Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041

March 2026

Foreword

This is our Local Plan. It sets out a vision and planning framework for how Uttlesford should develop and grow until the year 2041. It includes how and where high quality new homes should be built, where sites for new jobs should be placed, and what infrastructure, including schools, health care, community and leisure facilities, retail as well as transport will be needed to support them.

The Local Plan conforms with the latest national planning policy guidelines. It is based on the very latest evidence and is prepared after extensive engagement with the views of people in our communities.

Uttlesford is a great place in which to live and work. It is uniquely beautiful with a rich natural and man-made heritage, while it is also home to significant areas of employment.

Not only is our District one of the highest quality places to live in the country, but it is also one of the most expensive. Providing for more houses of the right type and tenure will help to make our housing more affordable and available, supporting people to build their lives and bring up their families in Uttlesford.

The amount of development we have to provide will have some effect on the area and bring about change. But, with this Plan and its supporting evidence, we will be able to ensure that new development is in the most appropriate locations, that it suits their surroundings and that it is also supported by the appropriate infrastructure.

Tackling climate change challenges is central to the Plan's themes and policies and demonstrates our vision to plan and care for not only the interests of today's communities but also those to come in the future. This Plan seeks to ensure that we look after what is best about Uttlesford, that we help the District grow and develop in a way that protects its historic assets and rural features, whilst enhancing and strengthening its qualities in a sustainable way.

John Evans

Councillor John C. Evans
Portfolio Holder for Planning
March 2026

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Chapter 1

Introduction

What is the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 to 2041?

1.1 This is the new Local Plan for Uttlesford District Council, which will replace the existing Adopted Local Plan 2005[1]. 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. The Local Plan sets out 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:

- placing climate change mitigation and adaptation at the heart of the strategy
- conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment
- achieving well-designed and aesthetically beautiful developments

1 UDC (2005) Uttlesford Local Plan 2005.
Local Plan 2005 - Uttlesford District Council

- supporting the local economy and future economic opportunities
- ensuring that development is accompanied by supporting infrastructure, including new or additional services and facilities, and
- maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of residents and for future generations.

1.3 The **Spatial Strategy** and policies within this Local Plan respond to the issues and opportunities affecting the District, identified through detailed evidence or from previous stages of consultation, or by working with key stakeholders.

1.4 Within the document, our policies are labelled as either 'Core' Policies (which are of a strategic nature) or 'Development' Policies (which are of a non-strategic nature). The Core (or Strategic) Policies set out appropriate scales of development, and other key requirements to inform how development comes forward that are of importance 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 or effect. 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 will form part of the statutory development plan for Uttlesford (see **Figure 1.1** below) and will be used to determine 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 website[2]. These comments were used to develop the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** of the Plan which fed directly into the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18).

1.8 A Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) version of the Plan was published for consultation in November 2023 and set out the Council's preferred **Spatial Strategy**. We received around 5,000 comments to the Draft Plan, which have helped to inform changes to the the Plan.

Why are we Producing a New Local Plan?

1.9 The Council's current Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and is undoubtedly now out-of-date. It is 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)[3] in 2012 and subsequent amendments, which substantially changed the Government's planning policy. This new national policy includes a requirement to review and update Local Plans every five years.

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

1.11 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council has far less control over planning for its District than is desirable and appropriate for it as a 'Place Maker' as described under planning legislation. 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, as it is much more difficult to plan effectively for infrastructure where speculative and unplanned development comes forward in a piecemeal manner, and
- ensure that development makes an appropriate contribution to tackling climate change, delivering Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery and any other planning related policies the Council may wish to develop.

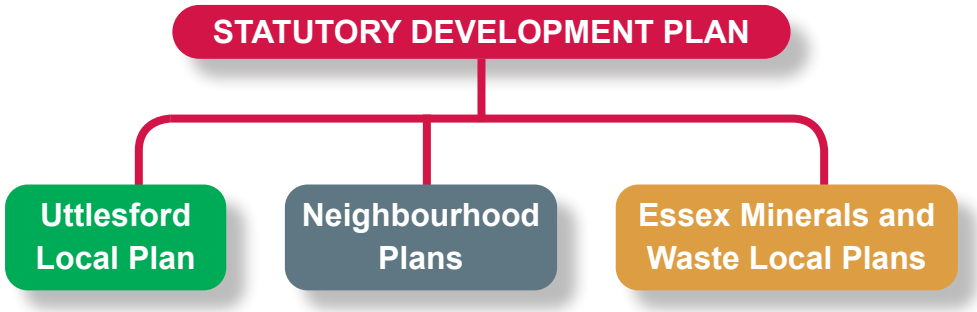
2 UDC (2021) Community Stakeholder Forum. Consultation and the Community Stakeholder Forum - Uttlesford District Council
3 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK

The Development Plan

1.12 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 Made Neighbourhood Plans prepared by the community.

1.13 These documents together make up the 'Development Plan' for the District **(Figure 1.1).** All planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the 'Development Plan' taken as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Figure 1.1: The documents that make up the Uttlesford Development Plan



1.14 The Development Plan for Uttlesford District includes the Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP)[4] and the Essex and Southend-On-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP)[5] 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.

1.15 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

1.16 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 eight Neighbourhood Plans[6] 'made' in Uttlesford for the following communities:

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

1.17 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 2012[7].

1.18 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 website[8]. We encourage communities to consider this Local Plan, since being in conformity with it will help to future proof their Neighbourhood Plans.

1.19 This Plan identifies '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.**

4 Essex County Council (2014) Essex Minerals Local Plan. essex-minerals-local-plan-adopted-july-2014.pdf
5 Essex County Council (2017) Essex and Southend-On-Sea Waste Local Plan. waste-local-plan-2017-compressed.pdf
6 UDC (2024) Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood plans - Uttlesford District Council
7 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/637. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
8 UDC (2024) Community Led Planning. Community led planning - Uttlesford District Council

National Planning Policy

1.20 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development and is complemented by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)[9] which provides additional guidance for practitioners.

1.21 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 for examination 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.

1.22 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

1.23 In developing the Local Plan, the Council has worked collaboratively with adjoining authorities, Essex County Council and other organisations (known as 'duty to co-operate' 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, health, London Stansted Airport, and the recreational impact on Hatfield Forest.

1.24 Further details on the extent of collaboration can be found within the Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper and Statements of Common Ground, saved on the Council's website here[10].

9 MHCLG (2024) Planning Practice Guidance. Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK
10 UDC (2024) Duty to Cooperate. Duty to Cooperate - Uttlesford District Council

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.25 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process tests how the Plan, its **Spatial Strategy**, allocated sites and policies achieve sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is defined by the NPPF as 'meeting the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[11].

1.26 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004[12] 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.

1.27 The SA, incorporating the SEA, has been undertaken throughout the plan-making process and has been updated as an integral part of preparing the Local Plan. It will assist with arrangements for monitoring and implementation of the Local Plan. Full details of the process and the assessment outcomes can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal Report[13].

11 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK
12 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) SI 2004 c. 5. Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
13 AECOM (2024) Sustainability Appraisal Report of the Publication Local Plan. Uttlesford_Local_Plan_SA_-_SA_Report_240730.pdf

Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.28 The designation, protection and restoration of European wildlife sites is embedded in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017[14], 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)[15] take account of the UK's departure from the EU.

1.29 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.

1.30 Assessments have been published at each stage in the Local Plan process. The 'Publication' (Regulation 19) Plan is accompanied by the HRA Report which can also be found on our website[16].

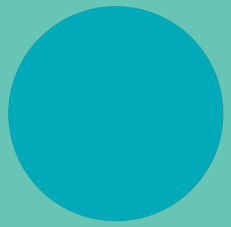
Evidence Base

1.31 The Plan is accompanied by a wide range of evidence which was commissioned to inform and support its preparation. The evidence has been prepared in accordance with national planning policy and guidance and has also taken account of the feedback received during the Draft Plan (Regulation 18) consultation. The evidence is proportionate to the scale and nature of the process as advised by national planning policy. All evidential studies are available on the Council's website[17].

14 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 No. 1012. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
15 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) ISBN 978-0-11-117657-3. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
16 AECOM (2024) Habitat Regulations Appraisal Regulation 19. Simon Gosling Report Uttlesford Local Plan 2024-06-21
17 UDC (2024) Regulation 19 Evidence Base. https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/4915/The-new-Local-Plan

Chapter 2

Spatial Portrait



Introduction

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

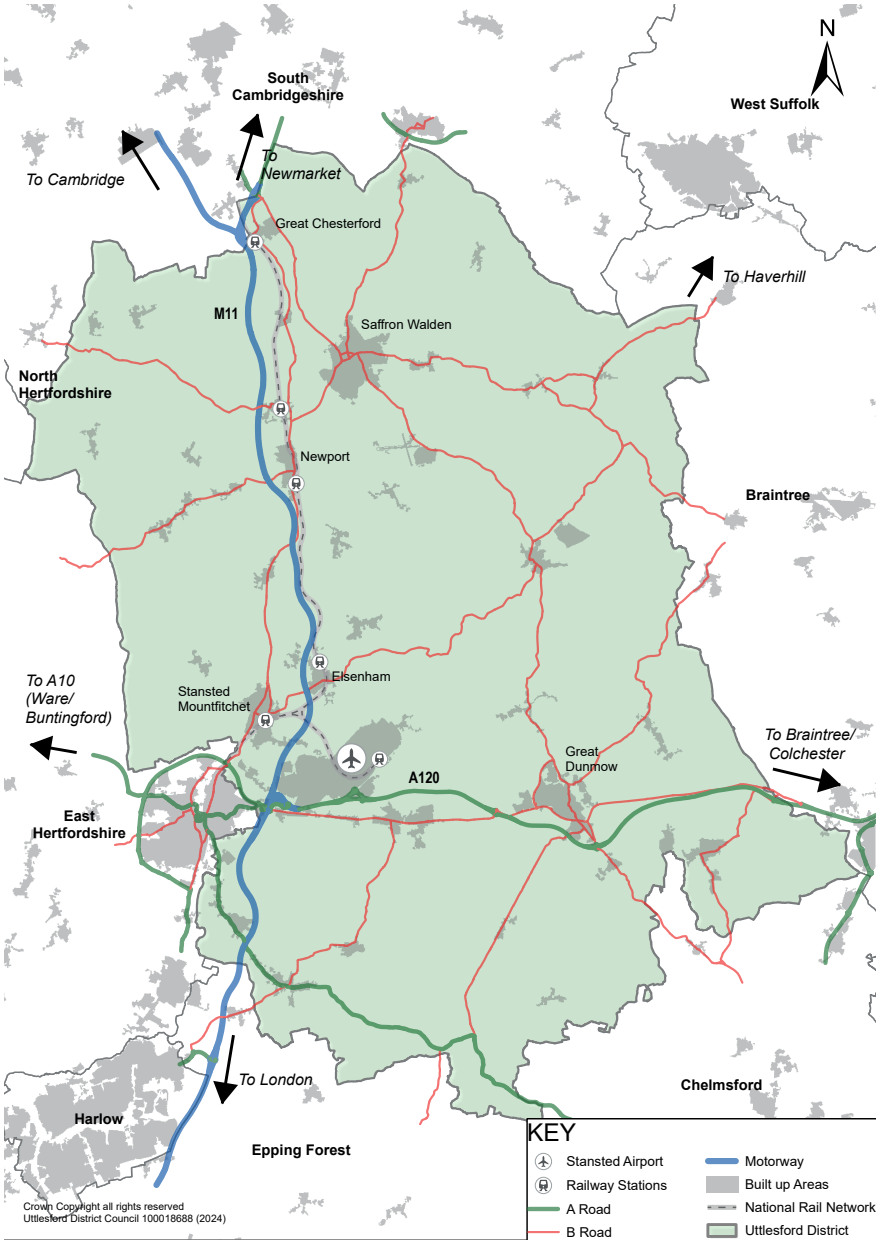
National Context

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 there may 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**).

Regional Context

2.3 Uttlesford, is located in the north-western corner of Essex, and borders two counties, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, with which it shares both planning issues and economic opportunities. The influence of the

Figure 2.1: Uttlesford District context map



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. Uttlesford's regional context is shown in **Figure 2.1.**

2.4 Uttlesford operates in a two-tier local authority area to which Uttlesford functions as a District Council and which is surrounded by the Districts of East Herts, Epping Forest, Chelmsford, Braintree, and South Cambridgeshire. The District falls within Essex County Council as the county council tier. The closest towns beyond the District boundaries are Bishop's Stortford, located next to Junction 8 of the M11 motorway on the western boundary and Braintree, which lies just beyond the eastern edge of Uttlesford along the A120. Cambridge, Chelmsford and Harlow are also accessible, and all provide a greater range of services.

2.5 The District is connected regionally through the major roads of the M11 and the A120, and by rail through the West Anglia main line which runs through the District and serves Stansted Airport. Stansted Airport is regionally and nationally significant providing international passenger and freight links for the District and surrounding region.

2.6 The Council has constructive engagement 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.

2.7 The wider eastern 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 District forms part of the UK innovation corridor, forming connecting businesses from London to Cambridge and further north into the Midlands[18]. 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 East[19], 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.

2.8 The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB)[20] 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, and
4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

2.9 Essex County Council has several initiatives that impact on

18 UK Innovation Corridor (2023) https://innovationcorridor.uk/
19 Transport East (2023) https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/
20 North Essex Economic Board (2023) North Essex Economic Board (NEEB)

Uttlesford's spatial growth strategy. The County Council is a key partner in its strategic role for infrastructure and service provision in a two-tier level local government structure. Along with its role as the Highway Authority, Local Transport Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, Lead Authority for Education, Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, and Lead Adviser on Public Health, the provision of libraries, and seeks to influence new development to best meet/ has statutory responsibilities for adult and social care (Care Act 2014) and children's services (Children Act 1989). Since 2020, it is playing a leading role for Essex authorities by delivering the recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission and is the responsible authority for delivering the Greater Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

2.10 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 masterplanning, 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.

2.11 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. The County Council is currently developing Local Transport Plan (LTP4) that will cover the period up to 2050 and anticipate adoption in 2026[21]. This first stage is aiming to achieve milestones against three strategic themes:

- supporting People: Health, Wellbeing, and Independence
- creating Sustainable Places and Communities, and
- connecting People, Places and Businesses.

2.12 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.

2.13 The Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) was set up in mid-2020 to address the national Climate Change

21 Essex County Council (2024) Local Transport Plan 4. Local Transport Plan | Essex County Council

Commission goals to achieve net zero carbon by 2050[22]. 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 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 report's recommendations are now incorporated into a Climate Action Plan with a focused delivery programme over the coming years. Uttlesford forms part of the Climate Focus Area (CFA), which is formed of the Blackwater and Colne River Catchment Areas, to accelerate action and provide exemplars, for learning and innovation.

Uttlesford Today

2.14 Uttlesford covers a total land area of around 250 square miles and had a population of 91,300 in 2021[23]. The District is situated along the M11 motorway, 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, Colchester and the International Port of Harwich to the east and Stansted Airport and Bishop's Stortford, and the M11 to the west of the District.

2.15 Between 2011 and 2021 the population of Uttlesford has grown by 15%, from 79,400 in 2011. This is a faster rate of growth than the average for England as a whole, which has grown by 6.6%, although there are other council areas that have grown more than Uttlesford. Nearby Cambridge has grown by 17.6% over the same period.

2.16 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.

22 Essex Climate Action Commission (2023) Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral. Net Zero - Making Essex Carbon Neutral (2023).pdf
23 ONS (2021) Census 2021. www.ons.gov.uk/census
24 ONS (2019) Mapping income deprivation at a local authority level. Mapping income deprivation at a local authority level - Office for National Statistics

2.17 Uttlesford is an affluent area, which is ranked the 8th least deprived local authority in England[24]. Although this is the case 18% of children live in low-income families, after housing costs[25]. The median house price for the District in 2022 was £459,000, which is 67% above the national average[26]. 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. This has meant that the median house price in Uttlesford has become 13.2 times higher than median full-time earnings[27].

2.18 The three key settlements provide the focal points for and main service centres to the surrounding rural hinterlands:

2.19 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 (ONS), 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.

2.20 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 Bishop's Stortford and Braintree.

25 Essex County Council (2019) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Uttlesford JSNA Profile 2019 | Essex Open Data
26 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973
27 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973

2.21 Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest settlement in Uttlesford. It has an historic core and with the construction of the railway the town increased in size. The 20th and 21st centuries have seen considerable development south of the railway line, especially with the redeveloped Rochford nurseries. The town is located just north of Bishop's Stortford and to the west of Stansted Airport, having extensive connections to the M11 and A120 transport corridors.

2.22 **Key opportunities and challenges:**

- providing sufficient housing including affordable housing for people to rent and to part-purchase through shared ownership schemes
- providing supported and specialist housing and health 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, green spaces 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
- addressing the wider determinants of health and areas of deprivation that cause inequalities within our communities, and
- to develop and continue to sustain the creative and cultural economy in the District.

Environmental Context

2.23 Part of the District is located on a low ridge of chalk hills that run from the southwest to the northeast through rolling countryside. This makes for a globally unique[28] chalk stream habitat, which is shown in **Figure 2.2.** There are 11 chalk streams in Uttlesford which are one of the rarest habitats globally with around 85% of these found in England. Currently, the only chalk stream habitat with a national designation is Debden Water Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

2.24 Uttlesford has a range of important sites for biodiversity, protected by national and local designations. These include 282[29] Local Wildlife Sites and 14 nationally designated sites including 12 SSSIs and two National Nature Reserves (NNRs). SSSIs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. NNRs are non-statutory designations, designated by Natural England as shown in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.2.**

28 Skykes, T., Gething, K. and Stubbington, R. (2022) Why does the protection of 'England's rainforest's matter so much? World Economic Forum. Why we need to protect England's chalk streams | World Economic Forum
29 Essex County Council (2023) Local Wildlife Sites. Local Wildlife Sites | Essex Wildlife Trust

Table 2.1: Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves In Uttlesford

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

2.25 Uttlesford has a number of woodlands, with Hatfield Forest being the largest, located just south of Stansted Airport and extending to over 403ha with a mix of deciduous Ancient Woodland, Wood Pasture and Parkland. It was notified as an SSSI in 1985, the largest SSSI in Uttlesford. It is also designated as a National Nature Reserve. It is the only remaining example of an intact Royal Hunting Forest. It is a unique landscape which is a mix of wood pasture, semi natural broadleaved woodland, scrub, and plantation woodland[30]. 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 loss[31]. A smaller area of Ancient Woodland in the north-west of the District, Hales Wood is also designated as a National Nature Reserve.

2.26 A climate and ecological emergency was declared for Uttlesford in 2019[32]. This committed the Council to achieving net zero by 2030 in terms of the Council's operations and to protect and enhance our local biodiversity. Biodiversity focus and action in Uttlesford has mainly been confined to designated sites, however there are examples of thriving biodiversity in other locations.

2.27 **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

30 National Trust (2024) Our work at Hatfield Forest. Our work at Hatfield Forest | Essex | National Trust
31 Footprint Ecology (2022) Hatfield Forest Visitor Survey and Impact Management. Publications - Footprint Ecology
32 UDC (2019) Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 - 2030. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY.pdf

controls, monitoring and enforcement processes, which will also reduce fuel bills

- to adopt and implement the Hatfield Forest Mitigation Strategy developed in conjunction with neighbouring Districts, Natural England, and the National Trust to mitigate visitor pressure and impact and preserve the value of Hatfield Forest NNR, 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.

Economic Context

2.28 Uttlesford is a predominantly rural District but is nonetheless well-connected and located on a strategic growth corridor between Cambridge and London. It includes strategic road, rail and air links and the large-scale economic drivers of Stansted Airport and Chesterford Research Park.

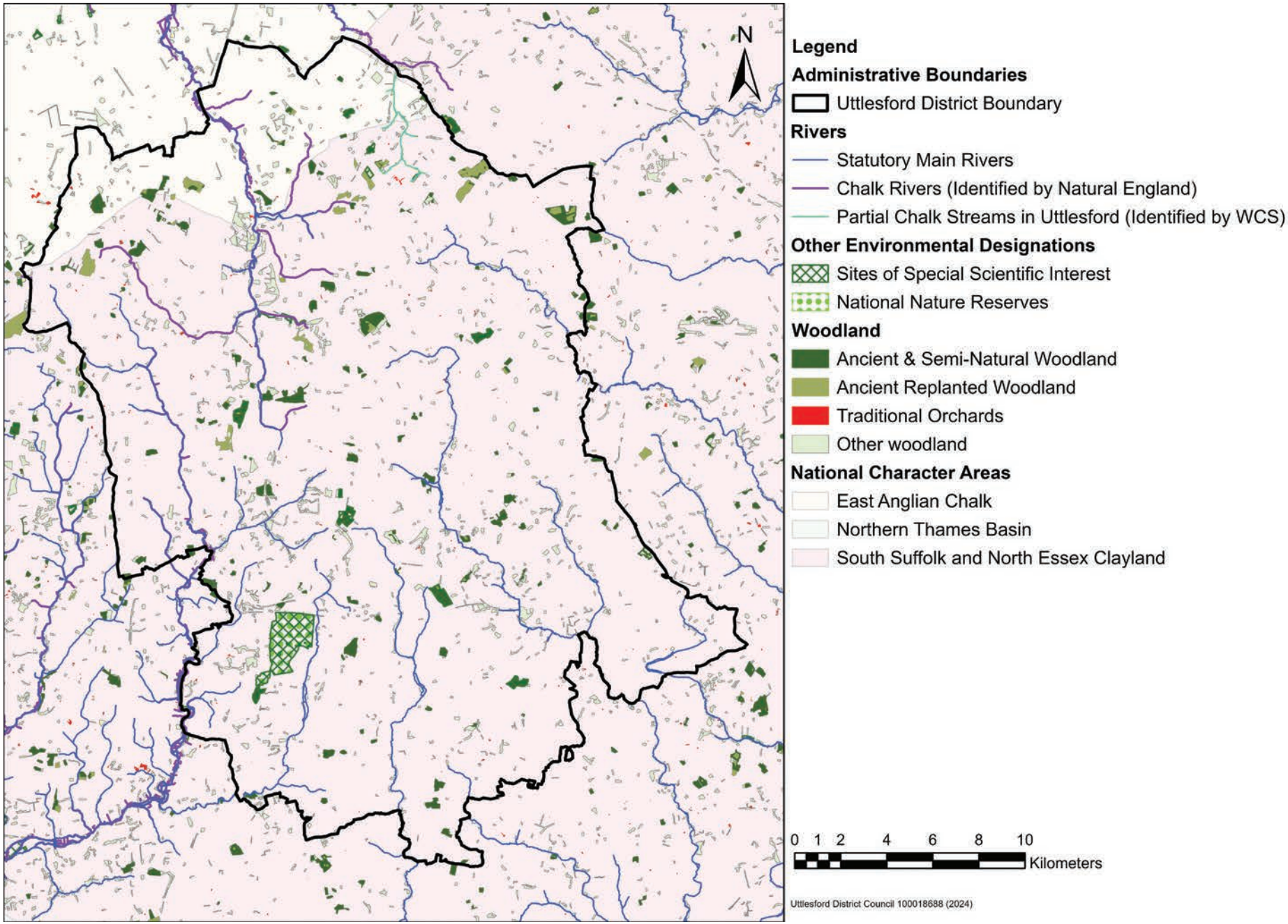
2.29 The District's vibrant market towns, rural centres and the rural economy are important to the area's economy, as centres for retail, heritage and culture, leisure and tourism and business. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data (2021)[33], Uttlesford has 63.2% of its population recorded as economically active. On this basis, 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. The Economic Needs Assessment also highlights a specific lack of industrial supply, particularly around Bishop's Stortford and M11 Junction 8, this being due to a 99.6% occupancy level within the industrial market[34].

London Stansted Airport

2.30 London Stansted Airport has a significant impact on the District, with the area around it experiencing considerable housing and employment pressure and accompanying transport challenges. Since 2013, the Airport has been

33 ONS (2021) Census 2021. www.ons.gov.uk/census
34 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf

Figure 2.2: Environmental context of Uttlesford



owned by the Manchester Airports Group (MAG), who are required by Government to prepare a Masterplan for its ground-based transport activities and to help provide the rationale for the transport investment necessary to enable the Airport's growth. These Masterplans are recommended to be updated every 5 years and the most recent Masterplan was produced in 2015 and is currently being reviewed. This will enable future development of the Airport to be given due consideration in the planning process.

2.31 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 create employment opportunities, including the consented Northside site for 65,000m^2 employment uses. There are associated plans for improvements to long-distance bus and rail services, the motorway junction and the local road network. Access to and around the Airport at Junction 8 of the M11 and from the A120 are potential constraints to growth and are considered within the Local Plan.

2.32 The Airport is the biggest single-site employer in the East of England and is currently the fourth busiest airport in the UK[35], supporting over 12,000 jobs across more than 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.

2.33 Stansted Airport also contributes to education provision in the District with the opening of the Stansted Airport College in 2019. The college has been at the forefront of recognising the importance of having a skilled aviation

35 Civil Aviation Authority (2023) UK airport data. UK airport data December 2023 | UK Civil Aviation Authority

sector and was the first purpose-built college at a UK airport. 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.

2.34 The Airport received a resolution to grant permission to grow its capacity to 51 million passengers per annum in December 2025. 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 considers, 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 which will continue to be explored further.

Chesterford Research Park

2.35 This is a major 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 32,000m^2 of commercial floorspace and in 2021 there were 26 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.

2.36 **Key opportunities and challenges:**

- continue to support a range of employment opportunities across Uttlesford to meet local needs
- 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
- 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, and
- to promote sustainable and active travel modes at Chesterford Research Park and Stansted.

Social and Transport Infrastructure

2.37 The District is located in a key transport focal point between London and Cambridge with ease of access to both cities. Its location on this important economic corridor means that transport infrastructure is key to enable this growth 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 (and provides access to the Haven Ports, including Freeport East). The West Anglian Mainline and National Highways are the highway authority for these routes. The transport network provides connections between the key settlements in Uttlesford with the villages and hamlets, albeit many of these are via minor roads.

2.38 In Uttlesford, there are many transport issues identified with noticeable congestion hotspots across the District, including Junction 8 on the M11, where work has been undertaken to increase its capacity. There are also challenges associated with the A120, to which there is a study ongoing to analyse the A120 corridor and mitigate the transport issues faced[36].

2.39 In Uttlesford there is a single rail connection, the West Anglia railway line, which runs from London to Cambridge with stations at Stansted Mountfitchet, Elsenham, Newport, Wendens Ambo (Audley End) and Great Chesterford. There is a branch that connects Stansted Airport to the rail network with direct links from the Airport to Stansted Mountfitchet and Wendens Ambo. These rail links provide vital wider connectivity benefits to the District serving both commuter and leisure travel. This is complemented with various bus operators providing vital links to settlements across the District and to improve the viability of these services, the Local Plan allows development in the most sustainable places with the most effective public transport infrastructure.

2.40 Car ownership in the District is very high with 38.0% of households owning two or more cars[37], which is higher than the average for England of 26.1%. This is the highest car ownership in Essex which in some places is required due to the limited public transport options in Uttlesford. In common with many other parts of the country, transport is the key carbon emitter in the District, therefore a reduction in vehicle usage through sustainable transport schemes would help make a strong contribution to the challenges associated with climate change.

2.41 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, which showed the District

36 Jacobs (2024) A120 Corridor Study Revised Development Scenario. Traffic Impacts of the Uttlesford Local Plan Site Allocations: A120 Corridor
37 ONS (2021) Census 2021. Nomis - 2021 Census Area Profile - Uttlesford Local Authority

to be healthier overall, than the rest of England. It also highlighted health inequalities to which Life Expectancy is 4.1 years lower in men and 0.4 years lower in women in the most deprived areas in the District. It was also revealed that 74.5% of adults are physically active which is higher than the value for England at 67.3%[38].

2.42 At the time of the 2021 Census, 13.8% of residents had no formal qualifications, which 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 three state secondary schools, 38 state primary schools and one 'all through' school providing both secondary and primary education. The three secondary schools are Forest Hall School in Stansted, Joyce Frankland Academy in Newport, Saffron Walden County High School in Saffron Walden and the 'all through' school is Helena Romanes School in Great Dunmow[39].

2.43 **Key opportunities and challenges:**

- contribute towards reducing car and vehicle dependency and maximise opportunities for integrated transport planning and sustainable modes of travel such as accessible, clean bus services linked to rail services

38 Public Health England (2019) Uttlesford Local Authority Health Profile. Local Authority Health Profiles - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care
39 LUC (2024) Uttlesford Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Uttlesford_Infrastructure_Delivery_Plan_for_Regulation_19_Consultation.pdf

- helping to ensure 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 best use Uttlesford's strategic location with sustainable business development
- 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 reducing health inequalities within the most deprived areas
- to locate a new secondary school in an appropriate location that minimises students' need for travel and meet the capacity arising from existing and new developments
- ensuring a sufficient supply of childcare and early learning opportunities in accordance with new growth patterns
- ensuring primary, community mental health and acute healthcare, including ambulance services are delivered to meet the capacity needs arising from existing and new developments, and
- balancing health facility and service provision with new growth patterns.

Heritage

2.44 Uttlesford is fortunate to benefit from a rich heritage within a range of historic, diverse settlements that span several periods of history. The District contains over 3,700 listed buildings (around a third of those in Essex), and over 4,000 archaeological sites such as the Scheduled Monument at Great Chesterford. 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.

2.45 In Uttlesford there are 39 conservation areas, these consist of many village and market town centres in the District that contain a diverse array of listed buildings, which contribute to the built heritage of Uttlesford. The most recent designation of a conservation area is in Smith's Green which was approved by Cabinet on 2 November 2023.

2.46 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 in the 12th century and Little Easton Lodge, a former Victorian Gothic style stately home in Little Easton. The heritage of Uttlesford extends into nature, with Hatfield Forest being one of the finest preserved royal hunting forests in England.

2.47 **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
- preserving the significance of heritage assets will help to contribute to and enhance local character and distinctiveness, and
- incorporating historic buildings/monuments into new places/open spaces to enable them to be understood and be enjoyed, including becoming centrepieces or waymarkers in new development.

Chapter 3

Spatial Vision and 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 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 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, historic 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 development to achieve net zero standards. 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 the 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 a focus on nature recovery, greater biodiversity and increased woodland. The rivers and streams of Uttlesford will be protected and enhanced, and together with multi-functional 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, regional, national, and international scale. As the East of England's largest employment site and an international gateway to travel and freight, London Stansted Airport will continue to be supported. Its advantage in providing economic growth and connectivity opportunities but with great emphasis on ensuring its environmental impacts are managed and mitigated where they cannot be avoided. The north of the District, with its proximity to Cambridge, will benefit from appropriate improved links into the high-skilled 'Cambridge Phenomenon', supporting economic growth at Chesterford Research Park and elsewhere. The implications for the growth of this sector in Uttlesford will be captured and as the sector grows beyond Cambridge, the exchange of ideas, technology and knowledge will be promoted.

Social/Community
The identified housing needs 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 (SO) informing the Uttlesford Local Plan 2041

Environmental: To Minimise the Environmental Impact of Development	
SO1: To plan for the climate and ecological emergency, avoid or mitigate the environmental impacts from development, including reducing energy usage and embodied carbon of new builds	SO4: Protect Uttlesford's water resources by delivering developments that efficiently use local resources, prioritise water conservation, use the latest sustainable consumption techniques and avoid abstraction of chalk aquifers that adversely affects Chalk Rivers and Streams. Ensure new development is resilient to the impacts of climate change including flooding, drought and heatwaves.
SO2: Protect high-quality landscapes by ensuring new development conserves and enhances landscape assets and achieves high quality design standards.	
SO3: Protect and preserve the natural environment, have full regard to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Protect and maximise opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain and the enhancement of Uttlesford's natural capital assets, including soils, woodlands, hedges, watercourses and ponds to capture and store carbon as well as providing for appropriate access for health and recreational benefits, together with effective multi-functional Green Infrastructure. Protect and restore the natural ecology and health of the District's chalk streams and rivers.	SO5: Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land whilst balancing the needs for local nature recovery, rural employment and diversification.
	SO6: Protect and enhance the historic environment, including protecting and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and their settings, including archaeology.

Economic: Recognise and Support the Economic Opportunities in the District	
SO7:	Recognise the influential role of the District's employment offer, including the international gateway of Stansted Airport, including the Northside development and the research and development offer at Great Chesterford Research Park, by embracing the planned expansion, whilst seeking to maximise their sustainability and infrastructure delivery.
SO8:	Foster sustainable economic development opportunities by promoting a strong, diverse, resilient, sustainable, and competitive economy, supported with a range of rewarding employment and learning opportunities and a multi-skilled workforce in a range of sectors including tourism, high-tech, biotech, research and development, aviation, sustainable agricultural and rural business.
SO9:	Allocate sufficient land to accommodate the identified development need.

Community/ Social: Provide Adequate and Timely Infrastructure to Support Development	
SO10:	Help sustain existing and deliver new local community facilities, education, sport, leisure, open space, health and retail provision through development to promote healthy, attractive, sustainable and safe communities.
SO11:	Meet the identified housing needs, including provision for specialist and supported housing needs (e.g., elderly/ disabled) and ensure that an appropriate contribution of affordable housing is met.
SO12:	Prioritise increased opportunities for high-quality and safe travel by public transport and active travel encouraging modal shift away from the car.

Chapter 4

Spatial Strategy

Introduction

4.1 The **Spatial Vision** for Uttlesford District up to 2041, as set out in **Chapter 3**, will be achieved through implementation of our **Spatial Strategy.** The **Spatial Strategy** identifies the appropriate locations for development, the level of housing to plan for, the amount of employment land to meet our needs 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 protect the environment.

4.2 Our **Spatial Strategy** for Uttlesford is shown in **Figures 4.1** and **4.2.**

4.3 The **Spatial Strategy** is underpinned by five core (strategic) policies:

- **Core Policy 1:** Addressing Climate Change
  Sets out criteria for development to ensure they respond to the challenge of climate change appropriately
- **Core Policy 2:** Meeting Our Housing Needs
  Specifies the scale and location of new housing, as well as ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
- **Core Policy 2a:** Local Plan Review
- **Core Policy 3:** Settlement Hierarchy
  Classifies the settlements in Uttlesford according to their role and service function
- **Core Policy 4:** Meeting Business and Employment Needs
  Specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across Uttlesford in appropriate locations
- **Core Policy 5:** Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
  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 focusing on their individual needs. These are set out in **Chapters 5 to 8**. The four **Area Strategies** are for:

- North Uttlesford, including Great Chesterford, Newport and Saffron Walden
- South Uttlesford, including Great Dunmow and Takeley
- Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham, and
- Thaxted and the Rural Area (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 12.** 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 Policies from the previous Uttlesford Local Plan have been replaced and updated by the policies set out in this Plan. These are clearly annotated and listed by **Appendix 1.**

Figure 4.1: Uttlesford Local Plan 2041 – Spatial Strategy

North Uttlesford - Including: Great Chesterford, Newport and Saffron Walden

- 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, School expansion(s) in the North Secondary School Planning Group may be supported if it is shown that such options are feasible, necessary to meet local demand and aligned with strategies to deliver wider school place planning objectives.
- Great Chesterford and Newport are recognised as Local Rural Centres to reflect their importance in the Settlement Hierarchy and their sustainability, good public transport connections including railway stations.
- Chesterford Research Park will provide a key location for the expansion and provision of high-quality employment use, supported through the development masterplan.

South Uttlesford – Including: Great Dunmow and Takeley

- Great Dunmow is recognised as a Key Settlement to reflect the role it plays within Uttlesford as one of our three largest and most sustainable settlements.
- Great Dunmow is an historic settlement that has traditional strong townscape character. It is therefore important its 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 and secondary school and health centre.
- Development at Takeley provides an opportunity to strengthen 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 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 new residents.
- The development must also provide for extensive areas of open space including comprehensive buffers in respect of 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 and celebrated by good landscape design, with regard to their settings as well as appropriate design.
- Improvements to access and usability of the Flitch Way in the south as a strategic linear route that could be used for greater east-west connectivity.
- The planned expansion of Stansted Airport and large-scale increase in warehousing provision will provide a key focus for employment, along with improvements to local sustainable transport.

Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham

- Stansted Mountfitchet is recognised as a Key Settlement to reflect the role it plays within Uttlesford as one of our three largest and most sustainable settlements.
- Stansted Mountfitchet is an historic settlement that has a traditional strong townscape character. It is therefore important its identity is protected, and the quality of the townscape is enhanced.
- Elsenham is identified as a Local Rural Centre to reflect its role to the local area and to reflect the opportunities the settlement offers for sustainable development, especially with access to the railway station and nearby employment.
- 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 new residents, and
- In the south of the District, the Green Belt will be maintained, with no new allocations proposed in the Green Belt.

Thaxted and Rural Area

- Thaxted is also recognised as a Local Rural Centre to reflect its role within the wider rural eastern part of the District. No strategic development is identified here to reflect the limited opportunities for expanding infrastructure and its comparatively less sustainable location within Uttlesford. However, the Council would support the community to explore opportunities for limited development within a Neighbourhood Plan, should they wish to support more modest infrastructure enhancements.
- The high quality of Thaxted's built heritage, landscape and environment are easily recognisable and it is particularly important these qualities are protected.
- 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.
- 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.

