



# **Uttlesford Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**

Summary Paper

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Troy Planning + Design  
For Uttlesford District Council

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Status of IDP

The IDP is a supporting document for the emerging Local Plan. The IDP covers the plan period up until 2033, although its content will be monitored and periodically reviewed.

The IDP is supported by a set of schedules that outline the infrastructure requirements for the District. These are very much seen as a ‘living document’, which can be updated and monitored over time, as more detail and information on site specific proposals emerges. As such, they are kept as a separate document to this IDP.

The document includes details of the infrastructure identified by the Council and other service providers as being needed to support the delivery of the emerging Local Plan. It explains the approach the Council has taken to identifying this infrastructure, how it will be delivered, and an assessment of the potential risks associated with doing so.

It is important to note that the Local Plan establishes an ambitious scale of growth, including three new garden communities where development will extend well beyond the Plan period. The IDP therefore presents a fairly strategic picture of requirements.

## 1.2 National policy context

The context for this Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 156 states:

*“Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:*

- *the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- *the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities.”*

Paragraph 162 goes on to state that:

*“Local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:*

- *assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands; and*
- *take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas.”*

It is important to note that the IDP addresses ‘strategic’ infrastructure priorities as distinct from very localised infrastructure needs arising from individual planning applications. As such, the approach of the IDP is to assess the needs arising from larger identified sites which individually, or in combination, will contribute towards addressing the strategic objectives of the emerging Local Plan. It is acknowledged

that there will also be growth arising from small, non-strategic sites which could be significant in certain locations. Such growth could therefore represent a burden on existing infrastructure networks. However, even in such locations it is unlikely that such growth will result in the need for additional strategic infrastructure, e.g. schools, medical facilities, utilities infrastructure. As such, it has not been addressed directly in the IDP although infrastructure providers have, in engaging with the IDP process, identified general burdens on existing infrastructure from growth which have been reflected in the study.

### 1.3 Engagement with infrastructure providers

Discussions, meetings and workshops have taken place with a variety of infrastructure providers both within the District Council and external organisations to develop an understanding of what infrastructure is needed. This process has enabled these infrastructure providers to think more strategically in terms of future provision and the challenges brought about by significant growth in the long term. In so far as the information has been made available, this IDP brings all these agencies' plans together in one document. This should encourage inter-relationships between parties and provides an opportunity to share information and align / coordinate infrastructure investment plans and programmes as well as potentially co-locate infrastructure. Organisations contacted as part of this IDP include:

- Abellio (Train Operating Company)
- Affinity Water (Drinking water)
- Anglian Water (Waste water)
- Arriva Buses (Bus services)
- BT Openreach (Broadband)
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Essex and Kent Police
- Essex County Council (ECC) (covering all strategic functions, e.g.: schools, transport, waste etc)
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- Essex Superfast Broadband
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Fibre Wifi (Broadband)
- Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Economic Partnership (GCGP)
- Hertfordshire and West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) / National Health Service (NHS)
- Highways England
- MAG Airports (owner: Stansted Airport)
- National Grid (Gas and electricity supplies)
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Sport England
- Sustrans (Walking and cycling infrastructure)
- Thames Water (Waste water)
- UK Power Networks (Electricity infrastructure)

## 1.4 Approach

This document has been written during a time of significant change, with the Government reforming many of the public services that are responsible for providing and planning infrastructure. This is likely to have an impact on provision, delivery and funding, and how the relevant organisations are able to respond in relation to future growth.

In addition, it is often difficult to be certain about infrastructure requirements so far into the future, as the detail of many development schemes is not currently known. Therefore, this IDP is intended to be a document which is regularly updated given the uncertainty and fluid nature of planning for infrastructure.

There are certain important principles regarding the approach and issues that the IDP has to recognise.

