

6. South Uttlesford Area Strategy



The South Area Strategy covers the corridor that extends east to west from Stansted Mountfitchet to Great Dunmow and includes the settlement of Takeley.

Introduction

- 6.1 The South Area Strategy covers the corridor that extends east to west from Stansted Mountfitchet to Great Dunmow and includes the settlement of Takeley. It is a strategically important employment and transport corridor, largely following the A120, and contains a variety of land uses, landscapes, biodiversity and heritage assets. Its role as a transport corridor is focused on the A120 that links Stansted Airport and the M11 at Junction 8 to Braintree and beyond.
- 6.2 The area's economic importance is focused on the larger scale industries' associated with airport cargo, passenger trips and commercial activities in and around the Stansted Airport area. The emerging Northside commercial development has recently been consented for 195,000 sqm and adjoins the airport. The two road arteries connect at Junction 8 of the M11 motorway, and to the railway stations on the Cambridge to London West Anglia line at Stansted Mountfitchet, and the multi-modal transport hub at Stansted Airport itself.
- 6.3 The countryside is rolling, agricultural and dissected by three river systems draining into the Rivers Chelmer, Roding and Stort that create a variety of habitats with considerable scope for enhancement along agricultural margins and the development proposed on farmland. The area has a rich and long history and heritage with several hundred listed buildings. Hatfield Forest Nature Reserve is a SSSI, containing a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This major visitor attraction currently suffers from overuse and lack of choice in public parkland amenity spaces and it is therefore essential the Local Plan supports the creation of a new Country Park along with more localised improvements to green infrastructure and open spaces, to help reduce any impacts on Hatfield Forest.
- 6.4 The area is a popular place in which to live with easy access to London and Cambridge. Three 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans cover parts of the South Strategy area at Great Dunmow, Felsted and Stebbing, whilst the Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley Neighbourhood Plans are currently being prepared as is designation of a Conservation Area at Smith's Green.
- 6.5 Beyond Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are our next largest settlements, which provide for the largest range of services and facilities, and as such are classified as 'key settlements'. Great Dunmow is situated about 6 miles east of Stansted Airport, north of the A120 dual carriageway. The parish is largely rural, however there is significant development pressure due to the town's proximity to Stansted Airport and London, the M11 motorway and the A120. Great Dunmow has its origins in roman times and there are over two-hundred listed buildings within the town.
- 6.6 Stansted Mountfitchet is situated near the border between Essex and Hertfordshire. The town relies on nearby settlements for large scale retail and leisure opportunities, and employment opportunities at Stansted Airport, Bishop Stortford and London. Stansted's origins as a settlement date back to Saxon Briton whilst the occupation of Stansted Mountfitchet castle, which now comprises a Schedule Ancient Monument, long pre-dates this. The southern edge of the settlement is bordered by a Metropolitan Green Belt designation, which prevents coalescence between the built form a Stansted, Birchanger and Bishops Stortford.

- 6.7 Takeley is classified as a 'Local Rural Centre' which represents the second highest level of services and facilities and provides an opportunity to support highly sustainable development. The settlement has seen piecemeal development in recent years and new strategic scale development in this plan provides an opportunity to provide a comprehensive and high-quality scheme that incorporates large areas of open space, protects the historic and environmental assets, but also provides for a new local centre and infrastructure such as schools and health facilities. With improved cycle and pedestrian access to the public transport interchange at Stansted Airport and nearby existing and proposed strategic employment sites, this provides one of the best opportunities for sustainable development in the district.
- 6.8 The South Area Strategy aims to provide new housing, community facilities and employment sites respecting the existing characters and heritage settings like Hatfield Forest's ancient royal hunting grounds, Smiths Green, Church End village and the Flitch Way long distance recreational route along the former railway line.

How the South Uttlesford will change by 2041

- 6.9 By 2041, the following deliverables are sought for within the South Uttlesford Area:
- the provision of a new secondary school at Takeley to serve the settlement and surrounding catchment and to complement the new secondary school already planned at Great Dunmow. There will also be new primary schools at Takeley and at Great Dunmow.
 - the provision of around 2,895 new dwellings on four strategic sites (one at Takeley for around 1,636 dwellings, one at Great Dunmow for around 869 dwellings and two sites at Stansted Mountfitchet for around 390 dwellings in total). The development will include around 1,000 affordable homes.
 - to provide active travel linkages between the proposed development sites and the existing settlement facilities, including improved connections for walking and cycling between Takeley and the public transport interchange at Stansted Airport and between key employment sites.
 - significant areas of new green infrastructure, open space, areas for enhancing and protecting biodiversity, including a new Country Park in the Takeley and Great Dunmow areas to reduce pressure on Hatfield Forest
 - protection of significant areas around Stansted Airport (Countryside Protection Zone) to preserve its 'rural' character and ensure there is no coalescence with any of the nearby settlements
 - to plan for 33 hectares of strategic employment space in the South Uttlesford Area to meet identified need related to the area, its settlements and related to the airport
 - development which achieves high quality urban design and protects the historic nature of the settlements, and
 - support greater footfall within the retail centres in Takeley, Prior's Green and Great Dunmow and to help boost the local economy.

Housing

- 6.9 There has been significant new housing growth along and adjacent to the corridor in recent years. It is important however that infrastructure is delivered to support any growth and the proposed allocations in this Local Plan will help to address any existing shortcomings.

