14 Both allocations within Thaxted are located towards the less constrained eastern extent of the Rural Centre. The more contemporary nature of development along this eastern edge ensures that new residential development will minimise its impact upon the sensitive historic designations within the settlement. Moreover, whilst the topography rises to the east of the village, the change in levels is more limited than that to the west of the village towards the River Chelmer. This change in topography within and surrounding the allocations ensures that key views towards the village centre and the Grade I listed church spire form an integral part of future development proposal, and this is reflected within the policy requirements for any future planning application (these are set out in **Appendix 4**).
- 7.15 With regards to opportunities, the selected sites allow for the delivery a new primary school within the northern half of the settlement, ensuring both new and existing residents across the village are situated within walking distance to education facilities. Furthermore, these sites provide opportunities to link new homes in with the existing transport network, with an emphasis on prioritising high quality and convenient routes towards the centre of Thaxted, such as along Copthall Lane and The Mead.
- 7.16 The policy requirements (**Appendix 4**) ensure that a comprehensive masterplanning approach is taken, whereby new development is not delivered piecemeal but as part of cohesive approach. Planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the allocations and the existing settlement, well-connected green infrastructure, and high quality public open spaces that benefit all Thaxted residents.
- 7.17 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the proposed allocations have been selected¹.

Economy

- 7.18 Thaxted functions as an important Local Rural Centre for the surrounding rural catchment and provides a range of local convenience retailers, places to eat and drink and community facilities, along with a range of small businesses and employers.
- 7.19 Whilst, there are no proposals for expanding any designated employment sites in Thaxted, it is important the existing local businesses, retailers and employers are supported to ensure the community remains viable for the long-term and to reduce the risk of the vitality of the centre gradually reducing with the resulting increased reliance on other settlements such as Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

¹ UDC, Site Selection Topic Paper, 2023. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>

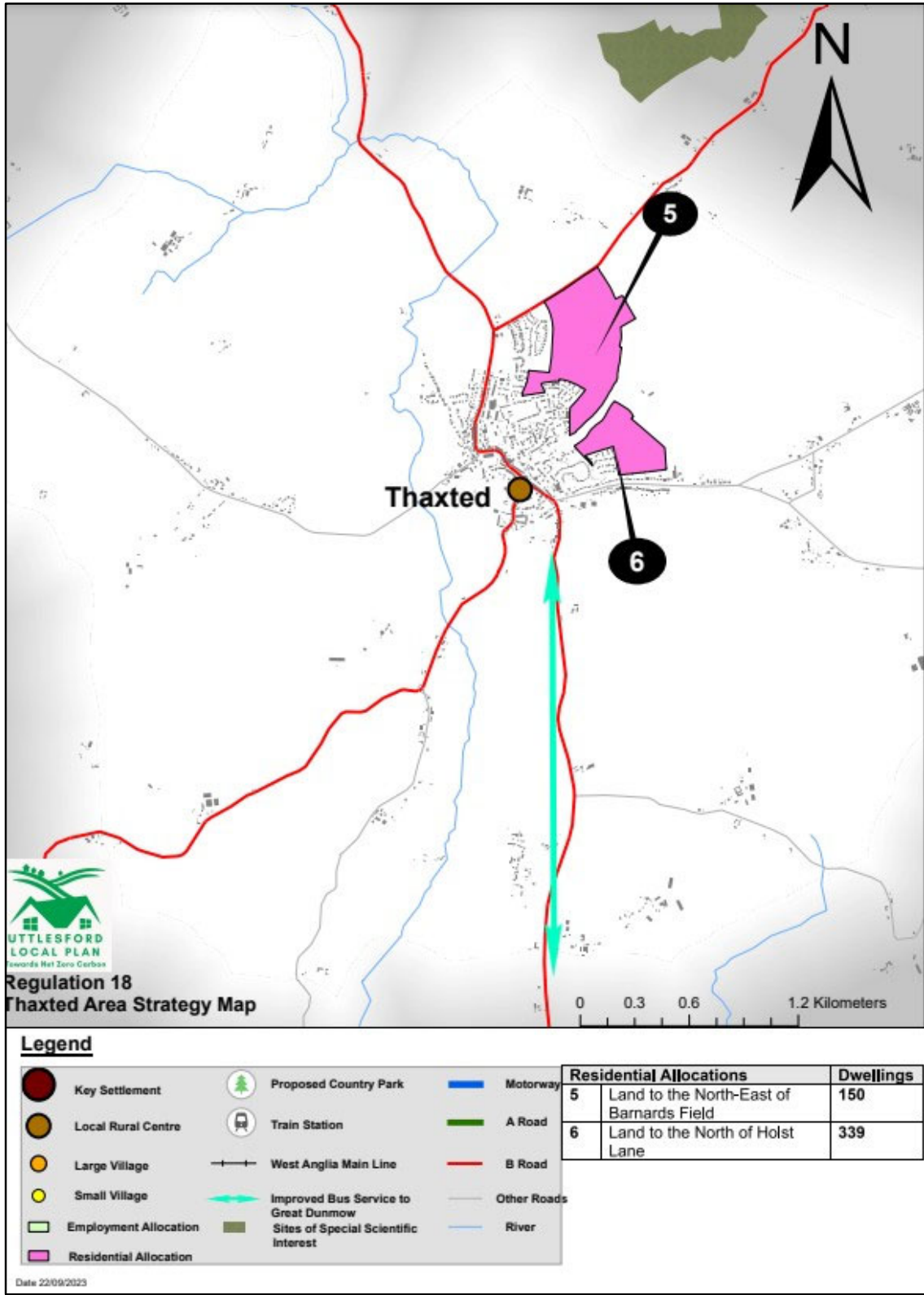


Figure 7.1: Thaxted Area Strategy Map

Core Policy 16: Thaxted Area Strategy

Our overarching priority for Thaxted is to protect its service centre role and deliver a balance of housing and education facilities, improving the self-sufficiency of the area, protecting the vitality and viability of the settlement and its surrounding rural communities, and maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices.

Development in the Thaxted Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

Housing Delivery

Around 489 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through this Plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendix 4**) and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the Thaxted Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 7.1. Thaxted Area Strategy Allocations

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Thaxted	Land to the North-East of Barnards Field	150
Thaxted	Land to the North of Holst Lane	339
Total		489

Employment

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45: Protection of Existing Employment Space**. The additional housing development will help to improve the vitality and viability of local businesses and employers.

Proposed Strategic Allocations at Thaxted

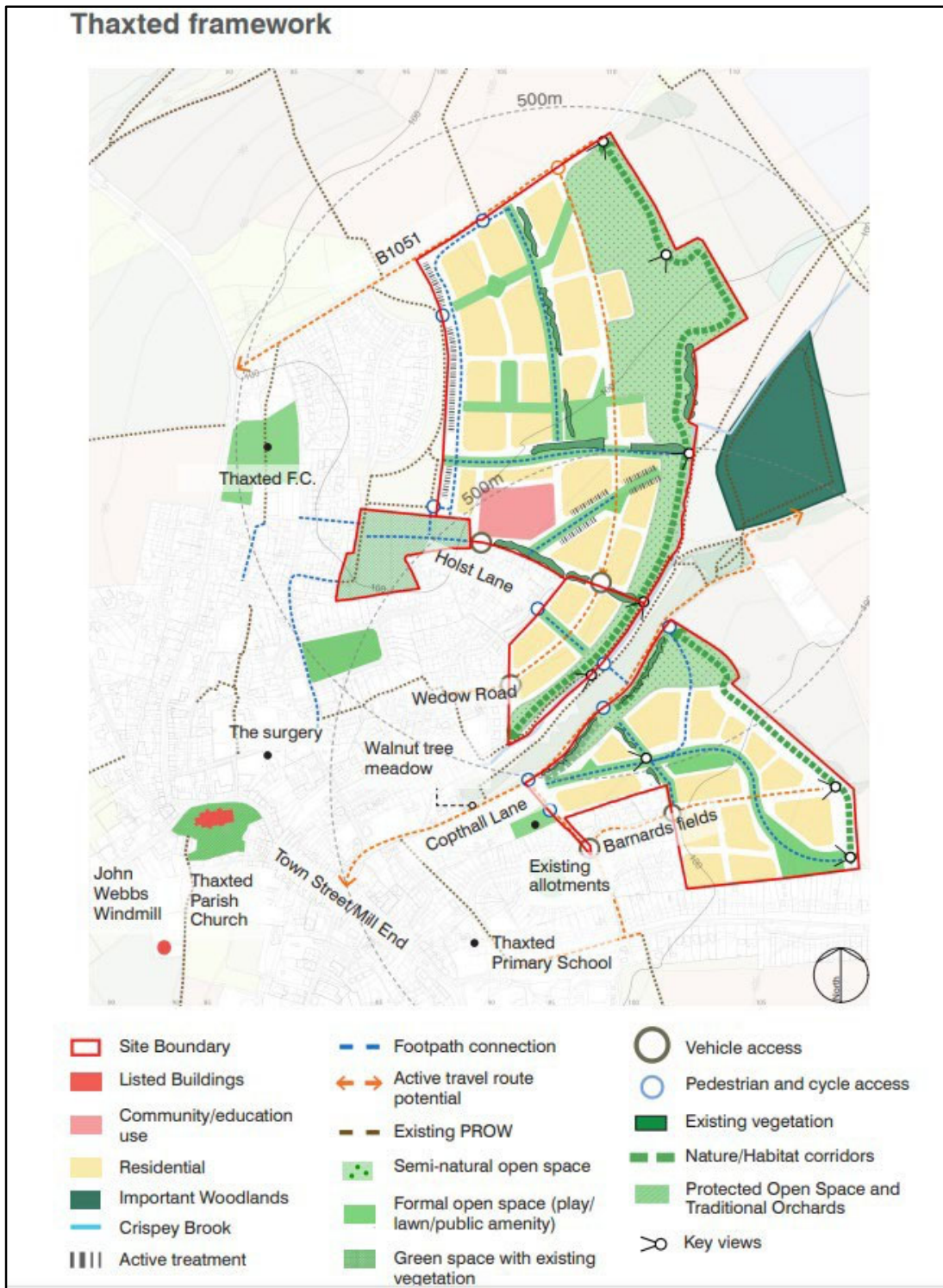


Figure 7.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Thaxted

7.20 The proposed allocations within Figure 7.2 seek to cumulatively deliver around 489 dwellings, a new 1 Form Entry primary school (on a site sufficient to deliver a 2 form entry school subject to future need), green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure. These allocations deliver a level of growth which can support the vitality of Thaxted and provide new essential facilities such as a new school, whilst also being well integrated into the town and protecting its important historic character. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

Land to the North-East of Barnards Field:

- maximise key views of the Grade I Listed Church and John Webbs Windmill from higher ground along the southern edges of the site
- create a strong interface with Cophall Lane and develop a pedestrian and cycle access strategy which demonstrates how pedestrians and cyclists can be connected between Cophall Lane and at the north-western corner of the site
- create a pedestrian point of access in the north-east corner of the site that connects into the existing PRoW network that extends beyond Cophall Lane and the woodland nearby
- propose a range of central green areas that combine existing ecological assets and include measures to enhance biodiversity and encourage play and recreation. These areas should be centrally located and accessible by a range of safe and legible routes that are appealing to pedestrians
- retain existing hedgerows and vegetation that run north to south in the site and border the edges of the site boundary, and
- develop a green infrastructure strategy that seeks to compliment important woodland and landscape towards the north-east of the site.

Land to the North of Holst Lane:

- demonstrate suitable vehicular access onto the B1051, exploring the possibility of two access points. Where a single access is proposed, the internal road alignment should be such that a cul-de-sac layout isn't formed
- pedestrian and cycle connectivity should emphasise connecting with the existing public footpath that extends between Burns Way and The Mead. Additionally, pedestrian and cycle connectivity should link this public footpath to the PRoW network situated to the south and east of the site
- provide additional services and facilities within a new minor centre. This must include a 1Form Entry primary school (on a 2 Form Entry size Site) and should consider another use such as a local convenience retail, leisure, or community building
- acknowledge and respond to the presence of Crispy Brook, the woodland belt and the open space to the south of the site through layout, design, orientation and connectivity
- provide a network of green spaces that are interconnected through clear and legible pedestrian links. These spaces should be overlooked by homes and/or community facilities and any play space should be situated within the heart of the development.
- utilise open space in the eastern part of the site to form a natural connection with the existing woodland located off Cophall Lane, and
- maximise key views of the Grade I Listed Church and John Webbs Windmill from within the site. The site should also focus on retaining long distance views with regard to the historic core of Thaxted and its wider landscape.

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the Thaxted Area.

- 7.21 At present, Thaxted functions as a Local Rural Centre to the surrounding rural hinterland of eastern Uttlesford. The settlement provides a number of services and facilities within walking distance for the majority of Thaxted residents. Whilst Thaxted does not lie along either of the key movement corridors within Uttlesford (the M11 and A120), it is served by hourly bus services to Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Airport.
- 7.22 To ensure the sustainability credentials of Thaxted are maximised it is important that some transport improvements are made within the Thaxted Area, as set out within **Core Policy 17: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Thaxted Area.**

Core Policy 17: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Thaxted Area

In order to deliver the growth in the Thaxted Area, highway infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the Thaxted Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Essex County Council.

Transport infrastructure at Thaxted will be required as follows:

- delivery of attractive, convenient and all-weather active travel routes within allocated development sites, including linkages to the existing network
- ensure dropped kerbs, tactile paving and other features are provided to make walking within the village as accessible as possible
- electric cycle parking to be provided as standard for every new household
- financial contributions towards the improvement bus services between Thaxted and Great Dunmow, allowing for an increased frequency of services to twice an hour
- enhance existing bus stops and shelters to provide real-time information on services, and
- provision of discounted bus services for new residents to ensure sustainable transport habits are developed at the beginning of a development's occupation.

Delivery of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Thaxted Area

- 7.23 There are several challenges regarding green and blue infrastructure in and around Thaxted, which comprise areas of flood risk along watercourses, fragmented woodland network and overall habitat connectivity, and a lack of active travel access. Thaxted, given its historic and compact nature, does not benefit from substantial or connected green infrastructure within the settlement public realm. Outside of Thaxted, habitats such as woodland and hedgerow are often broken or gapped due to agricultural intensification.
- 7.24 Opportunities therefore exist for the proposed allocations to deliver or contribute towards improvements to the green and blue infrastructure network within the Thaxted Area. The improvements sought will enhance the aesthetic, ecological and functional qualities of Thaxted's riparian, woodland and urban environment. In doing so, the Council will seek to address the challenges highlighted above and within the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

- 7.25 New development within the settlement will be expected to contribute towards the strategic opportunities as set out in **Core Policy 18: Delivery of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Thaxted Area**.

Core Policy 18: Delivery of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Thaxted Area

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Thaxted area as shown by maps in **Appendix 9-12** and the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified below and in more detail within the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Thaxted area including their enhancement and on-going management costs:

- i. improved water retention, slowed water flow and erosion
- ii. greening Thaxted and enhancing local experience
- iii. creating a connected north-south green spine along the River Chelmer
- iv. enhanced habitat networks within the arable landscape
- v. enhancing the Harcamlow Way, and
- vi. create a nature network and woodland corridor from Hatfield Forest to Thaxted.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

Thaxted Area Heritage

- 7.26 Thaxted's origins as a prosperous medieval town can be seen in the high quantity of listed buildings which are largely consolidated along Newbiggen Street, Watling Street and Town Street. These Listed Buildings, often constructed in contiguous terrace formation frequently have sensitively colour washed facades. Within the Conservation Area, on rising ground, lies the Grade I Listed St John's Church, which, together with the Windmill to its south are located in strategically elevated positions, both of which dominate the town when seen from viewpoints within the historic core and beyond.
- 7.27 The design and heritage value of this built environment led to the designation of the Thaxted Conservation Area, which spans the majority of the western half of Thaxted. Thaxted contains many high-quality buildings representative of many periods, however, some of the more contemporary additions to the eastern edge of the village haven't always been as successful as may be liked and it's essential that any new development achieves a high-quality standard
- 7.28 To prevent new development from being detrimental to the historic character of the existing settlement, it is important that new development is context-led. Opportunities should be taken to establish key views of the church from within the development sites and provide active and attractive frontages along these views. Such frontages should look to utilise terraced housing typologies and varied roof forms to recreate the architectural features that contribute to Thaxted's design quality. Planning applications should demonstrate that all reasonable design options have been considered to conserve and enhance the heritage value of Thaxted.

Chapter 8: Rural Area Strategy

Introduction

- 8.1 Beyond the three Key Settlements and six Local Rural Centres, Uttlesford District also contains 13 Larger Villages, 24 Smaller Villages and a number of smaller settlements that fall within open countryside, as set out within Chapter 4.
- 8.2 Most of the villages and hamlets within the rural area retain their traditional character and the rural area is host to an outstanding natural and historic environment. However, there are also some challenges facing the rural parts of the district, including housing affordability and access to employment, shops and services and with comparatively poorer public transport connectivity than the larger settlements, limited by the loss of some bus services. On this basis, it is considered appropriate to plan for some non-strategic (less than 100 dwellings) development sites at the Larger Villages, in the rural area to help sustain them and maintain their vitality and viability. The Larger Villages are the next largest and most sustainable settlements in the rural areas, although any development should be of a much lower scale than for the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres.
- 8.3 This Chapter sets out our strategy for non-strategic development at the Largest Villages (As defined in Core Policy 3 and later in this Chapter) along with providing any Development Management Policies that apply only to the rural areas, including:
- **Core Policy 19: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures**
 - **Core Policy 20: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites**
 - **Core Policy 21: Rural Diversification**
 - **Development Policy 1: New Dwellings in the Countryside**
 - **Development Policy 2: Replacement of a Dwelling in the Countryside**
 - **Development Policy 3: Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Countryside**
 - **Development Policy 4: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside**
 - **Development Policy 5: Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Gardens**

How the Rural Area will change by 2041:

- 8.3 Through this Local Plan over the period 2021-2041 housing and employment growth will be predominantly focused at the most sustainable locations in the district: the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres. The Rural Area – defined as the rest of the district – will not accommodate any strategic scale growth. However, to deliver the Plan Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives, it is important that Uttlesford's Larger Villages continue to see an appropriate level of non-strategic growth to help maintain their vitality and viability, including service provision, rural employment, and allow families to remain in their local community should they wish to do so. There is also a need to deliver affordable housing in the rural area where house prices are amongst the highest within the district either through non-strategic housing development at the Larger Villages, or through rural exception sites, where supported by the community.
- 8.4 Growth across the rest of the district will continue to be more limited, focusing on meeting local community and business needs and helping to support the vitality of these more rural settlements. Any development will be directed towards the larger

and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well connected than the smaller villages. Refer to the Settlement Facilities Study¹.

Housing in the Rural Area

- 8.5 The largest and most sustainable villages within the rural area – the Larger Villages as set out within **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – will accommodate the non-strategic development sites (sites of less than 100 dwellings) of 1,000 additional dwellings across the 13 Larger Villages in the plan period up to 2041, as outlined in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs**. Windfall development is not included in the 1,000 dwellings allowed for in the rural areas and will occur across the district where the relevant policies in this plan are met.
- 8.6 NPPF paragraph 66 states that strategic policies should “set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations”. NPPF paragraph 67 requires local planning authorities to set “indicative housing requirements” for neighbourhood areas “if requested to do so”, taking into account factors “including the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority”. This Local Plan therefore aims to future-proof this requirement by identifying housing requirement figures for all currently designated neighbourhood areas and all Larger Villages (regardless of whether they are designated neighbourhood areas) for the plan period. The Plan also provides guidance for any smaller communities who may wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan in the future.
- 8.7 Housing requirement figures are required for all designated neighbourhood areas, however some designated areas contain settlements which are classed as ‘Smaller Villages’ in the settlement hierarchy and therefore in line with the spatial strategy are not apportioned any non-strategic growth. This means that the Local Plan does not support ANY development (strategic or non-strategic) at Smaller Villages, or Open Countryside, unless any small proposals come forward that are consistent with other Local Plan, or national policies, such as for Rural Exception Sites. Whilst the Smaller Villages are nonetheless encouraged to plan for modest housing through any future neighbourhood plans and by encouraging windfall development, any identified housing requirement figures for Smaller Villages are identified by this Plan as Nil.
- 8.8 There are 13 Larger Villages in Uttlesford District and a number of designated Neighbourhood Areas that contain Smaller Villages. **Table 8.1**, shown below, illustrates the different tiers, settlements, parishes, and Neighbourhood Plan status, alongside Green Belt constraints and whether there are any strategic allocations in the areas.
- 8.9 The NPPF requires any housing requirement figures identified for designated neighbourhood plan areas, to reflect the strategy for the area. In Uttlesford, the strategy focuses strategic allocations at the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres, as these are the largest and most sustainable settlements in the district. For clarity, the residual housing requirement figure for all Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres is NIL as no non-strategic allocations are required here to deliver the Spatial Strategy, with all strategic allocations made in this Local Plan.

¹ UDC, Settlement Facilities Study, 2023. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>.

8.10 In relation to the housing requirement figures for the Larger Villages, it is proposed that any Larger Villages located in the Green Belt would not be appropriate locations for allocations to be made. The Council does not consider there are any exceptional circumstances for allocating development in the Green Belt in Uttlesford, as there are a large number of opportunities for development in the district that fall outside of the Green Belt. This means that the villages of Birchanger and Little Hallingbury are not appropriate locations for non-strategic allocations, and the housing requirement for these villages is set at the level of completions and commitments as at 1st April 2023².

Table 8.1: Larger village and other designated neighbourhood areas in Uttlesford District

Tier	Settlement	Parish	Planning Policy status	Neighbourhood Plan Status
Key Settlements	Great Dunmow	Great Dunmow	Strategic	Made 8 December 2016
Key Settlements	Saffron Walden	Saffron Walden	Strategic	Made 11 October 2022
Key Settlements	Stansted Mountfitchet	Stansted Mountfitchet	Strategic	Area Designated 17 September 2015
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns	Great Chesterford,	Great Chesterford,	Strategic	The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan was Made 2 February 2023
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns	Hatfield Heath,	Hatfield Heath,	Strategic, Green Belt	Area Designated 20 December 2021
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns	Newport,	Newport,	Strategic	The Newport and Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan was made on 28 Jun 2021.
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns	Takeley/ Prior's Green,	Takeley	Strategic	Area Designated 29 September 2021
Local Rural Centres/ Small Towns	Thaxted	Thaxted	Strategic	NP Made 21 February 2019
Larger Villages	Clavering	Clavering	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Henham	Henham	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Birchanger	Birchanger	Green Belt (inset)	N/A
Larger Villages	Little Hallingbury	Little Hallingbury	Green Belt (inset)	NP Area Designated 28 Feb 2023
Larger Villages	Stebbing	Stebbing	N/A	NP Made 19 July 2022
Larger Villages	High Easter	High Easter	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Felsted	Felsted	N/A	NP Made 25 Feb 2020
Larger Villages	Ashdon	Ashdon	N/A	NP Made 6 Dec 2022
Larger Villages	Debden	Debden	N/A	N/A

² ADD REFERENCE

Tier	Settlement	Parish	Planning Policy status	Neighbourhood Plan Status
Larger Villages	Elder Street	Wimbish	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Hatfield Broad Oak	Hatfield Broad Oak	N/A	NP Area Designated 22 April 2022
Larger Villages	Manuden	Manuden	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Great Easton	Great Easton	N/A	Great Easton, Duton Hill and Tilty NP Area Designated 30 Aug 2022
Smaller Villages	Flitch Green	Flitch Green	N/A	NP Area designated 25 January 2022
Smaller Villages	Little Dunmow	Little Dunmow	N/A	NP Area designated 18 May 2021
Smaller Villages	Little Easton	Little Easton	N/A	NP Area designated 9 July 2020
Smaller Villages	Radwinter	Radwinter	N/A	NP Area designated 7 Nov 2018
Smaller Villages	Quendon & Rickling	Quendon & Rickling	N/A	The Newport and Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan was made on 28 Jun 2021.
Open Countryside	Broxted	Broxted	N/A	NP Area designated 4 Jan 2022
Open Countryside	Cherry Green	Broxted	N/A	NP Area designated 4 Jan 2022
Open Countryside	Duton Green	Great Easton	N/A	Great Easton, Duton Hill and Tilty NP Area Designated 30 Aug 2022
Open Countryside	Tilty	Tilty	N/A	Great Easton, Duton Hill and Tilty NP Area Designated 30 Aug 2022
Open Countryside	Little Chesterford	Little Chesterford		The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan was made on 2 February 2023.

8.11 **Core Policy 19: Rural Areas Housing Requirement Figures** sets out the housing requirement figures for the rural area over the plan period (2021-2041) and also the residual to be allocated through non-strategic allocations. The methodology for how the figures have been calculated are set out in the '**Rural Housing Requirements Methodology Topic Paper**³ taking into account the relative size of the population, the relative availability of services and facilities, development that has been completed since the beginning of the plan period, development that is already 'committed' through the granting of planning permission or a Neighbourhood Plan allocation and available Housing/ Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) housing capacity.

³ UDC, Rural Housing Methodology Topic Paper, 2023. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>

- 8.12 Parish Councils should make it clear if they wish to make allocations to deliver the housing requirement in their responses to THIS consultation (see below). If not, then any non-strategic allocation proposals will be included in the Publication version (Regulation 19) of preparing this Local Plan.

Consultation Question:

There is an opportunity for the Town/ Parish Councils for the Larger Villages with an identified need for non-strategic allocations (Table 8.2) to take responsibility for making these allocations through a Neighbourhood Plan, if they wish to.

Where Town/ Parish Councils make a formal commitment to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to meet the identified non-strategic allocations, there will be no further detail provided in the Local Plan. Where Town/ Parish Councils choose not to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, or that will not include any non-strategic allocations, the District Council will work with those communities to identify non-strategic allocations and add them to the Publication Version of the Plan, to be published in Summer 2024.

We are asking the Town/ Parish Councils for the Larger Villages listed in Table 8.2 to confirm their intentions in response to this consultation.

Core Policy 19: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures

In accordance with the Spatial Strategy in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs**, the 1,000 dwelling non-strategic (sites under 100) housing requirement for the rural area will be distributed across the Larger Villages and other settlements within designated neighbourhood areas in accordance with **Table 8.2** shown below.

For clarity, the housing requirement over the plan period 2021-2041 is the figure to be met through non-strategic development in each Parish in total, taking into account completions since 1st April 2021 and known commitments (at 1st April 2023), with the residual allocation figures to be delivered through **additional** Neighbourhood Plan allocations (where a Qualifying Body wishes to do so) or the Uttlesford Local Plan with the sites to be confirmed at Publication (Regulation 19) stage.

The Local Plan identifies Strategic Allocations at Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres. For this reason the housing requirement figures for these settlements for the purposes of informing Neighbourhood Plans or Non-Strategic Allocations is NIL.