Figure 4.2: Key Diagram - Uttlesford's Spatial and Area Strategies

KEY

SITE ALLOCATIONS

Mixed Use

1 **South East Saffron Walden** (879 Dwellings & 2.5 Ha of Employment Land)

Residential

2A **Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane** (270 Dwellings)

2B **East of High Lane North** (55 Dwellings)

3 **Land East of Station Road** (110 Dwellings)

4 **East Takeley/Little Canfield** (1506 Dwellings)

5A **Land either side of the Broadway** (715 Dwellings)

5B **Land between the River Chelmer and B1008, Great Dunmow** (203 Dwellings*)

Employment

6 **Land South of A120 and North of Stortford Road, Little Canfield** (18 Ha of Employment Land)

7 **Land North of Taylors Farm, Takeley Street** (18 Ha of Employment Land)

8 **Water Circle Estate, Gaunts End** (5.5 Ha of Employment Land)

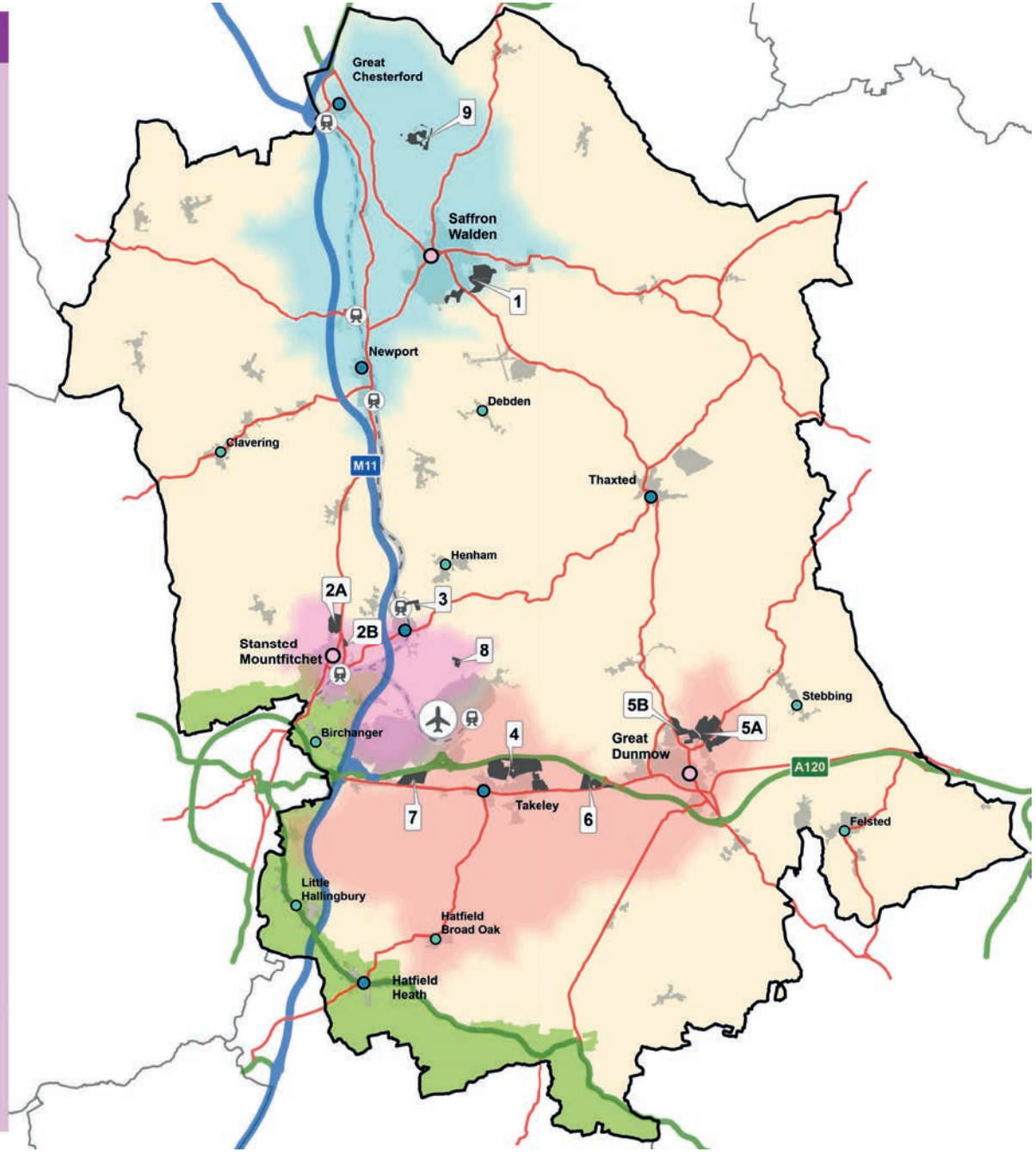
9 **Land at Chesterford Research Park, Little Chesterford** (13.5 Ha of Employment Land)

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

- Key Settlement
- Local Rural Centre
- Large Village

OTHER

- Built up Areas
- Local Plan allocations
- South Area Strategy
- Elsenham and Stansted Area Strategy
- North Area Strategy
- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Rural Areas
- Surrounding District Boundaries
- Uttlesford District Boundary
- Stansted Airport
- Railway Stations
- National Rail Network
- A Road
- B Road
- Motorway



Responding to Climate Change

4.7 There is overwhelming scientific consensus that we are experiencing significant climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a report in 2018 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 2019 and legislates that the UK must be net zero carbon by 2050. It has set 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'[40].

4.8 Key measures where the planning and development process can contribute to achieving 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 subject to the availability of finance to support this ambition
- electrification of small vehicles and the provision of electric charging points
- reducing the reliance on the private car, by delivering opportunities for accessibility to active travel modes and public transport
- reduction in waste and non biodegradable waste to landfill, and
- significant afforestation with woodland and hedgerow planting and restoration of land for example through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain processes, and enhancement and protection to watercourse and ecology.

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 energy use and space heating standards in new buildings. Increasing this 'fabric efficiency' and overall energy efficiency to as high a level as possible, and then requiring the residual energy needs to be met from renewable sources, goes a long way towards the achievement of net zero buildings and lower energy costs.

4.10 However, the energy standards required by the current Building Regulations 2021 (Part L), and the indicative standards for the next update to Part L (Future Homes Standard, 2025) are neither strict enough to make new homes net zero nor energy efficient enough to help meet the UK's carbon budgets. To mitigate climate change in line with the Climate Change Act, we need to require higher

40 Committee on Climate Change (2019) Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. Net Zero - The UK's contribution to stopping global warming - Climate Change Committee

standards through the Local Plan to achieve this. Improving the design of a building by reducing the extent of heat loss areas, the number of junctions and gaps, and by optimising elevation design for winter solar gains are some of the most effective components of an energy efficient design but are not sufficiently covered by Building Regulations. Such measures will instead be required in all new buildings through Local Plan policy.

4.11 The Local Plan therefore requires that new buildings are designed and built to be Net Zero Carbon in operation and should seek to minimise embodied carbon[41, 42]. They must be ultra-low energy, using less energy through greater efficiency, be fossil fuel free, and generate renewable energy on-site to at least match annual energy use. Without these requirements we are adding to the problem of retrofitting buildings in the future to meet the carbon emissions targets. We also need to reduce their 'embodied carbon' during construction and their long-term environmental impact, for example how building materials are sourced and re-used.

4.12 In 2019, the Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and prepared an Action Plan of initiatives to try to address some of the climate change measures required. The annual Action Plan has since been reviewed with the preparation of a Climate Crisis strategy and is focusing on achievable measures such as electric vehicle charging, active travel projects, support for a renewable energy strategy, community-based initiatives, and 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, which have been endangered through pollution and over-abstraction. The Local Plan includes policies to protect the natural environment but also to balance this with increased access to open space and semi-Rural 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. Our Local Plan biodiversity policies focus on the need to place the environment at the fore in development proposals, avoiding the loss of irreplaceable habitats like Ancient Woodlands, protecting trees and hedgerows whilst requiring an enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain over what is statutorily required.

4.14 The final main component of climate change impact is transport, particularly by the private car. The Local Plan places emphasis on the need to reduce this, to support

41 Essex Design Guide (2023) Report 1 Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base. PowerPoint Pre https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/3175/report-1-essex-net-zero-policy-study-technical-evidence-base-july-2023-updated-sept-2025.pdfsentation

42 The Essex Design Guide (2024) Essex Open Legal Advice – Energy policy and Building Regulations. updated-open-advice-re-energy-policy-building-regs-26-2-24-final.pdf

public transport and to encourage new and connected walking and cycling routes. In these ways settlements and new development become more sustainable. The Sustainable and Active Travel policies are designed to encourage use of non-car modes of travel wherever possible. The design of new development layouts will require convenient walking routes to facilities in the area around new housing and/or workplaces. It is acknowledged that with the existing rural settlement pattern across the District, use of the car will, continue but the Plan aims to increase and to promote a greater element of travel choice.

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 (CCSS) that addresses all aspects of climate change, referencing national and Essex Climate Action Commission targets set out in the 'Making Essex Carbon Neutral' 2021 report[43]. The CCSS will form part of the planning application validation checklist. Please note that there is also a separate requirement for an Energy Assessment to comply with **Core Policy 22,** which for major applications should be a full Energy Strategy, or for minor applications should utilize the Essex 'net zero' spreadsheet. The energy assessment may be presented as a section within a CCSS or as a standalone document.

4.16 The CCSS should cover the details listed below and in **Appendix 10,** and in accordance with **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change:**

- adaptation and resilience 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 and Strategy, 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, and
- health and well-being, including open space, culture and accessibility, where these relate to climate adaptation or sustainability.

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

43 Essex County Council (2021) Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral. Net Zero - Making Essex Carbon Neutral (2023).pdf

Core Policy 1 **Addressing Climate Change**

Development proposals must demonstrate how they will mitigate, adapt and be resilient to the impacts of climate change and support an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The following measures should be demonstrated to have been incorporated into design as appropriate to the size and type of development:

i. locating and laying out development to reduce the need to travel and to promote the use of public transport and active travel (walking and cycling) by creating or connecting to public or active travel routes and by clustering trip origins and destinations between homes, jobs, services
ii. providing high quality sustainable travel infrastructure and coordinating between contiguous and other development sites in the vicinity to address cumulative impacts and achieve connectivity of sustainable transport mode 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 whenever possible in a ‘circular economy’ approach to development (with reference to **Core Policy 24: Embodied Carbon** where any demolition is proposed)
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 23: Overheating**)
vi. accelerating the expansion of renewable and low carbon energy generation within the District (with reference to **Core Policy 22: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development** and **Core Policy 25: Renewable Energy Infrastructure**)
vii. use of materials with low embodied carbon as far as possible (with reference to **Core Policy 24: 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 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources and Core Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems**)
ix. ensuring that new developments are provided with recycling and waste disposal infrastructure, and
x. promoting and maintaining a network of connected, accessible and multi-functional green spaces to include biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery as appropriate and encouraging tree and hedgerow planting (with reference to **Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure**).

All applications for new development of one or more dwellings or greater than 100m^2 of non-residential floorspace, and all major refurbishment and major change of use, are expected to demonstrate the above by submitting a Climate Change and

Sustainability Statement covering the topics and level of detail proportionate to the scale and type of development as per **Appendix 10.**

Residential development over ten units and non-residential development over 1000m^2 floorspace or 0.5ha will be required to cover more detail and a wider range of topics in the Climate Change and 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 and construction methods.

For outline proposals, a reduced level of detail is expected but the application should still include an outline Climate Change and Sustainability Statement demonstrating that these issues are being planned for from the outline stage. There will be a requirement for these issues to be satisfactorily addressed through reserved matters.

Meeting Our Housing Needs

4.17 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.

4.18 With these aims, the Plan makes provision for at least 15,211 new homes to be delivered during the Plan period (2021 to 2041) as set out in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs.** This is in excess of the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing for the Uttlesford District up to 2041, as identified in the updated Local Housing Need Assessment of 13,500.

4.19 The Plan makes provision for a supply of housing in excess of the requirement in order to provide for flexibility and contingency and to help ensure the Plan can achieve and maintain a five-year housing land supply, as required by national policy.

Sources of Housing Supply

4.20 A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the Plan period. These will include:

- housing completions (in the period from April 2021 to March 2024)
- existing planning commitments
- strategic allocations made within the Plan (sites of 100 or more dwellings)
- non-strategic allocations (sites of 99 or fewer dwellings) that will be identified through Neighbourhood Plans, 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'.

4.21 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.

4.22 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). 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 Heritage.

4.23 The scale of development at the identified strategic allocations will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.

Core Policy 2 **Meeting Our Housing Needs**

The housing requirement for the Uttlesford District is for 13,500 homes to be delivered in the Plan period between 2021 and 2041.

The Plan provides for at least 15,211 dwellings by 2041 in the interest of providing for flexibility and contingency.

3,738 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Additionally, a further 847 dwellings will be delivered through non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages (547 dwellings) and at Newport (300 dwellings), which is classified as a Local Rural Centre. Additional dwellings will also be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process (including windfalls). The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown by 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)	13,500
Housing completions (April 2021 to March 2024)	2,452
Housing Supply	
Known Commitments	6,795
Strategic Allocations	3,738
Non-Strategic Allocations	847
Windfalls	1,430
Lapse Rate	-51
Total Housing Supply	**15,211**

Strategic Allocations

Development will be supported at strategic allocations where it (a) meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendices 2** to **4** and (b) is in accordance with 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 shows 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
Saffron Walden	Key Settlement	Land South of Radwinter Road and North and South of Thaxted Road	879
Total			**879**

Table 4.4: Strategic Allocations identified for Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Stansted Mountfitchet	Key Settlement	Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane	270
		East of High Lane	55*
Elsenham	Local Rural Centre	Land East of Station Road Elsenham	110
Total			**435**

*this site is below the 100 threshold for strategic development but is regarded as strategic in the context of planning for larger scale development nearby to ensure the site delivers appropriately for the settlement.

Table 4.5: Strategic Allocations identified for South Uttlesford

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Great Dunmow	Key Settlement	NE Great Dunmow	715
		Land between the River Chelmer and the B1008	203
Takeley/ Prior's Green	Local Rural Centre	NE Takeley	1,506
Total			**2,424**

Non-Strategic Allocations

Development will also be supported at non-strategic allocations at the Local Rural Centre of Newport and at the Larger Villages where development is (a) set out within Made Neighbourhood Plans, and (b) is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Non-strategic allocations at Larger Villages and at the Local Rural Centre of Newport will be identified in made Neighbourhood Plans in accordance with the identified housing requirement figures for the Larger Villages as shown within the **Rural Area Strategy** in **Core Policy 19** and for Newport in the North Uttlesford Area Strategy in **Core Policy 6.**

Local Plan Review

4.24 Whilst it is expected that an appropriate five-year land supply position, in accordance with national policy and guidance, will be demonstrated at, or soon after, the adoption of the Local Plan, a Local Plan Review policy is included in case this is not demonstrated at six months after Plan adoption.

4.25 This was identified as a requirement by the Inspectors presiding over the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 Examination process, which was considering housing land supply using data correct at that point in time (April 2025). As there was some uncertainty over the precise figures being projected for April 2026, or later, the Local Plan Review Policy (**Core Policy 2a**) has been added as a precautionary measure.

4.26 In the event that an appropriate five-year land supply position is not demonstrated six months after Plan adoption, a requirement for an early plan review would be triggered.

4.27 It should be made clear that the five-year land supply position for the purposes of **Core Policy 2a** will be monitored against the housing requirement identified in this Local Plan, shown by **Core Policy 2** of 13,500 homes for April 2021 to March 2041.

4.28 In the event a Local Plan Review is necessary, any decision making for Development Management purposes would be guided by relevant national policy and guidance at the time.

Core Policy 2a
Local Plan Review

In the event that Uttlesford is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing in accordance with appropriate national policy and guidance six months from adoption of the Local Plan, a Local Plan Review would become necessary.

The five-year land supply position, to inform if a Local Plan Review is necessary, will be monitored against the housing requirement identified in **Core Policy 2** of 13,500 homes for April 2021 to March 2041.

In such circumstances, the impact on decision making for Development Management purposes would be guided by appropriate national policy and guidance at the time.

Settlement Hierarchy

4.29 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. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role as defined by the policy:

- Key Settlements
- Local Rural Centres
- Larger Villages, and
- Smaller Villages.

4.30 The Local Plan 2041 protects and enhances the services and facilities provided by the Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and the Larger Villages and ensures that new facilities, homes and jobs are primarily 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.

4.31 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.

4.32 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 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 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 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.

The Settlement Classifications are:

Classification	Settlement	Type of Development
Key Settlements	Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet (Part GB)	There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and Larger Villages. 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 a Made Neighbourhood Development Plan, or future parts of the Local Plan. Development at washed over GB settlements should be assessed in accordance with National Policy.
Local Rural Centres (*)	Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath (GB), Newport, Takeley/Prior's Green, Thaxted	
Larger Villages	Birchanger (*), Clavering, Debden, Felsted, Hatfield Broad Oak, Henham, Little Hallingbury (*), Stebbing.	
Smaller Villages	Ashdon, Aythorpe Roding, Barnston, Berden, Broxted, Chrishall, Elder Street, Elmdon, Farnham, Flitch Green, Great Easton, Great Hallingbury, Great Sampford, Hempstead, High Easter, High Roding, Langley, Leadon Roding (Part GB), Lindsell, Little Canfield (excluding Prior's Green), Little Dunmow, Little Easton, Littlebury, Manuden, Quendon and Rickling, Radwinter, Sewards End, Wendens Ambo, White Roding (GB/Part GB), Widdington, Wimbish.	At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within a Made Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are: i. in keeping with local character, and ii. proportionate in scale, and iii. meeting local housing needs, and/ or providing local employment, services and facilities.
Open Countryside	Those villages and settlements not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the Open Countryside.	Development in Open Countryside will not be permitted 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

4.33 Uttlesford includes a number of significant employment sites and employers, including Stansted Airport and Chesterford Research Park, but proportionally to its size, is also home to a large number of micro-enterprises when compared to the East of England and England as a whole.

4.34 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 Administration 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 and 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 London[44].

4.35 Uttlesford has seen relatively rapid employment growth in recent years, outperforming surrounding areas in comparative terms. The following form the main strands that contribute to the economy of Uttlesford:

- Stansted Airport and environs
- Chesterford Research Park
- vibrant market towns and rural centres
- the rural economy, and
- the visitor economy.

4.36 Stansted Airport is undoubtedly one of the most important contributors to the local and regional economy, both directly and through the supply chain and supporting services. The Airport received a resolution to grant permission to expand to 51 million passengers per year in December 2025, and the approval in August 2023 of the Northside permission will significantly expand the warehousing floorspace at Stansted.

4.37 Another key local economic driver in Uttlesford is Chesterford Research Park located in the north of the District and near 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 has expressed an intention to expand further still over the Plan period.

44 Iceni (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf

4.38 Office demand is focused generally on local SME businesses and particularly space of up to 140m^2, although the rise of hybrid working has affected office floorspace demand. It is reported 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 46-140m^2. Some enquiries from small businesses are reported for satellite offices thus providing an alternative to commuting to London or Cambridge.

4.39 A lack of industrial supply is noted in Uttlesford and more generally within 10 miles of Bishop's Stortford with a 99.9% occupancy level within the industrial 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. Therefore, 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.

4.40 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 Report[45].

4.41 The Employment Needs Update recommends allocating the residual Chesterford Research Park area for research and development to deliver the site's 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 33ha for research and development uses of which approximately 10ha of space is already built and occupied, and 10ha has planning permission.

4.42 The Employment Needs Update identifies an overall need for office and R&D floor space of 21.7ha over the period to 2041, split 50:50 between office and R&D.

4.43 The R&D need is met at Chesterford Research Park (described above) and for office uses, the Employment Needs Update recommends making an allocation of 3-5ha around Stansted/Gaunt's End/Takeley alongside supporting windfall sites at the Key Settlements of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet[46].

4.44 Regarding industrial and logistics land, the report recommends that 52.1ha of floorspace is provided during the Plan period, of which 34.2ha is for the rest of the District outside of the Stansted Airport Operational Area. Broadly, the floorspace at Northside is considered adequate to meet Stansted-specific business needs of 17.9 ha; therefore, the need for the remainder of Uttlesford is 34.2 ha.

45 Iceni (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf
46 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf

4.45 However, taking into account the latest completions and commitment figures, as at 1st April 2024, there is a residual need for 31.5ha industrial land to meet local Uttlesford needs. The Employment Needs Update recommends that industrial allocations are made at Great Dunmow (5-10 ha); Saffron Walden (up to 5 ha) and 15ha in the Stansted vicinity around Takeley, Bishop's Stortford borders, Stansted Mountfitchet and Birchanger, although the Plan actually makes provision for 38.5ha as shown by **Figure 4.6.**

4.46 Allocations to meet R&D, office and industrial needs are made in **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs,** with further details provided in the relevant Area Strategies. The allocations made in this Plan exceed the residual need in order to provide flexibility and ensure delivery during the Plan period.

Table 4.6: Uttlesford Employment Land Supply as at 1st April 2024

Component	Employment Land (hectares)	
	Office and R&D	Industrial and logistics
Need 2021-2041	21.7	34.2 (52.2 including Stansted)*
Completions and Commitments (excluding Northside strategic industrial and logistics)	7.1	2.6
Residual need	14.6	31.5
New Strategic Allocations in this Plan	19.0	38.5
Balance to be met from windfall/ non-strategic development	0	0

* As outlined in the Employment Needs Update, the Stansted industrial and logistics need is essentially met in full by the Stansted Northside Permission. The 'rest of district' need is the figure used to calculate the residual need in this table.

Core Policy 4 **Meeting Business and Employment Needs**

Over the Plan period 2021 – 2041 the land requirement for office and R&D development is 21.7ha and industrial development is 52.2 ha. In order to meet this requirement, a further 14.6ha is needed for office development and R&D and 31.5ha is needed for industrial development beyond known completions and commitments.

A total of 57.5ha is identified for future development at the following strategic allocations:

Planning Applications for employment and business development will be supported at the allocated sites where they meet the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendices 2** to **4**, and in accordance with the Area Strategies.

Additional development will be supported either through windfall development in accordance with **Core policy 48: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites** or where supported by Made 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.**

Table 4.7: Local Plan 2041 Employment Allocations

Site Name	Type of Site	Use Class	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Chesterford Research Park	Research and Development	E(g)(ii)	13.5
Land South of Radwinter Road and North and South of Thaxted Road	General Industrial/ Storage or Distribution/ Office/ Light Industrial	B2/ B8/ E(g)(i)/ E(g)(iii)	2.5
Land North of Taylors Farm, North of Takeley Street	General Industrial/ Storage or Distribution/ Office/ Light Industria	B2/ B8/ E(g)(i)/ E(g)(iii)	18.0
Land south of A120 North of Stortford Road, Great Dunmow	General Industrial/ Storage or Distribution/ Office/ Light Industrial	B2/ B8/ E(g)(i)/ E(g)(iii)	18.0
Water Circle Estate, Gaunt's End, Elsenham	Office	E(g)(i)	5.5
Total			**57.5**

Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

4.47 Providing adequate supporting infrastructure and services 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 (including active and sustainable travel) and the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure. This approach also helps to maximise the benefits associated with new infrastructure being easily accessible by existing as well as new communities.

4.48 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, the County Council, and other local authorities, to support and facilitate 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 (with its partners) to the provision of essential infrastructure including affordable housing, education, transport, health, flood defences and open space, sports and leisure, and
- development proposals will be required to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met in a timely way, including the provision of transport, education, health, emergency services, social and community facilities.

4.49 **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 active travel, roads, public transport improvements, schools, healthcare facilities and services, and foul water upgrades.

4.50 **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.

4.51 The **Area Strategies** set out in **Chapters 5 to 8** include policies to help us plan for some of the 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.

4.52 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.

4.53 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.

4.54 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.

4.55 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. Applicants should also have regard to the Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions[47].

4.56 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.

4.57 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.

47 Essex County Council (2024) Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. The Essex County Council's developers guide to infrastructure contributions

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 in this Plan.

If infrastructure requirements would 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 4.49 and 4.50 and the detail of the requirements outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 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 deliver 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.

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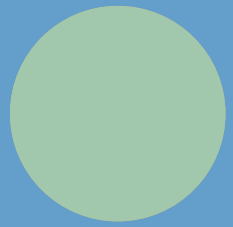
Chapter 5

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 makes 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 Rural Areas are set out in **Chapter 8: Thaxted and the Rural Area Strategy.**

5.2 Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the District. It 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 therefore functions as a Key Settlement. This offering includes several schools, sports and leisure facilities, shops and supermarkets, GP surgeries, 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 has significant land holdings around Saffron Walden, including to the west of the town, and comprises the historic mansion house along with parkland and gardens over a large area of land 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 northernmost part of Uttlesford, being close to the border with the neighbouring South Cambridgeshire District. The settlement benefits from a railway station located at its heart with connections to London and Cambridge and is located close to the strategic road network providing convenient road access to the wider area and a number of employment sites.

5.5 The nearby employment sites contribute to the high-tech and bio-tech cluster that partly lie in South Cambridgeshire and partly within Uttlesford, such as Chesterford Research Park. Chesterford Research Park was initially constructed approximately 60 years ago and since then, has continually provided high-skilled employment opportunities to the residents of Uttlesford and South Cambridgeshire, particularly surrounding the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries.

5.6 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 Stump Cross Junction, A11 and M11 Junction 9.

5.7 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 GP surgery, 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.

5.8 Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in Uttlesford, which offers a range of services and facilities and is where development will help to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport to access these services, facilities and employment. The town is therefore considered to be a sustainable location for growth within the District and for these reasons, there is a strategic mixed use development allocation at Saffron Walden. The Plan also supports the expansion of Chesterford Research Park. There are no strategic residential allocations at Great Chesterford or at Newport, but the Local Plan does identify a housing requirement to be addressed by the Newport Neighbourhood Plan through Non-Strategic Allocations.

How the North Uttlesford Area will Change by 2041

5.9 Following the delivery of the proposed allocations set out 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 settlements, alongside additional infrastructure provision, improving self-sufficiency. Meanwhile, new residents will contribute to sustaining the services and facilities also valued by existing communities.

5.10 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought within North Uttlesford:

- the provision of a new primary school in Saffron Walden. School expansion(s) in the North Secondary School Planning Group may be supported if it is shown that such options are feasible, necessary to meet local demand and aligned with strategies to deliver wider school place planning objectives
- the provision of around 879 dwellings at Saffron Walden on strategic allocations and a housing requirement of 300 dwellings to be delivered through the Newport Neighbourhood Plan on non-strategic allocations
- 13.5ha of R&D floorspace at Chesterford Research Park and up to 2.5ha of employment provision in Saffron

Walden at Land South of Radwinter Road and North and South of Thaxted Road

- a new road will be provided in Saffron Walden between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road, providing a more suitable route for all vehicles around the town
- 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, green infrastructure, open space and leisure facilities
- high quality walking and cycling links from the new developments connecting to key services
- transport improvements including improved bus services and infrastructure, and
- enhanced sustainable transport connections and facilities at both Saffron Walden (Audley End) and Great Chesterford railway stations.

Housing

5.11 The Plan will deliver around 879 homes at Saffron Walden through strategic development and identifies a housing requirement of 300 homes to be provided through the Newport Neighbourhood Plan on non-strategic sites. This is important to ensure the Local Plan facilitates sustainable development and supports infrastructure delivery where it has maximum benefit to existing, as well as new, communities.

5.12 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)[48].

5.13 Development at Saffron Walden provides an opportunity to provide new education facilities with a new primary school that will provide for some of the recently committed development as well as the newly proposed allocation. The secondary school here is already the largest in the District. School expansion(s) in the North Secondary School Planning Group may be supported if it is shown that such options are feasible, necessary to meet local demand and aligned with strategies to deliver wider school place planning objectives.

5.14 The new strategic allocation at Saffron Walden will provide a new road which connects Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road which will be designed to a high specification that not only serves the development but will alleviate pressure from vehicular traffic within the constrained town centre and facilitating greater connectivity.

48 Iceni (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf

5.15 The Saffron Walden strategic development site will also provide a range of green and open spaces, including formal play areas, seminatural spaces, and landscape corridors. The Plan will deliver an initial phase of a Country Park to the east of Saffron Walden to ensure appropriate open space is easily accessible to our communities across the District, alongside new sports pitches and associated facilities.

5.16 There is no strategic development proposed at Great Chesterford or Newport for a variety of reasons; at Great Chesterford relating to the availability of relevant sites in the short-term and the need to consider larger scale growth in the context of planning for the longer-term, larger scale infrastructure (beyond the scope of this Plan period) and to be more effectively aligned with planning for Cambridge. At Newport, a challenge exists in securing enough development to support infrastructure delivery without negatively impacting on a number of constraints affecting the village and it is considered this will be best addressed through a Neighbourhood Plan bringing forward a smaller scale of non-strategic sites.

5.17 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the strategic allocations have been selected[49].

5.18 The policy requirements (**Core Policy 6** and **Appendix 2**) ensure that a comprehensive development framework, masterplan and design code approach is taken, whereby new development is not to be delivered piecemeal but as part of a cohesive approach. Prior approval of these documents will be required to ensure that new development delivers all necessary infrastructure, connectivity 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

5.19 There has been strong employment growth across Uttlesford in recent years, particularly associated with Stansted Airport including the Northside development. Employment growth in the north of the District has been more limited

49 UDC (2024) Site Selection Topic Paper. Uttlesford Local Plan Site Selection Topic Paper

to smaller developments, but expansion is proposed in Saffron Walden for 2.5ha at Land South of Radwinter Road and North and South of Thaxted Road for industrial uses. This is consistent with the Economic Needs Assessment (2023)[50] that identified a need at Saffron Walden for up to 5 ha. In relation to office space, there is considered to be sufficient flexibility provided by the repurposing of vacant or underused floorspace with no requirement for additional allocations for office space.

5.20 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 unique employment offering within Uttlesford and the new allocation offers the potential for additional development plots to attract international investment, thereby building upon the high-skilled employment opportunities generated at this site. This Plan allocates sufficient land to enable the delivery of the full site masterplan promoted by the Research Park. Furthermore, the Plan provides flexibility to support economic development of other unallocated employment sites within north Uttlesford through **Core Policy 48** should further sites be 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 ambitions 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.

5.22 The Economic Needs Assessment 2023 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.

50 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Employment Needs Update. Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report.pdf

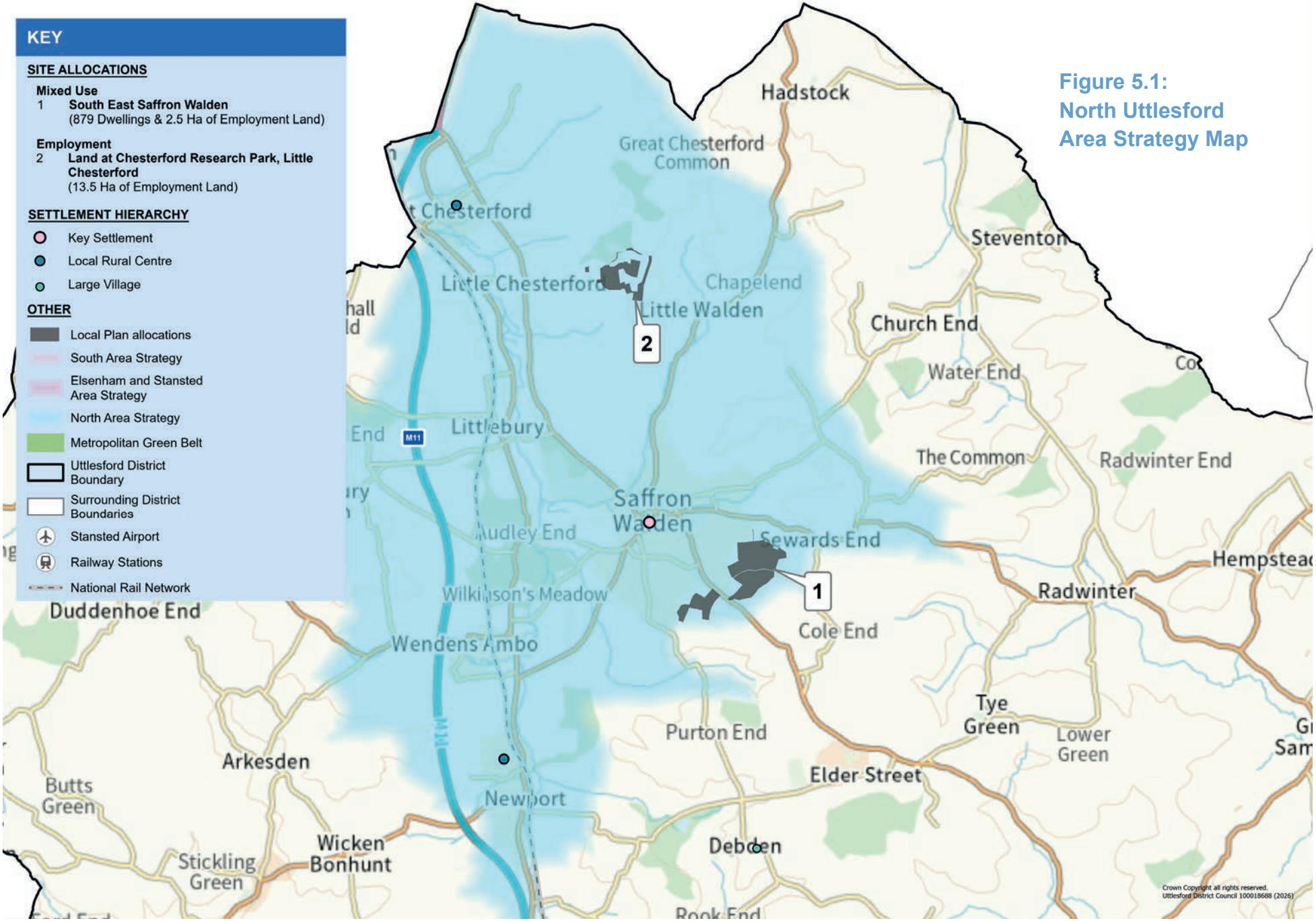


Figure 5.1: North Uttlesford Area Strategy Map

Core Policy 6 **North Uttlesford Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priorities for the 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 879 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations at Saffron Walden. A housing requirement of 300 homes is identified to be delivered through non-strategic allocations at Newport in the Newport Neighbourhood Plan. Other non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through other Neighbourhood Development Plans.

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
Saffron Walden	South East Saffron Walden	879

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.

Employment

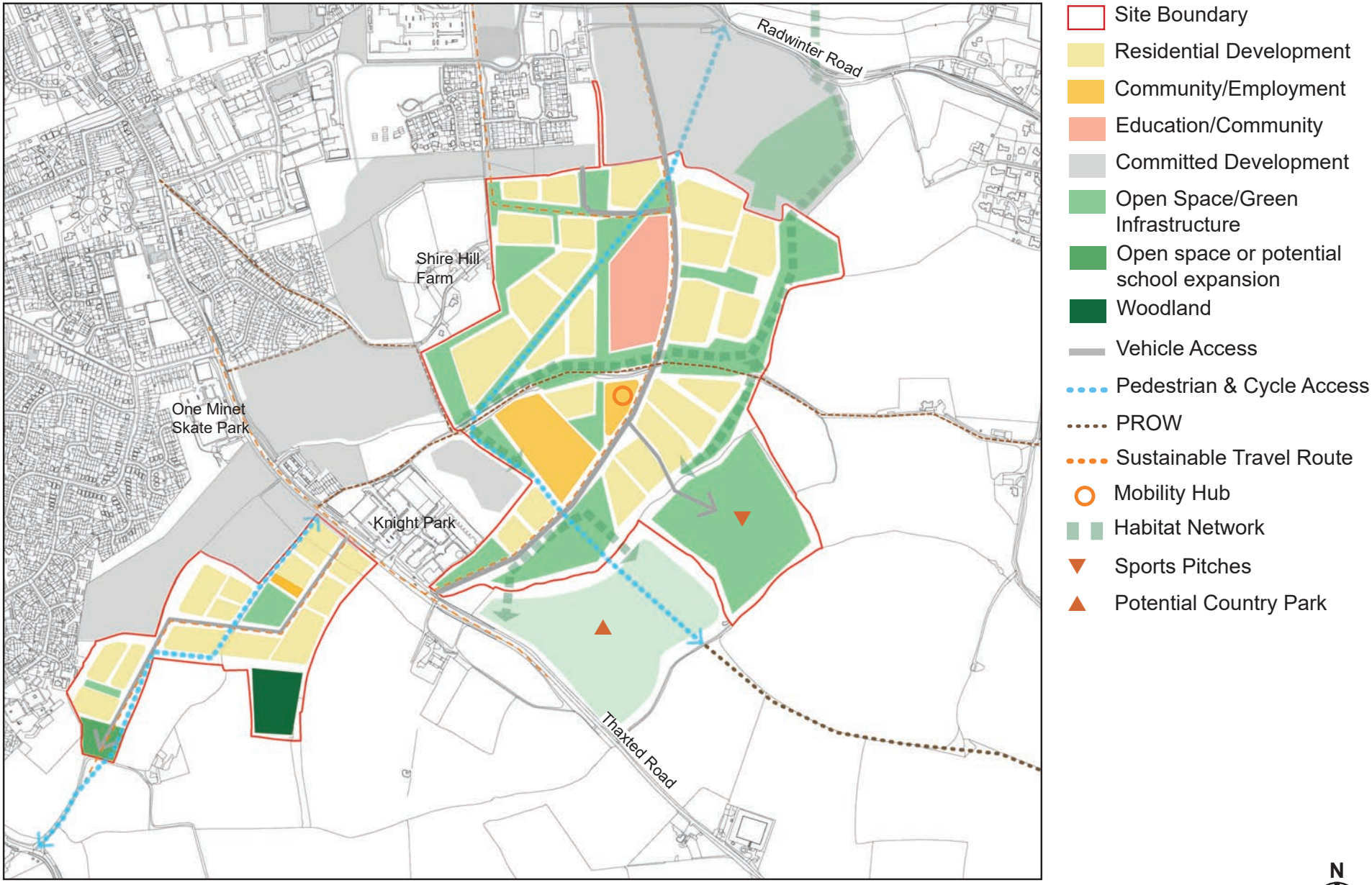
Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45.** A total of 16ha of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 46** on the following strategic employment sites:

Table 5.2: North Uttlesford Area Strategy Employment Allocations

Setttement	Site Name	Hectares
Chesterford	Chesterford Research Park	13.5
Saffron Walden	Land South of Radwinter Road/ North of Thaxted Road	2.5
Total		**16.0**

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.