- 6.11 To deliver the homes and infrastructure outlined above, the Local Plan provides for around 2,895 additional homes at four proposed strategic sites at Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley/Little Canfield. These allocations are set out in **Core Policy 10 and Figures 6.1, 6.2** shown below.
- 6.12 The policy requirements (**Appendix 3**) ensure that a comprehensive master-planning approach is taken to planning for the strategic sites to ensure the development forms part of cohesive approach. Planning applications will be required to ensure that new development delivers appropriate linkages between the allocations and the existing settlements, well-connected green infrastructure, and high quality public open spaces that benefit all South Uttlesford residents.
- 6.13 The proximity of new development in well serviced locations near existing communities and the enhancement of services will help to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of existing settlements. A high proportion of local housing will be affordable and available in different tenures with specialist housing including those that are suited to our ageing population and people who wish to rent.
- 6.14 The Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper provides a detailed explanation for how the proposed allocations have been selected³⁸.

Economy

- 6.15 The South Uttlesford Area will continue as a significant location for employment, particularly associated with the airport, including the recently consented scheme at Northside, located on the north-western side of the airport for 195,000 sqm for a range of B1 (industrial) uses and anticipated to provide around 3,000 jobs. Growth in passenger numbers at the airport and the new terminal facility will also provide for further employment in this area.
- 6.16 This Local Plan proposes three new strategic employment sites to meet the identified need in proximity to Stansted Airport, but also being easily accessible to the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres in this area. These sites are listed in Core Policy 4 and provide for around 33 hectares. The site Great Dunmow/ Takeley south of the A120 between Great Dunmow and Takeley should also include a public transport mobility hub, which is discussed more later in this Chapter.

³⁸ Uttlesford District Council, 2023, Site Selection Methodology Topic Paper. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

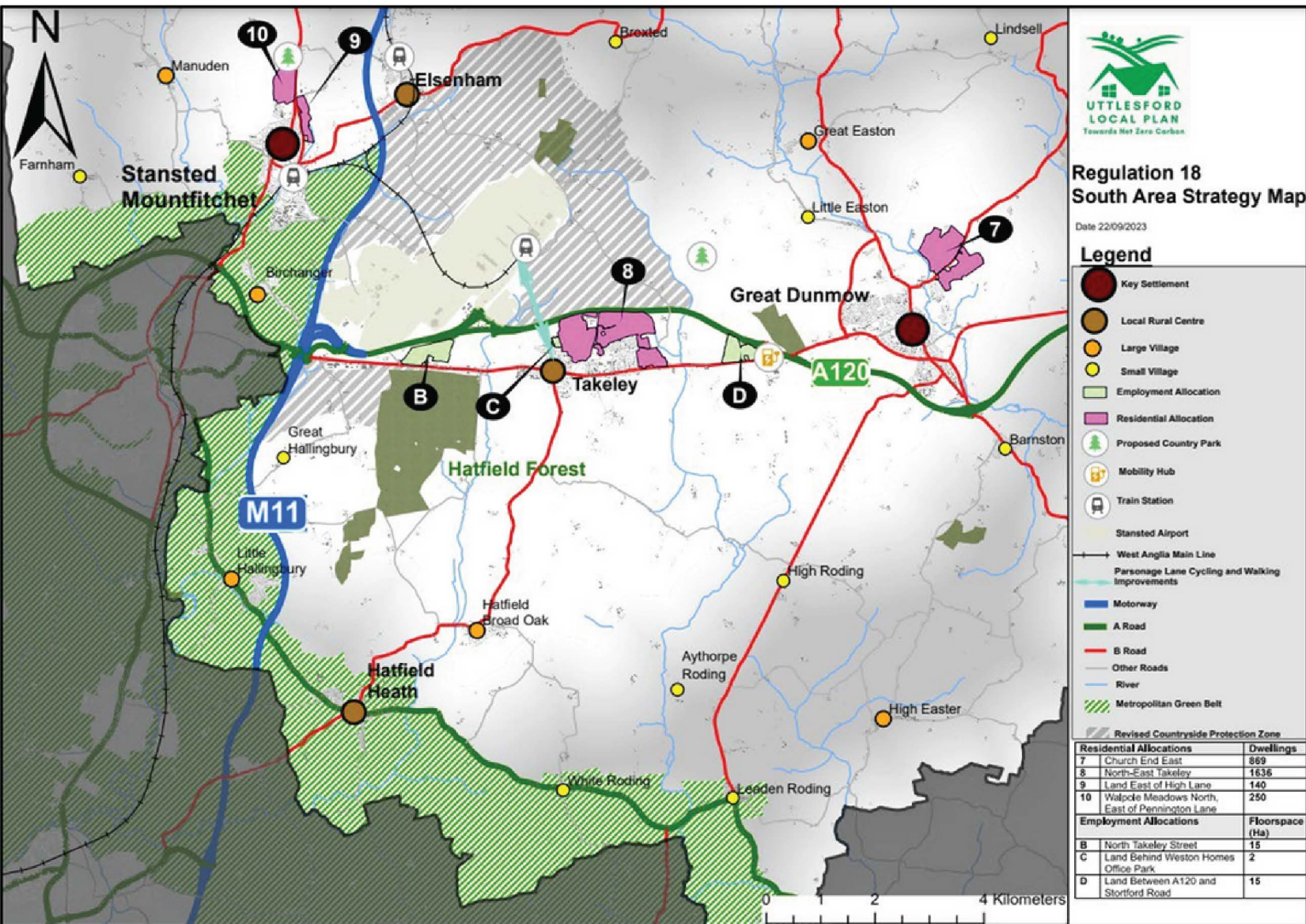


Figure 6.1: Area Strategy Map

Core Policy 10: South Uttlesford Area Strategy

Our overarching priority for the South Uttlesford Area is to support the strategic roles of the Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres by delivering a balance of housing, employment and a range of infrastructure, whilst protecting the environmental and historic assets and maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices.

