

Ref No	Page No	Policy No / Paragraph	Comment	Proposed Change / action / Query
1	N/A		The decision to hold the consultation period to align with the school holidays has caused considerable difficulty to the Town Council in coordinating a well-considered response. No council meetings are ordinarily held during the month of August and many councillors and officers are off on family holidays. This will also affect all other statutory consultees.	In future, avoid periods of school holidays, e.g. Christmas, Easter, July and August in line with established government guidance.
2	13	“Objective 1e” – High Quality Design	Amend the objective - resisting poor is negative	change words to ‘ensuring high quality design’ and delete ‘resisting poor’
3	13	Objective 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> para	Possible conflict with Corporate Plan which states that UDC will oppose 2 <sup>nd</sup> runway but this paragraph wishes to provide employment growth opportunities at Stansted	UDC to clarify this point
4	13	Objective 2b Supporting the Market Towns	Notes that the Local Plan will support Market Towns	How will this objective be met? Hierarchy given within Retail policy to SW? Need to clarify
5	19	3.15 West of Braintree	How many homes in Uttlesford area? Cross boundary development means this is unclear	Answer (found later in Local Plan proposals) is 3500 as per page 37 (Policy SP8)
6	19	3.16 (cross reference with 3.49 re housing numbers)	The figures given for Saffron Walden are incorrect and misleading. Also note the 85 homes granted for Little Walden Road, Gladman site plus the number of units in the care home.	Amend figures for Saffron Walden
7	19	3.16	Notes that no additional employment space is located within SW. Notes that new retailing and open spaces will be provided.	Should we be encouraging further employment space to encourage business and development? Where will this retail and open space be? There is no reference to further retail or open spaces within the Local Plan for SW
8	21	N/A	General comment – there are very few references to Neighbourhood Plans throughout the document. These will have to be taken into account once they are made.	Please review.

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9	22	Policy SP2	First line of policy notes that “the majority of development will be focussed at the towns of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow etc etc...”	This should be amended so that there is no assumption of hierarchy for development in SW and should state “the majority of development will be at the new Garden Communities at Easton Park, West Braintree and North Uttlesford followed by development at the towns of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow”. This changes the hierarchy of proposed development
10	24	3.31	Spatial strategy talking about rail travel. A new station is proposed at Granta Park on the Cambridge to Haverhill light railway	Uttlesford Garden Village should be connected to the light railway proposed for the Haverhill to Cambridge line. Eastern Park also needs a rail link to Stansted and Braintree.
11	26	3.42	The housing figure for Uttlesford is 14,100 of a total 46,058 across 4 authorities. 14,100 is more than ¼ of the total requirement and represents 30% of the requirement across 4 authorities. We question these figures anyway and believe that 11,500 is a more appropriate figure.  Houses in SW = total of 1269 (inc built, planning permission granted and those proposed in Local Plan), this represents 9% of the total required for Uttlesford	Query this allocation with UDC, why 30% of housing for Uttlesford? Please clarify  If this percentage is based on actual and projected population figures from census, is it fair to assume that because there has been a large percentage increase in past 10 years that this should continue?
12	34	Policy SP6, SP7 & SP8	Community provisions should also include land, sports facilities and pavilions.	This should be included in same paragraph 3 of Policy
13	35	3.61	Should this not state what these strategic highway improvements should be? These should be outlined in the Local Plan.	Add details of the strategic highway improvements
14	36	Policy 7 (point 4)	Transport Choice, what is this and how will it be achieved? What preventative measures will be put in place to reduce or mitigate against increased traffic flow from development into / out of Saffron Walden?	Policy should include some mitigation for increased traffic in/out of SW

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15	36	Policy SP7 (point 5)	Access strategy, refers to northbound traffic but what about southbound traffic?	There needs to be contributions towards capacity improvements in Saffron Walden and Southbound traffic too (i.e. cutting cross country to Stansted/Gt Dunmow and beyond)
16	47	Policy SP11 London Stansted Airport	Airport development- Notes the proposed development will be assessed against the Local Plan but UDC'S Corporate Plan says it will oppose a 2 <sup>nd</sup> runway at Stansted.	Add 'in line with UDC's Corporate Plan'
17	47	Policy SP11	This should make provisions to ban night time flights and with no increase in permitted flightpaths.	Policy to be amended
18	51	Policy SP12	Development should not take place in any areas rated higher than "low risk"	Proposed new bullet point "Development should not take place in any areas rated higher than low risk flooding"
19	52	Housing 4.2	Query greatest need is for 3 or 4 bedroom houses, the work of the Neighbourhood Plan does not support that – findings show that 2 and 3 bed homes are the priority. That requirement should be based upon policies within the Neighbourhood Plan and within good practices as detailed in the South Cambs Local Plan.	Query this statement from the SHMA. Amend to 2 and 3 bed.
20	52	Housing 4.3	Addition – 'Necessarily require <b>or qualify</b> for subsidised affordable housing'	Add in addition in 5 <sup>th</sup> line of paragraph
21	54	Housing Policy H1 plus housing density chart	This should state as led by local demand and outlined in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and according to the character of the area.	Should say "Densities are as outlined in the relevant Neighbourhood Plan and determined according to the character of the settlement. In the absence of an up-to-date Neighbourhood Plan then densities should average 30dph." This density accords with both the South Cambs and East Herts local plans.

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22	54	4.10	Add in 'Market' affordable to note those who need 2 & 3 bedroom houses but do not qualify for 'affordable housing'	Amend wording as proposed
23	55	Policy H2 Housing Mix	This should not include 'significant proportion of 3 & 4 bedroom market housing'. How does this cater for families that do not qualify for affordable housing and cannot afford 3 & 4 bedroom houses?	Amend wording as proposed below:  This should also say 2 & 3 bedroom affordable <b>Market</b> housing The Housing mix should be similar to South Cambs – 30% 1 & 2 bed, 40% 3 bed and 30% 4 bed or as outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan for the area.
24	56	Policy H3	This should state sub-division of a flat/ property will not be allowed where the dwelling is in a flood risk area and the flat is created with no access to a 1 <sup>st</sup> floor level for refuge.	Amend wording as proposed
25	58	Policy H5 (point b)	Please define 'unreasonably small'. This should state that garden sizes must comply with Essex Design Guide.	Amend wording and refer to Essex Design Guide
26	60	Policy H6	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph –add in 'with reference to the Neighbourhood Plan'  Question the 40% affordable homes as too high a percentage.  Housing should be pepper-potted throughout the site.  There should not be an 'invitation' for developers to evidence unviability, however, a viability statement should be submitted with the planning application and not after planning permission has been granted. There should be no alterations once permission is granted.	Suggest policy is revised in accordance with the South Cambs Local Plan.  And add re "with reference to the Neighbourhood Plan" A viability test should be the exception, not the rule and certainly not the most important policy point.  Affordable housing should be based on truly affordable rents.
27	61	Policy H7 (first point)	Add 'or at any other site'. Policy needs to mention working with Parish and Town Councils.	Amend wording as proposed

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28	66	Policy H10	This policy is the equivalent of the former Lifetime Homes policy and should apply to all developments regardless of size.	The percentage for Category 3 should be 15% for both market homes and affordable homes.
29	72	5 Employment ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> point)	Regarding employment, notes there is an acute lack of modern office accommodation in SW. The Local Plan should therefore seek to look for alternative land on the outskirts of town?	Local Plan should provision alternative sites for office accommodation for SW. Industrial/warehouses should be converted to office accommodation to reflect market need.
30	72	5 (3 <sup>rd</sup> point)	Noting the excess in industrial and warehouse units in SW.  What policies are in place to address that? Is this being addressed via the UDC Economic Development team?	Local Plan should make provision to encourage occupation of these units. Perhaps reduced rates for a period of time? Offer business incentive? Policy should reflect the commercial market need.
31	72	5.26	Note that the Printpack site is a 'Safeguard employment site' as per Appendix 6. This paragraph notes that 'these sites will be retained for employment use as described under policy EMP1' It is interesting it does not include the current Homebase Site as employment land.	Error in Maps as the SW Business Centre (behind Homebase) is not shown on the employment map.  We insist that the land currently occupied by Homebase is also included in the employment land map.
32	76	Policy EMP1	If houses are to be built in Saffron Walden on any scale then these communities should be sustainable with provision of new offices and other places of work, otherwise the town risks becoming no more than a commuter town for London and Cambridge.	Need also to mention the importance of high-tech industries requiring good communications (digital and transport). Needs standard office/manufacturing space.
33	77	Policy EMP2	Conversion to residential should not be encouraged.	
34	78	Policy EMP3	Change of use should not be encouraged beyond what is already permitted development.	Note error on map which needs to be amended.

