KNIGHT, KAVANAGH & PAGE

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
LEISURE FACILITIES EVIDENCE BASE

INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

MAY 2024

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) has been appointed by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to produce an indoor and built needs assessment for the period 2022-2041. Its stated objectives are to deliver:

- A detailed sports facilities assessment of indoor and built sports facilities.
- A comprehensive sport facilities and recreational strategy to inform future planning policies, priorities, infrastructure delivery and investment.

The overarching aim of the project is to provide:

- An evidence-based assessment of existing sport and recreation facilities.
- An assessment of the sport and recreational needs of the future residents of Uttlesford up to 2041.

This report is, thus, a detailed assessment of current provision of indoor and built sports facilities located within Uttlesford, identifying needs (demand) and gaps (deficiencies in provision).

Separate playing pitch and open space needs assessments have also been commissioned. All needs assessment reports will be followed by individual strategies which will contribute to the overall stated project outcomes to:

- Create sustainable communities by directing sports provision to areas of planned growth and areas of deficiency.
- Secure S106 contributions.
- Protect and enhance existing facilities ensuring better facilities through re-development.
- Incorporate a robust up to date needs assessment which supports the Council and meets the requirements of the amended National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Reflect and address the needs and demands of the local population that will grow in line with the changes defined by the Local Plan.

Thereby:

- Encouraging greater participation in sport and recreation.
- Promoting healthier communities.
- Justifying on-site provision and financial support for facilities.
- Involving the community in decisions affecting provision.
- Reinforce partnerships in delivering health outcomes.

1.2: Scope of the project

This report provides a facility breakdown of what exists in the authority, its condition, location, availability and overall quality. It considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth and takes into consideration health and economic deprivation.

The facilities/ sports covered include, sports halls (and associated indoor sports), swimming pools, health and fitness, gymnastics, squash, indoor bowls and village halls / community centres.

In delivering this report KKP has:

- Individually audited identified sports halls (conventional i.e., 3+ badminton court halls) swimming pools (minimum size 160m^2), health and fitness facilities (including, within reason, dance studios) and the wider range of facilities identified above.
- Analysed supply and demand to identify gaps and opportunities to improve provision.
- Sought to identify the extent to which delivery of leisure facilities is undertaken with full reference to the corporate strategies of the Council and other relevant strategic influences.

The audit was conducted between September and October 2023.

Specific deficiencies and surpluses are identified to inform the provision required. The specific objectives of the audit and assessment are to:

- Review relevant UDC strategies, plans, reports and corporate objectives.
- Review the local, regional and national strategic context.
- Present the scale of known local housing growth.
- Analyse the demographics of the local population at present and in the future (up to 2041).
- Audit indoor facilities provided by public, private, voluntary and education sectors.
- Consider potential participation rates and model likely demand.
- Analyse the balance between supply of, and demand for, sports facilities plus identification of potential under and over-provision – now and in the future.
- Identify key issues to address in the future provision of indoor sports facilities.

This process applied reflects Sport England's Guide; Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) methodology for indoor and outdoor sports facilities and accords with the most up-to-date version of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

1.3: Background

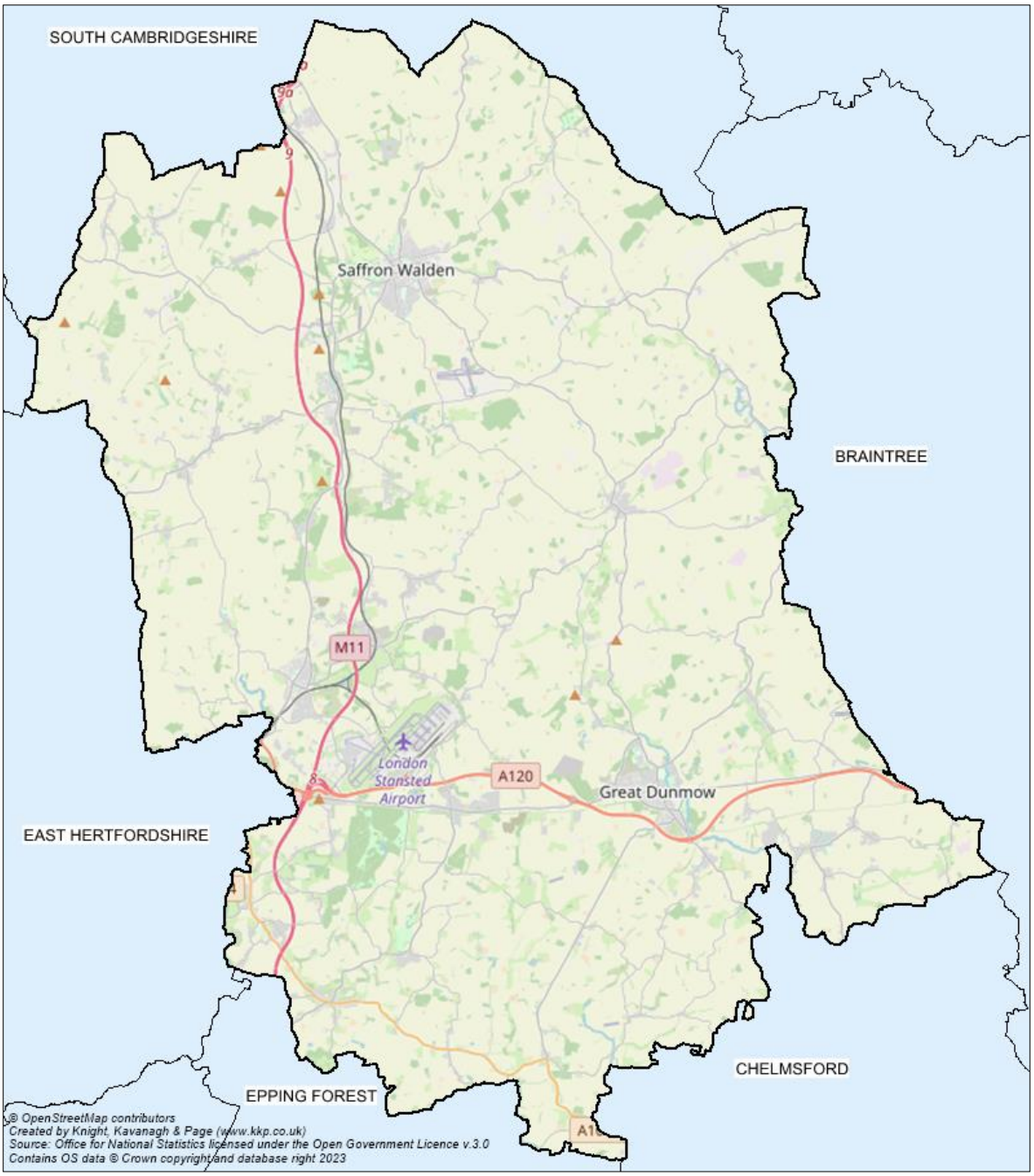
Uttlesford is one of 12 local authorities located in the County of Essex. It comprises of three settlements; Saffron Waldron, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet along with several local rural centres including, Takeley, Thaxted, and Newport.

It is surrounded by the following districts; Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire. Key transport routes include the M11, which connects the M25 with Cambridge, travelling north to south through the authority and the A120 which runs east to west, through the south connecting Stansted Airport to Braintree,

The key area of employment within the Authority is Stansted Airport. This is the fourth largest airport in the UK, behind the two London airports and Manchester. It is a base for several European low-cost carriers and currently employs c.3,200 people.

The authority's rural nature provides challenges for those people without private transportation, especially those living in outlying villages.

Figure 1.1: Main towns and transport links – Uttlesford District Council



1.4: Report structure

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in a report entitled *'*Strategic Planning: Effective Co-operation for Planning Across Boundaries (2015)*'* makes the case for strategic planning based on six general principles:

- Have focus.
- Be genuinely strategic.
- Be spatial.
- Be collaborative.
- Have strong leadership and
- Be accountable to local electorates.

In the preparation of this report, KKP has paid due regard to these strategic principles, it is, therefore, structured as follows:

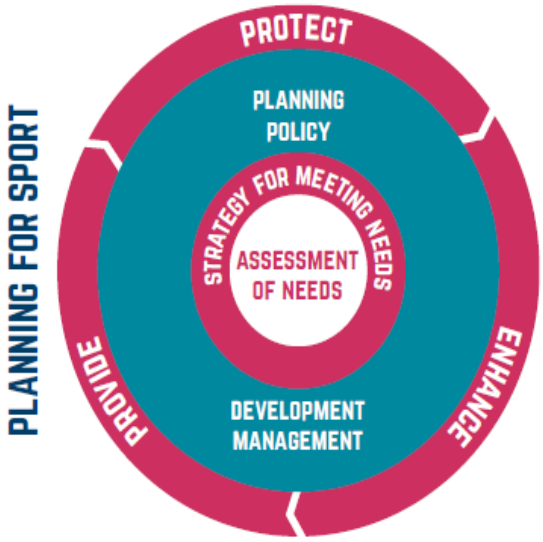
- Section 2 - background policy, population profile and demographic characteristics.
- Section 3 - description of methodology employed to assess indoor provision.
- Section 4 - assessment of sports hall provision.
- Section 5 - assessment of swimming pool provision.
- Section 6 - assessment of health and fitness provision.
- Section 7 - assessment of gymnastics.
- Section 8 - assessment of squash.
- Section 9- assessment of indoor bowls,
- Section 10 - assessment of village / community halls.
- Section 11 – strategic recommendations

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1: National context

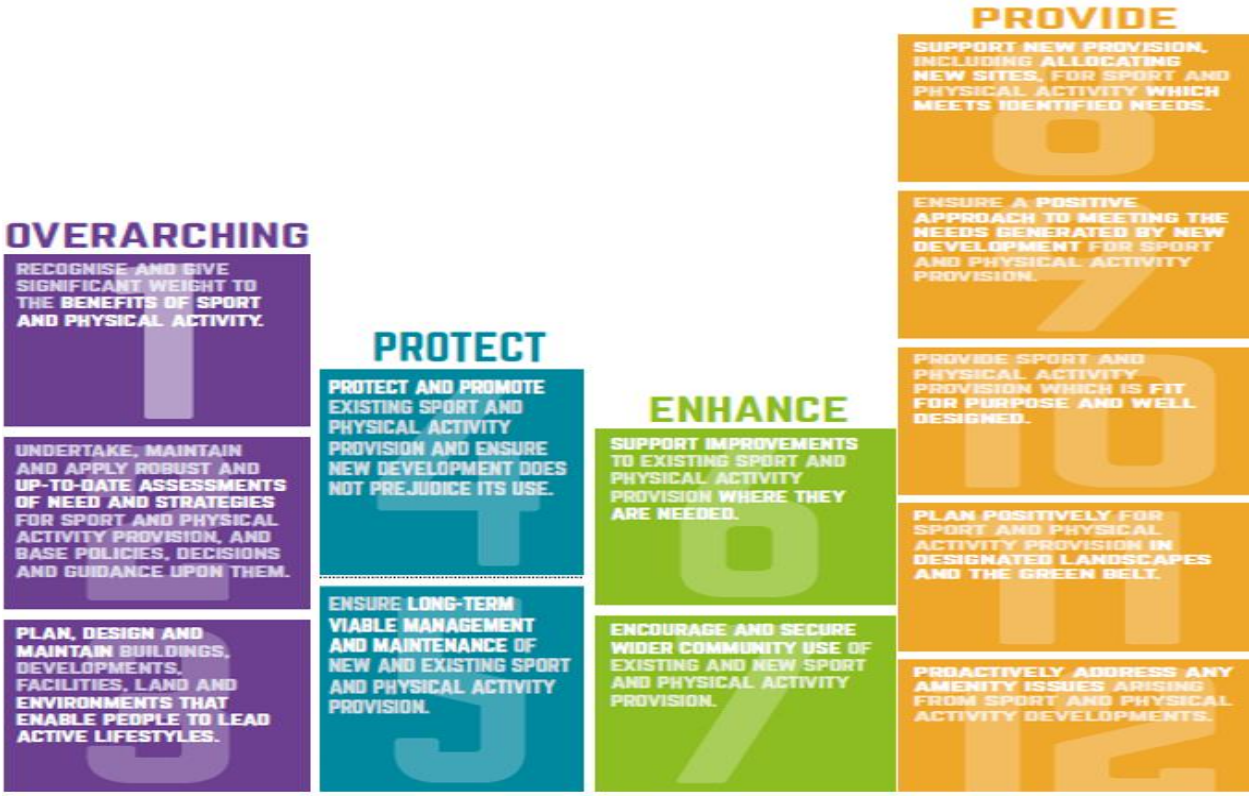
Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on up-to-date assessment of needs for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. This assessment report has been produced for UDC applying the principles and tools identified in Sport England's ANOG guidance.

Figure 2.1: The Sport England Planning for Sport Model



Assessment of need is core to planning for sporting provision. It is underpinned by 12 planning-for-sport principles which help the planning system to contribute to sustainable development by fulfilling the key role of the NPPF in creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Applying them ensures that the planning system plans positively to enable and support healthy lifestyles, delivers community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs, and provides opportunity for all to experience the benefits that taking part in sport and physical activity brings. They apply to all areas of the planning system and to planning at local authority and neighbourhood levels. As such they are of relevance to all involved in, or looking to engage with, the planning system.

Figure 2.2: Sport England's 12 planning principles



Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021

Sport and physical activity have a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all following the global pandemic. Reflecting this, Sport England's most recent strategy, Uniting the Movement is its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It sets out its aims to tackle the inequalities that it states are long seen in sport and physical activity making the point that 'providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important'. The three key Strategy objectives are:

As well as being an advocate for sport and physical activity, through the building of evidence and partnership development, the Strategy identifies five 'big issues' upon which people and communities need to address by working together. They are described as the major challenges to England being an active nation over the next decade as well as being the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference. Each is designated as a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but together, could change things profoundly. They are:

- **Recover and reinvent**: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
- **Connecting communities**: Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people**: Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connecting with health and wellbeing**: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active environments**: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

To address these, the right conditions for change need to be created across people, organisations and partnerships to help convert plans and ideas. This will include a range of actions, including development of effective investment models and applying innovation and digital technology to ensure sport and physical activity are more accessible. The specific impact of the Strategy will be captured via funded programmes, interventions made, and partnerships forged. For each specific area of action, key performance indicators will be developed to help evidence overall progress being made by all those supporting sport and physical activity.

Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure

Engagement by Sport England with the public leisure sector has highlighted that the pandemic has accelerated the appetite for local authorities to look at leisure services and re-examine the purpose of their provision, delivery against local community outcomes and consider their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.

Key insight from the report (**Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure**) includes the facts that:

- 68% of sports halls and swimming pools were built 20+ years ago. Although more than £150m was invested in the opening of new public leisure and swimming facilities in 2018/19[1], with another £200m worth of assets in construction or planning there remains significant levels of ageing public leisure stock.
- 72% of all school swimming lessons take place in a public leisure facility, which included both the statutory learn to swim programme and the water safety curriculum across primary schools. Swimming club usage is also predominantly based at public leisure facilities.

The leisure sector is emerging from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. Emergency funding [2] helped to avert financial catastrophe and enabled the additional costs of maintaining public assets and reopening services to be met**.** These funding sources are, however, finite and have now been virtually exhausted. At best, financial pressures risk limiting the ability of stakeholders to deliver against their commitments; at worst they may result in the permanent closure of some services or facilities.

In respect of the recovery of the sector to pre-Pandemic participation levels, data generated via the Moving Communities platform suggests that in October 2021, throughput levels (13.2 million) were still lower than the monthly average in 2019 (17.8 million). Recovery of participation levels across different activities has been imbalanced and has leant towards those activities which deliver a faster return to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

Sites refurbished in the last 10 years are seeing a throughput recovery of 68% compared with a recovery of 62% for those last refurbished 20+ years ago, suggesting that investment in newer facilities creates spaces that have greater appeal, increase user confidence levels and provide a more relevant offer to meet current customer demands.

To address these significant challenges, a repositioning of the traditional offer of public leisure into one akin to an **active wellbeing service** is advocated (see Figure 2.3 overleaf) focusing on added value and supporting the delivery of key local priorities, alongside wider government policy around Levelling Up, net zero and health inequalities.

[1] 2 Mintel Report on Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools (September 2019)
[2] Local authorities invested £160 million The National Leisure Recovery Fund £100m, Leisure operators drew on £171 million of reserves alongside further relief measures such as the Government's furlough scheme

Figure 2.3: Vision and commitments: Public Sector Leisure Report

High-quality data and insight
A commitment to build the evidence base and intelligence around what works, why and the difference it makes to communities.

Coordination and partnerships
A commitment to coordinate stakeholders and share information across organisations and geographical boundaries.

Leadership and workforce development
A commitment to develop and deliver programmes to support the workforce at all levels both within local authorities and providers.

Champion equality, diversity and inclusion
A commitment to training and change to embed diversity and inclusion across the full range of activities, services and communications — for both communities and the workforce.

Digital transformation
A commitment to support the digital transformation of the sector through the development of a white paper, partnering options and maturity assessment.

Strengthen the connection to health
A commitment to building partnerships at all levels including ICS and providing materials to support engagement (e.g. social prescribing handbook).

Environmental sustainability
A commitment to improving awareness, owning good practice and supporting the transition to zero carbon facilities.

Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England 2020

Sport England has brought together evidence on the contribution of community sport and physical activity to the five outcomes identified in the Government's strategy Sporting Future. These are physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development.

Its aim was to assess the evidence base with a view to demonstrating the contribution of community sport and physical activity to the outcomes. Building on this foundation and other previous work, Sport England quantified the social and economic impact of community sport and physical activity. There are two complementary parts to the research. Part one measures the social impact (including physical and mental health) of sport and physical activity while part two measures the economic importance.

The findings reveal that community sport and physical activity brings an annual contribution of £85.5 billion to the country (in 2018 prices) through social and economic benefits.

Its social value – including physical and mental health, wellbeing, individual and community development – is more than £72 billion, provided via routes such as a healthier population, consumer expenditure, greater work productivity, improved education attainment, reduced crime and stronger communities. It also generates more than £13bn in economic value. The economic value includes more than 285,000 jobs within the community sport and physical activity sector.

Together, both parts enable Sport England to demonstrate the contribution of sport and physical activity to the five government outcomes. The research revealed that the combined social and economic value of taking part (participating and volunteering) in community sport and physical activity in England in 2017/18 was £85.5bn. When measured against the £21.85 billion costs of engagement and providing sport and physical activity opportunities, for every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity, a return on investment (ROI) of £3.91 was created for individuals and society in 2017/18.

Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

This report updated the 2011 physical activity guidelines issued by the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK CMOs drew upon global evidence to present guidelines for different age groups, covering the volume, duration, frequency and type of physical activity required across the life course to achieve health benefits.

Since 2011, the evidence to support the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups has become more compelling. In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health and cardiovascular fitness, also contributing to healthy weight status. In adults, there is strong evidence to demonstrate the protective effect on physical activity on a range of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes, mental health problems and social isolation. Regular physical activity can deliver cost savings for the health and care system and has wider social benefits for individuals and communities.

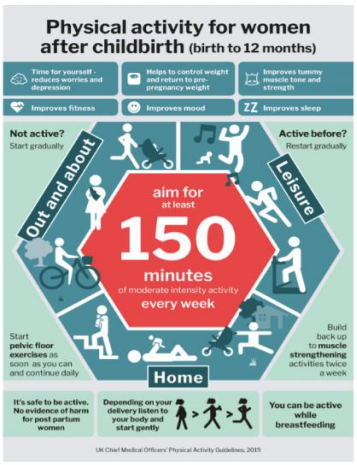
The key factors for each age group are as follows:

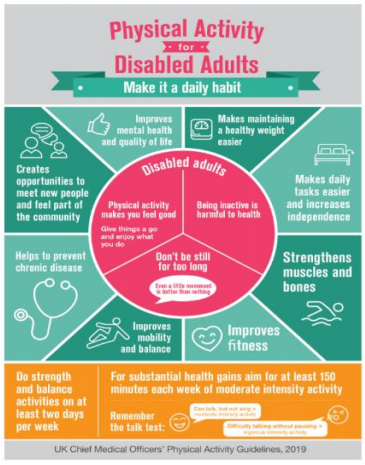
- **Under-5s***:* This is broken down into infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Pre-schoolers and toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of different exercises, whereas infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activities.

- **Children and young people (5-18 years)**: Children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week.
- **Adults (19-64 years):** For good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. This could be 150 minutes of moderate exercise, 75 minutes of vigorous exercise or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity, or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity.
- **Older adults (65+):** Older adults should participate in daily physical activity to gain health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social functioning. Each week older adults should aim to accumulate 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity aerobic activity.

It notes the emerging evidence base for the health benefits of performing very vigorous intensity activity performed in short bouts interspersed with periods of rest or recovery (high intensity interval exercise, HIIT). This interval exercise has clinically meaningful effects on fitness, body weight and insulin resistance and is incorporated in recommendations for adults.

Figure 2.4: Physical activity guidelines





It, thus, emphasises the importance of regular activity for people of all ages. It presents additional guidance on being active during pregnancy, after giving birth, and for disabled adults. The new guidelines are consistent with previous ones, introducing some new elements and allowing flexibility in achieving recommended physical activity levels for each age group.

Investment in school sport

The School Sport and Activity Action Plan (July 2019) sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have access to at least 60 minutes of sport and physical activity per day, with a recommendation of 30 minutes of this delivered during the school day (in line with the Chief Medical Officers guidelines which recommend an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week). It has three overarching ambitions which are that:

- All children and young people take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Children and young people have the opportunity to realise developmental, character-building experiences through sport, competition and active pursuits.
- All sport/physical activity provision for children and young people is designed around the principles of physical literacy, focuses on fun and enjoyment and aims to reach the least active.

The PE and sport premium can help primary schools to achieve this aim, providing primary schools with £320m of government funding to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of the PE, physical activity and sport offered through their core budgets. It is allocated directly to schools, so they have the flexibility to use it in the way that they think works best for their pupils.

In 2021 the Department for Education announced a £10.1 million funding package to help more schools open their facilities to the public once the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is over. The funding, which will be administered by Sport England and distributed via the Active Partnership Network will help schools deliver extra-curricular activities and open their facilities outside of the school day during evenings, weekends and school holidays.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023

The NPPF sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies the need to focus on three themes of economic, social, environmentally sustainable development:

A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making, the NPPF states that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs. It is clear about sport's role delivering sustainable communities through promoting health and well-being. Sport England, working within the provisions of the NPPF, wishes to see local planning policy protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need, as well as helping to realise the wider benefits that participation in sport can bring.

The **promoting healthy and safe communities** theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessment of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs, quantitative/qualitative deficiencies and surpluses should be identified and used to inform provision requirements in an area.

Cost pressures affecting the leisure industry

Insight produced by the Local Government Association (the LGA) suggests that councils continue to face substantial inflationary, COVID-19 related, and demand-led pressures. These are affecting their ability to efficiently operate leisure provision. This sits alongside the steep increase of living costs to households.

Whilst the leisure sector recovery following Covid -19 restrictions gained momentum during 2022, rising utility costs and the recent cost of living pressures on households are likely to adversely impact consumer confidence, throughput, and participation rates. Councils and leisure operators are therefore being required to address and review existing management arrangements and options to ensure the viability of the sector.

Leisure providers (both in-house and externally commissioned) are being adversely and disproportionately affected because leisure centres have high energy demands, especially those with swimming pools. Typically, energy costs are a leisure operator's second highest cost after staffing. This is further exacerbated because the leisure estate is ageing and is relatively energy inefficient. Research shows that two-thirds of public swimming pools and sports halls are in need of replacement or refurbishment, and ageing assets are contributing up to 40% of some councils' direct carbon emissions.

The LGA suggests that, in tackling the challenges presented by the current energy crisis, councils should pursue a partnership focused approach and consider solutions which may contribute to wider public health, decarbonisation, and levelling up and economic outcomes. This could include the following measures:

- Regular monthly meetings with leisure operator to review and monitor utility costs.
- Encourage leisure operators to be open and transparent about the true cost of utilities.
- Explore potential for flexibility in contractual arrangements and operating parameters: i.e., pool temperature / building temperature / reviewing pricing.
- Review non-viable/low priority contractual requirements.
- Consider using any management fee to stabilise utilities and stabilise providers to ensure service continuity.
- Consider renegotiating the repayment terms of loans to enable providers to defer COVID repayments to later years when they are more stable.
- Work with the operator to include leisure projects as part of decarbonisation projects and/or council investment in energy saving projects.
- Application for any additional external body funding available to support the continuation and/or efficiency of service provision such as Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund.

Environmental sustainability

The UK Government net zero strategy 'Build Back Greener', published in October 2021, sets out how it intends to meet 2050 decarbonisation targets focusing on interventions such as:

- A fully decarbonised power system by 2035 with all electricity coming from 'low carbon sources'.
- Improved home and buildings heating efficiency, aiming for all new heating appliances to be based on low carbon technologies, such as electric heat pumps or hydrogen boilers.
- Low carbon fuel supply – by scaling up the production of low carbon alternatives including hydrogen and biofuels.

UDC net zero carbon commitment is set out in its Climate Crisis Strategy. It aims to become net-zero by 2030.

Sport England reports that climate change and the increased occurrence of extreme weather that it brings are already affecting sports facilities, meaning that the sector needs to build greater resilience in respect of this very real threat.

It proposes that a wide range of issues should be considered when considering project development and the resultant environmental impact of, say, a new swimming pool. This includes determining whether to refurbish an existing building with its carbon already embodied or to build anew[3]. Sport England suggests some key principles as part of a 'pathway to sustainability' and net zero carbon in respect of building design and operation – including:

- **Reduce energy consumption** - as the first measure to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.
- **Change behaviour** - eliminate energy waste and operate energy control systems more effectively at no extra cost.
- **Passive design** - building orientation and placement on site is critical to achieving net zero targets Harness a site's natural resources to benefit cross ventilation, natural lighting, solar gain, shelter or shading.
- **Fabric efficiency** - maximise building fabric and glazing performance.
- Minimise initial energy demand - to reduce demand on plant and technologies incorporated.
- **Efficient systems** - invest in appropriate energy-efficient products including heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems
- **On-site renewables** - incorporate low and zero carbon (LZC) technologies to produce energy on site.
- **Off-site renewables** - only use energy providers who use renewable energy.

Summary of national context

Multiple challenges are currently impacting on the national policy context for physical activity and sport in the UK. Activity habits are continuing to be affected by rates of recovery from the Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, meanwhile rising utilities costs are imposing serious financial constraints on the operation of leisure facilities.

Local authorities need to consider how sport and physical activity can be better positioned as a key driver in influencing wider corporate outcomes such as the reduction of health inequalities. This can be achieved through working more effectively with 'whole system' partners such as those in the NHS at neighbourhood level, whilst employing the skills within the physical activity sector to better connect people with opportunities to participate.

Ensuring an adequate supply of sustainable facilities to support this is also key and may require a radical re-shaping of facility stock in some areas given the age and low energy efficiency of certain facilities, particularly swimming pools. The evidence base provided within this report is intended to help UDC to make such decisions on an informed basis.

2.2: Local context

Corporate Plan 2023-2027

Uttlesford's Corporate Plan sets out the key priorities for the next 5 years. Its vision within this time period is 'to make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play', through the following themes:

Theme	Description
Active place-maker for our towns and villages	To create a renewed focus on strategic master-planning in partnership with towns and villages to create better resident-centred places to live. This will result in new policies and plans to give our towns and villages a strong sense of purpose and place.
Progressive custodian of our rural and historic environment	Residents will see the Council is a strong protector of the physical and historic environment and that the Council is taking affirmative action on combating the effects of climate change at a local level.
Champion for the District	Residents will feel that the Council is proactively working on their behalf for the good of the District with other authorities and organisations. This will improve Uttlesford's connectivity and create a better local health service for residents.

To ensure that Uttlesford's towns and villages become a strong sense of purpose and place, the authority will promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities. This will be achieved through:

- Working with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia.
- It will continue to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles.

Uttlesford Local Plan

The new Uttlesford Local Plan will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan is expected in summer 2024. This will be followed by a period of examination during 2025 with the adopted Local Plan envisaged in early 2026.

This needs assessment report will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

Uttlesford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

The health of people in Uttlesford is generally better than the England average. However, there are key issues associated with the rurality of the area and the potential to overlook local inequalities, which are masked by Uttlesford's generally affluent socio-economic profile.

To reduce these inequalities, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision is to ensure that all children, young people and adults across the whole of Uttlesford can live healthy, fulfilling and long lives.

To achieve this, the Strategy lists five key priorities which are to:

1. Improve and support mental wellbeing.
2. Enable people to live healthy, active lifestyles throughout their lives.
3. Build healthy, resilient, active communities.
4. Alleviate pressures associated with increased costs of living.
5. Improve access to services and facilities.

To improve access to facilities, including leisure centres, the Authority will review and enhance sustainable public transport network to all key facilities. It will also ensure that facilities are of the highest of standards to ensure they are accessible. Providing accessible attractive facilities increasing the health of the Uttlesford community and creates opportunities for social interaction.

Fit for the Future: Active Essex Implementation Plan 2021-31

Launched in July 2021, the Fit for the Future strategy provides a rallying call to action for the thousands of organisations and people across Essex who recognise the enormous contribution physical activity and sport makes to the health and wellbeing of everyone.

As of June 2021, over 1.6 million people were living in Greater Essex of whom 901,000 are active adults who participate in over 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Active Essex wishes to increase this number, unite in one direction and over the next 10 years, create an active Essex to improve everyone's health and wellbeing. To achieve this, the Local Partnership sets out the following key objectives.

- **Strengthening Communities -** all communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to build resilience, connection and wellbeing.
- **Active Environments** - to work collectively to develop and provide well connected, accessible places and spaces that encourage people to be active.
- **Children and Young People** - to ensure every child has the best start in life, whereby they are active, healthy and happy.
- **Levelling Up Health and Wellbeing** - to change behaviours, which will enable and empower people to do things for themselves and their local communities. Physical activity is the highest priority for good health.
- **Sport and Physical Activity** - to support the recovery, development and growth of our sport and physical activity sector, in order to collectively increase opportunities for all.

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2022 – 2026

Every local area must have a JHWS setting out the priorities identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that local government, the NHS and other partners will deliver together through the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Essex JHWS aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in Essex by creating a culture and environment that reduces inequalities and enables residents of all ages to live healthier lives. To achieve this, the JHWS identifies five key priorities, all of which have specific development outcomes which need to be achieved though partnership work, as outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families with a focus on the vulnerable. Reduced loneliness and social isolation. Reduced suicide through a focus on system support
Physical activity and healthy weight	Enabling children, young people and their families to be more physically active. Improved levels of physical activity amongst adults by helping them find ways to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Improved nutritional awareness, healthy eating, and help low-income households access affordable healthy food options.
Supporting long term independence	Improved access to advice and guidance including financial support so that residents with long-term conditions and their carers can better manage their conditions. Reduced digital exclusion to improve access to advice and support online. Help all residents have better access to opportunities in education, work, skills, housing, and their social lives.
Alcohol and substance misuse	Improve access to advice, support and treatment for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues. Work across the system to help address the challenges of county lines and drugs related criminality. Educate children, young people, adults, and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.
Health inequalities & the wider determinants of health	Ensure that all children have access to quality parenting, early years provision and education that provide the foundations for later in life. Address food poverty and ensure that all children can access healthy food. Improve access to employment, education and training for adults and young people in our most deprived communities. Embed the use of health impact assessments in planning practice to ensure new planning proposals do not negatively impact on health, health services or widen health inequalities.

Leisure operator

The Council has a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with 1Life Management Solutions Limited to run its leisure centres. This contract, which expires in August 2035, incorporates:

- Refurbishment, maintenance, financing and operation of the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
- The design, construction and ongoing maintenance and operation of two new facilities; the Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre.

Although situated at the same site as the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, Turpin's Indoor Bowls Club sits outside of the PFI contract and is therefore managed independently of the contract.

In February 2023, Parkwood Group acquired 1Life.

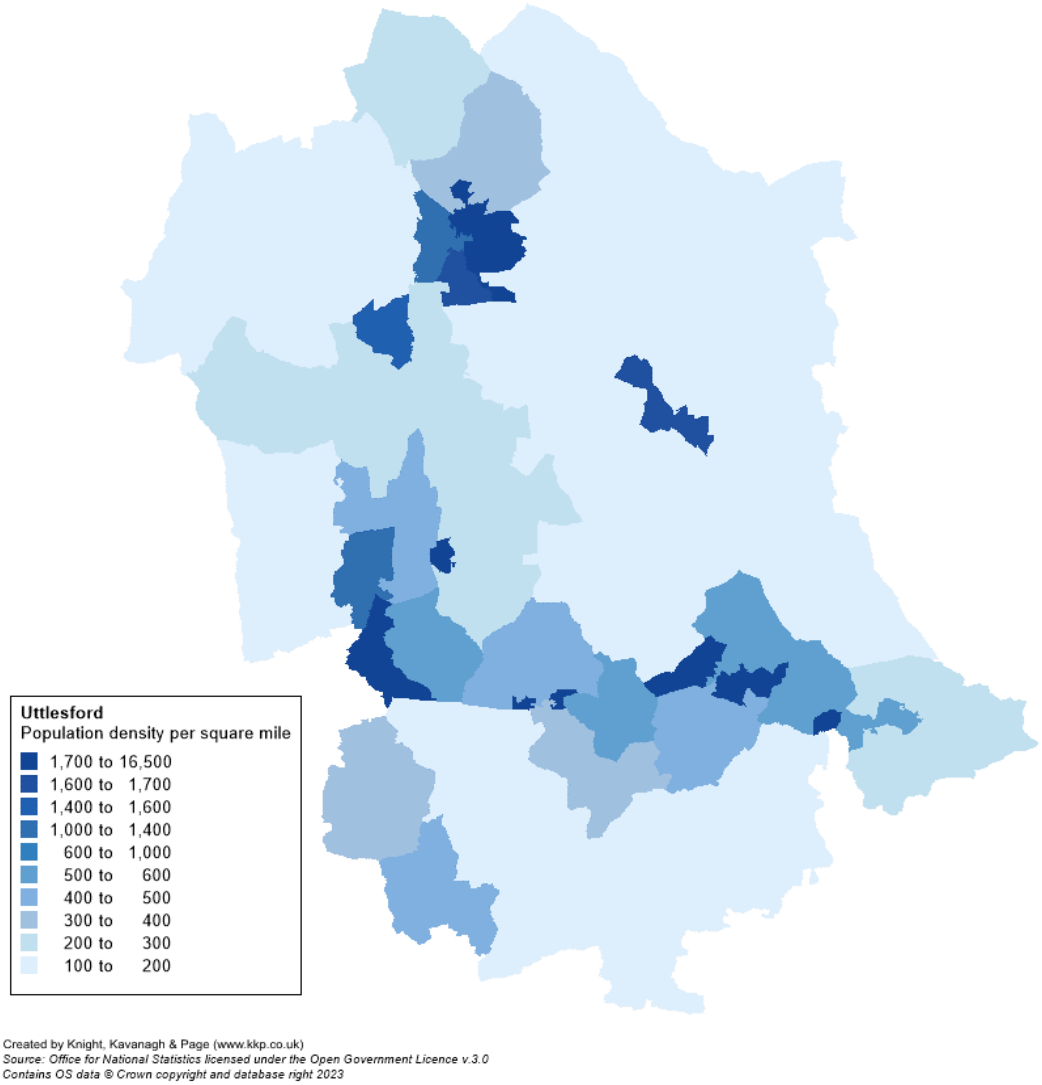
Summary of local policy

UDC is committed to ensuring that current and future residents have access to good physical activity opportunities, reside in strong communities and are supported by a successful and sustainable economy. It recognises that population growth and housing development is likely to require some form of intervention in relation to sports facility capacity by 2041.

2.3: Demographic profile

Population and distribution (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

Figure 2.5: UDC population density: 2021 MYE, ONS



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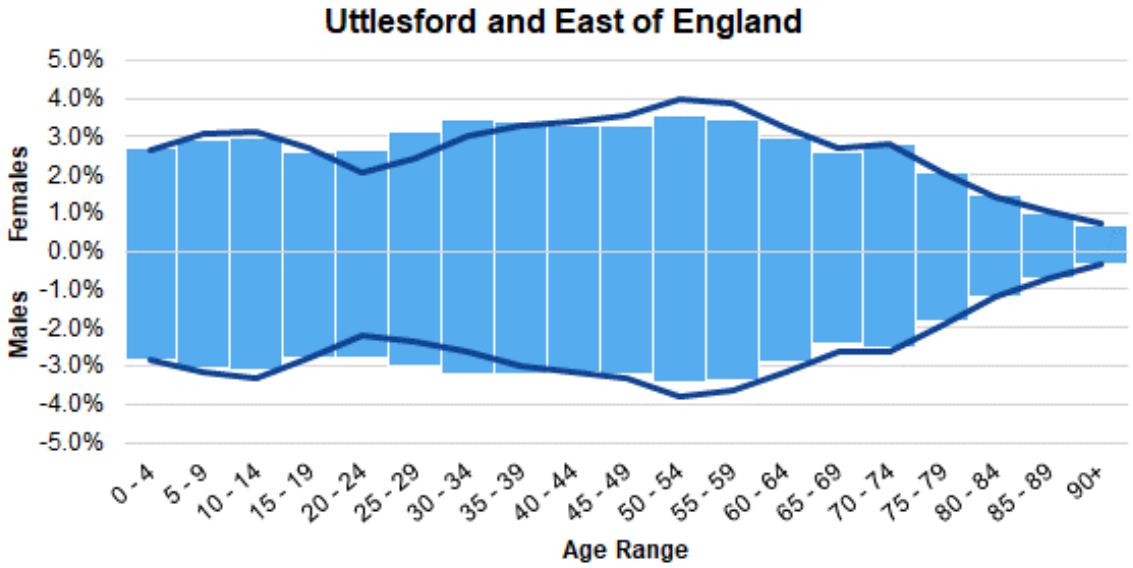
Higher population densities are focused in and around the three key settlements of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, along with concentrations in and around Stansted Airport (which includes the local service centre of Takeley). Newport and Thaxted are also Local Service Centres with higher population densities. The rest of the authority is predominantly rural.

The total population for Uttlesford is 91,348 (44,652 male and 46,696 female).

The chart overleaf illustrates population age and gender composition. Overlaying the blue line for Uttlesford on the blue bars for the region it is easy to see where one dataset is higher or lower than the other.

Figure 2.6: Comparative age/sex pyramid and Uttlesford and East of England



The proportion of 20-34 year olds is lower in Uttlesford (14.7%) than that in the East: (18.2%). There are, however, more people in the age groups from 45-64 (28.5% compared to 26.1%). The proportion of the population in remaining age groups in Uttlesford is similar to the regional averages.

Ethnicity: (Data source: 2021 census of population, ONS): Uttlesford's ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (94.5%) of the local population classified its ethnicity as White; this is higher than the comparative England rate of 81.0%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Mixed, at 2.2% this is lower than the national equivalent (3.0%).

Deprivation (Data source: 2021 indices of deprivation, DCLG): None of the District's population falls within areas covered by the country's four most deprived cohorts compared to a national average of c.40%. Conversely, 68.2% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country, this compares to a 'norm' of c.30%.

Table 2.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) cohorts - multiple deprivation in Uttlesford.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
30.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
40.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
50.0	1,537	1.8%	1.8%
60.0	9,369	11.0%	12.8%
70.0	16,211	19.0%	31.8%
80.0	19,939	23.4%	55.2%
90.0	23,663	27.8%	83.0%
Least deprived - 100.0	14,486	17.0%	100.0%

Figure 2.7: IMD cohorts - multiple deprivation and health deprivation in Uttlesford

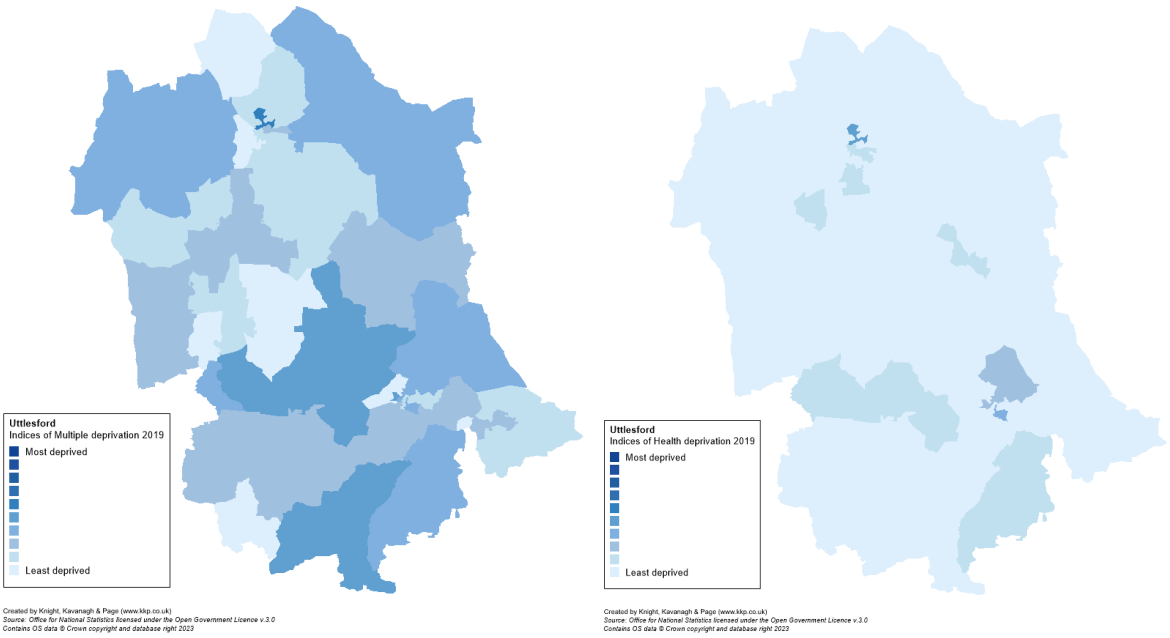


Table 2.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) cohorts – health deprivation in Uttlesford.

10% bands	Population in band	%	Cumulative %
Most deprived - 10.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
20.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
30.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
40.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
50.0	0	0.0%	0.0%
60.0	1,537	1.8%	1.8%
70.0	1,846	2.2%	4.0%
80.0	2,668	3.1%	7.1%
90.0	19,809	23.2%	30.4%
Least deprived - 100.0	59,345	69.6%	100.0%

Income and benefits dependency (Data source: Nomis 2022) The median figure for full-time earnings (2022) in Uttlesford is £38,489. The comparative rate for the East is £34,715 (-9.8%) and for Great Britain; £33,394 -13.2%. 985 people in Uttlesford claimed out of work benefits[4] in July 2023. This is an increase of 51.5% when compared to March 2020 (650).

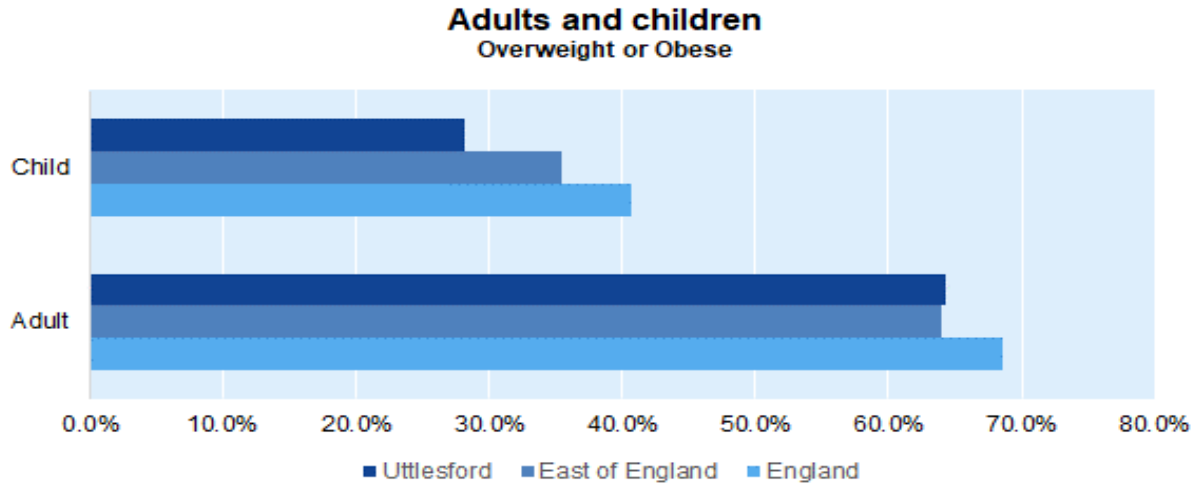
Health data (Data sources: ONS births and deaths, NCMP[5] and NOO[6]): In keeping with patterns seen alongside lower levels of health deprivation, life expectancy in Uttlesford is higher than the national figure; the male rate is currently 82.6 compared to 79.4 for England, and the female equivalent is 85.4 compared to 83.1 nationally.

Weight and obesity*:* Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. At a national level, the resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year.

[4] This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.
5 *National Child Measurement Program*
6 *National Obesity Observatory*

These factors combine to make prevention of obesity a major public health challenge. Adult rates of obesity or overweight in Uttlesford are below national but slightly above regional rates. However, child rates are below both national and regional rates.

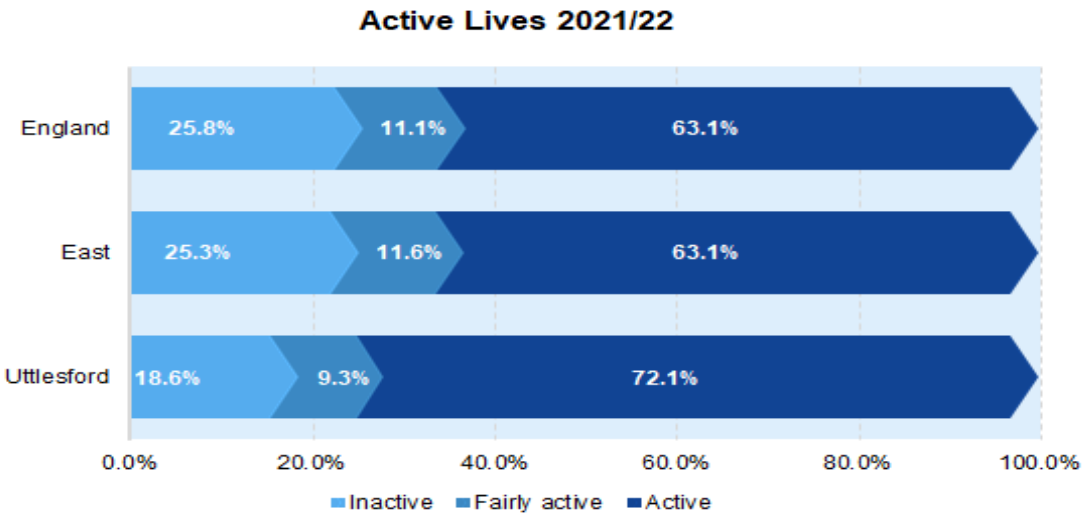
Figure 2.8: Child weight – reception and year 6



Sport England: Active Lives Survey (ALS) 2021/22

This is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity (excluding gardening). When compared to national rates, Uttlesford has a lower percentage of inactive compared to England and the East and a higher percentage is considered to be active.

Figure 2.9: levels of activity and most popular sports and physical activities



The most popular sports and physical activities:

ALS also makes it possible to identify the top five participation sports within Uttlesford. As with many other areas, fitness and athletics are among the most popular activities and are known to cut across age groups and gender; in Uttlesford over one third of adults take part in fitness activities, on average, at least twice a month. The next most popular activity is athletics in which 20.0% of adults participate on a relatively regular basis.

Table 2.4: Most popular sports in Uttlesford

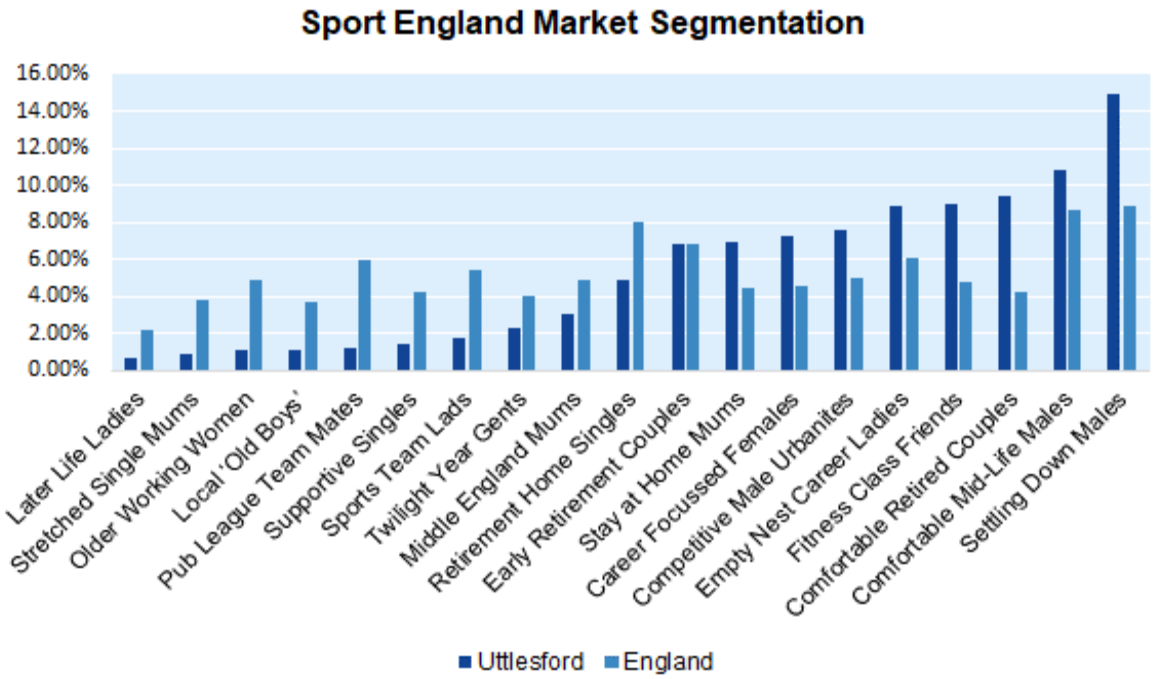
Sport	Uttlesford #.	Uttlesford %	East #	East %	England #	England %
Fitness	25,700	34.6%	1,264,600	25.0%	11,374,600	24.9%
Athletics	14,900	20.0%	694,100	13.7%	6,252,000	13.7%
Cycling	14,100	19.0%	916,500	18.1%	7,472,900	16.4%
Swimming	4,200	5.6%	231,200	4.6%	2,001,600	4.4%
Cricket	2,000	2.7%	25,900	0.5%	229,100	0.5%

Sporting segmentation (Data source: Market segmentation, Sport England)

Sport England classifies the adult population in 19 market segments to provide insight into the sporting behaviours. The segmentation profile for Uttlesford indicates that 'Settling Down Males' is the largest segment of the adult population at 14.97% (8,467) compared to a national average of 8.83%. This is followed by 'Comfortable Mid-Life Males' (10.86%) and 'Comfortable Retired Couples' (9.42%).

At the other end of the spectrum, there are fewest 'Later Life Ladies with only 0.7%, 'Stretched Single Mums' (0.9%) and 'Older Working Women' (1.13%).

Figure 2.10: SE segmentation –Uttlesford- compared to England



Mosaic (Data source: 2020 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

This is a similar consumer segmentation product. The following table shows the top five classifications in Uttlesford when compared to the country as a whole. The dominance of these five can be seen inasmuch as they represent almost three quarters (73.4%) of the population compared to a national equivalent rate of two in five (40.6%).

Table 2.5: Mosaic – main population segments in Uttlesford

Mosaic group description	Uttlesford #	Uttlesford %	National %
1 - Country Living	29,730	31.6%	7.1%
2 - Domestic Success	13,771	14.6%	8.8%
3 - Rural Reality	13,446	14.3%	7.2%
4 - Aspiring Homemakers	12,163	12.9%	10.5%
5 - Prestige Positions	10,335	11.0%	7.0%

Figure 2.11: Distribution of Mosaic segments in Uttlesford

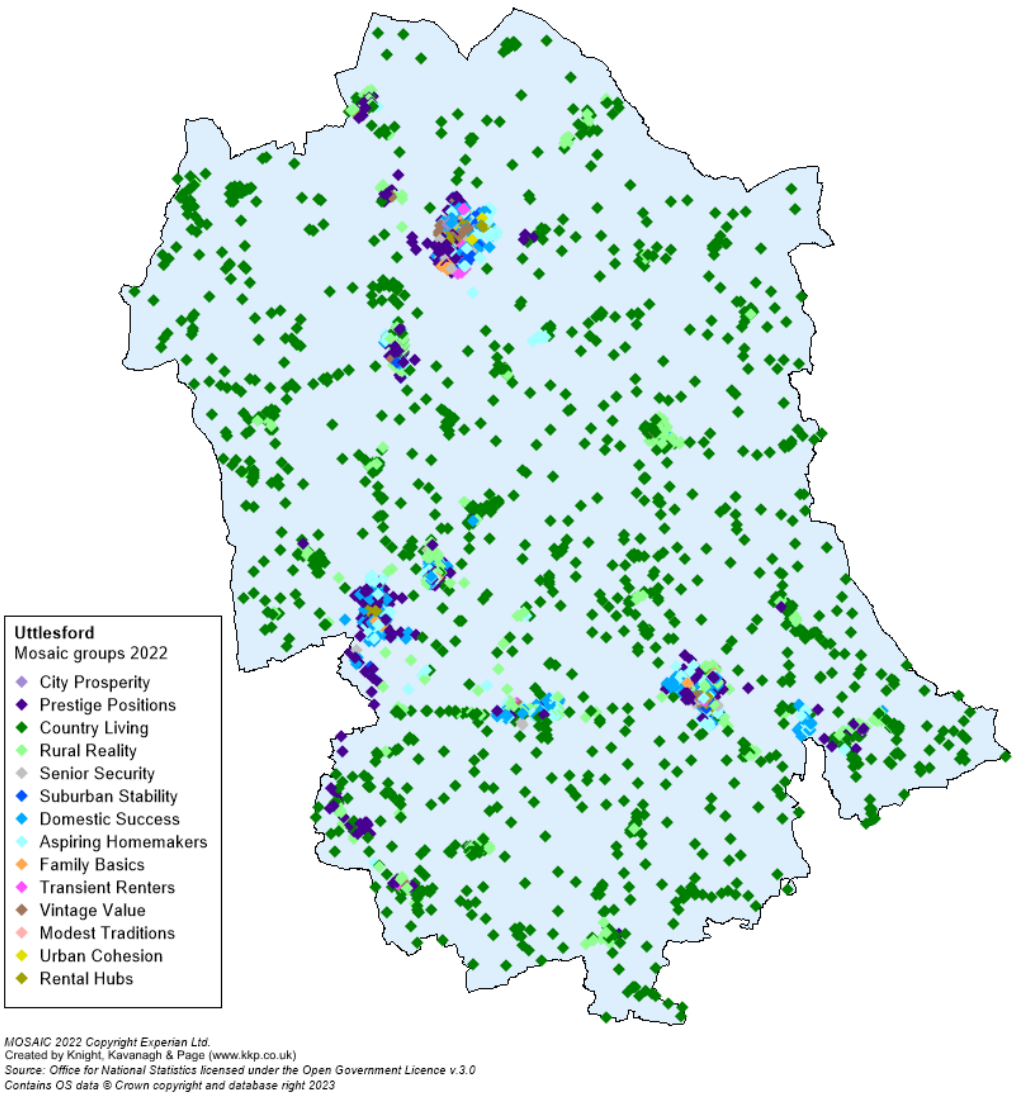


Table 2.4: Dominant Mosaic profiles in Uttlesford

Country Living	Well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired, and others commute distances to professional jobs.
Domestic Success	High-earning families who live affluent lifestyles in upmarket homes situated in sought after residential neighbourhoods. Their busy lives revolve around their children and successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles.
Rural Reality	People who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low-cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.

Population projections (Data Source: 2018-based population projections, ONS)

It is important to analyse population projections within the future local plan (up to 2041). ONS projections indicate a rise of 20.6% in Uttlesford's population (+18,328) over the 23 years from 2018 to 2041. Several key points are outlined below.

- The number of 0-15 year olds, grows by +1,213 (+6.8%) over the first half of the projection (to 2031).
- The number of 16-24 year olds increases by +5.0% in the first period (+389) followed by a decline of -2.4% (-202) in the second period to 2041.
- There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+.

Table 2.6: Uttlesford – ONS projected population (2018 to 2041)

Age (years)	2018 #	2031 #	2041 #	2018 %	2031 %	2041 %	2031 Change	2041 Change
0-15	17,717	18,930	19,271	19.9%	18.6%	17.9%	106.8%	108.8%
16-24	7,846	8,235	8,034	8.8%	8.1%	7.5%	105.0%	102.4%
25-34	9,019	9,121	10,158	10.1%	9.0%	9.4%	101.1%	112.6%
35-44	11,266	13,169	12,325	12.6%	13.0%	11.5%	116.9%	109.4%
45-54	14,086	14,194	15,051	15.8%	14.0%	14.0%	100.8%	106.8%
55-64	11,863	13,935	14,379	13.3%	13.7%	13.4%	117.5%	121.2%
65+	17,382	24,057	28,291	19.5%	23.7%	26.3%	138.4%	162.8%
Total	**89,179**	**101,642**	**107,507**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**114.0%**	**120.6%**

Housing growth

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. The standard methodology identifies a housing requirement of 675 dwellings per annum for Uttlesford[7]. The housing requirement for Uttlesford District is therefore 13,500 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2021 and 2041.
The indicative population figure (16,416) assumes that population growth will average 2.4[8] persons per dwelling. The draft Plan provides for at least 14,741 dwellings by 2041 in the interest of providing flexibility and contingency.

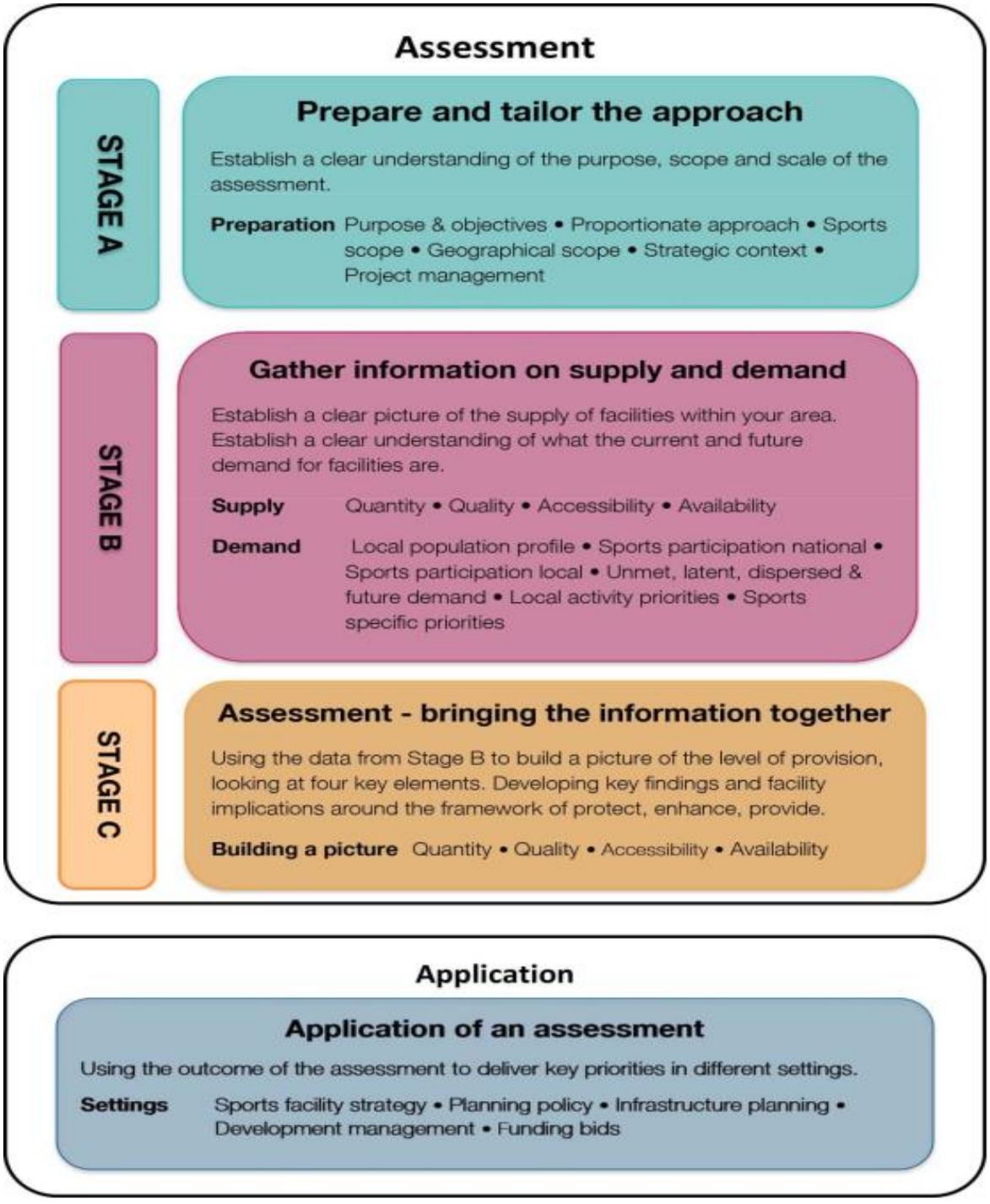
[7] 5 year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory (December 2022)
[8] Source: ONS Household and resident characteristics (Census 2021)

SECTION 3: INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

3.1: Methodology

Assessment of provision is based on the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities.

Figure 3.1: Recommended approach



This is the recommended approach to undertaking a robust assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It has been produced to help (local authorities) meet the requirements of the Government's NPPF, which states that:

'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.' (NPPF, Paragraph 103).

Provision assessment involves analysis of quality, quantity, accessibility and availability for the identified facility types (e.g., sports halls and swimming pools). Each venue is considered on a 'like for like' basis within its own facility type, to enable it to be assessed for adequacy.

Demand background, data and consultation is variable, depending upon levels of consultation garnered. In some instances, national data is available whilst in others, it is possible to drill down and get some very detailed local information. This is evident within the demand section.

The report considers the distribution of and interrelationship between facility types in the District and provides a clear indication of areas of high demand. It will identify where there is potential to provide improved and/or additional facilities to meet this demand and to, where appropriate, protect or rationalise the current stock.

3.2: Site visits

Active Places Power (APP) is used to provide baseline data to identify facilities in the study area. Where possible, assessments have been undertaken in consultation with facility staff. All community available facilities have been audited in consultation with facility owners/ operators. The only exception to this is Helena Romanes School from which no response was received. (For clarification, the school facilities not the leisure centre.)

Consultation with key indoor facilities, those operated by other partners and the voluntary sector were undertaken. Audits were undertaken with the facility/site manager via informal interviews with facility managers this report identifies 'relevance' and 'condition' and describes (e.g.):

- Facility and scale.
- Usage/local market.
- Ownership, management, and access arrangements (plus, where available, facility owner aspirations).
- Management, programming, catchments, user groups, gaps.
- Location (urban/rural), access and accessibility.
- Condition, maintenance, existing improvement plans, facility 'investment status' (lifespan in the short, medium, and long term).
- Existing/ planned adjacent facilities.

The assessment forms utilised capture quantity and quality data on a site-by-site basis and feeds directly into the main database allowing information to be stored and analysed. Quality assessments undertaken are rated in the following categories. These ratings are applied throughout the report, regardless of facility type.

Table 3.1: Quality ratings of indoor sports facilities using ANOG

Quality rating	Description
Good	Facility is assessed as being new or recently invested in, up to date, clean, well maintained and presented. Fixtures, fittings, equipment, and sports surfaces are new or relatively new with little if any wear and tear. They are well-lit with a modern feel. Ancillary facilities are new or well maintained, fit for purpose, modern and attractive.
Above average	Facility is in reasonable condition and is well maintained and presented. May be older but it is fit for purpose and safe. Fixtures, fittings, equipment, and sports surfaces are in an acceptable condition but may show some signs of wear and tear. Ancillary facilities are good quality, but potentially showing signs of age and some wear and tear.
Below average	Facility is older and showing signs of age/poor quality. Fixtures, fittings, equipment, and sports surfaces show signs of wear and tear. It is usable, but quality could be improved. The facility is not as attractive to customers and does not meet current expectations. Ancillary facilities are deteriorating, reasonable quality, but usable.
Poor	The facility is old and outdated. Fixtures, fittings, equipment, and sports surfaces are aged, worn and/or damaged. The facility is barely usable and at times may have to be taken out of commission. The facility is unattractive to customers and does not meet basic expectations. Ancillary facilities are low quality and unattractive to use.

Ratings are based on non-technical visual assessments. These consider facility age and condition. Surfaces, tiles and walls, line markings and safety equipment are considered and problem areas such as mould, damage, leaks etc. are noted. The condition of fixtures, fittings and equipment is recorded. Maintenance and facility 'wear and tear' is considered as is compliant with the Equality Act, although this is not studied in detail for the purposes of this report. When all data is collated, key facility elements receive an overall quality rating.

3.3 Catchment areas

Applying catchments areas for different provision types enables identification of areas currently not served. These vary from person to person, day to day, hour to hour. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchment'; the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users (used in the Sport England Facilities Planning Model - FPM). Sport England data indicates that most people will travel up to 20 minutes to access sports facilities. This, coupled with KKP's experience of working in/with leisure facilities and use of local data enables identification of catchment areas for sports facilities as follows:

Table 3.2: Facility catchment areas

Facility type	Identified catchment area by urban/rural
Sport halls	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Health and fitness	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Swimming pools	20-minutes' walk/ 20 minutes' drive
Squash courts	20 minutes' drive
Indoor bowls	30-minutes' drive
Dedicated gymnastics centre	30 minutes' drive
Village / community halls	800m / 10 minutes' walk

SECTION 4: SPORTS HALLS

Indoor multi-purpose sports halls are key sports facilities for community sport and allow a range of sports and recreational activities to be played. The standard methodology for measuring them is the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area. They are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least three badminton court size with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played.

It should be noted, however, that a 4+ court sports hall provides greater flexibility as it can accommodate major indoor team sports such as football (5-a-side and training), basketball and netball. It also has sufficient length to accommodate indoor cricket nets and indoor athletics; as such they tend to offer greater sports development flexibility than their 3-court counterpart.

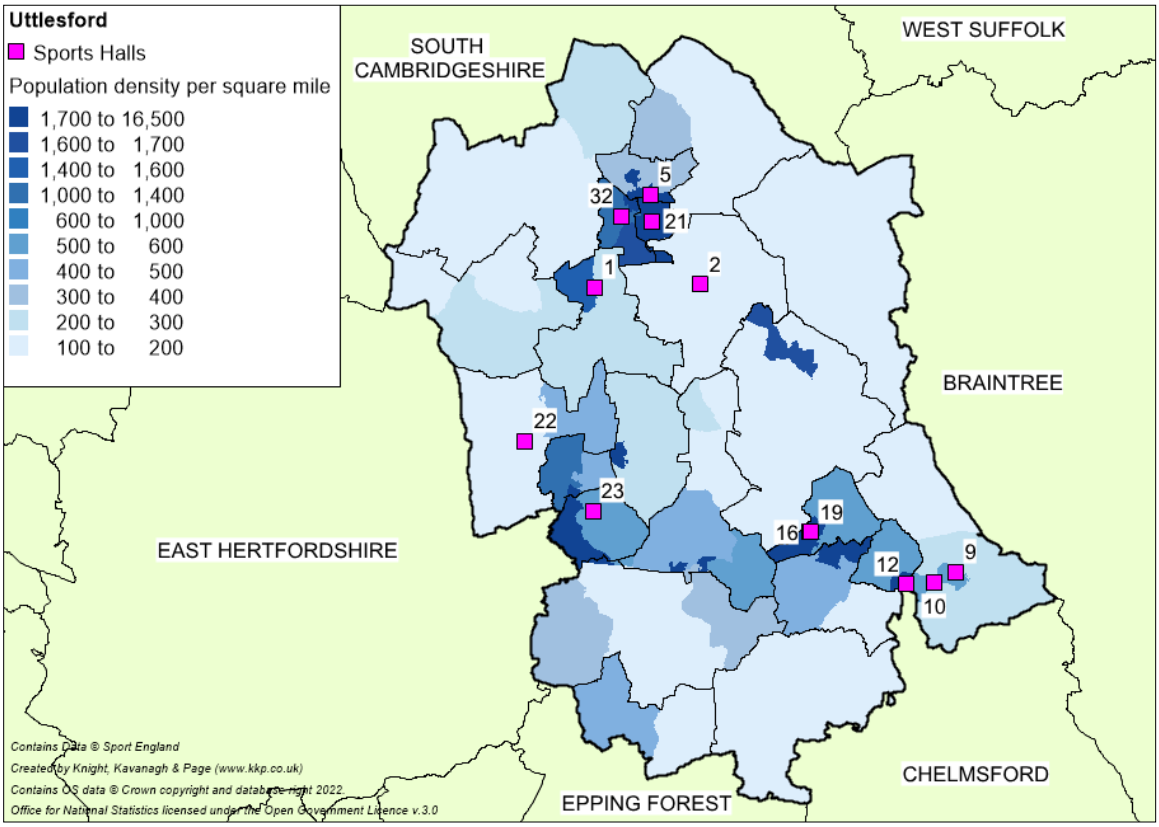
Larger halls, (e.g., those with 6-8 courts, can accommodate higher level training and/or competition as well as meeting day to day need. They also provide an option for more than one pitch/court increasing flexibility for training and competition and hosting of indoor central venue leagues for sports such as netball. This assessment considers all 3+ court facilities in Uttlesford. Halls that function as specialist venues (e.g., dance studios) are excluded.

4.1: Supply

Quantity

In Uttlesford, there are 14 sports halls at 12 sites accommodating 42 badminton courts.

Figure 4.1: All sports halls on population density



*Sites 16 & 19 are located in close proximity and appear as one square due to the location.

Table 4.1: All sports halls/activity halls in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	1
2	Carver Barracks	3
5	Dame Bradbury School	3
9	Felsted Primary School	1
10	Felsted School	3
10	Felsted School	4
12	Flitch Green Community Centre	2
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4
22	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	1
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4
-	**Total**	**42**

Four of the sports halls listed in Table 4.1 have two or fewer badminton courts. While often appropriate for mat sports, exercise to music and similar provision their size limits the range and scale of activity that can be accommodated. Table 4.2, lists the four halls excluded from the assessment due to size. (i.e., they have fewer than three marked badminton courts). The remainder (listed in Table 4.3) have 3+ marked badminton courts.

Table 4.2: Sports halls with fewer than three badminton courts

Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	1
9	Felsted Primary School	1
12	Flitch Green Community Centre	2
22	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	1

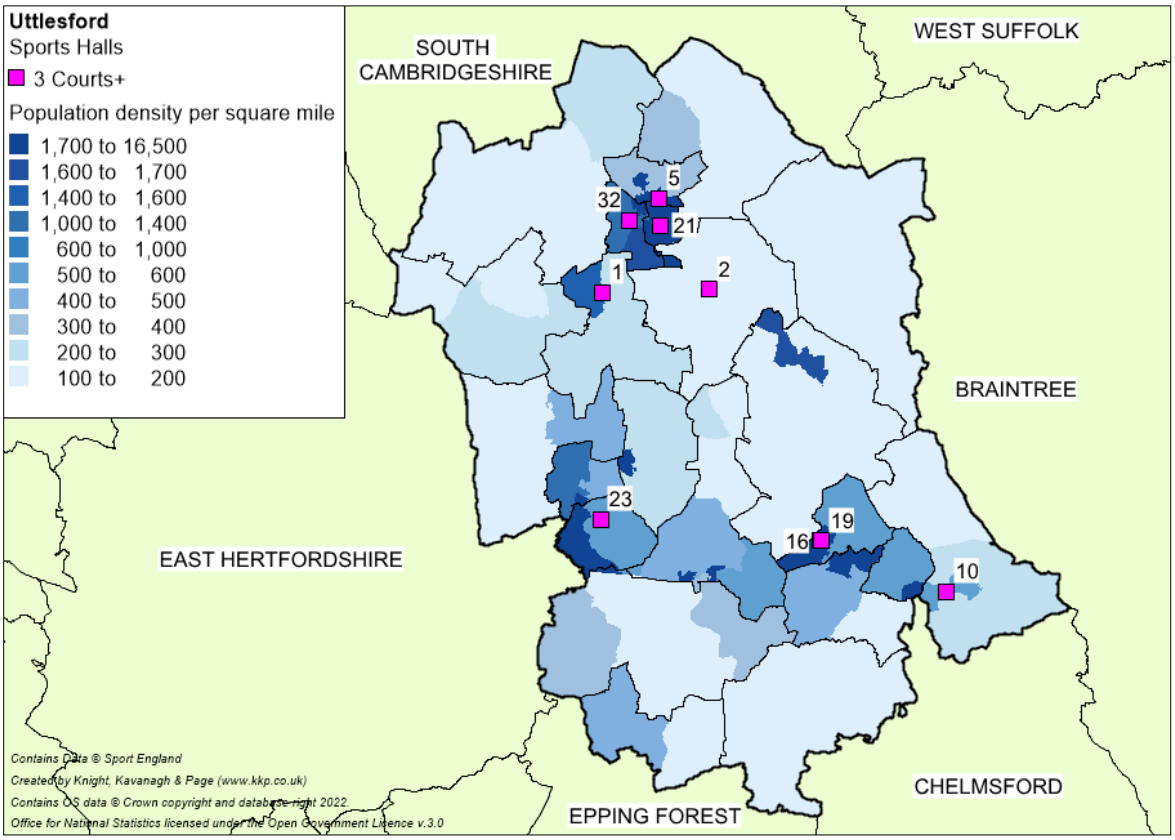
Table 4.3: Sports halls with 3+ badminton courts

Map ID	Site name	Courts
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4
2	Carver Barracks	3
5	Dame Bradbury School	3
10	Felsted School	3
10	Felsted School	4
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4

There are three 3-court sports halls and seven with 4-courts. There is no large sports hall (6 courts plus) so sports that require a more generous playing area (such as futsal and handball) cannot be comfortably accommodated.

Sports halls are well distributed across the district in the more densely populated areas. Spatially, there is a gap in provision in the (albeit sparsely populated) Carver Barracks /Thaxted area. Carver Barracks it is a military base and has its own provision (Map Id 2).

Figure 4.2: Sports halls 3+ courts on population density



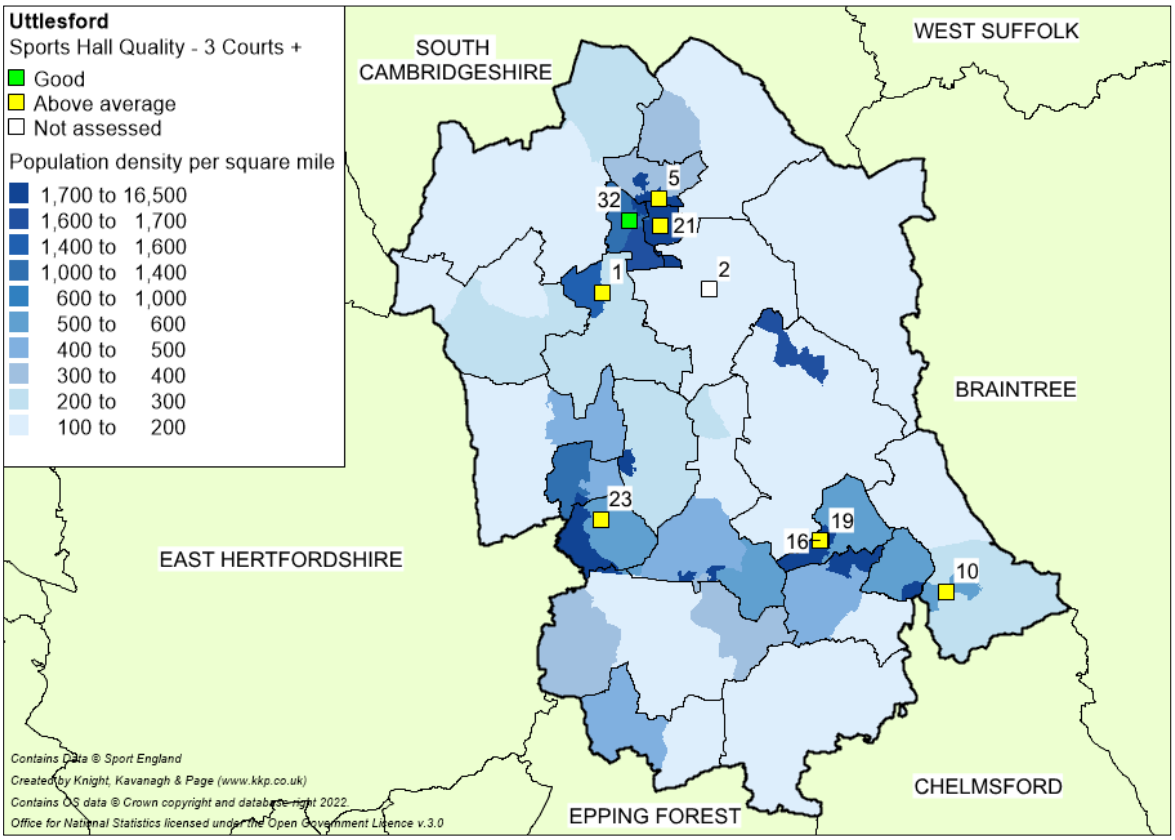
Facility quality

All 3+ court sports halls were subject to a virtual non-technical assessment to ascertain quality. These took place with consultation with the facility staff in September 2023, so any investment made after this date is not accounted for. Known or planned investment is mentioned below in the site notes.

Table 4.4: Quality of sports halls

ID	Site name	Courts	Court condition
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4	Above average
2	Carver Barracks	3	Not assessed
5	Dame Bradbury School	3	Above average
10	Felsted School	3	Above average
10	Felsted School	4	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4	Above average
19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4	Not assessed
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4	Above average
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4	Good

Figure 4.3: Quality of 3+ court sports halls



One sports hall is rated good quality, seven above average and two were unassessed.

Table 4.5: Site audit notes

Site name	Site audit notes
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	The lighting was upgraded to LED in 2023. The roof leaks.
Carver Barracks	The condition and any recent investment in the sports hall is unknown.
Dame Bradbury School	No issues were reported at the time of consultation.
Felsted School (3-court hall)	New lights installed in 2022.
Felsted School (4-court hall)	Roof leaks. New floor installed in 2023
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified. Re-lining and sand and re-seal required in the short term.
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	The condition and any recent investment in the sports hall is unknown.
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified.
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	PFI facility, it has regular investment as per the agreement. No issues identified.
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Has been flooded three times in recent years and required new floor. Most recently replaced in 2021. Reports of roof leaks. Requires new roof.

Table 4.6: Year of construction and refurbishment of sports halls*

Site	Year built/ opened	Year refurbished*	Age since opened / refurbishment
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	2001	2023	0
Carver Barracks	1975	-	48
Dame Bradbury School	2003	-	20
Felsted School (3-court hall)	2008	2022	1
Felsted School (4-court hall)	1978	2023	0
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	2003	2023	0
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form**	-	-	-
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	1984	2019	4
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	2003	2023	0
Saffron Walden County High Sports	2000	2021	3

*Years are as specified in Active Places Database 20/12/2022 or via the audit.
**Unknown due to the facility not being listed in Active Places Database and no response received.

Most sports halls have benefitted from some form of investment/refurbishment in the last five years. This is reflected in audit findings. One of the 3-court sports halls at Dame Bradbury is reported to have received no investment in the last 20 years. No information is available for Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form.

Maintenance at Lord Butler, Mountfichet Romeera and Great Dunmow leisure centres is overseen by the leisure operator 1Life. This is subject to the conditions of the PFI contract up until 2035. As such, these sites are well maintained, a situation reflected in the findings of the non-technical assessment. In addition, they have recently had a survey undertaken to identify decarbonisation opportunities. There are aspirations for solar panels.

The PFI contract has 13 years left on the contract.

Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has only one EV charger, it will be upgraded in the short term. Discussions are taking place as to whether it could become a Car Club site. The concern is however that it may mean a reduction in parking spaces which could be a detriment to the sports centre users.

Accessibility

Sports hall accessibility is influenced by how far people are willing and able to travel to and from them. Walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine facility accessibility to different communities. The normal (industry) standard is a 20-minute walk time (one-mile radial catchment) for an urban area and a 20-minute drive time for a rural area:

In the Uttlesford area, 27,552 residents live within one mile of a sports hall (32.3% of the total population). As noted above, there are no people living in defined areas of higher deprivation.

Figure 4.4: All sports halls with 3+ courts on IMD with one-mile radial catchments

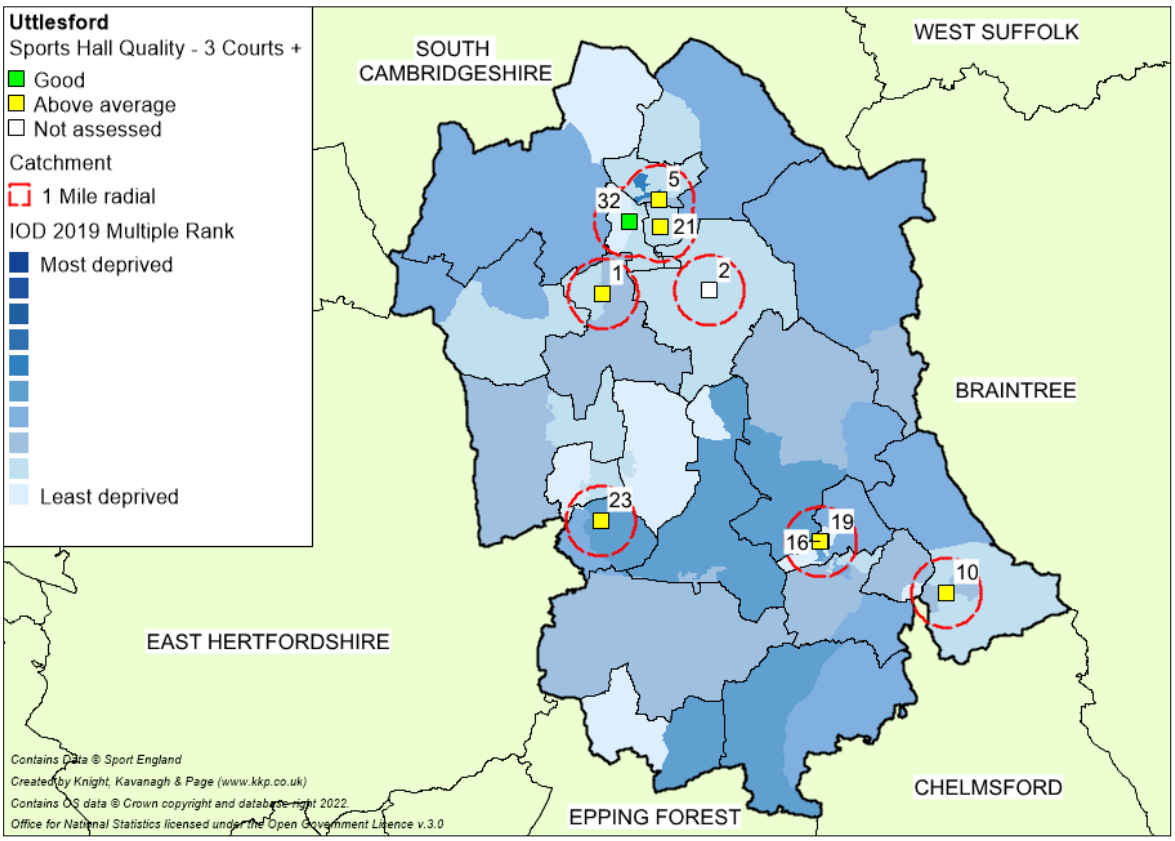
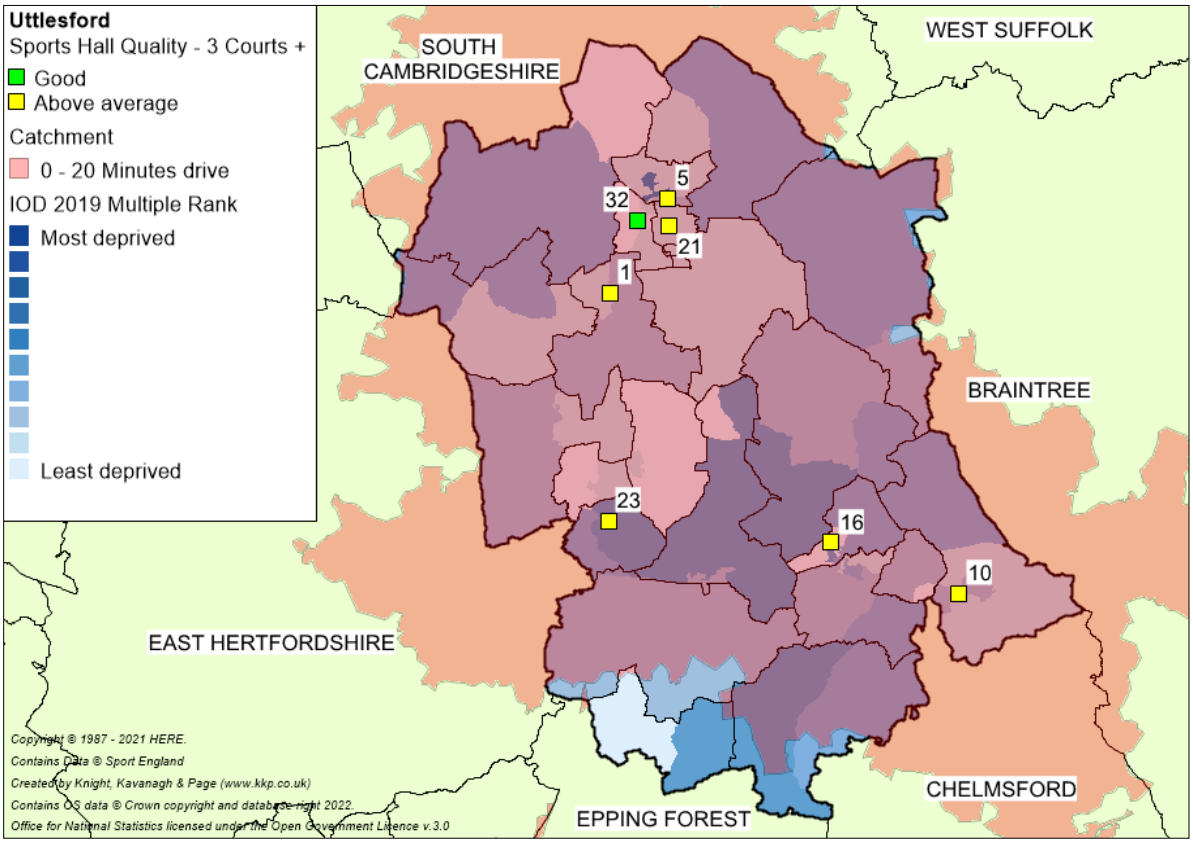


Table 4.7: Accessibility to sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	1,537	1.8%	0	0.0%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	2,349	2.8%	7,020	8.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,456	2.9%	13,755	16.1%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,176	3.7%	16,763	19.7%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	12,214	14.3%	11,449	13.4%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	5,820	6.8%	8,666	10.2%
Total	**85,205**	**100.0%**	**27,552**	**32.3%**	**57,653**	**67.7%**

It is reported that car ownership levels are high, only 8.7% of the population do not have access to a car (2021 Census) meaning that 3,232 people in Uttlesford's population are reliant on public transport or walking to get to a sports hall. This can add to the cost of participation.

Figure 4.5. Sports halls on IMD background based on 20 minutes' drive-time



Drive time catchment modelling suggests that approximately 95% of Uttlesford's population (87,153 people) live within a 20-minute drive of a publicly accessible sports hall with 3+ badminton courts, or a sports hall of equivalent dimensions.

Facilities in neighbouring local authority areas

Of the nine 3+ court sports halls in neighbouring authorities within two miles of the UDC boundary, one is to the north, two in the east and the remainder in East Hertfordshire to the southwest. The two public venues are Braintree Sport & Health Club and Leventhorpe Leisure Centre. They are considered likely to attract residents from the east and west of the authority. For some UDC residents the closest facility may be in a neighbouring authority.

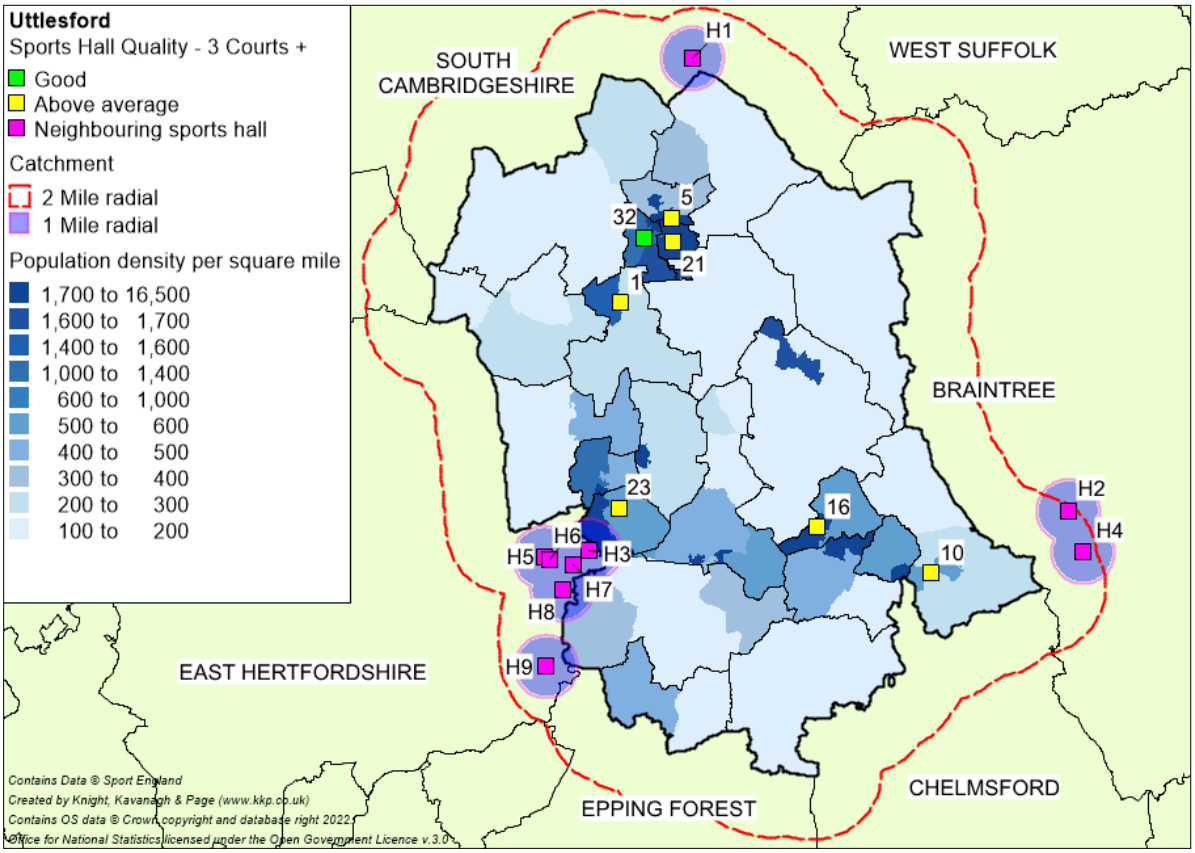
Table 4.8: Uttlesford's neighbouring sports halls – minimum 3 court with community use

ID	Site name	Courts	Access type	Local authority
H1	Anglian Leisure Linton	3	Sports club / CA	South Cambs.
H2	Braintree Sport & Health Club	5	Pay and play	Braintree
H3	Birchwood High School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H4	Notley Sports Centre	3 + 5	Sports club / CA	Braintree
H5	Bishop's Stortford College	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H6	Saint Mary's Catholic School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H7	Hertfordshire & Essex High School	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H8	The Bishop's Stortford High School	5	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire
H9	Leventhorpe Leisure Centre	4	Sports club / CA	East Hertfordshire

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023

Sports club / CA = sports club / community association

Figure 4.6: Neighbouring sports halls with community use (2 mile boundary)



Availability and facility management

In Uttlesford, all the sports halls are owned and managed in house by the respective education facility or by the Council's operator, 1Life (Parkwood). UDC has limited influence in terms of sports hall programming, pricing and management as it manages three out of nine sites.

Table 4.9: Ownership and management of sports hall facilities

Site	Ownership	Management
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	Academy	In house
Carver Barracks	MOD	MOD
Dame Bradbury School	Independent school	In house
Felsted School	Independent school	In house
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	Academy	In house
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	UDC	1Life (Parkwood)
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Academy	In house

Availability is very limited at boarding schools; this is particularly the case at Felsted School.

Daytime availability

Daytime availability is limited due to the constraints on education sites.

It is broadly accepted that some older people prefer to use facilities during daylight hours. Given that the proportion of older people (aged 65+) in the Authority is rising (from 19.5% in 2018 to 26.3% in 2041) provision of daytime access may be an increasing challenge going forward.

As shown below, there is limited capacity within existing facilities. (Sport England's bench-mark for a facility to be comfortably full is 80%). All sites are reported to be operating at / beyond this benchmark. In addition, there is limited opportunity to increase community use hours at the existing sites. The only exception is Helena Romanes where the appetite for this has not been established. Lastly, some football activity is reportedly taking place in sports halls, if this could be taken outdoors onto 3G pitches, it would release sports halls space to help indoor sports to grow. However, the audit identifies limited opportunity to do this.

Table 4.10: Community use hours and activities that take place in sports halls

Community use hours		KKP Ref	Site	Courts	Main sports played	Used capacity
0	0	2	Carver Barracks	3		
		19	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	4		
1-39	8.0	10	Felsted School	3 + 4	Cricket nets, netball, judo.	100%
	26.0	5	Dame Bradbury School	3	Badminton, netball, cricket, dodgeball, martial arts.	100%
40+	40	1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4+1	Badminton, pickle ball, netball, Futsal, cricket nets, football, indoor hockey, table tennis, basketball.	80%
	52.0	32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	4	Disability football, fencing, basketball, dance, martial arts.	70%
	100.0	16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4	Indoor cricket, indoor tennis, gymnastics, trampolines, disability multi sports.	90%
	105.3	23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	4	Netball, badminton, football, martial arts.	80%
	108.0	21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	4	Cricket nets, badminton, netball, basketball, gymnastics, trampolining, pickleball	90%

The audit identifies a good range of sports taking place, with a balance of traditional and non-traditional sports on offer.

Figure 4.7: All 3+ court sports halls on IMD with one mile radial catchment (excluding private use)

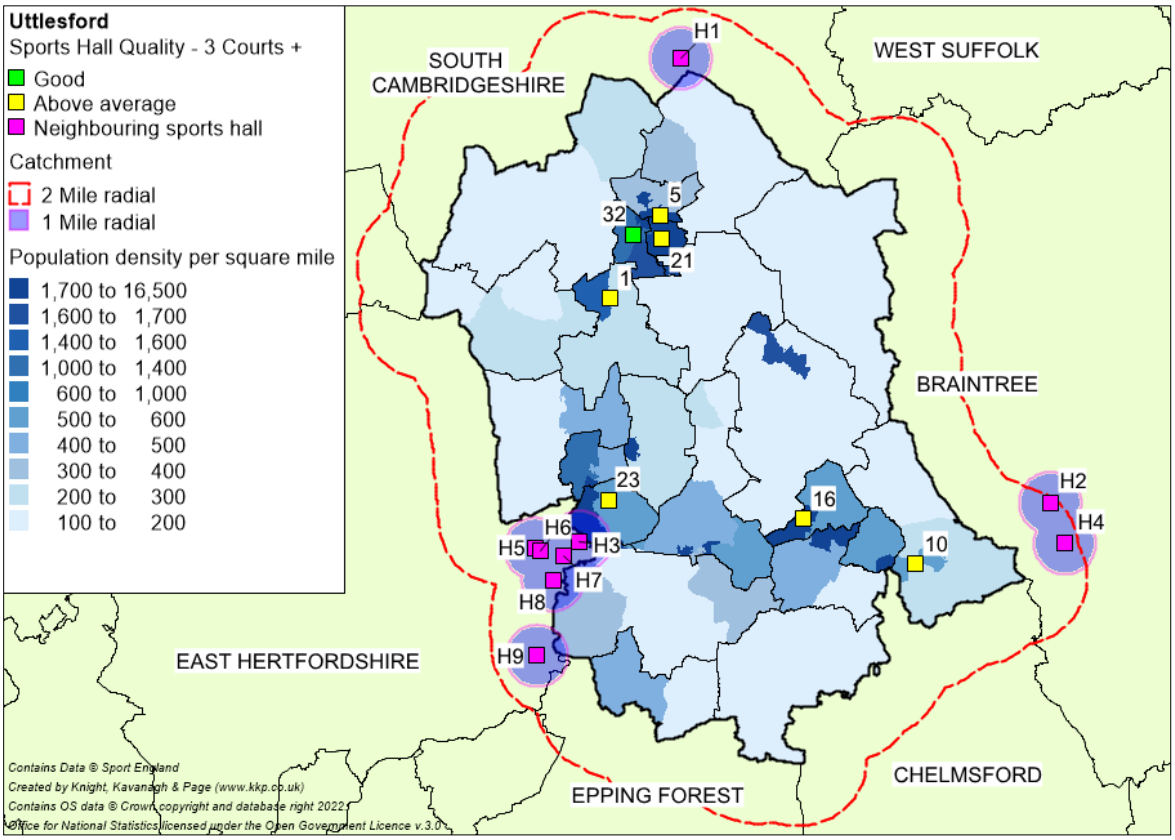


Table 4.11: Accessibility to sports halls with 3+ courts

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	1,537	1.8%	0	0.0%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	2,349	2.8%	7,020	8.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,194	2.6%	14,017	16.5%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,166	3.7%	16,773	19.7%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	11,381	13.4%	12,282	14.4%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	4,569	5.4%	9,917	11.6%
Total	**85,205**	**100.0%**	**25,196**	**29.6%**	**60,009**	**70.4%**

Future developments

There are plans to build a new replacement school (Helena Romanes School) in the south of Great Dunmow. Plans include an 8-court sports hall, two studios and a fitness gym. It is understood that there will be a community use agreement. Planning permission was granted in 2023. The existing 4-court sports hall (not available for CU) will be closed if the development proceeds.

4.2 Demand

NGB consultation

NGBs and active clubs were consulted to ascertain current use, participation trends and the needs/challenges facing sports halls in the area.

Badminton England (BE)

BE's Discover Badminton 2017-2025 strategy presents its vision to be one of the nation's most popular and to win World, Olympic and Paralympic medals. Key objectives are to:

- Grow grassroots participation.
- Create a system that identifies and develops player potential to deliver consistent world class performers.
- Build financial resilience to become a well governed organisation and demonstrate compliance with the UK governance code.

BE does not identify Uttlesford as a priority area, it has no affiliated clubs and coaches. It noted that it would be keen to support some activator delivery of its programmes at a facility wishing to increase badminton participation and revenue.

KKP found unaffiliated activity at a number of sites as identified in Table 4.10. This is casual in nature.

Newport Badminton Club is a social club based at Lord Butler Leisure Centre (Wednesday) and Anglican Leisure Joyce Frankland (Tuesday). It has c.19 members which are predominantly male. It is not affiliated to Badminton England. It hires two of the four courts per week at each of the sites (Tuesday 19:00-22:00 and Wednesday 20.00-22.00).

It reports capacity for an additional 10 members before needing to introduce a waiting list. Consultation identified that membership has reduced in the last few years. Should its membership increase, it would seek to hire additional courts. It reports that there is no junior activity in the area, all activity is for adults.

As for the facilities it uses, it reports that the shower facilities at Joyce Frankland LC are poor quality however, the sports hall floor is good quality, and it has good lighting.

At Lord Butler, it reports good quality showers and changing provision and good quality flooring but poor lighting – it reports that it has not accounted for badminton, the lights are too bright and not aligned properly to the badminton courts – which affects play.

Netball

In November 2021 England Netball (EN) launched a ten-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game along with a new organization brand identity. Its new strategy shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and to take it to new heights for the decade ahead.

The strategy outlines the intention to:

- Accelerate the development and growth of the game to every level, from grassroots to the elite;
- Elevate the visibility of the sport, and;
- Lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

At the heart of its purpose, EN commits to remaining dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority and to work to address the gender participation gap in the sport which has widened since the Pandemic. Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, EN pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

It is committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it represents, and continues to evolve, adapt and thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as EN pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport available to all.

Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to help protect the future of the sport. EN is working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision. It is committed to accelerating the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game.

The elite game is also a focus. EN's ambition is that the Vitality Roses will be the best female sports team in the world. It thus has to support the national team to win consistently on the world stage and to have an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court and set new standards. Professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority – with a specific focus on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events and creating more careers in the sport.

The Adventure Strategy was developed on the back of feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious, and sees EN pledge to continue as a trailblazer for women's sport.

Facility development

Facility development aspirations stated within EN's Strategy are to:

- Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives;
- Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level;
- Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full-time athletes underpinned by a world-class infrastructure and environments.

For EN to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages local authorities to adopt policies within outdoor and indoor sports facilities strategies that:

- Facilitate informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi-use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs).
- Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- Protects and enhances netball facilities within all primary and secondary school environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out-of-school hours.

- Supports the installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all-year-round use.
- Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- Where appropriate, supports development of netball homes and performance environments to enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

EN reports the sport to be growing fast nationally with a recently commissioned YouGov[1] report noting that the 2019 World Cup inspired 160,000 adult women to take up the sport. In addition, 71% of clubs reported more people had shown an interest in playing netball than before the tournament started.

Netball is played both indoors and outdoors. For outdoor provision please refer to the Playing Pitch Strategy 2023.

Current indoor netball activity and provision in the Uttlesford area is as follows:

Saffron Walden and Newport (Swan) Netball Club has c.300 members. It caters for juniors (age 7+) and adults. The majority of its activities take place at its home venue Herts & Essex Sports Centre which is located in the neighbouring authority of East Hertfordshire District Council.

It reports moving there several years ago when it was unable to source the facilities (both indoor and outdoor) it required in Uttlesford - on the days and times to suit its juniors and adults. It reports some activity (walking netball and Back to Netball) taking place indoors at the Lord Butler Sports & Fitness Centre.

Infinity Netball Club has 130 members and trains at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and on occasion at Herts & Essex Sports Centre. Whilst almost all play is outdoors, the Club would like to do some training/matches indoors. It reports this not being possible in the Uttlesford area due to lack of availability. In addition, when it plays outdoors at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre, it must pay for the courts it is not using (it cannot hire two of the four courts, it must pay for all four).

Fencing

Saffron Walden Swords Club is a fencing club based at Saffron Walden County High School. It hires the sports hall on a Saturday 09.30 – 14.30 and caters for people aged 8 years and upwards (including adults). It has c.40 members and delivers coaching sessions and private 1:1 coaching session.

Consultation identified that the Club would like to be able to deliver evening sessions during the week but reports there not being sport hall availability. It also faces a challenge with the storage of equipment, as it requires three locked kit cages.

It reports having limited availability to cater for increased demand and considers its growth options to be limited until it can access additional sports hall time at the same site. (Using a different site for an additional session would require more equipment and the required storage space).

Other sports

Athletics

[1] https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2019/10/02/netball-world-cup

Consultation indicates that both WaldenTri Club and Saffron Striders report demand for sports halls over the winter months, both however, indicate that there is no availability.

ECB – England and Wales Cricket Board
Consultation identified that currently the majority of cricket clubs use the Herts & Essex Sports Centre for indoor cricket activities. ECB would like the new replacement Helena Romanes School sports hall to include a minimum of 6 cricket lanes due to the strong demand in the area.

4.3: Future demand and Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

This helps quantify additional demand for community sports facilities generated by new growth populations, development, and regeneration areas. It is used to estimate facility needs for whole area (district) populations but should not be applied for strategic gap analysis as it has no spatial dimension and does not take account of:

- Facility location compared to demand.
- Capacity and availability of facilities – opening hours.
- Cross boundary movement of demand.
- Travel networks and topography.
- Attractiveness of facilities.

Calculations assume that the current sports hall stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. It appears that the projected increase in Uttlesford's population will lead to an increase in demand for sports halls to accommodate demand.

Table 4.12: Sport England: Sports Facilities Calculator

Description	Provision for 2018 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2031 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2041 population (mid-year estimate)
ONS population projections	89,179	101,642	107,507
Population increase	-	+12,463	+5,865
Facilities to meet additional demand	6.27 halls 25.08 courts	+0.88 halls +3.5 courts	+1.29 halls +5.15 courts
Estimated cost	£17,618,337	+2,462,209	+£1,158,698

Calculations assume that the current sports hall stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same. The projected increase in population will increase demand for sports hall space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 3.5 badminton courts up to 2031 and 5.15 badminton courts (1.29 sports halls up to 2041 (estimated cost: £1,158,698).

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 4.13: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional sports hall space required	Estimated cost (£)*
3,849	1.08 courts	£778,808

*based on 2Q2023 build costs

Based on current assessment, availability and proposed new development, investment is required in improving the quality and capacity of the existing stock prior to considering the development of a new sports hall.

A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls is recommended. The FPM report provides a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

4.4: Summary of key facts and issues – sports halls

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 14 sports halls (42 courts). Of these, 10 are 3+ court sports halls located at 8 sites (37 badminton courts).	Population growth (+18,328) estimates may create additional demand for an additional 5.15 courts (1.29 sports halls) by 2043. When adding in strategic housing impact there is further demand for 1.08 courts. The proposed new Helena Romanes School will result in the loss of a 4 court hall (no CU) and be replaced by 8 courts with a CUA.
Quality	In general, sports hall stock is good quality and well maintained. All sports halls have received some level of refurbishment within the last 20 years. Maintenance at the PFI (Parkwood) run facilities is subject to conditions of the PFI contract up until 2035.	There is a need to continue to maintain the quality of the sites as they age.
Accessibility	95% of UDC's population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a sports hall. Under one third (31.8%) live within 20 minutes' walk of a community available sports hall. There are nine 3+ court sports halls within two miles of UDC's border.	None required
Availability (Management and usage)	One site (Carver Barracks – an MoD site) is private use only. It cannot offer community use for security and military reasons. Felsted School has limited availability and is unable to expand primarily due to it being a boarding school. Netball reports having to travel out of area to access provision (indoor and outdoor). Herts & Essex Sports Centre is a key netball facility to which some Uttlesford residents travel.	There is limited capacity in existing facilities, they are operating at or beyond the Sport England benchmark of being comfortably full. Daytime use of sports halls will be of key importance given the projected increase in the number and proportion of older people in the authority. This applies particularly to Lord Butler Leisure Centre.

Strategic summary

- Each facility is important to the community served and all venues need to be protected in accordance with paragraph 103 of the NPPF.
- A good range of sports is available including gymnastics, badminton, netball, football, trampolining, pickleball, futsal, martial arts, indoor cricket, indoor hockey and indoor tennis. These sports need to be accommodated in the event of any new sports hall developments.
- Good relationships with schools are essential to retain/increase community use.

- Ensure the new Helena Romanes School has community use and meets the needs of the key sports in the area particularly indoor cricket.
- Keyholder access/working with an operator could be a consideration to resolve this in the short and longer term.
- Increase daytime access to sports halls to keep pace with demand related to growth in the number and proportion of older people.
- A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report is recommended to be undertaken for sports halls to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

SECTION 5: SWIMMING POOLS

A swimming pool is defined as an "enclosed area of water, specifically maintained for all forms of water-based sport and recreation". It includes indoor and outdoor pools, freeform leisure pools and specific diving tanks used for general swimming, teaching, training and diving. Many small pools are used solely for recreational swimming and will not necessarily need to strictly follow the NGB recommendations. It is, however, generally recommended that standard dimensions are used to allow appropriate levels of competition and training and to help meet safety standards. Relatively few pools need to be designed to full competition standards or include spectator facilities.

Training for competition, low-level synchronised swimming, and water polo can all take place in a 25m pool. With modest spectator seating, pools can also accommodate competitive events in these activities. Diving from boards, advanced synchronised swimming and more advanced sub-aqua training require deeper water. These can all be accommodated in one pool tank, which ideally should be in addition to the main pool.

The NGB responsible for administering diving, swimming, synchronised swimming and water polo in England is Swim England.

Swim England's report 'A Decade of Decline: The Future of Swimming Pools in England' provides a national analysis of the current swimming pool stock across England. It notes that the average age of a pool built from 1960 onwards is 43 years. On this basis it suggests that many of these pools are now coming to the end of their lifespan.

Many pool operators were placed in a serious financial situation during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when many local authorities provided emergency financial support through direct grants, deferred payments or loans to subsidise pool operators who had suffered loss of income due to pool closures.

The UK Government's £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund also enabled pools to re-open once restrictions had been lifted. Despite this, Swim England reports that 206 pools (including 68 public pools) closed, either permanently or temporarily over the period of the Pandemic.

In preparing for the future, Swim England recommend that local authorities conduct analysis of their pool stock to understand if they have the right pools in the right places to meet the needs of the local community. In the light of leisure facilities accounting for over 40% cent of some councils' direct carbon emissions it advocates capital investment into renewal of pool stock to support efforts to reach net zero targets, alongside combating the predicted overall future deficit of water space nationally.

5.1: Supply

This assessment is mostly concerned with larger pools available for community use (no restrictions to accessing the pool as a result of membership criteria). As such, those less than 160m^2 (e.g., 20m x 4 lanes) water space and/or located at private member clubs are deemed to offer limited value in relation to community use and delivery of outcomes related to health and deprivation. It is recognised that smaller pools can accommodate learning/teaching sessions, but they are, for modelling/needs assessment purposes, deemed unable to offer a full swim programme and, thus, eliminated from the supply evaluation, when considering accessibility and availability later in this section.

Quantity

The audit identifies eight swimming pools at seven sites. Three are main/general pools, two are learner/teaching pools and three are lidos. The general consensus is that a venue that has both a learner/teaching pool and a main/general pool can deliver a much broader programme (and substantially improve income generation).

Pools are located in the Authority's more densely populated areas of the authority. The north of the district has only one swimming pool but is largely rural and sparsely populated.

Figure 5.1: Swimming pools in Uttlesford

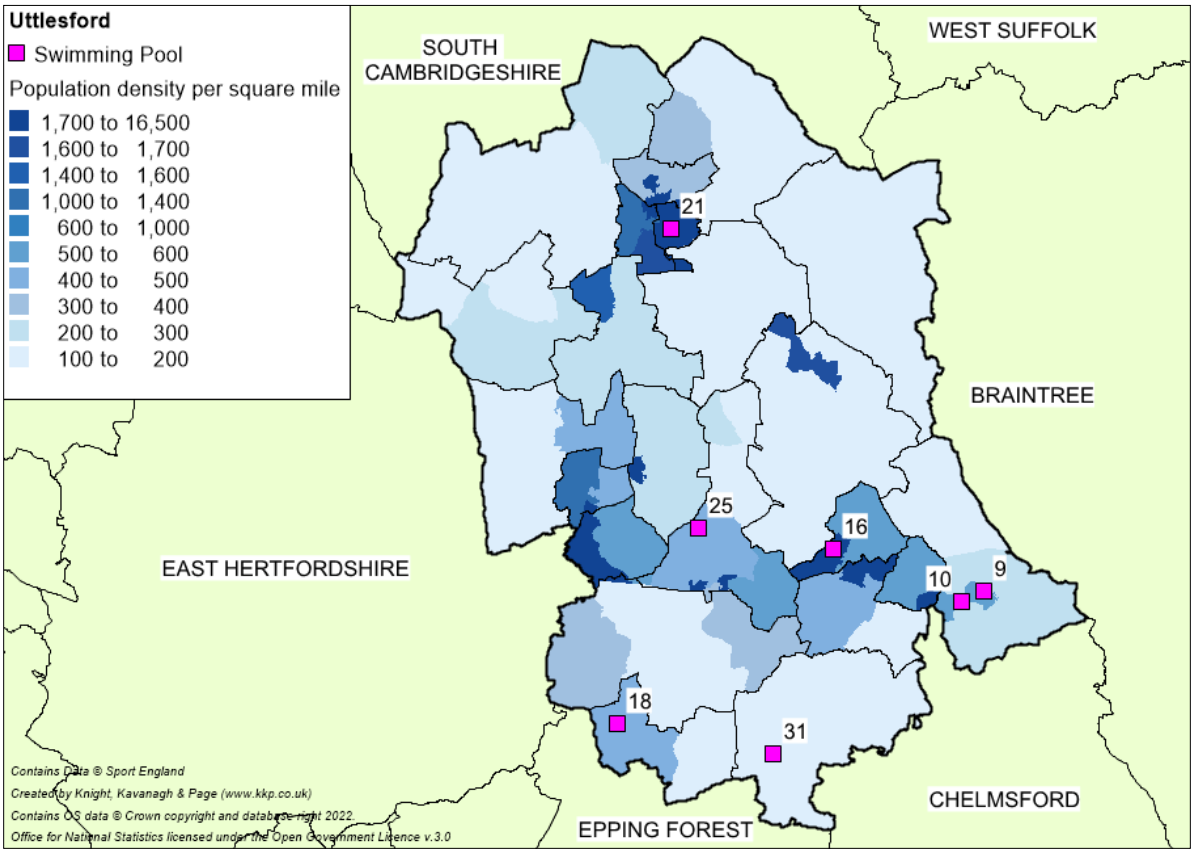


Table 5.1: Swimming pools in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Facility type	Lanes/ length	Area (m^2)
9	Felsted Primary School	Lido	0 x 11m	55
10	Felsted School	Main/general	4 x 23m	184
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Main/general	6 x 25m	325
18	Hatfield Heath Primary School	Lido	3 x 13m	85
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Main/general	5 x 25m	275
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Learner/teaching/training	0 x 12m	120
25	Pace Health Club (Stansted)	Learner/teaching/training	0 x 10m	40
31	Rodings Primary School	Lido	3 x 12m	66

The largest (6-lane x25m) pool is located at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has the most water on site as it has a 5-lane x 25m pool and a10m x 12m learner pool (0 lanes). Both are Council public leisure centres.

