

Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 5 Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles

May 2021

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 27 January and the theme was then open for comment.

Comments received up to the close of consultation on 21 April 2021 will be brought together in a document summarising comments from all nine themes, the Council's response and how the issues raised in the comments will be reflected in the Draft Local Plan.

Between 27 January and 21 April 2021, 71 people responded to the theme.

What we have been told about Leisure, Culture & Healthy Lifestyles

The following is a summary of what people said about how existing places and new development support health and wellbeing.

To read all the representations in full please go to the [Consultation Portal](#).

What you have told us about . . .

How can existing places and new development support health and wellbeing?

Healthy lifestyles

How can we enable you to take more exercise, eat healthily and nurture mental wellbeing?

- Better support for day centres and community centres
- Provision for active travel
- Ensure all year round use of public spaces
- Put health and wellbeing at the heart of planning decisions
- Ensure facilities promised are delivered
- Further enable healthy eating
- Provision for people in need
- Design for mental wellbeing



How could open space be made more accessible or improved?



Leisure

- Greater protection for open spaces, including Hatfield Forest
- Expand and link up with existing open space networks
- Improve the Flich Way
- Need for greater clarity on access
- Provide access to countryside beyond footpaths on agricultural land
- Create cycle/walking/equestrian greenways
- A new country park or nature reserve
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Prioritise walking, pedestrians and improve paths
- Ensure developers deliver amenity space promised
- Provide more seating in public places
- Permit exercise classes to operate free/at nominal cost in public green spaces

What buildings and spaces encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation?

- A mix of facilities for all
- Protection of existing community green spaces and creation of new ones
- Make health, wellbeing and a sense of community a priority for new development
- Address health and income inequalities

What types for sport, recreation and play facilities should we prioritise?

- Provision of facilities to suit different needs
- Address shortfalls and inadequacy

Culture



What arts and cultural facilities do you value? Does Uttlesford lack venues for culture, arts and adult education. If so what and where are they needed?

- Uttlesford is a beautiful, rural area with a rich historic and cultural heritage
- Main cultural spaces are in Saffron Walden, there is under-provision elsewhere in the District
- Need identified for an arts & culture review and strategy
- Opportunity . . .
 - to facilitate and publicise a wider range of cultural facilities
 - for multi-function spaces
 - support network of voluntary organisations
 - to further support hospitality, tourism and leisure
 - contribute to placemaking
 - for artists studios and development of creative skills
- Poor provision for theatre
- More performance and live music venues
- Important role of churches as a source of cultural and emotional support

Leisure

How could open space be made more accessible or improved?

Greater protection for open spaces:

- Areas around existing towns and villages MUST have the added protection that is afforded by green belt status
- Residents must be given certainty that agriculture land they enjoy as part of their recreation is not going to be covered in houses. Ancient woodland, natural habitats MUST be protected for future generations. We will not have the opportunity to reverse decisions once construction is underway
- More and more green open spaces are being developed. These housing developments are large with houses very close together and not a tree in sight. Many fields that used to be enjoyed for a daily walk are now developed. Walking around a housing estate is depressing and not good for our wellbeing
- Danger that housebuilding takes priority with open spaces an afterthought often neglected or underprovided for
- Focusing on zero or minimal loss of open countryside is critical to this theme

Expand and link up with existing open space networks:

- Enhance and expand publicly accessible open space for ALL users - walkers, cyclists, equestrians and the less mobile.
- Create a traffic-free off-road network, linking the PROW network, other open spaces and plug gaps
- Not much wrong with the current set up. Take care not to damage what we have.
- Better interconnectivity may encourage pub use

Poor access to open space for a rural area:

- Lack of easily accessible open space is poor and disgraceful for a rural area
- Footpaths are of variable quality and often poorly marked
- Policies should seek to improve public access to open space and to sensitively enhance the recreational versatility in existing and new areas. Large play areas are preferable to pocket-sized play spaces on new developments

Need for greater clarity on access:

- Although Uttlesford has a large quantity of open space it is not clear how much is available for public enjoyment. I find that I never sure of the status of country paths on private or agricultural land. Finding a clear map for walks is a challenge
- Easily accessible maps (physical and online) of footpaths in the district and car parking on key walking routes

Provide access to open space beyond footpaths on agricultural land:

- Rural farming areas is fine for walking/jogging, provided public rights of way exist and paths are maintained. However, these facilities are insufficient – because disabled persons, and poorer persons who are time-poor are likely excluded from access
- Footways and bridleways provide the only open space

Improvement of the Flitch Way:

- The western section is disconnected from the eastern section at Great Dunmow
- Connect and improve to be accessible to ordinary walkers and cyclists
- Reconnect the Flitch Way via a multi-user safe off-road bridleway through Dunmow

- It will enable HRS (Helena Romanes School) students to cycle and walk to school in safety when the school moves to Buttleys Lane
- Several sections are only accessible to those wearing hiking boots or mountain bikes
- Secure funding to surface the route and provide safe road crossings and a bridge over the River Chelmer
- Restore and convert buildings along the route for use as community areas, like the partially used space at Rayne Station

Prioritise walking, pedestrians and improve paths:

- Take walking and pedestrians seriously. Narrow, or missing, pavements and high traffic speeds make walking very unpleasant in some areas (e.g. Audley Road in Saffron Walden)
- Paths should be well maintained, and those closest to village centres to be safe for the elderly
- Create designated walks in every village. Start near toilet provision and include plenty of seating enroute

Identify and create cycle/walking/equestrian greenways:

- The Local Plan should include explicit pedestrian and cycling route plans
- More bridleways
- Ensure provision for safe off-road routes for horse riders too. Equestrianism is the second largest contributor to the rural economy after agriculture. It contributes over £5 million to the Essex economy and supports many rural industries. It is enjoyed in particular by women and girls. Both these groups are poorly served by many of the sports facilities in Uttlesford.
- Cycle groups too tend to be predominantly male. Cyclists have had access to bridleways since 1968. The drive to create cycle tracks is a welcome contribution to the need for improved sustainable travel but where cycle tracks are created, they should include provision for horse riders

Permit exercise classes to operate free of charge/ nominal cost in public green spaces:

- Fees are prohibitive for bootcamp or exercise classes to operate on Saffron Common. It should be full of yoga, tai chi, classes for the elderly, circuit training etc which generate the best health returns when they are professionally led
- Gardens, allotments, wildlife are important factors in Uttlesford's leisure time. Watching deer roam, buzzards wheeling in the sky, yellow hammers darting around hedgerows, bats on a summers evening all contribute to rich diversity. Planning decisions must reflect & support this diversity

Ensure developers deliver amenity space promised:

- Holding developers to their original plans and proposals for amenity space through planning approval and conditions would be hugely benefit

More seating in public places:

- Benches are needed around the village on which to rest, sit and talk.
- There is a lack of covered spaces where people can meet safely and sit and chat
- A meeting circle with fixed seats at 2m intervals as a memorial to the pandemic

Need to protect Hatfield Forest:

- The National Trust (NT) owns and manages Hatfield Forest providing opportunity for informal recreation
- There are no public footpaths and there is a charge to park. The Forest cannot be considered as truly public. Evidence has shown that the increased use of the forest is damaging the designated/protected features
- Natural England has put the Forest at risk of losing its 'unfavourable, recovering condition' due to excessive impacts of footfall
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace in the district is predominately provided by Hatfield Forest. The Local Plan cannot rely on the existence of Hatfield Forest in meeting requirements relating to the provision of open space and green infrastructure.
- The Council must prepare a robust and up to date evidence base including an Open Space Assessment of the quantity and quality of existing open space and future open space requirements, based on future housing provision, to inform a strategic solution to address the recreational pressure impacts to the designated site
- Future provision based upon existing provision (as recommended in the 2019 Open Space Study Standards Paper) is not an appropriate method of calculation as it does not take into consideration local circumstances
- The Council's evidence should identify shortfalls and pressure at existing sites
- Recreational pressure could be addressed through:
 1. Provision of alternative high quality natural/semi-natural greenspace on site for all new major residential developments.
 2. Provision of a destination site such as a new country park offering a multifunctional space with a range of facilities as an alternative to Hatfield Forest. This needs to be close enough to Hatfield Forest to divert pressure away from the Forest and delivered early in the plan period
 3. A contribution sought for monitoring and mitigation from new housing developments within an established Zone of Influence for the Forest
- These recommended measures are set out in the 'Hatfield Forest Visitor Survey and Impact Management Report 2018'

Proposal for a new country park:

- The 2019 UDC Open Space Assessment Report identified that 75% of Natural & Semi-natural Open Space is provided by Hatfield Forest which is under severe threat from overuse. Alternative facilities are urgently needed
- Of the total of 684 hectares of open space in Uttlesford, 404 hectares (approximately 60%) is accounted for by Hatfield Forest. National Trust has stated that due to ever-increasing public demand for access, the pressure on Hatfield Forest has reached an unsustainable level and a further local open space facility is urgently needed
- Restoration of the medieval Easton Park and surrounding ancient woodlands is an ideal alternative within 5 kms. The intention of the Agreement of 1939 is to keep the Park as an open space and a nature sanctuary
- UDC has the responsibility to protect the park for the next 50 and 500 years
- The benefits of a large park have been demonstrated by the success of Hylands Park under the tenure of the Chelmsford City Council
- As a rural district, Uttlesford needs to promote, preserve and develop its rights of way as free accessible means for everyone to enjoy outdoor exercise, take pleasure in our countryside and connect with each other as a community
- It sits perfectly with the council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030
- For non-sporty families to be encouraged to exercise (in order to start addressing the obesity issue if for no other reason), open space should be enticing. You can't push a

buggy along a muddy field footpath. Hatfield Forest is expensive for non NT members. Ditto for Audley End. We desperately need a new country park

- The Town Council is supportive of a Vision Document prepared by the Stop Easton Park Group and would support initiatives to create a new country park, to relieve pressures on Hatfield Forest. The most suitable location in the south of the district is on the historic Easton Park Estate. The area can be easily accessed from the A120 via the current gravel haul road. Planning conditions for the quarry require that each stage is restored as they work the next, returning the land to farmland and parkland by 2029. Large expanses of open landscape, public rights of way and bridleways are surrounded by picturesque ancient buildings, riding stables, ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites, natural ponds and a registered park and garden, which combined would provide a unique setting in which to restore the former deer park and provide new recreational facilities for the whole district.