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			To note Saffron Walden Business Centre (map18) is not shown on Saffron Walden inset map – is not shown as employment area.	
35	83	Policy RET1	Note Saffron Walden Business Centre is not shown on the policies map Query, this policy notes that floorspace for a convenience store by 2026 of 5,000sqm but this is contrary to page 19 (last para) which notes there is not additional employment floorspace in SW.  No mention of increasing the retail area in SW town centre.	We support this policy noting the hierarchy of Saffron Walden. The town does not need a supermarket of this size – the floor space represents a superstore, not a convenience store. Need to support independent shops to maintain the character of the town. Also note that we wish to protect the town centre and we do not at all support out of town retail parks. New developments need to be sustainable. Query this discrepancy
36	84	Retail 6.18	Support	
37	84	Policy RET2	Should add to this that any retail development outside town centres must demonstrate unviability or impracticality of the development being in the town centre.	Amend wording as proposed. Also note that convenience stores are needed on developments more than 500m from retail centres.
38	85	6.20	To support this paragraph	
39	85	6.21	This should also reference events in Saffron Walden such as the 8day weekend and maze festival.	Amend wording as proposed to also show activity in SW
40	85	Policy RET3	This would not allow food/restaurants in King Streets or the Market Square? This policy is designed to protect retail but reduces the protection in reality. We should be increasing the amount of primary shopping frontage, not reducing it. We do not want to allow change of use from A1 without planning permission.	This policy needs to be flexible in the right places but prioritise Primary frontages to remain so, especially in Saffron Walden.

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41	86	Policy RET4	Support this policy	
42	87	Policy RET5	Support this policy  To add 'Appropriate footpaths/cycle paths are provided by developers/applicant to access facility'	Support policy with amended wording as proposed
43	88	7.5	Notes that Low bus use and services are challenging- then the Local Plan should include some incentives to make use of public transport more attractive, viable and affordable.	Additional policies required to make public transport more attractive and viable
44	89	7.6	SWTC would welcome implementation of the Uttlesford Cycling Strategy together with details of any proposals.	
45	89	7.7	What will happen if the Peasland Road TRO is not implemented? What is the fall-back plan? We object to this policy as it conflicts with SWTC policy.	Query fall back option if SWTC challenge against the TRO is successful
46	89	7.8	Notes the additional traffic in SW, noting that no solution is currently found to address unacceptable traffic impacts.	UDC to find solution to this and this must be included within the Local Plan. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF says that 'development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.'
47	89	7.9	Talks about 'Existing S106 contributions' so this infers that additional S106 contributions would not be sought?  Should also stop calling it Kier Site and call it 'Land North and South of Thaxted Road'	We object to first sentence of 7.9 as it is factually incorrect.  Add 'future and existing Section 106'
48	89	7.9	Any further details available now on this separate Saffron Walden town transport study? Any schedules or timescales for it?  This assumes further development and intent to further	Further details required from UDC re SW traffic study

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			develop this land more than the 150 homes in the Local Plan and yet there would be no need to further develop as the 14,100 required during the Local Plan period have already been met. There also needs to a reference to Air Quality.	Query the intent or assumption that the Kier site will be developed further to the 150 homes as proposed in the Local Plan.
49	90	7.12	Not only improve existing services but add to the provisions where possible to encourage use of public transport.	Amend wording. Spelling of realistic
50	93	Policy TA1	Support this policy but need a definition of 'appropriate and safe networks'	How will this policy be implemented in relation to site access? UDC needs to ensure that this is set out in travel plans and that these have measurable outcomes.
51	94	Policy TA2	Support this policy	
52	96	Policy TA3	Support but request that a higher percentage of charging points are installed as electric vehicles (including bikes) are already a significant proportion of new vehicle sales. Note that this conflicts with 7.22 which states 10% for flatted development.	Amend policy to allow 20% provision for flats. Also add 'or to latest agreed standards'
53	97	Policy TA4	To add ' and/or any policy as identified within the local Neighbourhood Plans'	Amend policy as proposed
54	98	Policy TA5	Insufficient policy – needs major revision. No mention of the Cambridge to Haverhill Light Railway. Need new cycle paths and road links.	There need to be improvements to the M11 with new junctions north of Junctions 8/8A and improvements to Junction 9.
55	101	Policy INF1	Define 'timely delivery' This should say at defined, pre-agreed trigger points. Should include reference to community shopping facilities. Broadly support this policy	Support but request change re defining the time to have specific trigger points
56	101	8.6	Note that there is an identified deficiency in POS, sports, allotments etc. as evidenced in the Sports Facility Development Strategy of January 2016 and the Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy of 2012	Note this existing deficiency that the proposed Local Plan does not sufficiently address the current deficiency let alone make provision for any additional required from new developments
57	102	8.7	This is factually incorrect. It is just worthy of note, but this also should not suggest that there is sufficient in Saffron Walden.	Sentence to be amended - look at the number of public parks and spaces in other

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				Towns & Villages around the Uttlesford area. By only showing those in SW it also gives the impression that there is sufficient in town already and this is not the case.
58	102	8.10	Fully support this paragraph	To support
59	102	8.11	Define 'As good as' This is subjective. They must be to the standard acceptable by the current owner. What about where new provision, land is owned by a different person?	Amend
60	102	8.12	Should define 'Local community' also as town/parish council and Neighbourhood Plan team.	Amend
61	103	8.13		Delete it is a duplicate of 8.12
62	104	Policy INF2	But note the protection of allotment land under 1904 allotment act, you cannot simply dispose of allotment land without Secretary of State permission. Allotment allocation is only 40% of recommended allocation. Need to define 'Quality' etc. within the policy. Paragraph (b) to add 'and improved facilities' Paragraph (c) to note that there is a preference for the provision to be within the site. Policy should state that provision should be to Sport England Design/Fields in Trust/Natural England standards	We object to this policy in its current format as it is not well defined. It needs to be far more detailed and specific. Policy should also state that provision should be to Sport England standards and that provision of accessible green space and sports pitches should be to Fields in Trust and Natural England ANGst standards as a minimum.
63	106	8.24	Support this paragraph	
64	107	Policy INF3	50 units seem high. Health assessments should be made for smaller units especially where designed for elderly etc. In a rural district such as Uttlesford it is important that all developments, however, large make a contribution towards health.	Consider reduction in policy. Change to 10 and make the rules as for affordable housing or levy a set amount per roof.

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65	109	Policy INF4	Broadly support	
66	110	9.3	Support UDC's adoption of the Design companion for planning & place making.	
67	111	9.7	Support these principles	
68	112	Policy D1	Broadly support Support the inclusion of DCLG space standards	
69	112	9.8	Add in 'Provided the right place <b>or of sufficient quantity</b> '	Amend as proposed
70	113	Policy D2	Support this but the policy should also include that rear parking courts should be avoided.	Amend as proposed
71	113	Policy D3	Support this policy	
72	114	9.10	Define 'Large scale development'	UDC to define
73	114	9.14	Add to this paragraph: 'Particular regard and consideration must be afforded to the delivery of local community or shopping centres and school provision. Early delivery of these facilities will ensure provisions for the 1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> cohort of residents'	Amend as proposed
74	115	Policy D4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bullet point – Add to this policy – 'and community facilities'  Also add regarding phasing of works to ensure community provision is supplied to the first cohort of residents.  Welcome inclusion of Building for Life 12 assessment but this should apply to all new developments.	Amend as proposed. All new developments should be designed to allow the shortest routes for pedestrians to key destinations, regardless of vehicular access. Current advice from Essex Highways results in roads that are too narrow and dangerous. The provision and phasing of new supporting development such as shops, schools and community facilities should be mandatory.