Figure 5.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Saffron Walden



Appendix 2A - Saffron Walden Indicative Framework

Please note: This plan is for illustrative and indicative purposes only. Any proposals that come forward under this framework will be subject to full scrutiny by the local planning authority.

Proposed Strategic Development Sites

Saffron Walden

5.23 The strategic allocation proposes 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. The strategic mixed-use allocation at Saffron Walden will deliver:

- around 879 dwellings across all land parcels
- 2.5ha of employment use to the south of Thaxted Road
- a new primary school. School expansion(s) in the North Secondary School Planning Group may be supported if it is shown that such options are feasible, necessary to meet local demand and aligned with strategies to deliver wider school place planning objectives
- appropriate early years and childcare provision
- a new road that is designed as a multi-modal corridor which connects Radwinter Road to Thaxted Road, and
- significant amounts of multi-functional green infrastructure, public open space and sports pitches.

Non-Strategic Development Sites

Newport

5.24 Newport has been identified as a suitable location for sustainable development and whilst there are no strategic development sites proposed within this Plan, a housing requirement of 300 homes is identified to be delivered through the Newport Neighbourhood Plan[51] on smaller non-strategic sites in accordance with **Core Policy 6a: Housing Requirement Figures for Newport.** These non-strategic sites should be planned for comprehensively to ensure that development comes forward in a manner that delivers growth that can support the vitality of Newport whilst providing essential new facilities, being well integrated into the settlement, protecting its important historic character and reflecting the other constraints affecting the settlement[52].

51 Newport Parish Council and Quendon & Rickling Parish Council (2021) Newport and Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan. Newport_Quendon_Rickling_Neighbourhood_Plan_-_Made_version_m0rl8i21y949.pdf

52 UDC (2024) Larger Villages and Newport Local Rural Centre Housing Requirement Topic Paper. 2024-07-05_Final_Uttlesford_Larger_Villages_and_Newport_Housing_Requirement_Topic_Paper.pdf

Core Policy 6a **Housing Requirement Figures for Newport**

In accordance with the **Spatial Strategy** in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs,** a 300 dwelling non-strategic (sites under 100 dwellings) housing requirement is identified for Newport.

For clarity, the housing requirement over the Plan period 2021-2041 is the figure to be met through non-strategic development at Newport in total, taking into account completions since 1st April 2021 and known commitments (at 1st April 2025), with the residual figures to be delivered through additional Neighbourhood Plan allocations.

Development will be supported at non-strategic allocations at Newport through a masterplanning process involving the community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders, where development meets the requirements set out within the Newport Neighbourhood Plan and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. If a neighbourhood plan with sufficient allocations to deliver the housing requirement in full has not been 'made' by the date two years after the local plan is adopted, then the local planning authority will instead make the allocations in either a Local Plan Review or other Development Plan Document. This is to ensure the delivery of the Newport housing requirement during the plan period.

Table 5.3: Housing requirement figures for Larger Villages and other villages preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Local Rural Centre
Settlement	Newport
2021-41 Housing Requirement Figure (total)	452
Residual requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations (at 1 April 2025)	300

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the North Uttlesford Area

5.25 To maximise the opportunities for the delivery of sustainable and active travel within North Uttlesford the strategic allocations are required to contribute to strategic transport improvements, as well as the delivery of active travel routes and infrastructure, improvements to bus services and the provision of car clubs and e-bike schemes. These measures will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. The allocations will contribute to the delivery of new and enhanced active travel routes from the site and within the town including enhanced connections to rail stations and schools. These routes are detailed in the Uttlesford Local Cycling and Walking and Infrastructure Plan[53].

5.26 Taken together, the interventions will help to ensure the development proposals, for residential and employment, provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resultant from the development, including through supporting sustainable modes.

5.27 In Saffron Walden development sites will be required to deliver a multi-modal corridor connecting Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road. This road will provide connectivity through 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.

5.28 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**.

5.29 It is therefore important that strategic transport improvements are made within the North Uttlesford area as set out within the following **Core Policy 7** in addition to the site-specific requirements set out in **Core Policies 2** and **6** and the **Site Development Templates (Appendix 2).**

53 PJA and UDC (2024) Uttlesford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Sustainable_Transport_Local_Cycling_and_Walking_Infrastructure_Plan_Report_PUBLISHED.pdf

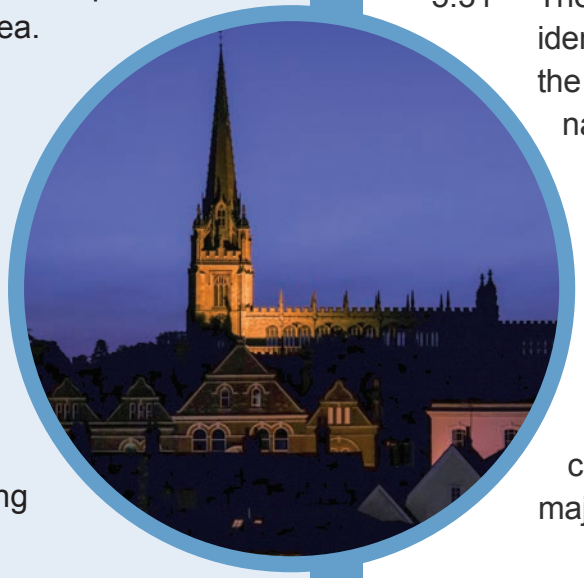
Core Policy 7
Delivery of Transport Schemes within the North Uttlesford Area

To deliver the growth in the North Uttlesford Area, strategic transport and other infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth, which is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area.

Strategic 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 for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians

The package may be further refined through the preparation of the new Local Transport Plan being developed by Essex County Council.



Delivery of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the North Uttlesford Area

5.30 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 9** and **39.**

5.31 The Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy identified several issues which impact on this part of the District including a low level of access to semi-natural greenspace, low access to a District-scale green space due in part because of dependence on the car as the dominant means of transport and poor connectivity in provision of active travel routes especially for cycling between settlements. Although Audley End House and Gardens are open to the public under the stewardship of English Heritage there is an entry charge which reduces public accessibility to this major green space.

5.32 In order to accommodate the need for amenity, recreation, access to open space and general compliance with Natural England standards (e.g., at least 0.5ha within 15 minutes of homes) there is an

aspiration to create a Country Park adjoining the proposed development allocation at Saffron Walden in the longer-term, but the allocation will enable the delivery of what could become the first phase of this Country Park, as proposed in our Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy[54]. The Country Park will offer an opportunity for the interpretation of the unique landscape and heritage as well as its underlying archaeology, scheduled ancient monuments and former settlements.

5.33 The allocation in Saffron Walden 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 secure habitats. Any proposed development must consider the potential for green infrastructure provision to connect to and support habitat networks beyond the site boundary to the Ancient Woodland site and designated Local Wildlife Site (LWS) at Pounce Wood.

54 LUC (2023) Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

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

All development proposals will protect and enhance Green and Blue Infrastructure and assets in the North Uttlesford Area as shown by maps in **Appendices 9-12** and as shown on the Policies Map.

Contributions will be sought towards the relevant strategic projects (including their enhancement and on-going management costs) identified in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, including:

i. creation of an area of open space that has the potential to form part of a wider Country Park in the longer-term, to serve residents in north Uttlesford within the area identified in the Area Strategy map and in **Appendix 2.**

North Uttlesford Area Heritage

5.34 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.

5.35 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. Apart from Colchester, Uttlesford contains the only other masonry 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.

5.36 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 an effect, but also prioritise 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.

5.37 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 utilised 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.

5.38 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 61: The Historic Environment,** and the Plan, as a whole.

Chapter 6

South Uttlesford Area Strategy

6.1 The **South Uttlesford Area Strategy** covers the east-west corridor that extends broadly from the M11 and Stansted Airport to Great Dunmow and includes the settlement of Takeley, the A120 and B1256 Stortford Road, Hatfield Forest and the Flitch Way. The area forms a strategically important employment and transport corridor, largely following the A120 that links Stansted Airport and the M11 at Junction 8 to Braintree and the east coast beyond. The Local Plan approach to the Elsenham and Stansted Mountfitchet area is set out in **Chapter 7.**

6.2 The area's regional economic importance is focused on the economic activity generated by Stansted Airport and its planned expansion. There is an identified need for employment in this area, both for larger scale commercial sites and for smaller units and for offices. This includes the Northside commercial development that has consent for 195,000m^2 that adjoins the Airport.

6.3 The two road arteries through the area connect at Junction 8 of the M11 motorway and provide access to railway stations on the Cambridge to London West Anglia Main Line at Stansted Mountfitchet, and the multi-modal transport hub at Stansted Airport itself. The improvements to Junction 8 under construction are designed to help meet additional movement from the Airport-related growth.

6.4 The countryside is agricultural in character with more rolling topography around Great Dunmow. There are three watercourse systems draining into the Rivers Chelmer, Roding and Stort. The waterway and river courses are associated with a variety of habitats with considerable scope for enhancement along agricultural margins and through required biodiversity enhancement, particularly where development is proposed on farmland.

6.5 The area is a popular place to live and has experienced considerable inward movement of people. There are currently three 'made' Neighbourhood Plans in the South Uttlesford Area, including the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (December 2016), the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (February 2020), the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan (July 2022) and Takeley which has been designated as a neighbourhood plan area. A review of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan has been underway since October 2023.

6.6 Beyond Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow remains the next largest settlement in the District, and is classified as a 'Key Settlement'. With its location about 6 miles east of Stansted Airport, and with easy access to the A120 dual carriageway, the area experiences significant development pressure. Great Dunmow functions as a service centre and offers a range of facilities and services which have historically met the needs of the growing population. However, with significant new development in recent years, there has been additional pressure on key services such as for education, health, utilities, convenience shopping, public open space, sports and youth provision. The town's ancient and historic character is reflected in the many listed buildings, churches, footpath network and numerous isolated farmsteads, complemented by a productive agrarian landscape with stream and river courses and patches of Ancient Woodland. Care must be taken to ensure that further new development is sympathetic in design and urban form, provides complementary services and good sustainable travel access to other towns, places of work and Great Dunmow town centre itself.

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 development, which can help to boost the sustainability of the area. The settlement has seen piecemeal development in recent years. With the new strategic scale development allocated in this plan, there is opportunity to provide a comprehensive and high-quality development framework that incorporates large areas of open space, protects the historic and environmental assets, and also provides for a new local centre and infrastructure such as schools, health and community 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 and 'Garden Village' type of

development in the District (this is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

6.8 The countryside around Stansted Airport on its north, east and southern sides is protected by the Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ). The CPZ boundaries and policy have been enshrined in the District's planning process since the last adopted 2005 Local Plan. It stems from the planning decision over Stansted Airport's expansion in the 1980s and seeks to preserve the rural character around the Airport permitting only development that does not harm the character or lead to the merging of new with existing developments. Despite this, some speculative development within the CPZ has occurred as a result of there not being an up-to-date Local Plan in place which meets local needs. This Chapter includes an updated CPZ policy, which seeks to strengthen the effectiveness of the policy, whilst reflecting the substantial change that has occurred since its original inception.

6.9 Overall, the **South Uttlesford Area Strategy** aims to provide new housing to the highest standards reflecting the principles of a Garden Village, sustainable travel accessibility, community facilities and employment sites. The Plan also recognises the existing characteristics and heritage of the area, such as Hatfield Forest, Smith's Green, Church End village, Warish Hall, and the Flitch Way as well as views of and access to the characteristic landscapes and watercourses.

How the South Uttlesford area will Change by 2041

6.10 By 2041, the following 'deliverables' are sought within the South Uttlesford Area:

- the provision of around 2,424 new dwellings on three strategic development sites at Takeley for around 1,506 dwellings, and at Great Dunmow for around 918 dwellings. This development will include over a third affordable homes with specialist older persons accommodation and some custom/self-build housing, all built to the highest standards of energy efficiency, with the development at Takeley reflecting the principles of a Garden Village community
- the provision of a new secondary school at Takeley to serve the area and to complement the rebuilt Helena Romanes secondary school already planned at Great Dunmow, permitting community access to facilities as appropriate. There will also be a new primary school (including early years and childcare provision) and facility to accommodate Special Educational Needs at Takeley
- new health facilities in the two local centres at Takeley and Great Dunmow developed in collaboration with the NHS and provided by the developer
- active travel linkages between the proposed development sites and the existing settlements, including enhanced access to the multi-modal transport hub at Stansted Airport, to ensure it promotes and facilitates a choice of transport modes including links to places of

employment and commerce outside the District
- significant areas of new multi-functional green infrastructure, including a new country parkland in Great Dunmow designed to meet Natural England's criteria for Suitable Alternative Green Space (SANG) to reduce visitor pressure on Hatfield Forest
- protection of significant areas around Stansted Airport (by the Countryside Protection Zone – **Core Policy 12**) to preserve its rural setting and long held 'airport in the countryside' character, to help minimise coalescence with any of the nearby settlements, that settlements retain their identity and that airport-related activities continue to be allowed on airport land
- development which balances the viability and facilities in existing settlements and creates places that reflect local character, and which achieves high quality urban design and protects heritage, landscape, watercourses and wildlife, and
- enhancing footfall in the Great Dunmow town centre to help boost the local economy.

Housing

6.11 There has been significant, mostly speculative, new housing growth in this area that has not been matched by appropriate supporting infrastructure. It is therefore important that the development proposed by this Plan seeks to address this deficiency, particularly for health and wellbeing, education, open space and sustainable travel. The Council is working with the service and statutory providers to ensure phasing of infrastructure alongside house construction and occupation to help address existing shortcomings.

6.12 As outlined above, to meet the identified needs and deliver the necessary infrastructure, the Local Plan provides for around 2,424 additional homes at three strategic site allocations at Great Dunmow and at Takeley/Little Canfield where development following the principles of a Garden Village will be encouraged. These allocations are set out in **Core Policies 10** and **10a** and **Figures 6.2** and **6.3.**

6.13 The policy requirements set out in **Core Policies 10** and **10a** and **Appendix 3** will ensure that a comprehensive development framework approach is followed. The aim is to ensure the final development has a cohesive and integrated approach. Individual planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the sites themselves, and to the existing settlement, with well-connected green infrastructure, education, early years and childcare, access to sporting and recreational facilities, high quality public open spaces with local facilities that will benefit all residents in the vicinity and across south Uttlesford for wider catchments like schools and sports.

6.14 The proximity of new development in well-serviced locations near existing communities and the enhancement of services will enhance the longer-term viability of the town centre and commercial activities and vitality of existing

settlements. Over a third of new housing will be affordable and available in different tenures together with additional specialist housing and supported housing more suited to older people and people who wish to rent. The energy policies in **Chapter 9** will also ensure that housing is built to highly efficient energy standards which will minimise fuel bills and provide more comfortable living.

6.15 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Papers explain how the proposed allocations have been selected[55].

6.16 The policy requirements (**Core Policy 10** and **Appendix 3)** ensure that a comprehensive development framework, masterplan and design code approach is taken, whereby new development is not to be delivered piecemeal, but as part of a cohesive approach. Prior approval of these documents will be required to ensure that new development delivers all necessary infrastructure, connectivity 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

6.17 The South Uttlesford Area will continue to be a significant location for employment, particularly associated with Stansted Airport, the M11 and the A120, including the consented Northside scheme, located on the north-western side of the Airport that will deliver 195,000m^2 for a range of B1 (industrial) uses and anticipated to provide around 3,000 jobs. The growth in cargo and passenger numbers at the Airport will also provide for further employment in this area.

6.18 There are other estates of employment for example at Thremhall Park, off Takeley Street in the west; new office development at Stansted Courtyard on the western side of the A120/Parsonage Road junction; new office development which is currently being extended off Parsonage Road, at the Weston Group Business Centre and Innovation Centre ('Seven Acres'). The largest and best quality existing employment sites in the District are identified as 'Existing Employment Sites' which are proposed to be protected for employment development over the plan period. These are identified in **Core Policy 45** and mapped on the Policies Map, supported by the Employment Land Review (2024).[56]

6.19 This Local Plan allocates new strategic employment sites which address the identified need for the District in the Stansted area and at Great Dunmow, both being accessible to the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres and new development along the A120/B1256 corridor. These sites are listed in **Core Policy 4** and provide for around 36 hectares. The split site south of the B1256/ A120 between Great Dunmow and Takeley will include a mobility hub as described in the transport section and **Core Policy 26.**

55 UDC (2024) Site Selection Topic Paper. Uttlesford Local Plan Site Selection Topic Paper
56 Iceni (2024) Uttlesford Employment Land Review. Uttlesford_Employment_Land_Report_Final_Report_02.07.2024.pdf

Core Policy 10 **South Uttlesford Area Strategy**

The overarching priorities for the South Uttlesford Area are to support the strategic roles of the Key Settlement and Local Rural Centre by delivering a balance of housing, employment and a range of infrastructure, whilst protecting and enhancing 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 2,424 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the **Site Development Templates (Appendix 3)**. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans. The following table shows how the level of planned housing in 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. of Dwellings
Takeley/ Little Canfield	East of Takeley	1,506
Great Dunmow	NE Great Dunmow	715
Great Dunmow	Land between the River Chelmer and B1008	203*
Total		**2,424**

*170 residential (including 20 Self Build and 150 Senior Living Units) and 60 bedspace Care home. A ratio of 1.8 bedspaces per dwelling has been applied so the 60 bedspace care home provides an equivalent of 33 dwellings.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where the requirements set out within the **Site Development Templates (Appendix 3)** are met and it is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Employment

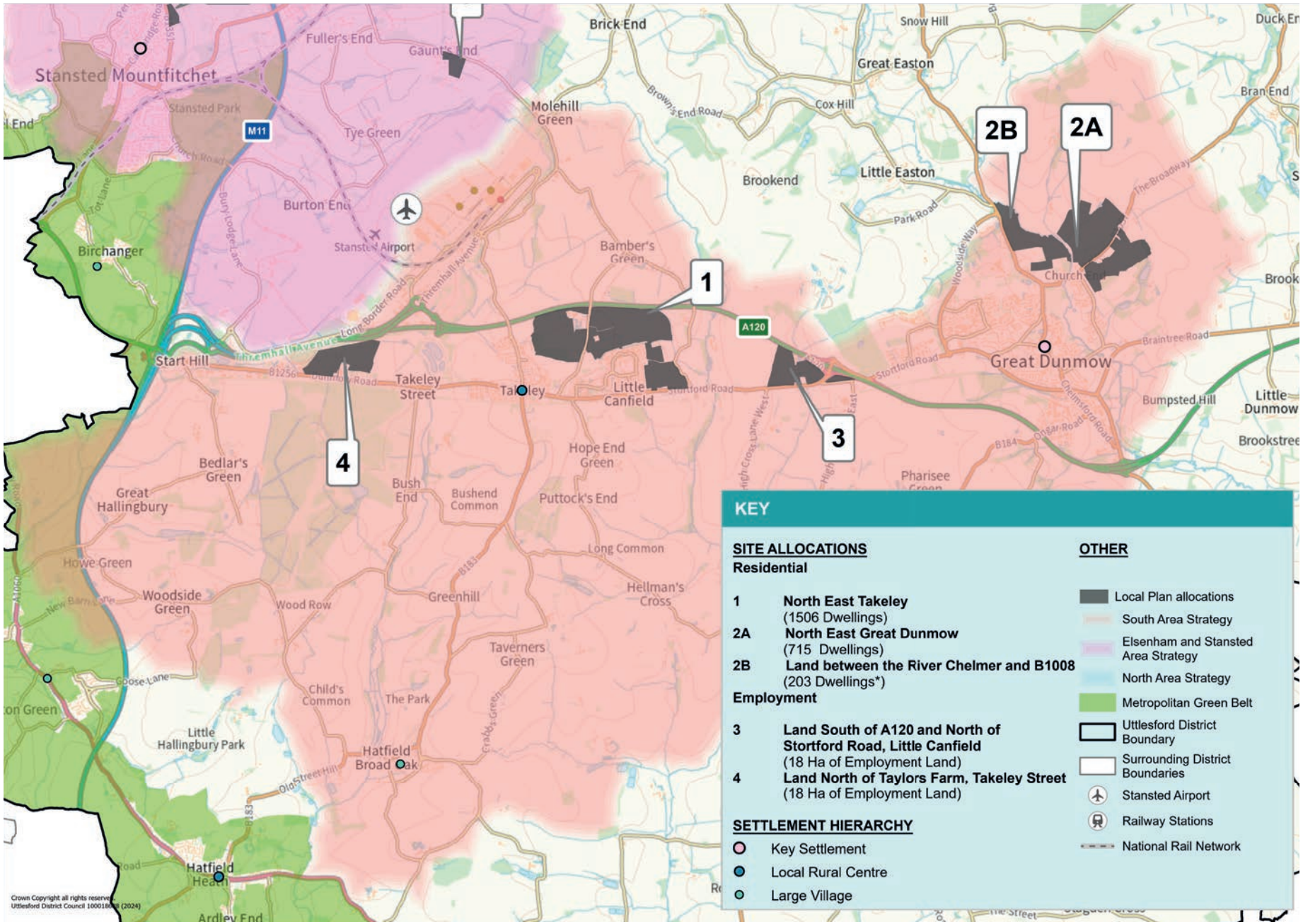
Existing Employment Sites will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45.** New employment land of 36ha will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 4** on the following strategic employment sites:

Table 6.2: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Employment Allocations

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Hectares (approx.)
Takeley	Land North of Taylors Farm, North of Takeley Street, off B1256 (adjoining Thremhall Park)	18
Great Dunmow West / Little Canfield	Land between A120 and Stortford Road B1256	18
Total		**36**

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where the requirements set out within the **Site Development Templates (Appendix 3)** are met and it is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Figure 6.1: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Map



Proposed Strategic Allocations: Great Dunmow

6.20 The proposed allocations in **Figure 6.2** seek to deliver around 918 dwellings in a new neighbourhood to the east of Church End and at nearby Parsonage Downs to the west, structured around extensive parkland and linking the site through quality open space provision. This will provide public access and amenity to new and existing residents, along with a local centre of community uses and small retail and/or small business units. Key considerations for planning for these sites are set out in the development templates in **Appendix 3** and 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 safeguarded area for the potential future provision of a new primary school with co-located early years and childcare facilities close to the local centre and along a bus route, along with provision of a new health care facility provided by the developer working with the NHS
- create extensive areas of multi-functional green infrastructure across the site that are capable of supporting biodiversity, including an expansion of the existing woodland to the east of the site including attractive and functional open spaces to facilitate social interaction and public amenity
- permeability for pedestrians from the site into the existing Public Rights of Way network and wider rural landscape, and
- at least 17ha should be delivered within the allocated site development boundaries to meet Natural England requirements for Suitable Alternative Natural Space to help mitigate impact of visitors to Hatfield Forest.

Proposed Strategic Allocations: Takeley

6.21 The proposed allocation in **Figure 6.3** seeks to deliver around 1,506 dwellings, in an integrated neighbourhood, 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 amenity and recreational space, green infrastructure, protection and enhancement of environmental and heritage assets including their heritage landscape and woodland settings. It will also provide important new infrastructure and a local centre.

6.22 Key considerations for planning for these sites are set out in the development template in **Appendix 3** and include:

- a new 8FE secondary school along the eastern side of the site, south of the new local centre and on the public

transport and sustainable travel corridor from which it will be accessed, with further land safeguarded to enable longer-term expansion should this be needed

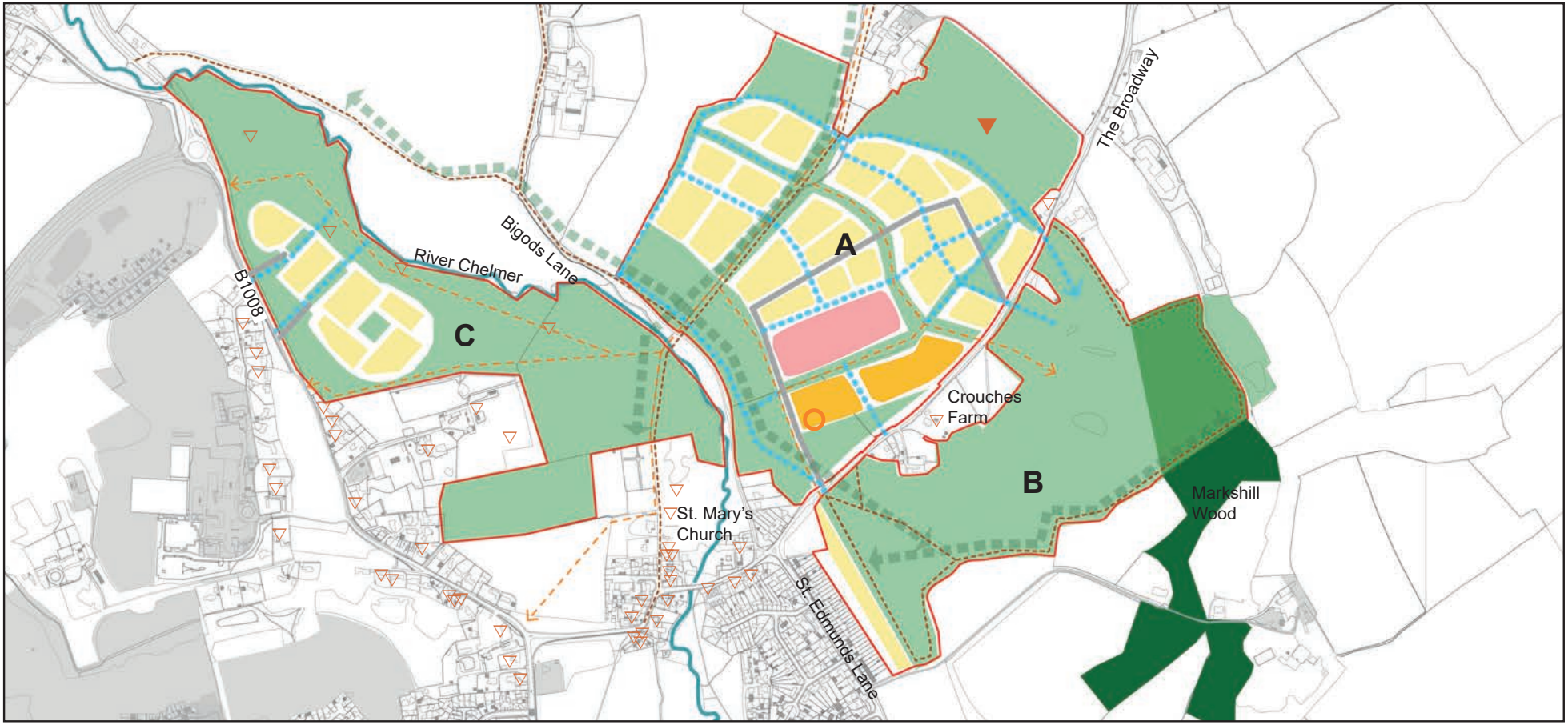
- a new 2FE primary school, adjacent to the new local centre with easy access to the sustainable travel corridor. This will be in association with early years and childcare provision (2x56 place and 1x30 place units) and may form part of a through-school alongside the new secondary school
- a new local centre in the eastern parcel positioned to maximise its catchment, providing for a range of uses including health care, mobility hub, community activities, including new health care provision, small retail and possibly small business support space, designed to minimise any adverse impact on the existing local centre at Prior's Green
- preservation of the open historic landscape between Prior's Wood and Warish Hall from Smith's Green Lane to the western site boundary. The land will provide public open space in a parkland setting that will help to relieve visitor pressure on Hatfield Forest and be designed to meet SANG criteria. It will be further protected from development by its continued location within the Countryside Protection Zone for the Airport, and
- extension and enhancement of the Ancient Woodland of Prior's Wood to the north and towards Smith's Green to create an improved habitat for wildlife with managed access, and to impose a 15m buffer against development around all its margins.

6.23 Given the scale and the nature of the opportunity for planning for development at Takeley in a way that achieves high-quality and that is highly sustainable, proposals are particularly sought that are consistent with Garden Village principles. It is therefore essential that development is brought forward in line with a comprehensive development framework in accordance with **Core Policy 10a.**

6.24 Proposals for development at Takeley should be guided by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City (GC) principles that help to create a framework for new and expanded communities. Importantly, the GC principles link the overarching aim of health and wellbeing to the natural environment, affordable, beautiful and accessible places to live and work, and an urban form that encourages sociability and cultural participation, where the public spaces can be managed by the community itself.

6.25 The Council considers that the unique and special characteristics of the Takeley area and the proposed site allocations warrant particular focus and call for an exemplar development which the GC model, together with the Council's Design Code, can achieve. A comprehensive approach to new development will help to address the various sensitivities associated with the evolution of this area and will help to create a more cohesive community and urban form.

Figure 6.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations: Great Dunmow



- Site Boundary
- Residential Development
- Committed Development
- Local Centre
- Education Facility
- Heritage Asset
- River
- Mobility Hub
- Sports Pitches
- **AB** Land either side of the Broadway
- Ancient Woodland
- Woodland Extension
- Open Space/Green Infrastructure
- Habitat Network
- **C** Land between the River Chelmer and B1008
- Active Travel Route
- Vehicle Access
- Pedestrian & Cycle Access
- PROW

N

Framework Plan 3B - Great Dunmow

Please note: This plan is for illustrative and indicative purposes only. Any proposals that come forward under this framework will be subject to full scrutiny by the local planning authority.

6.26 The Ancient Woodland should be extended to reflect better its historic extent and to maximise opportunity for enhanced tree cover and biodiversity. The open character of this western end of the site is afforded further protection by the requirement of SANG (Suitable Alternative Green Space) to balance visitor pressure on Hatfield Forest. This approach accords with GC principles for a natural environment setting with clear public access. The retained Countryside Protection Zone here will add further weight to the planning position to prevent encroachment or otherwise unsuitable built development.

6.27 The eastern part of the site east of Smith's Green offers ample opportunity to implement the GC principes of easy access for all. It is the proposed location for the community facilities and local centre and will be crisscrossed with accessible walking and cycling routes to provide easy access to the new centre with affordable homes and premises, reflecting GC principles.

6.28 The location of the site as a whole underlines the need to provide strong and enhanced public transport access to increase accessibility within the new development, to link with the existing Takeley village and Prior's Green, and to link with the wider highway and public transport networks along Stortford Road and Parsonage Road. Access from the site from the public transport route provides linkage to the travel hub at the Airport, major employment locations and the strategic highway routes, reducing the isolation of the site and providing opportunity for links with surrounding communities.

Core Policy 10a **Takeley Strategic Allocation Comprehensive Development Framework**

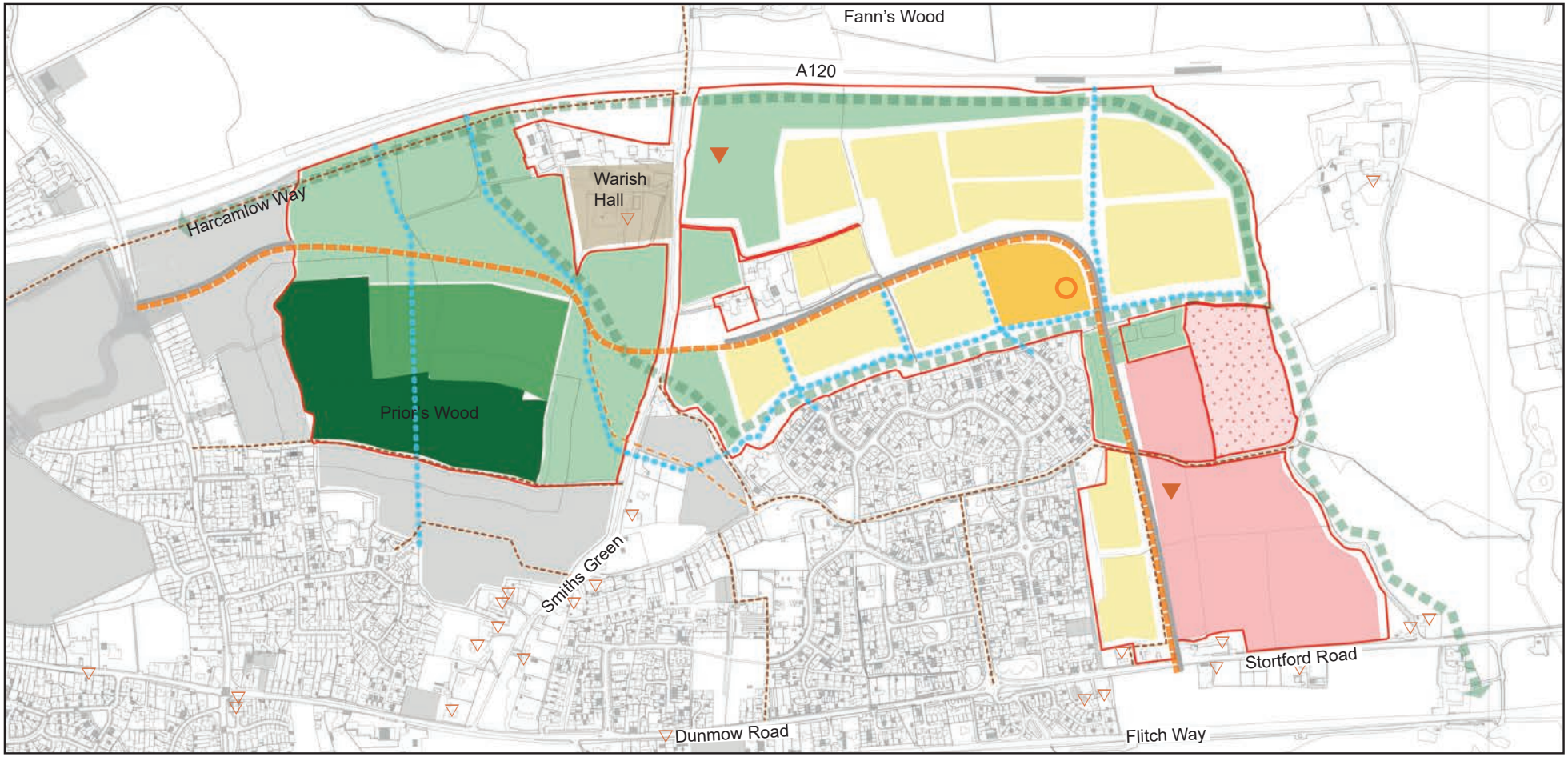
All new development at the Takeley Strategic Allocation will be guided by a comprehensive development framework as specified in **Core Policy 52a.**

The new housing allocated at the Takeley Strategic Allocation will be provided to an exemplar standard following Garden Village principles to ensure that a highly sustainable and accessible development is fully realised. The new development will form a mixed-use community incorporating on-site services and facilities, including new schools, a local centre, access to local opportunities for employment and enhanced public transport, cycle way and footpath connections to Takeley, Stansted Airport and Great Dunmow. This development will come forward in accordance with **Core Policies 10** and **10a** and the Site Development Template set out in **Appendix 3**.

The Council will continue to work with the landowners, Essex County Council, Natural England and Historic England and other relevant stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive development framework for the site following from the concepts in the Development Template in **Appendix 3**. This includes that:

i. the development is in accordance with the requirements of a travel plan for the whole site to make the necessary contributions in order to implement sustainable transport initiatives, including minimising car usage and increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling
ii. the development is in accordance with a comprehensive landscape plan for the whole site, including the provision of significant open space (to function as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace - SANG) of at least 30 hectares, and for the maintenance of which the developer is required to make appropriate endowment or revenue contributions
iii. proposals for new development should demonstrate that any potential impacts on Warish Hall (heritage assets) or Prior's Wood (Ancient Woodland) have been minimised with appropriate and significant mitigation and/ or enhancement (for example including an extension to the Ancient Woodland), and
iv. the land to the west of Smith's Green Lane that will remain within the Countryside Protection Zone and any proposals within this area must be compatible with **Core Policies 12** and **15.**

Figure 6.3: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Takeley



- Site Boundary
- Residential Development
- Committed Development
- Education Safeguarded Land
- Local Centre
- Education Facility
- Heritage Asset
- Mobility Hub
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Ancient Woodland
- Woodland Extension
- Open Space/Green Infrastructure
- Habitat Network
- Sustainable Transport Route
- Vehicle Access
- Pedestrian & Cycle Access
- PROW
- Sports Pitches

N

Framework Plan 3A - Takeley

Please note: This plan is for illustrative and indicative purposes only. Any proposals that come forward under this framework will be subject to full scrutiny by the local planning authority.

Stansted Airport

6.29 London Stansted Airport is the fourth largest airport in the country and is an international gateway serving the regional and national air travel and air freight market. The Airport is one of the largest centres of employment in Essex and the East of England and provides excellent direct access for local businesses to a wide range of international destinations and also plays a significant role in handling freight. The Airport has permission to increase freight movements and expand to 43 million passengers per year.

6.30 In supporting the activities and growth at the Airport the Local Plan considers how the Airport can have a positive impact on the environment, including managing noise, as well as aerodrome safeguarding, Public Safety Zones and connectivity and accessibility. The Airport Operational Boundary, referred to in **Core Policy 11** is the Airports operational land (as defined within s.263&264 TCPA 1990) as it applies from time to time.