Quality

Quality is assessed according to the process and definitions previously described in Section 3.2. The three main/ general pools in Uttlesford are all rated above average quality.

Figure 5.2: Quality of swimming pools

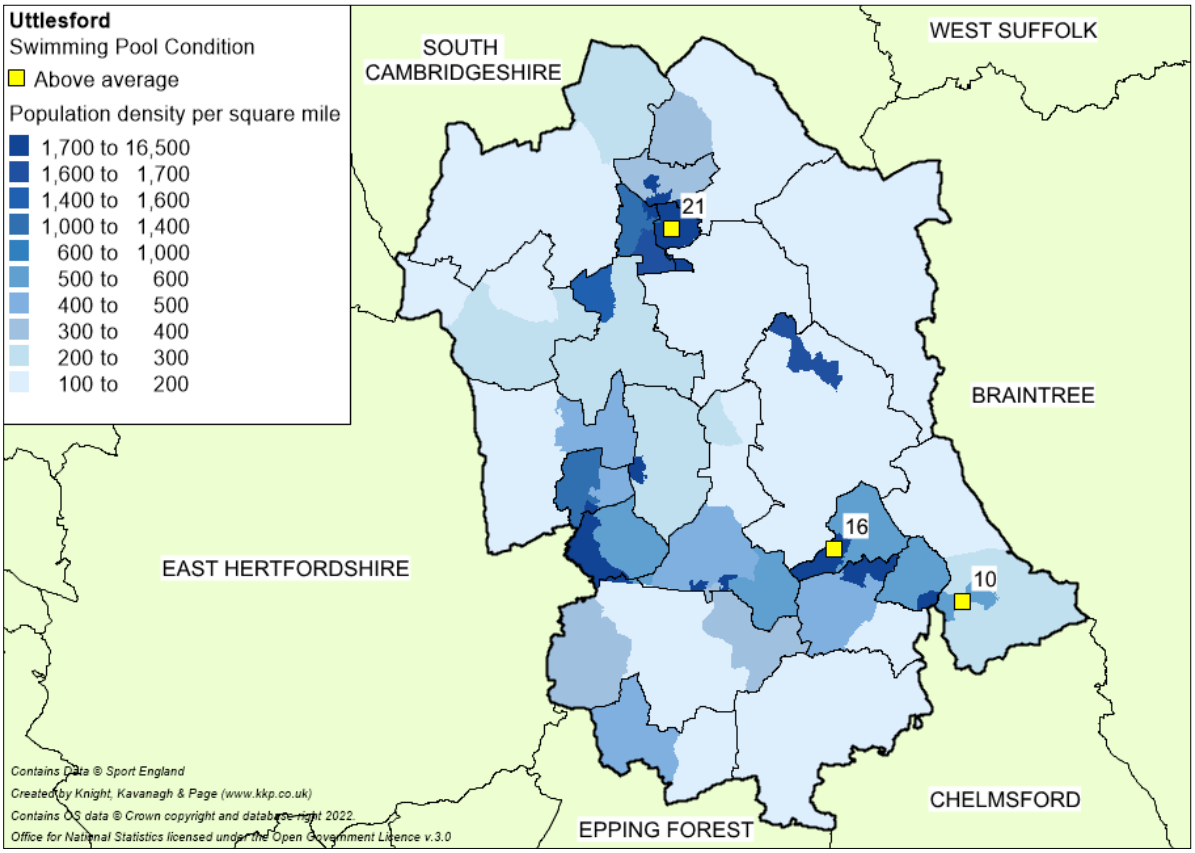


Table 5.2: Quality of 160m²+ swimming pools in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Facility type	Pool condition
10	Felsted School	Main/general	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Main/general	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Main/general	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Learner/teaching/training	Above average

All pools are reported to be above average quality.

Table 5.3: Age of swimming pools

Site name	Year built/ opened	Refurbishment	Age (years) since refurbishment
Felsted School	1983	2021	2
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	2003		20*
Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	1984	2004	19*

*As mentioned previously, the two public pools (Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre) are maintained in accordance with the lifecycle maintenance programme as agreed in the PFI agreement.

Felsted School is the oldest pool in the authority. Consultation with the School indicated that it is well maintained and receives the necessary investment as and when required.

The challenge for the Council is the long-term future of Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre. It is important that UDC and its operator has a plan for the 'handback'.

Accessibility

Swimming pool accessibility is influenced by the physical (i.e., built) environment. Appropriate walk and drive-time catchments are applied to determine community accessibility. The normal acceptable standard is 20-minutes' walk time (1-mile radial catchment) for an urban area and a 20-minutes' drive time for a rural area. This enables analysis of the adequacy of coverage and helps identify areas currently not serviced by existing provision. Figure 5.3 and Table 5.4 illustrate the walk-time based accessibility of swimming pools in the authority.

Catchment analysis indicates that 17,909 (21.0%) of the population lives within one mile of a swimming pool that is 160m^2 or larger. Given the rural nature of Uttlesford, this is not unusual. The challenge is to enable people living in particularly rural areas, that do not have access to a car, to access facilities.

Figure 5.3: Accessibility of swimming pools in Uttlesford

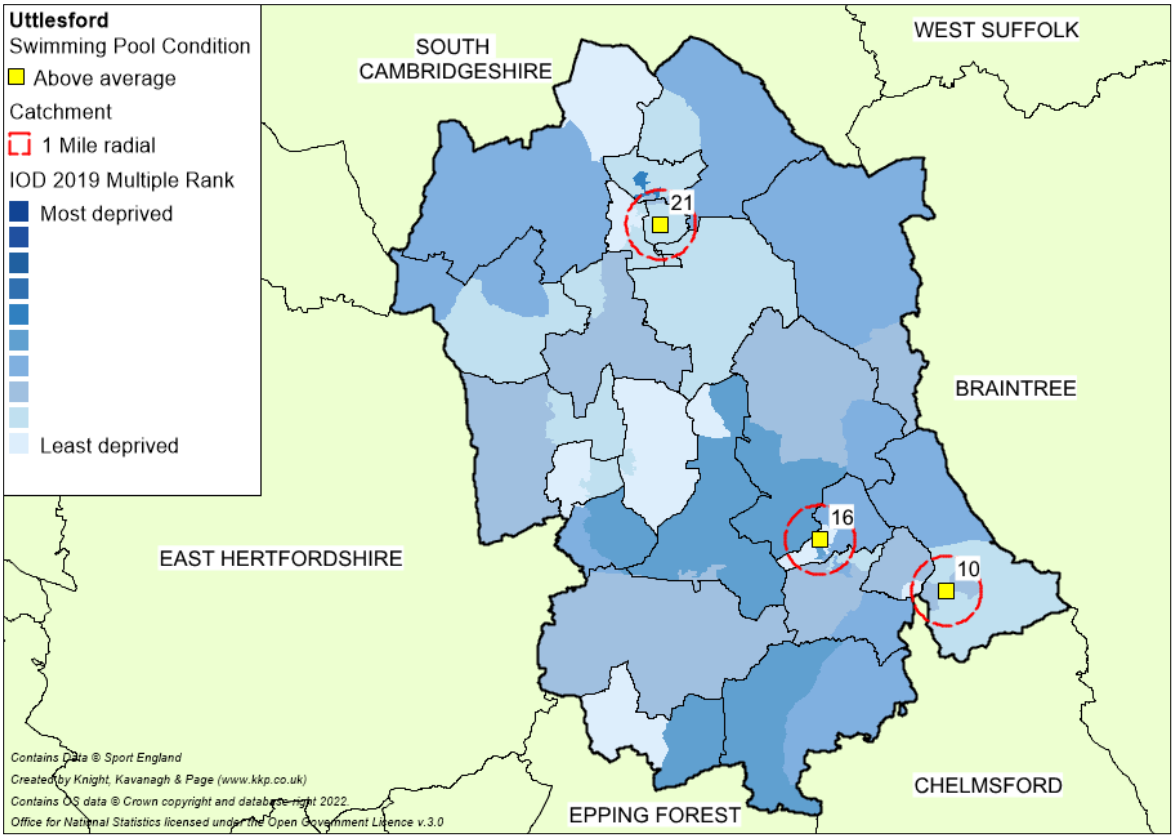
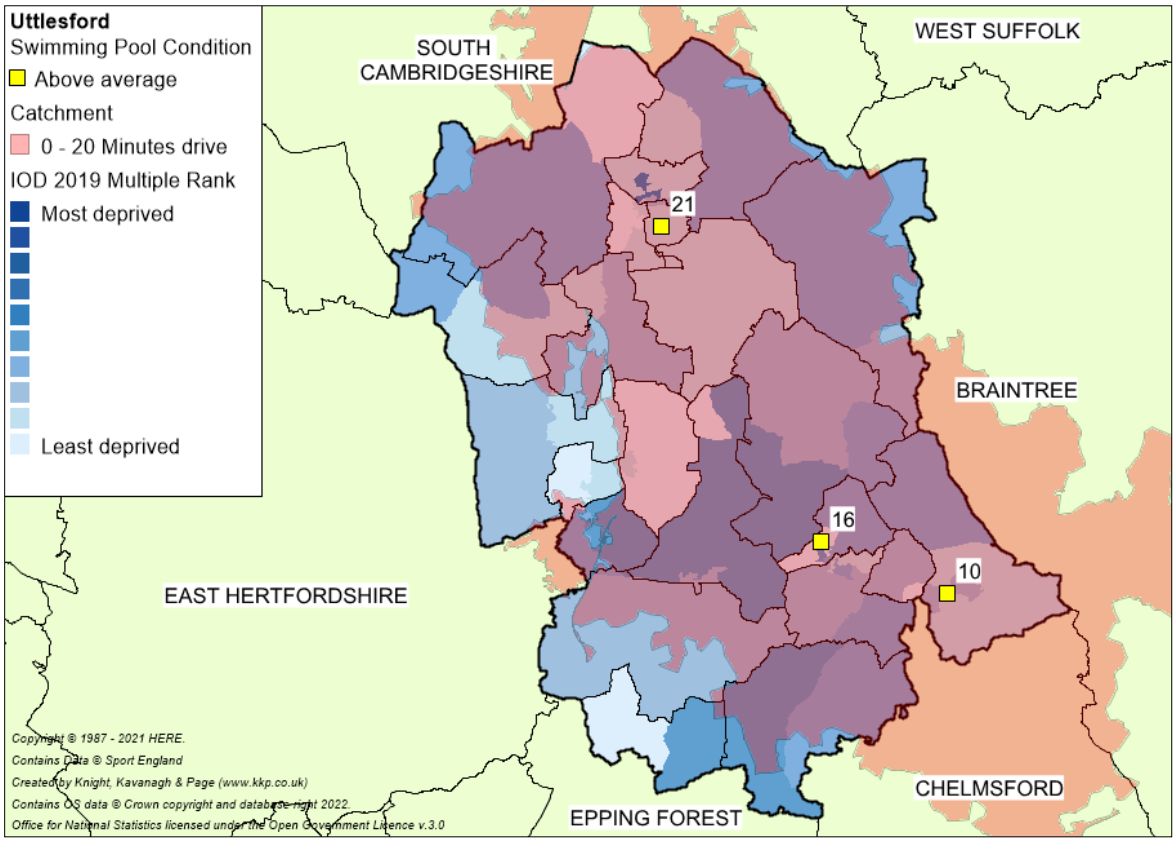


Table 5.4: Accessibility of swimming pools in Uttlesford (IMD 2019)

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	437	0.5%	1,100	1.3%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	1,409	1.7%	7,960	9.3%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	1,090	1.3%	15,121	17.7%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	2,819	3.3%	17,120	20.1%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	9,430	11.1%	14,233	16.7%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	2,724	3.2%	11,762	13.8%
Total	**85,205**	**100.0%**	**17,909**	**21.0%**	**67,296**	**79.0%**

A substantial proportion (84.0%) of Uttlesford's population lives within a 20 minutes' drive time catchment of a swimming pool (160m^2+).

Figure 5.4: Swimming pools with 20 minutes' drive time



Availability

Felsted School pool is available for very limited community use, it has a swim school, and all other use is for its own students (boarders). It is not available to the public or to swimming clubs due to the lack of ancillary provision and the safeguarding measures required to accommodate users.

The School reports that it used to offer use of its pool to a swimming club however, since Covid, it has reviewed this and taken the decision to not re-open to clubs. This is primarily due to challenges with the small-scale changing facilities and its ability to accommodate parents and family members of the swimmers taking part in the sessions who also require access to toilets and request refreshments etc.

Only the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre are available to the community for casual use, fitness swimming and club use. Dunmow Leisure Centre only has a main pool and, thus faces a challenge with programming to accommodate all demands.

When considering the pay and play accessible pools in isolation, catchment analysis indicates that 15,862 (18.6%) of the Uttlesford population lives within one mile of a swimming pool 160m^2 or larger. This is a 2.4% less (2,047 people fewer) than the figure for all pools.

Figure 5.5: Swimming pools offering pay and play access (IMD 2019)

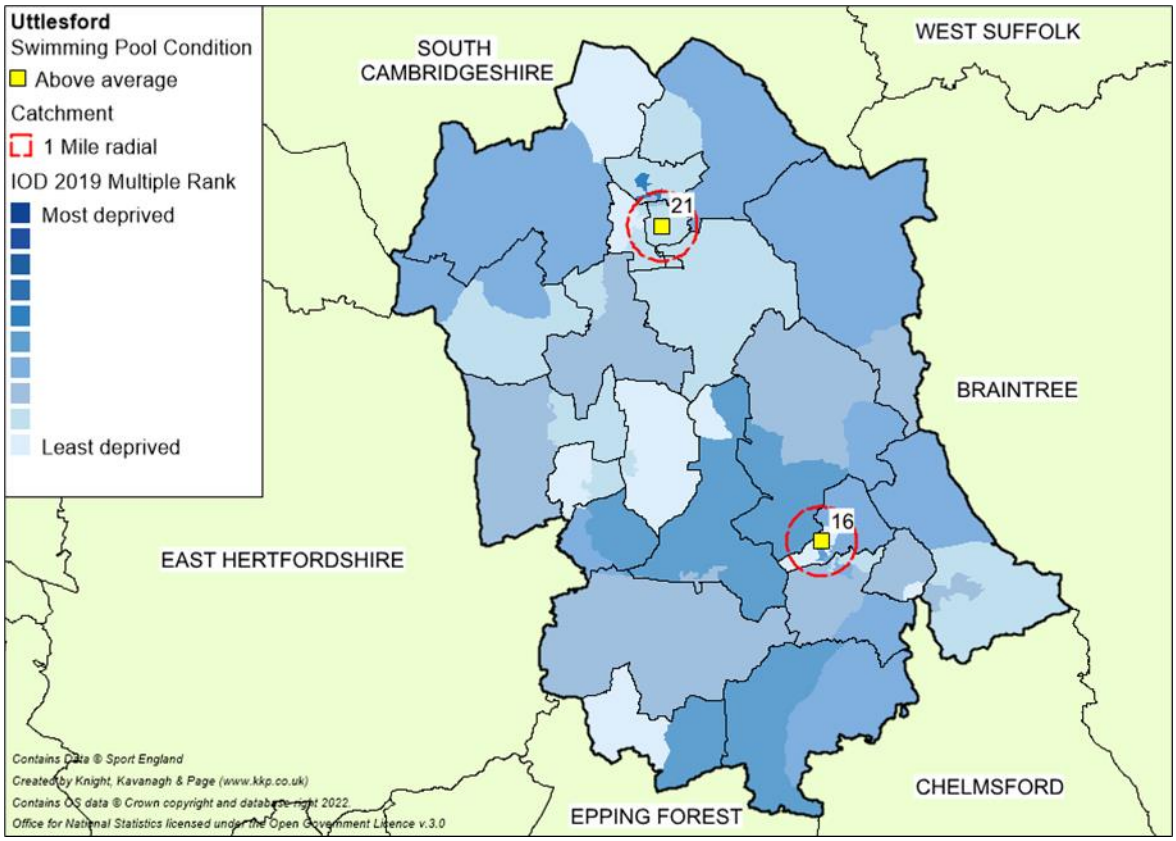


Table 5.5: Pay and play swimming pool accessibility in Uttlesford (IMD 2019)

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	437	0.5%	1,100	1.3%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	1,409	1.7%	7,960	9.3%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	1,090	1.3%	15,121	17.7%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	2,168	2.5%	17,771	20.9%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	9,076	10.7%	14,587	17.1%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	1,682	2.0%	12,804	15.0%
Total	**85,205**	**100.0%**	**15,862**	**18.6%**	**69,343**	**81.4%**

Facilities in neighbouring authorities

Accessibility is also influenced by facilities within easy reach of the local authority. All of these are located within East Hertfordshire. Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre offers pay and play access and is of significant size. The others require a membership to access or can be accessed via membership of a sports club/community association.

Figure 5.6: Swimming pools located within two miles of the Uttlesford boundary

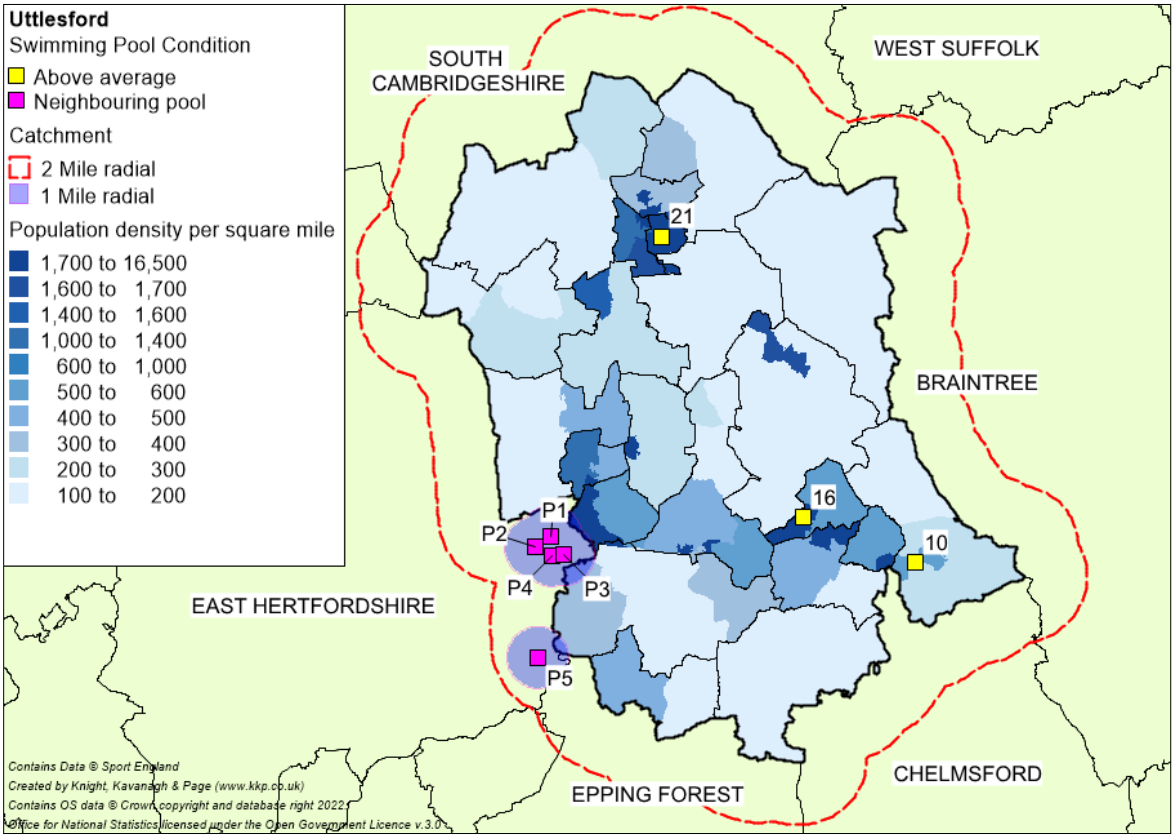


Table 5.6: Swimming pools located within two miles of Uttlesford's boundary

ID	Active Places site name	Lanes / length	Area m^2	Access type
P1	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	8 x 25m	500	Pay and play
P2	Bishop's Stortford College	6 x 25m	350	Sports club / CA
P3	Hertfordshire & Essex High School	4 x 25m	200	Sports club / CA
P4	Nuffield Health (Bishop's Stortford)	2 x 20m	160	Registered membership
P5	Leventhorpe Pool & Gym	5 x 25m	250	Pay and play

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2022 NB: Sports Club / CA = Sports club / Community association

Future enhancements/new developments

As of the audit date, plans have been shared to re-furbish the swimming pool at Friends School as part of a housing development scheme. It has been disused for a number of years. Timescales and the proposed level of community use are unknown.

In addition, there is an ambition to add learner/teaching pools at the public leisure centres to increase viability and reduce programming pressure (enabling a balanced programme encompassing learn to swim, club use, swim for fitness and casual swimming).

Also, it is also reported that plans to build a new replacement school (Helena Romanes School) in the south of Great Dunmow. Plans include land reserved to add a swimming pool at a future date should funds be sourced.

5.2: Demand

Swim England's latest strategic plan (May 2020) aims to create a happier, healthier and more successful nation through swimming. It sets several strategic objectives - to:

- Provide strong leadership and be the recognised authority for swimming.
- Substantially increase the number of people able to swim.
- Significantly grow the number and diversity of people enjoying and benefitting from regular swimming.
- Create a world leading talent system for all disciplines.
- Deliver a high quality, diverse and motivated workforce within swimming.
- Strengthening organisational sustainability for future generations.

It reports that water provision in the district as a whole is slightly below the recommended $12m^2$ per 1,000 population, with a deficit of $152m^2$ (a 4-lane 20m pool is $160m^2$). This includes Felsted School pool and Pace Health Club - part of a hotel at Stansted Airport - the extent to which these should be regarded as offering community use is questionable. The Pace Health Club has a learner/training pool which would not typically be included unless there is a main pool on site, which there is not.

Swim England notes that the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre opened in 1984 and although it has been receiving refurbishment, is approaching 40 years old. Swim England's view is that Lord Butler's long-term future needs to be considered as it is the only publicly accessible water in the north of the district and accounts for almost 50% of the overall district supply. Its condition should be considered when determining need for future provision. In terms of future recommendations, it states the need to increase water provision and the following:

- Future water provision should look to have open community access, making the water space even more accessible to the local population.

- The future facility mix needs to consider the versatility of its water space and the use of movable floor/boom system.
- A condition survey should be undertaken for the Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre given its age and the period since refurbishment. This should determine the critical point of its lifespan and assess the need for future investment in refurbishment or replacement.
- Involve Swim England's business engagement team to help maximise operations.

Club consultation

Dunmow Atlantis Swimming Club is a competitive club, affiliated to Swim England which competes at national level. It has approximately 190 members, 135 of which are juniors. It is full to capacity, having retained almost all members during Covid restrictions and lockdowns. It currently has a waiting period of c. 6 months. Unfortunately, it lost access to Felsted School after Covid and this has placed increased pressure on demand as it is unable to source additional pool time at its home venue Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. It reports (ideally) needing an additional hour each evening.

It hosts club galas at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre but for swim meets and competitions it travels out of the area (to Braintree and Basildon) due to spectator seating requirements etc.

Saffron Walden Swimming Club (Saffron Seals) based at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre has c.110 members (having has 190 going into the Pandemic). It has the capacity to cater for an increase in demand and has a plan to re-build the membership over the coming years. It reports having lost older swimmers when they could not train due to the lockdowns and facility closures.

It training sessions run for 2 hours on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, 1.25 hours on a Saturday and 2.5 hours on a Friday. It competes in the Essex Mini League and Essex Swimming League.

One issue raised is that the Leisure Centre is open for fewer hours post Covid and there is more programming pressure on facilities than there was previously. In addition, it reports that Swim England has increased ratios related to the number of volunteers required and this has proved to be challenging.

WaldenTri uses the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre for the swimming aspects of its offer. It hires the pool for three hours a week, a two-hour coached session on a Wednesday and a one-hour uncoached lane swim session on a Sunday.

5.3: Sport England's Facilities Calculator (SFC)

As noted above the SFC assists local planning authorities to quantify additional demand for community sports facilities generated by new growth populations, development, and regeneration areas. It can be used to estimate area facility needs but should not be applied for strategic gap analysis as it has no spatial dimension because it does not take account of:

- Facility location compared to demand.
- Capacity and availability of facilities – opening hours.
- Cross-boundary movement of demand.
- Travel networks and topography.
- Attractiveness of facilities.

Table 5.7: Sports facilities calculator

Description	Provision for 2018 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2031 population (mid-year estimate)	Provision for 2041 population (mid-year estimate)
ONS population projections	89,179	101,642	107,507
Population increase	-	+12,463	+5,865
Facilities to meet additional demand	18.25 lanes 4.56 pools	+2.56 lanes +0.64 pools	+3.76 lanes + 0.94 pools
Estimated cost*	£19,575,926	+£2,735,787	+£4,023,829

*based on Q3 2022 build costs

Given the current undersupply of water space, population increases will necessitate new provision. Calculations assume that current pool stock remains available for community use and the quality remains the same.

Projected population increases will lead to a further increase in demand for swimming space. The SFC indicates a requirement for an additional 2.56 lanes (0.94 of a pool) up to 2031 and 3.76 lanes up to 2041; equivalent to 0.23 swimming pools up to 2041 (estimated cost: £4,023,829).

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 5.8: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional swimming pool provision required	Estimated cost (£)
3,849	0.79 lanes	£866,492

When the strategic housing impact (0.79 lanes) is added to the 3.76 lanes increase in demand from population growth there is a need for 4.55 lanes of a swimming pool (could be a 4 lane 25m and a learner teaching pool or extension to existing provision).

A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for swimming pools is recommended. The FPM report provides a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

Swim England's estimate of a 152 m^2 deficiency is not based on a spatial assessment of Uttlesford and does not account for cross-boundary movements. Sport England reports that Sport England's key data from the 2023 FPM national run does not indicate that there is a deficiency of a scale that would justify new pool provision although a detailed assessment would be needed to confirm the position.

5.4: Summary of key facts and issues – swimming pools

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are eight pools at seven sites: three main pools, three lidos and two teaching/learner pools. Of these, three are 20m+ in length and are of community main pool size). Two main pools are located at public leisure centres, one is part of a boarding school.	There is insufficient water space in the area (a current deficit of -152m^2 which is almost equivalent to a 4-lane 20m pool). Existing stock will not be able to accommodate increased demand from projected population growth and housing development and additional provision may be required. Consideration should be given to the viability of adding a learner/teaching pool to the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre address programming pressures, expand its learn to swim programme and accommodate aquatic classes.
Quality	Pool stock is generally in above average condition. The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre site is nearly 40 years old.	There is a need to maintain the current stock of swimming pools with ongoing investment. This is covered for public leisure sites until 2035. There is a need to plan for the long-term future of The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	83% of the population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a swimming pool. 30% within 20-minutes' walk. Pay and play access is available to 18% of residents within one mile walk.	Availability of swimming pools is increasing pressure on the existing stock. It is considered likely that Uttlesford is exporting demand to pools out of the local authority.
Availability (Management and usage)	The two public leisure centre pools are available to the community on a pay and play basis. The Felsted School pool closed to the public during the Pandemic and consultation to date indicates it has not re-opened to the community since.	Ensure that the facilities can be accessed by the whole community particularly those from more deprived areas and/or with particular health needs.
Other	There is a need to invest in current facilities to reduce carbon emissions and the cost of operating efficiently to meet UDC's net zero emissions pledge.	Invest to save opportunities should be considered to reduce the energy consumption.

Strategic summary

- Each facility is important to the community served and should be protected in accordance with Para 103 of the NPPF.
- Programming should be investigated to ensure the most popular activities are available at peak times.
- Develop a masterplan to determine the long-term plan for The Lord Butler Swimming & Fitness Centre.
- A Sport England Facilities Planning Model report is recommended to be undertaken for sports halls to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken which will account for cross-boundary movements.

SECTION 6: HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITES

According to the most recent ALS data[9], around 11.4 million adults regularly engage in some form of fitness type activity (i.e., using gym equipment, a weights session, fitness class, or interval session). The popularity of fitness activities reflects the fact that they are delivered in a range of venues and facilities including larger gyms (run on behalf of local authorities by in-house or private sector operators and trusts), independently by large multi-site and smaller more local commercial organisations) and also in other smaller activity spaces such as village and community halls.

Fitness studios also vary in their size and function, from relatively large rooms within leisure centres often containing a sprung floor, to smaller spaces (often within community and village halls) which may serve as dedicated spinning (indoor cycling) studios or accommodate virtual fitness classes. Studio based timetabled classes such as Pilates, yoga, dance, step, boxercise and Zumba usually generate a significant amount of activity within publicly operated provision and are a core benefit of a health and fitness membership.

In terms of trends in the market, prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the UK health and fitness industry was enjoying a strong period of growth. It had more gyms, more members and a greater market value than ever before. The State of the Fitness Industry Report UK for 2022 found that membership levels dropped by around 5% since 2019 because of the Pandemic and that the number of facilities had also reduced. This correlates with ALS data which measured regular pre-Pandemic activity levels at around 14 million. Pure Gym and GLL remain the UK's leading operators (by number of gyms and members).

Health and fitness facilities are a core element of the role of public leisure facility delivery of wider health improvement outcomes. A leisure operator's role in providing for people with long term health conditions, including via exercise referral is critical. Fitness studios may 'double up' as spaces where NHS services such as physiotherapy, health screening, and weight management can take place alongside gentle exercise classes.

Larger health and fitness gyms containing a mix of flexible spaces (such as cardio, free weights and boxing equipment, (80 stations +[10]) remain central to the financial viability of public sector leisure centres. When combined with multiple studio facilities offering a good mix (and a sufficient number) of classes, these are often the most profitable spaces within a typical leisure centre.

The past decade or so has also seen a growth in the prevalence of operators offering 'functional fitness' type equipment and activities. This is a type of strength training that readies your body for daily activities and includes lifting, loading, pushing, pulling, squatting and hauling. This is manifested both in terms of small private facilities, and the incorporation of functional fitness spaces within publicly operated health and fitness facilities.

6.1: Supply

Quantity

There are 14 health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford, they offer 675 stations. Generally, they are located in the main settlement areas and on the main arterial routes of the authority.

[9] Active Lives adult survey Nov 20-21 report
[10] A health and fitness 'station' is defined as a piece of static fitness equipment – KKP normally audits facilities of 20 stations or more.

Figure 6.1: All health and fitness on population density.

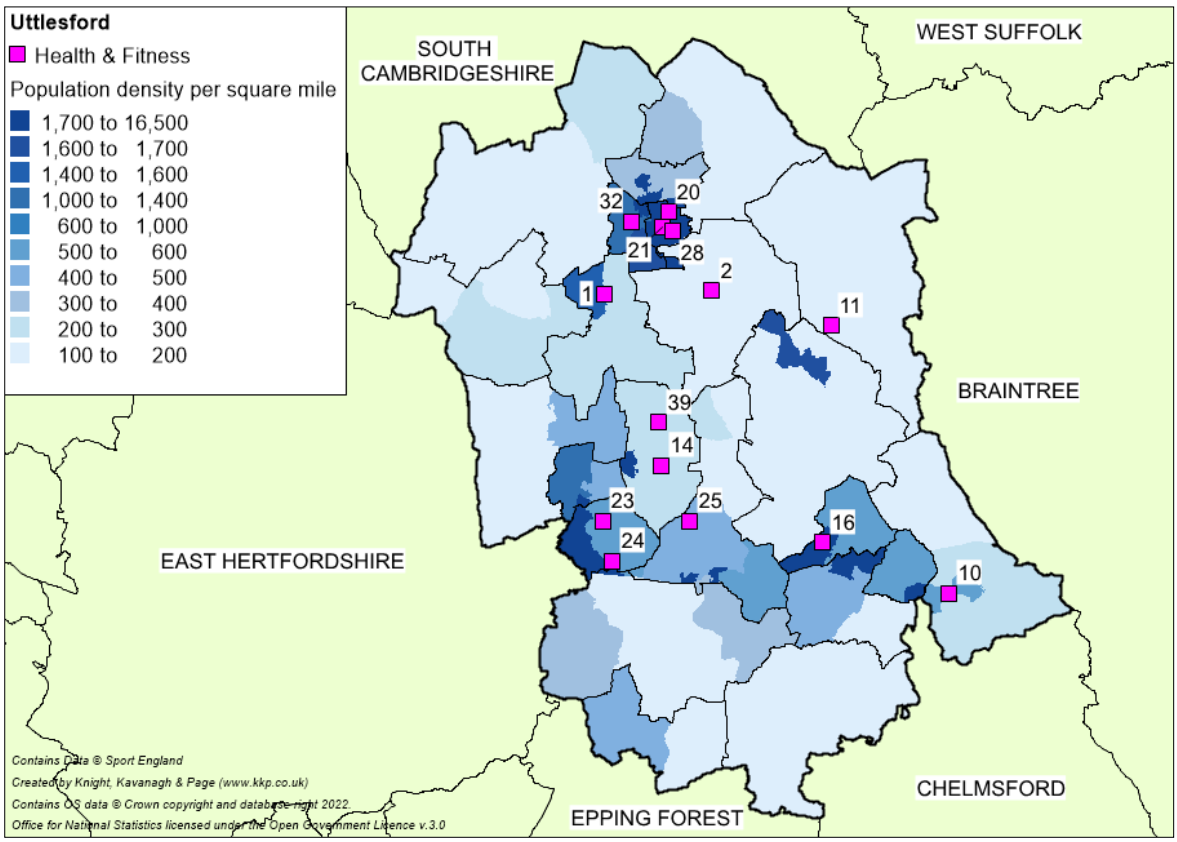


Table 6.1: All health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Stations
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20
2	Carver Barracks	20
10	Felsted School	33
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30
14	Golf World Stansted	11
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55
20	Just Gym	60
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37
24	Novotel (Stansted Airport)	19
25	Pace Health Club	32
28	Puregym	220
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26
39	Vision Fitness	40

Fitness facilities with fewer than 20 stations are typically not assessed/considered although it is recognised that they can service smaller communities. When the venues (Golf World Stansted and Novotel) with fewer than 20 stations are removed from the supply list, there are 12 health and fitness gyms and 645 stations. It should be noted that Puregym (200 stations) is a substantial facility and accounts for almost one third of the overall local supply (32.5%).

Quality

All community available health and fitness sites received a non-technical quality assessment. Generally, they are of good and above average quality. One is rated good quality (Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland), ten are above average, and one is below average.

Figure 6.2: Health and fitness gym (20+ stations) – quality

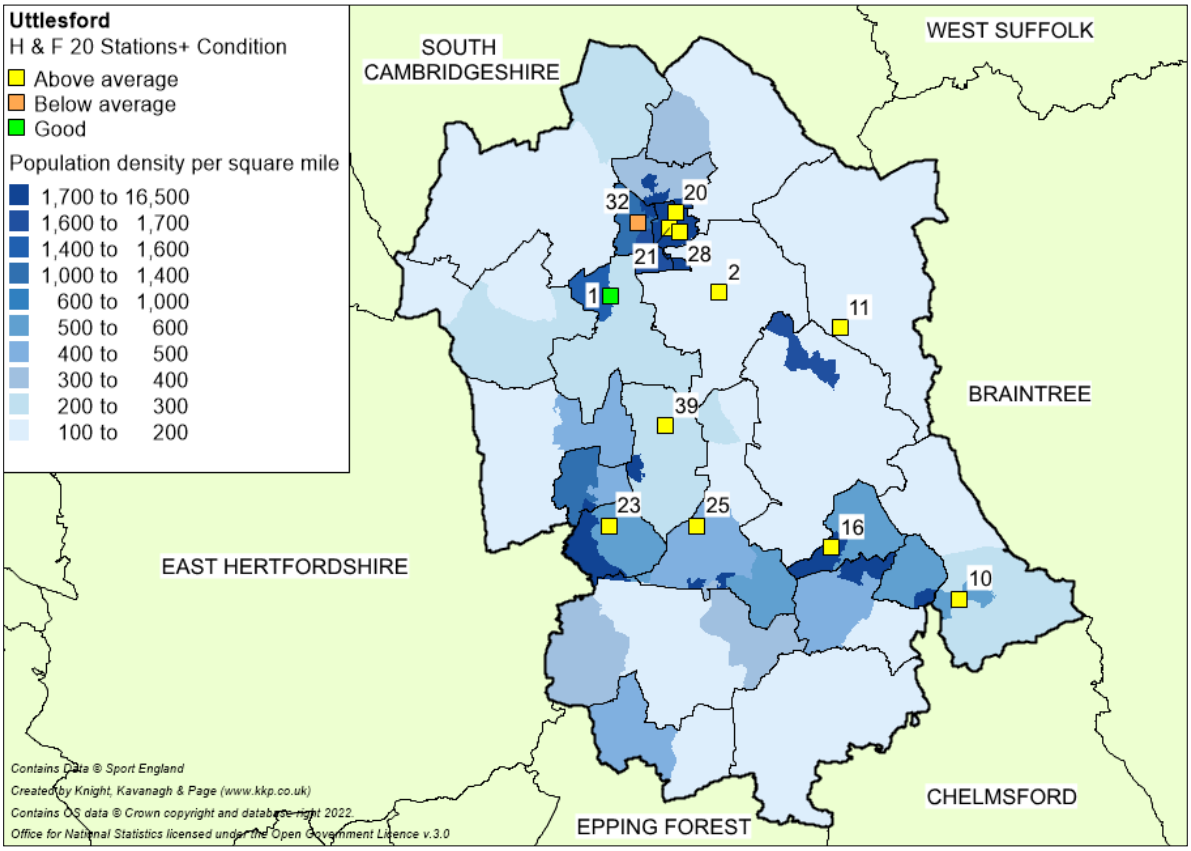


Table 6.2: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations)

ID	Site name	Stations	Condition
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20	Good
2	Carver Barracks	20	Above average
10	Felsted School	33	Above average
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55	Above average
20	Just Gym	60	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	32	Above average
28	Puregym	220	Above average
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26	Below average
39	Vision Fitness	40	Above average

Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland is good quality as it opened in 2023. It was funded as a result of the sale of land adjacent to the school. All the other gyms which rated above average in quality report benefitting from regular investment and maintenance regimes. Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is rated as below average and requires modernisation.

Figure 6.3: Health and fitness gyms 20+ stations+ with 1 mile radial catchment

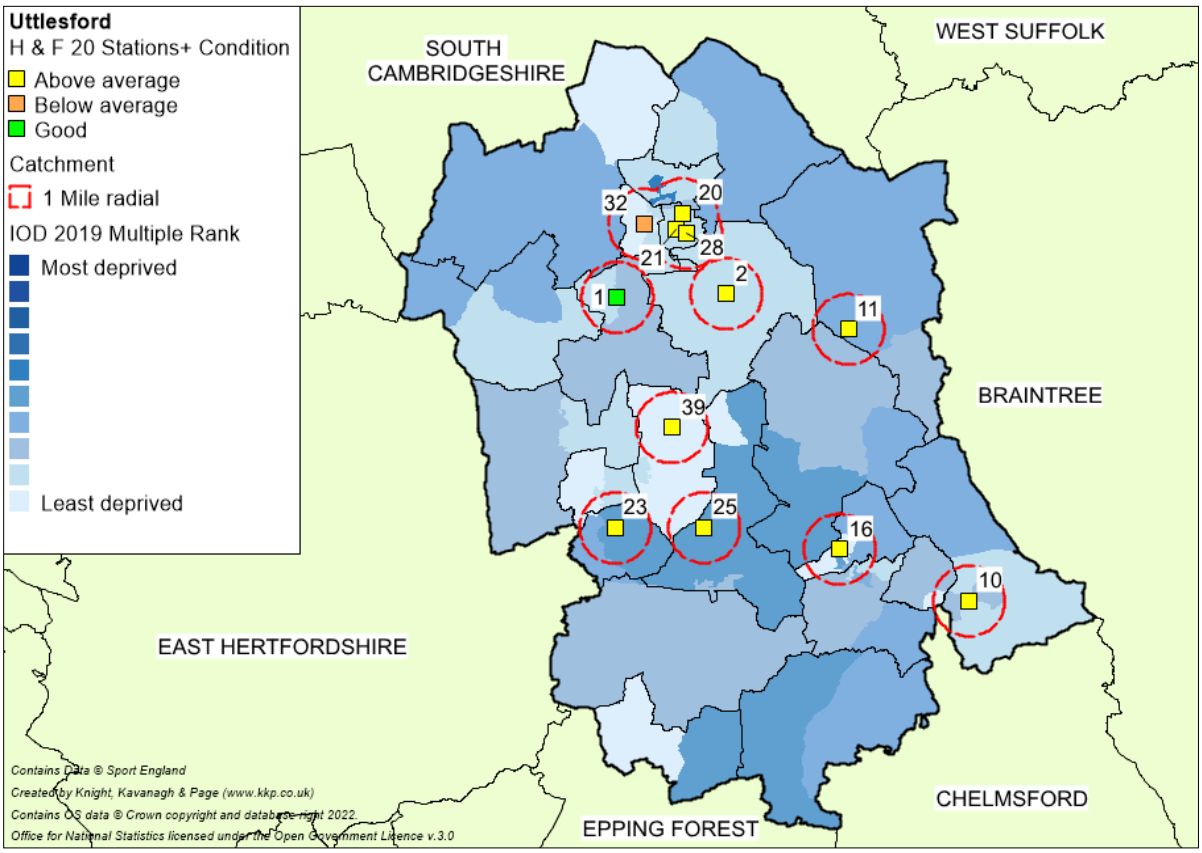
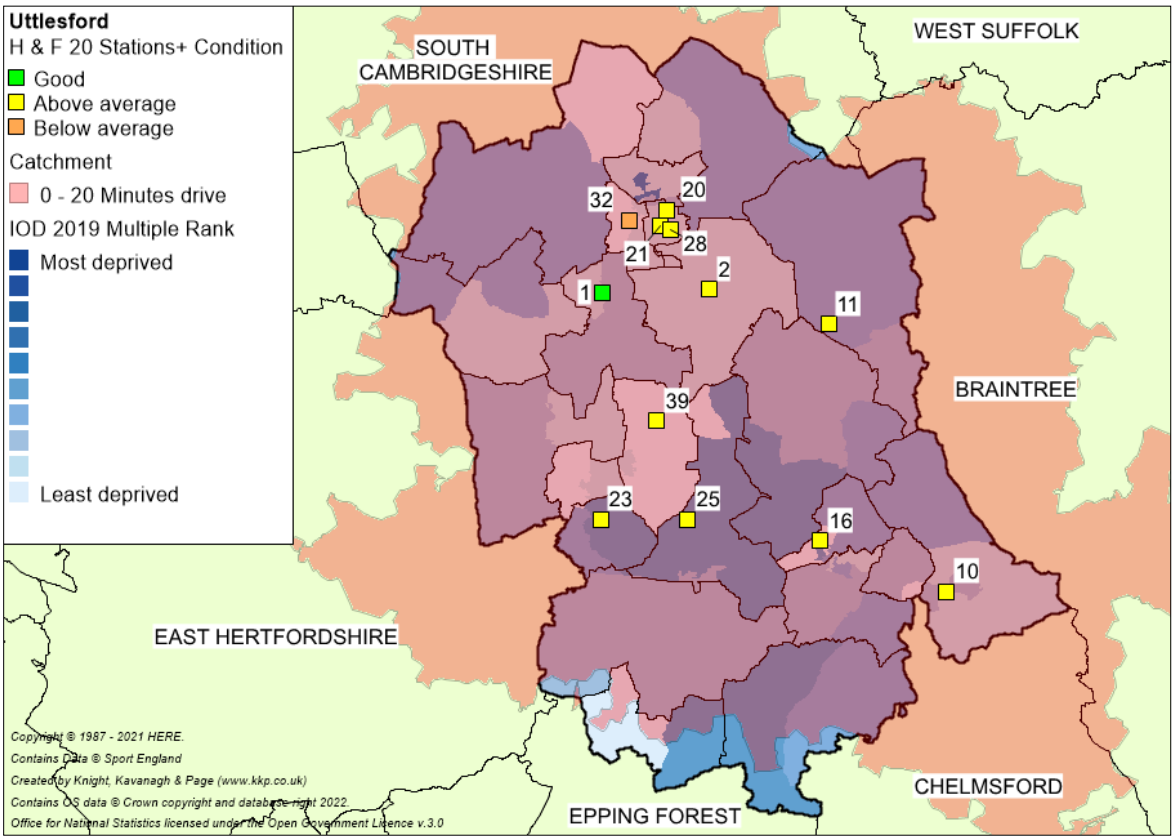


Table 6.3: Health and fitness gyms 20+ stations with 1-mile radial catchment

IMD 10% bands	Persons	Population %	Persons inside catchment	Population inside (%)	Persons outside catchment	Population outside (%)
0 - 10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
10.1 - 20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20.1 - 30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30.1 - 40	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
40.1 - 50	1,537	1.8%	842	1.0%	695	0.8%
50.1 - 60	9,369	11.0%	3,223	3.8%	6,146	7.2%
60.1 - 70	16,211	19.0%	2,498	2.9%	13,713	16.1%
70.1 - 80	19,939	23.4%	3,340	3.9%	16,599	19.5%
80.1 - 90	23,663	27.8%	12,332	14.5%	11,331	13.3%
90.1 - 100	14,486	17.0%	6,761	7.9%	7,725	9.1%
Total	**85,205**	**100.0%**	**28,996**	**34.0%**	**56,209**	**66.0%**

Drive time catchment modelling suggests that approximately 97% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 20-minute drive of a (20+ station) health and fitness facility within the district. Just over one third (34.0%) reside within one mile walk of a facility.

Figure 6.4: Health and fitness gyms with 20 minutes drive time catchment on IMD



Neighbouring facilities

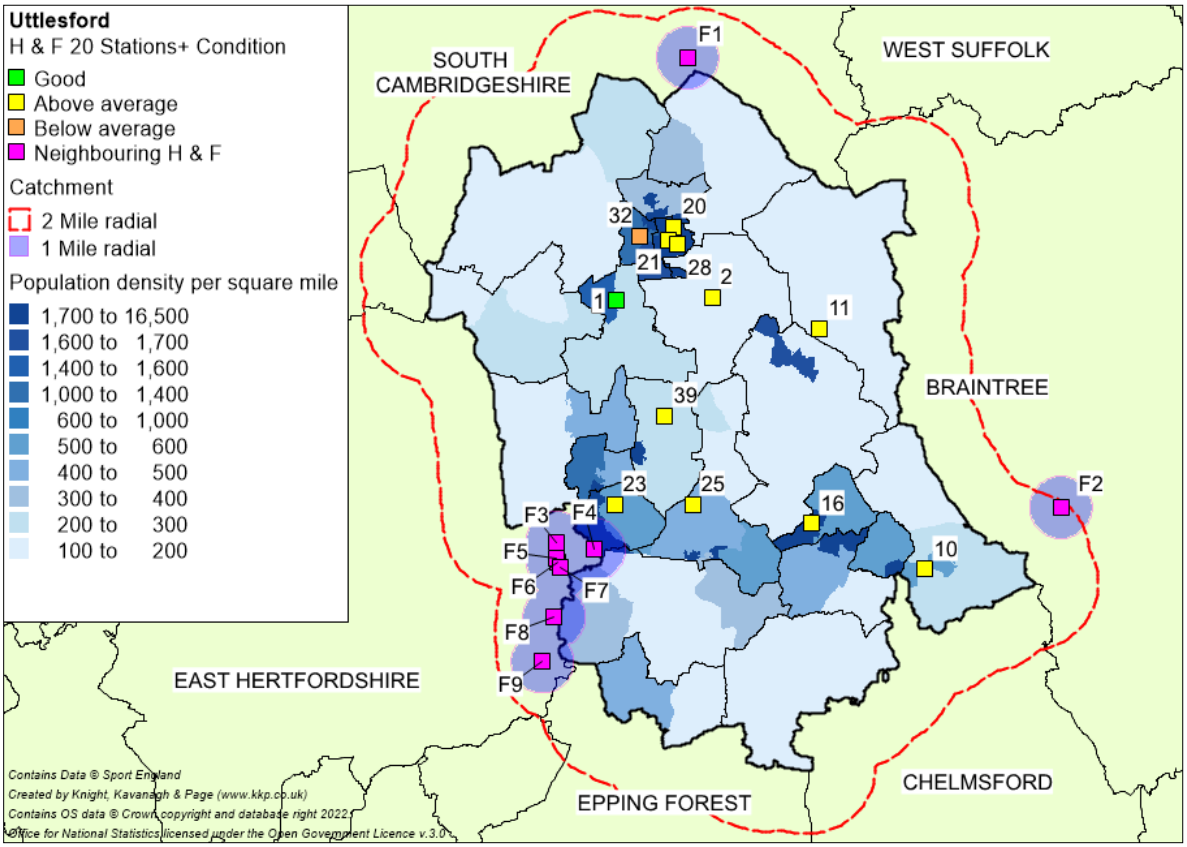
Health and fitness users do not just visit facilities within their own local authority, so those within two miles of the border are considered. There are nine sites located within two miles of the Uttlesford boundary. Two offers pay and play access. Four are of significant size with over 100 stations and two are national chains and will, thus, attract Uttlesford residents. Seven are in East Hertfordshire, one in Braintree and one is in South Cambridgeshire.

Table 6.4: Fitness gym with 20+ stations within 2 miles of local authority boundary

ID	Active Places site name	Stations	Access type
F1	Anglian Leisure Linton	50	Registered membership
F2	Braintree Sport & Health Club	60	Pay and play
F3	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	130	Registered membership
F4	Koru Gym	30	Registered membership
F5	Snap Fitness	200	Registered membership
F6	Nuffield Health	120	Registered membership
F7	Vision Fitness	40	Registered membership
F8	Challenge Active	106	Pay and play
F9	Leventhorpe Leisure Centre	40	Registered membership

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023

Figure 6.5: Health and fitness gyms (20+ stations) within 2 miles of Uttlesford boundary



Availability and programming

Sport England's classification of access type defines registered membership use facilities as publicly available. This generally means a monthly fee, the cost of which can vary considerably. It is acknowledged that memberships which might be considered expensive offer access to different market segments and can ease pressure on more available facilities (i.e., those with cheaper membership options). The access policy of the 20+ station sites in Uttlesford is shown in Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.5: Access policy of health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Stations	Access type
1	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	20	Registered membership
2	Carver Barracks	20	Private use
10	Felsted School	33	Registered membership
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	30	Pay and play
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	55	Pay and play
20	Just Gym	60	Pay and play
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	72	Pay and play
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	37	Pay and play
25	Pace Health Club	32	Registered membership
28	Puregym	220	Pay and play
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	26	Private use
39	Vision Fitness	40	Pay and play

Most of health and fitness gyms offer pay and play access (seven out of 12 gyms). Three require membership for access and two (Saffron Walden County High School and Carver Barracks) are not available to the community.

Table 6.6: Pricing structure of health and fitness facilities in Uttlesford

Site name	Annual	12-month DD	Notes
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland		£20.00 (adult) £18.00 (senior) £15.00 (junior)	+£10.00 for all memberships to include classes.
Carver Barracks	Private use – MOD site		
Felsted School	£225.00	£25.00 £35.00 £20	Gym only Incl. swim, squash & classes Classes only
Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	£320.00	£32.00	
Great Dunmow LC Centre	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option; £40.99 pcm.
Just Gym		£35.00	
Lord Butler Fitness & LC	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option; £40.99 pcm.
Mountfitchet Romeera LC	£334.70	£30.00	Multi-site option at £40.99 pcm.
Pace Health Club		£59.00	£649.00
Puregym		£22.99	
Vision Fitness		£33.00	Classes at additional cost.

The cheapest monthly direct debit membership is Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland at £20 per month. The most expensive is Pace Health Club at Stansted Airport at £59.00.
Public leisure centres tend to offer multi activity membership options (e.g., swimming and fitness classes) and multiple site usage. Running good quality health and fitness facilities with studios can offset the costs and enhance the financial viability of other venue elements such as swimming pools. In many instances they cross subsidise such facilities. Commercial gyms (e,g., Puregym) also offer pay and play options, although in common with most pay and play sites it becomes less cost-effective when people attend weekly or more often.

Future developments

Both Lord Butler and Great Dunmow leisure centres report demand for fitness classes that cannot be met. Both have waiting lists for classes and aspirations to add studio space to meet the demands of users.

Two studios are planned as part of the new replacement Helena Romanes School and a small fitness gym. It is understood that should the development happen, all will be available for community use.

6.2: Demand

Health and fitness via exercising in a gym or class environment is a highly popular form of exercise, appealing to men and women across a range of age groups. To identify the adequacy of provision a demand calculation based upon the assumption that ‘UK penetration rates will increase slightly in the future is applied. Population increases are also factored in to enable a calculation of whether current supply will meet future demand.

Table 6.7: UK penetration rates; health/fitness in Uttlesford (ONS 2018 Data)

Description	Curent (2018)	Future (2031)	Future (2041)
Adult population (16+ years)	71,462	82,712	88,236
UK penetration rate	16.0%	16%	17%
Number of potential members	11,434	13,324	15,000
Number of visits per week (1.75/member)	20,009	23,159	26,250
% of visits in peak time	65	65	65
No. of visits in peak time (equated to no. of stations required i.e., no. of visits/39 weeks*65%)	333	386	438
No of stations (with comfort factor applied)	**500**	**579**	**656**

*Applies 1.75 visits/week by members and 65% usage for 39 weeks of the year. (Figures rounded up/down).

Based upon UK penetration rates there is a current need for 500 stations in Uttlesford. This will grow to 579 by 2031 and to 656 by 2041, taking account of a comfort factor (particularly at peak times). Comfort factor is a level of over provision to reduce users having to wait for equipment to be available when working out.

When comparing the number of community available stations currently available (599) and accounting for the comfort factor, there is a positive supply balance (99 stations at present, 20 by 2031 and then an under-supply of 57 by 2041). This means that, all things being equal, there is a sufficient supply of health and fitness provision at present and up to 2041.

When factoring in the strategic housing impact, there is further increase in demand as follows:

Table 6.8: Strategic housing impact

Housing growth increases from proposed strategic allocation (Reg 19 working assumption)	Additional fitness stations required (Including comfort factor)
3,849	27 stations

Based on current assessment, availability and proposed new development, investment is required in improving the quality and capacity of the existing stock prior to considering the development of a health and fitness provision.

One key issue is that budget operators are not necessarily available to people with barriers to participation and groups and people from areas of (relative) disadvantage (as cost is only one factor which may hinder usage). This applies particularly to those who need to pay for transport to access such facilities and where pay and play is not available. The challenge for Uttlesford is ensuring that people in rural areas can access provision and that the public leisure stock can meet demand whilst challenged by the lack of studio provision at its sites.

Consultation with Vision Fitness highlighted an aspiration to open an additional fitness gym in the area and a desire to expand current provision.

Supply and demand analysis

As noted, health and fitness facilities are an important facet of leisure provision. The income derived can offset the cost/underpin the viability of other aspects of provision and ‘customer-targeted’ physical activity programmes such as exercise on referral. The challenge is to continue to provide opportunity for people from rural areas and those with health inequalities.

6.3: Dance studios

Dance studios are an important element of the wider health, fitness, and conditioning market. They vary in size, shape, quality of environment, access to sprung wooden floors and quality of ancillary facilities. There has been an increase in the number of people accessing fitness classes as identified in increased UK penetration rates.

Activities offered vary from low impact classes (i.e., Pilates and yoga) to dance, step, Zumba and boxercise. Dance classes/clubs are key users of studio spaces throughout the country.

There are 11 studios in the district (nine fitness studios and two spinning studios). Nine were subject to a non-technical assessment – all were rated above average. The two unassessed are Golf World Stansted and Pure Body Health studios.

Five studios are available on a pay and play basis, four require a membership for access. One requires membership of a sports club/community association and one (Saffron Walden County High School) is private use only by the school. As noted above, Lord Butler and Great Dunmow leisure centres report demand for fitness classes that they cannot cater for. Options to increase the scale of studio provision at these sites should be considered.

Figure 6.6: Studios in Uttlesford

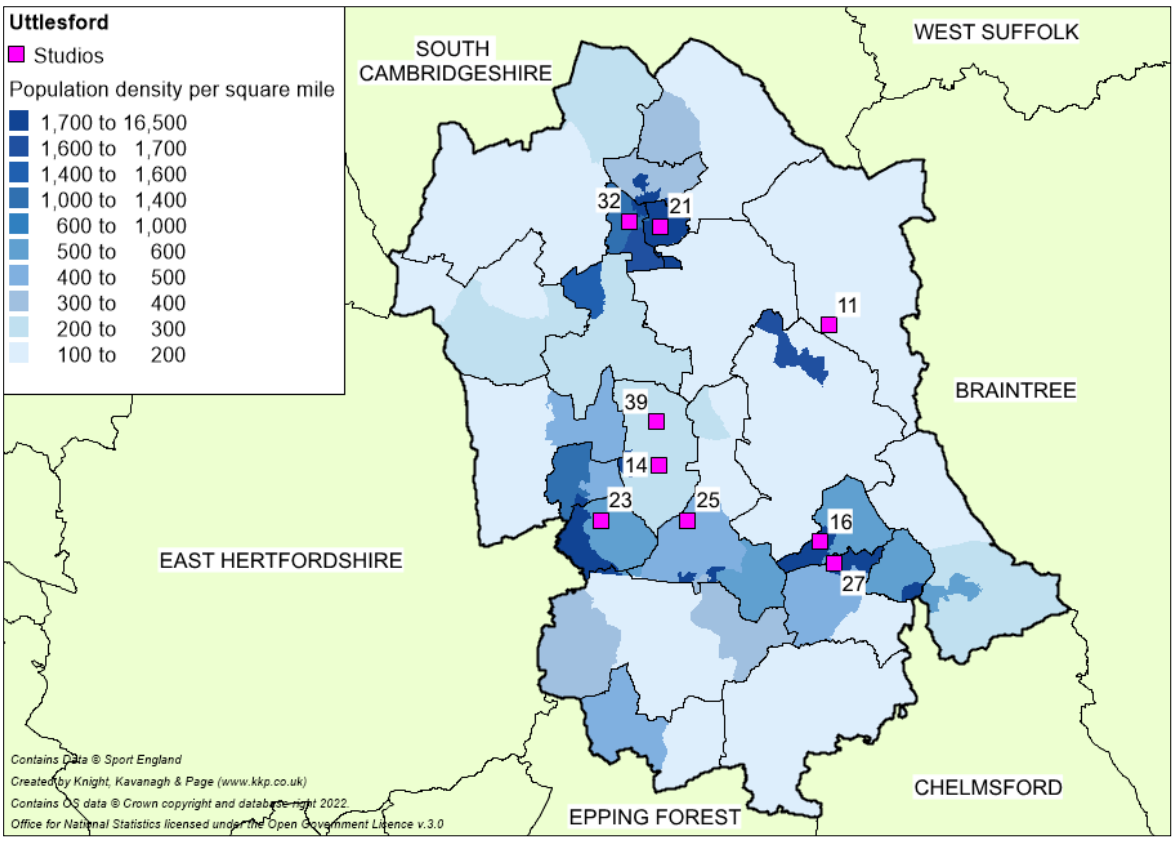


Table 6.9: List of studios in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Type	Access	Condition
11	Fitness Focus Gym Thaxted	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average
14	Golf World Stansted	Fitness	R.Membership	Not assessed
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average

ID	Site name	Type	Access	Condition
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	Cycle	Pay and play	Above average
23	Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	Fitness	Sports club/CA	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	Fitness	R.Membership	Above average
25	Pace Health Club	Cycle	R.Membership	Above average
27	Pure Body Health	Fitness	R.Membership	Not assessed
32	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Fitness	Private use	Above average
39	Vision Fitness	Fitness	Pay and play	Above average

6.4: Summary of key facts and issues – health and fitness

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	Of the 14 gyms, twelve have 20+ stations. These 12 gyms provide 645 stations. There are 11 studios. The nine gyms in neighbouring authorities offer a combined total of 776 stations.	The current positive supply/demand balance of 99 stations will, going forward, reduce due to the increasing population and fitness trends. There is no need for increased in provision between 2031-2041 period. There is a need to consider if additional studio space could be made available at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre to meet current and future demand. This will enable the centres to increase its fitness class offering and fitness membership will enable it to compete more effectively with commercial operators at peak times. Two new studios are planned for the new replacement Helena Romanes School
Quality	All audited gyms are rated above average in quality.	There is a need to maintain current good quality.
Accessibility	97% of the population lives within 20 minutes' drive time of a fitness gym. 34% of the population lives within one mile of a gym.	Ensure that people with specific health needs or people in rural locations can access health and fitness facilities.
Availability (Management and usage)	There are seven pay and play gyms with 20+ stations (and 11 studios).	The key need is to cater fully for the full range of local market segments ensuring that residents from rural areas and those with specific health needs can afford them.

Strategic summary

There is a need to assist 1Life (Parkwood) as the Council's leisure provider to be able to increase studio provision at two of the three public leisure sites. This will enable it to meet current demand and compete effectively with commercial providers. This will ensure that it is both well-placed to maintain the viability of its sports facilities and best positioned to enable people who need it most to access health and fitness-based sport and physical activity.

SECTION 7: GYMNASTICS

In 2023 British Gymnastics released its new strategy – Leap Without Limits: A New Vision for a New Era. The strategy is developed as a shared vision for gymnastics across all four home nations. To help achieve the vision It focuses on five 'leaps':

- **The Why Leap** - Nurturing and celebrating the positive impact of gymnastics on individuals, communities and wider society.
- **The Empowerment Leap** – Supporting everyone involved in gymnastics to play their part in making a positive difference.
- **The Experience Leap** – Making positive experiences and memories central to everything we do, at every stage, in every role.
- **The Creative Leap** – Encouraging and welcoming new ideas to support meaningful change.
- **The Together Leap** – Uniting the community, existing and new partners to maximise impact, learning and growth.

To bring the vision to life, British Gymnastics are working on the following actions:

- **Membership** – Develop a new more relevant membership offer that provides value for all its members, and an improved membership system.
- **Education** - Implement a reformed and reimagined approach to supporting the learning and development of the gymnastics workforce, ensuring it feels valued and supported by British Gymnastics and the clubs and delivery environments you operate within.
- **Community** – Celebrate and recognise the contribution and stories of those in the gymnastics community on British Gymnastics channels and more widely, including further developing the British Gymnastics Awards as an annual platform for this.
- **Reform** - Deliver all of the 40 actions British Gymnastics has committed to in Reform '25 over the next two years to create safe, positive and fair experiences for all in gymnastics, including a major Safe Sport campaign.
- **Events** - Work with its Technical Committees to agree a clearly defined and sustainable long-term national event programme for each discipline and develop new competitions and events at a recreational level.
- **Disability** - Work to build international support for our ambition for gymnastics to become a Paralympic sport, with the aim of agreeing a plan and pathway for this to become a reality.

The new strategy outlines six key impacts:

- More people enjoying the sport and its benefits, across all abilities, ages, and backgrounds, and as a gymnast, coach, club owner, official or fan.
- Everyone is safe, supported and is able and confident to speak up, whatever their role or involvement in gymnastics.
- More inspirational moments that are seen, shared and enjoyed by more people.
- The NGB membership experience is a positive one, which meets your needs, is easy from start to finish. and being a member of British Gymnastics is something that provides you with both pride and value.
- Members/participants feel connected to British Gymnastics and trust it to be positive custodians of this incredible sport.
- A united sport, where everyone is working together to ensure that collectively we deliver an uplifting gymnastics experience for all.

7.1: Supply

There is one dedicated gymnastics venue and one non dedicated gymnastic venue in Uttlesford.

Figure 7.1: Gymnastics provision in Uttlesford – 30 minutes' drive time catchment

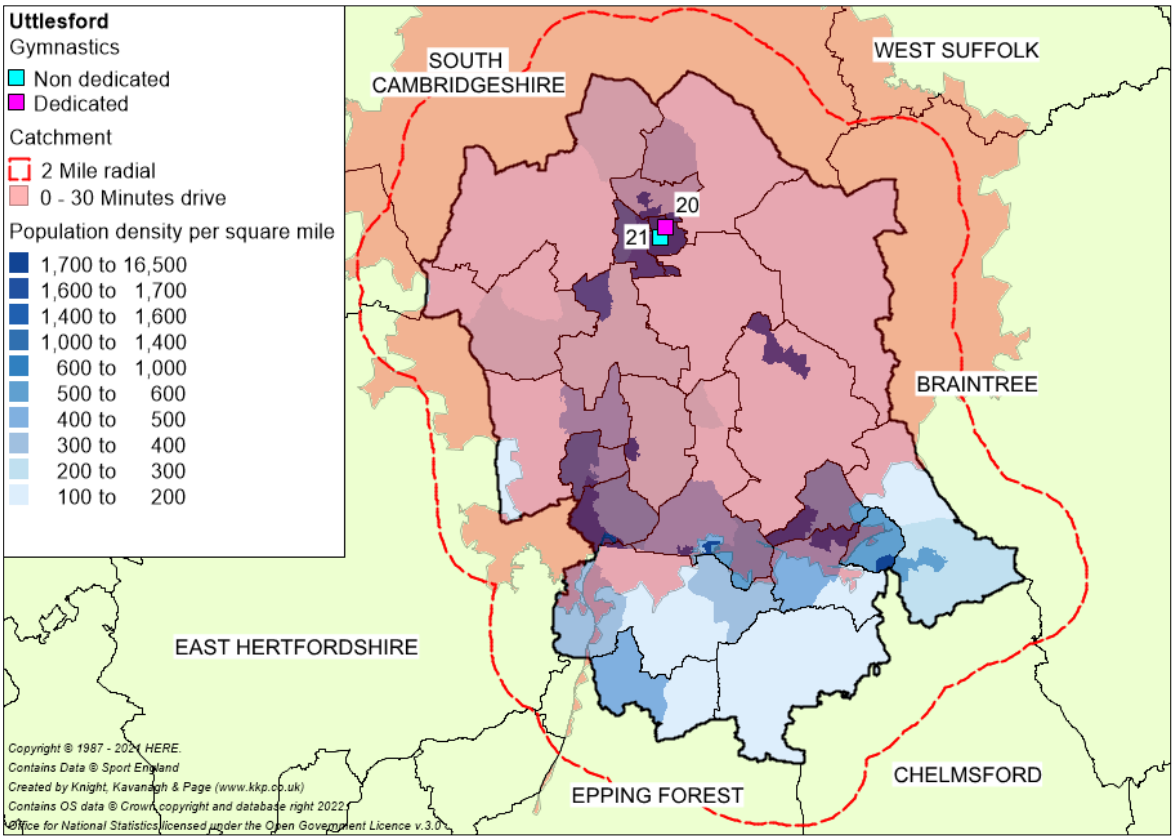


Table 7.1: Gymnastics provision in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name	Type
20	Allstars Gymnastics (Just Play)	Dedicated
21	The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre (Forge Gymnastics)	Non-dedicated

Allstars Gymnastics operates from a children's play centre. It offers recreational sessions for children aged 4 years to 11 years. Forge Gymnastics (formerly known as Dynamics (2001-2021) is based at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre. It also operates from two other sites in neighbouring Cambridge. (Linton Village College and Parkside School).

Accessibility and availability

Gymnastics facilities appeal beyond a local authority boundary. Consequently, this report considers provision within a 30-minutes' drive time catchment to demonstrate accessibility (Sport England suggests that drive time to specialist sports facilities can be modelled at 30 minutes as opposed to the 20 minutes modelled for sports halls and swimming pools). As shown in Figure 7.1, 80% of the Uttlesford population lives within 30 minutes of a dedicated gymnastics facility. There are no known dedicated facilities in neighbouring areas within the 30 minutes catchment area.

7.2: Demand

British Gymnastics reports that participation in gymnastics is increasing. It also suggests that there is substantial demand and that many clubs have waiting lists - restricting access to gymnastic activity due to lack of time within dedicated and generic facilities. In common with the majority of indoor based sports, gymnastic club membership levels were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. It states that the sport is experiencing a strong recovery post Pandemic with current membership numbers tracking at just c.5% below 2019 levels.

A key part of the National Governing Body's strategy to increase participation is to support clubs, leisure providers and other partners to move to their own dedicated facilities, offering more time and space for classes. British Gymnastics provides a range of products and programmes and expert assistance to support local delivery; gymnastic activities which are successfully driving membership growth and retention across the country.

Allstars Club is affiliated to British Gymnastics however, Forge Gymnastics Club in not.

Club consultation

Allstars Gymnastics did not respond to the invitation to be consulted. It operates from Just Play Saffron Walden and has 62 affiliated members.

Forge Gymnastics has recreational gymnastics. It hires the Lord Butler Leisure Centre for sessions but reports more demand than it can cater for. Its classes, dependent upon age, each cater for c.20-25 children. It requires more time but understands that this is currently not possible. Ideally, it would like an additional day to accommodate its current waiting list. It has no capacity to meet additional demand.

It reports that the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre can, at times, be too hot or too cold and has only limited storage. It aspires to have its own dedicated centre.

7.3: Summary of key facts and issues - gymnastics

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific needs
Quantity	Of the two gymnastics club in the area, one has a dedicated facility the other delivers from the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.	There is a need for increased gymnastics provision in Uttlesford. Forge Gymnastics aspires to acquire its own dedicated provision.
Quality	No quality issues have been reported. There are however challenges with storage of equipment and at times extremes in temperature of the sports hall at Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.	There are challenges with the storage of equipment at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	80% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 30-minute drive time of a club/venue within the authority. Some residents in the south of the authority are outside the 30 minutes' drive time catchment.	Consider how residents in the south of the authority can access gymnastics provision.
Availability (Management & usage)	Forge Gymnastics has waiting lists for all age groups. It reports demand for additional sessions but does not have the facility time to accommodate this.	There is a need for more time to meet current demand.

Strategic summary

Support Forge Gymnastics club to move to a dedicated facility ideally in the Saffron Walden area.
Consider additional outreach provision in the future to meet demand in the South.

SECTION 8: SQUASH

Squash is now on a new strategic path, implementing a rebrand and undergoing a major restructure. England Squash is committed to supporting the traditional infrastructure of county associations, clubs, coaches, and officials to grow the game via key programmes (e.g., Squash101) and campaigns (e.g., Squash Girls Can) but needs to apportion resources in a significantly different manner.

Table 8.1: England Squash strategic aims:

Element	Aim
Governance	Adhere to the highest standards of organisational governance.
Membership	Provide a membership model that caters to and provides benefits for anyone interested in playing and coaching squash irrespective of their ability.
Programmes	Enabling and supporting partners to be at the forefront of adult and player recruitment and retention.
Talent & high performance	Provide a support and development programme that identifies, develops, and delivers world leading individuals and teams.
Commercial	Create a diversified and effective revenue model that minimises risk and reduces dependency on funding.

Squash In a Changing World (2021-2025) outlines the England Squash vision, principles, and strategic pillars. Its vision for the future of squash in England is a thriving, diverse and growing community. Its purpose is to serve as custodians of the game's past, present and future. It is to serve as a catalyst for positive change across the sporting community at home and abroad. The 2021-2025 strategy sets six key objectives:

- Drive increased participation in the game, with a radical advance in equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Inspire and train a community of world class coaches, referees, and volunteers at every level, who drive participation and increase engagement in the game.
- Sustain world-leading talent pathways and programmes for high performing players who achieve success on the global stage and inspire others to realise their potential.
- Empower creativity and innovation in the game and in its culture, using ideas and technology to support the squash community and to engage with new audiences.
- Spearhead new and creative ways to enhance the visibility and appeal of squash at local, national, and international levels, including the pursuit of Olympic inclusion.
- Provide leadership for the game nationally and internationally, including addressing the Climate and Ecological Crisis.

England Squash estimates that there is one court per 12,617 people in England. This reflects the significant number of court closures and/or non-replacements when new facilities are developed to replace older venues - seen over the past decade. For squash to thrive, the NGB believes that the ratio should be closer to one court per 10,000.

There are nine squash courts in the area which is theoretically sufficient. However, four are located at independent schools and the MoD site and are not available for community use. In addition, the three courts at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre are currently not available. This means that currently two squash courts are available in the area.

Consideration should be given to any new provision (or facility extensions) planned to include squash facilities. For a good quality programme to be delivered on a single site, three squash courts are required. To meet the one per 10,000 benchmark, there is a current need for five courts. Taking future population growth (to 2041) into account there is a need for ten courts.

8.1: Supply

Quantity and quality

Four sites in Uttlesford have squash courts. There are also nine (traditional and glass-backed) courts within 20 minutes' drive time of the authority.

Figure 8.1: Squash courts within a 20 minutes' drive time of Uttlesford

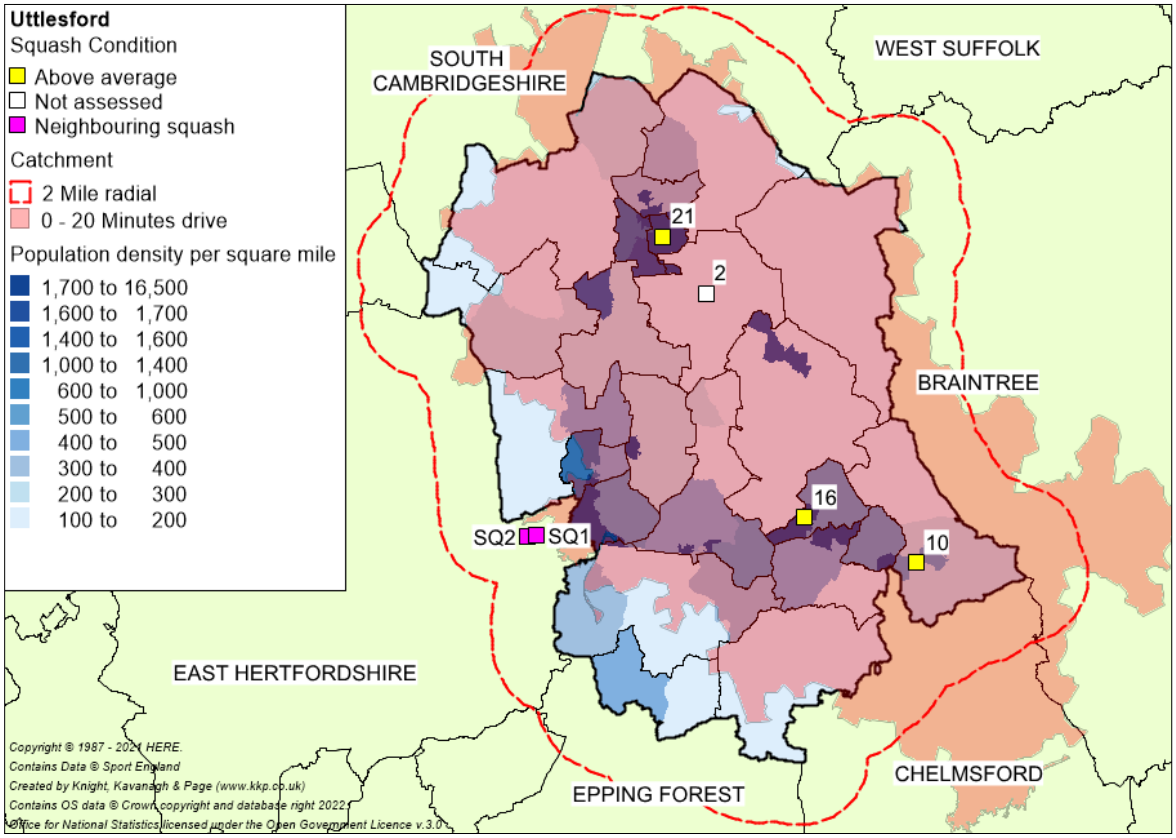


Table 8.1: Squash courts within 20 minutes' drive time of Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Normal	Glass backed	Total	Condition
2	Carver Barracks	0	2	2	Not assessed
10	Felsted School	2	0	2	Above average
16	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	0	2	2	Above average
21	Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre	3	0	3	Above average

The three courts at The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre have in 2023 been refurbished. During the refurbishment RAAC concrete was discovered in the ceiling resulting in the immediate closure of the courts. The remedial work is yet to take place and the timescale for the work is unknown (likely to be end of February 2024).

Accessibility

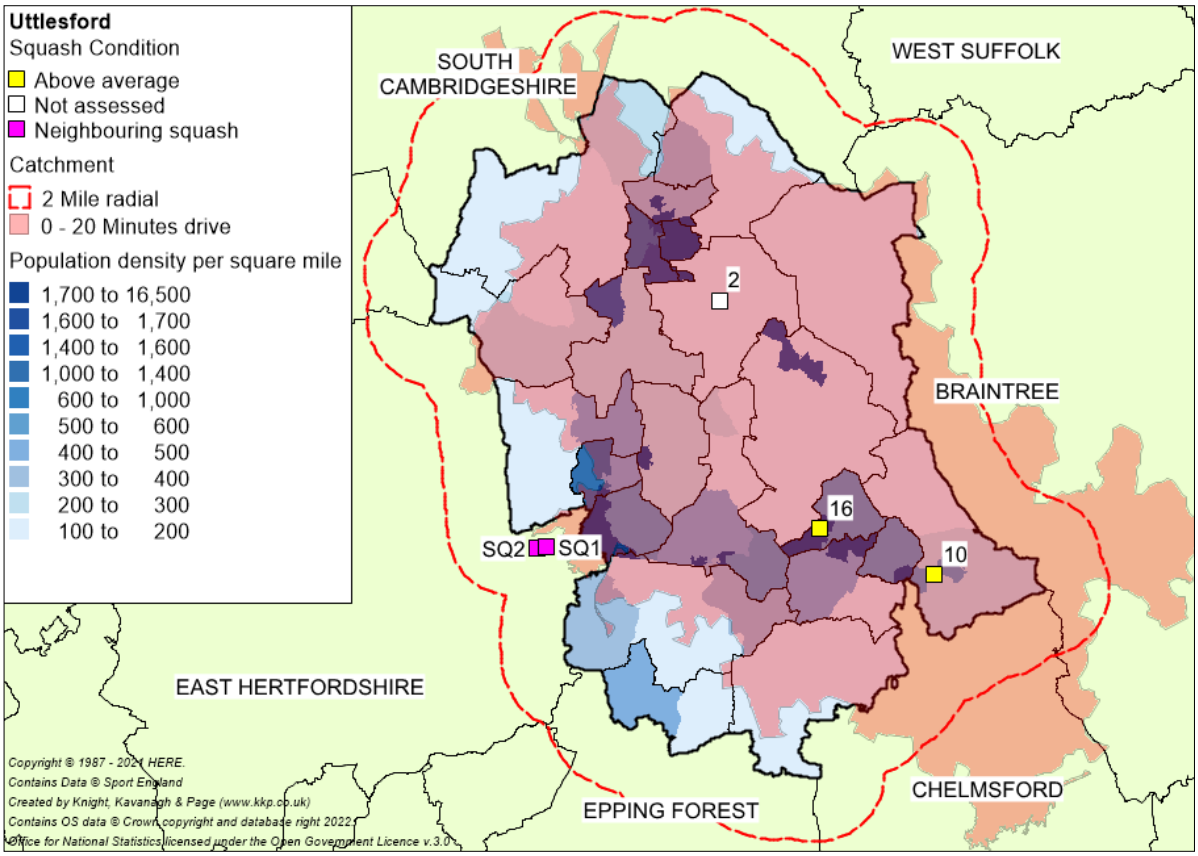
As illustrated above, approximately 90% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 30-minute drive of a facility with squash courts.

There are two sites (with 8 courts) within a 20-minute drive of Uttlesford. Both are in East Hertfordshire. Both require a membership to access the facilities.

Table 8.2: Squash facilities within 30 minutes' drive time catchment

Map ID	Site name	Courts	
		Number	Facility type
SQ1	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	2	Normal
SQ2	Bishop Stortford Squash Club	4	Glass-backed
SQ2	Bishop Stortford Squash Club	2	Normal

Figure 8.2: Squash courts within 2 miles of authority boundary



Availability

Two sites offer pay and play access (Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre). The remainder (Carver Barracks and Felsted School) are private use only.

1Life (Parkwood) identified that the courts at Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre are closed due to the RAAC concrete issue. Drive time catchment modelling suggests that, when Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre is unavailable, approximately 87.7% of Uttlesford's population is within a 30-minute drive of a one of the other facilities with squash courts.

Demand

Club consultation

Saffron Squash Club is based at the Lord Butler Fitness & leisure Centre. It has c.70 adult members and plays and organises games both recreationally and competitively. It affiliates to England Squash and competes in the Cambridgeshire Squash League.

It operates five nights per week and utilises all three courts for its programme, which includes training matches, box leagues, inter leagues and coaching on two of the three courts at the centre. It reports that it had managed to return its membership to pre Covid levels before having to stop due to the RAAC concrete issue.

The Club has reduced its programme temporarily until the work is completed as it reports that increased travel to the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre is not feasible for a number of members.

The Club aspires to expand its programme for juniors in the future.

8.2: Summary of key facts and issues – squash courts

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are nine squash court in Uttlesford at four sites. (Of these, four are glass-backed, and the others are traditional).	England Squash identifies a current need for nine courts rising to ten by 2041. Only five courts are available, currently reducing to two due to RAAC concrete. Consider installing squash courts as part of any new leisure development subject to demand and viability being identified and viability.
Quality	Courts are all rated above average quality.	There is an urgent need to complete the remedial work on courts at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
Accessibility	90% of Uttlesford's population lives within 20 minutes' drive time of a squash court located in a neighbouring authority.	None
Availability (Management and usage)	Pay and play opportunities are available at two sites in the authority (currently one). Other venues are private use only. Squash courts in neighbouring authorities require a membership to access.	None

Strategic summary

- There is a need to invest in squash court provision in the area to meet residents' needs.
- There is a need to consider installing squash courts as part of any new leisure development subject to the identification of demand.
- Update March 2024, the remedial RAAC concrete works on the squash courts at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre have been completed.

SECTION 9: INDOOR BOWLS

The five forms of bowls played indoors (flat/level green, crown green, long mat, short mat and carpet mat) each require a different venue and each format of the game has a different technical specification for their indoor facility.

Indoor flat/level green bowls is played on a purpose-built indoor green which complies with the laws of the sport of bowls. The NGB is English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA). It requires a standard bowling green; a flat area 31-40 metres long divided into playing areas called rinks. The number of these varies, depending on the width of the green.

Crown green bowls requires a standard crown green, artificial grass (carpeted) area of approximately 38m square which is crowned i.e., higher in the centre than round the perimeter. Indoor crown greens are relatively rare – compared to those provided for flat green bowls. The NGB is the British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA).

Carpet bowls is played on a rectangular carpet (45 x 6 feet) that is rolled out. It can be accommodated in any indoor space large enough to accommodate the mats which come in different lengths. It tends to be played at a recreational level. The NGB is the English Carpet Bowls Association (ECBA).

Short mat bowls is typically played in sports halls, parish council rooms, outdoor bowls club pavilions and on indoor flat green bowls club greens. The NGB is the English Short Mat Bowling Association (SMBA). Long mat bowls is played on a rolled carpet typically laid on a sports hall floor. There are no ditches in this game. It is typically found in areas of low flat-green supply and/or where crown green bowls is played outdoors. It has no NGB.

An indoor bowling centre typically comprises a single flat green with several rinks and ancillary accommodation which generally varies according to the number of rinks(i.e., changing rooms, lounge/bar, viewing area, kitchen, office/ meeting rooms, stores and car parking. A successful indoor bowls centre requires a combination of the right location, design, and financial and general management. Sport England[11] guidelines on catchment for indoor bowls centres are set out to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances:

- Assume the majority of users live locally and not travel more than 30 minutes.
- Assume that 90% of users will travel by car, with the remainder by foot.
- As a guide, calculate demand based on one rink per 14,000-17,000 total population.
- The number of rinks required can be related to the estimated number of members, assume 80-100 members per rink.

EIBA stated priorities are:

- Develop and implement a robust Sports Development Plan.
- Actively review the Sport England Club Matters" website.
- Actively promote the Club and local community amongst those who are both able bodied and disabled. Wheelchair users and visually impaired are particularly keen on the sport of bowls.

EIBA Outline Plan 2017 - 2021

It was reported during consultation with EIBA that an updated development strategy is in process; due to be released imminently.

[11] Sport England Design Guidance Note Indoor Bowls 2005

It will have additions and amendments related to further recovery from the Pandemic (Return to Play), increasing the number of 40-59 year old participants, increasing the number of volunteers, health and wellbeing and inclusivity. It will replace the current EIBA plan which is focused on **recruit and retain 45+ and recruit and retain 70+**. Both markets require growth. The idea is that people aged 45+ need new versions/formats of the game to play and the 70+ will wish to continue with current formats. Its focus areas are/were:

- Facilities: build, improve, retain
- Youth and the family
- Women – increase participation and retention.
- Disability
- Competitions
- Internationals
- Promotion
- Commercial partnerships

The “Recruit and Retain Strategy” is to concentrate on encouraging and supporting clubs to increase participation and improve the experience of all participants. Its objectives include:

- Growing participation across the adult population in local communities. Targeted work to increase female participation.
- Growing participation in the 12-18 age range as part of the EIBA Development Pathway.
- The provision of an excellent sporting experience for new and existing participants.
- A growth in indoor bowls participation by people who have disabilities.

Running alongside this is the Sport England funded development work provided jointly by the Indoor NGB (EIBA); Outdoor NGB, Bowls England (BE) and the “Bowls Development Alliance” (BDA). Each NGB has two directors on the Board of BDA. Sport England funding for the 2017-2021 period, focused on the delivery of the:

- **Club Development Programme**: supports clubs across the country where they have identified greatest need.
- **Play Bowls Package Scheme**: supports clubs with their recruitment.
- **Coach Bowls**: providing qualifications for coaches and developing the best tutor workforce to deliver these qualifications across the whole sport including BE, EIBA, British Crown Green BA and English Short Mat BA
- **Facilities**: providing funding support for BE and EIBA to research the facility requirements of their clubs.

Alongside these core objectives the BDA works with key partners on:

- **Safeguarding*:*** ensuring the sport is safe for everyone to play by working across all five NGBs (BE, EIBA, British Crown Green BA, English Short Mat BA and English Bowling Federation) to have policies and processes in place. Training is also available to support the network of Club Safeguarding officers.
- **Disability*:*** work in partnership with Disability Bowls England, Activity Alliance, BE and the EIBA to ensure everyone regardless of disability can access the sport of bowls.
- **Women Can*:*** the BDA is driving a campaign alongside BE and the EIBA to encourage more women to play bowls, coach bowls and volunteer in bowls.
- **Equality & diversity*:*** the BDA, BE and the EIBA are all striving to ensure the sport of bowls is as diverse as it can be.

The BDA is also currently finalising its vision statement for 2022-2025. Its work with the bowling NGBs will include:

Vision - Together, we will place bowls at the heart of every community as an accessible sport for all.

Purpose - To sustain, grow and develop the sport in partnership with the bowls family.

Strategic Priorities:

- Build Partnerships and Communities
- Educate and Empower
- Diversify and Innovate
- Sustain and Grow

Their work with the Bowling NGB's includes:

- Club Hubs – encourage growth of Membership and retention of facilities.
- Communities
- Health
- Inclusion

9.1: Supply

The one dedicated indoor bowls facility in Uttlesford is Turpins Indoor Bowls. It has 6-rinks, opened in 1996 and was refurbished in 2004.

Figure 9.1: Indoor bowls facilities in Uttlesford and within 30 minutes' drive time

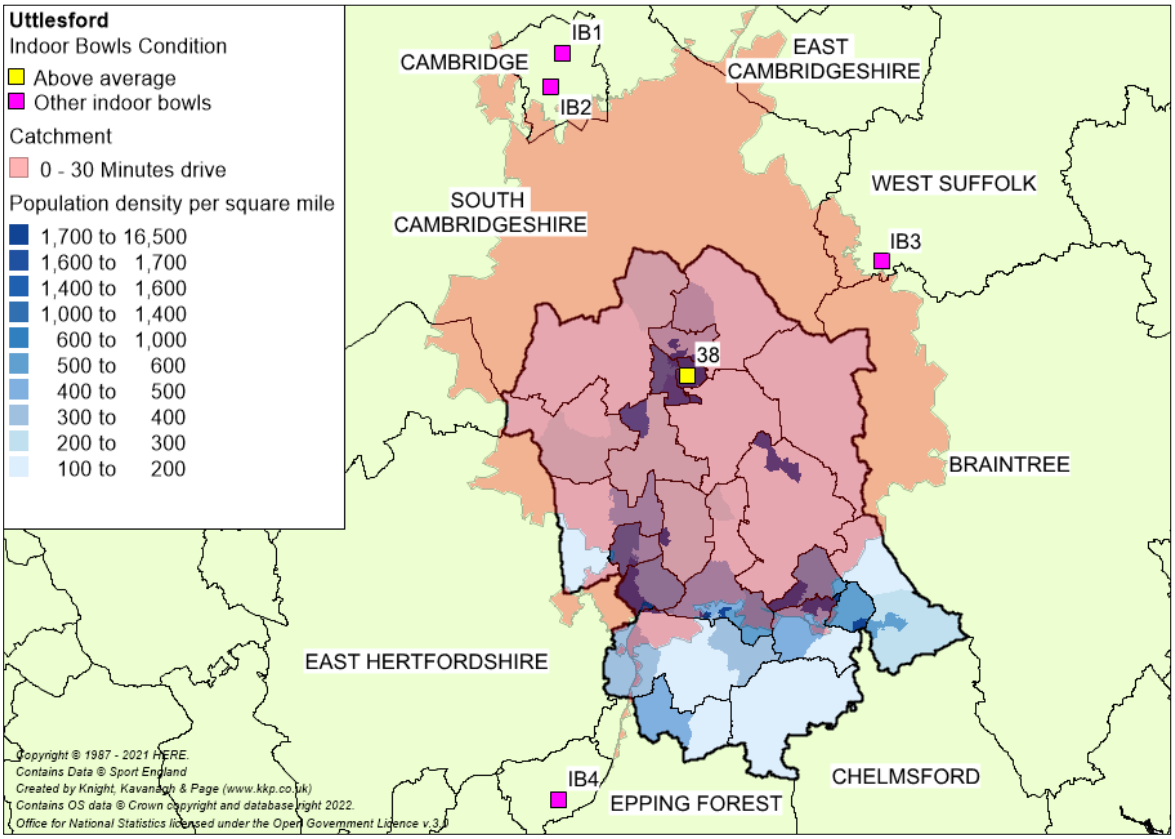


Table 9.1: Indoor bowls centres in Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Rinks	Access type	Condition
38	Turpins Indoor Bowls Club	6	Registered membership	Above average

Quality

Turpins Indoor Bowls is rated as above average in quality. In the last 12 months it has upgraded its lights to LED following receipt of a grant from the EU Development Fund. It reports that its gas heating system is c.26 years old and in need of replacement. It would like to install solar panels roof but requires UDC permission as the Council owns the facility. The rink carpet is also approaching the end of its life and will require replacement at some point over the next 5 years, at an estimated cost of £50k.

Accessibility

Drivetime modelling suggests that the majority (76%) of Uttlesford's population lives within 30 minutes' drive of a facility. There are no other indoor bowls facilities within a 30-minute drive of Turpins Indoor Bowls Club. However, other indoor bowls facilities outside of the 30-minute catchment, are technically accessible to residents of the north and south of Uttlesford.

Table 9.2: Nearest indoor bowls centre to Uttlesford

ID	Site name	Rinks	Access type	Local authority
IB1	Cambridge Chesterton Indoor	8	Sports club / CA	Cambridge
IB2	Cambridge & County Bowls	2	Sports club / CA	Cambridge
IB3	Haverhill Indoor Bowls Centre	4	Sports club / CA	West Suffolk
IB4	Tye Green Indoor Bowls Club	9	Sports club / CA	Harlow

Source: Active Places Power 03/10/2023 NB: Sports Club / CA = Sports club / community association

Availability

Turpins Indoor Bowls Club requires a membership to access facilities. This is also the case for facilities in neighbouring authorities.

Turpins can cater for increased demand as it has capacity of 700 members and currently has 350.

9.2: Demand

The EIBA view is that the Turpins Indoor Bowls Club is a key facility in Uttlesford and that it can cater for future anticipated demand.

The Club's membership has remained static for the last six years (excluding the years affected by Covid). It reports being almost back to pre-Covid levels (it lost over 100 members during the Pandemic) and ran a large recruitment drive to replace them. It reports that the majority of its members are 70+ years old. It has fewer than 10 under the age of 25 and none aged 25-40 years. It has six members over the age of 90.

It is keen to improve signage to increase awareness of the facility. Since the Pandemic it has reviewed its operations, reduced staffing levels and closed the café area. It currently provides hot drinks and cakes only.

At present it operates on a key holder arrangement basis to keep staffing costs low. This applies both to periods of use by bowls club members and when other groups use the venue.

These include darts teams and cards playing groups. It is also in discussions with the U3A (University of the Third Age) about the venue being used for some its activities. It has also identified demand for Boccia and is exploring the possibility of delivering this at its site.

9.2: Summary of key facts and issues – indoor bowls

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There is one indoor bowls facility (Turpins Indoor Bowls).	There is no requirement for additional provision.
Quality	It is above average in quality.	There is a need to invest in the gas boiler and the carpet will require replacement within the next 5 years.
Accessibility	(76% of the population lives within 30 minutes' drive time catchment of the facility. Facilities in neighbouring authorities may be more accessible to those living in the south of the authority.	There is no requirement for additional provision.
Availability (Management and usage)	Turpins Indoor Bowls Club requires a membership to access the facilities. It has capacity for cater for increased demand.	There is a need to increase participation and membership to ensure that the club remains viable in the long term.

Strategic summary

- Investment is required in the Turpins Club building heating system (which also meets the UDC decarbonization agenda).
- Turpins will also need a replacement carpet in the next 5 years.
- Given the increase in the number of older people projected, it is likely that demand for indoor bowls will increase.
- Where possible the Club should be supported to market and promote its activities to help grow/sustain participation and membership.

SECTION 10: VILLAGE / COMMUNITY HALLS

10.1: Village / community halls

Community centres are important recreational facilities, especially in rural areas that, in some instances, may lack access to purpose-built sports facilities. They are usually multi-functional, providing places for meetings, socialising and for sports and recreational clubs and activities. In more isolated areas, a church hall or a sports pavilion can also serve a range of functions depending on its size.

10.2: Supply of village/community halls

The audit identified 36 village / community halls in the Authority located mainly in areas of denser population, predominantly in the central/western areas of the district..

Figure 10.1: Village/community halls in Uttlesford with 800m radial catchment

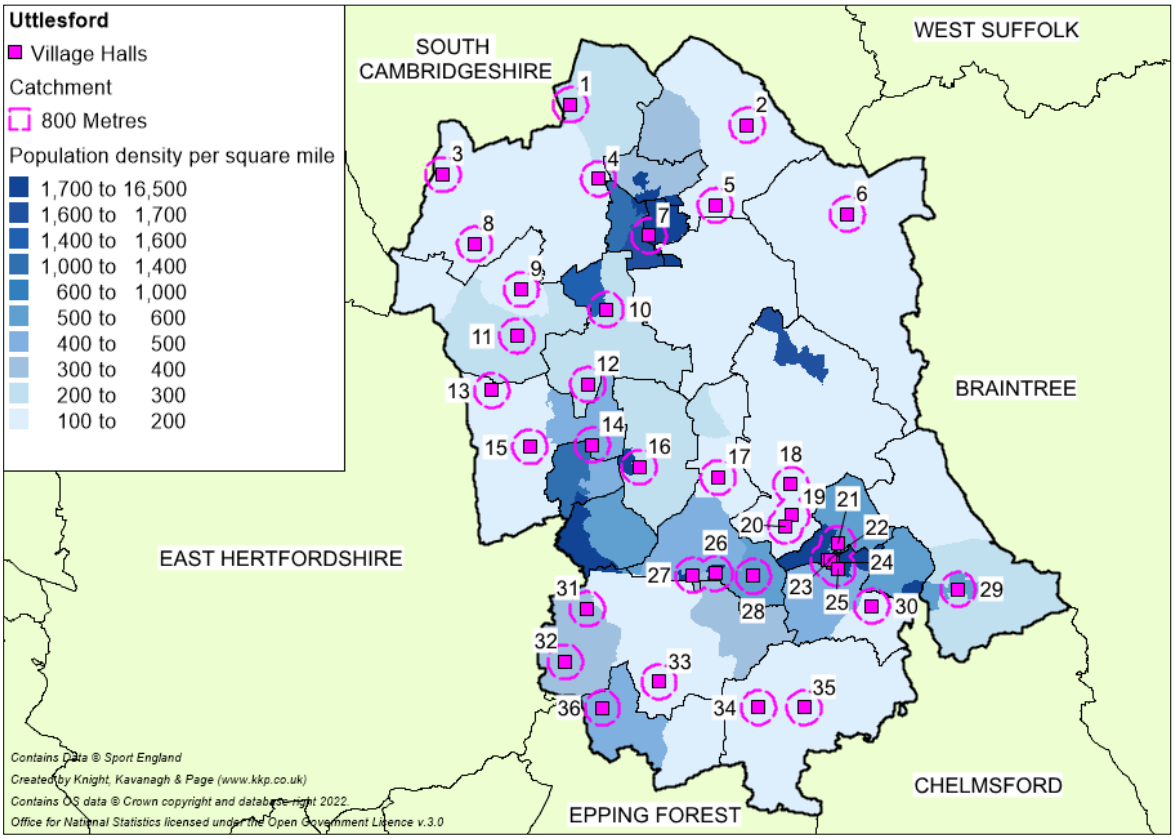


Table 10.1: All village/community buildings in Uttlesford

Map ID	Site name
1	Chesterfords Community Centre
2	Ashdon Village Hall
3	Chrishall Village Hall
4	Littlebury Village Hall
5	Sewards End Village Hall
6	Hempstead Village Hall
7	Golden Acre Community Centre
8	Duddenhoe End Village Hall
9	The Village Hall Arkesden Essex
10	Newport Village Hall
11	Clavering Village Hall
12	Quendon & Rickling Village Hall
13	Berden Village Hall
14	Ugley Village Hall
15	Manuden Village Community Centre
16	Elsenham Village Hall
17	Broxted Village Hall
18	Great Easton Village Hall
19	Memorial Hall, Little Easton
20	The Barn Theatre & Turkey Barn
21	St. Mary's Room
22	Foakes Hall
23	Talberd Room
24	Rowena Davey Centre
25	The Arts Centre
26	Priors Green Community Hall
27	Silver Jubilee Hall
28	Little Canfield Village Hall
29	Felsted Memorial Hall
30	Barnston Village Hall
31	Great Hallingbury Village Hall
32	Little Hallingbury Village Hall
33	Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall
34	Aythorpe Roding Village Hall
35	High Easter Village Hall
36	Hatfield Heath Village Hall and Institute

Accessibility

Radial catchment modelling estimates that one fifth (20%) of the population lives within 800m walk of a village or community hall. These facilities have potential to offer different types of physical activity which are relevant to the local communities which they serve.

Availability

Typically, village halls rely on volunteers to operate, many offer facilities to the community at the times needed i.e., morning, afternoon and evening. Activities tend to reflect the needs of the local community; different types include:

Table 10.2: Types of activities found in Uttlesford's village halls/community centres

Dance	Fitness	Physical activity	Sport
Ballet Ballroom tap Modern (solo, salsa) Contemporary Line Tea dance	Zumba Pilates Boot camp Circuit training Boxercise Aerobics Yoga Jazzercise Bounce Metafit Aerial fitness	Aerobics (legs bums & tums) Sculpt fit Seated exercise Tai chi Kids wellbeing Over 50s fitness Flexible strength	Table tennis Badminton Martial arts (various) Boccia Short mat bowls Carpet bowls Wrestling

It is noticeable that in recent years (since the last audit) there has been a marked increase in the number of fitness and physical activity sessions taking place in the centres (and less dance).

Audit research suggests that in addition to sport and physical activity, key services are also being delivered at these sites (including, food banks, warm hubs, breakfast clubs and social supermarkets). It is presumed that this reflects the economic and financial constraints being experienced in the communities that many serve.

Availability

Village/community halls tend to be open on a needs (booked) basis. Most are available during the day and at evenings/weekends, offering a range of activities serving their respective communities.

Management varies and management processes include village hall committees, local organisations and individuals. All management relies to a greater or lesser extent on volunteer goodwill.

10.2 Demand

Audit research suggests that demand for village hall/community centre space is high, highlighting the importance of these sites in ensuring a good range of local sport, physical activity, arts and cultural activities for local residents. Desk research indicates that the majority community centres have spare capacity.

These sites can (and could) play an important role in ensuring that older people or people living in more rural areas have access to facilities and can also contribute to getting the

inactive active or retaining those already involved. Further analysis is required to understand whether, and the extent to which, activities in these facilities can meet the needs of the local population.

In KKP's experience, smaller community venues provide the ideal environment to deliver health referral type activity such as gentle and chair-based exercise. Any future development of community hall provision should investigate the potential for integration with NHS neighbourhood services linked to physical activity and the priorities set out in the Council's Health and Well-being Strategy.

10.3 Summary of key facts and issues

Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 36 village / community centres in Uttlesford. They serve many of the more rural parts of the district.	No specific deficiencies or surpluses identified.
Quality	Quality was not assessed.	None identified
Accessibility	20% of the population lives within an 800-metre walk catchment of a site.	None identified
Availability (Management & usage)	Management varies between village hall committees, local organisations and individuals – virtually all reliant on volunteer goodwill. A wide variety of activity is on offer; it varies considerably between halls and is broadly reflective of interpreted local need.	None identified.

Strategic summary

- The opportunity to increase physical activity opportunity provided in such village halls and community venues should be a key strategy feature moving forward.
- Activities tend to reflect the needs of the local community and halls open at time to suit demand.
- In addition to sport and physical activity, other services are delivered (e.g., warm hubs, Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme). This reflects the economic and financial constraints experienced in the communities served.
- There may be opportunity to increase physical activity provision and work with service delivery partners (e.g., NHS) to ensure that all residents, particularly those in rural areas have improved access to sport/physical activity opportunity. This should be a key strategy feature moving forwards.

SECTION 11: INITIAL STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal opportunity/challenge for Uttlesford is to ensure that there is continuous investment in indoor and built facilities and that they are, consequently, fit for the future. There is a need to balance the needs of the core market of sports consumers already participating in local clubs whilst ensuring the growth of existing or new activities which meet the needs of new participants and the authority's growing population of older residents.

The following key strategic recommendations will be developed further in the strategic document which follows this but are likely to encompass the need to:

- Undertake a Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls and swimming pools to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district to be undertaken.
- Work with Dame Bradbury School to improve the standard of its below average sports hall subject to its opening for community use (should sufficient demand be identified).
- Address the identified deficiency in water space in the area. Options include the installation of a learner/teaching pool at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre.
- Maintain the quality of facilities - across all sports - which are currently in above average and good condition.
- Ensure that if the new replacement Helena Romanes School is developed, it has a formal agreement in place via a community use agreements (CUAs).
- In the medium to longer term, increase the volume of health and fitness (including studio) provision in the area, ideally at public leisure centre sites. This will enable them to upscale a more viable fitness offer and further cross-subsidise other health and wellbeing activities.
- Support Forge Gymnastics Club to move to a larger dedicated facility should the opportunity arise.
- Undertake a review of sports hall programming, linked to the findings of the District's Playing Pitch Strategy. Ascertain whether there is a need for more 3G/netball court investment to enable outdoor sports to play outside creating additional capacity for indoor sports.
- Ensure that memberships and specific activities are available to people living in the Authority's more deprived communities via enabling increased use of community facilities (e.g., activity halls and community centres).
- Maintain a watching brief in respect of the scale of health and fitness provision within Uttlesford (and provision made outside the Authority). Plan for the expansion of existing facilities / new provision in the long-term future.
- Ensure that people who face specific barriers to participation can access health and wellbeing provision, especially those in rural areas.
- Support other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) which may assist in increasing sport and physical activity within the wider community.
- Work with local sports clubs (with and via the leisure operator) to ensure that facilities and workforce development programmes enable facilities to best meet the needs of all clubs and residents.
- In line with UDC carbon reduction targets, ensure that existing facilities are made to be as energy efficient as possible, and that any new developments consider energy efficiency as a high priority.
- Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify and tackle ongoing investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.
- Village halls are delivering more fitness and wellbeing activities in addition to key services (e.g., warm hubs, food banks). These play an important role in serving the local community needs, especially in rural areas and for those without private transportation.
- Plan for the long-term future of The Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre.

KNIGHT, KAVANAGH & PAGE

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

INDOOR & BUILT SPORT FACILITIES STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN – FINAL REPORT

MAY 2024

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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Contents

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES- STRATEGY REPORT

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Uttlesford District Council (UDC) Indoor & Built Facilities Assessment and Strategy for the period 2022-2041. Recommendations are drawn from the Uttlesford Needs Assessment Report 2024 prepared by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP).

It is part of a wider series of inter-related documents which include a playing pitch strategy (PPS) and an open space and recreation study. The inter-relationship between the portfolio of documents must be noted as some sports covered by the PPS also access indoor facilities for matches/training or use such areas on an informal basis. Similarly, there are indoor sports venues which also feature playing pitches and/or other outdoor facilities.

Both the Needs Assessment Report and the Strategy were prepared in accordance with Sport England's ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance - for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) and in consultation with UDC, Sport England, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), Active Together, local sports clubs and key stakeholders.

1.1: Purpose

The Strategy provides UDC with a comprehensive assessment of the current level of facilities available and future supply and demand needs for facility provision over the next eight years. It delivers a clear evidence base and recommendations to inform future development and/or consolidation of facilities, partnership development opportunity and funding applications.

UDC is committed to catering effectively for the changing economic (post-Pandemic and cost of living crisis) and demographic (i.e., rise in the number and proportion of older population) profile of the area. Based on the needs assessment, it can make informed decisions to ensure that facilities are in the right places to enable the maximum number of local people to take part in regular, meaningful physical activity and sport.

The focus is, to provide clear direction for all partners so that they can collectively plan and develop the more modern, efficient, and sustainable range of community-based leisure, physical activity and sport facilities that district residents require. Built upon a comprehensive, up-to-date evidence base in line with the emerging Local Plan, it sets out a strategic, action plan-based approach to the enhancement of existing, and creation of new, sporting provision. This will ensure that residents can be physically active, healthier and, where appropriate, achieve their physical, sporting, health, and wellbeing ambitions in their local community.

1.2: National strategic context

Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021

Sport England believe that sport and physical activity has a key role in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all following the global pandemic. Reflecting this, its 10-year strategy vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity sets out to tackle the inequalities that it states are long seen and makes the point that 'providing opportunities for people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important'. The key objectives are:

- Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity.
- Joining forces on five big issues.
- Creating the catalysts for change.

As well as advocating sport and physical activity, via the building of evidence and partnership development, the Strategy identifies five big issues that people and communities need to address by working together. Described as the major challenges to England being an active nation over the next decade and the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference, each is designated as a building block that tackled on its own would make a difference.

However, delivered collectively they could change things profoundly. The issues are:

- **Recover and reinvent**: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
- **Connecting communities**: Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people**: Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connecting with health and wellbeing**: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active environments**: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

To address these five issues, the right conditions for change need to be created: across people, organisations and partnerships to help convert plans and ideas. This will include a range of actions, including development of effective investment models and applying innovation and digital technology to ensure that sport and physical activity is more accessible.

Uniting the Movement 2021 will be delivered via funded programmes, interventions made, and partnerships forged. For each action area, there are key performance indicators to evidence progress being made by all involved.

Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure

Engagement by Sport England with the public leisure sector has highlighted that the pandemic has accelerated the appetite for local authorities to look at leisure services and re-examine the purpose of their provision, delivery against local community outcomes and consider their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.

Key insight from the report (**Sport England: The Future of Public Sector Leisure**) includes the facts that:

- 68% of sports halls and swimming pools were built 20+ years ago. Although more than £150m was invested in the opening of new public leisure and swimming facilities in 2018/19[1], with another £200m worth of assets in construction or planning there remains significant levels of ageing public leisure stock.
- 72% of all school swimming lessons take place in a public leisure facility, which included both the statutory learn to swim programme and the water safety curriculum across primary schools. Swimming club usage is also predominantly based at public leisure facilities.

[1] 2 Mintel Report on Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools (September 2019)

The leisure sector is emerging from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. Emergency funding[2] helped to avert financial catastrophe and enabled the additional costs of maintaining public assets and reopening services to be met**.** These funding sources are, however, finite and have now been virtually exhausted. At best, financial pressures risk limiting the ability of stakeholders to deliver against their commitments; at worst they may result in the permanent closure of some services or facilities.

In respect of the recovery of the sector to pre-Pandemic participation levels, data generated via the Moving Communities platform suggests that in October 2021, throughput levels (13.2 million) were still lower than the monthly average in 2019 (17.8 million). Recovery of participation in different activities has been imbalanced and has leant towards those activities which deliver a faster return to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

Sites refurbished in the last 10 years are seeing a throughput recovery of 68% compared with a recovery of 62% for those last refurbished 20+ years ago, suggesting that investment in newer facilities creates spaces with greater appeal, that increase user confidence levels and provide a more relevant offer to meet current customer demands.

To address these significant challenges, a repositioning of the traditional offer of public leisure into one akin to an **active wellbeing service** is advocated focusing on added value and supporting the delivery of key local priorities, alongside wider government policy around Levelling Up, net zero and health inequalities.

Sport England's planning aim

Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on an up-to-date assessment of needs for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. As noted earlier, this assessment report was produced for UDC applying the principles and tools identified in Sport England's ANOG guidance.