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75	116	9.19	Delete the words 'It is envisaged that 'so that it is more positive	Amend as proposed
76	116	Policy D5	Add to policy:  'Design will be in accordance with any specific requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and will complement the area as identified within the Heritage and Character Assessment'	Amend as proposed
77	116	Policy D6	Support this policy	
78	117	Policy D7	Support this policy	Larger sites to provide 5% self-build
79	118	Policy D8	Needs to be more specific around provision of waste areas for flats to ensure they are accessible by both residents and refuse lorries. Developers need to provide appropriate storage areas for waste easily accessible to the front of the house.  We would also like to see a policy on green roofs as suggested.	Amend policy to include additional re waste access (...be provided) out of sight of the frontages of properties but with easy access to the road to allow for rubbish collections. 'Developments that offer innovative recycling and waste disposal systems will be particularly welcomed'? (already the case in many countries) 'The use of green roofs in new builds will be encouraged, especially for flat or shallow-pitch structures. Green roofs reduce water run-off, enhance sound and thermal insulation, and support local biodiversity.'
80	118	Policy D8 continued	Should add 'Houses with roof solar panels and water recycling schemes will be encouraged'	Amend as proposed
81	118	9.29	Support this	
82	119	9.30	Support this	

Ref No	Page No	Policy No / Paragraph	Comment	Proposed Change / action / Query
83	120	Policy D9	Support this	
84	121	Policy D10	Support this	
85	122	10.3	Support this it seeks to protect historic buildings and fabric.	
86	122	10.5	This should also make reference to the Neighbourhood Plan	Amend as proposed to make reference to NP
87	123	Policy EN1	Should there also be a cross reference here to the local listing within the conservation area appraisals? Note that pollution can also come from road traffic and air traffic.	Query with UDC
88	123	10.8	Support this inclusion	
89	124	Policy EN2	Support this especially that outline applications in a conservation area will not be considered.	Define 'substantial pollution'
90	124	Policy EN3	Welcome and support this policy. Should also add that developments will not be permitted that results in an increase in traffic and pollution within a Conservation Area.	
91	125	10.11	Support return to original characteristics	
92	126	Policy EN4	Should there be a reference here to locally listed buildings under the conservation area appraisal?	Query with UDC
93	127	Policy EN5	Broadly support this	
94	128	Policy EN6	Support this but needs clarification...	Amend to say "Development that is integral to the function of the park will be permitted provided that...", then planning conditions would be attached.
95	129	Policy EN7	Support this	

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96	129	Policy EN8	Support this	Is there a typo in this? The Last paragraph quotes NE1 but should this be EN1?
97	130	Policy EN9	Broadly support  Should this policy also reference the creation of additional parks & sites? It currently only seeks to protect the existing rather than create any new space.	Amend policy to include new parks and sites.
98	132	Policy EN10	Insufficient. Trees are also important to deal with pollution and prevent flooding. This policy should also seek to increase existing traditional open space and trees. Provision should therefore be made to encourage new creation of these. Hedgerows also need to be included here. The current tendency is for these to be removed by the developer when their retention would provide for a much more attractive setting. Trees also need to be given a higher value and loss of any trees should not be permitted where unnecessary. Indeed, the LPA should be encouraging the planting of more trees in line with Environment Agency guidelines to minimise the risk of flooding in this area. The cost of maintenance should not be an excuse for avoiding them.	Amend policy
99	132	10.34	Support this favour that all development should be located in areas at low risk of flooding.	
100	134	Policy EN11	Add the word 'Any' to paragraph 4 'and for <b>any</b> development in flood zones'  Add 'Development in flood zones 3(a) and 3(b) will only be considered where all other sites and opportunities have been exhausted and in exceptional circumstances.'  Add 'Green roofs will be encouraged in new builds to attenuate water run-off and thereby reduce flood risk.'	Amend policy

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101	135	Policy EN12	Why have carparks been excluded? Suggest to include carparks in this. Possible to have a preference on surface area material, i.e. –not tarmac, but some sort of wet/pour or porous material?	Amend policy to include car parks and make provision for other surface materials. Encourage use of green roofs in new buildings.
102	137	Policy EN13	Should include some reference here to sustainable water supply? E.g. – ‘Development which incorporates water recycling (i.e. rain water used for toilet facilities) will be considered favourably’	Amend policy
103	139	Policy EN15	Support but propose to add  ‘Any pollutants used or stored on site during construction of the development must be removed following completion of the development. Any such storage area must subsequently be verified as fit for public use and be accompanied by a test and inspection report to that effect’.	Amend policy – this will help to overcome problems as currently being experienced at Tudor Park site, SW
104	139	Para 10.52	Query ‘there is a risk that levels do not meet’ – is this not fact rather than speculation?  Should this paragraph also say that Policy EN16 applies?	Amend
105	140	Policy EN16	How to measure or mitigate against this?  How to prove that the development has contributed to any worsening pollution?  Object to policy as written.	Policy should be amended to include provision for the measuring or mitigation of this and also make reference to the impact of new development.  We suggest adoption of South Cambs policy SC13 (see Appendix A attached)
106	141	Policy EN17	Broadly support this policy	
107	143	Policy EN19	Broadly support this policy	

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108	145	Policy C1	Support this policy especially the protection of the panoramic views (2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet point)	Need reference to UDC's Protected Lanes Assessment.
109	146	Policy C2	Is this a simple typo at the end of the policy as it is the heading for the next policy?	Amend – delete last bullet point.
110	147	Policy C4	Support this policy	
111	p.223 onwards	Residential sites	Saffron Walden Town Council wish to retain those comments submitted in response to the earlier consultations on the SLAA and on site allocations.	See Appendices B and C attached
112	290	Policy M1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> point	Should state “rolling 5-year land supply”	Amend policy as proposed
113	290	Policy M1, point b	Generally support policy but amend “for the market towns and key villages <b>AND (not OR)</b> additional support for Neighbourhood Plans ....”	Amend policy as proposed
114	291	14.20	Support this paragraph to ensure that the principle of Garden Cities is not lost	
115	293	Policy M2	Support policy	
116	293	14.22	Support statement.	
117	296	14.38	Disagree – the Monitoring Report should be issued / published at defined times and at least annually	Amend statement as proposed
118	299	Glossary	Definition of “Neighbourhood Plan” should be included within the glossary	Add “Neighbourhood Plan” to glossary
119	310	Objective 1a / target box	States 100 affordable homes pa but this is insufficient build to meet the requirements of the Local Plan.  14,100 homes required of which 40% are affordable = 5640 affordable homes  5640 divided by 22 years (of the Local Plan) = 256 homes required pa	Review and amend target as those set do not meet requirements of the Local Plan

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120	310	Housing Mix Target	Refer to response reference No 23 in response to Policy H2 for comments regarding housing mix	Amend as per SWTC response No 23
121	312	Objective 1d	"Timely Manner" – this needs to be defined better Refer to SWTC comment Ref No 55 to Policy INF1	Amend as per SWTC response No 55
122	313	Target Box	Do these targets for provision of allotments, sports pitches and public open space meet Sport England standards? Also need targets for indoor facilities.	Needs to be to Sport England/Natural England/Fields in Trust standards as currently UDC falls woefully short of requirements across all these areas.
123	317	Reduction in levels of air pollution	What will be the frequency and publication of this information?	Should be issued at defined time and at least annually
124	320	Appendix 4, point 3	"A suitable body will need to be established" this infers that this will be a body separate to UDC.	Please clarify this point
125	321		Is it standard practice for a Garden City to be independently managed?	Please clarify this point
126	322	Point 4	Welcome and support this	
127	322	Point 9 (19.2)	Add "or better connectivity is developed as part of the Garden City principle and infrastructure development"	Amend as proposed
128	-	General Comment	There does not appear to be an additional provision within the Local Plan for cemetery / burial ground. Would any be required within the Local Plan period and if yes, any proposed sites? There is no reference or opportunity for woodland burial sites. There is also no reference to the planning permission granted for the crematorium at Great Chesterford and is this a material consideration for any of the policies?	UDC to advise
129	-	General Comment	The Plan should cross-reference to CIL to cover an eventuality where UDC may adopt CIL (rather than S106 agreements) Why has UDC not yet adopted a CIL?	To insert <b>(and or CIL)</b> after each reference to S106 agreements within the document and to also include CIL within the glossary

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130	-	General Comment	Saffron Walden Town Council supports the overall spatial strategy in that it focuses on new development in three new settlement sites. It cannot comment on the comparative sustainability of these sites, nor can it comment on the suitability of sites in other parts of the district outside Saffron Walden and Little Walden. We do, however, object to a number of the site allocations proposed for Saffron Walden and to the overall level of development proposed for Saffron Walden which does not appear to be sustainable on the basis of the evidence so far published.	



