

PPWG 23 May 2018

I wish to talk on two separate subjects.

The first concerns the Housing trajectory and five-year land supply - Appendix 2.

There are two ways of calculating the 5-year land supply, known as “Liverpool” and “Sedgefield”. The council has always used the harsher Sedgefield method and this was not a problem when it comfortably met the 5-year target.

Last year problems emerged and I suggested that it changed to the Liverpool method. This method had been accepted by the government and the Courts, especially where a district, like Uttlesford, had a good record on delivery. And it would have meant that Uttlesford would meet or have been reasonably close to its target.

The planning department did not agree with me and continued with the Sedgefield system.

Now it’s proposed to change to Liverpool. This sudden change of heart is very welcome. It’s a shame it didn’t come earlier.

My second point concerns the Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Appendix 8. I was very pleased to see the report which is an update of a Plan produced a year ago. That earlier Plan was not presented to the Group, who were merely shown a short summary of it.

The Plan does concentrate on the infrastructure needed for possible garden settlements, but it includes details of infrastructure requirements in other areas. So, I was surprised with the comment that for other locations it didn’t expect that growth would “result in the need for additional strategic infrastructure” (paragraph 2.1.1). Since the district is anticipating an extra 10,000 homes outside of these garden settlements during the Plan period this seemed unduly optimistic.

But the report does include some costings. Should the council decide to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (a CIL) then these could be a very useful starting point.

Five years ago I wrote suggesting that a CIL be introduced and since that time the council’s position has gone from opposition to lukewarm support.

I do appreciate that there are arguments about whether a CIL is most appropriate for large developments but there will still be a considerable amount of building in other parts of the district. I believe that the benefits of a CIL far outweigh any disadvantages. Having now completed the basic work on infrastructure needs then the council is surely in a good position to start work on a CIL almost immediately.

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May 2018

