

# Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Uttlesford Local Plan

SA Report

Non-technical Summary

July 2024



# Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan.

Once in place, the Local Plan will set a strategy for growth and change for the period to 2041, allocate sites to deliver the strategy and establish the policies against which planning applications will be determined.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising adverse effects and maximising the positives. Local Plans must be subject to SA.

Central to the SA process is preparation of an SA Report for publication alongside the draft plan that presents an appraisal of “the plan and reasonable alternatives”.

At the current time, the SA report is published alongside the ‘proposed submission’ version of the Local Plan, under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations (with an Interim SA Report previously having been published alongside an early draft plan in 2023).

This is the Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the SA Report.

## Structure of the Interim SA Report / this NTS

SA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1) What has plan-making / SA involved **up to this point**?

- including in relation to ‘reasonable alternatives’.

2) What are the SA findings **at this stage**?

- i.e. in relation to the draft plan.

3) What happens **next**?

Each of these questions is answered in turn below. Firstly though there is a need to set the scene further by answering the question: *What’s the scope of the SA?*

## What’s the scope of the SA?

The scope of the SA is reflected in a list of topics and objectives. Taken together, this list provides a methodological ‘framework’ for appraisal.

The following topics comprise the core of the SA framework:

- Accessibility
- Biodiversity
- Climate change adaptation
- Climate change mitigation
- Communities, equality, inclusion and health
- Economy and employment
- Historic environment
- Homes
- Land, soils and resources
- Landscape
- Transport
- Water

## Plan-making / SA up to this point

An important element of the required SA process involves appraising ‘reasonable alternatives’ in time to inform development of the draft plan, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft plan.

As such, Part 1 of the SA Report explains work undertaken in 2024 to develop and appraise a reasonable range of “growth scenarios”, essentially in the form of alternative key diagrams, i.e. alternative approaches to development where each is ‘reasonable’ in the terms of providing for development needs and delivering on wider plan objectives.

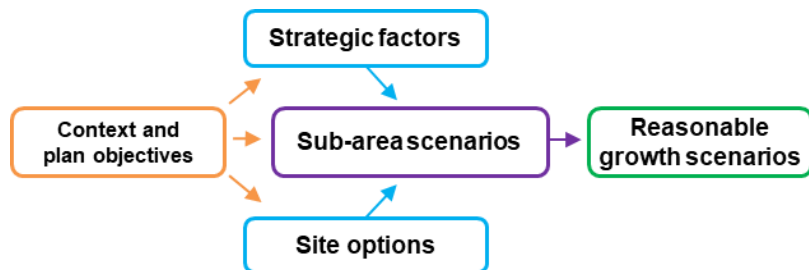
The decision was taken to focus on growth scenarios because this is the matter at the very heart of the plan and that with the greatest potential for alternatives to generate differential ‘significant effects’ (it is a requirement that SA focuses on significant effects).

In short, the process of exploring growth scenarios involved: **1)** defining growth scenarios; **2)** appraising growth scenarios; and then **3)** feeding-back to inform the draft plan. This three-stage process is explained below.

## Defining growth scenarios

Section 5 of the main report explains the process of defining reasonable alternative (RA) growth scenarios for appraisal and consultation. Figure A provides an overview.

Figure A: Process overview



### Context and plan objectives

Plan-making has been underway for a number of years, but a key milestone was reached in 2023, namely the Draft Local Plan consultation stage. All work from 2023, and all evidence gathered through consultation, fed into work to define growth scenarios in 2024.

Further key context comes from two failed attempts to prepare a new local plan to replace the adopted plan, which dates from 2005 (in the context of NPPF para 22, which requires that local plans are updated every five years). There is now an urgent need to adopt a local plan to remedy the issues caused by the lack of an up-to-date local plan over many years, namely developments coming forward in a piecemeal fashion without sufficient infrastructure alongside, leading to an infrastructure deficit at a number of settlements.

Simply achieving an up-to-date local plan is key, but there are also a range of other objectives in place to guide plan-making and, in turn, work to define growth scenarios. These cover Council priorities including net zero, nature recovery and affordable housing.

### Strategic factors

Section 5.2 of the main report gives consideration to:

- **Quantum** (*how much?*) – in the Uttlesford context there is a clear case for providing for housing and wider development needs in full, as opposed to generating unmet need that would then need to be provided for elsewhere in a constrained sub-region. There is also a need to remain open to evidenced requests to provide for unmet need from elsewhere, but in practice no such requests have been made to the Council.

