Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 3 Climate Change

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 9 December and the theme was then open for comment.

Between 9 December and 23 April 2021, 82 people and organisations responded to the theme.

What we have been told so far

The following is a summary of people's views on the actions needed to forestall the impacts of climate change.

To read all the representations in full please go to the Consultation Portal.

What you have told us

UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN
Towards Net Zero Carbon

Sustainable Construction Methods
- Improve sustainability of new builds
- Zero carbon housing
- Reports demonstrating CO_2 use during construction phase of a development

Biodiversity
- Destruction of habitats
- Loss of diverse range of wildlife species locally
- Loss of established pathways
- Increase requirement for planting schemes within development

Loss of agricultural land
- Retain agricultural land to increase food security domestically
- Reduce occurrence of placing green infrastructure projects on productive agricultural land

Parks and open spaces
- Increase available public open spaces and parks
- Increase planting in public parks

Climate Change

Will the actions we take today be enough to forestall the impacts of climate change?

Improved connectivity
- Improve transport connections between villages and rural areas

Flood risk
- Minimise building upon floodplains
- Improve drainage systems within the district

Harm to landscape
- The rural environment is highly valued
- Concerns regarding the implementation of green infrastructure at the cost of compromised landscape views from footpaths and pedestrian paths
- Concerns regarding the industrialisation of the location
- The views and appearance of the location are valued

Improve sustainable transport methods
- Reduce reliance on private vehicular use
- Greater provision of green transport infrastructure
- Increase cycle and walking routes

Education

Issues

- Lack of public awareness surrounding individual responsibilities
- Lack of education of sustainable ways of living

Options

- An education programme to educate the general public on individual responsibility to reduce carbon emissions
- Create a department within the local authority to oversee actions and enforcement of carbon reduction, sequestration strategies and reduction initiatives
- Build out an exemplar carbon sequestering affordable housing scheme, for use to demonstrate and for use as an education tool for developments
- Support training and employment opportunities within energy & natural systems e.g. growing hemp, woodwork, wool for insulation etc.
- Signify in meaningful ways how individual responses to climate change can provide adjust its effects
- Encourage education amongst builders regarding climate change and carbon emissions irrespective of skill level
- Inclusion of Climate Change as part of the school curriculum and research
- Teach cycle safety courses within school
- Encourage sustainable lifestyles through reducing the number of commuters and encouraging employers to employ closer to the office.
- Reduce plastic use.
- Crishall Parish Council: Implement local recycling facilities, which enable reports to be generated on how much recycled material is collected to report to the local community.

Sustainable Construction Methods

Issues

- Development at construction phase is not scrutinised for good practice with regards to lowering carbon emissions
- Sustainable materials are currently not conditioned for use within newly built housing schemes.
- Sustainable housing is not currently given the same weight/importance as providing affordable housing.

Options

- Construct buildings with lower energy requirements, high energy efficiency/thermal insulation, noise insulation, natural forms of ventilation, cooling etc to reduce reliance on air conditioning units.
- Sustainable construction should not be at the cost of delivering affordable housing
- A higher percentage of recycled materials should be used within construction
- Energy efficiency standards for new homes should be prioritised through prohibiting materials and methods which are not carbon neutral
- Build low carbon social housing

- Building Regulations should be enhanced to include more detailed requirements for achieving higher energy efficiency standards and for the consideration of design and materials to be used
- A full audit at completion of the building to check and sign-off that the construction fully complies with the specification
- Developers should provide a document detailing energy consumption for new builds and the CO2 produced during construction
- Costs of enhancements should be shared amongst landowners, developers, buyers and possible subsidies
- Minimise waste during construction
- Imposing regulations to ensure all new buildings are of the highest standards of energy efficiency.
- Ensure planting systems are considered within new build developments, and encourage the use of vertical planning such as living walls, green roods and the planting of suitable trees and bushes
- Encourage the use of sustainable materials for insulation such as hemp
- Encourage developers to design and build using recycled and renewable materials where possible, for example using composite boards and cladding raher than plastic
- Encourage purchase of materials from local suppliers to reduce miles and therefore the carbon footprint of each development.
- Berden Parish Council: CO2 produced by the construction of the new buildings should be compensated for by modification/reduced CIL or other financial obligations.
- Pelican Developments: New developments across the district should be delivered using carbon-efficient building techniques both for individual buildings and at neighbourhood scale.