Development in the South Uttlesford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

Housing Delivery

Around 2,895 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations may also be delivered through this Plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendix 3**) and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the South Uttlesford Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 6.1: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Housing Allocations

| Settlement/ Parish | Site Name | No. Dwellings |
|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| Stansted Mountfitchet | Walpole Meadows North, East of Pennington Lane | 250 |
| Stansted Mountfitchet | East of High Lane North | 140 |
| Takeley/ Little Canfield | NE Takeley | 1,636 |
| Great Dunmow | Church End East | 869 |
| Total | | 2,895 |

Employment

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with Core Policy 45. Thirty Three hectares of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with Core Policy 4 on the following strategic employment sites:

Table 6.2: South Uttlesford Area Strategy Employment Allocations

| Settlement | Site Name | Hectares |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Takeley/ Little Canfield | Land Between A120 and Stortford Road | 15 |
| Takeley | North Takeley Street | 15 |
| Gaunts End | Gaunts End | 3 |
| Total | | 33 |

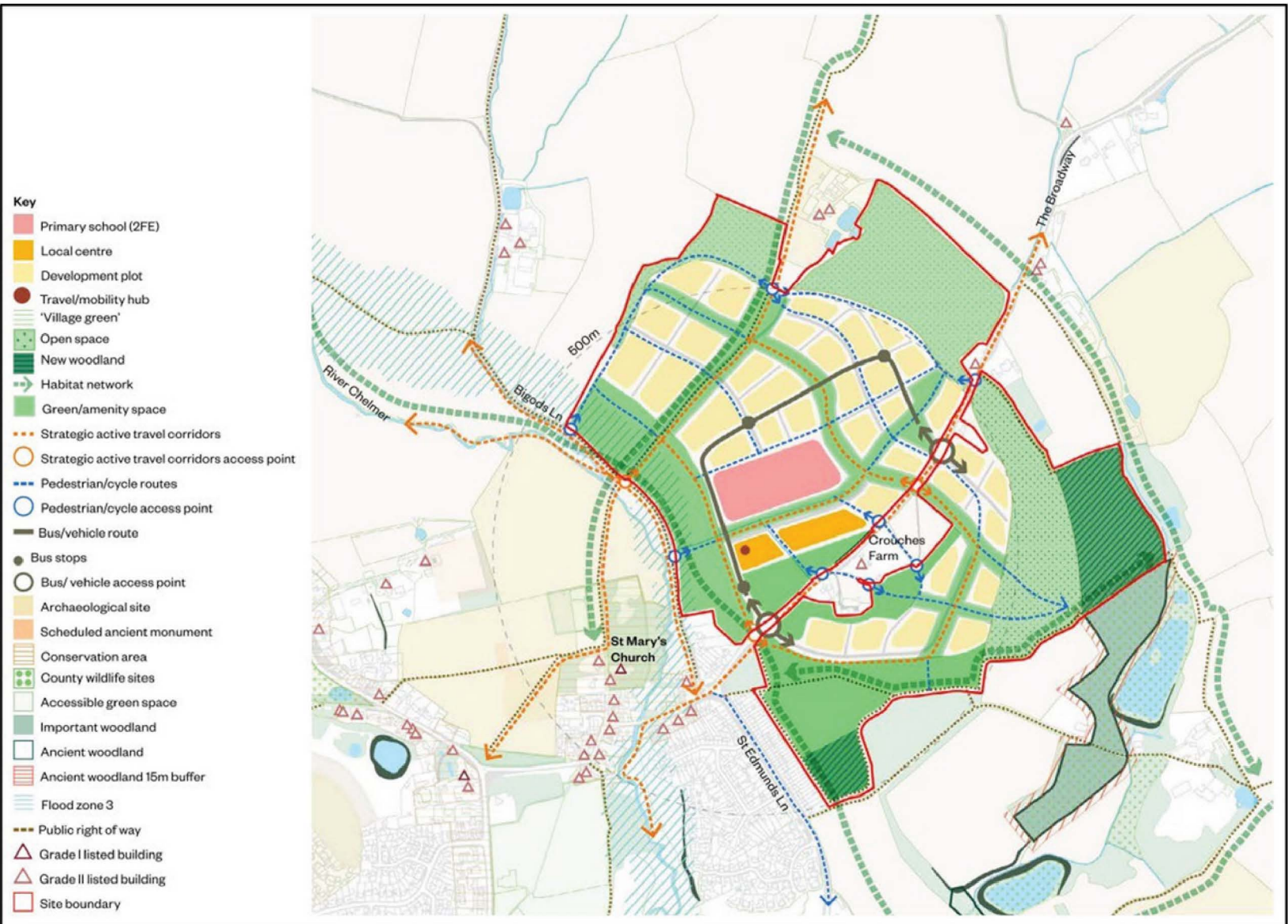


Figure 6.2: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Great Dunmow

- 6.17 The proposed allocation within **Figure 6.2** seeks to deliver around 869 dwellings in a new valley side neighbourhood extension for Church End, structured around a new riverside park extending around the site to provide public access and amenity to new and existing residents, along with a local centre of community uses and small retail units. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:
- a new local centre organised around a new riverside public park should be located on the northern parcel to serve new and existing residents. This new centre should maintain a visual connection to the setting of the Grade II Listed Crouches Farm
 - streets should be organised along and follow contours to form a network of continuous, interlinked routes
 - a new primary school is to be provided adjacent to the local centre and along a bus route
 - create extensive areas of green and blue infrastructure across the site that are capable of supporting biodiversity, including an expansion of the existing woodland to the east of the site
 - attractive and functional open spaces to facilitate social interaction and public amenity, and
 - permeability for pedestrians from the site into the existing Public Rights of Way network and wider rural landscape.