A new nature reserve:

- Similar to Rye Meads in Hoddesdon, RSPB Fowlmere or Wicken Fen. Provision could be made within Easton Park and some stretches of the Chelmer

Protect the green belt:

- Green Belt land continues to be threatened by development, decreasing its ability to provide for nature and reduce the impacts of climate change and people's access to green spaces. Protect the Green Belt Uttlesford is characterised by rolling countryside and open green spaces and featuring as one of the top places to live in the UK
- Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances can be fully evidenced and justified and the policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development

Incremental change:

- Radical new thinking is not required. Improve the public footpath network, maintain it better and make it more cohesive; advertise it far more clearly; Put money into improve current leisure facilities. But largely they are fine. People move here to be in the countryside, do not spoil it.

What buildings and open spaces encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation?

Provision of a mix of facilities:

- Green spaces, footpaths and access to the countryside should be considered as important as formal leisure facilities, gyms, swimming pools and formal play areas
- There are many types of buildings and open spaces that encourage a sense of community and help prevent social isolation: market stalls, streets of independent shops, pubs, interest groups that meet online or in-person, sports facilities, village halls, churches, playing fields and playgrounds, concert halls and music venues, museums, gardens. Community spirit relies on people having time to speak to neighbours, organise gatherings and have locations to meet and hold activities
- Grants should also be made available for developing Community hubs into multi-use facilities to encourage multi-generational interaction

Provision of facilities for all:

- More activities in the local community for young children/toddlers and parents
- Leisure centres/gymnasiums are important for all the community. Those who are older, fatter, or less fit should not be made to feel inferior

Protection of existing community green spaces and creation of new ones:

- Community green space, accessible for all, with seating & availability of refreshments, for gathering, socialising and events is lacking
- Existing community green spaces are precious; they allow diverse people to mix intergenerationally, socialise, sit down, relax and play
- Conflict exists between greedy developers/landowners who seek to develop housing on community open space, even well-used spaces
- Community land to grow food, fruits and vegetables etc helping the area become more self-sustainable. A place for people to come together, help out, volunteer and reduce our carbon footprint. Accessible to people of ages and from all walks of life. This would do wonders for people's mental health, give a sense of purpose and community spirit. Somewhere locals could plant trees, whether it be to celebrate a new joiner to this world, a bereavement, a birthday
- There are very few spaces for children to camp and learn bushcraft skills in Uttlesford. Particularly, there is a lack of deciduous, native woodland suitable for this purpose. Woodland is increasingly being seen as an important (possibly the most beneficial) outdoor environment for mental health in teens and older children.

Make health, wellbeing and a sense of community a priority for new development:

- Conflict exists between development profit versus community need for green space, community space, and amenities. If our health and wellbeing are priorities, then the latter need must take precedence
- The 15-minute neighbourhood requires facilities that promote social cohesion, community activities and support for the lonely are within 15 minutes walk of the vast majority of Uttlesford residents
- Small developments should be encouraged to be "communities" rather than just potential building sites

Address health and income inequalities:

- Stark health inequalities (TCPA & Marmot reviews 2010 & 2020) afflict the poorest harshly, including BAME and disabled groups. Poverty is on the rise in Uttlesford, as evidenced by our busy Food Bank
- Offer all benefit-claimants free-of-charge access to UDC's Lord Butler Leisure Centre and free parking at Uttlesford owned car-parking facilities

Specific places:

- Thaxted park could be enhanced to get the most out of it for all ages
- Stansted: Bloor site - static play structures were installed 12 months ago in the Children's play area, but they are still under water and unusable. Trees have still not been planted nor a footbridge into Pennington Lane
- Dunmow's green space, whilst marvellous, is over-used
- The Flitch Way, by virtue of being linear, is dull
- Saffron Walden: The Saffron Walden Quaker Meeting are looking into making the garden/graveyard at the back of the Meeting House more accessible to the public. A green space off the High St. Due to the pandemic

What types for sport, recreation and play facilities should the Local Plan prioritise?

Provision of facilities to suit different needs:

- There need to activities appropriate to the demographics of the local population. Families with young children will probably make use of playgrounds, many adults would value gym facilities and access to team sports, while the older generation might want the social contact and lighter exercise of bowls clubs or golf
- Parks and playgrounds should not be for children only - there are great outdoor gyms that can be used by all ages
- Providing a wide range of activities aimed at teenagers could be difficult in small rural communities, they may benefit from more centralised activities based around schools
- It seems that swimming, rugby, hockey, badminton, squash, gymnastics and bowling in general are not well catered for. Further analysis may be required to establish demand, if additional facilities were to be provided