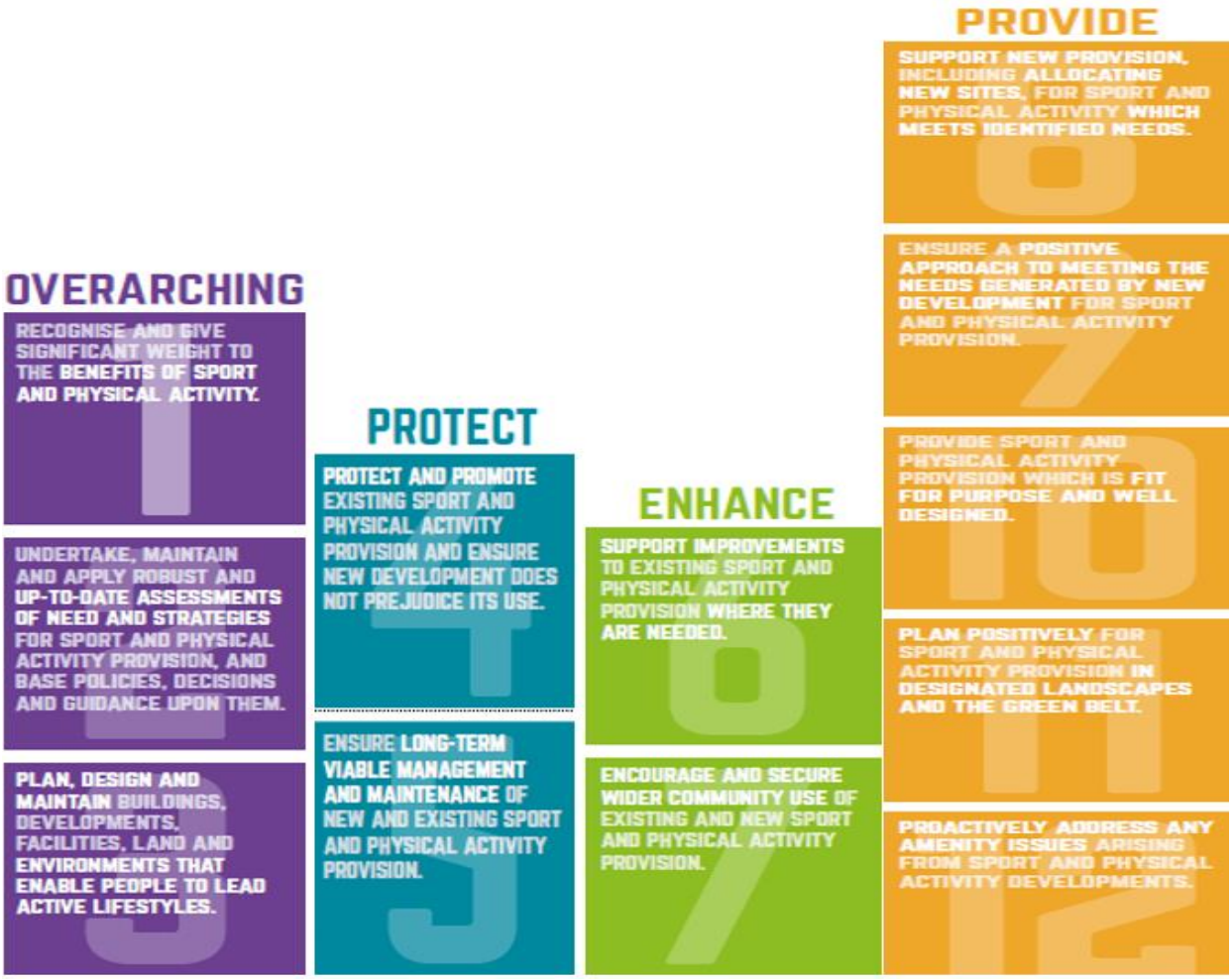
Table 1.1: Sport England planning objectives

Protect	Enhance	Provide
To protect the right opportunities in the right places.	To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision	To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations.
Existing provision should be protected unless an assessment has demonstrated there is an excess of the provision and the specific buildings or land are surplus to requirements; or the loss 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 benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the former or current use.	The use of existing provision should be optimised, for example, through quality, access and management improvements supported by appropriate ancillary facilities.	Appropriate new provision that meets needs and encourages people to play sport and be physically active should be provided by adapting existing places and through new development.

[2] Local authorities invested £160 million The National Leisure Recovery Fund £100m, Leisure operators drew on £171 million of reserves alongside further relief measures such as the Government's furlough scheme

Assessment of need is core to planning for sporting provision. It is underpinned by 12 planning-for-sport principles which help the planning system to contribute to sustainable development by fulfilling the key role of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Applying them ensures that the planning system plans positively to enable and support healthy lifestyles, delivers community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs, and provides opportunity for all to experience the benefits that taking part in sport and physical activity brings. They apply to all areas of the planning system and to planning at local authority and neighbourhood levels. As such they are of relevance to all involved in, or looking to engage with, the planning system.

Figure 1.1: Sport England's 12 planning principles



Cost pressures affecting the leisure industry

Insight produced by the Local Government Association suggests that councils continue to face substantial inflationary, Covid-19 related, and demand-led pressures which affect their ability to efficiently operate leisure provision. During 2022, the leisure sector recovery following the lockdown has gained momentum, but rising utility costs and recent cost of living pressures on households are adversely impacting consumer confidence, leisure centre throughput and overall participation rates. Councils and leisure operators are being required to address and review existing management arrangements and options to ensure the viability of the sector.

Leisure providers (in-house and externally commissioned) are disproportionately affected because leisure centres (especially those with swimming pools) have high energy demands. Typically, energy is a leisure operator's second highest cost after staffing. This is exacerbated by the fact that much of the leisure estate is ageing and relatively energy inefficient. Research shows that two-thirds of public swimming pools and sports halls need to be replaced or refurbished. Ageing assets contribute up to 40% of some authorities' direct carbon emissions.

The LGA advises that, in tackling challenges presented by the current energy crisis, councils should aim to pursue partnership focused approaches and consider solutions which may contribute to wider public health, decarbonisation, and levelling up and economic outcomes. It suggests that this could include the following measures:

- Regular monthly meetings with leisure operators to review and monitor utility costs.
- Encourage leisure operators to be open and transparent about the true cost of utilities.
- Explore potential for flexibility in contractual arrangements and operating parameters: i.e., pool and building temperatures and pricing reviews.
- Review non-viable/low priority contractual requirements.
- Using management fees to stabilise utilities and providers to ensure service continuity.
- Renegotiating repayment terms of loans to enable providers to defer Covid repayments to later years when they are more stable.
- Working with operators to include leisure schemes as part of decarbonisation projects and/or council investment in energy saving processes.

In addition, recently, there has been external body funding available to support the continuation and/or efficiency of service provision such as Sport England's Swimming Pool Support fund. Uttlesford DC in partnership with 1Life has secured a significant level of funding from this fund. (£81,437 for the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, and £73,919 for the Great Dunmow Leisure Centre).

Environmental sustainability

The UK Government net zero strategy 'Build Back Greener' was published in October 2021. This sets out how it intends the UK to meet its target for decarbonisation by 2050. It focuses on interventions such as:

- A fully decarbonised power system by 2035 with all electricity coming from 'low carbon sources'.
- Improved efficiency of heating for homes and buildings, aiming for all new heating appliances to be based on low carbon technologies, such as electric heat pumps or hydrogen boilers.
- Low carbon fuel supply – by scaling up the production of low carbon alternatives including hydrogen and biofuels.

UDC's net zero carbon commitment is set out in its Climate Crisis Strategy. It aims to become net-zero by 2030.

Sport England reports that climate change and the increased occurrence of extreme weather that it brings are already affecting sports facilities, meaning that the sector needs to build greater resilience to counter this very real threat.

It proposes that a wide range of issues should be considered when approaching project development to, and the resultant environmental impact of, say, new swimming pool development. This applies to determining whether to refurbish an existing building with its carbon already embedded or to build a new. In establishing a sustainability strategy early on Sport England suggests some key principles as part of a 'pathway to sustainability' and net zero carbon in respect of building design and operation.

- Reduce energy consumption as the first measure to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.
- Change behaviour, eliminate energy waste and operate energy control systems more effectively at no extra cost.
- Passive design - Building orientation and placement on site is critical to achieving net zero targets Harness a site's natural resources to benefit cross ventilation, natural lighting, solar gain, shelter or shading.
- Fabric efficiency - Maximise the building fabric and glazing performance.
- Minimise initial energy demand to reduce demand on plant and technologies incorporated.
- Efficient systems - Invest in appropriate energy-efficient products including heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems.
- On-site renewables Incorporate low and zero carbon (LZC) technologies to produce energy on site.
- Off-site renewables - only use energy providers who use renewable energy.

PART 2: LOCAL AREA CONTEXT

2.1: Local strategic context

Uttlesford District Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027

This sets out the key priorities for the next 5 years. The vision over this time period is 'to make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play', through the following themes:

Theme	Description
Active place-maker for our towns and villages	To create a renewed focus on strategic master-planning in partnership with towns and villages to create better resident-centred places to live. This will result in new policies and plans to give our towns and villages a strong sense of purpose and place.
Progressive custodian of our rural and historic environment	Residents will see the Council is a strong protector of the physical and historic environment and that the Council is taking affirmative action on combating the effects of climate change at a local level.
Champion for the district	Residents will feel that the Council is proactively working on their behalf for the good of the district with other authorities and organisations. This will improve Uttlesford's connectivity and create a better local health service for residents.

To ensure that Uttlesford's towns and villages deliver a strong sense of purpose and place, the authority will promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities. This will be achieved through:

- Working with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia.
- Continuing to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles.

Uttlesford District Council Local Plan

This will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district; guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan is expected in summer 2024. This will be followed by a period of examination during 2025 with Plan adoption envisaged in early 2026.

The needs assessment and strategy report will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

Housing growth

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. The standard methodology identifies a housing requirement of 675 dwellings per annum for Uttlesford[3]. The housing requirement for Uttlesford District is therefore 13,500 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2021 and 2041.

[3] 5 year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory (December 2022)

The indicative population figure (16,416) assumes that population growth will average 2.4[4] persons per dwelling. The draft Plan provides for at least 14,741 dwellings by 2041 in the interest of providing flexibility and contingency.

Uttlesford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

The health of people in Uttlesford is generally better than the England average. However, there are key issues associated with the rurality of the area and it is possible to overlook local inequalities, which are masked by Uttlesford's generally affluent socio-economic profile.

To reduce these inequalities, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision is to ensure that all children, young people and adults across the whole of Uttlesford can live healthy, fulfilling and long lives. To achieve this, the Strategy lists five key priorities – which are to:

1. Improve and support mental wellbeing.
2. Enable people to live healthy, active lifestyles throughout their lives.
3. Build healthy, resilient, active communities.
4. Alleviate pressures associated with increased costs of living.
5. Improve access to services and facilities.

To improve access to facilities, including leisure centres, the authority will review and enhance sustainable public transport networks to all key facilities. It will also ensure that facilities are of the highest of standards to ensure they are accessible. Providing accessible attractive facilities will help increase the health of the Uttlesford community and creates opportunities for social interaction.

Fit for the Future: Active Essex Implementation Plan 2021-31

Launched in July 2021, the Fit for the Future Implementation Plan provides a rallying call to action for the thousands of organisations and people across Essex who recognise the enormous contribution physical activity and sport makes to the health and wellbeing of everyone.

As of June 2021, over 1.6 million people were living in Greater Essex of whom 901,000 are active adults who participate in over 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Active Essex wishes to increase this number, unite in one direction and over the next 10 years, create an active Essex to improve everyone's health and wellbeing. To achieve this, it has adopted the following key objectives.

- **Strengthening communities -** all communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to build resilience, connection and wellbeing.
- **Active environments** - to work collectively to develop and provide well connected, accessible places and spaces that encourage people to be active.
- **Children and young people** - to ensure every child has the best start in life, whereby they are active, healthy and happy.
- **Levelling up health and wellbeing** - to change behaviours, which will enable and empower people to do things for themselves and their local communities. Physical activity is the highest priority for good health.
- **Sport and physical activity** - to support the recovery, development and growth of our sport and physical activity sector, in order to collectively increase opportunities for all.

[4] Source: ONS Household and resident characteristics (Census 2021)

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2022 – 2026

Every local area must have a JHWS setting out the priorities identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that local government, the NHS and other partners will deliver together through the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

The aim of the Essex JHWS is to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in Essex by creating a culture and environment that reduces inequalities and enables residents of all ages to live healthier lives. To achieve this, the JHWS identifies five key priorities, all of which have specific development outcomes which need to be achieved though partnership work, as outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families with a focus on the vulnerable. Reduced loneliness and social isolation. Reduced suicide through a focus on system support.
Physical activity and healthy weight	Enabling children, young people and their families to be more physically active. Improved levels of physical activity amongst adults by helping them find ways to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Improved nutritional awareness, healthy eating, and help low-income households access affordable healthy food options.
Supporting long term independence	Improving access to advice and guidance including financial support so that residents with long-term conditions and their carers can better manage their conditions. Reduced digital exclusion to improve access to advice and support online. Help all residents have better access to opportunities in education, work, skills, housing, and their social lives.
Alcohol and substance misuse	Improve access to advice, support and treatment for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues. Work across the system to help address the challenges of county lines and drugs related criminality. Educate children, young people, adults, and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.
Health inequalities & the wider determinants of health	Ensure that all children have access to quality parenting, early years provision and education that provide the foundations for later in life. Address food poverty and ensure that all children can access healthy food. Improve access to employment, education and training for adults and young people in our most deprived communities. Embed the use of health impact assessments in planning practice to ensure new planning proposals do not negatively impact on health, health services or widen health inequalities.

Leisure operator

The Council's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) based contract with 1Life Management Solutions Limited to run its leisure centres is set to run until August 2035, incorporates:

- Refurbishment, maintenance, financing and operation of the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
- The design, construction and ongoing maintenance and operation of two new facilities; the Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre.

Although situated at the same site as the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, Turpin's Indoor Bowls Club sits outside of the PFI contract and is therefore managed independently.

In February 2023, Parkwood Group acquired 1Life. Parkwood has, thus, taken on the management of the contract.

Summary of local policy

UDC is committed to ensuring that current and future residents have access to good physical activity opportunities, reside in strong communities and are supported by a successful and sustainable economy. It recognises that population growth and housing development is likely to require some form of intervention in relation to sports facility capacity by 2041.

2.2: About Uttlesford

Uttlesford is one of 12 local authorities located in the County of Essex. Higher population densities are focused in and around the three key settlements of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, along with concentrations in and around Stansted Airport (which includes the local service centre of Takeley). Newport and Thaxted are also Local Service Centres with higher population densities. The rest of the authority is predominantly rural.

It is surrounded by the following districts: Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire. Key transport routes include the M11, which connects the M25 with Cambridge, travelling north to south through the authority and the A120 which runs east to west, through the south connecting Stansted Airport to Braintree.

Population and distribution (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS): The population of Uttlesford is 91,348 of which 44,652 are males and 46,696 females. It has a slightly lower proportion of 20-34 year-olds (Uttlesford:14.7%, East:18.2%). There are, however, more people in the age groups from 45-64 (28.5% compared to 26.1%). The proportion of the population in remaining age groups in Uttlesford is similar to regional averages.

Deprivation (Data source: 2019 indices of deprivation, MHCLG): None of the district's population falls within areas covered by the country's four most deprived cohorts compared to a national average of c.40%. Conversely, 68.2% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country, this compares to a 'norm' of c.30%.

Ethnicity: (Data source: 2021 census of population, ONS): Uttlesford's ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion (94.5%) of the local population classified its ethnicity as White; this is higher than

the comparative England rate of 81.0%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Mixed, at 2.2% this is lower than the national equivalent (3.0%).

Income and benefits dependency (Data source: Nomis 2022) The median figure for full-time earnings (2022) in Uttlesford is £38,489. The comparative rate for the East is £34,715 (-9.8%) and for Great Britain; £33,394 -13.2%. 985 people in Uttlesford claimed out of work benefits[5] in July 2023. This is an increase of 51.5% when compared to March 2020 (650).

Health data (Data sources: ONS births and deaths, NCMP[6] and NOO[7]): In keeping with patterns seen alongside lower levels of health deprivation, life expectancy in Uttlesford is higher than the national figure; the male rate is currently 82.6 compared to 79.4 for England, and the female equivalent is 85.4 compared to 83.1 nationally.

Weight and obesity: Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. At a national level, the resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year. These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major public health challenge.

Adult rates of obesity or overweight in Uttlesford are below national but slightly above regional rates. However, child rates are below both national and regional rates.

Sport England: Active Lives Survey (ALS) 2020/21

This assesses the extent to which 16+ year olds take part in sporting activity. A lower percentage (18.6%) of Uttlesford's population is inactive than England (27.2%) and the East (25.3%). Conversely, a higher percentage (72.1%) is active.

The most popular sports and physical activities

ALS also makes it possible to identify the top five participation sports within Uttlesford. As with many other areas, fitness and athletics are among the most popular (they are also known to cut across age groups and genders). In Uttlesford more than one third of adults take part in fitness activities, on average, at least twice a month. The next most popular activity is athletics in which 20.0% of adults participate on a relatively regular basis.

Mosaic (Data source: 2020 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

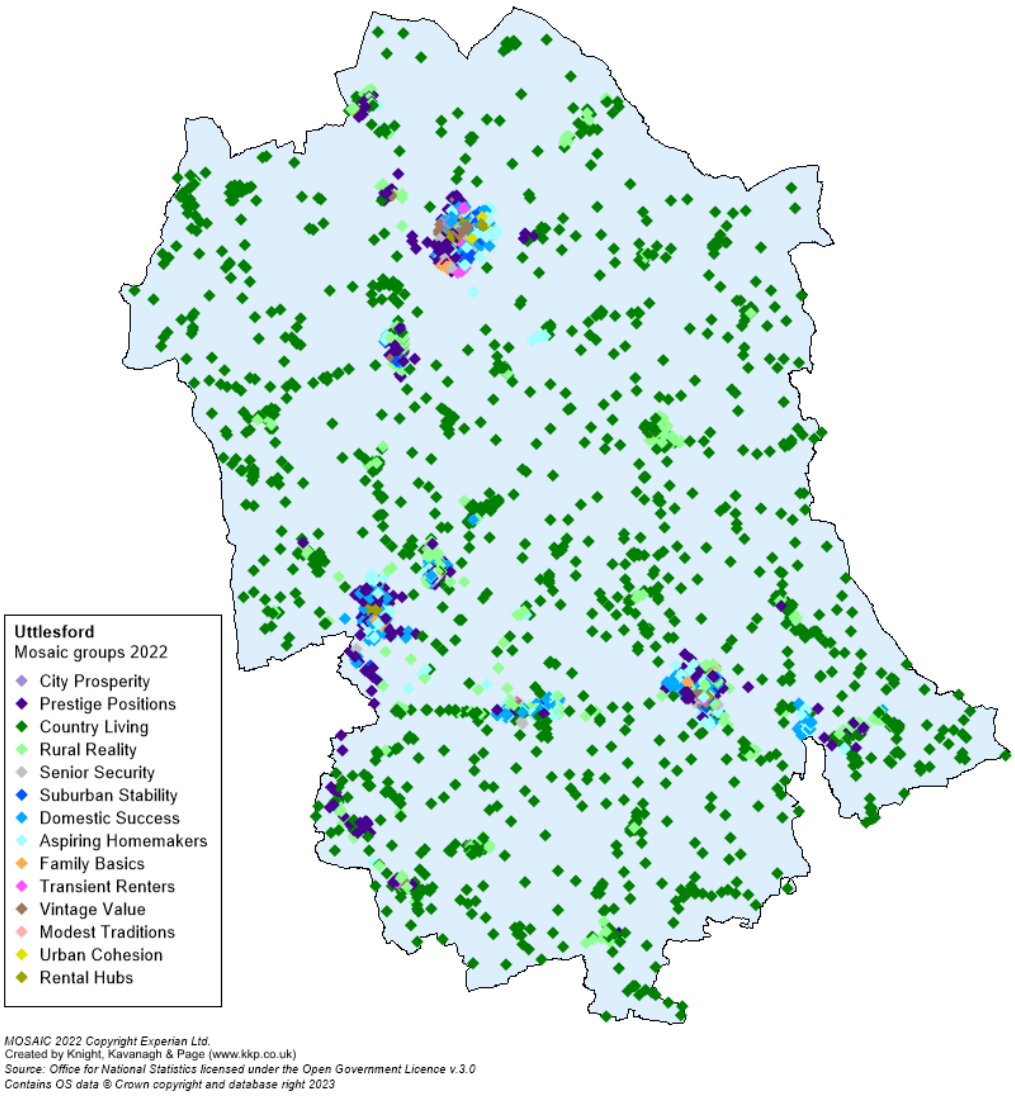
Mosaic classifies all 28.6 million households into 15 groups, 66 household types and 238 segments. This data is then used to paint a picture of UK consumers in terms of their social-demographics, lifestyles, culture and behaviour. The following table shows the top five classifications in Uttlesford when compared to the country as a whole. The dominance of these five can be seen inasmuch as they represent almost three quarters (73.4%) of the population compared to a national equivalent rate of two in five (40.6%).

[5] This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.
6 National Child Measurement Program
7 National Obesity Observatory

Table 2.1: Mosaic – main population segments in Uttlesford

Mosaic group description	Uttlesford #	Uttlesford %	National %
1 - Country Living	29,730	31.6%	7.1%
2 - Domestic Success	13,771	14.6%	8.8%
3 - Rural Reality	13,446	14.3%	7.2%
4 - Aspiring Homemakers	12,163	12.9%	10.5%
5 - Prestige Positions	10,335	11.0%	7.0%

Figure 2.1: Distribution of Mosaic segments in Uttlesford



Population projections

Strategic planning: Change over 25 years (2018 to 2043[8])

The most recent ONS projections indicate a rise of 20.6% in Uttlesford's population (+18,328) over the 23 years from 2018 to 2041. Some of the key points for Uttlesford are outlined below:

- The number of 0–15-year-olds, grows by +1,213 (+6.8%) over the first half of the projection (to 2031).
- The number of 16–24-year-olds increases by +5.0% in the first period (+389) followed by a decline of -2.4% (-202) in the second period to 2041.
- There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+.

Table 2.2: Uttlesford – ONS projected population (2018 to 2041)

Age (years)	2018 #	2031 #	2041 #	2018 %	2031 %	2041 %	2031 Change	2041 Change
0-15	17,717	18,930	19,271	19.9%	18.6%	17.9%	106.8%	108.8%
16-24	7,846	8,235	8,034	8.8%	8.1%	7.5%	105.0%	102.4%
25-34	9,019	9,121	10,158	10.1%	9.0%	9.4%	101.1%	112.6%
35-44	11,266	13,169	12,325	12.6%	13.0%	11.5%	116.9%	109.4%
45-54	14,086	14,194	15,051	15.8%	14.0%	14.0%	100.8%	106.8%
55-64	11,863	13,935	14,379	13.3%	13.7%	13.4%	117.5%	121.2%
65+	17,382	24,057	28,291	19.5%	23.7%	26.3%	138.4%	162.8%
Total	**89,179**	**101,642**	**107,507**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**114.0%**	**120.6%**

Summary of demographic profile and population projections

Uttlesford's population is expected to rise by 20.6% by 2041. A significant factor in this is the continuous rise in the number of people aged over 65. The number and proportion of people in most other age groups fluctuates over this period.

A key issue to consider is whether the current stock of facilities will be able to accommodate this increase or whether there is sufficient demand in specific areas to justify the development of new leisure facilities. There will also be a need to consider how the older population will choose to use its leisure time; this may well lead to changes in levels of demand for different activities.

There will be more need for daytime available facilities to accommodate the larger number of older people and provision to meet the demand for children's activities reflecting the rising number of 0-15 year-olds.

2.3: Planning policy

Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023

The NPPF sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their

[8] Office for National Statistics 2018-based population projections (data released March 2020)

councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies the need to focus on three themes of economic, social, environmentally sustainable development.

A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making, the NPPF states that local plans should meet objectively assessed need. It is clear about sport's role delivering sustainable communities via promotion of health and well-being.

Sport England, working within the provisions of the NPPF, wishes to see local planning policy protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need, as well as helping to realise the wider benefits that participation in sport can bring.

The promoting healthy communities theme in paragraph 103, identifies that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessment of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs, quantitative/qualitative deficiencies and surpluses should be identified and used to inform provision requirements in an area.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework. It is intended that the two documents should be read together.

When considering how local planning authorities and developers assess needs for sport and recreation facilities, NPPG states that authorities and developers may refer to Sport England guidance.

The promoting healthy communities theme in paragraph 103, identifies that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessment of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs, quantitative/ qualitative deficiencies and surpluses should be identified and used to inform provision requirements in an area.

Summary of national context

As the nation recovers from the global pandemic, there is a need to reconnect communities, reduce inequalities and create stronger societies. The aim is to create a catalyst for change, with sport and physical activity as one of the key drivers. There is a need to ensure that people in all age groups either get or remain active. Ensuring an adequate supply of suitable facilities to support this aim is also a requirement of the planning system in line with national policy recommendations.

Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on up-to-date assessment of needs for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. This assessment report applies the principles and tools identified in Sport England's ANOG.

PART 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

3.1: General findings

Uttlesford recognises the importance of its leisure facility stock to physical activity, health and wellbeing and is committed to its retention via the presumption (in planning policy) against any net loss of active sport and leisure facilities. There is also recognition that the Council must operate within a climate of financial constraints (increasingly so, following the Covid-19 pandemic and the on-going cost of living increases).

As noted above, there is a continuous rise in the number/proportion of persons aged 65+. The key issue is, therefore, likely to be how an increasingly ageing population chooses to use its leisure time and whether/how this may lead to changes in demand for different activities.

Although levels of deprivation (health and IMD) are relatively low, it is important to ensure that the proportion of the population which is currently active remains so and that more of those who are currently inactive become active (sustaining and improving the general health of the local population). Indoor and built facilities, and programmes of activity therein, need to be capable of adapting to changing demand and need associated with demographic change.

The audit identifies a need for additional sports hall provision and water space in Uttlesford as there is limited scope to increase hours in the existing facilities and few options to review programming to free up sufficient capacity to meet the needs of residents. There is a need to undertake a Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls and swimming pools to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district.

The principal opportunity/challenge for UDC is to ensure that its stock of facilities continues to be fit for the future and viable. There is a need to balance the requirements of the core market of people who already take part in sport and physical activity while ensuring that the growth of existing or new activities meets the needs of a more diverse and ageing population. Sustaining and improving the general health of the local population will become increasingly relevant.

Apart from this, in general, existing stock (and provision in neighbouring areas) is meeting the current demands of residents. There is, however, a need to maintain/improve quality and ensure that facilities remain community accessible, good quality and attractive.

3.2: What do we know about facilities and activities in Uttlesford?

This section includes summary findings from the needs assessment for the key indoor facility types (sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness, gymnastics, squash, indoor bowls and village/community halls).

Sports halls

There are 14 sports halls at 12 sites (42 badminton courts) in Uttlesford. Ten sports halls on nine sites have 3+ courts (a total of 37 courts).

One sports hall is assessed as good quality (Saffron Walden County High School Centre), the other seven (Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland, Dame Bradbury School, Felsted School, Great Dunmow Leisure Centre, the Lord Butler Leisure Centre and Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre) are rated above average quality.

Most sports halls in Uttlesford have benefitted from some form of investment/ refurbishment in the last 20 years. The exception is the 3-court sports hall at Dame Bradbury School, which is reported to have received no investment over this period.

In the Uttlesford area, 27,552 residents (32.3% of the total population) live within one mile of a sports hall.

Levels of car ownership are reportedly high. Only 8.7% of the population does not have access to a car (2021 Census). This means 3,232 people in Uttlesford's population are reliant on public transport or walking to get to a sports hall. This can add to the cost of participation. There is a need to ensure that there is provision in place for active modes of travel.

Of the nine 3+ court sports halls in neighbouring authorities within two miles of the UDC boundary, one is to the north, two in the east and the remainder in East Hertfordshire to the southwest. The two public venues with sports halls are Braintree Sport & Health Club (5-courts) and Leventhorpe Leisure Centre (4-courts). They are considered likely to attract residents from the east and west of the authority. For some UDC residents the closest facility may be in a neighbouring authority.

Existing facilities will struggle to accommodate an increase in demand. Sports halls located on education sites are limited to evening access only and some report facing challenges resourcing the opening of their facilities beyond existing hours. While most offer community availability there is limited scope to extend these hours and challenges are faced in respect of school-based sports halls at which community use is not offered (e.g., Felsted School and Carver Barracks).

In Uttlesford, all sports halls are owned and managed in-house by the respective education facility or by the Council's operator, 1Life (Parkwood). UDC has limited influence on sports hall programming, pricing and management as it only owns and manages three out of the nine sports halls. It does have some influence on sports hall programming, pricing and management through the monitoring of the PFI contract, however most of the operational provision is governed and controlled by pre-set key performance indicators.

Daytime availability is limited due to the constraints on education sites. This also applies at Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow leisure centres, both of which are (as per the respective PFI agreements) contractually required to accommodate school use. This leaves just the Lord Butler Leisure Centre offering daytime access.

This option to make use of sports halls during weekday daytime hours is likely to be of key importance given the projected increase in the number and proportion of older people in the authority.

All sports hall sites are reported to be operating at / beyond the Sport England comfortably full benchmark and as noted, there are few options to increase community use hours at existing sites. The exception may be Helena Romanes School although the appetite for extended use has not, yet, been established.

It may be that some of the football activity presently reportedly taking place in sports halls could be taken outdoors onto 3G pitches. This would release sports hall space and enable indoor sports to grow.

Investment should be directed at maintaining/improving the quality and capacity of existing stock (e.g., Dame Bradbury School) prior to considering development of a new sports hall.

A good range of sports is accommodated. This includes gymnastics, badminton, netball, football, trampolining, pickleball, futsal, martial arts, cricket, hockey and tennis.

Helena Romanes School is relocating to a new site. The replacement school includes an 8 court hall which will lead to an overall increase in 4-courts (the existing 4 court sports hall not available to the community will close). The new school will have a community use agreement and be available to the community.

Overall, the audit identifies that:

- Uttlesford has insufficient sports hall courts available/accessible to meet current demand.
- There is a need to maintain the quality of sports halls as they age.
- Daytime use of sports halls will be of key importance given the projected increase in the number and proportion of older people in the authority. (This applies particularly to the Lord Butler Leisure Centre).
- There is a need to undertake a Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district.
- New developments need to accommodate the following sports: gymnastics, badminton, netball, football, trampolining, pickleball, futsal, martial arts, cricket, hockey and tennis.

Swimming pools

The audit identifies four swimming pools at four sites of varying size – they include:

- Three main pools 160m^2 or larger (equivalent of 4 lanes x 20m).
- Two learner/teaching pools.
- Three lidos.

Pools are in the authority's more densely populated areas. The north of the district has only one swimming pool but is largely rural and sparsely populated.

The largest (6-lane x 25m) pool is at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre. The Lord Butler Leisure Centre has the most water on site (a 5-lane x 25m pool and a 10m x 12m learner pool). Both are Council owned public leisure centres.

In terms of pool quality, all three in Uttlesford are rated above average.

Felsted School is the oldest pool in the authority. Consultation with the School indicated that it is well maintained and receives the necessary investment as and when required.

The ageing public pool at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre opened c.40 years ago. There is a need to plan for the long-term future of this venue.

Catchment analysis indicates that 17,909 (21.0%) of the population lives within one mile of a swimming pool that is 160m^2 or larger. Given the predominantly rural nature of Uttlesford, this is not unusual. The challenge is to enable people living in particularly rural areas, that do not have access to a car, to access facilities.

The two public leisure centre pools are available to the community on a pay and play basis. The Felsted School pool closed to the public during the Covid-19 Pandemic and consultation identifies it has not re-opened to the community since.

Swimming clubs (including triathlon) report demand for additional session time which is not available. This demand has increased post Covid following the decision of Felsted School not to re-open to the community.

There is a need to invest in current facilities to reduce carbon emissions and the cost of operating efficiently to meet UDC's net zero emissions pledge.

As of the audit date, there are plans to refurbish the old Friends School swimming pool as part of a housing development scheme however, the timescales and level of community use is unknown.

There is an ambition to add learner/teaching pools at the public leisure centres (it is not possible to do this at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre) to increase viability, reduce programming pressure and meet demand (enabling a balanced programme encompassing learn to swim, club use, swim for fitness and casual swimming).

There is a need to undertake a Sport England Facilities Planning Model report for sports halls and swimming pools to provide a detailed quantitative and spatial assessment of the supply and demand across the district.

Health and fitness

The 14 health and fitness gyms in Uttlesford offer 675 stations. Generally, they are in the main settlement areas and on the main arterial routes of the authority.

All community available health and fitness sites received a non-technical quality assessment. Generally, they are of good and above average quality. One is rated good quality (Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland), ten are above average, and one is below average.

Nine sites are located within two miles of the Uttlesford boundary. Two offer pay and play access. Four are of significant size (with over 100 stations) and two are national chains. Some of these are likely to attract Uttlesford residents.

97% of Uttlesford's population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a (20+ station) health/fitness facility within the district. Just over one third (34.0%) reside within one mile walk of a facility.

When comparing the number of community available stations currently available (599) and accounting for the comfort factor, there is a positive supply balance (99 stations at present, 20 by 2031 and then an under-supply of 57 by 2041). This means that, all things being equal, there is sufficient health and fitness provision at present and there will be a small undersupply in 2041.

There is a need to for 1Life (Parkwood) as the Council's leisure provider to increase studio provision and instructors at two of the three public leisure sites (the Lord Butler Leisure Centre and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre). This will enable it to meet current group exercise demand and compete effectively with commercial providers. It should ensure that it is both well-placed to maintain the viability of its sports facilities and best positioned to

enable people which need it most to access health and fitness-based sport and physical activity.

The majority (seven out of 12) of health and fitness gyms offer pay and play access. Three require a membership for access and two (Saffron Walden County High School and Carver Barracks) are not available to the community.

One key issue is that budget operator managed venues are not necessarily available to people who face barriers to participation and groups, and people from areas of (relative) disadvantage (as cost is only one factor which may hinder usage). This applies particularly to those who need to pay for transport to access such facilities and where pay and play is not available. The challenge for Uttlesford is ensuring that people in rural areas can access provision and that the public leisure stock can meet demand whilst challenged by the lack of studio provision at its sites.

No known new local health and fitness facilities are planned. Both the Lord Butler and Great Dunmow leisure centres report demand for fitness classes that cannot be met. Both have waiting lists for classes and aspirations to add studio space to meet the demands of users. Consultation with Vision Fitness highlighted an aspiration to open an additional fitness gym in the area and a desire to expand current provision.

Gymnastics

Uttlesford has two gymnastics clubs. One is housed in a dedicated gymnastics venue and one is not, it delivers from the Lord Butler Leisure & Fitness Centre.

Allstars Gymnastics operates from a children's play centre. It offers recreational sessions for children aged 4 years to 11 years.

Forge Gymnastics (formerly known as Dynamics (2001-2021) is based at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre for sessions but reports more demand than it can cater for. It also operates from two other sites in neighbouring Cambridge (Linton Village College and Parkside School). Its classes, dependent upon age, each cater for c.20-25 children. It requires more time but understands that this is currently not possible. Ideally, it would like an additional day to accommodate its current waiting list. It has no capacity to meet additional demand.

The majority 80% of the Uttlesford population lives within 30 minutes of a dedicated gymnastics facility.

Should it be possible, there is a need for a larger facility to help Forge Gymnastics Club to meet demand for gymnastics in the district.

Squash

England Squash estimates that there is one court per 12,617 people in England. This reflects the significant number of court closures and/or non-replacements when new facilities are developed to replace older venues - seen over the past decade. For squash to thrive, the NGB believes that the ratio should be closer to one court per 10,000.

Of the nine squash courts at four sites in Uttlesford, four are glass-backed, and the others are traditional. Nine squash courts in the area are theoretically sufficient. However, four are located at independent schools and the MoD site and are not available for community use.

Consideration should be given to any new provision (or facility extensions) planned to include squash facilities. For a good quality programme to be delivered on a single site, three squash courts are required. To meet the one per 10,000 benchmark, there is a current need for five courts. Taking future population growth (to 2041) into account there is a need for ten courts.

Approximately 90% of Uttlesford's population lives within a 30-minute drive of a facility with squash courts.

Two sites offer pay and play access (Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and the Lord Butler Leisure Centre – when courts are open). Carver Barracks and Felsted School are private use only.

Saffron Squash Club is based at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre. It has c.70 adult members and plays and organises games both recreationally and competitively. It operates five nights per week and utilises all three courts for its programme, which includes training matches, box leagues, inter leagues and coaching on two of the three courts at the centre. It reports having managed to rebuild membership to pre-Covid levels before being stymied due to the RAAC concrete issue.

Indoor bowls

The one dedicated indoor bowls facility (Turpins Indoor Bowls Club) in Uttlesford is of above average quality.

Drivetime modelling suggests that the majority (76%) of Uttlesford's population lives within 30 minutes' drive of a facility. There are no other indoor bowls facilities within a 30-minute drive of Turpins Indoor Bowls Club.

It is available to the public but requires a membership to access facilities. There is capacity to accommodate additional members at the facility. It requires short/medium term investment in the gas heating system (which it would like to replace/enhance with solar panels – a development which would necessitate UDC permission as the venue owner) and rink carpet replacement (within the next 5 years).

There is no requirement for additional purpose-built indoor bowls facilities in the district now or in the near future.

Village/community halls

There are 36 village/community halls in Uttlesford located mainly in areas of denser population, predominantly in the central/western areas of the district.

Radial catchment modelling estimates that one fifth (20%) of the population lives within 800m walk of a village or community hall. These facilities have potential to offer different types of physical activity which are relevant to the local communities which they serve.

Village/community halls tend to be open on a needs (booked) basis. Most are available during the day and at evenings/weekends, offering a range of activities serving their respective communities.

PART 4: VISION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMEDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

The principal opportunity/challenge for Uttlesford is to continuously invest in its indoor and built facilities to ensure that they remain fit for the future. The vision for sport and leisure provision in the area for the period 2022 - 2031 reflects the clear requirement to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose (e.g., modern, welcoming, clean, attractive, flexible, enable a wide programme, ability to offer a good quality learn to swim programme and cost-effective to operate). It is:

"To create and maintain high quality, sustainable leisure and sports facilities which meet community need, increase participation, help tackle health and age issues and provide accessible, inclusive activities for Uttlesford residents as part of an active lifestyle".

4.1: General strategic objectives

Below are the recommended short, medium and long-term objectives, not all should be the responsibility of UDC and we advise that, as applicable, the Council works with relevant partners and sporting clubs to tackle noted issues and deliver key objectives.

(Short term refers to 1-2 years; medium is 3-5 years and long-term equates to 5-10 years).

Short term

- Work to reduce energy consumption to reduce carbon emissions/energy costs - in line with UDC carbon reduction targets. Ensure that facilities are made as energy efficient as possible, and that any new developments consider this as high priority.
- Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify and tackle investment, maintenance, and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities. Apply this to maintain the quality of all sports facilities in above average and good condition.
- Make immediate plans for ongoing investment to maintain the standard of the authority's swimming pools.
- Maintain/increase the level of community available sports hall provision in the current school stock.

Medium term

- Work with Parkwood to ensure that its health and wellbeing offer is developed and refined to better meet the needs of all residents including those with specific health needs, people with disabilities and those living in the authority's more deprived communities.
- Consider how community use can be extended at the new replacement Helena Romanes School enabling existing sport and physical activity participation to grow. It needs to accommodate the main sports in the area and any new opportunities in particularly indoor cricket.
- Work with Dame Bradbury School to improve the standard of its (currently below average) sports hall subject to it opening for community use (should sufficient demand be identified).
- Where no formal agreements are in place work with educational sites (such as Helena Romanes School) to secure community use agreements (CUAs).
- Ensure the continuity of options that enable daytime community use of sports halls.
- Maintain a watching brief in respect of the scale of health and fitness provision - both within Uttlesford and provision made outside the authority. Should the upward participation trend continue and predicted population growth occur, look to expand the

volume and improve the quality of provision available at public leisure centres (alongside the addition of dance studios) to enable them to continue to compete commercially and improve their capacity to cross-subsidise other aspects of provision.
- Invest progressively in appropriate energy-efficient products including heating, ventilation, fittings, controls, sensors, heat pumps and recovery systems.
- Support Forge Gymnastics Club to move to a larger dedicated facility should the opportunity arise.
- Review sports hall programming, linked to the findings of the district's Playing Pitch Strategy. Ascertain whether there is a need for more 3G/netball court investment to enable outdoor sports to play outside creating additional capacity for indoor sports.
- Work with local sports clubs (independently of and via the leisure operator) to ensure that facilities and workforce development programmes meet the needs of all clubs and residents.

Longer term

- Create a plan to invest in the plant and necessary refurbishments that look likely to occur at around the same time.
- Ensure that memberships and specific activities are available to people living in the authority's more deprived communities via enabling increased use of community facilities (e.g., activity halls and community centres).
- Be fully prepared to take opportunities to support (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) facility developments geared to improving sport and physical provision and activity in the wider community.
- Maintain/increase daytime access to sports halls to keep pace with demand related to growth in the number and proportion of older people.
- Work effectively with key provider to drive increases in participation challenging all parties to innovate via delivery of high quality, varied activity programmes.
- Develop a plan for the 'handback' of the Lord Butler Leisure Centre and the other leisure centres once the PFI agreement expires.
- Depending on the findings of the FPM, should there be a need for increased provision of sports halls and swimming pools, the redevelopment of The Lord Butler Leisure Centre should be considered with a larger swimming pool, sports hall and fitness provision (including studios). This should be linked to housing growth and also take into account the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2024.
- Should the replacement Helena Romanes School be developed, there is a need to consider increasing access to the community and enabling daytime access to the facility.

Action plans

The following action plan contains two sections:

- Management and programming.
- Indoor and built sports facilities action plan.

As above, in respect of timescales, short term refers to 1-2 years; medium is 3-5 years and long-term equates to 5-10 years. Action plan priorities are categorised either as protect, enhance or provide in line with Sport England objectives. The Sport England definitions for these 'headings' are as follows:

- **Protect** - to protect the right opportunities in the right places.
- **Enhance** - to enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision.
- **Provide** - to provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- **Overarching –** roughly works across all three of the above.

4.2 Indoor built facilities action plan

Considering the needs assessments related to specific facilities and sports, the demographic make-up, current vision of the Council and associated organisations, plus Sport England's Planning Model which encourages Protection, Enhancement and Provision of new facilities, UDC should take account of the following strategic recommendations.

4.2.1: Management and programming

Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Invest to ensure that sports facilities remain attractive and fit for purpose. **Protect/Enhance**	See site by site recommendations and ensure ongoing review of facility condition takes place.	Develop a system to, as early as possible, identify and tackle ongoing investment, maintenance and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing facilities. (See site by site actions below).	Short	UDC, Active Essex (AE) schools/ college, community organisations	High
Environmental sustainability and climate crisis. **Protect/Enhance/Provide**	In line with UDC carbon reduction targets, ensure that existing facilities are made as energy efficient as possible and that new developments consider energy efficiency as a high priority.	Improve the performance of Council buildings aiming to achieve net zero emissions and maximise funding opportunities. Ensure that all newly constructed Council-controlled/influenced sport/ leisure centre buildings, extensions and refurbishments are designed to achieve net zero emissions. Focus on the switch away from oil and natural gas use. Deliver ongoing 'invest to save' energy efficiency projects to reduce overall emissions and reduce running costs. Maximise onsite renewable energy generation opportunities.	Short	UDC, AE, schools/ College, community organisations	High
Maintain/increase community use of education facilities (sport halls) **Enhance**	Increase the number of hours for which school sports halls are available to the community. Reinforce this with CUAs. Market and promote availability of the current stock of sports halls to more sections of the community.	Work closely with schools that have expressed an interest in increasing community availability – to implement this. Continue to work with schools with good levels of community use to ensure complementary programming across the authority. Develop a site-by-site engagement action plan for schools with limited or no current community use. Where possible deliver binding CUAs	Medium	Schools/College, AE, UDC	High

Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Planning **Protect/Enhance/Provide**	Act upon Strategy objectives and actions in part 4.2.2.	Adopt the Strategy as an evidence-based document supporting the Local Plan and development management decisions. Use the strategy to protect existing facilities which meet community needs and to inform the need for proposals for new/enhanced provision. Secure developer contributions from new development that can be used towards new/enhanced provision that could meet the needs identified in the strategy.	Short	UDC	High
Monitor and review	Keep this Facilities Strategy relevant and up to date.	Complete a light touch annual strategy review. Deliver a complete review within 5 years of adoption.	Medium	UDC	High

4.2.2: Site specific recommendations

Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	Opened in 2001 and refurbished in 2023, it has one 4-court sports hall (rated above average) and a 1-court activity hall. The lighting was recently upgraded (2023) and the roof is reported to leak. The 20-station health/fitness gym which opened in 2023 is rated as good quality. Facilities are available for 40 hours of community use and accommodate a range of users.	Continue to invest in these facilities to maintain quality. Remedy the roof leak.	Anglian Leisure, Joyce Frankland.	Medium Short	Medium High
Dame Bradbury School	Independent school	Opened in 2003, it has one (3-court) sports hall rated above average quality. It is available for 26 hours of community use and used by a range of sports. It is reported to be operating at full capacity. There is an opportunity to increase the hours available to the community subject to demand and viability.	Maintain good school/community relationship and sustain good levels of community use. Improve the quality of the sports hall and extend the number of hours available to the community.	Dame Bradbury School, AE	Medium	Medium

Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Felsted School	Independent school	This has one 3-court and one 4-court sports hall - refurbished in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Both are rated above average quality. The 4-lane 23m pool (rated above average) opened in 1983 and was refurbished in 2021. It offers limited community use (swim schools only at weekends). The 33-station health/fitness suite is rated above average quality. The two squash courts are rated as above average quality. Community use is limited and is unable to expand primarily as it is a boarding school and the need to safeguard students.	Continue to invest to maintain facility. Maintain good school/community relationship and sustain (and improve) levels of community use should the opportunity arise.	Felsted School	Long	High
Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	1 Life (Parkwood) (UDC)	A public leisure centre currently operated by 1 Life Parkwood. It opened in 2003 and was refurbished in 2023. The 4-court sports hall is rated above average quality. Open for 100 hours of community use it accommodates a range of sports and is a key netball facility. The 6-lane 25m swimming pool is rated above average quality. It opened in 2003 and has received lifecycle maintenance to date. It faces high demand due to it catering for swimming lessons, club and recreational swimming. The 55-station health and fitness gym/studio is rated above average quality as are the two glass backed squash courts.	Continue to invest in the facility to maintain quality. Increase the number of studios on site to meet current and future demand. Consider the option to add a learner / teaching pool to the facility to increase venue capacity. Should the Helena Romanes School re-locate, enable daytime community use of the facilities to increase provision in the area.	UDC, 1 Life Parkwood	Long	Medium
Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	College	This has one 4-court sports hall. Quality was not assessed due to being unable to gain access to the site.	Explore options to understand if community use can be established.	The School UDC	Long	High

Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
The Lord Butler Leisure Centre	1 Life Parkwood (UDC)	The largest public leisure centre in the district, it opened in 1984 and was refurbished in 2019. It has one 4-court sports hall rated above average quality. The 5-lane 25m swimming pool (refurbished in 2004) is rated above average quality. It caters for significant club demand and faces challenges meeting the needs of the community. The 72 station health and fitness suite and studio is rated as above average quality. It is available on a pay and play basis. It has three squash courts which have been refurbished and the RAAC concrete issues resolved. Plans to upgrade the EV charger could enable it to become a Car Club site but may engender a reduction in parking spaces. The key challenge is the long-term future of the site. UDC and its operator need a plan for this once the PFI contract ends in 2035.	Continue to invest in the facility to maintain quality. Explore whether discounted/free parking can be implemented for leisure centre users to decrease the cost of participation and increase membership numbers. Develop a masterplan to determine the future of the Centre. Consider whether additional studio space could be made available to meet current and future demand. Masterplan the redevelopment of the facility to provide more capacity in the long term linked to housing growth in the area.	UDC, 1 Life Parkwood	Long	High
Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre	1 Life Parkwood (UDC)	Opened in 2003 and refurbished in 2023, the 4-court sports hall rates above average quality. It is operating at c. 80% capacity. The 37 station health and fitness suite is rated as above average quality and is available on a pay and play basis.	Continue to invest in the facility to maintain quality.	UDC, 1 Life Parkwood		
Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Academy	Refurbished in 2021, the 4-court sports hall is rated good quality. The floor was replaced in 2021 and there are reports of roof leaks. It is available for 52 hours of community use and operating at c.70% capacity. The 26 station health and fitness suite/studio rated as below average quality and requires modernisation. This is not available to the community.	Maintain good school/community relationship and sustain good levels of community use. Continue to maintain and invest in the sports facilities to ensure they remain high quality and attractive to users. Remedy the roof leak. Extend the number of hours available to the community as demand increases.	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	Medium	Medium

Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Turpins Indoor Bowls Centre	Sports Club (UDC)	Opened in 1996 and refurbished in 2004, the 6-rink indoor bowls facility is of above average quality. Membership is required to access the facilities; it has 350 members currently and capacity to cater for increased demand. The site has a good maintenance regime, but some areas require investment. The gas heating system is c.26 years old and in need of replacement. It would like to install solar panels roof but requires UDC permission as the Council owns the facility. The rink carpet is also approaching the end of its life and will require replacement at some point over the next 5 years, at an estimated cost of £50k.	Continue to market and promote the venue to drive up participation and ensure that it remains sustainable in the longer term. Seek funding and continue to invest to maintain these good quality facilities.	Turpins Indoor Bowls Centre, UDC	Medium	Medium
Commercial fitness gyms	Commercial	There are several commercially operated health and fitness facilities all of which contribute to the diverse facility offer in Uttlesford	Continue to monitor use and gauge the extent to which they complement other activity across the authority.	Commercial operators	Long	Low

PART 5: MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Strategy identifies and recommends the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain a high-quality built facilities infrastructure for Uttlesford for the period up until 2041.

It is important that it is (and is treated as) a live document and is used in a practical manner to prioritise investment, develop key work programmes and partnerships, guide planning gain investment and ensure that built sports facilities are a vital component contributing to the quality of life of Uttlesford residents.

Strategy production is just the start of the process. There is a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review to ensure that a considered perspective and approach is maintained throughout the strategy period.

It will be important for Uttlesford and its partners to develop a 3-5 year action plan based around the Strategy and for this to be annually monitored and reviewed. This should not only evaluate progress made against plan objectives but should identify actual/potential changes in supply and demand in the authority. This is on the basis that the Strategy is as much about how facilities are used as it is about ensuring that local infrastructure is of a good quality.

The annual review process should include:

- A review of the progress made implementing recommendations and the 3-5 year action plan; taking account of any changes required to the priority of each action (e.g., the priority of some may increase/reduce following implementation of others).
- Lessons learnt throughout the period.
- New facilities coming on stream (or being made newly available to the community) which will need to be considered.
- Any specific changes in the use of key district sites (e.g., sport specific specialisms of sites, changes in availability, etc.).
- Any specific changes in demand at facilities and/or clubs in the area (e.g., reduction or increase in club numbers, new housing growth.
- New formats of traditional sports that may need to be considered.
- Any other new or emerging issues and opportunities.

The outcome of the review will be development of a new annual and medium-term action plan for indoor and built sports facilities across the district.

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING GAIN CONTRIBUTION TOOLKIT

Introduction

The purpose of this toolkit is to ensure that planning gain contribution sought from an individual development is based on a tailored approach, using the robust evidence bases provided as part of the Uttlesford Indoor & Built Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan. This will help to clearly justify the needs arising from the development and how they are to be met.

It provides a step-by-step guide which should be used by those stakeholders which are directly involved in negotiating developer contributions, either the local authority case officers or housing developers or planning consultants, acting on their behalf.

The following processes should be followed to inform the potential additional demand that a new housing development generates. This sets out the process for leisure facilities.

There is also a checklist summary for the process which should be completed as evidence of working through each step. In terms of social sustainability, a series of questions to explore are provided with possible options to consider.

For all developments (regardless of size) developer contributions should be sought towards social, sport and open space facilities. Where a development may be considered too small to provide a contribution, consideration should be given to where several small developments may have a cumulative impact on the community infrastructure and refer to local planning policy.

In instances where a development may fall within two or more local authorities it is recommended that the demand from the more urban area or locally reflective area are applied in calculating the requirements. This will reflect the on the ground use of provision in the context of its setting. If provision is to be provided on the outskirts of an urban settlement and therefore is to act as an extension of that settlement, it is justifiable to utilise the demand/standards most appropriate.

The suite of evidence documents which should be used to assess demand includes:

- Uttlesford Indoor & Built Facilities Strategy - Needs Assessment Report: March 2024
- Uttlesford Indoor Built Facilities Strategy – Strategy Report March 2024

Process

Step 1	Determine the key indoor sports facility requirement resulting from the development	Navigation
	The key tools to assess this are provided within Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator which is accessed via the Active Places Power website. https://www.activeplacespower.com/ This will enable you to determine the demand for sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls facilities that the new population from a development generates.	Access to the calculator is restricted and requires a username and password to be set up.

The Uttlesford Strategy provides an estimate of future demand for key indoor sports facilities based on population forecasts, as a result of key housing growth areas. This key demand is translated into units of badminton courts, swimming pool lanes and indoor bowls rinks.

As the exact number of units are identified from specific housing developments then the Council will need to apply the household occupancy rate to this to determine the total population.

Number of dwellings x household occupancy rate[9] = associated population

This is the population that is applied within the Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) to determine the additional provision that is required to meet the additional demand.

The SFC is a modelling tool designed to assist local planning authorities to quantify how much additional demand is generated by increasing populations and new housing areas. The model has no spatial qualities or dimension and can only be used to estimate the facility needs for whole area populations. The model makes no reference to:

- Location of existing facilities compared to demand.
- Capacity and availability of facilities (i.e. opening hours, how well they are used).
- Cross boundary movements of demand.
- Travel networks and topography.
- The attractiveness of the existing facility network.

The SFC uses information that Sport England has gathered on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This ensures that the calculations take on board the population profile (e.g. age, gender, etc) of the local area.

The SFC then turns this estimation of demand (visits per week) into the equivalent amount of facility which is needed to meet these visits. For swimming pools, it uses 25m lane equivalents and for sports halls it uses the number of badminton courts.

Registration is required to access Active Places Power (APP) and therefore the SFC. If you are not already registered, you can register for free via the link under the login button on the APP homepage.

Please note the SFC is one tool and should not be used on its own to determine the need for sports facilities from a single development.

Step 2	Determine the other indoor sports and community facilities required as a result of the development	Navigation
	Use the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy to identify level of need that may be generated from new development(s) for indoor sporting provision not included within the SFC. This should also extend to community centre facilities within the area.	Indoor and built facilities strategy

There is no clear calculation of the requirements for other indoor sports provision and community centre facilities (not covered by SFC), as a result of a new housing development. In this instance, the Indoor & Built Facilities Strategy should be used to determine the need for additional facilities within any specific area within the authority. This should take into account the requirement for other dedicated sports facilities if the Strategy identifies this.

The Assessment Report (in specific sections) identifies need for other provision. This results from consultation with specific clubs and organisations, sports facility managers and NGBs. It

[9] National occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per household is used

also takes account of the size, scale, and quality of existing provision. Facilities identified within the Assessment Report are determined by the scope of the study which the Council commissions. This will also be informed by how busy existing facilities are. As an example, if an existing leisure centre (adjacent to the new housing development) is fully programmed with high demand for space, it is unrealistic to expect this facility to accommodate the demand generated from the new development. Therefore, additional provision will be required.

Step 3	Demonstrate an understanding of what else the development generates demand for	Navigation
	Consideration also needs to be given to the other infrastructure that will be generated as a result of the development. As an example, this could include primary and secondary schools, health centres, library, etc. The key focus here is to determine where there may be duplication of facilities and where there may be opportunities for shared provision.	Consultation with other council services, partners and developers

In reality, it will take a significantly large development to generate the requirement for a new stand-alone wet and dry leisure centre. Therefore, it is important to identify where other provision may be required as a result of the development, to determine if this could replace or supplement the need to provide sports facilities or community facilities.

A key example of this is the requirement for primary and secondary school provision, as a result of the development. A primary school will require a multi-purpose indoor hall, playground and playing field space to deliver its national curriculum requirements for PE. A secondary school will require at least a three-court sports hall and playing field space to deliver its national curriculum requirements for PE.

Therefore, further investigation should be undertaken to identify if there is an opportunity to ensure that community use of school sports facilities can be guaranteed, thus minimising potential duplication.

In this instance the ‘contribution’ associated with the increased demand for sports facilities could be used to enhance the school provision to ensure it was appropriate for community use (e.g., extend fitness facilities, community access arrangements, etc.).

In relation to other services (e.g., library, health centre, etc) there is a need to consider how these could be co-located alongside sports and community facilities, thus creating a community hub. This is a key driver for sports facilities in attracting users that might not otherwise use these types of facilities.

The financial, social, and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/

Step 4	Consider if there are existing facilities within close proximity that could be enhanced or extended to accommodate increased demand.	Navigation
	Further investigation is required to determine if there is an existing facility that is close enough to the development site which, if extended /refurbished / remodelled could accommodate the increased demand generated from the new development.	Facility mapping within the Indoor and Built Assessment Report

Detailed analysis of facilities within the vicinity of the new development should be undertaken to assess the suitability of these facilities to accommodate the increased demand generated from the development.

As an example, the following information should be pulled together to determine if this is an appropriate solution to accommodate the increased demand:

- Is the facility close enough to the development to accommodate the increased demand?
- The quality of the facility……does it need investment?
- Is there capacity to accommodate increased demand……how well used is the facility?
- Are there any restrictions in access to the facility?
- Are there plans in place to maintain or refurbish the facility?
- What type of activities are accommodated within the facility?
- Are the current management arrangements appropriate to accommodate changes or increased demand at the facility?
- Are there opportunities to co-locate other services alongside or within the facility?

In addition to the above, it will also be important to assess the potential impact of the additional demand on clubs and organisations within the vicinity. As an example, some clubs and organisations may already be at capacity; therefore, there may be no capacity to accommodate increased demand within the existing infrastructure.

Step 5	Consider the design principles for new provision	Navigation
	The exact nature and location of provision associated with either onsite or off-site developments should be fully determined in partnership with leisure and community specialists (e.g. NGBs, local authority, advisers, etc.) and community groups themselves.	Sport England design and cost guidance

It is important to ensure that the design of new or extended facilities is in line with the needs of local clubs and organisations as well as relevant design guidance. It will be important that any design reflects best practice design guidance taking account of the key considerations which will be relevant to each facility. As an example, this will include aspects such as: health and safety, safeguarding, storage, sport specific design features, etc.).

Where an extension or refurbishment of an existing facility takes place, it will be important to ensure that the local community is involved in that design. It will also be important to ensure that continuity of provision is also considered as clubs and organisations will need alternative accommodation during the construction period associated with a refurbishment or extension. This is important in ensuring these organisations continue to exist in the longer term.

Development of community hubs is a key focus for many organisations as the benefits derived from facility co-location is often greater than from stand-alone facilities. There is, thus, a need

for developers and stakeholders to consider how different facilities may 'fit' together. This could, for example, include the following facilities which may be required as part of a development:

- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- Primary and secondary schools.
- Health centres and GP surgeries.
- Library.
- Early years provision.
- Community centre.
- Children's play areas.
- Allotments and community growing areas.
- Local retail centres.

The master plan for new developments need to consider the strategic location of facilities and the clustering and co-location of facilities to maximise the benefit for the local community.

There is also a need to ensure that the location of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities are appropriately located in the context of indoor sports provision (if also being provided onsite) to ensure a cohesive approach to the whole sporting offer.

Step 6	**Strategic pooling of financial contributions to deliver new provision**	**Navigation**
	Consideration needs to be given to the multiple developments across the local authority or a combination of local authorities in order to determine if the combined increased demand is sufficient to warrant a contribution to a strategic leisure development.	Wider housing growth strategies.

If the authority considers each housing growth area in isolation, then it is unlikely that there will be sufficient demand generated from a single development to warrant a new stand-alone leisure provision, especially swimming pools.

As such the Council needs to consider how the cluster of housing developments within the local authority boundary, or relevant cross border area should make a contribution to strategic sport and leisure facilities. As discussed previously, this may be to provide new provision or to enhance existing in order that it can accommodate increased demand.

This in turn requires the Council and developer to consider the wider housing growth within the area which may also include that within a neighbouring authority. Where the combined increased demand generates the requirement for a strategic facility this should be pooled via developer contributions to a strategic development.

However, it should be noted that the contribution may go towards a facility which is outside of the local authority boundary but reflects how people will live their live within that specific development.

To calculate the contribution from each housing development into a strategic leisure facility fund the Council should use the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator. Using the population growth and process identified from stage 1 this will provide a basis for negotiation with developers on the contribution from each development.

Active Places Power

Sport England Design and cost guidance

Checklist summary

Prompt	Evidence	Navigation
Step 1: Determine the indoor sports facility requirement resulting from the development	-	Active Places Power
Step 2: Determine the other indoor sports and community facilities are required as a result of the development	-	Leisure Strategy
Step 3: Demonstrate an understanding of what else the development generates demand for	-	Consultation with other council services, partners, and developers)
Step 4: Consider if there are existing facilities within close proximity that could be enhanced or extended to accommodate increased demand.	-	Facility mapping within the Sports Facilities Assessment Report
Step 5: Consider the design principles for new provision	-	Consultation Sport England Design and cost guidance
Step 6: Strategic pooling of financial contributions to deliver new provision	-	Active Places Power Sport England Design and cost guidance

APPENDIX 2: INDICATIVE COSTINGS

Indicative costs

The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan are detailed below. Further details can be found on the Sport England website:

Sport England facility cost guidance

The costs outlined below are for the development of community sports facilities. These rounded costs are based on schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (and therefore based on economies of scale), updated to reflect current forecast price indices provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), prepared by Technical Team Lead of Sport England.

Facility capital costs

Facility capital costs are calculated using estimates of what it typically costs to build modern sports facilities, including fees and external work, naturally taking into account varying conditions, inflation and regional adjustments.

Costs are updated regularly in conjunction with information provided by the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) and other Quantity Surveyors.

The document is often referred to as the Planning Kitbag costs as the figures are often used by planners and developers when reviewing potential planning contributions to site developments.

Facility Type/Details	Area (m2)	Capital Cost (£)
Affordable Sports Halls		
1 Court (18m x 10m)	382	850,000
2 Court (18m x 17m)	515	980,000
4 Court (34.5m x 20m)	1,532	2,860,000
5 Court (40.6m x 21.35m)	1,722	3,095,000
6 Court (34.5m x 27m)	1,773	3,135,000
8 Court (40m x 34.5m)	2,240	3,920,000
10 Court (40.6m x 42.7m)	2,725	4,715,000
12 Court (60m x 34.5m)	3,064	5,195,000
Affordable Community Swimming Pools		
25m Pool 4 Lane (25m x 8.5m)	1,084	4,450,000
25m Pool 5 Lane (25m x 10.5m)	1,344	5,390,000
25m Pool 6 Lane (25m x 12.5m)	1,543	5,850,000
25m Pool 6 Lane (25m x 12.5) plus secondary pool (13m x 7m)	1,850	6,970,000
25m Pool 8 Lane (25m x 17m)	1,878	7,050,000
25m Pool 8 Lane (25m x 17m) plus secondary pool (17m x 7m)	2,226	8,090,000
Affordable Sports Centres with Community 25m Pool		
4 lane pool, 4 court hall, 50 station health and fitness gym plus studio	2,879	9,560,000

Facility Type/Details	Area (m2)	Capital Cost (£)
6 lane pool, 4 court hall, 100 station health and fitness gym plus 2 studios	3,553	11,220,000
6 lane pool plus learner pool, 4 court hall, 100 station health and fitness gym plus 2 studios	3,906	12,360,000
8 lane pool plus learner pool, 5 court hall, 100 station health and fitness gym plus 2 studios	4,509	13,685,000
Indoor Bowls Centre		
6 Rink (excludes Club/Function Room)	1,914	2,595,000
8 Rink (includes Club/Function Room)	2,500	3,390,000
Indoor Tennis Centre		
3 court	2,138	2,930,000
Extra Court	-	955,000

NB – The costs for:

- Affordable Sports Halls.
- Affordable Community Swimming Pools.
- Affordable Sports Centres with Community 25m Pool Options.
- Affordable Sports Centres with 50m Pool Options.

Align with the costs included within Sport England publications of the same name updated to 2Q 2023. The reader is referred to these documents and their Appendices for further information on sizes and general arrangement layouts.

The costs for other facilities include:

- External works (car parks, roads, paths, services connections etc) are included at an average cost of 12% in addition to the costs of the works.
- 12 months maintenance/grow in costs for Grass Pitches.
- Allowance for Fees inclusive of PM, SI, Planning, and associated fees.

The costs exclude the following:

- Project specific details/information, including poor ground conditions, difficult access, long service connections.
- Natural Turf Pitches exclude the costs for site remodelling, pump and sump systems and SUDS attenuation.
- Inflation beyond 2Q 2023.
- VAT.
- Land acquisition costs.
- Regional cost variations in materials and labour.

Lifecycle costs

Lifecycle costs are how much it costs to keep a facility open and fit-for-purpose during its lifetime.

It includes costs for major replacement and planned preventative maintenance (PPM) day-to-day repairs. The costs are expressed as a percentage of the capital cost.

It should not be underestimated the importance of regular maintenance and the expense in maintaining a facility throughout its life.

The table below provides typical annual allowances expressed as a percentage of the Overall Estimated Total Project Cost per annum based on a 25-year cost model.

Facility Type/Details	Sinking Fund (%)	Maintenance (%)
Multi – Use Sports Hall		
Good quality Sports Hall – irrespective of size	0.7	0.5
Affordable Community Swimming Pools		
Good quality Community Swimming Pool, irrespective of size	0.4	1.1

Sinking Fund

Major Replacement Costs. Typical items for consideration include:

- Scheduled replacement of major systems and components, i.e. upgrades/replacement of mechanical and electrical equipment (HVAC, tanks, filtration/chlorination/dosing plant, CCTV and the like). Re-configuration of wet areas, replacement of sports flooring, reception refurbishment.
- Scheduled refurbishment and adaptations, including replacement of sports specific equipment/netting. Re-sealing / re-lining of sports flooring, replacing carpets and signage, replacement of external seating and fittings.
- Cyclical Redecoration.

Maintenance

Day to Day Repairs and Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM). Planned Preventative Maintenance includes the costs for servicing and maintaining mechanical and electrical plant and systems in accordance with recommended standards/frequencies and statutory/mandatory inspections (i.e. legionella, lift and boiler insurance inspections etc).

Day to day repairs include:

External walls

Repairs to external walls, cladding, glazed screens, external doors and windows. Roofs Repairs to roofs, roof lights and the like, together with all associated work such as roof flashings, DPC's, gutters and downpipes.

Other items Repairs to ducts, internal doors and frames and the like. Fittings and fixtures Repairs to fitted cupboards, seating, notice boards, shelving, worktops and the like. Excludes loose furniture such as chairs, curtains/blinds etc.

Other items

Repairs to ducts, internal doors, and frames and the like.

Fittings and fixtures

Repairs to fitted cupboards, seating, notice boards, shelving, worktops and the like. Excludes loose furniture such as chairs, curtains/blinds etc.

Internal finishes

Repairs to internal floor, wall and ceiling finishes.

Plumbing and internal drainage

Repairs and PPM to plumbing and internal drainage including work to; rising mains, storage tanks and cisterns; hot and cold-water services; sanitary ware; waste, soil, overflow, and vent pipes; internal manholes, rodding eyes, and access covers.

Heating and ventilation

Repairs and PPM to fuel tanks, boilers, flues, plant, pump, motors, filters, switches, expansion tanks, pipework up to and including calorifiers, radiators, ducts, valves, fans and heating and other HVAC equipment.

Power and lighting

Repairs and PPM to electrical switch gear, fuse boxes, busbars, casings, wiring and conduit to lighting and power supply.

Other M&E services

Repairs and PPM to other M&E services which are part of the building, such as filtration/ chlorination/dosing plant, fire alarm and bell systems, emergency lighting, clock systems, PA systems, firefighting equipment, flood lighting and lighting conductors.

External Works

General Grounds Maintenance, repairs to car parks and external paving.

Exclusions:

Operation, Occupancy, End of Life Costs, Fees, and VAT are excluded from the allowances. The definition of these is provided below:

Operation costs: The cost of operating the facility rather than its occupancy excluding maintenance costs. Includes utility costs, administrative costs, overheads, and taxes etc.

Occupancy cost: User support costs relating to the occupation of the facility e.g. security.

End of life: Notional costs payable and credits accruing after 25 years. Includes disposal inspection and reinstatement to meet potential contractual requirements.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

WINTER ASSESSMENT REPORT
JUNE 2024

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

3G	Third Generation Turf
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ANOG	Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide
CC	Cricket Club
ECB	England & Wales Cricket Board
ECFA	Essex County Football Association
EH	England Hockey
EFA	Essex FA
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GMA	Grounds Maintenance Association
HC	Hockey Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
NGB(s)	National Governing Body (of sport)
NHS	National Health Service
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non-turf pitch
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPOSS	Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFC	Rugby Football Club
UDC	Uttlesford District Council
U	Under

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1: Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) has been appointed by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to produce a Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS). This will provide the necessary robustness and direction to inform decisions affecting relevant provision within the local authority area.

The overarching aim of the project is to provide:

- An evidence-based assessment of existing sport and recreation facilities.
- An assessment of the sport and recreational needs of the future residents of Uttlesford up to 2031.

Separate indoor and built sports facilities and open space needs assessments have also been commissioned. All needs assessment reports will be followed by individual strategies which will contribute to the overall stated project outcomes to:

- Create sustainable communities by directing sports provision to areas of planned growth and areas of deficiency.
- Secure S106 contributions.
- Protect and enhance existing facilities, ensuring better provision through re-development (unless provision is good).
- Incorporate a robust up to date needs assessment which supports the Council and meets the requirements of the amended National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Reflect and address the needs and demands of the local population that will grow in line with the changes defined by the Local Plan.

Thereby:

- Encouraging greater participation in sport and recreation.
- Promoting healthier communities.
- Justifying on-site provision and financial support for facilities.
- Involving the community in decisions affecting provision.
- Reinforce partnerships in delivering health outcomes.

This report, known as the Assessment Report, presents a supply and demand assessment of outdoor sports facilities in the area. It is delivered in accordance with Sport England's PPOSS Guidance, which details five stages for the developing the study:

- Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (1)
- Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (2 & 3)
- Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (4, 5 & 6)
- Stage D: Develop the strategy (7 & 8)
- Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (9 & 10)

Stages A to C for winter sports are covered in this report, with Stage D covered in the proceeding strategy document and Stage E ongoing once the work has been approved. The lifespan of a PPOSS is considered to be three years, although this can be increased if it is kept up to date. As part of the Stage E process, the PPOSS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off. Such a review will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development.

1.2: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Why the Strategy is being developed

The PPOSS provides an update to the existing study, which was completed in 2019 and is nearing the end of its recommended lifespan. Its primary purpose is to ensure the strategic framework remains up-to-date so that the Council can ensure that the provision of playing pitches can meet the local and community needs of existing and future residents in Uttlesford, as well as visitors.

In addition, an up-to-date PPOSS is required to inform local planning policy and to conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). One of the core planning principles of this is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Section eight of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities, with Paragraph 102 stating that "planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate."

Paragraph 103 sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
b) 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
c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Paragraphs 101, 102, and 103 set the parameters for the designation of Local Green Space. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

Local context

Corporate Plan 2023-2027

Uttlesford's Corporate Plan sets out the key priorities for the next 5 years. Its vision within this period is 'to make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play', through the following themes:

Theme	Description
Active place-maker for our towns and villages	To create a renewed focus on strategic master-planning in partnership with towns and villages to create better resident-centred places to live. This will result in new policies and plans to give our towns and villages a strong sense of purpose and place.
Progressive custodian of our rural and historic environment	Residents will see the Council is a strong protector of the physical and historic environment and the Council is taking affirmative action on combating the effects of climate change at a local level.
Champion for the district	Residents will feel that the Council is proactively working on their behalf for the good of the district with other authorities and

	organisations. This will improve Uttlesford's connectivity and create a better local health service for residents.

To ensure that Uttlesford's towns and villages develop a strong sense of purpose and place, the authority will promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities. This will be achieved through:

- Working with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia.
- Continuing to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles.

Uttlesford Local Plan

The new Uttlesford Local Plan will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan is expected in Summer 2024. This will be followed by an examination period with the adopted Local Plan envisaged in early 2026.

This needs assessment report will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

Uttlesford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

The health of people in Uttlesford is generally better than the England average. However, there are key issues associated with the rurality of the area and the potential to overlook local inequalities, which are masked by Uttlesford's generally affluent socio-economic profile.

To reduce these inequalities, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision is to ensure that all children, young people and adults across the whole of Uttlesford can live healthy, fulfilling and long lives.

To achieve this, the Strategy list five key priorities – which are to:

1. Improve and support mental wellbeing.
2. Enable people to live healthy, active lifestyles throughout their lives.
3. Build healthy, resilient, active communities.
4. Alleviate pressures associated with increased costs of living.
5. Improve access to services and facilities.

To improve access to facilities, including leisure centres, the authority will review and enhance the sustainable public transport network to all key facilities. It will also ensure that facilities are of the highest of standards to ensure they are accessible. Providing accessible attractive facilities will increase the health of the Uttlesford community and create opportunities for social interaction.

Fit for the Future: Active Essex Implementation Plan 2021-31

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Launched in July 2021, the Fit for the Future Plan provides a rallying call to action for the thousands of organisations and people across Essex who recognise the enormous contribution physical activity and sport makes to the health and wellbeing of everyone.

As of June 2021, over 1.6 million people were living in Greater Essex of whom 901,000 are active adults who participate in over 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Active Essex wishes to increase this number, unite in one direction and over the next 10 years, create an active Essex to improve everyone's health and wellbeing. To achieve this, the Local Partnership sets out the following key objectives.

- **Strengthening Communities -** all communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to build resilience, connection and wellbeing.
- **Active Environments** - to work collectively to develop and provide well connected, accessible places and spaces that encourage people to be active.
- **Children and Young People** - to ensure every child has the best start in life, whereby they are active, healthy and happy.
- **Levelling Up Health and Wellbeing** - to change behaviours, which will enable and empower people to do things for themselves and their local communities. Physical activity is the highest priority for good health.
- **Sport and Physical Activity** - to support the recovery, development and growth of our sport and physical activity sector, to collectively increase opportunities for all.

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2022 – 2026

Every local area must have a JHWS setting out the priorities identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that local government, the NHS and other partners will deliver together through the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Essex JHWS aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in Essex by creating a culture and environment that reduces inequalities and enables residents of all ages to live healthier lives. To achieve this, the JHWS identifies five key priorities, all of which have specific development outcomes which need to be achieved though partnership work, as outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 1.1: Essex JHWS priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcome
Improving mental health and wellbeing	Supported the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families with a focus on the vulnerable. Reduced loneliness and social isolation. Reduced suicide through a focus on system support.
Physical activity and healthy weight	Enabled children, young people and their families to be more physically active. Improved levels of physical activity amongst adults by helping them find ways to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Improved nutritional awareness, healthy eating, and help low-income households access affordable healthy food options.
Supporting long term independence	Improved access to advice and guidance including financial support so that residents with long-term conditions and their carers can better manage their conditions. Reduced digital exclusion to improve access to advice and support online. Help all residents have better access to opportunities in education, work, skills, housing, and their social lives.
Alcohol and substance misuse	Improve access to advice, support and treatment for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues. Work across the system to help address the challenges of county lines and drugs related criminality. Educate children, young people, adults, and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.
Health inequalities & the wider determinants of health	Ensure that all children have access to quality parenting, early years provision and education that provide the foundations for later in life. Address food poverty and ensure that all children can access healthy food. Improve access to employment, education and training for adults and young people in our most deprived communities. Embed the use of health impact assessments in planning practice to ensure new planning proposals do not negatively impact on health, health services or widen health inequalities.

Scope

The PPOSS encompasses all relevant facilities regardless of ownership and management. The following are included within the scope:

- Football pitches (grass and third generation turf (3G))
- Rugby union pitches
- Cricket pitches
- Hockey pitches (artificial grass pitches (AGPs))
- Outdoor tennis courts
- Outdoor netball courts
- Outdoor bowling greens
- Athletics tracks

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A bespoke section for third generation turf (3G) pitches is also included within this report. This is relevant to several sports, predominately football but also rugby union. It is separated out from other sections due to this multi-sport nature.

Study area

The study will cover provision within the Uttlesford administrative boundary area. Further to this, sub areas or analysis areas are applied to allow more localised assessment of provision and examination of supply and demand at the local level. Using analysis areas allows local circumstances and issues to be considered. In total, four analysis areas will be used, these are:

- North Uttlesford
- Rural North & Thaxted
- Rural South
- South Uttlesford

The breakdown of the areas and the whole study area can be further seen overleaf.

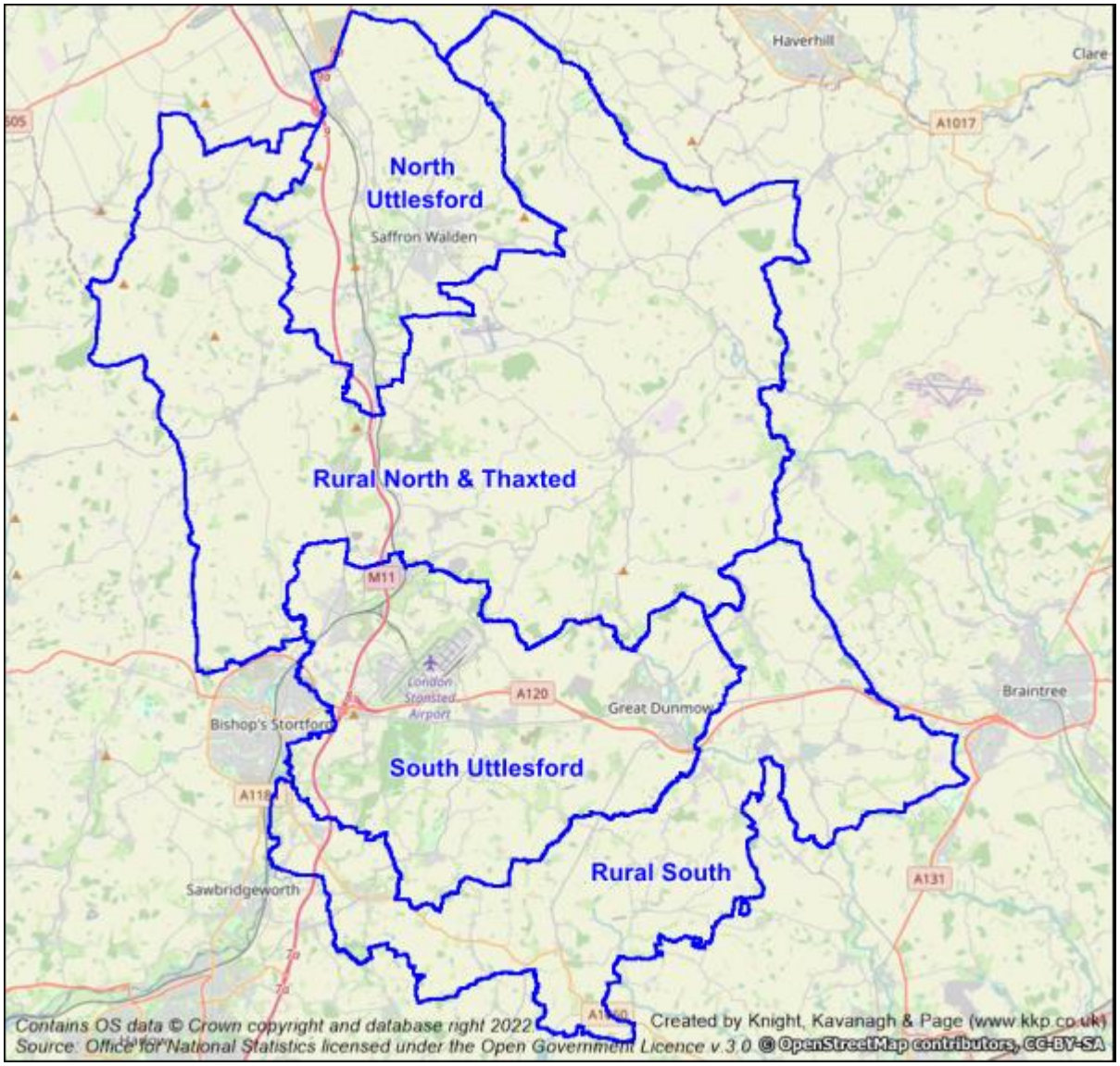

Figure 1.1: Map of Uttlesford and its analysis areas

Cross boundary issues are explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries.

1.3: Gather information and views on supply of and demand for provision (Stage B)

A clear picture of the supply of and demand for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities in Uttlesford is required to enable an accurate assessment of quantity, quality and usage. This has been achieved through site assessments and consultation with key stakeholders.

Gather supply information and views – an audit of provision

Quantity

Where known, all playing pitch facilities are included within the PPOSS, irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites have been initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web-based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting this process by checking and updating this initial data as well as by supplying their own affiliation data and booking information.

For each site, the following details are recorded in the project database:

- Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- Ownership and management type
- Security of tenure
- Community availability
- Total number, type and quality of provision
- Usage levels

Sport England's guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2021 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order':

- **Playing pitch** – a delineated area which is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- **Playing field** – the whole of a site that encompasses at least one playing pitch.

Although the statutory definition of a playing field sets out a minimum size, the PPOSS takes account of smaller-size pitches that contribute to the supply side. For example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch is included despite it potentially being smaller than 0.2ha. The study counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply, with the definition of a playing pitch also including artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

As far as possible, this report aims to capture all of the playing pitches within Uttlesford; however, there may be instances that have led to omissions, such as unused school sites where access was not possible (although facilities at sites not accessed are still included within the study where provision is known to exist from other sources e.g. affiliation data or club/league consultation). Where provision has not been recorded within the report, it is still considered to exist for planning purposes and will continue to do so. Furthermore, any exclusion does not mean that the provision is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

Accessibility

Not all playing pitch sites offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility also influences their actual availability for community use. As such, each site included in the PPOSS is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- **Community use** - provision in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.

- **Available but unused** - provision that is available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues. This most often applies to school sites but can apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- **No community use** - provision which as a matter of policy or practice is not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club sites and some semi-professional club sites where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ***Disused* -** sites that have previously been used for sport but are not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Once sites are disused for five or more years, these fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still must be assessed using the criteria in NPPF paragraph 103, with Sport England still likely to challenge a proposed loss which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of such a site is still that of a playing field until such time as its use is formally changed or it is developed for non-sport use.

In addition, there should be a good degree of certainty that provision will be available to the community for at least the following three years. If this is not the case, the provision is still included within the assessment but is noted as having unsecure tenure. A judgement is made based on the information gathered and a record of secured or unsecured community use is put against each site.

Quality

The capacity of provision to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances, it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

The quality of all provision identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed as part of a PPOSS, regardless of ownership, management and availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each pitch/facility. These ratings are then used to help estimate the capacity (aligned to NGB guidance) to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

For the purposes of quality assessments, the PPOSS refers to playing facilities and ancillary facilities separately as being of 'good', 'standard' or 'poor' quality. However, some good quality sites may have poor quality elements and vice versa (e.g., a good quality pitch may be serviced by poor quality changing facilities).

Good quality refers to facilities with, for example, good grass cover, even surfaces and that are free from vandalism and litter. For ancillary facilities, it refers to access for disabled people, sufficient provision for referees, juniors/women/girls and appropriate showers, toilets and car parking. The age of the facilities can also have a significant bearing on the overall quality rating.

Standard quality refers to playing provision that has, for example, adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear and goalposts that may be secure but need minor repair. In terms of ancillary facilities, standard quality refers to adequately sized changing rooms, storage provision and the provision of toilets, although some level of improvement/ modernisation may be required.

Poor quality refers to playing provision with, for example, inadequate grass cover, uneven surfaces and poor drainage, whilst for ancillary facilities it may relate to changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old, dated interiors. They are often unsuitable for mixed gender use.

To ensure accurate findings, site assessments for each sport are carried out during the playing season for that sport. As such, the site assessments for sports played in the winter are conducted between November and February, whilst the sports played in the summer have assessments carried out between July and August.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance), users and providers have also been consulted on the quality, the Council and relevant NGBs have also been engaged. In some instances, the quality rating has been adjusted to reflect this (thus establishing an “agreed quality rating”).

Furthermore, technical assessments have also been provided, where undertaken, such as those carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Association (GMA), which now provides technical assessments across football, rugby union and cricket (known as PitchPower reports). PitchPower reports, where carried out, have informed the quality assessments for the PPOSS to ensure the findings align (unless there is a clear reason for a differential e.g., recent improvements/deterioration).

Gather demand information and views

Current demand

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e., recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. To that end, demand for provision in Uttlesford tends to fall within the following four categories:

- Organised competitive play
- Organised training
- Informal play
- Unofficial use

Current and future demand for provision is presented on a sport-by-sport basis within the relevant sections of this report. In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section (unless no such demand has been identified).

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to provision. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is in training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the competition. In comparison, latent demand is the number of additional teams (or members) that could be accommodated if access to a sufficient number of playing pitch facilities (and ancillary provision) was available.

Exported and imported demand refers to those playing outside of their local authority area of choice. This therefore includes Uttlesford-based demand that travels outside of the district to access provision (exported demand), as well as demand from nearby authorities that travel into the district (imported demand). This can often be linked to capacity and/or quality issues within an authority, although nationally some leagues and competitions operate a central venue system that can necessitate the displacement.

A variety of consultation methods have been used to collate demand information. Firstly, face-to-face consultation (normally via video call) has been carried out with key clubs and leagues from each sport (as identified by the Council and the relevant NGBs), thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and further interrogation of key issues. For all remaining clubs, telephone consultation or an online survey (converted to postal if required) has been utilised.

Key providers and other users of provision have been contacted, including town and parish councils as well as schools and further/higher education establishments. This involves face-to-face meetings and an online survey being sent to primary schools, special schools and independent schools.

Future demand

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPOSS to assess whether the future demand for provision can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and proposed housing growth, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for the relevant facilities. Assumptions can then be made as to whether existing provision can cater for such growth.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication as to how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio can then be applied to predicted participation, population and housing growth to help estimate the change in demand for each sport that may arise in the future.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- Recent trends in the participation.
- The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- Feedback from clubs on plans to develop additional teams / attract additional members.
- Any local and NGB specific sports development targets e.g., women's and girls' activity.

All future demand projections across the PPOSS for Uttlesford cover the period up until 2041, in line with the Council's Local Plan.

1.4: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Stage C)

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision in Uttlesford and to identify key issues, challenges and aspirations. This forms the basis of this report.

Understanding the situation at individual sites

Qualitative ratings are linked to a capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. For playing pitch sports, the quality and use of each pitch is assessed against recommended capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions provision could accommodate.

Each pitch is then said to have potential spare capacity, be at capacity, or be overplayed – as follows:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

Pitches have a limit on how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may for example include training sessions and informal use. One team accessing one whole pitch is considered to use the pitch for 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week based on them playing home and away fixtures on an alternate basis (therefore only requiring access to their home pitch every two weeks).

As a guide, the NGBs for football, cricket, rugby union and hockey have set a standard number of matches that each pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality. Given how the sports operate, this is per week for football, rugby league, rugby union, per day for hockey and per season for cricket and is further detailed in the table overleaf.

Table 1.2: Capacity of playing pitches in match equivalent sessions

Sport	Pitch type	Good	Standard	Poor
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	60 per season	60 per season
Hockey	One AGP	4 matches per day	4 matches per day	0 matches per day

More detailed sport specific capacity guidance is detailed within the relevant sections of this report.

Develop the current and future picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on a Council-wide and an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of peak time demand (i.e., the day/time demand is most likely to exist). This then identifies whether there is overall spare capacity or whether there is a shortfall of capacity.

Although spare capacity may be identified at some sites and in some areas, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed (actual spare capacity), or a site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable rotation and to reduce wear and tear. There may also be a need to discount some capacity, for example at poor quality sites that should not be used until they are improved, or at unsecure sites where long-term access cannot be guaranteed.

Conversely, where a shortfall of capacity is identified, this does not necessarily mean there is a need for increased provision via new facilities. Instead, it may be possible for deficits to be overcome through better utilising the existing stock, such as through quality improvements or through improving community access.

Once current capacity has been determined, future capacity can then also be calculated via incorporating the future demand that has been identified as well as any unmet, latent and exported demand.

Identify the key findings and issues

The Assessment Report, which is this document, is drafted and presented on a sport-by-sport basis, with data analysis undertaken on both a Council-wide and sub-area basis. This focuses on reporting research findings, consultation, site audit information and data analysis supported by detailed GIS mapping. It is agreed and 'signed off' prior to moving on to the strategy and action plan development stages.

Each included section (from Part 2 onwards) summarises the local administration of the playing pitch facilities. Each provides a summary of the supply of and demand for provision, with key issues identified and an overall supply and demand analysis undertaken.

1.5: Develop the strategy (Stage D)

The Strategy follows the production of this Assessment Report, once it has been finalised and signed off by the Steering Group. It will feature:

- Headline findings
- An overall vision and associated aims for the PPOSS
- Sport-by-sport recommendations and scenarios
- Strategic recommendations
- A site-by-site and area-by-area Action Plan
- Housing growth scenarios

Additionally, it will provide detail as to how to deliver the PPOSS and keep it robust and up to date (Stage E).

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

The organisation primarily responsible for the development of football in Uttlesford is Essex County Football Association (ECFA). It is also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaches and delivering national football schemes.

Facility development for football is largely the responsibility of the Football Foundation (FF), which is a charity, linked to the Premier League, the FA and the Government, that helps communities improve their local football facilities through grant funding. It is committed to improving the experience of playing football for everyone involved in the game. The FF also acts on behalf of The FA as the strategic NGB for football in supporting the development of a PPOSS.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches, where formal demand is generally defined through five formats of play and five pitch types, linked to the age of teams and players. Please refer to the table below for more detail relating to this.

Table 2.1: Football grass pitch formats

Format/pitch type	Age range	Recommended pitch size (metres)
Adult	U17s+	100 x 64
Youth 11v11	U15s-U16s	91 x 55
Youth 11v11	U13s-U14s	82 x 50
Youth 9v9	U11s-U12s	73 x 46
Mini 7v7	U9s-U10s	55 x 37
Mini 5v5	U7s-U8s	37 x 27

Part 3 of this report captures supply and demand for third generation (3G) pitches, which is the preferred artificial surface type for football. There is a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, in addition to training needs, especially to accommodate mini and youth football. For the purposes of this PPOSS, 11v11 3G pitches are defined as those which meet FA minimum dimension criteria for adult football (91 x 55 metres), albeit pitches should be constructed to 100 x 64 meters as per recommended adult dimensions where possible.

Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)

To support the delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Game Strategy, the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project which has now been completed. As part of this, an LFFP has been produced for every local authority across England, with each plan being unique to its area, as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (the FA, Premier League and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)) and is delivered through the FF to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP builds upon PPOSS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game and as including strategic priorities for investment across small-sided football (including recreational and indoor activity). The LFFP also includes consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as under-represented communities. This includes those which may be key partners using football for behavioural change, plus groups which may be key drivers of FA priorities around participation in women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

The LFFP for Uttlesford was produced in 2019[1]. As it is a 'live' document it will be updated by the FF and County FA following the completion of this study, as an up-to-date supply and demand assessment may present findings and recommendations that need to be incorporated for investment purposes. LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require potential funding through the FF.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPOSS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP does, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans.

Consultation

A total of 33 football clubs play in Uttlesford, with 21 responding to consultation requests (64% of clubs). This equates to a team response rate of 85% (179 out of 211 teams). Most clubs that have not responded are small clubs fielding just one or two teams.

2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a total of 73 football pitches across 34 sites in Uttlesford. Of these, 72 pitches are available at some level for community use (although not necessarily used). The only unavailable pitch is at Carver Barracks.

Table 2.2: Summary of pitch types available for community use

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	3	4	3	3	7	**20**
Rural North & Thaxted	4	3	3	5	-	**15**
Rural South	8	-	1	1	-	**10**
South Uttlesford	3	6	5	6	7	**27**
Uttlesford	**18**	**13**	**12**	**15**	**14**	**72**

The South Uttlesford Analysis Area contains the largest offering with 27 pitches (38%), followed by the North Uttlesford Analysis Area with 20 (28%) pitches. The fewest number of pitches are identified in the Rural South Analysis Area, providing ten pitches (14%).

The largest number of pitches is identified amongst adult pitches, with 18 (25%), whilst the fewest number of pitches are represented amongst youth 9v9 pitches, with 12 (17%).

Figure 2.1 overleaf identifies all grass football pitches currently servicing Uttlesford.

[1] https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/uttlesford/uttlesford-executive-summary/

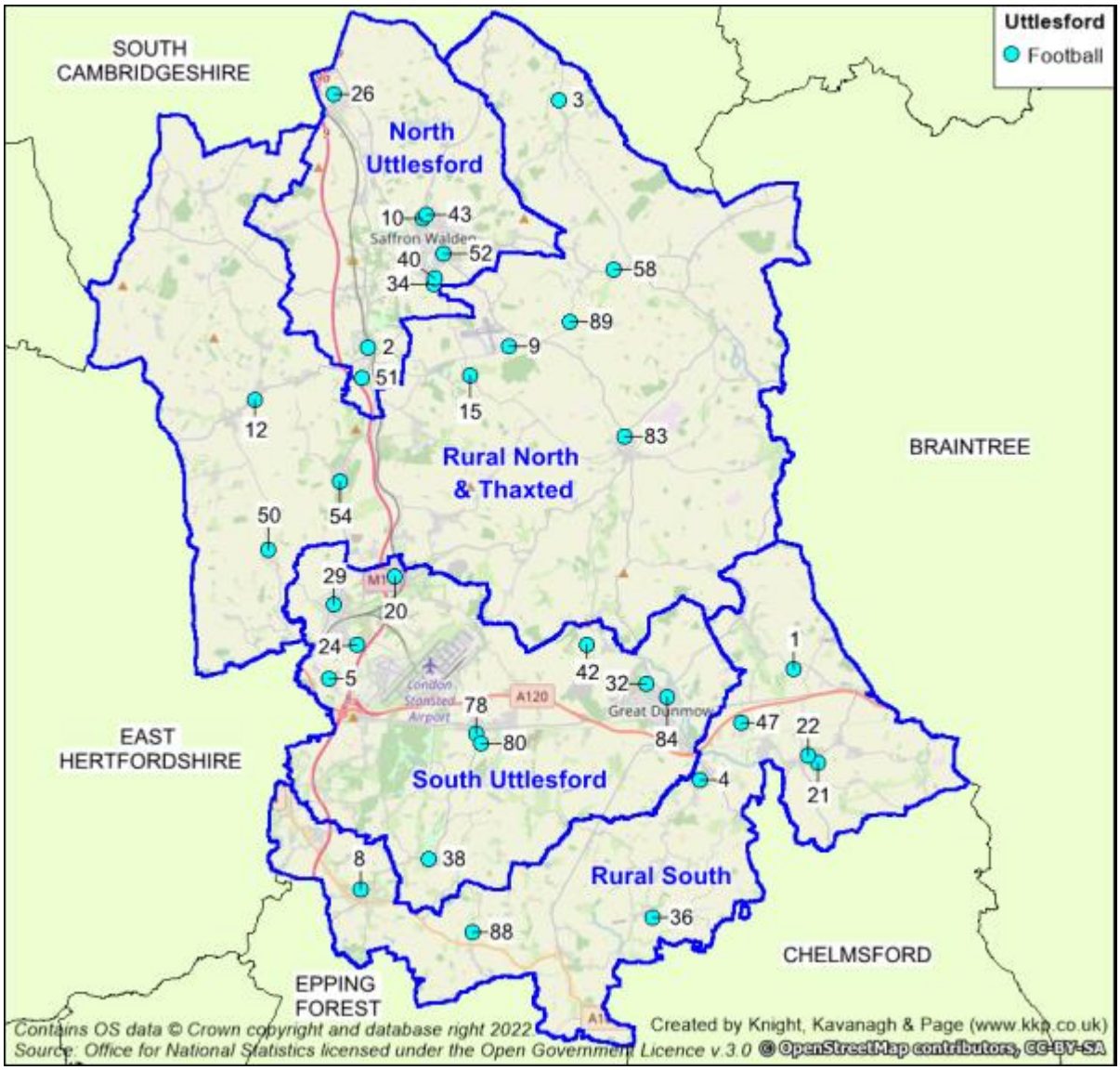

Figure 2.1: Location of grass football pitches in Uttlesford

Disused sites

A disused site is a site that has previously been used for sport but that is not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked).

Overall, there are four disused sites in Uttlesford. Exact details surrounding each site are referenced in the table below.

Table 2.3: Disused pitches/sites within Uttlesford (football)

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Comments
7	Burns Playing Field	CM6 2EB	Site previously accommodated one youth 11v11 pitch, *circa* 2022. The pitch is no longer marked out.
71	Stansted Airport Pitch	CM24 1RY	Site previously accommodated one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch, *circa* 2023. The pitches are no longer marked out.
90	Woodfield	CM22 6QR	Site previously accommodated one adult pitch, *circa* 2020. The pitch is no longer marked out.
94	Friends School (Walden School)	CB11 3NY	Site previously accommodated three grass pitches[2], *circa* 2017. The pitches are no longer marked out.

The disused pitches at Stansted Airport were previously used by Elsenham FC for its home matches. As part of the mitigation for the ultimate loss of the pitch, the Airport has committed to improving pitch quality at Elsenham Recreation Ground, as well as wider plans for 3G pitch provision at Forest Hall School.

In the next few years, the youth 11v11 pitch at Helena Romanes School will fall out of use, following the expected closure of the site due to a housing development. The School will be re-provided, further details of which can be found below.

In addition to the above, there are 13 sites that are still in use recreationally that previously provided formal football pitches but no longer do so. Sport England would not classify these sites as disused as the sites remain accessible.

[2] Configurations unknown.

Table 2.4: Unmarked pitches within Uttlesford (football)

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Comments
5	Birchanger Social Club	CM23 5QJ	One adult pitch which is not currently marked out.
9	Carver Barracks	CB10 2YA	One adult pitch which is not currently marked out.
21	Felsted Playing Field	CM6 3DS	One youth 9v9 pitch which is not currently marked out.
23	Flitch Green Community Centre	CM6 3GG	One youth 9v9 pitch, two mini 7v7 pitches and one mini 5v5 pitch which are not currently marked out.
28	Hadstock Recreation Ground	CB21 4PD	One adult pitch which is not currently marked out.
31	Hatfield Heath Primary School	CM22 7EA	One mini 7v7 pitch which is not currently marked out.
49	Littlebury Recreation Ground	CB11 4TA	One adult pitch which is not currently marked out.
51	Newport Recreation Ground	CB11 3PU	Two adult pitches which are not currently marked out.
56	R A Butler Academy	CB11 3DG	Two mini 7v7 pitches which are not currently marked out.
79	Takeley Primary School	CM6 1YE	One mini 7v7 pitch which is not currently marked out,
80	Takeley Sports Field	CM22 6TG	Two adult pitches which are not currently marked out.
92	Great Dunmow Primary School	CM6 1ZR	One mini 7v7 pitch which is not currently marked out,
93	Henham & Ugley Primary & Nursery School	CM22 6BP	One mini 7v7 pitch and one mini 5v5 pitch which are not currently marked out.

A scenario will be added in the forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan reviewing the impact which reinstating pitches on these sites would have on the supply and demand balance identified for football within the conclusions of this report.

Future provision

To mitigate the loss of Helena Romanes School, Essex County Council plans to build a new secondary school on land to the south of Stortford Road. The new school is expected to provide grass pitches, although the size dimensions are not yet known.[3]

Three additional residential developments have been approved across Uttlesford that are expected to provide future grass pitch provision. Firstly, at land north of Henham Road in Elsenham[4], permission has been granted for two new grass pitches to be built, one youth 9v9 pitch and one mini 5v5 pitch. Elsewhere, at land east of Highworth Quarry in Great Dunmow[5], permission has been granted to construct adult pitches (quantity unknown). Finally, at land west of Woodside Way, also in Great Dunmow, two small sports facilities are expected to be built, catering for mini football (pitch sizes unknown)[6].

[3] Planning reference: CC/UTT/90/20
[4] Planning reference: UTT/21/3269/DFO
[5] Planning reference: UTT/21/1708/OP
[6] Planning reference: UTT/23/0119/DFO

The following table outlines the current status of each proposed development and its anticipated delivery timeframe.

Table 2.5: Status of future provision and timeframes

Site name	Current situation	Anticipated delivery date
Land east of Highworth Quarry	S106 requires delivery of sports pitches prior to 45% of development completed. Prolonged timeframe given the application is for 1,000-1,200 dwellings and it is only at the outline stage.	10 to 15 years
Land north of Henham Road	The second phase of the development is underway and sports pitch delivery is the fourth phase.	Three to five years
Land south of Stortford Road	No start has been made on the development and conditions have not yet been discharged. Running out of time to implement permission.	Five to ten years
Land west of Woodside Way	One condition discharged so far but pre-commencement conditions remain. A start has not been made on pitches specifically, but progress has been made on surrounding development parcel.	Three years

In addition, Thaxted Rangers FC are exploring the potential to develop a new site with three youth 11v11 pitches. Early Discussions have taken place with FF and ECFA, as well as with a local landowner around securing a long term lease with Thaxted Parish Council for such a development.

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in Uttlesford is generally secure. A site is thought to provide security of tenure if there is a long-term lease agreement in place or a guarantee that the pitch will continue to be provided over the next three years.

To attract external funding, clubs and sites generally need long-term security of tenure. Linked to this, the table below reflects the clubs in Uttlesford currently operating at their home grounds under a lease arrangement.

Table 2.6: Summary of football clubs' lease agreements

Site ID	Site name	Club name	Comments
4	Barnston Association Football Club	Barnston FC	Lease from private landlord (three years remaining)[7]
10	Catons Lane	Saffron Walden Town FC	Lease from Saffron Walden Town Council (99-year lease)
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	Saffron Walden Community FC	Lease from Saffron Walden Town Council (50-year lease)
52	Peasland Road Football Pitch	Plantation Youth FC	Lease from Saffron Walden Town Council[8]
83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	Thaxted Rangers FC	Lease from the Thaxted Parish Council[9]

Barnston AFC is currently negotiating with the private landowner which owns its site to secure a longer-term tenure; however, the landowner is considering a redevelopment of the site, meaning the Club would need to find a new home ground. Therefore, the Club's tenure is currently unsecure.

Security of tenure is provided for clubs which own freehold of their home ground. This is identified for the following:

- Hatfield Heath FC (at Claves Pasture)
- Stansted FC (at Hargrave Park)
- Takeley FC (at Takeley Football Club)
- White Roding FC (at White Roding Sports & Social Club)

In addition, most parish/town council sites in Uttlesford ensure long-term security of tenure as part of their ongoing commitment to providing a leisure offer. In total, seven responding clubs indicate they rent use of parish/town council-owned pitches, predominately on a seasonal basis. These clubs are:

- Dunmow Rovers Youth FC (at Little Dunmow Recreation Ground and The Causeway Recreation Ground)
- Elsenham FC (at Elsenham Recreation Ground)
- Felsted Rovers FC (at Felsted Playing Field)
- Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC (at High Street Recreation Ground)
- Newport FC (at Newport Recreation Ground)
- Saffron Walden Community FC (at Newport Recreation Ground, Radwinter Recreation Ground and Wimbish Recreation Ground)
- Sewards End Dragons FC (at Quendon Athletic Football Club)

In contrast, tenure is unsecure at most other venues, most notably at education sites where long-term access is not guaranteed.

[7] Start date of lease unknown.
[8] Lease length unknown.
[9] Lease length unknown.

Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches across Uttlesford has been assessed via a combination of site visits, which were carried out in December 2023 using non-technical assessments (as determined by the FA); PitchPower reports; and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating on a scale of good, standard and poor. For the full site assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they can accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking many matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

The table below summarises the quality of community available pitches in Uttlesford. As seen, most pitches are assessed as standard quality, with 32 (44%) being rated as such. Of the remaining pitches, 26 (36%) community available pitches are assessed as poor quality and 14 (19%) are assessed as good quality.

Table 2.7: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Pitch type	Good	Standard	Poor
Adult	7	8	3
Youth 11v11	2	4	7
Youth 9v9	1	7	4
Mini 7v7	-	7	8
Mini 5v5	4	6	4
Total	**14**	**32**	**26**

The 14 good quality pitches are identified across the following sites:

- Barnston Association Football Club
- Felsted Playing Field
- Felsted School
- Hargrave Park
- High Street Recreation Ground
- Lime Avenue Playing Fields
- Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust
- White Roding Sports & Social Club
- Wimbish Recreation Ground

In contrast, 26 community available pitches located across 14 sites are assessed as poor quality. In the main, these pitches show signs of significant wear and are not comprehensively maintained (comparatively to the sites listed above):

- Alcott Playing Field
- Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland
- Ashdon Recreation Ground
- Calves Pasture
- Carver Barracks
- Clavering Jubilee Fields

- Elsenham Recreation Ground
- Great Chesterford Recreation Ground
- Herberts Farm Playing Fields
- Katherine Semar Junior School
- Laundry Lane
- Little Dunmow Recreation Ground
- Radwinter Recreation Ground
- The Causeway Recreation Ground

Mitigation for the loss of Stansted Airport Football Pitch (disused) also includes improving the quality of the grass pitches at Elsenham Recreation Ground.[10]

Although some parish/town council-owned pitches are assessed as poor quality (19 pitches), most are assessed as standard quality (25 pitches) when considering the maintenance regime undertaken. As such, the main reasons for some parish/town council pitches being assessed as poor quality relates more to waterlogging issues and/or unofficial use exacerbating problems due to the open access nature of many sites.

From consultation responses, just 13% of clubs report that pitch quality has worsened in recent years (at their home ground), whilst 47% report an improvement. The remaining 40% report no change. For clubs whose pitches have deteriorated in recent years, a common theme is that inadequate drainage systems, unfavourable weather and overuse have led to such deterioration. In comparison, clubs whose pitches have improved in recent years attribute this to a more thorough maintenance regime being undertaken.

Dunmow Rovers Youth FC, Felsted Rovers FC, Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC, Plantation Youth FC, Newport FC, Saffron Walden Community Girls FC, Sewards End Dragons and Thaxted Rangers FC all report that their sites have suffered from vandalism recently at their respective home grounds.

A full breakdown of the quality ratings can be found in Table 2.23.

Pitch improvement

The FA has a Grass Pitch Programme aimed at enhancing and sustaining the quality of grass pitches across the Country. For provision included in the programme, clubs can utilise the services of the FF's PitchPower app to carry out a free on-site assessment of their pitches. This then provides the Grounds Management Association (GMA) with the detail needed to create a personalised, informative report to advise on how improvements can be made. Clubs then receive bespoke advice and support to help with any future actions, funding applications and equipment, with clubs getting access to discounted rates for machinery and consumables through local partnerships.

The web app is open to access by all providers, including clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches. Applicants are required to submit a PitchPower assessment for each of their pitches as a condition of a grant funding application for FF grass pitch investment, such as the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (detailed later in this section).

[10] Planning reference: UTT/22/0434/OP

PitchPower is less restricted by the seasonal window of in-season play than the non-technical assessments, instead being able to be undertaken within a 10-month period, with assessments completed and submitted within one of three windows: September - October, November – March or April – June. Organisations must carry out two assessments a year, with at least one in the November – March window.

As well as the completion of other supporting information such as detail of volunteer training and what maintenance equipment is available, the assessment requires the taking of images and a single soil sample at each assessment site. There are three assessment sites for adult and youth pitches at each goal area and the centre circle, whilst for mini pitches there are two sites at the centre circle and one goal area.

The PitchPower assessments use a new five step Performance Quality Standard (PQS) rating system developed by the GMA, with the FF and Sport England agreeing alignment with the capacity guidance within the existing PPOSS guidance. This alignment is shown in the table below.

Table 2.8: Agreed equivalent PPOSS quality rating for PQS ratings

PQS rating	PPOSS quality rating
Poor	Poor
Basic	Standard
Good	Good
Advanced	Good
High	Good

In Uttlesford, three sites have received a recent PitchPower assessment[11]. The findings of these compared to PPOSS findings are shown in the table below.

Table 2.9: Summary of PitchPower findings compared to PPOSS quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	No. of pitches	Pitch type	PitchPower rating	PPOSS rating
4	Barnston Association Football Club	1	Adult	Good	Good
4	Barnston Association Football Club	1	Adult	Poor	Good
38	High Street Recreation Ground	1	Youth (11v11)	Basic	Standard
38	High Street Recreation Ground	1	Mini (7v7)	Basic	Standard
38	High Street Recreation Ground	2	Mini (5v5)	Good	Good
38	High Street Recreation Ground	1	Mini (5v5)	Basic	Standard
78	Takeley Football Club	1	Adult	Basic	Standard

PitchPower reports have also been completed at Flitch Green Community Centre (now disused) and The Causeway Recreation Ground; however, as these were carried out longer than 12 months ago, the results of these reports have not informed the PPOSS assessments.

[11] Only Pitch Power reports conducted post 2022 have been considered as the findings of those older than this are no longer considered to be reliable.

In addition to PitchPower, the FA has a general pitch improvement strategy, in partnership with the GMA. As part of this, it has a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice and practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. This is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise local authority-maintained sites.

Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF). As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the GMA (formerly Institute of Groundsmanship).

The GPMF can be utilised by grassroots football clubs, leagues and other eligible, organisations with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a PitchPower site assessment and subsequent Grass Pitch Assessment Report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Following a report, clubs can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches. Once a PitchPower grass pitch assessment report has been produced for the site, eligible organisations can then apply for grant funding support through the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 good quality grass pitches by 2030. If a site is categorised as ‘poor’ or ‘basic’ then clubs can apply for funding to enhance pitch quality, whilst clubs with good quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to sustain quality.

All applicants must have the required security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs (excluding pitches used for National League System play), leagues, County FAs, community organisations and charities. In 2023 the fund has now been opened up to education organisations and town/parish councils as eligible applicants. Local authorities are not currently eligible applicants, however, eligible organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have permission of the landowner via a service level agreement.

Over marked pitches

Over marking of pitches can cause notable damage to the surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. In some cases, mini pitches may be marked onto senior pitches or mini matches may be played widthways across adult or youth pitches. This can lead to targeted areas of surface damage due to a large amount of play focused on high traffic areas, particularly the middle third of the pitch.

Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, but it may also cause logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are due to play at the same site at the same time.

The table below highlights all sites containing over marked pitches in Uttlesford.

Table 2.10: Sites containing over marked pitches

Site ID	Site	Comments
26	Great Chesterford Recreation Ground	One youth 11v11 pitch is overmarked by one youth 9v9 pitches.
51	Newport Recreation Ground	One adult pitch which is overmarked by one youth 9v9 pitch.
52	Peasland Road Football Pitch	One adult pitch is overmarked by one youth 9v9 pitch.

Despite overmarkings, only the pitch at Great Chesterford is assessed as poor quality, suggesting that the over marked pitches at Newport Recreation Ground and Peasland Road Football Pitch are being maintained relatively well. However, capacity issues are evident at both Newport Recreation Ground and Peasland Road Football Pitch, partly because of the additional usage.

Ancillary facilities

As with pitch quality, the quality of ancillary facilities servicing football sites across Uttlesford has been assessed based on identifying good, standard and poor quality provision. To that end, ancillary facility ratings are primarily influenced by the type and quality of amenities which are available on a site, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, car parking and boundary fencing.

Where changing room facilities are not provided, this can make sites inaccessible to some clubs and teams, particularly for adult football and female activity. The provision of appropriate changing facilities can be a league requirement. Overall, seven community available sites are not serviced by an ancillary clubhouse facility in Uttlesford.

Of those sites serviced by provision, nine have good quality facilities, six have standard quality facilities and seven have poor quality facilities. This is further summarised in the following table.

Table 2.11. Summary of ancillary facilities' quality (community available)

Site ID	Site name	Quality rating[12]
1	Alcott Playing Field	Poor
3	Ashdon Recreation Ground	Poor
4	Barnston Association Football Club	Standard
5	Birchanger Social Club	Poor
8	Calves Pasture	N/A
10	Catons Lane	Standard
12	Clavering Jubilee Fields	Good
15	Debden Recreation Ground	Poor
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	N/A
21	Felsted Playing Field	N/A
26	Great Chesterford Recreation Ground	Good
29	Hargrave Park	Standard
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	Good
36	High Easter Playing Fields	Good
38	High Street Recreation Ground	N/A
42	Laundry Lane	Poor
43	Lime Avenue Playing Fields	Good
47	Little Dunmow Recreation Ground	Standard
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	Good
51	Newport Recreation Ground	Standard
52	Peasland Road Football Pitch	Good
54	Quendon Athletic Football Club	N/A
58	Radwinter Recreation Ground	Poor
78	Takeley Football Club	Poor
80	Takeley Sports Field	N/A
83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	Good
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	N/A
88	White Roding Sports & Social Club	Good
89	Wimbish Recreation Ground	Standard

At Alcott Playing Field, Ashdon Recreation Ground, Debden Recreation Ground, Laundry Lane and Takeley Football Club (poor quality ancillary facilities), the ancillary facilities are outdated and basic in terms of what they provide, whereas at Radwinter Recreation Ground, the facilities are not outdated but instead are more often utilised to serve other purposes and are not deemed to be dedicated provision.

Some school sites offer access to ancillary provision; however, such provision is generally considered to be impractical for community football clubs with very little schools offering dedicated ancillary provision and instead clubs have to use existing provision provided from a curricular perspective. As such, no quality ratings have been provided for school sites.

In addition to site assessments, of the clubs that responded to consultation requests, 40% report they have access to good quality clubhouse and/or changing provision at their respective home venues, whilst standard quality facilities report accessing by 27% of clubs

[12] Quality ratings have been determined via a combination of site assessment visits and consultation with both clubs and wider steering group.

and 7% access poor quality facilities. The remaining 26% report that they are without such ancillary provision.

