

Developing Uttlesford

– your district, your choice



Uttlesford District Council has to find sites for 4,000 new homes in the district. This leaflet invites you to take part in our latest consultation on this important subject. It sets out the key areas we are consulting on and explains how to find out more information. Please take a few minutes to read this information carefully.

Housing Targets

In order to meet government housing targets, Uttlesford District Council will have to make some very difficult decisions. Although locations for thousands of new homes have already been established, more sites still need to be found.

Some 10,150 new homes must be provided in Uttlesford between 2001 and 2026. More than half currently have planning permission or will be on already identified sites. There remain about 4,000 homes which must be built somewhere in the district. Because of the rural nature of this district, some houses will have to be built on green fields.

Core Strategy

The sites for these houses will be identified in broad terms in a council plan called the Core Strategy.

This plan also covers things like the impact of Stansted Airport, where sites for employment should be and how the environment can be protected.

Our plan needs to make sure that housing needs are met within the district, new jobs are provided in the right places so people don't always have to drive to work, and the things which people think are important in Uttlesford such as the countryside and wildlife are protected.

Studies

The council has carried out a number of studies to help it make these decisions. They tell us how much extra land for employment and shopping we are likely to need and how much affordable housing we will need to provide.

We have also done studies to show what the likely impact of additional development will be on the historic character of the main towns and villages, the water supply, sewage disposal and flood risk.

The transport and other impacts of all the various development options have also been assessed. All these studies are available on the council's website.

The council has joined with other councils in Essex to carry out a joint assessment of gypsy and traveller needs within the county.

Consultation

At the end of 2007, Uttlesford District Council consulted residents on the Core Strategy. Since then, the council has been looking at all the comments and carrying out more study work to try and find the best way of moving the new plan forward.

Now, we need to consult you again. This is your chance to look at the extra work which has been done and to comment on it.

So please read the information contained in this leaflet carefully. You can respond using the enclosed form or fill it in online. You may also want to read the detailed documents and comment further on these. Information about how to do this is on page 4.

You may already have commented on the East of England Plan, which sets out future housing numbers right across the eastern region up to 2031, as it was the subject of consultation towards the end of last year. This council plan is about what happens to your towns and villages in Uttlesford so it is vital you respond to this consultation as well.

Consultation runs from **Monday, 15 February 2010 to Friday, 9 April 2010.**

Where we are now

The previous consultation carried out in November 2007 detailed four options as to where the 4,000 homes could be developed:

- Option 1 – Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet
- Option 2 – Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley, Newport, Elsenham, Thaxted and Great Chesterford
- Option 3 – Similar to Option 2 but with less development in Takeley and more development at Elsenham
- Option 4 – A new settlement at Elsenham (3,000 homes) with limited development in other towns and villages (see Housing section)

Since that consultation, developers have suggested alternative locations for a new settlement. They are:

- Land north-east of Great Chesterford
- Land west, north and south of Little Dunmow (known as Chelmer Mead)
- Land between Stansted Airport and Great Dunmow (known as Easton Park)
- Land east of Stebbing (known as Boxted Wood)
- Land at Saling Airfield (known as Andrewsfield)

(Parts of these last two locations are in Braintree district.)

Option 4 is the council's preferred option. Further extensive technical and comparative work has been carried out on which comment is now invited. A document called the Comparative Sustainability Assessment looks at the Elsenham proposal and draws on various technical studies, the questions and concerns of residents, information from service providers such as the education, health and water authorities and the views of organisations including English Heritage and Natural England.

The document also compares Option 4 with the other three options, the alternative sites put forward by developers and the potential to spread development across the whole district.

We would like to hear your views on the information contained in the Comparative Sustainability Assessment, whether you agree with the Elsenham proposal or whether you think there is a better option, and why. See page 4 of this leaflet.

Housing

As explained on page 1, our plan needs to identify sites for 4,000 new homes to be built in the district by 2026.

In total, some 10,150 new homes must be built but about 6,000 of these will be on sites which already have planning permission or are identified in the current local plan. There are also sites which are currently used for other uses which could be used to provide houses.

Taking all these into account, we think that new sites will have to be found for about 4,000 homes. In the last consultation, we said our preferred option was for a new 3,000-home settlement to the north-east of Elsenham, but did not explain how sites for the remaining 1,000 homes would be found.

The results of new studies since then, which looked at issues including environmental, social and economic impacts, show that there are issues with the Elsenham site, particularly in relation to highways and water treatment. But they also show problems in relation to other options as well. The Elsenham proposal remains our preferred option.

Various options for the remaining 1,000 homes have been tested and we are suggesting that they should be split as follows:

- 500 homes at Great Dunmow on sites on the edge of the town. Possible sites are mainly on the southern and western edges of Great Dunmow
- 250 homes in Saffron Walden on the eastern edge of the town
- 30 homes at Great Chesterford
- 50 homes at Newport
- 20 homes at Stansted Mountfitchet
- 30 homes at Takeley
- 30 homes at Thaxted

This would leave 90 homes to be provided in the smaller villages. If we only allowed development in villages which have a primary school, (to minimise car use) this would average out at five new homes in each village. Information we have already collected suggests that for most villages this scale of development would be acceptable.