Equestrian needs

- Equestrian avoid using roads but it is often unavoidable. Main off-road access is Rights of Way network but can only use bridleways and byways. The network is fragmented and linked by roads. Equestrians are increasingly recognised as vulnerable road users
- According to Essex County Council's Rights of Way Improvement plan in Uttlesford horse riders have access to 22.1% of the Essex Rights of Way network and carriage drivers a 6.9%
- Most riders and carriage-drivers wish to take their horses out on bridleways and byways, away from motor traffic, for the physical and mental health benefits to animal and human, in exactly the same way as most walkers and cyclists. Many are unable to do so because the traffic on tarmac roads is too dangerous for such vulnerable road users, and there are generally so few traffic free routes available to equestrians

Address shortfalls and inadequacy:

- We are desperately short of sports facilities. Play spaces need upgrading. Too many developments pay lip services to play needs and sports. Plans need to be tougher on green space provision being usable
- Available sports facilities: swimming, rugby, hockey, badminton, squash, gymnastics and bowling in general are not well catered for within Uttlesford
- Stansted: Existing facilities are totally inadequate. Stansted needs more recreation space, a football pitch, a cycle track. It has well used skatepark, tennis and bowling facilities. Stansted has 3 allotment sites - these are fully taken up
- Little Easton sports pitch is down a protected lane. Dunmow United Football Club use the facility, which is not sustainable. Provision should be made in Great Dunmow. Rubbish on the verges of the protected lane is affecting wildlife and there is anti-social behaviour (selling drugs) outside hours
- Open spaces, specific play areas for children, park areas for the more mature residents to congregate have always been needed to ensure a community has focal points for its residents. The problem today is who pays for the continued maintenance of such areas - it is no longer charitable concerns under Trust Deeds setting up parks and halls...it falls to the Parish & Town Councils and local precepting as developers do not seem to wish to provide for the long term
- More areas dedicated to nature are needed. Adventure play areas such as at Great Notley and outdoor gyms are valuable ways to get people active outdoors and which are largely absent in the area of Uttlesford
- Indoor swimming facilities are also lacking in the West of Uttlesford

- Places for natural outdoor swimming are needed too
- Supporting Girlguiding and Scouting with the spaces they need for outdoor activities would be a good first step. Many girlguiding units in Uttlesford struggle to find suitable meeting spaces where they can store equipment. There is also a total lack of space for storing camping & large activity equipment. The fact that Uttlesford is already has the third highest rates of child mental health disorders in the County and that Essex has one of the highest suicide rates in the Country should spur Uttlesford to action

The Council's evidence base prepared in 2019 (the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor & Built Facilities Strategy) should be used as a basis for identifying community sports facility needs and for informing and justifying policies in the Local Plan on the protection of sports facilities, new and enhanced sports facilities and securing provision through new development.

- It is still relatively up-to-date and However, there may be a need to update the assessment of future needs in these studies if the Council's population projections or housing requirements have changed since the studies were undertaken
- The Playing Pitch Strategy Implementation Group that was set up to implement the strategies following their completion should be used to identify and key supply and demand changes since the studies were prepared
- Encouraging physical activity can be addressed through the local plan by expecting developments to be designed to create environments that encourage physical activity. Sport England (and Public Health England's) Active Design guidance sets out 10 principles of how development can be design to promote active lifestyles and the Essex Design Guide has embedded Active Design principles into its advice

Place specific:

- Elsenham: There is an existing recreation ground with sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling green and a playground. There may be funding available to maintain and upgrade existing facilities, and local organisations can manage existing facilities and areas. However, new areas of open space and recreation facilities will be required and these are most likely to be delivered in conjunction with new development.
- Stansted:
 - has 3x Allotment sites - these are fully taken up
 - Flooding issues at the Walpole Farm site are still to be resolved satisfactorily by Bloor Homes, the developer. Additionally, Bloor still have to sort out the Children's play area, to which static play structures were installed some 12xmonths or more ago, but which are still under water (although placed at the top of the hill but which remain unusable
 - On the same site, trees have still not been planted nor a footbridge into Pennington Lane
 - Stansted needs safe cycle lanes for children and adults
 - There are no public WCs

Culture

Arts and cultural facilities people value

Overall:

- The district is rich in medieval heritage and local historical buildings, woodlands and gardens, which should be a source of inward tourism and be more accessible to local residents
- Uttlesford is as a place to enjoy leisure, culture and a healthy lifestyle. A beautiful, rural area with a rich historic and cultural heritage. The key question is whether planned developments preserve and improve the well-being of residents or damage it. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that recent developments have contributed to a better quality of life for us all

Uneven provision across the district:

- Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall are wonderful facilities but there is definitely under-provision elsewhere in the district
- The main cultural spaces are located in Saffron Walden, provision is poor or non-existent in the rest of the district
- For the size of population there are a surprising number of museums in the District. It is mainly Saffron Walden museum that gets any publicity. There needs to be a properly co-ordinated tourist information service for the District as a whole

Opportunity to facilitate and publicise a wider range of cultural activities:

- Uttlesford must support existing community spaces so that they can offer a bigger range of cultural activities, e.g. public music & theatre performances & film screenings. New schools should have good facilities included in the build that can be used by the local community out of school hours - e.g. sprung dance floors, equipped music studios and performance spaces. Existing schools should be supported to develop their facilities for greater community use. Libraries must be better supported so that they can offer much more education, arts & wellbeing programmes
- Encouragement should be given to publicise local culture, art and new focal points throughout the district
- Arts and cultural facilities are important not just for the wellbeing of local people but for the vitality of town centres. We are aware the emerging Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of the potential for a new arts centre in the town. We would encourage the plan to promote and support cultural facilities in the district
- Encourage a café society in villages and towns. COVID has seen a growth in café use, so make it central with free broadband, small in-out meeting and play areas. Encourage the many local societies such as history, art, book clubs etc catering across the whole age range. It is not just about skate parks!