Focusing on local housing need (LHN), on the basis of the Government’s standard method this is 675 dwellings per annum (dpa), or 13,500 homes over the plan period.

- **Broad spatial strategy** (*where?*) – there are a wide range of broad spatial strategy factors that must feed-in, but a key question is around the potential to allocate one or more new settlements. In this regard, it is recognised that there are numerous options that warrant consideration in the fullness of time (e.g. through the next Local Plan, which will likely be adopted in or around 2030/31). However, in the context of the current Local Plan, it is considered that there is not the potential for a new settlement.

This is in light of: A) the urgent need to adopt a Local Plan (further context comes in the form of an intervention [letter](#) received from the Government in 2023); B) the fact that only *at most* ~6,000 homes must be provided for through allocations, once account is taken for completions since the start of the plan period (2021), sites with planning permission and a windfall assumption; and C) certain settlements needing growth to deliver new infrastructure to address existing issues, i.e. an infrastructure deficit.

### Site options

Work to explore site options in isolation was primarily undertaken through a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which identifies a long-list of sites that are available, achievable and potentially suitable for allocation. The total theoretical capacity of these sites is several times what is needed under any reasonable scenario.

Also, Section 5.3 of the main report explains a decision to focus on allocating sites with a capacity in excess of ~100 homes through the Local Plan (‘strategic sites’). This step was taken for a number of reasons, including because non-strategic sites can be allocated through neighbourhood plans prepared by town and parish councils.

### Sub-area scenarios

This is a key section within the main report (Section 5.4), which aims to draw together the ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ understanding generated from the preceding two sections.

For each of the nine top tier settlements in turn, the aim is to: A) discuss strategic factors; B) consider site options (in isolation and in combination); and then C) conclude on sub-area scenarios to take forward, i.e. alternative combinations of site allocations.

A final section then considers the eight larger villages that together comprise the third tier of the settlement hierarchy, and which tend to be more suited to non-strategic allocations. Whilst there is the possibility of the Local Plan allocating at these villages, on balance the decision is taken to delegate the task of allocation to follow-on neighbourhood plans. In total 600 homes are anticipated from future neighbourhood plan allocations at six villages.

**Reasonable growth scenarios**

The final task (Section 5.5 of the main report) is to combine sub-area scenarios to form growth scenarios for the District as a whole. This is a straightforward process in light of Section 5.4, which identifies a strategic choice between growth scenarios at just two sub-areas. Specifically, at **Great Dunmow** there are three growth scenarios, and at **Thaxted** there are two, which leads to six district-wide reasonable alternative growth scenarios.

These would involve providing for a total quantum of homes ranging between LHN (13,500 homes) + 10% and LHN + 18%, which is considered to be a reasonable range of growth quanta to test (see discussion above regarding strategic factors).

Under the lowest growth scenario the housing requirement would certainly be set at LHN, with a 10% supply buffer, whilst under the highest growth scenario there would be flexibility to consider a requirement set modestly above LHN, e.g. to deliver more affordable homes (or, alternatively, the housing requirement could be set at LHN with a supply buffer of 18%).

Also, under all of the scenarios there would be a good trajectory of supply over time, in that there would be good potential to provide for a housing requirement set at LHN on an annual basis over the entire plan period, i.e. there would be no need for a ‘stepped requirement’. Under all scenarios the identified supply falls below LHN over the final five years, but supply will be boosted in these years through at least one Local Plan Review.

N.B. the approach of ruling out scenarios that would risk generating unmet need is an evolution from the equivalent position in 2023 (see Section 5.5 of the report from that time) and reflects latest understanding regarding strategic factors and reasonable sub-area scenarios combined with an understanding that the level of completions and commitments is now significantly higher than was the case in 2023.

There is no pressure to explore *higher* growth scenarios, i.e. scenarios with a total supply in excess of LHN +18%, and it is very difficult to identify other sites that might come into contention. Table 5.12 within the main report lists some *additional* omission sites (i.e. options that do not feature in the RA growth scenarios) that perhaps come into contention, but in each case there is considered to be a strong argument for ‘non-support’ in light of strategic, settlement-specific and site-specific considerations taken in the round.