Transport and Surface Access

6.31 The Airport acts as a successful regional and local transport interchange for bus, coach and train services to provide access to a range of destinations in the UK, but it also performs a vital local function as a multi-modal transport hub. It is important the Airport provides and strengthens the choice of modes of transport for those persons using the Airport, and the community that would wish to access the Airport and take advantage of the excellent public transport provided, including through active travel links to existing and future locations of employment.

6.32 The functional local use of the Airport as an economic and transport hub is encouraged. Sustainable transport choice to the multi-modal transport hub should be reasonably accessible over the 24-hour period to enable staff, visitors and passengers to access the Airport, recognising many of the Airport operations are run day and night. The availability and provision of sustainable transport choice should be detailed in the Airport's Sustainable Development Plan and Surface Access Strategy.

Aircraft Noise

6.33 The Council understands the challenges facing local communities that are close to Stansted Airport in relation to the potential impact of noise and public health.

6.34 The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the control of aircraft noise and regulates Stansted Airport as a 'designated airport' and as such determines Stansted's Noise Abatement Procedures. 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 including the use of planning conditions to establish

areas within noise contours at different stages of the Airport's passenger growth.

6.35 In order to determine whether or not any specific development is likely to increase 'noise nuisance' from aircraft, the Council will consider and implement the most up to date national guidance and policy[57].

6.36 Where planning permission is granted for development, the Council may impose conditions in accordance with national aviation noise policy guidance and **Core Policy 44.**

Public Safety Zones

6.37 Public Safety Zones (PSZs) are designated areas of land at the end of runways at major airports, in which development is restricted so as to control the number of people on the ground at risk of death or injury should an aircraft accident occur during take-off or landing. The Department for Transport's policy objective governing the restriction of PSZ development near civil airports (stated within 'Control of development in airport Public Safety Zones') is that there should be no increase in the number of people living, working or congregating, and that, over time, the number should be reduced as circumstances allow.

6.38 Public Safety Zones have been defined at the ends of London Stansted Airport's runway and consist of an outer public safety controlled zone and an inner, higher risk zone, the public safety restricted zone.

6.39 Within the Public Safety Zones there is a general presumption against development unless it is an exception specified in the Department for Transport policy paper.

6.40 In relation to the Public Safety Zones, the extent of the inner public safety restricted zone (PSRZ) and the outer public safety controlled zone (PSCZ) is shown on the Policies Map. These Public Safety Zones are an important area of protection that all developments in the South Uttlesford Area need to be aware of and fully consider.

6.41 Within the PSRZ no residential or employment uses will be permitted. Within the PSCZ, planning permission will only be granted for extensions or changes of use or low density development. In determining planning applications with the Public Safety Zone, the Council will be guided by advice in the Department for Transport's policy paper "Control of development in airport Public Safety Zones" or any subsequent superseding or additional advice.

57 Hankinson Duckett Associates (2024) Countryside Protection Zone Study. 2024-06-18_Uttlesford_CPZ_Review_REPORT_Rev_A_hi-res.pdf

Core Policy 11 **London Stansted Airport**

Operation and Development
The Council will support the continued use of London-Stansted Airport in relation to the Approved Airport Capacity.

Development proposals within the Airport Operational Boundary should, where appropriate, provide enhancements to the multi-modal transport hub (including for cycling and walking) at the Airport to support both local connections and journeys associated with airport operations including passengers and all employed on the wider airport site.

The Council will support development which contributes to the Airport meeting their climate change targets, delivers ecology and biodiversity projects and supports ecological and environmental monitoring.

Development proposals within the Airport Operational Boundary 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.

Public Safety Zones
There is a general presumption against new or replacement development in the Airport Public Safety Zones (PSZ), including changes of use to existing properties; except for development listed as development permissible within the PSZ in the Department for Transport's "Control of development in airport Public Safety Zones" or any replacement guidance. The Public Safety Zones are detailed on the Policies Map.

Airport-related Parking
Proposals for airport related car parking will only be permitted within the Airport Operational Boundary. Appropriate mechanisms will be sought to make sure that all airport car parking is integrated into and contributes to funding of the Airport surface access strategy.

Parking proposals should include secure and prominent cycle parking with provision of safe and direct cycle connections to the wider highway network.

Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone

6.42 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 Airport. 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 fourth busiest airport, its surrounding remains predominately rural.

6.43 This Plan is seeking to support sustainable development, thus it is important that any strategic housing and employment development is located where they reduce the need for travel and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Furthermore, a review of the original CPZ reveals substantial change has occurred in the area since 1995 and that the effectiveness of the CPZ has been mixed[54]. For these reasons, the CPZ area is amended to ensure the rural setting of the Airport continues to be protected, including the expansion of the original CPZ to ensure the countryside setting of the Airport continues to be protected in light of development already permitted, but that the sustainable development set out by this Plan is removed from the CPZ area (**Core Policy 12**).

6.44 It is considered that the approach proposed strikes an appropriate balance between preserving the rural setting of the Airport and by supporting sustainable development in accordance with national and local priorities to support the climate change emergency. **Appendix 9** includes maps showing the CPZ area as set out in the 2005 plan and as 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 conserve and enhance the 'rural' character of the area around the Airport. The area is shown by the Policies Map and **Appendix 9.**

Within the defined area, development will be permitted where, all of the following apply:

i. proposals will not (either individually or cumulatively) diminish the physical and / or visual separation between settlements within the CPZ and Stansted Airport
ii. proposals will not adversely affect the open characteristics of the Countryside Protection Zone
iii. proposals will protect individual settlement identity, and
iv. proposals will implement positive landscape measures which would strengthen characteristic landscape patterns within the CPZ, in accordance with the guidelines set out within the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment.

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the South Uttlesford Area

6.45 To maximise the opportunities for the delivery of sustainable transport and active travel within the South Uttlesford area, the strategic allocations are 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. These measures will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring, and the development proposals should prioritise the provision and enhancement of active travel connections to key services, rail stations and schools.

6.46 The interventions will ensure that the development proposals provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resulting from the development proposals.

6.47 The strategic mixed-use development at Takeley will be expected to implement a framework to deliver a 'Monitor and Manage' approach to understanding the long term transport implications stemming from the development site. This approach will include the regular monitoring of agreed sections of the network and the identification of a developer contribution fund that can be drawn down to implement agreed interventions. The developer will agree the scale and approach with the highway authority.

6.48 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, the Highway Authority and transport partners is important for managing the interchange's functions in serving the Airport while also enabling sustainable access locally to and from Takeley and the proposed mobility hub at Land south of A120. This facility will enable safe access to sustainable transport routes via walking, cycling and local bus connections and improve connectivity to nearby settlements.

6.49 The South Uttlesford 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 Development Templates for the sites **(Appendix 3).**

6.50 Of particular importance is the Flitch Way, a strategic footpath (NCN16) utilising the former railway line that ran between Braintree and Bishop's Stortford between 1869 -1952. An assessment of issues relating to the condition and function of the Flitch Way has been completed[58] and a full costed programme of works to include its role as a wildlife corridor is is being prepared. Once a costed programme has been agreed, developers will be required to make an appropriate contribution to its implementation.

6.51 It is important that transport improvements are made within the South Uttlesford Area as set out within **Core Policy 13** with focus on delivering active travel connections and sustainable transport enhancements including improved bus services and enhanced links to the Airport. The development sites in Takeley will deliver active travel routes from the strategic sites along the B1256 linking communities and to Stansted Airport. Detailed discussions will be required with the Airport and highway authority on delivering this infrastructure.

6.52 Details of all the transport schemes and interventions required for the South Uttlesford Area are detailed in the Transport Evidence Topic Paper[59].

58 Transport Initiatives (2023) Flitch Way Links - Options Study. Microsoft Word - CSER58 Flitch Way Links DRAFT Report V1
59 UDC (2024) Transport Evidence Topic Paper. Transport_Evidence_Topic_Paper_PUBLISHED.pdf

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

To deliver the growth in the South Uttlesford Area, transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth, which is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area.

Transport infrastructure in Great Dunmow and Takeley will be required as follows:

i. a sustainable and active travel corridor will be delivered through the Takeley strategic site which will be designed to accommodate all appropriate road users and deliver walking and cycling schemes to the highest standard. The route will only be available for buses and active travel west of Smith's Green Lane
ii. contribute towards delivering strategic cycling and walking infrastructure improvements as identified in the Uttlesford and Essex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) including connections along the B1256 between Great Dunmow, Takeley, Stansted Mountfitchet and Bishop's Stortford
iii. land is safeguarded (see **Core Policy 14**) to enable further feasibility work to consider the longer-term potential for direct access to the A120 from employment development at Takeley Street, and
iv. upgrades to the Flitch Way including enhancements that improve safety, access, interpretation, multi-functional surfacing for all users and measures to improve biodiversity.

The package may be further refined through preparation of the new Local Transport Plan 4 being developed by Essex County Council.

Transport and Infrastructure Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area

6.53 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.

Core Policy 14 **Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport and Infrastructure Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area**

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

i. land for the delivery of a public transport and active travel connection between Takeley and Stansted Airport multi-modal transport hub including improvements along Parsonage Road to improve connectivity for cyclists
ii. land for the delivery of the western section of the sustainable and active travel corridor from the Parsonage Road roundabout through Land East of Parsonage Road to connect with the Takeley Strategic Mixed-Use Allocation
iii. land to enable further feasibility work to consider the longer-term potential for direct access to the A120 from employment development at Takeley Street, and
iv. land to enable longer-term expansion of the secondary school at Takeley, adjoining the allocation made by this plan, should this be found to be needed following more detailed feasibility work.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified schemes (as shown in **Appendix 8** and the Policies Map)* would need to demonstrate the proposal would not, in fact, harm their delivery.

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

* The area shown on **Appendix 8** and the Policies Map 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 in the South Uttlesford Area

6.54 As described above, the south of the District has several important and protected habitats, such as Flitch Way, Hatfield Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), High Wood SSSI at Easton Park and as well as fragmented areas of Ancient Woodland distributed throughout, such as Prior's Wood, Priory Wood at Thremhall Park, and Marks and Merks Hill Woods in Great Dunmow, and designated Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. This fragmentation undermines the wildlife value and is addressed in the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, which seeks new planting and habitat connections, extensions of and between woodland areas with protection from development by 15m buffer zones in accordance with Government advice[60]. Enhancement of green infrastructure is a conditional requirement of the strategic site allocations and reflects wider strategic ambitions across the District and county through the Local Nature Partnership and countywide initiatives such as the 'big green' infrastructure project and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

6.55 All of these Ecological Sites are designated for their Ancient Woodland or woodland habitats with the exception of Hall's Quarry (which is designated for geology that includes Pleistocene glacial gravels, silts and till deposits related to the Anglian glaciation) and the Flitch Way Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which provides an active green travel route.

6.56 Other Ecological Sites include fragmented areas of Ancient Woodland, such as Prior's Wood in Takeley, many of which are Local Wildlife Sites LoWS. Initiatives that enhance, connect and expand these irreplaceable habitats are a priority for this area.

6.57 The River Chelmer defines much of Great Dunmow's eastern boundary, with its valley located in fluvial Flood Zone 3. The river also runs between the two proposed allocated development sites. There is considerable potential for enhanced biodiversity and as part of the required SANG for green space where an attractive parkland setting can be provided within and across the two sites and to relieve pressure on Hatfield Forest. The Council retains the ambition in the longer term to provide a Country Park in the Great Dunmow area and meet the Natural England criteria to achieve this formal designation, function and high-quality facility.

6.58 The Metropolitan **Green Belt** protects areas of Open Countryside in the south-west to Stansted Mountfitchet and around Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath, White Roding and Leaden Roding.

60 Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance (2022) Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions. Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK

6.59 **Hatfield Forest NNR/SSSI** is the largest area of woodland in the District with over 404ha (1,000 acres) of carefully managed, though overused, ancient medieval hunting forest of coppices and wood pasture. However, the Council's 2023 evidence base on leisure and open space[61] 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. This gap in recommended provision underlines the emphasis made in this Plan for new provision, which will function as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, as well as longer term ambitions for larger Country Park provision.

6.60 The **Flitch Way** has over 220,000 people living within two miles of its 15-mile recreational National Cycle Network Route 16 (NCN 16) 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. The Flitch Way is popular especially among recreational walkers but would benefit from a few modest and appropriate improvements such as access, signage, interpretation boards whilst respecting its multi-functionality for access and amenity, and protecting its significance as a wildlife corridor. A programme of works will be developed and consulted on with the local community for which funding contributions will be sought from developers.

6.61 The **Harcamlow Way**, a 227km long-distance walking route (LDWR) traverses western parts of the District between Cambridge and Harlow and passes though the northern section of Takeley and along the southern side of the A120, crossing it close to Warish Hall at Smith's Green Lane. Local green spaces include Takeley Cricket Club, Smith's Green and Takeley Sports Field.

6.62 The key challenges for the Green and Blue Infrastructure in the **South Uttlesford Area Strategy** include:

- areas of localised flood risk
- protect Ancient Woodland, fragmented woodland cover and limited habitat connectivity
- need to protect the valuable habitat and Ancient Woodland, hedges, veteran trees or vulnerable species
- existing recreational pressures on Hatfield Forest and the requirement to accommodate the SANG criteria in order to meet Natural England standards
- limited access to semi-natural greenspaces and the need to make good provision of amenity green space
- recorded poor water quality in some watercourses ensuring that the landscaping proposals and creation of waterbodies have regard to safeguarding aviation activity relating to the attraction of birds that could lead to an increase in bird-strike risk.

61 LUC (2023) Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

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

All development proposals will protect and enhance Green and Blue Infrastructure and assets in the South Uttlesford Area as shown by maps in **Appendices 11-13** and as shown on the Policies Map.

Contributions will be sought towards the relevant strategic projects (including their enhancement and on-going management costs) identified in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, including:

i. the creation of a country parkland at Church End, Great Dunmow of not less than 17ha will stretch in continuous public open space from the north, near to Marks Farm, around the eastern edge by Merks Hill Wood, and along the River Chelmer beside Bigod's Lane to the track to the north, and westwards across Parsonage Downs to the B184 road into Great Dunmow. It should be designed to Natural England SANG criteria[62]. Where appropriate, opportunity should be taken to provide new habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain, in accordance with the GBI Plan, and

ii. the creation of public open space of not less than 30ha in area in the western part of the Takeley development site bounded by Warish Hall, Smith's Green Lane and Prior's Wood, to be designed in accordance with SANG criteria. It will incorporate the proposed sustainable travel route for bus, cycle and walking. Recognising also its potential for Biodiversity Net Gain, it will be designed to protect and enhance the heritage setting of Warish Hall and will extend the Ancient Woodland whilst incorporating Harcamlow Way.

Environmental proposals must comply with aviation safety and airport safeguarding policy regarding landscaping, habitat creation and wetland areas that may attract birds as set out in **Core Policy 11.**

62 LUC (2024) SANG and Country Park Study. Uttlesford SANG and Country Park

South Uttlesford Area Heritage

6.63 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 our settlements and their wider landscape setting. It is therefore key that we recognise and accommodate the designated and non-designated heritage assets within the area and that new development contributes towards the historic character, sense of identity and place.

6.64 On the north-western side of Great Dunmow are the historic gardens of Easton Lodge and Easton Lodge Estate. It is in this area that the Council retains its commitment to create a country park over this or the next Plan period. Steeped in local cultural history, it includes the ancient deer park, listed buildings, conservation area and the listed Gardens of Easton Lodge. The Trustees of the Gardens of Easton Lodge Preservation Trust have expressed concern over increasing demand to access the gardens, which cannot be met with the current facilities or major change to the operating model. Absorption into a public park facility would address this pressure on a unique green and potentially public resource.

6.65 At Takeley, the setting of listed buildings, Smith's Green Lane and the Scheduled Ancient Monument have played a significant role in considering where built development is, and is not, located within the proposed allocation. Smith's Green Lane is a non-designated asset which runs through the site to Bambers Green and is identified as a Protected Lane (**Core Policy 65**).

6.66 Similarly, the site allocations at Great Dunmow have been influenced by detailed analysis of heritage and landscape setting and is designed to protect views, nature conservation, green infrastructure and public amenity in general.

6.67 The illustrative masterplans in **Appendix 3** ensure a landscape design and green infrastructure-led approach, along with emphasis on sustainable travel and connectivity that respects and enhances heritage, and the significance and setting of these valuable historic assets in the overall plan making process. Furthermore, all assets of heritage value built, landscape and gardens, archaeological are protected by the **Historic Environment Core Policy 61.**

Takeley Mobile Home Park

6.68 The Takeley Mobile Home Park received consent as a consequence of its necessary relocation from the airport site when the latter received consent to expand in 2003. The mobile home site policy was adopted as Local Planning Policy 4 in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005. The site has a standalone use and does not represent an expansion of Takeley village itself. It therefore should not be regarded as a potential redevelopment site, including for the possibility of redevelopment for a permanent form of residential use, whereas its permitted and continued use as a mobile home site should be retained. For this reason, the 2005 Local Plan policy is included in this Local Plan (2021-2041) to ensure its original intention and purpose are protected. It is therefore replicated as **Development Policy 10: Takeley Mobile Home Park.**

Development Policy 10 **The Takeley Mobile Home Park**

The use of the Takeley Mobile Homes Park as defined on the Policies Map for conventional residential or other development proposals will not be permitted. Any additional mobile homes must respect the existing layout, open space provision and quality of landscaping.

Chapter 7

Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Strategy

Introduction

7.1 The Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Strategy sets out the Council's plan for development at these two settlements, which includes strategic housing allocations along with the associated necessary infrastructure. Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham are strongly interrelated by way of geography, connectivity and access to employment and infrastructure. It is therefore important to address the proposed growth as a single strategy, noting that these settlements are also closely related to the settlements and facilities within the **South Uttlesford Area Strategy** covered in **Chapter 6,** including Takeley and Stansted Airport.

7.2 Stansted Mountfitchet is one of three 'Key Settlements' within the District, lying near the Essex and Hertfordshire border. Stansted Mountfitchet's origins as a settlement date back to Saxon Briton whilst the occupation of Stansted Mountfitchet castle, which now comprises a Scheduled 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 forms of Stansted, Birchanger and Bishop's Stortford. The town is well serviced with a range of local facilities, however, there is some reliance on nearby settlements for large scale retail and leisure opportunities, and employment opportunities at Stansted Airport, Bishop's Stortford and London.

7.3 Elsenham is a 'Local Rural Centre' situated to the northeast of Stansted Mountfitchet, connected by the B1051. Elsenham is also an historic settlement, with reference made to it in the Domesday Book (1086). The majority of housing and local service provision at Elsenham is situated along two main corridors, namely Henham Road and Station Road. Elsenham benefits from a modest level of employment provision including, at the northern edge of the settlement, the Jenkins Drive industrial area and the Old Mead Road industrial area. However, the Water Circle Estate at Gaunt's End lies approximately 1.5km to the southeast of Elsenham.

7.4 Both Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham benefit from railway stations on the West Anglia line which provide regular services to Cambridge and London. The area also benefits from close proximity to two major road arteries at Junction 8 between the M11 motorway and the A120. Each settlement is also served by connecting bus services. For Stansted Mountfitchet, services are provided to Bishop's Stortford, Saffron Walden and Stansted Airport, with bus stops largely centred either along Cambridge Road or surrounding the train station. For Elsenham, only the service which runs between Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport is provided, with several stops along both Station Road and Henham Road.

7.5 Stansted Mountfitchet lies within the River Stort Valley landscape area. This countryside is characterised as gently rolling with occasional steep river valley slopes, with the landscape dominated by intensive arable agriculture and scattered woodland cover. Elsenham meanwhile lies within the Broxted Farmland Plateau landscape area which sits between the River Stort and River Chelmer. Likewise, this area is characterised by gentle undulations and intensive agricultural farming, though there are occasional large blocks of woodland, often of ancient origin.

7.6 Approximately 2.5km to the east of Elsenham lies the Elsenham Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which comprises a well-maintained Ancient Woodland. Moreover, between Elsenham and Stansted Mountfitchet lies the Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve, an Ancient Woodland which supports protected wildlife as well as recreational walking.

7.7 The pleasant landscape within the area is supplemented by a rich built heritage, including many listed buildings of a variety of origin and architectural styles, as well as the Stansted Windmill and Stansted Mountfitchet Castle Scheduled Monuments. Stansted Mountfitchet Castle is a well-documented example of a Norman ringwork and bailey with historical records dating from its construction in 1066 to its destruction in the early 13th century. Its earthworks remain essentially undisturbed and will retain important archaeological evidence pertaining to the internal layout of the castle and environmental information relating to the economy of its inhabitants and the landscape in which they

lived. The castle also provides an important tourist and educational function, visited by the residents of Uttlesford and beyond.

7.8 It is essential that the Local Plan supports the preservation and enhancement of the historic and landscape features which contribute to the attractiveness of the area, whilst also ensuring that need for housing and infrastructure are met for the future. It is important to note that Neighbourhood Plans will help achieve this aim and that Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan at present.

7.9 The Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Strategy therefore aims to provide new housing, employment, community facilities and green infrastructure which respects the existing character of the local area, whilst supporting the needs of present and future residents.

How Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham will Change by 2041

7.10 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought for Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham:

- provision of land to enable the delivery of a new primary school and early years and childcare provision at Elsenham
- the provision of two strategic residential sites at Stansted Mountfitchet for around 325 dwellings

- the provision of one strategic residential site at Elsenham for 110 dwellings
- the provision of one strategic employment site at the Water Circle Estate, Gaunt's End for 5.5ha of office floorspace
- to provide active travel linkages between the proposed development sites and the existing settlement facilities, including the respective railway stations, significant areas of new green infrastructure, open space, areas for enhancing and protecting biodiversity
- development which achieves high quality urban design and protects the historic nature of the settlements, and
- support greater footfall within the retail centres of Stansted to help the vitality and viability of the local economy.

Housing

7.11 There has been significant new housing growth along and adjacent to the M11 corridor in recent years. It is therefore important that infrastructure is delivered to support the planned growth, and that the proposed allocations in the Local Plan are well integrated with existing communities.

7.12 To deliver the homes and infrastructure outlined above, the Local Plan provides for around 435 additional homes at three proposed strategic sites at Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham. These allocations are set out in **Core Policy 16** and **Figures 7.1, 7.2** and **7.3** shown below.

7.13 The policy requirements **(Appendix 4)** ensure that a comprehensive masterplanning approach is taken to planning for the strategic sites to ensure the development is coherent and well-integrated. Planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the allocations and the existing settlements, well-connected green infrastructure, education, and high quality public open spaces and sporting facilities that benefit local residents.

7.14 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 and supported housing, including those that are suited to our ageing population and people who wish to rent[63].

7.15 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the proposed allocations have been selected[64].

63 Additional advice is available from ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (Appendix J); EPOA's Essex Design Guide/Ageing Population; Extra Care Design Guide 2023; ECC Supported Living Accommodation Standards; ECC Design Guide for LD Complex Needs Accommodation for Adults with Disability

64 UDC (2024) Site Selection Topic Paper. Uttlesford Local Plan Site Selection Topic Paper

7.16 The policy requirements (**Core Policy 16** and **Appendix 4**) ensure that a comprehensive development framework, masterplan and design code approach is taken, whereby new development is not to be delivered piecemeal but as part of a cohesive approach. Prior approval of these documents will be required to ensure that new development delivers all necessary infrastructure, connectivity 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

7.17 Stansted Mountfitchet, as a Key Settlement, provides a range of local convenience retailers, places to eat and drink and community facilities. Moreover, there is a range of small businesses and employers within and nearby the settlement, including the 'M11 Business Link'.

7.18 Elsenham has a comparatively smaller retail and leisure offer, in line with its designation as a Local Rural Centre. However, there are employers located within the business parks at Elsenham Golds Nurseries and Old Mead Road, at the northern edge of the village. The Water Circle Estate is situated at Gaunt's End approximately 1.5km to the south-east and is accessible via bus from Elsenham. A full list of the District's designated existing and proposed employment sites can be viewed under **Core Policy 4** and **45.**

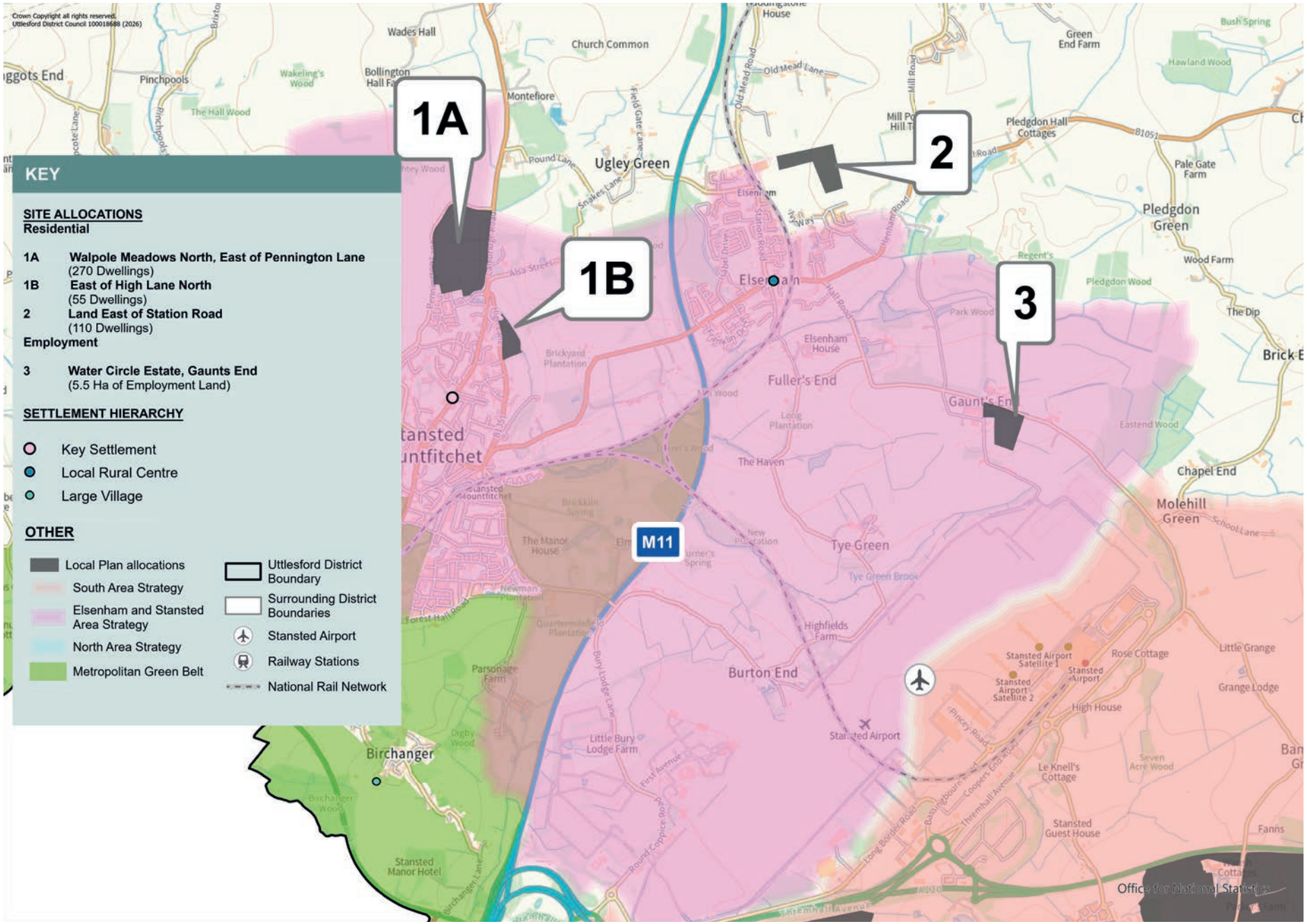
7.19 The Local Plan allocates a new strategic employment site within the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area which helps address the District's identified need for office space. This site is listed in **Core Policies 4** and **16** and provides for approximately 5.5ha of office (Use Class E(g)(i)). This site will act as an extension of the existing Water Circle employment area and will support the long-term viability of local communities by ensuring new employment opportunities are delivered alongside residential growth.

Stansted Mountfitchet

7.20 The proposed allocations within **Figure 7.2** seek to cumulatively deliver around 325 dwellings, green infrastructure, open space, 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 include:

- enhanced pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the town centre by developing active routes that can be easily accessed from all points of the development
- provide a large green space in the north of Walpole Meadows creating a green pedestrian link that connects both strategic sites with the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network and with Pennington Lane, including a

Figure 7.1: Area Strategy Map



minimum of 7.5ha high-quality Semi-Natural Accessible Greenspace with an approx. 2.3km circular walk
- create green and blue infrastructure across the site that is 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
- 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, and
- Provision towards the delivery of a new 56 place early years and childcare facility.

Elsenham

7.21 The proposed allocation within **Figure 7.3** seeks to cumulatively deliver around 110 dwellings, land to enable the delivery of a new primary school and early years provision, green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure. This allocation will deliver a level of growth which will complement the adjoining and consented scheme that lies in close proximity to Elsenham Railway Station, help to support the vitality of Elsenham and provide new essential facilities such as a new school, whilst also being integrated within the wider settlement. Key considerations for planning for this site include:

- maximise integration with the existing Outline planning permission (S62A/2022/0012)[65], to allow for legible and coherent streetscapes, permeable public realm, and accessible open spaces and green infrastructure
- prioritise safe, attractive, and convenient pedestrian access for all residents to the Elsenham Railway Station
- create a pedestrian point of access along the northern edge of the site which connects to the existing PROW network
- provide a central green area that include measures to enhance biodiversity and encourage play and recreation. This area should be accessible by a range of safe and legible routes that are appealing to pedestrians
- ensure strong boundary planting is provided along the northern and eastern edges of the allocation, which softens the developments visual impact, and
- contribute land to ensure 2.1ha is available overall, to enable the delivery of a new primary school and early years and childcare provision (approximately 1ha needed from the new allocation).

65 Planning Inspectorate (2024) Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2022/0012 - Land East of Station Road, Elsenham. www.gov.uk/guidance/section-62a-planning-application-s62a20220012-land-east-of-station-road-elsenham

Core Policy 16 **Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Strategy**

Our overarching priority for the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area is to support the strategic role of the Key Settlement and Local Rural Centre by delivering a balance of housing and a range of infrastructure, whilst protecting the environmental and historic assets and maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices.

Development in the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3.**

Housing Delivery
Around 435 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered 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 Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area will be distributed:

Table 7.1: Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Housing Allocations

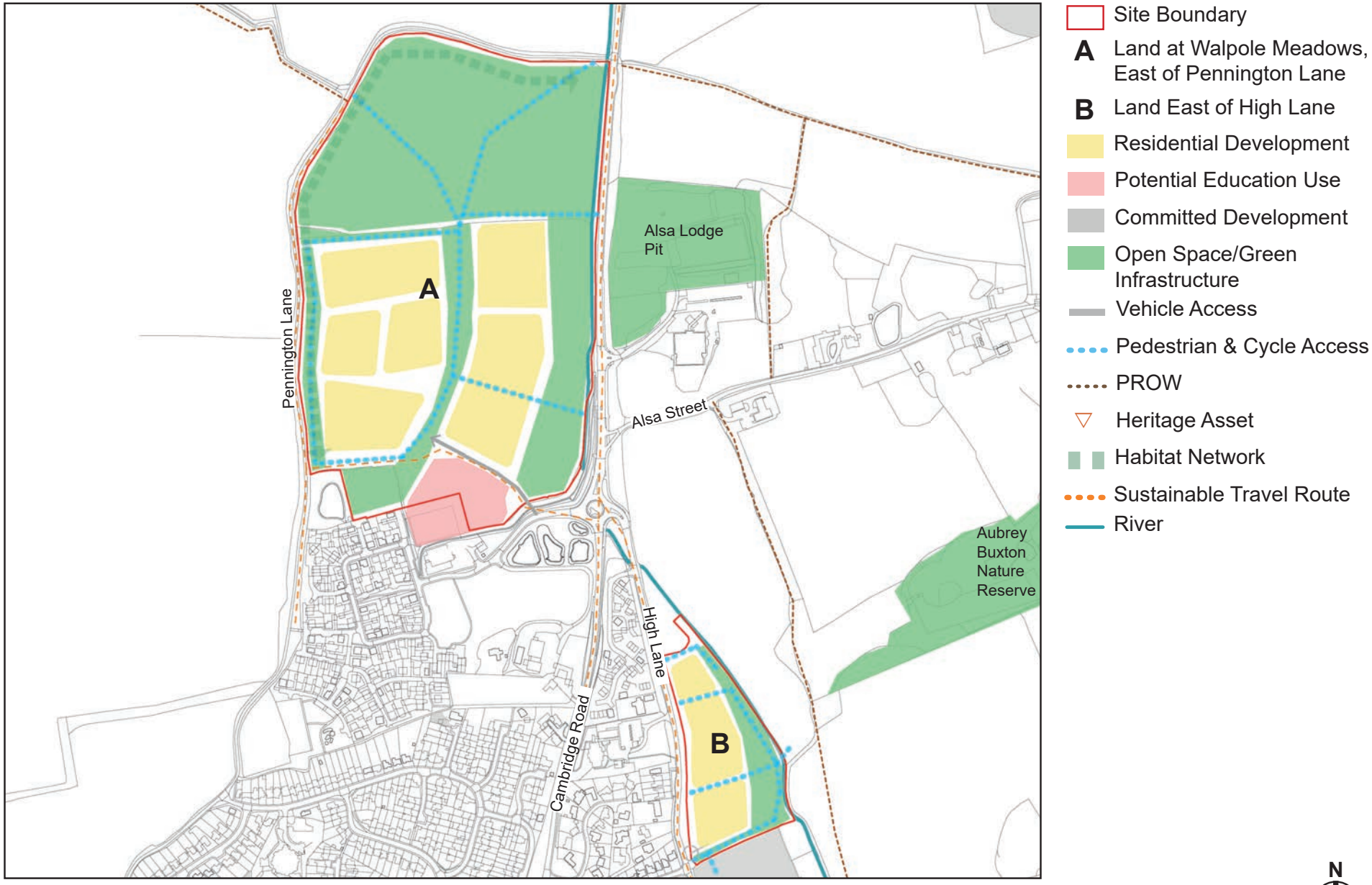
Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Stansted Mountfitchet	Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane	270
Stansted Mountfitchet	East of High Lane North	55
Elsenham, within Henham parish	Land East of Station Road, Elsenham	110
Total		**435**

Employment
Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 45.** A total of 5.5ha 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 7.2: Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Employment Allocation

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Hectares
Elsenham	Water Circle Estate, Gaunt's End, Elsenham	5.5

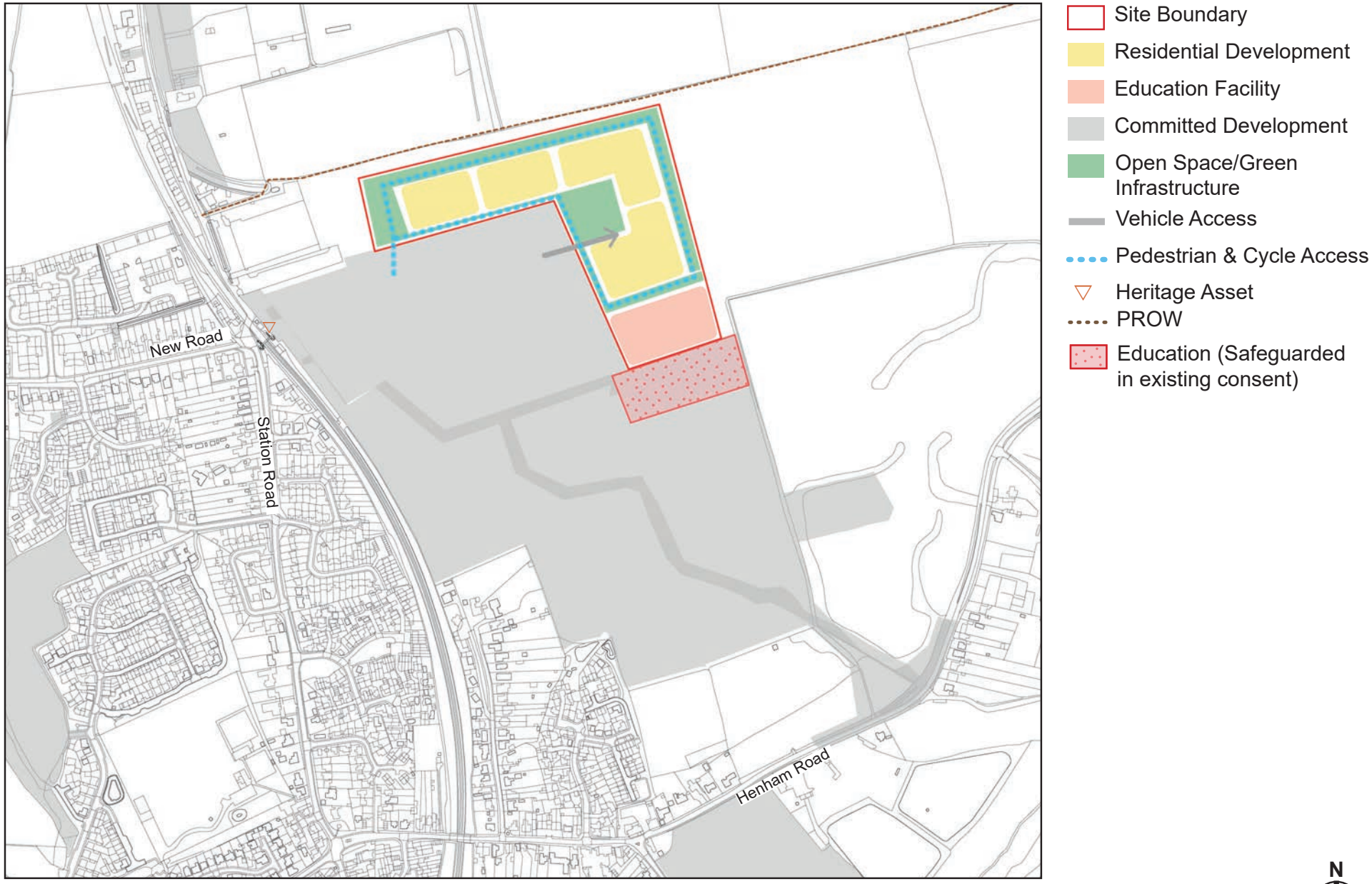
Figure 7.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Stansted Mountfitchet



Appendix 4A - Stansted Mountfitchet Indicative Framework

Please note: This plan is for illustrative and indicative purposes only. Any proposals that come forward under this framework will be subject to full scrutiny by the local planning authority.

