

4 Housing

Introduction

4.1 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF requires that Local Plans should meet the objectively assessed housing needs of an area unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This must involve using an up to date evidence base to make sure that the Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the local housing market area as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF. The Local Plan sets out to provide enough homes of the right type in sustainable locations to meet the housing needs likely to be generated in the District during the Local Plan period.

4.2 As well as delivering enough homes to meet the housing requirements, the Council must make sure that the homes being provided meet the needs of residents in terms of affordability, size, type, etc. The housing being provided will need to be an appropriate mix reflecting the needs within the population. The 2015 SHMA identifies that the greatest need is for family housing, i.e. 3 and 4+ bedroom properties.

4.3 The delivery of affordable homes is a key element of the Council's own housing strategy. Because of high house prices there are some members of the population, particularly younger people and those on low to modest incomes, unable to access the housing market. High housing costs have also led to a growing number of households who do not necessarily require subsidised affordable housing but, due to inflated house prices, are financially restricted from entering the private housing market. This applies particularly to 'Key Workers' and other workers on modest incomes who are key in providing public services and supporting the commercial businesses on which sustainable economic growth depends.

4.4 The number of people over 65 living in the District is expected to grow considerably over the lifetime of the Local Plan. In addition to the provision of sheltered housing need has been identified for extra care accommodation which provides higher levels of care. Bungalows will also be required as set out in the relevant site allocation policies. Provision will also be made for homes which meet optional Building Regulations standards for accessible and adaptable housing and for wheelchair accessible housing. Policies are also included in the Local Plan which will allow homes to be provided for people involved in agriculture or working in the rural area.

4.5 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF identifies that local planning authorities should plan for people wishing to build their own homes. PPG (paragraph 21) states that the Government wants to enable more people to build their own home and wants to make this form of housing a mainstream housing option and that local authorities should therefore plan to meet the strong latent demand for such housing. As of March 2018, there are 177 interested parties on the Council's register. The Council is committed to finding plots for those wanting to build their own homes.

4.6 Carver Barracks at Wimbish is a Ministry of Defence base with around 1,500 military staff and their dependents living on site. There are no specific proposals that will require additional accommodation needs for the base but any accommodation needs identified during the Local Plan period could be accommodated within the site.

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4.7 The 2016 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)⁽¹⁶⁾ identified that there is no need for any additional pitches for households that meet the required definition. This will be kept under review and any need that arises during the Local Plan period will be considered against a criteria based policy, or if it proves necessary in the future, through the preparation of a specific site allocations Local Plan.

Housing Density

4.8 Housing density is a measure of the number of dwellings which can be built on a site. It is usually expressed in terms of the number of dwellings per hectare. Higher densities of development are recognised as a way of reducing the consumption of resources (including land, energy and water) at the same time as creating vibrant and sustainable places. Development that is design-led can be built to high densities without lower quality; for example many of the central areas of historic towns and villages have high densities. It is however important that a design-led approach is adopted in order to secure the objective of making the best use of the land available whilst having regard to the particular characteristics of a site and the area in which it is located. Average densities provide a guide as to the density that should be met in different types of areas or locations. Policy H1 below sets out the average densities for housing development in the towns and settlements in Uttlesford which should be achieved having regard to Policies D1 – D10 in the Design Section of the Local Plan. These policies guide the design of all development in the district.

16 [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\) \(ORS, 2017\)](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7120&p=0). Available: <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7120&p=0>

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Policy H 1

Housing Density

Unless otherwise specified in a Neighbourhood Plan, housing development will be expected to achieve densities within the following ranges depending on the location of the development and taking into account the character of the area.

Location	Number of Dwellings per Hectare
Within the town Development Limits of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow	35-60
Within Development Limits of any other settlement	30-50
Adjacent to any settlement	30-50

Housing development will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the Design Policies D1-D10 set out in the Local Plan.