In conclusion, on the basis of the discussion presented across Section 5 of the main report (read as a whole), the following RA growth scenarios are considered to represent the reasonable alternatives at the current time (July 2024):

- Scenario 1 – Constants plus strategic growth to the **NE of Great Dunmow**
- Scenario 2 – Scenario 1 plus strategic growth to the **east of Thaxted**

- Scenario 3 – Constants plus strategic growth to the **SE of Great Dunmow**
- Scenario 4 – Scenario 3 plus strategic growth to the **east of Thaxted**
- Scenario 5 – Constants plus **high growth at Great Dunmow**  
[Where high growth means strategic growth to the SE plus low growth to the NE]
- Scenario 6 – Scenario 5 plus strategic growth to the **east of Thaxted**

**Table A:** The reasonable alternative growth scenarios

	Scenario 1 GD NE	Scenario 2 GD NE Thaxted	Scenario 3 GD SE	Scenario 4 GD SE Thaxted	Scenario 5 GD high	Scenario 6 GD high Thaxted
Completions, permissions, windfall	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193
Larger villages	900	900	900	900	900	900
Takeley	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546
Saffron Walden	879	879	879	879	879	879
Stansted Mountfitchet	325	325	325	325	325	325
Elsenham	110	110	110	110	110	110
Great Chesterford	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield Heath	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Dunmow	<b>917</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>1,453</b>	<b>1,453</b>
Thaxted	0	<b>489</b>	0	<b>489</b>	0	<b>489</b>
<b>Total homes</b>	<b>14,870</b>	<b>15,359</b>	<b>15,203</b>	<b>15,692</b>	<b>15,406</b>	<b>15,895</b>
<b>% above LHN</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>

## Growth scenarios appraisal

Summary appraisal findings are presented within the table below. Within each row (i.e. for each element of the SA framework) the columns seek to both rank the scenarios in order of performance (with a star used to highlight the best performing option(s)) and categorise performance in terms of ‘significant effects’ using **red** (significant negative) / **amber** (moderate or uncertain negative) / **light green** (moderate or uncertain positive) and **green** (significant positive), and where no colour indicates a neutral effect.

The summary appraisal matrix below shows a very mixed picture. Scenarios 1 and 3 are found to be the best performing scenarios under the highest number of sustainability topic headings and these two scenarios are also associated with the most predicted positive effects; however, it does not necessarily follow that these are the best performing scenarios overall. This is because the appraisal is undertaken without any assumptions made regarding the degree of importance that should be attributed to each of the sustainability topics (and, as part of this, it cannot and should not be assumed that the sustainability topics have equal weight). Under several topic headings there are scenarios that outperform Scenarios 1 and 3, and the Council, as decision-maker, might choose to give particular weight to one or more of these topics. Also, it is important to recognise that considerable simplifying assumptions are made within the appraisal in order to reach overall conclusions under any given topic heading, including in terms of the weight attributed to specific issues/impacts. Adjusted assumptions could quite easily lead to adjusted overall conclusions and, in turn, an adjustment to the overall picture.

Having made the above overarching comments, the following bullet points summarise appraisal findings under each of the sustainability topic headings in turn:

- **Accessibility (to community infrastructure)** – a clear focus of the strategy is directing growth broadly in line with the settlement hierarchy and in response to community infrastructure opportunities, most notably by supporting delivery of several new schools, including to address existing issues. However, the County Council does not support a new school at Thaxted, because the concern is that the school would be unable to expand to two form entry and so could struggle to remain viable. Finally, at Great Dunmow there is a fairly clear preference for focusing growth to the northeast.
- **Biodiversity** – there is a marginal / uncertain preference for focusing growth at NE Great Dunmow. There is a clear biodiversity opportunity here, given the potential to target new strategic green and blue infrastructure in such a way that supports existing biodiversity priority areas. There could be a similar opportunity at SE Great Dunmow (River Chelmer corridor), but this is less certain, and there is a degree of onsite constraint. Ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain policy is assumed under all scenarios.