## APPENDIX A – SUGGESTION FOR POLICY EN16

The South Cambs policy SC/13 provides as follows:

- "1. Where development proposals would be subject to unacceptable air quality standards or would have an unacceptable impact on air quality standards they will be refused.*
- 2. Where emissions from the proposed development are prescribed by EU limit values or national objectives, the applicant will need to assess the impact on local air quality by undertaking an appropriate air quality assessment and detailed modelling exercise having regard to guidance current at the time of the application to show that the national objectives will still be achieved.*
- 3. Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect air quality in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); or lead to the declaration of a new AQMA through causing a significant deterioration in local air quality by increasing pollutant levels either directly or indirectly; or if it would expose future occupiers to unacceptable pollutant levels.*
- 4. Larger development proposals that require a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan as set out in Policy TI/2 will be required to produce a site based Low Emission Strategy. This will be a condition of any planning permission given for any proposed development which may result in the deterioration of local air quality and will be required to ensure the implementation of suitable mitigation measures.*
- 5. Development will be permitted where:*
  - a. It can be demonstrated that it does not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from emissions to air; or*
  - b. Where a development is a sensitive end use, that there will not be any significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity arising from existing poor air quality.*
- 6. Specifically applicants must demonstrate that:*
  - c. There is no adverse effect on air quality in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) from the development;*
  - d. Pollution levels within the AQMA will not have a significant adverse effect on the proposed use / users;*
  - e. The development will not lead to the declaration of a new AQMA;*
  - f. The development will not interfere with the implementation of and should be consistent with the current Air Quality Action Plan;*
  - g. The development will not lead to an increase in emissions, degradation of air quality or increase in exposure to pollutants at or above the health based air quality objective;*
  - h. Any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality, are appropriately mitigated;*
  - i. The development promotes sustainable transport measures and use of low emission vehicles in order to reduce the air quality impacts of vehicles."*



Appendix B

# **SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**



## **Report on Uttlesford District Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment**

**April 2016**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is a study which will constitute part of the evidence base which Uttlesford District Council will use in producing its local plan. UDC has invited SWTC to comment on matters of fact with regard to the sites identified for residential or employment use in its SLAA. The relevant report to UDC's Planning Policy Working Group, of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016, states that "Any factual errors will be amended and any comments noted on the site assessment form."
2. The SLAA considers all sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, accommodating 0.25ha. (or 500m<sup>2</sup>) of economic development or at least 1 pitch for gypsies and travellers. It assesses whether the sites are deliverable which entails considering their suitability, achievability and availability as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

## **STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT**

3. This report comments on the assessments of sites undertaken in Saffron Walden and its immediate surroundings and makes recommendations as to how they could be made more accurate and therefore relevant to the process being undertaken.
4. The relevant sites in the SLAA comprise 3 in and around Little Walden and a further 15 in and around Saffron Walden. Rather than deal with each site in turn, this report groups the sites into categories on the basis of similarity of type, scale and location. It then comments on all sites in the category referring to individual sites only where there is a site-specific comment to be made. The categories are as follows:-
  - A. Little Walden
  - B. previously-developed urban sites
  - C. undeveloped urban sites
  - D. small green field sites immediately outside the town development limits
  - E. brownfield site removed from the town development limits
  - F. major green field sites immediately outside the town development limits.
5. It then deals with an additional site which is recommended for inclusion in the SLAA on the basis that, whilst it has outline planning permission, it should not be assumed that the scale of development that is achieved will reflect the maximum permissible.
6. This section of the report then goes on to recommend generic comments that should be incorporated on specific issues into the assessments of all sites. These issues comprise:-
  1. scope of existing infrastructure for accommodating additional growth;
  2. air pollution;

3. accessibility to strategic roads; and
  4. proximity to site of particular features scheduled in the assessments.
7. The report then concludes by making a generic comment on the potential implications of the SLAA with regard to how it may lead to development in the district which is not sustainable.
8. All sections of the report make recommendations as appropriate. These are then all listed comprehensively at the end of the report, with their wording amended for clarification as necessary.

## THE ASSESSED SITES

### A. Little Walden

9. This category comprises the following sites:-
1. 01 LtWal Rowley Hill Farm
  2. 02 LtWal Hall Farm
  3. 03 LtWal Hall Farm
10. The assessment finds site 01 LtWal (Rowley Hill Farm) unacceptable because of its isolated location.
11. The 'Sustainability Conclusions' for sites 2 and 3 are unexpected in that they both conclude that the village is not considered a suitable location for development but that the sites are well related to the village and "may be considered suitable if supported by the community." However, the 'Conclusions 2015' modify that by stating that "The site is considered suitable subject to community support."
12. It is particularly questionable as to whether 03 LtWal may be considered to be acceptable because it would extend the village in a manner which constitutes 'ribbon development'.
13. **It is recommended that the assessments clarify how the level of support from the community would be measured. It is also recommended that SWTC considers whether the development of site 03 LtWal would be acceptable.**

### B. Previously-developed urban sites

14. This category comprises the following sites:-
- 01 2 Ashdon Road
  - 02 Goddards Yard, Thaxted Road
  - 05 56 High Street

- 13 Viceroy Coaches, r/o 10-12 Bridge Street

15. The fact that these sites are previously developed means that the principle of development has been accepted and this must remain the case. However, the scale and design of redevelopment may need to have full and proper regard to the sites' surroundings in order to protect and, where possible, enhance the overall appearance of their locality.

16. The above applies particularly with regard to the Viceroy Coaches site as the SLAA acknowledges that the Historic Settlement Character Assessment notes that the site is within the approach to the town via the B184 and Windmill Hill such that "development in this sector would very significantly diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of this part of Saffron Walden." However, the SLAA concludes that redevelopment of this site would enable the use to relocate to a more sustainable location such that the site is suitable for residential development. This is considered reasonable and therefore acceptable.

17. The assessment of 2 Ashdon Road refers, under the heading 'Natural environment' to the Ashdon Road verges being a local wildlife site within 500 – 1000 m of the site. But what it fails to point out is that outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the Ridgeons site, of which the verges form part, and that the proposed redevelopment would have an adverse effect upon those verges. **It is therefore recommended that the assessment acknowledges that the verges will be adversely affected by a current planning permission if the development goes ahead.**

### C. Undeveloped urban sites

18. This category comprises the following sites:-

- 03 land at De Vigier Avenue
- 06 land at Harvey Way/Ashdon Road
- 14 land at Freshwell Gardens

19. It is important to note the difference in approach taken in these assessments between the sites in Little Walden – where sites "..... may be considered suitable if supported by the community" – and these urban sites which are adjacent to housing but clearly no consideration whatsoever is given to the views of the nearby residents. In this context it may be interesting to have regard to who owns the sites in question. It is understood that both the sites at Harvey Way and De Vigier Avenue are UDC-owned. **It is therefore recommended that there should be a consistency of approach in the assessments with regard to the relative importance of the views of**

**the local community and that the assessments should make it very clear which sites are owned by UDC.**

20. The assessments of Harvey Way/Ashdon Road and De Vigier Avenue refer, under the heading 'Natural environment', to the proximity of the Ashdon Road verges. But what they fail to point out is that outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the Ridgeons site, of which the verges form part, and that the proposed redevelopment would have an adverse effect upon those verges. **It is therefore recommended that the assessments acknowledge that the verges will be adversely affected by a current planning permission if the development goes ahead.**
21. In contrast to the above, the De Vigier Avenue site assessment refers to the proximity of the Commercial Centre bus stop. It is presumed that that is associated with the proposed redevelopment of the Ridgeons site and does not yet exist. **It is therefore recommended that the assessment reflects the fact that there is not yet a bus stop at the Ashdon Road Commercial Centre and that, whilst it is a proposal, it may never materialise.**
22. The site at De Vigier Avenue is described as being 'derelict/overgrow'. This is not how the site is seen by local residents who are very familiar with both it and the wildlife to which it is home. The De Vigier Residents' Group was set up specifically to protect this site from development when it became apparent that this was what the site-owners, UDC, had in mind.
23. In October 2014 the group presented to UDC's Cabinet a petition containing 250 signatures of people who object to UDC's proposed disposal of what it considers to be this wildlife haven to the rear of 16 -32 De Vigier Avenue. The land in question has been left undisturbed for over 28 years allowing trees, shrubs, bushes etc. to grow and provide a haven home and nesting area for an abundance of wildlife including protected species, RSPB red coded birds and bats. The wildlife area has flourished without any maintenance cost to UDC and is an area that could be maintained by residents. The presentation explained how the residents' group had received the support of many interested parties including the Essex Wildlife Trust and a former wildlife officer who is also willing to help in the managing of the site.
24. **It is recommended that the SLAA assessment be modified to reflect the fact that local residents both value this site as a wildlife haven, considering that it should be managed as such, and that they object to the proposed development of the site.**