Need identified for an arts and culture review and strategy:

- The role that culture plays in wellbeing; placemaking; isolation; improving diversity and inclusion; education; tourism and economic growth is proven
- Uttlesford enjoys a wealth of culture which has mainly thrived at a high amateur level. However, the lack of financial investment from the Council results in a lack of engagement from the Council. Through investment in culture, the council can bring a strategy that would make the cultural life of the region more balanced geographically and ensure inclusivity. And through this investment they would reap the rewards of more visitors to the region for local businesses, improved wellbeing for Residents and a more attractive place for companies to locate their businesses.
- Request for a cultural review:

- Across all art forms
- That takes into account the provision of culture bordering the region
- Examine what is needed, sustainable, what would show a good return (social as well as economic) and what buildings already exist
- Vital that young people are at the heart of this review. The lack of rich cultural experiences for young people outside major creates a divided society and a different kind of poverty
- The District needs a strong Cultural Strategy. This needs to include a Public Art programme that sees new art commissions within new builds & housing developments. It should also support artists and cultural groups to so that they can devise & deliver Arts on Prescription Health & Wellbeing programmes for existing & new residents.
- Plans should also include the development & support of new Artist Studio spaces
- An annual cultural diversity festival could be held in Uttlesford

Opportunity for multi-function spaces:

- Saffron Hall is one of the country's best examples of a shared use space in the arts today (school hall and world class concert hall). It is a model that has started to be copied throughout the country. With new houses will come new schools and there are opportunities there to replicate this very progressive model
- Opportunity for art galleries in churches and cafes, theatre in village halls and music in just about any building. All of this is possible and very easily within Uttlesford's reach but it requires co-ordination and strategy

Acknowledgement of the importance of culture:

- Society is made up of little communities, some of which are brought together by shared interests for example in sports, music and the arts. Investing in culture is vital therefore in supporting people's mental well-being, particularly in addressing loneliness: if you are a member of a choir, it is unlikely you will ever be friendless. Cross-generation clubs like a choir are a wonderful way of including young people and making them feel valued in their communities as well as helping us to learn and develop ourselves
- A starting point for leisure and culture is to have a good, active youth service. This is where many young people begin their independent journey. It is a fantastic way to show people opportunities, allow them to learn about life

Support for hospitality, tourism & leisure:

- The owners / operators of Down Hall Hotel would like to ensure that the policies in the new Uttlesford Local Plan are supportive of the hospitality, tourism and leisure sector and the aspirations of the hotel to:
 - develop a varied offer
 - create on-site leisure and recreational facilities
 - offer football and tennis coaching courses
 - provide meeting space of local businesses
 - secure the long term future of the heritage assets and biodiversity on the site

Stansted:

- There are still some 50 voluntary organisations in the village e.g. the History Society etc.
- Mountfitchet Castle which is a commercial venue which caters for school group visits
- Stansted Hall - The Arthur Findlay College which is the headquarters of the Spiritual Movement and which offers facilities unequalled anywhere in the world in the

Spiritualist movement as a residential centre for the study of Spiritualist philosophy and religious practice

Thaxted:

- The wonderful non-conformist 'chapel' is in need of major repairs and a new use. It would make an excellent local theatre and opera venue allied to the Thaxted Festival
- The United Reform Church in Thaxted, which is an outstanding and very functional building in need of major repairs, would make a wonderful multi-use cultural centre capable of accommodating theatre space, an opera venue (associated with the Thaxted Festival), a conference/lecture venue, visual arts centre/gallery but all combined with its continuing role as a place of worship

Does Uttlesford lack venues for culture, arts and adult education and if so what and where are they needed?

- Saffron Walden has a magnificent concert hall but poor provision for theatre. The Town Hall is unsatisfactory in many ways, although the Fairycroft team do brilliantly to make it work for musicals, but a flexible, theatrical space for amateur performing arts is needed
- Venues like Saffron Hall need to be replicated within any new development proposal, so any new school hall for example should be designed with dual functions in mind [with adequate separation so that the needs to the school are not compromised ie child safety]
- Uttlesford, particularly the southern area, would benefit from some additional cultural facilities similar to the South Mill Arts centre (formally Rhodes Arts Complex), Bishop Stortford, and a place to develop arts and craft skills similar to Parndon Mill in Harlow
- More live music venues etc, but practicalities especially transport, make it difficult
- We need more performance spaces, including music venues, theatres and cinemas, close to town centres. More public art would be great (sculpture trails?) and affordable galleries for local artists (even our library is too expensive for printmakers to exhibit in due to minimum commission per item). Perhaps vacant retail space can be repurposed? It is great to see arts courses going on in the area to encourage active participation. Clubs and societies need public buildings for meetings at affordable prices. We have many village halls which are ideal for this but fewer venues in towns in relation to their populations
- Insufficient attention is paid to the role of the church as a centre of community. Every village has one and they are often a source of cultural and emotional support. There is a danger of creating vast areas of housing without a communal heart
- A community hall is first and foremost a consideration for a new /expanded community as it enables different demographics of a community to have a meeting place. (The building of many village halls in the late 1930's was a way out of the financial depression and also brought communities together.) The halls should be a suitable size and design to the immediate population and from that health and wellbeing ventures will fall in place and grow.
- Most organised cultural activities rely on individuals and groups having the time and skills to make an event happen. They can be supported by the district and parish councils through funding and smoothing the path through red tape which can make events rather difficult to arrange
- Stansted: No cultural venues in Stansted. Events can use a small number of halls

