

## Local plan Response      Edward Gildea      Green Party

I'm afraid this is a disappointing plan. It is intended to supplying housing needs until 2041 but I get **no sense of the VISION** the UDC has **for Uttlesford in 2040**.

It is also deficient in its approach to the climate crisis.

At the heart of any strategy for sustainability is infrastructure, but this plan consistently **confuses facilities with infrastructure**. Facilities include schools, clinics, social centres etc; Infrastructure is the *underlying* structure: roads, railways, sewage and water supply systems, internet connectivity, local community energy generation, electric car charging points....

The plan claims to present 'a comprehensive and coherent infrastructure strategy,' but really, instead of outlining a future vision of such infrastructure, we have **Pragmatism...** in the best tradition of Richie Sunak's approach to Net Zero!

### Transport

The most urgent **infrastructure requirement is a railway**. We have just one north-south line, but no east-west line. It is the constraint that has doomed successive plans to failure. While it is clear that this plan cannot be premised on a railway that doesn't exist yet, it should form part of Uttlesford's long term vision. Otherwise it will never happen.

Many of the thousands of new residents in the proposed homes, will be commuting to London and Cambridge, but we have almost exhausted the space for housing along that line. With one exception: **Wendens Ambo**.

At the heart of the pragmatism of this plan is the **flawed Hierarchy principle**, which merely means adding to the largest towns, however much this unbalances them, while small villages stay small.

'Smaller Villages' are described as those with 'a low level of services and facilities'. But this includes **Wendens Ambo, which has the best railway station in Uttlesford**. An outstanding facility! No justification is given for this anomaly, which lies at the heart of all the traffic congestion of Saffron Walden.

If building a railway is an unrealistic option in the short to medium term, then surely it is pragmatic to build houses close to **all** the railway stations for all the additional thousands of commuters to London and Cambridge that the Local Plan will attract.

Instead the plan proposes extensive housing in places like **Thaxted** where there is no possibility of commuters cycling to the nearest station.

On page 12 para 46 it says, 'In the long term we will need to give consideration to one or more **Garden Communities**.' I think 2040 is quite long term, so let me give you a vision of a sustainable future:

- **Break through the concrete wall** at the end of Stansted airport and extend the railway.
- Lead the **railway along a new green corridor** with cycle lanes alongside, in a sweeping arc towards Dunmow.
- At Dunmow, connect with the Flitch Way, restoring the line destroyed by Beeching, to **connect with Braintree**, Colchester and along existing railway lines to the ports of Harwich and Felixtowe.
- **Restore the ancient forest** in the Takeley and Little Easton parishes, and punctuate it with **Forest Villages**, connected by cycle and mobility scooter routes in the Velo City concept <https://journal.urbantranscripts.org/article/the-future-of-the-countryside-velocity-principles-in-a-post-pandemic-world-petra-marko/>, in which urban sprawl is replaced by sustainable communities with new and unique identities.
- Enable commuters to **cycle from their forest village to stations** along the route for swift commuter travel to London, Cambridge and the airport.
- **Build a bridge for cycles and pedestrians to connect the stranded Flitch Way** to Bishops Stortford. That is an anomaly that should have been resolved decades ago!
- Imagine the **economic possibilities** when this line connects Uttlesford with Oxford, Cambridge, Stansted Airport and the coast!

Of course such a railway is not in the gift of UDC, but **unless you have the vision and the passion, it will never happen.**

At the very least, **draw the line on a map** and ensure that nothing is built to prevent the line being built in the second half of this century when finally central government comes on board with your vision!

### Housing

Let me also suggest a vision that all homes should be **carbon negative** in both their construction and their operation. That is:

- Use building materials like cross laminated timber and hemp which have sequestered carbon as they grew and will hold it for centuries
- Use geothermal foundations
- Are insulated to ensure virtually **no energy loss**
- **Export their surplus electricity** to the grid.

All this is perfectly possible. A local company is pioneering it, and it should be part of a dynamic vision for Uttlesford. Of course developers' with vested interests will resist, but without the vision, we won't get there.

### Climate Change

1. This is Core policy 1, but there are **no calculations** to demonstrate how the policies will actually deliver Net Zero by 2030.
2. Para 4.8 cites 2050. Have the goalposts been moved?
3. There is no mention of local, **community energy**.
4. What is the position on Solar energy during the lifetime of this plan? What plan for wind farms? Solar panels over car parks, industrial estates and shopping centres? Schools and farm buildings?

5. We will not get to Net Zero without generating our own clean energy.

### **Economy**

1. Economic development is cited at **Chesterford Research Park, but there are no strategic housing allocations proposed** at Great Chesterford, still less at Little Chesterford, which flies in the face of the policy for active or sustainable travel to workplaces.
2. The plan is severely lacking in **a vision for a post fossil fuel economy** and the immense opportunities for growth in new, sustainable technologies.
3. Instead, the plan focuses on largely low or semi-skilled employment in and around the **airport**, even though air travel has yet to develop a feasible plan for a zero carbon world. The airport is a major employer now, mostly of low skilled jobs, but UDC should express **a vision for the inevitable low carbon economy.**
4. We are amazingly well located close to Cambridge, the **crucible of scientific innovation** and so are remarkably well placed to bring those ideas into production and thereby create exciting, high skilled jobs in a new, sustainable economy.

### **Final points**

1. Saffron Walden: once again there is no housing allocation on transport infrastructure side of town. Instead, the old problem prevails of **housing on the wrong side of town.**
2. The new link between Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road will simply concentrate traffic up Mount Pleasant Road, across the narrow lights on the Debden Road, down Borough Lane, before **adding massively to the traffic jams on the London Road** outside these offices.
3. The affordable housing reduction from 40% to 35% flies in the face of a massive societal need for homes people can afford. Why compromise our ambitions at this stage? When the word 'appropriate', is used, for whom is the reduction 'appropriate'? Let's learn from international examples such as Vienna.
4. As a former teacher and headteacher I have grave reservations about the plan to split the County High. How intimidated do we want children to feel when they start life in a 14 form entry school? Are we expecting teachers to travel between sites? Or do we want to deprive children in the lower school of the expertise of A level teachers?  
**Industrial scale education should have no place in this plan.**