**D. Small green field sites immediately outside the town development limits**

25. This category comprises the following sites:-
- 09 land north of Newport Road

- 10 land east of Little Walden Road
- 12 land west of Lime Avenue

26. Site 09 (land north of Newport Road) is located in an approach to the town that the Historic Settlement Character Assessment finds would significantly diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness in this part of Saffron Walden. The SLAA concludes that the site is unacceptable because it is on the brow of a hill such that its development would be visually prominent.

27. Site 10 (land east of Little Walden Road) is located in an approach to the town that the Historic Settlement Character Assessment (HSCA) finds would significantly diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness in this part of Saffron Walden. However, the SLAA concludes that the site is relatively well defined by a band of trees such that its development would be acceptable subject to mitigating the visual impact and traffic impact. The site extends some 150m to the north and would effectively establish the principle of development on the western side of Little Walden Road. It is not acceptable to allow other factors such as a line of trees (which would have been present when the HSCA was undertaken) to over-ride its findings without good cause. Whilst the logic of the approach is understood, the evidence base (i.e. the HSCA) inhibits it and it must be questioned what the SLAA finding would have been had the band of trees been, say, 250m north of the town instead of 150m.

28. **It is recommended that SWTC considers the line of trees to be an insufficient reason to over-ride the evidence base which finds against development in this locality.**

29. Site 12 (land west of Lime Avenue) is part of a larger (5.2ha) site which is allocated in the adopted local plan for a community centre, playing fields and up to 15 units of affordable housing. 15 houses have already been built on part of the site and this remaining part of the site is currently subject to a planning application for residential development. SWTC is anxious to ensure that the proposed community centre is provided and managed in accordance with the adopted local plan. The assessment makes no reference to this long-standing and on-going commitment. **It is therefore recommended that the SLAA refers to this proposal and specifies that the site is currently neither suitable nor available for housing as a consequence.**

#### **E. Brownfield site removed from the town development limits**

30. This category relates to:-

- 04 land at Thaxted Road

31. This derelict site is outside the town development limits but immediately adjacent to the development limits of the 'island of development' on Thaxted Road. It is

immediately adjacent to the Aldi store. The small size of the site and the existence of the uses immediately adjacent mean that the principle of residential development would be acceptable subject to the application of normal planning policies. **It is, however, recommended that the statement in the ‘Suitability Conclusions’ that “The principle of development has been accepted on this site with the permission for the Heritage Centre (now lapsed).” be deleted.** That is because the principle of development would have to be re-established given that the previous permission has lapsed.

#### **F. Major green field sites immediately outside the town development limits**

32. This category comprises the following sites:-

- 07 land north and south of Thaxted Road
- 08 land south of Thaxted Road and east of Ozier Court
- 11 land east of Shire Hill
- 15 land at Bridge Farm, Windmill Hill

33. These 4 sites are each of a substantial size individually offering scope for 300, 165, 450 and 400 additional dwellings respectively (i.e. over 1300 in total). Their development, both individually and collectively, would have a major impact upon the already stretched infrastructure of the town. That infrastructure includes both primary and secondary school places, health care facilities and road capacity.

34. Whilst each site may be considered on its own individual merits in the context of these assessments it is imperative that the potential impact of any and all combinations of sites is taken into account in the production of the local plan. This is because the potential infrastructure provision necessary in order to meet the needs generated by these developments could, in turn, lead to either an acute lack or necessary facilities or, by contrast, even more substantial development proposals to justify its provision. Whether or not such an approach of continual development of the town would be sustainable, and therefore potentially not acceptable in principle, was called into question by the local plan Inspector. He referred, in his findings as to why he could not find the plan sound, to the possibility that there may be “..... limits as to how far relatively small towns with the characters of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow can grow sustainably, attractively, and in an integrated way through successive phases of peripheral expansion.”

35. Therefore, as recommended for all of the other sites, **it is recommended that the site assessments should specify that there will be no available capacity in either the primary or secondary schools or the doctors’ surgeries to meet the need that would be generated by the development of each of these sites. This also applies to sites 7 and 11 which, although the associated schemes feature the prospect of land for a primary school, do not offer the likelihood of a school being built.**

36. Each site is now considered, in turn, below.

Site 15 (land at Bridge Farm, Windmill Hill)

37. This site is considered unsuitable for development as it would not contribute to sustainable patterns of development. It is recommended that this wording be amended to make it much stronger by saying that the site is “..... **Not suitable because any significant development in that location would be unsustainable.**”

Site 08 (land south of Thaxted Road and east of Ozier Court)

38. The assessment concludes that the site is not considered suitable because its development would introduce a scale of development unrelated to the existing pattern of development. This is on the basis that “Between Thaxted Road and Debden Road there is a clearly defined edge to the town and the development of the site would breach this edge.”

39. It does, however, go on to suggest that the development of the site may be suitable as part of a larger development which includes site 07 (land north and south of Thaxted Road). The ‘Sustainability Conclusions’ section also refers to the possibility of “..... a road linking Thaxted Road and Debden Road” which had not previously been mentioned in the assessment. However, in the overall ‘Conclusions 2015’, this link road becomes an integral part of this larger, comprehensive development of which site 8 could form a part.

40. Whilst the situation regarding the link road is somewhat confused, it should be noted that the assessment pays no attention to how this now seemingly essential road might link the proposed comprehensive development with Debden Road. The intervening land comprises recreational open space (Herberts Farm Playing fields) and agricultural land. If this land is not available then what appears to be a possibly essential link road, and therefore the comprehensive development, is not deliverable.

41. **It is recommended that the assessment should clarify the situation with regard to this link road between Thaxted Road and Debden Road and that, if there is little or no prospect of it ever being delivered, then this should be reflected in the assessment. The wording of the conclusion should therefore change from “The site may be considered suitable..... subject to .....” to “The site is not suitable as part of a comprehensive development unless ..... and there is no evidence to suggest that this is either feasible or deliverable.”**

42. Some form of effective traffic mitigation would be inevitable because the Kier Inspector dismissed the appeal on site 7 on the basis that “the cumulative effect of the proposed development and other commitments would be significant at some key junctions in terms of additional delays and queuing at important times of the day”

such that “the proposed development would have a materially adverse effect on the efficient operation of the local highway network.” Given that that applied to the Kier development (site 7) alone, then it would most definitely apply to sites 7 and 8 together.

#### Site 07 land north and south of Thaxted Road

43. The potential uses for this site are identified as housing and employment. This is then contradicted by the ‘Suitability Conclusions’ which specifies residential and leisure uses (as per the dismissed Kier appeal).
44. The assessment quotes UDC’s Historic Settlement Character Assessment (HSCA) which states that, on this Thaxted Road approach to the town, the effect of development would:-
  - result in the loss of open arable farmland;
  - spill out into open countryside very clearly beyond defined edges; and
  - diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness in this part of Saffron Walden.
45. The assessment then, quite reasonably, goes on to quote further from the HSCA which found the effect of development on the land between Rylstone Way and The Kilns to be ‘neutral’ as was also referred to by the Kier Inspector.
46. But, whilst the Inspector found the contribution of the appeal site to the landscape character to be “limited”, he said considerably more. He acknowledged that “The appeal site is in a location where the countryside meets the town.” but put that in the context of what he described as the prominent existing development on Thaxted Road (i.e. The Kilns and further development to the south) which, when fully completed, “..... will amount to a substantial urban built form that will have a very significant effect on the character of the area.” He stated that “Many views of the appeal site, especially the part to the north of Thaxted Road where the housing would be located, would be in the context of this development and that existing on the urban edge of the town”.
47. He did acknowledge that “There would be a significant local change here as a result of the appeal proposals, with development on arable fields.....”. However, he went straight on to say that “..... But the indicative masterplan shows that an appropriate layout and landscaping within and around the development could be achieved that would assist in mitigating its impact.” He concluded that “..... The proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area.”
48. That conclusion is significant in that he acknowledged that the development would have had an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area but that he

did not consider that it would have been significant. However, the adopted local plan refers directly to the importance of this site within the landscape by stating (at para. 15.10) that “The prominent sloping field adjacent to the site is retained as an open buffer between housing in Eastby Close and Rylstone Way and the proposed (*employment*) development.” The only thing to have changed since that was written is that some of the old, dilapidated buildings have been redeveloped. Hence, the approach to the town from the south now features new, reasonably attractive built form such that it is no longer the case that development of the site would be neutral in that ‘it couldn’t make it any worse’.