Housing Mix

4.9 It is important that the Local Plan provides for a choice and mix of housing across the District in order to create balanced and sustainable communities in relation to both the choice and mix provided on larger, individual sites and overall choice and mix of the towns, villages and new garden communities. Widening housing choice broadens the appeal of an area and helps in meeting the needs of existing residents. The Council will expect the mix of new residential schemes to reflect the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidence of need taking into account local character considerations and viability which will be assessed on a site by site basis. Evidence of scheme viability will need to be demonstrated at the time a planning application is submitted, or alongside a request for a variation of a S106 agreement on the grounds of viability if this becomes necessary.

4.10 The 2015 SHMA assessed the housing mix and tenure in terms of number of bedrooms for market and affordable housing. It was concluded that the majority of the need for market housing is for 3 and 4 + bedroom houses, whilst the greatest need for affordable housing units is for 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

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Policy H 2

Housing Mix

New housing developments will provide for a mix of house types and sizes to meet the different needs of the local area and the District as a whole including a significant proportion of 3 and 4+ bedroom market housing and 2 and 3 bedroom affordable housing to meet the needs of families as evidenced by the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment having regard to local character, significance of heritage assets and the viability of the development which will be assessed on a site by site basis

Subdivision of Dwellings

4.11 The character of an area may be adversely affected by subdivision of existing properties or change of use to multiple occupancy as a result of on-street parking, the use of garden space for car parking, an increase in overlooking of adjacent properties and general noise and disturbance. If a dwelling is within a flood risk area, subdivision creating a ground floor flat could mean a flat being created with no access to a first floor level for refuge. The potential adverse effects of the subdivision or multiple occupancy of residential properties will be controlled by Policy H3 below.

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Policy H 3

Subdivision of Dwellings and Dwellings in Multiple Occupancy

The subdivision of dwellings into two or more units or the change of use of dwellings to houses of multiple occupancy will be permitted provided that:

1. Sufficient car parking is provided in accordance with the Essex Parking Standards, Local standards and subsequent updates;
2. There would be no material overlooking of neighbouring properties;
3. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent design guidance for the occupiers of the newly-created units;
4. If the dwelling is located within a flood risk area, no residential unit is created without access to a first floor level for refuge;
5. The development would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area by reason of:
 - i. On street parking;
 - ii. The loss of garden space for use as car parking; and
 - iii. Unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.

Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

4.12 While extensions to the home reduce the stock of smaller, cheaper housing, an extension may be the only way many households can afford to secure the accommodation they need as their requirements change. Applications for residential extensions will be considered against all policies within the Local Plan, where relevant, but specifically against the policies set out in the Design section of the Local Plan, in particular Policy D3 - Small Scale Development/ Householder Extensions and Policy D1 - High Quality Design.

4.13 To help protect the character of Uttlesford's countryside and its Green Belt there is a need to control the amount and design of new development in the countryside. The construction of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a number of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of the individual properties and their surroundings. Applications for small scale residential extensions should be considered against Policy D3 of the Local Plan. Regards should

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also be given to Policy SP10 – Protection of the Countryside and Policy C1 – Protection of Landscape Character as well as the design policies in the Design section of the Local Plan.

Policy H 4

House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside and the Green Belt

House extensions and replacement dwellings beyond the Green Belt:

1. Proposals to extend or replace existing dwellings within the area designated as Countryside or Countryside Protection Zone will be permitted provided that the proposal would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding countryside or the open character of the Countryside Protection Zone by virtue of its siting, scale, height, character and design.
2. A replacement dwelling should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity or other environmental grounds indicate that a more appropriate location on the plot can be justified.

House extension and replacement dwellings within the Green Belt

3. House extensions will be permitted which would not result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling or harm the purposes of the Green Belt; and
4. Replacement dwellings should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling and will only be permitted if they are not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Both within the Green Belt and beyond it account will be taken of the size of the existing dwelling, the extent to which it has previously been extended or could be extended under permitted development rights, and the character of the area.

Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

4.14 Infilling between existing dwellings and the development of other village sites often provide opportunities for the provision of additional homes. However, care should be taken to make sure such development is appropriate, well designed and well related to its surroundings. This will be particularly important beyond development limits, where the sensitive nature of these sites requires development only be allowed where it will not adversely affect the local environment and where it will not lead to over development.

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It is also important to safeguard the interests of residents in surrounding houses by making sure that residential amenity such as large gardens, privacy and the character of the area is maintained.

Policy H 5

Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

Proposals for small scale residential development on sites in settlements without development limits will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. The setting of existing buildings, the natural and historic environment, and the character of the area are protected;**
- 2. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent guidance;**
- 3. The development would not have an overbearing effect or cause disturbance to neighbouring properties;**
- 4. There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties; and**
- 5. The resulting development would not result in unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.**

Affordable Housing

4.15 As explained in the Spatial Strategy in Section 3 of the Local Plan, since 2010 the Council has worked with Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire Councils to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). A SHMA was published in 2010 and updated in 2012 and 2015. The 2017 SHMA sets out an up to date and policy-compliant assessment of housing need across the Housing Market Area (HMA) for the period 2011-2033. It identifies that the four districts represent the most appropriate “best fit” for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire HMA.

4.16 The 2015 SHMA concluded that the combined level of housing need across the four local authority areas was 46,058 homes for the period 2011-2033. This figure was disaggregated amongst the four authorities.

4.17 The Government released new household projections in July 2016. These figures showed that, by 2033, the population of Uttlesford was likely to be greater than originally expected. Following the release of these figures, further work on the SHMA has showned that the housing requirement for the District has increased to at least 14,000 new homes by 2033.

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4.18 The 2017 SHMA identified that the affordable housing component of the District's total housing need is 19.5%. In the light of national policy which does not permit affordable housing contributions from sites of 10 units or less, it is considered appropriate to require developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings in order to ensure that the affordable housing need is met.

4.19 There are, and will continue to be, many households in Uttlesford lacking their own housing or living in housing that is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

4.20 For affordable housing to be relevant to those in housing need in Uttlesford it must be available, both initially and for subsequent occupancy, only to those with a demonstrable housing need.

4.21 The Council encourages meeting affordable housing requirements through one of its preferred Registered Providers (RP) who have the management abilities and local knowledge to effectively manage new affordable housing. Increasingly though there are a range of different types of affordable housing and developers and property managers as well as Registered Providers. The Council will consider a range of different types of affordable housing subject to it meeting the overall intention of affordable housing. Innovative affordable housing products and development designs will be supported particularly within the new garden communities.

4.22 Starter Homes can help to widen opportunities for home ownership for those households able to afford market rents but unable to afford to buy housing in the Housing Market Area. The Council is supportive of the model and awaits the publication of the Regulations. The SHMA found that Starter Homes are unlikely to be affordable to those households identified as being unable to afford market housing. The provision of Starter Homes are therefore considered as being additional to (and not part of) the affordable housing need.

4.23 The percentage and type of affordable housing on any given site may be subject to negotiation at the time of a planning application, to allow issues such as site size, sustainability and viability to be considered. An appropriate mix of tenures and property size would need to be agreed in the light of the most up to date housing need evidence and will be determined by local circumstances. The Council will set out in its Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and specific site layout and design requirements for affordable housing. Currently the tenure split is 71% affordable rent or social rented tenure and 29% shared ownership or intermediate housing tenure. Affordable housing units will be normally be distributed throughout the development in clusters of no more than 10 units, depending on the size of the development.

4.24 Requirements for affordable housing provision can render some schemes unviable, especially when faced with a downturn in the housing market or changes to funding. The viability of schemes is a key consideration. It is the responsibility of the applicant to commission a viability study by specialists to be agreed with the Council

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to prove that the affordable dwellings requirement as set out in the policy will make their scheme unviable and to propose alternatives to meet the requirements set out in Policy H6 below.