Stansted Mountfitchet

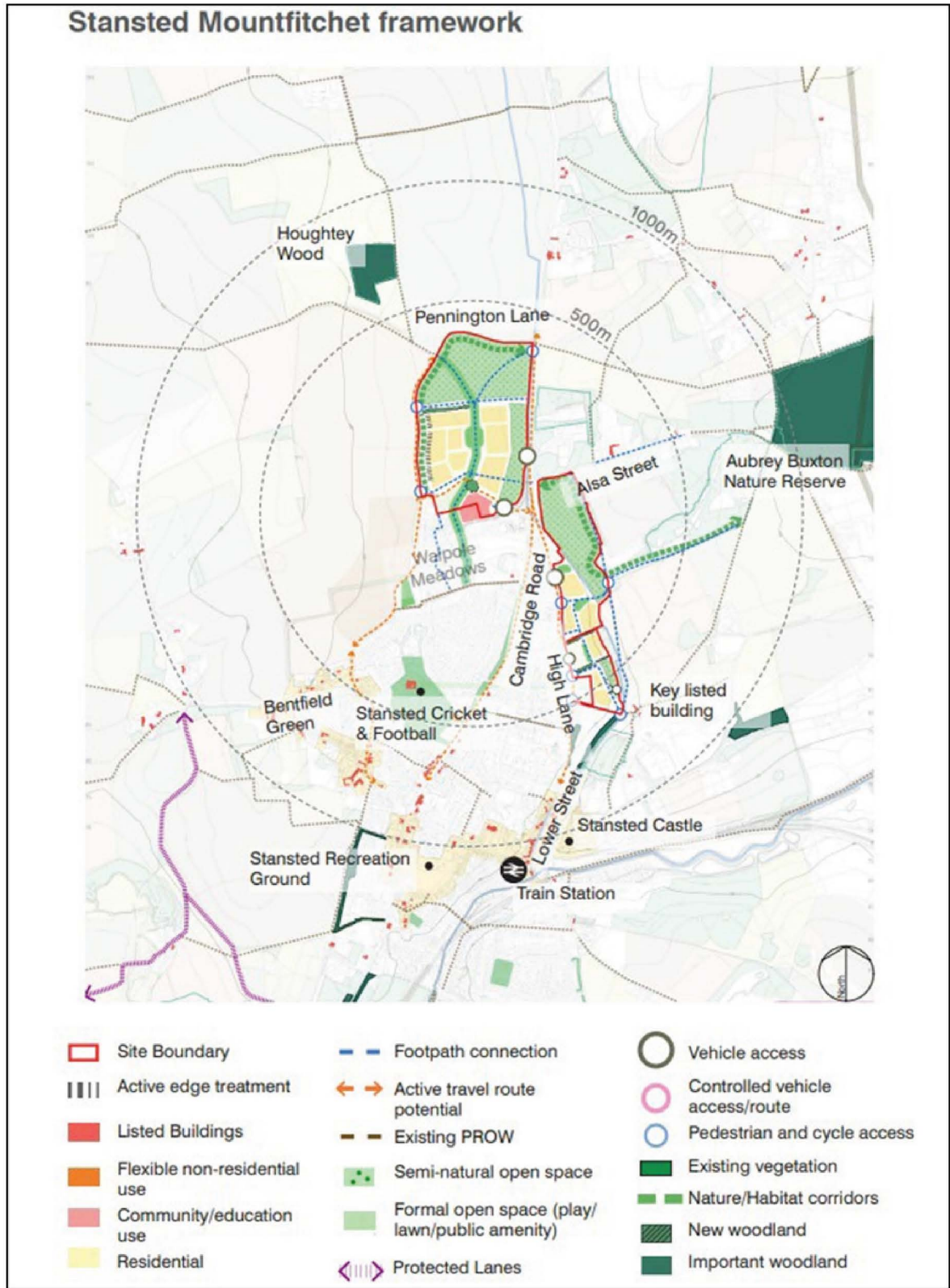


Figure 6.3: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Stansted Mountfitchet

6.18 The proposed allocations within Figure 6.3 seek to cumulatively deliver around 390 dwellings, green infrastructure, open spaces, and new transport infrastructure. These allocations deliver a level of growth which can support the vitality of Stansted Mountfitchet and provide essential new facilities whilst also being well integrated into the settlement and protecting its important historic character. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

- enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the town centre and Cambridge Road by developing active routes that can be easily accessed from all points of the development including the large open space in the north of the development
- provide an additional community use such as an educational building or health and leisure facility that is easily accessible by walking distance to surrounding developments within 20 minutes
- provide a large green space in the north of both sites that is accessible by 10 minutes to surrounding homes, and create a green pedestrian link that connects the sites with the public rights of way (PROW)
- provide a new 2 Form Entry Primary School for the new development here and to assist with planning for the wide catchment along with making provision for expanding the existing secondary school
- create areas of green and blue infrastructure across the site that are capable of supporting biodiversity. These spaces should link with the PROW to the east and beyond to the County Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserves, and
- conserve and enhance the setting of the listed buildings. Development should seek to establish how key views of the landscape are protected and equally how the development impacts views into the settlement from the landscape to the east.