- Given that each rural community cannot have a full range of social, leisure and cultural activities close at hand, transport becomes critical to allow access to those activities. Ideally this should be public transport and it needs to provide services at times that fit with demand. This is especially true for older age groups living in the more remote areas who will be discouraged from using private vehicles during winter evenings on unlit and winding rural roads
- Developers renege on their promises to create community facilities of one sort or another. What can UDC do to improve matters?
- There's a splendid concert hall, that can also be used for dance/drama and lectures, a very good, creative and involving community cinema. More space is needed for theatre, theatre workshops, poetry reading comedy spots although pubs and community halls and the Fairycroft House and library can be used for these too
- We should encourage more clubs, where a few people can meet and discuss their 'specialities' and meet on a regular basis. E.g. more clubs for children on the green in summer and maybe young football or cricket groups. If more clubs (preferably outdoors) were available we would get a lot more people exercising, walking and cycling. There could be outdoor areas for Chess, Draughts, Lectures on gardening - Art - Antiques etc.

Healthy lifestyles

Recommendation to conduct a Health Impact Assessment:

- The new Local Plan has the potential to positively impact on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing of Uttlesford District residents and this can be achieved through appropriate requirements for a Health Impact Assessment or HIA
- HIA provides a means of assessing the negative as well as the positive impacts of development proposals, with the aims of:
 - Identifying, recognising and maximising positive benefits (e.g. job creation, contributions to local economies)
 - Avoiding, minimising or mitigating negative impacts (e.g. through redesign of proposals or through compensatory measures)
 - Identifying unintended consequences and impacts of development proposals on health and wellbeing

An UDC Wellbeing Index:

- A new UDC Index could show the level of our wellbeing resources in parishes, to help identify what is missing. Perhaps a good start would be looking at gaps shown by Health and Wellbeing Plans prepared by parishes

Primary healthcare provision:

- There are 9 GP practices, 4 branch surgeries and 1 community hospital in Saffron Walden. These are the healthcare services available that this district council local plan must take into account in formulating future strategies
- Growth in terms of housing and employment, is proposed across a wide area and would likely have an impact on future healthcare service provision. Existing GP practices in the area do not have capacity to accommodate significant growth
- There is an overall capacity deficit, based on weighted patient list sizes, within the 9 GP practices providing services in the area

- West Essex CCG continues to monitor and address capacity issues in the area:
 - A new facility was opened in 2016 Stansted Mountfitchet with space for growth
 - The Elsenham growth requires further consideration
 - A double floor extension was built at Thaxted surgery to increase capacity
 - Reconfiguration of the under-utilised wing of the Saffron Walden Community Hospital is currently underway to allow for the delivery of general medical services
 - Crocus Medical Practice will be moving into the new facility in the summer when the building work has been completed and this will provide double capacity. The existing practice site in Castle Street will close
- Other capacity issues that need to be addressed:
 - Hatfield Heath capacity requires thought with regard to any local development
 - Great Dunmow capacity requires urgent consideration with site possible solutions being investigated
 - Any larger garden town developments will require separate deliberation for further infrastructure to be provided for
- West Essex CCG and NHS England are currently working together to help plan and develop new ways of working with our primary care facilities, in line with the Five Year Forward View, to increase capacity in ways other than increasing physical space. Existing health infrastructure will require further investment and improvement in order to meet the needs of the planned growth shown in this local plan. The developments contained within would have an impact on healthcare provision in the area and its implications, if unmitigated, would be unsustainable

How can we enable you to take more exercise, eat healthily and nurture mental wellbeing?