49. This site should also be seen in the context of the view of both sides of Thaxted Road. Site 7 was described in the HSCA in exactly the same way as site 8 apart from the impact of its development being ‘neutral’ because of the ‘ribbon development’ along the east side of Thaxted Road. Indeed, it should be noted that the SLAA describes site 8 as featuring “a clearly defined edge to the town and the development of the site would breach this edge.” which must also apply to site 7. If, therefore, site 7 was to be developed that would effectively signify that it was acceptable to develop on the other side of the road because the principle of developing the town in that direction would have been established.
50. In dismissing the Kier appeal, the Inspector found that:-
- the contribution of the appeal site to the landscape character was limited – although, therefore, still an issue;
  - there would have been a significant local change as a result of development on arable fields;
  - the proposed development would have had an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area – albeit not significant;
  - opportunities for re-routing trips on the constrained road network in the town are extremely limited;
  - the cumulative effect of the proposed development would be significant at some key junctions in terms of additional delays and queuing;
  - the proposed development would have had a materially adverse effect on the efficient operation of the local highway network;
  - traffic from the development would have had implications for NO<sub>2</sub> emissions on roads and junctions within the AQMA;
  - the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land had not been justified; and
  - the proposals would not amount to sustainable development.

51. Whilst that appeal was dismissed only on the grounds of the adverse effect on the operation of the local highway network, the fact that the Inspector stated that “opportunities for re-routing trips on the constrained road network in the town are extremely limited” means that there is little or no scope for overcoming this issue. Hence it is somewhat surprising that the tenor of the assessment of this site is reflected in the wording “..... Is *(suitable/achievable)* ..... Subject to.....”. That is very misleading as **the Inspector’s findings with regard to traffic in particular are that the approach taken in the assessment should be that “the site is not *(suitable/achievable)* ..... unless..... which is very unlikely to prove possible.” It is therefore recommended that the assessment and, in particular, the various conclusions be amended accordingly.**

11 land east of Shire Hill

52. The ‘Sustainability Conclusions’ state that the local plan Inspector considered that in strategic terms this is a sound location. That is not relevant to the assessment because the Inspector rejected the plan – in its entirety – and UDC withdrew it as a consequence when he made it clear that he would be unable to find the plan ‘sound’. He also stated that “There appeared ..... to be fairly widespread recognition that some form of ‘new settlement(s)’ may form an appropriate means for catering for the future long-term growth of the District and, if so, that this should be on a scale bold enough to achieve maximum possible sustainable critical mass and a long term solution..... .”

53. It follows that, given that the development strategy of the new local plan is likely to be very different from that of the plan that he rejected, there may well be no need for such a strategic location in Saffron Walden. Neither did he attempt to explain or justify how he reached the view that this was a sound location. It is therefore apparent that the Inspector went beyond his remit in commenting on a site which may well not even be considered in the new iteration of the local plan. **It is therefore recommended that the reference to the Inspector’s comment that this is a ‘sound location’ be deleted from the assessment.** It should also be noted that site 7 was also part of that same allocation in the rejected local plan but that no reference to the Inspector’s comment features in the assessment of that site.

54. The ‘Sustainability Conclusions’ also state that the primary access to the site is proposed through the development to the north. It goes on to say that the site is considered to be suitable for development subject to being able to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the efficient operation of the local highway network. This clearly stems from that being the reason the development of site 7, to the immediate south, was dismissed at appeal. But if the primary access to the site is from the north, and the site with permission to the north features an interim link

road via Shire Hill, then all west-bound traffic from both sites would be channelled through the town. This would mean that the traffic from both this site and that to the north would, if not individually then certainly collectively, prevent the “efficient operation of the local highway network” such that the development of this site would be unacceptable.

55. Whilst that appeal was dismissed only on the grounds of the adverse effect on the operation of the local highway network, the fact that the Inspector stated that “opportunities for re-routing trips on the constrained road network in the town are extremely limited” means that there is little or no scope for overcoming this issue. Hence it is somewhat surprising that the tenor of the assessment of this site is reflected in the wording “..... Is *(suitable/achievable)* ..... Subject to.....”. That is very misleading as **the Inspector’s findings with regard to traffic in particular are that the approach taken in the assessment should be that “the site is not *(suitable/achievable)* ..... Unless..... which is very unlikely to prove possible.” It is therefore recommended that the assessment and, in particular, the various conclusions be amended accordingly.**
56. The ‘Sustainability Conclusions’ state that the site, in combination with site 7 to the south, would assist in the provision of a link road between Radwinter Road and Thaxted Road. But the local plan Inspector has misgivings about this proposed link road. He found that:-
- the proposed new link’s function and specification is unexplained in the explanatory material to the policy;
  - there appear to be some risks to its effectiveness in the way that the scheme is being brought forward;
  - there appear to be uncertainties about way that the master plan is evolving in terms of the precise function intended to be performed by the required ‘link road’ between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road;
  - there are questions about the policy’s precise aims and effectiveness and whether or not it provides the authorities with the means necessary to secure their objectives in a situation where the policy is being implemented incrementally by developers with different focuses and timescales for their individual sites.
57. Given that the only change to take place in the interim has been the dismissal of the Kier appeal (which featured an integral part of the proposed link road), then the likelihood of the link road materialising is now less than it was when the local plan Inspector made those comments. It should also be noted that the Kier inquiry featured lengthy discussion as to the line of the proposed road as those of the 3

separate sections bore little relation to the overall line that Essex County Council, as the highway authority, had specified was required.

58. On the basis of the above, **it is recommended that the reference to the site assisting in the provision of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road be deleted from the assessment.**
59. The section of the assessment headed 'Natural Environment' talks at length about the Historic Settlement Character Assessment. But, in marked contrast to the local plan Inspector's view as to the soundness of the allocation (see paras. 52 & 53 above), the HSCA does not even warrant a mention in the 'Suitability Conclusions'. This is despite it saying that development in this sector could significantly diminish the sense of place and local distinctiveness of not only Saffron Walden but potentially also that of Swards End. Given the significance of such a statement, it is necessary to question the validity of this assessment if that statement is to be totally ignored and replaced by something which is irrelevant but seems to actively promote the development of the site.
60. The only possible justification for simply ignoring the landscape issue in the conclusions is that the HSCA refers to large buildings on the edge of the town making it one of the least attractive approaches. But that is not an adequate reason for doing so. Whether or not one sector is less attractive than another does not make its development acceptable. The HSCA's description of the area demonstrates that the approach is well worthy of protecting. It should also be borne in mind that the former Willis and Gambier factory (one of 'large buildings' on the approach into town) is currently being redeveloped for housing.
61. **It is therefore recommended that the 'Suitability Conclusions' and the overall 'Conclusions 2015' make adequate and appropriate reference to the importance of the existing landscape in this location.**

#### **G. Site recommended for inclusion in SLAA assessment**

62. This Ridgeons site on Ashdon Road is excluded from the SLAA presumably because it already has outline planning permission. But that does not mean that the existing permission will come to fruition in its entirety. For example, that permission allows for "up to 167 dwellings" but that does not necessarily mean that 167 will be provided on the site because of the words "up to". It will be a matter for UDC's Planning Committee to consider the details of the scheme and to determine those applications in the context of the principle of development having been established and the acceptability, or otherwise, of the details submitted.
63. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the proposed detailed design and/or layout of the proposals fall significantly short of expectations and has an adverse

effect upon the amenity of nearby residents. Neither should it be forgotten that the outline scheme was put forward in advance of, and accepted as an integral part of, the previous draft local plan which was rejected by the previous local plan Inspector. The scheme is therefore an integral part of the plan which the Inspector found to be unsound. It is therefore not beyond the bounds of possibility that, when presented with the details, the Planning Committee may consider them objectively and reach a decision accordingly.