As previously mentioned, eight sites providing community available provision are not equipped with ancillary facilities. In total, 56 teams across seven clubs are using pitches at sites which are without ancillary facilities. The following table provides a breakdown of the teams playing matches at such sites.

Table 2.12. Summary of teams using sites without ancillary facilities (community available)

Site ID	Site name	Club name	Number of teams
8	Calves Pasture	Hatfield Heath FC	1
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	Elsenham Youth FC	20
21	Felsted Playing Field	Felsted Rovers FC	2
38	High Street Recreation Ground	Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	6
54	Quendon Athletic Football Club	Elsenham Youth FC	3
80	Takeley Sports Field	Little Canfield Stars HBO Girls FC	4
80	Takeley Sports Field	Takeley Youth FC	4
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	16

The sites referenced in the table above should be prioritised for future ancillary investment, especially those catering for the greatest demand. It should be noted that some sites included in the table below are serviced by accessible provision such as communal village halls. These are however not always accessible and typically come with a rental cost for use.

Away from clubhouse provision, 58% of responding clubs are reported to have inadequate car parking facilities at their home grounds.

These sites include:

- Elsenham Recreation Ground
- Felsted Playing Field
- Hargrave Park
- Herberts Farm Playing Fields
- Newport Recreation Ground
- Thaxted Recreation Ground
- The Causeway Recreation Ground

This is a particular issue during peak times at multi-pitch sites when several matches are scheduled at the same time. Additionally, seven sites do not offer any car parking provision. These sites include:

- Alcott Playing Field
- Ashdon Recreation Ground
- Calves Pasture
- High Street Recreation Ground
- Quendon Athletic Football Club
- Takeley Football Club (FSI Stadium)
- Takeley Sports Field

A further five clubs also have ancillary provision aspirations. The table below summarises these plans.

Table 2.13: Summary of clubs' ancillary development aspirations

Site ID	Site name	Club	Comments
4	Barnston Association Football Club	Barnston AFC	Changing room refurbishment
10	Catons Lane	Saffron Walden Town/ Community FC	Changing room development
38	High Street Recreation Ground	Hatfield Broad Oak FC	Clubhouse & changing rooms development
51	Newport Recreation Ground	Newport FC	Changing room refurbishment
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	Clubhouse construction

Saffron Walden Town/ Community FC have aspirations to develop two NLS compliant changing rooms within the footprint of the existing stadia at Catons Lane. It is to be hoped that this provision could be made accessible for grass pitches at Lime Avenue Playing Fields. This is in anticipation for the removal of the existing ancillary provision at Lime Avenue Playing Fields (which was only provided temporarily as a result of the S106 agreement).

At Debden Recreation Ground, planning permission was granted in 2020 for the existing pavilion (assessed as poor quality) to be demolished and replaced with a new village hall and pavilion, for which a revised application is currently being determined. Elsewhere at The Causeway Recreation Ground, a planning application is currently being determined for a new toilet block and car park to support the grass pitches.[13]

National League system

The football pyramid is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It is known as the National League System and begins below the football league (the National League) and comprises six steps, with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. These are then supported by regional feeder leagues, which were previously at Step 7 of the pyramid but are now not included.

Clubs playing within the NLS must adhere to Stadium Accreditation[14] requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements.

Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground grading requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Stadium Accreditation assesses grounds from Grade 1 to 7, which aligns with Step 1 clubs down to Step 6 clubs making the transition from Regional Feeder League. Please refer to the FA website[15] for the full specifications for each.

The general principle for clubs in the NLS is that they must achieve the appropriate Stadium Accreditation grade by March 31st of their first season after promotion, which therefore

[13] Planning reference: UTT/23/2494/FUL
[14] https://premierleaguestadiumfund.co.uk/stadium-accreditation-programme
[15] http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/ground-grading

allows a short grace period for facilities to be brought up to standard. There has been a restructure of the NLS, with the former Step 7 repositioned as Regional Feeder Leagues to the NLS to be more aligned to the County FA network as the highest level of regional/local football. Clubs playing in Regional Feeder leagues remain eligible to access grant funding through the Premier League Stadium Fund (PLSF), on the condition that the Club has applied for promotion to Step 6, with any grant awarded conditional to grant of promotion. Clubs will retain access to cup competitions, but the restructure will help to establish a clear and consistent process for clubs coming in at Step 6 and will allow County FAs to develop local pyramid structures.

In Uttlesford, six teams operate within the football pyramid as summarised below.

Table 2.14: Summary of teams playing within the football pyramid structure

Team	League	Level
Saffron Walden Town FC First Team	Essex Senior Football League – Premier Division	Step 5
Stansted FC First Team	Spartan South Midlands Football League – Premier Division	Step 5
Takeley FC First Team	Essex Senior Football League – Premier Division	Step 5
Barnston FC First Team	Essex & Suffolk Border League - Premier Division	Regional Feeder League
Flitch United FC First Team	Essex & Suffolk Border League - Premier Division	Regional Feeder League
Thaxted Rangers FC First Team	Cambridgeshire County League – Premier Division	Regional Feeder League

None of the clubs reports any ground grading issues. However, for clubs operating within regional feeder leagues it should be noted that promotion to Step 6 typically requires a “step up” regarding facilities. As an example, the pitch used by the Club must be sports lit, the pitch must be fenced around its perimeter and there is a need for a turnstile for spectators to enter the site (amongst other things). For clubs within the regional feeder leagues, promotion is not always achievable due to these facility constraints.

Women’s National League System

Correspondingly there is a Women’s National League System, similar to the adult men’s, which provides structure to the adult female game. This ranges from Tier 1 to Tier 6 with each tier requiring differing Stadium Accreditation requirements.

Although women’s clubs are still required to meet ground requirements set out by the FA these differ from the men’s National League System. Ratings range from Grade A to C each with differing minimum requirements. Tier 1 and 2 in the Women’s National League System is akin to Tier 3 and 4 of the men’s National League System, but it is not the same. Within Uttlesford, no clubs operate in the Women’s National League System.

2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, a total of 211 teams across 33 clubs are identified as playing regular, competitive matches on football pitches within Uttlesford for the 2023/24

season. This consists of 32 senior men's, one senior women's, 86 youth boys', 14 youth girls' and 78 mini soccer teams (including any designated girls only mini teams).

Table 2.15: Summary of number of competitive teams currently playing in Uttlesford

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	9	28	10	15	12	**74**
Rural North & Thaxted	3	13	10	10	4	**40**
Rural South	13	2	2	6	-	**23**
South Uttlesford	8	25	10	14	17	**74**
Uttlesford	**33**	**68**	**32**	**45**	**33**	**211**
2019 PPOSS study	**38**	**38**	**26**	**30**	**31**	**163**

Both the North Uttlesford and South Uttlesford analysis areas offer the largest number of teams with 74 each (148 teams/70%), whilst the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas provide the fewest number of teams, with 40 (19%) and 23 (11%) respectively.

There are more youth 11v11 teams (68) when compared to other formats of play, with youth 9v9 teams being the least represented (32).

Participation trends

Since the previous PPOSS study produced in 2019, the total number of teams in Uttlesford has increased from 163 teams to 211 teams in 2023. This is broken down as an overall increase of 23%, consisting of five additional adult teams, 30 additional youth 11v11 teams, six additional youth 9v9 teams, five additional mini 7v7 teams and two additional mini 5v5 teams.[16]

More clubs report a growth in demand in recent years compared to those reporting a decrease. In total, 40% of clubs report an increase in the number of adult teams, whilst 57% report an increase in youth teams and another 57% report an increase in mini teams. Furthermore, only 13% of clubs report some degree of decrease in participation.[17]

Women's and girls' demand

The FA's current four-year strategy, 'Time for Change' has a focus on providing all girls with equal access to football by 2024. This focus will be a key objective of any facility investment to ensure that facilities are suitable for female access, particularly in relation to toilets and appropriate changing facilities.

As indicated above, there are currently 15 dedicated female teams playing within Uttlesford, representing 7% of the total number of teams. There are also additional female participants within mixed mini teams.

In addition, Wildcat centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, providing opportunities for girls aged 5-11 to develop fundamental skills and

[16] Comparisons cannot be drawn from the previous PPOSS study at a localised Analysis Area level as different geographical boundaries have been applied.
[17] The majority of clubs did not quantify the increase or decrease in participation.

experience football in a safe and fun environment and Squad sessions for 12-16 year olds follow the same format. All organisations delivering Wildcat centres or Squad sessions receive a £900 grant over two years and equipment in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation. There are currently two Wildcats centres operating in Uttlesford, at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre and Takeley Primary School.

Exported/Imported demand

In total, nine teams are identified as exporting demand outside of the district into neighbouring authorities, with this consisting of four adult teams and five youth 11v11 teams.

Table 2.16: Summary of exported match play demand into other local authorities

Club	Exported demand (teams)	Venue	Surface	Local authority
Dunmow United FC	1 x adult	Finchfield Playing Fields	Grass	Braintree
Takeley Youth FC	4 x youth 11v11	Mark Hall Sports Centre	3G	Harlow
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	1 x youth 11v11	Finchfield Playing Fields	Grass	Braintree
The Rodings FC	2 x adult	Roxwell Blues Cricket Club	Grass	Chelmsford
The Rodings FC	1 x adult	Melbourne Park	3G	Chelmsford

In addition, Dunmow Rovers Youth FC forecasts that it will need to consider exporting some of its match demand outside of the district if it is to meet its current and future demand.

No imported demand is identified.

Latent demand

Unmet/latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams (or members) that could be accommodated if access to a sufficient number of playing pitch facilities (and ancillary provision) was available.

Of responding clubs, 13 indicate that they could field more teams if they had access to more grass pitches, which represents a high level of latent demand and suggests existing capacity issues.[18]

The full list of responsive clubs which identify latent demand are:

- Dunmow Rovers FC
- Elsenham FC
- Felsted Rovers FC
- Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC
- Manuden Juniors FC
- Saffron Walden Community FC
- Saffron Walden Community Girls FC
- Sewards End Dragons FC
- Stansted FC
- Takeley FC

[18] Most clubs did not quantify such latent demand.

- Takeley Youth FC
- Thaxted Rangers FC
- The Rodings FC

Due to the latent demand expressed by Thaxted Rangers FC, the Club has engaged with FF and ECFA to discuss aspirations to develop a new site with three youth 11v11 pitches. Discussions have also taken place with a local land owner around securing a long term lease with Thaxted Parish Council.

Given the high level of future demand noted above, it is considered that this latent demand will also be absorbed by participation increases and population growth. As such, the quantifiable figures should be merged rather than being considered separately.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in several ways, including through participation increases and by using population forecasts. In addition, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing developments within Uttlesford.

Future population growth

Based on population projections to 2041[19] (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can estimate the likely additional demand for grass football pitches that will arise from any growth. This is through using the current and future populations in each relevant age groups together with the current team numbers. Team generation rates have then been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference, the total current population in Uttlesford of 91,348 is projected to increase to 107,507 by 2041. The table below shows the number of new teams that are forecasted to be generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions that this will require.

Table 2.17: Projected future demand from population growth

Age group	Team generation rate (TGR)	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent session[20]
Adult Mens (18-45)	1:468	5.53	6	3
Adult Womens (18-45)	1:15561	0.17	0	0
Youth Boys (12-17)	1:42	9.83	10	5
Youth Girls (12-17)	1:217	1.90	2	1
Youth Boys (10-11)	1:43	5.00	5	2.5
Youth Girls (10-11)	1:402	0.52	1	0.5
Mini Mixed (8-9)	1:55	7.77	8	4

[19] ONS projections do not account for the scale and distribution of future demand generated through housing growth.

[20] Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

Age group	Team generation rate (TGR)	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent session[20]
Mini Mixed (6-7)	1:75	5.70	6	3

As seen, it is anticipated that there will be a likely growth of six adult, 12 youth 11v11, six youth 9v9, eight mini 7v7 and six mini 5v5 teams. This represents relatively substantial growth.

At a localised level, the largest future demand generated is identified in both the North and South Uttlesford analysis areas, with seven match equivalent sessions respectively (14 teams each). The Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas yield three (six teams) and two (four teams) match equivalent sessions of future demand respectively.

Table 2.18: Summary of future demand generated via population growth (by analysis area)

Analysis area	Future demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	1	3	1	1	1	**7**
Rural North & Thaxted	-	1	1	1	-	**3**
Rural South	1	-	-	1	-	**2**
South Uttlesford	1	2	1	1	2	**7**
Uttlesford	**3**	**6**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**19**

Participation increases

From respondents, eight clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams that they provide for and quantify this potential growth. This equates to a predicted growth of 41 teams and is summarised by club, in the following table.

Table 2.19: Potential team increases identified by club

Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x youth 11v11 girls'	Youth (11v11)	0.5
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x youth 9v9 girls'	Youth (9v9)	0.5
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	South Uttlesford	2x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	1
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	South Uttlesford	2x mini 5v5	Mini (5v5)	1
Elsenham Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x youth 9v9 girls'	Youth (9v9)	0.5
Elsenham Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	0.5
Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x adult men's	Adult	0.5
Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x youth 9v9 boys'	Youth (9v9)	0.5
Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x mini 5v5	Mini (5v5)	0.5
Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	0.5
Newport FC	North Uttlesford	1x adult men's	Adult	0.5
Saffron Walden Community Girls FC	North Uttlesford	3x youth 9v9 girls'	Youth (9v9)	1.5
Saffron Walden Community Girls FC	North Uttlesford	2x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	1
Saffron Walden Community Girls FC	North Uttlesford	1x mini 5v5	Mini (5v5)	0.5
Takeley FC	South Uttlesford	1x adult women's	Adult	0.5
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	2x youth 11v11 boys'	Youth (11v11)	1
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	3x youth 11v11 girls'	Youth (11v11)	1.5
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	3x youth 9v9 boys'	Youth (9v9)	1.5
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	2x youth 9v9 girls'	Youth (9v9)	1
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	0.5
Takeley Youth FC	South Uttlesford	1x mini 5v5	Mini (5v5)	0.5
Thaxted Rangers FC	Rural North & Thaxted	1x adult men's	Adult	0.5
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	Rural North & Thaxted	4x youth 11v11 boys'	Youth (11v11)	2
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	Rural North & Thaxted	2x youth 9v9 boys'	Youth (9v9)	1
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	Rural North & Thaxted	1x mini 5v5	Mini (5v5)	0.5
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	Rural North & Thaxted	1x mini 7v7	Mini (7v7)	0.5
Total	-	-	**-**	**20.5**

The total future demand expressed by clubs amounts to 20.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Just over half of this is identified in the South Uttlesford Analysis Area (12.5 match equivalent sessions), whilst none is expressed in the Rural South Analysis Area. The most future demand is identified amongst youth 9v9 teams (6.5 match equivalent sessions), whilst the least is for adult teams (2 match equivalent sessions).

Table 2.20: Summary of future demand expressed by clubs in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	0.5	-	1.5	1	0.5	**3.5**
Rural North & Thaxted	0.5	2	1	0.5	0.5	**4.5**
Rural South	-	-	-	-	-	**0**
South Uttlesford	1	3	4	2.5	2	**12.5**
Uttlesford	**2**	**5**	**6.5**	**4**	**3**	**20.5**

Future demand summary

In the supply and demand analysis at the end of this section, it is considered unfeasible for all future demand to be factored in. This is because it is likely that club aspirations will absorb the future demand identified through population growth, rather than them being judged separately and therefore double counted. As such, only demand identified through population growth is taken forward, with club demand considered more theoretical and aspirational.

Notwithstanding the above, the Strategy & Action Plan document will contain a scenario that will consider the impact if club aspirations are realised. It will also contain a scenario exploring the participation trends for football since the previous Uttlesford PPS was established and what impact this trend will have on demand if it continues locally.

2.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

As a guide, the FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its current quality. Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity, the following ratings are used in Uttlesford:

Adult pitches		Youth pitches		Mini pitches	
Pitch quality	**Matches per week**	**Pitch quality**	**Matches per week**	**Pitch quality**	**Matches per week**
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 2.23 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Match equivalent sessions

Pitches have a limit on how much play they can accommodate over a certain time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.
As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may for example include training sessions and informal use.

One team accessing one pitch is considered to use the pitch for 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is based on them playing home and away fixtures on an alternate basis (therefore only requiring access to their home pitch every two weeks).

Education sites

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches, the current usage of such sites needs to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all, and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site AGP (as this can result in less grass pitch use).

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking. As such, where not overplayed because of community use, many school sites are considered to have no spare capacity to accommodate further usage, based on assumed curricular and extra-curricular activity.

For school sites which are available for community use, current play has been increased on a site-by-site basis, following consultation with the providers. Generally, usage is increased by one match equivalent session per pitch; however, in some cases, further use is added when it is known that a particular provider uses a particular pitch heavily.

Informal use

Several football pitches in the district, such as Thaxted Recreation Ground, are on open access sites. These pitches are subject to informal use in the form of, for example, dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. It must be noted, however, that informal use of these sites is not recorded and it is therefore difficult to quantify on a site-by-site basis.

Peak time

Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time, which can differ for each pitch type depending on when leagues operate for each format of play.

In Uttlesford, peak time is considered Sunday AM for adult, youth 11v11, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches, whereas it is Saturday AM for youth 9v9 pitches. As such, peak time varies by playing format, as shown in the table below.

Table 2.21: Summary of peak time for playing formats

Playing format	Peak time
Adult	Sunday AM
Youth 11v11	Sunday AM
Youth 9v9	Saturday AM
Mini 7v7	Sunday AM
Mini 5v5	Sunday AM

On occasion, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed, or more spare capacity is identified in the peak period than the overall spare capacity that exists. This is because most or all the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period. Where this is the case, given that peak time usage should not be utilised over and above overall capacity, adjustments have been made.

A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of play.

Any pitch not meeting this criterion is therefore not considered to have additional capacity, although it may have capacity outside of peak time.

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as actual spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality. Furthermore, any pitches with unsecure tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given future access cannot be guaranteed.

The table below identifies the way actual spare capacity is represented in Table 2.23.

Table 2.22: Spare capacity examples

Spare capacity in peak period (examples)	Explanation of spare capacity
1	If the cell is highlighted in green with a number, it means that the pitches have actual spare capacity at peak time.
-	If the cell has a dash in it, this means that the pitch is unavailable in the peak period. If it was to be made available, actual spare capacity could exist.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch is played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
1	If the cell has a number in it but is not highlighted, it means the pitch has spare capacity in the peak period; however, this is discounted. This is most commonly due to unsecure tenure and/or poor pitch quality.

Table 2.23: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Management	Type of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Available for community use?	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Spare capacity available in peak period (match sessions)	Comments
1	Alcott Playing Field	CM6 3SY	Rural South	Stebbing Parish Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	CB11 3TR	North Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure and poor pitch quality.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	CB11 3TR	North Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	At capacity.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	CB11 3TR	North Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	At capacity.
3	Ashdon Recreation Ground	CB10 2HY	Rural North & Thaxted	Ashdon Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	At capacity.
4	Barnston Association Football Club	CM6 1LZ	Rural South	Private	Unsecure	Adult	-	Yes	Good	2	2.5	6	3.5	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
5	Birchanger Social Club	CM23 5QJ	South Uttlesford	Sports & Social Club	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	At capacity.
8	Calves Pasture	CM22 7ER	Rural South	Sports Club	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
9	Carver Barracks	CB10 2YA	Rural North & Thaxted	MOD	Unsecure	Adult		Yes	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure and poor pitch quality.
9	Carver Barracks	CB10 2YA	Rural North & Thaxted	MOD	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	No	Poor	-	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
10	Catons Lane	CB10 2DU	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Standard	2	0	8	8	2	Actual spare capacity.
10	Catons Lane	CB10 2DU	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Yes	Good	1	1	3	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
12	Clavering Jubilee Fields	CB11 4QS	Rural North & Thaxted	Clavering Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
15	Debden Recreation Ground	CB11 3LB	Rural North & Thaxted	Debden Parish Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	1	Actual spare capacity.

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Management	Type of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Available for community use?	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Spare capacity available in peak period (match sessions)	Comments
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	CM22 6BY	South Uttlesford	Elsenham Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Poor	1	2	2	0	0	At capacity.
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	CM22 6BY	South Uttlesford	Elsenham Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Poor	2	2	4	2	1.5	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	CM22 6BY	South Uttlesford	Elsenham Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	-	Overplay.
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	CM22 6BY	South Uttlesford	Elsenham Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	4.5	1	3.5	-	Overplay.
21	Felsted Playing Field	CM6 3DS	Rural South	Felsted Parish Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Actual spare capacity.
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Education	Unsecure	Adult	-	Yes	Good	1	1	3	2	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
24	Forest Hall School	CM24 8TZ	South Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	2	2	4	2	2	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
24	Forest Hall School	CM24 8TZ	South Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
26	Great Chesterford Recreation Ground	CB10 1NS	North Uttlesford	Great Chesterford Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
29	Hargrave Park	CM24 8BX	South Uttlesford	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Yes	Good	1	2	3	1	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
32	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	CM6 2AU	South Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	CB11 3JS	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Actual spare capacity.
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	CB11 3JS	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Actual spare capacity
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	CB11 3JS	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Poor	1	3.5	1	2.5	-	Overplay.
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	CB11 3JS	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	7.5	1	6.5	-	Overplay.

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Management	Type of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Available for community use?	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Spare capacity available in peak period (match sessions)	Comments
				Council/Sports Club											
36	High Easter Playing Fields	CM1 4QR	Rural South	High Easter Parish Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
38	High Street Recreation Ground	CM22 7HG	South Uttlesford	Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Good	2	0.5	12	11.5	1.5	Actual spare capacity.
38	High Street Recreation Ground	CM22 7HG	South Uttlesford	Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Standard	1	0.5	4	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
38	High Street Recreation Ground	CM22 7HG	South Uttlesford	Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Good	1	1	6	5	1	Actual spare capacity.
38	High Street Recreation Ground	CM22 7HG	South Uttlesford	Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
40	Katherine Semar Junior School	CB11 4DU	North Uttlesford	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Poor	2	2	4	2	2	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure and poor pitch quality.
42	Laundry Lane	CM6 2JW	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Poor	2	3	4	1	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
42	Laundry Lane	CM6 2JW	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Poor	1	6	1	5	-	Overplay.
43	Lime Avenue Playing Fields	CB10 2GE	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Good	2	5.5	12	6.5	2	Actual spare capacity.
43	Lime Avenue Playing Fields	CB10 2GE	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council/Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Good	1	1.5	4	2.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
47	Little Dunmow Recreation Ground	CM6 3HU	Rural South	Little Dunmow Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Poor	1	2	2	0	0	At capacity.
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	CM23 1EH	Rural North & Thaxted	Trust	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Standard	1	3	4	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	CM23 1EH	Rural North & Thaxted	Trust	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	CM23 1EH	Rural North & Thaxted	Trust	Secure	Adult		Yes	Good	1	3.5	3	0.5	-	Overplay.
51	Newport Recreation Ground	CB11 3PU	North Uttlesford	Newport Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
51	Newport Recreation Ground	CB11 3PU	North Uttlesford	Newport Parish Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Overplay.

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Management	Type of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Available for community use?	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Spare capacity available in peak period (match sessions)	Comments
52	Peasland Road Football Pitch	CB11 3AY	North Uttlesford	Saffron Walden Town Council	Secure	Adult	-	Yes	Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Overplay.
54	Quendon Athletic Football Club	CB11 3YG	Rural North & Thaxted	Quendon & Rickling Parish Council	Secure	Adult		Yes	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	At capacity.
58	Radwinter Recreation Ground	CB10 2TX	Rural North & Thaxted	Radwinter Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Poor	2	0	4	4	2	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
78	Takeley Football Club	CM22 6QA	South Uttlesford	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Yes	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	At capacity.
80	Takeley Sports Field	CM22 6TG	South Uttlesford	Takeley Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Standard	1	2	4	2	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
80	Takeley Sports Field	CM22 6TG	South Uttlesford	Takeley Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Standard	1	2	4	2	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	CM6 2PT	Rural North & Thaxted	Thaxted Parish Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Standard	2	2.5	8	5.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	CM6 2PT	Rural North & Thaxted	Thaxted Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Actual spare capacity.
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	CM6 2AA	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	CM6 2AA	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Yes	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	CM6 2AA	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	CM6 2AA	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	CM6 2AA	South Uttlesford	Great Dunmow Town Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Overplay.
88	White Roding Sports & Social Club	CM6 1RT	Rural South	Sports & Social Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Good	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity.
88	White Roding Sports & Social Club	CM6 1RT	Rural South	Sports & Social Club	Secure	Adult		Yes	Good	1	1.5	3	1.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.
89	Wimbish Recreation Ground	CB10 2XE	Rural North & Thaxted	Wimbish Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Yes	Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	-	Overplay.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Management	Type of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Available for community use?	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Spare capacity available in peak period (match sessions)	Comments
89	Wimbish Recreation Ground	CB10 2XE	Rural North & Thaxted	Wimbish Parish Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Yes	Good	1	2.5	4	1.5	0	No spare capacity during the peak period.

Actual spare capacity

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Uttlesford. It totals 18 match equivalent sessions per week and is identified across 20 pitches at 12 sites.

Table 2.24: Actual (peak time) spare capacity site by site

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions)
10	Catons Lane	North Uttlesford	Mini (5v5)	2	2
10	Catons Lane	North Uttlesford	Adult	1	1
15	Debden Recreation Ground	Rural North & Thaxted	Adult	1	1
21	Felsted Playing Field	Rural South	Adult	1	1
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	North Uttlesford	Mini (5v5)	1	1
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	North Uttlesford	Mini (7v7)	2	2
36	High Easter Playing Fields	Rural South	Adult	1	0.5
38	High Street Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Mini (5v5)	3	2
38	High Street Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Mini (7v7)	1	1
43	Lime Avenue Playing Fields	North Uttlesford	Mini (5v5)	2	2
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	Rural North & Thaxted	Mini (7v7)	1	0.5
51	Newport Recreation Ground	North Uttlesford	Youth (9v9)	1	1
83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	Rural North & Thaxted	Youth (9v9)	1	1
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Youth (9v9)	1	1
88	White Roding Sports & Social Club	Rural South	Youth (9v9)	1	1
-	**Totals**	-	-	**20**	**18**

Actual spare capacity is broken down by analysis area and pitch type in the table below. As seen, most actual spare capacity is identified on mini 5v5 pitches (seven match equivalent sessions per week) and in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area (nine match equivalent sessions per week).

Table 2.25: Actual spare capacity summary in match sessions per week

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	1	-	1	2	5	**9**
Rural North & Thaxted	1	-	1	0.5	-	**2.5**
Rural South	1.5	-	1	-	-	**2.5**
South Uttlesford	-	-	1	1	2	**4**
Uttlesford	**3.5**	**0**	**4**	**3.5**	**7**	**18**

Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (based on its quality rating), which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Uttlesford, 10 pitches across eight sites are overplayed by 22 match equivalent sessions per week.

In total, half of the overplayed pitches in Uttlesford are overused due to their poor quality, whilst the remaining five pitches are overplayed due to the degree of demand accommodated.

Table 2.26: Overplay site-by-site

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions)
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Youth (9v9)	1	0.5
20	Elsenham Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Youth (11v11)	1	3.5
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	North Uttlesford	Youth (9v9)	1	2.5
34	Herberts Farm Playing Fields	North Uttlesford	Youth (11v11)	1	6.5
42	Laundry Lane	South Uttlesford	Youth (11v11)	1	5
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	Rural North & Thaxted	Adult	1	0.5
51	Newport Recreation Ground	North Uttlesford	Adult	1	1
52	Peasland Road Football Pitch	North Uttlesford	Adult	1	1
84	The Causeway Recreation Ground	South Uttlesford	Youth (11v11)	1	1
89	Wimbish Recreation Ground	Rural North & Thaxted	Youth (9v9)	1	0.5
-	**Totals**	-	-	**10**	22

Overplay is broken down by analysis area and pitch type in the following table. The highest level of overplay is identified on youth 11v11 pitches (16 match equivalent sessions per week) and in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area (11 match equivalent sessions per week). No overplay is identified on mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches or in the Rural South Analysis Area.

Table 2.27: Overplay summary in match sessions per week

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
North Uttlesford	2	6.5	2.5	-	-	**11**
Rural North & Thaxted	0.5	-	0.5	-	-	**1**
Rural South	-	-	-	-	-	**0**
South Uttlesford	-	9.5	0.5	-	-	**10**
Uttlesford	**2.5**	**16**	**3.5**	**0**	**0**	**22**

2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify current demand (i.e., spare capacity taking away overplay) in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is then also considered, based on team generation rates which are driven by population projections to 2041.

Adult football

Overall, adult pitches in Uttlesford are currently operating with spare capacity amounting to one match equivalent session per week. At a localised level, spare capacity is identified in the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas, whilst a shortfall is identified in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area. The South Uttlesford Analysis Area is at capacity.

Table 2.28: Supply and demand position for adult pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	1	2	**1**
Rural North & Thaxted	1	0.5	**0.5**
Rural South	1.5	-	**1.5**
South Uttlesford	-	-	**0**
Uttlesford	**3.5**	**2.5**	**1**

When accounting for future demand on a district-wide level, six additional teams are expected to be generated (three match equivalent sessions per week), leading to a future shortfall of two match equivalent session per week, as shown in the table below. At a localised level, a future shortfall is identified in the North and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst future spare capacity is identified in the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas.

Table 2.29: Future supply and demand position for adult pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Current total	Future demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	**1**	1	**2**
Rural North & Thaxted	**0.5**	-	**0.5**
Rural South	**1.5**	1	**0.5**
South Uttlesford	**0**	1	**1**
Uttlesford	**1**	**3**	**2**

Youth 11v11 football

Youth 11v11 pitches are currently operating with a shortfall of 16 match equivalent sessions per week. At a localised level, a shortfall is identified in both the North and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas are at capacity.

Table 2.30: Supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	-	6.5	6.5
Rural North & Thaxted	-	-	0
Rural South	-	-	0
South Uttlesford	-	9.5	9.5
Uttlesford	**0**	**16**	**16**

When accounting for future demand, 12 additional teams are expected to be generated (six match equivalent sessions per week), leading to a future shortfall of 22 match equivalent sessions per week across the district, as shown below. At a localised level, future shortfalls would be identified in the North Uttlesford, Rural North & Thaxted and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst the Rural South Analysis Area would be at capacity.

Table 2.31: Future supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Current total	Future demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	6.5	3	9.5
Rural North & Thaxted	0	1	1
Rural South	0	-	0
South Uttlesford	9.5	2	11.5
Uttlesford	**16**	**6**	**22**

Youth 9v9 football

Youth 9v9 pitches are currently operating with spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week. At a localised level, a shortfall is identified in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area, whilst spare capacity is identified in the Rural North & Thaxted, Rural South and South Uttlesford analysis areas.

Table 2.32: Supply and demand position for youth 9v9 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	1	2.5	**1.5**
Rural North & Thaxted	1	0.5	**0.5**
Rural South	1	-	1
South Uttlesford	1	0.5	0.5
Uttlesford	**4**	**3.5**	**0.5**

When accounting for future demand, six additional teams are expected to be generated (three match equivalent sessions per week), leading to a future shortfall of 2.5 match

equivalent sessions per week across the district, as shown below. At a localised level, future shortfalls are identified in each of the North Uttlesford, Rural North & Thaxted and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst future spare capacity is identified in the Rural South Analysis Area.

Table 2.33: Future supply and demand position for youth 9v9 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Current total	Future demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	**1.5**	1	2.5
Rural North & Thaxted	**0.5**	1	0.5
Rural South	1	-	1
South Uttlesford	0.5	1	0.5
Uttlesford	**0.5**	**3**	**2.5**

Mini 7v7 football

Mini 7v7 pitches currently have spare capacity of 3.5 match equivalent sessions per week. At a localised level, spare capacity is identified in the North Uttlesford, Rural North & Thaxted and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst the South Uttlesford Analysis Area is at capacity.

Table 2.34: Supply and demand position for mini 7v7 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	2	-	2
Rural North & Thaxted	0.5	-	0.5
Rural South	-	-	0
South Uttlesford	1	-	1
Uttlesford	**3.5**	**0**	**3.5**

When accounting for future demand, eight additional teams are expected to be generated (four match equivalent sessions per week), leading to a future shortfall of 0.5 match equivalent sessions across the district, as shown below. At a localised level, future shortfalls are identified in both the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas, whilst the South Uttlesford Analysis Area is at capacity and a future spare capacity is identified in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area.

Table 2.35: Future supply and demand position for mini 7v7 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Current total	Future demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	2	1	1
Rural North & Thaxted	0.5	1	0.5
Rural South	0	1	1
South Uttlesford	1	1	0
Uttlesford	**3.5**	**4**	**0.5**

Mini 5v5 football

Mini 5v5 pitches are currently operating with spare capacity of seven match equivalent sessions per week. At a localised level, spare capacity is identified in the North Uttlesford and South Uttlesford analysis areas, whilst the Rural North & Thaxted and Rural South analysis areas are at capacity.

Table 2.36: Supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	5	-	**5**
Rural North & Thaxted	-	-	**0**
Rural South	-	-	**0**
South Uttlesford	2	-	**2**
Uttlesford	**7**	**0**	**7**

When accounting for future demand, six additional teams are expected to be generated (three match equivalent sessions per week). This will lead to a future spare capacity of four match equivalent sessions per week, as seen below. At a localised level, each of the Rural North & Thaxted, Rural South and South Uttlesford analysis areas are at capacity, whilst the North Uttlesford Analysis Area reflects a future spare capacity.

Table 2.37: Future supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Current total	Future demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	5	1	4
Rural North & Thaxted	0	-	0
Rural South	0	-	0
South Uttlesford	2	2	0
Uttlesford	**7**	**3**	**4**

2.6: Conclusion

Using the supply and demand tables above, the table below summarises the overall supply and demand balance by pitch type in Uttlesford.

Table 2.38: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions

Pitch type	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	3.5	2.5	**1**	3	**2**
Youth 11v11	-	16	**16**	6	**22**
Youth 9v9	4	3.5	**0.5**	3	**2.5**
Mini 7v7	3.5	-	**3.5**	4	**0.5**
Mini 5v5	7	-	**7**	3	**4**

Overall, it is determined that there is current spare capacity on adult, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches, whilst a shortfall is evident on youth 11v11 pitches. After factoring in future demand, current spare capacity amongst adult, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches would be eradicated, leaving future shortfalls for each. Furthermore, the current shortfall of youth

11v11 pitches would worsen and the current spare capacity of mini 5v5 pitches would reduce.

The existing shortfall identified amongst youth 11v11 pitches is spread across just four pitches, the majority of which derives from the North and South Uttlesford analysis areas.

The following tables portray the supply and demand balance by analysis area.

North Uttlesford

Across North Uttlesford, there is a current shortfall of adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches, whilst mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches have spare capacity. When accounting for future demand, shortfalls across adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches worsen, whilst the spare capacity amongst mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches diminishes slightly.

Table 2.39: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions (North Uttlesford Analysis Area)

North Uttlesford Analysis Area					
Pitch type	**Actual spare capacity**	**Overplay**	**Current total**	**Future demand**	**Total**
Adult	1	2	**1**	1	**2**
Youth 11v11	-	6.5	**6.5**	3	**9.5**
Youth 9v9	1	2.5	**1.5**	1	**2.5**
Mini 7v7	2	-	**2**	1	**1**
Mini 5v5	5	-	**5**	1	**4**

Rural North & Thaxted

Across Rural North & Thaxted, there is current spare capacity of adult, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches, whilst youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 pitches are at capacity. When accounting for future demand, spare capacity across youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches is lost, leaving a future shortfall for both. Furthermore, an additional future shortfall would emerge for youth 11v11 pitches. In contrast, there would be no change for adult and mini 5v5 pitches.

Table 2.40: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions (Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area)

Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area					
Pitch type	**Actual spare capacity**	**Overplay**	**Current total**	**Future demand**	**Total**
Adult	1	0.5	**0.5**	-	**0.5**
Youth 11v11	-	-	**0**	1	**1**
Youth 9v9	1	0.5	**0.5**	1	**0.5**
Mini 7v7	0.5	-	**0.5**	1	**0.5**
Mini 5v5	-	-	**0**	-	**0**

Rural South

Across Rural South, there is current spare capacity of adult, youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches, whilst youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 are at capacity. When accounting for future demand, spare capacity diminishes for adult pitches, whilst spare capacity is lost entirely for mini 5v5

pitches, and a future shortfall would exist for mini 7v7 pitches. In contrast, there would be no change for youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.

Table 2.41: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions (Rural South Analysis Area)

Rural South Analysis Area					
Pitch type	**Actual spare capacity**	**Overplay**	**Current total**	**Future demand**	**Total**
Adult	1.5	-	**1.5**	1	**0.5**
Youth 11v11	-	-	**0**	-	**0**
Youth 9v9	1	-	**1**	-	**1**
Mini 7v7	-	-	**0**	1	**1**
Mini 5v5	2	-	**2**	2	**0**

South Uttlesford

Across South Uttlesford, there is current spare capacity of youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches, whilst adult pitches are at capacity and youth 11v11 pitches have a large shortfall. When accounting for future demand, the shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches would worsen, whilst additional future shortfalls would emerge for adult and youth 9v9 pitches. In addition, the current spare capacity of mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches would be lost, leaving a balanced capacity for both.

Table 2.42: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions (South Uttlesford Analysis Area)

South Uttlesford Analysis Area					
Pitch type	**Actual spare capacity**	**Overplay**	**Current total**	**Future demand**	**Total**
Adult	-	-	**0**	1	**1**
Youth 11v11	-	9.5	**9.5**	2	**11.5**
Youth 9v9	1	0.5	**0.5**	1	**0.5**
Mini 7v7	1	-	**1**	1	**0**
Mini 5v5	2	-	**2**	2	**0**

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Football – supply and demand summary

- In total, 20 pitches display actual spare capacity across 12 sites, equating to 18 match equivalent sessions, whilst 10 pitches are overplayed across eight sites by a total of 22 match equivalent sessions.
- Overall, it is determined that there is current spare capacity on adult, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches, whilst a shortfall is evident on youth 11v11 pitches.
- After factoring in future demand, current spare capacity amongst adult, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches would be eradicated, leaving future shortfalls for each. Furthermore, the current shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches would worsen and the current spare capacity of mini 5v5 pitches would be reduced.

Football – supply summary

- The audit identifies 73 football pitches across 34 sites in Uttlesford, with 72 pitches available at some level for community use.
- There are four disused sites across Uttlesford.
- In total, 14 community available pitches were assessed as good quality, 32 as standard quality and 26 as poor quality.
- A total of seven sites are identified as being serviced by poor quality ancillary provision, whilst another seven have no changing facilities.

Football - demand summary

- 211 teams across 33 clubs are identified as playing regular, competitive matches on football pitches within Uttlesford, consisting of 32 senior men's, one senior women's, 86 youth boys', 14 youth girls' and 78 mini soccer teams.
- Since the previous PPOSS study produced in 2019, the total number of teams in Uttlesford has increased from 163 teams to 211 teams in 2023. This is broken down as an overall increase of 23%,
- Nine teams are identified as exporting demand outside of the district into neighbouring authorities, with this consisting of four adult teams and five youth 11v11 teams.
- 13 clubs indicate that they could field more teams if they had access to more grass pitches, which represents a high level of latent demand and suggests existing capacity issues.
- Population growth suggests an increase amounting to six adult, 12 youth 11v11, six youth 9v9, eight mini 7v7 and six mini 5v5 teams, whilst eight clubs aspire to grow by a total of 41 teams.

PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

3.1: Introduction

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA pitch register. As such, in addition to training demand, a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality requirements.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22', which provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allow matches to be played on surfaces that meet the required standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.

Many test contractors offer reduced rates through efficiency savings to carry out multiple performance tests in the same session. Providers seeking 3G pitch compliancy for a number of sports would therefore be recommended to consider this opportunity.

EH's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower-level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available.

3.2: Current provision

The recommended dimensions for a 11v11 3G artificial grass pitch for football are 100 x 64 metres. This extends to an area of 106 x 70 metres with the recommended minimum three metre run-off area included. These dimensions allow for all age group match play to take place including adults, youth under 17/18 and younger age groups via overmarked pitches, e.g. the marking out of two youth 9v9 pitches for under 11/12s.

If a new pitch is proposed to measure below the recommended dimensions, then justification must be provided for this in relation to the identified needs it will provide for and/or site constraints. In doing so, the impacts of a reduced pitch size in meeting current and future needs must be considered, e.g. a pitch not providing the recommended dimensions for adult match play and/or only being able to accommodate one rather than two overmarked youth 9v9 pitches. This justification needs to be included in the planning application details submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority for the new pitch.

Unless otherwise stated and justified for an individual pitch, proposals in this PPOSS for any new 3G artificial grass pitches are based on providing them to the recommended dimensions.

There is currently one 11v11 3G pitch in Uttlesford, provided at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre. The pitch is serviced by sports lighting and is available for community use.

Table 3.1: 11v11 3G pitches in Uttlesford

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lit?	Size (metres)	FA accreditation
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	CB11 4UH	North Uttlesford	Yes	Yes	105 x 70	31/05/2025

The pitch is provided in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area.

As well as the 11v11 3G pitch, there are two smaller size 3G pitches in Uttlesford, located at Katherine Semar Junior School and Rodings Primary School. Both, however, are unavailable to the community and are not serviced by sports lighting.

Table 3.2: Additional supply of 3G provision

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lit?	Size (metres)
40	Katherine Semar Junior School	CB11 4DU	North Uttlesford	No	No	60 x 42
60	Rodings Primary School	CM6 1PZ	Rural South	No	No	40 x 23

Whilst not large enough to accommodate adult match play, a smaller size provision can be used to accommodate youth and mini matches, in addition to training demand, providing that they are FA approved, of an adequate size and with appropriate run-off areas. The FA's recommended pitch size for youth football various from 91 x 55 metres to 73 x 46 metres depending on age, whilst it is 55 x 37 metres for mini 7v7 play and 37 x 27 metres for mini 5v5 play.

Given the above, there are no smaller size 3G pitches in Uttlesford suitable for purposeful use (the pitch at Rodings Primary School is too small, even if it was available and serviced by sports lighting).

Figure 3.1 overleaf identifies the location of all 3G pitches currently in Uttlesford, regardless of size.

Figure 3.1: Location of 3G AGPs in Uttlesford

Future provision

A planning application is in place for the construction of a 11v11 3G pitch to be built at Forest Hall School.[21] The development is part of a mitigation scheme by Stansted Airport to offset the loss of the pitches on its site.

As part of the wider plans at Helena Romanes School, a new secondary school is proposed to be built at land south of Stortford Road, whereby Essex County Council are proposing a 11v11 3G pitch to be provided.[22] The delivery of such a development is expected to be around five years, should permission be implemented.

[21] Planning reference: UTT/23/2032/FUL
[22] Planning reference: CC/UTT/90/20

FA pitch register

For competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA 3G Pitch Register, which can be found at: https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch, with provision commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. The differences between the accreditations are that FIFA quality pitches are designed to accommodate substantial levels of regular usage, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are more for high level performance, with usage levels therefore more limited to protect the standard.

Generally, FIFA Quality pitches can be typically used for 60-85 hours per week, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are able to accommodate 20-30 hours.

To remain accredited, pitches must be re-assessed every three years to ensure that quality has not deteriorated beyond acceptable levels, although this is required annually for clubs using 3G pitches within the football pyramid (steps 1-6).

In Uttlesford, the pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is FA/FIFA approved and can therefore be used to host competitive matches. Re-testing is required annually at these sites to ensure that this remains the case.

The smaller size pitches at Katherine Semar Junior School and Rodings Primary School are not FA/FIFA approved and the latter is too small for any purposeful competitive play, meaning both cannot be used officially for matches.

World Rugby compliant pitches

To enable 3G pitches to accommodate competitive rugby union matches, World Rugby has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces can replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

In Uttlesford, there are no World Rugby compliant 3G pitches. The nearest World Rugby compliant 3G pitch is identified at Davey Field (Shelford Rugby Football Club) in South Cambridgeshire.

The following Strategy Report will explore the feasibility of any new 3G provision being able to accommodate rugby union provision, in attempt to minimise/alleviate rugby union grass pitch shortfalls currently identified.

Management/ownership

The 11v11 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is owned by the school; however, Saffron Walden Community FC (operators of the site) manage the bookings and have a 50-year community use agreement with the school.

Elsewhere, the smaller size pitches at Katherine Junior School and Rodings Primary School are both managed by the schools. Nationally, schools are common operators.

Availability (opening hours)

The 11v11 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is fully available to the community within the peak period (34 hours per week). However, it must be noted that a considerable degree, if not all of capacity is taken up by the operators of the site, Saffron Walden Town FC and Saffron Walden Community FC.

The picture is similar for the smaller size pitches at Katherine Semar Junior School and Rodings Primary School, with no community use offered and with the lack of sports lighting likely to limit availability even if this was not the case.

Quality

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is recommended that sinking funds be put into place to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

The 11v11 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is assessed as good quality, having been installed in 2022.

Table 3.3: Age and quality of 11v11 3G pitches

Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	2022	Good

Similarly, the smaller size pitch at Katherine Semar Junior School is assessed as good quality having been installed in 2023. However, the smaller size pitch at Rodings Primary School is assessed as poor quality; the pitch has exceeded its recommended lifespan, having been installed in 2006.

Ancillary facilities

At Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre, where the single community available 11v11 3G pitch is situated, ancillary facilities are considered to be good quality; with Saffron Walden Community FC (site operators) citing no issues at the site.

3.3: Demand

With only one 3G pitch in Uttlesford offering community use, the provision is considered to be at capacity at peak times, especially in winter months when grass pitches cannot be used for training or recreational demand (due to a lack of sports lighting). All of the availability is taken up by Saffron Walden Town FC and Saffron Walden Community FC.

The table below summarises usage levels of the 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre based on booking sheets during the 2023/2024 playing season. This is compared against availability at peak time, using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM), which applies an overall peak period of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Table 3.4: Current usage of 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre

Day	Peak time	Usage/capacity comments
Monday	17:00-21:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 17:00 to 22:00.
Tuesday	17:00-21:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 17:00 to 22:00.
Wednesday	17:00-21:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 17:00 to 22:00.
Thursday	17:00-21:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 17:00 to 22:00.
Friday	19:00-21:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 17:00 to 22:00.
Saturday	09:00-17:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 09:00 to 17:00.
Sunday	09:00-17:00	Saffron Walden Community FC use the pitch from 09:00 to 17:00.

As seen, there is currently no midweek or weekend availability.

All existing usage of the pitch is football related, with no other sports currently accommodated.

Unmet/latent demand

Unmet/latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams (or members) that could be accommodated if access to a sufficient number of playing pitch facilities (and ancillary provision) was available.

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many football clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at sports lit facilities, with 3G provision preferred by the FA and most clubs.

In Uttlesford, 12 clubs that responded to the consultation report they require additional access to 3G provision, which represents a high proportion of unmet demand. This is to be expected with only one community available pitch currently existing.

Across the clubs, 136 teams are represented, which is significant, with 62 of the 136 teams not currently accessing any 3G provision for training. 25 of the 62 teams not currently accessing 3G pitches for training, use grass pitches for their training demand, a further 36 teams use hockey pitches for training demand and one team does not train at all (Sewards End Dragons FC).

In contrast, three clubs, Saffron Walden Community FC, Saffron Walden Community Girls FC and Takeley Youth FC currently access 3G pitches (74 teams in total); however, the latter do so outside of the district (in Harlow).

A further breakdown of the current training facilities utilised by clubs reporting latent demand is detailed below.

Table 3.5: Current training facilities of clubs reporting unmet/latent demand

Club name	Site ID	Site used	Surface
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	AGP
Dunmow Rovers Youth FC	47	Little Dunmow Recreation Ground	Grass
Felsted Rovers FC	21	Felsted Playing Field	Grass
Hatfield Broad Oak Youth FC	38	High Street Recreation Ground	Grass
Manuden Juniors FC	50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	AGP

Club name	Site ID	Site used	Surface
Manuden Juniors FC	-	Bishop's Stortford College (exported demand)	AGP
Saffron Walden Community FC	63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	3G
Saffron Walden Community Girls FC	63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	3G
Sewards End Dragons FC	-	-[23]	-
Stansted FC	29	Hargrave Park	Grass
Takeley FC	80	Takeley Sports Field	Grass
Takeley Youth FC	-	Mark Hall School (exported demand)	3G
Thaxted Rangers FC	51	Newport Recreation Ground	Grass
Thaxted Rangers Youth FC	83	Thaxted Recreation Ground	Grass
The Rodings FC	5	Birchanger Social Club	Grass

As an example, Saffron Walden Community FC reports a waiting list of 150 children; the Club emphasises the need to access an additional 11v11 3G pitch to meet such unmet demand.

Exported/imported demand

Exported and imported demand refers to those playing outside of their local authority area of choice. This therefore includes Uttlesford-based demand that travels outside of the district to access provision (exported demand), as well as demand from nearby authorities that travel into the district (imported demand).

Table 3.5 shows two clubs currently exporting training demand outside of Uttlesford in order to access 3G or sand-based pitches. This applies to Manuden Juniors FC (at Bishop's Stortford College) and Takeley Youth FC (at Mark Hall School). Both clubs state that they would prefer to accommodate such demand within Uttlesford.

Future demand

As set out in Part 2 of this report, potential growth from population projections equates to 38 football teams to 2041. If this growth was realised, and if all additional teams wanted or needed to train on 3G provision, it would increase the number of 3G pitches required. The following Strategy Report will explore the impact of future demand generated via participation growth (41 additional teams) on the number of 3G pitches required.

In addition, although no rugby union demands currently access 3G pitches (with none suitable for such activity), it is clear that future access could provide a solution to the deficits identified in Part 4 of this report. This not only applies to Wendens Ambo RFC (shortfall of 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week) but is particularly the case for Saffron Walden RFC (shortfall of five match equivalent sessions per week) given the current overplay of their grass pitches.

[23] No training currently.

3.4: Supply and demand analysis

Football - Training demand

To quantify the 3G pitch shortfalls for football, the FA has established a training model, which suggests that one 11v11 3G pitch can accommodate 38 affiliated teams (with capacity built in for other forms of demand).
It also has an aspiration for all teams to train once per week on a 3G pitch, although this doesn't take into consideration any recreational activities and it is recognised that nationally some activity may need to be retained on sand-based pitches to ensure the sustainability of them.

Using the above, with current demand in Uttlesford totalling 211 teams, it is feasible that at least 5.5 11v11 3G pitches are required (rounded down from 5.55). This means an existing shortfall of 4.5 11v11 3G pitches (given that only the pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre currently contributes to the model).

Table 3.6: Current shortfall of 3G pitches to meet football training demand

Current demand (number of teams)	3G pitch requirement	Current number of 3G pitches available to the community	Current shortfall (number of 3G pitches)
211	5.5	1	4.5

To further this analysis, the table below explores where the 3G pitch shortfalls exist, by analysis area, on the presumption that all demand will want to train within the area that they play matches in. On this basis, the overall shortfall of 4.5 pitches equates to shortfalls in all analysis areas.

Table 3.7: Current shortfall for 3G pitches by analysis area for training demand

Analysis area	Current demand	Current 3G pitch requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall (number of 3G pitches)
North Uttlesford	74	2	1	**1**
Rural North & Thaxted	40	1	0	**1**
Rural South	23	0.5	0	**0.5**
South Uttlesford	74	2	0	**2**
Uttlesford	**211**	**5.5**[24]	**1**	**4.5**

Demand from three of the four analysis areas is sufficient to warrant the creation of a 11v11 3G pitch, with the only exemption being Rural South, whereby a smaller size pitch could be warranted.

When factoring in future demand identified through population growth to 2041, the overall requirement would increase to 6.5 11v11 3G pitches potentially required (rounded down from 6.55), leaving a future shortfall of 5.5 pitches.

[24] Totals rounded to nearest 0.5.

Table 3.8: Future shortfall of 3G pitches to meet football training demand

Analysis areas	Future demand (number of teams)	3G pitch requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Future shortfall
North Uttlesford	88	2.5	1	**1.5**
Rural North & Thaxted	46	1	-	**1**
Rural South	27	0.5	-	**0.5**
South Uttlesford	88	2.5	-	**2.5**
Uttlesford	**249**	**6.5**	**1**	**5.5**

At a localised level, the largest shortfall is identified in the South Uttlesford Analysis Area (2.5 pitches), whilst the least is identified in the Rural South Uttlesford Analysis Area (0.5 pitches). A future shortfall is identified in each analysis area.

It must be noted that the degree of future demand has the potential to be greater than that identified via population growth (to 2041), especially if participation rates continue to rise on a similar trajectory to what has occurred in the previous five years. This will be explored greater in the following Strategy Report.

Football - Match play demand

Improving grass pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs), alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The substitute to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches, providing that the pitch is FA approved, sports lit and available for community use during the peak period.

In Uttlesford, the 11v11 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is FA approved to host competitive matches. It is currently used by 30 teams for matches, which is a good level for one pitch.

As the number of 3G pitches increases in line with meeting training demand shortfalls, so should the number of teams utilising the provision for matches, which in turn should further relieve grass pitches of use. As such, whilst the number of 3G pitches needed for matches will never outweigh the number of 3G pitches needed for training (as they would not be sustainable without midweek usage), maximising the pitches in place and proposed, should be fully supported.

The use of 3G pitches for matches also emphasises the importance of maintaining good quality pitches. Should pitches become poor quality, they will likely lose accreditation to accommodate fixtures. This will then result in all teams using the provision needing to transfer to grass pitches, adding to their usage, reducing their capacity and further diminishing their quality.

Rugby union

No rugby union teams based in Uttlesford utilise a 3G pitch for either match or training demand.

Access to 3G provision for Saffron Walden RFC and Wendens Ambo RFC would be beneficial given the level of overplay of their grass pitches, although other solutions could

also be possible and neither report of aspirations to do so. This is further explored in the forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan.

Other sports

No demand for access to 3G pitches has been uncovered for any other sports in Uttlesford.

3.5: Conclusion

For football, with only one 3G pitch currently available for community use, and with capacity fully utilised on this supply when access is most required, there is a clear need to increase provision. With the FA model suggesting that there is a shortfall of 4.5 pitches to meet training requirements, priority should be placed on the creation of new provision.

3G – supply and demand summary

- With 211 football teams currently affiliated to Uttlesford there is a potential shortfall of 4.5 11v11 3G pitches to meet training demand, with this rising to a future shortfall of 5.5 11v11 3G pitches when accounting for future demand.
- For football, with only one 3G pitch currently available for community use, and with capacity fully utilised on this supply when access is most required, there is a clear need to increase provision.

3G – supply summary

- There is currently one 11v11 3G pitch in Uttlesford, provided at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre. The pitch is serviced by sports lighting and is available for community use.
- There are two smaller size 3G pitches in Uttlesford, located at Katherine Semar Junior School and Rodings Primary School. Both of these are unavailable to the community and are not served by sports lighting.
- The 11v11 3G pitch is FA approved and can therefore be used to host competitive matches (none of the smaller sized pitches are).
- The 11v11 3G pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is assessed as good quality, having been installed in 2022.

3G – demand summary

- With only one 3G pitch in Uttlesford offering community use, the provision is considered at capacity, with no spare capacity available.
- For football, 12 clubs that responded to the consultation (representing 136 teams) report they require additional access to 3G provision, which represents a high proportion of unmet demand.
- Three clubs, Saffron Walden Community FC, Saffron Walden Community Girls FC and Takeley Youth FC currently access 3G pitches (41 teams in total); however, the latter do so outside of the district (in Harlow).
- Future demand from population growth for football will likely result in increased demand for 3G provision, whilst it could also entail further need for World Rugby compliant provision.

PART 4: RUGBY UNION

4.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into four areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. As part of this, club developers and a team of community rugby coaches deliver core programmes for clubs across Uttlesford.

The RFU governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-aside, 10-aside, 7-aside and Tag rugby as well as the Touch Union. Its aim is to increase and retain participation within the game, with facilities needing to be appropriate, affordable and accessible to enable this.

The rugby union playing season operates from September to May, with senior men's fixtures being held on Saturday afternoons whilst ladies, juniors and mini fixtures are held on Sundays.

Consultation

Two rugby union clubs play within Uttlesford, and both responded to consultation requests.

4.2: Supply

There are 12 grass rugby union pitches identified in Uttlesford across five sites, with six pitches available for community use across four sites.

The remaining six pitches are unavailable for community use, all are located at Felsted School. Of the pitches available for community use, five are senior pitches and one is an age grade pitch.

Table 4.1: Summary of grass rugby union pitches available for community use

Analysis area	No. senior pitches	No. of age grade pitches	Total
North Uttlesford	1	-	**1**
Rural North & Thaxted	3	1	**4**
Rural South	-	-	**0**
South Uttlesford	1	-	**1**
Uttlesford	**5**	**1**	**6**

As shown in the table above, most community available pitches (four) are identified within the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area, whilst no pitches are identified in the Rural South Analysis Area.

The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches that are serviced by goalposts (posted pitches).

However, there are some additional marked spaces that are used, without goalposts, particularly for age grade rugby. It is also common nationally for age grade matches to be played on senior pitches via the use of cones, particularly at sites used by clubs.

Recommended pitch dimensions for all formats of play are shown in the table overleaf.

Table 4.2: Rugby union pitch dimensions

Age	Playing format	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres)[25]
U7	Age grade mixed	20 x 12
U8	Age grade mixed	45 x 22
U9	Age grade mixed	60 x 30
U10	Age grade mixed	60 x 35
U11	Age grade mixed	60 x 43
U12	Age grade boys/girls	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U13	Age grade boys/girls	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U14	Age grade boys/girls	100 x 70
U15	Age grade boys/girls	100 x 70
U16	Age grade boys/girls	100 x 70
U17	Age grade boys/girls	100 x 70
U18	Colts	100 x 70
Senior	Senior	100 x 70

Disused provision

A disused site is a site that has previously been used for sport but is not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Sites containing disused pitches are still in use recreationally but previously provided formal rugby union pitches, but no longer do so.

There is one disused rugby union pitch identified in Uttlesford, at Friend's School (now closed), whereby one age grade pitch had previously existed.

In addition, there are two sites that are still in use recreationally that previously provided formal rugby union pitches but no longer do so. The following table outlines these sites.

Table 4.3: Unmarked pitches within Uttlesford (for rugby union)

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	CB11 3TR	One age grade pitch which is currently not marked out.
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	CB11 4UH	One senior pitch and one age grade pitch which are currently not marked out.

The figure overleaf identifies all grass rugby union pitches currently servicing Uttlesford. For a key to the map, see Table 4.8.

[25] *Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.*

Figure 4.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Uttlesford

Management and security of tenure

Security of tenure is mixed for the two clubs based in Uttlesford, as summarised in the table below.

Table 4.4: Ownership/management arrangements for rugby clubs in Uttlesford

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club users	Arrangement	Tenure
9	Carver Barracks	Rural North & Thaxted	Wendens Ambo RFC	Rent from MOD	Unsecure
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	Saffron Walden RFC	Freehold	Secure
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club b)	Rural North & Thaxted	Saffron Walden RFC	Lease from private landowner (12-years remaining)	Unsecure

Saffron Walden RFC owns freehold of its main ground (at Saffron Walden Rugby Club), meaning it has security of tenure. However, the adjoining site, on which all its mixed age grade teams use, is leased from a private landowner. Whilst the lease has 12 years remaining, it has a 12-month break clause, meaning the landowner can terminate the agreement at any time, which means that it is unsecure tenure.

Elsewhere, Wendens Ambo RFC rents use of the pitch at Carver Barracks, signifying unsecure tenure as there is no long-term security of community use continuing.

Pitch quality

The assessment of rugby union pitch quality looks at two key elements; the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. For maintenance, each pitch is given a maintenance rating of M0, M1 or M2, based on the regime that is usually undertaken, with the definitions of these shown in the table below.

Table 4.5: Definition of maintenance categories

Category	Definition
M0	Minimal or no maintenance is undertaken
M1	Regular maintenance is undertaken that extends beyond a basic regime
M2	A sophisticated, regular and dedicated maintenance regime is undertaken

For drainage, a rating of D0, D1, D2 or D3 is assigned to each pitch. This is based on whether drainage is adequate and considers the presence of an operational system. The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres that has been installed in the last five years.

Table 4.6: Definition of drainage categories

Category	Definition
D0	Drainage is natural but inadequate
D1	Drainage is natural and adequate
D2	A pipe drainage system is installed (at 5-metre centres and within the last eight years)
D3	A pipe and slit drainage system is installed (at 1-metre centres in the last five years)

An overall quality rating based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated on a scale of good, standard and poor as shown below.

Table 4.7: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

Drainage	Poor Maintenance (M0)	Adequate Maintenance (M1)	Good Maintenance (M2)
Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

The pitches which are available for community use in Uttlesford, one is good quality, two are of standard quality and three are poor quality. However, there are six good quality pitches at Felsted School, all of which are unavailable for community use.

The sole good quality pitch within the district is identified at Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club. The maintenance at the site is high level and a functional drainage system has been established.

Saffron Walden RFC reports an improvement in the quality of its pitches (at Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club); however, the Club acknowledges its age grade pitch receives a considerable degree of demand due to being regarded as the dedicated training pitch. Consequently, the age grade pitch has deteriorated.

Similarly, Wendens Ambo RFC reports a slight improvement in the quality of the senior pitch at Carver Barracks.

A pitch-by-pitch breakdown can be seen in the table overleaf.

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

Table 4.8: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Tenure	Management	Community use?	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Sports lighting?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	CB11 3TR	North Uttlesford	Unsecure	Education	Yes	1	Senior	No	M0/D1	Poor
9	Carver Barracks	CB10 2YA	Rural North & Thaxted	Unsecure	MOD	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D0	Poor
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
22	Felsted School	CM6 3JL	Rural South	Unsecure	Education	No	1	Senior	No	M2/D3	Good
32	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	CM6 2AU	South Uttlesford	Unsecure	Education	Yes	1	Senior	No	M0/D1	Poor
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	CM22 6BQ	Rural North & Thaxted	Secure	Sports Club	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M2/D2	Good
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	CM22 6BQ	Rural North & Thaxted	Secure	Sports Club	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D1	Standard
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	CM22 6BQ	Rural North & Thaxted	Secure	Sports Club	Yes	1	Age grade	Yes	M1/D1	Standard

Ancillary facilities

Both clubs in Uttlesford have access to changing room provision for home games. The facilities at both Carver Barracks and Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club are identified as having adequate changing facilities, as seen in the table below.

Table 4.9: Ancillary facilities offered at each rugby club's home ground.

Site ID	Site name	Club	Club-house	Car parking	Dugouts	Stands	Fencing	Overall quality
9	Carver Barracks	Wendens Ambo RFC	✓	✓	x	x	x	Standard
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club	Saffron Walden RFC	✓	✓	x	x	✓	Standard

Saffron Walden RFC is currently utilising a marque as an extension to its clubhouse; however, it aspires to replace this with a permanent facility. The Club reports that the changing rooms specifically are causing ongoing problems, preventing the growth of any potential future senior women's team(s).

4.3: Demand

Demand for rugby pitches in Uttlesford tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

Competitive demand

There are two rugby union clubs based in Uttlesford, collectively providing a total of 26 teams. As a breakdown, this consists of two senior men's, eight age grade boys' and 18 age grade mixed teams.

The clubs are mixed in terms of what they provide. Saffron Walden RFC offers a mixture of senior, age grade boys' and age grade mixed teams, whilst Wendens Ambo RFC only offers age grade mixed teams. Wendens Ambo RFC is one of the only age grade-only clubs in the country.

Table 4.10: Summary of the number of rugby union teams

Club	Analysis area	Men's	Women's	Age grade boys'	Age grade girls'	Age grade mixed	Total
Saffron Walden RFC	Rural North & Thaxted	2	-	8	-	5	**15**
Wendens Ambo RFC	Rural North & Thaxted	-	-	-	-	11	**11**
-	**Total**	**2**	**0**	**8**	**0**	**16**	**26**

Amongst all the rugby teams within the district, age grade mixed teams are the most represented with 16 teams, largely attributed to the large number of age grade mixed teams

catered for at Wendens Ambo RFC (11 teams). Conversely, across both rugby clubs within Uttlesford, there are no senior women's or age grade girls' teams provided.

Training demand

Throughout the country, many rugby teams train at their home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed.

A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of sports lighting, with just one rugby pitch (at Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club) offering this.

The activity for each club and its level is highlighted in the table below.

Table 4.11: Summary of the rugby union club facility use for evening training

Site ID	Site	Club	Training demand	Match equivalent sessions
9	Carver Barracks	Wendens Ambo RFC	One match pitch is used for training, accommodating 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week.	1.5
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club	Saffron Walden RFC	One match pitch is used for training, accommodating five match equivalent sessions per week.	5

Training demand from Saffron Walden RFC would be greater; however, its five-age grade mixed teams utilise an unposted pitch at the Club's home ground for all its training demand.

Use of artificial pitches

The alternative to training on grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches. World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. A World Rugby compliant pitch enables the transfer of match demand from grass pitches onto 3G pitches, which alleviates overplay of grass pitches and as a result protects quality.

Nationally, clubs with access to 3G pitches for training utilise them as a method of protecting grass pitches for matches and providing a high-quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play generally continues to take place on grass pitches, although there is occasional use of 3G pitches for fixtures in the case of grass pitch quality or capacity issues (especially during bad weather spells).

There are currently no World Rugby compliant 3G pitches in Uttlesford. The nearest World Rugby compliant 3G pitch is identified at Davey Field (Shelford Rugby Football Club) in South Cambridgeshire.

The following Strategy Report will explore the feasibility of any new 3G provision being able to accommodate rugby union provision, in attempt to minimise/alleviate rugby union grass pitch shortfalls currently identified.

Exported/imported demand

There is no known exported or imported rugby union demand relating to Uttlesford.

Unmet/latent demand

Only Saffron Walden RFC reports latent demand, expressing that if the Club loses access to the area of land (not marked out) adjacent to its match pitches (owned by a private landlord), the Club will need an additional two pitches to meet its training demand. However, it does not quantify such latent demand with any additional teams.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined via several ways, including through participation increases and by using population forecasts. In addition, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for rugby union arising from housing developments within Uttlesford.

Future population growth

Based on population projections to 2041 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can estimate the likely additional demand for grass rugby pitches that will arise from any growth. Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates can then be established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference total current population in 2023 of 91,348 will increase to 107,507 by 2041. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by this growth and the requisite match equivalent sessions that it will create. As seen, an increase of one age grade boys' team and three age grade mixed teams are projected.

Table 4.12: District-wide team generation rates

Age group	Team generation rate	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent sessions [26]
Men (19-45yrs)	1:6665	0.34	0	0
Women (19-45yrs)	1:0	0.00	0	0
Boys (13-18yrs)	1:447	1.36	1	0.5
Girls (13-18yrs)	1:0	0.00	0	0
Mixed (7-12yrs)	1:416	3.07	3	0.75

At a localised level, all the future demand generated via population growth is identified within the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area.

Future levels of training demand that will emanate from this growth can be calculated via using Sport England's calculator. This demand is based upon access to a sports-lit grass pitch equated into match equivalent sessions.

[26] Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

Table 4.13: Future training demand from population growth

Age group	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions)	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions) - rounded figure	Hour/s equivalent
Men (19-45yrs)	0.17	-	0
Women (19-45yrs)	0.00	-	0
Boys (13-18yrs)	0.68	1	0.5
Girls (13-18yrs)	0.00	-	0
Mixed (7-12yrs)	0.77	1	0.25

Similarly, all future training demand generated via population growth is identified within the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area.

Participation increases

Both rugby union clubs express aspirational future demand. This potential growth is quantified in the table below.

Table 4.14: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Match equivalent sessions
Saffron Walden RFC	Rural North & Thaxted	1 x senior women's	0.5
Saffron Walden RFC	Rural North & Thaxted	1 x age grade girls'	0.5
Wendens Ambo RFC	Rural North & Thaxted	5 x age grade mixed	1.25
-	**Total**	**-**	**2.25**

The total future demand expressed by clubs amounts to 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week; one match equivalent sessions from Saffron Walden RFC and 1.25 match equivalent sessions from Wendens Ambo RFC.

Future demand summary

In the supply and demand analysis at the end of this section of the report, it is considered unfeasible for all future demand to be factored in. This is because it is likely club aspirations will absorb the future demand identified through population growth, rather than them being judged separately and therefore double counted. As such, only demand identified through population growth is taken forward, with club demand considered more theoretical and aspirational.

Notwithstanding the above, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain a scenario that will consider the impact if the clubs' aspirations are realised.

The peak period

To fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established for all types of rugby. For senior teams, it is Saturday PM as all senior teams play at this time, whereas peak time for age grade rugby is Sunday AM.

4.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby union pitches, the following assumptions are applied to the site-by-site and pitch-by-pitch analysis, unless otherwise known:

- All sites that are or could be used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this has secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- All competitive play is on senior sized pitches, with age grade teams playing on overmarked pitches, unless dedicated age grade pitches or unposted pitches are known to be installed.
- From U13s upwards, teams play 15v15 and use a full pitch.
- For senior and age grade boys/girls' teams, the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 match equivalent sessions for each match played based on all teams operating on a home and away basis.
- Age grade mixed teams (U6s-U12s) play on half of a senior pitch, meaning two matches and four teams can be accommodated at any one time.
- Play per week for age grade mixed teams is set at 0.25 match equivalent sessions for each match played based on teams operating on a home and away basis.
- Training that takes place on marked pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to usage levels (one training session is one match session).
- Internal use of school pitches is added to current play, where community availability is offered, as determined on a site-by-site basis depending on levels of activity.
- Other usage of pitches (e.g., by football teams) is added as match equivalent sessions based on the level and regularity of play.
- Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, based on quality, as set out below.

Table 4.15: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

The table below identifies the way spare capacity and overplay is represented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.16: Spare capacity examples

Spare capacity in peak period (examples)	Explanation of spare capacity
1	If the cell is highlighted in green with a number, it means that the pitch(es) have actual spare capacity at peak time.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch(es) is/are played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
1	If the cell has a number in it but is not highlighted, it means the pitch has spare capacity in the peak period; however, this is discounted. This is most commonly due to unsecure tenure and/or poor pitch quality but can also be due to the site being unavailable to the community.
1	If the cell is highlighted in red with a number, it means that the pitch(es) are overplayed.

Table 4.17: Capacity table for rugby pitches in Uttlesford

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Sports lighting?	Pitch capacity	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	North Uttlesford	Yes	1	Senior	Poor (M0/D1)	No	1.5	-	-	1.5	Unused by the community.
9	Carver Barracks	Rural North & Thaxted	Yes	1	Senior	Poor (M1/D0)	No	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	Overplayed through match and training demand from Saffron Walden RFC.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	Rural South	No	1	Senior	Good (M2/D3)	No	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
32	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	South Uttlesford	Yes	1	Senior	Poor (M0/D1)	No	1.5	-	-	1.5	Unused by the community.
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	Yes	1	Senior	Good (M2/D2)	Yes	3.25	1	-	2.25	Pitch is used by Saffron Walden RFC for its match demand.
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	Yes	1	Senior	Standard (M1/D1)	No	2	4	-	2	Overplayed through match demand from Saffron Walden RFC.
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	Yes	1	Age grade	Standard (M1/D1)	Yes	2	-	5	3	Overplayed through match and training demand from Saffron Walden RFC.

Actual spare capacity

There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as actual spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure it can cater for regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

In addition, any pitches that are used by clubs to capacity at peak time, that are poor quality or that provide unsecure tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity. As such, the table below ascertains whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be used to accommodate an increase in play on a site-by-site and pitch-by-pitch basis. This is regarding senior demand.

Table 4.18: Actual spare capacity table

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches with spare capacity	Pitch type	Potential spare capacity	Actual spare capacity (peak period)	Comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	North Uttlesford	1	Senior	1.5	0	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
32	Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form	South Uttlesford	1	Senior	1.5	0	Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure and poor pitch quality.
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	1	Senior	2.25	0	No spare capacity within the peak period.

Of the three pitches identified as having potential spare capacity in Uttlesford, none are considered to offer actual spare capacity at peak time for an increase in rugby.

Overplay

There are two senior pitches across the same number of sites in Uttlesford that are overplayed by 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 4.19: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of overplayed pitches	Pitch type	Overplay
9	Carver Barracks	Rural North & Thaxted	1	Senior	1.5
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	1	Senior	2
65	Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club a)	Rural North & Thaxted	1	Age grade	**3**
-	-	**Total**	**3**	-	**6.5**

Overplay is only identified in the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area (6.5 match equivalent sessions per week). No overplay is identified in the remaining three analysis areas.

Table 4.20: Summary of overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions)
North Uttlesford	-
Rural North & Thaxted	6.5
Rural South	-
South Uttlesford	-
Uttlesford	**6.5**

4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity and overplay of rugby union pitches in Uttlesford based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is based on what has been forecast through population growth, although it is only possible to identify this on a district-wide basis.

As seen, there is a current shortfall of 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week, with this emanating from a large overplay in the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area.

Table 4.21: Current supply and demand analysis in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
North Uttlesford	-	-	0
Rural North & Thaxted	-	6.5	6.5
Rural South	-	-	0
South Uttlesford	-	-	0
Uttlesford	**0**	6.5	6.5

When accounting for future competitive and training demand, the overall shortfall is projected to increase to 8.5 match equivalent sessions per week, principally due to a significant shortfall in the Rural North & Thaxted Analysis Area (8.5 match equivalent sessions per week).

Table 4.22: Future supply and demand analysis in match equivalent sessions per week (by analysis area)

Analysis area	Current total	Future competitive demand	Future training demand	Future total
North Uttlesford	0	-	-	0
Rural North & Thaxted	6.5	1.25	0.75	8.5
Rural South	0	-	-	0
South Uttlesford	0	-	-	0
Uttlesford	**6.5**	**1.25**	**0.75**	**8.5**

4.6: Conclusion

There is a clear shortfall of rugby union provision to meet demand in Uttlesford, with a shortfall identified due to both clubs utilising overplayed provision. This deficit is projected to worsen in the future, meaning that solutions need to be sought.

The quality of pitches across the district is relatively low with just one community available pitch deemed to be good quality. Hence, an improvement in pitch quality across the district could provide a solution to alleviating the current and future shortfalls identified.

Rugby union – supply and demand summary

- Of the three pitches identified as having potential spare capacity in Uttlesford, none are considered to offer actual spare capacity at peak time for an increase in rugby.
- There are two senior pitches across the same number of sites that are overplayed by 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week.
- There is a current overall shortfall of 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week, with future demand exacerbating this shortfall to 8.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Rugby union – supply summary

- There are 12 grass rugby union pitches identified in Uttlesford across five sites, with six pitches available for community use across four sites.
- Overall, there are two disused rugby union pitches identified in Uttlesford, at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and at Friend's School.
- Saffron Walden RFC owns freehold of its main ground (at Saffron Walden Rugby Club), meaning it has security of tenure, whereas Wendens Ambo RFC rents use of the pitch at Carver Barracks, signifying an unsecure tenure.
- Of pitches which are available for community use, one is good quality, two are standard quality and three are poor quality.
- The facilities at both Carver Barracks and Saffron Walden Rugby Football Club are identified as having adequate changing facilities.

Rugby union – demand summary

- There are two rugby clubs considered to be based in Uttlesford providing a total of 26 teams.
- Both Saffron Walden RFC and Wendens Ambo RFC have seen a slight decline in senior teams (one each). In contrast, both clubs have seen an increase in age grade mixed teams and Saffron Walden RFC have also seen an increase in its age grade boy's teams.
- Saffron Walden RFC reports latent demand, expressing that if the Club loses access to the area of land (not marked out) adjacent to its match pitches (owned by a private landlord), the Club will need an additional two pitches to meet its training demand.
- There is no known exported or imported rugby union demand relating to Uttlesford.
- Team generation rates predict a growth of one age grade boys' team and three age grade mixed teams are projected, whilst both clubs quantify aspirations to increase their current team numbers by a total of seven teams.

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

PART 5: HOCKEY

5.1 Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH).

Competitive league hockey matches and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on 3G pitches, 40mm pitches may be suitable at introductory level, such as school curriculum low level hockey. England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as seen below.

Table 5.1: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey

Category	Surface	Playing Level	Playing Level
England Hockey Category 1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	**Essential** International Hockey - Training and matches	**Desirable** Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of EH Player Pathway Performance Centres and upwards England
England Hockey Category 2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	**Essential** Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of player pathway: Academy Centres and Upwards	**Desirable** All adult and junior League Hockey Intermediate or advanced School Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)
England Hockey Category 3	Sand based surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	**Essential** All adult and junior club training and league Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools Intermediate or advanced schools hockey	**Desirable** All adult and junior League Hockey Intermediate or advanced School Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)
England Hockey Category 4	All 3G surfaces	**Essential** None	**Desirable** Lower level hockey (Introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.

In addition to the above pitch types, EH reports it is currently trialling a different multi-sport surface to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand on a pitch that is also suitable for other sports such as netball and tennis. The surface type, known as Gen 2, is a versatile surface that ensures the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it is a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including schools, with a dynamic surface which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.

For senior teams, a full-size hockey pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run-off areas, which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides and three metres at the ends. EH's preference is for four-metre side and five-metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres, though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day (peak time) provided that the pitch has sports lighting. Training is generally midweek and also requires access to a pitch with sports lights.

Consultation

Saffron Walden HC is the only hockey club identified as playing within Uttlesford and has been consulted to inform this section of the report.

5.2: Supply

There are six full-size, sports-lit hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford. One (of the two pitches provided) at Felsted School is unavailable for community use, whilst the remaining pitches across the district are available.

Table 5.2: Summary of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Surface type	Size (metres)
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland a)	North Uttlesford	1	Yes	Yes	Sand filled	100 x 60
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland b)	North Uttlesford	1	Yes	Yes	Sand filled	100 x 60
22	Felsted School a)	Rural South	1	Yes	Yes	Sand filled	100 x 65
22	Felsted School b)	Rural South	1	No	Yes	Sand dressed	100 x 65
27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	South Uttlesford	1	Yes	Yes	Sand dressed	100 x 65
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	North Uttlesford	1	Yes	No	Sand dressed	100 x 65

As seen in the table above, three of the full-size pitches are located in the North Uttlesford Analysis Area (at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre), with the remaining pitches identified across the Rural South Analysis Area (at Felsted School) and the South Uttlesford Analysis Area (at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre).

Disused provision

A disused site is a site that has previously been used for sport but is not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Sites containing disused pitches are still in use recreationally but previously provided formal hockey pitches but no longer do so.

Friend's School (Walden School) closed in 2017 and as such, the smaller size hockey suitable pitch fell out of use.

Smaller size provision

In addition to the five full-size pitches, there are also six smaller size hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford. However, only one pitch (at Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust) is available for community use. Three of the smaller size pitches are equipped with sports lighting (at Carver Barracks, Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust and R A Butler Academy).

Table 5.3: Smaller sized AGPs in Uttlesford

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Surface type	Size (metres)
9	Carver Barracks	Rural North & Thaxted	1	No	Yes	Sand filled	48 x 35
14	Dame Bradbury School	North Uttlesford	1	No	No	Sand filled	35 x 17
50	Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust	Rural North & Thaxted	1	Yes	Yes	Sand filled	34 x 37
56	R A Butler Academy	North Uttlesford	1	No	Yes	Sand filled	36 x 19
69	St Thomas More Catholic Primary School	North Uttlesford	1	No	No	Sand filled	30 x 17
105	Stansted St Marys C of E Primary School	South Uttlesford	1	No	No	Sand filled	61 x 44

Nationally, smaller size pitches are considered too small to accommodate any purposeful hockey demand, although some larger ones are utilised for training demand and junior play. However, in Uttlesford, each smaller size pitch is not considered suitable as they are too small. As such, these pitches have been discounted from this section of the report from this point forward.

For the location of the full-size AGP, please see Figure 5.1 overleaf.

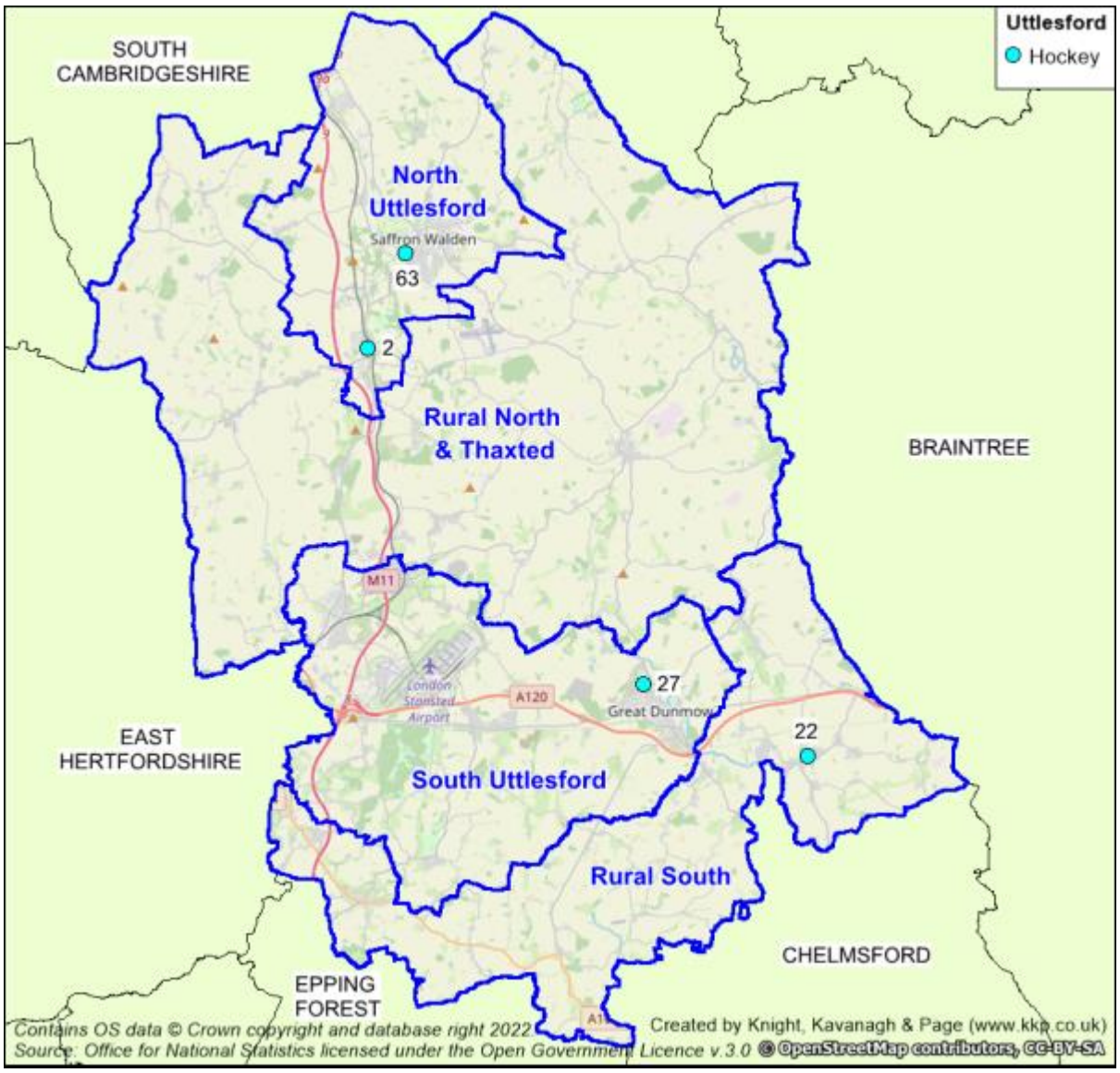

Figure 5.1: Location of full-size hockey suitable AGPs in Uttlesford

Management and security of tenure

Three of the five community available full-size pitches are owned and operated by education providers, with the only exceptions being at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre which are owned by a Trust and the district council respectively.

Saffron Walden HC currently has a 49-year lease with Newport Free Land Trust for use of one of the pitches at the Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland, with its current arrangement due to expire in 2053. The Club also has a long-term community use agreement with the School for access to the second pitch.

Availability

England Hockey applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 18:00-22:00; Friday 18:00-20:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00). On this

basis, only the full-size pitches at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and Great Dunmow Leisure Centre are considered to be readily available to the community within the peak period, as both are accessible for 34 hours.

Table 5.4: Availability of full-size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	34	Fully available to the community.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	34	Fully available to the community.
22	Felsted School	17	Available to the community from 18:00 to 21:00 from Monday to Friday; the pitch is unavailable on Saturdays but open to the community on Sundays from 09:00 to 13:00.
22	Felsted School	0	Unavailable for community use.
27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	34	Fully available to the community.
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	6	Available to the community from 09:00 to 15:00 on Saturday.

The full-size pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre offers a reduced level of availability within the peak period (no midweek availability) due to the lack of sports lighting on the pitch.

Quality

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, together with maintenance levels, that most commonly affects quality. An issue for hockey nationally is that some providers did not financially plan to replace the carpet when first installed, leading to many pitches now being poor quality.

For the PPOSS, AGPs are assigned a quality rating of good, standard or poor following site assessment. This rating is linked to the condition and age of the playing surface, as well as surrounding hard areas and the maintenance that is undertaken. For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Of the full-size community available pitches in Uttlesford, three are good quality, with each having been installed in the last four years (2020). Conversely, the remaining two pitches, at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre are poor quality, with both not being resurfaced since their installation in 2003 and 1998 respectively.

Table 5.5: Age and quality of full-size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	No. of pitches	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland a)	1	1994 (2020)	Good
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland b)	1	2023	Good
22	Felsted School a)	1	2005 (2020)	Good
27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	1	2003	Poor
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	1	1998	Poor

The unavailable full-size pitch at Felsted School is also poor quality, after it was last resurfaced in 2010.

Ancillary provision

The ancillary facilities at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland are good quality, with Saffron Walden HC reporting that dedicated facilities (separate from the School's facilities) were constructed in 2004 and refurbished in 2023.

5.3: Demand

Saffron Walden HC is the only hockey club currently playing in Uttlesford. The Club consists of 29 teams, which equates to seven senior men's, six senior women's teams, one mixed team and 15 junior teams. In total, it has a current playing membership of 609, as seen below.

Table 5.6: Summary of demand

Name of club	Membership							
	Senior men (17-55)	Senior women (17-55)	Senior men (17-55)	Junior girls (14-16)	Senior men (17-55)	Junior girls (11-13)	Senior men (17-55)	Total
Saffron Walden HC	174	95	44	53	54	77	112	609

Exported/imported demand

There is no known exported hockey demand identified in Uttlesford.

Braintree HC (Braintree District) use the full size pitch at Felsted School for some of its training and match demand. Primarily, the youth section of the Club use the facilities at Felsted School, with the U8s to U12s training and playing matches on Sunday morning, whilst the U14s to U16s train on Thursday evening and play matches on Sunday.

Latent/unmet demand

Latent demand is identified by Saffron Walden HC, with the Club stating it is at capacity and cannot grow further due to limited supply across the district.[27]

[27] The Club did not quantify such latent demand.

Future demand

Growing participation is a key aim within EH's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities, schools and regional and local leagues as well as developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Overall, it has an aim to double participation over the next ten years, meaning it does not consider team generation rates to provide an accurate representation of potential growth.

In relation to club aspirations, Saffron Walden HC reports that it does not foresee adding any additional teams.

Additional demand

In addition to club-based hockey activity, there are also various initiatives for hockey which are promoted by EH that can add to the demand in a local authority and necessitate the need for further pitch capacity.

This includes:

- Hockey Heroes
- Back to Hockey
- Walking Hockey

Back to Hockey and Walking Hockey sessions are both held at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland by Saffron Walden HC.

Felsted School delivers a large hockey programme and has close ties with Braintree HC, with the school's U14 and U16 teams playing their matches at Braintree's home ground. Furthermore, a lot of the children at Felsted School often join Braintree HC to play for its men's and women's senior teams. The school's most recent success came with the U16 girls' National Championship victory in 2022.

Peak time demand

Generally, all senior hockey is played on a Saturday, whereas all junior hockey is played on a Sunday.

Usage

Saffron Walden HC requires significant usage of the pitches at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and accesses both for all its training and match demand. Details of the Club's use of both pitches is summarised in the table below.

Outside of usage by Saffron Walden HC, there is also football use of the full-size pitches at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland, with both pitches occupied on Monday and Thursday evenings between 17:00 to 19:00. Football usage on the pitch is less prominent than on many AGPs nationally due to hockey usage being given clear priority.

In total, 25.5 hours of spare capacity remains during the peak period for further bookings when no hockey or football activity currently takes place.[28]

[28] Booking information/usage is unknown for Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre.

Table 5.7: Usage of full size AGP for hockey

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Usage in the peak period (hours)	Usage comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	34	25	Saffron Walden HC uses the pitch from 19:00 to 22:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Club also uses the pitch all day on Saturday and Sunday.
			2	Football clubs use the pitch from 17:00 to 19:00 on Monday and Friday.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	34	25	Saffron Walden HC uses the pitch from 19:00 to 22:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Club also uses the pitch all day on Saturday and Sunday.
			2	Football clubs use the pitch from 17:00 to 19:00 on Monday and Friday.
22	Felsted School	17	5.5	Braintree HC (Braintree District) use the full size pitch at Felsted School for some of its training demand on Thursdays from 19:00 to 20:30 and from 09:00 to 13:00 on Sundays.
22	Felsted School	0	-	No community use.
27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	34	0	Unused for hockey usage, although it is believed that it is used for recreational football throughout the week.[29]
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	6	0	Unused for hockey usage, although it is believed that it is used for recreational football on Saturdays.[30]

5.4: Supply and demand analysis

Match play analysis

It is suggested that a full-size pitch with sports lighting is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on one day. With teams playing on a home and away basis, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams at peak time (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP).

For senior hockey, on the basis that there are five full-size AGPs which can accommodate hockey matches in Uttlesford, this provides a theoretical opportunity to accommodate up to 40 hockey teams across the district. As such, with 14 senior teams fielded by Saffron Walden HC, this suggests that the current supply is sufficient to accommodate demand.

[29] Booking sheet information could not be acquired.
[30] Booking sheet information could not be acquired.

However, as the pitch at Felsted School is not accessible by the community on Saturdays and the pitch at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is without sports lighting, the actual capacity is perceived to be for 30 teams, as shown below.

Table 5.8: Summary of actual spare for senior hockey (Saturdays)

Site ID	Site	Actual capacity (match equivalent sessions)	No. of teams that can be fielded	Comments
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4	8	Fully available to the community.
2	Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland	4	8	Fully available to the community.
22	Felsted School	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
22	Felsted School	0	0	No community access on Saturdays.
27	Great Dunmow Leisure Centre	4	8	Fully available to the community.
63	Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre	3	6	Available to the community from 09:00 to 15:00 on Saturday.
-	**Total**	**15**	**30**	-

For junior hockey matches, the need for pitches is generally less than it is for senior hockey. This is because younger age groups can play on half a pitch (meaning two fixtures can take place at one time). As such, the current supply is also considered sufficient to meet such demand.

Training analysis

In terms of capacity for training, Saffron Walden HC reports no existing issues, with priority access given to the pitches at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and with some spare capacity existing for growth. Furthermore, additional spare capacity will likely free up if the 3G pitch supply increases in the district (see Part 3).

5.5: Conclusion

There is currently a sufficient supply of hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford to accommodate current and expressed future demand (no future demand), although this will entail fixtures to be programmed accordingly (four matches per day). Furthermore, for this to remain the case, imminent resurfacing of the pitches at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is required.

Two of the full size pitches, at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre are available for community use but are unused for hockey. Both pitches have exceeded their 10-year recommended lifespan and the latter is without sports lighting. If these pitches were to adequately service the community, as previously mentioned, both would require resurfacing and sports lighting would need to be installed at Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre for the pitches to be considered usable for competitive hockey matches.

Hockey – supply and demand summary

- There is currently a sufficient supply of hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford to accommodate current and future demand.
- Imminent resurfacing of the pitches Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre is required.

Hockey – supply summary

- There are six full size hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford.
- Each pitch is serviced by sports lighting; however, one of the pitches at Felsted School is unavailable for community use, whilst the remaining pitches across the district are available.
- There are also six smaller size hockey suitable pitches in Uttlesford. However, only one pitch (at Manuden Village Hall & Sports Trust) is available for community use.
- Saffron Walden HC currently operate at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland under a 49-year lease with Newport Free Land Trust, with its current arrangement due to expire in 2053, signifying a secure tenure.
- Of the full-size community available pitches in Uttlesford, three are good quality (at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and Felsted School), with the remaining two pitches, at Great Dunmow Leisure Centre and Saffron Walden County High Sports Centre being poor quality.
- Ancillary provision is good at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland.

Hockey – demand summary

- Saffron Walden HC is the only hockey club currently playing in Uttlesford; the Club consists of 29 teams, equating to seven senior men's, six senior women's teams, one mixed team and 15 junior teams.
- It has a membership of 609.
- The Club has seen a slight decrease in participation across both its senior men's teams and junior age groups, amounting to a decrease of one senior men's team and three fewer junior teams.
- There is no known exported hockey demand identified in Uttlesford.
- Braintree HC (Braintree District) use the full size pitch at Felsted School for some of its training demand.
- Saffron Walden HC requires significant usage of the pitches at Anglian Leisure Joyce Frankland and accesses it for all its training and match demand.
- In total, 25.5 hours of spare capacity remains during the peak period for further bookings when no hockey or football activity currently takes place.

APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is aware of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport - Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity (2023)

The Government published its new strategy for sport in August 2023. The 2015 government sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a More Active Nation, was a fundamental re-framing of sport and physical activity in the UK. It sets out five outcomes delivered by sport and physical activity:

- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Individual development
- Social and community development
- Sustainable economic development

This new strategy builds on the foundations of Sporting Future and retains these five outcomes at its core. To measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of three core priorities, with seven indicators to achieve these priorities, as follows:

- **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
  - Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030
  - Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
  - Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active

- **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
  - Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
  - Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector

- **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
  - Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
  - Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

Delivering against these priorities will help create a more active nation and a more sustainable sport sector. These aims are complementary; greater participation, stronger governance and confidence in the sector will help to drive investment, which in turn helps to attract new audiences. The vision is to make sport and physical activity accessible, resilient, fun and fair, now and for the years to come – for the benefit of individuals and the country.

Sport England Uniting the Movement: Our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport (2021-2031)

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value. That's why Sport England wants sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in sport and physical activity through NGBs, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. It states that there is now a need to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

Tackling inequalities

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means that there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there. These inequalities are at the very core of the Uniting the Movement.

Sport England plans on having a laser focus on tackling inequalities in all that it does, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- 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.

- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents' (mix of full-size and small sided provision, including multi-use games areas - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- Support access to flexible indoor spaces, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- Support testing of technology and innovation, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has commissioned a national project. Over the next two years to 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, LFFPs will establish a ten-year vision for football facilities that aims to transform the playing pitch stock in a sustainable way. They will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% will be identified via LFFPs. LFFPs will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and DCMS) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a replacement for a Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

A LFFP will; however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPOSS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The FA: Survive. Revive. Thrive. (2020-24)

This new strategy aims to ensure the grassroots game in England will survive, revive, and thrive over the next four years.

The strategy outlines seven transformational objectives through to 2024:

- **Male Participation:** Modernised opportunities to retain and re-engage millions of male participants in the game.
- **Female Participation:** A sustainable model based on a world-class, modernised offer.
- **Club Network:** A vibrant national club network that delivers inclusive, safe local grassroots football and meets community needs.
- **Facilities:** Enhanced access to good quality pitches across grassroots football.
- **Grassroots Workforce:** A transformation in community football by inspiring, supporting and retaining volunteers in the game.
- **Digital Products and Services:** An efficient grassroots digital ecosystem to serve the administrative and development needs of players, parents, and the workforce.
- **Positive Environment:** A game that's representative of our diverse footballing communities, played in a safe and inclusive environment.

This strategy was launched as grassroots football was able to safely return after lockdown from Monday 29 March 2021, it also identifies the immediate challenge, in light of COVID-19, to get grassroots football back on its feet.

The new strategy sets out a number of goals to revive the game by addressing the areas that require particular attention. This includes increasing opportunities to ensure girls have

the same access as boys to football in schools and clubs, and improving quality of pitches, with the aim of seeing 5000 good quality pitches added to the current number by 2024.

The FA: Time for Change Strategy (2020-24)

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in January 2021 which aims to 'unite the game and inspire the nation'. It will do this in two ways, by 'changing the game to maximise its impact' and by 'serving the game to deliver football for all'.

To achieve this, the strategy will focus on six Game Changer objectives, to change the fabric of the game and tackle long-term issues, to make the largest possible impact in the years ahead:

- Win a major tournament
- Service > two million through a transformed media platform
- Ensure equal opportunities for every girl
- Delivery of 5,000 quality pitches
- A game free of discrimination

These are underpinned by eight Serve objectives, ensuring maintenance of brilliant business-as-usual services to support the growing and evolving needs of the game:

- Trusted, progressive regulation and administration
- Safe and inclusive football pathways and environment
- Personalised and connected learning experiences
- Maximum investment into the game
- Diverse, high-performing workforce and inclusive culture
- World class venues and events
- Strong reputation and clear brand identity
- Technology enabled and insight driven

The Rugby Football Union Strategy (2021-onwards)

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

Game Objectives:

- Enjoyment – enable positive player experiences on and off the field
- Winning England – create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby
- Welfare – enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players
- Flourishing rugby communities – support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society

Driving Objectives:

- Diversity & Inclusion – drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society
- Understand – build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game
- Connect – connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences
- Commercial and operational excellence – ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce

England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters (2013)

The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'.

EH knows that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation's pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, it will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from its success and its occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes the sport function. EH knows the importance of its volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. England Hockey will enable this to happen, and it is passionate about its role within the sport. It will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards its vision.

As a governing body, EH wants to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through the club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in the game, so that players understand their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

- Grow our participation
- Deliver international success
- Increase our visibility
- Enhance our infrastructure
- For England Hockey to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

Club participation

The club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to EH to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey.

Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, EH has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in

the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in primary schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

England Hockey Strategy

The vision of the Strategy is for "every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players", whilst its mission is for "More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities."

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

- **PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision**

There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

- **IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)**

The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. EH works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facility & education providers around owning an asset.

- **DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.**

EH has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

APPENDIX 2: SUMMER SPORT REVIEW

This report provides a position on the current landscape of winter sports played in Uttlesford. Work is ongoing to develop the summer sport segment of this report and KKP is currently at Stage B of the PPS for establishing this work.

The summer sports in the scope of work for Uttlesford are as follows:

- Cricket pitches
- Outdoor tennis courts
- Outdoor netball courts
- Outdoor bowling greens
- Athletics tracks

The information below outlines the known position for 2024 in comparison to the Uttlesford PPS developed in 2019. The information does not make an assessment on the supply and demand position of any sport but is a useful guide to determine if there are any notable changes to the outcomes identified in 2019 (based on information available to KKP as of July 2024).

Cricket

For the 2024 cricket season, there are 32 affiliated clubs in Uttlesford which collectively provide 133 teams. This equates to 66 senior men's, two senior women's and 65 junior teams (55 junior boys' and 10 junior girls' teams).

In comparison to 2019, this is an increase of one team. This equates to limited growth, but further investigation is needed (which will be established throughout Stage B of the PPOSS process) to determine how this translates to clubs on an individual level. Specific clubs in 2019 were overplayed and shortfalls were apparent in Safford Walden with the remaining areas of Uttlesford showing sufficient capacity for growth.

Bowls

As of 2024, there are 11 clubs using bowling greens in Uttlesford. Membership, where known for nine clubs, equates to 491 members, made up of 339 senior men, 145 senior women and seven juniors. The average club membership is 55.

Summary of club membership (2024)

Club name	Analysis area	Members			Total
		Men	Women	Juniors	
Bishop's Stortford BC	South Uttlesford	70	50	4	**124**
Clavering BC	Rural North & Thaxted	23	6	1	**30**
Dunmow BC	South Uttlesford	78	41	1	**120**
Elsenham BC	South Uttlesford	29	11	-	**40**
Great Chesterford BC	North Uttlesford	23	5	-	**28**
Quendon BC	Rural North & Thaxted	23	11	1	**35**
Radwinter BC	Rural North & Thaxted	36	7	-	**43**
Saffron Walden Town BC	North Uttlesford	27	4	-	**31**
Stansted BC	South Uttlesford	30	10	-	**40**
Thaxted BC	Rural North & Thaxted	-	-	-	-

Club name	Analysis area	Members			Total
		Men	Women	Juniors	
Total	**-**	**339**	**145**	**7**	**491**

Membership for Stebbing and Thaxted bowling clubs are unknown (and as such excluded from the bowls membership table) with neither club having responded to consultation requests from KKP (yet).

In 2019, only four clubs responded to consultation attempts and as such the 2024 dataset can be considered more robust than that of 2019. In the main, demand for bowls seems to have remained relatively static. Previously, there was a two-member shortfall identified at Elsenham BC in 2019; however, this specific club has had a reduction in demand at its site, as seen in the corresponding table. Therefore, it is likely this will no longer be the case.

Tennis

Tennis demand

There are 10 tennis clubs in Uttlesford which is consistent with what was the case in 2019. A direct comparison to the previous study is difficult as KKP is still consulting with clubs andhas yet to undertake an audit on facilities. From the clubs which responded to consultation, three have seen a small decrease in demand and two a small increase.

There were small shortfalls identified at club specific sites in 2019. A direct comparison will not be available until a full assessment has been made by KKP for 2024.

The LTA's current Strategy (Tennis Opened Up) is based around parks tennis and KKP cannot comment on the position of informal and recreational tennis provision until it has undertaken an audit of facilities.

Netball

Netball demand

There are three netball clubs based in Uttlesford. Across these, there are currently 531 playing members (where known). The table below provides a summary of this by club.

Summary of club membership (2024)

Clubs	Current membership	2019 PPS Study
Great Dunmow Infinity NC	131	-
Saffron Hawks NC	-	-
Swan NC	400	220
Uttlesford	**531**	**220**

Membership is currently unknown for Saffron Hawks NC and was also previously unknown for Saffron Hawks NC, as well as for Great Dunmow Infinity NC. Therefore, a comparison of demand is difficult to make. However, where demand is known in both studies, a large increase in membership at Swan NC has occurred (45% increase).

It should be noted that netball clubs typically play matches within indoor built facilities with outdoor courts used for more seasonal offerings. There was a sufficient supply of outdoor

courts identified in 2019. A fuller position on if this remains the case will not be known until KKP has completed a full audit.

Athletics

There are no formal athletics tracks in Uttlesford. Demand is centred around road running clubs, who typically use existing road and active design routes.
Uttlesford is however identified as a potential location for a compact athletic facility by England Athletics. This was the case in 2019 and remains the case now.

More information can be found here: https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs-and-facilities/facilities/newgen-tracks/

APPENDIX 3: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Grass football pitch non-technical assessment

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Football

Please complete one form per pitch

Site reference:		**Site Name:**	
6 figure grid reference		**Pitch ID(s):**	
Number of football pitches on site:		**Pitch size:**	(Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 Mini, 5v5, 7v7)
Availability		**Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?**	
		If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one youth pitch is overmarked on a adult pitch) in Pitch Issues	
Weather at time of visit & date of visit			
Pitch Issues:			

Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)

Element (Gathered via a non technical site assessment)	**Rating**						**Guidance notes**	**Comments**
Playing surface								
Grass Cover	Good >80%		Adequate 60-80%		Poor <60%		Advice is to walk through the middle of the pitch	
Does the pitch meet The FA minimum size?	Yes - as per the FA recommended size		Within FA recommended guidelines		No		See size chart below for recommended dimensions	
Slope of pitch (gradient and cross fall)	Flat		Moderate		Severe			
Length of grass	Good		Too long		Too short		Good 30mm-50mm, Too long 51mm plus, Too short 29mm less	
Evenness of pitch	Good		Adequate		Poor			
Problem Areas: Evidence of dog fouling/glass/litter/vehicle tracks	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots			
Problem Areas: Evidence of unofficial use/damage to the surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots			
Problem Areas: Evidence of poor drainage	No evidence of standing water or poor drainage		Some evidence of poor drainage		Yes, poor drainage			
Maintenance programme (information from maintenance schedule/grounds team/club survey)								**Section total**
Grass cutting	Yes, as required		Yes, but not frequent enough		No			
Seeded	Yes, as required		Not known		No			
Aerated (per year)	Three or more times		Once/ twice		No			
Sand dressed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No			
Fertilised	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No			
Weed killed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No			
								Section total

NB If none of this information is provided you should assume that only the grass is being cut and the rest of the maintenance items should be marked with the lowest score option.

PITCH SCORE	0.0%	**RATING**	Poor

Rugby pitch non-technical assessment

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Rugby Union

Please complete one form per pitch

Site reference		**Site Name**	
6 figure grid reference		**Pitch ID(s)**	
Date of assessment		**Pitch size**	(Senior, Mini/Midi)
Number of pitches on site		**Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?**	
Availability		*If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues*	
Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused			
Weather at time of visit			
General comments/observations			

Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)

Qualitative information (gathered on site)	**Rating**						**Guidance notes**	**Comments**
Grass Coverage	Good		Adequate		Poor		>90% = good. <80% = poor	
Size of pitch	Acceptable (between recommended minimum and maximum sizes)		Flag for further investigation (below recommended minimum size)		Unacceptable (above maximum size)		Maximum size = width 70m, goal line to goal line 100m, in goal area 22m, run offs 5m where practical. Recommended minimum size = width 68m, goal line to goal line 94m, in goal area 6m, run offs 5m where practical.	
Length of grass	Too Long		Good		Too short		Too long = >75mm. Too short = <50mm	
Problem Areas: Evidence of glass/litter/vehicle tracks/dog fouling	None		Yes - some		Yes lots			
GOALPOSTS								
Are goalposts installed?	Yes		No					
Is there any obvious danger on posts?	Yes		No					
Are the posts stable in the ground?	Yes		No					
Is the crossbar fixed securely?	Yes		No					
Is there evidence of rust on the posts?	Yes		No					
ANCILLARY								
Is the pitch floodlit?	Yes		No					
Is there changing accommodation for the pitch?	Yes		No					
Is an appropriate level of car parking available?	Yes		No					
Pitch maintenance (information gathered via club survey/ pitch provider consultation) - refer to the guidance notes below								
Aerated (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Sand dressed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Fertilised (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Weed killed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Chain harrowed	every week		fortnightly		monthly		never			
								Pitch Maintenance Score
Drainage	Natural (inadequate) **SCORE D0**		Natural (adequate) **SCORE D1**		Pipe drained **SCORE D2**		Pipe and slit drained **SCORE D3**		Unknown **SCORE D0**		**Natural (adequate)** = 3 or less training/match cancellations per season **Natural (inadequate)** = 4 or more training match cancellations per season *Based on a **pipe drained** system at 5m centres that has been installed in the previous eight years **Based on a **slit drained** system at 1m centres completed in the previous five years.	

Artificial grass pitches non-technical assessment (including third generation turf pitches)

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Artifical grass pitches

Site reference		Site Name					
6 figure grid reference		Pitch ID					
Number of AGPs on site		Pitch size	Full (i.e., 100m x 60m)		Half (i.e., 60m x 40m)		
Availability							

Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused

Type of pitch							
	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)		Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)		Short Pile 3G (40mm)		
	Sand Dressed		Sand Filled		Water based		

Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)

Element	Rating								Guidance notes	Site comments
Age of Surface	less than 2 years		2-5 years		5-10 years		over 10 years			
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Problem Areas: Evidence of damage to surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				If no evidence, assume none.	
Access for disabled players. i.e.: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Condition of posts/ nets/ goals	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Adequate safety margins (where appropriate)	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate					
Is the AGP floodlit?	Yes				No					
Is the AGP left open at all times?	Yes				No					
Are there dug outs?	Yes				No					
Are there youth shelters/spectator seating around AGP?	Yes				No					
Is there changing accommodation for the AGP?	Yes				No					

Maximum score	93	Scoring:	Poor	<=50	Total Score 0
			Standard	51-79	
			Good	80+	Potential Rating Poor

KNIGHT, KAVANAGH & PAGE

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE UPDATE REPORT

JUNE 2024

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
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Contents

Glossary

DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DPD	Development Plan Document
DLUHC	Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
FIT	Fields in Trust
FOG	Friends of Group
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
MUGA	Multi-Use Games Area (an enclosed area with a hard surface for variety of informal play)
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
NSN	Natural/Semi-Natural
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
SOA	Super Output Areas
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
UDC	Uttlesford District Council

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Space Update Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Uttlesford District Council (UDC). It provides detail with regard to what open space provision exists in the area, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It uses the 2019 Open Space Assessment, updated to reflect any known changes in provision and population, to set out the quantity, quality, and accessibility to open space.

The table below details the open space typologies included within the study:

Table 1.1: Open space typology definitions

Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments / community food growing	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

For planning policies to be 'sound', local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. We advocate that the methodology to undertake such assessments should still be informed by best practice including the Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guidance; *Assessing Needs and Opportunities* published in September 2002.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced PPG17. However, assessment of open space facilities is still normally carried out in accordance with the Companion Guidance to PPG17 as it remains the only national best practice guidance on the conduct of an open space assessment.

Under paragraph 102 of the NPPF, it is set out that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform UDC what provision is required in an area.

In accordance with best practice recommendations[1], a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not included unless identified as being significant.

[1] A Companion Guide to PPG17

1.1 Report structure

Open spaces

This report considers the supply and demand issues for open space provision across Uttlesford. Each part contains relevant typology specific data. Further description of the methodology used can be found in Part 2. The report covers the predominant issues for all open spaces as defined in best practice guidance:

Part 2: Methodology
Part 3: Summary of survey and audit scores
Part 4 Parks and gardens
Part 5: Natural/semi-natural greenspace
Part 6: Amenity greenspace
Part 7 Provision for children/young people
Part 8: Allotments

Associated strategies

The study sits alongside the indoor and built facilities interim report and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS); also undertaken by KKP (provided in separate reports). The Companion Guidance to PPG17 included the open space typology of formal outdoor sports. This is predominantly covered within the associated PPS. The PPS is undertaken in accordance with the methodology provided in Sport England's Guidance 'Developing a Playing Pitch Strategy' for assessing demand and supply for outdoor sports facilities (2013).

Any site categorised as outdoor sports provision but with a clear multifunctional role (i.e., available for wider community use) is included in this study as a type of open space. Pitch or sport sites purely for sporting use are solely included within the PPS. For sites with a multifunctional role, double counting between the two studies does not occur, as the PPS looks at the number of pitch/sports facilities at a site and not hectares of land (as prescribed in Sport England Guidance).

1.2 National context

National Planning Policy Framework (2023), (DLUHC)

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (NPPF) sets out the planning policies for England. It details how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and provides a framework to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraphs 7-9). It establishes that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF establishes that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for health and well-being. It states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform UDC what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on, unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site 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.

1.3 Local context

Local Plan

The new Uttlesford Local Plan will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan occurred in December 2024 with Reg 19 consultation in summer 2024. This will be followed by a period of examination with the adopted Local Plan envisaged in early 2026.

This open space study will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

PART 2: METHODOLOGY

This section details the methodology undertaken as part of the study. The key stages are:

- 2.1: Population
- 2.2: Auditing local provision
- 2.3: Quality and value
- 2.4: Quality and value thresholds
- 2.5: Identifying local need

2.1 Population

Figure 2.1 shows the district broken down into these analysis areas in tandem with population density. Population is considered in more detail below.

