

**Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021
First Consultation: Theme 7 Local Economy
May 2021**

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 24 February 2021 and the theme was then open for comment.

Between 24 February and 21 April 2021, 55 people or organisations responded to the theme.

What we have been told about the ‘Local Economy’

The following is a summary of what people said about how we can support sustainable business growth across the district.

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

What you have told us about . . .

How can we support sustainable business growth across the district?

Overall need for clear strategy & vision . . .

- For sectors it wants to protect and attract; based on fundamental characteristics of the rural district
- Capitalise on opportunities that technology brings to rural communities
- Consider the needs of all sectors contributing to the economy, including warehousing, logistics, offices etc
- Locate employment with new homes
- Consider healthcare employment, education/skill training needs
- Some challenge the need for growth, as counter to well-being and climate change agenda
- Support a thriving economy within environmental and planetary needs



Rural economy

- Growth of rural businesses may be inhibited by lack of suitable premises
- Rural hubs could help foster growth
- Concern that villages with services risk becoming a target for development
- Unclear what a 'rural cluster' is (map 2) or implications for development
- Business hubs may be important. Potential for use of empty retail



Home based working/businesses

- Likely to continue or grow
- Greater need for hot desking/meeting spaces
- May impact space requirements



Supporting existing businesses

- Invest in/develop existing industrial clusters
- Business and industry should be at the cutting edge of sustainability



Life sciences, research & innovation

- Good transport links and data connections essential
- Out of town or brownfield land



How we can support agriculture

- Repurposing of land and buildings for hi-tech and environmental industries
- Only permit development in the countryside where it protects and enhances the local area
- Prevent abuse of prior approval/permitted development rights
- Retain disused barns for light industrial use, rather than conversion to residential
- Need for an integrated approach to resource management



Encourage growth & new business start-ups

- Ensure Uttlesford connects development within UK Innovation Corridor to business spaces, homes and a skilled workforce
- Ensure adequate employment sites



Changes to permitted development

- High street shop conversions to residential should not be allowed
- Address loss of conversion of agricultural buildings to other employment uses



Visitor economy, retail, leisure & culture

- Need to protect and encourage our cultural heritage and ensure leisure facilities are fit for purpose
- Potential for tourism. Plan for more hotel/B&B accommodation; protect loss of retail and cafes to residential use
- Encourage farmers markets, Christmas fayres, events to draw people into towns and support small traders
- Allow under-utilised farm buildings and empty shops for artisan businesses
- Reform business rates system



Stansted hub

- Allow more sites to be non-aviation related
- Do not allow exponential development outside existing boundaries
- Call to curb air travel and any increase to Stansted capacity to reduce impact of climate change



Living and working locally

- Linked to the rural economy and home working
- Request polices support residents on low incomes



The green economy

- Assist towns and villages to create local community energy companies
- Develop a sustainable ethical investment policy
- Deliver effective green waste management



How can we support sustainable business growth across the district?

Strategy & vision:

- Uttlesford needs a strategy for the sectors it wants to attract: most likely are those that align with existing businesses e.g. life sciences, aviation, tourism, healthcare. Also, those that do not depend on large scale production and goods movement because of the poor transport network beyond the major roads
- Make this a place business wants to come. Encourage it financially & with top class communications & accessibility links
- We need this strategy to make decisions on transport links, housing locations and types, and what kinds of commercial areas to develop
- A new approach needs to be taken based on the fundamental characteristics of the district, its rolling topography, the resultant lack of access, its rural environment and its exceptional heritage, which are highly valued
- Uttlesford has a high proportion of small businesses and should aspire to develop as a leader of small, innovative and creative businesses notably in the high value sectors capitalising on its proximity to the scientific hub of Cambridge
- New development should seek to support the growth of existing businesses & sectors within & surrounding the District & maximise opportunities to attract new business & inward investment
- The Local Plan should seek to allocate housing in locations which respond to the strategic business context of Uttlesford. This includes the Chesterford Research Park, the life science cluster in South Cambs, the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Corridor & utilising existing & proposed transport infrastructure to enable residents to sustainably commute to other key employment locations such as Stansted, Saffron Walden, London, Harlow & Cambridge
- Employment Land Review (ELR) 2017 identified – ‘Given the tight market conditions and the relative lack of vacant and available land to intensify or redevelop existing employment clusters there is a need to find additional land to meet projected demand’. There is an urgent need for new employment allocations

Relationship between housing and employment:

- Sustainability can only be achieved by locating new residential development close to main settlements where there are employment sites and opportunities, not locating new residential development in villages where unsustainable car travel is the only realistic mode of travel to get to employment sites
- A flexible approach should be taken to village planning restrictions with new housing, built within our existing communities and provision for further business facilities such as rural business hubs. Resultant requirements for improved infrastructure such as schools should be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy. A dispersal strategy plays to our strengths both in terms of our exceptional rural environment and heritage and in terms of the strong base of small businesses from which to build
- Need to strengthen and support the varied local economy in order to provide jobs. In turn promoting a balance between the location of jobs and housing, which can help to reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable growth is encouraging. It will be important to review the local and strategic context and ensure that the strategic cross boundary movement between the authorities continues to support the wider employment opportunities within the locality
- To encourage sustainable commuting patterns & reduce transport related carbon emissions it is imperative that housing & employment are located within close proximity to each other &/or highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport

- Work with and enhance our assets, create better links with existing sources of employment, use the existing railway line and improved local bus services to make the most of all outward commuting opportunities
- In terms of larger commercial development it would be sensible to concentrate everything around the Airport and around Great Chesterford, where there is an established technological capability and technology infrastructure. For the rest of the District the infrastructure is unsuited to significant commercial development
- Areas of deprivation should be the priority for rejuvenation. Also some brownfield lands

Regional relationships:

- East Herts – more people commute from Uttlesford to East Hertfordshire, than to anywhere else, including Bishop’s Stortford. The District boundary is contiguous with the boundary of the town. There is a very close relationship between the two
- The inter-relationship with all surrounding areas should be considered, including those with places such as East Hertfordshire, and Bishop’s Stortford in particular, where there is already a very strong connection
- In addition to relations with Cambridge and London consider less high-profile neighbours e.g Braintree
- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has commissioned specific evidence to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and we would expect to see an appropriate evidence study supporting the Uttlesford Local Plan.
<https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1438/greater-cambridge-employment-land-and-economic-development-evidence-study-gl-hearn-nov2020.pdf>

Spatial considerations:

- The consultation document is clear on the significance of the North-South corridor on the West of the district. The Ox-Cam arc has many benefits in already being a highly prosperous combined region and UDC reflecting in its spatial strategy the ability to gain material associated benefit is something which clearly has merit. The fact that the mainline rail corridor and Stansted airport are also both on this corridor is significant, as in contrast is the lack of such employment-positive factors on the East-West axis. While other centres such as Dunmow would likely benefit from some economic expansion relating to any housing allocations which are appropriate urban extensions, there is likely to be far greater merit from using the North-South Ox-Cam linked corridor as the main economic catalyst and working out the correct economic links from there to the rest of the district than trying to create multiple discrete “hubs”

North of the district:

- Opportunity to support and benefit from the significant economic growth of Cambridge and proximity to investment and employment locations such as: Saffron Walden; Chesterford Research Park; Granta Park employs in excess of 2,000 people and has further planning permission to expand. Wellcome Genome Campus employ circa 2,600 people and have obtained further planning permission for expansion of the Hinxton campus including 150,000 sqm of flexible employment uses; Babraham Research Campus; Addenbrooke’s Teaching Hospital and Research Centre including the Cambridge Biomedical Campus

South of the district:

- Concern that Gt Dunmow will become a dormitory town. It is unclear which new employment sources could be created in the south of the district and there is a high reliance on out-commuting to work

West of the district:

- Important to recognise that Uttlesford is not as prosperous as the Ox-Cam arc, so although supportive of recognising the significance of the North-South corridor on the West of the district and its connection with the Ox-Cam arc, the potential results or job creation for UDC should not be overstated

Consideration of different employment sectors:

- All economic and employment sectors should be considered, including offices, general and light industrial, and particularly logistics (storage and distribution)
- Why focus on Life sciences etc It's importance will ebb & flow relative to other sectors. Focus on general building blocks that will benefit any type of business; broaden the target base. Business parks around the Stansted corridor/the A120, utilising brownfield sites etc
- 20% of the 5,475 businesses are in the Professional, scientific, technical & admin support category, easily the largest category. Uttlesford has built a solid base in this regard given the number of agricultural buildings that have converted into working space or small business centres
- Considering the (revised) Use Class order, there are a number of economic and employment sectors which make up substantial elements of Uttlesford's economy, that are not covered by the specific questions raised in consultation document including:
 - Class B2 – general industrial
 - Class B8 – storage or distribution
 - Class E(a) – retail
 - Class E(c) – financial and professional services
 - Class E(g)(i) – offices
 - Class E(g)(iii) – (light) industrial

Technology:

- Good communications, broadband & telecommunications systems are a must
- Broadband improvements could attract more businesses that operate online
- Superfast broadband is very important and should encourage computer and Science based business to the area
- We must look forward, capitalise on the opportunities that technology brings to rural communities and recognise the 'paradigm shift' in working practices from the five day a week commuter model that has dominated since WWII
- Don't just meet basic targets for communications capability, exceed them by a margin
- Offer reduced price broadband by negotiating deals with the big providers, and then offering these at low cost to residents on lower incomes

Healthcare & education needs:

- Healthcare employment will increase as the population ages. However, more of it may take the form of home monitoring and visits than in care homes. Education needs to provide the skills needed for future businesses. Local colleges and adult

education should include relevant courses e.g. IT in healthcare, lab working, geriatrics, robotics and AI, home energy and insulation