Figure 7.3: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Elsenham



Appendix 4B - Elsenham Indicative Framework

Please note: This plan is for illustrative and indicative purposes only. Any proposals that come forward under this framework will be subject to full scrutiny by the local planning authority.

Delivery of Transport and other Infrastructure within the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area

7.22 To maximise the opportunities for the delivery of sustainable transport and active travel within the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area, the strategic allocations are 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. These measures will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. Development proposals should prioritise the provision and enhancement of active travel connections to key services, rail stations and schools.

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

7.24 There are two railway stations in this area, one each at Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham respectively. It will be important to deliver improved walking and cycling connections to the stations and improved infrastructure at the stations themselves, including secure cycle parking and providing space for the parking or docking of hire bike schemes that could be delivered throughout the District. Access to the railway stations should prioritise active travel and users with mobility challenges and ensure conflict with motor vehicles is reduced.

7.25 The area benefits from a good network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). All new developments will be required to protect the routes and to improve the connectivity and attractiveness of PROW in the vicinity of the development site, and to provide new PROW where indicated on the proposed Site Development Templates.

7.26 It is important that transport improvements are made within the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area, as set out within the following **Core Policy 17** with focus on delivering active travel connection and sustainable transport enhancements. The development proposals will deliver an active travel route from the strategic sites along High Lane into the town centre and railway station. This route should consider closing off High Lane to through traffic to ensure space can be secured for active travel. Detailed discussions will be required with the highway authority on delivering this infrastructure.

Core Policy 17
Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area

To deliver the growth in the Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area, transport and other infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth, which is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area.

Transport infrastructure in Stansted and Elsenham will be required as follows:

i. in Stansted Mountfitchet an active travel route will be delivered along High Lane and Lower Street, and
ii. delivery of strategic cycling and walking infrastructure improvements between settlements and schemes identified in the Uttlesford and Essex LCWIP including routes to Stansted Airport and Bishop's Stortford

The package may be further refined through preparation of the new Local Transport Plan being developed by Essex County Council.

Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham Area Heritage

7.27 Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham's historic origins can be seen in the high quantity of listed buildings. In Stansted Mountfitchet, these are largely consolidated around Lower Street/Chapel Hill, Silver Street, and further west towards Bentfield End. These properties range from 20th Century to 16th Century and earlier construction, demonstrating a myriad of architectural styles.

7.28 This concentration of listed properties is reflected in the areas of the settlement which are designated under the Stansted Mountfitchet conservation area. However, this conservation area also extends to include the Stansted Castle and Stansted Windmill Scheduled Monuments, which each provide a landmark presence within Stansted Mountfitchet.

7.29 At Elsenham, the majority of listed buildings are located at the southern and eastern extent of the settlement, along Robin Hood Road and Henham Road. Whilst not covered by a designated conservation area, these listed buildings still make a valuable contribution to the streetscape.

7.30 The proposed allocations are situated along the northern edges of both Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham respectively. For both settlements, this limits the visibility of new development from their historic cores, with more contemporary development already interjecting and limiting the potential for harm to the significance of local built heritage.

7.31 Moreover, the design requirements held within the new Local Plan (**Core Policies 52** and **52a**) and the **Uttlesford Design Code** will ensure that future planning applications demonstrate that all reasonable design options have been considered to conserve and enhance the heritage value of Elsenham and Stansted Mountfitchet. These design requirements will apply to both the proposed allocations and all other forms of development.

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Chapter 8

Thaxted and the Rural Area Strategy

Introduction

8.1 The majority of growth in the District over the Plan period is proposed in the North Uttlesford and South Uttlesford areas. However in the remainder of the District, described as 'Thaxted and the Rural Area', a proportionate scale of growth will be supported, to ensure that the viability and vitality of these important areas is also maintained.

8.2 The Local Rural Centre of Thaxted plays an important role for its wider rural hinterland, however infrastructure constraints limit the ability for further development to be accommodated at the current time. Non-strategic scale growth will be supported at the Larger Villages, whilst infilling will be supported in the Smaller Villages. Development within the Open Countryside will generally be restricted, however, it will be supported in principle where it is in accordance with specific Local Plan policies, such as where it delivers affordable housing (as a Rural Exception Site) or supports the sustainability of the agricultural sector, being an important component of the Uttlesford economy.

8.3 This Chapter sets out our strategy for development at Thaxted and the Rural Area, and particularly for non-strategic development at the Larger Villages (as defined in **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** and later in this Chapter) along with providing Development Management Policies that apply only to the Rural Area, 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 Open Countryside
- **Development Policy 2:** Replacement of a Dwelling in the Open Countryside
- **Development Policy 3:** Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Open Countryside
- **Development Policy 4:** Extensions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside
- **Development Policy 5:** Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Gardens

8.4 There are no specific policies for Thaxted as there are no housing or employment allocations for this settlement proposed in this Plan.

Thaxted

8.5 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, rail or A120 corridors. Instead, Thaxted's location, scale, and extent of facilities serves to support the comparatively rural surrounding settlements. These facilities include a range of local convenience retailers, places to eat and drink, community facilities, along with a range of small businesses and employers.

8.6 Thaxted has an historic core with a high concentration of listed buildings, owing to its medieval origins. Located on

rising ground the settlement is centred around the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, the Guildhall and Clarence House. The Grade II* listed John Webb's Windmill is also an important landmark. More recently, 20th and 21st century developments have increased the size of Thaxted to the north and east. 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.

8.7 Within the settlement itself, the B184 acts as the main linear through route, as well passing along the High Street which hosts several retail stores and other facilities. Along this key movement corridor, residences are situated at an increased density resulting from the prevalence of terraced housing which typifies its historic character. 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.

8.8 There are no allocations, either strategic or non-strategic, made at Thaxted within the Local Plan. This is principally because the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess of what the Council consider would be appropriate within this Local Plan period, especially considering some of the wider constraints to development that affect Thaxted, including its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths[66]. At present, a smaller scale of growth without the delivery of a primary school is also not practical given that the existing Thaxted Primary School is at capacity with no potential for expansion.

8.9 In the future the Council would support the community to explore if any non-strateguc scale of development could come forward without negatively impacting upon infrastructure provision, such as through a new Neighbourhood Plan. Speculative proposals for development within the existing built area of Thaxted will be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and **Core Policy 3,** subject to other policy considerations being met on a case-by-case basis.

Rural Area

8.10 Beyond the three Key Settlements and six Local Rural Centres, Uttlesford District also contains eight Larger Villages, 31 Smaller Villages and a number of smaller settlements that fall within Open Countryside, as set out within **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy.** Beyond the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres, i.e., the rest of the District, and consisting of the Larger Villages, Smaller Villages and areas identified as Open Countryside, are classified as the 'Rural Area' within this Plan.

66 UDC (2024) Site Selection Topic Paper. Uttlesford Local Plan Site Selection Topic Paper

8.11 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; access to employment, shops and services, with comparatively poorer public transport connectivity than the larger settlements. On this basis, it is considered appropriate to plan for some non-strategic scale (less than 100 dwellings) development sites at the Larger Villages in the Rural Area to help sustain them and maintain their vitality and viability in accordance with national policy. Other than Thaxted, the Larger Villages are the 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.

How Thaxted and the Rural Area will Change by 2041

8.12 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. An exception to this is the Local Rural Centre of Thaxted where infrastructure-related constraints do not support additional development at the current time. However, Thaxted plays an important role in the Uttlesford economy as a tourist destination and as a hub providing shops and services for the Rural Area. It is important that this function is retained over the plan period,

and this has been recognised with the designation of a Town Centre boundary and Primary Shopping Area boundary in **Core Policy 50: Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy** which seeks to preserve this role; and support for tourism development in **Core Policy 51: Tourism and the Visitor Economy.**

8.13 Consequently, Thaxted and the Rural Area will not accommodate any strategic scale housing or employment 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. 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 and in accordance with the relevant Plan policies.

8.14 Growth across the Rural Area 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 Study for more details)[67].

Housing in the Rural Area

8.15 The largest and most sustainable villages within the Rural Area, are the Larger Villages, as set out within **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy.** These will accommodate the non-strategic development sites (sites of less than 100 dwellings) which together will provide approximately 547 additional dwellings across the eight Larger Villages in the Plan period up to 2041. Windfall development is not included in the 547 dwellings allowed for in the Rural Area and will occur across the District where the relevant policies in this Plan are met (for example, within the existing built areas of Larger Villages, where in accordance with **Core Policy 3**).

8.16 NPPF paragraph 67 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". Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, NPPF paragraph 68 requires local planning authorities to set "indicative housing requirements" "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 aims to future-proof this requirement by identifying housing requirement figures for all currently designated neighbourhood

67 UDC (2024) Settlement Services and Facilities Topic Paper. Uttlesford_Settlement_Services_and_Facilities_July_2024.pdf

areas as well as 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.

8.17 Although housing requirement figures are required for all designated neighbourhood areas, 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 require any development (strategic or non-strategic) at Smaller Villages, or in 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 supporting windfall development, any identified housing requirement figures for Smaller Villages are identified by this Plan as nil.

8.18 There are eight 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 and Neighbourhood Plan status, alongside **Green Belt** constraints and whether there are any strategic allocations in the areas.

8.19 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 2025[68].

68 UDC (2024) Larger Villages and Newport Local Rural Centre Housing Requirement Topic Paper. 2024-07-05_Final_Uttlesford_Larger_Villages_and_Newport_Housing_Requirement_Topic_Paper.pdf

Table 8.1: Larger Villages and other designated Neighbourhood Areas in Uttlesford District

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Settlement Name	Spatial Strategy Status	Neighbourhood Plan Status at 1st April 2024
Key Settlement	Great Dunmow	Strategic	Made 8th December 2016
	Saffron Walden	Strategic	Made 11th October 2022
	Stansted Mountfitchet	Strategic, part Green Belt	Area Designated 17th September 2015
Local Rural Centre	Elsenham	Strategic	N/A
	Great Chesterford	Strategic	Made 2nd February 2023
	Hatfield Heath	Strategic, Green Belt (inset)	Area Designated 20th December 2021
	Newport	Non-strategic	Made 28th June 2021. Under review
	Takeley including Prior's Green	Strategic	Area Designated 29th September 2021
	Thaxted	N/A	Made 21st February 2019
Larger Villages	Birchanger	Green Belt (Inset)	N/A
	Clavering	Non-strategic	N/A
	Debden	Non-strategic	N/A
	Felsted	Non-strategic	Made 25th February 2020. Under review.
	Hatfield Broad Oak	Non-strategic	Area Designated 22nd April 2022
	Henham	Non-strategic	N/A
	Little Hallingbury	Green Belt (Inset)	Area Designated 28th Feb 2023
	Stebbing	Non-strategic	Made 19th July 2022
Smaller Villages	Ashdon	N/A	Made 6th December 2022
	Broxted	N/A	Area Designated 4th January 2022
	Flitch Green	N/A	Area Designated 25th January 2022
	Great Easton	N/A	Area Designated 30th August 2022
	Lindsell	N/A	Area Designated 11th January 2024
	Little Dunmow	N/A	Area Designated 18th May 2021
	Little Easton	N/A	Area Designated 9th July 2020
	Manuden	N/A	N/A
	Quendon & Rickling	N/A	Made 28th June 2021. Under review
	Radwinter	N/A	Area Designated 7th November 2018
Open Countryside	Cherry Green	N/A	Area Designated 4th January 2022
	Duton Green	N/A	Area Designated 30th August 2022
	Little Chesterford	N/A	Made 2nd February 2023
	Tilty	N/A	Area Designated 30th August 2022

8.20 **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 requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations. The methodology for how the figures have been calculated are set out in the 'Larger Villages and Newport Local Rural Centre Housing Requirements Methodology Topic Paper'[69] 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, and development that is already 'committed' through the granting of planning permission or a Neighbourhood Plan allocation and available Housing/ Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)[70] housing capacity.

8.21 The housing requirements are based on the settlement hierarchy, completions and commitments data at 1st April 2025, and the HELAA evidence, and have been informed by representations received during the Regulation 18 consultation. In particular, the assessment of facilities informing the settlement hierarchy is based on the 'settlements' rather than 'parishes' as was the case for the Regulation 18 Plan.

8.22 At Regulation 18 stage Parish Councils were asked to make it clear if they wished to make allocations to deliver the housing requirement figures in **Core Policy 19** through Neighbourhood Plans. If not, then any non-strategic allocation proposals would be included in the Publication Version (Regulation 19) of preparing this Local Plan.

8.23 Following engagement with the Larger Villages, every Larger Village intends to make new Neighbourhood Plan allocations to deliver their identified housing requirement figure. In order to ensure that housing delivery materialises should a Neighbourhood Plan not come forward in a timely manner, it is considered appropriate to set a two-year timescale from Local Plan adoption by which if a Neighbourhood Plan has not formally been 'made' as part of the development plan, then the local planning authority will instead take ownership of this task through a review of the development plan. This could take the form of a Local Plan Review, a site allocations Development Plan Document or a Supplementary Plan under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

69 UDC (2024) Larger Villages and Newport Local Rural Centre Housing Requirement Topic Paper. 2024-07-05_Final_Uttlesford_Larger_Villages_and_Newport_Housing_Requirement_Topic_Paper.pdf

70 UDC (2024) Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). Housing_and_Economic_Land_Availability_Assessment_HELAA_report_June_2024.pdf

Core Policy 19 **Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures**

In accordance with the **Spatial Strategy** in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs,** the 547 dwelling residual non-strategic (sites under 100 dwellings) 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 overleaf.

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 and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Non-strategic allocations will be set out in made Neighbourhood Plans. If a Neighbourhood Plan with sufficient allocations to deliver the housing requirement in full has not passed independent examination and referendum and been 'made' by the date two years after the Local Plan is adopted, then the local planning authority will instead make the allocations in either a Local Plan Review or other Development Plan Document. This is to ensure the delivery of the Larger Villages housing requirements during the plan period.

The housing requirement figures become applicable from the date of adoption. Where a neighbourhood plan has been 'made' in the context of an historic housing requirement figure, the housing requirement figure will be superseded by this policy. However, any allocations made to deliver any historic housing requirement figure will remain extant.

Any site development proposals are subject to Minerals (Essex Minerals Local Plan Policy S8) and Waste Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan Policy S2) safeguarding policy.

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

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Settlement	2021-41 Housing Requirement figure (total)	Residual requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations (at 1 April 2025)
Larger Villages	Birchanger	3	0
	Clavering	199	117
	Debden	78	27
	Felsted	320	95
	Hatfield Broad Oak	141	91
	Henham	181	119
	Little Hallingbury	21	0
	Stebbing	171	98
Smaller Villages	Ashdon	0	0
	Broxted	0	0
	Flitch Green	0	0
	Great Easton	0	0
	Lindsell	0	0
	Little Dunmow	0	0
	Little Easton	0	0
	Manuden	0	0
	Quendon & Rickling	0	0
	Radwinter	0	0
Open Countryside	Cherry Green	0	0
	Duton Green	0	0
	Little Chesterford	0	0
	Tilty	0	0
Rural Area Total		**1,114**	**547**

Rural Exception Sites

8.24 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.

8.25 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.

8.26 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 formerly lived in the village, or settlements, 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.

8.27 '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 relevant. 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 Area, including within the **Green Belt**, to meet local needs 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 through a local housing needs survey or other relevant study
ii. the number, size and tenure of the dwellings are suitable to meet the identified need
iii. is of a small scale and proportionate in size to the adjoining settlement where applicable
iv. the development would conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the historic environment in accordance with **Core Policy 61: The Historic Environment**
v. the development 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 by sustainable modes.

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 viably 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 Open Countryside

8.28 Whilst development in this Plan is focused more within the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres, and to a much lesser extent in the Larger Villages and Smaller Villages, there will still be occasions where development within the Open Countryside is appropriate in accordance with **Core Policy 3 Settlement Hierarchy.**

8.29 Under **Development Policy 1: New Dwellings in the Open Countryside** and **Development Policy 2: Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside** a criteria-based policy approach will be used to determine applications for residential development within the Open Countryside.

8.30 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 required to directly support such uses is important to foster a successful rural economy, but it can also have an adverse impact on the landscape if not properly managed. As such, it is important that development is located and designed appropriately. **Development Policy 3: Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Open Countryside** sets out the criteria under which such proposals will be assessed.

8.31 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 4: Extensions to 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 landscape setting. 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 Open Countryside**

New dwellings in the Open Countryside, 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 and enhances its immediate setting
iii. the development would involve the one for one replacement of an existing dwelling in accordance with **Development Policy 2 Replacement of a Dwelling in the Open Countryside**
iv. the development consists of the subdivision of an existing residential building, and/or
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.

Where a new dwelling has been permitted for an agricultural worker under **Development Policy 3: Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Open 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.

Development Policy 2 **Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside**

The replacement of an existing dwelling in the Open Countryside will be supported provided that:

i. the residential use of the original dwelling has not been abandoned
ii. the original dwelling is not of significant heritage value 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, and
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.

Development Policy 3 **Rural Workers' Dwellings in the Open 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 Open Countryside**

Extensions to dwellings in the Open Countryside will only be supported where the proposals:

i. respect the character of the original dwelling by retaining its visual dominance
ii. retain the openness of the Rural Area, and
iii. do not substantially alter the scale, design and character of the original dwelling.

Change of use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Gardens

8.32 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 would 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 a 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 and does not lead to the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

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

8.33 Diversification proposals for agricultural and land-based rural businesses have the 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.

8.34 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.

8.35 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
- uses including Agri-tech, Agri-food and Forestry sectors which may provide opportunities 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 practices.

Core Policy 21
Rural Diversification

In the Rural Area, proposals for economic activities that bring about rural diversification shall normally be permitted, subject to all the following criteria being met:

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. sufficient utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided, and
v. there is access by means of an existing road, it would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the local road network, and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required.

Chapter 9

Climate Change, Transport and The Environment

Introduction

9.1 This Chapter sets out policies addressing Climate, Transport and Environmental topics to help conserve and enhance the environment in Uttlesford, and to meet the challenges of the climate change emergency. Uttlesford contains a rich network of biodiversity, landscapes and habitats. These include formally designated areas of high value such as Hatfield Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/ National Nature Reserve (NNR) and those that are not designated but are of global biodiversity significance e.g. chalk streams, as well as areas that are of importance to native wildlife and local people. The Local Plan sets out how development can contribute to protecting and enhancing the environment, including through the existing NPPF mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimise, restore, offset), the local spatial hierarchy and a requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.

9.2 The impacts of climate change are predicted to increase over time[71]. The Local Plan policies aim to ensure the impacts of climate change are fully considered from the earliest stages of development, alongside biodiversity measures to help withstand the effects of climate change. These are predicted to include warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers and more frequent and intense weather extremes predicted for the UK.

71 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) What Climate Change is. Climate change and defence: a Dstl biscuit book - What climate change is - Guidance - GOV.UK

9.3 Sustainable transport measures will help to ensure the long-term viability of settlements within Uttlesford, improving connectivity and promoting active travel. Policies address the impacts of transportation, including freight, and the need for accessible travel for pedestrians, cyclists and other travelling 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 32a:** Aerodrome Safeguarding
- **Core Policy 33:** Managing Waste
- **Core Policy 34:** Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources
- **Core Policy 35:** Watercourse Streams Protection and Enhancement
- **Core Policy 36:** Flood Risk
- **Core Policy 37:** Sustainable Drainage Systems
- **Core Policy 38:** Sites Designated for Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **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 facing society. There is an urgency to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. These temperature targets were agreed 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[72].

9.5 Analysis[73] from the Committee on Climate Change shows that, for the UK to meet its steeply falling carbon budgets, it is 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 fossil fuels), 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 Climate change mitigation requires: an active reduction in carbon emissions, including by designing new developments and buildings to be energy and resource efficient, and welcoming proposals to achieve the same in existing buildings; increasing the use and generation of renewable and low carbon energy; and promoting patterns of development that encourage travel by more environmentally friendly modes of transport. As per the expectation set by the NPPF, 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.

9.7 The purpose of the policies in this Chapter, building on **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change** set out in **Chapter 4,** is to bring forward development that fully, or more than fully, mitigates its climate impacts and demonstrates readiness for future climate impacts, to the extent analysed

72 UDC (2019) Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 - 2030. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY.pdf
73 Committee on Climate Change (2023) Adaptation and Decarbonisation. Adaptation and decarbonisation - Climate Change Committee

as necessary to fulfil the Climate Change Act. It is crucial to address the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependency on fossil fuels, minimise energy usage, use low carbon energy and heat sources, and exploit opportunities in renewable energy production. These actions will address the Council's 2019 Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration as reflected in the review of the Climate Crisis Strategy, which aims to enable the entire District to achieve net zero status by 2030[74].

9.8 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 and require 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-sufficient[75], it is recognised that this may not always be possible at every site, in which case developers will then need to contribute to a 'energy offset' scheme.

9.9 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.

9.10 Local Planning Authorities are empowered through the Planning and Energy Act 2008[76] 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 plans[77].

9.11 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 Guide[78] and the Government's legislated Sixth Carbon Budget[79]. The Plan's approach also reflects the evidence base[80] produced by UDC's consultants on the need, feasibility and precedents for net zero carbon policy, and aligns with the Essex-wide recommended planning policy for Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation) published in the Planning Policy Position For Next Zero Carbon

74 UDC (2019) Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 - 2030. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY.pdf
76 UK Planning and Energy Act, 2008. Planning and Energy Act 2008
78 RTPI & TCPA (2023) The Climate Crisis. A guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change. The Climate Crisis. See page 34.
79 As per measures shown to be necessary for that 6th Carbon Budget. Committee on Climate Change (2020) Sixth Carbon Budget. Sixth Carbon Budget - Climate Change Committee
80 UDC Regulation 19 Evidence base. The new Local Plan - Uttlesford District Council

Homes And Buildings In Greater Essex – November 2023 set out in the **Essex Design Guide**, which is supported by detailed technical feasibility, cost uplift and legal justification evidence[81].

9.12 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) 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 types)[82] used to operate the building and the activities within it, multiplied by the carbon emissions associated with each energy type[83]. This includes:
  a. energy to heat, ventilate and light the building (regulated energy[84])
  b. plus the energy required to run the appliances and other energy-using equipment (unregulated energy[85]), and
  c. minus the amount of on-site renewable energy generation (where it prevents the need for production of an equal amount of conventional grid generation and its associated carbon).

9.13 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 scheme where, in exceptional circumstances, the on-site

81 Essex County Council & Essex Planning Officers Association (2023) Essex Design Guide: Net Zero Carbon Evidence. net-zero-carbon-planning-policy-for-greater-essex-november-2023.pdf
82 E.g. electricity, gas and other fuels.
83 E.g. 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.
84 E.g. heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, pumps and fans.
85 Unregulated loads are plug loads, such as cooking appliances, TVs, computers, and other electrical equipment.

requirements cannot be achieved due to demonstrable feasibility or viability constraints.

9.14 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 predicted amount of 'excess' self-generated zero-carbon energy for later direct use on site
  - where it is demonstrably not feasible 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.
- These criteria are necessary to meet the national carbon reduction targets and for the Local Plan to deliver on its obligation to mitigate climate change. The delivery of zero carbon homes is necessary from 2025 for the UK's carbon budgets[86], and the policies in this Plan are designed to ensure that new builds are net zero carbon in their own right, through optimal energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy on their own roofs. This will minimise the need for greenfield land to be set aside for standalone renewable energy generation and will reduce the reliance on decarbonisation of the electricity grid which is not expected to be achieved until after the mid-2030s. The use of on-site renewables will also protect occupants from steep and unexpected increases in energy costs.

Net Zero Operational Carbon Development

9.15 UDC's policy approach to net zero carbon operational development is closely aligned with an Essex-wide recommended policy approach published on the **Essex Design Guide** and supported by a detailed technical evidence base, funded by the Essex Climate Action

86 Committee on Climate Change (2020) The Sixth Carbon Budget: [sector summary for] Buildings. Sector-summary-Buildings.pdf

Commission and facilitated by the County Council's Climate Change and Planning Unit (CaPU) in collaboration with the local authorities of Greater Essex, the County Council and with the Essex Policy Officers Association. This policy approach results in a building which has net zero carbon emissions in operation by virtue of having a net zero energy balance measured over a year, achieved through a combination of on-site energy efficiency with renewable energy supply (usually onsite). This enhances the robustness of the Uttlesford policy in that it:

- is supported by in-depth modelling of feasibility[87], up-to-date cost uplift and viability studies[88] produced in support of those Essex policies (and the ability to use the identified costs to perform viability testing specifically for Uttlesford), and benefits from Essex's open legal advice confirming the acceptability in planning terms of setting this kind of policy[89]
- will improve implementation by using technical support services offered by the County, e.g. validation checklists/ templates and potentially a countywide energy offsetting scheme, and
- contributes towards a unified and consistent approach across the Essex area that will reduce uncertainty and complication for the region's development industry and enable upskilling of practitioners.

9.16 The first 'building block' in the Climate Change policies set out in this Plan 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/m^2 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.

9.17 Beyond space heating demand, the building's total energy use (regulated and unregulated) is also expressed in kWh/ m^2/year. This includes the space heating demand (divided by the efficiency of the heating system), plus the energy demand of all other energy uses in the building.

9.18 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

87 The Essex Design Guide (2025) Essex Net Zero Policy Study. Essex Net Zero Policy Study | Essex Design Guide
88 Three Dragons, Qoda & Ward Williams Associates (2022) Net Zero Carbon Viability and Toolkit Study. www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2590/essex-net-zero-carbon-viability-study-final-report.pdf
89 Estelle Dehon KC (Cornerstone Barristers) on behalf of Essex County Council (2024) Ability of local planning authorities to set local plan policies that require development to achieve energy efficiency standards above Building Regulations: Updated open advice. updated-open-advice-re-energy-policy-building-regs-26-2-24-final.pdf

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.

9.19 This policy approach aligns with national policy objectives in that it:

- delivers many of the general objectives of the Future Homes Standard/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).

9.20 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 improve the energy performance of buildings.

9.21 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 the Essex level showed that with these requirements, development of all types tested is feasible and remains viable in the majority of land values[90]. 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.

9.22 More detailed notes to assist the understanding and interpretation of this policy are included in **Appendix 8.** In addition, the Local Plan supports the role of green infrastructure in climate change adaptation e.g. carbon sequestration, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, lowering flood risk, provide shading, creating ecologically connected landscapes, and improving urban environments. Should a need arise, the Council may produce Supplementary Guidance to support policy implementation.

90 The Essex work modelled the feasibility of achieving the stated energy targets in a generous range of residential development typologies, and three types of non-residential development. www.essexdesignguide.eo.uk/climate-change/net-zero-evidence/

Core Policy 22 **Net Zero Operational Carbon Development**

Part A. New build development (residential and non-residential)
All new buildings (of one or more new dwellings or 100m^2 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[91] must use either those same methods or the 'net zero spreadsheet' from **Essex Design Guide**).

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 15 kWh/m^2 GIA/yr or less, and
ii. all new bungalows must achieve a space heating demand of 20 kWh/m^2 GIA/yr or less.

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.

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/m^2 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/m^2/yr
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
   1. Offices - 70 kWh/m^2 GIA/yr
   2. Schools - 65 kWh/m^2 GIA/yr
   3. Light Industrial - 35 kWh/m^2 GIA/yr

91 Major and minor development is defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.
The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

(Unless the reason for exceeding this target is specifically due to high unregulated energy use for equipment such as refrigeration of data centres that are unavoidable due to the proposed use of the finished scheme, in which case follow the approach for 'other new build' below).

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

Requirement 4: On-site renewable energy generation
Renewable energy must be generated on-site for all new developments (1 or more new dwellings or 100m^2 or more non-residential floorspace) at a level consistent with either (i) or (ii) below:

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/m^2/yr) =or> predicted annual energy use (kWh/m^2/yr)*, or
ii. the amount of energy generated in a year is:
a. at least 80 kWh/m^2 building footprint per annum for all building types; and
b. at least 120 kWh/m^2 building footprint per annum for industrial buildings.

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.
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 sample of premises for development of 10,000m^2 (gross internal area) or more.

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 still be met to achieve policy compliance.

Part B. Extensions and Conversions

Applications for residential extensions and conversions affecting existing buildings (but excluding listed buildings and conservation areas) should meet the minimum standard approach fabric specifications set out in **Table 2** (see **Appendix 10**) and incorporate renewable energy generation technology where practical and feasible.

*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 fund.

Reporting and Energy Modelling

9.23 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 the **Essex Design Guide**. These 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[92] at each stage of the planning process are set out in Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)[93], along with the template spreadsheet.

9.24 For major development proposals accurate predictive energy modelling 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). Two methods

92 As defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

93 The Essex Design Guide (2025) Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Summary of Policy, evidence and validation requirements. PowerPoint Presentation

for predictive energy modelling currently considered acceptably accurate are Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP, applicable to any building)[94] or CIBSE TM54[95] (generally only used in non-residential; endorsed by national government as a method for the non-residential energy forecasting requirement introduced by Part L 2021).

9.25 The Part L Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) and Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) are not accurate enough to fulfil the requirement for predictive energy modelling, as they are poor predictors of actual energy performance (the 'energy performance gap'). Part L SAP is expected to be replaced by the Home Energy Model (HEM) when the Future Homes Standard is brought in (2025 or later).

9.26 For minor development proposals, applicants may use predictive energy modelling as above, or alternatively may follow a 'minimum standards approach' which sets out the specifications to which the development must be designed and built. 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 is an alternative route to policy compliance available, comprising Passivhaus, and this is discussed within **Appendix 10** that provides additional guidance for the interpretation and implementation of **Core Policy 22.**

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 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 to generate renewable energy.

9.30 Seeking for proposals for domestic extensions and conversions to be built to the minimum fabric standards (residential) set out in **Appendix 10** will contribute to improving the energy efficiency of the existing building stock, which is an essential component 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,

94 Passive House Institute. https://passivehouse.com/en/home/
95 Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) (2022) TM54 Evaluating operational energy use at the design stage. TM54 Evaluating operational energy use at the design stage (2022) | CIBSE

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 10** differentiates (in conversions and extensions) between what is generally expected and what is simply encouraged.

Heritage Assets

9.31 Retaining, reusing, refurbishing and retrofitting historic buildings can contribute to meeting climate targets. There can be 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[96] and/or applicable Historic England Guidance and Best Practice.

Monitoring and Implementation of Core Policy 22: 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 16)**.

Overheating

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 Plan policies as a whole. 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

96 EPOA (2023) Climate Change and the Historic Environment v.1. climate-change-and-the-historic-environment.pdf

operation), national planning policy also requires[97] adaptation to overheating risk from a changing climate, considering the impact on occupants' comfort, health and wellbeing.

9.35 While climate adaptation is a separate issue from carbon reduction, it must be noted that a failure to design a building to passively[98] avoid overheating throughout increasingly frequent heatwaves would also risk a failure to achieve the 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. The role of green infrastructure within a development design should be considered given its contribution to urban cooling in line with **Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure.**

9.37 Overheating risk in new residential buildings has been addressed to some extent by amendment to the Building Regulations in June 2022[99] (Part O: Overheating Mitigation). Since the compliance tools for Building Regulations are not intended to evaluate accurately overheating in every case (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 TM52[100] for non-residential development and TM59[101] 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 Guide**[102].

97 UK, Planning& Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section19, Amended. www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/19
98 Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 158 specifically requires overheating adaptation; paragraphs 20(d) and 159(a) also establish a general requirement for climate adaptation. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/652e7150697260000dccf9a1/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf
99 MHCLG (2022) Overheating: Approved Document O. www.gov.uk/government/publications/overheating-approved-document-o
100 CIBSE (2013) TM52 The limits of thermal comfort: avoiding overheating. TM52: The Limits of Thermal Comfort: Avoiding Overheating in European Buildings | CIBSE
101 CIBSE (2017) TM59 Design methodology for the assessment of overheating risk in homes. Technical Memorandum 59: Design methodology for the assessment of overheating risk in homes | CIBSE
102 EPOA (2021) The Essex Design Guide: Solar orientation. Solar orientation | Essex Design Guide

Core Policy 23
Overheating

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

Major development proposals[103] (full or detailed reserved matters) are encouraged to use the following CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) standards**:

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

*Except outline proposals where not enough detail is known about building design to be able to assess this. In that case, the outline application should provide as much detail as possible on early choices towards overheating mitigation in light of the scheme characteristics that are settled in the outline application – for example, layout and landform. The outline application should make a commitment that the cooling hierarchy will be followed in the designs, and a subsequent reserved matters application will be required to provide the detail and demonstrate compliance with this policy.

**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).

Embodied Carbon

9.39 Embodied carbon describes the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the materials in constructing the building, the supply chain, maintenance 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 construction 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 The combination of the above is termed 'whole life embodied carbon' or 'life cycle embodied carbon'. Within this, 'up front embodied carbon' is all the emissions that happen up to the point of completion of the building.

9.41 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 scale[104].

103 As defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2184/made
104 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

9.42 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 Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI)[105] advice is applicable:

- 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.

9.43 **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 where available. 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] Report[106], paragraph 70). Further guidance and software tools have been developed, such as One Click LCA[107]. Further guidance is available through the Essex Embodied Carbon Policy Study (June 2024) on how embodied carbon can be addressed through the design of a development.

9.44 The Government stated[108] in 2022 that it is working with industry to adapt the RICS methodology into a national methodology, and once approved then this will become the methodology that should be used for demonstrating policy 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).

9.45 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 for a consistent scope and definition of targets. Specifically, LETI[109] and RIBA[110] 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 document whose key tables are below.

105 Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) (2020) Embodies Carbon Primer. www.leti.uk/_files/ugd/252d09_8ceffcbcafdb43cf8a19ab9af5073b92.pdf
106 House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2022) Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction. First Report of Session 2022 – 23. Sustainability of the built environment
107 One Click LCA. LCA & EPDs for construction & manufacturing | One Click LCA
108 House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2022) Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction: Government Response to the Committee's First Report. Third Special Report of Session 2022 – 23. Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction: Government Response to the Committee's First Report
109 Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Publications. Publications | LETI
110 Royal Institute of British Architects. For targets, see RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge and LETI's Embodied Carbon Target Alignment.

9.46 The targets in the Uttlesford Local Plan policy are set mostly to reflect the 'C' band, which LETI explains is the 'good practice' feasible and appearing in good designs today (while today's standard practice could range up to band E) if the poorest choices are made. 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". Some of the Uttlesford policy targets are in the 'D' band where there is existing or emerging feasibility evidence that the C band would incur additional cost uplifts.

Table 9.1: Upfront and life cycle embodied carbon LETI & RIBA targets

Upfront embodied carbon, stages A1-A5. ($kgCO_2e/m^2$) (excl. sequestration)

Band		Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<100	<100	<100	<100
	A+	<225	<200	<200	<200
	Relevant target: LETI 2030 Design Target				
	A	<350	<300	<300	<300
	B	<475	<400	<400	<425
	Relevant target: 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) ($kgCO_2e/m^2$)

Band		Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<150	<150	<125	<125
	A+	<345	<300	<260	<250
	A	<530	<450	<400	<380
	Relevant target: 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

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[111] 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 carbon.

Proposals for large scale new-build developments (a minimum of 100 dwellings or a minimum of 5000m^2 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 (RICS modules A1-A5)
   i. Residential: 500kgCO_2e/m^2
   ii. Non-Residential: 600kgCO_2e/m^2
B. Total embodied carbon (All RICS modules A-C except B6 and B7)
   i. Residential: Semi-detached and detached: 1,100kgCO_2e/m^2
   ii. Residential: Terraces and apartments: <1,000kgCO_2e/m^2
   iii. Non-residential: 970kgCO_2e/m^2

'Upfront' and 'Total' Embodied Carbon are defined in **Appendix 10.**

9.47 The embodied carbon assessment should cover a scope of building elements following the recommended scope and materials assumptions that will be laid out in emerging policy at Essex level. In line with the emerging findings, PV should be excluded from the scope of the assessment. The targets set out in **Core Policy 24** (in terms of what elements and activities within the building are included or excluded) reflect the scope of the LETI/RIBA banding.

111 As defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2184/made

Renewable Energy and Energy Infrastructure

9.48 As made clear in the preceding section, it will be necessary for new development to integrate renewable energy technologies 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 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.

9.49 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, and where they are focused on previously developed land and do not occupy the 'best and most versatile' ('BMV[112]) 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.

9.50 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 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 aerodromes[113]. The Ministry of Defence must 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

112 'BMV' agricultural land is that which is assessed as Grade 1, 2 or 3a. Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land (2021). www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land

113 Department for Transport (2016) The town and country planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) direction 2002. The town and country planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) direction 2002 - GOV.UK. Further advice on wind energy and aviation on Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Control Transport Services websites

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 diameters[114].