Development will be supported at non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages through a masterplanning process involving the community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders, where development meets the requirements set out within the relevant Neighbourhood Plan or allocation policies (to be included in the Publication version of this Plan – where required) and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Table 8.2: Housing requirement figures for Larger Villages and other villages preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Parish	2021-41 Housing Requirement Figure	Residual requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations (at 1 st April 2023)
Larger Villages	Clavering	186	111
Larger Villages	Henham	170	112
Larger Villages	Birchanger	3	0
Larger Villages	Little Hallingbury	22	0
Larger Villages	Stebbing	171	109
Larger Villages	High Easter	114	104
Larger Villages	Felsted	309	95
Larger Villages	Ashdon	58	41
Larger Villages	Debden	141	92
Larger Villages	Elder Street (Wimbish Parish)	130	115
Larger Villages	Hatfield Broad Oak	130	111
Larger Villages	Manuden	30	0
Larger Villages	Great Easton	138	110
Smaller Villages	Flitch Green	0	0
Smaller Villages	Little Dunmow	0	0
Smaller Villages	Little Easton	0	0
Smaller Villages	Radwinter	0	0
Smaller Villages	Quendon & Rickling	0	0
Open Countryside	Broxted	0	0
Open Countryside	Cherry Green	0	0

Open Countryside	Duton Green	0	0
Open Countryside	Tilty	0	0
Open Countryside	Little Chesterford	0	0
	TOTAL	1,712	1,000

Rural Exception Sites

- 8.13 The rural area of Uttlesford District contains many areas with high house prices and a limited supply of affordable homes. There is justification therefore for an exception to be made against normally restrictive policy beyond built-up areas, to allow for affordable housing to be provided on small sites that would not normally be considered for housing use, where there is a local need and where other policy considerations are acceptable.
- 8.14 On that basis, and in addition to the non-strategic allocations outlined in **Core Policy 19: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures**, limited rural exception sites will be supported, in principle, to deliver affordable housing to meet local needs in rural areas where market housing may not usually be supported, including within the Green Belt, where there is an identified local need and on a small scale that adjoins the existing settlement.
- 8.15 The NPPF requires local planning policies to support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and to consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would enable the scheme to be viable. In these instances, it is important to establish that a specific 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.
- 8.16 '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 Smaller 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.

Core Policy 20: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Development proposals for affordable housing within rural areas, to meet local needs only, will be permitted as an exception, subject to all the following criteria being met:

- i. a demonstrable local community need for affordable housing has been established
- ii. the number, size and tenure of the dwellings are suitable to meet the identified need
- iii. is of a scale appropriate to the size of the adjoining settlement
- iv. the site and the development will not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets

- v. the proposal is designed to respect the characteristics of the local area, including the countryside setting, and
- vi. schools and health facilities with capacity, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance.

A development appraisal should accompany the application that clearly demonstrates how the above criteria have been met. The Council will consider the cross-subsidisation of the affordable homes with some market homes where the number of market homes is the minimum necessary to deliver the affordable housing, which will be informed by a PPG-compliant developer-funded viability assessment agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

Development in the Countryside

- 8.16 Whilst development in this plan is focused more within the larger, and more sustainable settlements, and to a much lesser extent in the Larger Villages, there will still be occasions where development within the countryside is appropriate.
- 8.17 Under **Development Policy 1: New Dwellings in the Countryside** and **Development Policy 2: Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside** a criteria-based policy approach will be used to determine applications for residential development within the countryside.
- 8.18 The rural nature of Uttlesford and the significant role that agriculture plays in the economy of this area means that agricultural land and other rural land-based activities have a notable presence in the landscape and form an attractive backdrop to the various settlements. Development needed to directly support such uses is important to foster a successful rural economy, but it can also have an impact on the landscape if not properly managed. As such, it is important that development is located and designed appropriately, to minimise adverse impacts or even benefit the countryside. When a new dwelling is permitted for an agricultural worker under **Development Policy 3: Agricultural/ Rural Workers Dwellings in the Countryside**, the authority will only remove this restriction when it sees comprehensive evidence that the business no longer needs the dwelling, and it has been marketed for sale or rent for a minimum period of 24 months at a market price that reflects the occupancy.
- 8.19 It is important to ensure that extensions to dwellings do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding open countryside and are of an appropriate design and scale for their location. Under **Development Policy 3: Agricultural/ Rural Workers Dwellings in the Countryside** the Council will assess all such proposals against the criteria within the policy with particular regard to respecting the character of the original dwelling and retaining the openness of the rural area. Proposals that substantially alter the original dwelling will not be permitted. The original dwelling is defined as the dwelling granted permission if built since 1948. If the property was built prior to 1948, then it will be defined as the building that stood at 1st July 1948. Consideration will be given to what constitutes a disproportionate addition that will be influenced by various factors, such as:
- the scale, design and character of the dwelling and any extensions
 - the setting of the property and its visual impact on the wider landscape, and
 - the design and character of the extension proposed.

Development Policy 1: New Dwellings in the Countryside

Dwellings outside the developed footprint of a settlement, which are not agricultural workers dwellings, will only be permitted when one or more of the following apply:

- i. the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be an appropriate small-scale development that secures the future of associated heritage assets
- ii. the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings without substantial reconstruction
- iii. the development would involve the one for one replacement of an existing dwelling in accordance with **Development Policy 2**
- iv. the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling, and
- v. the development is for an individual dwelling where the design is of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture and would help to raise the standard of design more generally in rural areas and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Development will also need to be in accordance with other policies in the development plan, including, but not exclusively, those relating to landscape character, setting, and design.

Development Policy 2: Replacement of a Dwelling in the Countryside

The replacement of an existing dwelling outside the developed footprint of a settlement will be supported provided that:

- i. the residential use of the original dwelling has not been abandoned
- ii. the original dwelling is not of any architectural or historical merit and it is not valuable to the character of the settlement or wider landscape
- iii. the original dwelling is a permanent structure, not a temporary or mobile structure
- iv. the replacement dwelling is of a similar size and scale to the original dwelling
- v. it is located on the footprint of the original dwelling unless an alternative position within the existing residential curtilage would provide notable benefits and have no adverse impact on the wider setting, and
- vi. the replacement dwelling would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding countryside.

Development Policy 3: Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Countryside

Applications for new dwellings that support rural operations will only be acceptable where they are essential to the effective running of existing rural businesses. Applications should be accompanied by evidence of:

- i. details of the rural operation that will be supported by the dwelling
- ii. the need for the dwelling
- iii. the number of workers (full and part time) that will occupy the dwelling
- iv. the length of time the enterprise has been established that the dwelling will support
- v. the commercial viability of the associated rural enterprise through the submission of business accounts or a detailed business plan
- vi. the availability of other suitable accommodation on site or in the area, and

- vii. details of how the proposed size of the dwelling relates to the needs of the enterprise.

Any such development will be subject to a restrictive occupancy condition and the removal of permitted development rights.

Development Policy 4: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Extensions to dwellings in the open countryside will be permitted unless they result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling (excluding any detached buildings), which:

- i. do not respect the character of the original dwelling by retaining its visual dominance
- ii. do not retain the openness of the rural area by extending the visual impression of built development, and
- iii. substantially alter the scale, design and character of the original dwelling.

Change of use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Gardens

- 8.20 Proposals to change agricultural land to a 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 that do not affect the ability to use the land for agriculture. Proposals should include appropriate boundary treatments like native hedges or post and rail fencing which do not have the effect of urbanising the area or changing the openness of the countryside.

Development Policy 5: Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Gardens

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 materially negative change in the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

If structures in the new garden, for example sheds or other outbuildings, would change the open character of the countryside the Council may impose conditions removing permitted development rights when granting planning permission.

Rural Diversification

- 8.21 Diversification proposals for agricultural and land-based rural businesses have potential to sustain the rural economy and enhance, restore, or maintain the character of the landscape and increase soil carbon through land management techniques and reducing pollution. Whilst planning has fewer controls over agriculture, there are clear links between the practices of farms and estates that impact on wider public goods such as habitat, natural flood management, biodiversity, food and fuel, soils, and countryside access for active lifestyles.
- 8.22 Working with landowners on 'Estate Plans' to help influence the management of estates is another opportunity that might be opened up through early discussion with landowners and promoters in the rural development process. Diversification

proposals on privately managed estates will be supported where a proposal demonstrates sustainable practices and outcomes. This is preferably supported by an agreed Estate Plan that delivers and secures multiple wider public benefits such as employment and enterprise opportunities, sustainable access, social and cultural facilities, environmental enhancements, biodiversity increases, conserving and enhancing heritage assets (including a focus on saving heritage assets that are 'at risk') and improvements to land management. It is therefore important to facilitate the reuse of buildings in the countryside but in a manner which makes a positive contribution to both the rural landscape and the rural economy.

8.23 The Council supports the diversification and growth of Uttlesford's rural economy. Potential opportunity and growth areas include:

- floorspace provision of small (potentially shared) units in rural areas, including to support micro businesses
- an alternative to working from home, particularly in relation to office type premises
- for growth of non-office-based sectors (e.g., manufacturing) workshop space, particularly incubator space for small businesses
- land based uses including Agri-tech, Agri-food and Forestry-tec sectors may provide opportunity to deliver growth and support sustainable food production, maintain plant and animal health and support and enhance natural habitats, and
- cultural sector organisations and businesses, including creative industries and makers, arts organisations and practises.

Core Policy 21: Rural Diversification

In rural areas, proposal for economic activities that bring about rural diversification shall normally be permitted, providing that:

- i. the development is operated as part of a viable rural business (including farm holding) and contributes to the viability of the holding
- ii. it is not detrimental to the character and appearance of existing buildings and their setting within the landscape
- iii. existing buildings are used in preference to new buildings or extensions
- iv. utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided, and
- v. there is access by means of an existing road; no highway hazards are created or increased; and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required.

9. Climate Change, Transport and the Environment

Introduction

- 9.1 This chapter provides policies in relation to Climate, Environment and Transport to conserve and enhance the environment in the plan area, and to meet the challenges of the climate emergency. Uttlesford contains a rich network of biodiversity, landscapes and habitats. These include formally designated areas of high value such as Hatfield Forest and chalk streams, as well as areas that are of importance to wildlife and local people. The Local Plan sets out how development can contribute to protecting and enhancing the environment, including through the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain, and by avoiding harm.
- 9.2 The impacts of climate change are predicted to increase over time. The Local Plan policies aim to ensure the impacts of climate change are fully considered from the earliest stages of development, considering the requirements of adapting to a changing climate, as well as mitigation measures.
- 9.3 Sustainable transport measures will ensure the long-term viability of settlements within Uttlesford, improving connectivity and promoting active travel. Policies within Chapter 9 provide for the impacts of transportation, including freight, and the need for accessible travel for pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicle users. The policies included in this Chapter are:

Core Policy 22: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development

Core Policy 23: Overheating

Core Policy 24: Embodied Carbon

Core Policy 25: Renewable Energy Infrastructure

Core Policy 26: Providing for Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

Core Policy 27: Assessing the impact of Development on Transport Infrastructure

Core Policy 28: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling

Core Policy 29: Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

Core Policy 30: Public Rights of Way

Core Policy 31: Parking Standards

Core Policy 32: The Movement and Management of Freight

Core Policy 33: Managing Waste

Core Policy 34: Water Supply And Protection Of Water Resources

Core Policy 35: Chalk Streams Protection and Enhancement

Core Policy 36: Flood Risk

Core Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems

Core Policy 38: The Natural Environment

Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Core Policy 40: Biodiversity

Core Policy 41: Landscape Character

Core Policy 42: Pollution and Contamination

Core Policy 43: Air Quality

Core Policy 44: Noise

Climate Change

Introduction

9.4 'Climate Change' is arguably the most pressing issue in society. There is an urgency to limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels. These temperature targets were agreed to by 195 countries including the UK via the international Paris Agreement. The UK Government sets legally binding five-yearly carbon budgets (which are based on recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change).

9.5 Analysis¹ from the Committee on Climate Change shows that, for the UK to meet its steeply falling carbon budgets, it is therefore imperative that new development completed from 2025 onwards is built to be net zero carbon 'in itself' from the outset (with high levels of energy efficiency and heat pumps or heat networks, not gas), and also designed and located to help deliver the wider changes needed for a net zero carbon Uttlesford. The analysis also shows that beyond new buildings, there will need to be:

- a rapid and far-reaching rollout of energy efficiency measures in existing buildings
- a dramatic upscaling in the number of existing buildings and transport that runs on electricity rather than fossil fuel, and
- a corresponding rapid and dramatic upscaling of renewable energy to meet this (with electricity demand rising 50% by 2035 and doubling or even tripling by 2050, even if energy efficiency measures in buildings are deployed at scale).

9.6 The NPPF is clear that moving to low carbon with mitigation and adaptation to climate change are key elements of sustainable development. Under the NPPF² (paragraph 153 & footnote 53), plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change in line with the Climate Change Act. Local plans' climate duty (to *ensure* that the development and use of land helps mitigate and adapt to climate change) is also legally codified in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 19.1A, as amended by the Planning Act 2008 section 182.

9.7 Climate change mitigation means actively reducing carbon emissions – in this case by designing new developments and buildings to be energy and resource efficient, welcoming proposals to achieve the same in existing buildings, using renewable and low carbon energy generation, and promoting patterns of development that encourage travel by more environmentally friendly modes of transport. As per the expectation set by the National Planning Policy Framework³, policies will contribute to the radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that occur at all stages of design, production, construction and occupation of the building and the processes involved in the whole development scheme.

9.8 The purpose of the policies in this chapter and building on **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change** set out in Chapter 4 is to bring forward development

¹ Committee on Climate Change, Adaptation and Decarbonisation, 2023. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/adaptation-and-decarbonisation/>

² HM Govt Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2023), *National Planning Policy Framework*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf#page=45

³ NPPF 2023 edition, paragraph 152.

that fully (or more than fully) mitigates its climate impacts and demonstrates readiness for future climate impacts, to the extent analysed to be necessary to fulfil the Climate Change Act. This must include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dependency on fossil fuels, minimising energy usage, using low carbon energy and heat sources, and exploiting opportunities in renewable energy production. These actions will address the Council's 2019 Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration reflected in the review of the Climate Crisis Strategy which aims to enable the entire District to achieve net zero status by 2030⁴.

- 9.9 To work towards achieving this, we need policies that control the use of water and energy in all new buildings and set standards for use of power and space heating, requiring any remaining balance in energy needs to be met from renewable sources. Though the aim is to become energy neutral within sites, and for individual buildings to be energy self-sufficient⁵, it is recognised that this is not always possible within every site, in which case developers will then need to contribute to a 'carbon offset' scheme.
- 9.10 In addition to controls on new builds, we also need to encourage proposals that actively reduce the district's existing carbon emissions (through standalone renewable energy, and through improvements to the energy performance of existing buildings). Combined with a real effort to encourage provision and use of public transport, and reduction of car-based trips, development will then go a substantial way towards meeting carbon targets by reducing emissions.
- 9.11 Local authorities are empowered through planning policies under the Planning and Energy Act 2008⁶ to set reasonable standards for energy performance that are higher than the national Building Regulations baseline and this has successfully proved to be acceptable in recent local plans⁷.
- 9.12 The Plan takes a measurable target-led approach to policy on mitigation and climate resilience that can be monitored and is in accordance with the TCPA/RTPI Best Practice Guide⁸ and the Government's legislated Sixth Carbon Budget⁹. The Plan's approach also reflects the evidence base¹⁰ produced by UDC's consultants on the need, feasibility and precedents for net zero carbon policy, and aligns with the Essex-wide emerging recommended net zero carbon policies currently being developed through ongoing work within the Essex Design Guide (which themselves are supported by detailed feasibility and cost uplift evidence¹¹).
- 9.13 The carbon emissions directly associated with development are:
- embodied carbon emitted during the building's product, material transport and construction stages (and sometimes also the in-use refurbishment, maintenance and end-of-life disposal stages, depending on the scope of the embodied carbon assessment)

⁴ Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030.

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22640/CLIMATE%20CHANGE%20STRATEGY.pdf>

⁵ As a balance of grid energy use and zero carbon energy exports to the grid, across the course of the year.

⁶ UK, Planning and Energy Act, 2008. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/21/contents>

⁷ Such as Cornwall, Bath and North-East Somerset, and Central Lincolnshire.

⁸ TCPA/RTPI Climate Crisis Guide See page 34

⁹ As per measures shown to be necessary for that 6th Carbon Budget by the Committee on Climate Change:

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>

¹¹ Essex County Council & Essex Planning Officers Association (2023) Essex Design Guide: Net Zero Carbon Evidence. <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/climate-change/net-zero-evidence/>

- when all stages of the building's lifetime are considered in the above, it is termed 'whole life embodied carbon'
- carbon emissions of operational energy use – that is, the amount of energy (of different types¹²) used to operate the building and the activities within it, multiplied by the carbon emissions associated with each energy type¹³. This includes:
 - energy to heat, ventilate and light the building (regulated energy¹⁴)
 - plus the energy required to run the appliances and other energy-using equipment (unregulated energy¹⁵), and
 - minus the amount of onsite renewable energy generation (where this is used on site or exported to the grid where it prevents the need for production of an equal amount of conventional grid energy generation and its associated carbon).

9.14 The energy policies in this plan align with the available evidence on what is required to meet the UK's legally binding targets of five-yearly carbon budgets and net zero carbon by 2050. They follow recognised good practice by leading organisations such as LETI (Low Energy Transformation Initiative) and the Committee on Climate Change, using energy metrics for space heating and energy use intensity to limit these to an amount compatible with the UK's net zero carbon transition. A proposed net zero carbon scheme will therefore be judged on the following:

- space heating demand per square metre of treated indoor floor area
- energy use intensity (EUI), which covers overall energy use (regulated + unregulated) per square metre of treated indoor floor area
- renewable energy generation capacity (annual total) that matches the predicted total annual energy use, and
- proportionate contribution to the Council's offset scheme¹⁶ where, in exceptional circumstances, the aforementioned on-site requirements cannot be achieved due to feasibility or viability considerations.

9.15 The key features necessary for net zero carbon buildings in operation therefore are:

- ultra-low space heating (and space cooling) demand
 - low total energy use achieved via efficient low-carbon system for space heating and hot water (e.g. heat pump), low energy lighting, and selection of other efficient energy-related equipment
 - no fossil fuel use in the building
- new renewable energy generation capacity sufficient to generate an amount of energy across the course of each year at least equal to the building's predicted annual total energy use, with:
- technology to include ability to export zero-carbon energy to the grid at times when the building is not using all of its own generated energy (thus making grid energy 'cleaner' and offsetting the amount of grid energy that the building will use at times when the reverse is true), and/or to store the

¹² E.g., electricity, gas and other fuels

¹³ E.g., the emissions from burning gas in the building itself, or the emissions from burning fossil fuels within the electricity generation mix, or the emissions from burning fuel to supply heat to a heat network.

¹⁴ E.g., Regulated loads: → Heating → Cooling → Hot water → Lighting → Pumps and fan

¹⁵ Unregulated loads are plug loads such as: → Cooking → Appliances → TVs → Computers → Any other electrical equipment

¹⁶ Or a Council-approved offset scheme based in the district (or County as a last resort), subject to Council approval on a case by case basis.

- predicted amount of 'excess' self-generated zero-carbon energy for later direct use on site
 - where it is demonstrably unfeasible to include enough new renewable energy generation capacity to match the building's annual energy consumption, then a financial contribution per unit of renewable energy deficit, priced and ring-fenced for delivery of this renewable energy capacity elsewhere in the District
- minimised 'energy performance gap' from design to after construction and in operation.

Net Zero Operational Carbon Development

- 9.16 UDC's proposed policy approach to net zero carbon operational development is closely aligned with an Essex-wide policy approach being developed by the County Council along with the Essex Policy Officers Association, via the Essex Design Guide. This policy approach follows a series of steps and targets that results in a building which has net zero carbon emissions in operation by virtue of having a net zero energy balance across the course of each year, achieved through a combination of on-site energy efficiency with renewable energy supply (usually on-site, but with the option of off-site renewable energy supply through an offsetting mechanism). This enhances the robustness of the Uttlesford policy in that it will:
- benefit from the in-depth detailed modelling of feasibility, up-to-date cost uplift and viability studies produced in support of those Essex policies (and the ability to use the identified costs to perform viability testing specifically for Uttlesford)
 - improve efficiency by using implementation resources offered within the Essex work, e.g. validation checklists/templates and potentially a countywide energy offsetting scheme, and
 - contribute towards a unified and consistent approach across the Essex area that will reduce uncertainty and complication for the region's development industry and enable peer-to-peer learning across the network of council officers.
- 9.17 The first 'building block' in the policy is a space heating demand target. Space heating demand is the amount of heat energy needed to heat a building to a comfortable temperature over a year, and is expressed in kWh/m² gross internal area/yr. It is a measure of the thermal efficiency of the building elements. Various design and specification decisions affect space heating demand, including building form and orientation, insulation, airtightness, windows and doors and the type of ventilation system.
- 9.18 Beyond space heating demand, the building's total energy use (regulated and unregulated) is also expressed in kWh/m²/year. This includes the space heating demand (increased or decreased by the efficiency of the heating system), plus the energy demand of all other energy uses in the building.
- 9.19 Without these target levels of efficiency (specified in the policy), it will be difficult for a development to accommodate enough on-site renewables to become net zero carbon (noting in most cases the on-site renewable generation is likely to be solar PV panels on the development's roof). Reducing space heating demand and total energy use intensity to the target levels identified is necessary to enable the building to become net zero carbon (in operation) on site, and also aligns with recommendations from the Climate Change Committee, RIBA, LETI and the UK Green Building Council to align with the UK's legislated carbon reduction transition. It is also beneficial to residents and building users as it directly reduces energy costs.

- 9.20 This policy approach aligns with national policy objectives in that it:
- delivers many of the general objectives of the Future Home Standards/Future Buildings Standard (FHS/FBS) – such as high energy efficiency and low carbon heat, avoiding any risk of needing future retrofit to be ready for the UK’s net zero carbon future - but with enhanced certainty of actual performance (such as actual low energy demand through more effective design tools, certainty of low carbon heat, and certainty of renewable energy supply), and
 - further enhances the energy efficiency targets to match the necessary performance for the UK’s legislated carbon goals (such as by the use of targets to better ensure good building design and low carbon heat, and by bringing forward the renewable energy supply necessary to support the new development).
- 9.21 Finally, the policy as expressed below – by beginning with space heat demand targets, then low carbon heat and total Energy Use Intensity targets, then renewable energy, then offsetting, then monitoring – effectively implements the Energy Hierarchy which is generally accepted as the best practice process in design to improving the energy performance of buildings.
- 9.22 The requirements of **Core Policy 22: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development** have been tested for feasibility and cost uplift specifically in the Essex region through analysis commissioned at County level, in 2023. The feasibility work performed at Essex level showed that with these requirements, development of all types tested¹⁷ is feasible and remains viable in the majority of land values. The cost uplifts identified in both Essex studies are very recent and are reasonably applicable to the Uttlesford district and are therefore suitable to be used for more locally-specific viability interrogation through the Uttlesford whole plan viability assessment.
- 9.23 More detailed notes to assist the understanding and interpretation of this policy are included in **Appendix 7**. Should a need arise, the Council may produce Supplementary Guidance to support policy implementation.

¹⁷ The Essex work modelled the feasibility of achieving the stated energy targets in a generous range of residential development typologies, and three types of nonresidential development. See: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/climate-change/net-zero-evidence/>

Core Policy 22: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development

A) New build development (residential and non-residential)

All new buildings (of 1 or more new dwellings or 100sqm or more non-residential floor space) must be designed and built to be Net Zero Carbon in operation. They must be ultra-low energy buildings, fossil fuel free, and generate renewable energy on-site to at least equal annual energy use.

To achieve this, these new buildings are required to comply with requirements 1 to 5 as set out below (to be demonstrated through an Energy **Assessment**, which for major applications must be a full energy strategy utilising accurate methods for operational energy use prediction, and for minor applications must use either those same methods or the 'net zero spreadsheet' from Essex Design Guide¹⁸):

1. Requirement 1: Space heating demand

- i. all new residential buildings (apart from bungalows) and all non-residential buildings must achieve a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m² GIA/yr, and
- ii. all new bungalows must achieve a space heating demand of less than 20 kWh/m² GIA/yr.

2. Requirement 2: Fossil fuel free

- i. no new developments shall be connected to the gas grid, and
- ii. fossil fuels must not be used on-site to provide space heating, domestic hot water or cooking, and
- iii. space heating and domestic hot water must be provided through low carbon fuels.

3. Requirement 3: Energy Use Intensity (EUI) limits

- i. residential (Use classes C3 and C4) – All new build dwellings (1 dwelling or more) must achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of no more than 35 kWh/m² GIA/yr
- ii. on larger sites in exceptional circumstances this may be met as a site-wide residential average (weighted by floor area), provided that no single dwelling has an EUI of >60kWh/m²/yr¹⁹.
- iii. non-residential – The following new build non-residential buildings must achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of no more than the following where technically feasible by building type or nearest equivalent.
 - a. Offices – 70 kWh/m² GIA/yr
 - b. Schools – 65 kWh/m² GIA/yr
 - c. Light Industrial – 35 kWh/m² GIA/yr
- iv. for other new build residential and non-residential buildings, that are not covered by a) and b) above, applicants should report their total energy use intensity but are not required to comply with a certain limit. These are however encouraged to

¹⁸ Essex County Council, Zero Carbon Toolkit, Essex Design Guide, updated 2023. Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/climate-change/net-zero-carbon-toolkit/>

¹⁹

The 60kWh cap is the intermediate target from the [RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge](https://www.architecture.com/about/policy/climate-action/2030-climate-challenge). Available at: <https://www.architecture.com/about/policy/climate-action/2030-climate-challenge>.

demonstrate having made efforts towards complying with EUI limits being developed by the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard initiative.

- v. for the avoidance of doubt, Energy Use Intensity always refers to total energy use for all energy uses associated with the building, not differentiated between 'regulated' and 'unregulated' energy. It does not include energy use for electric vehicle charging as this is not related to the design or operation of the building.

4. Requirement 4: On-site renewable energy generation

Renewable energy must be generated on-site for all new developments (1 or more new dwellings or 100sqm or more non-residential floorspace) by whichever of the following results in the greater amount* of solar PV energy generation:

- i. the amount of energy generated in a year should match or exceed the predicted annual energy use of the building, i.e. Renewable energy generation (kWh/m²/yr) = or > predicted annual energy use (kWh/sqm/yr)** , or
- ii. the amount of energy generated in a year is:
 - a. at least 80 kWh/sqm building footprint per annum* for all building types; and
 - b. at least 120 kWh/sqm building footprint per annum* for industrial buildings.

The initial offset price is set at £1.35 per kWh or the most recent updated version (this cost is to be updated to reflect inflation and other cost changes during the lifetime of the Plan) and the contribution shall be calculated at the time of planning application determination.

5. Requirement 5: As-built performance confirmation and in-use monitoring

- i. in addition to the energy performance predictions made at design/application stage, all developments must resubmit as-built information at completion and prior to occupation
 - a. Major applications should submit a recalculation of energy performance predictive modelling using as-built specifications (see **Table 9.1**)
 - b. Minor applications should reconfirm the specifications to which the development has been built, taking into account any changes to fabric and systems compared to the specifications noted at design/application stage.

And

- ii. in-use energy monitoring for the first 5 years of operation is required on a minimum of 10% of dwellings for development proposals of 100 dwellings or more, or a 10% representative sample²⁰ of premises for development of 10,000sqm (gross internal area) or more.

²⁰ This should aim to cover a sample of floor space that is representative of the development's ratio of different uses and building typologies, as far as practicable considering the split of units of different Sizes and uses. Residential monitoring should be designed to aggregate the data to groups of 5 dwellings, for data anonymity purposes (as per the well-established approach in London). Where the anticipated occupancy of a development may result in an inability to anonymise this data to an extent that would contradict

Alternative routes to meeting policy requirements.

Proposals that are built and certified to the Passivhaus Classic or higher Passivhaus standard are deemed to have met Requirements 1 and 3. Requirements 2, 4 and 5 must also be met to achieve policy compliance.

B) Extensions and Conversions

Applications for residential extensions and conversions affecting existing buildings (but excluding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) are expected to meet the minimum standard approach fabric specifications set out in **Table 2** (see **Appendix 7**) and incorporate renewable energy generation technology where practical and feasible.

