



Agenda item: 8

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| Committee | Planning & Transport |
| Month | November 2021 |
| Report Title | Technical consultation on initial site assessments |
| Report Author | Georgia Arnold, Office Administrator and Committee Clerk |

Summary

Uttlesford District Council have reviewed the sites put forward during the call for sites exercise and are inviting councils to make comments on their initial assessment.

Extract from Uttlesford's email below:

"It is important to bear in mind that only some of these sites will be chosen for inclusion in the Local Plan and the Council is expecting to make that decision next Spring based on planning evidence. The first part of that evidence is a technical assessment for each site and your comments on that assessment are now requested.

All site assessments are ordered by parish within a single PDF document, which can be downloaded [here](#)

The assessments do not cover 'committed sites' – housing and employment sites already with planning permission. These will be factored into our calculations on additional requirements, and in our proposals for where additional homes and jobs should be located.

The assessments have been completed as a desktop exercise, utilising a wide range of spatial data, by AECOM – the Council's consultants carrying out the sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan. They will feed into a broader piece of site assessment work known as the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). An initial SLAA methodology was published in April – [here](#) – and the process will be fully documented in reports that we will publish alongside our consultation on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) in Spring 2022.

The purpose of this technical consultation is as follows:

- a) *To review the plotted site boundaries*
- b) *To fact-check the results from our desktop analysis*

The technical consultation is not an opportunity to make general comments on the suitability of a site. Please reserve any such comments for the assessment of the sites to be published alongside the Local Plan in the Spring.



Recommendation

Committee is asked to read the Site Assessment Document (Saffron Walden is detailed on pages 208-223) and make comments were required.

A reminder that Uttlesford are only asking for comments regarding the accuracy of their assessments at this stage. They will ask for comments regarding the suitability in the Spring.

Once discussed a final response will be issued to Uttlesford.

Initial comments

The site assessments look at the accessibility to local facilities and how long these journeys may take.

However, the primary school travel times seem to be on the assumption pupils get placed in to their closest primary school, which is not always the case.

Secondly, all sites seem to make the assumption that pupils would attend SWCHS Secondary and Sixth Form which is already popular and oversubscribed.

Therefore, the assessments need to consider whether the schools and Sixth Form can facilitate an influx of new pupils.

The assessment also looks at the travel time to the closest retailers that sell fruit and vegetables. This seems to focus on the closest shop available, which includes small convenience shops and different full-size supermarkets which all vary in prices. The assessment only looks at the travel time and does not consider the 10–20-minute walk whilst carrying shopping.

Unsure as to whether the employment centre is considered the town centre.

The references increase in numerical order, however there is not a 007 and 015 site reference.

The North East Thaxted Road site seems to be duplicated as reference 008 Res and 009 Emp.

The historic Park or Garden lists Widdington for every Saffron Walden site, it does not consider Audley End House.

There is no explanation as to what the conservation area references refer to. For example, site 001 RES East Shire Hill, refers to conservation area “Saffron Walden 1” being 539m away. It is assumed here that the references would correlate with the Conservation Appraisal (found [here](#)). However, assuming Saffron Walden 1 Refers to zone 1 in the appraisal this is further than 539m as started in the analysis.

Further explanation is therefore required to confirm if: This report uses the same referencing numbers as those in the Conservation Appraisal, if so, the distances listed are incorrect. OR, the references are different to the Conservation Appraisal, if so, confirmation is needed as to where these areas are, then the distances can be fact checked.



001 Res East Shire Hill South Radwinter Road

Travel times are not all accurate, (walking to primary and secondary school).

Assuming the Secondary School and Sixth Form are both SWCHS, the public transport travel time would be the same, not 15 and 30 minutes as listed. If so, it should be 30 minutes.

002 Res North De Vigier Avenue

A planning application appeal has been rejected in the past and a second application is awaiting final decision.

Travel times are not all accurate, (waking into centre and public transport into centre and the 1-hour bus stop).

003 Res South Radwinter Road (East of Griffin Place)

This site has a planning application awaiting final decision (21/2509/OP).

Assuming the Secondary School and Sixth Form is SWCHS, the public transport travel time would be the same, not 15 and 30 minutes as listed. It should be 30 minutes.

004 Res 46 Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden

This is next to the Linden Homes site by Tesco.

Not certain it should be called Radwinter Road, rather Leverett Way.

005 Res Herberts Farm, Debden Road, Saffron Walden

Travel times are not all accurate, (waking to primary school and walking to town centre).

Retailer is a convenience store, not a full supermarket.

006 Res Land South of Saffron Walden

Travel times are not all accurate, (walking to secondary and sixth form and town centre).

Retailer is a convenience store, not a large supermarket.

008 Res North East Thaxted Road

Assuming the Secondary School and Sixth Form is SWCHS, the public transport travel time would be the same, not 15 and 30 minutes as listed. It should be 20 minutes.

008 Emp North East Thaxted Road

Confirmation is required as to whether this is a duplication to 008 Res.



010 Res Former Friends Playing Field

Further explanation is required with the conservation area comments, this site is in zone 6 of the conservation appraisal.

011 Res Former Friends School

Further explanation is required with the conservation area comments, this site is in zone 6 of the conservation appraisal.

012 Res Land West of Little Walden Road

This site is opposite the Abbey Homes development.

Travel timings are fairly accurate; however, the road is not safe or accessible for cyclists or pedestrians, therefore are likely to drive in to the centre instead. An improved or formal footpath needs to be created.

Any walking for amenities is too far, particularly with shopping.

013 Res East Petts Lane Little Walden

Assuming the town centre destination is the same as the employment centre then they would both be 20 minutes to cycle, not 15 and 20 minutes as listed.

Any walking for amenities is too far, particularly with shopping.

014 Parkside Saffron Walden

Any walking for amenities is too far, particularly with shopping.

016 56 High Street

This site is currently the Scouting Hall.

Per the submitted Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (SWNP), Policy SW15 *“Proposals to develop the site at 56 High Street will not be allowed until an equivalent or better replacement scout hall is constructed and opened elsewhere. The site must not be broken up into small parcels which may prevent the land being commercially useful for modern town centre uses.”*

Further explanation is required with the conservation area comments, this site is in zone 2 of the conservation appraisal.

017 Viceroy Coaches

This is an allocated site in the drafted SWNP.

018 Jossaumes, Thaxted Road

This is an allocated site in the drafted SWNP.



Closing Summary

Based on an initial review of the site assessment report, it is clear that there are a number of anomalies and queries that need to be resolved and clarified. Particularly regarding the conservation area analysis because it is not clear what distance is being measured. Similarly, with the historic parks all of the Saffron Walden sites list Widdington.

Once discussed, these comments should then be brought to Uttlesford's attention.

A final reminder that at this stage we are not assessing the suitability of the sites, only the accuracy of the assessments made.