Better support for day centres and community centres:

- Continued support of Day Centres is crucial to the wellbeing and health of the elderly and other vulnerable groups. They are surely cost effective in terms of reducing the mental health impacts of loneliness
- The community acquisition of the Railway Arms provides an example of how a pub can become the hub of a community with mother and toddler groups, repair shops, a sensory garden, games for children and teenagers, community events and celebrations, book clubs... UDC should support such community projects where pubs are liable to closure around all the villages of Uttlesford as a way of promoting health and wellbeing
- Churches and church halls could be designed as flexible spaces for use every day of the week, as the Baptist Church is in Saffron Walden. Grants should assist them to become energy efficient or to support the removal of pews to create flexible spaces

Provision for active travel:

- Improve the footpath network by developing a proper strategy which considers where people might want to go and might be persuaded to walk instead of driving
- Providing alternatives to car use for school runs, shopping and commuting, including cycle lanes and safe pedestrian routes. Current provision is woeful
- There is a pressing need for greater connectivity within the network of public rights of way in Uttlesford through the creation of new multi-user tracks (bridleways) to encourage residents and visitors to walk, cycle, ride and drive horses both to

promote mental and physical health and to encourage sustainable travel to work and school

- A well-connected recreational network is vital so that ALL users can enjoy - including equestrians
- The district relies on the countryside and PROW network of footpaths for allowing people to get out walking, however many of these footpaths are in a very poor state and are virtually impassable during the winter months
- Longer leafy avenues and green spaces should provide a mix of direct and indirect walking and cycling route opportunities avoiding crossing roads. Where they must cross, pedestrians and cyclists should have priority... pedestrian crossing lights should change to permit walkers and cyclists to cross almost immediately making car drivers wait, driving a slower option and less convenient. This does not happen now but would be an easy district wide change to make so cycling and walking commutes become quicker, dryer and safer and so encourage more people to change their commuting habits for the better
- A 'country path' in Dunmow is used by developers as part of their 'selling strategy' as a walking cycling route but has had little investment and is now suffering as a result of this and increased footfall. It is flooded and boggy in parts and does not encourage walking for any but the surest footed

Ensure all year round use of public spaces:

- The local park in Dunmow is a quagmire during the winter due to increased footfall and does not have a continual path network thus making it virtually impossible to cross with a pushchair or young children
- New developments must be made to contribute to the existing open spaces to improve and sustain them for the increased usage, and also provide additional open space that is suitable for year round use with suitably surfaced paths/tracks

Provision of all-weather paths and seating:

- In the larger towns/villages Bench Trails should be established, with good smooth paths/paving in between, so that less mobile whether with toddlers in tow, less physically able can 'walk n rest' and communicate.

Put health and wellbeing at the heart of planning decisions:

- If development can only be achieved at the expense of poor air quality, dangerous roads, an unhealthy sedentary lifestyle and unsustainable energy usage in contravention of the UK's commitment to achieving net zero, it should not happen
- This means no developments until there are much better public transport links to where people work, meaning frequent and affordable bus and cycle links to train stations to Cambridge and London
- Developments must be required to have ground source heat pumps instead of carbon-emitting boilers, solar panels instead of cheap roofing, a frequent bus route and/or cycle lane within easy reach and preferably be built on brownfield not greenfield sites
- Large houses identical in size and style are built close to each other in strict rows are adverse to health and wellbeing. Much better care must be taken in design, layout and space in such developments of the rate of, mental illness is not to rise. Look at the design in Uttlesford already there. Use that as a model. Look at the nature of the place you want to develop. Don't allow these monstrous new developments. Mental illness and other related, problems will soar if development continues in this way. If you want to create unified communities, you need very small diverse homes to compliment not overwhelm what is already there.

Importance of creating and supporting communities

- Vibrant town and village centres Small developments should be encouraged to be "communities" rather than just potential building sites

Ensure facilities promised are delivered:

- Where developers are required to provide amenities such as tree planting, playgrounds, playing fields and so on these should be put in place before building commences
- Any developer reneging on commitments, or planting trees that subsequently die (for example) should not be allowed to develop any more housing in the district until remedied.

Further enable healthy eating:

- Markets with fresh fruit and veg, fish are a positive attraction. Saffron Walden market is outstanding, Dunmow and Thaxted provide opportunities to buy and eat well. Encourage a market 'offer' in other centres e.g. Stansted, Felsted, Newport
- Encourage farmer's markets or farm shops
- Events like Fete de la Musique combine arts, food and retail for residents and visitors
- Allocate allotments in new developments where demand can outstrip supply
- Healthy eating and eating less meat is linked to climate change. Uttlesford does not appear to have any vegetarian or vegan restaurants
- Child-obesity is rising – ensure fast-food restaurants are not located next to schools

Provision for people in need:

- Can schools have more funding to offer poorer school children: breakfast clubs, milk at breaks & affordable nutritious healthy school lunches, run non-for-profit but for the benefit of seeing children grow up healthy?
- Poverty may leave parents no time or money to feed their children well. As a society we should ensure that all children get good nutritious food while in school
- Covid19 mental health children's crisis: can schools receive funding for a mental health specialist to share across a group of schools? All children would benefit.
- UDC Wellbeing Index: an Index could show the level of our wellbeing resources in parishes, to help identify what's missing. Perhaps this can be done by looking at Health & Wellbeing Plans prepared by parishes
- The TCPA presentation identified that loneliness, poor diet, poor quality homes, and poor environments damage our communities. These issues hurt poorer people most. Unemployment and poverty are rising; working poor may earn under £10/hour. The local plan should facilitate healthy lifestyles
- Encourage employers to pay workers at least their appropriate minimum wage, and preferably a more generous living wage
- 40% of people earn under £25K P.A. in Uttlesford, there may be a need for free exercise classes, which would also assist development of community spirit and involvement. Elderly people also need free classes, for both balance and for exercise
- Disused high street spaces could encourage more community involvement by being granted rent free access for community cafes, giving disabled people and those with mental health issues the chance to work (or to be given credit by other local places such as cinema or food shops) to create a circular economy with enhanced community spirit
- Equestrian sports, or simply working with animals, could be invested in for mental health groups and children who are traumatised by domestic violence, giving free access to these groups would help them recover from trauma