*In cases where it is proposed to use the rooftop for a combination of solar PV and other rooftop uses with more general sustainability benefits – such as green/biosolar roofs that reduce the amount of PV that can be installed – it may be considered acceptable to achieve the *lower* of the two possible amounts of solar PV generation, so long as the requirement to at least match on-site annual energy demand is still met. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering the wider sustainability benefits of, and needs for, the proposed other rooftop use.

**For development proposals where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that meeting Requirement 4 is not technically feasible, then renewable energy generation on-site should be maximised as much as possible and the residual amount of renewable energy generation (equivalent to the shortfall in meeting the annual energy consumption of the building in kWh/yr) must be offset by a financial contribution (to cover the administration, purchasing and installation of a PV renewable energy system elsewhere in the plan area, which is able to generate a similar amount of energy) and be paid into the Council's offset fund²¹.

Reporting and Modelling

9.24 Policy compliance will need to be demonstrated through the submission of an appropriate Energy Assessment, which for major development proposals should be in the form of an Energy Strategy and for minor development proposals the 'net zero spreadsheet' (which will be available to download from Essex Design Guide). These

data privacy legislation / regulation, the developer should liaise with the Council pre-application to mutually agree an acceptable approach.

²¹ This energy offsetting mechanism meets the legislated criteria for levying of planning obligations, in that it is:

- *directly related* to the development (i.e. the development's energy use and associated carbon),
- *fairly and reasonably related in scale* to the development (the payment is calculated to reflect the amount of energy use that the development doesn't match with onsite renewable energy, and is priced to allow exactly that amount of energy to be provided off site within the District or County), and
- *necessary in order to make the development acceptable in planning terms* (as the offset payment will only be levied where the development cannot otherwise achieve operational zero carbon status as per the policy goal, policy definition, Essex and UDC commitments, NPPF requirement to proactively mitigate climate change in line with the Climate Change Act, and necessary actions for the UK's carbon reduction trajectory as per Committee on Climate Change analysis previously cited).

may be standalone documents or they may form a section within the Climate Change & Sustainability Statement required by **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change**. Minimum information requirements for Major and Minor development proposals at each stage of the planning process are set out in Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023), along with the template spreadsheet. Major and minor development is defined as:

- Major Development proposals are:
 - for housing development – where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, or
 - for non-residential development – an additional floorspace of 1,000 m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more.
- Minor development is less than 10 dwellings or less than 1,000 m² of additional floorspace.

9.25 For major development proposals, accurate predictive energy modelling, such as Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP)²² or CIBSE TM54²³, should be used. This will provide the necessary assurance of the accuracy of the energy assessment information and will be a useful tool for the developer to inform the design process towards achieving the targets, and will help reduce any potential energy performance gap issues (which is where in-use energy does not match the design standard).

9.26 For minor development proposals, applicants may use predictive energy modelling, or alternatively may follow a ‘minimum standards approach’ which sets out the specifications that the development must be designed and built to²⁴. By following this approach (i.e. without an energy model), minor applications will still need to re-confirm on completion the specifications that the development has been built to.

9.27 There are alternative routes to policy compliance available such as Passivhaus, or BREAAAM and these are discussed within **Appendix 7** that provides additional guidance for the interpretation and implementation of **Core Policy 23**.

Extensions and Conversions affecting Existing Buildings (except Listed Buildings)

9.28 Part A of **Core Policy 22** does not apply to proposals that relate to existing buildings, such as applications for the extensions, conversions, or changes of use. Proposals for residential extensions and/or conversions should instead meet the requirements set out in Part B.

9.29 Development proposals involving existing buildings offer an opportunity for measures to be taken to reduce existing rates of energy use and carbon emissions, and also to generate renewable energy.

²² Passive House Institute definition. Available at: https://passivehouse.com/04_phpp/04_phpp.htm

²³ Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), 2022. Available at: <https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/tm54-evaluating-operational-energy-use-at-the-design-stage-2022>

²⁴ Essex County Council, Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy (Summary of Policy, evidence and validation requirements), July 2023. Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2941/report-2-essex-net-zero-policy-summary-policy-evidence-and-validation-requirements-july-2023.pdf>

- 9.30 Seeking for proposals for extensions and conversions to be built to the minimum fabric standards (residential) set out in **Appendix 7** will improve the energy efficiency of the existing building and contribute to meeting climate targets. Incorporating renewable energy generation technology will enhance this further, but it is recognised that there may be some circumstances where incorporating renewables is not practical and/or feasible, such as a small extension or if the building is overshadowed. Additionally, it is noted that some elements of the fabric specification may not be practicable to achieve in every conversion and extension (in particular the air permeability and thermal bridging) therefore **Appendix 7** differentiates (in conversions and extensions) between what is required or encouraged.

Heritage Assets

- 9.31 Retaining, reusing, refurbishing and retrofitting historic buildings can contribute to meeting climate targets. There are sensitive issues that need to be addressed when it comes to improving the energy efficiency and climate resilience of heritage assets. Any schemes should have regard to the specific advice and guidance provided in the Essex Design Guide - Climate Change and the Historic Environment | Essex Design Guide and/ or applicable Historic England Guidance and Best Practice.

Monitoring and Implementation of Core Policy 23: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development

- 9.32 To support the implementation of this Policy indicators have been developed and are included in our Monitoring Framework (Chapter 12 and **Appendix 15**).

Mitigating Overheating Risk

- 9.33 Climate change means that today's building design solutions may need to be ready for environmental and climatic changes arising in the future such as heavier rainfall (potentially causing localised flooding) and/ or temperature fluctuations. As with carbon reduction, local plans also have a legal duty to ensure that climate adaptation is an outcome of the local plan policies as a whole²⁵. (Therefore, new buildings must be designed to last and to be adaptable. Designing new development to be net zero carbon in operation, while simultaneously being ready for the future climate, needs to be addressed at both building level and site level and at the earliest possible stage so that factors such as the orientation, built form, building fabric, site layout and landscaping measures can be taken into account to minimise energy demand and keep the building fit for use.
- 9.34 It is important that design is pursued holistically from an early stage, considering wider sustainability objectives and issues. While we must design net zero carbon buildings (in operation), national planning policy also requires²⁶ adaptation to overheating risk from a changing climate, considering the impact on occupants' comfort, health and wellbeing.
- 9.35 While climate adaptation is a somewhat separate issue from carbon reduction, it must be noted that a failure to design a building to passively²⁷ avoid overheating throughout increasingly frequent heatwaves would also risk a failure to achieve the

²⁵ UK, Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 19, Amended. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/19>

²⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (2023) paragraph 153 specifically requires overheating adaptation; paragraphs 20(d) and 154(a) also establish a general requirement for climate adaptation.

²⁷ Without the application of energy-using devices.

necessary low energy use intensity – as it could create a need for active cooling systems or otherwise enhanced mechanical ventilation to be added today or in future, increasing energy use and embodied carbon.

- 9.36 Therefore, there will be a need for designs (especially building form, orientation, glazing, insulation and shading) to strike a careful balance between the desirability of ‘solar gain’ to reduce winter space heating demand, the desirability of roof orientation to maximise solar PV output, and the need to avoid excess solar gain in summer.
- 9.37 Overheating risk in new residential buildings has partly been addressed by amendment to the Building Regulations in June 2022²⁸ (Part O: Overheating Mitigation). Since the compliance tools for Building Regulations are not intended to accurately evaluate overheating (in particular if buildings take the ‘simplified method’ route permitted within Part O as opposed to the ‘dynamic thermal modelling method’), major development proposals are therefore encouraged to use the CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) standards TM52²⁹ for non-residential development and TM59³⁰ for residential development in line with **Core Policy 23: Overheating**.
- 9.38 Measures to mitigate overheating risk from both current and future climate should be incorporated into the design to help ensure the future comfort, well-being and health of occupiers. Further guidance on good solar design is provided on the Essex Design Guide³¹.

Core Policy 23: Overheating

All development proposals must demonstrate how the cooling hierarchy has been integrated into design decisions, via the Climate Change & Sustainability Statement.

Major development proposals are encouraged to use the CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) standards*:

- **TM52** for non-residential development
- **TM59** for residential development

*applicants are encouraged to use future weather files (CIBSE ‘Design Summer Year’ [DSY] for 2050 or 2080 as opposed to a DSY based on previous decades’ weather).

²⁸ UK, Building Regulations, updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overheating-approved-document-o>

²⁹ CIBSE, 2013. Available at: <https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/tm52-the-limits-of-thermal-comfort-avoiding-overheating-in-european-buildings>

³⁰ CIBSE, 2017. Available at: <https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/technical-memorandum-59-design-methodology-for-the-assessment-of-overheating-risk-in-homes>

³¹ Essex County Council, Essex Design Guide, Updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/climate-change/solar-orientation/>

Embodied Carbon

9.39 Embodied carbon describes the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the materials in constructing the building, the supply chain, repairs and fixtures and fittings, and ultimately its demolition or re-use. Emissions sources include:

- **Products:** extraction, manufacturing and processing of materials, energy and water consumption used by the factory and transport of materials to the manufacturing site
- **Construction:** transporting the products to site and building the development
- **In-use:** maintenance, repair, refurbishment, replacement and emissions associated with refrigerant leakage, and
- **End of life:** demolition/disassembly, waste processing and disposal of any parts of product or building and any transportation relating to the above.

9.40 Embodied carbon is estimated to represent between 22-34% of total emissions caused by the built environment, or more than half of the emissions on an individual building scale³². Yet, the Building Regulations (including the proposed Future Homes Standard) currently do not address embodied carbon emissions at all. It therefore falls to the planning system, and through local plans, to stimulate action aiming to ensure new development's embodied carbon aligns with local and national climate targets. This is in line with the objectives and provisions, and hence legally binding targets, of the Climate Change Act³³.

9.41 Developers should demonstrate in the Climate Change & Sustainability Statement what actions are being taken to reduce embodied carbon and maximise reuse (the 'circular economy'). The summarised London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) advice is:

- Build less: Refurbish and re-use
- Build light: Consider the building structure
- Build wise: Longevity and local context
- Build low carbon: Review material specifications
- Build for the future: Assess end of life and adaptability, and
- Build collaboratively: Involve the whole team.

9.42 **Core Policy 24** introduces a requirement to assess and report whole life cycle carbon emissions for all new build developments (residential and non-residential) whose scale is over the threshold identified. The assessment for compliance with **Core Policy 24** should follow a nationally recognised methodology. In the absence of an approved UK national methodology, the RICS Professional Statement on Whole Life Carbon Assessment (WLC) is the accepted industry methodology for WLC assessments (see The Environmental Audit Committee [EAC] Report³⁴, paragraph 70). Further guidance and software tools have been developed, such as On Click LCA³⁵. The Government is working with industry to update the RICS methodology to develop it into a national methodology, and once approved then this will become the methodology that should be used for demonstrating policy

³² UK Green Building Council (2017), *Embodied Carbon: Developing a client brief*. <https://ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/UK-GBC-EC-Developing-Client-Brief.pdf>

³³ As expected of local planning policies by the NPPF, paragraph 153, footnote 53.

³⁴ Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction: Government Response to the Committee's First Report - Environmental Audit Committee (parliament.uk) (and for full EAC report with the paragraphs 70 cited above: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/22427/documents/165446/default/>)

³⁵ <https://www.oneclicklca.com/>

compliance. The EAC considers that once the national methodology and requirement to undertake whole-life carbon assessments is in place, the cost of undertaking assessments is likely to be minimal (EAC Report, paragraph 71).

- 9.43 In terms of targets for reducing embodied carbon, there is not a nationally set standard but industry organisations have worked together to align the best practice standards to ensure the scope and definition of targets are consistent. Specifically, LETI³⁶ and RIBA³⁷ have developed a simple rating system to easily enable comparison between different buildings / developments. The result is set out in the Embodied Carbon Target Alignment document³⁸ – whose key tables are below.

Table 9.1: Upfront and Life Cycle Embodied Carbon LETI & RIBA Targets

Upfront embodied carbon, stages A1-A5. (kgCO2e/m2) (excl. sequestration)					
Relevant Targets	Band	Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<100	<100	<100	<100
	A+	<225	<200	<200	<200
LETI 2030 Design Target	A	<350	<300	<300	<300
	B	<475	<400	<400	<425
LETI 2020 Design Target	C	<600	<500	<500	<550
	D	<775	<675	<625	<700
	E	<950	<850	<750	<850
	F	<1100	<1000	<875	<1000
	G	<1300	<1200	<1100	<1200
Life Cycle Embodied Carbon (sum of stages A1-A5, B1-B5, C1-C4) (kgCO2e/m²)					
Relevant Target	Band	Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<150	<150	<125	<125
	A+	<345	<300	<260	<250
	A	<530	<450	<400	<380
RIBA 2030 Build Target	B	<750	<625	<540	<535
	C	<970	<800	<675	<690
	D	<1190	<1000	<835	<870
	E	<1400	<1200	<1000	<1050
	F	<1675	<1400	<1175	<1250
	G	<1900	<1600	<1350	<1450

Reproduced from: LETI Embodied Carbon Target Alignment document

³⁶ Low Energy Transformation Initiative. <https://www.leti.uk/publications>

³⁷ Royal Institute of British Architects. For targets, see RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge.

³⁸ Embodied Carbon Target Alignment - LETI

- 9.44 The targets in the policy are set to reflect the 'C' band, which LETI explains is the 'good practice' feasible and appearing in good designs today (while today's standard practice would be closer to band E). LETI explains that while there is not yet enough industry data to be entirely certain about what embodied carbon targets in new buildings are required for national or local carbon budgets, its targets are set "to limit the embodied carbon to a value that is achievable in practice and also in line with sectorial carbon budgets".

Core Policy 24: Embodied Carbon

All development proposals must demonstrate, through the Climate Change & Sustainability Statement, what measures have been taken to reduce embodied carbon content as far as possible. Where it is proposed to demolish a building, this should be justified e.g., in relation to feasibility, or adverse impact on energy efficiency.

Major new-build proposals should identify the steps taken to reduce the building or overall development's impact on embodied carbon e.g., regarding its design and building materials to minimise embodied carbon³⁹.

Proposals for large scale new-build developments (a minimum of 100 dwellings or a minimum of 5000m² of non-residential floor space) must submit a Whole Life Carbon Assessment that demonstrates the following targets have been met:

a) 'Upfront' embodied carbon emissions

- i. Residential: $\leq 500\text{kgCO}_{2e}/\text{m}^2$
- ii. Non-Residential: $\leq 600\text{kgCO}_{2e}/\text{m}^2$

b) Total embodied carbon (excluding RICS modules B6 and B7)

- i. Residential: $\leq 800\text{kgCO}_{2e}/\text{m}^2$
- ii. Non-Residential: $\leq 970\text{kgCO}_{2e}/\text{m}^2$

Renewable Energy and Energy Infrastructure

- 9.45 As made clear in the preceding section, it will be necessary for new development to integrate renewable energy technologies in order to comply with the policies set out in this Chapter and government policies and legislative requirements. Furthermore, significant amounts of new standalone renewable energy generation will also be needed in order to enable the transition of existing settlements, industry and transport away from fossil fuels and onto clean energy sources, as a necessary part of the local and national carbon budgets leading towards net zero carbon.
- 9.46 In general, solar energy development proposals, including both building mounted and standalone ground mounted installations and extensions or repowering of solar installations will be supported where they are focused on previously developed land and do not occupy the highest-grade agricultural land. The integration of solar photovoltaics onto roofs of all suitable development is required to ensure that 'net zero', including total operational energy balance on site, can be achieved.
- 9.47 For wind energy development, the NPPF requires that proposals for new turbines must be in an area identified as suitable for such development (in the Local Plan or

³⁹ Please Note that should the Government during the lifetime of this Plan impose requirements regarding embodied carbon then this will take precedence over the requirements in this policy.

an SPD), and that following consultation the planning impacts identified by the community have been appropriately addressed and that the proposal has community backing. Wind energy proposals will be generally supported in areas of lower landscape value though will be considered in relation to:

- buildings - the safe separation distance is described as the Fall over Distance being the height of the turbine to the tip of the blade plus 10%
- power lines - National Grid and/or the Distribution Network Operators advise on the required distance between wind turbines and overhead power lines
- air traffic and safety –There is a 15 km consultation zone and 30km/32km advisory zone around civilian air traffic radar, with a c.15km statutory safeguarding consultation zone around Ministry of Defence aerodromes⁴⁰. The Ministry of Defence has to be consulted if a proposed turbine is 11m to blade tip or taller, and/or has a rotor diameter of 2m or more, and
- Shadow flicker - under certain circumstances and times of day, the sun may pass behind the rotors of a wind turbine and cast a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off. Properties within 130 degrees either side of north relative to the turbines may be affected at UK latitudes (although this depends on simultaneously sunny and windy weather, requires a narrow window opening to create the 'flicker' indoors, is minimal at 500-1000m distance from the turbine or negligible beyond 10 rotor diameters⁴¹).

Core Policy 25: Renewable Energy Infrastructure

The Council supports proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation and distribution networks. Particular encouragement will be given to community-led schemes with evidence of community support along with local energy sharing schemes, and battery storage. Proposals must include a scheme outlining how and when the site will be restored when energy production or equipment lifetime ends.

Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative impact, on:

- i. landscape, ecology and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas, nature recovery areas
- ii. visual impacts on local landscapes
- iii. best and most versatile agricultural land
- iv. historic environment - designated and non-designated assets and settings
- v. the Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness
- vi. aviation activities
- vii. public rights of way and pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
- viii. highways and access issues, and
- ix. residential amenity.

In addition, for wind energy proposals to be acceptable, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed development has been assessed to meet the requirements of the Uttlesford

⁴⁰ Town and Country Planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) direction 2002. Further advice on wind energy and aviation on websites for Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Control Transport Services

⁴¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48052/1416-update-uk-shadow-flicker-evidence-base.pdf

District Council's Noise Assessment Technical Guidance⁴² such that sources of noise and vibration generated by the development, and during its construction, are mitigated to prevent loss of amenity for existing and future occupants and land uses.

Ground mounted solar energy developments and proposals on buildings will be supported. In developments where employment, community, and agricultural buildings have roofs which are structurally adequate, and within car parks, mobility hubs and along streets as far as practicable, solar energy/PV installations should be included unless it can be demonstrated that is not practicable to do so or otherwise impacts unacceptably on amenity or heritage considerations.

Proposals should be accompanied by an Energy Statement that includes details for their maintenance, use of electricity so generated, and how they would contribute to renewable energy in new development e.g., as a percentage of total consumption.

Transport

Introduction

- 9.48 Delivering growth in the most sustainable locations and improving sustainable transport infrastructure are a key principle of this Local Plan. Delivering and maintaining sustainable, reliable, and adaptable transport infrastructure across Uttlesford will help reduce traffic congestion, provide sustainable transport options to residents and encourage increased use, particularly for local journeys. To facilitate the growth identified by the spatial strategy, there will need to be improvements to the existing transport network where proposed development may cause a direct impact.
- 9.49 By facilitating the sustainable movement of people between their home, work, shops and services across Uttlesford, it will help to facilitate economic growth opportunities, inward investment, regeneration and contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development.
- 9.50 Many aspects of transport and travel need to be considered, including reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking and cycling to reduce dependency on car travel and to improve public health, making public transport cleaner and more accessible to all users.
- 9.51 Reducing the need to travel by proposing and supporting development proposals which reduce the need to travel or promote the use of sustainable transport will support the district wide carbon reduction targets.
- 9.52 Uttlesford is located on two strategic transport corridors; running north to south is the M11 and West Anglia mainline rail (operated by Greater Anglia); and east to west is the A120 corridor. Uttlesford is well situated being close to Cambridge in the north, Braintree to the east, the county town of Chelmsford to the southeast and Bishops Stortford to the west.
- 9.53 Connectivity to London is an important factor for the district including inward and outward commuting and for passenger access for London travellers. London

⁴² Noise Assessment Technical Guidance (UDC, 2017). Available: <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6973&p=0> Regulation 19 Local Plan 191

Stansted Airport is located within Uttlesford to the east of Junction 8 of the M11/A120. London Stansted Airport is one of the UK's busiest airports, currently serving around 26.5 million passengers a year⁴³.

- 9.54 Greater Anglia provides regular direct rail services to London Liverpool Street, Stansted Airport and Cambridge. There are six stations in Uttlesford: Great Chesterford, Audley End, Newport, Elsenham, Stansted Mountfitchet and Stansted Airport. Partnership work will be key to ensure that rail services and infrastructure in the district reflect the working, visitor and economic needs of the district.
- 9.55 There are no bus stations in any of Uttlesford's town which provide a centralised focus for services or multi-modal interchange, however, there is a bus and coach interchange at London Stansted Airport which provides convenient access to the airport and rail station for local, regional and national services. There is a recognition that the bus and rail interchange facilities at Stansted Airport should be strengthened to provide the role of a public transport hub to the wider area.
- 9.56 Frequent bus services also run in the two main corridors with regular local and regional services serving Stansted Airport, Saffron Walden, Takeley, and Great Dunmow. Opportunities to provide local multi-modal transport hubs should be considered at strategic locations.
- 9.57 Two routes on the National Cycle Network run through Uttlesford: NCN11 & NCN16. NCN16 provides an almost continuous traffic free route between Bishops Stortford, Takeley, Great Dunmow and Braintree. There is an overall lack of local dedicated cycle provision, either in towns or routes connecting communities to key services and town centres.
- 9.58 The M11 provides the strategic north/south road connections to Cambridge and London and connects with the strategic east/west corridors such as the A14 & A505 to the north, the A120 within Uttlesford and the A414 and M25 to the south.
- 9.59 The A120 is a key east west corridor, both locally and for the surrounding region. It provides connectivity between Bishop's Stortford in the west, the M11, London Stansted Airport, Takeley, Great Dunmow and further east: Braintree and Colchester. The A120 could provide an important route for delivering high quality public transport including rapid transit schemes.
- 9.60 The challenges associated with transport provision and sustainable transport choices are long standing, however, they are not unique to Uttlesford. There is a great deal of daily commuting flows in and out of the district with residents accessing the diverse employment opportunities that are located within the district such as at Saffron Walden, Great Chesterford Research Park and Stansted Airport and the wider regional opportunities.
- 9.61 It is important that we consider car ownership and be realistic about the fact that most households in the district do own a car and often more than one vehicle. While public transport links are good for some towns along the key transport corridors, villages are more remote with less good access. Therefore, it is acknowledged that some level of car travel and parking considerations will remain important for Uttlesford. In the more rural locations, the policy approach to low

⁴³ Stansted Airport press release, July 2023. Available at: <https://mediacentre.stanstedairport.com/numbers-near-pre-pandemic-levels-as-summer-getaway-approaches/>

emission vehicles and improving sustainable transport will help mitigate the impact of car travel.

Delivering Sustainable Transport

- 9.62 The policies in this chapter are based on an evidence led approach that adopts the 'decide and provide' approach to shape for the future of development and transport infrastructure in Uttlesford. This approach identifies that sustainable transport is the preferred mode for transport and the supply of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, will be prioritised. This approach reflects the changing dynamics of transport in the modern world and will be proactive in its approach in respect of ensuring the sustainable location of new developments, reducing the need to travel, planning for sustainable travel modes, and providing for zero carbon or low emission vehicle use.
- 9.63 To support net zero or low carbon growth within the district, the strategic site allocations identified in this Plan are located to maximise opportunities for accessing sustainable travel choices. These include rail and bus services, ensuring the sites are close to key local services that are also reasonably accessible by walking and cycling.
- 9.64 Securing public transport improvements and better provision for walking and cycling would reduce pollution, make it safer and easier for people to travel to jobs and services and lead to better health, less congestion, and more pleasant streets.
- 9.65 All new residential roads including secondary and tertiary streets will be designed to minimise vehicle speeds and prioritise walking and pedestrian safety and provide safe and convenient cycle route choices.
- 9.66 Barriers to walking should be addressed in development proposals, to ensure that walking is promoted and that street conditions, especially safety/security and accessibility for disabled people, are enhanced. Walking networks and facilities in and around all new developments should be direct, safe, attractive, accessible and enjoyable.
- 9.67 Cycling is a space efficient mode compared to cars so making streets attractive for cycling can bring benefits to all road users while also improving the experience of living, working and getting around. Cycling should be promoted through the provision of improved and secure cycle parking and other facilities and new cycle routes as part of highway infrastructure improvements/traffic management measures.
- 9.68 The Council will work with partners and stakeholders to facilitate and promote sustainable transport links from new development to key destinations and the wider network. This includes new or improved infrastructure, services and promotion to support walking, cycling and public transport, and provision of charging points for electric vehicles. The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS) produced by Essex County Council provides a framework for the Council and its partners to co-ordinate the provision of services and infrastructure to achieve its objectives.
- 9.69 The design of streets, parking areas, and other transport elements should reflect the Uttlesford Design Guide, current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Essex County Council's Transportation Development Management Policies provide further detail on

requirements relating to accessibility and access, including Transport Assessment and Statement thresholds for each land use category.

- 9.70 The allocations and policies in the Plan will support development proposals that are planned and designed to maximise the opportunities to reduce demand for carbon intensive trips. This will be achieved through the delivery of neighbourhoods and streets where access and movement by sustainable transport and active travel is prioritized.
- 9.71 The Local Plan seeks to ensure that new development provides residents and businesses with a genuine choice of transport modes. This will be achieved by designing new development with convenient and safe active travel connections and high-quality public transport services.
- 9.72 Where development proposals are sited in a location with inadequate active travel and public transport connections, developers will be required to provide evidence that they have worked with the transport authority and service providers to provide new or improved infrastructure and public transport services to support net zero carbon growth.
- 9.73 The Local Plan supports development proposals that are designed and delivered in accordance with the ECC highway development management documents and policies, and the Essex Design Guide unless otherwise agreed with the Highways/Transport Authority at the time.
- 9.74 The policies support the delivery of safe and suitable access for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, public transport, general traffic and the delivery of goods vehicle movements.
- 9.75 The Council will support new development designed around existing or proposed active travel routes and public transport links, so the development integrates with the surrounding context and is well connected to existing settlements and key destinations and transport interchanges.
- 9.76 Access routes into development sites for active travel and public transport modes should be maximized and aligned with existing or proposed external routes. The development's active travel proposals should facilitate the ability for these active travel and public transport routes to link to any future adjacent development proposals or phased development.

Core Policy 26: Providing for Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

The Council will support measures identified in the Essex Local Transport Plan and the area travel plans and work with Essex County Council to ensure that transport improvements contribute positively to the attractiveness and safety of our places, quality of life, and respond sensitively to our natural and historic environment.

The Area Strategies (Chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this Plan) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify specific schemes addressing sustainable transport and connectivity.

All strategic developments as set out in Chapter 4 and the Area Strategies will be expected to provide direct bus access, rapid electric charging points, car and electric vehicle community sharing clubs and mobility hubs in accessible

locations, close to public services/ amenities on site.

Sustainable modes of transport should be prioritised in new developments to promote accessibility and integration with the wider community and existing networks. Priority should be given to cycle and pedestrian movements and access to public transport.

Development proposals should provide the following sustainable measures as appropriate:

- i. promote walking and cycling by ensuring proposals give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability
- ii. deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposals. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs
- iii. ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and public rights of way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate
- iv. identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicted active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements
- v. reduce road danger from other transport modes
- vi. ensure the provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Essex County Council latest guidance, and
- vii. cycling and walking routes should be planned, where possible, as part of the network of multi-functional green infrastructure.

Addressing Transport Impacts

9.77 Our strategy for managing growth across the district is to locate development in sustainable locations that helps to minimise the distance and duration of a journey, in addition to identifying appropriate and deliverable measures to meet the transport needs of the district. New development is therefore proposed within areas that are accessible by public transport and that have the capacity to accommodate the number of trips generated as a result of new development and/ or will provide financial contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of new development. This will support the delivery of infrastructure needed to facilitate travel of sustainable modes, whilst also enabling improvements to be made to the local and strategic road network. Sustainable accessibility also improves the ability of local communities, in particular disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, to access employment and important services including education, healthcare, open spaces, leisure and shopping.