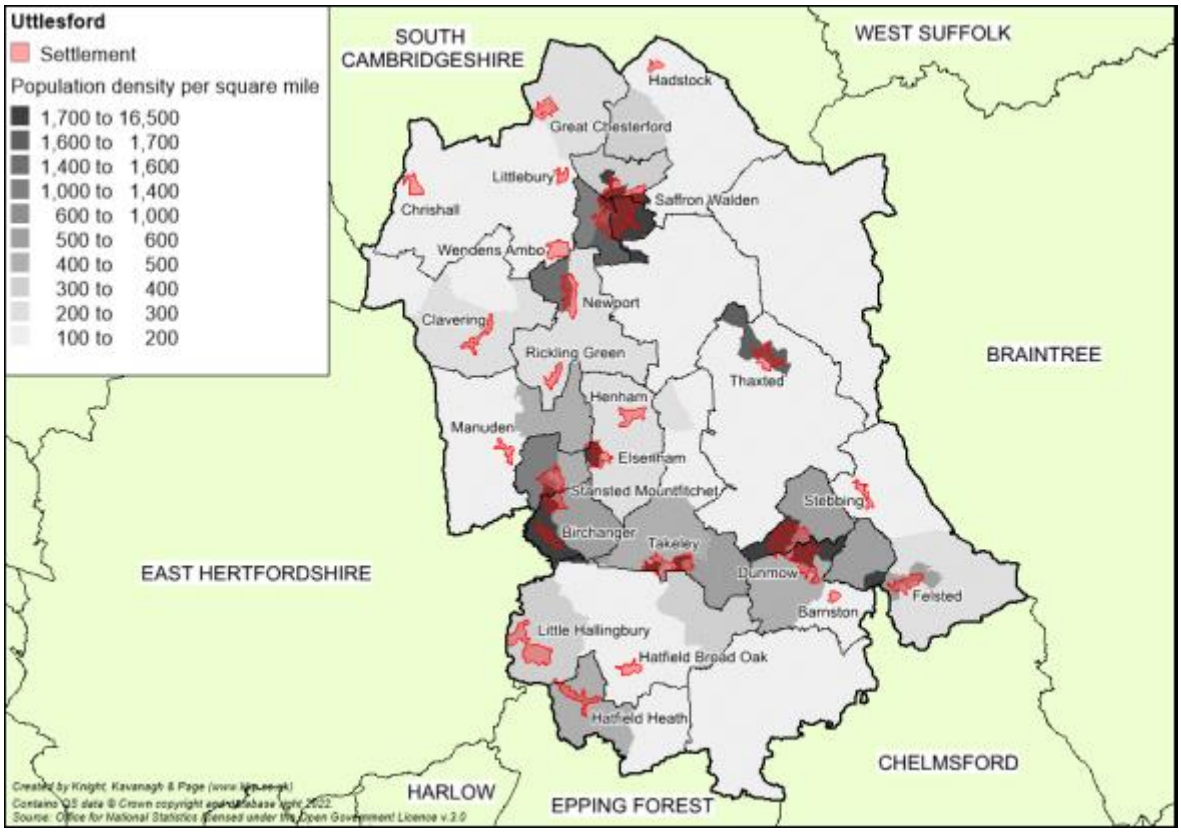


Figure 2.1: Map of Uttlesford District

Table 2.1: Analysis areas and populations

Analysis area	Population[2]
Saffron Walden	14,970
Great Dunmow	10,642
Rural Area	57,460
Stansted Mountfitchet	8,234
Uttlesford	**91,306**

The population figures are used to help determine the current provision levels for different types of open space with each analysis area.

2.2 Auditing local provision (supply)

Open space sites (including provision for children and young people) are identified, mapped, and assessed to evaluate site value and quality. Only publicly accessible sites are included (i.e., private sites or land, which people cannot access, are not included). The KKP Field Research Team originally undertook the site audit for the previous study in 2018/19. This has been reviewed (in autumn 2023) via a desk-based exercise to reflect any obvious changes in provision including adding any new sites (identified via checking against OS Greenspace data). Any newly added site has been visited and assessed in order to be allocated a score. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is counted only once. The audit, and the report, utilise the following typologies:

- Parks & gardens
- Natural & semi-natural greenspace
- Amenity greenspace
- Provision for children & young people
- Allotments

In accordance with best practice recommendations, a size threshold of 0.2 hectares is applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. Sites of a smaller size, particularly for the typologies of amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace tend to have a different role. Often this is for visual purposes (e.g. small incremental grassed areas such as highway verges) and is therefore considered as offering less recreational use in comparison to other forms of open space. Subsequently sites below 0.2 hectares for these typologies are not audited. However, any sites below the threshold (i.e., those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) are included.

Database development

All information relating to open spaces is collated in the project open space database (to be supplied as an Excel electronic file). All sites identified and assessed as part of the audit are recorded within the database.

Source: ONS 2021 Mid-Year population estimates for England

The database details for each site are as follows:

Data held on open spaces database (summary)

- KKP reference number (used for mapping)
- Site name
- Ownership (if known)
- Management (if known)
- Typology
- Size (hectares)
- Site audit data

Sites are primarily identified by KKP in the audit using official site names, where possible, and/or secondly using road names and locations. Please note that there are numerous protected sites in villages and the countryside that are not mapped or included in the study. This study focuses more on sites within reach of settlements, therefore, there is not 100% coverage across the district. A 1000m buffer distance has been used on the analysis areas to help attribute any sites located outside of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.

2.3 Quality and value

Each type of open space receives separate quality and value scores. This also allows for application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus within and to a particular open space typology.

Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a site of high quality may be inaccessible and, thus, be of little value; whereas a poor quality space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring.

Analysis of quality

Data collated is initially based upon those derived from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by Keep Britain Tidy). This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures. The quality criteria used for the open space assessments carried out for all open space typologies are summarised in the following table.

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)

- Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts,
- Personal security, e.g., site is overlooked, natural surveillance
- Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths
- Parking, e.g., availability, specific, disabled parking
- Information signage, e.g., presence of site information, notice boards
- Equipment and facilities, e.g., adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seating, bins, toilets, etc.
- Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti
- Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., fencing, gates, staff on site
- Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of general landscape & features
- Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people

For the provision for children and young people, criteria are also built around the Green Flag Award. It is a non-technical visual assessment, including general equipment and surface quality/appearance as well as of, for example, bench and bin provision. This differs, for example, from an independent Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RosPA) review, which is a more technical assessment in terms of play and risk assessment grade.

Analysis of value

Site visit data plus desk-based research is calculated to provide value scores for each site identified. Value is defined in best practice guidance in relation to the following three issues:

- Context of the site i.e., its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
- Level and type of use.
- The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

The value criteria set for audit assessment is derived as:

Value criteria for open space site visits (score)

- Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g., dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility
- Context of site in relation to other open spaces
- Structural and landscape benefits, e.g., well located, high quality defining the identity/ area
- Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Educational benefits, e.g., provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes
- Social inclusion and health benefits, e.g., promotes civic pride, community ownership and a sense of belonging; helping to promote physical and mental well-being
- Cultural and heritage benefits, e.g., historic elements/links (e.g., listed building, statues) and high profile symbols of local area
- Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks
- Economic benefits, e.g., enhances property values, promotes economic activity, and attracts people from near and far

Children's and young people's play provision is scored for value as part of the audit assessment. Value in particular is recognised in terms of the size of sites and the range of equipment it offers. For instance, a small site with only one or two items is likely to be of a lower value than a site with a variety of equipment catering for wider age ranges.

2.4 Quality and value thresholds

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the results of the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements may be required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).

A site rating low for quality should not automatically be viewed as being fit for development. It is also necessary to understand its value, access and role within the community it serves. It may for example be the only site serving an area and should therefore be considered a priority for improvement.

The most recognised national benchmark for measuring the quality of parks and open spaces is the 66% pass rate for the Green Flag Award. This scheme recognises and rewards well-managed parks and open spaces. Although this study uses a similar assessment criteria to that of the Green Flag Award scheme it is inappropriate to use the Green Flag benchmark pass for every open space as they are not all designed or expected to perform to the same exceptionally high standard. For example, a park would be expected to feature a greater variety of ancillary facilities (seating, bins, play equipment) and manicured landscaping and planting, etc. in contrast to an amenity greenspace serving a smaller catchment and fewer people.

Furthermore, a different scoring mechanism is used in this study to that of the Green Flag scheme (albeit criteria for this study are derived from the Green Flag scheme). For each open space typology, a different set and / or weighting for each criterion of quality is used. This is to better reflect the different roles, uses and functions of each open space type. Consequently, a different quality threshold level is set for each open space typology.

Quality thresholds in this study are individual to each open space typology. They are based on the average quality score arising from the site assessments and set using KKPs professional judgment and experience from delivering similar studies. The score is to help distinguish between higher and lower quality sites; it is a minimum expectation as opposed to an absolute goal. This works as an effective method to reflect the variability in quality at a local level for different types of provision. It allows the Council more flexibility in directing funds towards sites for enhancements, which is useful if funds are geographically constrained with respect to individual developments.

Reason and flexibility are needed when evaluating sites close to the average score / threshold. The review of a quality threshold is just one step for this process, a site should also be evaluated against the value assessment and local knowledge.

There is no national guidance on the setting of value thresholds, and instead a 20% threshold is derived from KKP's experience and knowledge in assessing the perceived value of sites.

A high value site is one deemed to be well used and offering visual, social, physical and mental health benefits. Value is also a more subjective measure than assessing the physical quality of provision. Therefore, a conservative threshold of 20% is set across all typologies. Whilst 20% may initially seem low - it is a relative score. One designed to reflect those sites that meet more than one aspect of the criteria used for assessing value (as detailed earlier). If a site meets more than one criterion for value it will score greater than 20%. Consequently, it is deemed to be of higher value.

Table 2.2: Quality and value thresholds by typology

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	60%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	35%	20%
Amenity greenspace	45%	20%
Provision for children and young people	45%	20%
Allotments	40%	20%

2.5 Accessibility catchments

Accessibility catchments can be used as a tool to identify deficiencies of open space in a local area. This is achieved by applying them to create a distance catchment. The study displays the results of the catchments to highlight any potential gaps in access to provision.

There is an element of subjectivity resulting in time / distance variations. This is to be expected given that people walk at different speeds depending on a number of factors including height, age, levels of fitness and physical barriers on route. Therefore, there will be an element of 'best fit'.

PART 3: SUMMARY OF SITES

3.1 Audit overview

Within Uttlesford there is a total of 311 sites, an increase of 27 sites since 2019, equating to over 694 hectares of open space, an increase of 8 hectares since 2019. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi-natural greenspace (509 hectares); accounting for 73% of open space.

Table 3.1: Overview of open space provision

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares)[3]
Park and gardens	7	9
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	68	509
Amenity greenspace	119	147
Provision for children & young people	88	10
Allotments	29	19
TOTAL	**311**	**694**

Natural and semi-natural greenspace in Table 3.1 includes Hatfield Forest. At 382 hectares, the site accounts for 75% of the total natural and semi-natural greenspace provision. As a SSSI/NNR it is sensitive to overuse and considered as being at capacity. Furthermore, there is a charge for entry. Consequently, some tables throughout the report omit the site to better demonstrate the need for natural/semi-natural greenspace.

Of the 311 sites, four sites do not receive a quality or value rating. Three of these are classified as natural and semi-natural greenspace. Of the natural sites, two appear

[3] Rounded to the nearest whole number

inaccessible and one does not receive a score due to its late inclusion. The fourth site to not receive a quality/value rating is an allotment which was not viewable.

3.2 Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for open spaces across Uttlesford.

Table 3.2: Quality scores for all open space typologies

Typology	Scores			No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low	High
Park and gardens	55%	61%	68%	3	4
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	18%	41%	61%	19	46
Amenity greenspace	24%	56%	84%	26	93
Provision for children & young people	30%	54%	75%	12	76
Allotments	32%	48%	66%	2	26
TOTAL				**62**	**245**

There is generally a good level of quality across most open space sites. This is reflected in over three quarters (80%) of sites scoring above their set threshold for quality.

However, there are proportionally more parks and gardens (43%) scoring below the threshold. This is followed by natural and semi-natural provision (29%).

3.3 Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for open spaces across Uttlesford

Table 3.3: Value scores for all open space typologies

Typology	Scores			No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	<20%	>20%
Park and gardens	37%	45%	54%	0	7
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	7%	26%	45%	9	56
Amenity greenspace	16%	32%	60%	1	118
Provision for children & young people	20%	40%	55%	0	88
Allotments	22%	24%	32%	0	28
TOTAL				**10**	**297**

The majority of sites (96%) are assessed as being above the threshold for value, reflecting the role and importance of open space provision to local communities and environments.

Allotments and natural and amenity greenspace have a higher proportion of low value provision than the other typologies.

For natural greenspace, this reflects a lack of ancillary features at some sites leading to a lack of recreational use in comparison to other sites. However, the value these provide in offering a visual amenity can still be important.

A high value site is one that is well used by the local community, well maintained (potentially with a balance for conservation), provides a safe environment and has features of interest; for example, good quality play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are considered a higher value than those offering limited functions and viewed as unattractive.

3.4 Summary

- 311 sites are identified as open space provision. This is equivalent to over 694 hectares.
- This is an increase of 27 sites (approximately eight hectares) since the 2019 study.
- Of assessed sites, over three quarters (80%) rate above the quality threshold.
- All but 10 sites are assessed as above the value threshold; reflecting the importance of provision and its role offering social, environmental and health benefits.

PART 4: PARKS AND GARDENS

4.1 Introduction

This typology often covers urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide accessible high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. Country Park sites may also provide opportunities and functions often associated with parks (if present).

4.2 Current provision

There are seven sites classified as parks and gardens in Uttlesford, the equivalent of over nine hectares. There has been no change in this since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied and, as such, all known sites are included within the typology.

Table 4.1: Distribution of parks

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	5	8.87	0.59
Great Dunmow	-	-	-
Rural Area	2	0.15	0.002
Stansted Mountfitchet	-	-	-
Uttlesford	**7**	**9.02**	**0.10**

Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.10 hectares per 1,000 head of population. The largest site and the biggest contributor to provision is The Common (5.53 ha). This is followed by Bridge End Gardens (3.00 ha). Both are located in Saffron Walden.

Three of the sites; Bridge Street, Dorset House and Station Road Memorial Garden are particularly small at 0.08, 0,06 and 0.03 hectares respectively.

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 4.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is below this suggested standard.

Audley End Estate is a Registered Historic Park and Garden but is not included within the audit. Whilst the land has some Public Rights of Way across it, the site is not accessible to the public in the same way as other park sites. There is also an entrance fee to some parts of the site. Consequently, it is not considered a publicly accessible space.

4.3 Accessibility

Figure 4.1 overleaf shows the location of parks provision across Uttlesford with a 15-minute walk time catchment applied. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, the majority of parks provision (five sites) is located in the settlement of Saffron Walden. This is the settlement with the highest population density. The other two settlements with parks provision are Elsenham and Thaxted.

Whilst several settlements are without parks provision, they are generally in areas of lower population density. This is with the exception of settlements such as Great Dunmow, Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet. However, these settlements are served by other forms of open space such as amenity greenspace which may offer similar opportunities.

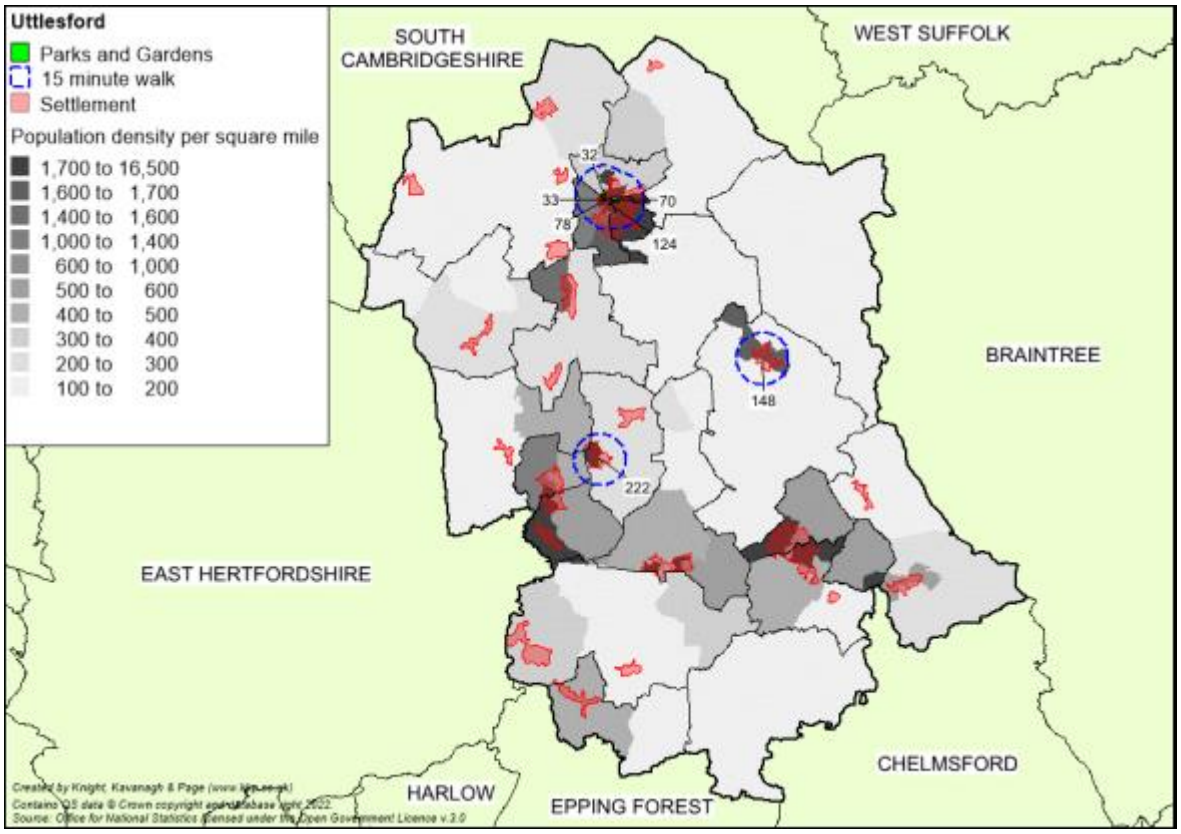


Figure 4.1: Parks and gardens mapped

Table 4.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
32	Bridge End Gardens	Saffron Walden	67.8%	54.5%
33	Close Gardens	Saffron Walden	59.7%	37.3%
70	The Common	Saffron Walden	63.1%	40.9%
78	Dorset House	Saffron Walden	63.1%	37.7%
124	Jubilee Garden	Saffron Walden	60.4%	48.2%
148	Margaret Gardens	Thaxted	59.4%	45.5%
222	Station Road Memorial Garden	Elsenham	54.7%	52.7%

4.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); scores from site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table summarises the results of the quality assessment for parks. A threshold of 60% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.3: Quality ratings for parks in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<60%)**	**High (>60%)**
55%	61%	68%	3	4

Of the seven parks in Uttlesford, four (57%), rate above the threshold. Whilst three sites fall below the quality threshold, it is worth noting that two; Close Gardens and Margaret Gardens only do so marginally, scoring 59.7% and 59.4% respectively.

The highest scoring park in Uttlesford is Bridge End Gardens, with a score of 67.8%. The site is an attractive ornamental garden including a hedge maze. It is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, highlighting its historical importance. This site is also identified in the residents' survey as a popular location to visit and is recognised as a local tourist attraction.

The Common is the second highest scoring site (alongside Dorset House). It is highlighted by Saffron Walden Town Council as a key site for the town. It also provides an important role for hosting community events. Consequently, it is a popular and well used site.

Sites scoring below the threshold for quality are generally smaller in size with fewer features when compared to higher scoring sites. They are, however, well maintained with attractive features/landscaping. None are reported to have significant quality issues.

4.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for parks. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.4: Value scores for parks in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<20%)**	**High (>20%)**
37%	45%	54%	0	7

All parks score above the threshold for value. The two highest scoring sites are Bridge End Gardens and Station Road Memorial Garden. These sites score 54.5% and 52.7% respectively.

Bridge End Gardens scores higher for cultural and heritage value. It also benefits from additional economic value due to its role as a tourist attraction. Consultation with Saffron Walden Town Council highlights that the site is a popular attraction which is very well used, and which has a number of volunteers.

All parks provide opportunities for a wide range of users and demonstrate the high social inclusion, health benefits and sense of place that parks can offer.

One of the key aspects of the value placed on parks provision is their ability to function as a multipurpose form of open space provision. Parks provide opportunities for local communities and individuals to socialise and undertake a range of different activities, such as exercise, dog walking and taking children to the play area. Taking all this into account, parks and gardens are recognised as being heavily integrated into people's everyday lives.

4.6 Summary

Parks and gardens

- There are seven sites classified as parks and gardens in Uttlesford, the equivalent of over nine hectares.
- Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 4.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is below this suggested standard.
- Most of the park provision in Uttlesford (five sites) is in the settlement of Saffron Walden, the area of highest population density.
- Whilst several settlements are without parks provision, they are generally in areas of lower population density. This is with the exception of Dunmow, Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet. However, such settlements are served by other forms of open space.
- Of the seven parks in Uttlesford, four (57%), rate above the threshold.
- Those sites that score below the threshold for quality are smaller with fewer features when compared to higher scoring sites. They are, however, well maintained with attractive landscaping. None are reported to have significant quality issues.
- All sites are assessed as being of high value, with the important social interaction, health benefits, historic value and sense of place sites offer being recognised.

PART 5: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

5.1 Introduction

The natural and semi-natural greenspace typology can include woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g., down-land, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g., marsh, fen), wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g., cliffs, quarries, pits) and commons. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on sites providing wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

5.2 Current provision

In total, 68 sites are identified as natural and semi-natural greenspace, totaling over 509 hectares of provision. There has been no change in this since 2019. These totals do not include all provision in the area as a site size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied. Sites smaller than this are likely to be of less or only limited recreational value to residents. However, they may still make a wider contribution to local areas, in relation to community viability, quality of life and health and wellbeing.

Table 5.1a: Distribution of all natural and semi-natural greenspace

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	3	1.23	0.08
Great Dunmow	9	21.52	2.02
Rural Area	55	465.93	8.11
Stansted Mountfitchet	1	20.45	2.48
Uttlesford	**68**	**509.15**	**5.58**

The largest of the natural and semi-natural greenspace sites is Hatfield Forest at 382 hectares. The site accounts for 75% of the total provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace. The site is managed and maintained by The National Trust.

The site is highlighted as suffering from impacts of recreational pressures. As a SSSI/NNR it is sensitive to overuse and considered as being at capacity. Furthermore, there is a charge for entry. On this basis, Table 5.1b shows quantity with Hatfield Forest omitted to better demonstrate the need for natural/semi-natural greenspace.

Table 5.1b: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace (excluding Hatfield Forest)

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	3	1.23	0.08
Great Dunmow	9	21.52	2.02
Rural Area	54	84.07	1.46
Stansted Mountfitchet	1	20.45	2.48
Uttlesford	**67**	**127.29**	**1.39**

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 1.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 5.1a illustrates that Uttlesford is above this suggested standard. However, as shown in Table 5.1b, if Hatfield Forest is omitted due to capacity/usage pressures, Uttlesford is below the FIT standard.

5.3 Accessibility

Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 show natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped against two different catchments; a 30-minute drive time and a 15-minute walk time. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Mapping shows a good distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace provision with most areas of higher population appearing to have access to provision of some kind. However, gaps against the walk time catchment are observed. Most noticeably to settlements with greater population densities such as Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet, Felsted and Great Dunmow (west).

The rural nature of the district, with easier access to the countryside, impacts upon resident expectations in terms of natural greenspace availability. Consultation with parish/town councils and via the community survey in 2019 highlights the presence and use of the network of footpaths leading to the surrounding countryside.

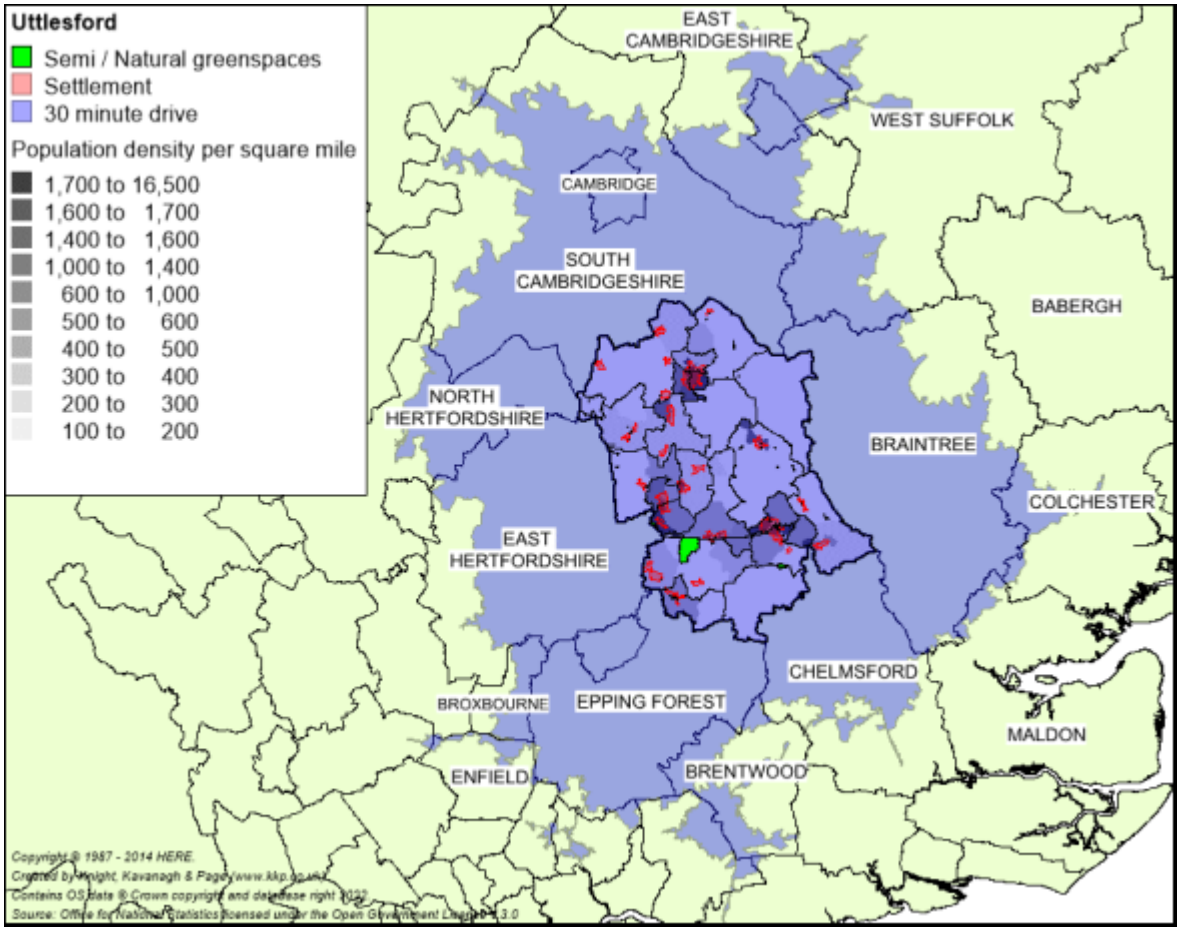


Figure 5.1: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped

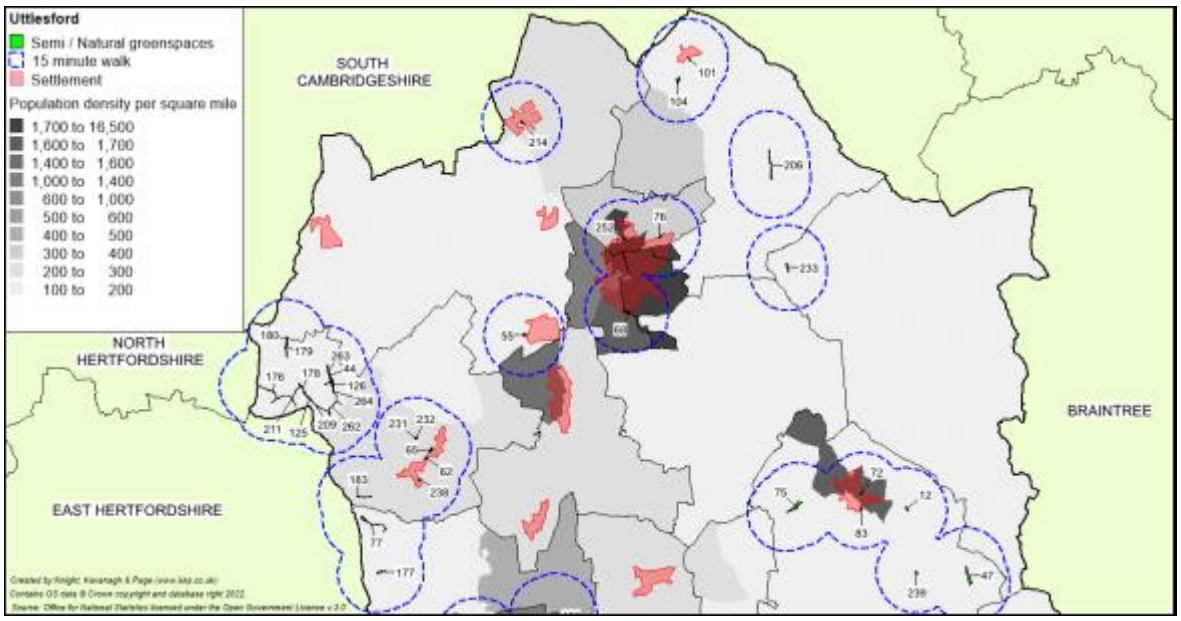


Figure 5.2: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped - North

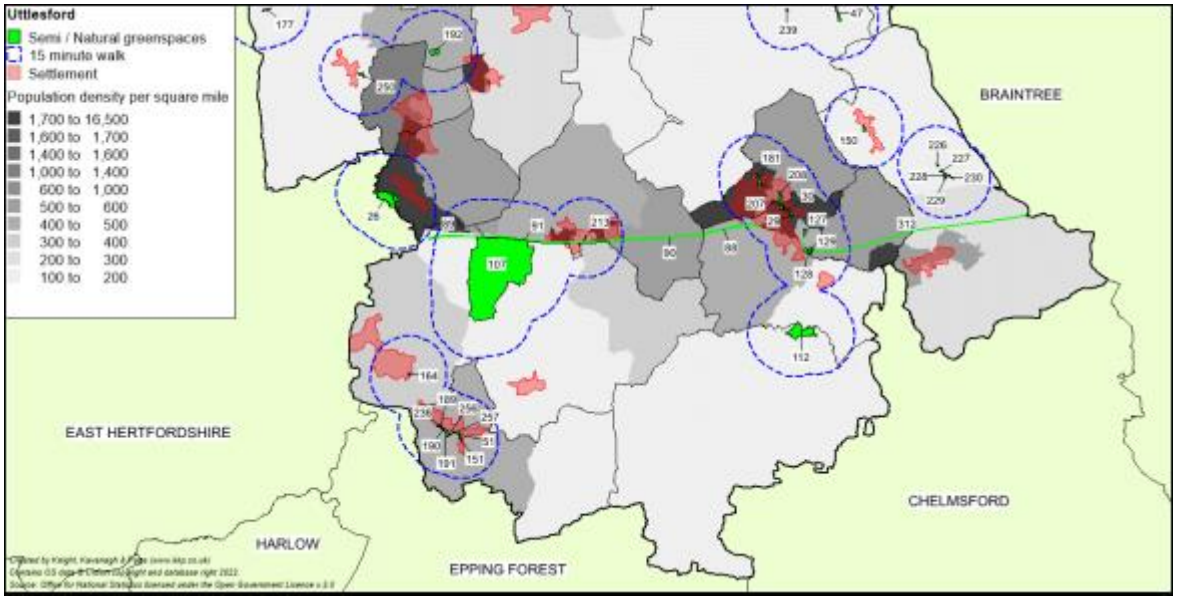


Figure 5.3: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped - South[4]

[4] No catchment is applied to Flitch Way given its linear nature and role as a pathway

Table 5.2: Key to sites mapped (sites with blank scores are inaccessible)

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
12	Bardfield Road	Thaxted	40.2%	24.5%
26	Birchanger Wood	Birchanger	56.7%	36.4%
29	Braintree Road	Great Dunmow	41.9%	25.5%
30	Braintree Road/River Chelmer	Great Dunmow	58.3%	26.4%
44	Bull Lane, Langley Upper Green	Langley	39.7%	25.5%
47	Bustard Green	Lindsell	43.5%	34.5%
51	Chelmsford Road	Hatfield Heath	43.1%	30.0%
55	Chinnel Meadow	Wendens Ambo	31.5%	16.4%
62	Clatterbury Lane 1	Clavering	37.0%	20.0%
65	Clatterbury Lane woodland	Clavering	42.9%	30.9%
68	Claypits Plantation	Saffron Walden	44.6%	25.5%
72	Coptal Lane	Thaxted	40.2%	25.5%
76	De Vigier Avenue	Saffron Walden	34.2%	20.0%
77	Dewes Green Road	Berden	24.5%	24.5%
83	Dunmow Road, Thaxted	Thaxted	38.6%	25.5%
88	Flitch Way, Dunmow	Great Dunmow	45.7%	30.9%
89	Flitch Way, Great Hallingbury	Great Hallingbury	53.3%	30.9%
90	Flitch Way, Little Canfield	Little Canfield	52.2%	30.9%
91	Flitch Way, Takeley	Takeley	48.4%	25.5%
101	Hadstock village pond	Hadstock	32.6%	25.5%
104	Harrison Sayer (wildlife trust)	Hadstock	33.7%	34.5%
107	Hatfield Forest	Hatfield Broad Oak	57.1%	45.5%
112	High Easter Road/Bishop's Green	High Easter	31.0%	24.5%
125	Langley Lower Green	Langley	21.7%	20.0%
126	Langley off Valance Road	Langley	46.7%	30.0%
127	Langleys Community woodland 1	Great Dunmow	36.4%	25.5%
128	Langleys Community woodland 2	Great Dunmow	37.0%	19.1%
129	Langleys Stand of Willows	Great Dunmow	41.9%	25.5%
150	Marshall Piece	Stebbing	22.3%	15.5%
151	Matching Road	Hatfield Heath	48.9%	20.0%
164	Motts Green	Little Hallingbury	21.2%	10.0%
176	Off Roper's Lane, Langley Lower Green	Langley	38.0%	24.5%
177	Park Green Nature Reserve	Berden	21.2%	20.0%
178	Park Lane	Langley	32.6%	20.0%
179	Park Lane 1, Chishall Common	Langley	33.2%	29.1%
180	Park Lane 2, Chishall Common	Langley	26.1%	23.6%
181	Parsonage Downs	Great Dunmow	60.9%	35.5%
183	Pelham Road	Clavering	22.3%	10.0%

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
189	Pond Lane 1	Hatfield Heath	46.7%	29.1%
190	Pond Lane 2	Hatfield Heath	49.5%	24.5%
191	Pond Lane 3	Hatfield Heath	51.1%	30.0%
192	Pound Lane	Ugley	41.9%	30.0%
206	River Bourne Wilderness nature trail	Ashdon	40.8%	20.9%
207	River Chelmer	Great Dunmow	40.2%	45.5%
208	River Chelmer, Harp Mead	Great Dunmow	45.7%	25.5%
209	River Stort, Langley Lower Green	Langley		
211	Roper's Lane, Langley Lower Green	Langley	38.6%	24.5%
213	Smiths Green	Takeley	42.9%	16.4%
214	South Street	Great Chesterford	52.9%	40.0%
226	Stebbing Green 1	Stebbing		
227	Stebbing Green 2	Stebbing	44.0%	25.5%
228	Stebbing Green 3	Stebbing	43.5%	25.5%
229	Stebbing Green 4	Stebbing	34.1%	30.0%
230	Stebbing Green 5	Stebbing	33.2%	20.0%
231	Stickling Green 1	Clavering	52.7%	25.5%
232	Stickling Green 2	Clavering	46.2%	24.5%
233	Stocking Green woodland	Radwinter	17.9%	14.5%
236	Stortford Road 2, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	54.4%	25.5%
238	Stortford Road, Clavering	Clavering	28.3%	16.4%
239	Sweetings Meadow	Lindsell	47.3%	34.5%
250	The Downs, Manuden	Manuden	33.7%	7.3%
252	The Green Little Walden Road	Saffron Walden	51.6%	25.5%
256	The Street pond	Hatfield Heath	57.6%	26.4%
257	The Street, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	60.9%	26.4%
262	Upper Green/Roast Green	Langley	37.0%	24.5%
263	Valance Road 1, Langley	Langley	45.7%	24.5%
264	Valance Road 2, Langley	Langley	44.6%	29.1%
312	Flitch Way, Flitch Green[5]	Little Dunmow		

5.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace. A threshold of 35% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

[5] Late inclusion to the study, site could not be sufficiently viewed so no score attributed

Table 5.3: Quality ratings for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<35%)**	**High (>35%)**
18%	41%	61%	19	46

Three sites do not receive a quality or value score. River Stort, Langley Lower Green and Stebbing Green 1 both appear inaccessible. Flitch Way, Flitch Green does not receive a score due to its late inclusion.

Natural and semi-natural greenspace has a lower quality threshold than some other open space typologies such as parks. This reflects the wide-ranging characteristics of provision. For instance, natural and semi-natural sites can be intentionally without ancillary facilities in order to reduce misuse/inappropriate behaviour whilst encouraging greater conservation.

Of assessed natural and semi-natural provision, a total of 19 sites (29%) in Uttlesford rate below the threshold set for quality. There are 46 rating above the quality threshold applied.

All sites scoring below the threshold for quality tend to be devoid of basic ancillary features such as benches and bins. However, as previously mentioned, this can be due to their purpose as a habitat and even some higher scoring sites lack such features. However, some sites are also noted as appearing poorly maintained with no pathways or evidence of use.

The lowest scoring sites are:

- Stocking Green woodland (18%)
- Park Green Nature Reserve (21%)
- Motts Green (21%)

The sites are all observed as isolated wooded areas with no ancillary facilities. Consequently, they rate lower for personal security, levels of use and general quality. Access to and within the sites is also uncertain.

Most sites scoring above the threshold are observed as being attractive due to the perceived higher levels of maintenance and cleanliness; often a reflection of their apparent regular use by people. Some of the highest scoring sites are:

- The Street, Hatfield Heath (61%)
- Parsonage Downs, Great Dunmow (61%)
- The Street Pond, Hatfield Heath (58%)
- Braintree Road/River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (58%)

The sites are viewed as well maintained, with good pathways, seating and often with a dedicated/obvious walking trail. In addition, they are all located within a settlement which further strengthens their role and use to the local community.

5.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 5.4: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<20%)**	**High (>20%)**
7%	26%	45%	9	56

Of the natural and semi-natural greenspace sites assessed, 56 sites (86%) rate above the threshold for value.

The highest scoring sites for value are:

- River Chelmer (46%)
- Hatfield Forest (46%)
- South Street (40%)

Each site scores highly for ecological value as they provide a variety of habitats. All are observed as generally attractive forms of provision. Hatfield Forest, owned by The National Trust also has a café on site which adds to its economic value. The National Trust site is widely recognised as a popular attraction. Consultation with town/parish councils and through the community survey highlights it to be overused, under pressure and at capacity.

The River Chelmer, Great Dunmow is recognised as a site offering a wide range of uses and opportunities. It provides some ecological value (i.e., Mead Harp Jubilee Woodland) as well as amenity benefits via the extensive and good quality pathways.

There is understood to be plans for a country park within the district as part of future housing plans. This could help alleviate some of the pressures at significant sites such as those highlighted at Hatfield Forest. The creation of a country park could also contribute in a multifunctional role to the levels of park provision.

The Street Pond and The Street Hatfield Heath (26%) have dedicated wildlife areas maintained by Hatfield Heath Parish Council. The sites are identified by the Parish Council as popular for informal walking.

The high proportion of sites to rate above the threshold for value demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna promotion. Sites are recognised as providing habitat opportunities whilst also offering opportunities for informal recreational activities. Prominent sites of this type can even act as destination sites, attracting users from other areas of Uttlesford.

5.6 Summary

Natural and semi-natural greenspace summary

- In total, there are 68 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering 509 hectares. This equates to 5.58 hectares per 1,000 population.
- Hatfield Forest accounts for 75% of total provision. The site is highlighted as suffering from the impacts of recreational use. There is also an entry charge. If omitted to better demonstrate the need for natural greenspace, a figure of 1.39 hectares per 1,000 population is noted.
- Of natural and semi-natural sites assessed, a total of 46 sites (71%) rate above the threshold set for quality. There are 19 sites that rate below the quality threshold applied.
- The majority of sites rate above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide, especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna whilst also providing recreational opportunities.

PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE

6.1 Introduction

This is defined as sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental spaces.

6.2 Current provision

There are 119 amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford, an increase of 9 sites since 2019, equivalent to 147 hectares of provision, an increase of 7ha. Sites are most often found within areas of housing and function as informal recreation space or open space along highways providing visual amenity. A number of recreational grounds and playing fields are also classified as amenity greenspace.

Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	13	14.38	0.96
Great Dunmow	11	13.67	1.28
Rural Area	84	111.99	1.95
Stansted Mountfitchet	11	6.65	0.81
Uttlesford	**119**	**146.69**	**1.60**

It is important to note that whilst a large proportion of provision may be considered as being smaller grassed areas or roadside verges, there is some variation of sites within this typology. For example, small sites such as Chapel Fields 0.09 hectares, to the largest, Woodside Green at over 26 hectares. Larger recreation grounds and playing fields serve a different purpose to smaller grassed areas and verges. These often provide an extended range of opportunities for recreational and sporting activities due to their size.

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests a guideline quantity standard of 0.60 hectares per 1,000 population. Table 6.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is above this suggested standard.

6.3 Accessibility

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show amenity greenspace mapped against a 15-minute walk time. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Mapping shows that generally most settlements contain amenity greenspace. However, there are some smaller rural settlements which do not have access to provision; most noticeably Chrishall.

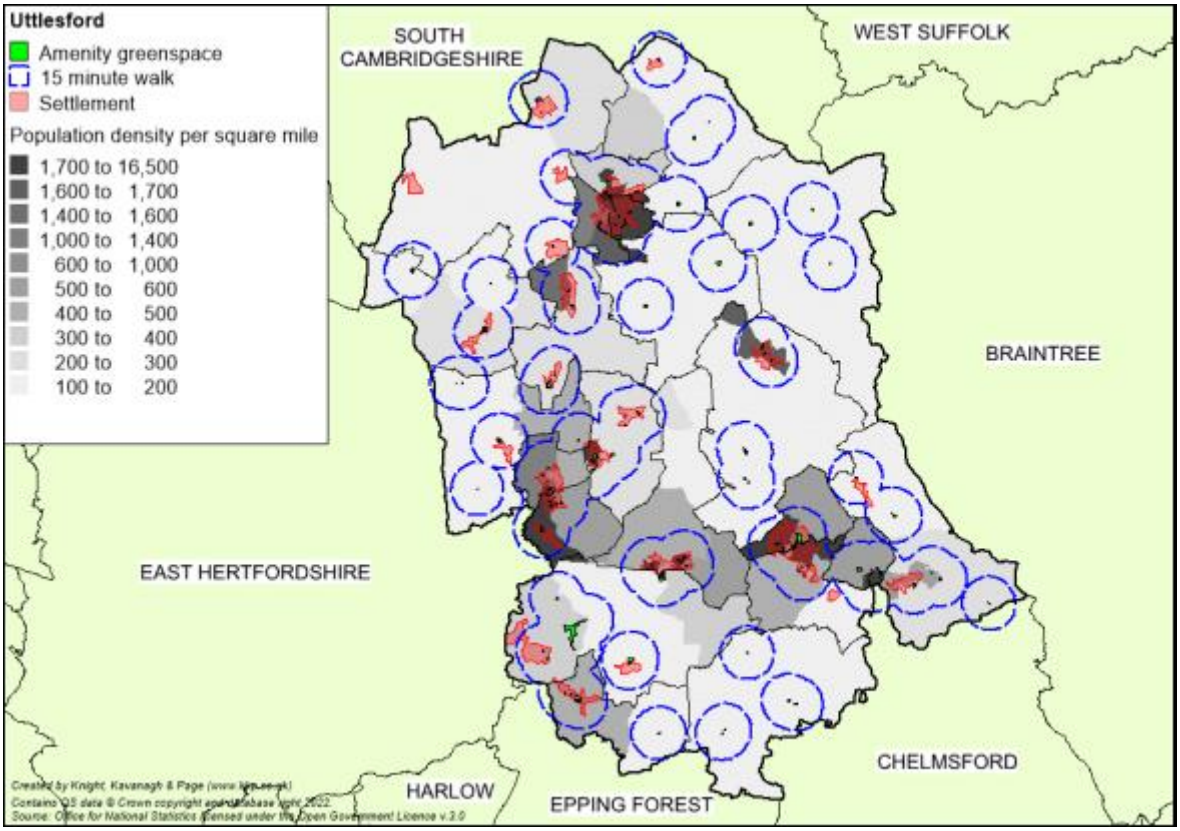


Figure 6.1: Amenity greenspace mapped

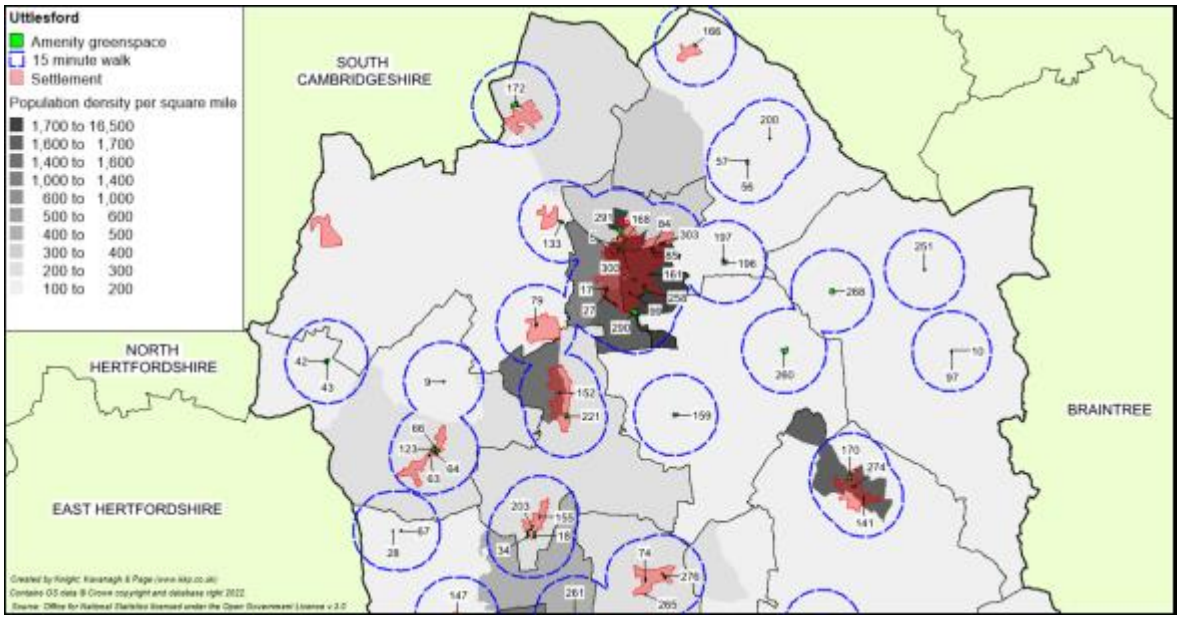


Figure 6.2: Amenity greenspace mapped - North

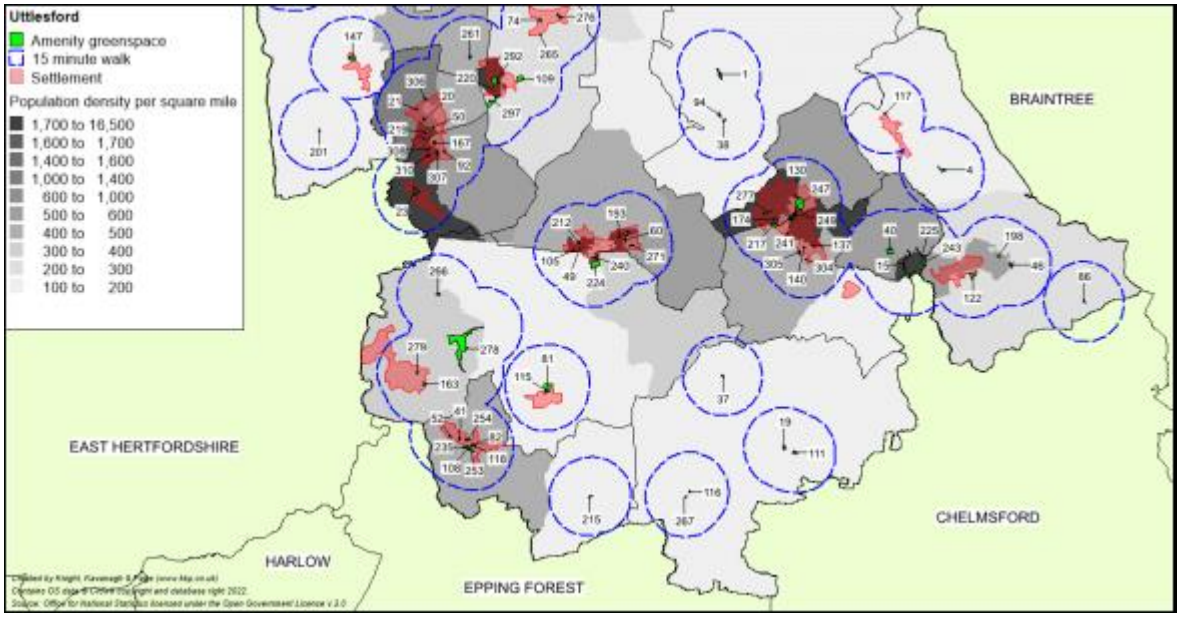


Figure 6.3: Amenity greenspace mapped - South

Table 6.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
1	Abbey View	Great Easton	41.6%	28.0%
4	Allcotts Playing field	Stebbing	35.0%	32.0%
5	Anglo American Playing Fields	Saffron Walden	80.4%	35.0%
9	Arkesden Recreation ground	Arkesden	68.7%	29.0%
10	Baptist Church Field, Great Sampford	Great Sampford	30.8%	22.0%
15	Baynard Avenue	Flitch Green	50.5%	38.0%
17	Beeches Close	Saffron Walden	45.3%	22.0%
18	Belchams Lane	Quendon and Rickling	40.7%	33.0%
19	Bellhouse Villas	High Easter	41.1%	29.0%
20	Bentfield Gardens public open space	Stansted Mountfitchet	51.9%	33.0%
21	Bentfield Green	Stansted Mountfitchet	50.0%	28.0%
23	Birchanger Lane	Birchanger	78.5%	39.0%
27	Blacklands Avenue / Seven Devils Lane	Saffron Walden	80.8%	28.0%
28	Bonneting Lane	Berden	50.5%	33.0%
34	Brixton Lane	Quendon and Rickling	50.0%	28.0%
37	Broadfield Playing field	High Roding	53.7%	33.0%
38	Brocks Mead	Great Easton	46.3%	28.0%
40	Brook Street Recreation Ground	Little Dunmow	45.8%	38.0%
41	Broomfields	Hatfield Heath	49.1%	28.0%
42	Bull Lane cricket field	Langley	60.7%	28.0%
43	Bull Lane village green	Langley	55.6%	23.0%

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
46	Burnstie Road, Bannister Green	Felsted	69.6%	34.0%
49	Chapel Fields	Takeley	38.8%	22.0%
50	Chapel Hill War memorial	Stansted Mountfitchet	77.1%	34.0%
52	Chestnut Drive	Hatfield Heath	69.2%	44.0%
56	Church End playing field	Ashdon	36.9%	27.0%
57	Church Field	Ashdon	34.6%	33.0%
60	Clarendon Road, Priors Green	Little Canfield	56.5%	28.0%
63	Clatterbury Lane 2	Clavering	55.6%	21.0%
64	Clatterbury Lane 3	Clavering	62.6%	28.0%
66	Clatterbury Lane/Hill Green	Clavering	57.0%	38.0%
67	Clavering Road Village Hall	Berden	44.4%	33.0%
74	Crow Street	Henham	68.7%	44.0%
79	Duck Street	Wendens Ambo	43.0%	28.0%
81	Dunmow Road recreation ground	Hatfield Broad Oak	43.0%	29.0%
82	Dunmow Road, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	36.4%	29.0%
84	Elizabeth Way 1	Saffron Walden	34.6%	16.0%
85	Elizabeth Way 2	Saffron Walden	50.5%	27.0%
86	Evelyn Road, Willows Green	Felsted	62.1%	27.0%
92	Foresthall Park	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.1%	28.0%
94	Great Easton Playing Field	Great Easton	46.3%	28.0%
97	Great Sampford Recreation ground	Great Sampford	75.7%	40.0%
99	Greenways	Saffron Walden	34.6%	23.0%
105	Harvest Fields	Takeley	72.0%	28.0%
108	Hatfield Heath War Memorial	Hatfield Heath	48.6%	38.0%
109	Henham Road Cricket Club	Elsenham	22.9%	23.0%
111	High Easter playing fields	High Easter	62.6%	34.0%
115	High Street Village green	Hatfield Broad Oak	79.0%	60.0%
116	Holloway Crescent	Leaden Roding	43.9%	28.0%
117	Hornsea Villas playing field	Stebbing	44.4%	34.0%
118	Hunter Meet/ Chelmsford Road	Hatfield Heath	48.1%	23.0%
122	Jollys Boy Lane North Playing Field	Felsted	57.9%	29.0%
123	Jubilee Field, Claterbury Lane	Clavering	43.5%	39.0%
130	Lime Tree Hill	Great Dunmow	32.2%	22.0%
133	Littlebury Recreation Ground	Littlebury	59.3%	39.0%
137	Lower Mill Field	Great Dunmow	50.5%	27.0%
140	Lukins Mead/Nusery Rise	Great Dunmow	36.4%	23.0%
141	Magdalen Green	Thaxted	48.6%	22.0%
147	Manuden playing fields	Manuden	56.1%	33.0%
152	Meadow Ford	Newport	52.3%	23.0%

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
155	Memorial area	Quendon and Rickling	66.8%	43.0%
159	Mill Road Recreation ground	Debden	79.9%	40.0%
161	Monk's Hill	Saffron Walden	52.3%	28.0%
163	Motts Green AGS	Little Hallingbury	39.3%	38.0%
166	Moules Lane recreation ground	Hadstock	49.5%	23.0%
167	Mountfitchet Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	80.8%	35.0%
168	Museum Street	Saffron Walden	68.7%	48.0%
170	Newbiggen Street playing field	Thaxted	65.4%	33.0%
172	Newmarket Road Playing field	Great Chesterford	70.1%	33.0%
174	Newton Green	Great Dunmow	61.7%	28.0%
193	Priors Green	Takeley	35.5%	23.0%
196	Radwinter Road playing field	Sewards End	76.6%	29.0%
197	Radwinter Road Village Hall	Sewards End	46.3%	22.0%
198	Ravens Crescent	Felsted	73.8%	28.0%
200	Rectory Lane playing field	Ashdon	66.4%	38.0%
201	Rectory Road	Farnham	47.2%	39.0%
203	Rickling Green Road AGS	Quendon and Rickling	50.9%	35.0%
212	Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley	Takeley	44.4%	28.0%
215	St Martin's Close	White Roding	52.3%	27.0%
217	Stane Street	Great Dunmow	67.8%	39.0%
219	Stanstead Park recreation ground	Stansted Mountfitchet	59.8%	34.0%
220	Stansted Road	Elsenham	62.6%	38.0%
221	Station Road Common, Newport	Newport	42.5%	29.0%
224	Station Road Recreation ground	Takeley	64.5%	40.0%
225	Station Road, Flitch Green	Flitch Green	66.8%	28.0%
235	Stortford Road 1, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	77.6%	29.0%
240	Takeley Park	Takeley	46.3%	28.0%
241	Teybards Lay	Great Dunmow	65.4%	39.0%
243	Tanton Road Lake	Flitch Green	83.6%	44.0%
247	The Causeway Recreation ground	Great Dunmow	64.5%	55.0%
249	The Downs, Great Dunmow	Great Dunmow	68.2%	50.0%
251	The Glebe AGS	Hempstead	44.9%	27.0%
253	The Heath Cricket pitch	Hatfield Heath	67.8%	33.0%
254	The Shaw	Hatfield Heath	53.3%	29.0%
258	Tukes Way AGS	Saffron Walden	50.9%	29.0%
260	Tye Green, Wimbish	Wimbish	63.6%	35.0%
261	Ugley Green	Ugley	65.0%	28.0%
265	Vernons Close playing field	Henham	37.4%	28.0%
266	Village Hall, Great Hallingbury	Great Hallingbury	35.5%	32.0%

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
267	Village Hall, Leaden Roding	Leaden Roding	49.1%	22.0%
268	Walden Road Recreation Ground	Radwinter	53.7%	34.0%
271	Warwick Road, Priors Green	Little Canfield	54.2%	28.0%
274	Weaverhead Close	Thaxted	36.4%	28.0%
276	Woodend Green	Henham	59.3%	35.0%
277	Woodlands Walk	Great Dunmow	65.0%	29.0%
278	Woodside Green	Great Hallingbury	29.9%	43.0%
279	Wrights Green	Little Hallingbury	53.3%	27.0%
290	Herbert's Farm Playing Fields	Saffron Walden	60.3%	29.0%
291	Lime Avenue	Saffron Walden	40.2%	28.0%
292	Elsenham PC Recreation Ground	Elsenham	77.6%	35.0%
297	Franklin Drive	Elsenham	70.1%	44.0%
300	Allard Way	Saffron Walden	71.0%	35.0%
303	Miller Street	Saffron Walden	65.9%	29.0%
304	Hibbert Drive	Great Dunmow	71.5%	34.0%
305	Hedgerow Grove	Great Dunmow	62.1%	34.0%
306	Oxlip Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	63.6%	29.0%
307	Herrington Avenue	Stansted Mountfitchet	71.0%	29.0%
308	Wilkin Crescent	Stansted Mountfitchet	54.7%	33.0%
310	Reeve Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	41.5%	28.0%

6.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for amenity greenspaces. A threshold of 45% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.3: Quality ratings for amenity greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<45%)	High (>45%)
24%	56%	84%	26	93

A total of 78% of assessed amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford rate above the threshold for quality. The highest scoring sites for quality are:

- Tanton Road Lake (84%)
- Mountfitchet Road (81%)
- Blacklands Avenue and Seven Devils Lane (81%)
- Anglo American Playing Fields (80%)

The four sites are observed as having good levels of maintenance and cleanliness, resulting in a positive overall appearance. In addition, they provide user security as well as recreational opportunities. The sites all have bins to prevent excessive littering as well as seating. These add to the quality and use of the sites. In addition, Anglo American Playing Fields and Mountfitchet Road contain play provision with the latter also featuring a MUGA.

High Easter Playing Fields (62%) scores above the quality threshold. High Easter Parish Council highlights that there are issues with the playing field surface due to poor drainage. This affects quality of play, particularly hindering football, which suffers as a result.

Sites scoring below the threshold are generally smaller in size and are observed as being basic pockets of green space. However, despite having little recreational use and fewer ancillary facilities, it is important to recognise they may provide a visual amenity. The lowest scoring amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford are:

- Henham Road Cricket Club (24%)
- Baptist Church Field, Great Sampford (32%)
- Elisabeth Way (35%)

These sites lack ancillary features and formal pathways. They also score lower for entrances and personal security. Henham Road Cricket Club appears to be a disused cricket ground.

Some Parish Councils highlight a lack of amenity greenspace in their area. For example, Thaxted Parish Council cite there is not enough greenspace and they aim to extend the amount of amenity provision wherever possible. Similarly, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council consider there to be a need for more open space provision in the settlement.

It is important to recognise that despite some sites rating below the threshold for quality, they may still have the potential to be important to the community. For instance, if a site is the only form of open space locally it may be of higher value given it is the only provision of its type. It may also provide a visual function. Such sites can have a wider contribution to local areas, in relation to community viability, quality of life and health and wellbeing.

6.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.4: Value ratings for amenity greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			**No. of sites**	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<20%)**	**High (>20%)**
16%	32%	60%	1	118

All except one amenity greenspace rate above the threshold for value. Elizabeth Way rates below the value threshold. The site serves more as a visual amenity and scores low for usage due to being overgrown with no facilities. Should a site be less attractive, or provide less recreational opportunity, people are less likely to visit the site.

Some of the highest scoring sites for value in Uttlesford are:

- High Street village green (60%)
- The Causeway recreation ground (55%)
- The Downs, Great Dunmow (50%)

High Street village green (60%) scores the highest for value. It is an attractive greenspace, containing a pond and meeting the needs of several users. The Causeway recreation ground has a fitness trail, further adding to its amenity and health value. Each is observed as a good or excellent local amenity, attractive and well used.

Hatfield Heath War Memorial (38%) has a war memorial, adding cultural heritage value. Moreover, consultation with Hatfield Heath Parish Council highlights that festivals and car shows are hosted here. It is consequently highlighted as an important site for the village.

Numerous amenity sites have the additional benefit of sporting opportunities. The following are examples of sites to have either football goals or cricket squares:

- High Easter playing fields
- Dunmow Road recreation ground
- Belchams Lane
- Bellhouse Villas
- Hornsea Villas playing field
- Littlebury recreation ground
- Stansted Park recreation ground
- Birchanger Lane
- Rectory Lane playing field
- Arkesden recreation ground

Amenity greenspace should be recognised for its multi-purpose function, offering opportunities for a variety of leisure and recreational activities. It can often accommodate informal activities, such as casual play and dog walking. Some sites in Uttlesford offer a dual function and are amenity resources for residents as well as being visually pleasing. These attributes add to the quality, accessibility and aesthetics of amenity greenspace. Combined with the presence of facilities (e.g., seating, landscaping and trees) this means that the better-quality sites are likely to be more respected and valued by the local community.

6.6 Summary

Amenity greenspace summary

- There are 119 amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford: over 146 hectares of provision.
- Over three quarters (78%) of amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford rate above the threshold for quality. Several of the low scoring sites are marginally below the threshold.
- The majority of sites scoring below the threshold are smaller sites and are observed as being basic, small pockets of green space and lack ancillary features.
- In addition to its multifunctional role, amenity greenspace makes a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence nearly all sites rate above the value threshold.
- Only one site rates low for quality and value. This is due to quality impacting on value. A less attractive site provides less recreational opportunity, with people less likely to visit the site.

PART 7: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 Introduction

This includes areas designated primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.

Provision for children is deemed to be sites consisting of formal equipped play facilities typically associated with play areas. This is usually perceived to be for children under 12 years of age. Provision for young people can include equipped sites that provide more robust equipment catering to older age ranges incorporating facilities such as skate parks, BMX, basketball courts, youth shelters and MUGAs.

7.2 Current provision

A total of 88 sites in Uttlesford are identified as provision for children and young people. This combines to create a total of nearly 10 hectares. This is an increase of 15 sites, an increase of 1ha since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied and as such all known provision is identified and included within the audit.

Table 7.1: Distribution of provision for children and young people

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	9	1.67	0.11
Great Dunmow	9	0.77	0.07
Rural Area	57	6.47	0.11
Stansted Mountfitchet	13	0.79	0.10
Uttlesford	**88**	**9.69**	**0.11**

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Overall, Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.11 hectares per 1,000 population.

A frequent comment within the responses to the community survey is the concern from respondents about a lack of play equipment catering for older children.

7.3 Accessibility

Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 show the location of provision for children and young people across Uttlesford with a 10-minute walk time catchment applied, as well as a 15-minute walk time catchment applied for those sites with skate parks or BMX tracks. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

The mapping highlights that nearly all settlements across the district have access to at least one form of play area. The exceptions are Little Hallingbury and Rickling Green.

The greatest amounts of provision can be seen in the areas of highest population density (Saffron Walden, Dunmow, Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet.

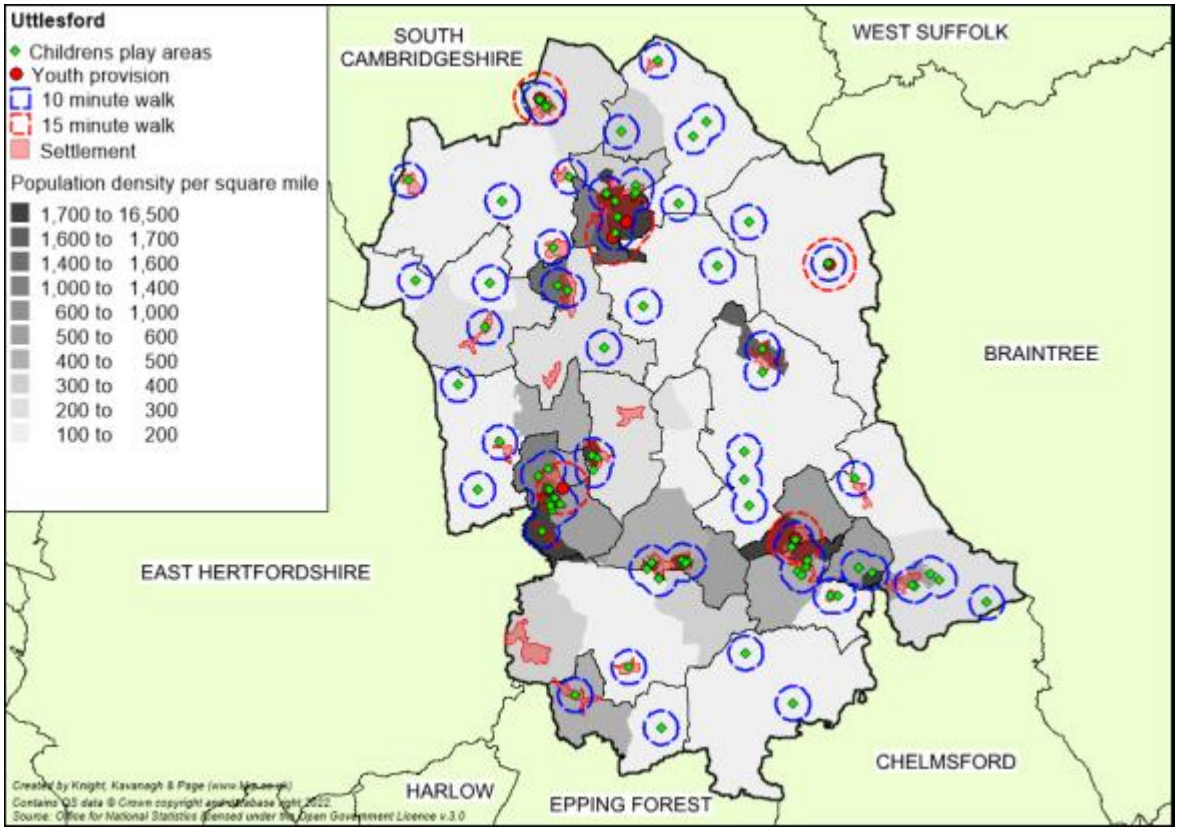


Figure 7.1: Provision for children and young people mapped

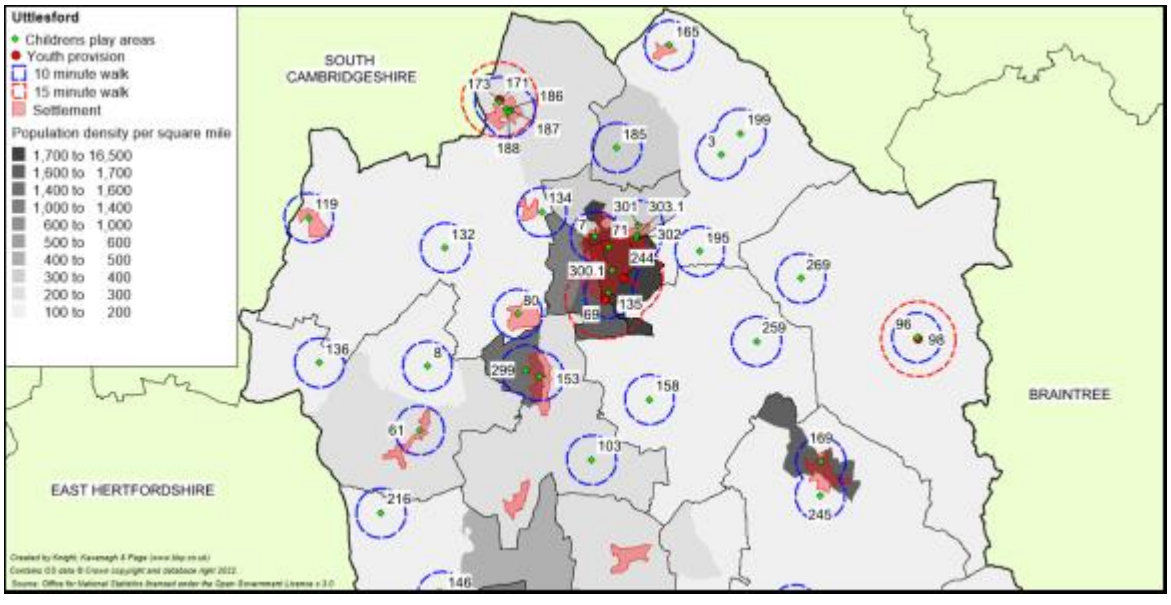


Figure 7.2: Provision for children and young people mapped – North

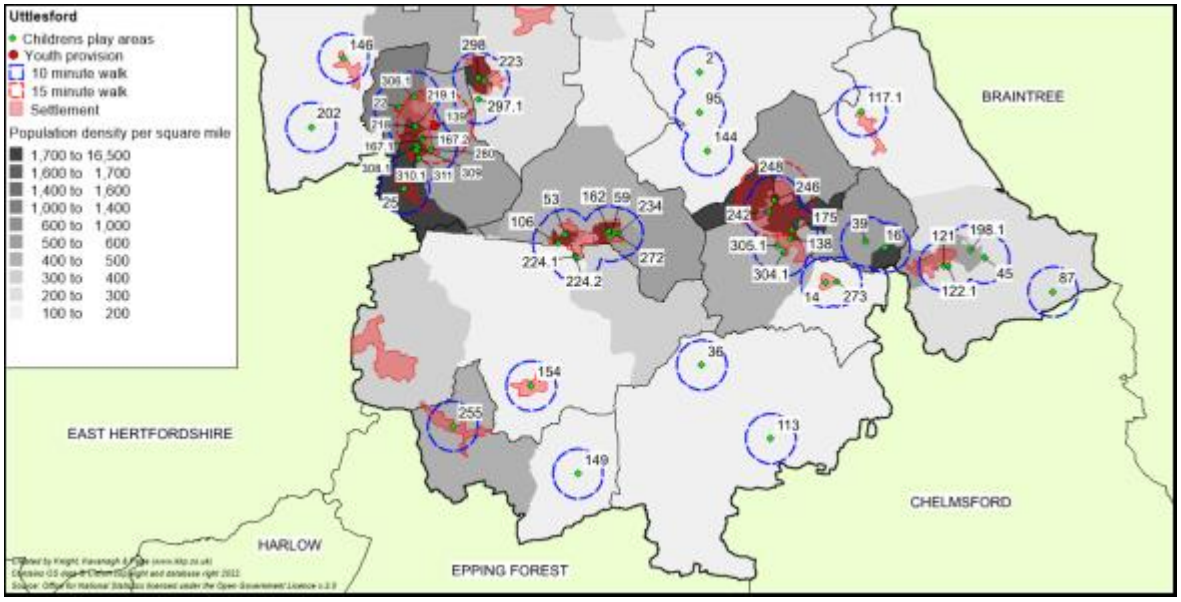


Figure 7.3: Provision for children and young people mapped – South

Table 7.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
2	Abbey View play area	Great Easton	46.4%	45.5%
3	All Saints Close play area	Ashdon	66.3%	38.2%
7	Anglo American Playing Fields play area	Saffron Walden	48.5%	54.5%
8	Arkesden play area	Arkesden	46.0%	38.2%
14	Barnston Village Hall play area	Barnston	45.0%	41.8%
16	Baynard Avenue play area	Flitch Green	61.9%	20.0%
22	Bentfield Green play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	45.7%	41.8%
25	Birchanger Lane recreation ground	Birchanger	52.2%	50.9%
36	Broadfield play area	High Roding	70.1%	41.8%
39	Brook Street play area	Little Dunmow	44.0%	41.8%
45	Burnsite Road play area	Felsted	49.5%	38.2%
53	Chestnut Way play area	Takeley	47.4%	41.8%
59	Clarendon Road play areas	Little Canfield	60.8%	54.5%
61	Claterbury Lane play area	Clavering	47.4%	41.8%
69	Claypits Plantation BMX	Saffron Walden	29.9%	38.2%
71	Common play area	Saffron Walden	62.9%	54.5%
80	Duck Street play area	Wendens Ambo	46.4%	41.8%
87	Evelyn Road, Willows Green play area	Felsted	47.4%	34.5%
95	Great Easton Playing Field play area	Great Easton	40.2%	38.2%
96	Great Sampford play area	Great Sampford	48.1%	45.5%
98	Great Sampford skate park	Great Sampford	43.3%	41.8%
103	Hamel Way play area	Widdington	60.8%	38.2%

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
106	Harvest Fields play area	Takeley	62.9%	32.7%
113	High Easter Village Hall play area	High Easter	48.5%	41.8%
117.1	Hornsea Villas play area	Stebbing	43.3%	38.2%
119	Jigneys Meadow adventure playground	Chrishall	42.3%	41.8%
121	Jollys Boy Lane North play area	Felsted	59.1%	38.2%
122.1	Jolly Boys Lane North MUGA	Felsted	52.6%	41.8%
132	Littlebury Green play area	Littlebury	50.5%	41.8%
134	Littlebury recreation ground play area	Littlebury	45.4%	38.2%
135	Long Horse Close play area	Saffron Walden	73.9%	54.5%
136	Long Lea play area	Langley	44.0%	38.2%
138	Lower Mill Field play area	Great Dunmow	69.4%	38.2%
139	Lower Street skate park	Stansted Mountfitchet	71.8%	45.5%
144	Manor Road play area	Little Easton	52.6%	38.2%
146	Manuden play area	Manuden	52.6%	41.8%
149	Marks Hall Lane play area	White Roding	47.4%	27.3%
153	Meadow Ford play area	Newport	63.2%	38.2%
154	Meadows Mead play area	Hatfield Broad Oak	45.4%	41.8%
158	Mill Road play area	Debden	71.1%	41.8%
162	Mortymer Close play area	Takeley	41.2%	34.5%
165	Moules Lane play area	Hadstock	48.5%	38.2%
167.1	Mountfitchet Road play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	51.2%	41.8%
167.2	Mountfitchet Road MUGA[6]	Stansted Mountfitchet		
169	Newbiggen Street play area	Thaxted	70.1%	41.8%
171	Newmarket Road play area	Great Chesterford	70.8%	45.5%
173	Newmarket Road skate park	Great Chesterford	48.5%	41.8%
175	Oakroyd Avenue play area[7]	Great Dunmow		
185	Petlands play area	Saffron Walden	45.4%	38.2%
186	Pilgrim's Close play area 1	Great Chesterford	51.5%	38.2%
187	Pilgrim's Close play area 2	Great Chesterford	30.9%	27.3%
188	Pilgrim's Close play area 3	Great Chesterford	61.2%	20.0%
195	Radwinter Road play area	Sewards End	69.1%	41.8%
198.1	Ravens Crescent play area	Felsted	46.4%	38.2%
199	Rectory Lane play area	Ashdon	53.3%	29.1%
202	Rectory Road play area	Farnham	48.5%	41.8%
216	St Nicholas Field play area	Berden	54.6%	45.5%
218	Stanstead Park play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	59.5%	45.5%
219.1	Stansted Park recreation play area	Stansted Mountfitchet		

[6] Assessed as part of 167.1
[7] Site appears to be temporarily closed

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
223	Elsenham play area	Little Canfield	50.5%	41.8%
224.1	Station Road MUGA[8]	Takeley	64.6%	41.8%
224.2	Station Road play area	Takeley		
234	Stokes Road, Priors Green play area	Canfield	69.1%	34.5%
242	Teybards Lay play area	Great Dunmow	56.4%	45.5%
244	Saffron Walden skate park	Saffron Walden	75.3%	54.5%
245	Thaxted Youth Club	Thaxted	56.7%	27.3%
246	The Causeway play area	Great Dunmow	70.1%	41.8%
248	The Causeway skate park	Great Dunmow	48.5%	41.8%
255	The Shaw play area	Hatfield Heath	58.8%	41.8%
259	Tye Green play area	Wimbish	44.3%	38.2%
269	Walden Road recreation play area	Radwinter	49.5%	38.2%
272	Warwick Road, Priors Green play area	Little Canfield	41.2%	38.2%
273	Watts Close play area	Great Dunmow	59.1%	20.0%
280	Walson Way play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	61.9%	54.5%
297.1	Franklin Drive play area	Elsenham	62.9%	38.2%
298	Isabel Drive play area	Elsenham	71.5%	41.8%
299	Wicken Gardens play area	Newport	63.2%	41.8%
300.1	Allard Way play area	Saffron Walden	72.9%	45.5%
301	Mapletoft Avenue play area	Saffron Walden	50.9%	41.8%
302	Howlands Close play area	Saffron Walden	57.7%	41.8%
303.1	Miller Street	Saffron Walden	40.2%	29.1%
304	Hibbert Drive play area	Great Dunmow	72.9%	41.8%
305.1	Hedgerow Grove play area	Great Dunmow	48.1%	38.2%
306.1	Oxlip Road play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	54.0%	50.9%
308.1	Wilkin Crescent play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.5%	38.2%
309	Childs Lane play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	61.5%	47.3%
310	Reeve Road play areas	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.1%	47.3%
311	Felsted Crescent play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	52.2%	38.2%

[8] Assessed as part of 224.2

7.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for play provision for children and young people. A threshold of 45% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of the quality scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 7.3: Quality ratings for provision for children and young people in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<45%)**	**High (>45%)**
30%	54%	75%	12	76

The quality of provision is generally good across Uttlesford with 86% of sites assessed as above the threshold. There are 12 sites rating below the threshold. Notably there is a significant spread (52.6%) between the highest and lowest scoring sites, with Hornsea Villas play area (22.7%) compared to Saffron Walden skate park (75.3%).

Saffron Walden skate park, along with other high scoring sites, has entrances that open onto safe overlooked areas, good boundary fencing or controls to prevent illegal use, seating, litter bins and signage. Additionally, they are maintained to a high standard, with no significant wear and tear to equipment or evidence of litter or vandalism.

Examples of other high scoring sites include Long Horse Close play area, Lower Street skate park and Mill Road play area, which scored 73.9%, 71.8% and 71.1% respectively. The high-quality score for Lower Street skate park is unsurprising, given that it is relatively new.

The Shaw play area, although scoring well above the threshold at 58.8%, is reported to suffer from vandalism. This is highlighted through consultation with Hatfield Heath Parish Council.

Sites scoring lower for quality include Claypits Plantation BMX (29.9%), Pilgrim's Close play area 2 (30.9%), Miller Street play area (40.2%) and Great Easton Playing Field play area (40.2%). These sites generally have fewer ancillary features or equipment and are often reported to have evidence of wear and tear. Furthermore, overall maintenance and cleanliness of the sites is not as high.

7.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessment scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table overleaf summarises the results of the value assessment for children and young people. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 7.4: Value ratings for provision for children and young people in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<20%)**	**High (>20%)**
20%	40%	55%	0	88

All play provision in Uttlesford is rated as being above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the role play provision provides in allowing children to play but also the contribution sites make in terms of giving children and young people safe places to learn, for physical and mental activity, to socialise with others and in creating aesthetically pleasing local environments.

Sites scoring particularly high for value tend to reflect a good range of quality equipment available at sites:

- Anglo American Playing Fields play area (54.4%)
- Birchanger Lane recreation ground (50.0%)
- Clarendon Road play area (54.4%)
- Long Horse Close play area (54.4%)
- Saffron Walden skate park (54.4%)

The sites are observed as being well maintained with a good to reasonable variety of equipment, as well as having sufficient access. The sites are also assumed to be well used given their range and quality of equipment.

Despite Anglo American Playing Fields play area scoring above the value threshold, it is observed as appearing old with the basketball courts having no lights.

Diverse equipment to cater for a range of ages and abilities is important and can significantly impact on value. Provision such as skate park facilities and MUGAs are often highly valued forms of play.

It is also important to recognise the benefits of play in terms of healthy, active lifestyles, social inclusion and interaction plus developmental and educational value. The importance of play and of children's rights to play in their local communities is essential.

7.6 Summary

Provision for children and young people summary

- There are 88 play provision sites in Uttlesford: a total of nearly 10 hectares.
- FIT suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Overall, Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.11 hectares per 1,000 population.
- The mapping highlights that nearly all settlements across the district have access to at least one form of play area. The exceptions to this are Little Hallingbury and Rickling Green.
- Quality of provision is generally good with 86% of sites assessed as above the threshold.
- All play provision rates above the threshold for value; reflecting the social, healthy and developmental benefits provision can provide.

PART 8: ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Introduction

Allotments are a typology which covers open spaces that provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so, to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social interaction. This includes provision such as allotments, community gardens, city farms and community food growing areas.

8.2 Current provision

There are 29 sites classified as allotments in Uttlesford, equating to over 18 hectares. This is an increase of 2 sites and 1ha since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied to allotments and as such all known provisions are identified and included within the audit.

Table 8.1: Distribution of allotments

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	6	5.71	0.38
Great Dunmow	1	1.26	0.12
Rural Area	20	10.86	0.19
Stansted Mountfitchet	2	0.78	0.09
Uttlesford	**29**	**18.62**	**0.20**

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) suggests a national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (20 per 2,000 people based on two people per house or one per 100 people). This equates to 0.25 hectares per 1,000 populations, based on an average plot-size of 250 square metres (0.025 hectares per plot).

Based on Uttlesford's current population (91,306) it does not meet the NSALG standard. Using this suggested standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision for Uttlesford is 22.83 hectares. The existing provision of 18.62 hectares therefore does not meet this guideline.

The majority of allotment sites are managed by parish councils. Therefore, exact plot number and waiting lists are difficult to fully attain. Information has; however, been obtained for some allotment sites and is set out in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Allotment information (where known)

ID	Site	Information
270	Waldgrooms allotments	Managed by Great Dunmow Town Council and has circa 100 plots. No waiting lists due to recent changeover of tenants. Water bills.
93	Frambury Lane allotments	Owned and managed by Newport Parish Council. Plot numbers not specified. However, there is currently no waiting list. New development in area will provide allotments too.
142	Magdalen Green allotments	Managed by Thaxted Parish Council. This site and KKP 13, Bardfield Road Allotments have circa 17 plots. Rarely any waiting lists. No need for any more.
58	Church Lane allotments	Managed by Elsenham Parish Council. Site owned by the church. Circa 22 plots. Church will require land for burial in 10 years. A new allotment as part of housing development is to be provided. Currently 20 people on the waiting list for this (five from the existing allotment). A new site now exists.
131	Little Walden Road allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Only statutory allotments. Circa 40 plots.
73	Crocus Fields allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Is on 50-year lease from farmer. Circa 28 plots.
275	Windmill Hill allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Land owned by farmer.
110	High Easter allotments	Managed by High Easter Parish Council. Circa six plots.
237	Stortford Road allotments, Clavering	Managed by Clavering Parish Council. Number of plots not identified. Currently no waiting list.
157	Mill Road allotments	Managed by Debden Parish Council. Circa 36 plots. Currently no waiting list.
160	Mill Road/Station Road allotments	Managed by Felsted Parish Council. Circa 67 plots. Currently no waiting list.
114	High Roding allotments	Managed by Aythorpe Roding Parish Council. Circa nine plots. Currently no waiting list.
293	Hatfield Heath allotments	21 plots. Well used. Waiting lists exists. Access to water. Car park.

8.3 Accessibility

Figure 8.1 show allotments mapped against analysis areas, with a 15-minute walk time applied. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Takeley is the largest settlement without allotment provision within a 15-minute walk time catchment.

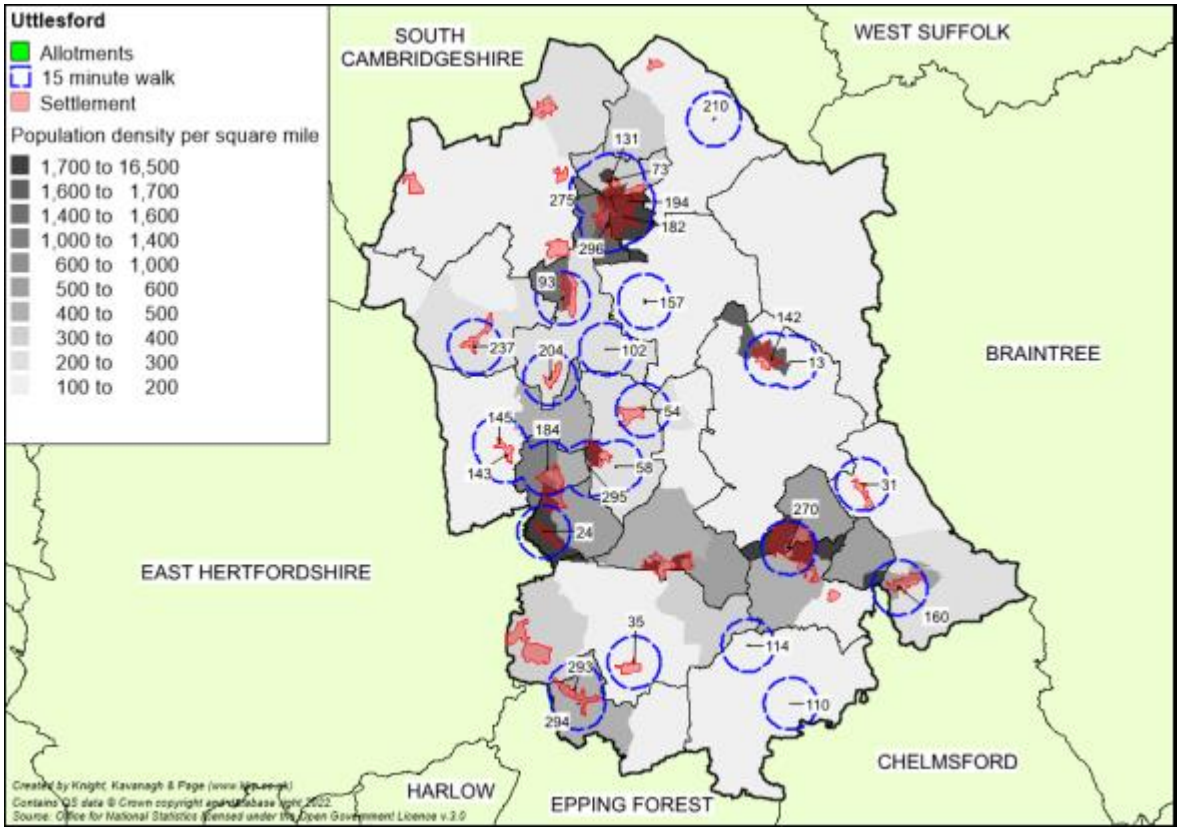


Figure 8.1: Allotments mapped

Table 8.3: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Parish	Quality Score	Value score
13	Bardfield Road allotments	Thaxted	46.2%	21.9%
24	Birchanger Lane allotments	Birchanger	51.7%	27.6%
31	Brick Kiln Lane allotments	Stebbing	46.2%	21.9%
35	Broad Street allotments	Hatfield Broad Oak	44.5%	21.9%
54	Chickney Road allotments	Henham	51.1%	26.7%
58	Church Lane allotments	Elsenham	31.9%	23.8%
73	Crocus Fields allotments	Saffron Walden	48.9%	21.9%
93	Frambury Lane allotments	Newport	61.5%	21.9%
102	Hamel Way allotments	Widdington	48.9%	21.9%
110	High Easter allotments, The Street	High Easter	46.7%	21.9%
114	High Roding allotments, The Street	High Roothing	41.2%	23.8%
131	Little Walden Road allotments	Saffron Walden	50.6%	22.9%
142	Magdalen Green allotments	Thaxted	50.0%	21.9%
143	Mallows Green Road allotments	Manuden	41.2%	21.9%
145	Manuden allotments, The Street	Manuden	42.9%	21.9%
157	Mill Road allotments	Debden	50.6%	21.9%

ID	Site name	Parish	Quality Score	Value score
160	Mill Road/Station Road allotments	Felsted	45.6%	23.8%
182	Peaslands Road allotments	Saffron Walden	42.3%	22.9%
184	Pennington Lane allotments	Stansted Mountfitchet	36.8%	23.8%
194	Radwinter Road allotments	Saffron Walden	40.3%	22.9%
204	Rickling Green Road allotments	Quendon and Rickling	46.7%	21.9%
210	Roger's End allotments	Ashdon	46.2%	32.4%
237	Stortford Road allotments, Clavering	Clavering	47.8%	21.9%
270	Waldgrooms allotments	Great Dunmow	58.8%	23.8%
275	Windmill Hill allotments	Saffron Walden	41.2%	23.8%
293	Hatfield Heath allotments 1	Hatfield Heath	48.9%	26.7%
294	Hatfield Heath allotments 2	Hatfield Heath	59.3%	28.6%
295	Smith Road allotments	Elsenham	65.7%	23.8%
296	Rowntree Way allotments	Saffron Walden		

8.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) the site assessment scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for allotments. A threshold of 40% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.4: Quality ratings for allotments in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<40%)	High (>40%)
32%	48%	66%	2	26

One site does not receive a quality or value score. The Rowntree Allotment site was not viewable and therefore could not be assessed.

The majority of sites rate above the quality threshold (85%), suggesting a high standard of allotment provision in Uttlesford. The highest rating sites are:

- Smith Road Allotment Gardens (66%)
- Frambury Lane allotments (61.5%)
- Hatfield Heath allotment 2 (59.3%)
- Waldgrooms allotments (58.8%)

The sites score highly for general levels of maintenance and cleanliness, surrounding fencing and controls to prevent illegal use, as well as a sense of personal security on site and informative signage. Smith Road, Hatfield Heath, Waldgrooms and Frambury Lane also have onsite parking and well cared for sheds and greenhouses.

The two sites which score below the quality threshold are not identified as having any specific quality issues and their lower quality scores can be attributed to fewer features and pathways which are not maintained to as a higher standard.

8.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.5: Value ratings for allotments in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	**Average score**	**Highest score**	**Low (<20%)**	**High (>20%)**
22%	24%	32%	0	28

All allotments rate above the threshold for value. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

Allotments should generally be considered as highly valued as they are often identified by the local community as important forms of open space provision.

8.6 Summary

Allotments summary

- There are 29 sites classified as allotments in Uttlesford, equating to over 18 hectares.
- Based on Uttlesford's current population (91,306) it does not meet the NSALG standard. Using this suggested standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision for Uttlesford is 22 hectares. The existing provision of 18 hectares therefore does not meet this guideline.
- The majority of allotment sites are managed by parish councils.
- The majority of sites rate above the quality threshold (93%), suggesting a high standard of allotment provision in Uttlesford. The four sites to score below the quality threshold are not identified as having any specific quality issues.
- All allotments rate above the threshold for value. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

PART 9: PROVISION STANDARDS

The provision standards used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space are set in terms of quality, accessibility, and quantity.

9.1: Quality and value

Each type of open space receives a separate quality and value score. This also allows for the application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus, as a particular open space type.

Quality and value matrix

Assessing the quality and value of open spaces is used to identify those sites which should be given the highest level of protection, those which require enhancement and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose. When analysing the quality/value of a site, it should be done in conjunction with the quantity and/or accessibility of provision in the area (i.e., whether there is a deficiency).

The high/low classification gives the following possible combinations of quality and value:

	High Quality	**Low Quality**
High Value	All sites should have an aspiration to come into this category. Many sites of this category are likely to be viewed as key forms of open space provision.	The approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality to the applied standard. The priority will be those sites providing a key role in terms of access to provision.
Low Value	The preferred approach to a site in this category should be to enhance its value in terms of its present primary function. If this is not possible, consideration to a change of primary function should be given (i.e., a change to another open space typology).	The approach to these sites in areas of identified shortfall should be to enhance their quality, provided it is also possible to enhance their value. In areas of sufficiency a change of primary typology should be considered first. If no shortfall of other open space typologies is noted then the site may be redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'.

There is a need for flexibility in the enhancement of low-quality sites. In some instances, a better use of resources and investment may be to focus on more suitable sites for enhancement as opposed to trying to enhance sites where it is not appropriate or cost effective to do so. Please refer to the individual typology sections as well as the supporting excel database for a breakdown of the matrix.

9.2: Accessibility

Accessibility catchments are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors underpinning catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. For the purposes of this process the concept of ‘effective catchments’ is used, defined as the distance that most users would travel. The accessibility catchments do not consider if a distance is on an incline or decline. They are therefore intended to act as an initial form of analysis to help identify potential gaps.

Table 9.2.1: Accessibility catchments

Open space type	Catchment
Parks & Gardens	15-minute walk time
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	30-minute drive time 15-minute walk time
Amenity Greenspace	15-minute walk time
Provision for children and young people	10-minute walk time 15-minute walk time for skate parks
Allotments	15-minute walk

If an area does not have access to provision (consistent with the catchments) it is deemed deficient. KKP has identified instances where new sites may be needed, or potential opportunities could be explored to provide comprehensive access (i.e., a gap in one form of provision may exist but the area in question may be served by another form of open space). Please refer to the associated mapping to view site catchments.

The following tables summarise the deficiencies identified from the application of the accessibility standards. In determining any subsequent actions for identified gaps, the following are key principles for consideration:

- Increase capacity/usage to meet increases in demand, or
- Enhance quality to meet increases in demand, or
- Commuted sum for ongoing maintenance/repairs to mitigate impact of new demand.

These principles are intended to mitigate the impact of increases in demand on existing provision. An increase in population will reduce the lifespan of certain sites and/or features (e.g., play equipment, maintenance regimes etc.). This will lead to the increased requirement to refurbish and/or replace such forms of provision.

Great Dunmow

Table 9.2.2: Great Dunmow accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	• Gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	• Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity (e.g., the Causeway recreation ground and Teybards Lay).
Amenity Greenspace	• No gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment.	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	• No gaps in 30-minute drive time • Gap in 15-minute walk time to west.	• Opportunities to create provision should be explored
Provision for children and young people	• No gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	• No significant gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

Rural Area

Table 9.2.3: Rural area accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◂ Gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment noted in settlements with greater density such as Thaxted and Newport.	◂ Gaps are served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces e.g. Newbiggen Street playing field (Thaxted), Station Road Common (Newport) and Meadow Ford (Newport).
Amenity Greenspace	◂ No significant gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment. ◂ Chrishall is the only settlement observed as not being served by provision.	◂ Given the low population density it is unlikely new provision will be required. If opportunities are presented to provide such provision, this should be explored.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◂ No gaps in 30-minute drive time. Minor gaps in 15-minute walk time noted in settlements with greater population density such as Felsted and Newport.	◂ Gap covered by 30-minute drive time. ◂ May also be served to some extent by other forms of provision such as Jollys Boy north playing field (Felsted), and Station Road common / meadow ford (Newport).
Provision for children and young people	◂ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◂ Gap in 15-minute walk time catchment observed to settlement of Takeley.	◂ Opportunities to create provision should be explored.

Saffron Walden

Table 9.2.4: Saffron Walden accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◂ Minor gap in 15-minute walk time catchment to south.	◂ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces (e.g. Greenways, Blacklands Close and Beeches Close).
Amenity Greenspace	◂ No significant gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◂ No gaps in 30-minute drive time or 15-minute walk time.	n/a
Provision for children and young people	◂ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◂ No significant gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

Stansted Mountfitchet

Table 9.2.5: Stansted Mountfitchet accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◂ Gap in 15-minute walk time catchment.	◂ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces (e.g., Stansted Park recreation ground, Bentfield Gardens, Herrington Avenue and Mountfitchet Road).
Amenity greenspace	◂ No gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment.	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◂ Gap in 15-minute walk catchment.	◂ Likely to be served to some extent by provision, such as Birchanger Wood.
Provision for children and young people	◂ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◂ No significant gap in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

9.3: Quantity

Quantity standards can be used to identify areas of shortfalls and help with determining requirements for future developments.

Setting quantity standards

The setting and application of quantity standards is necessary to determine shortfalls in provision and to ensure new developments contribute to the provision of open space across the area.

Shortfalls in quality and accessibility standards are identified across the district for different types of open space (as set out in Parts 9.1 and 9.2). Consequently, the Council should seek to ensure new developments contribute to the overall provision of open space.

The current provision levels are used as a basis to inform and identify potential shortfalls in existing provision. These can also be used to help determine future requirements as part of new developments.

Table 9.3.1: Summary of current provision levels

Typology	Quantity level (Hectares per 1,000 population)
Parks & gardens	0.10
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.58[9]
Amenity greenspace	1.60
Provision for children & young people	0.11
Allotment	0.20

Current provision levels are used to inform quantity as opposed to benchmarks such as those suggested by FIT. The national benchmark quantity standards are not deemed as appropriate for use as they do not take into consideration the local circumstances, distribution, and historical trends of the area.

An approach using locally derived quantity standards ensures more reflective standards are set as they are based on and take consideration to current local provision levels and views.

The current provision levels can be used to help identify where areas may have a shortfall. Table 9.3.2 shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall for each type of open space.

[9] 1.39 hectares per 1,000 population if Hatfield Forest is omitted from figures.

Table 9.3.2a: Current provision shortfalls by analysis area (hectares per 1,000 population)

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & semi-natural		Amenity greenspace		Allotments		Play provision	
	0.10		5.58		1.60		0.20		0.11	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Saffron Walden	0.59	+0.49	0.08	-5.50	0.96	-0.64	0.38	+0.18	0.11	level
Great Dunmow	-	-0.10	2.02	-3.56	1.28	-0.32	0.12	-0.08	0.07	-0.04
Rural Area	0.002	-0.098	8.11	+2.53	1.95	+0.35	0.19	-0.01	0.11	level
Stansted Mountfitchet	-	-0.10	2.48	-3.10	0.81	-0.79	0.09	-0.11	0.10	-0.01

All analysis areas are observed as having shortfalls in some form of open space. Against the recommended standards, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are identified as having quantity shortfalls against all open space types. If Hatfield Forest is omitted from the natural and semi-natural figures (Table 9.3.2b), a shortfall in Great Dunmow is no longer noted.

Table 9.3.2b: Current provision shortfalls by analysis area (hectares per 1,000 population) – excluding Hatfield Forest

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & semi-natural		Amenity greenspace		Allotments		Play provision	
	0.10		1.39		1.60		0.20		0.11	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Saffron Walden	0.59	+0.49	0.08	-1.31	0.96	-0.64	0.38	+0.18	0.11	level
Great Dunmow	-	-0.10	2.02	+0.63	1.28	-0.32	0.12	-0.08	0.07	-0.04
Rural Area	0.002	-0.098	1.46	+0.07	1.95	+0.35	0.19	-0.01	0.11	level
Stansted Mountfitchet	-	-0.10	2.48	-1.09	0.81	-0.79	0.09	-0.11	0.10	-0.01

9.4: Identifying priorities and recommendations

Several quantity shortfalls in the open space typologies are highlighted. However, creating new provision to address these shortfalls (particularly any quantity shortfalls) is often challenging (as significant amounts of new forms of provision would need to be created). Often a more realistic approach is to ensure sufficient accessibility and quality of existing provision.

The following provides a summary of the key findings through the application of the standards. It incorporates and recommends that the council should be seeking to help address the issues highlighted.

Recommendation 1

- ***Provision standards should be used to inform and help determine future requirements***

Exploring opportunities to enhance existing provision and linkages to these sites should be endorsed. Further insight into the shortfalls is provided within each provision standard summary (Parts 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3).

Quantity levels should still be utilised to indicate the potential lack of provision that any given area may have. However, this should be done in conjunction with the accessibility and quality of provision in the area.

The current provision levels could be used to determine the open space requirements as part of new housing developments. In the first instance, all types of provision should look to be provided as part of new housing developments.

If this is not considered viable, the column signalling whether an area is sufficient or has a quantity shortfall may be used to help inform the priorities for each type of open space within each area (i.e., the priorities may be where a shortfall has been identified).

Recommendation 2

- ***Sites helping, or with the potential to help, serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping, should be prioritised as opportunities for enhancement***

Part 9.2 identifies sites that help or have the potential to serve existing identified gaps in provision (p49-51).

These sites potentially help to meet the identified catchment gaps for other open space typologies. Where possible, the council may seek to adapt these sites to provide a stronger secondary role, to help meet the gaps highlighted.

Often this is related to parks, amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace. The council should explore the potential/possibility to adapt these sites through formalisation and/or greater provision of features linked to other types of open space. This is to provide a stronger secondary role as well as opportunities associated with other open space types.

This may, in some instances, also help provide options to minimise the need for creation of new provision to address any gaps in catchment mapping. For play provision, sites could be explored for opportunities to expand the amount and breadth of equipment at existing play sites.

These sites should therefore be viewed as open space provision that are likely to provide multiple social and value benefits. It is also important that the quality and value of these sites is secured and enhanced.

These sites should first look to be enhanced in terms of quality. Consideration should be given to changing the primary typology or strengthening the secondary function of these sites, to one which they currently help to serve a gap in provision, even if their quality cannot currently be enhanced. For some sites, such as natural and semi-natural greenspace, the ability to adapt or strengthen secondary roles may be limited due to the features and characteristics of the site.

It is important that other factors, such as the potential typology change of a site creating a different catchment gap and/or the potential to help serve deficiencies in other types of provision should also be considered. The council may also be aware of other issues, such as the importance of a site for heritage, biodiversity or as a visual amenity that may also indicate that a site should continue to stay the same typology.

Recommendation 3

- ***Keeping data, report and supporting evidence base up to date to reflect changes over time***

The study provides a snapshot in time. Whilst significant changes are not as common for open space provision, inevitably over time changes in provision occur through the creation of new provision, loss of existing provision and/or alterations to site boundaries and management. Population change and housing growth are also another consideration to review when undertaking any form of update as this may impact on quantity provision levels and standards. It is therefore important, particularly given the growing recognition of open space provision because of Covid-19, for the council to undertake regular reviews of the data and/or actions informed by it.

PART 10: FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIO

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. Two methods are presented to calculate open space requirements; one using the standard methodology and another using Objectively Assessed Need for Housing.

Please note that the scenarios should be updated as required over the Local Plan period to reflect changes in population projections and average household sizes.

The recommended quantity provision standards for Uttlesford are applied to determine the requirement for open space provision if the current levels of provision are to be maintained.

The formula to determine the initial amount of open space provision required is:

New/additional population from development x quantity standard / 1000

Method One: Standard Methodology

The standard methodology identifies a housing requirement of 684 dwellings per annum for Uttlesford[10]. Over a 10-year period this would be 6,840 dwellings. The indicative population figure (16,416) assumes that population growth will average 2.4[11] persons per dwelling.

On this basis, the following open space requirements are calculated:

Table 10.1: Future open space requirement (standard methodology)

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.10	1.64
Natural & semi-natural greenspace[12]	1.39	22.82
Amenity greenspace	1.60	26.27
Allotment	0.20	3.28
Provision for children & young people	0.11	1.81

[10] 5 year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory (October 2023)
[11] Source: ONS Families and household (2022)
[12] If Hatfield Forest is included, a standard of 5.58 is noted, meaning a future requirement of 91.60 hectares

Method Two: Objectively Assessed Need for Housing

The Objectively Assessed Need for Housing[13] identifies a housing requirement of 13,500 new homes up to 2041. This would provide an indicative population figure of 32,400 assuming that population growth will average 2.4[14] persons per dwelling.

On this basis, the following open space requirements are calculated:

Table 10.2: Future open space requirement (objectively assessed need)

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.10	3.24
Natural & semi-natural greenspace[15]	1.39	45.04
Amenity greenspace	1.60	51.84
Allotment	0.20	6.48
Provision for children & young people	0.11	3.56

The figures provide an initial indication of the levels of open space provision required because of new housing growth for the current levels of provision to be maintained. It should be treated as a starting point for further exploration and negotiation to ensure new populations are served by adequate open space provision.

It can also help to further strengthen existing plans. For example, there have previously been suggestions of a country park within the district as part of future plan proposals. This could help alleviate some of the pressures at significant sites such as those highlighted at Hatfield Forest. The creation of a country park could also contribute in a multifunctional role to the levels of park provision and natural greenspace need as part of future open space requirements.

[13] Local Housing Need Assessment (JG Consulting, May 2024)
[14] Source: ONS Families and household (2022)
[15] If Hatfield Forest is included, a standard of 5.58 is noted, meaning a future requirement of 180.79 hectares

Report to:

Uttlesford District Council

Local Housing Needs Assessment

Report to Inform
Regulation 19 Consultation

June 2024

jg Consulting
Quality Specialist Research

Contents

Summary

Background

1. This report provides an updated Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) for Uttlesford District Council. This report focusses on overall housing need using the Standard Method as well as looking at affordable housing in the context of changing Government policy (including in relation to First Homes) and the needs of specific groups such as older people.

2. The study follows the approach set out in the latest published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and uses the latest available demographic data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and a range of other available datasets to provide a contextual picture and analysis of the housing market for the Council's administrative area.

3. To understand the area, an initial phase of work was carried out to talk with key players in the housing market (including estate and letting agents). From this, agents noted the private rented sector in Uttlesford, like most other parts of the country, cannot deliver the supply needed and that this is particularly acute in Uttlesford due to the scale of out-migration from London.

4. It was noted that whilst Stansted Airport is a major employer and significant contributor to the local economy, its impact on Uttlesford's housing market is limited to the Great Dunmow area and its impact would appear to be greater in Bishop's Stortford, Harlow, and more southern towns along the M11 corridor.

5. Finally, both registered providers and the County Council highlighted delivery of extra-care housing for older people as a particular issue and this is picked up later in this report.

6. Overall, the report sets out a number of either linked or distinct sections to cover a range of core subject areas; the sections are summarised below:

    - Section 2 – Area Profile;
    - Section 3 – Overall Housing Need;
    - Section 4 – Affordable Housing Need;
    - Section 5 – Housing Mix;
    - Section 6 – Older and Disabled People; and
    - Section 7 – Self- and Custom Build Housing.

Area Profile

7. Analysis was carried out to provide background information about population and housing in Uttlesford. Data is compared with local, regional and national data as appropriate. The analysis can be summarised as covering three main topic headings:

- Demographic baseline (including data on population age structure and changes)
- Housing stock (including type and tenure)
- Housing market (including data on house prices)

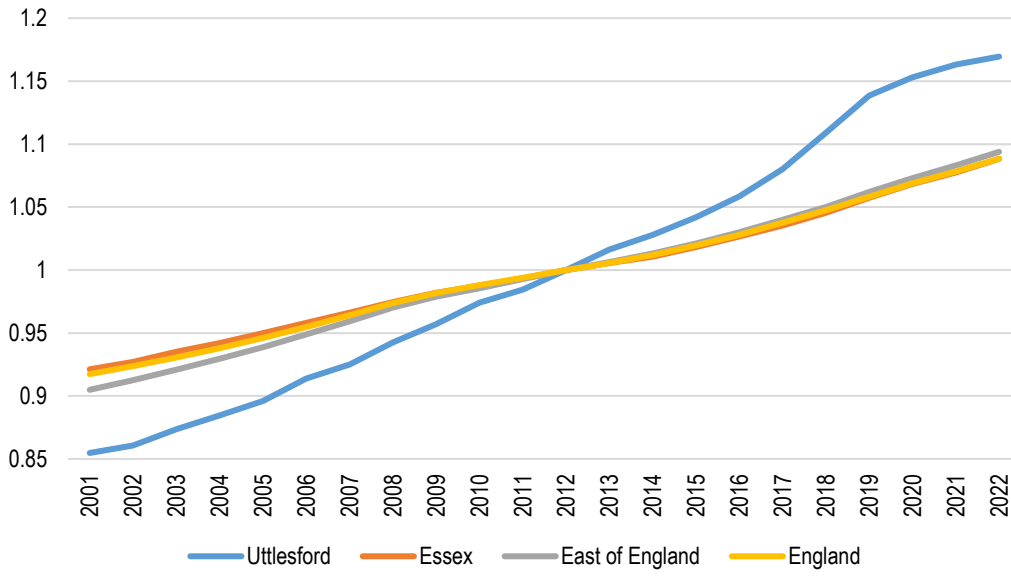
8. As of mid-2022, the population of Uttlesford is 92,600 and since 2012 the District's population has grown by around 14% which is a much faster rate of growth than across Essex, the East of England region and nationally. The District also saw fast population growth in the 2002-2012 period.

9. The age structure of the population is also slightly different to other areas, with fewer people aged in their 20s and 30s, and higher proportions in their 50s. Over the past decade, the District has seen an ageing of the population, with the number of people aged 65 and over increasing by 32%; there have however also been increases in the number of children and people of 'working-age' (taken to be 16-64).

10. Population growth in the District is largely driven by internal migration – moves from one part of the UK to another, although there are also modest positive levels of natural change (births minus deaths) and international migration (although international migration was negative between 2017 and 2021).

11. ONS dwelling stock data indicates there were 39,000 dwellings in the District as of 2022, a net increase of 5,700 dwellings between 2012 and 2022. As with population growth, rates of change in dwelling numbers have been in excess of that seen in other areas, going back at least until 2001. Although Uttlesford has seen strong growth in the number of dwellings, the actual increase in the 2012-22 period is lower than many other areas – Uttlesford saw the 16th strongest growth of all local authorities in the East of England region and had lower growth than some other Essex authorities (Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring).

Figure 1: Indexed change in dwelling stock (2001-22) – (2012=1)



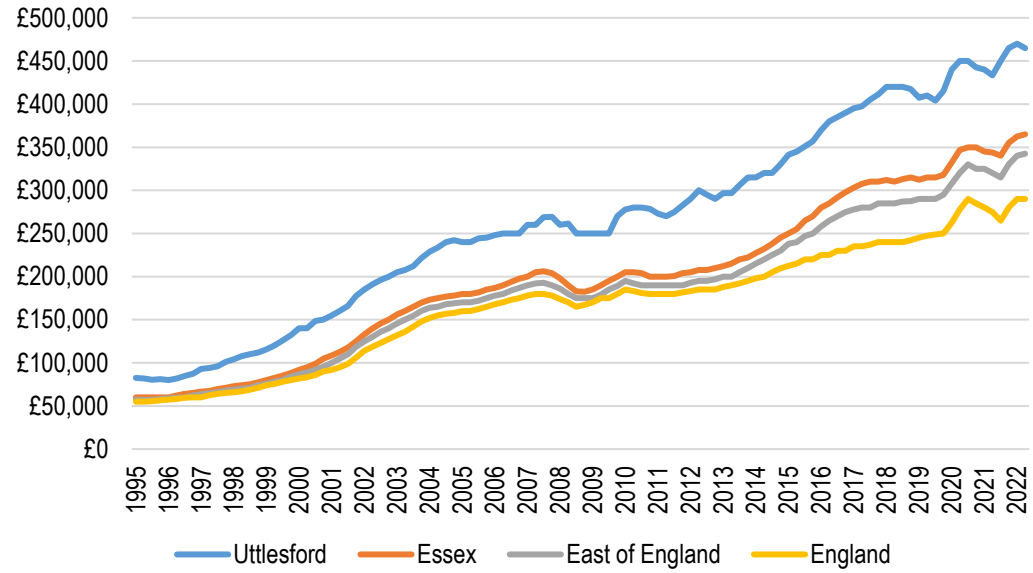
Source: DLUHC (Live Table 125)

12. Some 72% of all households in the District are owner-occupiers, notably higher than the national average of 62% (and higher than other benchmark areas), consequently the proportion of households living in the social rented (13%) and private rented (15%) sectors is lower than seen in other locations.

13. The housing stock is dominated by detached homes, making up 42% of all dwellings (23% nationally) and related to this the stock is generally larger in nature, with around 38% having 4+-bedrooms. Again linked to this, the District sees high levels of under-occupancy, with nearly half of all households living in homes with at least two spare bedrooms. Levels of overcrowding are very low – at just 1.4% of all households.

14. In the year to March 2023 the median house price in Uttlesford was £465,000. This is significantly above the median house price for comparator areas, and is 60% above the national average. Prices have also been increasing significantly, rising by 55% (£165,000) over the decade to March 2023. Over the past five years price rises have been more modest, increasing by 17%. When looking at median prices by property type, Uttlesford also typically sees higher prices for different types of property than Essex, the East of England region and England as a whole.

Figure 2: Median House Prices 1995-2023 (year ending March 2023)



Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

15. As well as higher house prices, the District typically sees higher private rental costs, with the median private rent for a 2-bedroom home standing at £1,000 per month in the year to September 2023. Rents overall are around 29% above the national average (compared with 60% when looking at median house prices). Over the past five years rents have increased by around 16%, similar to the increase in house prices over the same period.

16. In line with national trends, the affordability ratio in the District has generally increased over time with the workplace based median affordability ratio in Uttlesford standing at 12.18 in 2023 (although this was a reduction from 13.85 in 2022) – these figures are based on the ratio between median house prices and full-time earnings.

17. Overall, the data points to Uttlesford as an affluent area with higher house prices and large proportions of households living in owner-occupied housing. The District also sees a housing mix of larger and detached homes. The analysis points to relatively high levels of housing demand. This can be seen in analysis of house prices and levels of delivery above other areas.

18. That said, there are clearly issues suggested by the data. The house price to income ratio is high, pointing to potential difficulties in first-time-buyers (in particular) accessing the market – private rents are also high. At the same time, the relative lack of social rented housing means it will be difficult for the Council to meet affordable housing needs when they arise.

Overall Housing Need

19. The LHNA studied the overall housing need set against the NPPF and the framework of PPG – specifically the Standard Method for assessing housing need. This shows a need for 675 dwellings per annum. This is based on household growth of 482 per annum and a (capped) uplift for affordability of 40%.