Design for mental wellbeing:

- There are two key elements – decent living conditions and social contact
- Housing mix should be carefully considered in the Local Plan.
- At the lower end of the affordability scale provide more smaller, affordable units, but with gardens, which are a great mental stimulus
- Social contact will come about through the formation of local interest groups. They require facilities to meet so there needs to be a strategy for community buildings. Most villages have one but they are often not very inviting!
- Mental Health - needs more service

Place specific:

Stansted:

- Good range of services but little room for expansion of village centre
- Organisations offer health walks. There is the Romeera Centre and 3 allotment sites
- Not much open space, culture or leisure facilities for its size
- Residents travel to Bishop's Stortford because it is nearer
- Little provision for team sports
- A football pitch and cycle track/ Safe cycle lanes are needed
- No open space in Foresthall Park and nothing west of B1383
- Footways and bridleways provide the only open space.
- Benches are needed around the village on which to rest, sit and talk
- There are no public WCs.

Great Dunmow:

- Good access to health facilities supports future healthy lifestyles and provision was made in the Gt Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan, however, land allocated for a new health centre as part of Land South of Stortford Road has not been supported by the local GP surgeries or the CCG.

It is acknowledged that Uttlesford is already ahead of the rest of the county in being a place where people are more prosperous, tend to have a good lifestyle, better health and employment.

- Uttlesford is already well placed to support mental health and wellbeing. More of what we already do should be sufficient, the Buffy Bus and Mobile Library are good examples. Local coffee shops in the larger villages and volunteer led activities can all help. It is possible to keep fit and active if you want to - there are lots of good clubs and facilities already available. Education and making people aware of what's out there may help. It really is up to each one of us to look out for each other to make a community.

Other considerations

CIL

- CIL as an infrastructure funding tool for leisure facilities would add value

Request to consider Neighbourhood Plans (NP):

- Felsted NP
- Thaxted NP
- [NB Great Dunmow also has a made Neighbourhood Plan]

Call for sites - sites promoting health & wellbeing

- Chelmer View: Proposed new mixed-use development based around an extensive green infrastructure comprising open spaces, green movement corridors, water features and a soft landscaped environment. These spaces will be highly accessible (prioritising walking and cycling) linking between the site and the settlement of Great Dunmow and facilitating movement around the site to key services. Encourage exercise through day-t- day activity by linking journeys with recreation
- West of Walden Road, Church End, Ashdon : The provision of high quality public open space and a mix of sizes and tenures within development, including affordable homes, as well as its location in close proximity to local services and facilities all contribute to the promotion of wellbeing and social inclusion. Proposed provision of new formal pedestrian paths through the site and providing linkages to Fallowden Lane to the north. Provision of a new community use such as a tennis court accessible to existing and new residents
- Land at Warish Hall Farm (Weston Homes) - supports importance of open space, vibrant towns and village centres, sports and play facilities and culture and healthy lifestyles. Proposal to provide local facilities and new services through two local centres, a community hall and public open space to meet local needs and to help foster social interaction. The concept masterplan for the site draws on concepts such as the 15-minute neighbourhood by linking villages with shared resources, improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, providing new local services and facilities, reinvigorating local existing services and promoting sustainable environments, health and wellbeing
- North Uttlesford (Grosvenor): Alongside the provision of homes and jobs, community services and facilities need to be provided in an accessible manner to enable existing and future residents to live healthy lifestyles. New development should contribute to delivering new or enhanced infrastructure for the benefit of the wider community, in particular the provision of community facilities, health and social care and green infrastructure. Proposal includes the provision of a comprehensive range of

community infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and will include a community centre and 3 community hubs to facilitate on-site provision of a primary school/s, on-site secondary provision, pre-school/nursery facilities, local healthcare, convenience retail, a multi-purpose community hall and other community infrastructure; active landscapes, providing functional outdoor spaces and facilities for recreation, sport, play and exercise as food growing at community allotments and orchards, and a network of over 25km of trails. Cultural landscapes are also uniquely important to the site, its sense of place and heritage

- South of Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford (Bloor Homes): The provision of high quality public open space and a mix of sizes and tenures within development, as well as its location in close proximity to local services and facilities all contribute to the promotion of wellbeing and social inclusion. Residential development would support the existing village centre, accessible on foot and by bike, whilst providing open spaces connected by a series of green corridors to encourage walking and exercise
- Thaxted: Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan that there is support for outdoor recreation areas and children's play areas. The existing recreation, play areas and outdoor sports facilities in the village are under pressure, are quite fragmented/poorly distributed, are not well connected to the village in terms of accessibility and are not able to meet local needs. The promoted development by Stonebond Properties at land south of Thaxted improves connectivity to the existing Youth Club and includes substantial areas of open space, green infrastructure and new sports pitches on the eastern and southern parts of the site