Takeley

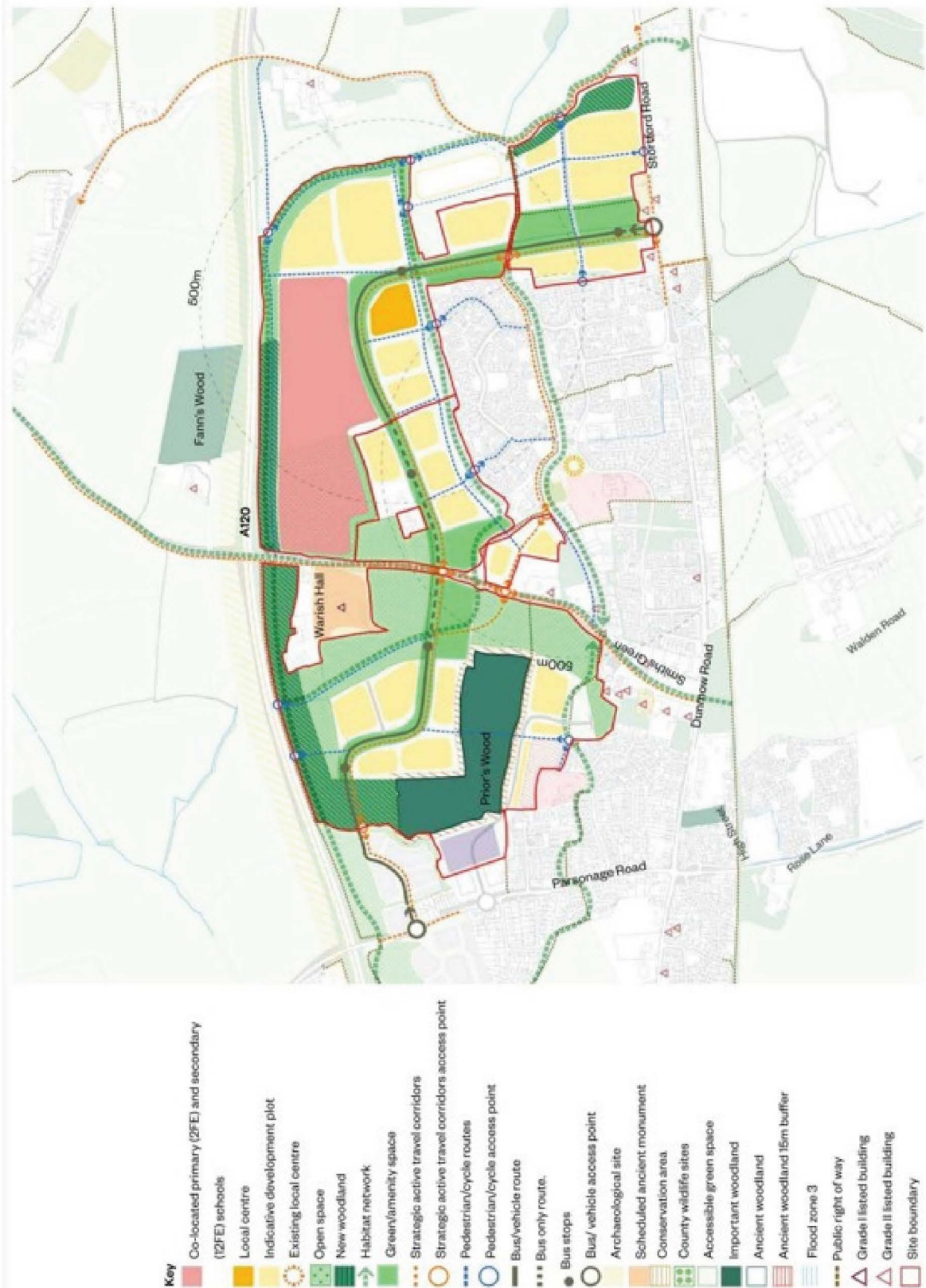


Figure 6.4: Proposed Strategic Allocations at Takeley

6.19 The proposed allocation within Figure 6.4 seeks to deliver around 1,636 dwellings, within integrated neighbourhoods, enhancing the vitality of Takeley and the wider area. It is recognised that part of the allocation falls within the neighbouring parish of Little Canfield, and it is important that the separate identity of Little Canfield is maintained. The allocation provides for a comprehensive package of open space, green infrastructure, protection for environmental and heritage assets as well as providing important new infrastructure and a local centre for the area. Key considerations for planning for these sites will include:

- a new primary school, adjacent to a new local centre and on a public transport corridor
- a new Secondary school along the north-eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to new local centre and on a public transport corridor
- a new local centre in the eastern parcel positioned to maximise its catchment, providing for a range of uses including for health care, whilst also minimising any adverse impact on the existing local centre at Little Canfield
- the new neighbourhoods should be arranged around a green wedge at the centre along Smiths Green Lane providing amenity for new and existing communities and by providing extensive open space and protection for the environment and heritage assets, and
- an active travel and public transport spine should be provided connecting the new neighbourhoods and new local centre.

Stansted Airport

6.20 The growth in Stansted Airport as a transport hub, commercial and hospitality centre and as a stimulus to economic spin-off, research and product design, manufacturing and ancillary services underlines its role as the country's fourth busiest airport. Additional long-haul passenger numbers will impact on transport movements in the area for travelers and for employees. The range and diversity of employment opportunities at the airport is welcomed and encouraged.