Policy H 6

Affordable Housing

Developments on sites which provide for 11 dwellings or more, or residential floorspace of more than 1,000 sq m (combined gross internal area), will be required to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings on the application site and as an integral part of the development. The council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.

Where it can be evidenced to the satisfaction of the Council that this requirement would render the development unviable the Council will negotiate an appropriate provision of affordable housing.

In exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be achieved, off-site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on-site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.

Affordable housing units will be distributed through the development in appropriately sized, non-contiguous clusters. The tenure mix of affordable housing should reflect the most up to date local housing need evidence and viability on individual sites.

Developers may not circumvent this policy by artificially subdividing sites. Where sites are sub-divided, the Council will normally expect each subdivision or smaller development to contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable housing which would have been appropriate on the whole or larger site.

To prevent the loss of affordable housing to the general housing market, the Council will, where appropriate, require long term safeguards to be in place to ensure the benefit of affordable housing will be enjoyed by successive occupiers. This will normally be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

4.25 As a consequence of the scale of affordable housing needs and the need to retain mixed and balanced communities, the Council will also exceptionally release suitable land in rural areas for local needs housing that would not otherwise normally receive planning permission.

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4.26 It is important to establish that a need exists and then to make sure that accommodation is made available for those people who have a genuine need for housing in the locality that they cannot meet in the market. Such people may for example, include existing residents who need separate accommodation locally, key workers or people who have longstanding links with the local community, such as people who used to live in the village but were forced to move away because of a lack of affordable housing, and people who need to move back into a village to be near relatives. 'Local' in this context means 'within the parish', principally, although the needs of those who live or work in an adjoining parish may also be accepted. This would particularly apply where a scheme is proposed in a larger village that would meet the needs of adjoining smaller communities. Properties need to meet an identified local need and be provided and maintained by a registered or other provider, to be agreed by the Council at an early stage. On some exception sites the Council may consider development that includes cross-subsidy from open market sales on the same site. The applicant would need to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that a mixed tenure scheme was essential to the viability and delivery of the development. The District Council will work with Registered Providers, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups in identifying suitable sites.

4.27 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of affordable housing including discounted market sale and intermediate homes to rent or buy. The Council supports the development of CLTs to meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies, CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

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Policy H 7

Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

Development of affordable housing will be permitted outside settlements on a site where housing would not otherwise normally be permitted, if it meets all the following criteria:

1. The development will meet a local need that cannot be met in any other way, as demonstrated by an up to date housing needs survey prepared within the last three years;
2. The development is of a scale appropriate to the size and facilities; of the settlement; and
3. The site adjoins the settlement;

The inclusion of market housing in such schemes will be supported provided that:

4. Viability assessments demonstrate that the need for the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the development; and
5. The proportion of market housing is the minimum needed to make the scheme viable.

Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

4.28 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF clarifies that Local Planning Authorities should identify and make provision for people wishing to build their own home. Enabling self and custom building provides an important opportunity to bring more choice into the housing market and enable people to design and build homes that meet their specific needs.

4.29 Self or custom build housing is identified as dwellings built (or commissioned) by someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least three years. The three years is relevant in terms of qualifying for self-build Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) exemption.

4.30 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires each local planning authority to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority area in order to build houses for those individuals to occupy as homes. The self-build register also provides information about the demand for such housing. This evidence should then be used to inform the Local Plan, consideration of planning applications and the disposal of public land.

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4.31 The Council will work with developers on sites where the delivery of serviced plots for affordable housing are negotiated to enable some of these to be offered for self-build where a need is identified.