9.51 In addition, developers are encouraged to explore and consider the use of Bio Solar, especially for larger commercial buildings and solar farms with dual benefits for energy and biodiversity such as habitat creation, water storage capacity, flood alleviation and energy saving potential[115]. Biodiversity can be enhanced on solar farms in various ways including through the establishment of hedgerows, wildflower meadows, bird boxes, insect houses and ponds[116].

114 Department of Energy & Climate Change (2011) Update of UK Shadow Flicker evidence base. Update of UK Shadow Flicker evidence base - GOV.UK
115 Further information can be found here: https://livingroofs.org/introduction-types-green-roof/biosolar-green-roofs-solar-green-roofs/
116 For further guidance see BRE's National Solar Centre Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments. www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/pdf/Brochures/NSC-Biodiversity-Guidance.pdf and The Longfield Solar Farm EDF study for biodiversity net-gain opportunities. (info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk).

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 for standalone new renewable energy capacity on greenfield sites must include a scheme outlining how and when the site will be restored when energy production or equipment lifetime ends. Where standalone renewable energy development is proposed, applicants are encouraged to consider and demonstrate how the finished scheme will be managed in the long-term for improved biodiversity outcomes.

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 to these criteria, for wind energy proposals to be acceptable, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed development has been assessed to meet the requirements of the Uttlesford District Council's Noise Assessment Technical Guidance 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.

Proposals for PV development on rooftops, carparks or other existing structures will be exempt from the requirement for provision of detail about site restoration at the end of the PV lifetime.

Proposals to create or expand heat networks will be supported provided that they are supplied by low-or zero-carbon heat sources (not fossil gas but may include waste heat). Proposals to connect a development to a heat network will be supported provided that the

heat network is proven to be more efficient and lower-carbon than an alternative individual building-level low carbon heat delivery system.

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

9.52 Uttlesford will require a transport network that addresses not only the needs of the residential and working population but also the impact that transport has on emissions and climate change. Transport is the largest contributor to UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 27% in 2019[117]. UK emissions from transport have been broadly flat for the last 30 years, even as those of other sectors have declined.

9.53 By facilitating the sustainable movement of people between their home, work, shops and services, including education, across Uttlesford, it will help to facilitate economic growth opportunities, inward investment, regeneration and contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development.

9.54 Plan making and planning decisions should consider many aspects of transport and travel need by encouraging walking and cycling and the use of public transport and car sharing to reduce dependency on car travel. Policies should make all forms of sustainable transport more accessible to all users and promote the use of cleaner modes of travel including public transport.

9.55 There are direct health benefits of delivering walking and cycling infrastructure and making sure the design of new places prioritises journeys on foot or cycle. Physical activity, like cycling and walking, can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers,

117 Department for Transport (2021) Decarbonising Transport. A Better, Greener Britain. Decarbonising Transport – A Better, Greener Britain

heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking) and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone)[118].

9.56 It is important that the need to travel is reduced by development proposals that promote the use of sustainable transport and support the District wide carbon reduction targets.

9.57 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 Bishop's Stortford to the west.

9.58 Connectivity to London is an important factor for the District including inward and outward commuting and for passenger access for London travellers. London 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 year[119].

9.59 Greater Anglia provides regular direct rail services to London Liverpool Street, Stansted Airport and Cambridge. There are six train 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.

9.60 There are no bus stations in any of Uttlesford's towns 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. The bus, coach and rail interchange facilities at Stansted Airport should be strengthened to fulfil the role of a multi-modal public transport hub to serve the wider area.

9.61 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.

9.62 Two routes on the National Cycle Network run through Uttlesford: NCN11 & NCN16. NCN16 provides an almost continuous traffic free route between Bishop's 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.

118 Department for Transport (2020) Gear Change. A bold vision for cycling and walking. Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking
119 Stanstead Airport press release (July 2023) Numbers near pre-pandemic levels as summer getaway approaches. Numbers near pre-pandemic levels as summer getaway approaches

9.63 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.

9.64 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.

9.65 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, Chesterford Research Park and Stansted Airport and the wider regional opportunities.

9.66 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 available 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, parking considerations and car sharing between drivers will remain important for Uttlesford. In the more rural locations, the policy approach to low emission vehicles and improving sustainable transport will help mitigate the impact of car travel.

Delivering Sustainable Transport

9.67 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.

9.68 The evidence led 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.

9.69 Essex County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP)[120] sets out a transport policy for Essex, and how Essex County Council will deliver and manage a full range of transport services. The third Local Transport Plan for

120 Essex County Council (2011) Local Transport Plan. www.essexhighways.org/uploads/downloads/essex_ltp.pdf

Essex (LTP3) was adopted by Essex County Council in 2011. LTP4 will reflect and formally incorporate the revised policy framework contained within Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral *ECAC) and the Transport East: Transport Strategy. These place a greater emphasis upon the provision and use of sustainable transport and the decarbonisation of the transport network. LTP4 will cover the period up to 2050 and be based on the following three strategic themes:

- Supporting People: Health, Wellbeing and Independence
- Creating Sustainable Places and Communities, and
- Connecting People, Places and Businesses.

9.70 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.

9.71 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, less congestion, and more pleasant streets. Provision of active travel proposals will deliver demonstrable physical and mental health benefits for new and existing residents.

9.72 All new residential roads will be designed to best manage vehicle speeds appropriately reflecting the place and movement function of that road and will prioritise walking and pedestrian safety, and provide safe and convenient cycle route choices.

9.73 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.

9.74 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.

9.75 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 safe and accessible walking, cycling and public transport, and provision of charging points for electric vehicles. The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

(SMOTS)[121] produced by Essex County Council aims to effectively target and adopt different methods of successfully encouraging modal shift, by giving the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the County.

9.76 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.

9.77 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.

9.78 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.

9.79 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.

9.80 The Local Plan supports development proposals which propose a choice of travel modes including public transport and active travel. Transport infrastructure should be planned and delivered in accordance with the ECC highway and transport design documents and wider transport policies.

9.81 The Council will support new development that is designed to be connected to existing and/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.

9.82 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.

121 Essex County Council (2025) Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy. Sustainable modes of travel strategy

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 and a shared mobility scheme.

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 providing access to public transport including the provision of new or enhanced existing bus services.

Strategic allocations will deliver mobility hubs in accessible locations which are close to community facilities on site and provide sustainable connections to wider services. These mobility hubs will provide access to bus services in a convenient location including provision for measures included in the shared mobility scheme such as cycle hire, cargo bikes and a development wide car club.

Development proposals should provide the following sustainable measures:

i. maximise the incorporation of bus service provision and supporting infrastructure, including the enhancement of existing services
ii. promote walking and cycling by ensuring movement proposals give first priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability
iii. deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with ECC and LTN 1/20 standards including measures for the reduction of conflict with motor vehicles. Provision should be inclusive and address disabled users and those with mobility needs
iv. ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and Public Rights of Way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate
v. 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

vi. reduce road danger from other transport modes

vii. ensure the provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Essex County Council latest guidance, and

viii. cycling and walking routes should be planned, where possible, as part of the network of multi-functional green infrastructure.

Addressing Transport Impacts

9.83 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.

9.84 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.

9.85 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.

9.86 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.

9.87 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.

9.88 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.

9.89 In 2022, domestic transport accounted for 28% of total domestic emissions in the UK. Domestic transport saw an increase of 2% in emissions compared to 2021 and a decrease of 10% compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. The Climate Crisis Strategy sets out the Government's area-based CO_2 emissions data for the District. This assessment shows that in Uttlesford District to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 there would need to be a reduction of 576 Kilo Tonnes CO_2 (317 of which is attributed to Transport). Therefore, as transport is a significant contributor to the overall carbon emissions, development proposals are required to deliver a range of sustainable transport interventions to reduce the carbon emissions attributed to transport.

9.90 In order to understand whether the sustainable transport measures are successful in reducing the transport related carbon emissions that result from development proposals, any submitted Transport Assessments should include a Transport Related Carbon Emissions Quantification Statement (Quantification Statement). The Quantification Statement is intended to be a section in the Transport Assessment that sets out the transport related carbon emissions baseline and demonstrate the positive impacts, in relation to carbon reduction, of any sustainable transport interventions that the development proposes.

9.91 A Transport Related Carbon Emissions Quantification Statement will include the following:

i. A baseline assessment of the Transport Related Carbon Emissions that would result from the development if no sustainable transport interventions (including EV charging) were proposed or delivered, and

ii. An assessment of the positive impacts that will result, in relation to carbon reduction, from the implementation of the proposed sustainable transport measures and interventions.

9.92 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. Travel Plans should include the following:

- identification of and delivery mechanisms for the sustainable transport interventions, behavioural changes and travel planning mechanisms required to ensure the development reduces carbon emissions to become net zero and achieve modal split targets
- proposals for the appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator
- the provision of Travel Packs for new residents including information on public transport discounts, bike/e-bike/e-scooter hire schemes, car clubs and car sharing schemes
- proposals for digital active and sustainable travel information to be made available to all residents and occupiers across the development and to be regularly maintained and updated, and
- an action plan setting out specific actions, timelines and targets to be monitored and reviewed annually.

9.93 Where additional bus stops are proposed on existing bus routes they must be integrated to minimise disruption and lengthening of journey time for those in existing developments. Discussions and agreement with the Local Transport Authority is required.

Core Policy 27 **Assessing the Impact of Development on Transport Infrastructure**

Development should be located close to key services and facilities, to promote walking and cycling; and where there is an appropriate level of public transport accessibility and sufficient public transport capacity to 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, in line with the thresholds set out in the Essex County Council latest guidance.

Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans will be required to demonstrate how opportunities for active sustainable travel have been maximised and to provide adequate mitigation measures to effectively address the likely transport 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. The Quantification Statement should demonstrate how proposed sustainable transport measures and interventions will reduce carbon emissions to the greatest possible extent.

Development proposals should:

i. prioritise active travel over the use of the car, including providing walking and cycling connections to key services in the town and permeability to existing settlements
ii. contribute towards the improvement of all sustainable modes of transport including 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
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. These measures should reduce road danger and facilitate safer movements for all users and transport modes. Highway mitigation should be delivered directly by developer via Section 278 having regard to the ECC Developers Guide for infrastructure contributions. In exceptional circumstances, pooled contributions may be required where mitigation cannot be apportioned to a single allocation OR development

iv. implement shared mobility schemes including the provision of electric car club vehicles, hire bicycles and e-cargo bikes, where appropriate, and
v. comply with the latest guidance on design, parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure, and
vi. A construction management plan is submitted and agreed with the Highway Authority prior to commencement, with before and after condition surveys as appropriate.

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

vi. being acceptable in terms of impact on the environment including landscape, townscape, public realm and amenity of adjoining areas
vii. 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
viii. providing adequate secure cycle parking and ease of access on foot, including consideration of pedestrian desire lines.

Travel Plans
All developments that generate significant amounts of movement will be required to produce a Travel Plan having regard to the thresholds in Essex County Council published guidance.

Active Travel: Walking and Cycling

9.94 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.

9.95 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.

9.96 Facilitating and enhancing active travel should be a primary consideration in all planning decisions and the design process. 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.

9.97 The Council is producing a Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (LCWIP90) 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.

9.98 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.

9.99 The Council will expect all development to consider the key principles of walkable and wheelable neighbourhoods, accessibility for all users and active travel into new developments.

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, facilitating mode shift to active travel as the natural first choice for journeys.

All new development 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 and enhanced as continuous linear features
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. facilitate high quality routes for active travel to schools including supporting the introduction of school streets and enhancing walking access and permeability to schools
vi. reduce road danger from other transport modes
vii. 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 LCWIP, and
viii. ensure provision of secure cycle parking and active travel in line with the latest guidance.

Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

9.100 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. With the expected growth in electric bicycles and mobility scooters, infrastructure should be put in place to ensure there is safe storage and appropriate charging facilities for these types of vehicles.

Core Policy 29
Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

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

Safe charging infrastructure for bicycles should be installed in cycle storage which will be located in a prominent and easily accessible location.

Infrastructure and storage should be installed for electric mobility scooters where appropriate, and particularly in specialist and older persons housing.

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

9.101 The Public Rights of Way network provides access to Uttlesford's unique countryside and heritage and in the process, improves 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.

9.102 The Rights of Way network provides a key alternative to car use on journeys of less than five miles. The Council will ensure that all Public Rights of Way are protected, enhanced, and promoted.

9.103 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.

9.104 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.

9.105 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.

9.106 Developers should liaise with Essex County Council, early in development proposals, to check whether any claims have been submitted for new public rights across the land.

Core Policy 30
Public Rights of Way

Development proposals for sites that include a Public Right of Way within the site or are for major development proposals adjacent to an existing Right of Way are 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. New Rights of Way will be delivered in green corridors that provide enhanced widths offering natural surveillance and maximising opportunities for active travel. Where surfacing enhancements are required, these must cater to all users including wheelchairs and those with mobility challenges.

Managing Parking

9.107 The Council will focus on measures to promote and improve opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport and for electric vehicle charging. Development proposals should consider principles and policies in the Essex Parking Standards and the Uttlesford Design Guide.

9.108 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.

9.109 Secure cycle parking and storage should be located in a prominent position, usually at the front of a dwelling/ building. The siting of cycle parking should be prioritised over car parking to promote the use of cycles. The secure cycle parking should also include charging facilities for electric bicycles.

9.110 With an ageing population the use of mobility scooters and vehicles is increasing and often a mobility lifeline for many. Development proposals should ensure that this use is planned for and delivered particularly in

specialist or older persons developments and those which are designed for future adaption.

9.111 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.

9.112 Airport-related parking outside the Airport boundaries often has a detrimental impact on local communities and the efficient use of the highway network. Local streets and road can become dominated by inconsiderate airport users who are seeking to avoid using the official Airport car-parks, this is often called 'Fly-Parking'. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how the transport and movement proposals for the site will include proposals to deter 'Fly-Parking' in order to maintain the efficient use of the highway and prioritise residents and the local community. Development proposals which propose Airport parking outside the Airport boundaries including where Airport parking is ancillary use will not be permitted.

9.113 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.

9.114 All developments will be encouraged to incorporate an electric car club, which can be an attractive alternative to private car ownership and reduce the parking impact of private cars and provides access to low emission vehicles for residents.

Core Policy 31 **Parking Standards**

Development proposals should take into account the latest Essex Parking Standards and the parking standards and design principles set out the **Uttlesford Design Code**.

All development types, including employment, should provide:

- secure and covered cycle parking should be prioritised over private car parking
- be conveniently located adjacent to entrances to buildings
- enjoy good natural observation
- be easily accessible from roads and/or cycle routes
- be well lit
- be located so it does not obstruct pedestrian and cycle routes
- cycle storage should include provision for electric cycle charging, and
- developments which propose flats or homes in multiple occupation should ensure that there is enough cycle parking available for all residents.

Educational developments, including new schools and expansions, should deliver secure parking for cycles and other wheeled vehicle storage for school pupils, staff and visitors and parents.

New transport infrastructure or proposals to enhance existing transport infrastructure, including bus interchanges and rail stations, should include proposals for secure cycle parking and also facilitate parking/docking for cycle hire schemes.

All major developments, including employment, and the strategic allocations should deliver an electric car club scheme of an appropriate scale to the development. Where proposals cannot provide for an electric car club on-site, and it is considered that the creation and/or improvement of off-site facilities in the locality is appropriate, a financial contribution in lieu may be accepted.

Development proposals should consider those with mobility challenges and ensure secure and accessible parking is provided for mobility scooters and vehicles including charging infrastructure.

Proposals which include provision below the local and national standards should be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify a deviation from the standards.

Development proposals, including the strategic allocations, will be required to demonstrate how the transport and movement proposals for the site will include proposals to deter ‘fly parking’ in order to maintain the efficient use of the highway and prioritise residents and the local community. Development proposals which propose airport parking outside the airport boundaries including where airport parking is an ancillary use will not be permitted.

The Movement and Management of Freight

9.115 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.

9.116 London Stansted Airport is an important regional and national hub for air freight and there are significant transport movements associated with the Airport. The Airport has planning permission to deliver 16,000 freight movements which is expected to be delivered over the next 10-15 years. The Airport's importance and success as a major national freight and cargo hub is due to its location as a gateway to London, the Southeast and the Midlands – onwards travel connections provided by the M11 and A120 ensure that cargo can be distributed throughout the UK via the road network. The Council will work closely with the Airport, the Highway Authority and other partners to ensure opportunities are taken to reduce the impact of airport related freight movements on the surrounding highway network and on local communities.

9.117 Heavy goods vehicles (HGV) that pass through our communities can have detrimental impacts on our towns and villages. These vehicles may produce higher emissions and their size and weight results in the dominance of the road space whilst moving and causing delays when unloading in constrained locations.

9.118 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.

9.119 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)[122]. 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.

122 Department for Transport (2021) Transport decarbonisation plan. Transport decarbonisation plan - GOV.UK

Core Policy 32 **The Movement and Management of Freight**

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.

Any HGV or freight generating uses should consider the impact on the pedestrian environment and active travel network.

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 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.

Aerodrome and Military Safeguarding

9.120 Safeguarding ensures the safety of aircraft manoeuvring on the ground, taking off, landing or flying in the vicinity of the aerodrome. Aerodrome safeguarding is a legal requirement and regulated by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) and the Civil Aviation Authority.

9.121 A number of safeguarding areas exist in Uttlesford, these being London Stansted Airport, Duxford Aerodrome and Carver Barracks Airfield. The Safeguarding Zones around them are defined on a safeguarding map issued by the relevant safeguarding authority. They define certain types of development which by reason of their height, attraction to birds or inclusion of or effect upon.

9.122 Policy provisions regarding the safeguarding process are set out in the ODPM/DfT Circular 1/2003 (or any subsequent revisions) Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas. In accordance with this Circular, the relevant safeguarding authority is a statutory consultee for certain planning applications for development that require safeguarding to protect the safety of the site's operation.

9.123 The safeguarding zone for London Stansted Airport covers the whole District. The main implications for the types of development within the zone that will require consultation with the Airport Operator are:

- any proposal likely to attract birds, such as proposals involving mineral extraction or quarrying; waste disposal sites and management facilities, significant areas of landscaping, reservoirs or other significant areas with water land restoration schemes, sewage works, nature reserves, or bird sanctuaries
- applications connected with an aviation use
- renewable energy schemes including all wind turbine applications, and solar arrays and biomass energy plants, and
- development over a certain height in different areas of the District as specified on the safeguarding maps.

Core Policy 32a **Aerodrome Safeguarding**

Development within the Safeguarding Zones that would affect the operational integrity or safety of aircraft operating in or around London Stansted Airport, Duxford Aerodrome or Carver Barracks Airfield will not be permitted.

Environment

Introduction

9.124 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.

9.125 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

9.126 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 minimising 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.

9.127 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 to allow 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 Waste Strategy (2024)[123] Essex Minerals Local

123 Essex County Council (2024) Waste Strategy for Essex 2024 – 2054. https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/waste-strategy-for-essex-consultation/supporting_documents/Draft%20Waste%20Strategy%20for%20Essex.pdf
124 Essex County Council (2019) Minerals and Waste Development Scheme. Minerals and Waste Development Scheme.pdf

Plan (2014) and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Plan (2017) that are under review[124].

9.128 It is therefore important that developers should practise:

- 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)
- 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, matching localised topsoil characteristics wherever possible.
- using secondary materials, reclaiming and reusing material arising from the demolition and site preparation
- 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
- designing the integration of facilities for domestic and business waste recycling into the layout of the scheme and buildings
- exploring the use of new energy recovery facilities, and
- 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.

9.129 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 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.

9.130 Where waste management facilities are proposed near airports and airfields, consideration should be given to the potential of outdoor waste storage to attract birds, which may increase the risk of bird-strike. The impact of such facilities on aviation should be assessed at the design and planning application stage.

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 minimise impacts (including through noise, pollution, traffic and on the local environment and landscape) on the communities living close to the sites.

Proposals which would result in adverse impacts on aviation safety at local aerodromes will not be supported, as set out in **Core Policy 32a: Aerodrome Safeguarding.**

All proposals for new residential and commercial development must include adequate recycling facilities to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery, preferably within the premises or dwelling, or provide adequate, secure, external or communal storage facilities. Convenient storage for waste must be provided, with the needs for older persons or persons with disabilities given appropriate consideration, to enable convenient and safe access to waste management should be addressed in the design.

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 during the construction phase, which minimises the need for waste transfer, where feasible
iii. allow for convenient and safe access to waste facilities and to enable safe 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 comply with the **Uttlesford Design Code**[125] criteria, as appropriate, and
v. enable waste from mixed-use schemes to be segregated in separate secured areas.

A Site Waste Management Plan should be submitted for all development proposals over 100 dwellings setting out how the above requirements have been met in accordance with the Minerals Local Plan. Innovative solutions to minimise waste at source will be supported.

125 UDC (2024) District-Wide Design Code. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13171/District-wide-Design-Code-July-2024/pdf/UDC_Design_Code_2.pdf?m=1721755486950

Water Resources

9.131 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 consumption 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/CO_2/l[126]. 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 metering[127]. The Consultants carried out the Uttlesford Water Cycle Study Phase 1 and Phase 2 (WCS) in co-operation with the water companies, the Environment Agency (EA) and information from the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, which have informed the preparation of this Plan. It has considered the implications of Affinity Water's Resource Management Plan (2025-2075)[181].

9.132 Building Regulations provide an optional standard beyond the mandatory 125l/p/day of 110l/p/d where there is local stress[129] and the direction of travel in water resources planning is to reduce per capita consumption in new build development below this optional standard. This is reflected in the Defra Plan for Water[130], which suggests a review of the Building Regulations will consider a new minimum efficiency standard of 100l/p/d in areas of serious water stress. The Affinity Water supply region is classified as being an area of serious water stress[131]. 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.

9.133 For non-residential development, the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) UK New Construction Standard awards credits

126 JBA (2022) Uttlesford District Council Water Cycle Study – Stage 1. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13271/Stage-1-Water-Cycle-Study-August-2022/pdf/Stage_1_Water_Cycle_Study_August_2022.pdf?m=1722946466953
127 JBA (2022) Uttlesford District Council Water Cycle Study – Stage 1. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13271/Stage-1-Water-Cycle-Study-August-2022/pdf/Stage_1_Water_Cycle_Study_August_2022.pdf?m=1722946466953
128 Affinity Water (2024) Water Resources Management Plan. Draft WRMP
129 MHCLG (2016) The Building Regulations: Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency: Approved Document G. 2015 edition with 2016 amendments. AD_G_Corrigenda_SECURE.pdf
130 DEFRA (2023) Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water. Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water - GOV.UK
131 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

for the environmental performance of new buildings, including metrics related to water consumption, monitoring and efficiency. Higher efficiency standards will also reduce the potential impact of growth on wastewater treatment capacity as well as on the energy required to supply drinking water and treat wastewater.

9.134 The water efficiency standards set out in **Core Policy 34** and the policy requirement for new development to not reduce groundwater levels or watercourse flow will help the Council achieve its statutory obligation under Section 33 of the Water Framework Directive to have regard to the river basin management plans for the District[132]. While the Environment Agency has not produced specific guidance, the Council Recommends following the example processes set out in the guidance on WFD Assessment for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects[133].

9.135 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.

9.136 The Council will ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact service providers as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network connections and reinforcement requirements. For water-intensive non-residential development where water companies are not under a statutory duty to supply water, this early engagement is particularly important. Where there is a capacity constraint the Council will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

9.137 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, Chelmer, Ter, Pant and Pincey Brook **(Figure 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

132 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/407/contents
133 Planning Inspectorate (2024) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Water Framework Directive. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Water Framework Directive - GOV.UK

existing buildings. 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.

Core Policy 34 **Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources**

Water Supply

Development proposals must 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 watercourses including the chalk streams.

Water efficiency

Development proposals must 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 should achieve at least a water efficiency standard of 90 litres per person per day. Proposals for non-residential development should achieve at least three credits under the BREEAM "Wat01" measure. Where possible, proposals involving the refurbishment or change of use of existing building should undertake retrofitting to increase water efficiency to the same standards.

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 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 proposals should demonstrate they will not cause contamination of groundwater[134], particularly in the Source 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.

134 Environment Agency (2018) The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab38864e5274a3dc898e29b/Envirnment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

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 and Lead Local Flood Authority guidance. The location of, and likely impact on, the private water supplies within the District must also be taken into account. Development proposals must ensure that this infrastructure can demonstrate that it will contribute to achieving 'good' status under The Water Framework Directive for surface and groundwater bodies.

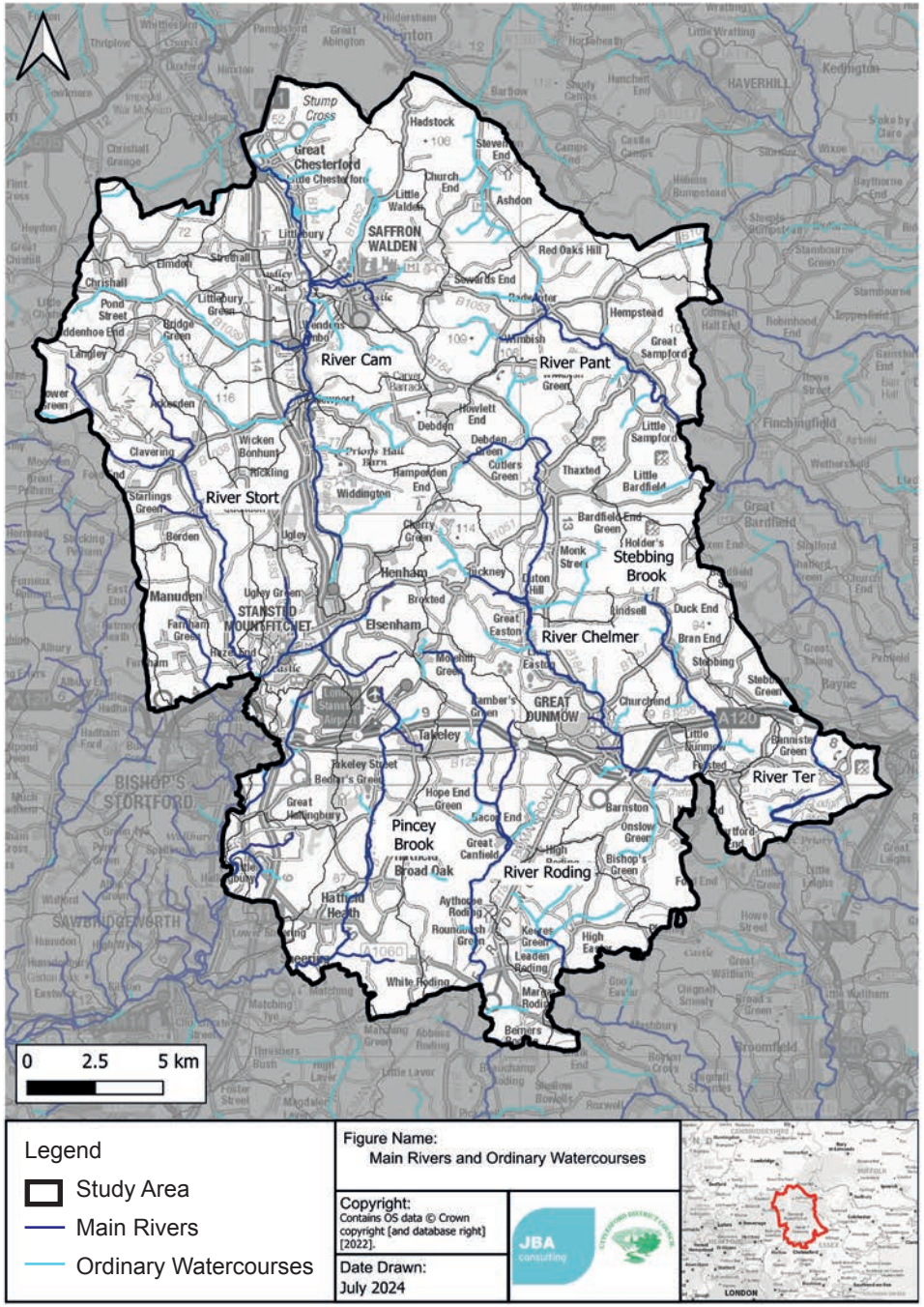
Planning proposals which increase the demand for off-site water and sewage service infrastructure will only be granted permission where it can be demonstrated that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or where it can be demonstrated that extra capacity will be provided in time to serve the new development prior to first occupation. Where necessary, phasing conditions will be attached to planning permissions to ensure that new developments are not occupied until the required capacity is in place.

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.

Watercourse Protection and Enhancement

9.138 River corridors are important assets for biodiversity and will be protected through policies in this Local Plan. UDC will also work with the Essex Local Nature

Figure 9.1: Significant watercourses in Uttlesford



Partnership through its Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the Environment Agency, water companies (Anglian Water, Affinity Water and Thames Water) and Essex County Council in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority, in seeking to protect and enhance river habitats as important natural landscape features.

9.139 All watercourses should have a buffer zone of native vegetation to ensure effectiveness as a wildlife corridor as part of a functioning ecosystem and allow space for any sympathetic maintenance needed in the future. Riparian corridors within developments should be retained as public open space, rather than private gardens.

9.140 Seven of the District's main watercourses are classified by Natural England as chalk streams. Chalk streams are a rare and valuable habitat and 85% of the worlds chalk streams are in England with 29% of these being in East Anglia[135]. In their natural state, chalk streams are clear, with little sediment, low nutrient levels and stable temperatures at around 10-11^{0}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.

9.141 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, the groundwater abstraction from agriculture and the water industry. The River Stort has a 'moderate' status due to pollution from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and agriculture runoff. Elsewhere, the ecology and water availability have been affected by sections of chalk streams being straightened, deepened and widened.

9.142 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance certain habitats and species. The species that have been designated to be of "principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity" are those that are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population[136]. The Council therefore recognises chalk streams as habitats of principal importance.

9.143 Chalk stream ecological health depends on water quantity and the naturalness of the flow, water quality, the physical shape

135 Environment Agency (2023) Working to improve Norfolk's chalk streams. https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/15/working-to-improve-norfolks-chalk-streams/
136 DEFRA and Natural England (2022) Habitats and species of principal importance in England. www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england

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. It is proposed in the wider Cambridgeshire area to work with multiple partners across Local Authority boundaries to develop a chalk streams strategy and for it to become a material consideration for planning.

9.144 Population growth and new housing are increasing pressure on chalk streams through 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 sewage treatment infrastructure. Mitigation responses include: precluding development alongside chalk streams, the use of infiltration and deep borehole SuDs[137] to aid chalk aquifer recharge, SuDS maintenance standards, and water efficiency standards.

9.145 There are many opportunities for improving the ecological condition of waterways and the following examples will be particularly encouraged:

- locating open space next to rivers
- retaining river habitat as public space
- designing schemes that positively integrate with river corridor habitats
- maximise health and wellbeing capacity of access to natural watercourses
- integrating flood attenuation with landscape and biodiversity enhancements
- utilising bio-engineering solutions and avoiding hard bankside engineering, and
- restoring natural river courses and corridors where these were previously modified, culverted or channelled:
- incorporating features to support aquatic wildlife including fish, and
- working with relevant river catchment partnerships to identify the most appropriate enhancements for watercourse habitats.

9.146 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

137 Subject to appropriate consideration for the risk of contamination in accordance with Core Policy 34

be welcomed in accordance with the requirements of **Core Policy 23: Net Zero Operational Carbon Development** and **Core Policy 39: Biodiversity.**

Flood Risk

9.147 Many areas of Uttlesford have experienced localised flooding in the past, including parts of the larger settlements of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stebbing, Takeley and Thaxted, as well as smaller settlements and roads.

Core Policy 35 **Watercourse Protection and Enhancement**

To help protect watercourse habitats, development proposals should retain or reinstate a buffer zone of at least 15m from the watercourse bank top, or 10m from a ditch bank top, according to the River/ Ditch definitions set out under current BNG User Guidance[138]. Within this riparian buffer zone, no development shall be permitted apart from domestic extensions, soft landscaping and small amenity areas, and appropriate planting should be incorporated to protect the banks. Developers should submit details for approval which demonstrate how the buffer zone will be protected.

Development proposals within river basins or floodplains must be accompanied by an assessment of, and mitigation or restoration measures for any potential pollution arising from the construction process, building materials and proposed land use, including an assessment of the capacity of pollutants to enter groundwater or watercourses.

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, in accordance with **Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources.** To achieve this, developers are expected to contribute proportionate costs and mitigation of addressing any potential impacts.

138 Natural England (2021) The Biodiversity Metric Supporting Documents. The Biodiversity Metric Supporting Documents - JP https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720039

9.148 Uttlesford is 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.

9.149 Most of the main rivers have hydraulic models from the Environment Agency and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)[139] has been updated to inform this Plan. Flood risk is now well understood in the main settlements, however the exacerbation of flood risk by poorly maintained or blocked drains and 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.

9.150 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 LLFA 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[140]. 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.

9.151 Groundwater and sewer flooding are limited by their nature and so are usually very localised. Development proposals should address the relationship between flood risk **(Core Policy 35)** and water supply **(Core Policy 34).**

9.152 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 **Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources, Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems and Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure.**

9.153 Development proposals within the plan area are expected to follow the sequential approach set out in national policy, including the NPPF[141] and Planning Practice Guidance[142]. A sequential approach should also be taken to site layout, with development directed to the parts of the site at the lowest risk of flooding where possible. Development on the functional floodplain should be avoided wherever possible.

139 JBA (2024) Uttlesford District Council: Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13278/Level-1-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-June-2024/pdf/Level_1_Strategic_Flood_Risk_Assessment_June_2024.pdf?m=1722946721067

140 Tier 1 is defined as more than 1000 people at risk, Tier 2 - 500 people at risk, and Tier 3 – less than 500 people at risk. JBA (2024) Uttlesford District Council: Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Page 36. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13278/Level-1-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-June-2024/pdf/Level_1_Strategic_Flood_Risk_Assessment_June_2024.pdf?m=1722946721067

141 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 167. National Planning Policy Framework

142 MHCLG (2022) Flood risk and coastal change. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change

Development proposal should also consider whether the use of natural flood management projects would be appropriate to alleviate flow and flooding issues downstream. They would also ensure that the river environment is improved in accordance with Core Policy 35: Watercourse Protection and Enhancement.

Core Policy 36 **Flood Risk**

All development proposals should follow the sequential approach set out in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance and, where possible, adopt a sequential approach to site layout. Proposals should demonstrate that they will be safe for their lifetime and that they reduce and, where possible, avoid 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, assessments of 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 wastewater 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
v. raise finished floor levels 600mm above the 1 in 100 year flood level, including an appropriate allowance for climate change
vi. use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) for the management of surface water and where possible increase biodiversity and amenity, and
vii. proposals must include a drainage strategy to evidence how the development will mitigate flooding on and off site. This must have regard to the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex.

A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for: all developments of 1 hectare and greater in Flood Zone 1; for all

proposals for new development, including minor development and changes of use, in Flood Zones 2 or 3 and where the proposed development or a change of use is to a more vulnerable class that may be subject to other forms of flooding. Details of appropriate mitigation and management measures must be submitted for approval as part of the planning application and implemented. Where built development or land raising is proposed within the 1 in 100 year flood level extent, including an allowance for climate change, floodplain compensation must be provided.

Where detailed hydraulic modelling of a watercourse is not available, modelling should be undertaken as part of the site-specific flood risk assessment to estimate the 1 in 30, 1 in 100, and 1 in 1000 flood extents and levels, including an appropriate allowance for climate change.

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.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

9.154 **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 appropriate.[143]

9.155 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.**

9.156 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 enhance biodiversity through habitat creation, new open spaces and good design, and help to mitigate the impacts of climate change. SuDS are also important for preventing the deterioration of and/or achieving enhancements to the ecological status of Water Framework Directive designated water bodies and their associated elements.

143 SDEFRA (2015) Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards. assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf

SuDS should be included as part of the landscape strategy and early engagement with the Lead Local Flood Authority is encouraged to ensure all opportunities to increase amenity, biodiversity and multifunctional areas have been considered.

9.157 The hierarchy of managing surface water drainage should be in accordance with: firstly, rainwater reuse, and secondly, infiltration. Proposals should be designed to include permeable surfaces wherever possible. The design of SuDS should be carefully considered from the early design stages, with smaller features such as swales and rain gardens incorporated into the design where possible. Source control techniques, such as green roofs, permeable paving and swales, should be used so that rainfall runoff in events up to 5mm does not leave the site. Large infiltration and attenuation basins are not always desirable or appropriate, and they should not be constructed on contaminated ground or where peak seasonal groundwater levels are shallow. Conversely, within chalk stream catchments consideration should be given to the use of infiltration and deep borehole SuDS to aid replenishment of the chalk aquifer. This being subject to appropriate consideration for the contamination risk in accordance with Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources.

9.158 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, in line with the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex[144].

9.159 SuDS can create new permanent or seasonal/temporary water bodies that have the potential to attract birds. Where development is proposed in the vicinity of airports and airfields, the risk of bird-strike may therefore be increased. The impact of SuDS on aviation should be assessed at the design and planning application stage and considered against Core Policy 32A: Aerodrome Safeguarding. London Stansted Airport should be consulted regarding any new development within 13KM of the Airport, to ensure early input into any viability and requirements of the SUDS proposed.