9.78 The Local Plan seeks to increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport. A strong focus is required on designing walkable neighbourhoods and reducing the need to travel and encouraging use of other modes of transport, travel choices, especially for shorter trips to improve accessibility and tackle traffic congestion. It is important that new development can be accessed safely and that, to help manage car use, development is accessible by means of transport other than the private car. The layout of large-scale sites should provide access for public transport and service vehicles.

- 9.79 Proposals will need to quantify the likely transport impacts that the proposed development will have and describe any mitigation measures to reduce them. Proposals for development that will generate significant amounts of transport movements will need to be accompanied by a transport assessment, and where necessary, by a travel plan.
- 9.80 The promotion of travel plans is essential to encourage residents and employees to make use of sustainable transport networks, and to inform them of the travel choices available. A key element of this is the marketing and promotion of public transport, cycling and walking.

Core Policy 27: Assessing the impact of Development on Transport Infrastructure

Development should be located in an area with an appropriate level of public transport accessibility and where public transport capacity can accommodate the proposed increase in the number of trips, or where capacity can be increased to an appropriate level through contributions, or other infrastructure funding.

Developers will be required to submit a Transport Assessment and/ or a Transport Statement to assess the potential transport impacts of the developments and guidance should be sought from the Highway Authority on which approach is appropriate.

Travel Assessments and Travel Statements will be required to propose mitigation measures to demonstrate they have maximised opportunities for active sustainable travel and will make adequate provision to mitigate the likely impacts. Where that mitigation relates to matters that can be addressed by management measures, the mitigation should be accompanied by the preparation of a Travel Plan.

Where a Transport Assessment or Travel Plan is required, a Transport Related Carbon Emissions Quantification Statement will be necessary and should be integrated into the document.

All Travel Plans must have measurable outputs, be related to the aims and objectives in the Essex Local Transport Plan and provide monitoring and enforcement arrangements. Planning obligations will be sought to secure the provisions in the Travel Plan, including the requirement for an annual monitoring and progress report. Submission of area-wide Travel Plans will be considered in appropriate situations. Outline planning applications are required to submit a framework for the preparation of a Travel Plan.

Development proposals should:

- i. contribute towards the improvement of public transport and the improvement and delivery of walking and cycling routes that serve the site. This could be achieved through the design of development and/ or through financial contributions appropriate to the scale and impact of the development
- ii. be expected to provide, or contribute to the provision of, new and/ or improved public transport infrastructure and services proportionate to the projected number of additional trips arising from the development and considering cumulative impacts of other approved developments in the area
- iii. limit motor vehicle trips and identify and deliver highway safety measures at and around the development site, including temporary measures during the construction phase. This measure should reduce road danger and facilitate safer movements for all users and transport modes, and
- iv. comply with the latest guidance on design, parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure.

Development of New Transport Infrastructure

Proposals to improve or provide new public transport infrastructure and facilities will be supported subject to:

- i. being acceptable in terms of impact on the environment including landscape, townscape, public realm and amenity of adjoining areas
- ii. being designed to be safe, convenient, attractive and accessible for use especially for vulnerable users including lone females, young adults, people with disabilities and specific mobility needs, and
- iii. providing adequate secure cycle parking and ease of access on foot, including consideration of pedestrian desire lines.

Active Travel: Walking and Cycling

- 9.81 Active travel refers to modes of travel that involve a level of activity. The term is often used interchangeably with walking and cycling, but active travel can also include trips made by wheelchair, mobility scooters, adapted cycles, e-cycles, scooters, as well as cycle sharing schemes.
- 9.82 Active travel is a key component of sustainable transport planning, as it has a number of benefits for individuals, communities, and the environment. Encouraging mode shift to walking, wheeling and cycling is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emissions, as outlined in the transport decarbonisation plan.
- 9.83 Active travel should be an important consideration in all planning decisions. When planning new developments, it is important to make sure that there are safe and convenient routes for people to walk, cycle, and wheel. This can be done by providing dedicated infrastructure for active travel, such as footpaths, cycle lanes, and shared spaces. It is also important to make sure that the built environment is designed to encourage active travel, such as by creating compact, walkable communities.
- 9.84 The Council is producing a Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (LCWIP)⁴⁴ for the district to identify cycling and walking improvements that are required in Uttlesford taking account of planned growth. The outputs identify walking and cycling routes for inclusion into site specific policies in the new Plan to improve connectivity between existing and new routes. These will be required to be identified in the future Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 9.85 LCWIPs provide a prioritised plan of preferred routes and core zones which can be used to inform and prioritise future funding opportunities in the short, medium and long term; secure developer funding towards walking and cycling infrastructure including in responding to specific planning applications; and link to wider sustainable transport networks such as bus, rail, rapid transit.
- 9.86 The Council will expect all development to consider the key principles of 15/20-minute neighbourhoods and active travel into new developments.

⁴⁴ UDC, Active Travel Uttlesford, 2023. Available at: <https://letstalk.uttlesford.gov.uk/active-travel-in-uttlesford>

Core Policy 28: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling

Development should be planned around a network of safe and accessible walking and cycling routes where dedicated traffic free links make walking and cycling the preferred choice for day-to-day trips, encourage sustainable travel, and support healthy and active lifestyles.

The Council will support the delivery of public realm improvements and infrastructure designed to create attractive places that make walking and cycling safer, healthier, and more attractive as a travel choice.

New developments and infrastructure proposals should:

- i. promote walking and cycling by ensuring proposals give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability
- ii. deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs
- iii. ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and public rights of way are retained as continuous linear features and also improved
- iv. identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicted active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements
- v. reduce road danger from other transport modes
- vi. be expected to enable and contribute towards improvements and delivery of local and strategic active travel routes and links as identified in the Area Strategies and associated IDP and LPWIP, and
- vii. ensure provision of secure cycle parking and active travel in line with the latest guidance.

Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

9.87 The Plan will ensure that developments provide the infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles where it is appropriate and viable, and with reference to the principles in the Essex EV Infrastructure Strategy. This could be in the form of residential and public electric vehicle charging points or make ready infrastructure for charging stations.

Core Policy 29: Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

All development proposals should maximise the opportunity of occupiers and visitors to use electric and low emission vehicles, including electric bicycles and electric cargo cycles.

Proposals should maximise the provision of residential and public electric vehicle charging / plug-in points and/or the space and infrastructure required to provide them in the future. The design and operation of such infrastructure should follow best practice so that their operation does not undermine the quality of the public realm.

Public Rights of Way

- 9.88 The public rights of way network provides access to Uttlesford's unique countryside and heritage and in the process, improve health and quality of life. Public rights of way are an intrinsic part of our overall transport network, providing valuable and safe access on foot and increasingly by cycle to the wider countryside, places of employment, schools, shops and other local services and amenities. The rights of way network provides a key alternative to car use on journeys of less than five miles. The Council will ensure that Rights of Way are protected, enhanced, and promoted.
- 9.89 There will be a need for improvements to the rights of way network affected by development proposals to encourage more walking, cycling and horse riding through improved accessibility, surfacing and connectivity. Where the scale and location of development will require connections and/or lead to increased use by new and existing residents, the Council will secure appropriate contributions from the applicants. Consideration will be given to achieving off-site local pedestrian, bridleway and cycleway routes which connect development sites with open spaces, leisure/community uses and strategic access routes, make links within the wider Rights of Way network, or create circular or extended routes.
- 9.90 At the earliest opportunity and as part of their planned development, applicants are required to record the route of any public Rights of Way affected by proposed development and submit a Rights of Way Scheme for their improvement, accommodation or diversion. Rights of Way schemes should detail what is proposed for existing routes, including whether the paths are to be incorporated into the design or diverted. They must also include landscape proposals for the paths, and details regarding new routes and connections to the rights of way and access network. Details regarding how any rights of way are to be dealt with during construction must also be included.

Core Policy 30: Public Rights of Way

Development proposals for sites that include a Right of Way within the site, or are for major development proposals adjacent to an existing Right of Way, will be required to submit a Rights of Way Scheme that demonstrates how the development will protect, enhance and promote the public Rights of Way network.

This must include, where necessary, improvements to help restore and re-connect Rights of Way.

Where development would increase the pressure on the Rights of Way network, contributions will be sought through planning obligations for measures to protect and enhance the Rights of Way network, including the delivery of additional routes and improvements to existing public paths both on-site and off-site.

Managing Parking

- 9.91 The Council will focus on measures to promote and improve opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport and for electric vehicle charging. The Council will also continue to promote lower levels of private car parking to help achieve modal shift. This will be particularly relevant for non-residential developments where more sustainable transport alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport exist

and are being developed. It will also be important in our town centres, where our aim is to increase access without increasing the overall level of parking.

- 9.92 Car parking standards are an important means of managing traffic levels in and around a development, especially when combined with measures to increase access to transport alternatives to the private car.
- 9.93 The dominance of vehicles on streets is a significant barrier to walking and cycling and reduces the appeal of streets as public places. When properly implemented in appropriate locations, car-limited development could have significant benefits including:
- accommodating more dwellings on a given site through appropriate densities
 - leaving more space for landscaping and green space
 - safer streets for children's play, and more social interaction
 - reduced car dependency, while supporting walking, cycling, public transport and local car clubs, and
 - less traffic congestion and pollution associated with the new development.
- 9.94 Larger car-limited developments will be encouraged to incorporate a car club, which can be an attractive alternative to private car ownership and boost the attractiveness of car limited housing.
- 9.95 Development proposals should have regard to the most up to date Essex County Council Parking Standards⁴⁵ and the guidance in the Uttlesford Design Code⁴⁶.

Core Policy 31: Parking Standards

Development proposals should have regard to the latest Essex Parking Standards and the parking standards set out in the Uttlesford Design Code.

Proposals for provision below these standards should be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify a deviation from the standards, such as significantly higher levels of sustainable transport provision.

The Movement and Management of Freight

- 9.96 The routing of traffic and particularly the movement of freight is a key issue in the creation of safe and attractive communities. The volume of freight transported through an area is often a useful measure of prosperity of a local economy and it is important that local authorities, working in partnership with the Local Highway Authority, manage this demand as far as possible. However, such movements can have adverse impacts, especially where vehicles move from or to the strategic network and local roads.
- 9.97 Heavy goods vehicles (HGV) that pass through our communities can have detrimental impacts on our towns and villages. These vehicles may produce higher

⁴⁵ ECC, Parking Standards, 2009. Available at:

<https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/1960/essex-parking-standards.pdf>

⁴⁶ UDC, Design Code, 2023. Available at: <https://uttlesforddesigncode.co.uk/>

emissions and their size and weight results in the dominance of the road space whilst moving and causing delays when unloading in constrained locations.

- 9.98 In some instances, HGV's have caused physical damage to the fabric of our historical towns and villages. To reduce the number of vehicles carrying goods and freight into our towns, the use of local delivery hubs (including micro-consolidation centres) may divert some of the HGV's away from sensitive or constrained areas in our towns and villages. The Council will work with the Highway Authority, and other partners, to minimise freight trips on the road network and promote safe, clean and efficient freight movements.
- 9.99 Development proposals for freight and servicing will be expected to consider the four main actions regarding 'last mile deliveries' as set out in the UK Transport Decarbonisation Plan (page 140)⁴⁷. Where relevant a planning application will be expected to be accompanied by a Freight Management Strategy setting out how freight and servicing will be managed and mitigated within the development.

Core Policy 32: The Movement and Management of Freight

Development proposals should consider the freight strategies and policies set out in the Essex Local Transport Plan that relate to the efficient and reliable transportation of freight.

Proposals must submit a Freight Management Strategy setting out how freight, home deliveries and servicing will be managed and mitigated within the development for approval.

Freight management strategies should ensure the prioritisation of the use of the Strategic Road Network and minimise the use of the rural network and that encourage the movement of freight by sustainable modes whilst minimising negative impact of freight trips on local communities.

Development proposals that generate a significant number or intensity of transport movements, will be required to demonstrate that:

- i. they are conveniently located to enable direct routing to the strategic road network
- ii. there is no unacceptable impact on residential areas, local air quality, local amenity, or the highway network
- iii. there would be no unacceptable impact on landscape, heritage, local character and biodiversity
- iv. they adopt best practice approaches to managing and minimising freight, servicing and delivery trips
- v. they facilitate low or zero emission technologies, and
- vi. provide adequate off-street provision to accommodate delivery and servicing activities, with on-street loading only considered in exceptional circumstances.

The Council will support the development and enhancement of local delivery hubs that help consolidate deliveries, reduce vehicle traffic and enable sustainable last-mile movements in the district, subject to their acceptability on the local and strategic road networks and local communities.

⁴⁷ Department for Transport, UK Transport Decarbonisation Plan, 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan>

Environment

Introduction

- 9.100 It is important that development within Uttlesford protects, maintains and enhances the special characteristics of the built and natural environment, to ensure development is sustainable in the long term, and that Uttlesford remains an attractive place for people to live, work and to visit. The Local Plan can help shape a positive future for Uttlesford by
- ensuring the sustainable use of water
 - supporting the sustainable treatment of waste
 - supporting increased biodiversity and providing protection for valuable habitats, and
 - preventing disturbance or harm from pollution and contamination
- 9.101 The Local Plan policies take account of the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy and the Landscape Character Assessment, to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the environment is at the centre of the strategy.

Managing Waste

- 9.102 The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) sets out the national commitment that by 2050 no waste shall be sent to landfill, eliminating avoidable waste, including from construction and demolition. Around half of all waste relates to construction although much is recovered from concrete, brick and asphalt. Reusing construction waste will lower the embodied carbon footprint and contribute to the 'circular economy' by minimizing the residual waste. Applied to the development industry this means that buildings must be adaptable so that they can be reused, extended, re-modelled and converted. This approach reduces the need for raw materials and the manufacture of new building components.
- 9.103 The waste hierarchy minimises the volume of waste generated, regarding waste as a resource to re-use or recycle, with disposal as the last option. Developments therefore should be designed to reduce construction waste and maximise the reuse and recycling of materials. Schemes should be designed for future occupants to maximise recycling and reduce waste with waste storage capacity as an integral design element. Proposals that explore the potential to produce energy from waste are encouraged. This is reflected in the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Plan (2017) that are under review⁴⁸.
- 9.104 It is therefore important that developers should practise:
- i. responsible sourcing of materials from lawful, certified sources through environmental management systems and custody schemes such as the sourcing of timber accredited by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
 - ii. maximising use of local supply chains in the sourcing/reuse/recycling of materials and waste, and ensuring that all good quality topsoil and subsoil is reused in green infrastructure and landscaping, or on sites allocated for carbon sequestration or carbon off-setting

⁴⁸ Essex County Council, Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, 2019, Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/planning-land-and-recycling/planning-and-development/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy>

- iii. using secondary materials, reclaiming and reusing material arising from the demolition and site preparation
- iv. reducing embodied carbon impact of materials e.g., to achieve an area-weighted rating of A or B as defined in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Green Guide to Specification
- v. designing the integration of facilities for domestic and business waste recycling into the layout of the scheme and buildings
- vi. exploring the use of new energy recovery facilities, and
- vii. using materials that represent a lower risk to the health of construction workers and occupants e.g., materials with zero or low volatile organic compound (VOC) levels, to be addressed in the Health Impact Assessment.

9.105 During construction, development must minimise levels of noise, vibration, artificial light, odour, air quality, fumes, and dust pollution. Developers are expected to sign up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme, or satisfy the UDC/the District Council that they are signatories to an equivalent or superior scheme', to minimise impact on amenity in the area, regarding the routing, timing, and frequency of heavy goods vehicle movements and working with nearby contractors to co-ordinate the timings of works, deliveries, routes, and location of equipment to reduce cumulative impact.

Core Policy 33: Managing Waste

To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities as identified in the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017), or their replacements, and which minimize impacts on the communities living close to the sites through noise, pollution, traffic and on the local environment and landscape.

Proposals for new development must include adequate recycling facilities to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery, preferably within the premises of the dwelling, or provide adequate, secure, external or communal storage facilities. Convenient and safe access to manage waste must be provided and the needs for older persons or persons with disabilities to effect convenient and safe access to waste management should be addressed in the design.

Proposals should demonstrate high quality design solutions to minimise the adverse visual impact of waste facilities and comply with the Uttlesford Design Code⁴⁹ criteria as appropriate.

Development proposals should:

- i. provide adequate internal and external storage space to enable the occupiers/users to separate, store and recycle their waste, which will be separate from cycle storage, car parking and circulation areas
- ii. include on-site waste management, which minimises the need for waste transfer, where feasible
- iii. allow for convenient and safe access to waste to facilitate its collection
- iv. implement high quality design solutions to minimise the adverse visual impact of waste facilities for both the proposed site and neighbouring uses, and

⁴⁹ UDC, Uttlesford Design Code, 2023. Available at: <https://uttlesforddesigncode.co.uk/>

- v. enable waste from mixed-use schemes to be segregated in separate secured areas.

A Waste Management Plan should be submitted for Major development proposals setting out how the above requirements have been met. Innovative solutions to minimise waste at source will be supported.

Water Resources

- 9.106 Climate change is placing pressure on water resources, increasing the potential for a supply-demand deficit, and for environmental damage from over abstraction of water resources. Furthermore, managing water supply and disposal are activities which have a carbon impact and reducing water at all stages in the artificial water cycle will be of value. Water UK estimate that the carbon footprint of one litre of mains treated domestic water is 0.79g/CO₂/l⁵⁰. Water use in the Uttlesford area is relatively high at around 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 Southeast Affinity Regions with higher levels of metering⁵¹. Consultants, JBA, carried out the Uttlesford Water Cycle Study Phase 1 (WCS) in co-operation with the water companies, the Environment Agency (EA) and information from the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, which has informed the preparation of this Plan⁵².
- 9.107 Building Regulations offer a standard beyond the mandatory 125l/p/day of 110l/p/d where there is local stress⁵³. The Affinity Water supply region that is classified as being an area of serious water stress⁵⁴. Therefore, policies to reduce water demand from new developments should go further and help to achieve 'water neutrality', although the behaviour of occupiers can also affect water efficiency, e.g., residents replacing low flow devices with those with higher flows. The application of additional conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting, and potentially grey water recycling, can help to mitigate the reduction in water efficiency in new dwellings post construction, and developers are encouraged to explore these options.
- 9.108 The Council's Water Cycle Study (WCS) was commissioned to identify any issues with the provision of waste and potable water services to maintain an adequate water supply, foul drainage and wastewater treatment to accommodate growth in the district. The baseline study established that wastewater treatment capacity can be provided wherever it is required in the district, however if there are any developments proposed where there are currently none, new sewer infrastructure would be required.
- 9.109 The water companies are required to undertake measures to reduce and to minimise the use of potable water and are working with the Environment Agency to reduce the abstraction of water from groundwater. Water supply services are provided by Affinity Water. Several Environment Agency designated main rivers flow through Uttlesford : the Rivers Cam, Stort, Roding, Can, Chelmer, Ter, Pant and Pincey Brook (Figure

⁵⁰ ADD REFERENCE

⁵¹ ADD REFERENCE

⁵² JBA, Uttlesford Water Cycle Study Phase 1, Available at: ADD REFERENCE

⁵³ The Building Regulations (2010) Part G Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency, 2015 edition with 2016 amendments. HM Government (2016).

⁵⁴ The Environment Agency defines areas for water stress as where (i) the current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is available to meet that demand; or (ii) the future household demand for water is likely to be a high proportion of the effective rainfall available to meet that demand

9.1). It is important that new development does not result in an unsustainable increase in water abstraction and that water demand in new homes is minimised. This helps achieve Water Neutrality: offsetting the demand from new homes by improving efficiency in existing buildings. In order to achieve this, new development must be subject to planning policy which aims for houses and businesses to be built to high standards of water efficiency through the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings, or rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.

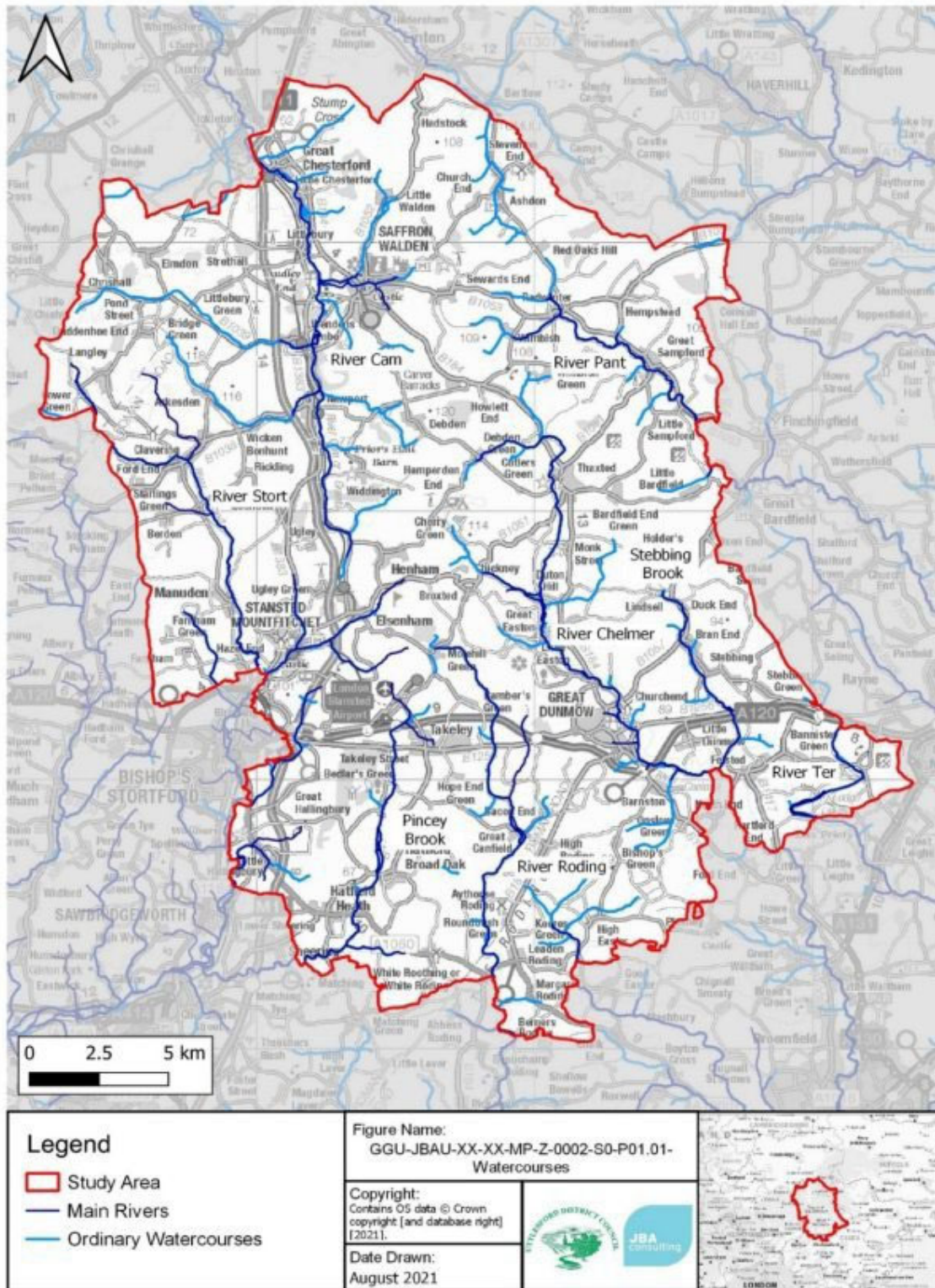


Figure 9.1: The river and watercourse basins in Uttlesford.

Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources

Water Supply

Development proposals should demonstrate how they contribute positively towards achieving 'good' status under the Water Framework Directive for surface and ground waterbodies. Development must not lead to a reduction in groundwater levels or reduced flows in any water courses including the chalk streams.

Water efficiency

All development proposals should demonstrate how they incorporate water efficiency measures to minimise consumption of water; protect and enhance water quality; and protect water resources. All new residential development that achieves at least the water efficiency of 110 litres per person per day described in the Building Regulations G2 will be supported. A standard of no more than 90l/p/d must be achieved in the sensitive chalk stream catchments.

Water Recycling

Development proposals must make appropriate provision for water recycling and should be designed to incorporate appropriate future proofing and best practice techniques. Proposed use of hard surfacing must be permeable and development proposals should include rainwater re-use and collection mechanisms such as green roofs/walls, rainwater gardens and in residential proposals water collection and recycling facilities such as a rainwater butt.

Contamination

Development should demonstrate that it will not cause contamination of groundwater, particularly in the Chalk Protection Zones, or contamination of surface water. If there is the potential for contamination the developer should submit details of effective safeguards which must be implemented prior to development commencing to prevent deterioration in current water standards.

Infrastructure

The Council will expect new development to connect to mains foul drainage, and will restrict the use of non-mains drainage for foul water disposal, in line with Environment Agency guidance. The location of, and likely impact on, the private water supplies within the District must also be taken into account.

Planning proposals which increase the demand for off-site water and sewage service infrastructure will only be granted permission where sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or where they can demonstrate that extra capacity will be provided in time to serve the new development prior to first occupation.

Where non-mains drainage is proposed for the disposal of foul water, a foul drainage assessment will be required to ensure the most sustainable drainage option will be implemented.

Chalk Streams

- 9.110 Chalk streams are a rare and valuable habitat and 85% of the world's chalk streams are in England with 29% of these being in East Anglia⁵⁵. In their natural state, chalk streams are clear, with little sediment, low nutrient levels and stable temperatures of around 10-11°C at the spring sources. They derive most flow from chalk-fed groundwater, namely chalk aquifers of underground water that are replenished when it rains. Chalk streams are a vital water resource for humans and nature. The constant temperature at source and alkaline (ph) level of the water supports unique ecosystems. However, over-abstraction of the chalk aquifer has resulted in sections of these chalk streams becoming dry in periods of Low rainfall.
- 9.111 Seventeen water courses run through Uttlesford with many river tributaries originating within the district. Of these, none were assessed in the 2019 assessment⁵⁶ as being in 'good' ecological health, by the Environment Agency. Thirteen were assessed as moderate, three as 'poor' and one as 'bad'. In all cases, chemical pollution was the main reason for suboptimal condition. Three of the watercourses with the worst pollution assessment feed directly into Chalk Stream habitat.
- 9.112 Some stretches of these watercourses do not meet the 'Good' Water Framework Directive standards due largely to groundwater and surface water abstractions. Large parts of Affinity Water's supply area contain chalk streams but there is insufficient water to permit more to be abstracted. Furthermore, low river flow can exacerbate water quality issues by increasing the concentration of pollutants. The River Cam has a 'Poor' status under the Water Framework Directive due to surface water abstraction for agriculture, and groundwater abstraction from agriculture and the water industry. The River Stort has a 'Moderate' status due to pollution from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and agricultural runoff. Elsewhere, the ecology and water availability have been affected by sections of chalk streams being straightened, deepened and widened.
- 9.113 Chalk-stream ecological health depends on water quantity and the naturalness of the flow, water quality, the physical shape of the river and biological factors. Restoration measures include restoring natural flows, floodplain reconnection, channel realignment, reconnecting rivers to groundwater, removal of barriers to fish passage, and the rewilding of degraded rivers. The protection of chalk streams involves changes to how water is abstracted, stored and managed, reducing abstractions and potentially bringing in supplies from elsewhere. WwTWs' phosphorus discharge and roads are the primary pathway of sediment to chalk streams. It is proposed in the wider Cambridgeshire area to work with multiple partners and cross-boundary working to develop a chalk streams strategy and for it to become a material consideration for planning.
- 9.114 Population growth and new housing are increasing pressure on chalk streams by changes in land use, demand for water, water quality and habitat loss. To reduce the impact of development, adequate infrastructure should be in place to ensure there is no increase in unsustainable abstraction or overloading of the sewer network or

⁵⁵ Defra, Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water, 2023. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1164375/plan_for_water.pdf .

