

August 2007

Uttlesford District Council

Historic Settlement Character Assessment



**UTTLESFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
POLICY CHOICES AND OPTIONS FOR GROWTH**

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Introduction

This study has been commissioned by Uttlesford District Council to inform long term planning for the management and conservation of its historic environment, with particular regards to the creation of its Local Development Framework.

The Council has to consider options for growth and the decision where to locate housing development will be difficult. In addition to the 'functional indicators' such as proximity to services, education, health facilities, transportation and employment, it is equally relevant to consider the 'visual and environmental indicators' in a District so rich in environmental qualities.

Within Uttlesford there is a wealth of fine buildings, many of them ancient and listed. These buildings with their varied styles and methods of construction span many centuries. Attractive small market towns and villages punctuate the gently rolling countryside, heavily treed in many locations, whose arable and pastoral mosaic is particularly well cared for. The sensitive combination of historic built form and manicured landscape are of the highest quality.

In reaching such important decisions the assimilation of housing development in the District requires particularly careful examination so that the above special qualities are maintained.

This project provides a detailed assessment of the historic environment within six of the district's settlement and it will help ensure effective management and conservation so that it can make a contribution to shaping sustainable communities.

This assessments evaluates the environmental capacity of the settlements to accommodate future growth by

- Summarising their general character.
- Describing the historic core and its relationship with the built up area of the village as a whole.
- Summarising the general function the landscape performs in relation to the built up area and the historic core, on the approach roads which will be the areas most susceptible to pressures and also in relation to open spaces within the village.
- Analysing the quality of these landscapes.
- Summarising in broad terms the effect of development and whether it would diminish, improve or have little or no effect on the sense of place and local distinctiveness.

Each settlement is assessed in sectors; these sectors come from approach roads and can not be defined by boundary lines.

The following settlements are included in this study:

- Great Chesterford

- Great Dunmow
- Henham
- Newport
- Saffron Walden
- Stansted Mountfitchet

All of the surveys were carried out in May-July 2007