144 Essex County Council (2020) The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide For Essex. SuDS Maintenance and Adoption. www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/suds/maintenance/suds-maintenance-and-adoption/

Core Policy 37 **Sustainable Drainage Systems**

All major development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off, unless it can be demonstrated to be inappropriate or there would be significant harm to water quality, flood risk or biodiversity. For minor development, SuDS should be used where run-off cannot be adequately managed through the use of permeable surfacing[145].

i. all new development will be required to incorporate water management measures to reduce surface water run-off or adverse impact on water quality and ensure that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The principal method to do so should be the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). As well as providing appropriate water management measures, where possible SuDS should be designed to be multi-functional to deliver amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefit for the built, natural (including green infrastructure) and historic environment
ii. all major development will be required to submit a drainage strategy to demonstrate how both on and off-site flood risk will be managed; and mitigation measures should be satisfactorily integrated into the design and layout of the development
iii. proposals must demonstrate how the SuDS feature(s) reflect and respond to site circumstances, landscape character and the green-blue infrastructure network, and have regard to Essex County Council's SuDS Design Guide
iv. SuDS will be required to meet the following criteria:
    - The design must follow an index-based approach when managing water quality. Implementation in line with the updated Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) SuDS Manual is required
    - Maximise opportunities to enhance biodiversity net-gain.
    - Improve the quality of water discharges and be used in conjunction with water use efficiency measures, and
    - Function effectively over the lifetime of the development
v. surface water connections to the public sewerage network should only be made where it can be demonstrated that there are no feasible alternatives (this applies to new developments and redevelopments) and where there is no detriment to existing users.

Proposals should consider the impact upon aviation in accordance with **Core Policy 32A: Aerodrome Safeguarding** and London Stansted Airport should be consulted regarding any new development within 13km of the Airport, to ensure early input into any viability and requirements of the SUDS proposed. The use of natural flood management techniques to provide multi-functional benefits for water quality, local amenity and biodiversity is supported.

Where a site-specific flood risk assessment is required for development proposals (see **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.

145 Major and minor development is defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

Sites Designated for Biodiversity and Geology

9.160 The Council's strategy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity within the District facilitated in part, through partnership working with Essex Biodiversity Project and Essex Wildlife Trust, and through controls on development to reduce potential impacts on sites, which may have importance for biodiversity.

9.161 Uttlesford has a range of important sites and habitats for biodiversity, recognised through designations, from national to local importance. Sites of Biodiversity of Geological Importance are identified on the Policies Map and shown by **Appendices 9-11** and these represent a tiered network for 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 Assessment[146].

9.162 Important sites within Uttlesford include the statutorily protected national designations (National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest; SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves) and non-statutorily protected Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites and Special Roadside Verges Sites with protected species, important habitats and sites which are important for their historic landscape interest will be protected and where possible enhanced. National and local designations aim to protect key Uttlesford habitats including ancient and deciduous woodland, chalk grassland, chalk wildflower assemblages, chalk pits, marsh, rivers (including chalk streams) as well as important geological features. Irreplaceable habitats within the District include Ancient Woodland and ancient/veteran trees.

9.163 There are 14 nationally designated sites located in Uttlesford made up of 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and two National Nature Reserves (NNR).

9.164 There are 290 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 nine 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 11.**

9.165 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

146 AECOM (2024) Uttlesford Local Plan. Habitat Regulations Assessment. Regulation 19. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13308/Habitat-Regulation-Assessment/pdf/Uttlesford_Local_Plan_HRA_FINAL.pdf?m=1723034664693

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.

9.166 Developments that can make a positive contribution to the network of other ecological sites by habitat creation, expansion or connection will be positively considered, especially where this contributes to Nature Recovery Networks including the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the UDC Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

9.167 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.

9.168 An ecological survey and impact assessment will be required for any development affecting or with the potential to affect:

- a national or locally designated site
- protected species
- species on the species of conservation concern of threatened species, and
- habitats with potential to support protected species or species of conservation concern, and
- Natural England Priority Habitats/ Expansion Zones.

9.169 Any necessary ecological surveys and impact assessments should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist with appropriate professional accreditation and competencies. Field 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 SSSI and NNR

9.170 As described in **Chapter 6,** Hatfield Forest is the District's largest SSSI and is also a National Nature Reserve. Hatfield Forest is a medieval hunting forest of mixed

deciduous woodland and parkland of 403 ha, an area which extends beyond the SSSI designation. The forest encompasses Irreplaceable Ancient Woodland and Ancient Tree habitats as well as important Wood Pasture & Parkland and Lowland Meadow Habitats. It supports protected species including bats and badgers. It also provides an important recreation resource to the residents of Uttlesford and those in neighbouring Districts and is a strategic area of green infrastructure. Hatfield Forest is subjected to considerable pressure and habitat degradation by visitors, particularly in the winter months when paths in the forest can be damaged and habitat loss has occurred.

9.171 Natural England, the National Trust, Uttlesford District Council and neighbouring authorities have developed a Mitigation Strategy outlining a package of on-site Strategic Access Management Measures (SAMM) to mitigate the impacts of new residential development. 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 12.** In addition, new development is required to provide sufficient green open space to meet Natural England criteria to help provide alternative access and divert visitors away from Hatfield Forest, this is known as Sustainable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Protection of Wildlife Habitat Sites on the Essex Coast

9.172 Residents of Uttlesford have recreational access to protected Habitat Sites in the vicinity of the Essex Coast, including internationally designated Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), as well as wetlands designated under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Ramsar Convention 1975. The Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary Planning Document (May 2020) was adopted by the Council in September 2020. Developments that result in net additional dwellings within the zone of influence, as shown on the Policies Map and within **Appendix 13,** are required to pay the Essex Coast RAMS Tariff in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)[147]. 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 though 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.

147 Place Services (2020) Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document. Essex_Coast_RAMS_SPD_June_2020_final.pdf

Core Policy 38 **Sites Designated for Biodiversity or Geology**

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 is required to be submitted with the application if the proposed development affects or has the potential to affect any site of biodiversity or geodiversity interest including:

i. any internationally designated Habitats Site including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site
ii. any statutory designated site, for example: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves
iii. any non-statutory designated site, for example: Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites and Special Roadside Verges
iv. priority habitats, and
v. protected species:
   a. special on the Red Data List of threatened species
   b. habitats suitable for protected species or species on the Red Data List.

The highest level of protection will be given to Habitats Sites (formerly known as European Sites). Development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the integrity of a Habitats Site either alone or in combination with other development. Proposals having a harmful impact on the integrity of Habitats 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.

Development proposals which would result in significant harm to any other biodiversity or geodiversity interest will only be considered for approval after alternative sites that would result in less or no harm have been considered. 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 off-site Biodiversity Net Gain, these will be secured by conditions or planning obligations 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 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 and may need to include a biodiversity management plan and financial support for continued maintenance.

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.

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 **(Core Policy 32a: Aerodrome Safeguarding).**

Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Mitigation
Contributions will be secured from development towards mitigation of the in-combination adverse effects of new development 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 13, including Permitted Development which is required to comply with the Habitats Regulations. All new residential development within the zone of influence is expected to meet or exceed Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Standards, and larger sites should provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) that adheres to Natural England SANG Quality Guidance.

Protection of Hatfield Forest
Where appropriate, within the Hatfield Forest Zone of Influence (11.1km) as shown on the Policies Map and Appendix 12:

vi. contributions[148] will be required from new residential developments which result in a net increase in dwellings towards the delivery of the Strategic Access Management Measures (SAMM) as set out in the Hatfield Forest Mitigation Strategy.

148 In accordance with the tariffs and guidance set out in the Natural England Hatfield Forest Mitigation Strategy – Project update (19th June 2025).

vii. high quality on-site green infrastructure provision shall be completed and accessible within the early phases of development in new major developments, including natural and semi-natural greenspace, dog walking routes and dogs off-lead areas.

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:

- Ancient Woodland
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Meadows
- Chalk Rivers/ Streams
- Ancient or Veteran Trees.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy

9.173 Green and Blue Infrastructure plays an important role in helping to make the District sustainable, healthy and attractive and in helping to meet Local Plan objectives and the Biodiversity Duty of UDC. All development should adopt an approach that is environment and landscape-led to maximise the beneficial provision of Green and Blue Infrastructure for people and nature in accordance with Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure. Well-designed green and blue infrastructure is an important means of delivering against the objectives of other policies in the Plan, including: Core Policy 35: Watercourse Protection and Enhancement; Core Policy 36: Flood Risk; and Core Policy 37: Sustainable Drainage Systems. It can also help to ensure that the sites identified in Core Policy 38: Sites Designated for Biodiversity or Geology remain connected to each other and the wider countryside.

9.174 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[149]. 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 being of considerable value to the health and wellbeing of our communities and new residential developments through regulating the quality of the environment, providing materials and non-material amenity benefits. These are described as "ecosystem services" in the Planning Practice Guidance 2023[150].

149 LUC (2023) Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
150 MHCLG (2024) Planning Practice Guidance. Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK

9.175 GBI delivers multi-functional benefit - for wildlife, bee pollination, climate change amelioration, watercourse health, walking and outdoor exercise, recreation, green active-travel routes, mental health and to provide quality landscape settings for built development and particularly for heritage buildings and sites.

9.176 The GBI Strategy identifies a series of priority projects such as extensive and connected woodland planting and the potential creation of Country Parks. More detail for those relating to the strategic developments is identified in the **Area Strategies** where development will be expected to contribute towards helping to bring this forward. Furthermore, the proposed allocations will be expected to make significant contributions to delivering GBI as set out in the masterplans and policy requirements for these sites **(Appendix 4).**

9.177 The Council commissioned a further study on the feasibility of the Country Park proposals and the provision of high quality green and open space as an integral part of the new strategic developments. The study identified outline concepts for a new Country Park in the northern part of the District within and adjacent to the Saffron Walden site allocation. The development of a Country Park in the future, along with provision as part of the Strategic Allocation, in association with sports pitches and recreation facilities, will help serve the gap in provision in the north of the District for existing and new residents. A new site for a Country Park is also being explored to serve the south of the District to help ease the pressure on Hatfield Forest. In this Plan, provision will be made in relation to the Great Dunmow, Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet Strategic Allocations, which are all in the Hatfield Forest Zone of Influence. Longer-term opportunities will also continue to be explored through future Local Plans.

9.178 The green spaces will need to be designed and maintained to Natural England Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) standards. Criteria relating to size, access, circularity of routes, connectivity, habitats, and landscape for example will be applied to the design of these areas as illustrated in the requirements for these sites **(Appendix 4).** Maintenance contributions will be required of developers with appropriate management arrangements for Great Dunmow, Takeley and Walpole Meadows in Stansted Mountfitchet.

9.179 Developers are encouraged to consider the **Essex Design Guide** for the Design of GI and the Essex Green Infrastructure Standards (2022), which have been endorsed by Natural England and awarded Building with Nature Policy accreditation, 2023. The Essex GI Standards have nine principles and standards for the protection, enhancement, creation, and management of GI in Essex, and their application will help ensure the delivery of multi-functional, accessible high-quality GI.

Core Policy 39 **Green and Blue Infrastructure**

In planning for major developments[151], 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. demonstrate that they have taken a Green and Blue Infrastructure design-led approach to development schemes, and utilised Uttlesford's Green and Blue Infrastructure design checklist, to ensure green infrastructure is fully considered and well-integrated into developments from the earliest stages
ii. ensure Green and Blue Infrastructure, wherever appropriate, is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, considering the views of key stakeholders, with their early engagement
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 GBI network as well as associated landscape heritage features
iv. 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 to improve connections to habitat networks and to contribute to wider nature recovery
v. protect existing trees and hedgerows during and after site preparation and construction. Where proposed development might affect trees, developers must demonstrate that an accurate assessment by a competent arboriculturist has been undertaken and protective measures put in place before commencement of development. Developers are strongly encouraged to increase tree cover using a mix of native species to include orchard and fruiting trees that are resilient to pests, diseases and climate change and support biodiversity, and
vi. provide a phased implementation Plan for GI that identifies the implementation of the main structural elements in the first phase of development. The GI and landscape plan should be implemented at the earliest opportunity in alignment with the development construction phasing in order for planting to mature and for the aesthetic benefit of early occupants.

151 As defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2184/made
152 LUC (2023) Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

All proposals for Green and Blue Infrastructure should align with 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 Strategy[152] and the Nature Recovery Strategies and the Essex GI standards.

Development proposals for major developments must be accompanied by a GBI Plan for the site in accordance with the GBI Strategy of the relevant Area Strategy. This should include stewardship arrangements for not less than 30 years to cover maintenance, management and funding arrangements. The Plan should also incorporate an appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and cover the protection of existing green infrastructure as well as any designated sites and features during construction and implementation phases with proposed mitigation measures. No development shall take place until the Plan has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

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

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

Where appropriate a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) must be prepared detailing the management and maintenance of green infrastructure assets and green spaces for the lifetime of the development.

All proposals which deliver new or enhanced green and blue infrastructure should consider the impact upon aviation in accordance with **Core Policy 32a: Aerodrome Safeguarding.**

Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

9.180 Biodiversity and nature recovery are 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.

9.181 The Council supports the objectives of the Essex Local Nature Partnership, including their commitment to ensure that 25% of all land in Essex will enhance biodiversity and the natural environment by creating natural green infrastructure and to adopt the Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSS) target for everyone to have access to high quality natural space close to home and work.

9.182 The Council supports the creation, restoration, retention, protection and extension of all areas designated internationally, nationally and

locally as well as all Habitats and Species of Principal Importance[153] within the District.

9.183 To support declining local species populations[154] new homes should include integrated habitats including those for bats, birds (including swifts) and pollinators, in line with the standards set out in the **Uttlesford Design Code**[155] as well as permeable boundaries to facilitate wildlife movement. Where new tree planting is required, native species should be used referring to the Essex Tree Palette[156].

9.184 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. This may include the creation of Biodiversity Net Gain units. The stewardship arrangement and the potential need for off-site BNG units 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.

9.185 The creation of BNG units is particularly encouraged where they:

- are in locations of strategic importance according to the Statutory BNG metric
- are included in Local Nature Recovery Strategies, or
- have the potential to positively impact important habitats within the District including, but not limited to, Ancient Woodland, Ancient Trees, rivers and their supporting habitats, chalk meadows, watercourses, chalk streams and hedgerows, or to support protected species.

9.186 The Environment Act (2021) has introduced a mandatory approach to supporting biodiversity through development Biodiversity Net Gain[157], setting a statutory 10% minimum increase in natural habitats and ecology for all development which impacts on biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain is calculated using the most recent Statutory Biodiversity Metric[158]. It 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.

153 For a full definition of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance: DEFRA (2022) Habitats and species of principal importance in England. Habitats and species of principal importance in England - GOV.UK
154 LUC (2024) Evidence for Biodiversity Net Gain. https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36276/Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain.pdf
155 UDC (2024) District-Wide Design Code. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13171/District-wide-Design-Code-July-2024/pdf/UDC_Design_Code_2.pdf?m=1721755486950
156 Essex County Council and Place Services (2018) Essex Tree Palette. essex-tree-palette-2018-6-1.pdf
157 The Environment Act 2021. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents
158 DEFRA (2024) Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides. www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

9.187 Environmental degradation through modern farming methods, runoff from fields and roads into rivers and from roads into (protected) grass verges, loss of hedgerows, species extinctions and new greenfield development have lowered the value of biodiversity in the District and give considerable scope for improvement beyond 20% BNG. At the time of writing, despite being the largest District in Essex with the lowest population density, Uttlesford has the third lowest biodiversity (species per km^2) of any Essex District. Its biodiversity is significantly lower than similar UK Districts in terms of size and population density[159]. To address this, the Council seeks to exceed the statutory minimum increase by setting a requirement for development proposals to achieve at least 20% Biodiversity Net Gain.

9.188 The most expensive part of providing BNG is in setting up the process and/or site itself. The Natural England Study[160] 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 landowner and land value.

159 LUC (2024) Evidence for Biodiversity Net Gain. https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36276/Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain.pdf

160 DEFRA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain Impact Assessment. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5da5d695ed915d17b4f13f63/net-gain-ia.pdf

Core Policy 40 **Biodiversity and Nature Recovery**

With the exception of development which is exempt from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, all development proposals will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain calculated using the most recent Statutory Metric, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that provision in excess of the statutory minimum 10% would make development unviable.

Biodiversity Net Gain Units should deliver gains that are significant at a local or landscape scale. 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.

Where proposals involve the creation of natural areas and habitats which are integral to development, they should be accompanied by a long-term management plan which must be approved by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the requirements of **Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure.**

All proposals which include Biodiversity Net Gain should consider the impact upon aviation in accordance with **Core Policy 32a: Aerodrome Safeguarding.**

Planning applications subject to mandatory BNG shall require a biodiversity gain plan. The Plan must be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before commencement.

Landscape Character

9.189 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 that create local distinctive character.

9.190 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.

9.191 There are four river valley landscapes in Uttlesford centred on the Rivers Cam, Start, 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.

9.192 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.

9.193 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)[161]

161 LUC (2023) Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/12665/Uttlesford-full-LCA/pdf/Uttlesford_full_LCA.pdf?m=1701352785163

Core Policy 41 **Landscape Character**

Development proposals should preserve the character and appearance of valued 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 reflect and enhance local landscape character or its setting in accordance with the applicable guidelines to protect and conserve, manage and plan landscapes outlined for each landscape character area within the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2023), particularly in settlement edge locations and Rural Areas. Development should, in the first instance, seek to avoid damage to the local landscape character, with appropriate mitigation secured 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. cause coalescence between settlements
iv. harm views to distant landmarks and landscapes particularly sensitive to change[162]
v. harm the setting of natural and built landmark features, or
vi. reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

All major development proposals[163] must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

Environmental Protection

9.194 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 latest

162 Including those identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2023)
163 As defined in the NPPF, paragraph Annex 2: Glossary. www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary

Environment Act 2021[164], 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 and Contamination

9.195 The planning system plays a vital role in making sure all new development considers pollution levels and ways to minimise these. Pollution can come from many sources, including light, noise, air, odour, vibrations, all of which can have a damaging effect on the local environment, amenities and health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, and soil contamination that could impact negatively on land or water bodies (both surface water and groundwater). The NPPF requires that local plans aim to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the natural environment and encourage the re-use of degraded, or contaminated brownfield land. The use of brownfield sites for development presents a positive opportunity for remediation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

9.196 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 take into account any controls and mitigation measures that could reasonably be imposed by condition e.g. hours of operation.

9.197 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.

9.198 There is a potential conflict between ensuring there is adequate lighting to meet safety, security and operational objectives and keeping lighting to a minimum to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties, protect the character of countryside, reduce harm to wildlife and maintain the visibility of the night sky. Lighting can also

164 The Environment Act 2021. www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted

extend the opportunity for outdoor sport activities in the winter months when there is limited daylight.

9.199 This conflict can be resolved by carefully designed lighting schemes designed to prevent light spillage and glare and to provide the minimum lighting necessary for operational and security purposes. Schemes will be considered against the latest national guidance and lighting standards.

Core Policy 42 **Pollution and Contamination**

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

Where development would cause unacceptable risk to public health or safety, general amenity, existing uses, occupiers of surrounding land uses or the historic and natural environment due to potential from: vibration, odour, light pollution, pollution of surface or ground water sources, and/ or ground contamination, planning permission will not be granted unless the need for development is judged to outweigh the effects caused and the proposed development includes mitigation measures to minimise the adverse effects (with reference to **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change** and **Core Policy 35: Watercourse Protection and Enhancement**).

Developments sensitive to pollutants will be permitted where the occupants 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 on 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, sites that involve the handling of hazardous substances 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.

Excavated materials recovered on a development site via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste Development Industry Code of Practice (DoWCoP)[153] subject to certain conditions being met.

Light Pollution

The Council will seek to limit light pollution from new development, including limiting the hours of use for external lighting. Proposals for external lighting will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

iv. it does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring uses or the wider landscape
v. the level of lighting and its period of use is the minimum necessary for security and operational purposes
vi. low energy lighting is used in conjunction with features such as movement sensors, daylight sensors and time controls
vii. the alignment of lamps and provisions of shielding minimizes spillage, glare, glow, including into the night sky
viii. there is no loss of privacy or amenity to nearby residential properties and no danger to pedestrian and road users, and
ix. there is no harm to local ecology, intrinsically dark landscapes and/or heritage assets.

165 CL:AIRE. Definition of Waste: Code of Practice. https://claire.co.uk/projects-and-initiatives/dow-cop.html

Air Quality

9.200 Uttlesford District is rural in nature and the principal town of Saffron Walden is the administrative centre. Uttlesford is bisected by the M11 motorway and A120 trunk road which support Stansted International Airport in the south of the District. Significant traffic congestion can occur during peak times within Saffron Walden causing high emissions of pollution such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. Traffic emissions are the most significant source of air pollution within the District.

9.201 Within Saffron Walden, the historic layout of the town results in problems with traffic flow and congestion particularly at peak times. However, the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) within Saffron Walden town centre recorded six consecutive years of no Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) exceedances and the AQMA was formally revoked on 19 March 2024. Uttlesford District Council is committed to the development of the Saffron Walden Clean Air project which will pilot green modes of transport and encourage active travel in the town. The Strategic Allocation set out in this Plan at Saffron Walden will deliver a range of transport measures designed to assist in delivering the aims of the Clean Air Project.

9.202 Poor air quality may be experienced alongside the M11 and the A120 in some instances on either side of the central reservations of the M11 and A120 where development should be controlled. However, as both roads 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 precise areas.

Core Policy 43 **Air Quality**

Development will not be permitted if air pollution impacts lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment, or protected sites (as defined by the Environment Act 2021[166]) or amenity, including residential amenity.

Applicants must have regard to the most up to date UDC Air Quality Technical Guidance[167] and shall, where appropriate, prepare and submit an air quality assessment with their application. Applicants should demonstrate that:

i. any identified emissions will not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity
ii. development has regard to the most up to date UDC Air Quality Technical Guidance
iii. 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 and interim targets referenced in the Local Management Technical Guidance (TG22), or latest version[168]
iv. any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality are appropriately mitigated
v. the development promotes sustainable transport measures and use of low emission vehicles to reduce air quality impacts of vehicles, and
vi. the development is designed in a way to encourage non-habitable rooms on roadside facades (and habitable rooms as far from roads as possible) with consideration for the Design Code requirements for solar gain/ overheating.

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 may be at risk of meeting the relevant regulatory standards, 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.

166 The Environment Act 2021. Section 110. www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted
167 UDC (2018) Air Quality Technical Planning Guidance. Air_Quality_Technical_Guidance_.pdf
168 DEFRA (2022) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22). https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LAQM-TG22-May-25-v2.1.pdf

Noise

9.203 The Local Plan policy relating to noise **(Core Policy 44)** aims to ensure 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. It seeks to ensure that quality of life will be protected from unacceptable noise impacts by managing the relationship between noise sensitive development and noise sources. To achieve this objective, development will be required to adhere to the noise standards identified within the policy.

9.204 Aircraft movements are a particular major source of noise in Uttlesford. London Stansted Airport Noise Action Plan 2018 (Building on a Sound Foundation)[169] sets out what controls there are on noise generated by departing and arriving aircraft. The Noise Action Plan also sets out what controls there are on aircraft noise generated by ground operations and what the night noise restrictions are. 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 at the Airport.

9.205 The Noise Action Plan's purpose is to assess/consider and manage aircraft noise at the Airport and includes specific measures or actions to reduce impacts on communities living around the Airport. It is a key part of delivering broader UK noise objectives that are to limit and where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise.

9.206 Each year, London Stansted Airport commissions and publishes a suite of noise contours, which are modelled in the CAA'S ANCON modelling system. 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. The summer (mid-June to mid-September) average mode daytime LAEQ 16-hour (0700-2300) and night-time 8hr (2300-0700) noise contours for Stansted Airport that are published annually, and the longer-term forecast contours approved by airport planning permissions, will be used for the purposes of planning application decision making relating to noise sensitive development.

169 Stanstead Airport (2019) Noise Action Plan 2019 – 2023. www.stanstedairport.com/community/noise/noise-action-plan/

Core Policy 44 **Noise**

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

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 not be permitted unless 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.

Noise sensitive uses proposed in areas that are exposed to noise at the Unacceptable Adverse Effect level will not be permitted. The Unacceptable Adverse Effect Level for most sources, including surface transport, will be determined on a case-by-case basis subject to the nature of the proposal, the source of the noise and guidance from the Council's Environmental Health officer.

For aviation transport sources, the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level is considered to occur where noise exposure is above 63dB LAeq,16hr (57dB LAeq,8hr at night) and the lowest observed effect level is considered to be 51DB LAEQ, 16HR (45DB LAEQ, 8HR at night)[170].

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 Significant Observed Adverse Effect noise will not be permitted.

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. Applicants must have regard to

170 Based on 21/00031/VARCON London Luton Airport – Secretary of State Decision (October 2023) and Panel Report (May 2023). Called-in decision: London Luton Airport, Airport Way, Luton (ref: 3296455 - 13 October 2023)

the most up to date UDC Noise Technical Guidance[171]. 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 environment.

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.

Outdoor noise on school sites should not exceed 55DB LAEQ (30 MIN).

171 UDC (2017) Noise Assessment Technical Guidance. https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6973/Noise-Assessment-Technical-Guidance-June-2017/pdf/UDC_Noise_Technical_Guide_final_draft.pdf?m=1498825184667

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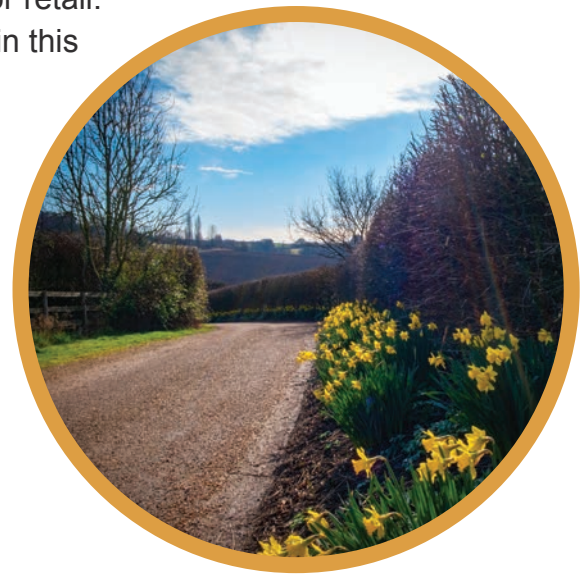
Chapter 10

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. This is 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 Existing 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 14,** informed by the Uttlesford Employment Land Review 2024[172]. 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.

172 ICENI (2024) Uttlesford Employment Land Review. Uttlesford_Employment_Land_Report_Final_Report_02.07.2024.pdf

Core Policy 45 **Protection of Existing Employment Space**

Existing employment areas as identified on the Policies Map and in **Appendix 14** will be safeguarded for offices, warehouses, workshops, industrial and complementary sui generis uses i.e. B2, B8, E(g) and sui generis use. In order to ensure the delivery of consented employment developments a presumption in favour of employment uses (B2, B8 and E(g)) will apply to sites with an extant or part-implemented planning permission for employment use, and sites where the permission has lapsed within the past three years, where new applications are generally consistent with the original permission. Proposals which promote development or reuse of vacant sites located within Existing Employment Sites for employment use will be supported subject to their compliance with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Proposals that result in the loss of permanent jobs or employment floorspace on any site will only be permitted where there is evidence to show that the site/building has reached the end of its useful economic life for employment use by:

i. 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 market values and local land values, and

ii. demonstrating that the physical adaption or reuse of the building/site for employment use is uneconomic in commercial terms, and

iii. the proposed alternative use would not conflict with any existing or potential other employment generating uses in terms of environmental, traffic generation or any other planning matters. The following considerations are likely to assist in demonstrating this, including:

   a. that the proposed scheme provides better quality employment space allowing for mixed use, and/or
   b. that the application demonstrates a clear need for community facilities that would be met by the proposal, and/or
   c. 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:

iv. 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

v. 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 126 and 127[173].

173 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework

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 **Core Policy 45**.

*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 cafes, a gymnasium and/or early years childcare facilities.

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

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

i. the use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site, and
ii. 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 Walden) with less focus on the Local Rural Centres for new strategic employment provision, other than protecting existing employment space. **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 Area 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 of Existing Employment Sites (as defined in **Core Policy 45**) and the built-up area of Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres and Larger Villages, provided that the benefits are not outweighed by any harmful impacts (through consideration of other policies within this plan), where:

i. there is a demonstrable need for the employment that cannot be accommodated on Existing Employment Sites or allocated sites
ii. the effect on the amenity of nearby residents and businesses is acceptable
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 is acceptable.

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) being met, where applicable. Other proposals in Smaller Villages and the Open Countryside will be supported, provided that, in addition to criteria (i)-(iv) where applicable:

v. the proposal cannot reasonably be accommodated on or adjacent to Existing Employment Sites 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 and 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 Districts[174]
- 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
- Essex is at the forefront of aviation skills and training excellence. The Stansted Airport Employment & Skills Academy delivers courses, training and apprenticeships across many careers and industries in partnership with London Stansted Airport and Harlow College. This is the first purpose-built college at a UK airport. There is considerable interest in understanding the benefits it has made within the sector, and potentially replicating such training excellence at other UK airports.

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 2,500m^2 of employment development or every 50 residential units provided, consistent with the thresholds set out in the Essex County Council Developer's Guide[175]. Apprenticeships may be from the construction or end use phase of the proposed development, or combination of the two.

174 SQW (2021) The Local Economy of Uttlesford, Section B: Socio-Economic Baseline. https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24597/Working
175 Essex County Council (2024) Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. The Essex County Council's developers guide to infrastructure contributions

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 considered to ensure large-scale development proposals contribute to this aim by fulfilling the requirements set out below.

Applications for large-scale development, 50 dwellings or more, or over 2500m^2, should 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:

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

If it can be demonstrated that there are circumstances specific to the scheme where direct provision is not operationally feasible, or that an alternative means of delivery would result in a more effective outcome a financial contribution in lieu might be considered.

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)[176] 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

176 NEXUS Planning (2023) Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13268/Uttlesford-Retail-Capacity-Study-Update-Final-October-2023/pdf/Uttlesford_Retail_Capacity_Study_Update_-_Final_-_October_2023.pdf?m=1722946356807

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 seen 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 the provision of facilities and services to the residents. The Retail 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 historically 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 2021-24[177] 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

177 UDC (2021) Economic Recovery Plan 2021 – 24. Draft Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan.pdf

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 circumstances. 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 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[178] 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:

178 NEXUS Planning (2023) Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13268/Uttlesford-Retail-Capacity-Study-Update-Final-October-2023/pdf/Uttlesford_Retail_Capacity_Study_Update_-_Final_-_October_2023.pdf?m=1722946356807

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 food store (725m^2 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 six convenience and six 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 Local Rural 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 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 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 two convenience goods units, three comparison goods units and eight service goods units. There are a number of small restaurants and/or take-aways.

10.35 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

10.36 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 food store and a bakery) and two further units are in comparison goods use (a pharmacy and a home interiors shop).

10.37 The centre is located exclusively along the linear High Street, is highly attractive with a number of historic features and listed building. The centre

is relatively lightly trafficked (in terms of retail patronage). Parking is largely on-street with high-quality public realm.

Takeley

10.38 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.

10.39 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 takeaways).

Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas

10.40 The NPPF states at Paragraph 90[179] 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.

10.41 The updated Retail Study (2023)[180] has been used to define the boundaries used to guide planning applications for main town centre uses and to apply the sequential test.

10.42 The town centres of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted, and the five local centres of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport and Takeley are identified on the Policies Map and **Appendix 15**. In relation to Stansted Mountfitchet, 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 Centre Boundaries (including Primary Shopping Areas)

10.43 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

179 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework
180 NEXUS Planning (2023) Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13268/Uttlesford-Retail-Capacity-Study-Update-Final-October-2023/pdf/Uttlesford_Retail_Capacity_Study_Update_-_Final_-_October_2023.pdf?m=1722946356807

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.

10.44 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.

10.45 '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.

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

Retail Impact Assessment Threshold

10.47 The NPPF states at Paragraph 94[181] that when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m^2 of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:

a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

10.48 The Planning Practice Guidance for town centres and retail[182] further elaborates on this at Paragraph 015 stating "in setting

181 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework
182 MHCLG (2020) Town centres and retail guidance. www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres

a locally appropriate threshold it will be important to consider the:

- scale of proposals relative to town centres
- the existing viability and vitality of town centres
- cumulative effects of recent developments
- whether local town centres are vulnerable
- likely effects of development on any town centre strategy, and
- impact on any other planned investment".

10.49 The Local Retail Impact Threshold and Local Centre Allocations Report[183] is an addendum to the Retail Capacity Study 2023 that specifically considers the evidence for a local threshold. The study states that as a result of the likely vulnerability of the town centres, it is appropriate for Uttlesford District Council to seek a Local Impact Threshold to protect its centres. The designation of a Local Impact Threshold need not be considered a barrier to investment, but instead an appropriate safeguard to ensure that retail impact is assessed across a range of proposals.

10.50 A threshold of 1,000m^2 gross is recommended by the updated Report and supported by this Plan. A threshold at this limit would capture discount foodstore proposals whilst not unnecessarily incumbering smaller proposals beneath the threshold.

183 NEXUS Planning (2024) Local Retail Impact Threshold & Local Centre Allocations. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13267/Retail-Capacity-Study-Update-Addendum-2024-FINAL/pdf/Retail_Capacity_Study_Update_Addendum_2024_FINAL.pdf?m=1722946356523

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, other main town centre uses and markets 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 1000m^2 (gross).

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:

iv. 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
v. the proposal meets the needs of residents within the local neighbourhood, and
vi. 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 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

10.51 We are committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for residents, and to reduce health inequalities in accordance with the NPPF, PPG, other Government Policy[184], the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy[185] and Essex County Council's Healthy Weight Strategy[186]. 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 restrict the proliferation of particular types of hot food takeaways in inappropriate locations, such as adjacent to schools and playgrounds.

10.52 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.

10.53 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 400m 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

10.54 Where there is interest in opening a new shop or cafe 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.

10.55 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 applies to settlements without a defined centre.

184 Department of Health & Social Care (2020) Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives. Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives - GOV.UK and Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities - GOV.UK

185 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2028. Uttlesford Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

186 Essex County Council (2024) Our appetite for change, Healthy Weight in Essex. Our appetite for change

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:

i. the shop would be of a size appropriate to the settlement
ii. the site would be well related to the settlement, with the potential to reduce the need to travel by car, and
ii. 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

10.56 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 each 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.

10.57 In the Rural Area accommodation including hotels, Bed and Breakfast, Self-catering, Country Inns and camping will be supported in line with **Core Policy 51** below.

10.58 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, including leisure uses. 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 Chesterford Research Park: ancillary 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.

Proposals to strengthen the heritage tourism offer at Audley End Estate, which is a major employer in Open Countryside, are supported in principle but will need to ensure that heritage assets are not adversely affected. The Council will work collaboratively with the Audley End Estate, English Heritage, Historic England and partners to help ensure the long-term stewardship of the Estate.

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, or
iii. are a small-scale camping or glamping proposal supported by **(Core Policy 21: Rural Diversification)**

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.

Proposals for small-scale camping or glamping sites will be supported as rural diversification schemes **(Core Policy 21: Rural Diversification)** where the impact on the landscape and historic environment is acceptable and suitable access and parking is provided in accordance with other development plan policies.

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.

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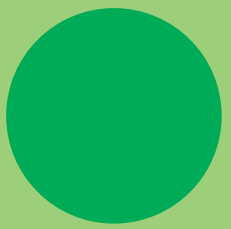
Chapter 11

Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities



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 and tenures, 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. The following policies are included in this Chapter:

- **Core Policy 52:** Good Design Outcomes and Process
- **Core Policy 52a:** Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations
- **Core Policy 53:** Standards for New Residential Development
- **Core Policy 54:** Supported and Specialist Housing
- **Core Policy 55:** Residential Space Standards
- **Core Policy 56:** Affordable Dwellings
- **Core Policy 57:** Sub-Division of Dwellings and Houses in Multiple Occupation
- **Core Policy 58:** Custom and Self-Build Housing
- **Core Policy 59:** The Metropolitan Green Belt
- **Core Policy 60:** The Travelling Community
- **Core Policy 61:** The Historic Environment
- **Core Policy 62:** Listed Buildings
- **Core Policy 63:** Conservation Areas
- **Core Policy 64:** Archaeological Assets
- **Core Policy 64a:** Registered Parks and Gardens
- **Core Policy 65:** Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance
- **Core Policy 66:** Planning for Health
- **Core Policy 67:** Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- **Core Policy 67a:** Management of Public 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 requires all development, including all elements of the built environment, to be of the highest design quality and contribute to Uttlesford's long-term economic prosperity, quality of life and a net zero 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 a 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[187], including additional Guidance Notes, 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**[188] and the **Essex Design Guide**[189] which then provide further information, justification, requirements and guidance that are specific to Uttlesford and Essex. In addition, Neighbourhood Plans, where relevant, must also be referred to, prior to the undertaking of any design work.

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 requirements and 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 code approach meets with the aspirations of the Council and the wider

187 MHCLG (2021) National Model Design Code. National Model Design Code - Part 1 The Coding Process
188 UDC (2024) District-Wide Design Code. District-wide Design Code
189 Essex County Council (2018) Essex Design Guide. www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/

Uttlesford community, providing applicants with the best chance of achieving planning approval.

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 Proposals as defined by the Development Management Procedure Order 2015[190] 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. In addition, major development proposals should make use of the Uttlesford Quality Review Panel (a local sub-panel of the Essex Quality Review Panel) at an early and appropriate stage in the schemes development and as agreed with Development Management Officers. Certain strategic and large schemes will be required to use the UQRP process, refer to Core Policy 52a.

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

190 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents

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, including agreed energy and water efficiency standards. The use of pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and others is also encouraged.