Sustainable Design

Issues

- Housing built is not energy efficient
- Housing developments do not encourage sustainable energy generation or consumption

Options

- Residential, commercial buildings, public buildings and car parks should include solar panels wherever possible
- Greater discussions during design stage regarding biodiversity, landscape and carbon (climate change) mitigation strategies
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- Mitigation of effects of development on climate change should be discussed at design phase
- Increase viability of rainwater harvesting within new build development sites
- Energy recycling should feature more prominently within the design stage of buildings, particularly office and commercial buildings
- Monitor energy use of housing development
- Designs of new builds should incorporate as much natural light as possible
- Prioritise developments which facilitate working from home

- Require carbon free energy generation installations on all new developments such as solar and geothermal generators and requiring charging points for electric vehicles onsite

Site Allocations

Issues:

- Development in sites of sparse development with low connectivity encourage private car use
- Concerns regarding urban sprawl
- Loss of valuable habitat space
- Newport Parish Council: The Cam's chalk aquifers is an unsuitable site as it has inadequate water to support more housing

Options:

- Location of proposed sites for housing to be built should connect to or expand existing settlements
- Reluctance to permit development which will result in the loss of woods, forests and habitat land which act as carbon sinks, contribute to offset greenhouse emissions
- Prevent development outside of existing towns and villages
- Resist development which are for 2+ dwellings which rely upon vehicular travel
- Build more local, denser communities with local facilities rather than sprawling out of town development
- Encourage walkable villages
- Resist large scale housing developments within rural villages with limited travel options/sustainable transport infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions
- Development should be strategically placed along rail corridors and close to stations, bus services and local amenities
- No development in close proximity to water courses, water table level, foul and surface water drainage
- Create new towns, containing carbon neutral affordable homes.
- An energy strategy for each local community, which suggests suitable locations and sites for local solar and wind options.
- Pelican Developments: Site allocations should be based on their capacity to positively effect climate change and facilitate 15-minute neighbourhoods.
- Gladman: Using the viability assessment prior to implementing any measures through local plan policy will ensure schemes remain viable in perceived sustainable locations
- Pigeon (Turley): a comprehensive sustainability strategy should inform the viability of sites proposed for development.
- Newport Parish Council: Housing should be built where water resources exist

Harm to Views and Landscapes

Issues:

- Destruction of landscapes

- Concerns regarding Cutlers Green Solar Farm proposal and its impact to the rural landscape
- Concerns the historic landscape and enjoyment of the landscape of Uttlesford will be impacted upon by the inclusion of sustainable energy infrastructure such as wind farms and solar farms creating an industrialised landscape
- Increased industrialisation of Uttlesford landscape

Options:

- Encourage green infrastructure projects on sites that are unproductive and of low value with regards to landscapes and views

<u>Sustainable Transport</u>

Issues:

- Village and country lanes are currently experiencing traffic pollution and a volume of traffic for which they are unsuited.
- There is currently limited public transport infrastructure across the district for cycling and walking
- Great Canfield Parish Council: Great Canfield is not considered a sustainable location with limited access to essential amenities and modes of sustainable transport.
- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service: As a number of UDC residents commute into Greater Cambridge, travel by sustainable transport methods should be encouraged.