6.21 Sustainable transport choice to and from the airport should be available over the 24- hour period, building on existing services and improving routes. It is expected that in the shorter-term subsidy and other support for users of bus services will be required to facilitate convenient access to employment opportunities.

6.22 The functional local use of the airport as an economic and transport hub is encouraged. This requires continued collaboration with the management of the airport and agreement on the master plan for the surface transport arrangements on the non-highways' authority airport land to include improvements to local transport infrastructure, safe cycling and walking access particularly around the A120 Start Hill roundabout and Junction 8 arising from airport-related growth. For these reasons, a route for improved pedestrian/ cycle connections between Takeley and the airport is set out later in this Chapter.

6.23 Of importance to achieving an acceptable expansion of airport-related activity is to retain control over the character and amenity experienced in and derived from the surrounding countryside between the airport and villages as well as the required and regulatory standards for noise, air pollution, and public safety etc. The NPPF requires the consideration of transport and air quality issues from the early stages of plan- making and development proposals to address known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility for new development, particularly by active travel and public transport. Accordingly, the Local Plan's Area Strategies are directing development towards areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

- 6.24 Support will be given to appropriate aviation-related development proposals and the airport's contribution to the local and national economy. The Council will seek clear mitigation measures effectively addressing any aviation related environmental or health concerns.
- 6.25 The Councils approach to development proposals within the airport's safeguarded areas are set out in **Core Policy 11**. This seeks to ensure that any development is appropriate, not unreasonably impacted by the airspace, and that the Airport Operator is given due consultation.
- 6.26 Air safeguarding areas refer to a designated zone of exclusion, in which the Airport Operator can, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority, consult on development proposals to protect the environment surrounding the airport from development. Reasons for preventing development would include activities that have the potential to impact the airports safe operation, or sensitive development that would likely be negatively and inappropriately impacted by the aerospace itself. Safeguarding ensures:
- buildings and structures in the area do not pose a danger to aircraft
 - the integrity of radar and other electronic aids to navigation are not affected
 - inappropriate lighting is not present, to avoid confusion with aeronautical lighting
 - no increase in wildlife risk (e.g., bird strikes)
 - operations that could create interference through construction processes are prevented, and
 - aircraft are not impacted by potential 'glint and glare' from development (e.g., solar panels).
- 6.27 The safeguarded airspace around Stansted measures approximately 6.5 nautical miles (12 km) in radius, centred around the Airfield Reference Point, the mid-point of the main instrument runway. Airport-related development within the safeguarded area, and elsewhere, must be held to the same standards as other development, as set out within the supporting policies.

Aircraft Noise

- 6.28 Aircraft noise is generally exempt from the general noise nuisance controls. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the control of aircraft noise. However, the Civil Aviation Authority indicates the overall policy is that noise issues are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise.
- 6.29 In order to determine whether or not any specific development is likely to increase 'noise nuisance' from aircraft, the Council will seek to assess the impact of that development in terms of:
- the number, location, duration and frequency of aircraft activities and movements
 - the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with individual aircraft activities and movements
 - the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with overall aircraft activities and movements
 - seasonality of aircraft activities and movements, and
 - the time of day at which aircraft activities and movements take place.

- 6.24 Where planning permission is granted for development, the Council may impose conditions in accordance with the NPPF noise guidance and Core Policy 43: Noise.

Core Policy 11: London Stansted Airport

The Council will support the continued use of London-Stansted Airport.

It will consult with the airport operator on proposals in the aircraft's safeguarded areas, as shown by the Policies Map and Appendix 5. Development that may be a hazard to aircraft operation and/ or safety will not be permitted.

In consultation with the airport operator, the Council will ensure that:

- i. areas included in airport safeguarding areas are protected from development, and
- ii. sensitive uses such as housing, education and hospitals are not located in areas significantly affected by aircraft noise without acceptable mitigation measures.

Development proposals at the airport should include mitigation measures to address any environmental and health impacts, particularly in respect of noise, air quality, health, and climate change in compliance with other Development Plan policies.

Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone

- 6.31 The Uttlesford 1995 Local Plan introduced a 'Countryside Protection Zone' (CPZ) policy that identified land parcels around the airport that would be protected from development in order to safeguard the 'rural' nature and setting of Stansted. It was also included in the 2005 Local Plan. This has been partly successful and despite significant development at the airport, now the Country's second busiest airport, its surroundings remain predominantly rural.
- 6.32 This plan is seeking to support sustainable development, and thus it is important that any strategic housing and employment development is located where they reduce the need for travel and maximize opportunities for sustainable travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport. On this basis, it is proposed that the CPZ area is amended to ensure the rural setting of the airport continues to be protected, but that the sustainable development proposed by this plan is removed from the areas protected by the 1995 policy (Core Policy 12).
- 6.33 It is considered that the approach proposed strikes an appropriate balance between preserving the rural setting of the airport, which supports sustainable development in accordance with national and local priorities to support the climate change emergency. **Appendix 7** includes maps showing the CPZ area as set out in the 2005 plan and as proposed to be amended by this Plan.

Core Policy 12: Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone

An area around Stansted Airport (the Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone) is protected from development to preserve the 'rural' character of the area around the airport. The area is shown by the Policies Map and **Appendix 7**.

Within the defined area, development will only be supported where, either of the following apply:

- i. new buildings or uses would not promote the coalescence between the airport and the existing or allocated development in the surrounding countryside within the CPZ, and
- ii. the proposal would not adversely affect the open characteristics of the CPZ.