**Table B: Summary appraisal of the reasonable growth scenario**

Topic	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6
	GD NE	GD NE Thaxted	GD SE	GD SE Thaxted	GD high	GD high Thaxted
Accessibility	★1	4	2	5	3	6
Biodiversity	★1	★1	2	2	2	2
CC adaptation	=	=	=	=	=	=
CC mitigation	2	2	2	★1	2	2
Communities, equality, health	4	★1	5	2	6	3
Economy & employment	2	2	★1	★1	★1	★1
Historic environment	3	4	★1	3	2	3
Homes	6	5	4	3	2	★1
Land & soils	★1	2	★1	2	★1	2
Landscape	=	=	=	=	=	=
Transport	★1	2	★1	2	2	3
Water	★1	2	3	4	5	6

- **Climate change adaptation** – a key factor here is flood risk and, in this regard, all three of the sites that are a variable across the scenarios (NE Great Dunmow, SE Great Dunmow, East Thaxted) are subject to a degree of surface water flood risk.
- **Climate change mitigation** – focusing on built environment decarbonisation, there is a degree of support for SE Great Dunmow as a larger site in single land ownership, such that there is reduced concern that development viability would be a constraint to delivering net zero carbon development to an exacting standard (to include net zero achieved onsite). However, this is marginal and uncertain. With regards to significant effects, the conclusion reflects the stretching nature of decarbonisation targets. It is not possible to conclude built env decarbonisation has been a main ‘driver’ of spatial strategy / site selection (but transport decarbonisation has been, as discussed below).
- **Communities, equality, health** – there are a very wide range of factors, but the rank of preference reflects: A) support for growth at Thaxted, with a view to maintaining village services, facilities and retail, bus services and generally village vitality, e.g. noting high house prices and notwithstanding the Neighbourhood Plan’s support for restricting housing growth; and B) a preference for NE Great Dunmow, as this would involve lower growth without necessarily compromising on infrastructure delivery (or wider objectives, e.g. housing mix). With regards to (B), this is in the context of very high recent and committed growth at Great Dunmow (including ‘speculative’ sites).
- **Economy and employment** – the approach to employment land is held constant across the scenarios and all would provide for established needs in full. There is a feasible possibility of delivering some modest new employment land at SE Great Dunmow, but this is not currently proposed by the site promoter. If possible, it could prove well-targeted from an employment land perspective but could create challenges in terms of effective masterplanning (linking new homes to the town centre).
- **Historic environment** – this is a key constraint district-wide, and also affecting two of the three variable growth locations. SE Great Dunmow appears to be subject to less constraint, but there is uncertainty ahead of receiving the views of Historic England.
- **Homes** – all scenarios perform well because they make provision for local housing need (LHN) over the plan-period as a whole (once account is taken of the potential to boost supply in the latter years of the plan period through a Local Plan Review). Nonetheless, there is still support – from a pure housing perspective – for the highest growth scenario, which could allow for the housing requirement to be set at a figure modestly above LHN, e.g. aimed at boosting affordable housing supply.

With regards to significant effects, there is an outstanding issue in respect of provision for longer term Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.

- **Land and soils** – high quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land is a significant constraint to growth across the sub-region. However, there is a concentration of slightly lower quality (grade 3) quality land at Great Dunmow.
- **Landscape** – all three of the variable growth locations are subject to a notable degree of constraint. There is an argument to suggest that SE Great Dunmow is most constrained, for example noting that the Saffron Way passes through the site.
- **Transport** – the first point to note is a transport argument against strategic growth at Thaxted, as a rural village, although this is not entirely clear cut. Great Dunmow is not an ideal location for growth from a transport perspective, but an extensive amount of work has been undertaken to understand issues and opportunities associated with strategic growth to the NE, broadly concluding that this is a suitable location for growth from a transport perspective. SE Great Dunmow is clearly better linked to the strategic road network (supportive of bus connectivity) but would be notably separated from the urban edge by the river corridor, Dunmow Park, employment land and the B1256.
- **Water** – there are some outstanding risks around wastewater treatment along the A120 corridor, including at Great Dunmow, hence Scenario 6 generates a concern.

## The preferred growth scenario

The following statement explains officers’ reasons for supporting **Scenario 1**:

“The preferred scenario is Scenario 1, which the appraisal shows to perform reasonably well relative to the alternatives, clearly supporting a conclusion that it is “an appropriate strategy” (NPPF para 35). At Great Dunmow, it is recognised that the choice between growth to the northeast and growth to the southeast is quite finely balanced, but the site to the southeast does not relate well to the settlement edge and growth to the northeast will deliver valuable new strategic green / blue infrastructure. Also, the site to the southeast is considerably larger but would likely deliver little in the way of additional infrastructure. At Thaxted there is a clear case for growth, other than in respect of the primary school viability issue, and notwithstanding this is a rural village with high car dependency. However, the primary school capacity issue is understood to be a barrier to growth that cannot be overcome, in the context of the current Local Plan (but it is important to recall that there will be a Local Plan Review within five years, which could potentially direct further growth to Thaxted and assist with school viability). With regards to higher growth, the preferred scenario is considered to represent a suitably proactive approach to both housing and employment growth, and there have been few calls for higher growth other than from the development industry. However, the Council will remain open to evidenced reasons in support of higher growth.”