20. The report has considered whether there are exceptional circumstances to move away from the Standard Method (either in an upward or downward direction). This looked at up-to-date demographic trends and is also mindful of the NPPF December 2023 which sees some strengthening of the encouragement for local authorities to consider exceptional circumstances.

21. Firstly, the report tested the data used in the 2014-projections as ONS has subsequently revised key trend data for migration. In Uttlesford, the revisions were very minor and unlikely to have any notable impact on the projections.

22. The report than looks at more recent demographic trends – taking account of 2021 Census data and ONS mid-year population estimates up to 2021, this data was compared with the 2014-based projections. Whilst there were differences between sources, these did not show a clear trend (sources showing both higher and lower population estimates than had previously been projected and this did not point to any exceptional circumstances.

23. Data about household growth from the Census also showed a similar pattern to that in the 2014-based projections, again pointing to the projections underpinning the Standard Method as remaining reasonable.

24. A final demographic analysis considered more recent trends to 2023 and also the implications of the latest (2021-based) national population projections. Again, neither of these sources pointed to there being anything ‘exceptional’ in Uttlesford.

25. Past build rates were also considered as areas with strong growth might be able to provide more homes than the Standard Method (also high delivery might point to an over-supply of housing). In Uttlesford, whilst delivery has been strong, averaging 540 dwellings per annum over the past decade) it is again not considered that this provides any evidence to suggest a higher or lower figure than the Standard Method.

26. Overall, it was therefore concluded in demographic terms that the Standard Method is a reasonable assessment of housing need for Uttlesford (noting the premise of the method itself has not been challenged in this report). The new Local Plan is due to have a plan period of 2021-41 which leads to an overall need for 13,500 dwellings (675×20). Between 2021 and 2024, there were a total of 1,802 net completions, leaving 11,698 to be provided to meet the calculated need (at a rate of 688 per annum).

27. On that basis a bespoke demographic projection was developed to look at how the population might change if 688 homes per annum were delivered over the period to 2041 (from 2024). This showed continued strong population growth and an ageing of the population, although notable growth in the number of children and those of ‘working-age’ is also projected.

Figure 3: Population change 2024 to 2041 by broad age bands – Uttlesford (linked to Standard Method)				
	2024	2041	Change in population	% change from 2024
Under 16	16,856	19,864	3,008	17.8%
16-64	57,421	68,454	11,033	19.2%
65 and over	20,343	30,664	10,321	50.7%
Total	94,621	118,983	24,362	25.7%

Source: Demographic Modelling

28. As a final test on exceptional circumstances, the Standard Method projection was used to look at potential changes to the resident labour supply and the number of additional jobs that might be supported. Overall, it was projected the labour supply would increase by around 25% over the 2024-41 period and that this could support around 13,000-14,200 additional jobs – this is higher than the job growth forecast by the 2023 Employment Need Assessment (10,600 additional jobs in the 2022-41 period) and therefore does not point to a need to plan for housing in addition to the Standard Method.

Affordable Housing Need

29. Analysis has been undertaken to estimate the annual need for affordable housing. The analysis is split between a need for social/affordable rented accommodation (based on households unable to buy OR rent in the market) and the need for affordable home ownership (AHO) – this includes housing for those who can afford to rent privately but cannot afford to buy a home.

30. The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. Additionally, when looking at rented needs, consideration is given to estimates of the supply of social/affordable rented housing. For AHO, consideration is given to the potential supply of resales of low-cost home ownership properties (such as shared ownership) and lower quartile sales of existing homes.

31. When looking at needs from households unable to buy OR rent, the analysis suggests a need for 287 affordable homes per annum across the District.

Figure 4: Estimated Need for Social/Affordable Rented Housing (per annum)	
	Per annum
Current need	43
Newly forming house-holds	298
Existing house-holds falling into need	52
Total Gross Need	393
Relet Supply	106
Net Need	287

Source: Affordable Needs Modelling (see Section 4)

32. Despite the level of need being high in relation to the Standard Method, it is not considered that this points to any requirement for the Council to increase the Local Plan housing requirement due to affordable needs. The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex and in trying to make a link it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home) – indeed removing households from the modelling who are already in accommodation reduces the need to 221 per annum. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity.

33. The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit. It is however clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes.

34. When looking at AHO products, the analysis is inconclusive about the scale of the need, although the evidence does suggest that there are many households in Uttlesford who are being excluded from the owner-occupied sector (as evidenced by increases in the size of the private rented sector). It is likely that a key issue in the District is about access to capital (e.g. for deposits, stamp duty, legal costs) as well as potentially mortgage restrictions (e.g. where employment is temporary) rather than simply the cost of housing to buy.

35. The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each will have a role to play – shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent.

36. However, given the cost of housing locally, it seems very difficult for affordable home ownership products to be provided and be considered as ‘genuinely affordable’. This again points to the need for the Council to prioritise delivery of rented affordable housing where possible.

37. In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues (recognising for example that providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options).

38. Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area. It does however need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided. The evidence does however suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise.

Housing Mix

39. Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population. The proportion of households with dependent children in Uttlesford is fairly high with around 31% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally). There are notable differences between different types of household, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas as lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

40. There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes; future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save; economic performance and housing affordability. An analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, this takes account of both household changes and the ageing of the population – the analysis also models for there to be a modest decrease in levels of under-occupancy (which in Uttlesford is notable in the market sector). Our recommended mix is set out below:

Figure 5: Suggested size mix of housing by tenure – Uttlesford

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			General needs	Older persons
1-bedroom	25%	20%	25%	40%
2-bedrooms		45%	30%	60%
3-bedrooms	45%	35%	35%	
4+-bedrooms	30%		10%	

Source: Housing Market Model (see Section 5)

41. The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households. Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1-bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues. The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register.

42. The mix identified above could inform strategic policies although a flexible approach should be adopted. For example, in some areas Registered Providers find difficulties selling 1-bedroom affordable home ownership (AHO) homes and therefore the 1-bedroom elements of AHO might be better provided as 2-bedroom accommodation. That said, this report also highlighted potential difficulties in making (larger) AHO genuinely affordable.

43. Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level. The Council should also monitor the mix of housing delivered.

44. Given the nature of the area and the needs identified, the analysis suggests that the majority of units should be houses rather than flats although consideration will also need to be given to site specific circumstances (which may in some cases lend themselves to a particular type of development). There is potentially a demand for bungalows, although realistically significant delivery of this type of accommodation may be unlikely. It is however possible that delivery of some bungalows might be particularly attractive to older person households downsizing and may help to release larger (family-sized) accommodation back into family use.

Older and Disabled People

45. A range of data sources and statistics have been accessed to consider the characteristics and housing needs of the older person population and the population with some form of disability. The two groups are taken together as there is a clear link between age and disability. The analysis responds to Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People published by Government in June 2019 and includes an assessment of the need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to M4(2) and M4(3) housing technical standards (accessibility and wheelchair standards).

46. The data shows that Uttlesford has a very slightly older age structure and notably lower levels of disability compared with the national average. The older person population shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant equity in their homes (74% of all older person households are outright owners).

47. The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase substantially. Key findings for the 2024-41 period include:

- A 51% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 42% of total population growth);
- A 71% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 63% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems;
- A need for around 800 housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 90% in the market sector;
- A need for around 500 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around 85%) in the market sector;
- A need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 600 in the period and mainly for nursing care); and
- a need for over 300 dwellings to be for wheelchair users (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

48. This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing. Given the evidence, the Council could consider (as a start point) requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards and around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion of around 10% in the affordable sector).

49. Where the authority has nomination rights M4(3) would be wheelchair accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation) and in the market sector they should be wheelchair user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user). It should however be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly.

50. In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this the viability of provision). There may also be some practical issues to consider, such as the ability of any individual development being mixed tenure given the way care and support services are paid for).

Self- and Custom Build Housing

51. As of 1st April 2016, and in line with the 2015 Act and the Right to Build, relevant authorities in England are required to have established and publicised a self-build and custom housebuilding register which records those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area in order to build their own self-build and custom houses.

52. The Uttlesford Local Plan (January 2005) was adopted before the Uttlesford Self and Custom Build register was set up. Therefore, there are no policies that specifically refer to self and custom build. However, though there is no reference to self and custom building within the supporting text, Policy H3 – New Homes within Development supports the principle to develop Self-Build plots as windfall sites, within the defined development boundaries and on land allocated to housing.

53. Data from the Council suggests that the demand has successfully been met with enough suitable permissions before the relevant deadlines although the supply will need to be investigated further in light of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. It is suggested the Council should review its supply and give consideration to including a specific policy on this topic within the next Local Plan.

Overall Summary

54. Uttlesford has characteristics of an affluent area, including high house prices and a high proportion of households living in owner-occupied housing. However, the high house prices (also when considered relative to local incomes) and the general lack of social rented housing does point to potential affordability and the need for affordable housing.

55. The Standard Method shows a housing need for 675 dwellings per annum in the District. This figure looks to be reasonable and there are no exceptional circumstances pointing towards a higher or lower figure – this conclusion takes account of up-to-date demographic trends.

56. There is a significant need for affordable housing, particularly for lower income households likely to need rented accommodation. The Council should prioritise delivery of social rented housing where it is viable to do so. There is also a potential need for affordable home ownership (although such a need is not clear-cut), although it seems difficult to make such homes genuinely affordable in a local context, thus lending further support for the provision of social rented housing.

1. Background

Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update to the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) prepared for Uttlesford District Council to inform the Regulation 18 Consultation of the emerging Local Plan[1]. The report has been prepared in the same format as the draft LHNA and includes the same range of data as in the previous study. The key difference is this report now takes a 2024 base and looks at a range of topics up to the end of the plan period (2041). The draft LHNA looked at needs over a 10-year period (2023-33).

1.2 This report focusses on overall housing need using the Standard Method as well as looking at affordable housing in the context of changing Government policy (including in relation to First Homes) and the needs of specific groups such as older people.

1.3 The Council is in the process of reviewing the evidence base for the new Local Plan which currently covers the period 2021-2041 and on that basis a key purpose of the study is to assess how many, and determine the types of, homes that need to be planned for across the period to 2041 to ensure that the Local Plan remains up to date and continues to meet changing needs.

1.4 The study follows the approach set out in the latest published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and uses the latest available demographic data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and a range of other available datasets to provide a contextual picture and analysis of the housing market for the Council's administrative area.

National Policy Context

1.5 The sub-sections below set out an overview of the key national planning policy and guidance in relation to housing need.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2023

1.6 The latest version of the NPPF was published by Government in December 2023. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It sets out that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

[1] https://uttlesfordreg18evidencebase.co.uk/documents/Uttlesford_LHNA_draft_October%202023.pdf

1.7 The development plan must include strategic policies to address Council's priorities for the development and use of land in its area. Plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for plan-making, this means that the plan should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change and strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring authorities, where it is sustainable to do so.

1.8 Paragraph 11 reiterates that "strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring area, unless…the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area.".

1.9 In order to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, Paragraph 60 in the NPPF states it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

1.10 Paragraph 61 sets out that in order to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance although this only provides an advisory starting point. It notes there may be exceptional circumstances which justify an alternative approach and any approach would need to reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals.

1.11 Paragraph 63 goes on to set out that within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

1.12 Paragraphs 64 – 66 address affordable housing provision. They set out that where an affordable housing need is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified, or the agreed approach contributes to the objectives of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Planning Practice Guidance

1.13 Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) includes several sections which are relevant to the assessment of housing need. Guidance on Housing and economic needs assessments explains that housing need is "an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area" and should be undertaken separately from assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure and preparing policies to address this such as site allocations.

1.14 The PPG explains that policy-making authorities are expected to follow the Standard Method for assessing housing need and that the method is designed to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for, addressing both projected household growth and historical under-supply.

1.15 The guidance does however note that the use of the standard method for strategic policy making purposes is not mandatory but that alternative methods should only be used in exceptional circumstances and will be tested at examination. Where an authority uses an approach leading to a lower housing need figure than that identified using the standard method, the strategic policy-making authority will need to demonstrate, using robust evidence, that the figure is based on realistic assumptions of demographic growth and that there are exceptional local circumstances that justify deviating from the standard method. This will be tested at examination. The PPG also notes that any method which relies on using household projections more recently published than the 2014-based household projections will not be considered to be following the standard method.

1.16 The current guidance is therefore quite clear: there is an expectation that the 2014-based sub-national household projections (SNHP) should be used but that an alternative approach can be used. When using an alternative approach, it is necessary to take account of demographic growth and market signals, but this cannot include using more recent versions of published SNHP. On their own these would not currently constitute exceptional circumstances.

Qualitative research and stakeholder consultation

1.17 Whilst much of the project is based on analysis of a wide range of data sources covering a number of topics an initial stage of the project sought to speak to key players in the housing market to help provide some context for the analysis to follow. Below is a summary of these discussions and initial impressions of the District.

Introduction

1.18 We visited the main settlements in district to obtain context to the study and undertake face to face interviews with estate and letting agents. Visits included Chesterford, Elmdon, Felsted, Great Dunmow, Littlebury, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stansted Airport, Saffron Walden, Stebbing and Thaxted. Consultation includes selected registered providers and strategic housing officials employed by Essex County Council.

Overview of the District

1.19 The district is predominantly rural and agricultural. The two main settlements are Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow. These are market towns. Great Dunmow in particular, has seen significant growth recently. These towns offer a wide range of services to local residents and surrounding villages and rural enterprises. Their high streets are distinctive and comprise mostly of local independent businesses. Stansted Airport drives the largest centre of employment and is a hub for hospitality distribution and technical support industries.

Consultation with Estate and Letting Agents

1.20 Interviews with agents covered the topics of gaps in supply, in-migration, investors, and the impact of Stansted Airport expansion on the housing market. 6 agents were interviewed. Interviews took place at Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden.

1.21 All agents reported high levels of transactions for sale or rent from incomers. Some reported 50% of transactions. In the south of the district these were mostly from households moving out of London. We were told that relocation out of London allows wider choice, of housing, lower living costs, better state education for their children and the ability to commute back to their place of work. The north of the district also houses households relocating from the Cambridge area. The towns and villages are also popular locations for retiring and retired households. Agents said that implications of this were high house prices, unaffordable to lower income and newly forming households.

1.22 High prices also limit the scale of investment from small scale investors. We were told that supply of rented housing was not keeping up with demand because of an unwillingness to invest by a largely demoralised private rented sector. This was due to the cumulative effect of changes to the tax system, increased regulation, and measures in the white paper "A Fairer Private Rented Sector" (2022). All agents reported high levels of demand citing waiting lists of hundreds of households. Agents mostly had only one or two vacancies at any time and were having to put a cap on the number of viewings for each vacancy. They said that a particular gap was good quality family housing with off-street parking. There was little evidence of build to rent initiatives and little scope for commercial to residential conversion on any scale.

1.23 Great Dunmow agents (sales and lettings) told us there were high levels of demand from Stansted Airport employees whether from management, aircrew, technical support or hospitality. Lower paid workers had little choice but to travel in from areas with lower housing prices. Some agents had branches in towns such as Bishop's Stortford, Harlow and others along the M11 corridor south of the airport. One agent drew attention to problems supplying short term accommodation for visiting workers, temporary workers or new employees undergoing training and spoke of some agents working with hotels to provide rooms or even shared accommodation.

1.24 Agents in Saffron Walden told us that there was little impact from airport employees. Whilst there is uncertainty about the long-term future of Carver Barracks, we asked agents in Saffron Walden about impact on the local housing market from servicemen based at the barracks. We were told there was little impact as the base was very self-contained.

Consultation with Registered Providers

1.25 Seven questionnaires were sent to a selection of registered providers who were seeking to expand their stock holding – 3 responses were received. The findings are summarised below.

Supply of social and affordable rented housing

1.26 Some registered providers reported difficulty letting 1-bedroom first floor flats and a shortage of 4-bedroom family housing.

Management and regeneration

1.27 None of the respondents were envisaging management intervention or regeneration that would involve decanting tenants over the next 5-years.

Supply from s106 agreements

1.28 All respondents were aware of the council's priorities for tenure and bedroom mix from large scale development of housing and the supply of affordable housing arising from it. No respondent considered that the supply arising from such development was inappropriate.

Special needs commissioning

1.29 None of the respondents were providers of specialist accommodation.

Evidence of need for affordable home ownership

1.30 Respondents each raised different issues:

- there are affordability issue affecting higher share shared ownership resales;
- changes in the help to buy agent system will necessitate closer working with the local authority regarding demand and strengthen the effectiveness of registered provider internal application processes;
- shared ownership remains a highly popular product; and
- restriction on staircasing and local connection criteria can make some first sales and resales more difficult to achieve.

Homeoption.org

1.31 One registered provider said they had no feedback on numbers of bids for individual vacancies. Other comments were:

- the process is satisfactory, but nominations can be slow to come through;
- multiple nominations for the same vacancy would be helpful; and
- improved communications would be welcome when it is difficult to find suitable applicants.

Stansted Airport expansion

1.32 Registered providers envisaged little impact due to low levels of stock and the polices that prioritise local need. One registered provider considered that improving shared ownership supply may help.

Consultation with the Essex County Council strategic housing team

1.33 Telephone interviews took place with members of the strategic housing team. It is unusual that a non-unitary county council employs a team of housing specialists. It was explained to us that the role of the team was to ensure that strategic county functions that had implications for housing was well co-ordinated with local planning authorities (LPA) and local housing authorities (LHA). The critical issues identified by the team were:

- refresh of the Essex wide housing strategy;
- infrastructure for new development (roads, transport, community services);
- designing and delivering the garden villages;
- delivery of social care in areas of housing growth;
- health and social care; and
- co-ordination of homelessness related services.

1.34 Officers pointed out that social care was the largest area of spending of the council. The council was engaging with registered providers and there was a specific programme for extra care housing. The aim here was to influence LPA/LHA policy providers and seek to replicate the Hertfordshire commissioning strategy. Officers told us that addressing the needs of the aging population was a major challenge for the county. The strategic approach was to assist people to live independently with appropriate support and adaptation for as long as possible.

1.35 Officers told us about the impact of out of (London) borough placements of homeless and vulnerable people and the bi-lateral agreement that had been reached. Also, the partnership working with the nine Essex districts to address rough sleeping.

1.36 We expressed our concern over problems in achieving effective consultation with the NHS on housing issues across the country. Officers explained that the county was responsible for public health and working with that team provided the housing team with data and insights that helped to shape strategy and policy. There was a focus on delivering healthy outcomes through the design of garden communities through addressing car dependency, housing density and social isolation.

1.37 We also sought an overview of issues facing the county with specific reference to Uttlesford. We drew attention to the policy issues faced by the outer London boroughs in delivering their housing requirement due to greenbelt constraints. We were told that this was an acute issue on the south of the county, less so in Uttlesford.

1.38 We also asked for a perspective on Stansted Airport expansion. Officers thought it would have modest impact on Uttlesford pointing out that the expansion was much less significant in scale than the Harwich Freeport project. Officers acknowledged that there was a role for the county in improving public transport to the airport. The limited impact is likely to be due to the capacity and nature of the housing offer in the south of the district.

Key Findings from the Consultation

1.39 The private rented sector in Uttlesford, like most other parts of the country, cannot deliver the supply needed. This is particularly acute in Uttlesford due to the scale of out-migration from London.

1.40 Whilst Stansted Airport is a major employer and significant contributor to the local economy, its impact on Uttlesford's housing market is limited to the Great Dunmow area and its impact would appear to be greater in Bishop's Stortford, Harlow, and more southern towns along the M11 corridor.

1.41 Information from the registered providers who responded to our survey is very limited on the question of delivering extra care housing. Given the scale of the challenge described by the County Council this topic merits further discussion in this report.

Structure of this Report

1.42 This report sets out a number of either linked or distinct sections; these are summarised below with a brief description:

- Section 2 – Area Profile – Provides background analysis including looking at demographic trends, house prices and house price changes;
- Section 3 – Overall Housing Need – Uses the Standard Method to calculate housing need and also considers circumstances where an alternative housing requirement might be justified;
- Section 4 – Affordable Housing Need – Provides analysis about the need for affordable housing and builds on this by considering the range of tenures of homes which can provide genuinely affordable housing in a local context;
- Section 5 – Housing Mix – This section assesses the need for different sizes of homes in the future, modelling the implications of demographic drivers on need/demand for different sizes of homes in different tenures.
- Section 6 – The Needs of Older People and People with Disabilities – Considers the need for specialist accommodation for older people (e.g. sheltered/Extra-care) and also the need for homes to be built to Building Regulations M4(2) any M4(3). The section studies a range of data around older persons and people with disabilities; and
- Section 7 – Custom- and Self-Build Housing – Provides information about the demand for and supply of custom- and self-build housing plots.

Rounding

1.43 It should be noted that the numbers included in tables and figures throughout the report may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Background: Key Messages

- This report provides an updated Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) for Uttlesford District Council. This report focusses on overall housing need using the Standard Method as well as looking at affordable housing in the context of changing Government policy (including in relation to First Homes) and the needs of specific groups such as older people.

- The study follows the approach set out in the latest published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and uses the latest available demographic data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and a range of other available datasets to provide a contextual picture and analysis of the housing market for the Council's administrative area.

- To understand the area, an initial phase of work was carried out to talk with key players in the housing market (including estate and letting agents). From this, agents noted the private rented sector in Uttlesford, like most other parts of the country, cannot deliver the supply needed and that this is particularly acute in Uttlesford due to the scale of out-migration from London.

- It was noted that whilst Stansted Airport is a major employer and significant contributor to the local economy, its impact on Uttlesford's housing market is limited to the Great Dunmow area and its impact would appear to be greater in Bishop's Stortford, Harlow, and more southern towns along the M11 corridor.

- Finally, both registered providers and the County Council highlighted delivery of extra-care housing for older people as a particular issue and this is picked up later in this report.

- Overall, the report sets out a number of either linked or distinct sections to cover a range of core subject areas; the sections are summarised below:

  - Section 2 – Area Profile;
  - Section 3 – Overall Housing Need;
  - Section 4 – Affordable Housing Need;
  - Section 5 – Housing Mix;
  - Section 6 – Older and Disabled People; and
  - Section 7 – Self- and Custom Build Housing.

2. Area Profile

Introduction

2.1 This section provides some background analysis about population and housing in Uttlesford. Data is compared with local, regional and national data as appropriate. The analysis can be summarised as covering three main topic headings:

- Demographic baseline (including data on population age structure and changes)
- Housing stock (including type and tenure)
- Housing market (including data on house prices)

Population

2.2 As of mid-2022, the population of Uttlesford is estimated to be 92,600 this is a growth of around 11,400 people over the previous decade. This equates to a growth of around 14.1% since 2012 which is a much higher rate of growth than across Essex (7.9%), the East of England region (8.2%) and nationally (6.7%).

Figure 2.1: Population change (2012-22)

	Population (2012)	Population (2022)	Change	% change
Uttlesford	81,148	92,578	11,430	14.1%
Essex	1,407,607	1,519,509	111,902	7.9%
East of England	5,915,033	6,398,497	483,464	8.2%
England	53,506,812	57,106,398	3,599,586	6.7%

Source: Mid-year population estimates

2.3 The table below considers population growth rate in the 20-year period from 2002 to 2022. The analysis shows over this period that the population of Uttlesford has grown at a substantially faster rate to that seen in other areas – indeed annual growth is roughly double any of the benchmark areas shown below.

Figure 2.2: Population Annual Growth Rate (2002-2022)

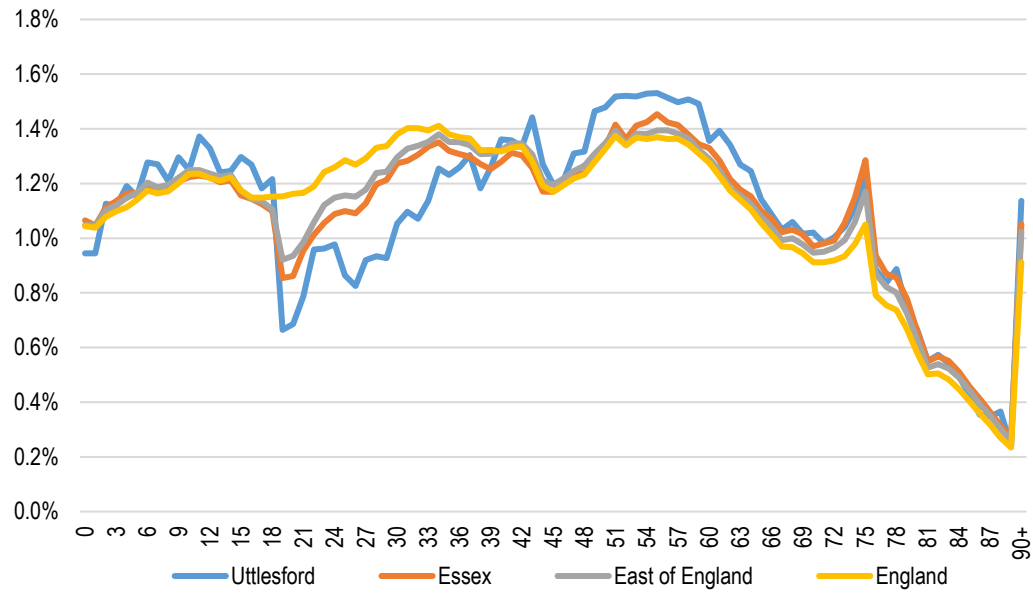
	Growth Rate (2002 – 2012)	Growth Rate (2012 – 2022)	Growth Rate (2002 – 2022)
Uttlesford	1.7%	1.4%	1.7%
Essex	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%
East of England	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%
England	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%

Source: Mid-year population estimates

Age Structure

2.4 The figure below shows the age structure by single year of age (compared with a range of other areas). From this it is clear that Uttlesford has fewer people aged in their 20s and 30s than other areas and a higher proportion of people aged in their 50s. The age structure regarding older persons is broadly similar to that seen in other locations.

Figure 2.3: Population profile (2022)



Source: Mid-year population estimates

2.5 The analysis below summarises the above information (including total population numbers for Uttlesford) by assigning population to three broad age groups (which can generally be described as a) children, b) working age and c) pensionable age). This analysis does not show the differences within the 'working-age' group but does highlight a similar proportion of people aged 65 and over, and a similar proportion of children when compared with other locations.

Figure 2.4: Population profile (2022) – summary age bands

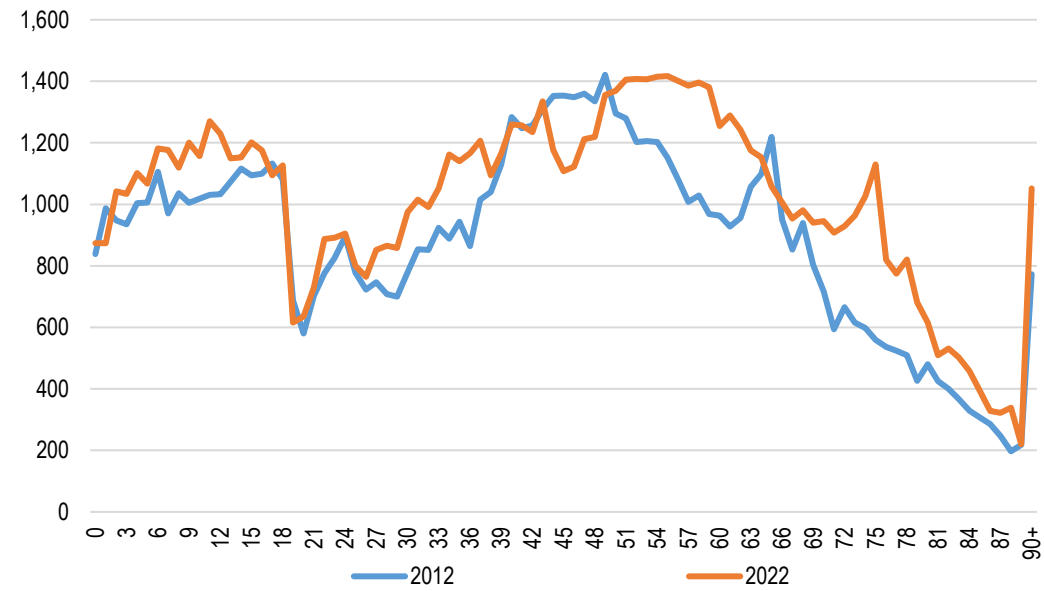
	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	Population	% of population	% of population	% of population	% of population
Under 16	17,830	19.3%	18.7%	18.8%	18.5%
16-64	55,539	60.0%	60.5%	61.3%	62.9%
65+	19,209	20.7%	20.8%	19.9%	18.6%
All Ages	92,578	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Mid-year population estimates

Age Structure Changes

2.6 The figure below shows how the age structure of the population has changed in the 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 – the data used is based on population so will reflect the notable increase seen in this period. There have been some changes in the age structure, including increases in the population in their late 20s and early 30s, as well as people in their 50s. The proportion of people aged 65 and over also looks to have increased notably.

Figure 2.5: Population age structure (people) (2012 and 2022)



Source: Mid-year population estimates

2.7 Where there are differences, it is often due to cohort effects (i.e. smaller or larger cohorts of the population getting older over time). One notable feature however is the higher proportion of children in 2022 – nationally increases in the number of children were fairly modest over the 2012-22 period. The information above is summarised into three broad age bands to ease comparison. The table below shows an increase of 10% in the 16–64 age group and a much larger increase of 32% in the 65+ age group.

Figure 2.6: Change in population by broad age group (2012-22) – Uttlesford

	2012	2022	Change	% change
Under 16	16,200	17,830	1,630	10.1%
16-64	50,412	55,539	5,127	10.2%
65+	14,536	19,209	4,673	32.1%
TOTAL	81,148	92,578	11,430	14.1%

Source: Mid-year population estimates

Components of Population Change

2.8 The table below consider the drivers of population change from 2011 to 2022. The main components of change are natural change (births minus deaths) and net migration (internal/domestic and international).

2.9 There is also an Unattributable Population Change (UPC) which is a correction made by ONS upon publication of Census data if population has been under- or over-estimated (this is only calculated for the 2011-21 period). There are also 'other changes', which for Uttlesford are relatively low – these changes are often related to armed forces personnel or boarding school pupils.

2.10 The data shows natural change to generally be dropping over time (i.e. the number of excess births compared with deaths is reducing) and migration is variable, with no clear trend – it is however clear that migration, and particularly internal (domestic) migration is the main driver of population change in the District.

2.11 The analysis also shows (for the 2011-21) period a notable negative level of UPC (totalling around 2,800 people over the 10-year period), this suggests when the 2021 Census was published ONS had previously over-estimated population change. This is an important point to note as ONS typically uses figures with no adjustments for UPC in their projections.

2.12 Overall the data shows a continuing trend of strong population growth throughout the period studied although it is notable that the figure for the most recent year is the lowest figure seen going back as far as at least 2011.

Figure 2.7: Components of population change, mid-2011 to mid-2022 – Uttlesford

	Natural change	Net internal migration	Net intern-ational migration	Other changes	Other (unattri-butable)	Total change
2011/12	235	1,069	65	9	-262	1,116
2012/13	242	1,164	26	50	-266	1,216
2013/14	217	1,334	97	1	-281	1,368
2014/15	211	839	92	44	-296	890
2015/16	191	1,033	102	-79	-304	943
2016/17	114	1,146	10	-14	-310	946
2017/18	191	1,353	-41	4	-307	1,200
2018/19	208	1,744	-62	43	-283	1,650
2019/20	129	1,293	-129	33	-205	1,121
2020/21	89	1,651	-52	47	-296	1,439
2021/22	103	301	224	29	0	657

Source: ONS

Housing Stock

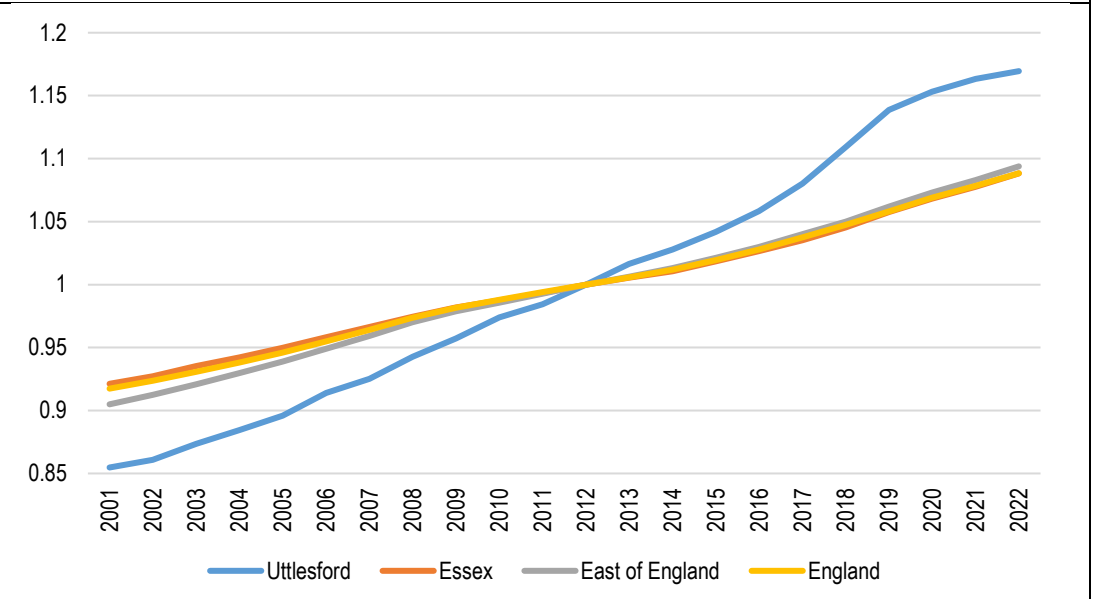
2.13 As of 2022 there were 39,000 dwellings in Uttlesford, an increase of 5,700 over the 10-year period from 2012 – this represents a 17% increase in the number of homes, roughly double that seen across a range of benchmark areas. Although Uttlesford has seen strong growth in the number of dwellings, the actual increase in the 2012-22 period is lower than many other areas – Uttlesford saw the 16th strongest growth of all local authorities in the East of England region and had lower growth than some other Essex authorities (Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring).

Figure 2.8: Change in dwellings (2012-22)

	Dwellings (2012)	Dwellings (2022)	Change	% change
Uttlesford	33,380	39,037	5,657	16.9%
Essex	607,944	661,625	53,681	8.8%
East of England	2,550,367	2,789,745	239,378	9.4%
England	23,116,851	25,160,404	2,043,553	8.8%

Source: DLUHC (Live Table 125)

Figure 2.9: Indexed change in dwelling stock (2001-22) – (2012=1)



Source: DLUHC (Live Table 125)

2.14 By using Census data about the number of households it is possible to estimate the number of vacant homes in the District and how this has changed from 2011 to 2021. In 2011, there were 31,316 households in the District, implying a vacancy rate of 4.7%; by 2021 there were 36,960 households and an implied vacancy rate of 4.8%. Whilst this suggests the proportion of vacant homes has increased, this change is not as significant as seen in other areas, notably the proportion of vacant homes nationally is estimated to have increased from 4.0% to 5.8% over the 2011-21 decade.

Figure 2.10: Estimated proportion of vacant homes (2011 and 2021)		
	2011	2021
Uttlesford	4.7%	4.8%
Essex	3.7%	4.3%
East of England	4.3%	4.7%
England	4.0%	5.8%

Source: DLUHC (Live Table 125) and Census

Tenure

2.15 The table below shows household tenure compared with a number of other locations. The analysis identifies a relatively high proportion of owner-occupiers, particularly those with a mortgage. The proportion of households living in both the social rented sector and private rented accommodation is lower than observed in other areas. The figures for private rent include a small number of households categorised as living rent free.

Figure 2.11: Tenure (2021)					
	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	House-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds
Owns outright	13,177	35.7%	36.3%	34.6%	32.5%
Owns with mortgage/loan	13,568	36.7%	33.5%	31.6%	29.8%
Social rented	4,809	13.0%	14.1%	15.5%	17.1%
Private rented	5,401	14.6%	16.0%	18.3%	20.6%
TOTAL	36,955	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2021 Census

2.16 As well as looking at the current tenure profile, it is of interest to consider how this has changed over time; the table below shows data from the 2011 and 2011 Census. From this it is clear that there has been notable growth in the number of households living in all tenures, but particularly outright owners (owners with a mortgage seeing the lowest increase). Both the social and private rented sectors also see notable increases over time.

Figure 2.12: Change in tenure (2011-21) – Uttlesford				
	2011	2021	Change	% change
Owns outright	10,668	13,177	2,509	23.5%
Owns with mortgage/loan	12,078	13,568	1,490	12.3%
Social rented	3,961	4,809	848	21.4%
Private rented	4,108	5,375	1,267	30.8%
Living rent free	501	26	-475	-94.8%
TOTAL	31,316	36,955	5,639	18.0%

Source: Census (2011 and 2021)

Dwelling Type

2.17 The 2021 Census shows that, detached homes were the most common dwelling type within Uttlesford at 42% of total dwelling stock, significantly above the national average for this built-form (23%). Flats/maisonettes are least common at 11% (this includes 0.6% of dwellings recorded as 'other').

Figure 2.13: Accommodation type (2021)					
	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	Dwellings	% of dwellings	% of dwellings	% of dwellings	% of dwellings
Detached	15,507	42.0%	30.5%	29.6%	22.9%
Semi-detached	11,427	30.9%	31.5%	31.0%	31.5%
Terraced	5,803	15.7%	19.9%	21.2%	23.0%
Flat/other	4,222	11.4%	18.1%	18.2%	22.6%
TOTAL	36,959	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Census (2021)

2.18 The Census can also be used to look at changes in dwelling types over the 2011-21 decade. This shows increases for all built-forms with the number of flats increasing by 26% - this however only represents 16% of additional dwellings – 42% of additional homes shown by the Census are detached, the same proportion as there are already in the stock. The data therefore points to deliver in the 2011-2021 period as broadly following the profile of the existing stock.

Figure 2.14: Change in accommodation type (2011-21) – Uttlesford					
	2011	2021	Change	% change	% of change
Detached	13,139	15,507	2,368	18.0%	42.0%
Semi-detached	9,622	11,427	1,805	18.8%	32.0%
Terraced	5,208	5,803	595	11.4%	10.5%
Flat/other	3,347	4,222	875	26.1%	15.5%
TOTAL	31,316	36,959	5,643	18.0%	100.0%

Source: Census (2011 and 2021)

Bedrooms (accommodation size)

2.19 The analysis below shows the number of bedrooms available to households as of the 2021 Census. Generally, the size profile in Uttlesford is one of larger homes with 38% of homes having 4+-bedrooms – this compares with just 21% nationally. The proportion of 1- and 2-bedroom homes is relatively low compared with other locations.

Figure 2.15: Number of bedrooms (2021)					
	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	House-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds	% of house-holds
1-bedroom	2,829	7.7%	10.6%	10.7%	11.6%
2-bedrooms	7,602	20.6%	26.3%	25.8%	27.3%
3-bedrooms	12,654	34.2%	37.8%	39.6%	40.0%
4+-bedrooms	13,873	37.5%	25.2%	23.9%	21.1%
TOTAL	36,958	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average bedrooms	3.02		2.77	2.77	2.71

Source: Census (2021)

2.20 The table below shows how the number of bedrooms has changed over the 2011-21 decade for the whole of the District. This shows that around 50% of the change is accounted for by 4+-bedroom homes, with increases also seen for other dwelling sizes. The analysis points to homes with 3-bedrooms seeing the smallest proportionate increase, although 3-bedroom homes still make up nearly a quarter of the change recorded by the Census.

Figure 2.16: Change in dwelling size (2011-21) – Uttlesford					
	2011	2021	Change	% change	% of change
1-bedroom	2,289	2,829	540	23.6%	9.6%
2-bedrooms	6,601	7,602	1,001	15.2%	17.7%
3-bedrooms	11,375	12,654	1,279	11.2%	22.7%
4+-bedrooms	11,051	13,873	2,822	25.5%	50.0%
TOTAL	31,316	36,958	5,642	18.0%	100.0%

Source: Census (2011 and 2021)

Overcrowding and Under-Occupation

2.21 The analysis below studies levels of overcrowding and under-occupation – this is based on the bedroom standard with data taken from the 2021 Census. The box below shows how the standard is calculated, this is then compared with the number of bedrooms available to the household (with a negative number representing overcrowding and a positive number being under-occupation). Households with an occupancy rating of +2 or more have at least two spare bedrooms.

For the purposes of the bedroom standard a separate bedroom shall be allocated to the following persons –

(a) A person living together with another as husband and wife (whether that other person is of the same sex or the opposite sex)
(b) A person aged 21 years or more
(c) Two persons of the same sex aged 10 years to 20 years
(d) Two persons (whether of the same sex or not) aged less than 10 years
(e) Two persons of the same sex where one person is aged between 10 years and 20 years and the other is aged less than 10 years
(f) Any person aged under 21 years in any case where he or she cannot be paired with another occupier of the dwelling so as to fall within (c), (d) or (e) above.

2.22 The analysis shows that levels of overcrowding in Uttlesford are low in a national context with only 1.4% of households being overcrowded in 2021 (compared with 4.4% nationally). This level of overcrowding is also below the regional average and for the whole of Essex. Levels of under-occupation are also relatively high with around 49% of households having a rating of +2 or more – this is notably higher than seen across England and also above that see in other areas.

Figure 2.17: Overcrowding and under-occupation (2021) – bedroom standard

	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	Number of households	% of households	% of households	% of households	% of households
+2 or more	18,167	49.2%	38.3%	38.5%	35.6%
+1 or more	11,240	30.4%	33.5%	32.9%	33.2%
0	7,028	19.0%	25.0%	25.2%	26.8%
-1 or less	523	1.4%	3.2%	3.4%	4.4%
TOTAL	36,958	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Census (2021)

2.23 The table below shows how levels of overcrowding and under-occupancy have changed in the 2011-21 decade. This shows a significant increase in the number of household under-occupying homes and a reduction in overcrowding.

Figure 2.18: Change in overcrowding and under-occupation (2011-21) – Uttlesford

	2011	2021	Change	% change
+2 or more	14,961	18,167	3,206	21.4%
+1 or more	9,969	11,240	1,271	12.7%
0	5,695	7,028	1,333	23.4%
-1 or less	691	523	-168	-24.3%
TOTAL	31,316	36,958	5,642	18.0%

Source: Census (2011 and 2021)

House Prices

2.24 In the year to March 2023 the median house price in Uttlesford was £465,000 – this is above the average seen in the benchmark areas, including being some 60% above the national average.

Figure 2.19: Median House Prices (Year to March 2023)		
	Price	Difference from England
Uttlesford	£465,000	+60%
Essex	£365,000	+26%
East of England	£342,500	+18%
England	£290,000	-

Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

2.25 The table below shows median prices by dwelling type. This again shows some significant differences between prices in Uttlesford and other locations – it is however the case that a median flat price in the District is slightly lower than the national average (which is likely to be influenced by prices of flats in London). The higher prices in Uttlesford do point to relatively strong housing demand.

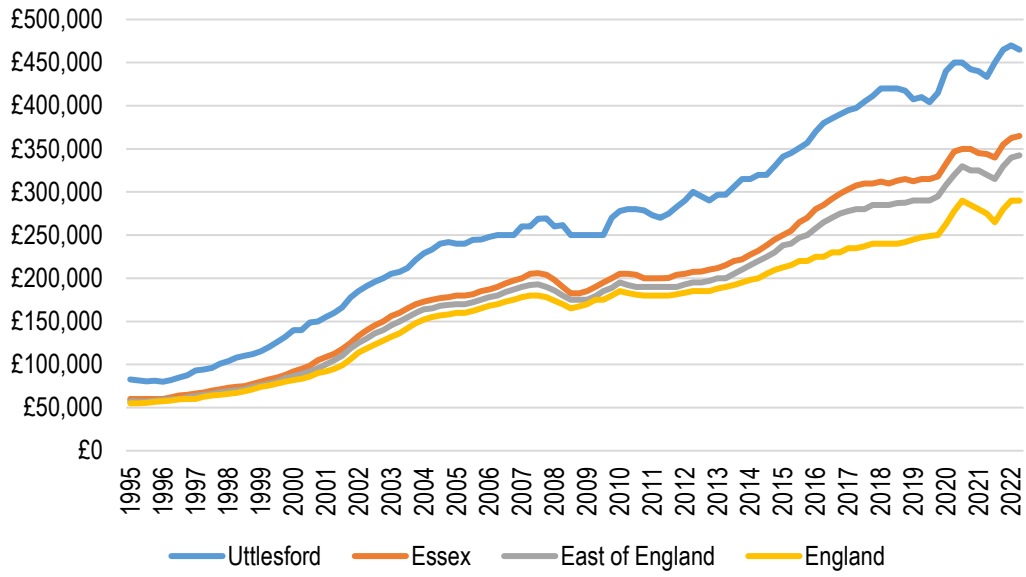
Figure 2.20: Median House Prices (year to March 2023)					
	Flat/ Maisonette	Terraced	Semi-Detached	Detached	All Sales
Uttlesford	£225,000	£367,500	£446,750	£635,000	£465,000
Essex	£210,000	£328,000	£380,000	£525,000	£365,000
Differential	*£15,000*	*£39,500*	*£66,750*	*£110,000*	*£100,000*
East of England	£210,000	£310,000	£350,000	£480,000	£342,500
Differential	*£15,000*	*£57,500*	*£96,750*	*£155,000*	*£122,500*
England	£232,000	£240,000	£274,000	£440,000	£290,000
Differential	*-£7,000*	*£127,500*	*£172,750*	*£195,000*	*£175,000*

Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

House Price Changes

2.26 The figure below shows growth in the median house price over the period since 1995. House prices in Uttlesford closely followed the national trend across England over time, with stronger price growth in the pre-recessionary period between 2003 and 2008, a dip during the recession and a strong increase to 2018 before seeing some variation over the last couple of years or so.

Figure 2.21: Median House Prices 1995-2023 (year to March 2023)



Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

2.27 Relative to other areas, percentage house price increases in Uttlesford have been lower than seen across Essex and the East of England, however in actual cost terms, the change in Uttlesford has been higher. Over the 10-year period studied, the average house price in Uttlesford rose by £165,000, compared with £105,000 nationally.

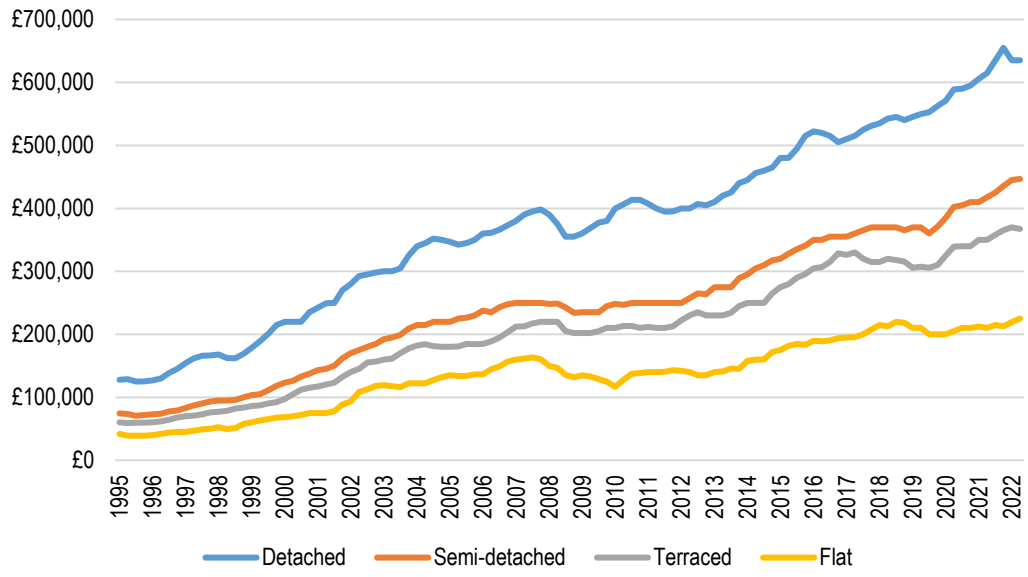
Figure 2.22: Median House Price Change year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2023

	Year ending March 2013	Year ending March 2023	Change	% change
Uttlesford	£300,000	£465,000	£165,000	55.0%
Essex	£207,500	£365,000	£157,500	75.9%
East of England	£195,000	£342,500	£147,500	75.6%
England	£185,000	£290,000	£105,000	56.8%

Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

2.28 Trends in the values of different types of properties in Uttlesford are shown in the figure below. It shows that in the longer-term, the strongest value growth has been for detached properties although all dwelling types have seen increased values. It is also notable that all dwelling types saw a drop in price through the early part of the 2008 recession, but that detached homes look to have been particularly affected by this.

Figure 2.23: Trends in Median Price by Property Type, Uttlesford



Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

2.29 The table below shows data for the last decade (to March 2023) – this shows all house types increasing by a broadly similar percentage, with the percentage increase for semi-detached homes being slightly higher.

Figure 2.24: Median House Price Change year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2023 by dwelling type - Uttlesford

	Year ending March 2013	Year ending March 2023	Change	% change
Detached	£399,995	£635,000	£235,005	58.8%
Semi-detached	£257,500	£446,750	£189,250	73.5%
Terraced	£230,000	£367,500	£137,500	59.8%
Flat	£140,000	£225,000	£85,000	60.7%

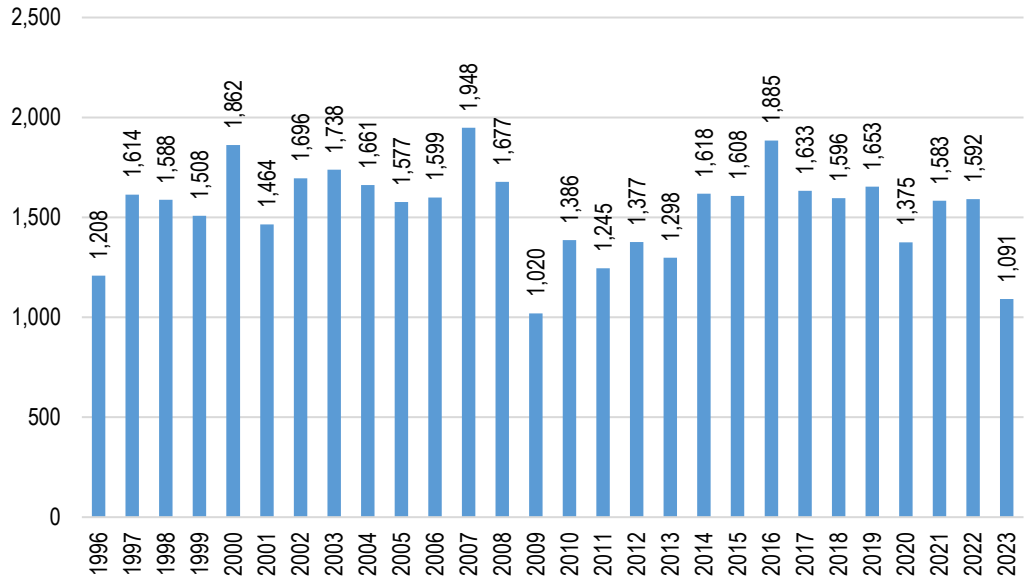
Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

Sales

2.30 Transaction levels (sales) reflect the relative buoyancy of the market and provide an indication of 'effective demand' for market housing. Sales volumes averaged about 1,700 per annum over the 10-year period to 2008. They fell dramatically as a result of the 'credit crunch', before picking up from 2012 onwards as availability of mortgage finance improved and as a result of Government support for the housing market. Sales of market housing in Uttlesford have however generally been trending down since 2016.

2.31 The drop in sales volumes seen since 2016 is likely to have been influenced by the effects of macro-economic uncertainty on the market – linked to Brexit – coupled with changes to mortgage interest relief which have affected the buy-to-let market. The most recent data will also be starting to pick up the impact of the war in Ukraine and associated 'cost of living crisis'.

Figure 2.25: Sales of Market Housing in Uttlesford, 1996-2023 (year to March 2023)



Source: ONS Small Area House Price Statistics

Private Rental Values

2.32 The analysis below reviews current private rents in Uttlesford against the County, regional and national average. The data is drawn from the ONS Private Rental Market Statistics. Median monthly rents vary from £850 for a 1-bedroom homes to approaching £1,500 for 4+-bedroom properties in the District. It should be noted these figures are for all private rents, and not just new tenancies

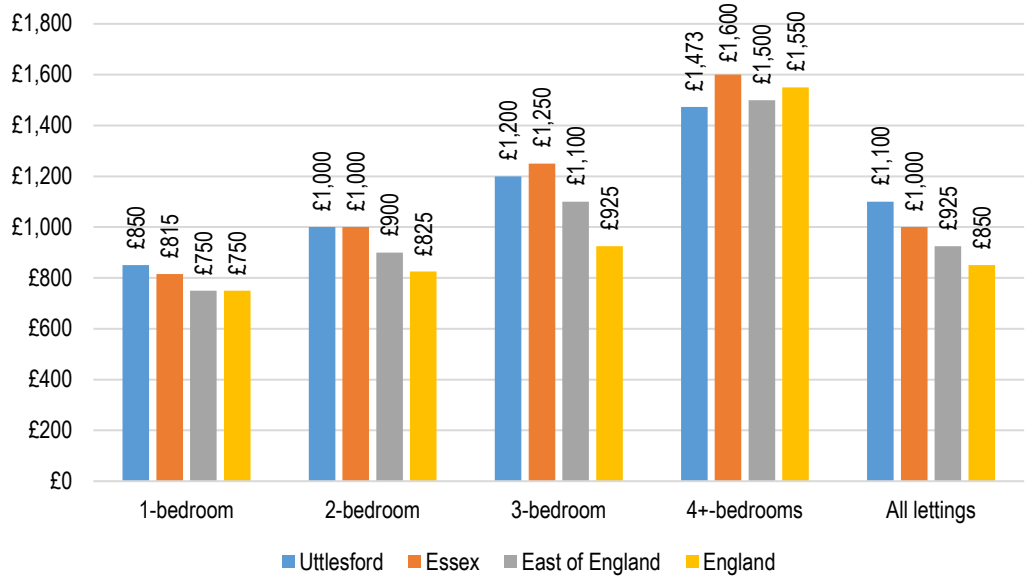
Figure 2.26: Monthly Rents in Uttlesford, Year to September 2023

	Mean	Lower Quartile	Median
1-bedroom	£872	£780	£850
2-bedrooms	£1,041	£925	£1,000
3-bedrooms	£1,225	£1,000	£1,200
4+ bedrooms	£1,593	£1,250	£1,473
All Lettings	£1,176	£925	£1,100

Source: ONS Private Rental Market Statistics

2.33 The median rent for all properties is 10% above the Essex average, 19% higher than the East of England average and 29% above the England average. Rents in Uttlesford for all property sizes are all above the national average. It is however notable that differences between areas for private rents are not a great as for sale prices – analysis earlier showed the average house price in the District to be 60% higher than the national average, compared with private rents being 'just' 29% higher.

Figure 2.27: Median Monthly Rents versus Wider Comparators, Year to September 2023



Source: ONS Private Rental Market Statistics

2.34 Analysis below has also sought to consider rental trends over the last 5 years to provide a relative indication of where there is a supply/demand imbalance. The evidence indicates that over this period rents have grown by an average of 16%. The strongest growth has been for smaller (1- and 2-bedroom) properties with little change shown for larger (4+-bedroom) homes.

Figure 2.28: Median Rental Change in Uttlesford, 2017/18 – 2022/23

	2017/18	2022/23	Change	% Change
1-bedroom	£700	£850	£150	21.4%
2-bedrooms	£850	£1,000	£150	17.6%
3-bedrooms	£1,150	£1,200	£50	4.3%
4+ bedrooms	£1,450	£1,473	£23	1.6%
All Lettings	£950	£1,100	£150	15.8%

Source: ONS Private Rental Market Statistics

2.35 The table below compares changes in overall median private sector rents in Uttlesford with other locations. Interestingly all areas have seen an increase of £150-£160 per month, which means in proportionate terms a slightly lower increase in Uttlesford compared with other locations.

Figure 2.29: Median Rental Change in a range of areas, 2017/18 – 2022/23

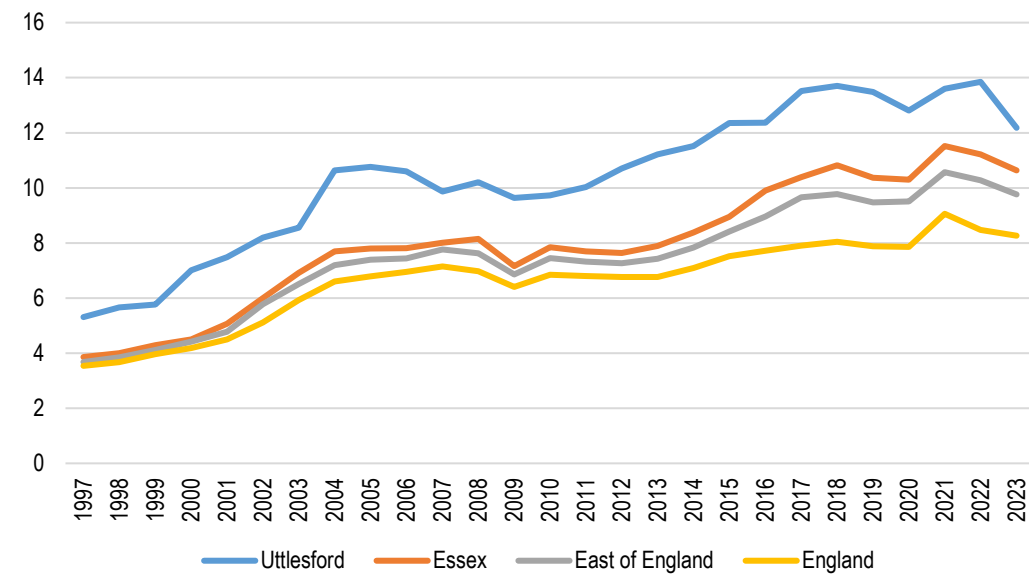
	2017/18	2022/23	Change	% Change
Uttlesford	£950	£1,100	£150	15.8%
Essex	£850	£1,000	£150	17.6%
East of England	£775	£925	£150	19.4%
England	£690	£850	£160	23.2%

Source: ONS Private Rental Market Statistics

Market Affordability

2.36 The figure below shows median workplace-based affordability ratios over time. This is the ratio between median house prices and median earnings of those working in the District. In all areas the affordability ratio has increased between 1997 and 2023, Uttlesford now sees an affordability ratio of 12.18, which is higher than that seen in other locations – the ratio did however drop notably from 2022 to 2023. In terms of trends the Uttlesford and other area figures see a broad alignment although data for Uttlesford can be a bit more variable year-on-year – as the earnings estimates are derived from survey based data they can be prone to fluctuations particularly in smaller areas.

Figure 2.30: Median Affordability Ratio (1997-2023)



Source: ONS, Housing Affordability in England and Wales

Area Profile: Key Messages

- Analysis was carried out to provide background information about population and housing in Uttlesford. Data is compared with local, regional and national data as appropriate. The analysis can be summarised as covering three main topic headings:

  - Demographic baseline (including data on population age structure and changes);
  - Housing stock (including type and tenure); and
  - Housing market (including data on house prices)

- As of mid-2022, the population of Uttlesford is 92,600 and since 2012 the District's population has grown by around 14% which is a much faster rate of growth than across Essex, the East of England region and nationally. The District also saw fast population growth in the 2002-2012 period.

- The age structure of the population is also slightly different to other areas, with fewer people aged in their 20s and 30s, and higher proportions in their 50s. Over the past decade, the District has seen an ageing of the population, with the number of people aged 65 and over increasing by 32%; there have however also been increases in the number of children and people of 'working-age' (taken to be 16-64).

- Population growth in the District is largely driven by internal migration – moves from one part of the UK to another, although there are also modest positive levels of natural change (births minus deaths) and international migration (although international migration was negative between 2017 and 2021).

- ONS dwelling stock data indicates there were 39,000 dwellings in the District as of 2022, a net increase of 5,700 dwellings between 2012 and 2022. As with population growth, rates of change in dwelling numbers have been in excess of that seen in other areas, going back at least until 2001. Although Uttlesford has seen strong growth in the number of dwellings, the actual increase in the 2012-22 period is lower than many other areas – Uttlesford saw the 16th strongest growth of all local authorities in the East of England region and had lower growth than some other Essex authorities (Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring).

- Some 72% of all households in the District are owner-occupiers, notably higher than the national average of 62% (and higher than other benchmark areas), consequently the proportion of households living in the social rented (13%) and private rented (15%) sectors is lower than seen in other locations.

- The housing stock is dominated by detached homes, making up 42% of all dwellings (23% nationally) and related to this the stock is generally larger in nature, with around 38% having 4+-bedrooms. Again linked to this, the District sees high levels of under-occupancy, with nearly half of all households living in homes with at least two spare bedrooms. Levels of overcrowding are very low – at just 1.4% of all households.

- In the year to March 2023 the median house price in Uttlesford was £465,000. This is significantly above the median house price for comparator areas, and is 60% above the national average. Prices have also been increasing significantly, rising by 55% (£165,000) over the decade to March 2023. Over the past five years price rises have been more modest, increasing by 17%. When looking at median prices by property type, Uttlesford also typically sees higher prices for different types of property than Essex, the East of England region and England as a whole.

Area Profile: Key Messages (cont…)

- As well as higher house prices, the District typically sees higher private rental costs, with the median private rent for a 2-bedroom home standing at £1,000 per month in the year to September 2023. Rents overall are around 29% above the national average (compared with 60% when looking at median house prices). Over the past five years rents have increased by around 16%, similar to the increase in house prices over the same period.

- In line with national trends, the affordability ratio in the District has generally increased over time, with the workplace based median affordability ratio in Uttlesford standing at 12.18 in 2023 (although this was a reduction from 13.85 in 2022) – these figures are based on the ratio between median house prices and full-time earnings.

- Overall, the data points to Uttlesford as an affluent area with higher house prices and large proportions of households living in owner-occupied housing. The District also sees a housing mix of larger and detached homes. The analysis points to relatively high levels of housing demand. This can be seen in analysis of house prices and levels of delivery above other areas.

- That said, there are clearly issues suggested by the data. The house price to income ratio is high, pointing to potential difficulties in first-time-buyers (in particular) accessing the market – private rents are also high. At the same time, the relative lack of social rented housing means it will be difficult for the Council to meet affordable housing needs when they arise.

3. Overall Housing Need

Introduction

3.1 This section of the report considers overall housing need set against the framework of Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – specifically the Standard Method for assessing housing need. The section also considers recent demographic trends to test if there are 'exceptional circumstances' that would point to the Standard Method as no longer being reasonable.

3.2 Where projections are discussed in this section, the analysis looks at the 2024-41 period. This is different to the Regulation 18 LHNA draft which looked at a 10-year period (2023-33). The change is to update to the current base year (i.e. 2024) and to roll forward to the end of the currently proposed plan period (to 2041).

Standard Method

3.3 The analysis below considers the level of local housing need for Uttlesford using the Standard Method. The methodology for calculating housing need is clearly set out by Government in Planning Practice Guidance and follows a four-step process worked through in the following sub-sections. We consider first the implications of use of the 2014-based Household Projections, the use of which is required in the Planning Practice Guidance.

Step One: Setting the Baseline

3.4 The first step in considering housing need against the Standard Method is to establish a demographic baseline of household growth. This baseline is drawn from the 2014-based Household Projections and should be the annual average household growth over a ten-year period, with the current year being the first year i.e. 2024 to 2034. This results in growth of 4,822 households (482 per annum) over the ten-year period.

Step Two: Affordability Adjustment

3.5 The second step of the standard method is to consider the application of an uplift on the demographic baseline, to take account of market signals (i.e. relative affordability of housing). The adjustment increases the housing need where house prices are high relative to workplace incomes. It uses the published median affordability ratios from ONS based on workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio for the most recent year for which data is available.

3.6 The latest (workplace-based) affordability data is for 2023 and was published by ONS in March 2024. The Government's Guidance states that for each 1% increase in the ratio of house prices to earnings, above 4, the average household growth should be increased by 6.25%, with the calculation being shown below. For Uttlesford, the ratio for 2023 was 12.18, giving an uplift of 51% - this leads to a housing need of 729 dwellings per annum.

$$Adjustment\ factor = \left(\frac{Local\ affordability\ ratio\ - 4}{4}\right) x\ 0.25 + 1$$

Step Three: The Cap

3.7 The third step of the Standard Method is to consider the application of a cap on any increase and ensure that the figure which arises through the first two steps does not exceed a level which can be delivered. There are two situations where a cap is applied:

- The first is where an authority has reviewed their plan (including developing an assessment of housing need) or adopted a plan within the last five years. In this instance the need may be capped at 40% above the requirement figure set out in the plan.
- The second situation is where plans and evidence are more than five years old. In such circumstances a cap may be applied at 40% of the higher of the projected household growth (step 1) or the housing requirement in the most recent plan, where this exists.

3.8 The last Uttlesford Local Plan dates back to 2005 with a housing target of around 373 dwellings per annum. A cap is therefore applied as 40% above the household growth shown above (as this is higher of the two figures). This gives a housing need of 675 dwellings per annum.

Step Four: Urban Uplift

3.9 The fourth and final step in the calculation means that the 20 largest urban areas in England are subject to a further 35% uplift. This uplift ensures that the Governments stated target of 300,000 dwellings per annum is met and that "homes are built in the right places, to make the most of existing infrastructure, and to allow people to live nearby the service they rely on, making travel patterns more sustainable." (Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 2a-035-20201216). Uttlesford is not listed within the top 20 urban areas in the country and therefore there is no additional uplift.

Standard Method Calculation using 2014-based Household Projections

3.10 The table below works through the Standard Method calculations for the District and shows a need for 675 dwellings per annum.

Figure 3.1: Standard Method Housing Need Calculations using 2014-based Household Projections

	Uttlesford
Households 2024	38,630
Households 2034	43,452
Change in households	4,822
Per annum change	482
Affordability ratio (2023)	12.18
Uplift to household growth	51%
Uncapped need (per annum)	729
Capped need (per annum)	675

Source: Derived from a range of ONS and MHCLG sources

3.11 Although this figure is calculated over a ten-year period from 2024 to 2034, Paragraph 12 of the PPG states that this average household growth and the local housing need arising from it can then *'be applied to the whole plan period'* in calculating housing need. This paragraph also notes the NPPF *'requires strategic policies to look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption'*.

3.12 In Uttlesford the emerging plan is to cover the 2021-41 period and this leads to an overall need for 13,500 dwellings (675×20). In the 2021-24 period, data from the Council shows a total of 1,802 net completions and therefore (in housing need terms) the remaining need is for 11,698 dwellings, at a rate of 688 per annum (2024-41).

Divergence from the Standard Method (Exceptional Circumstances)

3.13 The table above sets out housing need using the Standard Method and whilst this is a relevant consideration Planning Practice Guidance does allow for divergence from these figures (in both an upward and downward direction) where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. An important start point is to understand Government Guidance on this topic. This can be found in Planning Practice Guidance 2a and below are some key quotes for the purposes of this document.

"Is the use of the standard method for strategic policy making purposes mandatory?

No, if it is felt that circumstances warrant an alternative approach but authorities can expect this to be scrutinised more closely at examination. There is an expectation that the standard method will be used and that any other method will be used only in exceptional circumstances." - Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 2a-003-20190220.

"***If authorities use a different method how will this be tested at examination?***

Where an alternative approach results in a lower housing need figure than that identified using the standard method, the strategic policy-making authority will need to demonstrate, using robust evidence, that the figure is based on realistic assumptions of demographic growth and that there are exceptional local circumstances that justify deviating from the standard method. This will be tested at examination. Any method which relies on using household projections more recently published than the 2014-based household projections will not be considered to be following the standard method." - Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 2a-015-20190220 (whole paragraph not replicated).

3.14 Paragraph 2a-010 also sets out circumstances where it might it be appropriate to plan for a higher housing need figure than the standard method indicates; this includes noting that the method *'does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore, there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates'*. In Uttlesford, economic growth potential (increases in jobs) could put pressure on the need to provide housing delivery in excess of the Standard Method, and this is discussed later in this report.

3.15 Regarding demographic trends and projections, the guidance is therefore quite clear: there is an expectation that the 2014-based sub-national household projections (SNHP) should be used but that an alternative approach can be applied where relevant. When using an alternative approach, it is necessary to take account of demographic growth and market signals, but this cannot include using more recent versions of published SNHP. The PPG does not specifically set out examples of exceptional circumstances but it is considered that there are likely to be two main considerations:

- Firstly that demographic data on which projections are based is demonstrably wrong and cannot realistically be used for trend-based projections on which the Standard Method is based; and
- Secondly that demographic trends have changed so much that it is unrealistic to use a set of projections based on information in a trend period to 2014, which is now over 8-years old.

3.16 The analysis below principally focuses on population projections as these are the main driver of household growth. The analysis additionally does not seek to challenge the market signals (affordability) element of the Standard Method.

Data used in 2014-based projections

3.17 On the 22nd March 2018 ONS released revised population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2012 to mid-2016. The main justification ONS listed for this were that improvements had been made to international emigration and foreign armed forces dependents and that the distribution of people aged in their 20s and 30s has changed more than for other age groups.

3.18 By updating previous estimates of population change and migration (including in the period 2011-14) ONS were essentially changing the data used to underpin part of the 2014-based projections. It is therefore worthwhile seeing how significant these changes were for Uttlesford and if updated information point to the 2014-based projections as being substantially wrong.

3.19 The table below shows estimated population in 2014 from the original and revised MYE. For the whole of the Council area the revised population estimate for 2014 is slightly higher than for previous data (data used for the 2014-SNPP). This would suggest the 2014-based projections slightly under-estimated population growth. However, the scale of difference is not at all substantial and would be unlikely to have any notable impact on projections.

Figure 3.2: Original & Revised Estimate of Population in 2014

	Original estimate	Revised estimate	Difference
Uttlesford	84,042	84,066	+24

Source: ONS

More Recent Demographic Trends

3.20 In testing the Standard Method, it is worthwhile studying up-to-date demographic trends in terms of both population and household growth, this can be used to see if the trends are so different from those projected by the 2014-based projections that reliance can no longer be placed on these projections (which have a base date which is now some 10-years old).

Population Estimates

3.21 The analysis below looks at population trends across the District. Two main sources are initially used, these are:

- MYE (unadjusted) – unadjusted ONS mid-year population estimates (MYE) – these are estimates of population made by ONS through its tracking of births, deaths and migration from 2021. This is an important source as the data contained within this data source (notably about migration) is likely to be used by ONS as part of the next round of population projections (2022-based SNPP); and

- MYE (Census adjusted) – these are estimates of population in 2021 that take account of 2021 Census data. Essentially, ONS use the Census (which dates from March 2021) and roll forward to a mid-year estimates based on births, deaths and migration in the 3 month period. The Census adjusted MYE replace the unadjusted figures as the ONS view of population in 2021.

3.22 From these sources there are only two consistent data points (2011 and 2021) – much of the analysis to follow therefore looks at trends in this 10-year period.

3.23 Above it was noted that one exceptional circumstance might be that the 2014-based subnational household projections (SNHP) that underpin the Standard Method are clearly wrong – in this instance we are looking to consider if the trends that have actually occurred are substantially different from those projected back in 2014 and that this is locally exceptional. One way of considering this is to compare data for 2021 with recently published Census data and also MYE data (prior to a Census adjustment). Comparisons are made for both population (as this underpins the household projections) and household estimates.

3.24 The table below shows population figures for 2011 and 2021 from these sources. The data shows the 2014-based projections had projected the population of Uttlesford to reach 92,900 by 2021 and ONS in their monitoring of data had actually estimated a higher population figure (94,700). However, following publication of the 2021 Census, ONS has revised down its estimate of population in 2021 to 91,900, potentially suggesting the 2014-SNPP did over estimate population change.

Figure 3.3: Estimated Population in 2011 and 2021 -range of sources

	2011	2021	Change	% change
2014-based SNPP/SNHP	80,032	92,879	12,847	16.1%
MYE (unadjusted)	80,032	94,731	14,699	18.4%
MYE (Census adjusted)	80,032	91,921	11,889	14.9%

Source: ONS

3.25 Overall, it is however not considered that the difference between sources, including more up-to-date information point to an exceptional circumstance such that the 2014-based projection could be rejected as not showing a realistic level of population change. Whilst the Census shows lower growth from 2011, it is the case that differences are fairly minor, and the Census (as with unadjusted MYE data) does potentially have some degree of error associated with it.

Household Estimates

3.26 In terms of more recent trends, we can also look at household changes as projected in the 2014-SNHP and as now shown by the Census, this is shown in the table below. This shows two very similar figures, with household growth in the two sources only being around 140 different (14 per annum). As with the population change data this does not point to any exceptional circumstance regarding more recent trends.

Figure 3.4: Estimated Households in 2011 and 2021 -range of sources – Uttlesford				
	2011	2021	Change	% change
2014-based SNPP/SNHP	31,569	37,072	5,503	17.4%
Census	31,316	36,960	5,644	18.0%

Source: ONS

ONS admin-based population estimates

3.27 Over the last couple of years ONS has been developing new 'admin based' population estimates with data now available for mid-2021 to mid-2023 – the latter date therefore being since the most recent MYE. It is therefore of interest to look at population estimates from this source, although we would point out that ONS note the following on their website:

'These are official statistics in development because we continue to refine our methods. They do not replace official mid-year population and international migration estimates and should not be used for decision making'.

3.28 The table below shows population estimates from the admin-based data and also the MYE. For 2021-22 the admin-based figures show a very similar population growth to the MYE; but they also include a slightly higher estimated level of growth for the 2022-23 period (of 912 people). This higher figure is still some way below the estimated average growth in the MYE for the last 5-years (an average of just over 1,200 people per annum).

Figure 3.5: ONS admin-based population estimates (2021-23) and comparison with MYE – Uttlesford				
	ONS MYE	Change	ONS admin-based estimate	Change
2021	91,921	-	92,088	-
2022	92,578	657	92,800	712
2023	-	-	93,712	912

Source: ONS

National Population Projections

3.29 A final point to note is that ONS published Interim 2021-based National Population Projections in January 2024 which project population growth to be higher than in recent population projections. However, by 2041 the population is projected to be at a similar level to that set out in the 2014-based National Population Projections.

3.30 The components of change to arrive at a similar population level are however quite different, with the latest national projections including a notably higher level of net migration (long term average of 259,000 compared to 165,000 in the 2014-based release) and much lower levels of natural change. This potentially means more people of working age and fewer older persons (and children). This projection is yet to be translated into subnational figures (i.e. for individual authorities) or for households – however a lower proportion of older people may well see a lower projected household growth than is contained in the 2014-SNHP.

3.31 As noted, data is not yet available for smaller areas, however it is possible to form a view about what the population projection might say for Uttlesford by considering population growth in each of the 2009-14 and 2016-21 periods (noting that ONS typically looks at trends over 5-years when developing projections). Over the 5-year period to 2014 the population of the District was estimated to have increased by around 7,000 people, and for the 5-years to 2021 by around 6,400 people. This does suggest a subnational projection linked to the 2021-based national projections is unlikely to show stronger population (or household) growth than the 2014-based projections.

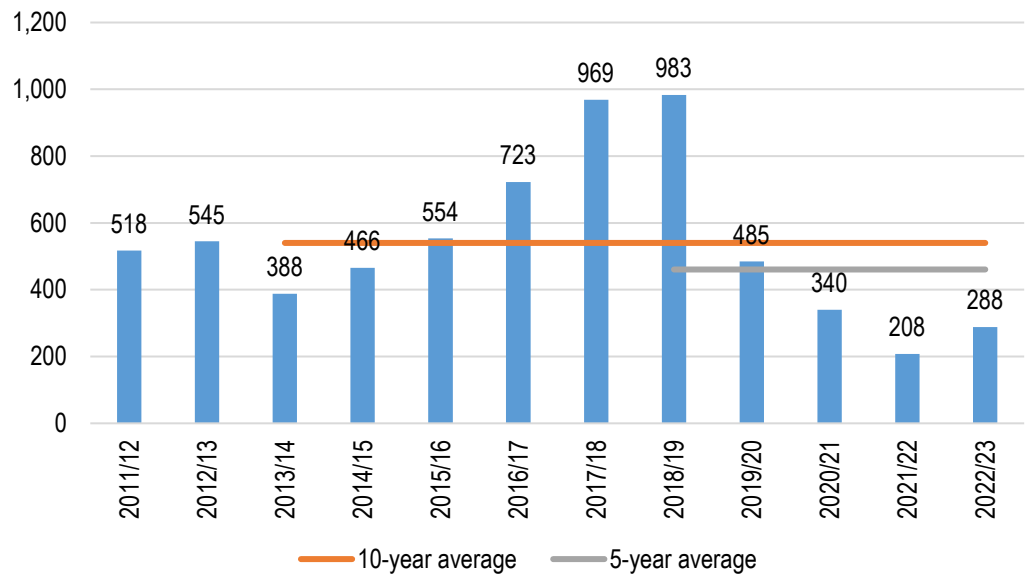
Past build rates

3.32 The final consideration for a housing requirement is looking at past housing delivery. This is a key part of the PPG, which says (2a-010):

'There may, occasionally, also be situations where previous levels of housing delivery in an area, or previous assessments of need (such as a recently-produced Strategic Housing Market Assessment) are significantly greater than the outcome from the standard method… Authorities will need to take this into account when considering whether it is appropriate to plan for a higher level of need than the standard model suggests'

3.33 The figure below shows housing completions over the period from 2011 to 2023 – this shows average completions of 540 per annum over the past decade and a lower figure of 461 per annum over the past 5-years. Generally, these figures would point to a housing need of 675 per annum as being reasonable – supply has not consistently exceeded the Standard Method.

Figure 3.6: Net Completions (2011-23) – Uttlesford



Source: DLUHC (Live Table 122)

Developing a Projection linking to the Standard Method

3.34 The data above suggests the Standard Method in demographic terms is a reasonable number to use in estimating housing need for the District and it is worthwhile looking at how population might change if providing this level of homes. A bespoke projection has been developed, linking to provision of 688 dwellings per annum in the 2024-41 period – this is based on a need for 13,500 homes over the 2021-41 period and removing completions for 2021-24 (1,802 completions). This projection is then used for other analysis in the report (including looking at the mix of housing).

3.35 A scenario has been developed which flexes migration to and from the District such that there is sufficient population for 11,698 additional homes (2024-41 – based on 13,500-1,802). The modelling links to 2018-based population projections (these being the latest available at a subnational level) and also rebases population and households to the levels shown in the 2021 Census. To provide a base population estimate for 2024, data has been drawn from ONS admin-based population estimates which has then been rolled forward by a year based on population assumptions in the 2018-SNPP.

3.36 Within the modelling, migration assumptions have been changed so that across the District the increase in households matches the housing need (including a standard 3% vacancy allowance). Adjustments are made to both in- and out-migration (e.g. if in-migration is increased by 1% then out-migration is reduced by 1%).

3.37 In developing this projection a population increase of around 24,400 people is shown, with population change shown in all broad age bands, but particularly those aged 65 and over. This 'Standard Method' projection does generally follow the trends seen in the 2012-22 period and as discussed previously.

Figure 3.7: Population change 2024 to 2041 by broad age bands – Uttlesford (linked to Standard Method)				
	2024	2041	Change in population	% change from 2024
Under 16	16,856	19,864	3,008	17.8%
16-64	57,421	68,454	11,033	19.2%
65 and over	20,343	30,664	10,321	50.7%
Total	94,621	118,983	24,362	25.7%

Source: Demographic Projections

Relationship Between Housing and Economic Growth

3.38 The analysis to follow considers the relationship between housing and economic growth; seeking to understand what level of jobs might be supported by changes to the local labour supply (which will be influenced by population change). To look at estimates of the job growth to be supported, a series of stages are undertaken. These can be summarised as:

- Estimate changes to the economically active population (this provides an estimate of the change in labour-supply);
- Overlay information about commuting patterns, double jobbing (i.e. the fact that some people have more than one job) and potential changes to unemployment; and
- Bringing together this information will provide an estimate of the potential job growth supported by the population projections.

Growth in Resident Labour Supply

3.39 The approach taken in this report is to derive a series of age and sex specific economic activity rates and use these to estimate how many people in the population will be economically active as projections develop. This is a fairly typical approach with data being drawn in this instance from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) – July 2018 (Fiscal Sustainability Report) – this data has then been rebased to information in the 2021 Census (on age, sex and economic activity).

3.40 The table below shows the assumptions made for the District. The analysis shows that the main changes to economic activity rates are projected to be in the 60-69 age groups – this will to a considerable degree link to changes to pensionable age, as well as general trends in the number of older people working for longer (which in itself is linked to general reductions in pension provision).

Figure 3.8: Projected changes to economic activity rates (2024 and 2041) – Uttlesford						
	Males			Females		
	2024	2041	Change	2024	2041	Change
16-19	37.2%	37.7%	0.5%	35.9%	36.3%	0.4%
20-24	85.5%	85.5%	0.0%	83.1%	83.1%	0.0%
25-29	92.3%	92.3%	0.0%	84.9%	84.9%	0.0%
30-34	94.1%	94.1%	0.0%	84.2%	84.1%	0.0%
35-39	94.1%	94.0%	-0.1%	83.9%	84.8%	0.9%
40-44	94.7%	93.9%	-0.9%	84.5%	86.6%	2.1%
45-49	95.5%	94.3%	-1.2%	83.9%	87.4%	3.5%
50-54	91.6%	91.0%	-0.6%	81.3%	85.1%	3.8%
55-59	86.9%	86.2%	-0.7%	73.4%	75.7%	2.4%
60-64	75.6%	80.3%	4.7%	61.3%	66.6%	5.3%
65-69	43.2%	54.4%	11.3%	29.2%	40.5%	11.4%
70-74	19.8%	22.4%	2.6%	10.6%	16.7%	6.0%
75-89	9.7%	10.0%	0.3%	4.3%	6.8%	2.5%

Source: Based on OBR and Census (2021) data

3.41 Working through an analysis of age and sex specific economic activity rates it is possible to estimate the overall change in the number of economically active people in the District – this is set out in the table below. The analysis shows that the projection linked to the Standard Method results in growth in the economically-active population of 12,300 people – a 25% increase.

Figure 3.9: Estimated change to the economically active population (2024-41) – Uttlesford				
	Economically active (2024)	Economically active (2041)	Total change in economically active	% change
Standard Method	48,810	61,132	12,323	25.2%

Source: Derived from demographic projections

Linking Changes to Resident Labour Supply and Job Growth

3.42 The analysis above has set out potential scenarios for the change in the number of people who are economically active. However, it is arguably more useful to convert this information into an estimate of the number of jobs this would support. The number of jobs and resident workers required to support these jobs will differ depending on three main factors:

- Commuting patterns – where an area sees more people out-commute for work than in-commute it may be the case that a higher level of increase in the economically active population would be required to provide a sufficient workforce for a given number of jobs (and vice versa where there is net in-commuting);
- Double jobbing – some people hold down more than one job and therefore the number of workers required will be slightly lower than the number of jobs; and
- Unemployment – if unemployment were to fall then the growth in the economically active population would not need to be as large as the growth in jobs (and vice versa).

Commuting Patterns

3.43 The table below shows summary data about commuting to and from Uttlesford from the 2011 and 2021 Census. Data from both sources is used as the 2011 data is quite old, but the 2021 data could be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.44 In 2011, the data shows a modest level of net out-commuting for work with the number of people resident in the area who are working being 1.1% higher than the total number who work in the area. In 2021, this pattern looks to have changed to one of a net in-commute with there being around 7.5% more people working in the area than live in the area (and are working). The difference between the numbers living and working in the area are shown as a commuting ratio in the final row of the table and is calculated as the number of people living in an area (and working) divided by the number of people working in the area (regardless of where they live).

3.45 When comparing the two sources it is clear the main difference is a large increase in the number of home workers (or those of no fixed workplace) in 2021 compared with 2011. As the country has moved away from the pandemic, it is possible this figure has started to reduce slightly.

Figure 3.10: Commuting patterns (2011 and 2021) – Uttlesford

	2011	2021
Live and Work in LA	13,006	9,064
Home workers or no fixed workplace	10,028	24,882
In-commute	17,652	15,503
Out-commute	18,110	11,794
Total working in LA	40,686	49,449
Total living in LA and working	41,144	45,740
Commuting Ratio	1.011	0.925

Source: Census 2011, 2021

3.46 In translating the commuting pattern data into growth in the labour-force, a core assumption is that the commuting ratio remains at the same level as shown by the Census (a 2011 and a 2021 scenario). A sensitivity has also been developed where commuting for new jobs is assumed to be on a 1:1 ratio (i.e. the increase in the number of people working in the area is equal to the number of people living in the area who are working).

Double Jobbing

3.47 The analysis also considers that a number of people may have more than one job (double jobbing). This can be calculated as the number of people working in the local authority divided by the number of jobs. Data from the Annual Population Survey (available on the NOMIS website) for the past 5-years (for which data exists) suggests across the District that typically about 6% of workers have a second job.

3.48 For the purposes of this assessment it has therefore been assumed that around 6% of people will have more than one job moving forward – this means the number of jobs supported by the workforce will be around 6% higher than workforce growth. It has been assumed in the analysis that the level of double jobbing will remain constant over time.

Unemployment

3.49 The last analysis when looking at the link between jobs and resident labour supply is a consideration of unemployment. Essentially, this is considering if there is any latent labour force that could move back into employment to take up new jobs. This is particularly important given there is likely to have been notable increases in unemployment due to Covid-19, although it will be difficult to be precise about numbers.

3.50 Given the estimates of economic activity and job growth are taken from 2024 it is considered that there is no need to include a further adjustment to take account of the pandemic. Essentially it is assumed that people who lost employment through the pandemic will now be back in work (where they are seeking work) and so there is no latent labour supply available to fill additional jobs.

Jobs Supported by Growth in the Resident Labour Force

3.51 The table below shows how many additional jobs might be supported by population growth under the Standard Method projection. Given different assumptions about commuting patterns and estimates about double jobbing, it is estimated that between 13,000 and 14,200 additional jobs could be supported by the changes to the resident labour supply over the 2024-41 period.

Figure 3.11: Jobs supported by demographic projections (2024-41)

	Total change in economically active	Allowance for double jobbing	Allowance for net commuting (= jobs supported)
2011 commuting	12,323	13,109	12,963
2021 commuting	12,323	13,109	14,172
1:1 commuting	12,323	13,109	13,109

Source: Derived from a range of sources

Economic Forecasts

3.52 The estimated growth in labour supply and jobs supported can be compared with local economic forecasts with data provided by Iceni Projects as part of work on an Employment Needs Update in September 2023[2].

3.53 From paragraph 4.36 to 4.38 of that report conclusions are drawn about a reasonable level of job growth to plan for – taking account of not just a baseline position but also a number of known planned developments. Over the 2022-41 period, the report concluded that job growth of 10,600 would be reasonable to plan for.

[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6594448f80a3bb000d9d0671/Uttlesford_Employment_Needs_Update_2023_-_Final_Report_checked.pdf

3.54 This figure is below the estimated number of jobs that could be supported by population growth associated with the Standard Method (for a slightly shorter 2024-41 period) and suggests there is no upside to housing numbers due to economic growth.

Overall Housing Need: Key Messages

- The LHNA studied the overall housing need set against the NPPF and the framework of PPG – specifically the Standard Method for assessing housing need. This shows a need for 675 dwellings per annum. This is based on household growth of 482 per annum and a (capped) uplift for affordability of 40%.

- The report has considered whether there are exceptional circumstances to move away from the Standard Method (either in an upward or downward direction). This looked at up-to-date demographic trends and is also mindful of the NPPF December 2023 which sees some strengthening of the encouragement for local authorities to consider exceptional circumstances.

- Firstly the report tested the data used in the 2014-projections as ONS has subsequently revised key trend data for migration. In Uttlesford, the revision were very minor and unlikely to have any notable impact on the projections.

- The report than looks at more recent demographic trends – taking account of 2021 Census data and ONS mid-year population estimates up to 2021, this data was compared with the 2014-based projections. Whilst there were differences between sources, these did not show a clear trend (sources showing both higher and lower population estimates than had previously been projected and this did not point to any exceptional circumstances.

- Data about household growth from the Census also showed a similar pattern to that in the 2014-based projections, again pointing to the projections underpinning the Standard Method as remaining reasonable.

- A final demographic analysis considered more recent trends to 2023 and also the implications of the latest (2021-based) national population projections. Again, neither of these sources pointed to there being anything 'exceptional' in Uttlesford.

- Past build rates were also considered as areas with strong growth might be able to provide more homes than the Standard Method (also high delivery might point to an over-supply of housing). In Uttlesford, whilst delivery has been strong, averaging 540 dwellings per annum over the past decade) it is again not considered that this provides any evidence to suggest a higher or lower figure than the Standard Method.

- Overall, it was therefore concluded in demographic terms that the Standard Method is a reasonable assessment of housing need for Uttlesford (noting the premise of the method itself has not been challenged in this report). The new Local Plan is due to have a plan period of 2021-41 which leads to an overall need for 13,500 dwellings (675×20). Between 2021 and 2024, there were a total of 1,802 net completions, leaving 11,698 to be provided to meet the calculated need (at a rate of 688 per annum).

- On that basis a bespoke demographic projection was developed to look at how the population might change if 688 homes per annum were delivered over the period to 2041 (from 2024). This showed continued strong population growth and an ageing of the population, although notable growth in the number of children and those of 'working-age' is also projected.

- As a final test on exceptional circumstances, the Standard Method projection was used to look at potential changes to the resident labour supply and the number of additional jobs that might be supported. Overall, it was projected the labour supply would increase by around 25% over the 2024-41 period and that this could support around 13,000-14,200 additional jobs – this is higher than the job growth forecast by the 2023 Employment Need Assessment (10,600 additional jobs in the 2022-41 period) and therefore does not point to a need to plan for housing in addition to the Standard Method.

4. Affordable Housing Need

Introduction

4.1 This section provides an assessment of the need for affordable housing in Uttlesford. The analysis specifically considers general needs housing, with further analysis of specialist housing (e.g. for older people) being discussed later in the report.

4.2 The analysis follows the PPG (Sections 2a-018 to 2a-024) and provides two main outputs, linked to Annex 2 of the NPPF – this is firstly an assessment of the need from households unable to buy OR rent housing and secondly from households able to rent but not buy. For convenience these analyses are labelled as a need for 'social/affordable rented housing' and 'affordable home ownership' although in reality it is possible for a home ownership product to fit into the rented category (as long as the price is sufficiently low) or for a rented product (such as rent-to-buy) to be considered as affordable home ownership.

4.3 The analysis also considers First Homes, which looks likely to become a new tenure (potentially replacing other forms of affordable home ownership). Further information about First Homes was set out in a Planning Practice Guidance in May 2021.

Methodology Overview

4.4 The method for studying the need for affordable housing has been enshrined in Government practice guidance for many years, with an established approach to look at the number of households who are unable to afford market housing (to either rent or buy) – it is considered that this group will mainly be a target for rented affordable homes (social/affordable rented) and therefore the analysis looks a need for *'affordable housing for rent'* as set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF. The methodology for looking at the need for rented (social/affordable) housing considers the following:

- **Current affordable housing need**: an estimate of the number of households who have a need now, at the point of the assessment, based on a range of secondary data sources – this figure is then annualised so as to meet the current need over a period of time;
- **Projected newly forming households in need**: using demographic projections to establish gross household formation, and then applying an affordability test to estimate numbers of such households unable to afford market housing;
- **Existing households falling into need**: based on studying past trends in the types of households who have accessed social/affordable rented housing; and
- **Supply of affordable housing**: an estimate of the likely number of lettings that will become available from the existing social/affordable housing stock.

4.5 The first three bullet points above are added together to identify a gross need, from which the supply of relets of existing properties is subtracted to identify a net annual need for additional affordable housing. For the purposes of this assessment, this analysis is used to identify the overall (net) need for social/affordable rented housing.

4.6 This approach has traditionally been used to consider the needs of households who have not been able to afford market housing (either to buy or to rent). As the income necessary to afford to rent homes without financial support is typically lower than that needed to buy, the ability of households to afford private rents has influenced whether or not they are in need of affordable housing.

4.7 The NPPF and associated guidance has expanded the definition of those in affordable housing need to include households who might be able to rent without financial support but who aspire to own a home, and require support to do so. The PPG includes households that "*cannot afford their own homes, either to rent, or to own, where that is their aspiration*" as having an affordable housing need.

4.8 This widened definition has been introduced by national Government to support increased access to home ownership, given evidence of declining home ownership and growth in private renting over the last 20 years or so. The PPG does not however provide specific guidance on how the needs of such households should be assessed and so this study adopts a broadly consistent methodology to that identified in the PPG, and consider a current need; a newly-arising need on an annual basis; existing households falling into need; and an annual estimate of supply.

4.9 The analysis of affordable housing need is therefore structured to consider the need for rented affordable housing, and separately the need for affordable home ownership. The overall need is expressed as an annual figure, which can then be compared with likely future delivery (as required by 2a-024).

4.10 Whilst the need for social/affordable rented housing and affordable home ownership are analysed separately, there are a number of pieces of information that are common to both assessments. In particular, this includes an understanding of local housing costs, incomes and affordability. The sections below therefore look at these factors.

Local Prices and Rents

4.11 An important part of the affordable needs model is to establish the entry-level costs of housing to buy and rent. The affordable housing needs assessment compares prices and rents with the incomes of households to establish what proportion of households can meet their needs in the market, and what proportion require support and are thus defined as having an 'affordable housing need'. For the purposes of establishing affordable housing need, the analysis focuses on overall housing costs (for all dwelling types and sizes).

4.12 The analysis below considers the entry-level costs of housing to both buy and rent across the District. The approach has been to analyse a range of sources, including Land Registry and ONS data along with an internet search of homes available in the market to establish lower quartile prices and rents. Using a lower quartile figure is consistent with the PPG and reflects the entry-level point into the market recognising that the very cheapest properties may be of sub-standard quality.

4.13 Data from the Land Registry for the year to March 2024 shows estimated lower quartile property prices by dwelling type. The data shows that entry-level costs to buy are estimated to start from about £160,000 for a second-hand flat and rising to £480,000 for a detached home. Looking at the lower quartile price across all dwelling types, the analysis shows a lower quartile price of £335,000 – all figures have been rounded to the nearest £5,000. The figures are all based on cost of existing homes in the market although newbuild prices are considered later in this section when looking at potential costs of affordable home ownership properties.

Figure 4.1: Estimated lower quartile cost of housing to buy by type (existing dwellings) – year to March 2024 – Uttlesford	
	Lower quartile price
Flat/maisonette	£160,000
Terraced	£310,000
Semi-detached	£365,000
Detached	£480,000
All dwellings	£335,000

Source: Land Registry

4.14 It is also useful to provide estimates of property prices by the number of bedrooms in a home. Analysis for this draws together Land Registry data with an internet search of prices of homes for sale (using sites such as Rightmove). The analysis suggests a lower quartile price of about £160,000 for a 1-bedroom home, rising to £495,000 for homes with 4-bedrooms.

Figure 4.2: Current estimated lower quartile cost of housing to buy by size (existing dwellings) – Uttlesford	
	Lower quartile price
1-bedroom	£160,000
2-bedrooms	£260,000
3-bedrooms	£370,000
4-bedrooms	£495,000
All Dwellings	£335,000

Source: Land Registry and Internet Price Search

4.15 A similar analysis has been carried out for private rents. For this, reference has been made to Office for National statistics (ONS) data (which covers a 12-month period to September 2023) supplemented by a review of available properties through an internet search – these latter figures provide an indication of current costs to access the market, whereas the ONS data includes existing tenancies which may be at a lower rent. The analysis shows an average lower quartile cost (across all dwelling sizes) of £1,025 per month.

Figure 4.3: Current estimated lower quartile market rents – Uttlesford	
	Lower Quartile rent, pcm
1-bedroom	£850
2-bedrooms	£1,100
3-bedrooms	£1,400
4-bedrooms	£1,900
All properties	£1,025

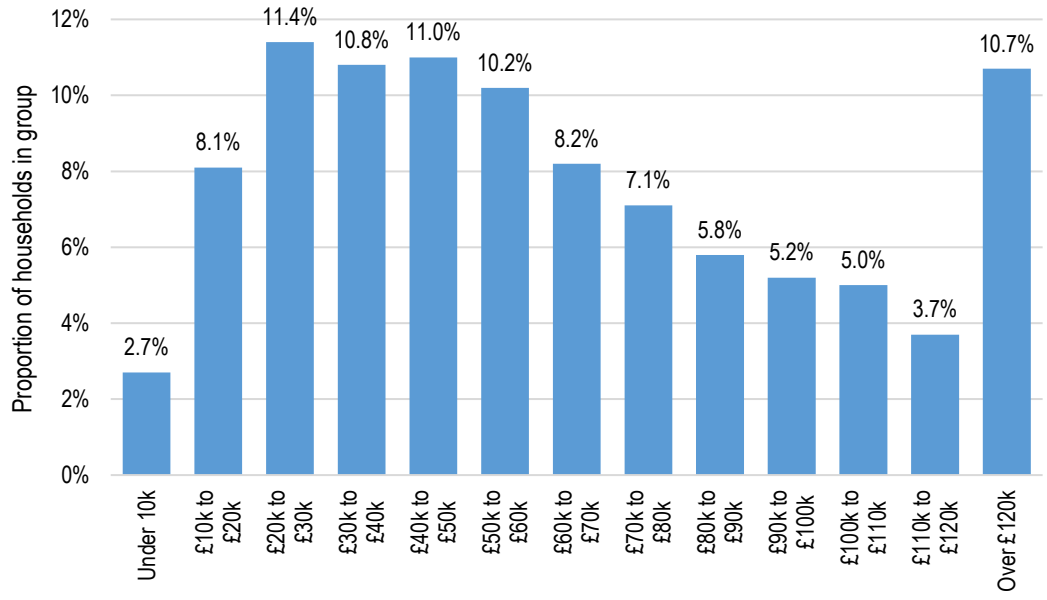
Source: Housing Market Survey

Household Incomes

4.16 Following on from the assessment of local prices and rents it is important to understand local income levels as these (along with the price/rent data) will determine levels of affordability (i.e. the ability of a household to afford to buy or rent housing in the market without the need for some sort of subsidy). Data about total household income has been based on ONS modelled income estimates updated to a 2023 base using data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). Additional data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) has been used to provide information about the distribution of incomes.

4.17 Drawing this data together an income distribution for the whole District has been constructed for 2023. The figure below shows that just under a quarter of households have incomes below £30,000 with a further fifth in the range of £30,000 to £50,000. Overall, the average (mean) income is estimated to be around £65,000, with a median income of £55,900; the lower quartile income of all households is estimated to be £32,500.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of household income (2023) – Uttlesford



Source: Derived from a range of data

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Affordability Thresholds

4.18 To assess affordability two different measures are used; firstly to consider what income levels are likely to be needed to access private rented housing (this establishes those households in need of social/affordable rented housing) and secondly to consider what income level is needed to access owner occupation (this, along with the first test helps to identify households in the 'gap' between renting and buying). This analysis therefore brings together the data on household incomes with the estimated incomes required to access private sector housing. Additionally, different affordability tests are applied to different parts of the analysis depending on the group being studied (e.g. recognising that newly forming households are likely on average to have lower incomes than existing households).

4.19 A household is considered able to afford market rented housing in cases where the rent payable would constitute no more than a particular percentage of gross income. The choice of an appropriate threshold is an important aspect of the analysis – the PPG does not provide any guidance on this issue. CLG SHMA guidance prepared in 2007 suggested that 25% of income is a reasonable start point, it also noted that a different figure could be used. Analysis of current letting practice suggests that letting agents typically work on a multiple of 40%. Government policy (through Housing Benefit payment thresholds) would also suggest a figure of 40%+ (depending on household characteristics).

4.20 Lower quartile rent levels in Uttlesford are typically higher than average in comparison to other locations (ONS data points to a lower quartile rent of £925 in existing tenancies, compared with £750 across the East of England region and £650 nationally. This would suggest that a proportion of income to be spent on housing could be higher than the bottom end of the range (the range starting from 25%). On balance, it is considered that a threshold of 30% is reasonable in a local context, to afford a £1,025 pcm rent would imply a gross household income of about £41,000 (and in net terms the rent would likely be around 40% of income).

4.21 In reality, many households may well spend a higher proportion of their income on housing and therefore would have less money for other living costs – for the purposes of this assessment these households would essentially be assumed as ideally having some form of subsidised rent so as to ensure a sufficient level of residual income.

4.22 Generally, the income required to access owner-occupied housing is higher than that required to rent and so the analysis of the need for social/affordable rented housing is based on the ability to afford to access private rented housing. However, local house prices (and affordability) are important when looking at the need for affordable home ownership.

4.23 For the purposes of this assessment, the income thresholds for owner-occupation assume a household has a 10% deposit and can secure a mortgage for four and a half times their salary. These assumptions are considered to be broadly in line with typical lending practices although it is recognised that there will be differences on a case by case basis.

4.24 The table below shows the estimated incomes required to both buy and rent (privately). This shows a notable 'gap' across the District. The information in the table below is taken forward into further analysis in this section to look at affordable needs for different types of housing.

Figure 4.5: Estimated Household Income Required to Buy and Privately Rent			
	To buy	To rent (privately)	Income gap
Uttlesford	£67,000	£41,000	£26,000

Source: Based on Housing Market Cost Analysis

Need for Social/Affordable Rented Housing

4.25 The sections below work through the various stages of analysis to estimate the need for social/affordable housing in the District. Final figures are provided as an annual need (including an allowance to deal with current need). As per 2a-024 of the PPG, this figure can then be compared with likely delivery of affordable housing.

Current Need

4.26 In line with PPG paragraph 2a-020, the current need for affordable housing has been based on considering the likely number of households with one or more housing problems. The table below sets out the categories in the PPG and the sources of data being used to establish numbers. The PPG also includes a category where households cannot afford to own despite it being their aspiration – this category is considered separately in this report (under the title of the need for affordable home ownership).

Figure 4.6: Main Sources for Assessing the Current Need for Affordable Housing		
	Source	Notes
Homeless households (and those in temporary accommodation	MHCLG Statutory Homelessness data	Household in temporary accommodation at end of quarter.
Households in overcrowded housing[3]	2021 Census table RM099	Analysis undertaken by tenure
Concealed households[4]	2021 Census table RM009	Number of concealed families
Existing affordable housing tenants in need	Modelled data linking to past survey analysis	Excludes overcrowded households
Households from other tenures in need	Modelled data linking to past survey analysis	

Source: PPG [2a-020]

4.27 It should be noted that there may be some overlap between categories (such as overcrowding and concealed households, whereby the overcrowding would be remedied if the concealed household moved). The data available does not enable analysis to be undertaken to study the impact of this and so it is possible that the figures presented include an element of double counting (although this is likely to be small). Additionally, some of the concealed households may be older people who have moved back in with their families and might not be considered as in need.

[3] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2199
[4] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2109

4.28 The table below sets out the categories in the PPG and estimates of the number of households within each need category. This shows an estimated need from around 1,860 households. The data draws on a number of sources, including the 2021 Census.

Figure 4.7: Estimated housing need by category of household		
	Households	% of households
Concealed/homeless household	502	27.0%
Households in overcrowded housing	524	28.2%
Existing affordable housing tenants in need	105	5.6%
Households from other tenures in need	729	39.2%
TOTAL	1,859	100.0%

Source: Derived from a range of sources

4.29 In taking this estimate forward, the data modelling next estimates the need by tenure and considers affordability. The affordability in different groups is based on estimates of how incomes are likely to vary, for owner-occupiers there is a further assumption about potential equity levels. For homeless and concealed households it is assumed incomes will be low and households unlikely to be able to afford to rent privately. The table below shows just over half of those households identified above are unlikely to be able to afford market housing to buy OR rent and therefore there is a current need from 1,014 households.

Figure 4.8: Estimated housing need and affordability by tenure			
	Number in need	% unable to afford	Current need after affordability
Owner-occupied	471	4.0%	19
Affordable housing	349	79.4%	277
Private rented	538	40.2%	216
No housing (homeless/concealed)	502	100.0%	502
TOTAL	1,859	54.5%	1,014

Source: Derived from a range of sources

4.30 Finally, from these estimates, households living in affordable housing are excluded (as these households would release a dwelling on moving and so no net need for affordable housing will arise). The total current need is therefore estimated to be 737 – this estimate can be compared with data from the Council's Housing Register, which at April 2023 had a total of 1,328 applicants of which 538 were considered to be in a reasonable preference category (i.e. having more acute needs).

4.31 For the purposes of analysis, it is assumed that the local authority would seek to meet this need over a period of time. Given that this report typically looks at needs in the period from 2024-41, the need is annualised by dividing by 17 (to give an annual need for 43 dwellings). This does not mean that some households would be expected to wait 17-years for housing as the need is likely to be dynamic, with households leaving the current need as they are housed but with other households developing a need over time.

Newly-Forming Households

4.32 The number of newly forming households has been estimated through demographic modelling with an affordability test also being applied. This has been undertaken by considering the changes in households in specific 5-year age bands relative to numbers in the age band below, 5 years previously, to provide an estimate of gross household formation.

4.33 The number of newly-forming households is limited to households forming who are aged under 45 – this is consistent with CLG guidance (from 2007) which notes after age 45 that headship (household formation) rates 'plateau'. There may be a small number of household formations beyond age 45 (e.g. due to relationship breakdown) although the number is expected to be fairly small when compared with formation of younger households.

4.34 In assessing the ability of newly forming households to afford market housing, data has been drawn from the English Housing Survey and also previous housing needs surveys undertaken nationally by JGC. This establishes that the average income of newly forming households is typically around 84% of the equivalent figure for all households – this figure is remarkably consistent across areas and therefore reasonable to use for the data modelling in Uttlesford.

4.35 The analysis has therefore adjusted the overall household income data to reflect the lower average income for newly forming households. The adjustments have been made by changing the distribution of income by bands such that average income level is 84% of the all household average. In doing this it is possible to calculate the proportion of households unable to afford market housing. For the purposes of the need for social/affordable rented housing this will relate to households unable to afford to buy OR rent in the market.

4.36 The assessment suggests overall that around two-fifths of newly forming households will be unable to afford market housing (to rent privately) and this equates a total of 298 newly forming households will have a need per annum on average across the District.

Figure 4.9: Estimated Need for Social/Affordable Rented Housing from Newly Forming Households (per annum)

	Number of new households	% unable to afford	Annual newly forming households unable to afford to rent
Uttlesford	697	42.7%	298

Source: Projection Modelling/Affordability Analysis

Existing Households Falling into Affordable Housing Need

4.37 The second element of newly arising need is existing households falling into need. To assess this, information about past lettings in social/affordable rented has been used. The assessment looked at households who have been housed in general needs housing over the past three years – this group will represent the flow of households onto the Housing Register over this period. From this, newly forming households (e.g. those currently living with family) have been discounted as well as households who have transferred from another social/affordable rented property. Data has been drawn from a number of sources, including Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) and Continuous Recording of Sales and Lettings (CoRe).

4.38 In the absence of any guidance in the PPG, this method for assessing existing households falling into need is consistent with the 2007 SHMA guide which says on page 46 that *'Partnerships should estimate the number of existing households falling into need each year by looking at recent trends. This should include households who have entered the housing register and been housed within the year as well as households housed outside of the register (such as priority homeless household applicants)'*. Following the analysis through suggests a need arising from 52 existing households each year across the District.

Supply of Social/Affordable Rented Housing Through Relets

4.39 The future supply of affordable housing through relets is the flow of affordable housing arising from the existing stock that is available to meet future need. This focusses on the annual supply of social/affordable rent relets.

4.40 The Practice Guidance suggests that the estimate of likely future relets from the social rented stock should be based on past trend data which can be taken as a prediction for the future. Information from a range of sources (LAHS and CoRe) has been used to establish past patterns of social housing turnover. The figures are for general needs lettings but exclude lettings of new properties and also exclude an estimate of the number of transfers from other social rented homes. These exclusions are made to ensure that the figures presented reflect relets from the existing stock.

4.41 On the basis of past trend data is has been estimated that 106 units of social/affordable rented housing are likely to become available each year moving forward for occupation by households in need.

Figure 4.10: Analysis of Past Social/Affordable Rented Housing Supply, 2020/21 – 2022/23 (average per annum) – Uttlesford

	Total Lettings	% as Non-New Build	Lettings in Existing Stock	% Non-Transfers	Lettings to New Tenants
2020/21	212	83.0%	176	50.0%	88
2021/22	225	92.4%	208	55.6%	116
2022/23	304	71.4%	217	53.0%	115
Average	247	81.1%	200	52.9%	106

Source: LAHS/CoRe

4.42 The PPG model also includes the bringing back of vacant homes into use and the pipeline of affordable housing as part of the supply calculation. These have however not been included within the modelling in this report. Firstly, there is no evidence of any substantial stock of vacant homes (over and above a level that might be expected to allow movement in the stock). Secondly, with the pipeline supply, it is not considered appropriate to include this as to net off new housing would be to fail to show the full extent of the need, although in monitoring it will be important to net off these dwellings as they are completed.

Net Need for Social/Affordable Housing

4.43 The table below shows the overall calculation of affordable housing need. The analysis shows that there is a need for 287 dwellings per annum across the area. The net need is calculated as follows:

Net Need = Current Need (allowance for) + Need from Newly-Forming Households + Existing Households falling into Need – Supply of Affordable Housing

Figure 4.11: Estimated Need for Social/Affordable Rented Housing (per annum)

	Per annum
Current need	43
Newly forming house-holds	298
Existing house-holds falling into need	52
Total Gross Need	393
Relet Supply	106
Net Need	287

Source: Derived from a range of sources

The Relationship Between Affordable Need and Overall Housing Numbers

4.44 The PPG encourages local authorities to consider increasing planned housing numbers where this can help to meet the identified affordable need. Specifically, the wording of the PPG [2a-024] states:

'The total affordable housing need can then be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, given the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by market housing led developments. An increase in the total housing figures included in the strategic plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes'

4.45 However, the relationship between affordable housing need and overall housing need is complex. This was recognised in the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Technical Advice Note of July 2015. PAS conclude that there is no arithmetical way of combining the OAN (calculated through demographic projections) and the affordable need. There are a number of reasons why the two cannot be 'arithmetically' linked.

4.46 Firstly, the modelling contains a category in the projection of *'existing households falling into need'*; these households already have accommodation and hence if they were to move to alternative accommodation, they would release a dwelling for use by another household – there is no net need to provide additional homes. The modelling also contains *'newly forming households'*; these households are a direct output from the demographic modelling and are therefore already included in the overall housing need figures.

4.47 This just leaves the *'current need'*; much of this group will be similar to the existing households already described (in that they are already living in accommodation) although it is possible that a number will be households without housing (mainly concealed households) – these households are not included in the demographic modelling and so are arguably an additional need, although uplifts for market signals/affordability (as included in the Government's Standard Method) would be expected to deal with such households.

4.48 The analysis estimates an annual need for 287 rented affordable homes, which is notionally 42% of a Local Housing Need of 688 dwellings per annum (as calculated using the Standard Method for the 2024-41 period). However, as noted, caution should be exercised in trying to make a direct link between affordable need and planned delivery, with the key point being that many of those households picked up as having a need will already be living in housing and so providing an affordable option does not lead to an overall net increase in the need for housing (as they would vacate a home to be used by someone else).

4.49 It is possible to investigate this is some more detail by re-running the model and excluding those already living in accommodation. This is shown in the table below which identifies that meeting these needs would lead to an affordable need for 221 homes per annum across the District – notionally 32% of the Standard Method. This figure is theoretical and should not be seen to be minimising the need (which is clearly acute). It does however serve to show that there is a substantial difference in the figures when looking at overall housing shortages.

4.50 The analysis is arguably even more complex than this – it can be observed that the main group of households in need are newly forming households. These households are already included within demographic projections and so the demonstrating of a need for this group again should not be seen as over and above any need derived through the normal process of looking at need. Indeed, only the 30 per annum (current need) is in addition to demographic projections and this scale of uplift will already have been included in figures when moving from a demographic start point to an estimate of housing need using the Standard Method.

Figure 4.12: Estimated Need for Affordable Housing (social/affordable rented) excluding households already in accommodation – Uttlesford		
	Including existing households	Excluding existing households
Current need	43	30
Newly forming households	298	298
Existing households falling into need	52	0
Total Gross Need	393	327
Re-let Supply	106	106
Net Need	287	221

Source: Derived from a range of sources

4.51 Additionally, it should be noted that the need estimate is on a per annum basis and should not be multiplied by the plan period to get a total need. Essentially, the estimates are for the number of households who would be expected to have a need in any given year (i.e. needing to spend more than 30% of income on housing). In reality, some (possibly many) households would see their circumstances change over time such that they would 'fall out of need' and this is not accounted for in the analysis. One example would be a newly forming household with an income level that means they spend more than 30% of income on housing, as the household's income rises they would potentially pass the affordability test and therefore not have an affordable need. Additionally, there is the likelihood when looking over the longer-term that a newly-forming household will become an existing household in need and would be counted twice if trying to multiply the figures out for a whole plan period.