- Need for access to high quality local staff
- Aging population with need more caring roles. Covid has raised the profile of care and health workers. More training for these roles, but the sector needs to have better pay and conditions and realistic costing of these services in order to be able to pay appropriately
- Assist in developing a skilled local workforce and world of work awareness by linking together businesses with schools, colleges, adult training to encourage apprenticeships/work placements, all with quality information, advice and guidance plus appropriate support to people with special needs or others who might have difficulty in the labour market
- The training and development opportunities provided at Airport College at London Stansted Airport are recognised and Essex County Council recommends continued provision of education opportunities for existing and communities within Uttlesford and Essex to benefit Essex residents, workers and business

Transport links:

- Transport (as mentioned in all themes) affects ability to get to work or services, reliance on car especially when working on shifts
- Improvements in the interconnectedness of settlements without reliance on cars or heavier transportation is required
- Improved public transport links are needed, particularly from the south of the district, to connect with high quality employment sites in the north of the district and Cambridgeshire, e.g. in health and science industries

Think local:

- Local procurement - help local businesses be able to bid for contracts, especially from developers. Developers also to provide an employment and training code and local procurement code
- Market and communicate the benefits and quality from local purchasing with online presence and local delivery options. (Some of this already underway). More people in the area means more chance to build local buying patterns and their use of local facilities and personal services
- Help people to shop local. Not just pedestrianizing the shopping centres but by getting people there in more environmentally benefiting ways. Commission studies on possible routes for each village/ town. Look at the safety of these. So often there are insufficient road crossings, narrow footways, ineffective speed limits that are ignored

General comments made:

- The local economy/employment is one of the three major elements of the Local Plan along with housing and transport. The balance of these three should guide the location of new developments. The challenge is to determine the possibilities for future employment and whether these can be influenced by the plan itself
- Your very comprehensive summary portrays what could be an exciting future for the area
- If you focus too much attention on specific business types you risk missing the target completely. Be forward thinking in reuse of brownfield sites, encouraging protection & utilisation of our beautiful green spaces to make this a nice place to do business

- Consideration must be given to business growth whenever considering large development plans
- Commercial development should be sensitive to its surroundings and would not have an unacceptable impact on local roads

Challenging the need for growth:

- After recovery from Covid there are plenty of economic activities around Uttlesford for the emphasis in the District to be on preserving amenity and making adjustments such as replacing retail with accommodation, keeping Stansted Airport no larger, and generally limiting growth, which tends to be at the expense of the environment. The idea that growth is naturally desirable needs to be questioned. GDP is a coarse number and contains activities which are not beneficial either to well-being, or to the support of the national economy
- I would question the in-built assumption in this question that 'growth' is necessary
- "Create to Regenerate" and "Design to Distribute". Circular thriving must be the purpose of the new economy model, or we are toast.
<https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/> (Focus on a thriving not growth, to meet the social and economic needs within the environment and means of the planet).

The rural economy: What kinds of rural businesses should the Local Plan encourage and support? What kind of land should be protected and allocated for these businesses?

- Rural economy - It would be a mistake to focus on any specific types of business. Focus instead on the general building blocks needed. Good communications links, decent transport links, including walking/cycling etc
- Rural businesses should be sited near to local populations to minimise the impact of travel on carbon emissions
- Provide higher paid jobs in rural communities otherwise people have to travel to larger conurbations for career progression
- Map 2 employment locations - It is wholly unclear what a 'rural cluster' is or what the implications of what this designation would mean for new development. If it is part of a yet-to-be identified hierarchy of settlements, where the larger rural settlements are expected to be the location of some new development (e.g. formerly identified 7 'key villages' in the withdrawn local plan), then would not be some 40 'clusters' identified on Map 1. No weight should be given to this map until an explicit and fully justified hierarchy is published
- Creating small shops within villages would enable local people in their home-based or small unit businesses to buy necessities. This should be allowed WITHOUT the risk of the village then becoming a target for development because it is now 'sustainable'

Consider how to protect and enhance the rural context:

- Working from home or from rural business hubs best suits the nature of the landscape and setting in the district and provides an exceptional quality of life, which will attract future residents
- Promote a sustainable rural economy and to address any issues of rural deprivation while at the same time protecting the important countryside assets including agricultural land, historic and landscape features, and biodiversity

Enable diversity and growth:

- Policies should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport (NPPF (para. 84)). Important to provide for a range of different employment sites in a variety of different locations so as to be attractive to different enterprises and to maximise opportunities for the economy to continue to recover
- Planning policies should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; along with the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses
- There is potential for diversification on rural farmsteads and in village and town centres, for innovation hubs and for serviced offices as an alternative to working from home
- Rural businesses tend to start small and their growth may be inhibited by the lack of suitable premises for growth

Opportunity for rural hubs:

- Some empty premises would be more usefully converted to work hubs, which are essential to support very small businesses
- Rural hubs, with good services and communications, could be vital in helping foster new business. Existing, or new, village halls might be adapted or extended for this purpose. “Pop-up” hubs may be a good way to test the concept
- The “village hub” concept could revitalise local and village communities; add a village centric approach and encourage communities to “stay local”. The principle is to enable broadband and work facilities in a village hall, church hall or even disused farmyard buildings to encourage use of workspace. People could still go to work, but not commute. Eat local; spend local; work local; walk or cycle; remain nearer home; achieve a work/life balance; improve skilled participation in local community and affairs

Life sciences, research & innovation: What buildings, land use and infrastructure are required to support this sector?