⁵⁶ Environment Agency publish data every six years. Available at: <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/41cb73a1-91b7-4a36-80f4-b4c6e102651a/wfd-classification-status-cycle-2>

sewage treatment infrastructure. Mitigation responses include Buffer strips precluding development alongside chalk streams; SuDS maintenance standards; water-efficiency standards.

- 9.115 There is considerable potential for chalk stream areas to be sites for Biodiversity Net Gain and for inclusion in Nature Recovery Networks and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, or in response to an off-site requirement for biodiversity net gain or carbon offsetting from elsewhere. The chalk streams and riparian areas are suitable locations subject to a design and planting plan and suitable environmental works that demonstrate sensitivity towards the ecology of the stream and environs. Such a scheme will be welcomed in accordance with the requirements of **Core Policy 23: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development** and **Core Policy 39: Biodiversity**.

Core Policy 35: Chalk Streams Protection and Enhancement

To help protect the ecology and water quality of chalk streams a designated area is proposed for stretches of the chalk streams (Rivers Stort, Chelmer, Pant and Cam) comprising 15m buffers from the top of the banks on either side (as shown by the **Policies Map** and **Appendix 8**). Within this riparian buffer zone, no development will be permitted apart from domestic extensions, soft landscaping and small amenity areas. Developers should submit details for approval of and provide a vegetative buffer zone to protect the banks.

All development proposals within the river basin or floodplain of a chalk stream must provide a Chalk Stream Impact study that sets out:

- v. implications for water resources and sewerage systems and impact on the chalk stream
- vi. an assessment of impact on groundwater hydrology and flow into chalk streams
- vii. impact on ecology of chalk stream itself and within the buffer zone
- viii. assessment and mitigation or restoration measures for any potential pollution arising from the construction process, building materials and proposed land use, and
- assessment of potential pollutants and their capacity to enter chalk stream groundwater/flow.

Planning approval will be contingent on adequate water supply and treatment infrastructure being in place with no additional burden on chalk aquifer abstraction or ecology. To achieve this, developers are expected to contribute proportionate costs and mitigation of addressing any potential impacts.

Within the area of the chalk aquifer development proposals are restricted to installing water supplies to homes to permit a maximum water volume of 90l/p/d as set out in **Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection Of Water Resources**.

Flood Risk

- 9.116 Many of the settlements across Uttlesford have experienced flooding in the past, including the larger settlements of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stebbing, Takeley and Thaxted.
- 9.117 Uttlesford is located in the headwaters of three major catchments (Great Ouse, North Essex and Thames) and past flooding has been predominantly from main rivers, ordinary watercourses and surface water.
- 9.118 The majority of the main rivers have hydraulic models from the Environment Agency and the SFRA has been updated to support the Regulation 18 Local Plan⁵⁷. Flood risk is now well understood in the main settlements, however the exacerbation of flood risk by poorly maintained or blocked culverts in the district, particularly in Saffron Walden, continues to be an issue for the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Essex County Council.
- 9.119 Local sources of flooding, particularly from ordinary watercourses and surface water, are also a problem in the district. Saffron Walden has been identified as a Tier 2 area of local flood risk by the Lead Local Flood Authority due to its surface water risk and flood history, and Clavering, Great Dunmow, Manuden, Radwinter, Takeley, Thaxted and Stansted Mountfitchet have been identified as Tier 3 areas. Other areas within Uttlesford that have been identified as having a surface water flooding problem through the flood history review include Little Hallingbury and Little Dunmow.
- 9.120 Groundwater and sewer flooding are limited and very localised. Development proposals should address the relationship between flood risk and **Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources**.
- 9.121 The effect of climate change has been assessed. In most catchments, the extent of Flood Zone 3 is not likely to increase significantly with climate change due to the confined topography. However, climate change is predicted to result in more frequent and extreme rainfall events, increasing the frequency and severity of flooding from fluvial and surface water sources. It is important that development proposals consider flood risk in the context of other policies within Chapter 9, particularly **Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems**.
- 9.122 Development proposals within the plan area are expected to follow the sequential approach set out in national policy⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ ADD reference to SFRA when available

⁵⁸ Paragraph 161, NPPF, 2023. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

Policy 36: Flood Risk

All development proposals should demonstrate that they avoid and reduce the risk of all forms of flooding to future occupiers, and do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Where development proposals include land within Flood Zones 2 or 3, or are subject to the Sequential Test through national policy for other reasons, alternative sites should include a district wide search within defined settlement boundaries.

All proposals for new development will be required to:

- i.* manage and reduce surface water run-off and not increase the risk of flooding to third parties
- ii.* manage water and waste water discharges
- iii.* ensure safe access and egress for future users of the development and an appropriate emergency evacuation plan where appropriate
- iv.* include evacuation and flood warning procedures to assist existing communities at risk of flooding, and
- v.* raise finished floor levels 600mm above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood level.

A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for all developments of 1 hectare and greater in Flood Zone 1 and, for all proposals for new development, including minor development and changes of use, in Flood Zones 2 or 3 and where proposed development or a change of use to a more vulnerable class that may be subject to other forms of flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented.

All development proposals must be assessed against the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

9.123 Core Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems complements **Core Policy 36 (Flood Risk)** to reduce the district's vulnerability to surface water flooding and ensure that new development does not increase surface water run-off. The Council will consider proposals against the relevant technical standards, and take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency, where appropriate⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ See also: Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards (DEFRA, 2015). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf

- 9.124 Development proposals should be accompanied by an adequate risk assessment demonstrating how the risk to groundwater would be mitigated in the proposed design, meeting the requirements of **Core Policy 34**.
- 9.125 The Local Plan sets out its intentions for Green and Blue infrastructure within the Area Strategies and **Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure**. As well as their role in water attenuation, SuDS can play a part in improvements to biodiversity through habitat creation, new open spaces and good design. Developers should consider the whole life management of any SuDS scheme and the Council will secure long term maintenance through planning obligations and/or conditions.

Core Policy 37: Sustainable Urban Drainage

All major development will be required to use sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off, unless there would be significant harm to water quality, flood risk or biodiversity.

The use of natural flood management techniques is supported.

Where a site-specific flood risk assessment is required for development proposals (**Core Policy 36: Flood Risk**) this should be used to inform the design of appropriate drainage systems.

All proposals for SuDS should include arrangements for their whole life management and maintenance.

The Natural Environment

- 9.126 The Council's strategy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity within the district, facilitated in part, through partnership working with 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.
- 9.127 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 shown by **Appendix 9** and these represent a tiered network for the conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity within the district. There are no European or internationally designated wildlife sites in Uttlesford, but there are examples of these sites in neighbouring districts. The Council has therefore taken account of the impact of development in Uttlesford on these sites through its Habitats Regulations Assessment⁶⁰.
- 9.128 Important sites within Uttlesford include the statutorily protected national designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the non-statutorily

⁶⁰ UDC, Habitats Regulations Assessment, 2023. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

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.

- 9.129 There are 14 nationally designated sites located in Uttlesford made up of 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 2 National Nature Reserves (NNR).
- 9.130 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 roadside verges which are protected for their flora in addition to 9 existing and 31 proposed Local Geological Sites (LoGS) which range in size from single erratic boulders to quarries. All of these sites are identified on the Policies Map and shown by **Appendix 10**.
- 9.131 SSSI and NNRS have a high 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 many 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.
- 9.132 Developments that can make a positive contribution to the network of protected sites by habitat creation, expansion or connection will be positively considered, especially where this contributes to the Essex Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Initiative, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Advice on incorporating biodiversity in developments can be found on the Essex Biodiversity Project website⁶¹.
- 9.133 Development proposals with water edge frontages including rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds should make provision for ecological buffer strips of dimensions according to recognised best practice, with a view to protecting and where appropriate enhancing water dependent habitats and species.
- 9.134 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 the development site.
- 9.135 An ecological survey and impact assessment will be required for any development affecting or with the potential to affect:
- i. a national or locally designated site
 - ii. protected species
 - iii. species on the species of conservation concern of threatened species, and
 - iv. habitats with potential to support protected species or species of conservation concern, and
 - v. Natural England Priority Habitats/ Expansion Zones.
- 9.136 Ecological surveys and impact assessments must be carried out by a suitably qualified person with appropriate professional accreditation and competencies. Field

⁶¹ Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/design-details/landscape-and-greenspaces/ecology-and-biodiversity/>

surveys must be conducted at a suitable time for the species, according to current best practice. Further information can be obtained from the Natural England Standing Advice for Protected Species.

Hatfield Forest

- 9.137 Hatfield Forest is the district's largest SSSI, at 403 ha, and 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 encompasses Priority Ancient Woodland, Woodpasture & Parkland, and Lowland Meadow Habitats and supports protected species including bats and badgers. It 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 therefore needs to be carefully managed to minimise harmful impact on the forest.
- 9.138 Natural England and the National Trust have developed a Mitigation Strategy outlining a package of on-site Strategic Access Management Measures (SAMM) to protect and restore the condition of Hatfield Forest. New housing development within the Hatfield Forest Zone of Influence (Zoi) will be required to contribute to the Hatfield Forest SAMM to mitigate the recreational impact, as shown on the Policies Map and in **Appendix 11**.

Protection of wildlife habitat sites on the Essex Coast

- 9.139 Residents of Uttlesford have access to protected wildlife habitats in the vicinity of the Essex Coast, for recreation. The Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary Planning Document (May 2020) was adopted by the Council in September 2020. Net additional dwellings within the zone of influence, as shown on the Policies Map and within **Appendix 11**, are required to pay the Essex Coast RAMS Tariff in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The tariff is due for all permissions outlined in the SPD, including net additional dwellings granted through both permitted development and planning consent. Usage of the wildlife sites, including by Uttlesford residents, will be monitored through visitor surveys. For Uttlesford, the zone of Influence relates to the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar. However, the zone of influence related to the different wildlife habitats may be updated in the future, according to usage.

Core Policy 38: The Natural Environment

Development proposals will be supported where they protect and enhance sites internationally, nationally and/ or 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:

- an internationally designated site, for example Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site

The highest level of protection will be given to European Sites. Development will not be permitted unless it will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site, either alone or in combination with other development. Proposals having a harmful impact on the integrity

of European Sites that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances where there are no suitable alternatives and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Compensation would then be required.

Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Mitigation

Contributions will be secured from development towards mitigation in accordance with the Essex Coast RAMS Habitats Regulations Assessment Strategy Document 2018-2038 and Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document 2020. The Essex Coast RAMS tariff will be applied to net additional dwellings, within the zone of influence, as shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 11**, including Permitted Development which is required to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

- i. a nationally designated site; for example: SSSI's & National Nature Reserves
- ii. locally Designated Sites; for example: Local Wildlife Sites
- iii. priority habitats, and
- iv. protected species:
 - a. species on the Red Data List of threatened species
 - b. habitats suitable for protected species or species on the Red Data List.

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 for approval after alternative sites that would result in less or no harm have been assessed and discounted. In the absence of alternative available sites development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated against, appropriate compensation measures will be sought.

To ensure that mitigation or compensation measures take place, which may include Biodiversity Offsetting, 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.

Protection of Hatfield Forest: Where appropriate, within the identified areas as shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 11**, contributions from proposed residential developments will be secured towards recreational mitigation measures and Priority Habitat enhancement/ connectivity at Hatfield Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR).

Protection of Priority Habitats: Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, according to the latest Defra Biodiversity Metric, will be refused, save for where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated and appropriate mitigation and compensation is provided, including but not limited to:

- i. Ancient Woodland
- ii. Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- iii. Lowland Meadows
- iv. Chalk Rivers/ Streams
- v. Ancient or Veteran Trees

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy

9.140 In order to integrate the overriding objective to protect and enhance the natural environment and to provide for amenity needs for new and existing residents, the Council commissioned a Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy.⁶² This refers to the network of green and water-related spaces in the district, their protection, enhancement and extension, and has informed relevant policies in the Local Plan. The GBI elements themselves are important as well as the linkages between them, both for nature and for human use and enjoyment. This GBI or 'natural capital' is recognised as fundamentally important in providing considerable value to our communities and new developments through regulating the quality of the environment, providing materials and non-material amenity benefits, described also as "ecosystem services" in the UK's Planning Practice Guidance 2023⁶³.

9.141 The essential purpose of the GBI is to deliver multiple functions – for wildlife, bee pollination, human use and climate cooling, water ecology and so on.

9.142 The GBI Strategy identifies a series of priority projects. More detail for these is identified in the Area Strategies where development will be expected to contribute towards helping to bring these forward. Furthermore, our proposed allocations will be expected to make significant contributions to delivering GBI as part of the emerging masterplans for these sites and as also specified in the Site Development Templates (**Appendices 2 to 4**).

⁶² Add reference when available, 2023

⁶³ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023. Planning Practice Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green and Blue Infrastructure plays an integral role in making the district sustainable, healthy and attractive and in helping to meet Local Plan objectives. All development should adopt an approach that is environment and landscape-led so as to maximise the beneficial provision of green and blue infrastructure for people and nature.

In planning for major developments, priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

All major developments must:

- i. demonstrably take a green and blue infrastructure design-led approach to development schemes, and utilise Uttlesford's green and blue Infrastructure design checklist, to ensure green infrastructure is considered and well-integrated into developments at the earliest stages
- ii. ensure green and blue infrastructure is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, taking into account the views of key stakeholders
- iii. avoid the loss and fragmentation of existing green and blue infrastructure networks, including within the built environment. Existing landscape features, watercourses and habitats should be integrated into development, and green and blue infrastructure proposals must identify opportunities to maximise their quality and achieve biodiversity net gain. Development proposals must protect and enhance sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network as well as associated landscape heritage features
- iv. where relevant, demonstrate how the appropriate use and permanence of the Green Belt will be maintained and enhanced by existing and new GBI on-site
- v. development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or chalk streams and riparian ecology will be refused
- vi. integrate Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDs) into the development, as appropriate, ensuring they are designed to have multi-functional benefits for biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic value
- vii. consider connectivity as a core principle of green and blue infrastructure, integrating active travel and recreational routes that connect with open space and meet accessibility, quantity and quality standards for all users, including connections to existing communities, facilities and services. Appropriate greening should be integrated into these routes, providing and improving connections to adjacent habitat networks especially where this would contribute to wider nature recovery, and
- viii. protect existing trees and hedgerows during and after development and where proposed development might affect trees an accurate assessment by a competent arboriculturist should be undertaken and protective measures put in place. Opportunities should be maximised for increasing tree cover through new planting. New canopy should provide a mix of species to include orchard and fruiting trees that are resilient to pests, diseases and climate change and support biodiversity.

All proposals for green and blue infrastructure should be checked against the design checklist in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and relevant sections of

the Uttlesford's Design Code, together with Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance, the Council's Open Space Strategy⁶⁴ and the LNRS.

Development proposals for major developments must be accompanied by an acceptable GBI Plan for the site in accordance with the GBIS, and the Master Plan for the site in accordance with the relevant Area Strategy. This should include stewardship arrangements for not less than 30 years to cover maintenance, management and funding arrangements.

An endowment sum should be provided to contribute to the maintenance of the GBI and/or a revenue contribution depending in the nature of the proposed GBI element, to be secured through section 106.

Contributions towards local green infrastructure projects as set out in the Strategy will be sought where they are related to the development or where they mitigate the impacts of new development.

Biodiversity

- 9.143 Biodiversity is integral to sustainable development and to health and wellbeing. The protection of the natural environment is a core objective of the Local Plan and an essential component of the measures to mitigate climate change. The protection of soil from a biodiversity perspective is also increasingly important in agricultural areas. Development which would disturb or damage any soils of high environmental value will not be acceptable.
- 9.144 The Council will support measures for the creation, restoration, retention, protection and extension of biodiversity areas as this applies to woodland, watercourses, grassland or other priority habitats in the district. The creation of new wetland area, restoration of a natural water course with appropriate 10m minimum buffers, riparian planting, and encouragement of aquatic species are all supported. Smaller scale provision is useful too. New homes should include bat, swift and bird boxes integrated into the fabric of the building, green roofs and walls as appropriate, insect pollinator and hedgehog permeable fencing as well as making provision for protected species such as badgers' pathways and both terrestrial and aquatic habitats for great crested newts.
- 9.145 The management of natural areas and newly created sites to be an integral part of the development will require an endowment or some other means to support maintenance and longer-term future. The stewardship arrangement should be discussed with the local planning authority at the earliest date since it may affect the design and nature of proposals for the natural environment and biodiversity net gain requirements on the site.
- 9.146 The Environment Act (2021) has introduced a mandatory approach to supporting biodiversity through development from November 2023: Biodiversity Net Gain⁶⁵. Where development impacts on biodiversity the development proposal must demonstrate an increase in natural habitat and ecology over and above that affected,

⁶⁴ These are not yet available so shall we are out this reference included as per LUC advice?

⁶⁵ UK, The Environment Act, 2021. Available at:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

using the most recent Defra Biodiversity Metric⁶⁶ to achieve a minimum increase of 10%. Uttlesford's evolving Biodiversity Net Gain strategy⁶⁷ should be referred to for further detail. Biodiversity Net Gain can be viewed as a mechanism within the planning system to help work towards better environmental protection and sustainable development as well as an opportunity to invest in the Environment, beyond the previous 'no net loss' approach. However there remains strong pressure for development in the district with its range of vulnerable natural and semi natural habitats, and chalk steams. Unplanned development consents fragment ecological pathways and without a specific measure to encourage connectivity and ecological corridors, development can impact on the quality and viability of habitats and species. Environmental degradation through modern farming methods, runoff from fields into rivers and from roads into (protected) grass verges, loss of hedgerows and new greenfield development have lowered the value of biodiversity in the district and give considerable scope for improvement beyond 20% in many areas.

- 9.147 The most expensive part of providing BNG is in setting up the process and/or site itself. The Natural England Study (Vivid Economics June 2018) concluded that financial viability overall was not impacted by BNG up to 20%, and nor on the level of affordable housing. Indeed, now the requirement is in place alongside local policy, any additional cost will be borne by the land-owner and land value.

Core Policy 40: Biodiversity

All development proposals must conserve and enhance networks of habitats, species and sites, including the promotion of connections outside the immediate site boundary, and as otherwise in accordance with the Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy or the local GBI Plan for the Area Strategy sites.

Planning consent will be refused where there is a potential loss or deterioration of protected or rare habitats or areas without adequate mitigation measure such as proposed access and management arrangement or provision of new or enhanced habitats as agreed with Local Planning authority.

Development will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 20% net gain in biodiversity (measured using the DEFRA biodiversity metric 3.1 or successor) by protecting, enhancing or creating sites of greater biodiversity or geological value and improved soils. In situations where this is not considered appropriate then the justification must be clearly set out and alternative arrangements, for example off-site mitigation or financial contribution, to be made.

All major applications should be accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Ecological Enhancement Scheme, setting out how the site will be improved and maintained over a thirty-year period. Delivery of biodiversity net gain should follow the mitigation hierarchy with gains delivered on site as primary preference.

Where the required delivery of biodiversity net gain is not possible on site, gain should be delivered as close as possible on projects identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy or as identified in the County's emerging Nature Recovery Network.

⁶⁶ Natural England, Biodiversity Metric 4.0, 2023. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

⁶⁷ UDC, Biodiversity Net Gain Advice. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7344/Biodiversity-net-gain>

Landscape Character

- 9.148 As set out in **Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy**, 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.
- 9.149 The district is made up of three landscape types. Much of the district is characterised by gently rolling farmland plateau landscapes crossed by river and stream valleys. This is an open landscape of medium to large arable fields but well wooded in places. The open nature of the landscape provides long distance views across the farmland landscape and the higher areas are particularly sensitive to change.
- 9.150 There are four river valley landscapes in Uttlesford centred 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, 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 uplands 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 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 natural, cultural and visual characteristics, sensitivities to change and Landscape guidelines are set out in the Landscape Character Assessment for Uttlesford (2023)⁶⁸.

Core Policy 41: Landscape Character

Development proposals will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the landscape, the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes, or geological sites of importance through the restoration, management and enhancement of existing areas, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, particularly in settlement edge locations, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- i. cause an unacceptable visual intrusion into the open countryside
- ii. be inconsistent with local character
- iii. introduce disturbances to areas with a high level of tranquillity
- iv. cause coalescence between settlements
- v. harm views to distant landmarks and landscapes of interest
- vi. harm the setting of natural and built landmark features, and
- vii. reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

All major development proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be

⁶⁸ UDC, Landscape Character Assessment for Uttlesford, 2023. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanningevidence>

submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

Environmental Protection

9.151 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 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 1995⁶⁹, which gives the Environment Agency and local authorities' powers to control pollution, and address contaminated land including ways to deal with cumulative impacts of development.

Pollution

9.152 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.

9.153 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. 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.

9.154 Adverse effects must be carefully considered in the assessment of any planning application and can be the basis for the refusal of an application if not adequately addressed. Developers are encouraged to have pre-application discussions with the Council to be advised on the specific requirements. Assessments should:

- identify the sensitive receptor(s) which may be affected by the proposed development, including residents, businesses, land users and sensitive environmental assets,
- consider the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or approved development, and
- demonstrate the measures which would be implemented to ensure adverse impacts would be avoided at source, or where this is not possible, outline the proposed management and mitigation measures to reduce effects to an acceptable level; and identify the significance of any residual effects.

9.155 When considering development proposals, the Council will consider the risk of pollution arising from contamination and the impact on human health, property and the wider environment. Contamination is not, however, restricted to previously developed land but it can also occur on greenfield sites and it can arise from natural sources as well as from human activities. Developers should undertake a preliminary

⁶⁹ UK, The Environment Act 1995, as amended, Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/25/contents>

risk assessment to identify any contamination on site. Where sites are known to be contaminated, or where contamination is subsequently discovered, any development proposals on the land will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the contamination can be mitigated.

- 9.156 Developers are expected to proactively monitor impacts and emissions to enable issues to be addressed swiftly. Close liaison with communities can support this approach, enabling feedback and dialogue on the need for and effectiveness of any mitigation measures.

Core Policy 42: Pollution and Contamination

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

Planning permission will not be granted where the development and uses would cause unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the environment, general amenity or existing uses due to the potential of vibration, odour, light pollution, pollution of surface/ ground water sources or land pollution and 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 and environment would not experience adverse impact, or the impact can be overcome by mitigation measures.

Development should be designed to ensure that established noise and other nuisance-generating uses remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed in them. Development proposals that have not clearly demonstrated how noise and other nuisances will be mitigated and managed should not be permitted.

For developments on, or near to, hazardous substance sites or land which is contaminated or has a history of a potentially contaminating use, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that:

- i. there will be no threat to the health or safety of future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land, and
- ii. there will be no adverse impact on the quality of local groundwater or surface water.

Air Quality

- 9.157 Saffron Walden has included an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where some road junctions were a risk. However, this area no longer meets the criteria to be categorised as an AQMA and it is expected that the designation will be removed. Nonetheless, 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 and where possible, development should contribute towards improvements in air quality.

- 9.158 Poor air quality may be experienced alongside the M11 and the A120 in some instances and 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 where development should be controlled. However, as both zones run through the countryside where there is limited opportunity for development, it is unlikely there will be many instances where development is proposed within these areas.

Core Policy 43

Development will not be permitted where it might lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from emissions to air. Applicants must have regard to relevant UDC Air Quality Technical Guidance⁷⁰ and are required to undertake an appropriate air quality assessment and to demonstrate that:

- i. there is no adverse effect on air quality in any AQMA from the development
- ii. pollution levels within any AQMA will not have a significant adverse effect on the proposed use/users
- iii. development has regard to relevant UDC Air Quality Technical Guidance
- iv. development within or affecting any Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) will also be expected to contribute to a reduction in levels of air pollutants within the AQMA
- v. 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
- vi. any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality are appropriately mitigated, and
- vii. 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.

Noise

9.159 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. People's quality of life will be protected from unacceptable noise impacts by managing the relationship between noise sensitive development and noise sources. To achieve this development will be required to adhere to the noise standards identified within it.

⁷⁰ UDC, Air Quality Technical Guidance, 2018. Available at:
https://www Uttlesford.gov.uk/media/8250/Air-Quality-Technical-Planning-Guidance-2018/pdf/Air_Quality_Technical_Guidance_.pdf?m=636652790533370000

- 9.160 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) ⁷¹sets 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.
- 9.161 The Civil Aviation Authority annually produces Noise Exposure Contours for London Stansted Airport which reflect each departure route and glide and are available on their website. Calculation of exposure to aircraft noise takes into account the level of use of each departure route and glide 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 aircraft noise will help to make sure that the policy continues to be applied to the most appropriate area. Noise sensitive developments include residential uses.
- 9.162 Wind energy developments can adversely impact on aerodromes, radar and other navigation systems used for air traffic control and aircraft instruments. In relation to ground based radar, the movement of wind turbine blades are a moving target for the radar beam. This can be mistaken for an aircraft or create clutter that can interfere with the radar systems ability to track aircraft near the wind energy development. A proliferation of wind energy developments can have cumulative adverse effects on the safety and efficiency of aircraft tracking, and ground-based radar when they are close to the line of sight of the radar. Hence new development must take into account flight paths and navigation considerations.

Core Policy 44: Noise

Proposals will be supported that will not result in an unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the environment, general amenity or existing users due to the potential of noise.

To reduce, manage and mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life, residential and other development proposals should manage noise in accordance with the following:

A. Noise Sensitive Development

Residential and other noise sensitive development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that users of the development will not be exposed to unacceptable noise impact from existing, temporary or future uses.

Noise sensitive uses proposed in areas that are exposed to noise at the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) or the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) from existing or future industrial, commercial or transport (air, road, rail and mixed) sources will be permitted where it can be demonstrated good acoustic design has been considered early in the planning process, and that all appropriate mitigation, through careful planning, layout and design, will be undertaken to ensure that the noise impact for future users will be made acceptable.

⁷¹ Stansted Airport, Noise Action Plan 2019-2023, 2019. Available at: <https://www.stanstedairport.com/community/noise/noise-action-plan/>

Noise sensitive uses proposed in areas that are exposed to noise at the Unacceptable Adverse Effect level will not be permitted. For surface transport noise sources, the Unacceptable Adverse Effect Level is considered to occur where noise exposure is above 66dB LAeq,16hr (57dB LAeq,8hr at night).

For aviation transport sources the Unacceptable Adverse Effect is considered to occur where noise exposure is above 60dB LAeq,16hr.

B. Noise Generating Development

Noise generating development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that nearby noise sensitive uses (as existing or planned) will not be exposed to noise impact that will adversely affect the amenity of existing and future users. Proposals will be acceptable in noise impact terms, and where required will, through good acoustic design, appropriately mitigate noise impacts through careful planning, layout and design. Noise Generating Development that would expose users of noise sensitive uses to Unacceptable Adverse Effect noise will not be permitted.

C. Noise Impact Assessment

A Noise Impact Assessment will be required to support applications where noise sensitive uses are likely to be exposed to significant or unacceptable noise exposure. The Noise Impact Assessment will:

- i. assess the impact of the proposal as a noise receptor or generator as appropriate, and
- ii. demonstrate in full how the development will be designed, located, and controlled to mitigate the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties, and the surrounding area.

D. Mitigating Noise Impact

Where proposals are identified as being in the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) or the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) categories, either through noise exposure or generation, all reasonable mitigation measures must be employed to mitigate noise impacts to an acceptable level.