4.52 The discussion above has already noted that the need for affordable housing does not generally lead to a need to increase overall provision (with the exception of potentially providing housing for concealed households although this should be picked up as part of an affordability uplift). It is however worth briefly thinking about how affordable need works in practice and the housing available to those unable to access market housing without Housing Benefit. In particular, the role played by the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in providing housing for households who require financial support in meeting their housing needs should be recognised.

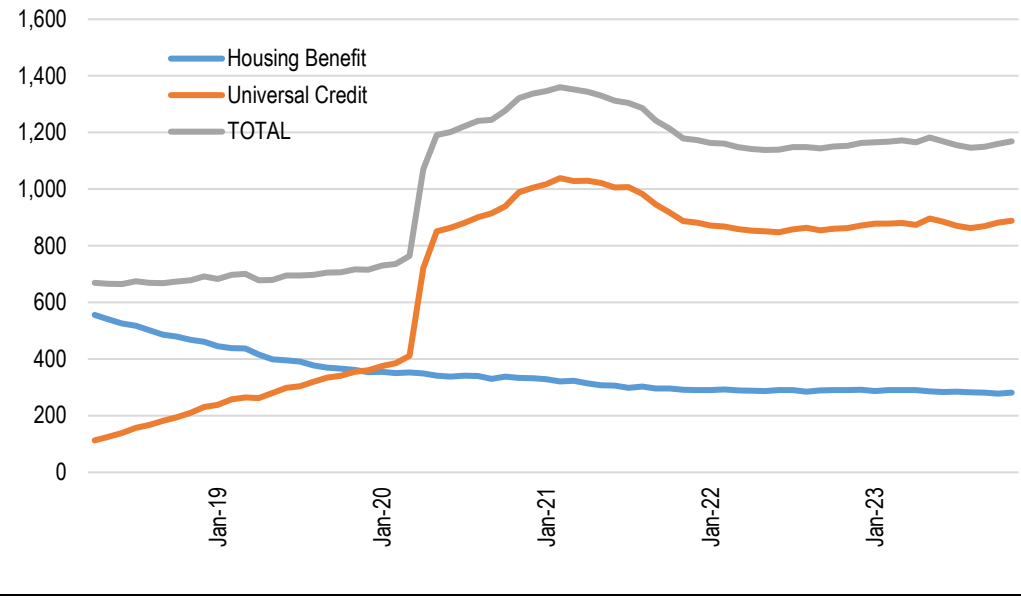
4.53 Whilst the Private Rented Sector (PRS) does not fall within the types of affordable housing set out in the NPPF (other than affordable private rent which is a specific tenure separate from the main 'full market' PRS), it has evidently been playing a role in meeting the needs of households who require financial support in meeting their housing need. Government recognises this, and indeed legislated through the 2011 Localism Act to allow Councils to discharge their "homelessness duty" through providing an offer of a suitable property in the PRS.

4.54 It is also worth reflecting on the NPPF (Annex 2) definition of affordable housing. This says: *'Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market'* [emphasis added]. Clearly where a household is able to access suitable housing in the private rented sector (with or without Housing Benefit) it is the case that these needs are being met by the market (as within the NPPF definition). As such the role played by the private rented sector should be recognised – it is evidently part of the functioning housing market.

4.55 Data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has been used to look at the number of Housing Benefit supported private rented homes. As of November 2023, it is estimated that there were around 1,170 benefit claimants in the private rented sector in Uttlesford. From this, it is clear that the PRS contributes to the wider delivery of 'affordable homes' with the support of benefit claims, and further complicates any attempts to find a relationship between affordable need and overall housing need.

4.56 The figure below shows the trend in the number of claimants in the District. This shows there has been a notable increase since March 2020, which is likely to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, even the more historical data shows a substantial number of households claiming benefit support for their housing in the private sector (typically around 700 households).

Figure 4.13: Number of Housing Benefit claimants in the private rented sector – Uttlesford



Source: Department of Work and Pensions

4.57 Whilst housing delivery through the Local Plan can be expected to secure additional affordable housing it needs to be noted that delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations is an important, but not the only means, of delivery affordable housing; and the Council should also work with housing providers to secure funding to support enhanced affordable housing delivery on some sites and through use of its own land assets.

4.58 Overall, it is difficult to link the need for affordable housing to the overall housing need; indeed, there is no justification for trying to make the link. Put simply the two do not measure the same thing and interpreting the affordable need figure consideration needs to be given to the fact that many households already live in housing, and do not therefore generate an overall net need for an additional home. Further issues arise as the need for affordable housing is complex and additionally the extent of concealed and homeless households needs to be understood as well as the role played by the private rented sector.

4.59 Regardless of the discussion above, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue across the District. It does however need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided. As noted previously, the evidence does however suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise.

4.60 Finally, whilst there is no direct link between the affordable need and overall housing need, it is the case that the levels of affordable need across areas can feed into considerations about the distribution of housing for different locations, along with an understanding of demographic trends and economic growth.

Split Between Social and Affordable Rented Housing

4.61 The analysis above has studied the overall need for social and affordable rented housing with a focus on households who cannot afford to rent in the market. These households will therefore have a need for some form of rented housing at a cost below typical market rates. Typically, there are two main types of rented affordable accommodation (social and affordable rented) with the analysis below initially considering what a reasonable split might be between these two tenures.

4.62 The table below shows current rent levels in the District for a range of products along with relevant local housing allowance (LHA) rates. Uttlesford is split across a number of Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) for the purposes of LHA, with the main ones being Cambridge (which includes Saffron Walden) and Harlow & Stortford (which includes Great Dunmow).

4.63 Data about average social and affordable rents has been taken from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and this is compared with lower quartile market rents. This analysis shows that social rents are lower than affordable rents; the analysis also shows that affordable rents are notably lower than lower quartile market rents.

4.64 The LHA rates for virtually all sizes of home are below lower quartile market rents. This does mean that households seeking accommodation in many locations may struggle to secure sufficient benefits to cover their rent (even where they can find a landlord willing to accept benefit tenants).

Figure 4.14: Comparison of rent levels for different products – Uttlesford

	Social rent	Affordable rent (AR)	Lower quartile (LQ) market rent	LHA (Cambridge)	LHA (Harlow & Stortford)
1-bedroom	£404	£610	£850	£898	£808
2-bedrooms	£464	£758	£1,100	£947	£1,022
3-bedrooms	£517	£889	£1,400	£1,122	£1,207
4-bedrooms	£580	£1,095	£1,900	£1,446	£1,371
All	£480	£756	£1,025	-	-

Source: RSH, market survey and VOA

4.65 To some extent it is easier to consider the data above in terms of the percentage one housing cost is of another and this is shown in the table below. Caution should be exercised when looking at the overall averages as these will be influenced by the profile of stock in each category and so the discussion focusses on 2-bedroom homes (this is the main stock size held by Affordable Housing Providers, 42% of social rented housing and 49% of affordable rents). This shows that social rents are significantly cheaper than market rents (and indeed affordable rents) but that affordable rents (as currently charged) represent 69% of a current lower quartile rent.

Figure 4.15: Difference between rent levels for different products – Uttlesford			
	Social rent as % of affordable rent	Social rent as % of LQ market rent	Affordable rent as % of LQ market rent
1-bedroom	66%	48%	72%
2-bedrooms	61%	42%	69%
3-bedrooms	58%	37%	63%
4-bedrooms	53%	31%	58%
All	63%	47%	74%

Source: RSH, market survey and VOA

4.66 The table below suggests that around 14% of households who cannot afford to rent privately could afford an affordable rent at 80% of market rents, with a further 5% being able to afford current affordable rents. There are also an estimated 31% who can afford a social rent (but not an affordable one). A total of 49% of households would need some degree of benefit support (or spend more than 30% of income on housing) to be able to afford their housing (regardless of the tenure). This analysis points to a clear need for social rented housing.

Figure 4.16: Estimated need for affordable rented housing (% of households able to afford)	
	% of households able to afford
Afford 80% of market rent	14%
Afford current affordable rent	5%
Afford social rent	31%
Need benefit support	49%
All unable to afford market	100%

Source: Affordability analysis

4.67 The analysis indicates that provision of around 80% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified; albeit in setting planning policies, this will need to be considered alongside viability evidence. Higher provision at social rents will reduce the support through housing benefits required to ensure households can afford their housing costs.

Establishing a Need for Affordable Home Ownership

4.68 The Planning Practice Guidance confirms a widening definition of those to be considered as in affordable need; now including *'households which can afford to rent in the private rental market, but cannot afford to buy despite a preference for owning their own home'*. However, at the time of writing, there is no guidance about how the number of such households should be measured.

4.69 The methodology used in this report therefore draws on the current methodology, and includes an assessment of current needs, and projected need (newly forming and existing households). The key difference is that in looking at affordability an estimate of the number of households in the 'gap' between buying and renting is used. There is also the issue of establishing an estimate of the supply of affordable home ownership homes – this is considered separately below.

4.70 The analysis has been developed in the context of First Homes with the Government proposing that 25% of all affordable housing secured through developer contributions should be within this tenure. A definition of First Homes (from the relevant PPG (70-001)) can be found later in this document.

Gross Need for Affordable Home Ownership

4.71 The first part of the analysis seeks to understand what the gap between renting and buying actually means in the District – in particular establishing the typical incomes that might be required. The information about incomes required to both buy and rent in different locations has already been provided earlier in this section and so the discussion below is a broad example.

4.72 Using the income distributions developed (as set out earlier in this section) along with data about price and rents, it has been estimated that of all households living in the private rented sector, around 33% already have sufficient income to buy a lower quartile home, with 27% falling in the rent/buy 'gap'. The final 40% are estimated to have an income below which they cannot afford to rent privately (i.e. would need to spend more than the calculated threshold of their income on housing costs) although in reality it should be noted that many households will spend a higher proportion of their income on housing.

4.73 These figures have been based on an assumption that incomes in the private rented sector are around 88% of the equivalent figure for all households (a proportion derived from the English Housing Survey) and are used as it is clear that affordable home ownership products are likely to be targeted at households living in or who might be expected to access this sector (e.g. newly forming households).

Figure 4.17: Estimated proportion of households living in Private Rented Sector able to buy and/or rent market housing

	Can afford to buy OR rent	Can afford to rent but not buy	Cannot afford to buy OR rent
Uttlesford	33%	27%	40%

Source: Derived from Housing Market Cost Analysis and Affordability Testing

4.74 The finding that a proportion of households in the private rented sector are likely to have an income that would allow them to buy a home is also noteworthy and suggests for some households, barriers to accessing owner-occupation are less about income/the cost of housing and more about other factors (which could for example include the lack of a deposit or difficulties obtaining a mortgage (for example due to a poor credit rating or insecure employment)). However, some households will choose to privately rent, for example as it is a more flexible option that may be more suitable for a particular household's life stage (e.g. if moving locations with employment).

4.75 In terms of the potential for deposits to be a barrier to home ownership it needs to be remembered the analysis in this report does not specifically factor in deposits due to good local information not typically being available; however, the English Housing Survey (2021-22) did collect data on savings (nationally) and this showed that 22% of owners, 48% of households in the private rented sector and 74% of social tenants did not have any savings. Access to deposits will therefore be a potential barrier to accessing housing for some households

4.76 To study current need, an estimate of the number of household living in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) has been established, with the same (rent/buy gap) affordability test (as described above) then applied. The start point is the number of households living in private rented accommodation; as of the 2021 Census there were some 5,375 households living in the sector across the District.

4.77 Additional data from the EHS suggests that 60% of all PRS households expect to become an owner at some point (3,225 households if applied to Uttlesford) and of these some 40% (1,290 households) would expect this to happen in the next 2-years. These figures are taken as the number of households potentially with a current need for affordable home ownership before any affordability testing.

4.78 As noted above, on the basis of income it is estimated that around 27% of the private rented sector sit in the gap between renting and buying (varying by location). Applying this proportion to the above figures would suggest a current need for around 346 affordable home ownership units (20 per annum if annualised over the 2024-41 period).

4.79 In projecting forward, the analysis can consider newly forming households and also the remaining existing households who expect to become owners further into the future. Applying the same affordability test (albeit on a very slightly different income assumption for newly forming households) suggests an annual need from these two groups of around 216 dwellings (185 from newly forming households and 31 from existing households in the private rented sector).

4.80 Bringing together the above analysis suggests that there is a need for around 236 affordable home ownership homes (priced for households able to afford to rent but not buy) per annum across the District. This is before any assessment of the potential supply of housing is considered.

Figure 4.18: Estimated Gross Need for Affordable Home Ownership (per annum)

	Current need	Newly forming households	Existing households falling into need	Total Gross Need
Uttlesford	20	185	31	236

Source: Derived from a range of sources

Potential Supply of Housing to Meet the Affordable Home Ownership Need and Net Need

4.81 As with the need for social/affordable rented housing, it is also necessary to consider if there is any supply of affordable home ownership products from the existing stock of housing. As with assessing the need for affordable home ownership, it is the case that at present the PPG does not include any suggestions about how the supply of housing to meet these needs should be calculated.

4.82 One source is likely to be resales of low cost home ownership products with data from the Regulator of Social Housing showing a total stock in 2023 of 617 homes. If these homes were to turnover at the same rate seen for the social housing stock then they would be expected to generate around 15 resales each year. These properties would be available for these households and can be included as the potential supply.

4.83 In addition, it should be noted that the analysis looks at households unable to afford a lower quartile property price. By definition, a quarter of all homes sold will be priced at or below a lower quartile level. According to the Land Registry, in Uttlesford there were a total of 1,019 resales (i.e. excluding newly-built homes) in the last year (year to March 2023, based on ONS small area house price data) and therefore around 255 would be priced below the lower quartile.

4.84 It is then possible to provide a best estimate of the supply of lower quartile homes that are bought by the target group of households (assumed to be first-time buyers). Whilst dated, a report by Bramley and Wilcox in 2010 (Evaluating requirements for market and affordable housing) noted that around 40% of first-time buyer with a mortgage buy at or below the lower quartile[5]. Other recent data suggests that first time buyers account for around half of home purchase loans[6] with a total of around 65% of all homes being bought with a loan (35% as cash buyers[7]).

4.85 Bringing this together would point to 32.5% of homes being bought by first-time buyers and around 13% of all homes being a lower quartile home bought by a first-time buyer (32.5% × 40%) – this would point to around half of all lower quartile sales as being to first-time buyers (as half of 25% is 12.5%). Therefore, for the purposes of estimating a 'need' half of all lower quartile sales are included in the supply.

4.86 We can therefore now provide three supply estimates which can be considered in the context of the estimated need. These are:

- Only count the supply from affordable home ownership resales (15 per annum);
- Include the supply from affordable home ownership and half of resales of lower quartile homes (142 per annum (127+15)); and
- Include the supply from affordable home ownership and all resales of lower quartile homes (270 per annum (255+15)).

4.87 The table below shows the estimated net need from applying these three supply scenarios. Only including the resales of AHO shows a need for 221 dwellings per annum and this reduces to 94 if 50% of lower quartile sales are included. If all lower quartile sales are included in the supply, then there a modest surplus need for affordable home ownership. Overall, the analysis shows it is difficult to conclude what the need for affordable home ownership is.

[5] https://thinkhouse.org.uk/site/assets/files/1614/2010_20nhpau_202.pdf
[6] https://www.mortgagesolutions.co.uk/news/2022/01/24/first-time-buyer-numbers-rose-to-nearly-410000-in-2021/#:~:text=First%2Dtime%20buyers%20accounted%20for,39%20per%20cent%20in%202009
[7] https://www.ft.com/content/e0ad2830-094f-4e61-acaa-d77457e2edbb

Figure 4.19: Estimated Net Need for Affordable Home Ownership (per annum)			
	AHO resales only	AHO resales plus 50% of LQ sales	AHO resales plus 100% of LQ sales
Total gross need	236	236	236
LCHO supply	15	142	270
Net need	221	94	-34

Source: Derived from a range of sources

Different Home Ownership Products

4.88 Given the analysis above, it would be reasonable to conclude that there is a need to provide housing under the definition of 'affordable home ownership' – although it is difficult to fully quantify this 'need' and the analysis below focusses on the cost of discounted market sale (which would include First Homes) to make them genuinely affordable before moving on to consider shared ownership (in this case suggestions are made about the equity shares likely to be affordable and whether these shares are likely to be offered).

4.89 The table below sets out a suggested purchase price for affordable home ownership/First Homes in Uttlesford by size. It works through first (on the left hand side) what households with an affordable home ownership need could afford (based on a 10% deposit and a mortgage at 4.5 times' income). The right-hand side of the table then sets out what Open Market Value (OMV) this might support, based on a 30% discount. The lower end of the range is based on households who could afford to rent privately without financial support at LQ rents; with the upper end based on the midpoint between this and the lower quartile house price.

4.90 Focussing on 2-bedroom homes, it is suggested that an affordable price is between £220,000 and £240,000 and therefore the open market value of homes would need to be in the range of £314,300 and £342,900 (if discounted by 30%). For 3-bedroom homes the affordable price is in the range of £280,000 and £325,000 – given the £250,000 price cap on First Homes, this data suggests it might be very difficult to make First Homes genuinely affordable in a local context for homes with more than 2-bedrooms.

Figure 4.20: Affordable home ownership prices – Uttlesford		
	What households with an affordable home ownership need could afford	Open Market Value (OMV) of Home with 30% Discount
1-bedroom	£160,000	£228,600
2-bedrooms	£220,000-£240,000	£314,300-£342,900
3-bedrooms	£280,000-£325,000	£400,000-£464,300
4+-bedrooms	£380,000-£437,500	£542,900-£625,000

Source: Derived from market survey data

4.91 It is difficult to definitively analyse the cost of newbuild homes as these will vary from site-to-site and will be dependent on a range of factors such as location, built-form and plot size. We have however looked at newbuild schemes currently advertised on Rightmove with the table below providing a general summary of existing schemes.

4.92 This analysis is interesting as it shows the median newbuild price for all sizes of homes is above the top end of the OMV required to make homes affordable to those in the gap between buying and renting (with the exception of 1-bedroom homes although the sample of newbuild was very limited (only one development). That said, homes at the bottom end of the price range could potentially be discounted by 30% and considered as affordable for some sizes.

4.93 This analysis shows how important it will be to know the OMV of housing before discount to be able to determine if a product is going to be genuinely affordable in a local context – providing a discount of 30% will not automatically mean it becomes affordable housing. Overall, it is considered the evidence does not support central Government's position that 25% of affordable housing should be provided as First Homes in a local context.

Figure 4.21: Estimated newbuild housing cost by size – Uttlesford

	No. of homes advertised	Range of prices	Median price
1-bedroom	4	£200,000	£200,000
2-bedrooms	11	£365,000-£490,000	£400,000
3-bedrooms	59	£400,000-£1,150,000	£520,000
4+-bedrooms	123	£525,000-£1,600,000	£685,000

Source: Derived from market survey data

4.94 The analysis below moves on to consider shared ownership, for this analysis an assessment of monthly outgoings has been undertaken with a core assumption being that the outgoings should be the same as for renting privately so as to make this tenure genuinely affordable. The analysis has looked at what the OMV would need to be for a shared ownership to be affordable with a 25% and 50% share.

4.95 The findings for this analysis are interesting and do point to the possibility of shared ownership being a more affordable tenure than discounted market housing (including First Homes). That said, even with 25% equity shares the OMVs needing to be achieved are below the median newbuild prices shown above for all dwelling sizes (other than 1-bedroom).

Figure 4.22: Estimated OMV of Shared Ownership with a 50% and 25% Equity Share by Size – Uttlesford

	50% share	25% share
1-bedroom	£241,000	£292,000
2-bedroom	£312,000	£378,000
3-bedroom	£398,000	£482,000
4-bedrooms	£540,000	£654,000

Source: Derived from market survey data

4.96 A further affordable option is Rent to Buy; this is a Government scheme designed to ease the transition from renting to buying the same home. Initially (typically for five years) the newly built home will be provided at the equivalent of an affordable rent (approximately 20% below the market rate). The expectation is that the discount provided in that first five years is saved in order to put towards a deposit on the purchase of the same property. Rent to Buy can be advantageous for some households as it allows for a smaller 'step' to be taken on to the home ownership ladder.

4.97 At the end of the five-year period, depending on the scheme, the property is either sold as a shared ownership product or to be purchased outright as a full market property. If the occupant is not able to do either of these then the property is vacated.

4.98 In order to access this tenure, it effectively requires the same income threshold for the initial phase as a market rental property although the cost of accommodation will be that of affordable rent. The lower-than-market rent will allow the household to save for a deposit for the eventual shared ownership or market property. In considering the affordability of rent-to-buy schemes there is a direct read across to the income required to access affordable home ownership (including shared ownership). It should therefore be treated as part of the affordable home ownership products suggested by the NPPF.

Implications of the Analysis

4.99 Given the analysis above, there may be a case to conclude that there is a need to provide housing under the definition of 'affordable home ownership' – although this conclusion is largely based on only considering supply from resales of affordable housing. If supply estimates are expanded to include market housing for sale below a lower quartile price then the need for AHO is less clear-cut. Regardless, the analysis is clear of much greater needs for rented forms of affordable housing.

4.100 Regardless, it does seem that there are many households in Uttlesford who are being excluded from the owner-occupied sector (although they can afford private rented housing). This can be seen by analysis of tenure change, which saw the number of households living in private rented accommodation increasing by 31% from 2011 to 2021 (following a much higher increase in the 2001-11 period. Over the same period (2011-21), the number of owners with a mortgage increased by a more modest 10%. That said, some households will choose to privately rent, for example as it is a more flexible option that may be more suitable for a particular household's life stage (e.g. if moving locations with employment).

4.101 On this basis, and as previously noted, it seems likely in Uttlesford that access to owner-occupation is being restricted by access to capital (e.g. for deposits, stamp duty, legal costs) as well as potentially some mortgage restrictions (e.g. where employment is temporary) rather than simply being due to the cost of housing to buy (although this will be a factor).

4.102 The NPPF gives a clear direction that 10% of all new housing (on larger sites) should be for affordable home ownership (in other words, if 20% of homes were to be affordable then half would be affordable home ownership) and it is now the case that policy compliant planning applications would be expected to deliver a minimum of 25% affordable housing as First Homes (as a proportion of the total affordable housing), with Councils being able to specify the requirement for any remaining affordable housing (subject to at least 10% of all housing being for AHO).

4.103 Firstly regarding the 10%, it is not clear that this is the best solution in the District. The NPPF does provide some examples of where the 10% might not be required (paragraph 65), most notably that the 10% would be expected unless this would *'significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups'*. In Uttlesford, the clear need for additional rented housing would arguably mean that providing the affordable home ownership would 'prejudice the ability' to meet the needs of the 'specific group' requiring rented accommodation.

4.104 Regarding the 25% of affordable housing as First Homes, it is not clear whether there is any scope to challenge the 'minimum of 25%', nor what role other tenures of affordable home ownership (such as shared ownership) might play. It is possible that provision of First Homes could squeeze out other forms of LCHO such as shared ownership, although it is likely that there will still be a role for this type of housing given typically lower deposit requirements.

4.105 Whilst there are clearly many households in the gap between renting and buying, they in some cases will be able to afford homes below lower quartile housing costs. That said, it is important to recognise that some households will have insufficient savings to be able to afford to buy a home on the open market (particularly in terms of the ability to afford a deposit) and low-cost home ownership homes – and shared ownership homes in particular – will therefore continue to play a role in supporting some households.

4.106 The evidence points to a clear and acute need for rented affordable housing for lower income households, and it is important that a supply of rented affordable housing is maintained to meet the needs of this group including those to which the authorities have a statutory housing duty. Such housing is notably cheaper than that available in the open market and can be accessed by many more households (some of whom may be supported by benefit payments).

4.107 There may also be a role for AHO on any 100% affordable housing schemes that may come forward (as well as through Section 106). Including a mix of both rented and intermediate homes to buy would make such schemes more viable, as well as enabling a range of tenures and therefore potential client groups to access housing.

4.108 In addition, it should also be noted that the finding of a 'need' for affordable home ownership does not have any impact on the overall need for housing. It seems clear that this group of households is simply a case of seeking to move households from one tenure to another (in this case from private renting to owner-occupation); there is therefore no net change in the total number of households, or the number of homes required.

Affordable Housing Need: Key Messages

- Analysis has been undertaken to estimate the annual need for affordable housing. The analysis is split between a need for social/affordable rented accommodation (based on households unable to buy OR rent in the market) and the need for affordable home ownership (AHO) – this includes housing for those who can afford to rent privately but cannot afford to buy a home.

- The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. Additionally, when looking at rented needs, consideration is given to estimates of the supply of social/affordable rented housing. For AHO, consideration is given to the potential supply of resales of low-cost home ownership properties (such as shared ownership) and lower quartile sales of existing homes.

- When looking at needs from households unable to buy OR rent, the analysis suggests a need for 287 affordable homes per annum across the District.

- Despite the level of need being high in relation to the Standard Method, it is not considered that this points to any requirement for the Council to increase the Local Plan housing requirement due to affordable needs. The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex and in trying to make a link it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home) – indeed removing households from the modelling who are already in accommodation reduces the need to 221 per annum. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity.

- The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit. It is however clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes.

- When looking at AHO products, the analysis is inconclusive about the scale of the need, although the evidence does suggest that there are many households in Uttlesford who are being excluded from the owner-occupied sector (as evidenced by increases in the size of the private rented sector). It is likely that a key issue in the District is about access to capital (e.g. for deposits, stamp duty, legal costs) as well as potentially mortgage restrictions (e.g. where employment is temporary) rather than simply the cost of housing to buy.

- The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each will have a role to play – shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent.

- However, given the cost of housing locally, it seems very difficult for affordable home ownership products to be provided and be considered as 'genuinely affordable'. This again points to the need for the Council to prioritise delivery of rented affordable housing where possible.

- In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues (recognising for example that providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options).

Affordable Housing Need: Key Messages (cont…)

- Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area. It does however need to be stressed that this report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided. The evidence does however suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise.

5. Housing Mix

Introduction

5.1 This section considers the appropriate mix of housing across Uttlesford, with a particular focus on the sizes of homes required in different tenure groups. This section looks at a range of statistics in relation to families (generally described as households with dependent children) before moving on to look at how the number of households in different age groups are projected to change moving forward.

Background Data

5.2 The number of families in Uttlesford (defined for the purpose of this assessment as any household which contains at least one dependent child) totalled 11,600 as of the 2021 Census, accounting for 31% of households; this proportion is slightly higher than seen in other areas and within this group a higher proportion of married couple households can be observed.

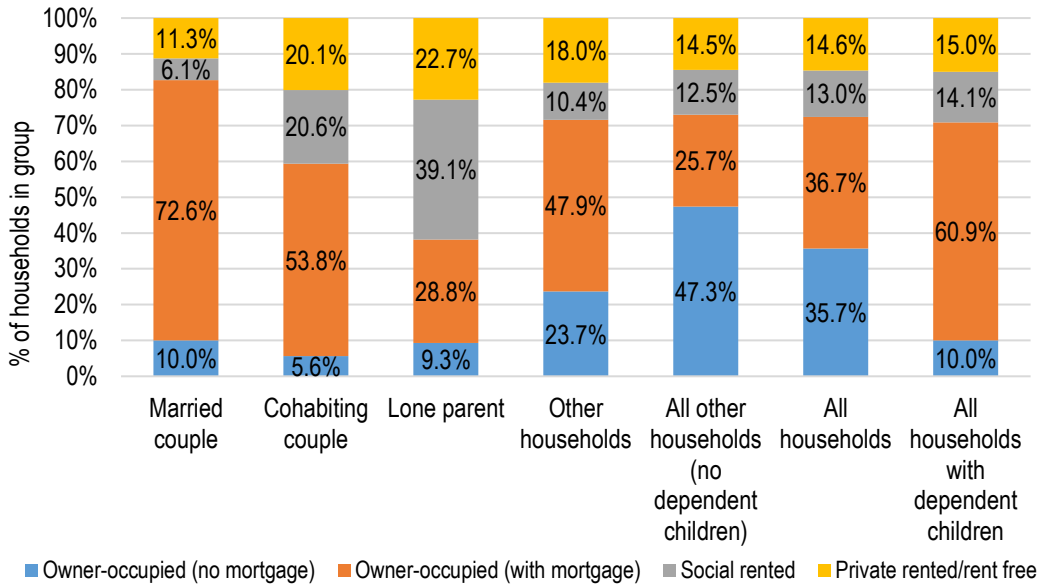
Figure 5.1: Households with dependent children (2021)

	Uttlesford		Essex	East of England	England
	No.	%	%	%	%
Married couple	7,158	19.4%	15.3%	14.4%	15.5%
Cohabiting couple	1,786	4.8%	5.0%	4.5%	4.8%
Lone parent	1,948	5.3%	6.4%	6.9%	6.3%
Other households	677	1.8%	2.2%	2.7%	2.4%
All other households	25,391	68.7%	71.1%	71.5%	71.0%
Total	36,960	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total with dependent children	11,569	31.3%	28.9%	28.5%	29.0%

Source: Census (2021)

5.3 The figure below shows the current tenure of households with dependent children – data again from the 2021 Census. There are some considerable differences by household type with lone parents having a very high proportion living in the social rented sector and also in private rented accommodation. In Uttlesford, only 38% of lone parent households are owner-occupiers compared with 83% of married couples with children.

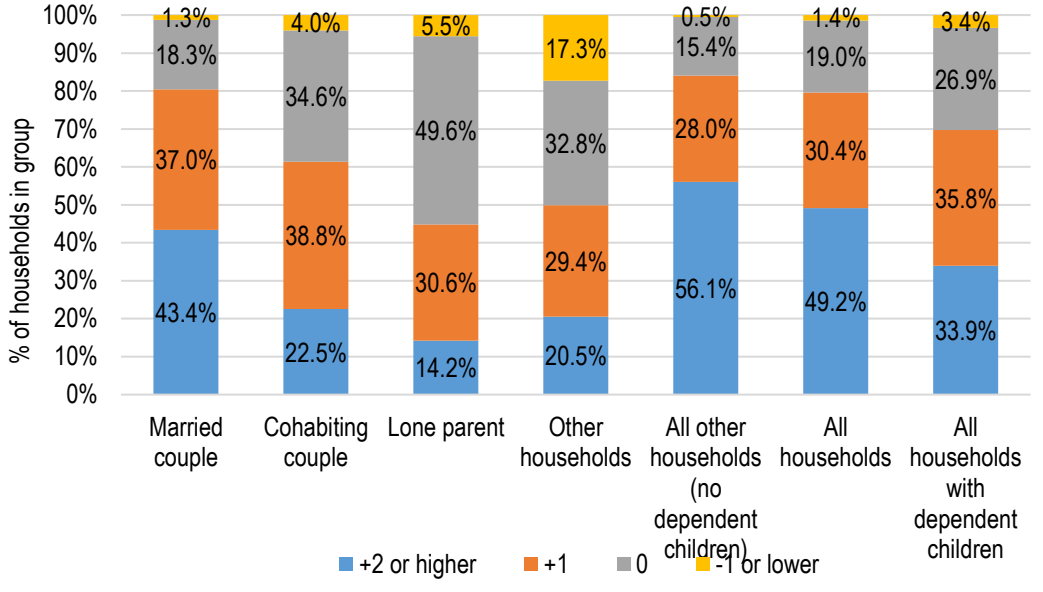
Figure 5.2: Tenure of households with dependent children (2021) – Uttlesford



Source: Census (2021)

5.4 The figure below shows levels of overcrowding and under-occupancy of households with dependent children. This shows higher levels of overcrowding for all household types with dependent children, with 6% of all lone parents and 17% of 'other' households being overcrowded. Overall, some 3.4% of households with dependent children are overcrowded, compared with 0.5% of other households. Levels of under-occupancy are also notably lower in households with dependent children.

Figure 5.3: Occupancy rating of households with dependent children (2021) – Uttlesford



Source: Census (2021)

The Mix of Housing

5.5 A model has been developed that starts with the current profile of housing in terms of size (bedrooms) and tenure. Within the data, information is available about the age of households and the typical sizes of homes they occupy. By using demographic projections linked to the local housing need calculated though the standard method, it is possible to see which age groups are expected to change in number, and by how much.

5.6 On the assumption that occupancy patterns for each age group (within each tenure) remain the same, it is therefore possible to assess the profile of housing needed is over the assessment period to 2041 (from 2024).

5.7 An important starting point is to understand the current balance of housing in the area – the table below profiles the sizes of homes in different tenure groups across areas. The data shows a market stock (owner-occupied) that is dominated by 3+-bedroom homes (making up 83% of the total in this tenure group, a notably higher proportion to that seen in other locations). The profile of the social rented sector is broadly similar across areas as is the private rented sector (again a slightly larger mix in Uttlesford in both sectors). Observations about the current mix feed into conclusions about future mix later in this section.

Figure 5.4: Number of Bedrooms by Tenure, 2021

		Uttlesford	Essex	East region	England
Owner-occupied	1-bedroom	3%	4%	4%	4%
	2-bedrooms	14%	21%	20%	21%
	3-bedrooms	35%	41%	44%	46%
	4+-bedrooms	48%	33%	32%	29%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	3.29	3.03	3.05	3.01
Social rented	1-bedroom	25%	32%	29%	29%
	2-bedrooms	39%	34%	35%	36%
	3-bedrooms	33%	30%	32%	31%
	4+-bedrooms	3%	4%	4%	4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	2.14	2.07	2.11	2.10
Private rented	1-bedroom	17%	21%	21%	21%
	2-bedrooms	35%	41%	38%	39%
	3-bedrooms	33%	29%	30%	29%
	4+-bedrooms	15%	10%	11%	11%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Ave. no. beds	2.46	2.28	2.31	2.30

Source: Census (2021)

Overview of Methodology

5.8 The method to consider future housing mix looks at the ages of the Household Reference Persons and how these are projected to change over time. The sub-sections to follow describe some of the key analysis.

Understanding How Households Occupy Homes

5.9 Whilst the demographic projections provide a good indication of how the population and household structure will develop, it is not a simple task to convert the net increase in the number of households into a suggested profile for additional housing to be provided. The main reason for this is that in the market sector, households are able to buy or rent any size of property (subject to what they can afford) and therefore knowledge of the profile of households in an area does not directly transfer into the sizes of property to be provided.

5.10 The size of housing which households occupy relates more to their wealth and age than the number of people they contain. For example, there is no reason why a single person cannot buy (or choose to live in) a 4-bedroom home as long as they can afford it, and hence projecting an increase in single person households does not automatically translate into a need for smaller units.

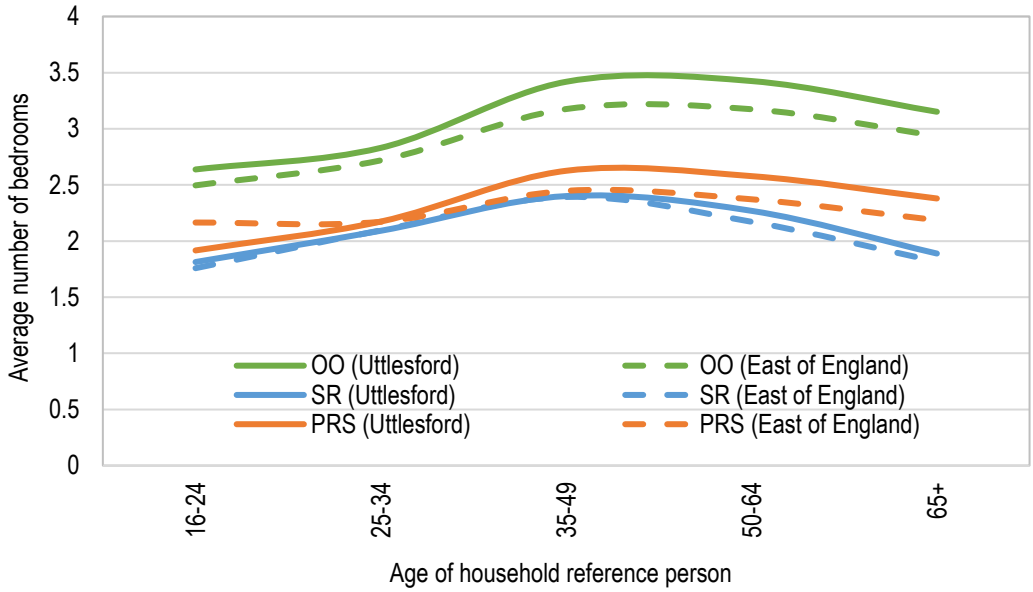
5.11 That said, issues of supply can also impact occupancy patterns, for example it may be that a supply of additional smaller bungalows (say 2-bedrooms) would encourage older people to downsize but in the absence of such accommodation these households remain living in their larger accommodation.

5.12 The issue of choice is less relevant in the affordable sector (particularly since the introduction of the social sector size criteria) where households are allocated properties which reflect the size of the household, although there will still be some level of under-occupation moving forward with regard to older person and working households who may be able to under-occupy housing (e.g. those who can afford to pay the spare room subsidy ('bedroom tax')).

5.13 The approach used is to interrogate information derived in the projections about the number of household reference persons (HRPs) in each age group and apply this to the profile of housing within these groups (data being drawn from the 2021 Census).

5.14 The figure below shows an estimate of how the average number of bedrooms varies by different ages of HRP and broad tenure group for Uttlesford and the East of England region. In the owner-occupied sector the average size of accommodation rises over time to typically reach a peak around the age of 50; a similar pattern (but with smaller dwelling sizes and an earlier peak) is seen in both the social and private rented sector. After peaking, the average dwelling size decreases – as typically some households downsize as they get older. The analysis identifies some differences between Uttlesford and the region with dwellings in Uttlesford typically being larger, although the pattern of average dwelling sizes by age of HRP are similar in both areas.

Figure 5.5: Average Bedrooms by Age and Tenure in Uttlesford and the East of England



Source: Census (2021)

5.15 The analysis uses the existing occupancy patterns at a local and regional level as a start point for analysis and applies these to the projected changes in Household Reference Person by age discussed below. The analysis has been used to derive outputs for three broad categories. These are.

- **Market Housing** – which is taken to follow the occupancy profiles in the owner-occupied sector;
- **Affordable Home Ownership** – which is taken to follow the occupancy profile in the private rented sector (this is seen as reasonable as the Government's desired growth in home ownership looks to be largely driven by a wish to see households move out of private renting); and
- **Rented Affordable Housing** – which is taken to follow the occupancy profile in the social rented sector. The affordable sector in the analysis to follow would include social and affordable rented housing.

Changes to Households by Age

5.16 The table below presents the projected change in households by age of household reference person, this shows growth as being expected in all age groups and in particular older age groups. The number of households headed by someone aged 50-64 is however projected to see a more modest increase over the period studied. The analysis is aligned to the current standard method need.

Figure 5.6: Projected Change in Household by Age of HRP in Uttlesford – linking to Standard Method – 688 dwellings per annum (2024-41))				
	2024	2041	Change in Households	% Change
Under 25	391	513	122	31.0%
25-34	3,581	4,711	1,130	31.5%
35-49	9,843	11,731	1,888	19.2%
50-64	12,171	13,689	1,518	12.5%
65-74	5,571	7,806	2,236	40.1%
75-84	5,190	7,669	2,479	47.8%
85+	2,115	4,101	1,986	93.9%
Total	38,863	50,220	11,358	29.2%

Source: Demographic Projections

Initial Modelled Outputs

5.17 By following the methodology set out above and drawing on the sources shown, a series of outputs have been derived to consider the likely size requirement of housing within each of the three broad tenures at a local authority level. The analysis is based on considering both local and regional occupancy patterns. The data linking to local occupancy will to some extent reflect the role and function of the local area, whilst the regional data will help to establish any particular gaps (or relative surpluses) of different sizes/tenures of homes when considered in a wider context.

5.18 The analysis for rented affordable housing can also draw on data from the local authority Housing Register with regards to the profile of need. The data shows a pattern of need which is focussed on 1- and 2-bedroom homes but around a fifth of households as requiring 3+-bedroom accommodation – it should be noted the table below excludes cases where bedroom requirement information was not available.

Figure 5.7: Size of Social/Affordable Rented Housing Needed – Housing Register Information		
	Number of households	% of households
1-bedroom	657	51%
2-bedrooms	368	29%
3-bedrooms	213	17%
4+-bedrooms	50	4%
TOTAL	1,288	100%

Source: LAHS

5.19 The table below show the modelled outputs of need by dwelling size in the three broad tenures. Market housing focusses on 3+-bedroom homes, affordable home ownership on 2- and 3-bedroom accommodation and rented affordable housing showing a slightly smaller profile again.

Figure 5.8: Initial Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure in Uttlesford				
	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Market	3%	20%	41%	36%
Affordable home ownership	20%	38%	31%	12%
Affordable housing (rented)	30%	37%	30%	3%

Source: Housing Market Model

Adjustments for Under-Occupation and Overcrowding

5.20 The analysis above sets out the potential need for housing if occupancy patterns remained the same as they were in 2021 (with differences from the current stock profile being driven by demographic change). It is however worth also considering that the 2021 profile will have included households who are overcrowded (and therefore need a larger home than they actually live in) and also those who under-occupy (have more bedrooms than they need).

5.21 Whilst it would not be reasonable to expect to remove all under-occupancy (particularly in the market sector) it is the case that in seeking to make the most efficient use of land it would be prudent to look to reduce this over time. Indeed, in the future there may be a move away from current (2021) occupancy patterns due to affordability issues (or eligibility in social rented housing) as well as the type of stock likely to be provided (potentially a higher proportion of flats). Further adjustments to the modelled figures above have therefore been made to take account of overcrowding and under-occupancy (by tenure).

5.22 The table below shows a cross-tabulation of a household's occupancy rating and the number of bedrooms in their home (for owner-occupiers). This shows a high number of households with at least 2 spare bedrooms who are living in homes with 3 or more bedrooms. There are also a small number of overcrowded households. Overall, in the owner-occupied sector in 2021, there were 24,100 households with some degree of under-occupation and just 160 overcrowded households.

Figure 5.9: Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of bedrooms (owner-occupied sector) – Uttlesford					
Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2	0	0	5,477	10,966	16,443
+1	0	3,051	2,873	1,708	7,632
0	672	743	882	207	2,504
-1	26	49	60	26	161
TOTAL	698	3,843	9,292	12,907	26,740

Source: Census (2021)

5.23 For completeness the tables below show the same information for the social and private rented sectors. In both cases there are more under-occupying households than overcrowded, but differences are less marked than seen for owner-occupied housing.

Figure 5.10: Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of bedrooms (social rented sector) – Uttlesford					
Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2	0	0	414	60	474
+1	0	856	453	56	1,365
0	1,154	905	628	40	2,727
-1	51	112	75	4	242
TOTAL	1,205	1,873	1,570	160	4,808

Source: Census (2021)

Figure 5.11: Cross-tabulation of occupancy rating and number of bedrooms (private rented sector) – Uttlesford					
Occupancy rating	Number of bedrooms				
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed	TOTAL
+2	0	0	706	542	1,248
+1	0	1,307	735	201	2,243
0	887	541	316	52	1,796
-1	39	38	31	9	117
TOTAL	926	1,886	1,788	804	5,404

Source: Census (2021)

5.24 In using this data in the modelling an adjustment is made to move some of those who would have been picked up in the modelling as under-occupying into smaller accommodation. Where there is under-occupation by 2 or more bedrooms, the adjustment takes 25% of this group and assigns to a '+1' occupancy. This does need to be recognised as an assumption, but can be seen to be reasonable as they do retain some (considerable) degree of under-occupation (which is likely) but does also seek to model a better match between household needs and the size of their home. For overcrowded households a move in the other direction is made, in this case households are moved up as many bedrooms as is needed to resolve the problems (this is applied for all overcrowded households).

5.25 The adjustments for under-occupation and overcrowding lead to the suggested mix as set out in the following table. It can be seen that this tends to suggest a smaller profile of homes as being needed (compared to the initial modelling) with the biggest change being in the market sector – which was the sector where under-occupation is currently most notable.

Figure 5.12: Adjusted Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure – Uttlesford				
	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Market	3%	25%	44%	27%
Affordable home ownership	21%	42%	28%	9%
Affordable housing (rented)	30%	38%	28%	4%

Source: Housing Market Model (with adjustments)

5.26 Across the District, the analysis points to around a third of the rented affordable housing need being for 1-bedroom homes and it is of interest to see how much of this is due to older person households. In the future household sizes are projected to drop whilst the population of older people will increase. Older person households (as shown earlier) are more likely to occupy smaller dwellings. The impacts of older people have on demand for smaller stock is outlined in the table below.

5.27 This indeed identifies a larger profile of homes needed for households where the household reference person is aged Under 65, with a concentration of 1-bedroom homes for older people. This information can be used to inform the mix required for General Needs rather than Specialist Housing, although it does need to be noted that not all older people would be expected to live in homes with some form of care or support.

Figure 5.13: Adjusted Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Age – affordable housing (rented) – Uttlesford

Age of HRP	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Under 65	25%	34%	34%	7%
65 and over	36%	64%		
All affordable housing (rented)	30%	38%	28%	4%

Source: Housing Market Model

5.28 A further analysis of the need for rented affordable housing is to compare the need with the supply (turnover) of different sizes of accommodation. This links back to estimates of need in the previous section (an annual need for 287 dwellings per annum) with additional data from CoRe about the sizes of homes let over the past three years.

5.29 This analysis is quite clear in showing the very low supply of larger homes relative to the need for 4+-bedroom accommodation where it is estimated the supply is only around 5% of the need arising each year, whereas for 1- and 2-bedroom homes around a third of the need can be met.

Figure 5.14: Need for rented affordable housing by number of bedrooms

	Gross Annual Need	Gross Annual Supply	Net Annual Need	As a % of total net annual need	Supply as a % of gross need
1-bedroom	104	32	71	24.9%	31.3%
2-bedrooms	154	55	98	34.3%	36.1%
3-bedrooms	114	17	97	33.9%	14.8%
4+-bedrooms	21	1	20	6.9%	5.4%
Total	393	106	287	100.0%	27.0%

Source: Derived from a range of sources

Indicative Targets for Different Sizes of Property by Tenure

5.30 The analysis below provides some indicative targets for different sizes of home (by tenure). The conclusions take account of a range of factors, including the modelled outputs and an understanding of the stock profile in different locations. The analysis (for rented affordable housing) also draws on the Housing Register data as well as taking a broader view of issues such as the flexibility of homes to accommodate changes to households (e.g. the lack of flexibility offered by a 1-bedroom home for a couple looking to start a family).

Social/Affordable Rented Housing

5.31 Bringing together the above, a number of factors are recognised. This includes recognising that it is unlikely that all affordable housing needs will be met and that it is likely that households with a need for larger homes will have greater priority (as they are more likely to contain children). That said, there is also a possible need for 1-bedroom social housing arising due to homelessness (typically homeless households are more likely to by younger single people).

5.32 As noted, the conclusions also consider the Housing Register and also take account of the current profile of housing in this sector. In taking account of the modelled outputs, the Housing Register and the discussion above, it is suggested that the following mix of social/affordable rented housing would be appropriate:

General Needs

- 1-bedroom: 25%
- 2-bedroom: 30%
- 3-bedroom: 35%
- 4+-bedroom: 10%

Housing for Older People

- 1-bedroom: 40%
- 2+-bedroom: 60%

Affordable Home Ownership

5.33 In the affordable home ownership and market sectors a profile of housing that closely matches the outputs of the modelling is suggested. It is considered that the provision of affordable home ownership should be more explicitly focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households. Based on this analysis, it is suggested that the following mix of affordable home ownership would be appropriate (although it is recognised that analysis did not definitively show a need for this tenure of housing):

- 1-bedroom: 20%
- 2-bedroom: 45%
- 3+-bedroom: 35%

Market Housing

5.34 Finally, in the market sector, a balance of dwellings is suggested that takes account of both the demand for homes and the changing demographic profile (as well as observations about the current mix when compared with other locations and also the potential to slightly reduce levels of under-occupancy). The conclusions have also slightly boosted figures for larger (4+-bedroom) homes to provide more flexibility and to recognise the potential for a general increase in home working (and therefore households seeking an extra room/bedroom to use as office space). This sees a slightly larger recommended profile compared with other tenure groups:

- 1-/2-bedroom: 25%
- 3-bedroom: 45%
- 4+-bedroom: 30%

5.35 Although the analysis has quantified this on the basis of the market modelling and an understanding of the current housing market, it does not necessarily follow that such prescriptive figures should be included in the plan making process (although it will be useful to include an indication of the broad mix to be sought across the study area) – demand can change over time linked to macro-economic factors and local supply. Policy aspirations could also influence the mix sought.

5.36 The suggested figures can be used as a monitoring tool to ensure that future delivery is not unbalanced when compared with the likely requirements as driven by demographic change in the area. The recommendations can also be used as a set of guidelines to consider the appropriate mix on larger development sites, and the Council could expect justification for a housing mix on such sites which significantly differs from that modelled herein. Site location and area character are also however relevant considerations the appropriate mix of market housing on individual development sites.

5.37 On this point, it is notable (see section on affordable housing) that at the time of drafting this study, the vast majority of new homes for sale were larger properties – 30% as 3-bedroom homes and 62% with 4+-bedrooms. Whilst larger homes may be preferable to developers (they may see higher profits and a lower affordable contribution) it is likely they are not the most suitable size to meet local requirements – the larger homes may be more attractive to households moving into the area. This does emphasize the importance of monitoring and potentially influencing the mix of market housing in the future.

Smaller-area Housing Mix

5.38 The analysis above has focussed on overall District-wide needs with conclusions very much at the strategic level. It should however be recognised that there will be variations in the need within areas due the different role and function of a location and the specific characteristics of local households (which can also vary over time). This report does not seek to look at smaller-area needs, however, below are some points for consideration when looking at needs in any specific location:

a) Whilst there will be differences in the stock profile in different locations this should not necessarily be seen as indicating particular surpluses or shortfalls of particular types and sizes of homes;

b) As well as looking at the stock, an understanding of the role and function of areas is important. For example, higher priced rural areas are typically sought by wealthier families and therefore such areas would be expected to provide a greater proportion of larger homes;

c) That said, some of these areas will have very few small/cheaper stock and so consideration needs to be given to diversifying the stock; and

d) The location/quality of sites will also have an impact on the mix of housing. For example, brownfield sites in the centre of towns may be more suited to flatted development (as well as recognising the point above about role and function) whereas a rural site on the edge of an existing village may be more appropriate for family housing. Other considerations (such as proximity to public transport) may impact on a reasonable mix at a local level.

5.39 Overall, it is suggested the Council should broadly seek the same mix of housing in all locations but would be flexible to a different mix where specific local characteristics suggest. The Council should also monitor what is being built to ensure that a reasonable mix is provided in a settlement overall. For example, if a recent housing site has provided nothing but 4+-bedroom 'executive' homes, then it could be expected that the next site to come along might provide a mix which includes more homes for younger/smaller family households and childless couples.

5.40 Additionally, in the affordable sector it may be the case that Housing Register data for a smaller area identifies a shortage of housing of a particular size/type which could lead to the mix of housing being altered from the overall suggested requirement

Built-form

5.41 A final issue is a discussion of the need/demand for different built-forms of homes. In particular this discussion focusses on bungalows and the need for flats vs. houses.

Bungalows

5.42 The sources used for analysis in this report make it difficult to quantify a need/demand for bungalows in the District as Census data (which is used to look at occupancy profiles) does not separately identify this type of accommodation. Data from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) does however provide estimates of the number of bungalows (by bedrooms) although no tenure split is available.

5.43 The table below shows a notable proportion of homes in Uttlesford are bungalows (10% of all flats and houses) with about half of these having 2-bedrooms, and a further 27% 3-bedrooms); a similar proportion (9%) of homes across England are bungalows.

Figure 5.15: Number of dwellings by property type and number of bedrooms (March 2020) – Uttlesford

	Number of bedrooms					All
	1	2	3	4+	Not Known	
Bungalow	420	1,780	960	390	20	3,560
Flat/Maisonette	2,090	1,970	170	50	10	4,280
Terraced house	300	2,380	3,680	770	10	7,150
Semi-detached house	100	1,610	6,120	1,380	20	9,230
Detached house	40	660	3,400	8,670	80	12,850
All flats/houses	2,950	8,400	14,330	11,260	140	37,070
Annexe	-	-	-	-	-	330
Other	-	-	-	-	-	300
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	500
All properties	-	-	-	-	-	38,180

Source: Valuation Office Agency

5.44 In general, discussions with local estate agents (discussions nationally) find that there is a demand for bungalows and in addition, analysis of survey data (in other locations) points to a high demand for bungalows (from people aged 65 and over in particular).

5.45 Bungalows are often the first choice for older people seeking suitable accommodation in later life and there is generally a high demand for such accommodation when it becomes available (this is different from specialist accommodation for older people which would have some degree of care or support).

5.46 As a new build option, bungalows are often not supported by either house builders or planners (due to potential plot sizes and their generally low densities). There may, however, be instances where bungalows are the most suitable house type for a particular site; for example, to overcome objections about dwellings overlooking existing dwellings or preserving sight lines.

5.47 There is also the possibility of a wider need/demand for retirement accommodation. Retirement apartments can prove very popular if they are well located in terms of access to facilities and services, and environmentally attractive (e.g. have a good view). However, some potential purchasers may find high service charges unacceptable or unaffordable and new build units may not retain their value on re-sale.

5.48 Overall, the Council should consider the potential role of bungalows as part of the future mix of housing. Such housing may be particularly attractive to older owner-occupiers (many of whom are equity-rich) which may assist in encouraging households to downsize. However, the downside to providing bungalows is that they are relatively land intensive.

5.49 Bungalows are likely to see a particular need and demand in the market sector and also for rented affordable housing (for older people as discussed in the next section of the report). Bungalows are likely to particularly focus on 2-bedroom homes, including in the affordable sector where such housing may encourage households to move from larger 'family-sized' accommodation (with 3+-bedrooms).

Flats versus Houses

5.50 Although there are some 1-bedroom houses and 3-bedroom flats, it is considered that the key discussion on built-form will be for 2-bedroom accommodation, where it might be expected that there would be a combination of both flats and houses. At a national level, 82% of all 1-bedroom homes are flats, 38% of 2-bedroom homes and just 5% of homes with 3-bedrooms.

5.51 The table below shows (for 2-bedroom accommodation) the proportion of homes by tenure that are classified as a flat, maisonette or apartment in Uttlesford, the East of England and England. This shows around a quarter of all 2-bedroom homes are flats. This would arguably point to the majority of 2-bedroom homes in the future being houses. The analysis does also show a higher proportion of flats in the social and private rented sectors (although it is still the case that the majority of homes in these sectors are houses).

Figure 5.16: Proportion of 2-bedroom homes that are a flat, maisonette or apartment (by tenure)

	Uttlesford	East of England	England
Owner-occupied	17%	20%	25%
Social rented	25%	42%	48%
Private rented	38%	47%	52%
All (2-bedroom)	24%	32%	38%

Source: 2021 Census

5.52 For completeness, the table below shows the proportion of flats in Uttlesford for all sizes of accommodation and different tenures. Of particular note is the very small proportion of 3+-bedroom homes as flats.

Figure 5.17: Proportion of homes that are a flat, maisonette or apartment (by tenure and dwelling size) – Uttlesford

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Owner-occupied	57%	17%	1%	0%
Social rented	76%	25%	2%	6%
Private rented	67%	38%	4%	2%
All	69%	24%	1%	0%

Source: 2021 Census

5.53 As noted, this analysis would suggest that most 2-bedroom homes should be built as houses (or bungalows) rather than flats given the nature of the current stock. Any decisions will have to take account of site characteristics, which in some cases might point towards flatted development as being most appropriate. The analysis would suggest that the affordable sector might be expected to see a higher proportion of flats than for market housing.

Housing Mix: Key Messages

- Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population. The proportion of households with dependent children in Uttlesford is fairly high with around 31% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally). There are notable differences between different types of household, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas as lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

- There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes; future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save; economic performance and housing affordability. An analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, this takes account of both household changes and the ageing of the population – the analysis also models for there to be a modest decrease in levels of under-occupancy (which in Uttlesford is notable in the market sector). Our recommended mix is set out below:

<table>
<tr><th></th><th rowspan="2">Market</th><th rowspan="2">Affordable home ownership</th><th colspan="2">Affordable housing (rented)</th></tr>
<tr><th>General needs</th><th>Older persons</th></tr>
<tr><td>1-bedroom</td><td rowspan="2">25%</td><td>20%</td><td>25%</td><td>40%</td></tr>
<tr><td>2-bedrooms</td><td>45%</td><td>30%</td><td rowspan="3">60%</td></tr>
<tr><td>3-bedrooms</td><td>45%</td><td rowspan="2">35%</td><td>35%</td></tr>
<tr><td>4+-bedrooms</td><td>30%</td><td>10%</td></tr>
</table>

- The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households. Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1-bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues. The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register.

- The mix identified above could inform strategic policies although a flexible approach should be adopted. For example, in some areas Registered Providers find difficulties selling 1-bedroom affordable home ownership (AHO) homes and therefore the 1-bedroom elements of AHO might be better provided as 2-bedroom accommodation. That said, this report also highlighted potential difficulties in making (larger) AHO genuinely affordable.

- Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level. The Council should also monitor the mix of housing delivered.

- Given the nature of the area and the needs identified, the analysis suggests that the majority of units should be houses rather than flats although consideration will also need to be given to site specific circumstances (which may in some cases lend themselves to a particular type of development). There is potentially a demand for bungalows, although realistically significant delivery of this type of accommodation may be unlikely. It is however possible that delivery of some bungalows might be particularly attractive to older person households downsizing and may help to release larger (family-sized) accommodation back into family use.

6. Older and Disabled People

Introduction

6.1 This section studies the characteristics and housing needs of the older person population and the population with some form of disability. The two groups are taken together as there is a clear link between age and disability. It responds to Planning Practice Guidance on *Housing for Older and Disabled People* published by Government in June 2019. It includes an assessment of the need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to M4(2) and M4(3) housing technical standards (accessibility and wheelchair standards).

Understanding the Implications of Demographic Change

6.2 The population of older persons is increasing, and this will potentially drive a need for housing which is capable of meeting the needs of older persons. Initially below a series of statistics about the older person population of Uttlesford are presented.

Current Population of Older People

6.3 The table below provides baseline population data about older persons in Uttlesford and compares this with other areas. The population data has been taken from 2022 mid-year population estimates. The table shows that Uttlesford has a similar age structure to other areas with 21% of the population being aged 65 and over, this compares with 20% regionally and 19% nationally.

Figure 6.1: Older Persons Population, 2022

	Uttlesford	Essex	East region	England
Under 65	79.3%	79.2%	80.1%	81.4%
65-74	10.5%	10.4%	10.0%	9.6%
75-84	7.4%	7.6%	7.1%	6.5%
85+	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total 65+	20.7%	20.8%	19.9%	18.6%
Total 75+	10.3%	10.4%	9.9%	9.0%

Source: ONS mid-year population estimates

Projected Future Change in the Population of Older People

6.4 Population projections can next be used to provide an indication of how the number of older persons might change in the future with the table below showing that Uttlesford is projected to see a notable increase in the older person population. The projection linking to the Standard Method shows a projected increase in the population aged 65+ of around 51% - the population aged Under 65 is in contrast projected to increase by around 19%.

6.5 In total population terms, the projections show an increase in the population aged 65 and over of 10,300 people. This is against a backdrop of an overall increase of 24,400 – population growth of people aged 65 and over therefore accounts for 42% of the total projected population change.

Figure 6.2: Projected Change in Population of Older Persons, 2024 to 2041 – Uttlesford (linking to Standard Method)

	2024	2041	Change in population	% change
Under 65	74,277	88,319	14,041	18.9%
65-74	9,917	13,925	4,008	40.4%
75-84	7,570	11,186	3,616	47.8%
85+	2,856	5,553	2,697	94.4%
Total	94,621	118,983	24,362	25.7%
Total 65+	20,343	30,664	10,321	50.7%
Total 75+	10,426	16,739	6,313	60.6%

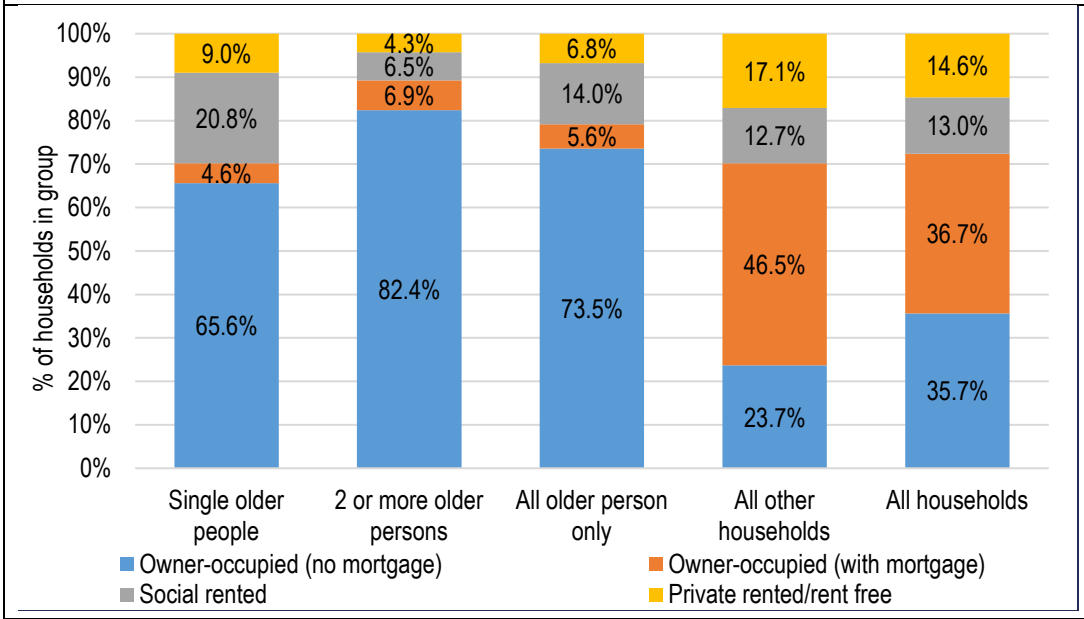
Source: Demographic projections

Characteristics of Older Person Households

6.6 The figure below shows the tenure of older person households. The data has been split between single older person households and those with two or more older people (which will largely be couples). The data shows that the majority of older persons households are owner occupiers (79% of older person households), and indeed most are owner occupiers with no mortgage and thus may have significant equity which can be put towards the purchase of a new home. Some 14% of older persons households across the District live in the social rented sector; the proportion of older person households living in the private rented sector is relatively low (about 7%).

6.7 There are also notable differences for different types of older person households with single older people having a much lower level of owner-occupation than larger older person households – this group also has a much higher proportion living in the social rented sector.

Figure 6.3: Tenure of Older Persons Households in Uttlesford, 2021



Source: 2021 Census

Prevalence of Disabilities

6.8 The table below shows the proportion of people who are considered as disabled under the definition within the 2010 Equality Act[8], drawn from 2021 Census data, and the proportion of households where at least one person has a disability. The data suggests that some 26% of households in the District contain someone with a disability. This figure is lower than seen in other areas. The figures for the population with a disability also show lower proportions when compared with other areas – some 13% of the population having a disability.

Figure 6.4: Households and Population with a Disability, 2021

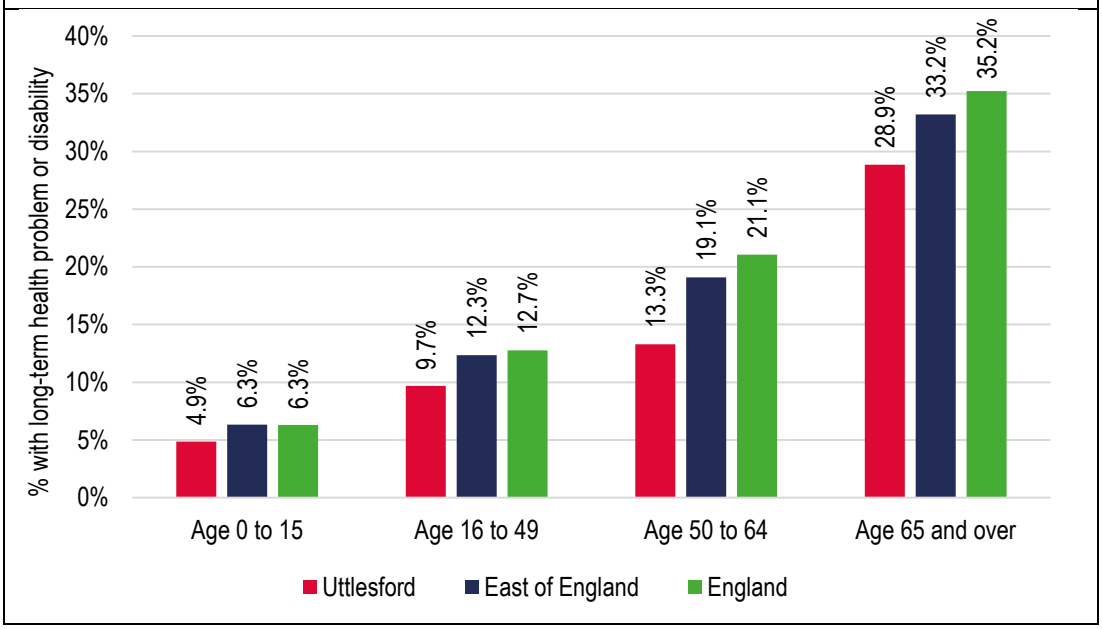
	Households Containing Someone with a Disability		Population with a Disability	
	No.	%	No.	%
Uttlesford	9,753	26.4%	12,230	13.4%
Essex	194,096	31.0%	250,552	16.7%
East region	811,942	30.9%	1,053,832	16.6%
England	7,507,886	32.0%	9,774,510	17.3%

Source: 2021 Census

[8] The Census uses the same definition of disability as described in the Equality Act. This defines disability as a person with a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

6.9 As noted, it is likely that the age profile will impact upon the numbers of people with a disability, as older people tend to be more likely to have a disability. The figure below shows the age bands of people with a disability. It is clear from this analysis that those people in the oldest age bands are more likely to have a disability. For older age groups in particular, the analysis also shows lower levels of disability in each age band within Uttlesford when compared with the regional and national position.

Figure 6.5: Population with Disability by Age



Source: 2021 Census

Health Related Population Projections

6.10 The incidence of a range of health conditions is an important component in understanding the potential need for care or support for a growing older population.

6.11 The analysis undertaken covers both younger and older age groups and draws on prevalence rates from the PANSI (Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information) and POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information) websites. Adjustments have been made to take account of the age specific health/disabilities previously shown.

6.12 Of particular note are the large increases in the number of older people with dementia (increasing by 71% from 2024 to 2041 and mobility problems (up 63% over the same period). Changes for younger age groups are smaller, reflecting the fact that projections are expecting older age groups to see the greatest proportional increases in population. When related back to the total projected change to the population, the increase of people aged 65+ with a mobility problem represents around 8% of total projected population growth.

Figure 6.6: Projected Changes to Population with a Range of Disabilities – Uttlesford (linked to Standard Method)					
Disability	Age Range	2024	2041	Change	% Change
Dementia	65+	1,212	2,072	860	71.0%
Mobility problems	65+	3,115	5,068	1,954	62.7%
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	18-64	377	450	73	19.3%
	65+	158	234	77	48.6%
Learning Disabilities	15-64	992	1,184	192	19.4%
	65+	345	519	174	50.4%
Impaired mobility	16-64	2,369	2,704	335	14.1%

Source: POPPI/PANSI and Demographic Projections

6.13 Invariably, there will be a combination of those with disabilities and long-term health problems that continue to live at home with family, those who chose to live independently with the possibility of incorporating adaptations into their homes and those who choose to move into supported housing.

6.14 The projected change shown in the number of people with disabilities provides clear evidence justifying delivering 'accessible and adaptable' homes as defined in Part M4(2) of Building Regulations, subject to viability and site suitability. The Council should ensure that the viability of doing so is also tested as part of drawing together its evidence base although the cost of meeting this standard is unlikely to have any significant impact on viability and would potentially provide a greater number of homes that will allow households to remain in the same property for longer.

Need for Specialist Accommodation for Older People

6.15 Given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people, there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options moving forward. The box below shows the different types of older persons housing which are considered.

Definitions of Different Types of Older Persons' Accommodation

Age-restricted general market housing: This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.

Retirement living or sheltered housing (housing with support): This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24-hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Extra care housing or housing-with-care (housing with care): This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Residential care homes and nursing homes (care bedspaces): These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Source: Planning Practice Guidance [63-010]

6.16 The need for specialist housing for older persons is typically modelled by applying prevalence rates to current and projected population changes and considering the level of existing supply. There is no standard methodology for assessing the housing and care needs of older people. The current and future demand for elderly care is influenced by a host of factors including the balance between demand and supply in any given area and social, political, regulatory and financial issues. Additionally, the extent to which new homes are built to accessible and adaptable standards may over time have an impact on specialist demand (given that older people often want to remain at home rather than move to care) – this will need to be monitored.

6.17 There are a number of 'models' for considering older persons' needs, but they all essentially work in the same way. The model results are however particularly sensitive to the prevalence rates applied, which are typically calculated as a proportion of people aged over 75 who could be expected to live in different forms of specialist housing. Whilst the population aged 75 and over is used in the modelling, the estimates of need would include people of all ages.

6.18 Whilst there are no definitive rates, the PPG [63-004] notes that *'the future need for specialist accommodation for older people broken down by tenure and type (e.g. sheltered housing, extra care) may need to be assessed and can be obtained from a number of online tool kits provided by the sector, for example SHOP@ for Older People Analysis Tool)'*. The PPG does not specifically mention any other tools and therefore seems to be indicating that SHOP@ would be a good starting point for analysis. Since the PPG was published the Housing Learning and Information Network (Housing LIN) has removed the Shop@ online toolkit although the base rates used for analysis are known.

6.19 The SHOP@ tool was originally based on data in a 2008 report (More Choice Greater Voice) and in 2011 a further suggested set of rates was published (rates which were repeated in a 2012 publications). In 2016, Housing LIN published a review document which noted that the 2008 rates are 'outdated' but also noting that the rates from 2011/12 were 'not substantiated'. The 2016 review document therefore set out a series of proposals for new rates to be taken forward onto the Housing LIN website.

6.20 Whilst the 2016 review rates do not appear to have ever led to an update of the website, it does appear from reviewing work by Housing LIN over the past couple of years as if it is these rates which typically inform their own analysis (subject to evidence based localised adjustments).

6.21 For clarity, the table below shows the base prevalence rates set out in the various documents described above. For the analysis in this report the age-restricted and retirement/sheltered have been merged into a single category (housing with support).

Figure 6.7: Range of suggested baseline prevalence rates from a number of tools and publications

Type/Rate	SHOP@ (2008)[9]	Housing in Later Life (2012)[10]	2016 Housing LIN Review
Age-restricted general market housing	-	-	25
Retirement living or sheltered housing (housing with support)	125	180	100
Extra care housing or housing-with-care (housing with care)	45	65	30-40 ('proactive range')
Residential care homes	65	(no figure apart from 6 for dementia)	40
Nursing homes (care bedspaces), including dementia	45		45

Source: Range of sources as identified

[9] Based on the More Choice Greater Voice publication of 2008 (https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Reports/MCGVdocument.pdf). It should be noted that although these rates are from 2008, they are the same rates as were being used in the online toolkit when it was taken offline in 2019.
[10] https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Toolkit/Housing_in_Later_Life_Toolkit.pdf

6.22 In interpreting the different potential prevalence rates it is clear that:

- The prevalence rates used should be considered and assessed taking account of an authority's strategy for delivering specialist housing for older people. The degree for instance which the Council want to require extra care housing as an alternative to residential care provision would influence the relative balance of need between these two housing types;
- The Housing LIN model has been influenced by existing levels of provision and their view on what future level of provision might be reasonable taking account of how the market is developing, funding availability etc. It is more focused towards publicly commissioned provision. There is a degree to which the model and assumptions within it may not fully capture the growing recent private sector interest and involvement in the sector, particularly in extra care; and
- The assumptions in these studies look at the situation nationally. At a more local level, the relative health of an area's population is likely to influence the need for specialist housing with better levels of health likely to mean residents are able to stay in their own homes for longer.

6.23 We have therefore sought to consider these issues and the appropriate modelling assumptions for assessing future needs. Nationally, there has been a clear focus on strengthening a community-led approach and reducing reliance on residential and nursing care – in particular focussing where possible on providing households with care in their own home. This could however be provision of care within general needs housing; but also care which is provided in a housing with care development such as in extra care housing.

6.24 We consider that the prevalence rates shown in the 2016 Housing LIN Review is an appropriate starting point; but that the corollary of lower care home provision should be a greater focus on delivery of housing with care. Having regard to market growth in this sector in recent years, and since the above studies were prepared, we consider that the starting point for housing with care should be the higher rate shown in the SHOP@ report (this is the figure that would align with the PPG).

6.25 Rather than simply taking the base prevalence rates, an initial adjustment has been made to reflect the relative health of the local older person population. This has been based on Census data about the proportion of the population aged 65 and over who have a disability compared with the England average. In Uttlesford, the data shows better health in the older person population and so the prevalence rates used have been decreased slightly (by an average of about 13%) – these figures are based on comparing the proportion of people aged 75 and over with a disability in Uttlesford (38.3%) with the equivalent figure for England (43.9%).

6.26 A second local adjustment has been to estimate a tenure split for the housing with support and housing with care categories. This again draws on suggestions in the 2016 Review which suggests that less deprived local authorities could expect a higher proportion of their specialist housing to be in the market sector. Using 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, the analysis suggests Uttlesford is the 295th most deprived local authority in England (out of 317) – i.e. a lower than average level of deprivation – this suggests a greater proportion of market housing than a local authority in the middle of the range (for housing with support and housing with care).

6.27 The table below shows estimated needs for different types of housing linked to the population projections. The analysis is separated into the various different types and tenures although it should be recognised that there could be some overlap between categories (i.e. some households might be suited to more than one type of accommodation).

6.28 Overall, the analysis suggests that there will be a notable need for housing with support (particularly in the market sector) and housing with care (again mainly for market housing). The analysis also suggests a need for some additional nursing care bedspaces and for residential care in the longer-term (a current sufficient supply).

Figure 6.8: Specialist Housing Need using adjusted SHOP@Review Assumptions, 2024-41 – Uttlesford (linked to Standard Method)

		Housing demand per 1,000 75+	Current supply	Current demand	Current shortfall/ surplus (-ve)	Addition-al demand to 2041	Shortfall /surplus by 2041
Housing with support	Market	69	449	722	273	437	710
	Affordable	40	569	416	-153	252	98
Total (housing with support)		109	1,018	1,138	120	689	809
Housing with care	Market	29	59	300	241	182	423
	Affordable	10	104	109	5	66	71
Total (housing with care)		39	163	410	247	248	495
Residential care bedspaces		35	442	364	-78	220	142
Nursing care bedspaces		39	192	410	218	248	466
Total bedspaces		74	634	774	140	468	608

Source: Derived from Demographic Projections and Housing LIN/EAC

6.29 It can be seen by 2041 there is an estimated need for 1,303 additional dwellings with support or care across the whole District. In addition, there is a need for 608 additional nursing and residential care bedspaces. Typically for bedspaces it is conventional to convert to dwellings using a standard multiplier (1.80 bedspaces per dwelling for older persons accommodation) and this would therefore equate to around 338 dwellings. In total, the older persons analysis therefore points towards a need for around 1,641 units over the 2024-41 period (97 per annum).

6.30 The provision of a choice of attractive housing options to older households is a component of achieving good housing mix. The availability of such housing options for the growing older population may enable some older households to downsize from homes which no longer meet their housing needs or are expensive to run. The availability of housing options which are accessible to older people will also provide the opportunity for older households to 'rightsize' which can help improve their quality of life.

6.31 It should also be noted that within any category of need there may be a range of products. For example, many recent market extra-care schemes have tended to be focused towards the 'top-end' of the market and may have significant service charges (due to the level and quality of facilities and services). Such homes may therefore only be affordable to a small proportion of the potential market, and it will be important for the Council to seek a range of products that will be accessible to a wider number of households if needs are to be met.

Wheelchair User Housing

6.32 The analysis below draws on secondary data sources to estimate the number of current and future wheelchair users and to estimate the number of wheelchair accessible/adaptable dwellings that might be required in the future. Estimates of need produced in this report draw on data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) – mainly 2018/19 data. The EHS data used includes the age structure of wheelchair users, information about work needed to homes to make them 'visitable' for wheelchair users and data about wheelchair users by tenure.

6.33 The table below shows at a national level the proportion of wheelchair user households by the age of household reference person. Nationally, around 3.4% of households contain a wheelchair user – with around 1% using a wheelchair indoors. There is a clear correlation between the age of household reference person and the likelihood of there being a wheelchair user in the household.

Figure 6.9: Proportion of wheelchair user households by age of household reference person – England

Age of household reference person	No household members use a wheelchair	Uses wheelchair all the time	Uses wheelchair indoors only	Uses wheelchair outdoors only	TOTAL
24 and under	99.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	100.0%
25-34	99.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	100.0%
35-49	98.2%	0.5%	0.1%	1.2%	100.0%
50-64	96.9%	0.7%	0.4%	2.0%	100.0%
65 and over	93.1%	0.9%	0.4%	5.6%	100.0%
All households	96.6%	0.6%	0.3%	2.5%	100.0%

Source: English Housing Survey (2018/19)

6.34 The prevalence rate data can be brought together with information about the household age structure and how this is likely to change moving forward – adjustments have also been made to take account of the relative health (by age) of the population. The data estimates a total of 896 wheelchair user households in 2024, and that this will rise to 1,265 by 2041.

Figure 6.10: Estimated number of wheelchair user households (2024-41) – Uttlesford

	Prevalence rate (% of households)	Households 2024	Households 2041	Wheelchair user households (2024)	Wheelchair user households (2041)
24 and under	0.5%	391	513	2	3
25-34	0.5%	3,581	4,711	17	23
35-49	0.9%	9,843	11,731	89	106
50-64	1.3%	12,171	13,689	161	181
65 and over	4.9%	12,875	19,575	626	952
All households	-	38,863	50,220	896	1,265

Source: Derived from a range of sources

6.35 The finding of an estimated current number of wheelchair user households does not indicate how many homes might be need for this group – some households will be living in a home that is suitable for wheelchair use, whilst others may need improvements to accommodation, or a move to an alternative home. Data from the EHS (2014-15) shows that of the 814,000 wheelchair user households, some 200,000 live in a home that would either be problematic or not feasible to make fully 'visitable' – this is around 25% of wheelchair user households.

6.36 Applying this proportion to the current number of wheelchair user households gives a current need for 224 additional wheelchair user homes. If the projected need is also discounted to 25% of the total (on the basis that many additional wheelchair user households will already be in accommodation) then a further need for 92 homes in the 2024-41 period can be identified. Added together this leads to a need estimate of 316 wheelchair user homes – equating to 19 dwellings per annum.

Figure 6.11: Estimated need for wheelchair user homes, 2024-41

	Current need	Projected need (2024-41)	Total current and future need
Uttlesford	224	92	316

Source: Derived from a range of sources

6.37 Furthermore, information in the EHS (for 2018/19) also provides national data about wheelchair users by tenure. This showed that, at that time, around 7.1% of social tenants were wheelchair user (including 2.2% using a wheelchair indoors), compared with 3.1% of owner-occupiers (0.7% indoors). These proportions can be expected to increase with an ageing population but do highlight the likely need for a greater proportion of social (affordable) homes to be for wheelchair users.

Figure 6.12: Proportion of wheelchair user households by tenure of household reference person – England

	No household members use a wheelchair	Uses wheelchair all the time	Uses wheelchair indoors only	Uses wheelchair outdoors only	TOTAL
Owners	96.9%	0.5%	0.2%	2.4%	100.0%
Social sector	92.9%	1.6%	0.6%	4.8%	100.0%
Private renters	98.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%	100.0%
All households	96.6%	0.6%	0.3%	2.5%	100.0%

Source: English Housing Survey (2018/19)

6.38 To meet the identified need, the Council could seek a proportion (maybe up to 5%) of all new market homes to be M4(3) compliant and potentially a higher figure in the affordable sector (say 10%). These figures reflect that not all sites would be able to deliver homes of this type. In the market sector these homes would be M4(3)A (adaptable) and M4(3)B (accessible) for affordable housing.

6.39 As with M4(2) homes it may not be possible for some schemes to be built to these higher standards due to built-form, topography, flooding etc. Furthermore, provision of this type of property may in some cases challenge the viability of delivery given the reasonably high build out costs (see table below).

6.40 It is worth noting that the Government has now reported on a consultation on changes to the way the needs of people with disabilities and wheelchair users are planned for as a result of concerns that in the drive to achieve housing numbers, the delivery of housing that suits the needs of the households (in particular those with disabilities) is being compromised on viability grounds[11].

6.41 The key outcome is: *'Government is committed to raising accessibility standards for new homes. We have listened carefully to the feedback on the options set out in the consultation and the government response sets out our plans to mandate the current M4(2) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes'*. This change is due to shortly be implemented though a change to building regulations.

6.42 The consultation outcome still requires a need for M4(3) dwellings to be evidenced, stating *'M4(3) (Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings) would continue as now where there is a local planning policy in place in which a need has been identified and evidenced. Local authorities will need to continue to tailor the supply of wheelchair user dwellings to local demand'*.

6.43 As well as evidence of need, the viability challenge is particularly relevant for M4(3)(B) standards. These make properties accessible from the moment they are built and involve high additional costs that could in some cases challenge the feasibility of delivering all or any of a policy target. The table below shows estimated costs for different types of accessible dwellings, taken from research sitting behind the initial PPG on accessible housing – these costings are now 10-year old.

Figure 6.13: Access Cost Summary

	1-Bed Apartment	2-Bed Apartment	2-Bed Terrace	3-Bed Semi Detached	4-Bed Semi-Detached
M4(2)	£940	£907	£523	£521	£520
M4(3)(A) – Adaptable	£7,607	£7,891	£9,754	£10,307	£10,568
M4(3)(B) – Accessible	£7,764	£8,048	£22,238	£22,791	£23,052

Source: EC Harris, 2014

6.44 It should be noted that local authorities only have the right to request M4(3)(B) accessible compliance from homes for which they have nomination rights. They can, however, request M4(3)(A) adaptable compliance from the wider (market) housing stock.

6.45 A further option for the Council would be to consider seeking a higher contribution, where it is viable to do so, from those homes to which they have nomination rights. This would address any under delivery from other schemes (including schemes due to their size e.g. less than 10 units or 1,000 square metres) but also recognise the fact that there is a higher prevalence for wheelchair use within social rent tenures. This should be considered when setting policy.

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes

Older and Disabled People: Key Messages

- A range of data sources and statistics have been accessed to consider the characteristics and housing needs of the older person population and the population with some form of disability. The two groups are taken together as there is a clear link between age and disability. The analysis responds to Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People published by Government in June 2019 and includes an assessment of the need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to M4(2) and M4(3) housing technical standards (accessibility and wheelchair standards).

- The data shows that Uttlesford has a very slightly older age structure and notably lower levels of disability compared with the national average. The older person population shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant equity in their homes (74% of all older person households are outright owners).

- The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase substantially. Key findings for the 2024-41 period include:

  - a 51% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 42% of total population growth);
  - a 71% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 63% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems;
  - a need for around 800 housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 90% in the market sector;
  - a need for around 500 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around 85%) in the market sector;
  - a need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 600 in the period and mainly for nursing care); and
  - a need for over 300 dwellings to be for wheelchair users (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

- This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing. Given the evidence, the Council could consider (as a start point) requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards and around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion of around 10% in the affordable sector).

- Where the authority has nomination rights M4(3) would be wheelchair accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation) and in the market sector they should be wheelchair user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user). It should however be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly.

- In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this the viability of provision). There may also be some practical issues to consider, such as the ability of any individual development being mixed tenure given the way care and support services are paid for).

7. Self- and Custom Build Housing

Introduction

7.1 As of 1st April 2016, and in line with the 2015 Act and the Right to Build, relevant authorities in England are required to have established and publicised a self-build and custom housebuilding register which records those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area in order to build their own self-build and custom houses.

7.2 According to the Right to Build Taskforce Self-build involves the occupier of a new home taking responsibility for the design, construction and funding of the home on a single building plot. Self-builders are in control of their development timeline and are not bound by any requirement to act in a given way to satisfy the needs of a developer, contractor, landowner or specialist enabler, with the exception of any statutory requirements imposed by a mortgage lender, insurer or local planning authority.

7.3 Custom build involves the development of a multi-plot site and involves the occupier of a new home commissioning or building their new custom home through a range of housing delivery models facilitated and/or supported by a landowner, developer, contractor, or enabler. Custom builders commit to delivering their new home as part of a pre-defined process when they agree to purchase a serviced plot of land, including taking the responsibility to construct their home themselves.

Local Evidence

7.4 The Uttlesford Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register was introduced in April 2016 and there have now been six and a half full base periods[12] up to 30th October 2022.

7.5 The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register as per the 2015 Act (as amended). Since the introduction of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) they are also required to address any historic need which has not been met.

7.6 The council introduced a local connection test in December 2020, this separates the register into 2 parts with those who do not meet the local connection criteria entered into Part 2 of the register. Statutorily, the 2015 Act only requires the council to permit the number of plots indicated as needed by those on Part 1 of the register. However, any need from entrants who do not meet local connection criteria must be considered within the decision-making process.

7.7 The data to follow has been taken from the Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding: Progress Report of December 2022[13] - this report contains a range of statistics about the demand for and supply of self-build plots.

[12] A base period is a period of typically 12 months in which demand for custom and self-build is recorded. The first base period began on the day on which the register (which meets the requirement of the 2015 Act) was established and ended on 30th October 2016. Each subsequent base period is the period of 12 months beginning immediately after the end of the previous base period. Subsequent base periods will therefore run from 31st October to 30th October each year.

[13] https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5314/Self-build-and-custom-housebuilding-progress-reports

7.8 If assessed over the six and half base periods, there has been a total of 198 registered expressions of interest in a serviced plot of land in Uttlesford of which 78 are in Part 1 of the register (an average of 12 per annum). All bar one of the entries on the register are from individuals (with 1 group joining in the second base period).

Figure 7.1: Serviced Plots Demand			
Base Period	Part 1	Part 2	Total
Base Period 1 (1st April 2016 to 30th October 2016)	12	18	30
Base Period 2 (31st October 2016 to 30th October 2017)	26	46	72
Base Period 3 (31st October 2017 to 30th October 2018)	14	30	44
Base Period 4 (31st October 2018 to 30th October 2019)	12	10	32
Base Period 5 (31st October 2019 to 30th October 2020)	3	2	5
Base Period 6 (31st October 2020 to 30th October 2021)	8	2	10
Base Period 7 (31st October 2021 to 30th October 2022)	3	2	5
Total	78	110	198
Average (per annum)	12	17	30

Source: Uttlesford District Council

7.9 The table below shows the availability of suitable serviced plots – this is split between those where self- or custom build is specifically in the application description and other single dwelling plot permissions. The data points to a significant number of permissions and suggests the Council has permitted sufficient suitable plots to meet the demand identified on the register overall and in any given year, therefore there is no historic backlog.

Figure 7.2: Number of Serviced Plots Permitted			
Base Period	Self- or custom build in application description	Single plot dwelling permissions	Total
Base Period 1	1	57	58
Base Period 2	29	187	216
Base Period 3	5	151	156
Base Period 4	9	151	160
Base Period 5	3	51	54
Base Period 6	1	121	122
Base Period 7	1	101	102
Total	49	819	868
Average (per annum)	8	126	134

Source: Uttlesford District Council

7.10 However, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act[14] also gives more specific guidance on what does and does not count towards. The amendments to the wording mean that development permissions must specifically be for 'the carrying out of self-build and custom housebuilding'.

[14] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/enacted

7.11 This means local authorities can no longer count what 'could' be self-build and custom housing (all single plots for example as is the case in Uttlesford) and only what is actually permitted as such. The Council may therefore wish to retrospectively identify whether those single unit developments which comprise the majority of their supply where actually occupied by the person who commissioned their build. Without this information the council could be required to meet the backlog need of 29 dwellings (78 total part 1 need minus 49 confirmed supply) as well as any future need.

7.12 The Council's evidence also provides an indication of the location and sizes of homes sought by those on the register. Generally, locational preferences are for more rural areas, although there are demands across the District (including the main settlements of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow). In terms of the size of home, it is clear that those registered are seeking larger properties, with 57% preferring a home with at least 4-bedrooms and most of the rest for 3-bedrooms.

Broader Demand Evidence

7.13 It is worth highlighting that a survey[15] undertaken by YouGov on behalf of the National Custom and Self-Build Association ("NaCSBA") in October 2020 found that awareness of the Right to Build legislation is low with 83% of people unaware that the local authority self-build registers exist. As a result, the number of individuals on a local authority's self-build register may underestimate demand.

7.14 In order to supplement the data from the Council's own register, we have looked to secondary sources as recommended by the PPG, which for this report is data from NaCSBA – the national association for the custom and self-build housing sector.

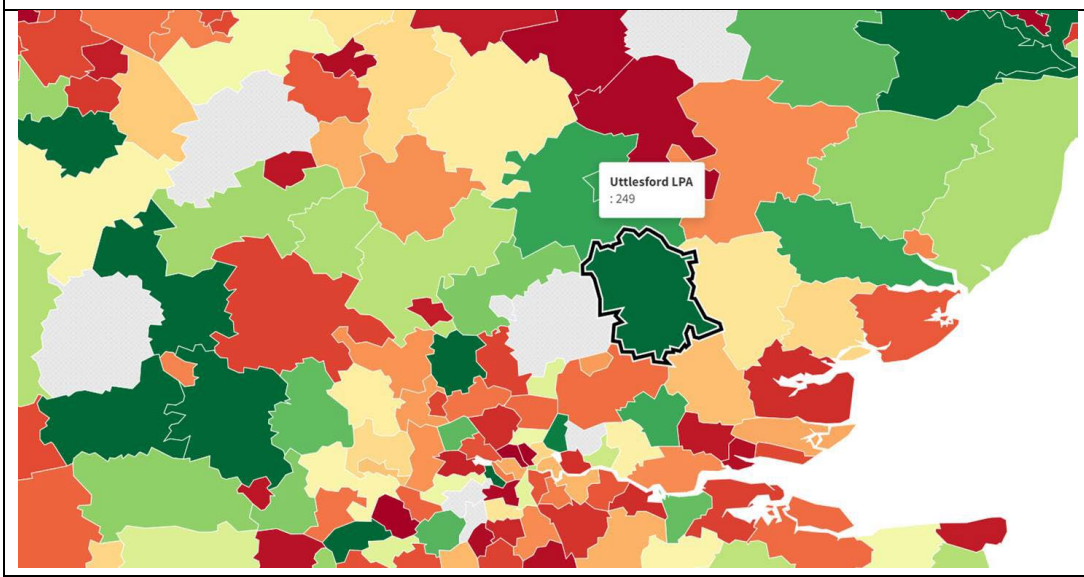
7.15 First, it is worth highlighting that the October 2020 survey undertaken by YouGov on behalf of NaCSBA found that 1 in 3 people (32%) are interested in building their own home at some point in the future, including 12% who said they were very interested. Notably, almost half (48%) of those aged between 18 and 24 were interested in building their own home, compared to just 18% of those aged 55 and over. This is notable as, traditionally, self-build has been seen as the reserve of older members of society aged 55 and over, with equity in their property.

7.16 Second, we can draw on NaCSBA data to better understand the level of demand for serviced plots in Uttlesford in relative terms. The association has published analysis with supporting maps and commentary titled "Mapping the Right to Build" in 2020. This includes an output on the demand for serviced plots as a proportion of total population relative to all other local authorities across England.

7.17 One of the key maps within the report highlights the areas of strongest demand and this is shown in the figure below. This shows a need for 249 units per 100,000 head of population in Uttlesford – this is a high figure and points to relatively strong demand for self-build in the District.

[15] A survey of 2,017 adults with fieldwork undertaken online between 9th – 11th October 2020. The figures are weighted and are representative of all GB adults aged 18+

Figure 7.3: Overall Demand for Self-Build Plots per 100,000 of Population



Source: NaCSBA "Mapping the Right to Build," 2020

Policy Response

7.18 The council's immediate priority should be to examine their historic supply of single dwelling developments to understand whether they should be counted towards the custom and self build supply.

7.19 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding PPG sets out how authorities can increase the number of planning permissions which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding and support the sector. The PPG[16] is clear that authorities should consider how local planning policies may address identified requirements for self and custom housebuilding to ensure enough serviced plots with suitable permission come forward and can focus on playing a key role in facilitating relationships to bring land forward. There are a number of measures which can be used to do this, including but not limited to:

- Supporting Neighbourhood Planning groups where they choose to include self-build and custom build housing policies in their plans;
- Working with Homes England to unlock land and sites in wider public ownership to deliver self-build and custom build housing; and
- When engaging with developers and landowners who own sites that are suitable for housing, encouraging them to consider self-build and custom housebuilding, and facilitating access to those on the register where the landowner is interested;
- Working with local partners, such as Housing Associations and third sector groups, to custom build affordable housing for veterans and other groups in acute housing need.

[16] Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 57-025-20210508

7.20 Currently the Council does not have a policy that specifically refers to self and custom build. However, though there is no reference to self and custom building within the supporting text, Policy H3 – New Homes within Development supports the principle to develop Self-Build plots as windfall sites, within the defined development boundaries and on land allocated to housing.

7.21 An increasing number of local planning authorities have adopted specific self-build and custom housebuilding policies in respective Local Plans to encourage delivery, promote and boost housing supply. There are also a number of appeal decisions in the context of decision-taking which have found that paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is engaged in the absence of specific policy on self-build housing when this is the focus of a planning application.

7.22 As a general principle, the Council should support the submission and delivery of self-build and custom housebuilding sites, where opportunities for land arise and where such schemes are consistent with other planning policies. As such, the Council should consider the inclusion of a specific self and custom build housing policy within the Local Plan in order to satisfy the clear demand for plots within the District.

7.23 The Council may also wish to consider allocating sites specifically for this use and the Council should consider any sites which do arise for this purpose.

7.24 An appeal decision[17] in Windsor and Maidenhead demonstrates the importance of delivering custom and self-build homes. This appeal allowed for the delivery of four custom and self-build homes in the Green Belt on the basis that "very considerable weight" was placed on the Borough not meeting its custom and self-build need.

7.25 The Council may also wish to consider an application to "Brownfield Land Release Fund" which includes specific funding to release brownfield sites for self and custom build housing. Not only is this important to provide additional homes but to ensure that the SME construction industry is supported.

Self- and Custom Build Housing: Key Messages

- As of 1st April 2016, and in line with the 2015 Act and the Right to Build, relevant authorities in England are required to have established and publicised a self-build and custom housebuilding register which records those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area in order to build their own self-build and custom houses.
- The Uttlesford Local Plan (January 2005) was adopted before the Uttlesford Self and Custom Build register was set up. Therefore, there are no policies that specifically refer to self and custom build. However, though there is no reference to self and custom building within the supporting text, Policy H3 – New Homes within Development supports the principle to develop Self-Build plots as windfall sites, within the defined development boundaries and on land allocated to housing.
- Data from the Council suggests that the demand has successfully been met with enough suitable permissions before the relevant deadlines although the supply will need to be investigated further in light of the LURA. It is suggested the Council should review its supply and give consideration to including a specific policy on this topic within the next Local Plan.

[17] Appeal A Ref: APP/T0355/W/22/3309281

Uttlesford Draft Local Plan 2021-2041

Local Retail Impact Threshold & Local Centre Allocations

ON BEHALF OF UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

July 2024

Contents

Appendices

1. Introduction

1.1 This Response has been produced by Nexus Planning ('Nexus') at the request of Uttlesford District Council ('the Council'). Nexus was employed by the Council to prepare the District's "Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update" (2023).

1.2 The Council has subsequently relied upon the findings of the Retail Capacity Study to inform the evolution of some of its Town Centre policies. Specific to this, we are asked to assist with two further topics which were not covered in the Retail Capacity Study, namely:

- Core Policy 50 (Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Hierarchy) proposes a Local Impact Threshold of 1,000 sq m (gross) and the Council seeks further evidence in support of this; and
- Core Policy 2 (Meeting our Housing Needs) designates a number of Strategic Housing Allocations, whilst Core Policy 50 explains that those Allocations will be supported with the provision of new Local Centres. The Council seeks to understand what sort of scale and mix of Local Centre provision might be appropriate to support two of those Allocations; at Great Dunmow and at Takeley.

1.3 We address these topics individually in Sections 2 and 3 of this document.

2. Core Policy 50 - Retail Impact Threshold

The Uttlesford Draft Local Plan

2.1 Core Policy 50 of the Draft Local Plan defines a series of Town Centre Boundaries for all Town and Local Centres in the District. These boundaries were based on the work carried out by Nexus in the 2023 Retail Capacity Study. Within those boundaries, Core Policy 50 then sets out how the Council will implement its development management policies. One specification is that:

> *"Where planning permission is required for any retail or leisure proposal outside these centres, they will be subject to an impact assessment, appropriate to the use. In Uttlesford the threshold for such an impact assessment is over 1000 sqm (gross)".*

2.2 In this section, we examine the relevant legislature which governs retail impact thresholds and its application in the Uttlesford context.

Policy Context

2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF', 2023) explains at Paragraph 94 that:

> *"94. When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m2 of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:*
>
> *a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and*
>
> *b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme)".*

2.4 Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') on Town Centres and Retail further elaborates on this at Paragraph 015:

> *"The impact test only applies to proposals exceeding 2,500 square metres gross of floorspace* unless a different locally appropriate threshold is set by the local planning authority. In setting a locally appropriate threshold it will be important to consider the:*
>
> - *scale of proposals relative to town centres*
> - *the existing viability and vitality of town centres*
> - *cumulative effects of recent developments*
> - *whether local town centres are vulnerable*
> - *likely effects of development on any town centre strategy*
> - *impact on any other planned investment"*

2.5 It is therefore evident that any Local Impact Threshold which deviates from the nationally set default threshold of 2,500 sq m will have necessitated a consideration of the six bullet points under Paragraph 015 of the PPG.

The Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update (2023)

2.6 The Retail Capacity Study Update prepared by Nexus in 2023 was supported by a significant weight of empirical data and research. A key pillar of the assessment was a household telephone survey of 607 households in Uttlesford District and its immediate surrounds, prepared by NEMS Market Research. That survey sought to understand quantitative retail and leisure shopping patterns, as well as a range of qualitative views on the various Town Centres within the District, as well as a range of other matters. The survey findings were included in full at Appendix B to the Retail Capacity Study, with detailed assessment and analysis by Nexus at Section 4 ('Capacity Assessment') and at Appendix C (Statistical Tables).

2.7 The survey was also backed up by a detailed Health-check assessment of all the Town and Local Centres in the District, prepared by Nexus, and carried out in accordance with the suggested range of indicators set out at Paragraph 006 of the Town Centres and Retail PPG. This was contained at Section 5 ('Health-Check Assessment') of the Retail Capacity Study.

2.8 Building on these two aspects, Nexus provided a series of recommendations at Section 7 of the Retail Capacity Assessment ('Summary and Recommendations). Pertinent to Retail impact Threshold, this included a recommendation at 7.14 that:

> *"Given the smaller size of Uttlesford's town centres, and the large quantum of independent retailers, we consider it likely that the Council may wish to consider implementing an impact threshold at below the NPPF standard of 2,500 sq m. In doing so, the Council would need an appropriate evidence base. The findings of this Study should be used in this regard and the Council may wish to consider a specific exercise in re-examining a suitable threshold. To this end, we note that emerging Core Policy 50 under the Regulation 18 Plan had a suggested threshold of 1,000 sq m. This looks sensible in our estimation, though this threshold should be re-tested for its soundness under a re-consideration of the Plan policies. Such an assessment would incorporate the market share and health-check findings of this Study, alongside any other economic or market considerations at that point in time and consider whether the 1,000 sq m threshold remained appropriate".*

2.9 The rationale for the recommendation in 2023 was therefore built on an assessment of the scale and nature of retail provision in Uttlesford District. However, no detailed consideration was given to the PPG factors highlighted above as that was outside the scope of the initial reporting. Accordingly, the Council has asked Nexus to objectively consider this matter in detail.

2.10 In doing so, we refer to the health-checks and household telephone surveys which were prepared in support of the Retail Capacity Study 2023, which remain relevant at the present date.

2.11 Within this context, we therefore address all six of the bullet points under Paragraph 15 of the Town Centres and Retail PPG. Our method and interpretation of the PPG test was recently examined at the Crawley Borough Local Plan Examination (January 2024) and found to be sound by the Plan Inspectors (February 2024). We therefore adopt the same methodology here.

i. Scale of Proposals Relative to Town Centres

2.12 The 2023 Retail Capacity Study incorporated a series of composition charts for each of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet Town Centres in Section 5. We have floorspace data provided by Experian Goad for Saffron Walden, whilst Valuation Office data has been utilised for Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.

2.13 Applying that composition analysis to the PPG test, we are able to contrast below the relative scale of units in each case.

Figure 2.1 – Unit Sizes, Town Centres

	Saffron Walden	Great Dunmow	Stansted Mountfitchet
Average Unit Size	122 sq m	125 sq m	147 sq m
Average Convenience Goods Unit Size	235 sq m	301 sq m	382 sq m
Average Comparison Goods Unit Size	126 sq m	113 sq m	142 sq m
Average Service Goods Units Size	112 sq m	102 sq m	96 sq m
Average Vacant unit Size	111 sq m	105 sq m	120 sq m

2.14 The analysis of Uttlesford's Town Centres points to a prevalence of smaller retail unit sizes, with averages unit sizes ranging between 122 – 147 sq m across the three centres. Convenience goods units are larger, averaging between 235 – 382 sq m across the three centres. Comparison goods and service goods units are considerably smaller at typically just over 100 sq m.

2.15 Linked to this, it is common elsewhere to draw on committed development proposals to understand the type of scale of units which are being sought in edge or out-of-town locations and whether there was likely to be an overlap in provision. In this instance the Council has reported that there are no such extant permissions.

2.16 There is though a current application for a new foodstore (to be operated by Lidl) in Great Dunmow[1]. That store is proposed at 1,512 sq m net floorspace, incorporating 1,210 sq m of convenience goods sales and 302 sq m net comparison goods sales.

2.17 There is therefore no evidence of demand to draw on from committed development, and only little by way of proposed development. Notwithstanding, it is reasonable to suggest that the average size of units in Uttlesford's town centres are likely to be smaller than the average size of units sought outside town centres. This does not mean though that the centres are immune from threat. There do exist a number of larger vacant units which are capable of competing for occupation with out-of-town proposals. Examples of this include the current vacant units around Market Place in Saffron Walden.

2.18 To try to assist further, we have reviewed www.therequirementlist.com which Nexus subscribes to. Whilst this list can only be indicative, and does not indicate concrete demand, it is helpful in understanding the range of operators who might wish to open new premises in the Uttlesford area in the near future. As can be seen, all but one of the retailers (The Range) is seeking floorspace which would otherwise not qualify for retail impact assessment at the national threshold if it were to be brought forward outside a Town Centre. This lends further weight to the scale of local impact

[1] LPA ref UTT/23/2006/FUL

threshold recommended (i.e. 1,000 sq m), whereby the majority of larger unit sizes detailed on the list would require impact assessment under the local threshold.

Operator	Location	Size of Unit
Lidl	Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden	1,500 – 2,300 sq m
Toolstation	Great Dunmow	300 – 550 sq m
Costa Coffee	Great Dunmow	100 sq m
The Range	Saffron Walden	2,500 – 6,500 sq m
Majestic Wine	Saffron Walden	1,800 – 4,200 sq m
Whistles	Saffron Walden	120 – 180 sq m
Hobbs	Saffron Walden	200 – 280 sq m
Wendy's	Saffron Walden	100 - 400 sq m
JoJo Mamam Bebe	Saffron Walden	70 – 130 sq m
M&S Food	Saffron Walden	1,200 – 2,300 sq m
Tortilla	Stansted Mountfitchet	80 – 220 sq m

ii. The Existing Vitality and Viability of Town Centres

2.19 A full health-check for each Town Centre was carried out at Section 5 of the Retail Capacity Study 2023. We have extrapolated those findings into **Appendix A** of this report, and draw further on those findings below where we consider the 'vulnerability' of the Centres.

iii. Cumulative Effects of Recent Developments

2.20 The Council has confirmed that there are no recent developments which might cumulatively impact on the relevant Town Centres.

iv. Whether Local Town Centres are Vulnerable

2.21 The composition data at Figures 24, 26 and 29 of the Retail Capacity Study 2023, points towards relative pictures of health in each of the three main centres. All three centres have vacancy rates below the UK average. However, when contrast to previous surveys in 2010, it is evident that vacancies have increased significantly in Saffron Walden (6.7% to 11.4%) and slightly in Stansted Mountfitchet (4.7% to 5.9%). The vacancy rate in Great Dunmow has remained relatively static (4.2% to 4.1%).

2.22 Moreover, Uttlesford District is one of the few Districts of the UK which does not have any significant out-of-centre or out-of-town retail competition. There are no major retail parks and only a handful of medium-sized supermarkets. Each of the three largest centres has a foodstore at its core (Waitrose in Saffron Walden, Co-op in Great Dunmow and Co-op in Stansted Mountfitchet), which they rely on heavily for footfall generation.

2.23 As a result, Uttlesford's town centres are particularly susceptible to retail impact, even from relatively modest developments. The proof of this is in the recent submissions made on behalf of Lidl for a new foodstore in Great Dunmow. Whilst we make no comment here on the acceptability of that proposal, it is a fact that even the applicant has modelled

that there would be an 8.8%[2] reduction on trade on convenience goods facilities in Great Dunmow Town Centre. It is clear, therefore, that even the most optimistic of assessments would result in meaningful impact on a town centre. Notably, at 2,169 sq m gross floorspace, the Lidl proposal would not necessarily have to be assessed for impact under the nationally set threshold (2,500 sq m gross).

2.24 Accordingly, we consider that the rural setting of Uttlesford, coupled with its heavy reliance on existing anchor retailers within its town centres, provides proper context for its town centres to be considered 'vulnerable' to out-of-centre trade.

v. Likely Effects of Development on any Town Centre Strategy

2.25 The Council does not currently have in place any Town Centre Strategies for its individual Town Centres. Notwithstanding it does propose to bring forward place-specific strategies in due course, once the Local Plan is adopted.

vi. Impact on any Other Planned Investment

2.26 The Council has confirmed that it is not aware of any additional planned Investment which would factor into thinking around the local impact threshold.

Conclusion

2.27 The PPG sets out a range of criteria which are relevant to considering whether a Local Impact Threshold should be imposed. This report has considered each in turn.

2.28 Our assessment is that as a result of the likely vulnerability of the town centres, it is appropriate for Uttlesford District Council to seek a Local Impact Threshold to protect its centres. The designation of a Local Impact threshold need not be considered as a barrier to investment, but instead an appropriate safeguard to ensure that retail impact is assessed across a range of proposals.

2.29 Our recommendation is that a 1,000 sq m gross impact threshold be applied, in line with the wording of Core Policy 50 of the Draft Local Plan. A threshold at this limit would capture discount foodstore proposals, such as the example we have described in Great Dunmow, whilst not unnecessarily incumbering smaller proposals beneath the threshold.

[2] Rapleys, Planning and Retail Statement, Table 10.9 (LPA ref: UTT/23/2006/FUL)

3. Core Policy 50 – Local Centres in Support of Strategic Allocations

Introduction

3.1 The Council also wishes to understand the appropriate quantum and mix of uses which might be appropriate as part of the Local Centre Designations for two of their proposed strategic allocations at Takeley and Great Dunmow.

3.2 Local centres in strategic allocations should principally cater for the large proportion of residents' 'top-up' food shopping and service provision, especially retail and leisure services such as cafes, hairdressers and beauty salons. It is expected that residents in most cases would still travel further afield to larger retail centres for the majority of their comparison goods shopping. Whether a strategic allocation would cater for main food shopping or not will be dependent on the scale of the local centre and the availability of other food stores in the vicinity. We anticipate that similar principles will apply to the proposed strategic allocations.

3.3 In keeping with the wider capacity assessment for the District as a whole, we have focused on the delivery of the strategic allocations to the end of the Plan period at 2041. Although the two strategic allocations are at early stages of the planning process, based on our knowledge of various strategic allocation proposals, it is assumed that both will have been completed by that point.

Population

3.4 To calculate the likely future population and expenditure of the strategic allocations, we first consider average household sizes in Uttlesford District. Whilst housing mix will differ marginally between different strategic allocations, it is assumed for the purpose of our assessment that on average they will follow the Uttlesford averages.

3.5 We derive average household sizes from Census 2021 data regarding the number of households and the number of people living in those households. The table below outlines the average household size for each dwelling size. We assume that these will persist to 2041.

Table 3.1 Average household size

Dwelling Size	Population	Household number	Average Persons per Household
1-bedroom	3,122	2,289	1.36
2-bedroom	12,467	6,601	1.89
3-bedroom	28,577	11,375	2.51
4+-bedroom	33,988	11,051	3.08

Source: Census 2021

3.6 By applying the relevant average household sizes to the number of proposed dwellings to be accommodated at each strategic allocations, we are able to estimate the likely population at each settlement. The dwelling mix at both allocations is currently unknown and therefore we have assumed that dwelling sizes will follow the housing mix ratio assumptions in Table 3.2, which have been provided by the Council and are based on an amalgamation of market and affordable mixes as set out in the Uttlesford District Council Local Housing Needs Assessment.

Table 3.2 Dwelling mix assumptions

1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed
16.3%	20.2%	39.7%	23.8%

Source: Uttlesford District Council

3.7 Great Dunmow is allocated for 885 dwellings, whereas Takeley is allocated for 1,506 dwellings.

3.8 By multiplying the number of dwellings at each strategic allocation by the average household sizes for different dwelling sizes, we therefore calculate that the strategic allocations will have a combined population of 5,579 people, as seen in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Population at each strategic allocation

Strategic Allocation	Proposed Dwellings @ 2041	Proposed Population @ 2041
Great Dunmow	885	2,065
Takeley	1,506	3,514
Total	**2,391**	**5,579**

Source: Uttlesford District Council

Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity

3.9 From the projected populations at the strategic allocations, we can then calculate the expected convenience expenditure at each settlement.

3.10 We have sourced per capita convenience goods expenditure at the most recent reporting year of 2022 from Experian AppLibrary. For each strategic allocation we have sourced this data for the Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) in which they are located. For Great Dunmow, this figure is £2,744 and for Takeley this figure is slightly lower at £2,606.

3.11 This base year data is then projected forwards to the two reporting years (2023 and 2041) using the per capita growth forecasts as set out in Figure 7 of the Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 2021 (February 2024). These forecasts are appropriately adjusted for special forms of trading. The rates adopted can be seen in Table 3 of **Appendix B**.

3.12 To calculate the total expenditure generated by residents at each strategic allocation, we multiply the average per capita convenience goods expenditure by the number of persons expected to populate each strategic allocation. This provides an estimate of the overall convenience expenditure at each strategic allocation.

3.13 However, Local Centres would not be expected to fulfil the role of a main food shopping destination; in the main we would consider it appropriate for main food shopping needs arising from strategic allocations to be directed towards existing centres and food superstores. In recognition of this, we have disaggregated the identified expenditure in terms of the assumed 'main food' and 'top-up' shopping expenditure in accordance with our general observation from survey evidence. We therefore assume that 75% of spending will be apportioned to 'main food' spending and the remaining 25% will be apportioned to 'top-up' spending.

Table 3.4 Estimated Available Convenience Expenditure at each strategic allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Total Population	Per Capita Convenience Expenditure @ 2023	Per Capita Convenience Expenditure @ 2041	Estimated Available Convenience Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Available 'Main Food' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Available 'Top-up' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)
Great Dunmow	2,065	2,666	2,612	5.4	4.0	1.3
Takeley	3,514	2,532	2,482	8.7	6.5	2.2
Total	**5,579**			**14.1**	**10.6**	**3.5**

Notes:
Populations from Table 3.3.
Per Capita Convenience @ 2023 from Experian App Library 2022 report, Great Dunmow data from E02004597 and Takeley data from E02004596
Per Capita Convenience @ 2041 is the 2023 figures projected forwards by the annual growth forecasts in Table 3 of Appendix C
The split between main food and top-up is based on a 75%/25% split in line with Nexus experience and professional judgment

3.14 The table above shows that £1.3m convenience top-up spending is likely to be generated by residents at Great Dunmow, and another £2.2m at Takeley, for a total of £3.5m.