- Science based businesses need a focus or easily accessible central hub upon which to interact with other businesses. Has Uttlesford realised the full potential of its investment at Chesterford Park? If not, has it learned from any mistakes made?
- Out of town or industrial estate brownfield land. Good power and data connections are essential
- Rural areas should support special types of buildings that need space e.g. labs. These would need to have good communications and transport links with associated businesses and health facilities i.e. Cambridge and Harlow hospitals and bio-industries
- Cambridge is rightly recognized as a centre of scientific research, and recent years have seen the development of numerous science parks, primarily focussed on the biotech / health sector. There is, however, a danger of overdevelopment in this area and for the attractiveness of these to business to diminish, as they are located further from academic centres in Cambridge and London. Planning should include alignment with ongoing and planned developments in Cambridgeshire to ensure these are truly competitive and attractive to business, and potentially in other sectors

- Essex County Council (ECC) acknowledge the contribution some of the emerging sectors provide within Uttlesford and Essex. Of particular importance is the life sciences at Chesterford Research Park. ECC seeks to promote growth and development within this sector, providing future economic opportunities for the Essex living, working and investing community.
- To support business growth, housing allocations on unconstrained sites in villages such as Great Chesterford should be prioritised and encouraged. Great Chesterford is in a unique position in close proximity, with many of research campuses undergoing expansion and is already on direct public transport routes. In light of this, considerable growth (e.g. 250 or more dwellings) of a village such as Great Chesterford, particularly sites within close proximity of the transport links should be strongly encouraged and prioritised

Visitor economy: How can we support retail, leisure and culture across the district?

- Uttlesford has lots of potential both for tourism and for workforce in Cambridge and surrounds - should work for more hotel and B&B capacity, and for retaining controls to stop local shops and cafes being lost to residential use
- Artisan businesses need to be very local to their community. Under-utilised farm buildings, empty shops all provide opportunities for such businesses
- Better marketing of our visitor economy

Supporting retail, town centres and high streets:

- Recognise and support the importance of Homebase to Saffron Walden by designating the Homebase site for DIY retail, thus safeguarding it for this purpose. This should take the form of a policy tied to a specific designation on the Policies Map that seeks to retain the site in DIY retail use and only permit alternative uses where the site has been extensively marketed and there is no demand for the retail use
- Some retailer struggle to pay business rates, 20% vat on fuel costs
- Local shops pay business rates – a significant overhead; meanwhile, US online giant stores account for £1.3 billion in lost corporation tax p.a. This is unfair on local shops. Please lobby Government to reform the rates system
- High street shops must be accessible for potential customers. Large supermarkets provide easy free parking & some even connect with local bus routes. Our High Streets need to learn from this. Cambridge City provides a good example with a comprehensive and inexpensive park & ride services. UDC needs to encourage farmers markets, Christmas Fares and similar events which draw people into their towns. Events such as these also support small traders being able to interact directly with their clients
- Need joined up planning of town centres to prevent saturation of one shop type over another. LPA should be able to refuse applications for too many of the same type and decide applications considering the context of what else is nearby, not just assess each application in isolation
- Commercial units, particularly in High Streets, should not be turned into residential units. Business rents should be affordable to encourage smaller businesses so as to retain the High Street of small market towns
- During the pandemic there's been some business rate holidays, and restart/reopening grants, but this is insufficient to preserve local high streets. , which were losing shops prior to the pandemic. UDC should lobby Government for a long-term fair sales tax, as VAT is a regressive tax that hits poorer people disproportionately as they've less money to spend. We know that with 60% of

Uttlesford residents earn under £34,000 p.a. (and 40% earn under £25,000 p.a.) so local shops need to price goods affordably for our many low income residents

The role of culture:

- We must protect and encourage our cultural heritage and ensure our local leisure facilities are fit for purpose
- Now the Saffron Hall is established as a centre of excellence, its future and development must be supported. The Saffron Screen Cinema is undoubtedly deserving of a new, more comfortable and user friendly site in future planning, perhaps in conjunction with a business/leisure development and free parking. The siting and cost of parking is important in the attraction of footfall into our town centres, which ensures the future success of the businesses within
- Evidence could be prepared to explore how a rural enterprise district for environmental, educational, cultural, social, and tourist developments with linkages to past (including the Bardfield artists and their work) and current activities, with more appropriate farming diversity development policies for the area as well

Supporting leisure & tourism:

- Breathing life back into villages with community run pubs & well managed visitor attractions to showcase rural communities
- Review planning rules which may stop hospitality venues from expanding their outside serving spaces in view of the likely ongoing impact of the pandemic
- Look at potential new tourist attractions e.g arts & craft centres with the coffee shop attached. Bird watching tours Outdoor activities eg photographic courses & craft skills within village hub
- Development of the tourist industry and renewed focus on the local identity should also be supported
- A major tourism initiative would also help considerably. Uttlesford has so much to offer in terms of genuine 'rurality' and heritage and at a time of limited opportunity for overseas travel, a bit of marketing could produce a significant boost for local businesses
- Encourage more visitors to the area by advertising what we have to offer and also create areas where people can sit and just enjoy the towns interesting areas

Agriculture: How can we support agriculture and support creation of net gain in biodiversity?