10: Economy and Retail

Introduction

- 10.1 The Plan seeks to provide a positive policy framework, which supports jobs, businesses and investment, to build a strong and competitive economy. It sets a framework to reflect the different drivers within Uttlesford's economy with the aim to build and sustain a vibrant, diverse and resilient local economy; that encourages both large and small scale opportunities throughout Uttlesford in appropriate locations, which are set out in our Spatial Strategy (Chapter 4) and Area Strategies (Chapters 5 to 8).
- 10.2 This Chapter sets out the more detailed policies that will be used to determine planning applications relating to the economy and for retail. The policies included in this chapter are:
- **Core Policy 45: Protection of Existing Employment Space**
 - **Core Policy 46: Development at Allocated Employment Sites**
 - **Core Policy 47: Ancillary Uses on Existing or Allocated Employment Sites**
 - **Core Policy 48: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**
 - **Core Policy 49: Employment and Training**
 - **Core Policy 50: Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy**
 - **Core Policy 51: Tourism and the Visitor Economy**
 - **Development Policy 6: Hot Food Takeaways**
 - **Development Policy 7: New Shops or Cafes in Smaller Settlements**
 - **Development Policy 8: Tourist Accommodation**

Existing Employment Space

- 10.3 It is important that we protect our existing employment sites to help ensure that an appropriate level of employment provision is provided across the district.
- 10.4 Where a site no longer has reasonable prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present, or any other realistic and suitable, employment use. They must demonstrate that the site has remained un-sold or un-let for at least 12 months. In addition, applicants will need to provide evidence demonstrating that the site has been appropriately marketed for its present use or related employment use for a minimum period of 12 months immediately prior to the submission of the planning application. Applicants are thereby required to demonstrate that despite genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let a site on reasonable terms for employment use, they have failed to do so.
- 10.5 The site's potential contribution to the local and wider economy must be considered, both currently and in the long term, taking proper account of the economic cycle and the likely future needs of the economy. The Council will need to be satisfied that the change of use of all or part of the employment site would not jeopardise the provision of sufficient employment land across the district to meet the identified need.
- 10.6 Existing employment sites to be protected are identified on the Policies Map and listed in **Appendix 13**. These areas are home to many successful businesses that contribute to Uttlesford's economy. There will inevitably be a degree of change within these areas over the plan period as businesses form, expand, contract and close.

Core Policy 45: Protection of Existing Employment Space

Existing employment areas as identified on the Policies Map and in **Appendix ADD** will be safeguarded for offices, warehouses, workshops, industrial and complementary sui generis uses i.e. B2, B8, E(g) and sui generis use. Proposals which promote development or reuse of vacant sites located within existing employment areas for employment use will be supported subject to their degree of compliance with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Proposals that result in the loss of permanent jobs or employment floorspace on any site (not limited to safeguarded employment in paragraph 1 above) will only be permitted where:

1. There is evidence to show that the site/building has reached the end of its useful economic life for employment use by:
 - demonstrating that there is no demand for the reuse of the building/site, following a minimum period of 12 months marketing for the existing employment use with a recognised commercial agent at a reasonable price reflecting typical local land values, and
 - demonstrating that the physical adaption or reuse of the building/ site for employment use is uneconomic* in commercial terms, and
2. The proposed alternative 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. The following considerations are likely to assist in demonstrating this, including:
 - that the proposed scheme provides better quality employment space allowing for mixed use is , and/ or
 - that the application demonstrates a clear need for community facilities that would be met by the proposal, and/ or
 - the existing use of the building/ site is unsuitable to continue as business use due to environmental considerations.

Any non-employment use that contributes or may contribute to making B2, B8, E(g) or Sui generis use unsustainable or unviable will not be permitted (unless supported by **Core Policy 47: Ancillary Uses on Existing or Allocated Employment Sites**).

There will be a presumption against the loss of any employment uses outside designated existing employment sites. Development (including change of use) resulting in the loss of employment uses will not be permitted unless:

- i. the loss of a small proportion of floorspace would facilitate the redevelopment and continuation of employment uses (within B and E(g) use class or sui generis research institutes) on the site and that the proposed redevelopment will modernise buildings that are out of date and do not meet business needs; or
- ii. the site is vacant and has been realistically marketed for a period of 12 months for employment use, including the option for potential modernisation for employment uses and no future occupiers have been found.

Alternative Uses for Allocated Employment Sites

- 10.7 The allocated sites in **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** and as set out in the Area Strategies chapters, are crucial to delivering the identified employment land needed over the plan period, however there is a need for flexibility and for the plan to react to changing economic conditions. Therefore, **Core Policy 46: Development at Allocated Employment Sites** clarifies the circumstances whereby alternative development could come forward. This is supported by NPPF Paragraphs 122 and 123¹.

Core Policy 46: Development at Allocated Employment Sites

The strategic employment allocations, as listed in **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** and as set out in the Area Strategies are safeguarded for employment uses*. Alternative uses will be considered if they provide ancillary supporting services (in accordance with **Core Policy 47**) or meet a need identified through a subsequent Local Plan Review, or exceptionally where a reassessment of the latest available district-wide Employment Land Review, demonstrates that these sites are no longer needed over the full plan period. All new strategic employment allocations made in **Core Policy 4** are to be treated as though they are designated existing employment sites after completion and are covered by this policy.

*Defined as use classes B2, B8 and E (g)

Ancillary Uses on Allocated Employment Sites

- 10.8 Providing facilities ancillary to the main business uses on large employment sites can help to make them more attractive to incoming firms and improves the quality of the working environment for employees. Ancillary facilities also help employment sites to develop sustainably by reducing the need for traffic movements.
- 10.9 It is important that any ancillary uses are necessary to support the main employment uses as set out by **Core Policy 47: Ancillary Uses on Existing or Allocated Employment Sites**. The provision of larger scale retailing, such as food superstores and non-food retail warehouses, will not be supported.
- 10.10 Where there is sufficient demand, amenities for employees may include small-scale shops and cafés, a gymnasium and/ or early years childcare facilities.

¹ NPPF, 2023. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

Core Policy 47: Ancillary Uses on Existing or Allocated Employment Sites

Proposals for uses other than E(g), B2 and B8 business uses on existing or allocated employment sites will only be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- ii. the use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site, and
- iii. the use, either alone or combined with other existing or proposed uses, would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centre or shopping centre (including local centres) or the social and community vitality of a nearby village.

Conditions may be imposed to limit the scale of the operation and to restrict the range of activities proposed or goods sold, where necessary, to ensure that the criteria set out above are met.

Development on Unallocated Sites

10.11 The Local Plan 2041 sets out the employment allocations within Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs. There is a strong focus on our Key Settlements and their localities (Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Saffron Waldon) with less focus on the Local Rural Centres for new strategic employment provision, other than protecting existing sites. **Core Policy 48: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites** complements our new allocations by supporting appropriate employment development on unallocated sites across the district, where there is a demonstrable need.

10.12 In the wider district, including outside the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres and our Larger Villages, new employment activities can be accommodated with least impact on the landscape/ environment through the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings. However, there is some flexibility for new employment buildings to come forward in the rural areas if there are no suitable existing buildings available for re-use, providing that the proposals meet other criteria set out in **Core Policy 21: Rural Diversification**.

Core Policy 48: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites

Proposals for new employment (Use Classes E (g), B2 or B8) will be supported on unallocated sites in or on the edge or, the built-up area of Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and Larger Villages, where there are exceptional circumstances, provided that the benefits are not outweighed by any harmful impacts (through consideration of other policies within this plan), taking into account the following:

- i. a demonstrable need for the employment that cannot be accommodated on existing allocated sites
- ii. the effect on the amenity of nearby residents and businesses
- iii. the provision of safe site access for pedestrian and cyclists and for all types of vehicles likely to visit the sites, and measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible, and
- iv. the scale, nature and appearance of the employment development on, and its relationship with, the settlement, its character and its landscape setting.

In Smaller Villages and the open countryside, the re-use, conversion, or adaptation of

suitable existing buildings for employment will also be supported subject to criteria (i)-(iv) where applicable. Other proposals in Smaller Villages and the open countryside will be considered, provided that, in addition to criteria (i)-(iv) where applicable:

- v. the proposal cannot reasonably be accommodated on existing employment land identified as vacant or developable, and
- vi. it can be demonstrated that the proposal will benefit the local economy and will not undermine the delivery of the strategic employment allocations.

Supporting Training & Skills

10.13 Economic growth creates opportunities for training and to develop the skills of residents in Uttlesford. The Council is keen to ensure that these opportunities are increasingly made available to residents.

10.14 Uttlesford's population is relatively well qualified, and the district is relatively affluent, however the success of the district is not equally distributed and there is room for improvement. Some key factors include:

- Uttlesford has a relatively large population aged 0-15, in comparison to the average for England and second largest in comparison to neighbouring Local Authority Districts²
- 4.5% of the working age residents (aged 16-64) have no qualifications, which is lower than the average for the East of England and England
- Uttlesford does not fall within the 40% most deprived areas in England, but there are pockets of relative deprivation in the southern part of the district
- skills and education of the labour force are crucial to economic viability, flexibility and competitiveness of the Local Economy, and
- Stansted Airport Employment & Skills Academy is located within Uttlesford and delivers courses, training and apprenticeships across many careers and industries in partnership with London Stansted Airport and Harlow College.

10.15 The Council supports the creation of opportunities to provide apprenticeships or training thus raising skills and attainment and supporting people into higher paid employment, potentially connecting employers and employment opportunities to local schools, colleges, training organisations and voluntary services.

10.16 It is the Council's ambition that one new apprenticeship would be capable of being generated by every 2,500 sqm of employment development or every 100 residential units provided. Apprenticeships may be from the construction or end-use phase of the proposed development, or combination of the two.

² The Local Economy of Uttlesford – Socio-Economic Baseline (July 2021). SQW (p3-4)

Core Policy 49: Employment and Training

The Council will support employment and training schemes to maximise local employment opportunities and help address skills deficits in the local population. Planning obligations will be used to ensure large-scale development proposals contribute to this aim by fulfilling the requirements set out below.

Applications for large-scale development, 100 dwellings or over 2500sqm, must include a site-specific Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) and the developer will be expected to agree to deliver and monitor the commitments secured in the ESP. The ESP should address, in detail, how the developer intends to deliver the following requirements:

- the number of apprenticeships
- employment and training initiatives training and work experience for younger people, including those who are not in employment, training or education, and
- best endeavours to maximise local labour, and
- local procurement agreement – providing potential for local businesses to be included in any tender list.

Retail and Town and Local Centres

Introduction

10.17 The retail strategy is to provide a broad range of retail and other facilities in the town and local centres, maintain their roles and enhance the historic nature of the town centres which attracts people to visit them. The Uttlesford Retail Study Update (August 2023)³ underpins the approach, identifying when retail needs arise and how these can be met sustainably without harm to the town and local centres. The Retail Study was undertaken after the coronavirus lockdowns and reflects how the retail sector has responded to the threats and challenges posed by restrictions on consumer movements.

10.18 The current Retail Study shows post pandemic growth in retail spending and a slight decline in online spending, The study also shows a movement in the retail vacancy rates over the past two years due to renewed acquisition activity and in some cases due to reductions in the overall footprint due to floorspace being repurposed to other uses. One of the positive impacts of the lockdowns was the resurgence of local spending due to travel restrictions and people working from home thereby leading consumers to shop and visit facilities closer to home. This has been a boost to local/ or neighbourhood centres, as well as smaller and independent stores.

Town and Local Rural Centres

10.19 The Local Plan seeks to maintain the vibrant market towns of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet and the six Local Rural Centres namely Takeley, Thaxted, Hatfield Heath, Elsenham, Newport and Great Chesterford as the main focus of new retail development as well ensuring that these centres play a vital and wider role in in the provision of facilities and services to the residents. The retail

³ UDC, Uttlesford Retail Study Update 2023. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4924/Local-Plan-evidence-and-background-studies>

Study recommends a retail hierarchy that reflects the level of facilities and the role that Town and Local Centres play within the district, with Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted being designated as top tier 'Town Centres', and Takeley, Hatfield Heath, Elsenham, Newport and Great Chesterford as 'Local Centres'.

- 10.20 The Council's Economic Development team has and continues to work closely with local retailers to encourage retail recovery. For the three main market towns, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow have town teams and Stansted Mountfitchet has an economic development working group. In 2022, the Economic Development Team launched the "Discover Uttlesford" marketing campaign to encourage recreation visitors to the district.
- 10.21 The Council's economic team is also working to minimise the effect of the pandemic on trading and to encourage recovery. An economic recovery plan was approved by the Council in December 2020 and a new Strategy is currently being updated. One objective of the Plan is to foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure. It has been identified that the pandemic has increased the pace of change towards online shopping that has heightened the impact on traditional commercial centres.
- 10.22 Policies in the Local Plan seek to promote long-term vitality, viability and to protect the character of towns and villages so that they continue to provide an attractive environment for the people who visit them.

Loss of Shops and Other Facilities

- 10.23 The Local Plan, by supporting appropriate development in our Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and Larger Villages, will play a role in helping to support the vitality and viability of local shops and services and facilities, thus making an important contribution to the community and economic sustainability of our settlements. The existing level of provision in Small Villages will be retained and reused where possible.
- 10.24. 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, health services and cultural facilities can be important to the local communities they serve. These shops and facilities provide a vital role in reducing car dependency and provide an accessible service at a local level and within the more rural communities. Some villages also have specialist outlets like antique shops, garden centres and restaurants which may contribute to the tourism economy, including through their tourist value. 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. Examples would be rooms in pubs or places of worship used by local groups as meeting rooms, and children's nurseries.
- 10.25. Regulations allow for some changes in use without the need for planning permission. The Local Plan can only inform planning applications for a change of use in certain circumstances⁴. Where planning permission is required the Council will apply the tests in **Core Policy 50: Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy**. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the use is no longer viable. It is important that

⁴ ADD REFERENCE

communities make good use of local facilities to make a sound case for refusal of planning permission. Facilities which the community feels are important to their social well-being can be listed as Assets of Community Value.

Town and Local Centres Hierarchy and Retail Uses

10.26 The Uttlesford Retail Study August 2023 provides an up-to-date assessment of retail need, occupancy, vacancy rates, issues and opportunities. The evidence recommends a town and local centres hierarchy which differs slightly from the settlement hierarchy in Core Policy 3, with Thaxted providing a higher level and more strategic retail and main town centre uses role catering for a wider rural hinterland. An overview of the key issues and opportunities at the district's largest retail centres – the Town and Local Centres are as follows:

Town Centres:

Saffron Walden

10.27. Saffron Walden is the primary retail and leisure destination in the district, providing a range of services and amenities not widely available within the smaller settlements. The majority of the Saffron Walden Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area which is important to protect the historic and attractive centre, but might also act as a barrier to entry for new businesses. Most of the vacant units in the Town Centre were previously occupied by national multiple retailers. The Local Plan policies will seek to retain and encourage the location of shops and food and drink establishments within the Town Centre.

Great Dunmow

10.28. Great Dunmow is the second largest centre in the district comprising independent retailers and a limited number of national multiples. The convenience goods units in the town centre are limited to a Co-operative foodstore (725 sq m net), One Stop shop and smaller independent convenience units. The low vacancy rates within the Town Centre means that there is a lack of available space (by unit size). In order to maintain viability and vitality in the Town Centre the Local Plan will seek to maximize opportunities and will consider market demand where planning applications seek subdivisions or amalgamations.

Stansted Mountfitchet

10.29. Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest centre in the district comprising two locations, which means the centre lacks cohesion and doesn't act as one. In total there are 6 convenience and 6 comparison units within the centre. The centre lacks potential development sites and available premises for future expansion. The Local Plan will seek to maintain the vitality of the town Centre by applying the sequential approach.

Thaxted

10.30 Thaxted is located to the east of the district and is approximately six miles from Saffron Walden. The centre provides a range of services and is surrounded by predominantly residential dwellings. The majority of the units are located along Town Street and Watling Street. The focal point of the centre is the Guildhall. The health-check of Thaxted Local Centre indicates that the centre caters very well for its local catchment area. The range of goods offered is limited, but the household survey indicates that there is little discontent with any aspects of the centre.

Local Centres

10.31 In addition to the four Town Centres, there are also five Local Centres in the district which fulfill an important more local role for the next tier of settlements and their rural hinterlands:

Elsenham

10.32 Elsenham is a small village centre located approximately two miles north-east of Stansted Mountfitchet. It is located immediately adjacent to a double-roundabout which can make accessibility by car challenging. The centre has just four town centre units comprising a Tesco Express store, a post office, a hair salon and a take-away.

Great Chesterford

10.33 Great Chesterford is the northern-most centre in the district and is located approximately four miles north of Saffron Walden. The centre has no recognisable retail centre and just two main town centre use units; a bakery and food hall and a public house.

Hatfield Heath

10.34 Hatfield Heath is located to the far south of the district, around seven and a half miles south of Stansted Mountfitchet. It is the largest of the village centres and is home to 14 units in main town centre use. The centre is fully let and vibrant comprising 2 convenience goods units, 3 comparison goods units and 8 service goods units. There are a number of small restaurants and/or take-aways.

The centre faces on to the attractive heath, incorporating a church building, war memorial and cricket ground as well as public open space. Parking is on a crescent off the main Stortford Road.

Newport

10.35 Newport is located approximately four miles south-west of Saffron Walden. It has 11 retail units, including one vacancy. Six of the units are in service uses, two are in convenience use (a small Nisa foodstore and a bakery) and two further units are in comparison goods use (a pharmacy and a home interiors shop).

10.36 The centre is located exclusively along the linear High Street is highly attractive with a number of historic features and Listed buildings. The centre is relatively lightly trafficked (in terms of retail patronage). Parking is largely on-street with high-quality public realm.

Takeley

10.37 Takeley has eight units in main town centre use. It is located on a very busy cross-roads between Dunmow Road and Parsonage Road, making accessibility around the centre difficult. However, there are signal-controlled junctions in all directions and off-street parking is provided off Dunmow Road. The centre has low environmental quality being car-dominated and with little by way of greenery.

10.38 Takeley centre comprises two convenience units (Londis and a newsagents), a small pharmacy and five units in service uses (a public house, tyre store, dry cleaners and

two take-aways).

Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas

- 10.39 The NPPF states at paragraph 86⁵ that planning policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability; and define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.
- 10.40 The updated Retail Study (2023) has been used to define the boundaries used to guide planning applications for main town centre uses and to apply the sequential test.
- 10.41 The town centres of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted the five local centres of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport and Takeley are identified on the Policies Map and **Appendix ADD**. In relation to Stansted Mountfitchet, ~~Policy ADD~~ the following policy will apply to both Cambridge Road and Lower Street centres. For the purposes of this policy, main 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 centres include primary shopping areas

- 10.42 Primary Shopping Areas are the retail core where the majority of footfall and activity occurs. These are the main shopping streets along which Class E shops should be retained. The remainder of the town centre area boundaries (beyond the defined Primary Shopping Areas) provide a mix of main town centre uses such as restaurants, commercial services and leisure facilities which support the centre as a whole.
- 10.43 Changes to the Use Classes Order (including the new Class E) increase freedoms within town centres, although pubs, drinking establishments and takeaways are excluded from Class E. Where located within a primary shopping area any ground floor proposal that would amount to a material change of use away from Class E should be supported by evidence that a Class E use has been marketed unsuccessfully for a period of time. In order to consolidate the provision of retail floorspace in Primary Shopping Areas and effectively apply the sequential test the Council will use planning conditions to control the location of new retail floorspace within Class E.
- 10.44 Meanwhile uses can further support town centres by allowing occupiers to temporarily occupy vacant units and test new business concepts, pop-up stores and event spaces where they support the vitality and viability of the town centre. Such uses will be supported by the Council.
- 10.45 Residential uses can add to the vitality of town centres and within those areas the District Council will support the change of use of upper floors to residential. Mixed schemes on development opportunity sites could also include a residential element but the District Council would expect to see town centre uses at ground floor level on the street frontage. **Core Policy 50: Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy**

⁵ NPPF, 2023. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

below ensures that ground floor level shops are not lost to residential uses.

Core Policy 50: Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy

The Council will promote the continued role and function of its town and local centres to positively contribute towards their viability, vitality, character and public realm. The hierarchy of centres in the district is:

- Town Centres: Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted
- Local Centres: Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport and Takeley.

All Town and Local Centres have designated Town Centre Boundaries, whilst only the Town Centres have designated Primary Shopping Areas. The boundaries of the Town and Local Centres' and their respective primary Shopping Areas (where appropriate) are defined on the Policies Map and by **Appendix 15**.

To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the Town Centres, the Council will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services and other main town centre uses in accordance with the established hierarchy of centres. The Council will use planning conditions to assist with the application of the town centre first approach in the context of Class E flexibilities introduced by the Use Classes Order.

Retail and other 'Main Town Centre Uses' will be directed towards these centres. Where such uses are proposed outside these centres the Council will apply the sequential approach as set out in the NPPF.

Where planning permission is required for any retail or leisure proposal outside these centres, they will be subject to an impact assessment, appropriate to the use. In Uttlesford the threshold for such an impact assessment is over 1000 sqm (gross).

The Council will support the provision of new local centres containing a small number of shops of limited size with the allocated strategic housing sites set out in this Local Plan and as specified within the Development Site Templates (**Appendices 2 to 4**).

The Council will support proposals for new small shops or extensions to existing shops within or adjacent to existing settlements that are required to serve local needs. In locations beyond the defined town and local centres, change of use (that require planning permission) of shops and other community facilities will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:

- i. there is no significant demand for an alternative town centre use in that catchment area, demonstrated by marketing for 18 months; or
- ii. the facility is not financially viable; or
- iii. the replacement land use offers compelling benefits which outweigh the loss.

Proposals for development that affects the design of a shopfront will need to ensure consistency with the Uttlesford Shopfront Design Guide.

Primary Shopping Areas

Where planning permission is required, proposals resulting in the loss of Main Town Centre Uses* at ground floor level within a Primary Shopping Area must demonstrate that:

- i. the unit has been proactively and appropriately marketed for at least 12 months and it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a realistic prospect of the unit being used for E Class Uses in the foreseeable future
- ii. the proposal meets the needs of residents within the local neighbourhood, and
- iii. the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

Notwithstanding the flexibilities allowed under Class E of the Use Classes Order the Council will use planning conditions where appropriate to support the availability of retail floorspace within the Primary Shopping Area, and limit new floorspace in out of centre locations.

The Council will support main town centre uses as meanwhile uses on a temporary basis within Primary Shopping Areas. Such uses would be controlled by condition as a temporary use (up to 18 months) so as to not permanently lose retail floorspace unnecessarily without justification.

* Defined using the NPPF definition as retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Hot Food Takeaways

- 10.46 We are committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for residents, and to reduce health inequalities. One of the challenges we face in promoting healthy eating is the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in local neighbourhoods, including the prevalence of hot food takeaways in some areas. We will therefore support opportunities for communities to access a wider choice of healthier food options and resist the proliferation of particular types of hot food takeaways in inappropriate locations, such as adjacent to schools and playgrounds.
- 10.47 As 'Sui Generis' uses Hot Food Takeaways also have the potential to cause nuisance to nearby residents due to general activity, particularly during the late evening, cooking odours, increased traffic movements and litter.
- 10.48 To minimise the likelihood of disturbance, hot food takeaways will be resisted in predominantly residential areas unless the premises are situated within a neighbourhood shopping centre or other commercial frontage. Even in those situations, permission may be refused if an existing residential property is likely to experience nuisance. In predominantly residential areas, we will seek to impose planning conditions to limit the late-night opening hours of hot food takeaways.

Development Policy 6: Hot Food Takeaways

Proposals for 'sui generis' hot food takeaways will only be permitted where supported by a Health Impact Assessment and provided they:

- i. would not result in significant harm to the amenity of local residents, or highway safety
- ii. would not result in harmful cumulative impacts because of any existing or consented outlets in the immediate vicinity, and
- iii. the proposal is not located within a five-minute walk of a school or playground, unless within an established local shopping centre.

Where harmful impacts are predicted planning permission will either be refused or mitigated through planning conditions relating to the variety of food sold (enabling healthier choices) and hours of operation.

New Shops or Cafes in Smaller Settlements

10.49 Where there is interest in opening a new shop or café within or adjoining a settlement the District Council will allow provision outside development limits where no sites are available provided the chosen site is well located to the village, is walkable and is of an appropriate scale. Applicants will be expected to define the catchment area that the new shop is intended to serve, based on the intended operator, location and the scale of the shop. If there are existing shops within this catchment area, an impact assessment of the effect on these shops will be required, including likely trade diversion.

10.50 The District Council will encourage community run schemes and schemes which provide a mix of facilities which might include a shop, post office, meeting rooms, internet access and possibly local transport hub. This policy settlements without a defined centre.

Development Policy 7: New Shops or Cafes in Smaller Settlements

The Council will support proposals for new small shops or extensions to existing shops within or adjacent to existing settlements that are required to serve local needs where the following criteria are met:

- the shop would be of a size appropriate to the settlement the site would be well related to the settlement, with the potential to reduce the need to travel by car, and
- there would be no significant adverse impact on the character and amenity of the area including visual intrusion, noise and traffic generation.

Sites that could provide a mix of local facilities will be particularly welcomed.

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

- 10.51 The district's visitor economy represents the second most important income strand for the district after retail spending. The town centres and villages contain several regionally and nationally important attractions. The charming Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet town centres are a draw to many visitors and shoppers alike. They both offer a range of independent stores alongside cafes and service businesses. The Local Plan seeks to harness these opportunities by supporting the visitor economy through encouraging provision of leisure facilities, increased footfall in town/local centres, visits, day and overnight stays.
- 10.52 In the rural areas accommodation including hotels, Bed and Breakfast, Self-catering, Country Inns and camping will be supported in line with **Core Policy 51** below.
- 10.53 In addition, Stansted Airport is an important draw to the area for tourists and visitors passing through. Applications for other types of development relating to Stansted Airport are dealt with under **Core Policy 11**.

Core Policy 51: Tourism and the Visitor Economy

The Council encourages new development to advance tourism and the visitor economy for leisure and business purposes. Proposals will be supported as follows:

- i. within the built-up areas of the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres – larger scale developments including conference facilities, museums, heritage centres, hotels, guest houses and associated facilities for visitors
- ii. within the built-up areas of the Larger and Smaller Villages - smaller and proportionately scaled developments that are in keeping with the character of the settlement, including museums, heritage centres, hotels, guest houses, self-catering accommodation and associated facilities for visitors
- iii. at Stansted Airport and Great Chesterford Research Park – ancillary business hotel and conference facilities, and
- iv. at service areas on the main transport corridors, hotel accommodation.

Outside the above locations, small-scale development to support the visitor economy, including farm diversification and equine development, will be supported provided that proposals are in keeping with the scale and character of the locality and which would not adversely affect heritage assets or their setting. Larger developments will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, for example to sensitively re-use a historic building, or to proportionally support or enhance enjoyment of a significant and established visitor attraction where this cannot reasonably be achieved from a town or village location.

Development Policy 8: Tourist Accommodation

Self-Catering Accommodation:

Proposals for self-catering accommodation will only be permitted where they:

- i. are provided through the conservation and conversion of existing buildings, including agricultural buildings, or
- ii. are appropriately located within the existing built form of settlements.

Exceptionally, proposals for new-build, short-stay, self-catering units that are directly associated on-site with a tourist attraction, and required to sustain the viability of the tourist attraction, may be acceptable.

Removal of Occupancy Conditions – Holiday Lets:

Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions on holiday accommodation that has been built or converted for that purpose outside Development Boundaries will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances.