4.32 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of self-build schemes. CLTs are non-profit, community based organisations run by volunteers that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community, are owned and controlled by the community and are made available at permanently affordable levels. The Council supports the development of CLTs to meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

4.33 The Council further recognises the opportunity of custom and self-build housing partly satisfying the affordable housing obligations from a residential development. Self-build development can provide for intermediate housing for rent or sale but would be subject to applying affordability and eligibility criteria. Several alternatives can be used to secure delivery. These include providing a specific number of fully serviced plots or homes that can be partly built out to be self-finished by purchasers. In all cases these should be made available to households in housing need with a relevant local connection and provided for sale or rent at an appropriate discount below market values. Affordable self-build properties should meet the definition for affordable housing provided by the Local Plan and Annex 2 of the NPPF for people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home on the open market.

4.34 Support for this growing sector can make a positive contribution to development within the District. Where areas of land are identified for self-build, either as part of a strategic development site, new garden community, or through other smaller scale or windfall development, good design principles will apply.

4.35 Masterplans and Plot Passports should be prepared that provide the parameters within which these new homes can be designed and build, allowing for individual interpretation, but within a framework that establishes the grain, scale and rhythm of new development.

4.36 Plot Passports are a summary of the design parameters for any given plot, helping private homebuilders understand what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission for the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The Passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built, as well as height restrictions and other details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.

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Policy H 8

Self-Build and Custom Units

Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported where they seek to address the need and demand for self and custom build housing and:

- 1. The site is located within development limits;**
- 2. Are of high quality design and accord with plot passports (where appropriate);**
- 3. Are constructed sustainably and are energy efficient; and**
- 4. Do not conflict with other policies in the local plan.**

Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported as part of the Garden Communities and strategic sites.

Where land is proposed for self and custom build plots located within Garden Communities and strategic sites, a design code and individual Plot Passports should be prepared and submitted to the Council for approval. Together, these will regulate the form of development, establishing building parameters such as heights, footprints, set-backs, densities and parking requirements. Neighbourhood plans may designate self and custom build sites where demand is identified.

In line with identified demand, a proportion of the self-build plots should be provided as affordable housing. These should be provided:

- 5. At an appropriate discount below market value; and**
- 6. To households in housing need with a relevant local connection.**

If Self or Custom Build plots are not sold after being marketed appropriately for 24 months, then they should remain on the open market as Self or Custom Build plots or be offered to the Council as land to deliver additional affordable housing. If there is no interest from the above after a further 12 months then the developer can build out the site as open market housing.

Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.37 Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 Housing Act (2004). ⁽¹⁷⁾states that every local housing authority must, when undertaking a review of housing needs in their District carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers residing in or resorting to their district. Local planning authorities are required to provide culturally suitable accommodation for all their community under the Housing Act (2004).

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4.38 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) (2015) ⁽¹⁸⁾ requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets and provide a sufficient supply of sites for those families who meet the definition of 'gypsy and traveller' and 'travelling showpeople'. Gypsy and traveller under the PPTS are defined as:

4.39 *“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:*

- a. *Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life;*
- b. *The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.*
- c. *Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.”*

4.40 Travelling showpeople are defined in the PPTS as:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.”

4.41 In partnership with the Councils across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, the District Council commissioned the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for gypsy and traveller and travelling Showpeople families. The latest GTAA was published in January 2018 and the baseline for the Uttlesford Study in 2016.

4.42 The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Uttlesford through a combination of desk-based research and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites. A total of 16 interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised and unauthorised sites and yards.

4.43 The GTAA identified that in the District there is a need for no additional pitches up to 2033 for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition contained in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; a need for up to 8 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may meet the planning definition; and a need for 10

17 [Available: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents)

18 [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(DCLG, 2015\).](#)

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additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition. No needs for travelling showpeople were identified. The Council is working with the other Councils in Essex to identify the need and the appropriate location(s) for transit provision.

4.44 The Council is committed to providing for the housing need of all of its community as required under the 2004 Housing Act. The Council will closely monitor the gypsy and traveller population and keep the evidence base on gypsy and traveller need and supply under review.