- The IDP does not seek to make up for historic deficits in infrastructure. However, there are instances where supporting growth might most effectively be achieved through the upgrading of existing facilities. This could include, for example, extending existing schools or enhancing current public transport services.
- Not all housing and employment growth planned for individual sites will attract specific additional infrastructure requirements that can be addressed through the development of that site alone. In most cases, the infrastructure needs that have been identified reflect the cumulative impact of growth in a wider area, e.g. based upon growth in and around existing settlements or proposed new garden communities.
- The assessment of infrastructure needs has been based upon the trajectory for development in the existing settlements and at the proposed new garden communities (see text and associated tables in Section 2).
- The IDP, for most infrastructure items, presents the 'worst case scenario' in terms of needs. In the case of social, community, leisure and green infrastructure needs, this is because the methodology for establishing the scale of need is based on calculations per head of the population. In reality, much of the infrastructure that is provided in most locations will be provided either in the form of improvements to existing facilities or as co-located facilities. In particular, co-location is likely to become a growing trend which recognises the limited amount of funding available and, in more urban locations, a lack of land to provide all the requirements individually.
- Co-location is likely to take many forms. Schools are increasingly looking to raise revenue by hiring out sports pitches and other facilities outside of school hours. Equally, the shift in primary healthcare provision to larger health hubs means larger buildings that could share facilities with other health providers – opticians, dentists, physiotherapists, etc – but also equally with a range of other uses, both commercial and community, e.g. retail, community centres, libraries, etc. Indeed, the limited resources available for provision of, for example, library and community services has spawned many excellent examples of alternative types of provision with different management structures to those traditionally used.

Whilst it is important to recognise such changing ways of providing services, it is extremely difficult for an IDP to be definitive about what these could be. There are too many options open as to how this is provided and this could therefore have a

significant impact on needs and costs. However, such provision, particularly on larger strategic sites such as the proposed 'garden communities' where new health hubs and schools are to be provided, should be recognised as the way such infrastructure needs will be provided over the plan period.

## 1.5 Types of infrastructure

The term 'infrastructure' covers a wide range of services and facilities provided by public and private organisations. The definition of infrastructure is outlined in section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The Uttlesford IDP covers a mix of physical, social and green infrastructure, including:

### Physical infrastructure:

- Transport
- Utilities
- Water
- Waste

### Social infrastructure:

- Schools and other educational facilities
- Health and social wellbeing
- Emergency services
- Social and community (including libraries, allotments and community halls)

### Green infrastructure:

- 'Designed landscapes' (including Country Parks)
- Natural / semi-natural green space

## 1.6 Categorising infrastructure

The infrastructure detailed within the IDP has been categorised as either:

- **Critical:** Delivery of the identified infrastructure is critical and without which development cannot commence (e.g.: some transport and utility infrastructure).
- **Necessary:** The identified infrastructure is necessary to support new development, but the precise timing and phasing is less critical and development may be able to commence ahead of its provision (e.g.: schools and health care).
- **Important:** Delivery of the identified infrastructure is important in order to help build sustainable communities, but timing and phasing is not critical over the plan period (e.g.: libraries, green infrastructure and youth provision).

## 2 Summary of Key Findings

Given the ambitious scale of growth in the Local Plan, which will see commencement of three new Garden Communities in the Plan period, and extending well beyond this, the IDP purposely takes a strategic view of the infrastructure needs and requirements arising from the likely scale and distribution of future growth in the district.

The IDP is supported by a set of schedules that outline the infrastructure requirements for the District. These are very much seen as a 'living document', which can be updated and monitored over time, as more detail and information on site specific proposals emerges.

The IDP has been informed through workshops and discussions with infrastructure providers and the promoters of the Garden Communities, as well as desktop research.

The headline findings of the IDP are summarised below.

### 2.1 Physical Infrastructure

There are some key challenges and risks to growth associated with the need for physical infrastructure in the district. These are summarised below:

#### 2.1.1 M11 Junction 8

Junction 8 of the M11 is already under pressure. It has been identified as a problem junction with a severe level of congestion. Whilst interim solutions have been funded a longer-term solution is required for growth to be accommodated, particularly that associated with the garden communities, which extend beyond the Plan period, as well future expansion of Stansted Airport and growth in neighbouring authorities. Highways England is in the process of investigating potential interventions required to Junction 8 (and, indeed, that stretch of the M11 between Junction 8 and 13) to help determine investment within the Department for Transport's next Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