11: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

11.1 Achieving healthy and sustainable communities means ensuring that existing and future Uttlesford residents are served by the homes and facilities which meet their needs, promote healthy choices and social cohesion. The design of new places can substantially contribute to this goal by delivering the necessary services and facilities. Developments which secure an appropriate mix of housing types, encourage residents to walk and cycle, and facilitate opportunities for social interactions will provide the framework for future residents to form successful new communities. The Local Plan will ensure that these foundations are delivered as part of new developments within Uttlesford.

11.2 The Local Plan will also affect existing communities. The Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres within Uttlesford are planned to accommodate the majority of the proposed allocations up to 2041 as they provide a greater choice of services and facilities and provide the best opportunity to deliver sustainable development. The Local Plan will ensure that new developments are well integrated into the existing settlements so that current residents can benefit from new services and infrastructure provision and vice versa. In this way the Local Plan seeks to protect and support the vitality of new and existing communities

- **Core Policy 52: Good Design Outcomes and Process**
- **Core Policy 53: Standards for New Residential Development**
- **Core Policy 54: Specialist Housing**
- **Core Policy 55: Residential Space Standards**
- **Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings**
- **Core Policy 57: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership**
- **Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Housing**
- **Core Policy 59: The Metropolitan Green Belt**
- **Core Policy 60: The Travelling Community**
- **Core Policy 61: Transit Sites**
- **Core Policy 62: The Historic Environment**
- **Core Policy 63: Design of Development Within Conservation Areas**
- **Core Policy 64: Development Affecting Listed Buildings**
- **Core Policy 65: Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance**
- **Core Policy 66: Planning for Health**
- **Core Policy 67: Open Space**
- **Core Policy 68: Community Uses**
- **Core Policy 69: New cemeteries and burial space**
- **Core Policy 70: Communications Infrastructure**
- **Development Policy 9: Public Art**

Good Design: Outcomes and process

- 11.3 Uttlesford's towns and villages have grown over time, responding to their location and cultural heritage, the surrounding landscape and built form, movement patterns and building use, and in their relationships with open and public spaces. The use of traditional materials often reflects the local geology and landscapes, which can be broadly categorised as agricultural land, chalk ridges, or river valleys. These elements often underpin the character and identity of Uttlesford's built and natural environment.
- 11.4 The Council require all development, including all elements of the built environment, to be of the highest design quality and contribute to the Uttlesford's long-term economic prosperity, quality of life and a net zero or low carbon future.
- 11.5 Design is the comprehensive coordination of the many elements a new proposal must consider and incorporate. Therefore, our design policy (**Core Policy 52: Good Design Outcomes and Process**) should be read alongside all other policies in this plan, with focus on Climate Change, Housing, Infrastructure, and Transport.
- 11.6 The **NPPF Section 12** 'Achieving well-designed places', **Planning Practice Guidance** 'Design: process and tools', and the **National Design Guide** provide justification and set out requirements for good design and are the basis for our design policy.
- 11.7 The **National Model Design Code**¹, including additional **Guidance Notes**², which set out the national requirements for masterplanning, design coding, and community engagement should also be considered.
- 11.8 The reader should be familiar with the above documents before reading the following **Uttlesford Design Policy**, the **Uttlesford Design Code(s)**³ and the **Essex Design Guide**⁴, which then provide further information, justification, and guidance that are specific to Uttlesford and Essex.
- 11.9 Informed by consultation, research and best practice, the Uttlesford Design Code focuses on the principles and outcomes needed to create and enhance high quality places to live and work and provides guidance to assist in their delivery. Following the principles and requirements established by **Core Policy 52** and the Design Code will ensure that the design approach meets with the aspirations of the Council and the wider Uttlesford community, providing applicants with the best chance of achieving planning approval.

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021, National Model Design Code: part 1 - the coding process. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009793/NMDC_Part_1_The_Coding_Process.pdf

² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021, National Model Design Code: part 2 - guidance notes. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009795/NMDC_Part_2_Guidance_Notes.pdf

³ UDC, 2023, Uttlesford Draft Design Code. Available at:

<https://uttlesforddesigncode.co.uk/index.php?contentid=115>

⁴ Essex County Council, 2018, Essex Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>

- 11.10 Good design should address local needs and challenges, providing fit for purpose solutions that make Uttlesford an attractive and distinctive place to be. The approach to design will drive the importance of mixed uses and facilities, ensuring we enable people to start well, live well and age well in the communities in which they live. New buildings and places should reflect the distinctiveness of the district, fusing together the unique historic built environment and rural landscape setting.
- 11.11 Good design should consider how to create socially and commercially attractive places with a distinctive character and identity that enhance their surroundings. Proposals should first consider people and how they live and work; next consider the design of places and spaces that support this to form the basis of a place structure, and then organise and design buildings around this.
- 11.12 The Uttlesford Design Code sets out a vision for the design of individual buildings and collections of buildings, public spaces, streets, and each of their components. The Design Code outlines strategic principles, design guidelines and parameters for both designers and decision makers to shape the high-quality design of buildings and spaces in the district. The Design Code sets out key aspirations for design quality and placemaking across Uttlesford which will be used by the Local Planning Authority to inform the determination of planning applications. As such, the Design Code will be applied, along with **Core Policy 52: Good Design Outcomes and Process**, to assess whether a proposal in Uttlesford complies with the appropriate requirements.
- 11.13 Outline planning applications for Major Development Proposals⁵ must demonstrate compliance with **Core Policy 52**, along with other relevant Local Plan policies and the latest Uttlesford Design Code. This is particularly important as key design decisions and implications can be set at the application stage including, but not limited to, access, active travel provision, open space provision and layout, density, heights, and site layout.
- 11.14 The proposed design quality of a planning application must also be maintained between the initial grant of permission and scheme of operation. The Local Planning Authority will follow the approaches set out in Planning Practice Guidance, for example encouraging design details to be agreed as part of the initial permission, retention of key design consultants from the planning application team and using design review opportunities at appropriate intervals. Site inspections will be used to verify compliance with approved plans and conditions.

⁵ Major development is defined as:

- The provision of 10 or more dwelling houses,
- Outline application on a site area of 0.5 hectares or more and where the proposed number of dwellings has not been specified,
- The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more, or Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

Core Policy 52: Good Design Outcomes and Process

Development will be supported where proposals can clearly demonstrate compliance with appropriate national policy and guidance in respect of Design, especially the most up-to-date version of the **Uttlesford Design Code(s)**, and the **Essex Design Guide**.

Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the following ten characteristics⁶ are addressed in the design of the scheme in a mutually supportive way:

- i. Context – understand and enhance the surroundings and demonstrate how heritage, local history, and culture has been valued and incorporated
- ii. Identity – demonstrate how the context study and analysis has helped to developed proposals are locally informed, attractive, and distinctive
- iii. Built form – demonstrate how a coherent pattern of development has been achieved with a compact form and appropriate building types and forms including key destinations
- iv. Movement – demonstrate an integrated network of routes for all modes of transport which are accessible, encourage active travel and easy to move around with well-considered parking and servicing
- v. Nature – demonstrate provision of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of activities to enhance and optimise the existing and support rich and varied biodiversity
- vi. Public spaces – demonstrate creation of safe, social, well-located, attractive, high quality and inclusive public spaces that support social interaction
- vii. Uses – demonstrate a mixed and integrated community with provision of mixed uses as required and a socially inclusive mix of home tenures, types, and sizes
- viii. Homes and Buildings – demonstrate how functional, healthy, safe, comfortable and sustainable buildings have been created with well related amenity and servicing
- ix. Resources – demonstrate how proposals follow the energy hierarchy and are efficient and resilient including selection of building materials and construction techniques, and
- x. Lifespan – demonstrate how proposals are made to last and have provision to be well maintained, adaptable to changing needs, and foster a sense of ownership.

Proposals for **Major Development** should:

- prepare and submit Masterplans and Design Codes in accordance with national policy and guidance and the most up-to-date version of the Uttlesford Design Code(s), which provides further information on what needs to be included
- undertake appropriate Community Engagement that informs the proposals from an early stage in accordance with relevant national and local guidance⁷, and
- make use of Pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and others as appropriate.

Proposals for 100 dwellings or more must also:

⁶ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021, National Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

⁷ Uttlesford District Council, 2023, Uttlesford Community Engagement Protocol. Available at: <https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29530/Protocol%20-%20DRAFT.pdf>

- make use of a Design Review as early in the process as possible. The Uttlesford Quality Review Panel is the preferred approach, , but the Essex Design Review Panel, or a Building for a Healthy Life assessment⁸ (which must be commissioned by the applicant and undertaken by a neutral third-party accredited organisation such as Design for Homes, Place Services, or Design Southeast) are also acceptable options.

Public Art

11.15 The Council is committed to the provision of public art within developments and/ or in the surrounding neighbourhood. Public art can make an important contribution to the character and visual quality of new places. Public art can also contribute to community cohesion, skills and active participation in planning and development if an inclusive and comprehensive engagement process is undertaken for the conception, vision, production, and experience of the art.

Development Policy 9: Public Art

All major development will be expected to contribute in the Section 106 agreement to a public art fund to be used to deliver public art projects located on or off site with clear benefit for the local community.

Any public art proposals must make a significant contribution towards the appearance of the scheme, the character of the area, and provide benefits for the local community.

Applicants will be required to set out details for the provision of public art, including its location and design in accordance with the Uttlesford Design Code.

Housing

11.16 **Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy** sets out the overall level of housing to be provided over the plan period and where that new housing should be located. This section sets out the more detailed policy requirements for housing provision covering both market, affordable and specialist housing, as well as meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers. It then moves on to set out the approach to conversions/HMOs, custom and self-build followed by setting out our Green Belt policy. Policies relating to the rural areas are set out in **Chapter 8: Rural Area Strategy**.

Standards for New Residential Development, including Housing Mix and Accessibility

11.17 Development should provide an appropriate mix of housing types flexible enough to adapt to different local needs. This includes the delivery of specialist accommodation to deliver lifetime homes and meet the demands of an ageing population.

11.18 The NPPF requires Local Plan policies to deliver a wide choice of quality homes by planning for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic projections, market trends and the differing needs of the various sectors of the community.

⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2019, PPG Design: process and tools: 018 Reference ID: 26-018-20191001 and NPPF para. 133. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>

- 11.19 New housing must support the needs of the community as a whole by including affordable and market homes of the type, size and tenure needed by residents. However, housing mix can have implications, both for development feasibility and viability as well as for local character. Therefore, whilst it is important to manage the mix of housing provided on new developments, the appropriate approach should also achieve a practical balance.
- 11.20 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (June 2023)⁹ (LHNA) for Uttlesford recommends that a different dwelling mix is sought for different types of housing, as set out below in **Table 11.1**. There are a range of factors that will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes; future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save; economic performance and housing affordability.

Table 11.1: Housing mix by tenure (Uttlesford LHNA 2023).

	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 or 4+ beds
Market	5%	35%	40%	20%
Affordable home ownership	20%	45%	25%	10%
Affordable rented	35%	35%	25%	5%

- 11.21 The LHNA provides data on population change for example identifying that over the 2023-2033 period there will be a 32% increase in the population aged 65+ and a 41% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 39% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems. This shows that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing. Given the likely level of need the Council will require all dwellings (across all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards¹⁰ and 10% of market homes meeting M4(3)¹¹ rising to 20% for affordable dwellings.
- 11.22 Part M4(2) dwellings are those that are 'accessible and adaptable' so a wheelchair user can visit a property whereas a Part M4(3) dwelling is one in which a wheelchair user could live.
- 11.23 To ensure that older people are able to secure and sustain their independence in a home appropriate to their circumstances, the Council will encourage developers to build new homes that can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and older people as well as assisting independent living at home. National planning guidance states that Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes M4(3) should be applied only to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. As noted above the authority has an ageing population with mobility -problems that justifies a high level of need for M4(3) housing.

⁹ Justin Gardner, 2023, Local Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

¹⁰ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2016, Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings, volume 1: dwellings. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

¹¹ Ibid

11.24 Live/Work space is defined as property that is specifically designed for dual use, combining both residential and employment space¹². Live/Work is distinct from conventional 'home working' which usually comprises a residential unit with ancillary and often temporary or informal work areas. Live/Work is a distinctive and formal division of residential and workspace floorspace which does require planning permission. The NPPF states planning policies should allow for new and flexible working practices. It is anticipated that due to the Covid-19 pandemic and rise in people working from home the demand for live/work units may increase. Within individual Live/Work units the workspace should be designed to be functionally separate from the dwelling(s) to which it relates and the division within each unit clearly marked on submitted floorspace plans. The Council may impose conditions on any planning permission granted to secure a continuing ratio between workspace and living space. The impact of introducing business premises in generally residential areas on amenity must also be addressed.

Core Policy 53: Standards for New Residential Development

New residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed, vibrant and inclusive communities. This should be in accordance with the most up-to-date LHNA (**Table 11.1**) unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate or where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints based on a PPG-compliant developer-funded viability assessment agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

The Council will encourage Live/Work units in new developments to help create vibrant communities.

The Council expect all residential schemes to be 100% wheelchair accessible – M4(2) compliant; 10% M4(3) compliant for market homes and 20% M4(3) compliant for affordable homes – or replacement standards, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practically achievable or financially viable to deliver in line with this policy based on a PPG-compliant developer-funded viability assessment agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

Specialist and Supported Housing

11.25 Given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist and supported housing options moving forward. There may be a range of factors which may influence such moves, including issues related to health, ability to maintain existing homes and/or care and support needs. Options include sheltered and extra care housing (classed as C3 dwellings), and residential care homes and nursing homes/ care bed spaces (classed as C2 provision).

11.26 Sheltered and extra care housing are alternatives to care/nursing home bed spaces and can help to reduce costs associated with care by supporting people to remain as independent for as long as possible. These can also support not only older people but also those with a lifelong disability. In addition, they can be integrated well into

¹² Live work units are considered as composite B1/C3 use or sui generis

local communities and also as part of larger developments. The LHNA suggests that in the period 2023-2033 Uttlesford has a need for¹³:

- 355 additional market dwellings (sheltered/retirement housing)
- 330 additional housing units with care (extra-care) (90% to be market sector)
- 300 additional nursing care bedspaces, and
- 370-640 dwellings to be for wheelchair users (meeting M4(3) standards).

Core Policy 54: Specialist Housing

Strategic housing sites will be expected to provide at least 5% extra care dwellings¹⁴ (C3 Use Class) as part of the overall mix. Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing¹⁵ (C3 Use Class) for older people will be required.

Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older and/ or disabled people and those with mental health needs and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities. All proposals will be expected to provide affordable housing in accordance with **Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings**.

The Council will support residential care homes (C2 Use Class) and developments which provide for a mix of Uses Classes C3 and C2 where the appropriate infrastructure is provided and they offer easy access to community facilities and frequent public transport.

Residential Space Standards

11.27 Development must provide a good living environment for both existing and future residents. A lack of living and storage space can compromise basic lifestyle needs and can have profound impact on an occupant's health and well-being. Therefore, in providing new homes, it is important that they are designed and constructed to a high quality with good standards of internal space. In 2015 the Government introduced a nationally described internal space standard¹⁶. To ensure development continues to deliver suitably sized accommodation the Council will require that, as a minimum, all new development should be in accordance with these nationally described standards or any subsequent update.

¹³ Justin Gardner, 2023, Local Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

¹⁴ Extra Care Housing - very sheltered housing, catering for less mobile people and wheelchair users. Schemes may have care staff and may provide meals.

¹⁵ Alternative Specialist Housing – Other forms of accommodation for elderly or disabled people including sheltered housing and other alternative provision

¹⁶ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2015, Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

Core Policy 55: Residential Space Standards

A. Internal Residential Space

All new dwellings will achieve compliance with the nationally described space standards (or any successor standards/ policy) as a minimum.

B. External Residential Space

New residential dwellings will be expected to have direct access to an area of private and/ or communal amenity space. The form of amenity space will be dependent on the form of housing and could be provided as a private garden, roof garden, communal garden, courtyard balcony, or ground-level patio with defensible space from public access. The amount of outdoor amenity space must be appropriate to the size of the property and designed to allow effective and practical use of and level access to the space by residents, as specified by the Uttlesford Design Code.

Affordable Dwellings

- 11.28 The Council is committed to helping to support and enable the right conditions for people to have a secure and safe home. The provision of affordable housing plays an important role in this process as it helps to prevent homelessness and ensure that those who are unable to afford market housing have access to suitable homes to rent and buy.
- 11.29 Affordable housing, including for affordable supported and specialist, is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). The term 'affordable' as defined in the NPPF includes affordable rented housing, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership such as intermediate housing and shared ownership. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- 11.30 The NPPF requires Local Plan policies to identify the type and tenure of homes required by those who require affordable housing. The provision of affordable housing should be met on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be justified.
- 11.31 The LHNA identified that 261 households p.a. in Uttlesford are currently in affordable housing need, which equates to 38 % of the annual Local Housing Need figure for the District of 684 dwellings. However, the link between affordable and overall needs is complex and many of those identified as having an affordable housing need are already in housing and thus do not generate a net additional need for a home. If for this reason we exclude existing households, our annual affordable need would be 192 dwellings, which equates to 28 % of our annual Local Housing Need¹⁷.
- 11.32 Furthermore, affordability in the District has worsened with the workplace based median affordability ratio in Uttlesford at 13.18 in 2022, based on the ratio between median house prices and full-time earnings¹⁸.

¹⁷ Justin Gardner Consulting, 2023, Local Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.utlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

¹⁸ Ibid

- 11.33 The Council is committed to taking all opportunities to deliver high quality affordable housing for people who are unable to access or afford market housing as well as helping people make the step from social or affordable-rented housing to home ownership in line with **Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings**.
- 11.34 The NPPF expects at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership¹⁹, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. The Uttlesford LHNA advises that this 10% requirement may not be the best solution for the District and states, for example, that the clear need for additional rented housing in Uttlesford, would arguably mean that providing the 10 % affordable home ownership in line with the NPPF would prejudice the ability to meet the needs of the specific group requiring rented accommodation²⁰.
- 11.35 Furthermore, the LHNA states that 'There is a significant need for affordable housing, particularly for lower income households likely to need rented accommodation. The Council should prioritise delivery of social rented housing where it is viable to do so. There is also a potential need for affordable home ownership, although it seems difficult to make such homes genuinely affordable in a local context, thus lending further support for the provision of social rented housing'²¹.
- 11.36 In May 2021, the Government introduced First Homes²², a new tenure of affordable housing. First Homes are a specific type of discounted market housing which are currently reduced by a minimum of 30% against market value and sold to people meeting set eligibility criteria. The PPG currently stipulates that First Homes should make up at least 25% of all affordable housing units being delivered through planning obligations. The PPG establishes national thresholds, percentages, caps and eligibility criteria for First Homes, but it also grants substantial opportunity for local deviation where evidence demonstrates that such a change is justified. The Council has published details of local criteria and exemptions for First Homes²³. As the LNHA makes clear there is a high level of need for social rented housing, once First Homes provision has been satisfied, **Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings** states that the majority of the remaining provision for affordable dwellings should be prioritised for socially rented affordable dwellings.
- 11.37 The need for affordable housing of different sizes may vary by area and over time. In considering the mix of homes to be provided within specific development schemes, this information should be brought together with details of households currently on the Council's Housing Register and the stock and turnover of existing properties. Similarly, on individual sites, the preferred affordable housing mix will be determined through negotiation and informed by up-to-date assessments of local housing needs and site / neighbourhood characteristics.
- 11.38 The Council will require affordable housing to be provided on site, unless offsite provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly

¹⁹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021, National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

²⁰ Justin Gardner Consulting, 2023, Local Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 70-001-20210524, Planning Policy Guidance, 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

²³ Planning Policy Guidance, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

justified and the proposed agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings

New residential development (including conversions and changes of use) with the capacity to provide 10 or more self-contained units should provide 35% of the total dwellings as affordable dwellings.

Affordable dwellings should be delivered on-site. However, in exceptional circumstances a financial contribution may be accepted by the Council in order to provide affordable dwellings off-site where the other sites may be more appropriate to provide affordable dwellings than the site of the proposed development.

Affordable dwellings should incorporate a mix of tenures and sizes prioritising rented dwellings at social rent levels. To most effectively meet the district's housing needs the Council will require the following mix of tenure:

- i. 25% of homes to be available as First Homes, and
- ii. 70% of the remaining qualifying development will be affordable/ social rented, and 30% as other forms of affordable homes.

The dwelling mix should be in accordance with the most up-to-date LHNA (Table 11.1) unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints.

The exact tenure split on each site will be a matter for negotiation, taking account of up-to-date needs assessments and the characteristics of the area.

A minimum of 20% of affordable dwellings (for which the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating a person(s) to live in that dwelling) constructed should be built to Building Regulation Standard M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair Accessible Standards, taking account of the suitability and viability of the site.

Affordable dwellings should be appropriately distributed throughout a new development and should be designed to a high quality, with the same or a consistent external appearance as for market dwellings. Where a site is sub-divided, the Council will expect each sub-division to contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable dwellings which would have been applicable on the whole site.

Where a developer states that exceptional development costs mean it is not possible to meet the full requirements for the delivery of affordable dwellings the burden of proof will be on them to demonstrate this to the Council and the evidence must be supported by a PPG-compliant developer-funded viability assessment agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

11.39 Shared accommodation, including well designed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), play a role in providing housing for people on low incomes, those on benefit payments and young professionals. These are often the only choice of housing for people who would otherwise be homeless.

11.40 Conversions from houses to high quality flats or HMOs can provide a useful addition of smaller dwellings to the housing stock. However, it is important that conversions provide a high standard of accommodation and promote and retain housing choice.

When considering proposals for conversion the Council will consider the impact on the mix of dwellings locally, the character of the area and on the amenity of adjoining dwellings. To ensure the quality of any new accommodation is high and that it supports a good quality of life it is important that proposals are consistent with the space standards for both internal and external space (**Core Policy 55: Residential Space Standards**).

Core Policy 57: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership

Applications for the subdivision of a dwelling into two or more dwellings or for Houses in Multiple Occupation, will be permitted provided that:

- i. the proportion of dwelling units in multiple occupation or subdivided (including the proposal) within a 100m radius of the application site does not exceed 10% of total dwelling units
- ii. the proposal does not result in a non-HMO or non-subdivided dwelling being sandwiched between two HMOs or conversions
- iii. the proposal does not lead to a continuous frontage or concentration of HMOs or conversions, and
- iv. the proposal does not harm the amenity of the area by ensuring
 - a. adequate parking provision, including prevention of loss of garden space as car parking, and
 - b. adequate provision for the storage of refuse containers, and
 - c. amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex design guide (or subsequent guidance).

Custom and Self-Build Homes

- 11.41 Custom and self-build homes are another route to achieving home ownership. The Council will encourage opportunities to bring more custom and self-build homes forward through development using **Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Housing**. There is one main difference between the two forms of development, with custom build being where a person commissions a specialist developer to help them to deliver their own home or where they can make choices about the design, layout or style of the home; whilst self-build is where a person is more directly involved in actually organising and constructing their home more directly. The legal definition of self-build and custom house building is set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) as : “self-build and custom housebuilding” means the building or completion by “(a) individuals, (b) associations of individuals, or (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals”.
- 11.42 This definition will be used to determine whether or not a home can be categorised as a custom or self-build house.
- 11.43 There are a number of mechanisms for delivering custom and self-build homes, ranging from people finding their own plot and building their own home, to developers providing serviced plots for people to design and have their own home built, to sites being specifically acquired, marketed and delivered by a builder or developer as custom build where the builder will construct the custom homes for an individual to their chosen design or specification.

- 11.44 For the three-year period that ended on the 31st October 2022 the Council had permitted 278 plots that could be considered suitable for custom or self-build purposes. For the year October 2021-October 2022 there were 5 individual requests on the register.
- 11.45 **Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Housing** is arranged in three parts to enable different opportunities for custom and self-build homes to be brought forward. These homes will be expected to satisfy the requirements of other relevant policies in the Development Plan. Part one, in broad terms outlines support for custom and self-build proposals and is aimed at individuals seeking permission for their own plot. Part two is intended for landowners/developers seeking permission for a site capable of delivering anything from one or more plots. However, the subtle difference to this section of the policy is that landowners/developers have no desire to build all (or any) of these for themselves. Part two requires the design parameters to be agreed at outline permission through the development of plot passports which are agreed through the planning permission process.
- 11.46 Plot passports have a role to play alongside design codes; they are a simple way of helping private homebuilders understand what they can build on a site. A plot passport is a succinct summary of the design parameters for a given plot. They add value by acting as a key reference point for the purchaser, capturing relevant information from the planning permission, design constraints and procedural requirements in an easily understandable and readily accessible format. Most are between one and four pages long and can form part of the marketing material available for the plot. The details set out in part two are a baseline for landowners/developers to set a vision for the site. However, landowners/developers may wish to include more detail within the plot passport such as costings/images which can then be used to form the marketing of the plot subject to planning been approved, in accordance with local and national planning policy.
- 11.47 Part three is aimed at larger schemes of 100 or more dwellings requiring developers to provide 5% of all homes as custom and self-build plots. Sites of this scale will be informed by master planning and the applicant can apply design codes to ensure that any custom and self-build homes have clear parameters of what will be considered acceptable within the development when viewed holistically. This will help provide certainty to the Council but also to the developer of the wider site. Such design codes should not stifle innovation and creativity for potential custom and self-builders but should help to ensure that the development as a whole is well-designed. The aim is to create a unique and sustainable sense of place that will be everlasting for future generations whilst still respecting the context of the site.
- 11.48 Requiring 5% of dwellings as self-build or custom-build on sites of 100 homes will ensure there is sufficient supply coming forward to meet the identified need. Even though sufficient self-build and custom-build development has been provided in the past, this was during a period of relatively high speculative development, which will reduce once the Local Plan is adopted.
- 11.49 It is important to remember that any proposals for self-build or custom-build will still need to comply with **Core Policy 56: Affordable Dwellings**.

Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Housing

Individual Plots

Proposals for self and custom build dwellings consistent with the policies of this Local Plan, to be built and occupied by the applicant or to be built on behalf of the applicant, will be supported in principle.

Multiple Plots

When outline permission or permission in principle is sought for plots for custom and self-build homes and where details of each plot will be secured via a custom/self-builder at a later date, a plot passport is required.

Plot Passport should, as a minimum, should summarises the main marketing details and specifications of the plot to include:

- i. the site location
- ii. the plot size (m²)
- iii. the ratio of built footprint to overall plot size
- iv. the indicative developable footprint
- v. permissible building lines
- vi. side spacing requirements, and
- vii. building heights.

Additional specifications, such as but not limited to materials, landscaping details, and access arrangements may be required on each plot where local context, a planning permission, or a permission in principle indicates this is necessary.

Detailed applications for custom and self-build homes on plots with a plot passport will be expected to adhere to the parameters of the plot passport and clearly demonstrate how the criteria have been satisfied. Applications which satisfy the requirements of the plot passport will be supported in principle.

Any variations on the plot passport parameters in a detailed application will require full justification for the changes to demonstrate that they are suitable for the plot if they are to be supported.

Provision of Plots on Larger Sites

Proposals for 100 or more dwellings will provide serviced plots to deliver at least 5% of the total number of dwellings on the site as self-build or custom build homes. All plots set aside for self-build or custom build housing (secured via a legal agreement or planning condition) must include:

- viii. legal access onto a public highway
- ix. water, foul and other drainage, broadband connection, and electricity supply available at the plot boundary
- x. sufficient space to build without compromising neighbouring properties and their amenity and the amenity of future occupiers, and
- xi. an agreed design code or plot passport for the plots.

If plots remain unsold after a thorough and proportionate marketing exercise which includes making details available to people on the custom and self-build register in

Uttlesford, and covers a period of at least 18 months from the date at which the plots are made available (with the 18 month time frame not commencing until thorough and appropriate marketing is in place); These plots may be built out as conventional market housing subject to detailed permission being secured and that viii) and xi) have been satisfactorily concluded.

