

First consultation (Issues and Options): Character and Heritage



Describe what you like about the character and heritage of Uttlesford, and how you would like to see this protected and enhanced whilst providing new sustainable communities?

The following information should be used to inform how you answer the above question on the theme of Character and Heritage:

Background

The character and heritage of a place is affected by various factors including land use, the general arrangement of streets and spaces, plot design through to architecture, landscape design and setting, highway design, environmental conditions and the local community.

Uttlesford has a distinctly rural character, with walkable historic market towns and villages nestled within an attractive and accessible landscape of gently rolling hills, farmland, woodland and hedgerow. It benefits from numerous historic assets including around 3,700 listed buildings, 39 designated Conservation Areas, 7 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, 73 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a number of archaeological sites. The sensitive landscape setting also benefits from small-scale protections including Ancient Woodland, Wildlife Sites, designated Open Space and Tree Preservation Orders. There is also an area of metropolitan Green Belt in the south of the district. In the last few decades, growth has largely focused on providing housing estates, employment sites and retail as extensions to existing settlements, with Flich Green the only entirely new major settlement.

The new local plan provides the opportunity to plan for the type of growth which best protects and enhances the districts character and heritage. This will need to consider where and how new development such as new homes, employment, retail and leisure is provided, as well as supporting infrastructure such as open space, roads and other public utilities.



Car dominance – Uttlesford’s historic towns and villages were once primarily focused on place and walkability. Following the 2nd world war, new development has been predominantly designed around the car. This has positively revolutionized travel and for many the car is now perceived as essential. However, it has had a significantly detrimental impact on place-making, with the huge land requirements of

roads and parking often leading to urban sprawl, cluttered and disjointed public and private realms, reduced social life and children’s play, noise and air pollution, and hindering the safety, speed and enjoyment of walking and cycling.

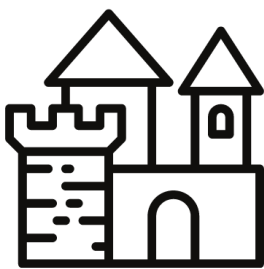
How do you think we should address the often competing demands of travel and place?



Density v greenery – Higher density development, such as found in many of Uttlesford’s historic settlement cores, can help promote interesting townscape qualities, a mix of complementary uses, walkability, close-knit social communities and compact development footprints requiring less land for development, though from the post war period especially, can be associated with poor living conditions, social ills and loss of

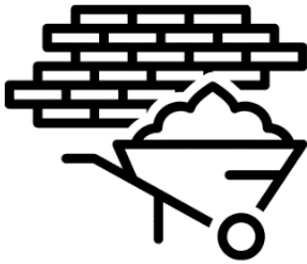
human-scale. Lower density development allows for more greenery, private amenity, sense of space and quiet living, though can be associated with bland, sprawling, car-dominated suburbia.

What should be Uttlesford’s future density strategy and why?



Heritage – Uttlesford’s heritage is rich and wide ranging, covering conservation areas, historic buildings, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, historic landscapes and archaeological remains.

How do you think we should protect and enhance the setting of heritage assets balancing the sometimes competing need for locating new development in the most sustainable locations – should this be through integration and complementary design, or buffers?



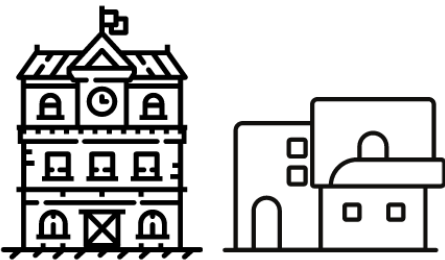
Materials – Traditional use of local materials in Uttlesford includes local clay brick and tile, lime render and natural timber, contributing to local distinctiveness. New development increasingly utilizes foreign and artificial materials, which can offer greater affordability / environmental performance / durability.

What do you think should be the Council's future priorities when guiding developers in their use of materials?



Standardisation – Uttlesford's remaining pre-industrial development is characterized by self-build development and varied street patterns, whereas new development is often standardized based on economies of scale, quality standards/guidance and modern methods of construction.

How can the Council and developers help deliver less standardised development?



Style – The District benefits from various historic architectural styles - invariably pre-18th century timber-framed building settlement cores, Georgian / Victorian / Edwardian inner settlement development, and grading out through the garden city and modernist / radburn influences of the mid-20th century. In more recent times, development

has tended to be dominated by suburban estates of loosely traditionally styled housing. A notable exception is the award winning The Avenue scheme in Saffron Walden which provides a distinctly contemporary twist on the local vernacular.

What style of development do you want to see built in the future (e.g. traditional and/or contemporary), and which new schemes do you like and dislike?

Now let us know what you think. Listening to what you value and want will help us plan for growth and change.