64. One such element of the scheme which may well be expected to prompt significant local opposition is the proposed redevelopment of the playing field which was laid out as a football field (and is visible as such on Google Maps) and formed an integral part of the Ridgeons site. Not only was that playing field used as a football pitch, for both formal and informal games (including a Saffron Walden Town F.C. junior team), but the whole area of open space was heavily used as such by residents from the north east part of the town because of the acute lack of alternative open space in the vicinity – the nearest alternative being The Common.

65. The protection of that field from redevelopment, which could include its reinstatement given that it is not now in the form of a playing field, is in accordance with the NPPF in that it states:-

“To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: .....

- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;” (at para. 70); and

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.” (at para. 74).

66. It is also possible that local residents will seek the reinstatement of the playing field as a Local Green Space in the context of either or both the local plan or the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF states (at para. 77) that:-

“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”

67. It is therefore considered that excluding the Ridgeons site from the SLAA is premature and that **it is recommended that it should be included albeit with the same proposed amounts of housing and commercial floorspace as has outline planning permission.** By doing so, the fact that the site does not have full planning permission would not be prejudged as is currently the case by virtue of its exclusion.

## **COMMENTS TO INCLUDE ASSESSMENTS OF ALL SITES**

### **1. Scope of existing infrastructure for accommodating additional growth**

68. The ‘Accessibility’ section of the assessments specify how far the sites are from the nearest primary schools, secondary schools and doctors’ surgeries. They also comment as to whether any additional provisions are proposed at those services. But the assessments fail to comment as to whether there is any existing spare capacity at these facilities to meet the needs of the potential residents of the development should it take place or the potential implications if there is no capacity available. This is imperative as without it the fact that the facilities are a particular distance from the facility is of no use. **It is therefore recommended that all assessments are amended to fully address the fact that services in the town do not have the capacity to meet the needs that would result from the development of the sites.**

### **2. Air pollution**

69. The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to review air quality within their districts and, if the air quality objectives set out in regulations under the Act are unlikely to be achieved, the authority must designate the affected area as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Act then requires an Action Plan for the AQMA setting out how the air quality objectives will be achieved.

70. UDC declared Saffron Walden town centre an AQMA because it has consistently shown the highest levels of air pollutants, along with areas very close to the M11. Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are above the annual mean air quality objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> at several locations. The Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2016 for the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area points out that:-

- NO<sub>2</sub> levels in central Saffron Walden were above the annual mean objective when recording began in 1993 but, in line with national trends related to the introduction for improved engine technology, levels dropped below the objective.
- In 2007 this trend began to reverse, probably due to increases in traffic and congestion.
- Levels monitored in Saffron Walden since 2007 show that levels of NO<sub>2</sub> have reduced slightly at some junctions over the past 2-3 years. Some fluctuation is due to the effect of weather conditions, but the trend has been for levels to remain flat. Levels of PM<sub>10</sub> have also remained relatively flat since 2011, and measurement of the finer particulates, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, replaced PM<sub>10</sub> monitoring throughout 2014 due to the increasing evidence on health impacts.

71. Whilst the government has introduced various measures intended to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicles based on European Directives, these have not been successful as reductions achieved in standard emission test cycles are not reproduced in “on the road” conditions. As a result, concentrations of nitrogen dioxide have remained relatively stable in urban areas in the UK for several years. This issue is acknowledged in Highways Agency guidance for assessing future pollutant concentrations where a much lower level of reduction is proposed compared with that expected from the European emission limits.

72. The National Planning Policy Framework states (at para. 109) that: “The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ..... preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of ..... air ..... pollution.....”. It goes on to state that “Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas.”

73. The situation in Saffron Walden town centre is now at a stage where air quality assessments are demonstrating that there is a risk of continued exceedance of air quality objectives and limit values. Given that, the government’s air quality objectives, the government’s planning policy guidance and that UDC has a responsibility to take action to meet the government’s air quality objectives, the

prospect of increased air pollution in the town centre must be an important consideration in the formulation of the strategy for the future development in the district which will underlie the local plan. **It is therefore recommended that the Saffron Walden SLAA assessments for major sites refer to the amount of traffic that would be generated exacerbating air pollution in the AQMA which is in contravention of both the NPPF and UDC's duty as the body responsible for local air quality.**

### **3. Accessibility to strategic roads**

74. Also under the heading 'Accessibility', the assessments state that 'viable routes exist to a number of strategic roads'. Whilst the existing traffic routes may well be feasible, **it is recommended that the assessments should refer to the strategic roads being well removed from the town such that the developments in the town would generate more traffic travelling through both villages en route to these strategic roads and the town centre which is already heavily congested in peak hours** and not only has little or no scope to accommodate more peak hour traffic but is also subject to excessive air pollution, especially during the peak hours (see paras. 69 – 73).

### **4. Proximity to site of particular features scheduled in the assessments**

75. The assessments specify the distance of the site from SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, local geological sites, SAMs, listed buildings, conservation areas etc.. But what they do not comment upon is whether, however far from these features the site is, this is a good thing or a bad thing. It is acknowledged that there may be merit in a site being near to a primary school or a supermarket, but what is the relevance of being less than (or more than) 100m. from a listed building? **It is recommended that for all relevant criteria in all the assessments, some comment is made as to the relevance of the relative proximity, or otherwise, of these features.**

## **POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF S.L.A.A. REGARDING ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMENT**

76. The NPPF requires local planning authorities preparing a local plan to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment "to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period."
77. Under the heading 'Examining Local Plans', para. 182 of the NPPF makes it clear that "the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.....".

78. The 'Planning Practice Guidance' on Housing and economic land availability assessments includes the following statements:-
- "The assessment is an important evidence source to inform plan making but does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development."
  - "It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet need, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those needs."
  - "Plan makers should not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may have a part to play in meeting the development needs of an area."
79. What is of concern is that this guidance (which complements para. 182 of the NPPF) might not be put into practice in the preparation of UDC's emerging local plan. That is because UDC's SHLAA 2015 Draft Methodology states, under the heading 'Assessment Review', that:-
- "Once all the sites and broad locations have been assessed, the development potential of all the sites can be collected and an assessment made as to whether there are sufficient or insufficient sites/broad locations to meet objectively assessed needs. If there are insufficient sites the council will need to reconsider its assessment of sites, for example changing the assumptions on the development potential on particular sites (including physical and policy constraints) including sites for possible new settlements."
80. This suggests that, if the sites included in the SLAA are suitable/available/deliverable etc., they will be the sites that will be allocated in the local plan. The consequence of that is that the plan will not be based on 'the most appropriate strategy' but merely the land which is capable of contributing to the 'objectively assessed needs' of the district. As such, the outcome may well be a pattern of development which is not sustainable.
81. **It is therefore recommended that SWTC seek assurances from UDC that the strategy underlying the emerging local plan will indeed be 'the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives' and not simply the consequence of land which is developable or has been put forward for development by the owners.**

## RECOMMENDATION

82. That SWTC considers the following recommendations that feature in the body of the report and, if in agreement, urges UDC to amend the SLAA accordingly:-