Some of the sites which have been suggested are currently only allowed to be used for employment. Some of them are in use but there are others which have been identified for employment for a long time but where nothing has been built. To allow these sites to be used for housing instead would require a change of policy. Other employment sites would have to be found. Alternatively, the sites could be developed with a mix of housing and employment such as offices.

Stansted Airport

The council needs to consider which Stansted Airport scenario forms the best basis on which to plan other development. The scenarios are explained in more detail in the main consultation document (details of how to read a copy of this document are on page 4).

They are:

- Scenario 1 – No growth – passenger numbers around 20 million a year.
- Scenario 2 – Implementation of the planning permission known as G1 (which has already been granted) for an increase in passenger numbers to 35 million a year.
- Scenario 3 – Implementation of a current planning application, known as G2 (which has not yet been granted planning permission) with passenger numbers rising to 68 million passengers a year. This option would need additional airport land and a new runway.

The council has tested the three scenarios to see what the social, environmental and economic impacts might be. This assessment is on the council's website. It shows that Scenario 1 would be best, followed by Scenario 2. Scenario 3 performs badly mainly because of the amount of land needed to build a second runway along with all the supporting development it would require, and also because of the noise that would result from the extra aircraft using a second runway.

Although Scenario 1 is the best, we have to have a sound plan based on the most likely outcome. Planning permission has already been given by the government for 35 million passengers per year and our new plan cannot prevent this development. The latest forecasts for demand suggest that the G1 planning permission will be implemented so the council is therefore suggesting that Scenario 2 forms the most realistic basis for the new plan. Scenario 1 is included because it reflects the current level of demand.

Gypsies and Travellers

The council has to meet the housing needs of all people who live in the district. This includes gypsies and travellers. The council has to plan for 46 extra pitches by 2021. A pitch is the space required to accommodate one household and their caravan/s. The regional average for the number of caravans per pitch is 1.7 so as an example a site which has 15 pitches could potentially accommodate around 26 caravans

and 72 people. A study has been carried out in Essex of needs within the county. Consultation with gypsy and traveller groups suggests that they would prefer to see sites of fewer than 20 pitches which are in rural areas, close to amenities but not too close to towns.

We are suggesting that the following issues need to be taken into account when looking for sites:

- Sites need to be close to a settlement which has local

Employment

In the previous consultation we suggested an approach which would allow firms to expand onto greenfield sites if certain conditions were met. This proposal attracted some objections. New planning guidance says we should not be looking at greenfield sites. Therefore we need to look at alternatives. One approach would be to allocate suitable sites for businesses to set up or grow. This would give greater certainty about where business development might take place, but comes with a risk that the identified sites might not be used if they do not meet businesses' needs.

The other option is to accept that while it is important to support small and medium-sized firms to locate to or grow in Uttlesford, it might not be possible to meet all needs because of the district's rural nature. Therefore some expanding firms might leave the district and others might not locate here. There has already been some evidence of this happening in Uttlesford.

Green Belt

In the previous consultation for the new plan we suggested that there might be some possibility of development on the edge of villages within the greenbelt. The studies that have now been done show that there are in fact enough housing sites available outside the green belt, so we are suggesting that the greenbelt boundaries should stay as they are now.

services, eg schools, shops

- Visual impact and character of the area
- If the site is to be used for business, the impact on nearby residential properties in terms of things such as noise and dust
- Safe and convenient access to the road network as well as provision for parking, turning and servicing on site and safe access for occupants and visitors
- Location on public transport route

Now Have Your Say

On the previous three pages we have set out why we are carrying out this consultation and explained the key areas on which we are consulting.

More information on all the topics covered can be found in two key documents - the Core Strategy and Comparative Sustainability Assessment.

You may wish to read these documents before responding to the consultation.

You can find them by logging on to www.uttlesford.gov.uk and following the link from the homepage.

If you want to look at paper copies of the documents, they are available from Uttlesford District Council's London Road offices in Saffron Walden, the Community Information Centre in Thaxted and our customer service desk at Great Dunmow Library.

They are also available to view, but not take away, from the libraries in Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted. Alternatively, copies are held by parish councils across the district.

Three Ways to Comment:



1 You can use the response form delivered with this leaflet, which sets out the main questions we would like your answers to. A reply paid envelope is also supplied so you do not have to use a stamp.



2 You can fill in a version of the reply form online – follow the link from the homepage at www.uttlesford.gov.uk



3 You can write us a letter. Please make sure you make it clear which parts of the consultation you are commenting on and what changes you would like to see.

Post your letter to:
**Planning Policy Team,
Uttlesford District Council,
London Road, Saffron Walden,
Essex, CB11 4ER.**

Commenting in Further Detail

You may wish to comment in greater detail on the Core Strategy. You can do that either online or on paper.



Our online planning consultation system, called Limehouse, allows you to go through the Core Strategy page by page, making notes against its contents as you go.

You need to register to use it and full details can be found on www.uttlesford.gov.uk, again following the link from the homepage.



You are alternatively welcome to write to us giving your views on the detailed content of the Core Strategy. Please use the address in the left-hand column.

**WHICHEVER METHOD YOU CHOOSE FOR YOUR
RESPONSE, IT MUST BE WITH US BY
FRIDAY, 9 APRIL, 2010.**

For further information on any aspect of this consultation, please contact the Planning Policy Team on **01799 510461** or **01245 510454**.

If you require this leaflet in any other format or language, please call **01799 510510**.