Need to protect agricultural land:

- Our green belt and productive agricultural land must be protected. We are fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the country, which through over development will put it in danger of losing its visitor attraction. Some villages are already impacted adversely
- The countryside should be protected from development, including business, unless it needs to be located there and cannot be located in a built-up area. It should also only be permitted in the countryside where it protects and enhances the local area
- Need stronger rules on the size and weight of vehicles accessing rural farms to businesses working out of old farm buildings which have been diversified as mini industrial estates. Heavy vehicle frequently accessing these sites results in continuous damage to grass verges, ditches and the roads themselves. This in turn destroys the biodiversity along these roads.

Supporting agriculture:

- Encourage more cooperatives between agricultural suppliers – clearly the balance is important to make sure the consumer has choices, but pooling resources could share risk. See how government's intended farm subsidy policy that is meant to improve bio diversity can be influenced to cover the conversion of more local land to production & save the UK from having to import so much food
- Supporting farmers to be 'farmers' rather than farming not being a viable business needs to be prioritised
- The correlation between land use and its resultant number of jobs ignores its true value as a national agricultural resource and the character and setting for the established local community
- Support agriculture by not focussing on other sectors that may seem to give more bang for the buck. Recent years shown that we need to be more, not less self-sufficient. We need to look at other metrics than just pure £s/acre for the good of the country, not just this local area
- Help farmers with biodiversity by working with them to achieve this and encourage more small holdings
- GVA is not a valid data presentation for the context of this consultation and should be completely ignored. Especially in relation to the Agriculture Sector. Agriculture must be supported as this area provides vital food resources

Support diversification:

- Support diversification in how the farms are used. e.g. in Great Canfield there are several Airbnb, self-catering cottages, and barns rented out for small local business use. This assists the local economy with employment of local people
- Repurposing of land and buildings for hi-tech and environmental industries may increase its value added

Repurposing agricultural buildings/structures:

- Uttlesford is predominately an agricultural area. We need to consider what business needs from an (agricultural) property
- Not a good idea to convert already industrial barns into housing (to gain profits) since barns needed for light industrial
- Permitted development rights have already been extended to allow change of use and conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential, subject to some limits (GDPO Part Q). There are several examples in the District where this limited exemption is being abused, whereby several former sheds on a smallholding are first deemed by the Prior Notification process to be exempt from formal approval, which are soon granted full planning permission because the PD rights have established a baseline. This then frees up the Part Q rights for other buildings on site. These sites are unsustainably located to be able to support residential development. The new Local Plan should include content and policy to prevent this abuse of process

Other

- Agriculture dominates land use yet seems to contribute little to the economy

Stansted hub: What kind of space, buildings and infrastructure is required to support the diversity of businesses around Stansted?

Overall:

- Essex County Council recognises the important opportunity and asset that London Stansted airport performs as a gateway to the rest of the world

Support for non-airport related use:

- Include policies that take a more flexible approach towards accommodating development around the airport by removing airport-related user restrictions
- The airport is an important travel and business hub and is located at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor with excellent connections to the M11. Many businesses unrelated to the airport would benefit from an on-airport location and their operations would complement airport related uses. Consider new airport policies in the Local Plan which support general employment growth within the Stansted Airport boundary. Flexible use of diverse business premises to the area further south of the runway will deliver the greatest focused economic benefits, both for the airport, the local community and for the district as a whole
- Support the diversity of businesses around the Airport and to support economic recovery and growth
- Aviation and growth around the airport will 'pick up' and is again likely to be our largest area of employment. Can more of the sites around the airport be non-aviation related?
- There is surplus vacant employment space at Stansted Airport. The demand for industrial/warehouse space from airport associated users has fallen due to the changing role and function of the airport and a change in economic circumstances. This has resulted in the permanent loss of business, a greater number of vacant units for extended periods of time and a lack of new development – all of which impacts on the economic performance of the site and the airport's ability to facilitate economic growth and the provision of jobs on and off airport. This matter is further compounded by the fact that the supply of office, industrial and warehouse space in the District is already tightly constrained
- If passenger traffic at Stansted is projected to be lower than expected then it is a good time to think local and decide how the local economy can benefit. Sprawling car parks at Stansted Airport could be rethought and used for industry and the same level of car parking achieved with multi-storey – freeing up land that is already concreted over for more efficient use.