# SA findings at this stage

Part 2 of the SA Report answers the question “what are appraisal findings at this stage?” by presenting an appraisal of the Local Plan as a whole. The following is a summary.

## Appraisal of the Proposed Submission Local Plan

The appraisal builds upon the appraisal of Growth Scenario 1 by additionally factoring-in proposed concept masterplans and development management policy (including site-specific policy). The appraisal predicts effects on the baseline as follows:

- **Significant positive** in respect of **accessibility** (to community infrastructure) – primarily on account of the proposal to deliver or facilitate delivery of a secondary school and several primary schools, although there remains a degree of uncertainty at several settlements, notably Saffron Walden.
- **Significant positive** in respect of **employment land** – although there remains a degree of uncertainty at Saffron Walden and in respect of meeting needs for new office development, noting uncertainties around the allocation at Gaunt’s End (Elsenham).
- **Moderate or uncertain positive** in respect of **biodiversity** – given a focus on avoiding sensitivities and realising strategic opportunities, aligned with a DM policy requirement for all development to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG). However, valued (including SSSI) woodlands along the A120 / B1256 corridor remain a constraint.
- **Moderate or uncertain positive** in respect of **communities, equality and health** – given adjustments that have been made to the plan following consultation in 2023, perhaps most notably at Takeley and Newport, but also at Thaxted (although there is a ‘communities’ argument for growth) and Great Dunmow (particular support for new green and blue infrastructure). The appraisal also includes a stand-alone discussion of **equality** and **health** considerations, including a focus on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Ultimately, the plan is deemed to perform well and no significant tensions with equality or health objectives can be identified.
- **Moderate or uncertain positive** in respect of **homes** – the plan performs strongly but is not able to provide for longer term Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. Also, development viability is tighter along the A120 corridor (where there is a focus of growth) than elsewhere in the District, with possible implications for affordable housing (given required infrastructure and wider policy asks, e.g. net zero development). The proposed district-wide DM policy on affordable housing is broadly supported, particularly its strong focus on a tenure split focused on affordable rented homes.
- **Moderate or uncertain positive** in respect of **transport** – the plan takes a highly proactive approach to supporting modal shift away from the private car, including via a focus of growth at Takeley, but opportunities could feasibly be taken to ensure a higher focus of growth in proximity to train stations.
- **Neutral** in respect of **climate change adaptation** (flood risk focus) – because there are some outstanding constraints / challenges in respect of surface water flood risk. However, these can likely be addressed through masterplanning without undue issue, i.e. with limited need to compromise on wider objectives.
- **Neutral** in respect of **climate change mitigation** (built environment decarbonisation focus) – best practice DM policy approach is proposed, but there is also a need to ensure that all steps are taken through strategy / site selection, and there is a ‘high bar’ to concluding positive effects given stretching net zero target dates.
- **Neutral** in respect of **landscape** – notable beneficial adjustments have been made, including at Takeley (Countryside Protection Zone, CPZ). Whilst there are residual impacts, these are of localised / of limited strategic significance, and it is important to recall that the baseline situation is one whereby growth would continue without a plan.
- **Moderate or uncertain negative** in respect of the **historic environment** – detailed work has been undertaken in line with the consultation response received from Historic England, but some inherent concerns/challenges remain, notably at Great Dunmow.
- **Moderate or uncertain negative** in respect of the **land, soils and resources** – because significant loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (including grade 2 quality) is unavoidable given the extent of this constraint across the sub-region.
- **Moderate or uncertain negative** in respect of the **water** – whilst the proposed ambitious approach to water efficiency is supported (in the context of a water-stressed sub-region), there are some wastewater treatment challenges along the A120 corridor.

There will be the potential to bolster the plan’s performance through the forthcoming examination in public, in response to the appraisal above. Also, a small number of specific recommendations are made in the main report, which might be actioned. However, it is inherently difficult to make specific recommendations because actioning them will inevitably have implications that are difficult to foresee and account for here. For example, whilst it would be easy to recommend further policy stringency in respect of affordable housing, this would have cost/viability implications such that there could be a need to accept trade-offs in respect of one or more wider objectives (e.g. net zero). Equally, whilst it would be easy to recommend further site-specific policy, there is always a risk of being overly prescriptive, potentially with implications for site delivery.