4.45 The Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address the identified need for Gypsy and Travellers who fall outside the definition of the PPTS as part of the Council's overall objective to meet district-wide housing needs. Any need that arises during the Local Plan period will be considered against the criteria based Policy H9 below, or if it proves necessary in the future, through the preparation of a specific site allocations plan.

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Policy H 9

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Planning permission for new Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites will be granted if the following criteria are met:

1. The applicant has adequately demonstrated a need for a site in the District and the number and type of pitches or plots proposed;
2. The site is located in a sustainable location, well related to a settlement with a range of services and facilities, including a primary school and healthcare facilities;
3. The site is located, designed and landscaped to minimise any impact on the natural, built and historic environment;
4. The site has safe pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the public highway and provides adequate space for parking, turning and servicing on site;
5. The site is not located in Flood Zone 3 and passes the Exception Test if the site is located in Flood Zone 2;
6. The site is, or can be, connected to physical infrastructure including drainage, water supply, power and other necessary utility services; and
7. The layout of the site and associated facilities including pitches/ plots, hard-standings, amenity blocks, vehicular and pedestrian access, play areas and boundary treatments are well planned to support health and well-being.

Plots for Travelling Showpeople should be large enough to accommodate the storage and maintenance of rides and equipment.

Accessible Homes and Housing for Older People

4.46 Uttlesford has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing over the Local Plan period. Essex County Council (ECC) is the provider of social services in the District. Its independent Living Programme is encouraging the provision of specialist accommodation in Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities. For Uttlesford District, ECC has set the target of delivering 73 self-contained additional units of specialist accommodation (33 through rental and 40 through ownership) to enable older people to live independently within the community by 2020. This is in addition to the requirement for communal establishments. The Independent Living target

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is set out in Essex County Council's Independent Living Position Statement (2016) ⁽¹⁹⁾. This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care, which is a considerably more expensive way of meeting the needs of older people, and can unnecessarily restrict independence within this age group.

4.47 Housing intended specifically for older people should be located where it is easy for residents to access community facilities and services, such as day-to-day shops and healthcare, and to be able to travel by public transport to larger centres to access a greater range of higher order facilities and services such as hospitals and libraries. If the day-to-day facilities and services are not available locally they should be available on site. Research has shown that the incorporation of certain design features in housing can have positive implications for the health and well-being of older people. In 2009 the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) published a report examining the design of housing for older people and made recommendations to improve it. This included 10 key design principles which are now known as the HAPPI principles and are considered best practice that should be adopted in the design of housing for older people. Bungalows provide a popular form of housing in Uttlesford which means that older people can downsize to accommodation that is fit for purpose but still maintains their independence. It also meets a need for those with a physical disability who require accommodation on one floor. The provision of 1 and 2 bed bungalows will be supported.

4.48 There is also a need to ensure that the needs of wheelchair users are met within the District. It is therefore essential that planning policy be provided to ensure that the needs of older people and wheelchair users are met over the Local Plan period. The Local Plan aims to give people more choice and control over where and how they live and receive care. Sites of 11 or more dwellings are therefore required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). This threshold reflects the likelihood that the costs associated with such provision may make smaller developments unviable. Where this would result in only a part dwelling being provided, it is expected that the total requirements will be rounded up. 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(3): Category 3 (Wheelchair Users Dwellings) to meet the needs of wheelchair users in the District.

19 [Independent Living Programme for Older People Position Statement October 2016.](#)

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Policy H 10

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Provision will be made for housing, including bungalows, that meets the needs of the ageing population and those with disabilities.

Housing designed specifically for older people should offer easy access to community facilities, services and frequent public transport, or where this is not possible facilities and services should be available on-site. Where possible schemes should be well-related and integrated with the wider neighbourhood. Subject to viability older people's housing developments should be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.

New housing must be designed and constructed in a way that enables it to be adapted to meet the changing needs of its occupants over time. For this reason the Council requires all new housing on sites of 11 or more dwellings (market and affordable) to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be required to meet Category 3 (M4(3)) requirements (Wheelchair user dwellings).