Support for warehousing and logistics:

- Provide continued policy support for warehousing and logistics development given its significant contribution to the economy and the locational benefits of the Airport

Restrict growth of Stansted:

- Stansted airport provides opportunities for businesses, but we **MUST** not allow exponential development outside of the existing boundaries. Roads and transport links, particularly M11 junctions 8 & 8A are already at capacity and not suitable for significant increases
- The drop in flight numbers will not be a short-term matter but seen as the beginning of a more environmentally sensitive future. The over-riding importance of reducing climate change means that there is a necessity to curb air travel. Government cannot support measures to reduce climate change yet support increased airport capacity as it seems to be doing at Stansted. UDC should do all it can in its Local

Plan to severely limit the capacity of Stansted Airport, and absolutely rule out any increase

- International travel and air travel generally are likely to follow a downward trend, therefore pressure should continue to reduce airport development
- Business which supports the expansion of Stansted Airport should be discouraged because this will lead to increased air miles, carbon emissions, noise

Other concerns:

- Warehouses for distribution tend to be large steel clad buildings which require direct and good links to trunk roads which limits areas that are suitable. Overpowering buildings such as these can be very destructive to local communities, as seen in Milton Keynes. Need to be very cautious before approving buildings of this scale and impact on local communities
- Stansted Airport must stop being seen as the hub of all local employment

Working from home: How can we support home based working and businesses?

- Homeworking is very likely to grow. More companies may encourage this to save on their own office costs
- Employers will not need large offices. Hot desking will be the norm & a much greater emphasis on meeting rooms e.g. oil giant BP expect staff to work 40% of their time from home. Such changes will have significant impact on the demand for office space. Many empty office spaces may be converted to flats and apartments
- Office requirements will be very different post COVID. Technology has also affected office requirements, paper free offices are the norm
- Business hubs may be important for people whose homes do not have suitable space for working at home; for facilities to enable meeting face-to-face at times. Town centres may develop these hubs in empty retail or over-the-shop spaces. These should be given priority over change of use to residential
- Implies need for additional space in new houses and/or local workspace hubs
- Home working - better communications links are needed & support for businesses & communities
- Look at the guidance issued by the Welsh Government – <https://gov.wales/remote-working> Review planning rules to relax requirements for enabling homes to become business focussed

Supporting existing businesses: How can the Local Plan support existing businesses?

- Invest and develop our existing industrial clusters or where specialist opportunities exist: science; construction; businesses involved in greening and the environment; visitor attractions (museums, galleries, music, open spaces for walking etc.); arts/media/creative; sport and recreation; hospitality; food production and food growing, warehousing and distribution
- Consider the needs of logistics (storage and distribution), general or light industrial sectors, and offices – which are important sectors that all contribute to the economy

On construction:

- Construction is a large part, but interestingly appears to contribute relatively little to the economy. If this is the case, push that sector and demand more. If there are

contracts to be got, insist on the best green conditions to be met. Encourage construction companies to give back to the community and compete for the best green designs

On sustainable development:

- When planning for sustainable development there are going to be difficult decisions; the norm will no longer be the norm, and radically different ways of thinking are going to be needed. Business and industry should be at the cutting edge of sustainability, driving it with inspiring ideas

Encourage growth & new business start-up: What kind of businesses should we attract to Uttlesford? How can we support businesses to grow and create new jobs in Uttlesford?

- The UK Innovation Corridor report 'Innovation Core' (17 March 2021) identifies this area as a leader for Europe, including:
 - how research is transformed into commercial products
 - forecasts for growth
 - identifying the importance of developing business spaces, more homes and a skilled workforce to benefit from an increasing numbers of jobs
 - the need to ensure Uttlesford continues to make connections to the development work within the Corridor to achieve maximum benefits to our residents, businesses and schools etc.

Uttlesford is a partner local authority and needs to be working alongside and with the other Local Plan themes and targets

- Ensure adequate business/employment sites
- Set out key areas for growth in the District, such as Stansted Airport. A key focus should be on locations for employment growth in areas which are considered as suitable locations
- Transport links must be improved if we are to encourage business growth
- There needs to be 'seed beds' to encourage small businesses to start up and flourish and the correct placing of any larger more industrial units.
- We need more computer-based companies, like a small computer hub along with science-based companies
- Allowing business to expand in their existing location is the most beneficial way to encourage employment in a district. Logical to allocate additional employment land adjacent to existing business premises where possible. Likewise, encouraging redevelopment of low-grade employment sites to create modern clear span buildings that are more suitable for 21st century business operations. This will allow local businesses to compete internationally there by reducing imports and benefitting the local and national economy and providing high quality local employment. Enterprise zone and business rates relief can also be effective tools
- The need for flexible space and the ability for small businesses to grow.

Allow local businesses to grow and expand:

- Need to allow our local small family business to grow whilst remaining in our local area rather than moving away when they require efficient new and larger premises. Woodgates Farm in Broxton and Skyline 120 in Braintree are good examples of what can be achieved. Such developments would also attract new opportunities to Uttlesford and ultimately reduce the need for many to commute.