1. the assessments clarify how the level of support from the community would be measured for the development of sites 02 LtWal and 03 LtWal at Hall Farm, Little Walden;
2. there should be a consistency of approach in the assessments with regard to the relative importance of the views of the local community;
3. the assessments should make it very clear which sites are owned by UDC;
4. SWTC considers whether the development of site 03 LtWal would be acceptable;
5. the assessments of sites 02 (Ashdon Road), 03 (land at De Vigier Avenue) and 06 (land at Harvey Way/Ashdon Road) acknowledge that the verges at the Ridgeons site will be adversely affected by the current planning permission if the development goes ahead;
6. the assessment of site 03 (land at De Vigier Avenue) reflects the fact that there is not yet a bus stop at the Ashdon Road Commercial Centre and that, whilst it is a proposal, it may never materialise;
7. the assessment of site 03 (land at De Vigier Avenue) be modified to reflect the fact that local residents both value this site as a wildlife haven, considering that it should be managed as such, and that they object to the proposed development of the site;
8. SWTC considers the line of trees some 150 m. north of site 10 (land east of Little Walden Road) to be an insufficient reason to over-ride the evidence base which finds against development in this locality;
9. the assessment of site 12 (land west of Lime Avenue) specifies that the site is currently neither suitable nor available for housing;
10. in the assessment of site 04 (land at Thaxted Road), the statement in the 'Suitability Conclusions' that "The principle of development has been accepted on this site with the permission for the Heritage Centre (now lapsed)." be deleted;
11. the assessments for sites 07 (land north and south of Thaxted Road) and 11 (land east of Shire Hill) should specify that there will be no available capacity in a nearby primary school to meet the need that would be generated by the development of each of these sites as, although the associated schemes feature the prospect of land for a primary school, they do not offer the likelihood of a school being built;

12. the wording of the assessment of site 15 (land at Bridge Farm, Windmill Hill) be amended by saying that the site is “..... not suitable because any significant development in that location would be unsustainable.”;
13. the assessment of site 08 (land south of Thaxted Road and east of Ozier Court) should clarify the situation with regard to the possible link road between Thaxted Road and Debden Road and that, if there is little or no prospect of it ever being delivered, then this should be reflected in the assessment. The wording of the conclusion should therefore change from “The site may be considered suitable..... subject to .....” to “The site is not suitable as part of a comprehensive development unless ..... and there is no evidence to suggest that this is either feasible or deliverable.”;
14. the assessment of site 07 (land north and south of Thaxted Road) and, in particular, the various conclusions be amended to “the site is not (*suitable/achievable*) ..... unless..... which is very unlikely to prove possible.”
15. the reference to the Inspector’s comment that this is a ‘sound location’ be deleted from the assessment of site 11 (land east of Shire Hill);
16. the assessment and, in particular, the various conclusions relating to site 11 (land east of Shire Hill) be amended to read “the site is not (*suitable/achievable*) ..... unless..... which is very unlikely to prove possible.”;
17. the reference to site 11 (land east of Shire Hill) assisting in the provision of a link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road be deleted from the assessment;
18. the ‘Suitability Conclusions’ and the overall ‘Conclusions 2015’ in the assessment of site 11 (land east of Shire Hill) make adequate and appropriate reference to the importance of the existing landscape in this location;
19. the Ridgeons site should be included within the SLAA albeit with the same proposed amounts of housing and commercial floorspace as has outline planning permission;
20. all assessments are amended to fully address the fact that services in the town (including primary and secondary schools and health care facilities) do not have the capacity to meet the needs that would result from the development of the sites;
21. the Saffron Walden SLAA assessments for major sites refer to the amount of traffic that would be generated exacerbating air pollution in the AQMA and that this would be in contravention of both the National Planning Policy Framework and UDC’s duty as the body responsible for local air quality;

22. the assessments of all of the Saffron Walden sites should refer to the strategic roads being well removed from the town such that the developments in the town would generate more traffic travelling through both villages and the town centre; and
23. for all relevant criteria in all the assessments, some comment is made as to the relevance of the relative proximity, or otherwise, of various features for which figures are quoted including SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, local geological sites, SAMs, listed buildings and conservation areas; and
24. SWTC seek assurances from UDC that the strategy underlying the emerging local plan will indeed be 'the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives' and not simply the result of land which is developable or has been put forward for development by the owners.



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8<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Sarah Nicholls  
Senior Planning Officer  
Uttlesford District Council  
Council Offices  
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Saffron Walden  
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Dear Sarah

**Uttlesford Local Plan:  
Residential Allocations in Towns and Villages**

Thank you for your letter of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016 regarding residential allocations in towns and villages. Your letter was considered at the Town Council's Full Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and a response was formally agreed and is as follows:

Firstly, to apologise for not replying to you before your suggested dates of either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Due to annual leave, there has been a slight delay in replying to correspondence and I apologise for this delay but trust that the Town Council's response can nevertheless still be considered as valid. It is noted however, that this is not a formal consultation with a formal closing period.

The Town Council would appreciate if you could please forward this response to the UDC Planning Policy Working Group for its meeting on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016. I appreciate that the agenda for this meeting has already been issued but would request that this response is forwarded either in advance to Members of the PPWG or is tabled at the meeting. It is further noted that the agenda for the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September has been issued and at time of writing (8<sup>th</sup> September) supporting papers for this meeting are still outstanding and are not available on line for review, notably the transport, education and retail assessments. The Town Council would wish to note its disappointment with this and that it is not considered good practice for any documents to be tabled at a meeting, let alone such important documents as the transport study, retail study and project plan. We would urge UDC to have these type of documents in the public realm at first available opportunity.

The Town Council notes the following from your letter that at the UDC "Full Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July, Members approved a distribution strategy. This preferred distribution strategy involves a dispersal of the housing across new settlement(s), the towns and villages." Your letter then further notes "officers are considering that the two towns of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow could provide sites to deliver between 600-750 dwellings each".

The Town Council would question the basis on which this consideration is made. It is noted that an option is for 600-750 dwellings to be built in Saffron Walden and yet at the time of your letter (27<sup>th</sup> July), the following assessments are outstanding:

- Transport (and still outstanding as at 8<sup>th</sup> September)
- Education (and still outstanding as at 8<sup>th</sup> September)
- Retail (and still outstanding as at 8<sup>th</sup> September)
- Employment

These assessments and studies are vital to informing on the most appropriate areas for future potential development. The Town Council would therefore question how can any consideration be given to potential large scale development in Saffron Walden without these base-line assessment documents? There appears to be an air of pre-determination on the residential allocations and this is clearly not acceptable.

The Town Council also questions the validity of a public exhibition which will show the land which could be used as development sites when this policy and specific distribution is yet to be determined.

With regards to any specific development within Saffron Walden, the Town Council wishes to further remind UDC of the previous response submitted by the Town Council and a further copy of this is attached. We would again request that the attached document is considered an integral part of the Town Council's response to your letter of 27<sup>th</sup> July and is also further distributed to members of the PPWG. Those comments made previously by the Town Council are still valid and should still be considered as such.

The following additional response is further supplied and should be read in conjunction with the response as attached:

**1. 03saf15 Land at De Vigier Avenue – 14 dwellings.**

The Town Council objects to proposed development in this area. This is an area which is loved and protected by local residents, please refer specifically to points 22 and 23 of the attached document detailing the importance of this area to local wildlife and residents.

**2. 04saf15 Land at Thaxted Road – 8 dwellings**

The Town Council supports development in this area

**3. 05saf15 56 High Street – mixed use including residential**

The Town Council supports development in this area

**4. 07saf15 land north and south of Thaxted Road – 300 dwellings (known as the Kier site)**

The Town Council objects to proposed development in this area and refers to the previous submission as attached. Attention is also drawn to the failed planning application for this site which was subject to a planning appeal which was successfully defended by the Town Council. The Town Council does not wish to repeat all of those grounds on which the appeal was successfully fought by the Town Council and would note that reference must be made to the outcome of the Planning appeal and of the Inspectors comments and reasons for upholding refusal of the application; these details are not further repeated here. It is noted that that the Inspector upheld this refused planning

application and that the development was considered by him to be unsustainable. Nothing has changed to move from this position and it is noted therefore that the site must still be considered unsustainable in light of no changes to traffic flow, traffic management or air quality management.

**5. 10saf15 land east of Little Walden Road – 50 dwellings**

The Town Council objects to this proposed site as it is outside of the town development limits. UDC has a 5-year housing supply and it is not therefore necessary or appropriate to consider development outside of the town boundary.

**6. 11saf15 Land east of Shire Hill and South of Radwinter Road – 450 dwellings**

The Town Council objects to this proposed site and draws attention to those comments in the attached document, with particular reference to paragraphs 52 - 67

**7. 13saf15 Land at Viceroy Coaches, Bridge Street – 10 dwellings**

The Town Council supports this proposed site

**8. 16saf15 Jossaumes, Thaxted Road – 12 dwellings**

The Town Council supports this proposed site

Yours sincerely

Lisa Courtney  
Town Clerk