

Uttlesford District Council

Local Plan Panel Meeting - Wednesday 10th April 2024

Public Participation Statement On Behalf Of Littlebury Residents Group (LRG)

Thank you Mr Chair for the opportunity to speak this evening.

As mentioned in the introduction, my name is Tim Bradshaw and I am Deputy Chair of the Littlebury Residents Group.

LRG was formed recently by a group of Littlebury residents concerned about the potential for inappropriate housing development in our village. Our concerns arose from recent moves by Audley End Estate who own the majority of the land around Littlebury.

Approximately 30 responses to the Regulation 18 consultation were submitted by Littlebury villagers expressing concern about potential development and our WhatsApp group currently has over 70 members.

Since the publication of the Regulation 18 responses in March, we have reviewed those relevant to us, particularly the responses from Savills on behalf of Audley End Estate and these have raised further concerns for us. We note that AEE are proposing that land for development in Littlebury is added to the Local Plan, something we strongly oppose and something we ask UDC to resist, for the very reasons that it was excluded in the original draft plan.

On 21st March, several of our committee attended the last Local Plan Panel meeting using the video link and listened with interest to the updates on the Local Plan and the discussions around Site Selection and Larger Villages.

We understand that following the Regulation 18 feedback, the Local Plan settlement hierarchy is to be updated and that some Large Villages may be downgraded to Smaller Villages, particularly where a Larger Village designation had been given to what were effectively multiple hamlets.

What was less clear was whether Smaller Villages might be affected. In particular, we would appreciate clarification on whether any Small Villages are being considered for reclassification to Larger Villages. Can today's meeting provide any clarity?

Our concerns are fuelled by the fact that AEE (via Savills) have lobbied UDC for Littlebury and Wenden's Ambo to be classified as Larger Villages in their Regulation 18 response NDLP1450.

We are strongly opposed to Littlebury being classified as a Larger Village and in fact, as a number of our residents stated in their consultation comments, we suggest that Littlebury would be more appropriately classified as Open Countryside. This is because we believe that the number of amenities and facilities have been overstated in the original assessment. We certainly do not believe that Littlebury fits the profile, or has the infrastructure of, a Larger Village.

Having heard the discussions at the last Local Plan Panel, we wonder if our classification as a Smaller Village rather than Open Countryside may be because the original assessment was based on

Littlebury Parish as a whole - which includes the distinctly separate villages of Littlebury Green and Catmere End - with some of their facilities (such as a museum) being counted as being in Littlebury.

We are aware that UDC have held consultations with Larger Villages recently. We are concerned that if any Smaller Villages are being considered for promotion to Larger Villages, the residents of those villages may miss out on that consultation.

Similarly, we note that UDC are planning 1-1 discussions for any Larger Villages that are considering developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Again, we are concerned that if Littlebury is being considered as a candidate Larger Village, we may miss out on these discussions.

As things stand currently, Littlebury is classified as a Smaller Village in the draft Local Plan. We have no visibility on whether there are any plans to change this. There may be no plans to do so and as such, our concerns may be unfounded.

Are UDC and/or the Local Plan Panel able to provide any clarification on the process being used to finalise the settlement hierarchy and the draft Local Plan and how any affected villages will be engaged in this process?

In particular, are UDC and/or the Local Plan Panel able to provide any reassurance in respect of the classification of Littlebury in the next draft of the Local Plan?

We would welcome your feedback from tonight's meeting.

We also ask that the Littlebury Residents Group is included in any future Local Plan consultation in respect of Littlebury alongside the Littlebury Parish Council.

Thank you.