The Metropolitan Green Belt

11.50 Part of the south of the district falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The primary aim of Green Belt designation is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Metropolitan Green Belt serves five purposes, which are:

- i. check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- ii. prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- iii. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- iv. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
- v. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

11.51 The boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt were approved as part of the adoption of the Uttlesford Local Plan 1995. These boundaries were then carried forward unamended by the 2005 Uttlesford Local Plan.

11.52 The Metropolitan Green Belt boundary surrounds the settlements of Birchanger, Little Hallingbury and Hatfield Heath, however, their respective settlement envelopes are excluded from the Metropolitan Green Belt designation. Further, the southern extents of Stansted Mountfitchet, White Roding, and Leaden Roding are bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt. No other settlements within the District are washed over or bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt. Proposals for development within the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy**.

Core Policy 59: The Metropolitan Green Belt

The Metropolitan Green Belt boundaries within Uttlesford District will be maintained in order to:

- i. check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- ii. prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- iii. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- iv. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
- v. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with government policy contained in the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan Policies.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

- 11.53 Meeting the identified housing needs of all sections of our community, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is a key objective of this plan. To achieve this the Council is assessing the accommodation needs of the local community and considered the needs of people residing in or visiting a borough with respect to sites for caravans.
- 11.54 The NPPF and subsequent legislation requires Councils to identify sites to meet the accommodation needs of all communities within their area. This includes the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and Travelling Showpeople. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for this group , in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 11.55 Councils are also required to set out criteria by which any relevant application will be assessed. Local planning authorities must use robust evidence to establish accommodation needs when preparing Local Plans and making planning decisions. As such, the Essex Authorities commissioned ORS (Opinion Research Services) to undertake a review of the 2016 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which is set to be completed in 2024 . This will meet the requirements of the Housing Act (1985), the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the NPPF (2019) and Planning Policy Guidance (2014) as amended by Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) (which included a change to the definition of Traveller for planning purposes).
- 11.56 The main objective of the GTAA will be to assist the respective authorities in determining an appropriate level of pitch and plot provision for their area to inform the policies and proposals of our Local Plans. It will provide the Councils with robust, defensible and up-to-date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and will identify the level of need that Uttlesford needs to plan for. These requirements will be included in the next version of the Local Plan to be published in 2024.
- 11.57 **Core Policy 60: The Travelling Community**, will be used to inform decision making on planning applications for new traveller community pitches. The precise need for Uttlesford will be reviewed in the next (Regulation 19) version of the Plan as state above.

Core Policy 61: The Travelling Community

Applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people accommodation will be supported subject to the following criteria being met:

- i. it addresses an identified need
- ii. the proposal is well related to the size and location of the site and respects the scale of nearby communities
- iii. it provides a satisfactory residential amenity both within the site and for neighbouring occupiers and there is no significant impact on the amenity of nearby communities
- iv. adequate provision is made for on-site facilities for storage, play, residential amenity, parking, access as well as utility provision for the number of pitches/plots proposed, and
- v. it is in a sustainable location in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities, such as being no further than 4.8km from the edge of a settlement with a secondary school or no further than 3.2km from the edge of a settlement with a primary school.

11.58 The GTAA will also consider the need for transit pitches. If a need is identified, the Council will work with the County Council, National Highways and neighbouring authorities to investigate the potential for transit sites along the strategic road network. Applications will be assessed against **Core Policy 62: Transit Sites**. As a general rule of thumb 6-8 pitches is considered a reasonable size for a transit site as this would enable families travelling together to stay together.

Core Policy 62: Transit Sites

Applications for transit sites will be approved subject to the following criteria being met:

- i. it addresses an identified need
- ii. the proposal is well related to the size and location of the site and respects the scale of nearby communities
- iii. it provides a satisfactory residential amenity both within the site and for neighbouring occupiers and there is no significant impact on the amenity of nearby communities, and
- iv. there is no significant impact on the strategic road network.

The Historic Environment

- 11.59 Uttlesford has a rich historic environment that is both a 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. 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.
- 11.60 The quality of the cultural heritage in the district is very high with around 3,700 Listed Buildings, 36 Conservation Areas and seven Registered Parks and Gardens, as well as 73 Scheduled Monuments and more than 4,000 records of archaeological sites and finds in the district.
- 11.61 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 avoided or minimised.
- 11.62 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.
- 11.63 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.
- 11.64 There are 73 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 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.
- 11.65 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.
- 11.66 Applicants proposing development affecting a scheduled monument or site of archaeological significance need to consult Historic England's National List for

England (NHLE)²⁴ 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 and recording work.

- 11.67 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 are unlikely to be acceptable unless in wholly exceptional circumstances.

Core Policy 63: The Historic Environment

All development proposals should conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of Uttlesford District's historic environment. This should include conserving the significance of its designated and non-designated heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance, and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

In determining applications, great weight and importance will be given to conserving the significance of designated heritage and non-designated assets, including:

- i. the special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings, including with regard to their character, fabric and their settings
- ii. the special architectural and historic interest, character and/ or appearance of the District's Conservation Areas and their settings, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historic significance
- iii. the special archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether Scheduled or not), both with regard to their fabric and their settings, and
- iv. the special cultural, architectural and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.

Listed Buildings

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated will not be approved, unless there is a clear justification, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

All applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets will be expected to provide a heritage statement using appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and historic landscape context of the application site, at a level of detail proportionate to the historic significance of the asset or area, using recognised methodologies and, if necessary, a field survey. The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum. The level of assessment should be proportionate to the proposal and shall be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic, architectural and archaeological features, significance and character.

²⁴ Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Archaeological Assets

Where nationally important monuments and 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 monuments and 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:

- i. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site
- ii. no viable use of the site itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation
- iii. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible, and
- iv. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscape or buildings or archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation.

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

Development will only 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.

- 11.68 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. Proposals will be considered against the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the historic environment can bring.
- 11.69 Proposals to introduce energy efficiency and renewable energy measures affecting heritage assets will be approached positively and weighed against harm to the significance of the heritage asset and the wider historic environment.
- 11.70 The Council will work proactively to safeguard heritage assets at risk 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.
- 11.71 The Council will continue to work alongside owners and relevant partners including, Essex County Council, Historic England and other heritage bodies to secure the restoration and optimum viable re-use of heritage assets at risk.

- 11.72 As set out in **Core Policy 63: The Historic Environment**, development will not be permitted that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or if appropriate to their significance, a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals.
- 11.73 Where the loss of a heritage asset is considered acceptable, the developer will be responsible for making appropriate provision for a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication that will ensure the site is preserved by record prior to destruction. Such measures will be secured either by planning agreement or by a suitable planning condition.

Design of Development within or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas

- 11.74 There are 36 individual Conservation Areas in the district distributed across 51 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.
- 11.75 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.
- 11.76 Development adjacent to or even some distance from a Conservation Area may impact on the setting 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.

Core Policy 64: Design of Development Within Conservation Areas

Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, appearance and setting. In particular special attention will be paid to:

- i. the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development
- ii. views within, into or out of the Area
- iii. the pattern of development and the effects upon Local Green Spaces, other important green spaces, and other gaps or spaces between buildings and the historic street pattern which make a positive contribution to the character in the Conservation Area
- iv. the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development, and any loss or harm to features that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the development would make an equal or greater contribution;

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- v. the building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, or
- vi. the building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use, and
- vii. any proposed replacement building makes an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

Development Affecting Listed Buildings

- 11.77 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. 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'.
- 11.78 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 lime based render and 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.
- 11.79 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 respect the historic nature of the building.
- 11.80 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.
- 11.81 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.

- 11.82 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.

Core Policy 65: Development Affecting Listed Buildings

Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, should:

- i. conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting
- ii. respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context, and
- iii. retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design, details and form.

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:

- i. locations other than on a Listed Building have been considered and dismissed as being impracticable
- ii. there is no irreversible damage to significant parts of the historic fabric, and
- iii. the location of the equipment on the Listed Building would not cause harm to its character or appearance.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance

- 11.83 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.

- 11.84 The Council's Local List of Heritage Assets²⁵ 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.

- 11.85 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.

²⁵ UDC, Local List, Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/local-heritage-list>

- 11.86 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 assessed on a case by case basis, balancing the scale and significance of the harm, against the positive impact of enabling development.
- 11.87 Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, will be considered subject to **Core Policy: 63 The Historic Environment**²⁶,

Core Policy 66: 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. 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 will be supported where they seek to enhance the heritage asset of Local interest.

Health

- 11.88 Uttlesford is the least deprived local authority in Essex and one of the least deprived in England, however across Uttlesford wards, there is a six year gap in healthy life expectancy at birth for males and a nine year gap for females²⁷. As shown in **Figure 11.1**, the built environment and environmental quality of an area can affect up to 10% of the total factors influencing health and wellbeing.

²⁶ Footnote 68, NPPF, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

²⁷ UDC, Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2019. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028>

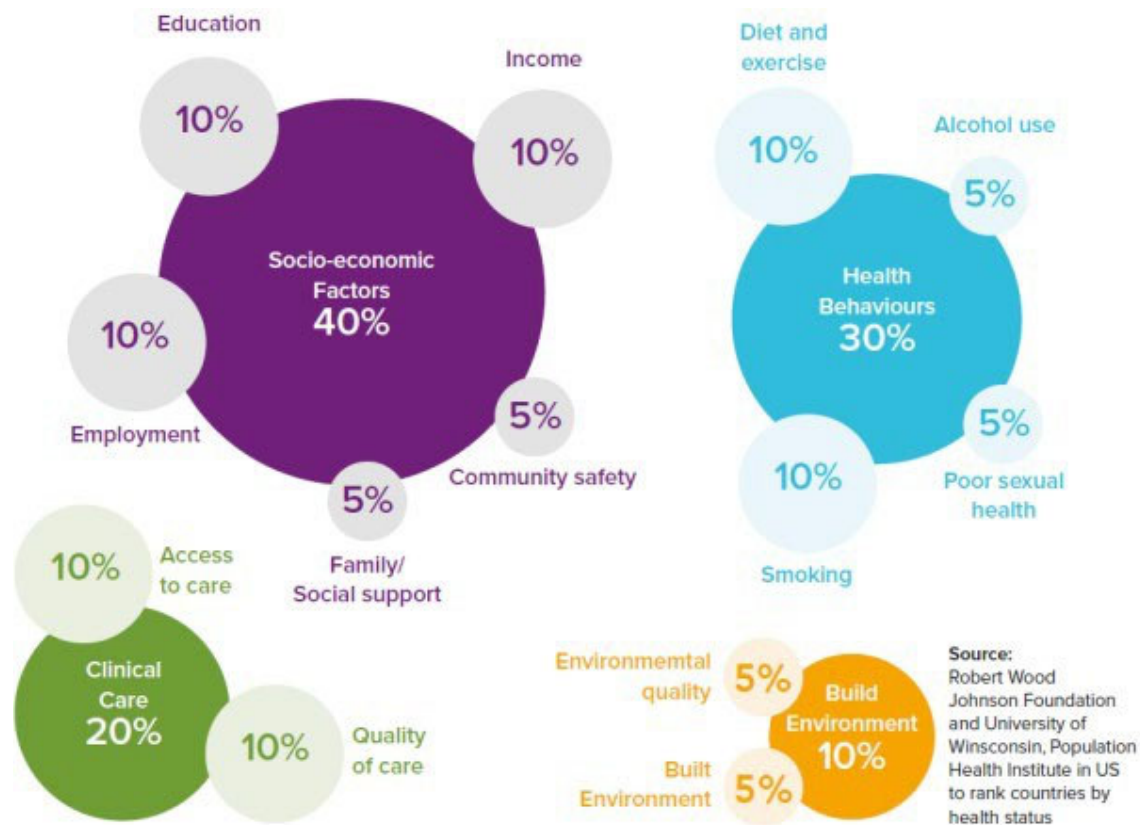
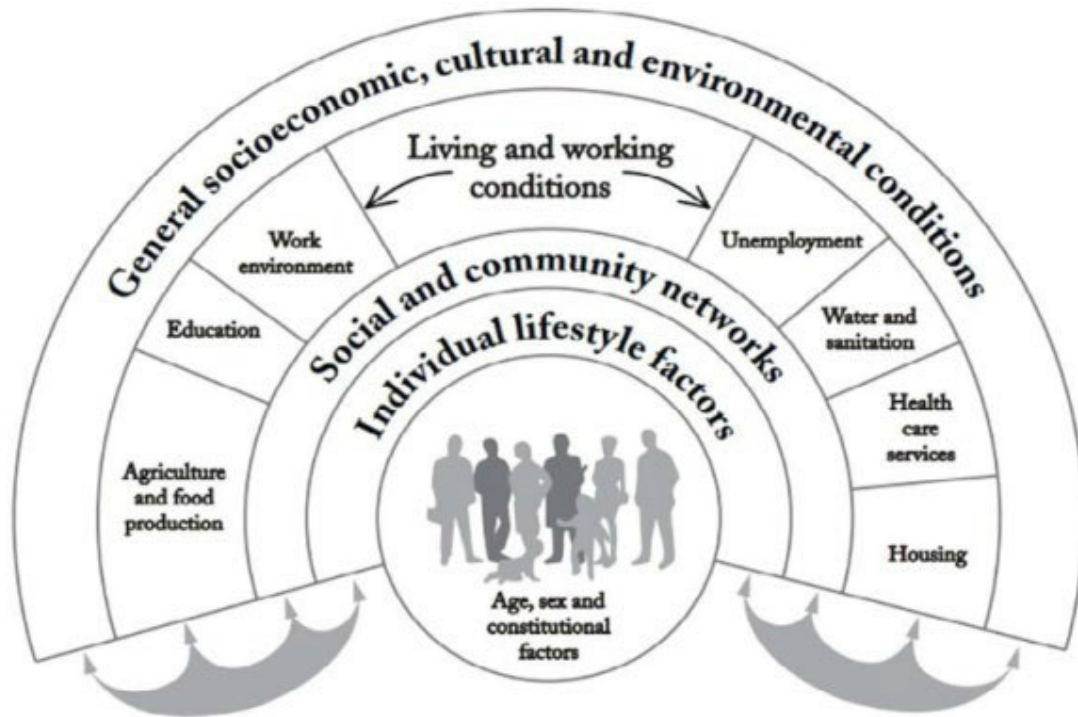


Figure 11.1: Factors Affecting health and Wellbeing.

- 11.89 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF requires local plans and planning decisions to "...enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling"²⁸.
- 11.90 **Core Policy 66: Planning for Health**, sets out how the Council expects development proposals to contribute to improvements in the major determinants of health – the social, economic and environmental factors that shape people’s lives.
- 11.91 The Council will require all development to consider health impacts through a design and access statement; major development will also be required to provide a Health Impact Assessment. In reviewing information provided in support of development proposals, the Council will take account of the advice set out within the Essex Design Guide²⁹.

²⁸ Paragraph 92, NPPF, 2023. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

²⁹ ECC and Essex Planning Officers, Essex Design Guide HIA guidance, updated 2023. Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/supplementary-guidance/health-impact-assessments/>



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead

Figure 11.2: The Dahlgren and Whitehead model of the main determinants of health

Core Policy 66: Planning for Health:

The Council will support proposals that reduce health inequalities, promote healthier lifestyles and improve the health and well-being of our existing and new communities. All major development proposals should:

- i.* undertake a Health Impact Assessment
- ii.* include health and wellbeing issues in a design and access statement demonstrating adherence to local health objectives, priorities and needs (as detailed in the JSNA), and
- iii.* contribute to shaping healthy communities by adhering to the following principles to deliver high-quality sustainable places:
 - a. address the projected health and wellbeing needs of an area, including addressing health inequalities and avoiding and mitigating any adverse health and sustainability impacts
 - b. design active street layouts and public realm, open spaces/ green spaces for play and recreation, sports and leisure that encourage walking and cycling
 - c. enable good mental wellbeing by reducing social isolation and loneliness by encouraging the provision of social community infrastructure and opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another

- d. ensuring access to green spaces and connection with nature, to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing and to deliver multiple benefits for people, place and the environment
- e. provide diversity in the residential offer that improves accessibility, affordability and promotes inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods, and
- f. make it easier for people to make healthier food choices by promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally sourced food, for example by providing opportunities for food growing, for example by the inclusion of allotments.

Open Space

- 11.92 High quality open spaces and opportunities for informal and formal sport and recreation make a valuable contribution to the health and well-being of communities and are also important for climate change resilience and biodiversity. Easy, safe and improved access for all residents and visitors to high quality open and natural space is therefore important.
- 11.93 The NPPF sets out that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. For that reason, it is important to safeguard existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, from development unless certain policy tests can be met. Furthermore, the NPPF requires planning policies to protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.
- 11.94 Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks, and registered Town and Village Greens. In addition to the social benefits, they can also have an ecological value, contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure and form an important component of the landscape. New developments and development on existing open space should contribute to the provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements set out in **Chapter 9**.
- 11.95 The district's parks, open spaces and sports / recreation facilities help to enable local communities to lead lifestyles with greater levels of physical activity, resulting in better physical and mental health, reduced stress levels and increased social interaction as well as reduced exposure to noise and air pollution. These spaces provide a vital natural resource in which people of all ages, gender and abilities can play, learn, exercise, relax and enjoy the natural world. Easy, safe and improved equitable access for all residents and visitors, particularly for children and young people, the elderly and people with disabilities to high quality open and natural space is therefore important. The Covid-19 pandemic heightened the value and appreciation of open space and it is important to build on the new habits people have formed around their use of open spaces for exercise and social interaction.
- 11.96 To assess current provision and identify specific needs (in terms of quality or quantity) in order to accommodate the demands arising from future growth the Council undertook an Open Space Study (2023) and a needs assessment for recreation and sports facilities.
- 11.97 In summary, the studies concluded that there is a varied level of access to open space, and sport and recreation facilities within the district. New development will

require locally specific provision for open space and leisure facilities over the plan period, as demand and supply changes.

- 11.98 The Open Space study sets out minimum provision standards for different types of open space in terms of quantity and access, the standards are set out in Table 11.1 (all quantities are hectares per 1,000 people)

Table 11.1 Minimum Provision and Access Standards for Open Space

Typology	Ha/1000	Access (Distance and walk time)
Parks & gardens	0.10	1.66
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.58	92.81
Amenity greenspace	1.59	26.44
Allotment	0.20	3.33
Provision for children & young people	0.11	1.83

- 11.99 The figures provide an initial indication of the levels of open space provision required as a result of new housing growth in order for the current levels of provision to be maintained. It is a starting point to ensure new populations are served by adequate open space provision, as each settlement will have differing requirements over the plan period.

11.100 The principal challenge for the Local Plan is to ensure that leisure facilities are provided in tandem with new development, to meet the demands of new users and the aging population. Additional facilities and improved access are required for communities across the district to address health inequalities. Although there is currently an oversupply of fitness provision, this is projected to form a shortfall by 2041. There is also latent demand for water facilities which will require addressing to accommodate the scale of additional housing proposed in the Local Plan. The potential requirements will be set out in the next stage of the Plan to be published in the Summer 2024.

- 11.101 On-site provision is required in all cases. However, where on-site provision cannot be achieved or it is considered that the creation and/or improvement of off-site open space is more appropriate, a commuted sum may be accepted. In making this judgement, the Council will have regard to the overall size of the development proposal, location and whether the area has sufficient provision of good quality accessible open space.

Core Policy 67: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Existing Open Space

The loss of any open spaces, sport and recreation provision, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i.* the UDC Open Space Study (2023), or other relevant information, clearly shows the provision and the function it performs is surplus to requirements, and
- ii.* the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable, accessible location within the local catchment area, and
- iii.* the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

Development proposals on open space will only be permitted where the proposal:

- iv.* improves the quality of the open space and promote inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests
- v.* is demonstrably ancillary to the use of open space and its primary function, e.g., play/ sports fields
- vi.* contributes to both the character and amenity of the area and is proportionate to the function and nature of the open space, and
- vii.* enhances the environmental function of the open space.

Open Space in New Development

All new residential developments of 10 dwellings or more will be required to maximise opportunities to incorporate new publicly accessible, high quality and multi-functional open space and/ or, where appropriate, enhance existing provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.

In determining the nature of new or improved sports and recreation provision the Council will be guided by the most up to date evidence, including the Open Space Study (2023) and Sport England's Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Calculators.

Onsite and off-site provision

Provision should be met on-site. The Council will require open space to meet the minimum standards set out in Table 11.1 and sports and recreation provision to meet the minimum standards to be included in the next stage of Plan in Summer 2023.

Where proposals cannot provide or enhance existing provision then a financial contribution may be required to provide alternative or enhanced and conveniently accessible off-site open space provision.

Maintenance

Maintenance plans proposals will be required for open space within development proposals to ensure their long-term quality and management.

Community Uses

11.103 The NPPF(2023)³⁰ defines community facilities as: local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Other community uses include health care facilities, community centres, education provision and library services.

11.104 Core Policy 68: Community uses, provides the basis for the protection of existing community uses and the requirements to provide additional community uses in tandem with new development. The requirements for new provision will be guided by the most recent UDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan³¹, and other relevant information from service providers. The Council will work with agencies including NHS commissioning organisations and health care providers, the police, education providers (schools, colleges and universities), community and community and voluntary sector organisations, transport providers, businesses, and residents to understand the requirements for community uses and facilities within the District. Essex County Council's strategies for education, transport and community facilities (such as libraries) will be an important material consideration in any decision making³².

Core Policy 68: Community Uses

New Development

New development that will increase the need for community facilities will only be permitted where:

- i.* it includes the provision of new facilities, or
- ii.* enhances existing facilities through improving quality or capacity.

Existing Community Uses

New community facilities will be supported, provided that they:

- iii.* serve an identified need, informed by the IDP or other relevant information
- iv.* are located as close as possible to the community that they serve
- v.* are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling
- vi.* are compatible with nearby uses and the character and appearance of the neighbourhood, and
- vii.* are located and designed to enable shared use with other services/facilities.

The redevelopment or change of use of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:

- viii.* an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows that the facility is surplus to requirements or no longer viable, or

³⁰ Paragraph 93, NPPF, 2023. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

³¹ UDC, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2023. Available at: [INSERT LINK WHEN AVAILABLE]

³² INSERT references

- ix. the loss resulting from the proposed redevelopment or change of use will be replaced by an equivalent or better provision (in terms of quantity and quality) in a suitable nearby location.

On-site and Off-site Provision

Provision should be made onsite. If on-site provision is not feasible a financial contribution to create of a new facility nearby or improve of an existing nearby facility will be required, informed by the latest Uttlesford IDP and Developer Contributions SPD. When new provision is made, appropriate mechanisms must be put in place to ensure its satisfactory maintenance and management.

The Council will encourage communities to nominate Assets of Community Value, and will take into account listing or nomination of 'Assets of Community Value' as a material planning consideration.

New cemeteries and burial space

11.105 There is no strategic need for further burial grounds within Uttlesford identified within the evidence for the Local Plan³³. In Uttlesford, the provision of burial space is the responsibility of town and parish councils. Those preparing neighbourhood plans should ensure they have assessed the need for future burial provision and, if needed, locate sites within their plans to meet anticipated need.

11.106 Cemeteries and burial grounds can be a valued and sensitive type of Green Infrastructure. Proposals for new and existing cemeteries or burial grounds should consider the potential for linking with green infrastructure corridors, and opportunities for improvements in biodiversity, taking account of Core Policies relating to Green and Blue Infrastructure, and **Core Policy 41: Biodiversity**.

11.107 Development proposals should have due regard to the character of the surrounding area and the policies within the rest of **Chapter 11**, relating to the historic environment and landscape character. It will be necessary to demonstrate that any proposed cemetery or burial space will not have an adverse impact on ground or surface water, and will be required to demonstrate how it has met, the criteria of policies within **Chapter 9 Climate, Environment, Transport**.

Core Policy 69: New Cemeteries and Burial Space

Development proposals for new cemeteries and burial grounds will be permitted where they:

- i.* address an identified need, or
- ii.* are allocated within a neighbourhood development plan,
- iii.* will have no adverse impact on groundwater and surface water, and
- iv.* are designed to make the most of opportunities to integrate within the Green and Blue Infrastructure network.

³³ **Insert reference to IDP/GI study as relevant, when available**

Communications Infrastructure

- 11.108 Telecommunications infrastructure includes development proposals related to the supply and management of broadband and mobile phone services.
Telecommunications infrastructure often constitutes development in its own right.
- 11.109 Given the critical importance of internet access to communities in smaller towns and rural areas, all new residential dwellings should be provided with suitable broadband connectivity or any successor technology. Non-residential buildings, particularly those for commercial or community use, should also have superfast broadband connectivity unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not viable.
- 11.110 Development proposals should consider the visual impact of the proposals in terms of landscape and the built environment. Proposals for updated installations should include provisions to remove redundant hardware to minimise impacts on the local environment.

Core Policy 70: Communications Infrastructure

Major development proposals will be required to demonstrate how high-speed broadband infrastructure, and other communications infrastructure, will be provided in time for occupation of the development.

The visual impacts of telecommunications proposals should be minimised, and development should take particular account of the requirements in Core Policy 42: Landscape Character, Core Policy 63: Design of Development within Conservation Areas, and Core Policy 64: Development Affecting Listed Buildings.

12: Monitoring and Implementation

- 12.1 This chapter provides an overview of how the Council will monitor and implement the strategy set out within this Local Plan 2041 including its Strategic Vision and policies.
- 12.2 Monitoring allows us to understand whether the Plan policies are working as intended and if they are effective. Monitoring the Plan is critical in ensuring the successful delivery of the Plan and to shape the development of any future Development Plans for the District.
- 12.3 The revised NPPF (2021) requires the Council to maintain a 5-year land supply. This requires any plan allocations to be sufficient to provide a rolling five-year period of housing delivery to be identified and assessed against the local housing need, including a 5% buffer to ensure competitiveness in the market. Should there be significant under delivery of housing within the district, a more substantial 20% buffer may apply. The Council will publish information annually within their Authority Monitoring Report to show the progress of housing delivery and the broader implementation of the Local Plan.
- 12.4 The Council will work jointly with stakeholders to deliver Local Plan 2041 objectives. This will include partnership working with both public agencies and the private sector and is necessary to ensure development progresses in a manner consistent with the strategy identified in this plan.
- 12.5 The Council has included a Monitoring Framework at **Appendix ADD**, which identifies how the Council will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 for each policy. The Council recognises that appropriate action will need to be taken if implementation of the plan is clearly off track and triggers for action are set out within the Monitoring Framework.
- 12.6 The Council is also aware that the plan needs to be resilient to changing circumstances and be flexible and responsive if the plan is not delivering in accordance with the Monitoring Framework. **Core Policy 71: Monitoring and Implementation**, sets out the Council's intended approach.

Core Policy 71: Monitoring and Implementation

The Council will monitor progress towards the achievement of indicators and targets set out within the Monitoring Framework (as set out in **Appendix ADD**). The Authority Monitoring Report will be produced on a least an annual basis and will be used to establish whether the implementation of the Plan, either in part or as a whole, is being effectively actioned. Where there is evidence to suggest that policy specific targets listed in the Monitoring Framework have not been met, contingency measures and actions listed in the Monitoring Framework will apply.

Contingency measures may include once or more of the following:

- i. seeking to accelerate delivery on other permitted or allocated sites
- ii. seeking alternative sources of funding if a lack of infrastructure is delaying development or causing significant problems as a result of new development
- iii. identifying alternative deliverable sites that are in general accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the Plan, and
- iv. undertaking a full or partial review of the Local Plan, if investigation indicates that its strategy, either in whole or in part, is no longer appropriate.