Only where circumstances exist where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is not practically achievable or financially viable to deliver will new development be exempt from this policy.

Specialist Housing and Care Homes for Older and Vulnerable People

4.49 Some people, such as the elderly or disabled, may need specialist housing provision, which is specially designed for their needs, and inline with the ten HAPPI principles. This can include extra care, sheltered and registered care homes for the elderly and disabled, as well as any other facilities for the homeless or those escaping violence. These uses generally fall within the C2 residential institutions or in some cases the C3 dwelling homes use class and this is determined usually by the amount of care available on site and whether the units are self-contained.

4.50 Many of the considerations for specialist housing will be similar to those of general housing, and development will need to take into account all relevant policies in this plan, but each use will have specific needs. For example, elderly or disabled accommodation should provide storage and charging points for wheelchairs/mobility scooters; whilst those accommodating children should have appropriate indoor and outdoor play space. In all cases, residents are less likely to have access to a private vehicle and so the nearby provision of shops and services is essential, in addition to good public transport links for trips further afield.

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Policy H 11

Specialist Housing

Specialist housing is defined as accommodation, which has been specifically designed and built to meet the needs of the elderly, disabled, young or vulnerable adults, and may include some elements of care and support for everyone who lives there.

Proposals for specialist housing will be permitted within development limits providing that all the following criteria are met:

- 1. Everyday services that users would expect to access, such as shops and health services should be available on site or should be located close by and be able to be accessed by a range of transport modes;**
- 2. Parking should be provided in line with the Council's approved standards;**
- 3. There is an appropriate level of private amenity space to meet the needs of residents.**

Sites beyond development limits will be favourably considered if in addition to the above criteria:

- 4. The site adjoins a settlement;**
- 5. The setting of existing buildings, the natural and historic environment and the character of the area are protected;**
- 6. The development would not have an overbearing effect or cause disturbance to neighbouring properties; and**
- 7. There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties.**

Agricultural / Rural Workers' Dwellings

4.51 The erection of a new dwelling for someone engaged in agriculture or rural activity who has to be available on the holding at all times is one instance where new buildings may exceptionally be permitted in the countryside.

4.52 Applications for planning permission in such circumstances will need to demonstrate that the agricultural or rural enterprise or intention to engage in one is genuine and will be sustained for a reasonable period of time that is sufficient to warrant a dwelling in the countryside where it would not otherwise be permitted. Applications should include clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a

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sound financial basis. It will also be necessary to establish that the enterprise needs one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times, for example to provide essential care to animals or processes at short notice and to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or produce.

4.53 Such dwellings may be exceptionally permitted in open countryside only because of the needs of the enterprise. Before permission is granted there has to be a clearly established existing need.

4.54 In these cases dwellings will normally be modest in size, in line with the function of providing appropriate care, and be related to the needs of the holding in terms of its scale. The test is a stringent one. The application must demonstrate that new residential accommodation is essential for the enterprise, and not just convenient.

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Policy H 12

Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings

An agricultural/rural workers' dwellings will be permitted if it meets the following criteria:

- 1. the dwelling is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise to enable one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times;**
- 2. the enterprise is economically viable to the extent that it can sustain the dwelling proposed;**
- 3. the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;**
- 4. the size and location of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier; and**
- 5. the proposed dwelling should satisfy other planning requirements including access arrangements, energy efficiency, siting and impact on the countryside and flood risk.**

In granting planning permission the Council will:

- 6. make sure that the dwellings are kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists; and**
- 7. remove the permitted development rights.**

An occupancy condition restricting the occupancy of a dwelling to a person employed or last employed in agriculture or rural worker will not be removed unless the council is satisfied that:-

- 8. the long term need for the dwelling has ceased; and**
- 9. there is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in agriculture or other rural work in the locality**