#### 2.1.2 Access to areas of growth from the strategic highway network

Access to areas of new growth and development from the strategic road network are considered critical pieces of infrastructure. In particular:

- Growth at North Uttlesford will likely exacerbate pressure on the A505 (in South Cambs). Improvements to the A505 are however required with or without North Uttlesford coming forward as a new garden community and so is not seen as a constraint to development. The Transport Study notes that preliminary improvement schemes have been identified that are considered to mitigate the impact of traffic flows associated with growth in the Uttlesford Local Plan.
- Although access from the A120 into the proposed garden settlement at Easton Park is considered achievable, the current scheme being promoted only shows a single point of access to serve a new settlement of 10,000 new homes. This will require further monitoring and testing to consider whether additional access arrangements are required, and which will help ensure network resilience. This may represent a risk to scheme delivery.

- Access to the A120 from the proposed West of Braintree new garden community is considered feasible.
- Various traffic options have been investigated for Saffron Walden, relating to different levels of growth, including a potential new link road, which has since been ruled out. Instead, improvements to existing traffic corridors have been identified which will provide opportunities for traffic to avoid travelling through the town centre. These will need to be developed further as part of emerging proposals and schemes for development sites.
- It is advised that access and junctions on the A120 at Great Dunmow are able to accommodate the scale of growth envisaged in the Local Plan. Delays currently experienced on the B184 and B1256 will be improved through implementation of conditions associated with committed development.

### **2.1.3 Sustainable access**

Alongside the access arrangements outlined above, all major growth locations would be required to deliver a package of sustainable travel measures, including bus, walking and cycling routes. These are all considered necessary items of infrastructure. Essex County Council will seek contributions to enhanced walking and cycling routes from each of the proposed Garden Communities. These are necessary to increase permeability between places via a sustainable transport method. Often, the existing routes in place are inadequate. It is important that any passenger transport services provided or amended are deliverable and viable in the long-term.

### **2.1.4 Rail**

Improvement to rail services are considered necessary. There are a series of projects being developed at the moment which will increase capacity and frequency over the longer-term, including new rolling stock and seating capacity on rail services. It is also noted that improved access to stations is required, particularly by foot and cycle. These should be delivered as part of the package of sustainable transport measures associated with growth across the district, particularly within the garden communities. This is not considered a risk to growth.

### **2.1.5 Water infrastructure**

Overall, the Water Cycle Study concludes that there is no major reason that would prevent timely delivery of at least one suitable and technically feasible option for the Garden Communities, by upgrading the impacted existing WECs owned by AWS or TW. Provision of water infrastructure is critical and could be a risk to the spatial distribution of growth in the local plan period. Although it is considered that growth in the existing towns and settlements can be accommodated, upgrades will be required to the foul sewerage network. Growth at the proposed new garden communities will place additional burdens on foul water capacity over and above this and capacity will need enhancing.

Major upgrades and new water supply infrastructure will be required for the new garden communities. Thames Water has put forward four options (as part of the Councils Water Cycle study) that are considered to be workable solutions and could

address the issues with capacity at Easton Park. These do not include a proposal for a new Waste Recycling Centre.

The detail of what is required across the district will need feeding into future asset management periods for Anglian and Thames Water. Without a commitment to delivery in the next AMP period, growth in the garden communities could be delayed to later in the plan period.

The delivery of technical and feasible solutions also needs considering alongside environmental concerns. The EA has advised that the level of discharges into water courses is currently at its limit and that additional permits for increased discharges may not be granted. Therefore, growth without appropriate water infrastructure, particularly at the garden communities, is a major risk to delivery.

For all sites, the surface water network capacity is a constraint to provision. Urban run-off needs to be controlled on site to ensure no increase in run-off to the local river system. The use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to provide water quality, amenity and ecological benefits in addition to the flood risk management benefits, will be expected

### **2.1.6 Electricity network**

It is considered that in the short term sufficient capacity exists within the electricity network to accommodate growth. However, to support the total quantum of development proposed in the proposed garden communities, new network and or primary substations would be required at North Uttlesford, Easton Park and West of Braintree. This infrastructure is considered necessary but is not thought to be a risk to development.