- There is a need to make provision for small businesses to grow and for new start-up businesses to have opportunities to locate to premises that are available in locations that are accessible to residential neighbourhoods, including villages. Uttlesford District has no vacant employment land that is available to purchase
- Land on the airport has historically been unavailable and any future release of sites is hampered by the need to provide delivery infrastructure, which has an 18-month lead in time. The nature of this land is also large scale and not suitable for the scale and nature of the majority of business operating in Uttlesford. Therefore, smaller sites need to be allocated in locations that are accessible to housing and close to the highway network, including the M11. There are no new employment land opportunities in Takeley/Canfield
- Greater flexibility should be introduced into policies to encourage expansion and adaptation of existing businesses and allow for intensification of existing employment sites to meet the demand for additional employment floorspace

Support of warehousing and logistics:

- There should be continued policy support for warehousing and logistics development, given its significant contribution to the economy
- To have a robust plan for economic recovery, Uttlesford must create the right conditions to support existing key resilient growth sectors, such as warehousing and logistics
- Reference to 'logistics' is under the heading of 'Stansted hub', which would pre-suppose that logistics are either only important in relation to the airport, or that the airport is the only appropriate location for logistics development. This is not the case.
- Over the past decade, the demand for new warehouse premises for logistics floorspace has grown enormously. Most of this was driven by logistics-type activities across a range of different industrial sectors including: wholesale, parcel delivery, online retail, high street retail, grocery retail and third party logistics operators. There is, and will continue to be, an increase in the demand for additional logistics (storage and distribution) floorspace, ideally located with easy access to the strategic highway network, Stansted Airport and ports
- Newport Parish Council suggests that freight should go by rail. Freight on our narrow roads pollutes our air and causes ill-health

Responding to change:

- The switch in activity from high street retail to online has created a significant demand for facilities close to the motorway (J8) for retailer distribution and delivery, these tend to be medium sized warehousing stock and generate relatively high levels of employment and the District is historically very short of such stock. The provision at Stansted northside proposed in the last plan will be welcome but on its own is insufficient to meet this demand and consideration ought to be given to well located sites, in close proximity to the junction in addition to the original proposals
- Consideration is required on the appropriate re use of retail buildings particularly in secondary locations which will no longer be viable for retail purposes, flexible consideration of permitted development in these locations will be required as a preponderance of empty frontages will undermine the viability of the high street as a whole. Other uses might include childcare, healthcare/gym/fitness, A3/A5, offices and residential subject to each case.

Address need and deficiencies:

- There is inadequate provision of smaller B (now E) class units for smaller local businesses, these typically require units of 150 to 500 sq m in trade park or roadside

locations with relatively easy access to the highway network for delivery/goods in/out and are a good source of local jobs and rates income

- There is proven demand for clusters of office/Class e employment to support the SME sector and with vacancy rates at below 5% of existing stock the lack of new employment facilities is now and has for some time acted as a constraint on the local economy
- Unless employment sites can be located adjacent to public transport hubs there will need to be adequate car parking provision as , being a rural district the majority of employees are reliant on their cars to get to and from work

Thinking about possible new settlements:

- Any new settlements proposed should have adequate provision for employment space in order to reduce the impact of traffic movements into and out of the district, but these do need to be of sufficient scale to provide a range of opportunities across the SME sector and must include B1(c) and smaller scale B8 facilities as this is where the local demand is, alongside offices aimed at the local and regional markets. a token provision will not provide the critical mass to ensure viability

Living and working locally: How can we create the conditions to enable people to live and work locally?

- Policies are required to support residents on low incomes; Encourage employers to pay fair living wages to our key workers, including care workers and delivery drivers and shop workers, and decent sick pay
- Need for the creation of a local Job Centre+ where our residents claiming UC can do so without travelling far. Currently a 4-hour round trip on public transport costs around £15
- Please waive parking charges for local UC claimants and offer free public transport

The green economy: How can the Local Plan encourage and support the growth of new green sectors, businesses and innovation?

- The costs to go green are an additional challenge. Have business incentives for e-cars/ e-vans, solar panels. Do this in a way that even small businesses benefit
- The idea of creating rural enterprise hubs seems good, please explore
- Solar panels – the idea of village halls and churches teaming up to create local Community Interest Companies to run an energy grid, keeping jobs and income local, seems brilliant –please assist our towns and villages to start such green enterprise
- Green Investment - develop a sustainable ethical investment policy, to invest in good things like: the Science Park, mental health services for children and adults, domestic violence shelters, affordable social housing, sports and parks, green public transport, local procurement, using local housebuilders, and green energy
- Post-Covid will hopefully see climate change being considered more important than before along with a reduction in air travel and the unrealistic desire to allow Stansted Airport to grow way beyond its current limit
- Business productivity is drastically needed in effective green waste management, green energy e.g. household solar, wind, ground source warmth, green planting materials especially vertical planting structures, green fencing, fencing with hedgehog holes, affordable green household products and green transport
- Where does all the waste go? Green disposal mechanisms are essential for greener consumerism. We should deal with the waste in Uttlesford

Changes to permitted development: How can the Local Plan protect and enhance our high streets?