Options

- A North exit straight onto the M11 from the A120 instead up directing traffic towards the Birchanger roundabout to reduce congestion
- Carbon footprint of housing should be calculated to include travel required to work and facilities.
- Encourage active travel connections (foot and cycle) and the provision of green public transport methods such as electric trains
- Increased connectivity of footpaths and cycleways between villages
- Provide a network of smaller scale public transport methods such as minibuses
- Buildings should be permitted where there are methods of transport that reduce the reliance upon vehicles, e.g. within walking/cycling distance to railway line
- Invest in electrical charging points across the district; especially in towns where off street parking is limited
- Provide a reliable bus service
- Implement green transport systems within new large-scale development sites
- Increasing cycle infrastructure may not reduce unsustainable transport use as the climate and cold weather prohibits cycling
- Limit available parking on streets to discourage multicar ownership
- Cross working and sharing of ideas across authorities should be heightened to promote greater integration of transport infrastructures such as roads, cycling paths, pedestrian routes and the pedestrianisation of areas
- Developers should provide greater links with larger scale developments and main towns
- Increase rail connectivity between villages to reduce reliance on vehicular use

- Provide free parking within housing sites on the outskirts of larger towns, as well as safe storage units for cycles to reduce traffic within main towns such as Saffron Walden
- Create new garden communities which contain necessary facilities and are within walking distance to larger settlements that benefit from reliable transport systems to major areas
- Provide car parking areas with permeable surfaces.
- Regular and direct bus routes between Dunmow and Bishop's Stortford may reduce private car use.
- Encouraging active travel and horse riding and expanding upon this as a mode of transport within he local plan; providing a connected network for hose riders, and prohibiting barriers which prevent all users being able to use public routes. (The British Horse Society)
- Provide electric charging points for electric vehicles around the district.
- Encourage Homeworking to reduce travel needs.
- Introduce air quality zones.
- Encourage use of electric vehicles through offering free parking for them.
- The Salings Parish Council: Resist development not well positioned to railways/train stations.
- Thaxted Parish Council: Introduce a speed limit reduction to 10 mph across the district.
- Thaxted Parish Council: Uttlesford should change its own fleet of vehicles to electric or hydrogen.
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<u>Sustainable Energy</u>

Issues

- Concerns regarding the sustainability of the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport and energy consumption
- Reduce number of flights
- Dumping of aviation fuel
- Current reliance on petrochemicals

Options

- Increase use of natural & local products, including water recycling.
- Provide greater grants that are more widely available to allow existing housing stock to be retrofitted with more energy efficient and sustainable methods of insulation energy generation
- Encourage commercial buildings to use sustainable forms of energy generation
- Solar electricity should be a preferred method for heating and to provide heated water
- Concerns regarding the destruction of environment through the implementation of solar farms on green field.
- Solar panels should not be positioned on steep hillsides and should be screened with hedge
- Existing gas boilers should be replaced by heat pumps or hydrogen systems
- All public buildings should have solar panels. Small businesses & retail should be encouraged to install them

- The use of solar panels should be encouraged on new developments, but large-scale plants should be restricted to 'brown field' sites, sites of limited agricultural value.
- Offshore wind turbines should be favoured to reduce impact to landscape.
- Reduce night flights and dumping of aviation fuel.
- Encourage passive solar gain, encouraging the use of reflective film on windows, reducing energy use in older buildings.
- Minimise the use of Heating, cooling and Air Source and ground heat pumps,
- Recycling of grey water should be a mandatory requirement for all new build developments.

  Berden Parish Council: Individual buildings should have design measures of water harvesting, solar shading etc.
- SERGO: New buildings should be complaint with the BREEAM 'very good' standards, wherein where the roof design allows, PVs for the generation of renewable energy will be installed.
- Baker and Metson Ltd: Implement a fabric first approach to reduce waste, improve insulation and achieve high levels of air tightness
- Baker and Metson Ltd: reduce the potential for a heat island effect occurring through making homes more energy efficient.

Flood Risk Mitigation

Issues:

- Building upon flood plains will reduce their viability as a flood defence mechanism.
- UK climate projections suggest we'll get less rainfall in the summer yet experience more intense rainfall events which increase the risk of flooding within the public sewerage network.
- The topography of the countryside and Stansted, holds a greater risk of flooding in the lower parts of the Village.
- Great Canfield Parish Council: The river Roding runs through the parish and has experienced more flooding incidents in recent years then previously. A potential reason for this is the increase of housing developments to the north of Canfield, which has resulted in more water run-off entering the river and across the fields, which has caused farmers to lose crops as a result.