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 versions of the **Uttlesford Design Code**, and the **Essex Design Guide**.

Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the following ten characteristics[191] are addressed in the design of the scheme in a mutually supportive way:

i. context - understand and enhance the surroundings and demonstrate how landscape character, heritage, local history, and culture have been valued and incorporated. Respond to any significant or material site constraints
ii. identity - demonstrate how the context study and analysis have helped to develop proposals that 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 are 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 Green and Blue Infrastructure and support rich and varied biodiversity

191 MHCLG (2021) National Design Guide. www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide

vi. public spaces - demonstrate the creation of safe, social, well-located, attractive, high quality and inclusive public spaces that support social interaction and provide opportunity for active and healthy lifestyles (Refer to Sport England's 'Active Design' for guidance[192])

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, accessible, 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 the selection of building materials and construction techniques that minimise their environmental impact, and through the use of passive design strategies that maximise resilience, 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:

xi. prepare and submit Masterplans and Design Codes which are in accordance with national policy and guidance and the most up-to-date version of the **Uttlesford Design Code**(s)or demonstrate compliance with the **Uttlesford Design Code**(s) through other means, such as a Design & Access Statement

xii. undertake appropriate Community Engagement that informs the proposals from an early stage in accordance with relevant national and local guidance[193] and

Strategic Allocations set out in this Plan should also comply with the requirements of **Core Policy 52a: Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations.**

Proposals for 50 dwellings or more must also:

xiii. make use of a Design Review as early in the process as possible. The Uttlesford Quality Review Panel (a sub-panel of the Essex Quality Review Panel) is the preferred approach, but the Essex Quality Review Panel, or a Building for a Healthy Life assessment[194] (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.

192 Sport England (2023) Active Design. www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design
193 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Community Engagement Protocol. uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29530/Protocol%20-%20DRAFT.pdf
194 MHCLG (2019) PPG Design: process and tools: 018 Reference ID: 26-018-20191001 and NPPF para. 133. www.gov.uk/guidance/design

Core Policy 52a **Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations**

In addition to the requirements of **Core Policy 52,** proposals for the Strategic Allocations made by this Plan should also:

i. undertake appropriate Community Engagement and illustrate how this informs the proposals from an early stage in accordance with relevant national and local guidance

ii. utilise an external Design Review as early in the process as appropriate. The preferred review panel is the Uttlesford Quality Review Panel (UQRP), a sub-panel of the Essex Quality Review Panel

iii. prepare a comprehensive Development Framework for the whole site and adjoining highway areas as relevant for approval by the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of individual planning applications to which they should conform. The Development Framework should incorporate:

   a. site-wide Vision
   b. masterplan
   c. supporting statement demonstrating how the development will respond to the characteristics of the site and detailing the delivery of the uses, green infrastructure network and spaces, ecological enhancement, sustainable travel, broad design principles and infrastructure required in **Core Policies 5, 26** and **39** and the Site Development Templates.

iv. prepare a site-wide Design Code to complement the Development Framework for all development and land uses. This Design Code should be submitted with any initial planning application (outline or detailed) for any part of the allocation sites and should demonstrate compliance with the **Uttlesford Design Code**, and

v. take a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development including respecting existing site constraints including utilities situated within sites.

Public Art

11.15 The Council is committed to the provision of public art within developments and/ or in the surrounding neighbourhood in accordance with **Development Policy 9: Public Art.** 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 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. This will form part of the community engagement strategy as local people should be involved in the design of any element of public art. The Council will coordinate the implementation of the public art with local Parish Councils and any relevant Neighbourhood Plans.

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 and supported housing, as well as meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers. It then moves on to set out the approach to conversions, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), custom and self-build followed by setting out our **Green Belt** policy. Policies relating to the Rural Areas are set out in **Chapter 8: Thaxted and 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 and supported accommodation to deliver the latest appropriate requirements, including those specified in Building Regulations, and meet the demands of an ageing population. These are addressed by **Core Policy 53: Standards for New Residential Development.**

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.

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 (LHNA)[195] for Uttlesford recommends that a different dwelling mix is sought for different types of housing, as set out below in **Table 11.1.** There is 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.

195 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973

Table 11.1: Housing mix by tenure

	Number of bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4+
Market Housing	25%		45%	30%
Affordable Home Ownership	20%	45%	35%	
Affordable Housing (Rented) - General Needs	25%	30%	35%	10%
- Older Persons	40%	60%		

11.21 The LHNA provides data on population change, for example, identifying that over the 2024-2041 period there will be a 49% increase in the population aged 65+, a 67% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia, and a 60% 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) standards[196] and 10% of market homes meeting M4(3)(a)[197], rising to 10% M4(3)(b) for affordable dwellings.

11.22 Part M4(2) dwellings are those that are 'accessible and adaptable' so a wheelchair user and those with reduced mobility 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 and well-being in a home appropriate to their circumstances, the Council will encourage developers to build new homes that are M4 (2) compliant so that homes can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities, including the provision of dementia-friendly homes in order to assist independent living at home. Providing appropriate M4 (2) and M4 (3) compliant housing ensures that homes built today meet the needs of occupiers in the future. Adapting properties once they have been built is both costly, disruptive for the adult and retrofitting adaptations rarely achieves what good design from the outset can. In line with national planning guidance the Local Plan will only require wheelchair accessible homes M4(3)(b) to be applied only to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. Exceptions to the M4(2) or M4(3) requirements on the grounds of practical achievability could include, for example, instances where:

- a small block of flats is proposed, such that it is not of a scale that would make a lift viable or practical

196/197 MHCLG (2016) Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings, volume 1: dwellings. www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m

- specific plots cannot reasonably be levelled at ground floor, owing to the topography, and
- dwellings are sited in areas of flood risk where the raising of the entrance height is necessary to mitigate this risk.

11.24 Live/Work space is defined as property that is specifically designed for dual use, combining both residential and employment space[198]. 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 residential floorspace 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.

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

Core Policy 53 **Standards for New Residential Development**

New major 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 have regard to 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 where they will not have an adverse impact on the local area and where an appropriate quality of accommodation is proposed.

The Council expect all residential schemes to be 100% M4(2) compliant and all major residential schemes to demonstrate 5% of market homes are M4(3)(a) compliant and 10% of affordable homes are M4(3)(b) compliant - or replacement standards. These M4(2) and M4(3) requirements will apply 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 ill-health amongst older people and the working age population 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, well-being, loneliness, 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 can help to reduce costs to the care and health system 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 into local communities and also as part of larger developments.

The LHNA suggests that in the period 2024-2041 Uttlesford has a need for:

- 775 additional market dwellings (sheltered/ retirement housing)
- 480 additional housing units with care (extra-care) (90% to be market sector)
- 585 additional nursing care bed spaces, and
- Over 300 dwellings to be for wheelchair users (meeting M4(3) standards)[199].

11.27 Consequently, **Core Policy 54: Supported and Specialist Housing** requires that strategic housing sites will be expected to provide a proportion of new homes to contribute towards the demand for older persons housing. The most appropriate form(s) of provision will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Some future specialist housing will be delivered by the market in response to perceived demand, therefore, the policy supports the principle of this form of development where an application is close to essential facilities.

11.28 When determining applications for specialist housing proposals, the Council will have regard to the conclusions of Essex County Council's 'Adult Social Care Needs Assessment', due for publication in December 2024, or any future iteration thereof.

199 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973

Core Policy 54 **Supported and Specialist Housing**

Strategic housing sites will be expected to provide at least 5% of the proposed dwellings as extra care housing or sheltered/retirement housing[200] (C3 Use Class) as part of the overall mix.

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 will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities, where they are:

i. well served by public transport
ii. easily accessible
iii. close to local facilities, and
iv. integrated into communities.

Wherever possible, these proposals should be provided in accordance with the requirements of **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

11.29 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 standard[201]. 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.

201 MHCLG (2015) Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard. Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard - GOV.UK

202 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973

Core Policy 55 **Residential Space Standards**

Internal Residential Space

All new dwellings will achieve compliance with the Nationally Described Space Standards (or any successor standards/ policy) as a minimum.

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, having regard to the **Uttlesford Design Code**.

Affordable Dwellings

11.30 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.

11.31 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' is defined in the NPPF and 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.

11.32 The NPPF requires Local Plan policies to identify the type and tenure of homes needed by those who require affordable housing. The provision of affordable housing should be met on site unless, exceptionally, off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be justified.

11.33 Affordability in the District has worsened in recent history, with the workplace based median affordability ratio in Uttlesford at 12:18 in 2022, based on the ratio between median house prices and full-time earnings[202].

11.34 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.**

11.35 The NPPF expects at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership, 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[203].

11.36 The LHNA[204] 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'.

202 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973
203 MHCLG (2021) Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 70-001-20210524. Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK
204 JG Consulting (2023) Local Housing Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13251/Uttlesford-LHNA-Final/pdf/Uttlesford_LHNA_Final.pdf?m=1722945798973

11.37 In May 2021, the Government introduced First Homes[205], 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. 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 priority for the remaining provision of affordable dwellings is for socially rented affordable dwellings.

11.38 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.

205 MHCLG (2021) First Homes Guidance. www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes

11.39 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 justified and evidenced, and the proposed agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Core Policy 56 **Affordable Dwellings**

Major residential development (including conversions and changes of use) should provide 35% of the total dwellings as affordable dwellings.

Affordable dwellings should be delivered on-site. However, in exceptional circumstances, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu may be accepted where alternative sites are 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:

- 30% of affordable homes to be available as affordable home ownership (including First Homes), and
- 70% of affordable homes to be available as affordable / social rented.

The exact tenure split on each site will be a matter for negotiation, taking account of up-to-date need assessments and the characteristics of the area.

Affordable dwellings should be appropriately distributed throughout a new development in small groups and clusters, 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 number of affordable dwellings which would have been applicable on the whole site.

Where a developer considers 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 in a form and sufficiency to be agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

11.40 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, students, and young professionals. These are often the only choice of housing for people who would otherwise be homeless.

11.41 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 in accordance with **Core Policy 57: Sub-Division and Houses in Multiple Occupation.** 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 Houses in Multiple Occupation**

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 the 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 three or more HMOs, and
iv. the proposal does not harm the amenity of the area, including by ensuring:
    a. adequate parking provision, including prevention of loss of garden space as car parking
    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

11.42 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. 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".

11.43 This definition will be used to determine whether or not a home can be categorised as a custom or self-build house.

11.44 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.

11.45 For the three-year period that ended on the 31st October 2023 the Council had permitted 64 plots that could be considered suitable for custom or self-build purposes. For the year October 2022-October 2023 there were eight new individual entries on the register.

11.46 **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.

11.47 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 being approved, in accordance with local and national planning policy.

11.48 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 where there is an active need, as demonstrated by outstanding entries on the Self/Custom Build Register. Sites of this scale will be informed by masterplanning 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.

11.49 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.

11.50 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, to be built and occupied by the applicant or to be built on behalf of the applicant, and which are consistent with the policies of this Local Plan, 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 Passports should, as a minimum, summarise the main marketing details and specifications of the plot to include:

i. the plot location
ii. the plot size (m^2)
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 and landscaping details may be required on each plot where these details are fundamental to the appropriateness of the plot proposal.

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, provided that the Uttlesford self and custom build register is recording a demand for self and/or custom build homes when a planning application for 100 or more dwellings is being determined. 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 12 months from the date at which the plots are made available (with the 12 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 first secured.

The Metropolitan Green Belt

11.51 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:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land[189].

11.52 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.

11.53 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 also be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy.**

11.54 This Local Plan does not propose any development in the **Green Belt**, but three small amendments are made to the **Green Belt** boundary to reflect development in the **Green Belt** that is now built, as identified in the **Green Belt** Study Update 2024[206] at Elms Farm, east of Stansted Mountfitchet, Broomsfields Road, north of Hatfield Heath and Latchmore Bank, north of Little Hallingbury (illustrated at **Appendix 16**). These changes ensure the boundaries' intended permanence for the long term in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 145[207].

Core Policy 59 **The Metropolitan Green Belt**

The Metropolitan **Green Belt** boundaries within Uttlesford District will be maintained in order to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
- 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.

206 LUC (2024) Green Belt Study Update. Green_Belt_Study_Update_-_Addendum_to_the_2016_Uttlesford_Green_Belt_Review.pdf
207 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 145, Available here: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20231228093504/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

11.55 The NPPF and planning 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. To achieve this, the Council has assessed the accommodation needs of the local Gypsy and Traveller community and sought to meet these through the allocations set out in **Core Policy 60.**

11.56 Local planning authorities must use robust evidence to establish accommodation needs when preparing Local Plans and making planning decisions. As such, the Council commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to prepare a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)[208]. This meets the requirements of the Housing Act (1985), the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the NPPF (2023) and Planning Policy Guidance (2014) as amended by Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015).

11.57 The main objective of the GTAA is to determine an appropriate level of pitch and plot provision for the District to inform the policies and proposals of our Local Plan. It provides the Councils with up-to-date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, including the level of need that Uttlesford needs to plan.

11.58 Throughout the Council's Call for Sites undertaken in 2021, and during the Regulation 18 consultation process, no new sites were submitted for consideration for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Consequently, the Council has sought to meet the need for additional pitches through the expansion of established sites, with a preference for meeting the need where it arises.

11.59 The allocations set out below provide an in-principle acceptance of the proposed additional number of pitches within the boundary of the site, as shown by the Local Plan Policies Map. However, the grant of permission will still be subject to the demonstration of a well-designed and landscaped proposal, as well as the sufficient consideration given to the mitigation of flood risk where this arises. A list of the existing sites, their associated level of need, and the justification for their inclusion (or not) in the Plan, is set out within the GTAA spreadsheet[209].

208/209 Opinion Research Services (2024) Uttlesford District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Uttlesford District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

11.60 Councils are also required to set out criteria by which any relevant application will be assessed. **Core Policy 60: The Travelling Community,** is used to inform decision making on planning applications for new traveller community pitches, as well as allocating sites to meet the identified need of 18 pitches[210].

11.61 **Core Policy 60** also considers the need for transit pitches, which are permanent sites used to provide temporary accommodation for their residents. 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. 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.

210 Opinion Research Services (2024) Uttlesford District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
Uttlesford District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Core Policy 60 **The Travelling Community**

The Council have published a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) which sets out the accommodation requirement for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People in the District. This identifies that for individuals who meet the definition outlined in the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), to be delivered between 2023 and 2041 is for 66 pitches. A further 24 pitches are required over the same period to meet the needs of those individuals who do not meet the PPTS definition, or for whom it is not clear whether they meet the PPTS definition. Allocations towards meeting the identified need have been made through the expansion of existing Gypsy and Traveller Sites and are listed in **Table 11.2** below:

Table 11.2: Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations

Parish	Site Name	Number of Additional Pitches
Felsted	Pitts Cottages, Felsted	14
Henham	Land At North Hall Road, Henham	1
Great Dunmow	Willow Farm, Great Dunmow	1
Great Dunmow	The Ford, Great Dunmow	2

In addition to the allocations above, the Council is currently engaging in the preparation of a separate Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document that will allocate new Gypsy and Traveller sites sufficient to meet the residual identified need at new sites. The Council intend a draft of this document to be published for Regulation 18 consultation in 2025. Applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People's accommodation on sites not allocated in **Table 11.2** 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, 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*.

Transit Sites
Applications for transit sites will be approved subject to the following criteria being met:

vi. it addresses an identified need
vii. the proposal is well related to the size and location of the site and respects the scale of nearby communities
viii. 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
ix. there is no significant impact on the strategic road network.

*distance to school gates via safe walking routes

The Historic Environment

11.62 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.

11.63 The quality of the cultural heritage in the District is very high with around 3,700 listed buildings, 35 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.

11.64 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 sensitively managed and properly conserved. There may be opportunities to enhance the significance of the historic environment and it is important that these are identified and 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, if not avoidable, minimised and mitigated.

Core Policy 61 **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 designated heritage assets and their setting in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance, and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

Applications for development proposals which impact the significance of heritage assets will be determined in accordance with legislation requirements and the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

All applications which affect or have the potential to affect heritage assets will be required to provide a heritage statement using appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and landscape context at a level of detail proportionate to the 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 sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic interest, character and setting.

11.65 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.

11.66 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. Consideration must be given to the Essex Design Guide on Climate Change and the Historic Environment, that sets out a best practice approach to understanding heritage assets.

11.67 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.

11.68 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.

Listed Buildings

11.69 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 exist. Every period from before the Norman Conquest to the 20th century is represented, but over 40% of all listed buildings date from the 17th century.

11.70 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.

11.71 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 may be 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.

11.72 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.

11.73 It should be noted by applicants that, any building or structure within the curtilage belonging to a 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'.

Core Policy 62 **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. 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
ii. retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic to the asset, and its setting, and any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, scale, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), details and form.

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:

iii. locations other than on a listed building have been considered and dismissed as being impracticable
iv. there is no irreversible damage to significant parts of the historic fabric, and
v. the location of the equipment on the listed building would not cause harm to its character or appearance.

Conservation Areas

11.74 The Council has carried out a series of conservation area appraisals[211] leading to management plans and some communities have produced their own design advice through Town and Village Design Statements. It is important that the development pressures on the District are managed in ways that protect and enhance the built environment so new development will be expected to comply with such advice where this has been approved by the Council. The Council has also applied Article 4 directions in a number of settlements, as appropriate, to limit certain permitted development rights within these areas.

11.75 The Council is responsible for designating new conservation areas. Prior to designation, a conservation area appraisal should be undertaken by the Council to identify the merits of such a designation. The Council will work with local communities to consider whether the designation of any new conservation areas within the District is appropriate.

211 UDC Conservation Area Appraisals. Conservation area appraisals - Uttlesford District Council

11.76 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 criteria which should be considered to conserve the special interest or significance of the conservation area.

11.77 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 should reflect upon the respective conservation area appraisal to address how such impacts could be mitigated.

Core Policy 63 **Conservation Areas**

Proposals for development in a conservation area or affecting the setting of a conservation area should pay special attention to:

i. the location, form, scale, massing, materials, density, layout, landscaping, and end use of the development
ii. views within, into or out of the Area
iii. the effects upon Local Green Spaces, other important green spaces, and gaps or spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the character in the conservation area, and
iv. the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development.

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. 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 wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use, and
vii. the proposed replacement building makes an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens

11.78 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.

11.79 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.

11.80 Applicants proposing development affecting a Scheduled Monument or site of archaeological significance need to consult Historic England's National List for England (NHLE)[212] 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.

11.81 Where an archaeological or heritage assessment is required by **Core Policy 64: Archaeological Assets** and/or **Core Policy 64a: Historic Parks and Gardens**, the assessment must, as a minimum, define the significance of the assets including any contribution made to their setting and the impact of the proposed development, thus allowing an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. Such assessment should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified professional.

212 Historic England's National Heritage List for England. Search the List – Find listed buildings, monuments, battlefields and more | Historic England

Core Policy 64 **Archaeological Assets**

Development which could adversely affect Scheduled Monuments or non-designated assets of archaeological interest, and their settings will require a suitable desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation that should be submitted as part of any planning application.

Where Scheduled Monuments and their settings would be 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. This presumption will be applied unless it can be demonstrated that public benefits will be secured which outweigh that harm or loss in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. In such circumstances, a programme for excavation, investigation and recording will be required to be submitted and agreed by way of a pre-commencement condition.

Core Policy 64a **Registered Parks and Gardens**

Development proposals within or surrounding a Registered Park and Garden should be designed to preserve the significance of the asset, taking account of the landscape setting and any key views either within the asset, or between the asset and its wider environs. Where new landscaping is proposed as mitigation against the impact of development on a Registered Park and Garden, this should be reflective of the pattern and identity of the existing landscaping within the asset.

Proposals which contribute to or better reveal the significance of a Registered Park and Garden will be supported, including the removal of structures and uses that detract from the special historic interest of these historic parks.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Importance

11.82 The District benefits from a wealth of non-designated heritage assets 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, protected lanes, and even important walls, railings or fingerposts.

11.83 The Council's Local List of Heritage Assets[213] 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.

11.84 The Council may identify new local heritage assets at any stage of the planning process and their identification would be a material consideration in any planning decision.

11.85 Development proposals which would have an adverse impact upon the character, form and fabric of the heritage asset of local importance and/ or would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the asset, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

11.86 Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments, will be considered subject to C**ore Policy: 64 Archaeological Assets.**

Core Policy 65 **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 importance, including those present on the Council's Local Heritage List[214]. Permission for a proposal that would result in harm to, or the loss of, a non-designated heritage asset will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that takes into account the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the non-designated asset.

The Council will apply this balanced judgement when assessing proposals which affect the form, character, or setting of the 'Protected Lanes', as defined on the Policies Map.

213/214 UDC (2018-2021) Local Heritage List. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/local-heritage-list

Health and Wellbeing

11.87 Uttlesford is the least deprived local authority in Essex and one of the least deprived in England, although there are some areas of relative deprivation, and the most deprived ward in the District is Saffron Walden Castle Ward.

11.88 Uttlesford has the highest life expectancy for both males and females of all Essex Districts and has experienced the highest (4.7% female) and second highest (4.1%, male) increases in life expectancy amongst the county's local authority areas (between 2001-2020)[215].

11.89 Across Uttlesford wards, there is however, a six-year gap in healthy life expectancy at birth for males and a nine-year gap for females[216]. This highlights the importance of resourcing and delivering universal services at a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the degree of need. By planning for strategic scale growth to 2041 the Local Plan can support this ambition by securing infrastructure to address the needs of new development, including the delivery of new health facilities or financial contributions towards such facilities. This is in accordance with the Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy[217]. The Local Plan can also help to enable and support healthy lifestyles through the delivery of high-quality and well-designed development, which helps people to have resilience to cope with the challenges and changes through the course of their lives.

11.90 As shown in **Figure 11.1,** the built environment and environmental quality of an area is one of the key factors influencing the health and well-being of the area's inhabitants. Paragraph 96 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"[218].

11.91 The Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)[219] is a process through which local authorities and NHS organisations assess the current and future health, care and well-being needs of the local community to help inform decisions. It is a series of reports and data sets that provide summaries for five main headings:

215 Essex County Council (2022) High Level Essex JSNA Summary. data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2g4zr/2022-high-level-essex-jsna-summary
216 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2028. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028
217 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2028. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028
218 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy Framework
219 Essex County Council (2022) Essex's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Essex's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Essex Open Data

- life expectancy
- clinical care
- health behaviours
- socioeconomic
- physical environmental[220]

11.92 **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 the quality and length of life. Thus, working towards the JSNA objectives, the Council will require all developments to consider health impacts and demonstrate how proposals have incorporated appropriate aspects through a design and access statement. Development proposals of 50 dwellings or more, or proposals for other use classes of 1,000m^2 or more, will be required to provide a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) which is proportionate to the scale of development. Development proposals requiring a HIA will need to demonstrate they have taken account of the advice in the **Essex Design Guide**[221]. The Council will support proposals that consider the Sport England Active Design Principles[222], where applicable to proposals.

220 Essex County Council (2022) Essex's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Essex's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Essex Open Data
221 Essex County Council (2018) Essex Design Guide. www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/
222 Sport England, Active Design. www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design

Figure 11.1: Factors Affecting Health and Well-being[223]

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Winsconsin, Population Health Institute in US to rank countries by health status

223 UDC (2023) Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2028. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028

Core Policy 66 **Planning for Health and Well-being**

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 submit a design and access statement that demonstrates how the development contributes to shaping healthy communities and delivers high-quality sustainable places. Additionally:

i. all development proposals in Use Class C2 (Residential) and Sui Generis Hot Food Takeaways and development proposals of 100 dwellings or more, or 5,000m^2 floorspace or more, should undertake a full Health Impact Assessment in accordance with the Essex Design Guide HIA guidance
ii. development proposals of 50 to 99 dwellings or 1,000m^2 to 4,999m^2 floorspace should undertake a screening which assesses if a full Health Impact Assessment is required.

Health Impact Assessments should include, but are not limited to, demonstrating how the proposal contributes towards:

iii. addressing local health issues, outcomes, and needs, as detailed in the JSNA, Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
iv. addressing the projected health and wellbeing needs of an area, including addressing health inequalities and avoiding and mitigating any adverse health and sustainability impacts
v. design active street layouts and public realm, that are safe, secure and accessible by their design
vi. incorporate open spaces/ green spaces for play and recreation, sports and leisure that encourage walking and cycling
vii. enable good mental wellbeing by reducing social isolation and loneliness by encouraging the provision of social community infrastructure, including opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another
viii. 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
ix. provide diversity in the residential offer that improves accessibility, affordability and promotes inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods
x. make it easier for people to make healthier food choices by promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally sourced food by providing opportunities for food growing, for example by the inclusion of allotments
xi. the scope of the Health Impact Assessment is agreed with the Council's Development Management and Public Health team's prior to commencement of the assessment at the earliest opportunity
xii. the assessment is undertaken at an early stage of the development process and there is a clear demonstration that the assessment process has informed the overall design process, and
xiii. the assessment is undertaken in accordance with Essex Healthy Places Guidance and responds to the latest public health data and community insights gathered by the applicant's team.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

11.93 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.

11.94 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 wellbeing 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[224].

11.95 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.**

11.96 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 space for exercise and social interaction.

11.97 A 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, the existing community and the aging population. Moreover, the quality of existing facilities across the District need improvement, including improved accessibility in order to address health inequalities. Developers and landowners should work collaboratively with the Council and sporting governing bodies, including Sport England and the relevant

224 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 102 and 104. National Planning Policy Framework

Parish or Town Council in drawing up effective Section 106 agreements and community infrastructure levy agreements, where applicable, to ensure efficient delivery, including agreed maintenance and endowment of facilities.

11.98 The Local Plan is informed by three updated Leisure Studies (Open Space Study 2024[225]; Indoor Sports and Built Facilities Needs Assessment and Strategy 2024[226]; and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Winter Assessment Report 2024[227]). These documents highlight where any shortfalls exist in provision and inform how new development proposals should contribute to help maximise the effectiveness of any new provision.

11.99 In summary, the new evidence concluded that there is a varied level of access to open space, and sport and recreation facilities within the District and new development will require locally specific provision for open space and leisure facilities over the Plan period, as demand and supply changes. Any specific requirements for such facilities relating to the individual allocations included in this Plan are set out in **Appendices 2-4**.

11.100 On-site provision of open space and leisure facilities will be expected in all cases, in accordance with the minimum open space standards set out in **Appendix 17**. However, where on-site provision cannot be achieved or it is considered that the creation and/ or improvement of off-site facilities is more appropriate, a commuted sum may be accepted. This will usually involve improving local infrastructure (via a project identified within the Leisure Evidence Base). Increasing the capacity of existing infrastructure will ascertain the desired results from increases in demand generated from new development. In making this judgement, the Council will have regard to the overall size of the development proposals, location and whether the local infrastructure can be suitably enhanced.

11.101 Where on-site playing pitch provision is made, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites, traditionally provided by developers, are not considered long-term sustainable provision for relevant sports, and their development will be discouraged.

11.102 The Council use the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator to inform pitch requirements associated with development proposals. The Site Development Templates **(Appendices 2-4)** set out the indicative requirements for sports pitches that are needed for each of the allocations made by this Plan. The Council will use the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator to inform indoor sports facility requirements associated with development proposals.

225 Knight, Kavanagh & Page (2024) Open Space Update Report. Uttlesford_Open_Space_Update_Report_June_2024_Final.pdf
226 Knight, Kavanagh & Page (2024) Indoor & Built Facilities – Needs Assessment. www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/13309/UDC-Leisure-Facilities-Evidence-Base-Indoor-Needs-Assessment-Final-May-2024/pdf/UDC_-_Leisure_Facilities_Evidence_Base_-_Indoor_Needs_Assessment_-Final_May_2024.pdf?m=1723035498283
227 Knight, Kavanagh & Page (2024) Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy Winter Assessment Report. Uttlesford_PPOSS_-_Winter_Assessment_Report_Final_-_With_Summer_Appendix.pdf

Core Policy 67 **Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

The loss of any open space, sport and recreation provision, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

i. the latest UDC Open Space; Indoor and Built Facilities; and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, or other relevant information, clearly shows the provision and the function it performs is surplus to requirements or
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 or
iii. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

Development proposals on open space or at sporting facilities built or otherwise will only be permitted where the proposal:

iv. improves the quality of the open space or supporting infrastructure associated with a sporting facility and promote inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests
v. is demonstrably ancillary to the use of open space and sporting facility and its primary function, e.g., playing field/ sports pitch
vi. contributes to both the character and amenity of the area and is proportionate to the function and nature of the open space and sport; and
vii. enhances the environmental function of the open space and sports area.

Open Space in New Development
All proposals for major residential developments 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 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 latest UDC Open Space; Indoor and Built Facilities; and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Sport England's Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Calculators.

On-site and off-site provision
The Council will require open space to meet the minimum standards set out in **Appendix 17** and provided on-site wherever possible. Where proposals cannot provide for open space on-site, and it is considered that the creation and/or improvement of off-site facilities in the locality is appropriate, a financial contribution in lieu may be accepted.

11.103 Where more than one development is taking place on adjoining sites, the Council will expect developers to consider how the provision of sports and leisure facilities can be coordinated locally to maximum effect.

Management of Public Open Space

11.104 Where development proposals include new public open space, the Council expects the transfer of such land to be in accordance with the hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 67a.** This hierarchy provides for local communities, namely Town and Parish Councils, to have the opportunity to take ownership of new public open spaces, should this be desirable to them. The categories of public open space covered by this policy include:

- Parks and Amenity Greenspace (Category 1)
- Natural Accessible Greenspace (Category 2)
- Children and Young People's Equipped Play Facilities (Category 3), and
- Allotments and Community Gardens (Category 4)

11.105 Where the Town or Parish Council decline the transfer of such land, Uttlesford District Council (UDC) will then review whether it has the capability to accept the transfer and effectively maintain the land. Where any of the categories listed above cannot be managed by the Town/Parish Council or UDC and are to be retained by the developers or transferred to a management company, the quality of management and maintenance must be maintained at a high standard. UDC will ensure costs to residents, where they apply, remain reasonable.

11.106 A maintenance and management strategy should be provided as part of the planning application to clarify the proposed management of any public open space and if any transfer of maintenance will be undertaken and to whom. This highlights the importance of developers engaging early with the relevant Parish or Town Council and with UDC on planned proposals.

11.107 Some types of open space may require maintenance to be carried out by more than one body to be managed appropriately. For example, where sustainable drainage forms part of an open space area, these should be managed by the appropriate management company. Engagement with Essex County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority) will be required to determine their role. Furthermore, changes to DEFRA policy and legislation have the potential to impact arrangements and should be monitored.

11.108 Where certain site infrastructure is not subject to transfer, along with any associated Public Open Space, including visitor parking areas, communal driveways, communal bin stores, incidental open space, green infrastructure, footpaths, street trees not in the adoptable highway, and landscape buffers, these will normally be managed by a

Management Company, due to the impractical nature of splitting some open space typologies between different organisations, such as when it adds undue cost to all parties and prejudices the maintenance of the space. It is expected that any proposal to split management responsibilities is clearly set out in a plan to be included in the maintenance and management strategy, to enable UDC to assess its appropriateness and effectiveness.

11.109 A commuted sum for the management and maintenance is payable where the land is to be transferred to a Parish or Town Council or to UDC. This should total 30-years' provision of management and maintenance of public open space. A 30-year period is used as this is already the established period for maintenance payments in connection with securing Biodiversity Net Gain. The rates agreed will be index linked from the date of the permission to the date the land is transferred.

11.110 The level of a Commuted Sum for Management and Maintenance can be discussed any time after public open space specification and the Management and maintenance scheme are agreed. The commuted sum will be calculated based on an average of three quotes for 30-years' management and maintenance. These quotes should be prepared by suitably qualified independent professionals (Landscape Institute, Chartered Institute of Horticulture or grounds maintenance), to be agreed between the developer and the District Council.

Core Policy 67a **Management of Public Open Space**

The Council's preferred hierarchy of management bodies for public open space following development is for this to be handed to the relevant Parish or Town Council, then Uttlesford District Council, and if neither of these bodies accept the transfer, then management by the developer or a private management company will be acceptable.

A maintenance and management strategy should be provided as part of the planning application to clarify the proposed management of any public open space and if any transfer of maintenance will be undertaken and to whom.

Where the transfer of land to either the Town/Parish Council or UDC is agreed, the requirement of a commuted payment, equal to 30-years' management from the developer, will apply.

Community Uses

11.111 The NPPF defines community facilities as: local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship[228]. Other community uses include health care facilities, emergency services, community centres, education provision and library services. **Core Policy 67** will apply to open space and sports venues and C**ore Policy 68** will apply to all other community uses identified above.

11.112 **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 Plan[229] and other relevant information from service providers. The Council will work with agencies including NHS commissioning organisations and health care providers, the emergency services, education providers (schools, colleges and universities), community and community and voluntary sector organisations, including charities, 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 also be an important material consideration in any decision making. Where healthcare facilities are declared surplus or identified as part of an Estates Strategy or Service Transformation Plan where investment is needed towards modern, fit for purpose infrastructure and facilities, there will be no requirement to retain any part of the site in an alternative community use.

11.113 Where a community use or facility is considered to be no longer viable and is proposed to be removed or demolished, evidence will be required to demonstrate that such facilities are surplus to requirements. The evidence will be determined on a case-by-case basis through the development management process and could take the form of some or all of the following:

- a submission of trading accounts or as appropriate for a community-based enterprise such as the previous three years of audited accounts
- demonstration that efforts have been made to secure grants or other funding, or that engagement has taken place to secure the active involvement of other organisations with an interest in community service provision, and
- demonstration that opportunities to accommodate other uses which may increase viability have been explored.

228 MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 88. National Planning Policy Framework
229 LUC (2024) Uttlesford Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Uttlesford_Infrastructure_Delivery_Plan_for_Regulation_19_Consultation.pdf

Core Policy 68 **Community Uses**

New, Expansion of or Improvement to Community Uses
New, expansion of or improvement to community facilities will be supported, such as local shops, meeting places, cultural buildings, public houses, places of worship, health and care facilities, community centres, education provision and libraries, provided that they:

i. serve an identified need, informed by the IDP or other relevant information
ii. are located as close as possible to the community that they serve
iii. are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling
iv. are compatible with nearby uses and the character and appearance of the neighbourhood to encourage a vibrant and active centre, and
v. are located and designed to enable shared use with other services/facilities.

Protection of Existing Community Uses
The demolition, redevelopment, or change of use of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:

vi. an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows that the facility is surplus to requirements or is no longer viable. This should be demonstrated with clear evidence that:
    a) the existing use is no longer commercially or economically viable or could not be made commercially or economically viable, or
    b) there is alternative local provision that is accessible to the local community by public transport, walking or cycling; and in either case, and
    c) the premises are no longer required to meet the needs of the local community.

vii. the loss resulting from the proposed demolition, 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.

The Council will encourage communities to nominate Assets of Community Value and will take into account the listing of 'Assets of Community Value' as a material planning consideration.

Demand from New Residential Development
To accommodate the demand generated from new residential development, contributions toward the provision of new community uses will be sought in accordance with C**ore Policy 5: Providing Support Infrastructure and Services.** When new on-site provision is made, appropriate mechanisms must be put in place to ensure its satisfactory endowment, maintenance and management.

New Cemeteries and Burial Space

11.114 There is no strategic need for further burial grounds within Uttlesford identified within the evidence for the Local Plan[230]. However, the provision of burial space in Uttlesford is the responsibility of Town and Parish Councils and 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.

11.115 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 40: Biodiversity and Nature Recovery.**

11.116 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 in accordance with the Environment Agency's guidance on groundwater risk assessments[231], and will be required to demonstrate how it has met the criteria of policies within **Chapter 9 Climate, Environment, Transport.** Where necessary, developers may require an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016[232]. It is recommended to contact the Environment Agency at an early stage to discuss permitting requirements

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 Plan, where a need has been identified
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.

230 LUC (2024) Uttlesford Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Uttlesford_Infrastructure_Delivery_Plan_for_Regulation_19_Consultation.pdf and LUC (2023) Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
231 Environment Agency (2023) Cemeteries and burials: groundwater risk assessments Guidance. www.gov.uk/guidance/cemeteries-and-burials-groundwater-risk-assessments
232 The Environment Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/1154/contents

Communications Infrastructure

11.117 Telecommunications infrastructure includes development proposals related to the supply and management of fixed line broadband and mobile phone services and telecommunications infrastructure often constitutes development in its own right.

11.118 Given the critical importance of internet access to residents across the District, 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 Gigabit broadband connectivity unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not viable.

11.119 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.

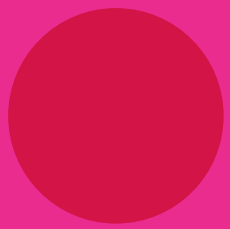
Core Policy 70 **Communications Infrastructure**

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how Gigabit broadband infrastructure, and other communications infrastructure, will be provided in time for first 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 41: Landscape Character, Core Policy 62: Listed Buildings** and **Core Policy 63: Conservation Areas.**

Chapter 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 (2023) requires the Council to demonstrate a 5-year land supply at the point of Plan submission and Examination, but otherwise does not require a rolling five-year housing supply to be demonstrated for the first five years following plan adoption, except where triggered by **Core Policy 2a: Local Plan Review**. Beyond this five-year period, it would be necessary for the Council to resume monitoring a five-year supply of housing annually. 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 its Authority Monitoring Report to show the progress of housing delivery and the broader implementation of the Local Plan. A Housing Trajectory (updated to April 2025) is also shown by **Appendix 20.**

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 18,** 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 to 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 18.**

The Authority Monitoring Report will be produced on 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 one 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.

Contact information
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UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN

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