- The phenomenon of abandoned shopping retail premise is increasing, yet new development, tearing up existing green land going on, which seems environmentally counterproductive. Give incentives for developers to look at areas in decline before seeking new sites. Make this regeneration attractive
- High street shop conversions to residential should be banned – please lobby Government to ban this
- It's more important this holds in smaller villages where the loss of a single shop, Post Office or pub has a profound impact
- Change of high street shops to residential would result in an incongruous mix of uses
- Article 4 Directions should be sought to prevent the automatic right to change use from retail to residential

Impact of the pandemic on Uttlesford: How can the Local Plan support the economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the lasting changes in our behaviour and use of local facilities that are likely to stay?

- More people working from home (not commuting) since Covid and there may be more small business start-ups. Investigate options to encourage communal business spaces, rent a desk, hubs etc. with support and facilities alongside. Possibly using community/voluntary sector buildings as a social enterprise and encourage use of existing buildings
- Need for improved broadband connectivity
- I believe that business growth will bounce back strongly once Covid restrictions are lifted and that many long established business practices will be the beneficiary of significant innovative change as a result of the pandemic. There will however be many losers and businesses which will sadly not survive, whilst others may struggle and require assistance to achieve sustainable business growth. Advantageous loan facilities and financial incentives will be required to assist and encourage new start-up businesses into the district
- Business rates must be urgently reviewed at a national level and is probably the most pressing issue affecting future business stability and growth. This is particularly the case in the leisure sector of pubs and restaurants, which has been so badly impacted. The impact of pandemic lockdowns on high street and town centres should be investigated and reviewed at the earliest opportunity to take full advantage of closed businesses and other properties for future housing or business opportunities
- We must change direction from multiple coffee chains, charity shops and estate agents to bring innovative new retail business and social centres into these areas. Home working may well initiate local business meeting hubs
- It is surely far too soon to predict what a post-pandemic District will look like (especially as it is not yet over), and to make any assumptions about what the new Local Plan should do to accommodate any changes
- It seems that Covid has created a potential shift that will see more people work from home at least part of the time, creating more stable home communities (less commuter ghost-towns) with more demand for local services and shops during the day. Local businesses are also innovating due to Covid in terms of making their services and products accessible online or with delivery options, or with pubs offering work space, pop-up mobile businesses.

- Uttlesford must create the right conditions to support existing key resilient growth sectors, such as warehousing and logistics, that can assist in ameliorating the impact of COVID-19
- Consideration, post covid, must be given to hubs or 'rent an office space' hot desk type provision

Responses related to specific sites and the call for sites

- Land to the west of Station Road, Takeley, (Hatfield Broad Oak Parish) - 3 hectare site promoted for mixed use employment, which can be designed to make provision for a broad spectrum of business and commercial uses. The Council should be making provision for smaller mixed use employment sites in or around larger settlements where they are readily accessible to existing residential neighbourhoods. Thereby matching homes with jobs.
- Warish Hall Farm (Weston Homes) - would offer increased choice and availability of accommodation, facilities and job opportunities within the local area and in close proximity to Stansted Airport. The London-Stansted-Cambridge Corridor's Growth Commission (2016) identified that the Corridor competes globally for investment and needs the quality of place and infrastructure to attract talent, investment and entrepreneurs
- To support the diversity of businesses around the Airport and to support economic recovery and growth SEGRO requests that the FedEx Cargo Warehouse at Stansted Airport is not restricted to a cargo-related use in the emerging Local Plan. It is considered that this will provide flexibility for a range of logistics and employment uses to come forward in this area that will support economic growth
- UDC has failed to support M11 Business Link Site by refusing growth because it is in the Green Belt. This site requires direct access to the M11 but it seems UDC has deliberately ignored business development here yet why did it approve the setting up of this site in the first place?
- North Uttlesford (Grosvenor) presents an opportunity to unlock the economic potential supporting the growth of existing business & sectors and opportunities for inward investment. It is strategically well-placed. Potential to provide a range of housing & facilities for employees within the Growth Corridor & across the Life Science Cluster
- Land north of Taylors Farm (Pigeon) – opportunity for commercial and logistics park, comprising light industrial, storage and distribution uses. Uttlesford has the lowest level of industrial floorspace in its property market area (comprising Uttlesford, Hertford, Harlow and Epping Forest) representing only 15% of total stock. Furthermore, it has incredibly low vacancy rates (0.6%) against an ideal vacancy rate of 8%.
- Down Hall Hotel – request support to improve its on-site golf, leisure and recreation offer; support on-site staff living accommodation tied to the principle use of the hotel

Other considerations

- Request to consider Felsted Neighbourhood Plan
- NB Thaxted and Great Dunmow also have made Neighbourhood Plans