Option:

- Flood plains should not be built upon to ensure they are viable for their intended use.
- New developments should be designed with surfaces which allow water ingress to minimise the potential impacts of high levels of surface run-off areas and localised flooding.
- Restrict development into the valleys increasing the threat of surface water run-off.
- SERGO: Locate new developments in areas which are not at risk of flood
- Great Canfield Parish Council: The Flitch Way should be protected from further development to reduce impact to countryside views, and to continue its use as a recreational space

Light Pollution

Issues:

- External lighting, used where not necessary

Options:

- Use of external lighting, where not essential, should be removed
- Increased focus on external light use within development schemes

Public & Green Space provisions

Issue:

- Pandemic has increased use of open spaces, therefore a greater level of open and green spaces throughout the district should be strategised

Options:

- Increased planting within public open spaces to increase biodiversity rather than mown lawns etc.
- Link hedgerows and increase movement corridors within open spaces to provide greater mobility for wildlife.
- Innovative and workable green, blue and 'edible' infrastructure

Listed Buildings

Issues:

- High density of listed buildings within district which are restricted from increasing the energy efficiency of their home

Options:

- Listed building consent needs to be relaxed to enable better insulation & green energy installation
- Green infrastructure projects may damage/harm the settings of listed buildings

Landscaping Schemes

Issues:

- Destruction of landscapes will contribute to global warming

Options:

- Larger developments should provide fully detailed and enforceable sets of conditions to incorporate landscaping, hedgerows, trees and wild areas within their schemes

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Issues:

- Increased levels of flooding
- Flooding events in recent history, have blocked roads in Clavering, Wicken, Bonhunt and Newport.
- Increased levels of rainfall have led to higher rates of flooding within the area
- Climate Change increases the risk of extreme weather events, posing a serious threat to the water sector (Anglican Water Services Ltd)

Options

- The implementation of drainage systems across the district

Use of Brownfield Sites

Issue

- Use of high grade, productive land for green infrastructure projects

Options

- Larger scale developments should be sought within areas of 'brownfield' land or on land with low agricultural / landscape value
- Brownfield sites, Grade 3 land and disused airfields should be used for solar farming rather than agricultural land
- Berden Parish Council: Viable brownfield sites should be supported financially to reduce the cost of building low energy consuming housing.
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Biodiversity

Issues:

- Concerns regarding destruction of wildlife habitats
- Loss of established pathways
- Potential introduction of new hazards to wildlife

Options

- Increase solar farms within the district as they increase biodiversity, encourage wildflowers and pollinators to improve populations of insects and wildlife
- The planting of trees, plants and hedging should be required within new developments
- Prohibit the removal of veteran trees which sequester more carbon than younger trees
- Increase conifers within settlements which offer overwintering birds and insects habitat space
- Increased planting schemes which encourage local wildlife populations

Agricultural Land

Issues:

- Concerns regarding loss of arable farm land
- Green infrastructure projects may result in the loss of productive farmland
- The solar farm site on the outskirts of Berden will remove the versatile agricultural land, trees and woodlands that currently occupy the land.

Options:

- Retain agricultural land and reduce the use of these sites for renewable energy sites, such as solar farms
- Retention of agricultural land, secures the viability of UK produce following Brexit and COVID-19 and provide food security

- Seek financial compensations from agricultural landowners who are able to build or sell land for development and thus increase carbon emissions.
- Work with farmers to reduce chemical input and increase biodiversity & soil protection
- Identify sites which may suitable for solar energy generation
- Assess the potential of solar energy generation stations upon the roofs of commercial buildings and car parks.
- Subsidised covered areas for local farmer’s markets should be provided to allow local produce to be sold locally