Delivery of Transport Infrastructure within the South Uttlesford Area

- 6.33 To ensure we deliver sustainable and active travel within the South Uttlesford area, the proposed allocations will be required to contribute to strategic transport improvements including the delivery of active travel routes and infrastructure, improvements to bus services and the provision of car clubs and e-bikes. This will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. Consideration should be given to providing and enhancing active travel connections to rail stations and schools.
- 6.34 These interventions will ensure that the development proposals provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resultant from the development proposals.
- 6.35 The Local Plan supports the enhancement of the Stansted Airport transport interchange including enhancements to the wider bus network and train services. Collaboration with the airport is important to manage the importance of this facility for the airport, whilst also enabling sustainable access (walking/ cycling) from nearby Takeley and proposed Sustainable and Public Transport Hub to be located between Great Dunmow and Takeley. This facility will enable better access to more strategic transport routes from the nearby settlements, enabling safe access via walking, cycling or more localised bus connections.
- 6.36 There are two railway stations in this area, at the Airport and at Stansted Mountfitchet. It will be important to deliver enhancements to the public transport interchanges together with improved walking and cycling connections to the stations including improved infrastructure at the stations.
- 6.37 The South Area benefits from a good network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). All new developments will be required to improve the connectivity and attractiveness of routes in the vicinity of the development site, and to provide new routes where indicated in the proposed site allocation master-plans.
- 6.38 Of particular importance is the Flich Way, a strategic footpath (NCN16) utilising the former railway line that ran between Braintree and Bishops Stortford 1869 -1952. An assessment of issues relating to the condition and function of the Flich Way has been completed³⁹ and a full costed programme of works to include its role as a wildlife

³⁹ Transport Initiatives, 2023, Flich Way Links – Options Study. Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

corridor is anticipated during 2024. Once a costed programme has been agreed, developers will be required to contribute to its implementation.

- 6.39 The overall aim of this Plan is to reduce the impact of car use by making it easier for people to access services locally and sustainably or by digital means, shifting modes by supporting people to switch from private car to active and passenger transport. This complements the aims of Net Zero Carbon growth and requires collaboration with developers in the master planning to locate and design new development to reduce the need for people to make carbon intensive transport trips in the future. Active sustainable transport plans will be required for each strategic site. Proposals should be in accordance with the County Highways Authority Local Transport Plan (2011)⁴⁰ and take into account the proposals set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWiP) () study (2023)⁴¹ and the Local Transport and Cycling Works Improvement Plan (DATE)⁴².
- 6.40 It is therefore important that transport improvements are made within the South Uttlesford Area as set out within the following **Core Policy 13**.

40 Essex County Council, 2011, Local Transport Plan. Available at:
<https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-transport-plan>

41 Tetra Tech, 2023, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Available at:
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplanevidence>

Core Policy 13: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the South Uttlesford Area

In order to deliver the growth in the South Uttlesford Area, highway infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Essex County Council.

Transport infrastructure in South Uttlesford will be required as follows:

- i. a multi modal corridor for public transport and active travel between Takeley and Stansted Airport public transport interchange, including improvements along Parsonage Road to improve connectivity for cyclists and offer priority for bus services. This will include new active travel connections through the airport to the transport interchange.
- i. creation of a Sustainable and Public Transport Mobility Hub adjacent to the proposed strategic employment allocation at Canfield End providing appropriate and convenient access to the B1256/A120 junction
- iii. Fritch Way upgrade - safety, access, interpretation, multi-functional surface and eco- management
- iv. explore B1256 Dunmow/Stortford Road as a secondary vehicular route and as a sustainable travel route following on from the A120 sustainable transport study
- v. deliver enhancements at Stansted Mountfitchet rail station to the public transport interchange together with improved walking and cycling connections to the station including, improved infrastructure at the station
- vi. new vehicular accesses at Takeley onto Parsonage Lane and from Stortford Road.
- vii. improved access to Great Dunmow centre from the proposed development site, including review of roles of Bigods Lane (and possible extension using bridleway to B184 at Bowyer's Bridge as a later phase)
- viii. localised highway mitigation and junction improvements at Church End and St Edmunds Lane in Great Dunmow, including measures to improve active travel
- ix. appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures at Junction 8 and Start Hill roundabout area, as recommended in the transport evidence, and
- x. the delivery of a new bus route and active travel corridor through the Takeley and Great Dunmow sites.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area

- 6.41 There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 13** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area**, set out below.

Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the South Uttlesford Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following transport schemes as listed by **Core Policy 13**.

- i. land for the delivery of a multi modal corridor for public transport and active travel Pedestrian/ Cycle link between Takeley and Stansted Airport transport interchange
- ii. creation of a Sustainable and Public Transport Mobility Hub adjacent to the proposed strategic employment allocation at Canfield End providing appropriate and convenient access to the B1256/A120 Junction, and
- iii. Flich Way upgrade, including to safety, access, interpretation, multi-functional surface and eco- management.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (to be shown by maps in Appendix 6 and the Policies Map)* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 6** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport scheme, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Essex County Council and other relevant parties.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) and Biodiversity