### **2.1.7 Gas and broadband**

Provision of gas and broadband services are considered necessary but do not pose risks to the scale and distribution of growth in the local plan period.

### **2.1.8 Waste**

It should be noted that the waste facility at Saffron Walden is operating at or near capacity and therefore an ongoing review of service provision is required. Equally, the waste facilities located outside of Uttlesford and which are used regularly by residents of Uttlesford are also at or near capacity. These include facilities located in Braintree, Chelmsford, Mountnessing, and Harlow. Housing growth and the associated population/waste growth will at the least require existing infrastructure to be re-modelled and upgraded and may require the establishment of new infrastructure to serve this.

## **2.2 Social infrastructure**

Social infrastructure in this IDP includes education (comprising early years and childcare, primary and secondary schools), healthcare, emergency services, libraries, community centres, allotments and open space / play and leisure provision.

### **2.2.1 Education**

Education is considered to be necessary infrastructure. Where new development is to take place in existing towns and settlements existing facilities may need

expanding. Equally, and where new development is of a certain size, then new facilities may be required.

Early years and childcare places are required at the Garden Communities as well as allocated development at the towns and villages. If the need for a new primary school is also identified in the area, it may be possible to deliver them at the same time.

Primary and secondary school provision is required at the Garden Communities as well as the allocated development at the towns and villages. This can either be in the form of a new school, expansion to an existing school or securing of permanent accommodation for temporary school buildings.

Education provision within the proposed garden communities could help provide for needs. School place provision in these has been determined in line with guidance established by Essex County Council: the package of infrastructure outlined by site promoters for the garden communities is broadly in accordance with this guidance. Provision in each of the garden communities would be linked to particular trigger points and require financial contributions and provision of land.

### **2.2.2 Health care**

Health care provision is currently undergoing change and the CCG has prepared a Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP) for the area. It notes a £550million per year funding gap that will be in effect by 2021, unless action is taken now to improve our own personal health and the way healthcare providers can work together.

It is thought that a new hub facility would most likely be needed in Great Dunmow and that the proposed garden communities should include health centres. There is no official standard for when the need for new GP provision will be triggered. The exact size and type of provision will though be determined following more detailed understanding of the scale and type of growth to come forward in different locations across the district.

Hospital care provision is also likely to change in the coming years and therefore it is not currently possible to accurately determine the nature of any infrastructure requirements related to hospital based care.

### **2.2.3 Other social infrastructure items**

Beyond these items there are no major risks to growth associated with the provision of social infrastructure. Contributions will be required to new community centres and youth facilities, which could comprise co-located buildings with libraries and health provision. Allotments, open space, play and leisure facilities should be masterplanned into new development areas in line with general standards for provision. However, and subject to future models, some of this could be provided alongside or within new school sites.

## **2.3 Green infrastructure**

Existing research demonstrates that a high proportion of households in the district have limited access to natural greenspace. Furthermore, there is an identified need for a new Country Park in the district, which would both increase provision and access, but also relieve pressure on the Hatfield Forest.

The proposed new garden communities, by their very nature, include good levels of greenspace provision and some of these also allow for provision of a new Country Park.

A key outstanding question is how the Country Park(s) would be managed and maintained: that is whether they would be retained within the control of the landowners or whether they would be transferred to the County / District to run. The Great Notley Country Park in Braintree is a good example of a successful facility run by the County and which could be a model to be considered in Uttlesford.

The Flitch Way, which follows the route of the former railway between Braintree and Stansted, forms an important part of the network of green infrastructure in the district. It provides for cycling and walking connections. Access to this and improvements to the quality of the route would be sought, particularly from those areas of proposed growth close to the Flitch Way, including garden communities at Easton Park and West of Braintree.

The green infrastructure items outlined above are considered necessary infrastructure. Their form and nature of delivery will be further considered through the preferred options process and the next level of detail that will emerge as the preferred new garden communities are identified. There are no major risks to growth in relation to Green Infrastructure. However, the quality and effective coordination of its planning and delivery will be a key determinate in realising quality place-making in the local plan period.