Finally, it should be noted that the current version of the Local Plan was prepared taking account of the appraisal within the Interim SA Report (2023). There is no requirement for SA to be iterative in this way, but it helps to demonstrate a robust plan-making process.

## Cumulative effects

The SEA Regulations, which underpin the SA process, indicate that stand-alone consideration should be given to 'cumulative effects', i.e. effects of the Local Plan in combination with other plans, programmes and projects that can be reasonably foreseen. In practice, this is an opportunity to discuss potential long term and 'larger than local' effects. The following bullet points cover some key considerations:

- **Housing needs** – progressing the Uttlesford Local Plan and providing for LHN in full is strongly supported from a 'larger-than-local' perspective. It is not impossible that one or more neighbouring local authorities in the sub-region will struggle to provide for their own LHN in full. Another consideration is providing for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in collaboration with neighbouring authorities, recognising that it is not uncommon for Local Plans to fail to provide for needs in full (see [rtpi.org.uk/blog/2024/june/simon-ruston-kicking-the-can-down-the-road/](https://rtpi.org.uk/blog/2024/june/simon-ruston-kicking-the-can-down-the-road/)). However, on the other hand, needs can be very localised, and even site-specific.
- **The economy** – the proposed strategy of providing for employment land needs in full is equally supported. The need to deliver employment land along the M11 corridor and in the vicinity of London Stansted Airport in particular is clearly of at least regional importance. Also, there is a need to support national objectives around economic growth at Cambridge, which leads to a focus on Great Chesterford (the plan does not propose any new supply) and Chesterford Research Park (the plan proposes to allocate land to enable the park to expand to the full extent of its masterplan vision).
- **Transport corridors** – there is need for ongoing consideration of capacity issues at M11 J8, and there is also a need to work with neighbouring local authorities (East Herts, Braintree and Chelmsford) in respect of capacity and possible mass rapid transit along the A120. Another key consideration is capacity on the train line to Cambridge, e.g. taking into account committed strategic growth to the north of Harlow.
- **London Stansted Airport** – is a key national asset. The plan is supportive of employment growth in the vicinity of the airport and has a focus on avoiding conflicts.
- **Internationally and nationally important biodiversity sites** – the key consideration is recreational pressure on Hatfield Forest, in combination with recreational pressure from growth in East Herts and Harlow. The plan now includes a focus on delivering Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which is strongly supported.
- **Landscape scale nature recovery** – river corridors are a focus, including the River Cam in the north of the District and Chelmer in the south. Further spatial guidance will be set out in the forthcoming Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy ([LNRS](#)).
- **Agricultural land** – food self-sufficiency is rising up the agenda nationally. The Local Plan will result in a significant loss of high quality agricultural land, but the situation would not necessarily be any better in the absence of a Local Plan.
- **Water** – this is a key larger-than-local issue, including recognising that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is paused whilst work is undertaken in respect of water resources and the water environment. Also, a challenge is working across two water companies in respect of waste water treatment capacity along the A120 corridor.

## Next Steps

### Submission, examination, adoption and monitoring

Once the period for representations on the Local Plan / SA Report has finished the intention is to submit the plan for examination in public alongside a summary of the main issues raised through the Regulation 19 publication period. Once found to be sound following examination the Local Plan will be adopted, at which time a 'Statement' will present prescribed information including "measures decided concerning monitoring".

Section 11 of the main report suggests a number of indicators, for example:

- Biodiversity – performance of the biodiversity net gain regime must be monitored in light of strategic priorities set through the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Climate change mitigation – monitoring should focus on clarity. This is a confusing policy area, but it is important that the interested public can understand and engage.
- Economy and employment – need for office and industrial/logistics floorspace changes very quickly. Regular monitoring of delivery would assist with future assessments.
- Homes – there is always potential for additional monitoring, e.g. by settlement. Close monitoring of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will assist with future assessments.
- Transport – there might ideally be an enhanced focus on bus patronage and cycle routes. Also, understanding of strategic priorities changes over time (e.g. Essex LTP4 is forthcoming), hence there is a need to consider implications for local plan review.
- Water – as well as the wastewater situation along the A120 corridor, there is a clear case for monitoring water efficiency standards achieved by developments.