- 6.42 Outside the main three settlements the landscape in the South Area is characterized by gently rolling, open, arable farmland, small river valleys and water courses, dispersed settlements and historic landscape features.
- 6.43 There are several important and protected habitats, including designated sites such as Hatfield Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and High Wood SSSI with fragmented areas of Ancient Woodland distributed throughout, such as Priors Wood and Marks hill Wood, as well as designated Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. This fragmentation undermines the wildlife value, and it is an aim of Local Plan to seek new planting or connections between woodland where habitat and environmental conditions permit.
- 6.44 The water courses and rivers that run through this area should be protected with riparian vegetated “10m buffer-strips” to help to shade and buffer pollutants entering from runoff, controlling erosion, and providing good habitat and nutrient input in line with **Core Policy 36**. The River Chelmer defines much of Great Dunmow’s eastern boundary, with its valley located in Flood Zone 3 for fluvial flood risk. The river also represents the western boundary of the proposed development site, and there is potential for enhanced biodiversity as part of the Country Park to be provided within the site.
- 6.45 The Metropolitan Green Belt protects areas of open countryside in the south-west to Stansted Mountfitchet and further south around Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath, White Roding and Leaden Roding. Hatfield Forest is the largest area of woodland in the district with over 1,000 acres of ancient medieval hunting forest of coppices and wood pasture. However, the Council’s 2023 evidence base on leisure and open space⁴³. Revealed that the district is short of ‘natural and semi-natural green spaces’ open to the general public, and 75% of this limited provision is accounted for by Hatfield Forest.
- 6.46 The Flitch Way, with over 220,000 people living within two miles of the 15-mile recreational route National Cycle Network Route 16 (NCN 16) following the former railway line from Braintree to Bishops Stortford, and running along the northern boundary of Hatfield Forest, providing traffic-free connections to the park and opportunities for habitat connectivity. Currently, there is no continuous traffic-free onward connection for the Flitch Way through Great Dunmow although the NCN16 has an on-road route along Chelmsford Road and the B1256.
- 6.47 The Harcamlow Way, a 227km long-distance walking route (LDWR) traverses western parts of the District between Cambridge and Harlow and passes though the northern section of the Takeley site and along the southern side of the A120. Local green spaces include Takeley Cricket Club, Smith’s Green and Takeley Sports Field.
- 6.48 The key challenges for this South Area Strategy for the green and blue infrastructure network are:
- areas of localised flood risk
 - Limited and fragmented woodland cover and limited habitat connectivity
 - Existing recreational pressures on country parkland
 - Limited access to semi-natural greenspaces
 - Recorded poor water quality in some watercourses.

43 LUC 2023 GBI Study available here: uttlesfordreg18evidencebase.co.uk

- 6.49 It is expected that development proposal will follow a green and blue infrastructure- led approach. This places the natural and managed environment at the core of the development. The Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy aims to achieve the multi-functional uses of created and improved green areas in and around new and existing settlements. It is recognised that better connected habitats enable species to colonise new microhabitats, expand the network and contribute to enhanced climate resilience, helping to meet one of the aims of the Local Plan.

Core Policy 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the South Uttlesford Area

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the South Uttlesford area as shown by maps in Appendix 9- 12 and to be shown on the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects (including their enhancement and on-going management costs) identified in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the South Uttlesford Area, including:

- i. creation of a Country Park of not less than 12ha across the two sites at Walpole Meadows and High Lane at Stansted Mountfitchet.
- ii. The creation of a Country Park of not less than 20 ha that will stretch in a continuous parkland of public open space from the north, near to Marks Farm around the eastern edge, and along the River Chelmer alongside Bigods Lane to the track to the north. Public access will be created through it and will continue as a green route from Marks Farm south towards the River Chelmer. This landscaping and habitat creation/enhancement should take place in the first phase of the development to allow time for it to mature as far as possible for the enjoyment of residents. The developer will make an endowment contribution towards the future maintenance of the park to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.
- iii. new woodland planting will be required to strengthen and extend the boundary woodland areas as and where appropriate, and elsewhere opportunity be taken to provide new habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain, in accordance with the GBI Plan.
- iv. a network of green routes for active travel, in addition to the bus route, will be provided to access and link the development plots, the community hub and the Country Park as illustrated in the Concept Master Plan and

South Uttlesford Areas Heritage

- 6.50 Each of the settlements within the South Uttlesford area has a distinct heritage which has visually influenced their architecture, pattern of streets, density, and public open spaces. The Local Plan seeks to deliver much-needed new homes and infrastructure, whilst ensuring this is done in a manner which preserves the unique historic character of these settlements and their wider landscape setting. It is therefore key that we recognise and accommodate the designated and non-designated heritage assets within these settlements which contribute towards this historic character.
- 6.51 The south of Uttlesford houses several Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Stansted Mounfitchet Castle, the Warrens at Hatfield Forest, and Canfield Castle. The location and scale of development proposed throughout the Local Plan must ensure that the sensitivity of these sites is protected, given that they provide an important insight into our medieval and pre-medieval history. The built heritage of these settlements is of equal importance. Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet, and Takeley each house a large number of listed buildings, which are typically clustered around the historic core of the settlement.
- 6.52 At Stansted, this relates to Bentfield End, Silver Street, Chapel Hill and the Lower Street areas, which is reflected by the presence of a Conservation Area which covers large sections of these routes. Similarly, Great Dunmow benefits from a Conservation Area designation along Stortford Road, High Street and northwards up to Parsonage Downs, owing to the high concentration of listed buildings along these routes. Whilst Takeley does not have a designated Conservation Area, there is a cluster of listed buildings which run along Smiths Green, leading to the Warish Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument at the northern extent of this lane.
- 6.53 The setting of these listed buildings and presence of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Takeley have played a significant role in directing where built development is, and isn't, located within the proposed allocation at Takeley. The design requirements and illustrative masterplan held in **Appendix 3** have been designed to ensure green open spaces are centred around these historic assets, to best preserve their significance and setting. Similar philosophies have been applied at all allocations within the South Uttlesford area, with the protection of the fabric, setting and views of heritage assets being a major priority in the plan-making process.