3.15 Not all of this spend is expected to be carried out locally. Professional judgments need to be made in respect of the proportion of available 'top-up' expenditure which could reasonably be expected to be directed to local facilities within the strategic allocation as part of individuals' spend, as well as any expenditure which might be attracted from adjacent areas and from passing custom.

3.16 From our knowledge of how households shop and their natural inclination to use facilities close to home to undertake much of their 'top-up' shopping, we consider that appropriately located convenience facilities accessible to both of the planned strategic allocations will generally have the potential to attract around 75% of all such expenditure.

3.17 We therefore consider that the majority of the turnover of these 'top-up' convenience stores will originate within the strategic allocations. However, individuals residing outside the strategic allocations will clearly visit these developments for various reasons (visiting friends, school, work etc.), and we have therefore assumed that an added 20% of the turnover of all 'top-up' stores within the strategic allocations will be 'inflow' from outside the strategic allocation itself.

3.18 Based on these assumptions, we set out in the table below our estimation for the available 'top-up' expenditure which might support the strategic allocations in the period to 2041.

Table 3.5 Estimated Total 'Top-Up' Convenience Goods Expenditure at each strategic allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Available 'Top-up' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Retention of Expenditure @ 75% (£m)	Estimated Inflow of Trade @ 20% (£m)	Total 'Top-up' Goods Expenditure Available (£m)
Great Dunmow	1.3	1.0	0.2	1.2
Takeley	2.2	1.6	0.3	2.0
Total	**3.5**	**2.6**	**0.5**	**3.2**

Notes:
Estimated available 'Top-up' Expenditure taken from Table 3.4
Assumed retention of 75% of available strategic allocation residents spend + inflow of 20% of trade from beyond the strategic allocation
Average sales density based on Nexus Planning professional judgment

3.19 The final step in our methodology is to convert the identified 'top-up' expenditure into a floorspace estimate. In undertaking this exercise, we deploy an average sales density which is more accented towards the known sales density of traders likely to occupy smaller convenience stores (e.g. Budgens Co-op, Londis etc), potentially discount foodstores (Lidl or Aldi), or one of the 'main four' foodstore operators who might open a smaller format store. Using this approach, we adopt a sales density average of £9,500/sqm at 2041. The results are set out in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 Estimated Floorspace Capacity for 'Top-Up' Convenience Goods @2041

Strategic Allocation	Total 'Top-up' Goods Expenditure Available (£m)	Estimated Average Sales Density for Convenience Retailers (£/sqm)	Estimated 'Top-up' Convenience Floorspace Capacity by 2041 (sqm)
Great Dunmow	1.2	9,500	128
Takeley	2.0	9,500	207
Total	**3.2**		**334**

Notes:
Estimated available 'Top-up' Expenditure taken from Table 3.5
Average sales density based on Nexus Planning professional judgment

3.20 The results show that there will be an estimated £3.2m 'top-up' spend available at the two strategic allocations by 2041. Converting this to floorspace capacity, we expect the strategic allocations to support an additional 334 sqm of additional convenience shopping floorspace. Given the scale of floorspace required, we expect this to take the form of smaller foodstores.

Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity

3.21 We carry out a similar assessment of strategic allocation capacity to support comparison goods in our tables below. The key methodology points and assumptions are set out below:

- Comparison expenditure per capita is taken from Experian AppLibrary at 2022, for the same MSOAs used for the convenience expenditure data;
- Comparison expenditure is then grown using the growth rates outlined at Table 3 of Appendix C;
- We assume that a much lower percentage of comparison goods spend generated by strategic allocation residents (5%) will be spent within Local Centres. The vast majority of such spending would be expected to be carried out in higher order town centres. A similar assumption is made that an additional 10% of inflow would be generated from individuals visiting the strategic allocation from outside; and
- We adopt an average sales density of £5,000/sqm at 2041, in line with our observed averages for comparison goods retailers in smaller Local Centres.

Table 3.7 Estimated Available Comparison Expenditure at each strategic allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Total Population	Per Capita Comparison Expenditure @ 2023	Per Capita Comparison Expenditure @ 2041	Estimated Available Comparison Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)
Great Dunmow	2,065	4,127	6,042	12.5
Takeley	3,514	3,986	5,836	20.5
Total	**5,579**			**33.0**

Notes:
Populations from Table 3.3
Per Capita Comparison @ 2023 from Experian App Library 2022 report, Great Dunmow data from E02004597 and Takeley data from E02004596
Per Capita Comparison @ 2041 is the 2023 figures projected forwards by the annual growth forecasts in Table 3

Table 3.8 Estimated Total Comparison Expenditure at each strategic allotment @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Available Comparison Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Retention of Expenditure @ 5% (£m)	Estimated Inflow of Trade @ 10% (£m)	Total Comparison Goods Expenditure Available (£m)
Great Dunmow	12.5	0.6	0.1	0.7
Takeley	20.5	1.0	0.1	1.1
Total	**33.0**	**1.6**	**0.2**	**1.8**

Notes:
Estimated available comparison goods Expenditure taken from Table 3.7
Assumed retention of 5% of available strategic allocation residents spend + inflow of 10% of trade beyond the strategic allocation

Table 3.9 Estimated Floorspace Capacity for Comparison Goods @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Total Comparison Goods Expenditure Available (£m)	Estimated Average Sales Density for Comparison Retailers (£/sqm)	Estimated Comparison Floorspace Capacity by 2041 (sqm)
Great Dunmow	0.7	5,000	137
Takeley	1.1	5,000	226
Total	**1.8**		**363**

Notes:
Estimated total comparison goods Expenditure taken from Table 3.8
Average sales density based on Nexus Planning professional judgment

3.22 Our analysis shows that by 2041, the strategic allocations will collectively support approximately 363 sqm of new comparison goods floorspace.

Services Floorspace Capacity

3.23 In addition to the 'top-up' and comparison goods floorspace, it would also be normal to bring forward a number of units in service retail use. These are typically classified as being in retail services (e.g. hairdressers, nail bars, dry cleaners etc), leisure services (cafes and restaurants) and financial and business services (e.g. estate agents, banks etc). These services are less easy to estimate expenditure capacity for, though Experian Goad estimate that such uses collectively account for 40% of units and 26% of floorspace in UK centres. We have factored in that the proposed Local Centres supporting the strategic allocations are likely to be smaller than the UK average surveyed by Goad and might be expected to have a

slightly higher proportion of service goods. We have therefore assumed that 40% of all floorspace in the centres will be used for services.

Summary

3.24 In light of the above, we have identified theoretical capacity to support the levels of floorspace in each strategic allocations in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Indicative Floorspace Capacity at each strategic allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity (sqm)	Estimated Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity (sqm)	Estimated Service Goods Floorspace Capacity (sqm)	Total Floorspace (sqm)
Great Dunmow	128	137	177	442
Takeley	207	226	288	720
Total	**334**	**363**	**465**	**1,162**

Notes:

Service goods floorspace capacity assumes this will account for 40% of total floorspace

3.25 We calculate that the strategic allocations will collectively support an additional 1,162 sqm of retail floorspace by 2041.

3.26 At these approximate levels of provision, we consider that there is unlikely to be any harm to existing centres. However, our figures are acknowledged as indicative and would need testing for their appropriateness through the ordinary planning process in each instance.

Appendix A – Health-Check Assessments (Extrapolated from Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study Update, 2023)

5. Health-Check Assessment

5.1 This section of the report sets out our detailed health check findings on the vitality and viability of Uttlesford's Key Settlements (Town Centres), as defined in the Council's proposed draft Regulation 18 Plan (Core Policy 3 and 50), of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, as well as its Local Rural Centres of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport, Takeley and Thaxted.

5.2 The extent of our assessments of the centres have been determined by the extent of Experian Goad Plans (where available), in order to provide consistency and allow for comparison against national averages and the findings of the previous 2016 and 2021 Studies. Where Goad Plans are not available, the Council's base mapping has been used. Full sized composition plans are contained at **Appendix D**.

Methodology

5.3 This health-check assessment builds on the consultant teams' analysis of market trends as outlined in Chapter 2. We supplement this analysis with two sources of new empirical evidence; consultation and stakeholder engagement, and our town centre health checks. By combining the findings of our engagement with local groups, residents and businesses, and our on-the-ground observations, we are able to build a picture of the current health of the centres, based on performance against the range of health check indicators set out in the NPPF/PPG.

5.4 We describe our methodology for the health check exercise below, before going on to examine each of the Town and Local Rural Centres in Uttlesford. We utilise the categorisations employed by Experian. These are mostly commonplace, but for the avoidance of doubt, 'Retail Services' include the likes of dry cleaners, health & beauty and opticians, whilst 'Leisure Services' include bars, cafes, and fast-foods.

5.5 Nexus carried out the latest health check surveys in July 2023.

5.6 Health checks are both a physical exercise in walking the town centres to understand their make-up, constraints, and opportunities, as well as an exercise in understanding the views of local stakeholders.

5.7 While the NPPF does not provide a precise list of criterions to be used to assess the health of a centre, the Government's 'Town Centres and Retail' National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) of March 2014, updated in July 2019, offers a helpful set of indicators. The NPPG explains these indicators should be monitored on a regular basis in order to judge the health of a centre and its performance over time:

- **Diversity of Uses** | Data on the diversity of uses in Uttlesford's centres was collated during the health check completed by Nexus in July 2023. The collected data includes the number, type and quantum of floorspace provided in these locations.
- **Proportion of Vacant Street Level Property** | Vacant properties were also identified during the 2023 health check. The volume of vacant floorspace within a centre can provide an indication of how well the centre is performing. However, it is important to acknowledge that a degree of vacancy is inevitable and indeed desirable. Some churn is expected in the market as units alter and change, as new businesses come in, and others leave. In this context, vacant units can be found in even the strongest of town centres. Equally, a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean a centre is performing well; as the quality and performance of the occupied units may be relatively poor.
- **Commercial Yields on Non-Domestic Property** | Whilst this can be an indicator of town centre performance over time, data on commercial yields for Uttlesford's centres is not publicly available at this time, as it is now only

produced by ONS for major cities. Commercial rents provide a suitable alternative indication of the relative attractiveness of the area.

- **Customers' Views and Behaviour** | Information on customers' views is based on the results of the household survey data. Importantly, and as described at Chapter 4, the household survey undertaken by NEMS represents a demographically accurate sample of the population.
- **Retailer Representation and Intentions to Change Representation** | Information on the current strength of centres and retailer representation have been derived from Experian Goad Category Reports and other published sources.
- **Commercial Rents** | An examination of average prime rents to facilitate an understanding of shopping rents and investment yields.
- **Pedestrian Flows** | General footfall and pedestrian flows were observed by Nexus during site visits to the Centres. Nexus was able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of pedestrian flows through observation at varying times.
- **Accessibility** | Consideration of access to and around each centre was informed by the Nexus site visits. This was in addition to stakeholder engagement, and a desktop review of data pertaining to access to public transport and parking facilities. The accessibility of a centre is determined by the ease and convenience of access by a variety of transport means including pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people.
- **Perceptions of Safety and Occurrence of Crime** | General perceptions of safety were gathered by Nexus during the site visits and supplemented by a review of existing data.
- **State of Town Centre Environmental Quality** | Consideration of the quality of the buildings and public realm in each of the centres was informed by Nexus' site visits to the centres.
- **Balance between independent and multiple stores** | Consideration of the balance of retailer representation was informed by Nexus' site visits to the centres, as well as Goad mapping.
- **Barriers to Entry** | Consideration of the extent to which there is evidence of barriers to new businesses opening and existing businesses expanding. Attention was given to the length of unit vacancies as per Goad Reports, as well as the size of units available to let, and insights provided through engagement with relevant stakeholders operating businesses within the centres.
- **Opening Hours / Availability / Evening Economy** | General understanding of the night-time economy was informed by Nexus' site visits to the centres, stakeholder engagement, and a desktop review of various local businesses' opening hours.

Saffron Walden Town Centre

Description

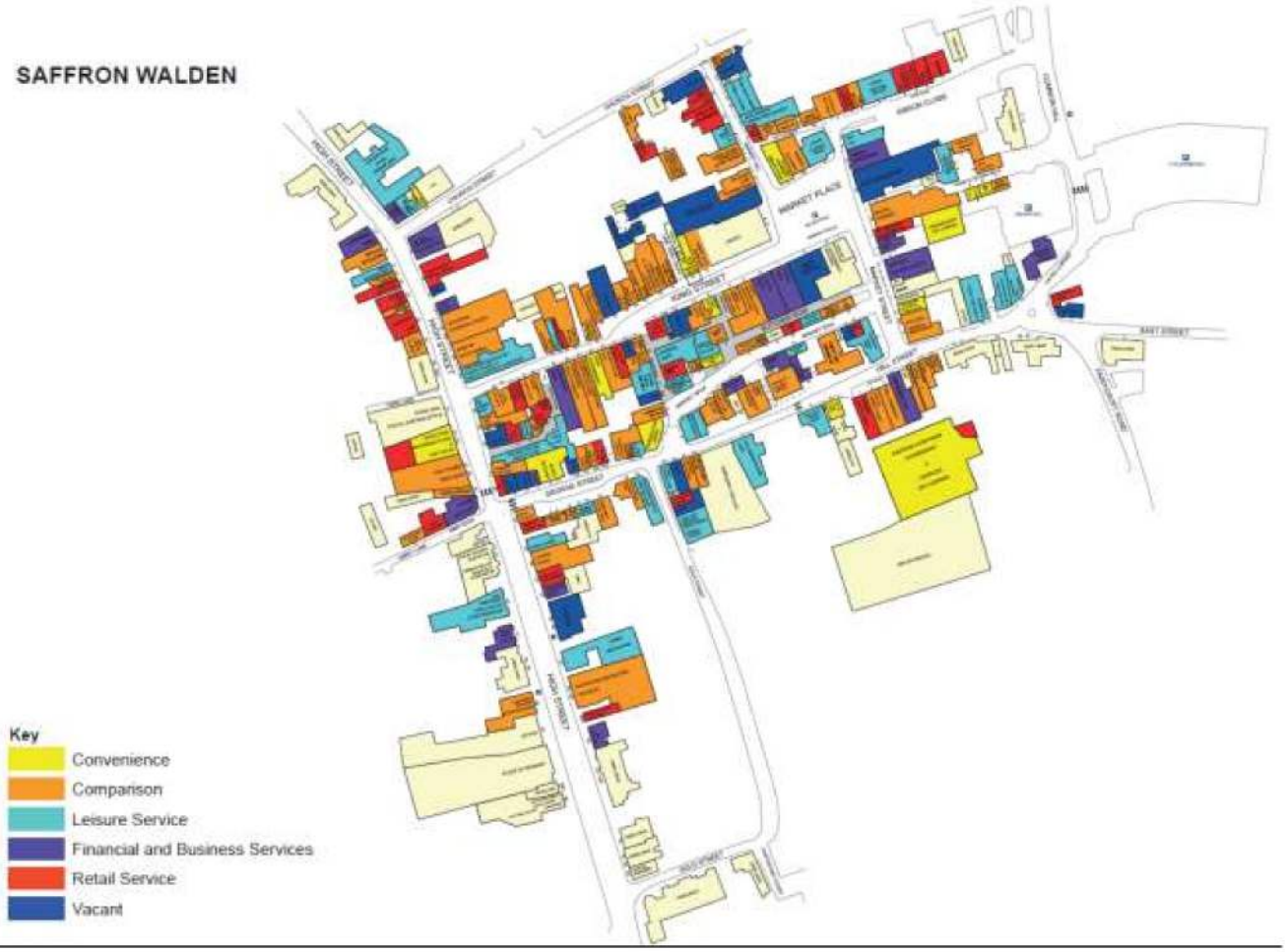
5.8 Saffron Walden is the primary retail and leisure destination in the District, providing a range of services and amenities that are not widely available within the smaller settlements. The centre is located 12 miles north of Bishops Stortford.

5.9 Due to the historic nature of this centre, the layout is informal and interesting, with several narrow side streets which add to its character. The main shopping streets are located on High Street, King Street, Hill Street and around Market Place, which acts as a focal point of the centre. The centre is entirely within a Conservation Area. Saffron Walden is classed as a 'Town Centre' within the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) and the Regulation 18 Plan (2023).

Overall Composition

5.10 Saffron Walden is the largest centre in the District comprising 210 units in town centre uses. The centre has a good mix of uses largely comprising independent retailers with a number of national multiples including Boots, Superdrug, Monsoon and Robert Dyas, primarily located in King Street and Hill Street. Waitrose is the largest convenience store located to the south of the centre. Our Goad assessment of the centre is contained at Figure 23 below, and also in larger print form at Appendix D.

Figure 23. Saffron Walden Composition Map



5.11 Figure 24 provides an overview of Saffron Walden's composition at the time of the site visits in July 2023, compared to the UK averages (2023). It also contrasts the findings to the last health checks carried out for the Council in 2010 and 2021.

Figure 24. Saffron Walden Town Centre Composition

Categories	Units 2010 (%)	Units 2021 (#)	Units 2021 (%)	Units 2023 (#)	Units 2023 (%)	UK Average Units 2023 (%)
Convenience	7.2	16	7.2	14	6.7	9.3
Comparison	54.1	77	34.8	80	38.1	26.9
Retail Services		*32*	*14.9*	*34*	*16.2*	*15.8*
Leisure Services		*37*	*16.7*	*38*	*18.1*	*25.3*
Financial & Business Services		*27*	*12.2*	*20*	*9.5*	*8.7*
Services	32.0	96	43.4	92	43.8	49.8
Vacant	6.7	32	14.5	24	11.4	13.8
Total	**100.0**	**221**	**100.0**	**210**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Nexus Planning 2021 and 2023
Note: Data analysed for 2021 and 2023 uses the current Goad category definitions to allow comparison with UK averages
Note: Data analysed for 2010 using superseded Goad category definitions to allow comparison with historic data.

Convenience

5.12 The proportion of convenience goods units (6.7%) has remained relatively consistent since 2010, but is marginally below the UK average of 9.3%.

5.13 Qualitatively, the centre has a wide range of convenience units including butchers, bakers, and health food shops. The majority of these units are independent stores. The centre also features a Waitrose store (2,501 sq m net) to the south of the town centre. The town has two out-of-centre foodstores; a Tesco on Radwinter Road (3,196 sq m net) to the south east of the town, and an Aldi store (1,218 sq m net) on Thaxted Road to the south of the town.

Comparison

5.14 Comparison units account for the largest proportion of stores within Saffron Walden Town Centre, with 80 units (38.1%), which considerably exceeds the UK average of 26.9%. This suggests that the centre is still performing well in terms of comparison goods offer, and this is borne out by the survey results highlighted in Section 4. Notwithstanding, in keeping with many town centres across the UK, Saffron Walden has seen a significant decrease in the number of comparison goods retailers since 2010, when they accounted for 54.1% of units in the centre.

5.15 The centre features a wide selection of different comparison units, including fashion, jewellers and homeware and charity shops, which would all be expected in the largest town centre in the District.

Services

5.16 The service sector (retail, leisure, financial and business services) has increased in presence since the 2010 health checks. Overall, services now account for 43.8% of units within the centre, compared to 32.0% in 2010.

5.17 Retail services account for 16.2% of the units in Saffron Walden, which is very similar to the UK average of 15.8%. Of the retail services provided in Saffron Walden Town Centre, it is notable that nearly two-thirds provide 'health and beauty' services.

5.18 The centre features a lower proportion of leisure units (18.1%) compared to the UK average of 25.3%. The leisure services currently present in the centre include a range of cafes, along with several public houses, two hotels, restaurants and takeaway units. Notably, Saffron Walden does not currently offer any increasingly popular 'experience-based' leisure activities such as indoor golf or escape rooms.

5.19 Financial and business services account for 9.5% of the centre's units. This is marginally higher than the UK average of 8.7%. The centre's offer includes a wide range of banking options, as well as a number of estate agents.

Vacancies

5.20 At the time of the site visits in July 2023, there were 24 vacant units (11.4%), a lower proportion than the UK average (13.8%). This is an improved situation to 2021 when 14.5% of units were vacant and suggests that Saffron Walden Town Centre has emerged well out of the pandemic. This is corroborated by our market share analysis in Section 4.

Pedestrian Flows

5.21 During the site visits high pedestrian flows were observed throughout the centre, with no particularly quiet areas observed. The historic street pattern and highly walkable nature of the centre contributes to this. King Street and Hill Street were noted as having the greatest pedestrian flows.

Accessibility

5.22 There are a number of car parks available in Saffron Walden, all of which are located on the outskirts of the centre. These include:

- Fairycroft Road (incl. Waitrose) – 294 spaces
- The Common – 109 spaces
- Rose and Crown– 36 spaces
- Swan Meadow – 394 spaces

5.223 Fairycroft Road, The Common and Swan Meadow are charged at £2.00 for 3 hours. Rose and Crown is £1.20 for a maximum of 2 hours. Further parking was also witnessed on Market Place at the time of the Nexus site visit. Car parks appeared to be well utilised.

5.224 High levels of traffic were noted along High Street, particularly at the Junction with King Street, although no congestion was noted at the time of the Nexus visit.

5.225 There is no train station in Saffron Walden. The closest station is 2 miles away at Audley End with a number of bus services connecting it to the centre.

5.226 A number of bus services link Saffron Walden to locations elsewhere in the sub-region, including Cambridge, Haverhill and Stansted Airport, as well as many other local towns.

5.227 Parts of the centre are pedestrianised. However, narrow pavements make navigating the centre by foot difficult in some places. Measures were noted on Hill Street to widen the pedestrian area using cones.

5.228 The results of the household survey found that 76.4% of respondents travelled to the town centre using private vehicles, whilst 20.1% had walked to the centre. 2.6% of respondents used the bus.

Perception of Safety

5.29 The centre was relatively busy at the time of the site visits, providing significant natural surveillance across the centre. The perception of crime in Saffron Walden is low. This is corroborated by data from crimerate.co.uk which notes that the incidence of crime in Saffron Walden was 35% lower than the UK average in 2023.

Opening Hours

5.30 Saffron Walden benefits from a number of public houses and restaurants throughout the centre which ensures that an evening economy is in operation within this centre. With the exception of some convenience units, such as Waitrose, the remainder of the centre operates traditional opening hours.

Environmental Quality

5.31 Saffron Walden is a pleasant centre which appears to be well maintained and no litter evident at the time of the visits. A number of planters with attractive floral displays were witnessed throughout the centre along with heritage signage.

5.32 Attractive shopfronts and buildings were noted throughout the visit, in particular the Cross Keys Hotel, the Library in Market Place and the Corner Cupboard. Shop frontages throughout the centre were of good quality. However, a more consistent approach to shop frontages would be beneficial throughout the centre.

5.33 The street furniture was largely uncluttered and the pavements in relatively good condition, albeit very narrow in places as would be expected in a centre of its historic nature.

Barriers to Entry

5.34 The majority of the centre is designated as a Conservation Area (designated 1968) and includes a number of listed buildings. Whilst this is undoubtedly a positive in terms of visitor attraction, it could also potentially act as a barrier to entry for new businesses as any alterations will have to demonstrate the preservation of the Conservation Area.

5.35 There are a number of vacant units in the Town Centre (24 no.). These are not concentrated in any particular area, which is a positive. However, it is notable that a number of vacant units were previously occupied by national multiple retailers. This could be considered a barrier to entry to other national multiples who may be concerned with the viability of the centre.

Customer Views & Behaviour

5.36 When asked what they most liked about Saffron Walden Town Centre, the most common responses from the NEMS household survey (Q29) were 'choice and range of shops' (30.4%), the 'environmental quality of the centre' (17.0%) and 'the market' (7.3%).

5.37 The top three responses as to what would encourage respondents to visit the centre more often (Q30) were, 'increased choice and range of shops' (14.4%), 'more parking' (6.9%) and 'improved non-food shops' (6.5%).

Summary

5.38 In summary, our health-check of Saffron Walden Town Centre indicates that:

- The provision of convenience goods units is slightly below the UK average, whilst the provision of comparison goods units is well above the UK average.

- The centre is increasingly accented towards independent retail.
- There has been a notable increase in service provision in the town centre. Services account for 43.8% of units within the centre, compared to 32.0% in 2010. Financial services and health and beauty services are especially prominent.
- The centre now has a lower number of vacant units (11.4%) compared to the UK average (13.8%). This is a reversal of fortunes since 2021 when it had a rate higher (14.5%) than the UK average.
- In terms of improvements, improved visitor signposting to the car parks would be beneficial. A shopfront strategy could be implemented to assist in bringing all shopfronts up to the high standards set in general.

Great Dunmow Town Centre

Description

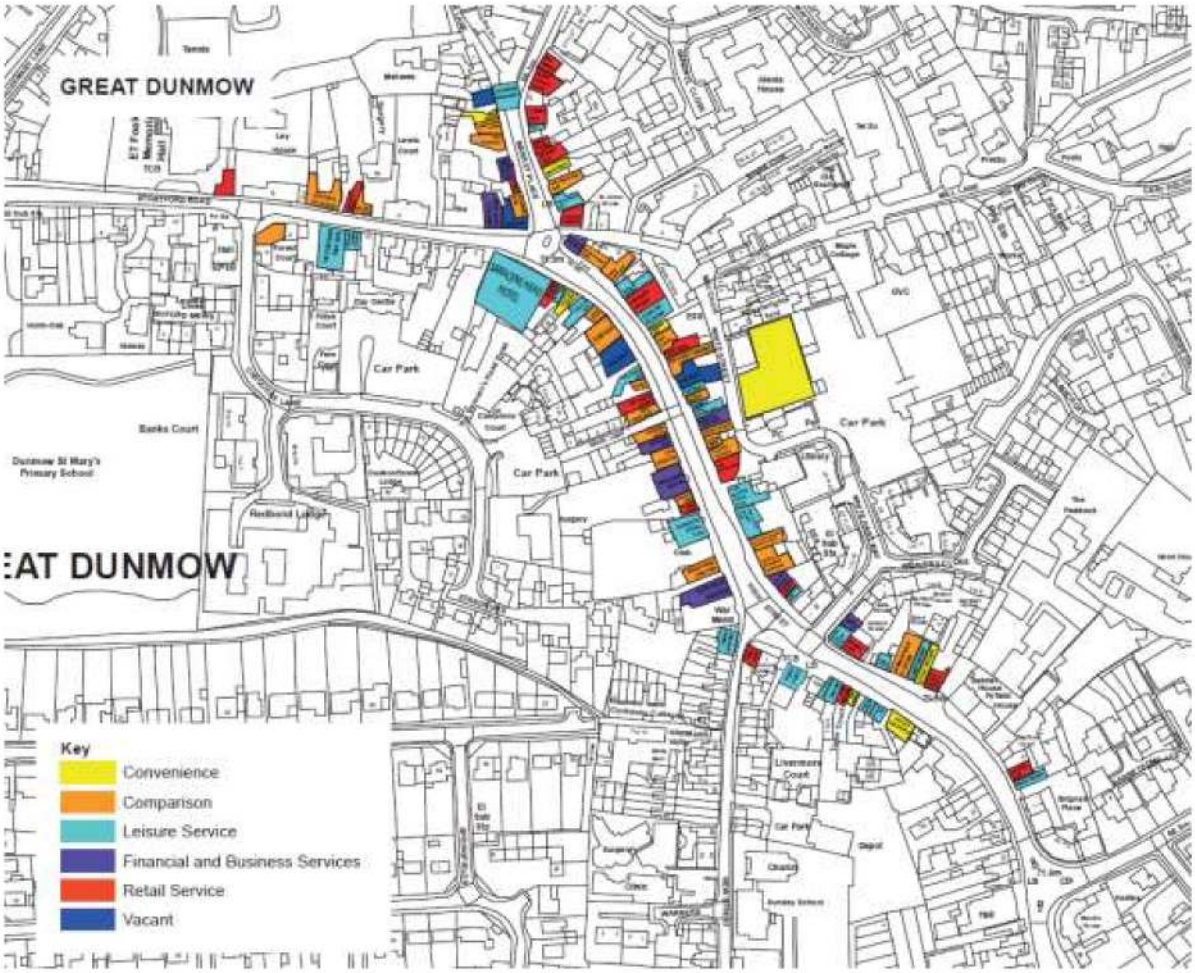
5.39 Great Dunmow is an historic market town located equidistant between Braintree and Bishops Stortford. The retail provision in the centre is primarily located along High Street and Stortford Road.

5.40 Great Dunmow is classed as a 'Town Centre' within the Uttlesford Local Plan (Adopted 2005) as well as the current Regulation 18 Plan (2023).

Overall Composition

5.41 Great Dunmow comprises 96 units, and is the second largest centre in the District. The centre predominately comprises independent retailers with a limited number of national multiples including Boots, as well as William Hill and Coral in terms of betting shops, and Barclays and Nationwide for financial services. Services account for almost two-thirds of the units in the centre.

Figure 25. Great Dunmow Composition Map



5.42 Figure 26 provides an overview of Great Dunmow's composition at the time of the site visits in July 2023, compared to the UK averages (2023), as well as a comparison to previous centre surveys carried out in 2010 and 2021.

Figure 26. Great Dunmow Town Centre Composition

Categories	Units 2010 (%)	Units 2021 (#)	Units 2021 (%)	Units 2023 (#)	Units 2023 (%)	UK Average Units 2023 (%)
Convenience	9.4	8	8.3	8	8.2	9.3
Comparison	35.4	24	25.0	26	26.8	26.9
Retail Services	-	*23*	*24.0*	*21*	*21.6*	*15.8*
Leisure Services	-	*23*	*24.0*	*28*	*28.9*	*25.3*
Financial & Business Services	-	*13*	*13.5*	*10*	*10.3*	*8.7*
Services	51.0	59	61.5	59	60.8	49.8
Vacant	4.2	5	5.2	4	4.1	13.8
Total	**100**	**96**	**100**	**97**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Nexus Planning 2023
Note: Data analysed for 2021 and 2023 uses the current Goad category definitions to allow comparison with UK averages
Note: Data analysed for 2010 using superseded Goad category definitions to allow comparison with historic data.

Convenience

5.43 The provision of convenience goods units in Great Dunmow is just below the UK average of 9.3%. The main offer is a Co-Operative foodstore, located behind the high street (725 sq m net). The convenience offer also includes a One Stop along with other smaller, independent convenience units including 2 butchers and 2 delicatessens.

Comparison

5.44 The centre has seen a significant decrease in the number of comparison units since 2010, at which point, there were 34 units (35.4%). In 2023 comparison units accounted for 26 units (26.8%), which is in line with the UK average.

5.45 The majority of the comparison units are independent retailers offering a range of goods. The comparison offer comprises a mix of charity shops, sports goods, chemists, carpet and flooring shop, as well as antiques and gift shops. However, the centre lacks in fashion and footwear stores.

Services

5.46 Services account for 60.8% of units within Great Dunmow, which significantly exceeds the UK average of 49.8%. The services provision for the centre has increased since the 2010 health-check, when they accounted for 51.0% of units in the centre.

5.47 Retail services make up 21.6% of the units, higher than the UK average of 15.8%. A majority of the retail services are made up of the 'health and beauty sector'.

5.48 Leisure services account for 28.9% of the centre, which is comparable with the UK average of 25.3%. The leisure services within the centre comprise cafes, fast food and takeaways, as well as restaurants, public houses and hotels.

5.49 The centre has a slightly higher percentage of financial and business services (10.3%) compared to the UK average of 8.7%. The financial and business services include a number of estate agents, as well as financial advisors and banks.

Vacancies

5.50 The number of vacant units within the centre has decreased from 5 to 4 units since 2021 and vacancy rate in the centre remains low at only 4.1%. This is significantly lower than the UK average of 13.8% and is positive in terms of the vitality and viability of this centre. The few vacancies there are, are spread throughout the centre, and as a result, there are no particular areas of concern in Great Dunmow.

Pedestrian Flows

5.51 The highest areas of pedestrian flow were witnessed along High Street, primarily between New Street and Market Place.

Accessibility

5.52 Great Dunmow Town Centre does not benefit from a dedicated train station; the nearest station being in Stansted Mountfitchet.

5.53 There are a number of car parks in Great Dunmow, all of which charge for parking. On-street parking is limited throughout the centre.

- Angel Lane – 31 spaces (maximum stay 3 hours for £1.20)
- Chequers Lane – 67 Spaces (maximum stay 3 hours for £1.20)
- New Street – 11 Spaces (maximum stay 3 hours for £1.20)
- White Street – 172 spaces (up to £3.50 for 9 hours, with monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or annual rates are also available).

5.554 The centre also benefits from several bus services, connecting local residents to a number of locations including Saffron Walden, Braintree, Chelmsford and Stansted Airport. In addition to these services, the 315 service offers a more localised service to the immediate surrounding villages.

5.555 Continuous traffic was noted on High Street at the time of the Nexus site visits, although no congestion was witnessed. Car parks appeared to be well utilised, with the availability of more parking stated as something that would encourage more visits to the centre in the household survey (see below).

5.556 The results of the household survey showed that a 77.9% of people questioned travelled to the centre by private vehicle as either the driver or passenger. A significant number of people stated that they walked into the town centre (16.7%). 3.6% of people accessed the centre using bus.

Perception of Safety

5.57 The centre was relatively busy at the time of the site visits, providing significant natural surveillance across the centre. The perception of crime in Great Dunmow was low when the site visits were carried out. A small amount of graffiti was witnessed on High Street.

5.58 This is verified by crimerate.co.uk who recorded that the prevalence of crime in Great Dunmow in 2023 is 30% below the UK average.

Opening Hours

5.59 The evening economy comprises several restaurants, hotels and drinking establishments. A number of takeaways are also located in the centre. The supermarkets in the centre are open beyond conventional opening hours of 9am - 5pm, with Co-Op and One Stop open until 10pm.

Environmental Quality

5.60 Great Dunmow is an attractive centre and has a large number buildings of notable quality, including the Old Town Hall, Square 1 restaurant and the Saracens Head Hotel, which enhance the character of the area and result in a pleasant visitor experience. A large number of the shop frontages are of good quality.

5.61 Heritage wayfinding signage was noted at the time of the visit. However, the centre was lacking green relief in parts and improvements within the centre could include planting/hang baskets and inclusion of seating where the pavement width allows, in particular, the area by the War Memorial, which could act as more of a focal point for the centre. Pavements, although largely free from litter at the time of visits, were noted to be in need of improvement.

Barriers to Entry

5.62 The centre offers a number of car parks, but lacks on street parking for short stay visits. This was raised as a significant barrier to entry in the Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (see Section 2).

5.63 Whilst the low vacancy rate in the town centre is good news, it may also mean that a lack of available space (by unit size) could be seen as a barrier to entry. Planning applications seeking amalgamations or sub-divisions to reflect market demand should be considered carefully on their merits.

5.64 Similar to Saffron Walden, the centre in its entirety is designated as a conservation area (designated 2007) and includes a number of listed buildings. Whilst this helps protect its attractive nature, this could potentially represent a barrier to entry for new businesses as any alterations will have to demonstrate a lack of harm to the historic environment.

Customer Views & Behaviour

5.65 When asked what they most liked about Great Dunmow Town Centre, the most common responses from the NEMS household survey were 'close to home or work' (54.7%), 'choice and range of shops' (7.4%) and 'environmental quality of centre' (5.5%).

5.66 The top three responses to what would encourage respondents to visit the centre more often asked during the household survey were 'increased choice and range of shops' (14.6%), 'a discount foodstore' (11.4%) and 'improved food shops in the town centre' (9.0%).

Key Issues

5.67 In summary, our health-check of Great Dunmow Town Centre indicates that:

- The composition of the Town Centre is broadly in line with UK averages.
- There are a very low number of vacant units (4.1%). This is a feature of health, but can also mean that it is difficult for new entrants to find an appropriate unit. The Council should listen to market signals on whether amalgamations or sub-divisions are appropriate.

- The centre would benefit from public realm improvements, including a general 'greening' of the centre, and perhaps creating a focal area by the War Memorial.
- The lack of availability of fee car parking is an issue for traders and local residents, and is a feature of the made Neighbourhood Plan. If the town centre started to exhibit features of decline, then no doubt the focus would sharpen on this issue.
- Great Dunmow is an attractive, characterful centre with a pleasant shopping environment.

Stansted Mountfitchet Local Centre

Description

5.68 Stansted Mountfitchet is located to the west of the District and is under 10 miles from Saffron Walden. The centre provides a range of services and is predominantly surrounded by residential dwellings. The majority of the units can be found in two locations; between the east end of Chapel Hill and the south western side of Grove Hill and also along the B1383 between Chapel Hill and Clarence Road.

5.69 Stansted Mountfitchet is classed as a 'Local Centre' within the Uttlesford Local Plan (Adopted 2005), and as a 'Local Rural Centre' in the Regulation 18 Plan (2023).

Overall Composition

5.70 Stansted Mountfitchet is a Local Centre comprising 51 units split between two locations as identified above. The first location is anchored by the junction linking Chapel Hill and Grove Hill, which features The Kings Arms public house and mixed use convenience store, pharmacy and estate agent with a large car park to the rear. This is also positioned within close proximity to the train station. The second location is relatively linear in structure with a range of unit types positioned along the main road.

Figure 27. Stansted Mountfitchet (Lower Street) Composition Map

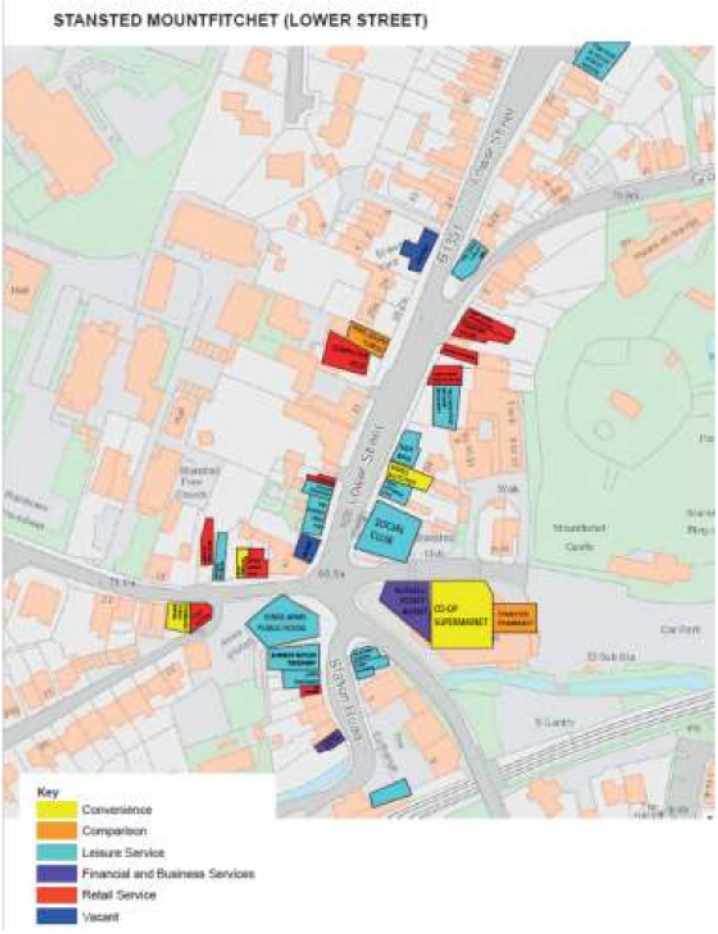


Figure 28. Stansted Mountfitchet (Cambridge Road) Composition Map

5.71 Figure 29 provides an overview of Stansted Mountfitchet's composition at the time of the site visits in July 2023, compared to the UK averages (2023), as well as a comparison to previous health checks carried out in 2010 and 2021.

Figure 29. Stansted Mountfitchet Local Centre Composition

Categories	Units 2010 (%)	Units 2021 (#)	Units 2021 (%)	Units 2023 (#)	Units 2023 (%)	UK Average Units 2023 (%)
Convenience	18.6	6	11.8	6	11.8	9.3
Comparison	25.6	6	11.8	6	11.8	26.9
Retail Services		*14*	*27.5*	*13*	*25.5*	*15.8*
Leisure Services		*20*	*39.2*	*19*	*37.3*	*25.3*
Financial & Business Services		*4*	*7.8*	*4*	*7.8*	*8.7*
Services	51.2	38	74.5	36	70.6	49.8
Vacant	4.7	1	2.0	3	5.9	13.8
Total	**100.0**	**51**	**100.0**	**51**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Nexus Planning 2023
Note: Data analysed for 2021 and 2023 uses the current Goad category definitions to allow comparison with UK averages
Note: Data analysed for 2010 using superseded Goad category definitions to allow comparison with historic data.

Convenience

5.72 There are 6 convenience units within Stansted Mountfitchet, making up 11.8% of all units, which is slightly higher than the UK average of 9.3%. The number of convenience units within the centre has dropped by two units since 2010.

5.73 The centre features a small Co-op supermarket by the car park to the north-east of the train station, as well as a Tesco Express on Cambridge Road. The centre also features an independent bakery, butchers, petrol station, and greengrocers.

Comparison

5.74 There are 6 comparison units within the centre, which make up 11.8% of all units, lower than the UK average of 26.9%. The number of comparison units within the centre has fallen from 25.6% in 2010. As such, Stansted Mountfitchet now has a considerably lower percentage of comparison goods units compared to the UK averages.

5.75 The comparison units comprise largely independent retailers and with the range of shops, including: florists, printing shop and design shop.

Services

5.76 Overall, services equate to 70.6% of units within Stansted Mountfitchet. This has increased considerably since the 2010 survey (51.2%).

5.77 There are numerous health and beauty units within the centre and a number of barber shops. Stansted Mountfitchet has a greater proportion of retail services (25.5%), compared to the UK average (15.8%).

5.78 The centre also has a higher proportion of leisure services (37.3%) compared to the UK average (25.3%). The leisure offer includes the Kings Arms public house, a social club, bars and restaurants as well as a large number of takeaways. For a centre of its size, the centre has an extensive service offer, which is no doubt linked to commuter custom to/from the mainline train station.

5.79 Financial and business services equate to 7.8% of the centre, which is slightly lower than the UK average (8.7%).

Vacancies

5.80 Stansted Mountfitchet has seen a slight increase in vacant units (5.9%), compared to the previous 2021 survey (2.0%). The proportion of vacant units in the centre remains though significantly below the UK average of 13.8%.

Pedestrian Flows

5.81 During the Nexus site visits, it was observed that that both parts of the centre were quiet during daytime hours. The Tesco Express on Cambridge Road attracted the highest footfall.

Accessibility

5.82 Stansted Mountfitchet has a train station just outside the first town centre boundary near the Kings Arms public house. The train line connects Stansted Mountfitchet to London Liverpool Street and numerous other locations. It is also located approximately 5 miles from Stansted Airport.

5.83 Parking is available in the centre at the locations below. There are also on street parking spots throughout the centre, although there are extensive 'resident permit' zones. At the time of the visit sufficient parking was observed to be available.

- Lower Street - 209 spaces (maximum stay 9 hours for £4.70)
- Crafton Green – 52 spaces (maximum stay 9 hours for £3.00)
- Station car park – 68 spaces (£7.00 for 9 hours)

5.84 A regular bus service links the centre to the train station and the nearby airport.

5.85 At the time of the visits, traffic was not considered to be heavy and there was no significant congestion.

5.86 The results of the household survey showed that only half of respondents travel to the centre by private vehicle (52.7%), whilst 42.5% had last walked to the centre. 3.6% of visitors arrived by bus.

Opening Hours

5.87 The centre has numerous public houses, bars and brasseries and a social club as well as restaurants catering for a number of cuisines. With the exception of the two small supermarkets, the remainder of the town maintains relatively traditional opening hours.

Environmental Quality

5.88 Stansted Mountfitchet (Lower Street) is an attractive centre with many attractive buildings throughout including the Stansted Mountfitchet Social Club, the Kings Arms Public House and a number of dwellings. This area of the centre is within a Conversation Area.

5.89 In comparison, the environmental quality of the Cambridge Road portion of the centre does not benefit from the same historic character.

5.90 There was a noticeable lack of trees or green infrastructure throughout the centre as it is mainly comprised of rows of terraced units. However, some hanging baskets attached to attractive heritage lampposts along Lower Street were noted. Improved signage in both centres would also enhance the character of the area.

5.91 Pavements were found to be litter free at the time of the visit. However, the overall quality of the paving would benefit from improvement.

5.92 The height and size of storefront fascia boards was relatively consistent throughout the centre, and condition of the shopfronts relatively good.

Barriers to Entry

5.93 The lack of clear development sites and available premises may be factors that may reduce the potential for new traders to enter the centre.

5.94 It is evident that the centre is also heavily reliant on its train station, which serves the extensive service economy. It will be important to continue to monitor the health of the centre now that working patterns have changed following the pandemic in order to ascertain whether there has been any significant impact on trade. The has been a small increase in vacancy over the period since 2021.

Customer Views & Behaviour

5.95 When asked what they most liked about Stansted Mountfitchet Local Centre, the most common responses from the NEMS household survey were 'close to home' (41.9%), 'choice and range of shops' (18.0%) and 'environmental quality' (8.3%).

5.96 The top three responses to what would encourage respondents to visit the centre more often asked during the household survey stated 'more parking' (17.8%), 'increased choice and range of shops' (7.0%) and 'discount foodstore' (6.2%).

Summary

5.97 In summary, our health-check of Stansted Mountfitchet Local Centre indicates that:

- The centre has two small foodstores but is very accented towards the provision of services which account for 70.6% of all units within Stansted Mountfitchet.
- Stansted Mountfitchet has very low vacancy which is an indicator of very good health. However, the centre is reliant on commuters utilising the train station and vacancy has increased slightly since 2021.
- Environmental improvements could be made to the centre, including opportunities for greenery and pavement improvements.

Appendix B – Statistical Tables

Nexus Planning
Uttlesford - Strategic Allocation Capacity

Table 1 - Average Household Size

Dwelling Size	Population	Household number	Average Persons per Household
1-bedroom	3,122	2,289	1.36
2-bedroom	12,467	6,601	1.89
3-bedroom	28,577	11,375	2.51
4+-bedroom	33,988	11,051	3.08

Source: ONS, Census 2021

Table 2 - Population at each Strategic Allocation

Strategic Allocation	Proposed Dwellings @ 2041	Proposed Population @ 2041
Great Dunmow	885	2,065
Takeley	1,506	3,514
Total	**2,391**	**5,579**

Source: Uttlesford Council
Proposed Population @ 2041 is Average Persons per Household per Bedroom Number (Table 1) x Proposed Dwelllings @ 2041

Table 3 - Experian Per Capita Expenditure Growth Forecasts

Year	Convenience	Comparison
2022	-5.0%	3.3%
2023	-2.9%	-2.3%
2024	-1.0%	-3.1%
2025	-0.6%	1.2%
2026	-0.4%	2.9%
2027	-0.2%	2.5%
2028	-0.1%	2.2%
2029	-0.1%	2.3%
2030	-0.1%	2.3%
2031	-0.1%	2.4%
2032	-0.1%	2.4%
2033	0.0%	2.6%
2034	0.0%	2.6%
2035	0.0%	2.5%
2036	0.0%	2.5%
2037	0.0%	2.6%
2038	0.0%	2.6%
2039	0.0%	2.6%
2040	0.0%	2.6%
2041	0.0%	2.6%

Source: Experian Retail Planner Brefing Note 21 (February 2024) - Figure 7 ('Adjusted SFT')

Table 4a - Estimated Available Convenience Expenditure at each Strategic Allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Total Population	Per Capita Convenience Expenditure @ 2023	Per Capita Convenience Expenditure @ 2041	Estimated Available Convenience Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Available 'Main Food' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Available 'Top up' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)
Great Dunmow	2,065	2,666	2,612	5.4	4.0	1.3
Takeley	3,514	2,532	2,482	8.7	6.5	2.2
Total	**5,579**			**14.1**	**10.6**	**3.5**

Notes:
Populations from Table 1
Per Capita Convenience @ 2023 from Experian App Library 2022 report, Great Dunmow data from E02004597 and Takeley data from E02004596
Per Capita Convenience @ 2041 is the 2023 figures projected forwards by the annual growth forecasts in Table 3
The split between main food and top up is based on a 75%/25% split in line with Nexus experience and professional judgment

Table 4b - Estimated Available Comparison Expenditure at each Strategic Allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Total Population	Per Capita Comparison Expenditure @ 2023	Per Capita Comparison Expenditure @ 2041	Estimated Available Comparison Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)
Great Dunmow	2,065	4,127	6,042	12.5
Takeley	3,514	3,986	5,836	20.5
Total	**5,579**			**33.0**

Notes:
Populations from Table 1
Per Capita Comparison @ 2023 from Experian App Library 2022 report, Great Dunmow data from E02004597 and Takeley data from E02004596
Per Capita Comparison @ 2041 is the 2023 figures projected forwards by the annual growth forecasts in Table 3

Table 5a - Estimated Floorspace Capacity for 'Top-up' Convenience Goods @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Available 'Top up' Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Retention of Expenditure @ 75% (£m)	Estimated Inflow of Trade @ 20% (£m)	Total 'Top up' Goods Expenditure Available (£m)	Estimated Average Sales Density for Convenience Retailers (£/sq m)	Estimated 'Top up' Convenience Floorspace Capacity by 2041 (Sq m)
Great Dunmow	1.3	1.0	0.2	1.2	9,500	128
Takeley	2.2	1.6	0.3	2.0	9,500	207
Total	**3.5**	**2.6**	**0.5**	**3.2**		**334**

Notes:
Estimated available 'Top-up' Expenditure taken from Table 4a
Assumed retention of 75% of available strategic allocation residents spend + Inflow of 20% of trade from beyond the strategic allocation
Average sales density based on Nexus Planning professional judgment

Table 5b - Estimated Floorspace Capacity for Comparison Goods @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Available Comparison Goods Expenditure @ 2041 (£m)	Estimated Retention of Expenditure @ 5% (£m)	Estimated Inflow of Trade @ 10% (£m)	Total Comparison Goods Expenditure Available (£m)	Estimated Average Sales Density for Comparison Retailers (£/sq m)	Estimated Comparison Floorspace Capacity by 2041 (Sq m)
Great Dunmow	12.5	0.6	0.1	0.7	5,000	137
Takeley	20.5	1.0	0.1	1.1	5,000	226
Total	**33.0**	**1.6**	**0.2**	**1.8**		**363**

Notes:
Estimated available comparison goods Expenditure taken from Table 4b
Assumed retention of 5% of available strategic allocation residents spend + inflow of 10% of trade beyond the strategic allocation
Average sales density based on Nexus Planning professional judgment

Table 6 - Indicative Floorspace Capacity at each Strategic Allocation @ 2041

Strategic Allocation	Estimated Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity (sq m)	Estimated Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity (sq m)	Estimated Service Goods Floorspace Capacity (sq m)	Total Floorspace (sq m)
Great Dunmow	128	137	177	442
Takeley	207	226	288	720
Total	**334**	**363**	**465**	**1,162**

Notes:
Service goods floorspace capacity assumes this will account for 40% of total floorspace

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Settlement Services and Facilities Topic Paper

July 2024

Uttlesford District Council

Table of Contents

Introduction

1.1. The Council is preparing a new Local Plan to replace the current Plan adopted in 2005. One of the objectives of the Local Plan is to ensure that any proposed growth is as sustainable as possible, and that all our settlements, including smaller rural communities, maintain their vitality as thriving places to live, work and play. This means that a range of services, such as public transport, and facilities like a village hall, are available and easily accessible to residents.

1.2. Clearly not all settlements can have the full range of services that larger cities or towns such as Cambridge, Bishops Stortford or Saffron Walden can offer, because they perform different roles and functions and may not have a sufficient catchment population to make certain services or facilities viable. These varying 'tiers' of settlement types together form what we call the ***Settlement Hierarchy*** across the district. The use of a settlement hierarchy is crucial for Uttlesford as it is a diverse area which includes vast rural areas with sparse small settlements and larger urban areas that serve local and regional needs.

1.3. The Local Plan uses the settlement hierarchy to help direct development to the most sustainable locations for growth that are supported by a wide range of services and facilities, in order to achieve sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 2 of the NPPF[1]It ensures that new development is focused on larger settlements as they provide the best range of services and facilities, and new development will help to support and enhance them. Locating new homes close to communities with services and jobs will also enable the residents in new homes to access them by walking, cycling and public transport, thereby reducing the need to travel by car. This strategy also supports the delivery of affordable homes where they are most needed and facilitates the effective provision of main services provided by the Essex Integrated Care Service, the County Council and emergency services.

1.4. It is also important to ensure that any new development, especially of larger schemes of over ten dwellings, makes provision for new facilities and adequate community infrastructure. This could involve improvements to local transport and walking/cycling networks; enhancements to the quality or capacity of existing facilities; and provision of land for sports and outdoor recreation and smaller scale children's play areas. However, many of Uttlesford's settlements have not always benefitted from such investment because, without an up-to-date local plan, there has been no overall strategic approach to infrastructure investment or new delivery. This Local Plan aims to address identified shortfalls wherever possible within the parameters of local planning guidance and viability testing. Importantly, it will also require

[1] National Planning Policy Framework (2023) Achieving sustainable development. Available online: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/2-achieving-sustainable-development

commensurate investment in local infrastructure wherever there is strategic or site-specific development to meet the needs arising from the impact of proposed dwellings or employment uses, and to serve the existing and new populations. The *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* summarises the major infrastructure requirements that need to be provided primarily from the strategic allocations[2].

1.5. As part of the process of preparing a Local Plan, it is essential to update the settlement hierarchy to understand how our towns, villages and smaller settlements function at the moment. While it is important to be as accurate as possible, the overall objective of the study is to derive and check each settlements' role and function within the district. It is the tier itself that will help determine the level of growth appropriate, not the position of the settlement within its assigned tier. It is important to note this study represents a position in time and service provision can change based on local circumstances, to plan for growth in the district in a local plan this is sufficient and through monitoring and reviews of the local plan, this study will then in turn reflect these changes.

1.6. Each settlement was assessed and scored based on the level and type of facilities and services available, and then assigned to one of the five settlement hierarchy tiers. This in turn influences the type of development that may be acceptable in each of settlement. In simple terms, the larger settlements, which offer the widest range of facilities, services, employment and transport choices, are most likely to be more suitable for supporting new development. Conversely, the smaller and more rural settlements at the lower end of the settlement hierarchy will be much less likely to be suitable for any development, as this would not be sustainable or able to support the wellbeing needs of residents.

1.7. This Topic Paper is part of a series that provides supporting evidence and helps to explain how the Plan has been prepared. It updates our understanding of what services and facilities available across the district and then groups the settlements into five 'tiers' that relate to how the settlements function and how they should be considered in the Local Plan. The settlement tiers are:

Key Settlement: Key Settlements are settlements that have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the district through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.
Local Rural Centre: Local Rural Centres are either small towns or large villages with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside of the Key Settlements.

[2] UttlesfordInfrastructure Delivery Plan (2024)

Larger Village: Larger Villages are settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.
Smaller Village: The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily to meet local needs.
Open countryside – where development is not appropriate comprising scattered farmsteads, dwellings, hamlets.

1.8. This study presents a snapshot in time of the data available and recommends a settlement hierarchy for consideration in the new Local Plan. Although the level of services and facilities available may vary over time, this does not mean the relative classification of different settlements should necessarily change. The 'strategy' within the Plan seeks to promote sustainable development in the most appropriate locations and to support the vitality of our most sustainable rural communities. New development can help deliver new infrastructure and improve the vitality and viability of communities. It may be that by bringing forward new development, the risk of services or facilities being lost, or shops closing can be reversed, and new facilities or shops can be provided to replace them. The settlement hierarchy helps to inform the Spatial Strategy, which sets out the level of growth required and its distribution within the district over the plan period and guides the location of strategic housing and employment allocations.

Policy Context

2.1. Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[3] seeks to create sustainable development in settlements that are well served by local facilities and services such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, public houses, places of worship and cultural buildings. It also seeks to support development in the more sustainable rural settlements that can support the community's vitality and viability. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that planning policy should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive.

2.2. The adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) did not establish a formal settlement hierarchy, but employed a strategy for development which defined some principles. These included:

- Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, and Stansted Mountfitchet were recognised as the **main 'urban' areas** that act as service hubs for the surrounding rural land.

[3] National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Available online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

- The **A120 corridor** was identified for growth.
- Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Newport, Takeley and Thaxted were identified as **key rural settlements**, located on main transport networks with local employment opportunities.
- **Other villages** were categorised as such

Methodology

3.1. There is no nationally recognised methodology for assessing local facilities and services and determining a settlement hierarchy. This study seeks to identify the more sustainable settlements across the district, where residents can access a greater range of services and ensure that settlement growth supports the achievement of sustainable development in accordance with national policy. The methodology used recognises the dispersed settlement pattern in Uttlesford and considers the different types of service provision and connectivity throughout the district. The methodology is set out in 3 stages below:

Stage 1: Data Collection

3.2. A Parish Services Survey was undertaken between 15th December 2022 and 16th January 2023. 60 surveys were distributed and 22 were returned following reminders. For any parishes where the form was not returned, the assessment was undertaken by officers using secondary data describe. A copy of the survey is in **Appendix 3.**

3.3. The initial unit for measurement was the parish because of data availability. This was reviewed following the Regulation 18 consultation, and individual settlements were used as the unit of measurement to address some skewed results caused by large communities located on the edges of rural parishes, and to better understand the roles and functions of individual settlements. The audit of settlement services and facilities was also updated following the Regulation 18 consultation considering any submitted information on updated circumstances.

3.4. The facilities and services identified were then weighted, based on the nature of the facility or service, its order of importance in contributing to sustainable development and its catchment area. For example, a railway station is generally found where it is accessible and usable by a wide and populous catchment area whereas a small convenience store has a much more local and smaller catchment. Less common and higher order facilities received higher weightings on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) and its presence is generally reflected in the higher tier settlement in the hierarchy. Table 1 below lists the type of services and facilities recorded and assessed. **Appendix 1** provides descriptions of each service type, along with

justifications for the assigned weightings. It also documents secondary sources of data used to supplement the parish survey responses.

Table 1: Types of Services and Facilities that contribute to settlement sustainability

Theme	Description
Education	Early years provision (Formal/Informal), Primary School, Secondary School, Sixth Form
Health	Doctors Surgery, Hospital, Dentist
Community Facilities	Community/Village Hall, Day Centre, Museums, Library, Mobile Library, Theatre/Arts Centre, Places of Worship, Council Offices, Police Station, Fire Station
Commercial	Hairdressers, Public house/Inn, B&B, Restaurant, Takeaway, Café/Coffee Shop, Small Convenience Store/Farm Shop, Supermarket, Non-Food Shops, Chemist/Pharmacy, Post Box, Post Office, Cash Point, Financial Services, Tourism/Visitor Information Centre, Vet, Petrol Station
Open Space	Leisure centre/ Indoor sports facilities, Outdoor sports facilities, Children/Young Persons provision, Amenity Greenspace, Allotments
Transport and Connectivity	Public Car Parks, Railway Station, Taxi Ranks, Community Transport Service, Electric Charging points, Bicycle Storage, Bus Service, Broadband, Mobile Telephone
Utilities	Broadband Connection, Mobile Connection
Employment	Key Employment Site

3.5. While Stansted Airport's role in supporting the regional economy is recognised, airport-related facilities and services at Stansted Airport were not included as they do not serve a primarily local function to support growth at individual settlements (such as convenience stores within Stansted Airport, airport parking and airport hotels within Stansted Airport).

Stage 3: Settlement Analysis

3.6. While Stansted Airport's role in supporting the regional economy is recognised, airport-related facilities and services at Stansted Airport were not included as they do not serve a primarily local function to support growth at individual settlements (such as convenience stores within Stansted Airport, airport parking and airport hotels within Stansted Airport).

3.7. Analysis of the settlement weighted scores enabled settlement tiers to be identified. These tiers form the settlement hierarchy, consisting of five categories: Key Settlement; Local Rural Centre; Large Village, Small Village and Open Countryside.

Outcome: The Settlement Hierarchy

3.8. The five tiers of settlements – Key Settlements, Local Rural Centres, Larger Villages and Smaller Villages – reflect the ranking using the collated service score presented in **Appendix 2**. This ranking is illustrated in Table 2 below and displayed geographically in figure 1.

Table 2: Proposed Tiers and Associated Service Scores

Hierarchy Tier	Settlement	Service Score
Key Settlements	Saffron Walden	500
	Great Dunmow	300
	Stansted Mountfitchet	246
Local Rural Centres	Thaxted	150
	Takeley Including Priors Green	146
	Newport	87
	Hatfield Heath	85
	Elsenham	85
	Great Chesterford	82
Larger Villages	Clavering	74
	Henham	74
	Felsted	67
	Stebbing	50
	Hatfield Broad Oak	48
	Little Hallingbury	46
	Birchanger	45
	Debden	44
Smaller Villages	Quendon & Rickling	39
	Wendens Ambo	39
	High Easter	38
	Great Easton	37
	Manuden	36
	Ashdon	36
	Chrishall	35
	Radwinter	35
	Littlebury	34
	Leaden Roding	32
	Great Sampford	31
	Wimbish	31
	Flitch Green	30
	Elmdon	29
	White Roding	28
	Great Hallingbury	27

	Broxted	**27**
	Farnham	**26**
	High Roding	**26**
	Barnston	**26**
	Little Easton (Butchers Pasture)	**25**
	Langley	**25**
	Elder Street*	**24**
	Hempstead	**22**
	Little Dunmow	**22**
	Berden	**22**
	Sewards End	**22**
	Aythorpe Roding (Roundbush Green and Surrounds)	**21**
	Widdington	**21**
	Lindsell	**20**
	Little Canfield Excluding Priors Green	**20**
Open Countryside	**Little Chesterford**	**19**
	Arkesden	**18**
	Hadstock	**18**
	Margaret Roding	**18**
	Little Sampford	**16**
	Ugley	**16**
	Duton Hill	**16**
	Great Canfield	**13**
	Little Bardfield	**13**
	Tilty	**12**
	Church End (Ashdon)	**12**
	Wicken Bonhunt	**11**
	Wenden Lofts	**10**
	Strethall	**8**
	Chickney	**5**

Notes:
Small settlements and hamlets that scored below 20 are deemed to fall in the 'Open Countryside' category and are not considered suitable for any level of allocated development.
[1] High Easter was re-assessed to a 'small village' at Regulation 19 following a review of higher scoring services particularly the absence of a primary school.
[2] Ashdon was re-assessed as a small village and separated from the nearby hamlet of Church End (open countryside) whose inclusion in the same parish figures at Regulation 18 had skewed the tier allocation.

[3] *Wimbish and Elder Street were separated at Regulation 19 each into the Small Village category from the previous combined Large Village at Regulation 18 because of their geographical distance.*
[4] *Great Easton and Duton Hill were assessed separately as Small Village and Open Countryside at Regulation 19 from the previous Reg 18 combined category of Large Village*
[5] *Manuden was reassessed as a small village due to circumstances changing for some of the services in the settlement.*

Settlement Hierarchy

Legend

- Key Settlements
- Local Rural Centres
- Larger Villages
- Smaller Villages
- District Boundary

Figure 1 - Map of Settlements of the Settlement Hierarchy

4.1. The emerging settlement hierarchy exhibits a spatial dimension, with Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres generally located along the A120 and M11 corridors, with the exception of Thaxted. The northeastern and western parts of the district, characterised by their rural nature, offer a lower level and range of services and facilities and are therefore generally less able to accommodate sustainable development

Key Settlements

4.2. There are **three Key Settlements in the district, each with a hierarchy score of over 200**. These settlements contain the highest range and level of services and facilities and represent the most sustainable location within the district. They are all supported by a secondary school, at least one primary school and supermarkets. They have good connections to the transport network as a whole and are supported by at least an hourly bus service.

Saffron Walden: Saffron Walden is the largest town in the district and serves as the administrative and commercial centre. It has a strong visitor attraction with its medieval market and wealth of listed buildings as a nucleated settlement around the market square, and the Common within the attractive rolling landscape of the river Cam. It has the highest level of service and facilities including five primary schools, a secondary school, three supermarkets and a thriving town centre with various community and commercial facilities. It is also well connected with frequent bus services linking it to Stansted Mountfitchet, Bishops Stortford, Haverhill and Cambridge. Saffron Walden is within a couple of miles from Audley End railway station located in the neighbouring village of Wendens Ambo with a connecting bus service and linked cycling and walking route. The settlement also has the only community museum in the district that showcases the town's heritage. In the historic centre of the settlement there is a wide variety of independent and chain retail units and an industrial estate to the east of the town on Shire Hill.

Great Dunmow: Great Dunmow is the second largest settlement in Uttlesford, a historic market town and the service centre focus or the south-eastern part of the district. It is characterised by a historic settlement core spanning from Parsonage Downs to the High Street, which features a variety of building styles from the 16th and 17th century, a former Guild Hall and numerous 19th century houses. The town has experienced significant growth in recent years with major housing commitments at Ongar Road and Woodlands Park. The settlement's location along the 'A120 corridor' has brought the benefit of frequent bus services to the airport, Bishops Stortford, Braintree, Thaxted and Saffron Walden. It has a range of retail and service units and several areas of small and larger scale industry including an industrial estate to the south on Chelmsford Road.

Stansted Mountfitchet: Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest settlement in Uttlesford. It has an historic core and benefits from excellent rail connections to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport. A former railway line connected to Braintree now serves as the Flitch Way recreational route and country park. Bus

and train services connect the village to Stansted Airport, north to Saffron Walden and south to Bishops Stortford. There has been some new development south of the railway line, especially at the redeveloped Rochford nurseries. Stansted Mountfitchet contains a wide range of services and retail units along Cambridge Road and along Chapel Hill towards the railway station. It also has a secondary school which requires expansion to accommodate recent population growth. The settlement is contained by the Green Belt to the south and east.

Local Rural Centres

4.3. There are **six settlements with a hierarchy score between 80-200 and classified as Local Rural Centres**. They all have a primary school, a good number of services and facilities for everyday needs and a reasonable level of connectivity.

Takeley is an historic settlement that developed along Stane Street, the Roman road that connects Bishops Stortford, Braintree and beyond to the east, and round the former priory at Warish Hall. It has experienced speculative development and has grown from a small linear village, though largely retaining its rural character. It is located south of Stansted Airport and in recent years has developed a new local centre and primary school at Priors Green, complementing existing housing and Roseacres school to the west and adjoining the Four Ashes junction. It is served by several bus services that connect across the district, as well as to Stansted Airport and mid/south Essex. New housing development and employment uses together with a new health centre off Parsonage Road add to its sustainability and as a sustainable growth point.

In this assessment, the services provided at the Priors Green development, although located within the parish of Little Canfield, are considered for practical purposes under Takeley due to its proximity.

Thaxted is located seven miles southeast of Saffron Walden and six miles north of Great Dunmow. It is a thriving and ancient settlement of exceptional environmental quality with architectural and historic interest of national importance. The B184 forms the main artery of the settlement, with regular bus services connecting to Stansted Airport. Thaxted is well served by a doctor's surgery, a variety of commercial and retail services, a primary school which is at capacity and a range of thriving community activities which place it fourth in the settlement hierarchy. There have been some recent new development and planning consents on the eastern side of the town.

Elsenham is a large village in the western part of Uttlesford district, lying to the north-east of Stansted Mountfitchet and to the north of Stansted Airport. The village expanded greatly with recent expansion to the west and east in the last twenty years. It has a linear settlement pattern dissected by the railway line with historic buildings concentrated in the south-east along Henham Road. The hamlets of Tye Green and Gaunts End lie within the parish. The settlement contains a doctor's surgery, a primary school and employment centres to the north next to the railway station.

Newport is an elongated village astride the B1383. Growth of the village to the east is limited by the River Cam and the Cambridge – London railway line with most of the more recent development located to the west of the village. The village benefits from a long-established secondary school, a primary school and various commercial and community facilities. It falls within the Large Village category close to Elsenham.

Great Chesterford is some eleven miles south of Cambridge and four miles north of Saffron Walden. The town lies in the Cam valley immediately east of the M11 motorway where Junction 9 gives access for south bound traffic to London and a link with the A11/A14 road network to Newmarket and Norwich. The B1383 (previously the A11) forms the western boundary to the Conservation Area and is the main route to Stansted Mountfitchet and Bishops Stortford. There are bus services to Cambridge and Saffron Walden, and a railway station on the London-Cambridge line. Its location and services consider it as a sustainable settlement and located in the Local Rural Centre tier.

Larger Villages

There are **8 settlements identified as Larger Villages** that have a hierarchy score of 40-80. These settlements have a lower level of service infrastructure, but essentially, provide for local needs and crucially have a primary school and a reasonable level of public transport or call-up access to mini-bus transport which help significantly to make them the more sustainable of our rural villages.

Felsted falls within this category with a relevantly high population level compared to its service level; this is due to there being a number of smaller villages being located close together in the vicinity with opportunities to benefit from services. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in nearby villages. High Easter, Ashdon, Manuden, Great Easton and Wimbish were removed from the Larger Village category following a review of local service availability and accessibility with updated evidence.

Smaller Villages

There are **31 settlements identified as Smaller Villages,** that have a hierarchy score of 20-40. They have a relatively low service level and are not considered suitable for any proposed development allocations other than the potential for limited infill or as otherwise allocated in the future in Neighbourhood Plans.

Flitch Green is in this category although it is located near to, though not contiguous with, Felsted from which it has a different character and relative self-containment for lower-level needs.

Open Countryside

Any settlements that score below the Smaller Village category, which may include small groups of dwellings or hamlets are classified as falling with the 'Open Countryside'. These areas are not suitable for any development unless compatible

with the rural exception policies set out within the Local Plan. -There are fifteen hamlets and isolated settlements in the open countryside, some of which are close to but distinct from large villages such as Church End (near Ashdon) and Ashdon.

Conclusion

5.1. This paper summarises our approach to auditing services and facilities available in our settlements and classifying their settlement hierarchy. The assessment has informed the Settlement Hierarchy, which in turn, and in accordance with the Spatial Strategy, helps to identify the more sustainable settlements and potential locations for development. The most sustainable settlements identified are Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, and Stansted Mountfitchet, with the local rural centres of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Heath, Newport, Takeley and Thaxted offering sustainable locations for potential development.

Appendix 1 – Description of Weighted Scores Attributed to Service Types

Service	Score	Description	Scored	Secondary Source
Education Facilities				
Formal early years provision	3	Nursery/ Pre School-Early Years Provision designated by the Local Education Authority.	By Facility	Essex County Childcare
Informal early years provision	2	Informal early years provision such as a creche or playgroup. Usually unsupervised, in shared community building therefore a lower score is justified.	By Facility	Essex County Childcare
Primary School	3	Primary Education (generally 1 and 2 form entry schools) registered under the LEA. These are key services that were identified as an important service to local communities in the parish survey.	By Facility	Google Maps
Secondary School	5	Wide catchment area serving villages/hamlets with a school bus service. They were scored at a 5 as a key and high order service	By Facility	Google Maps
Further Education	5	Further education centre such as sixth form or adult education, often associated with a Secondary School.	By Facility	Google Maps
Health and Well-Being				
Doctors Surgery or Health Centre	4	A key service that provides health services to a wide catchment area	By Facility	West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
Hospital	5	A key piece of infrastructure as it is the only hospital located in the district.	By Facility	West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
Dentist	3	Although essential infrastructure is not as essential as other healthcare facilities.	By Facility	https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist
Community Facilities				

Community/Village Hall	3	A community hall or building that provides a central community centre for various cultural events.	By Facility	Google Maps
Day Centre	4	Formal provision for older people in a bespoke building. This service has a wider catchment which usually requires vehicular access for clients.	By Facility	Google Maps
Museums	5	A community facility showcasing objects of artistic or cultural interest. These have a wide catchment area and are of high cultural significance to the district. Small and locally run or private museums are discounted.	By Facility	Google Maps
Library	5	A registered permanent library that provides access to the internet and books to residents. A key service that functions in high tier, larger settlements.	By Facility	Google Maps
Mobile Library	2	A mobile library service where a vehicle with a library of books inside that tends to support rural communities without access to a physical library; it runs to a timetable where most settlements may be monthly.	Stops in settlement	Essex Libraries (https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/digital-content/our-mobile-and-home-library-services/mobile-libraries/uttlesford)
Theatre/Arts Centre	3	A high-level facility which provides cultural facilities for a large catchment population	By Facility	Google Maps
Places of Worship	3	Very common in all settlement tiers across the district, typically historical provision for a local catchment area.	By Facility	Church of England and google maps search.
Council Offices	5	Provides various council services. This survey includes parish or district council buildings	By Facility	Google Maps
Police Station	4	Registered Essex Police service provision. This service is counted in a settlement when community policing or a police station is present	By Facility	Essex Police (https://www.essex.police.uk/contact/find-a-police-station/)

Fire Station	4	Registered Essex Fire service provision. This service is counted in a settlement where a fires station is present.	By Facility	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/about-us/fire-stations)
Commercial				
Hairdressers	2	Common service often located in small retail units	By Facility	Google Maps
Public house/Inn	3	Registered pub provision, this can be a key community facility in a settlement. Many are subject to closure.	By Facility	Google Maps
B&B	4	A smaller accommodation centre providing sales for nearby businesses and captures tourist income for the settlement. Does not include small scale Airbnb lettings where singular room/house is rented out.	By Facility	Google Maps
Restaurant	1	Commercial establishment that is common in most settlement tiers, sometimes located in rural settings therefore a lower score is justified.	By Facility	Google Maps
Takeaway	1	Additional takeaway service provided by restaurant, which has a lower catchment area.	By Facility	Google Maps
Small Convenience Store/Farm Shop	2	Food Store that has floor space less than 500 sq meters, these tend to serve smaller villages or are sometimes located in 'suburbs' of larger settlements to serve newer developments.	By Facility	Google Maps
Supermarket	4	Supermarket with a floor space of over 500 sq meters. This is a key piece of infrastructure supporting a wide catchment population in higher order settlements.	By Facility	Google Maps
Other Non-Food Shops	1	These can include a wide range of other shops providing commercial services to the district	By Facility	Google Maps

Chemist/Pharmacy	3	Health Facilities providing prescription services, common of higher tier settlements.	By Facility	National Health Service (https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy)
Post Box	1	Post Box where mail can be posted and will be collected on a regular basis, common in most settlements.	By Facility	Royal Mail(https://www.royalmail.com/services-near-you)
Post Office	4	A permanent building providing various postal services	By Facility	Royal Mail (https://www.royalmail.com/services-near-you)
Cash Point	2	Cashpoint only, providing self-service banking requests including withdrawing, deposits, and bill payments. Common alongside banks and supermarkets.	By Facility	Google Maps
Financial Services (Bank/Building Society)	4	Building providing the full range of banking services. These commercial service centres can either be a building society or a bank.	By Facility	Google Maps
Tourism/Visitor Information Centre	4	Centre providing information on services, events and community facilities in a settlement and the wider district.	By Facility	Google Maps
Vet	4	Veterinary facilities providing pet care.	By Facility	Google Maps
Petrol Station	2	Usually located on principal routes across the district	By Facility	Google Maps
Leisure/open space				
Leisure Centre/ Indoor sports facilities	5	Indoor sports facility providing gym or other indoor sport facilities	By Facility	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5578/Leisure-centres-swimming-pools-and-gyms
Outdoor sports facilities	3	These are outdoor sports facilities, these can be football pitches etc. Only public use facilities are counted in this audit and may include hard and soft surfaces.	By Facility	Google Maps
Provision for Children/ Young People	2	Provision for children/ young people, this can include play equipment or skate parks. These are required to be provided in new estate developments.	By Facility	Uttlesford Open Space Assessment 2019

Amenity Greenspace	1	Natural informal space that is typical for most settlements in Uttlesford.	By Facility	Uttlesford Open Space Assessment 2019
Allotments	3	Provision for local populations where plots of land are used for growing vegetables. Tend to be community run and can also benefits the environment.	By Facility	Uttlesford Open Space Assessment 2019
Transport				
Public Car Parks	3	Surfaced Car Park for general public or service use	By Facility	Uttlesford Car Parking Map
Railway Station	5	A rail station providing good connectivity beyond the district to Cambridge and London though not all trains run to Stansted Airport. It accesses a highly sustainable mode of transport providing high-capacity regional movement to services or places of employment.	By Facility	Uttlesford Settlement Hierarchy 2019 https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/travel-information/maps-of-the-national-rail-network/
Taxi Rank	5	Physical allocation of land for taxi services to operate. Indicative of larger population centres and transport nodes where taxi demand is higher	By Facility	Google Maps
Community transport service	3	Supplements bus service with an on-demand project through Essex County Council. This on-demand service works by users contacting DaRT/DigiGo through a mobile device. It provides services to more remote areas over a wide part of the district and serves more rural, isolated, and dispersed population, and hence adds to transport sustainability for those settlements not served by a formal bus route.	By available coverage across the parish.	Essex Community Transport Services https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/bus/community-transport/demand-responsive-transport-dart
Electric charging points	3	Currently indicative of wider patronage but will become a feature in all settlement tiers. The provision identified is of charging points that have public access.	By Facility	Uttlesford Electric Charging (https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/electric-vehicle-charging)

Frequent daily bus service	4	The settlement is awarded this score if it has an hourly bus service or more, with a reliable connection to the public transport network	By level of service	Essex County Council Bus Map/Bustimes.org
Infrequent daily bus service	2	These services provide less than hourly but daily service to settlements.	By level of service	Essex County Council Bus Map/Bustimes.org
Less than daily bus service	1	Bus services that do not run daily but serve the settlement weekly or only part of the week.	By level of service	Essex County Council Bus Map/Bustimes.org
Bus service seven days/week	1	This score is given to settlements where buses run seven days a week.	By level of service	Essex County Council Bus Map/Bustimes.org
Utilities				
Broadband Service	2/1/0	Level of service within the settlement as per the availability of standard/superfast and ultrafast broadband speeds from a central postcode within the settlement boundaries. This is recorded either by reported levels from parish councils or through the Ofcom checker referenced in the source column.	By level of service	Ofcom Broadband coverage checker https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/broadband-coverage
Mobile telephone service	2/1/0	Level of service based on the amount of 4G or 5G providers available to the settlement. This is key to modern settlement connectivity and with working from home is becoming increasingly important.	By level of service	Signal Checker https://www.signalchecker.co.uk/
Employment				
Key Employment Site	3	Employment area identified in the baseline assessment of employment sites in Uttlesford. Presence of outside-home-based employment indicates higher level of economic activity and opportunity to coalesce services and provide business support; more local employment reduces need to use car and enhances opportunity	By presence of identified Employment site.	Uttlesford Economic Development & Employment Needs Assessment (2021)

		for economic activity and interaction for all sectors of society		

Appendix 2 – Services and Facilities Scoring by Theme

Education/Health

			Education					Health		
Hierarchy Level	Settlement	TOTAL	Early Years provision (Formal)	Early Years Provision (Informal)	Primary School	Secondary School	Further Education	Doctors Surgery/Health centre	Hospital	Dentist
	SCORE PER SERVICE		3	2	3	5	5	4	5	3
Key	Saffron Walden	500	15	6	15	5	5	8	5	18
Key	Great Dunmow	300	9	2	6	5	5	8		12
Key	Stansted Mountfitchet	246	9		9	5	5	4		9
Local Rural	Thaxted	150	3	2	3			4		3
Local Rural	Takeley Including Priors Green	146	3	12	6					6
Local Rural	Newport	87	3	2	3	5	5	4		
Local Rural	Hatfield Heath	85	3	2	3			4		
Local Rural	Elsenham	85		2	3			4		
Local Rural	Great Chesterford	82	3		3			8		
Large Village	Clavering	74	3		3					
Large Village	Henham	74	3		3					
Large Village	Felsted	67	3		3			4		
Large Village	Stebbing	50	3	2	3					
Large Village	Hatfield Broad Oak	48	3		3			4		
Large Village	Little Hallingbury	46		2	3					
Large Village	Birchanger	45	3		3					
Large Village	Debden	44		2	3					
Small Village	Quendon & Rickling	39			3					
Small Village	Wendens Ambo	39	3							
Small Village	High Easter	38	3							
Small Village	Great Easton	37			3					
Small Village	Manuden	36			3					
Small Village	Ashdon	36	3		3					
Small Village	Chrishall	35	3		3					
Small Village	Radwinter	35			3					
Small Village	Littlebury	34		2						

	Leaden Roding	32			3					
	Great Sampford	31			3					
	Wimbish	31			3					
	Flitch Green	30	3	2	3					
	Elmdon	29								
	White Roding	28								
	Great Hallingbury	27	3							
	Broxted	27								
	Farnham	26		2	3					
	High Roding	26								
	Barnston	26								
	Little Easton (Butchers Pasture)	25								
	Langley	25								
	Elder Street*	24	3							
	Hempstead	22								
	Little Dunmow	22								
	Berden	22								
	Sewards End	22								
	Aythorpe Roding (Roundbush Green and Surrounds)	21		2						
	Widdington	21								
	Lindsell	20								
	Little Canfield Excluding Priors Green	20		2						
Open Countryside	Little Chesterford	19								
	Arkesden	18								
	Hadstock	18								
	Margaret Roding	18								
	Little Sampford	16								
	Ugley	16								
	Duton Hill	16								
	Great Canfield	13								
	Little Bardfield	13	3							
	Tilty	12								
	Church End	12								
	Wicken Bonhunt	11								
	Wenden Lofts	10								
	Strethall	8								
	Chickney	5								

Commercial/Open Space

			Commercial																	Open Space				
Hierarchy Level	Settlement	TOTAL	Hairdressers	Public house/Inn	B&B	Restaurant	Takeaway	Small Convenience Store/Farm Shop	Supermarket	Other Non-Food Shops	Chemist/Pharmacy	Post Box	Post Office	Post Office (Mobile)	Cash Point	Financial Services (Bank/Building Society)	Tourism/Visitor Information Centre	Vet	Petrol filling station	Leisure centre/ Indoor sports facilities	Outdoor sports facilities	Provision for C/YP	Amenity Greenspace (Common/ Village Green)	Allotments
	SCORE PER SERVICE		2	3	4	1	1	2	4	1	3	1	4	2	2	4	4	4	2	5	3	2	1	3
Key Settlement	Saffron Walden	500	38	18	8	31	14	4	12	38	6	24	4		12	24	4	16	2	5	12	12	11	9
	Great Dunmow	300	6	15	8	13	11	2	4	23	6	13	4		8	4		12	2	5	9	12	9	3
	Stansted Mountfitchet	246	12	18	4	3	6	8	8	5	6	5	4		8			4	4	5	6	12	6	6
Local Rural Centre	Thaxted	150	4	15	12	5	2	6		5	3	4	4		6		4		2			4	3	6
	Takeley Including Priors Green	146	2	6	16	3	4	6		13	3	1	4		6			4	4		9	6	6	
	Newport	87		6	8	3	4	2		4	3	4	4						2			2	2	3
	Hatfield Heath	85		6	4	5	8	2		5		5										2	8	6
	Elsenham	85	2	3	8		2			2	3	5	4		4						6		3	6
	Great Chesterford	82		6			1	2				3								5	3	12	1	3
Large Village	Clavering	74		6	8	1		2				6	4		2					5	6	2	4	3
	Henham	74	2	3	8	1		2				3	4							5	3		3	3
	Felsted	67		6	4	1		2		2		4	4							5	3	2	4	3
	Stebbing	50		3	4	1	1	2		1		5	4								3		2	3
	Hatfield Broad Oak	48		6		2	1	2		3		1	4									2	2	
	Little Hallingbury	46		3	4			2				5	4								3		2	
	Birchanger	45		6	4	1				1		2									3	2	1	
	Debden	44		3		2						3	4								3	2	1	3
Small Village	Quendon & Rickling	39		3	4	1						3									6		4	3
	Wendens Ambo	39		3			1			1		2									3	2	1	
	High Easter	38				1						1	4								6	2	1	3
	Great Easton	37		3		1	1					3									3	2	3	
	Manuden	36		3								2								5	3	2	1	6
	Ashdon	36		3		1	1					1									6	2	1	3
	Chrishall	35		3	4	1						2									3	2		
	Radwinter	35		3		1	1	2				3									3	2	1	
	Littlebury	34		3						1		5									3	4	1	
	Leaden Roding	32						2		1		2		2									2	
	Great Sampford	31				1						3		2							3	4	2	
	Wimbish	31			4							2									3	2	1	

	Flitch Green	30					1	2				1										3	2	3		
	Elmdon	29								2		4										3		1		
	White Roding	28				1	1	2		2		1										3	2	1		
	Great Hallingbury	27								1		2										3	2	1		
	Broxted	27		3	4	1	1			1		2														
	Farnham	26		3								1											2	1		
	High Roding	26		3		1	1			1		1										3	2	1	3	
	Barnston	26								5		1										3	2			
	Little Easton (Butchers Pasture)	25		3								3										3	2			
	Langley	25		3								3										3	2	2		
	Elder Street*	24						2				3							2			3	2	1		
	Hempstead	22										1											2	1		
	Little Dunmow	22		3	4	1						1											2	1		
	Berden	22																				3	2	2		
	Sewards End	22			4							2										3	2	2		
	Aythorpe Roding (Roundbush Green and Surrounds)	21		3		1	1					1										3		1		
	Widdington	21		3								1											2		3	
	Lindsell	20						2				3										3				
	Little Canfield Excluding Priors Green	20				1				3		2												1		
Open Countryside	Little Chesterford	19										2											2			
	Arkesden	18		3								3												1		
	Hadstock	18											4										2	1		
	Margaret Roding	18										1														
	Little Sampford	16			4							3														
	Ugley	16										2												1		
	Duton Hill	16		3								1										3	2			
	Great Canfield	13										3														
	Little Bardfield	13										3										3				
	Tilty	12			4							1														
	Church End	12										1											2	2		
	Wicken Bonhunt	11		3		1	1					2														
	Wenden Lofts	10								1		1														
	Strethall	8																								
	Chickney	5																								

Transport/Utilities/Employment

			Transport										Utilities						Employment
Hierarchy Level	Settlement	TOTAL	Public Car Parks	Railway Station	Taxi Rank	Community Transport service E.g DaRT	Electric charging points (Cimmunity Use)	Bicycle Storage	Frequent Daily Bus Service (Hourly)	Infrequent Daily Bus Service	Less than daily bus service	7 day service	Good Broadband Connection	Limited Broadband Connection	Poor Broadband Connection	Good Mobile Connection	Limited Mobile Connection	Poor Mobile Connection	Key Employment Site
	SCORE PER SERVICE		3	5	5	3	3	3	4	2	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	3
Key Settlement	Saffron Walden	500	15		5	3	9		4				2			2			3
	Great Dunmow	300	12	5			12		4			1		1		2			3
	Stansted Mountfitchet	246	6	5	5	3	12	3	4			1		1		2			3
Local Rural Centre	Thaxted	150	6			3				2			2				1		
	Takeley Including Priors Green	146					3		4					1		2			3
	Newport	87						3	4					1			1		
	Hatfield Heath	85		5					4			1	2				1		
	Elsenham	85	3	5				3		2			2			2			3
	Great Chesterford	82	3					3	4				2				1		3
Large Village	Clavering	74				3								1			1		3
	Henham	74							4				2			2			3
	Felsted	67							4					1			1		
	Stebbing	50								2			2				1		
	Hatfield Broad Oak	48							4				2				1		
	Little Hallingbury	46							4				2				1		3
	Birchanger	45							4				2			2			3
	Debden	44							4					1			1		3
Small Village	Quendon & Rickling	39							4					1			1		
	Wendens Ambo	39		5				3	4					1			1		3
	High Easter	38	3			3					1			1			1		
	Great Easton	37				3				2				1			1		3
	Manuden	36									1			1					3
	Ashdon	36								2				1			1		
	Chrishall	35				3				2			2				1		
	Radwinter	35				3				2			2				1		
	Littlebury	34							4				2				1		
	Leaden Roding	32							4			1	2				1		
	Great Sampford	31												1			1		3
	Wimbish	31				3			4								1		

	Flitch Green	30				3			4				2				1			
	Elmdon	29												1			1			
	White Roding	28							4			1		1			1			3
	Great Hallingbury	27								2				1			1			3
	Broxted	27							4				2				1			
	Farnham	26				3													0	3
	High Roding	26									1		2				1			
	Barnston	26							4					1			1			3
	Little Easton (Butchers Pasture)	25								2			2				1			3
	Langley	25				3								1					0	
	Elder Street*	24				3			4								1			
	Hempstead	22				3				2			2						0	3
	Little Dunmow	22							4			1		1			1			
	Berden	22				3					1			1		2				3
	Sewards End	22								2				1			1			
	Aythorpe Roding (Roundbush Green and Surrounds)	21									1			1			1			
	Widdington	21							4					1			1			
	Lindsell	20								2				1			1			
	Little Canfield Excluding Priors Green	20							4				2			2				
Open Countryside	Little Chesterford	19								2				1			1			3
	Arkesden	18				3														
	Hadstock	18											2							3
	Margaret Roding	18				3			4			1	2				1			3
	Little Sampford	16								2				1			1			
	Ugley	16							4					1		2				
	Duton Hill	16				3				2				1			1			
	Great Canfield	13												1			1			
	Little Bardfield	13															1			
	Tilty	12				3											1			
	Church End	12								2				1			1			
	Wicken Bonhunt	11												1						
	Wenden Lofts	10				3								1			1			
	Strethall	8				3								1			1			
	Chickney	5												1			1			

Appendix 3 – Copy of Parish Survey Sent out December 2022

Uttlesford Parish & Town Council Survey – Services and Facilties
December 2022

NAME OF PARISH:

This survey is intended for town and parish councils and parish meetings in Uttlesford. It will help to make sure the Council has the most up-to-date information for each parish/settlement as part of the process of preparing the Local Plan. We are asking if each parish could review the forms we have set out below, make any amendments or additions and return to us by 16th January 2023. Please copy this Word document and return to the following email address: localplan@uttlesford.gov.uk

This is a non-statutory consultation that we are undertaking to inform the development of the new draft Local Plan, in particular the descriptive profile of each settlement and the hierarchy of settlements. The statutory consultation on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) is scheduled for summer 2023.

The purpose of this survey is to check the services and facilities in the main settlement and other villages/hamlets in your parish. Please fill in the information about your settlements in the various boxes provided (You may need to copy if you have more than one settlement in your parish)

1. SETTLEMENTS IN YOUR PARISH

Name of Parish	
Name of Main settlement	
Other villages/hamlets	

2. SERVICES IN THE MAIN SETTLEMENT

(Please copy this form and complete for any smaller villages/ in your parish)

Please check the number and any names of facilities and services in your parish which are open as of 1st January 2023 (If premises have closed post pandemic, please indicate this)
Please add any comments with further information as you wish.

	Number	Name	Comments
EDUCATION AND LEARNING			
Early years provision			
Primary school			
Secondary school			
Sixth form college			
Adult education/learning centre			
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING			
Doctor's surgery / health centre			
Baby clinic			
Hospital			

Dentist			
COMMUNITY FACILITIES			
Community or village hall			
Day centre			
Creche and day nurseries			
Playgroup			
Youth clubs/centre			
Social Clubs			
Museum			
Library			
Mobile library			
Theatre/arts centre			
Places of worship			
Council offices			
Police presence			
RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL			
Hairdressers			
Public house/Inn			
Hotel			
B&B			
Self-catering visitor accommodation			
Restaurant			
Café/coffee shop			
Takeaway			
Small Convenience stores			
Supermarket			
Non- food shops stores (approximate number)			
Chemist/pharmacy			
Post box			
Post Office			
Other parcel services (e.g. drop off point myhermes, yodel)			
Cash point			
Financial services (bank or building society)			
Tourism/visitor information centre			
Vet			
Petrol filling station/car repairs			
RECREATION			
Leisure centre /indoor sports facilities			
Outdoor sports pitches/facilities			
Recreation ground			
Tennis courts/club			
Bowling Green			
Kickabout area			
Skate Park			
Children's play park with equipment e.g. swings			
Public Park or garden			
Common or village green			

Other open space			
Allotments			
TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY			
Public car parks			
Railway station			
Taxi rank			
Community transport service			
Electric charging points – for community use			
Public car parks			
Bicycle storage			
Bicycle hire			
DaRT (Demand Responsive Transport) local bus service			
Bus Routes (Please detail each route)			
Bus route and destinations			Frequency of service
Bus route and destinations			Frequency of service
Bus route and destinations			Frequency of service
Bus route and destinations			Frequency of service
Broadband - level of service			Standard/Superfast? Reliability?
Mobile telephone - level of service			

3. SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN THE PARISH

a) Are there any issues with services and facilities? If so, please outline them below. (E.g. Loss of village shop, pub etc)

Service	Comments

b) Are there any services and facilities that you would like to see in the parish or that the community needs? If so, please outline them below.

Service	Comments

4. EMPLOYMENT

Access to employment and linking jobs with homes is important in maintaining sustainable places. Please would you list the main employment or business sites/small estates in your parish if you have any and give a rough idea of the number and type of businesses there if you can.

Employment site:		
Name	Address /location	Nature of businesses

Employment site:		
Name	Address /location	Nature of businesses

Employment site:		
Name	Address /location	Nature of businesses

MANY THANKS YOUR HELP.

Please return this form to localplan@uttlesford.gov.uk by **16th January 2023**
Please put 'Parish Survey' in the subject line

Shared Transport in New Developments in Uttlesford

Report prepared by CoMoUK

V1 April 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

Uttlesford District Council has commissioned CoMoUK, the national charity for shared transport to provide a report which outlines the current evidence of the benefits of shared transport whilst providing a set of recommendations to help inform the specification for the roll out of a shared mobility scheme across new developments in Uttlesford.

Approximately 5000 new homes are included in the draft local plan within the Uttlesford boundary located in six towns and villages: Saffron Walden, Newport, Thaxted, Great Dunmow, Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet (see Figure 1).

The Local Plan aims to ensure that active travel and sustainable transport principles are at the heart of the new developments. The council is looking at what practical measures will be required to ensure new residents are able to choose sustainable travel modes. It is expected that the changes will support existing residents to also change their travel behaviour.

The Council has shared background to the travel patterns in the area with CoMoUK. It is apparent that the current mode of commuting in Uttlesford (recorded during the 2011 and 2021 Census) is predominantly by private car, with relative levels of car use within the district higher than for both Essex and England. Bus, motorcycle and bicycle use within Uttlesford is low. Train use within Uttlesford is lower than for the county, although it is the same as the national level. Walking within the district is approximately equivalent to both the county and England albeit higher in the market towns and lower within rural areas.

The usual places of work analysis for Uttlesford residents shows that a large proportion of residents' work within the district (42%), with 33% working in neighbouring authorities and over 16% in London. There are also many people travelling into the district to work.

There are high levels of car ownership within Uttlesford and there are few dedicated cycle routes in towns or linking settlements. The majority of the road network in the district is narrow rural roads which service small villages and market towns. The car ownership levels are reflected in the local parking standards[1], which are set at one for one bedroom property and two for two and three bedroom dwellings and three for larger dwellings, excluding garages.

There is a need for reliable high quality sustainable transport modes in order to reduce the dominance of the private car. The report provides an independent view on the best approach to deliver shared transport both at the six new developments and the settlements

[1] https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localparkingstandards

in which they are to be based. The map (figure 1) and table 1 below illustrates the proposed sites, their current and proposed population size.

Settlement	**No. of new dwellings (existing pop)**
Saffron Walden	1,200 (16,600)
Great Dunmow	870 (10,400)
Stansted Mountfitchet	390 (8,600)
Takeley	1,600 (5,500)
~~Thaxted~~	~~490 (3,100)~~
~~Newport~~	~~400 (2,900)~~

Table 1: Settlements and populations

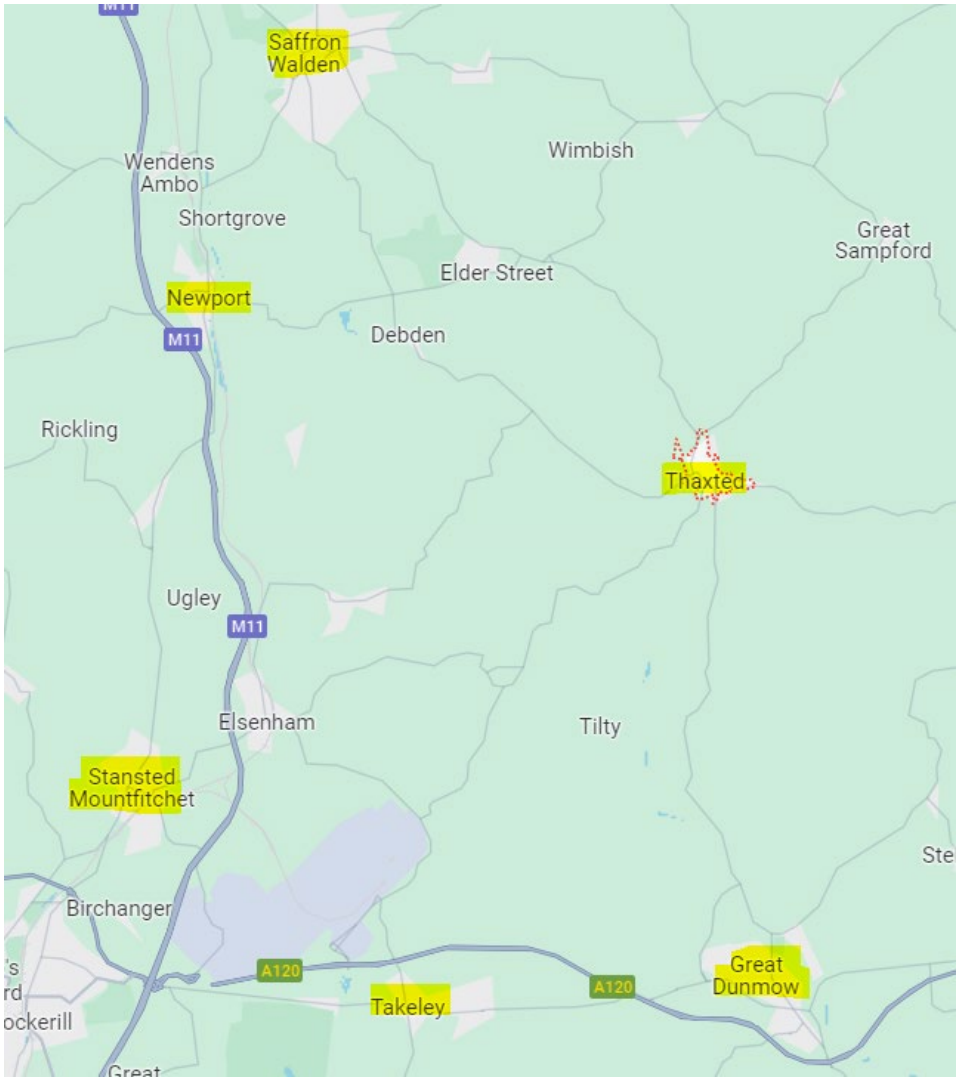


Figure 1: Map of the settlements which will be the location of the proposed new housing developments

2. Models of shared transport and evidence for their contribution to social and environmental goals

2.1 Car clubs

Pay per trip car clubs allow individuals and organisations to have access to a car without being tied to ownership. Bookings are completed on a website or in an app and are charged by the hour and by distance. Electric car clubs offer access to electric vehicles which are typically parked at dedicated charging points. There are four national operators, all of which are accredited by CoMoUK. In addition, there many community-led schemes.

An alternative to providing self-service access to a vehicle owned by a third party is Peer to Peer sharing where residents place their own vehicles on a platform which connects them to those who wish to hire a car in the area and provides the insurance cover for the trip.

Evidence of the impacts of car clubs

The CoMoUK 2022 annual car club reports found that each car club vehicle in the UK substituted the need for 22 privately owned vehicles.[2] With private cars in England spending on average 23 hours out of 24 parked, car clubs give people the benefit of access to cars, without the huge spatial inefficiencies of private car storage.

People using car club vehicles are likely to drive less overall but the trips they do take are for longer distances than private car journeys. This reflects the 'sunk costs' of car ownership, which incentivise car use for regular, short journeys that can more easily be replaced with other modes of transport.[3]

Car club users are more likely to travel at other times by foot, bike or public transport than the average population. The 2022 report shows that 76% of car club members were walking at least once a week for travel (i.e. not for leisure). 48% of respondents used a bus at least once a week and 15% used a train or tram at least once a week. This compares to a national average in England of 16% and 5%, respectively, in 2021. 37% were using a bicycle at least once a week. In 2021, only 15% of people in England cycled once a week or more on average.

Car clubs can also bring significant cost savings to members, especially those who use cars infrequently. Our latest survey found that 73% of those who have got rid of a car (first, second, third or otherwise) agree that car club membership saves them money compared to owning or leasing a car.

[2] https://www.como.org.uk/documents/car-club-annual-report-uk-2022
[3] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2213624X20301589#s0040

Research from a rural setting

Huntly Travel Hub (see below for the full case study): Since the scheme was launched in 2015 they have found that their members combined drive around 783 miles per month. The car club has 70 members, with 10 core users for whom the car club has replaced their vehicles, meaning 10 cars removed from the road. There are around 20 members who use a car once a month, and the remaining members use the car on a one-off basis. Feedback from regular users reported they saved around £1,500 to £2,000 per year, compared to the cost of a privately owned vehicle.

2.2 Bike share & bike loans

There are several different models for providing access to shared bikes. Self-service bike share allows people to pick up a bike and carry out one-way trips with the bike, leaving it at their destination. Back-to-base, (bike hire, pool bikes) sometimes also use a mobile app to allow self-service access alternatively they can be managed by a local bike shop or tourist attraction. Such hires are often charged by a half or full day rather than per minute. A third option is for longer term loans for people to "try before they buy" and are often delivered with cycle training and vouchers towards the purchase of a similar bike. These commonly include electric bikes.

Evidence of the impacts of bike sharing schemes

The CoMoUK 2023 Annual Bike Share report[4] show that bike share re-attracts people into cycling, supports health and wellbeing, triggers sustainable travel behaviours, cuts car miles and presents an affordable travel option. One-third of bike share users in the UK, for example, use shared bikes to cycle for the first time ever or for the first time in five years or more. Two-thirds of bike share users say that they have been cycling more frequently since joining a bike share scheme.

Research from a rural setting

Huntly Travel Hub: The Huntly Travel Hub has 24 electric bikes which are rented out on weekly or monthly contracts, rather than on a short-term (hourly or daily) basis. Staff running the long-term hire scheme in Huntly reported that, of the 250 people who hired an e-bike from hub in 2021, 20 went on to buy a bike.

[4] https://www.como.org.uk/documents/bike-share-annual-report-uk-2022

2.3 Mobility hubs

Mobility hubs are designed to host public transport alongside shared transport modes and active travel facilities. Bringing services together boosts convenience for multi-modal trips, with the possibility of seamless switches and improved links between different layers of transport such as the core public transport network and shared services.

Hubs allow space to be reorganised for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and business owners addressing parking problems and creating more pleasant urban realm. Converting space previously used only for private parking to green space, waiting areas and additional facilities makes for a better experience for the traveller, increasing patronage. They can also offer a safer and more comfortable dwell time which will lead to improved access for more vulnerable users.

They raise the profile and visibility of the range of shared and other sustainable travel modes, which provides a new status and appeal, with the associated benefits of reduction in car use.

3. Analysis of the potential for shared transport in the proposed sites in Uttlesford

3.1 Car clubs

Car clubs work well where there is a population which can have low-car lifestyles, with the need for only occasional access to a car. These households are able to forego car ownership or to give up their own private vehicle and switch to using to a car club. Car clubs also work well where there is a mix of residents, tourists and businesses whose bookings can be spread over the week. The typical characteristics of an area which supports low car living include; high housing density with a range of amenities in walking distance, regular public transport which supports commuting without a car, and constraints to owning your own car such as a lack of parking spaces or permit fees. An additional factor, which is harder to measure, is the presence of the environmentally motivated residents who are willing to change their behaviour even if it requires extra effort. The existence of green community groups was used as a guide to whether these types of residents were present at the moment.

The report explores whether a sufficient number of the listed characteristics are currently present or are likely to be present in each of the new developments from the information available. This will be displayed in a traffic light system to show where the supportive factors are present (green), present to some degree (amber), absent (red). This is then translated to a score with green gaining 3 points, amber 2 and red 1. The total score is calculated across the factors. The results of this are summarised in table 2 below.

With additional research time, further in-depth analysis could be carried out to assess other contributory factors such as car ownership per household, commuting patterns and Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC).

Table 2: Assessment of potential for car clubs for each settlement

Settlement	Planned population size	Housing density & parking constraints (current & future)	Public transport connectivity	Amenities within walking distance	Community green groups	Score & recommended solution
Saffron Walden	17,800	High density & constrained parking in centre, lower density on existing new developments, ample in existing suburbs. The new housing is currently planned to be medium density.	Rail station (2.5m). Regular bus services[5] to the rail station, Haverhill, Cambridge, Stansted and Bishops Stortford	A range of shops & supermarkets, health centres and school within walking distance	Wildlife group. Eco Church	13 Car club
Great Dunmow	11,270	Existing settlement has small pockets of higher density housing with more traditional estates with ample parking. The new housing is currently planned to be medium density.	No rail station. Buses to Saffron Walden & Newport. New bus service planned to Stansted.	Some shops & supermarkets, health centre and primary school within walking distance	Friends of Flitch Way	9 Peer to peer sharing
Stansted Mountfitchet	8990	Existing settlement has small pockets of higher density housing. with more traditional estates with ample parking. The new housing is currently planned to be medium density.	Rail station links to Bishops Stortford and Cambridge. Bus to Airport.	Some shops, health centres and school within walking distance	Sustainable Stansted	10 Car club with the right conditions outlined in the recommendations
Takeley	7100	Low density, ample parking. The new housing is currently	Rail station at Stansted airport (3m). New bus	Limited shops, no supermarket, health centres and school	No community groups found	6 Peer to peer sharing

[5] https://www.travelessex.co.uk/about-timetables-maps

		planned to be medium density.	service planned to Stansted.	within walking distance		
~~Thaxted~~	~~3590~~	~~Central housing has limited parking (are there car parks used by these residents?), otherwise low-density housing with ample parking. The new housing is currently planned to be medium density.~~	~~No rail station. Bus to Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow plus Dart 299 DRT service to surrounding villages.~~	~~Limited shops, no supermarket, health centres and school within walking distance~~	~~Eco Thaxted Group~~	~~7 Peer to peer sharing~~
~~Newport~~	~~3300~~	~~Low density, ample parking. The new housing is currently planned to be medium density.~~	~~Rail station links to Bishops Stortford and Cambridge. Bus to Saffron Walden.~~	~~Limited shops, health centres and school within walking distance~~	~~No community groups found~~	~~7 Peer to peer sharing~~

3.2 Bike share schemes & loans

Shared bike schemes work well where there is a range of supportive factors. The key factors being; safe cycling infrastructure, density, and the right use cases and trip generators to justify a pool of bikes versus privately owned bikes. The presence of supportive community groups is also helpful.

Table 3, below, assesses whether a sufficient number of those characteristics are likely to be present in each of the new developments from the information available. This will be displayed in a traffic light system to show where the supportive factors are present (green), present to some degree (amber), absent (red). This is then translated to a score with green gaining 3 points, amber 2 and red 1.

Table 3: Assessment of the potential of shared bike schemes for each settlement

Settlement	Planned total pop'n size	Use cases & trip generators	Cycling infrastructure	Scheme supporters (community group / bike shop)	Score & recommended solution
Saffron Walden	17,800	Connecting residents to town & station. Connecting rail travellers to town. Leisure rides. Potentially tourist in town.	The key connection to the station has been improved although needs additional lighting and segregation. Surrounding rural roads which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.	https://www.newdales.co.uk/ Wildlife group. Eco Church	11 One way bike share at multiple sites. Bike loans
Great Dunmow	11,270	Leisure cycling. Connecting new housing to town centre? Too small for utility trips.	NCN16 / Flitch Way from Stansted, Takeley to Braintree but lacks segregation in Great Dunmow. New settlements have narrow roads and ancient bridges but cycle infrastructure improvements are being considered.	Remote based workshop only www.flitchbikesltd.co.uk Friends of Flitch Way	8 Pool bikes, back to base from housing, or bike loans
Stansted Mountfitchet	8990	Connecting residents to amenities, work, station. Leisure cycling.	Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy. Links to NCN16. Lacks safe routes to the airport.	https://www.stanstedbicycles.co.uk/ More shops in Bishop Stortford. Sustainable Stansted Group. Successful app bike scheme within airport for staff.	8 Bike & e-cargo bike loans Possibly extension of existing app bike scheme at Airport from staff car parks to terminal
Takeley	7100	Connecting residents to amenities, work, Stansted station. Leisure cycling.	NCN16 from Stansted, Takeley to Braintree. New route planned to Stansted rail station.	No bike shops or community groups found	7 Bike loans Possibly extension of existing app bike scheme at Airport from

					staff car parks to terminal
~~Thaxted~~	~~3590~~	~~Leisure rides~~	~~Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.~~	~~No shops. Eco Thaxted Group~~	~~5 Extension of Saffron Walden loan scheme to Thaxted~~
~~Newport~~	~~3300~~	~~Connecting residents to amenities, work, station. Leisure cycling.~~	~~Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.~~	~~The Bicycle Shop. No community groups found~~	~~5 Extension of Saffron Walden loan scheme to Newport.~~

3.3 Electric cargo bike schemes & loans

Electric cargo bikes are relatively new to the UK. Shared schemes are available in three models:

- Public self-service schemes, e.g. Hackney and Westminster, London, Bristol and Hereford.
- Day hires e.g. Strathaven
- Longer term, try before you buy loans, e.g. Saffron Walden, Leeds.

There is also a growth in businesses providing e-cargo bike delivery schemes.

Some schemes offer e-cargo bikes which can carry goods only and others allow for carrying children as well as space for shopping and parcels. An alternative to cargo bikes is the addition of trailers, again there are different types for children or goods. These can be added to existing bike fleets and could offer a more flexible, low cost solution especially for infrequent leisure cycling.

In this context of smaller rural settlements the model the report seeks to explore the expansion of the model Saffron Walden has deployed of providing back to base hires from one location to residents and businesses. The scheme here provides a three-wheeled cargo-bike to carry up to 2 kids or 1 adult, or cargo ranging from furniture to food deliveries with a rain tent cover.

As outlined above for bike share schemes, shared electric cargo bikes schemes will also require safe cycling infrastructure, at a width to accommodate these larger bikes, the right density, and use cases. Given the additional cost and extra cycle training support which might be required to deploy such a scheme the number of places which can host a pool of bikes is likely to be smaller than with other types of bikes. The presence of supportive community groups is also helpful.

Table 4, below, assesses whether a sufficient number of supportive characteristics are likely to be present in each of the new developments from the information available. This is displayed in a traffic light system to show where the supportive factors are present (green), present to some degree (amber), absent (red). This is then translated to a score with green gaining 3 points, amber 2 and red 1.

Table 4: Assessment of the potential for e-cargo bike schemes for each settlement

Settlement	Planned total pop'n size	Use cases & trip generators for cargo bikes over traditional bikes	Cycling infrastructure	Scheme supporters (community group / bike shop)	Score & recommended solution
Saffron Walden	17,800	Business deliveries. Leisure rides with children. Utility trips into town e.g. shopping. Try before you buy loans.	The key connection to the station has been improved although needs additional lighting and segregation. Surrounding rural roads which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.	https://www.newdales.co.uk/ Wildlife group. Eco Church.	11 E-cargo bike (or trailer) hires from a central point & the new development/s. With option for longer term loans.
Great Dunmow	11,270	Leisure rides with children. Utility trips into town e.g. shopping. Try before you buy loans.	NCN16 / Flitch Way from Stansted, Takeley to Braintree but lacks segregation in Great Dunmow. New settlements have narrow roads and ancient bridges but cycle infrastructure improvements are being considered.	Remote based workshop only www.flitchbikesltd.co.uk Friends of Flitch Way	8 E-cargo bike (or trailer) hires from the new development/s. With option for longer term loans.
Stansted Mountfitchet	8990	Business deliveries. Leisure rides with children. Utility trips into town e.g. shopping. Try before you buy loans.	Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy. Links to NCN16. Lacks safe routes to the airport.	https://www.stanstedbicycles.co.uk/ More shops in Bishop Stortford. Sustainable Stansted Group. Successful app bike scheme within airport for staff.	8 E-cargo bike (or trailer) hires from the new development/s. With option for longer term loans.

Takeley	7100	Leisure rides with children. Utility trips into town e.g. shopping. Try before you buy loans.	NCN16 from Stansted, Takeley to Braintree. New route planned to Stansted rail station.	No bike shops or community groups found	7 E-cargo (or trailer) bike hires from the new development/s. With option for longer term loans.
~~Thaxted~~	~~3590~~	~~Leisure rides with children~~	~~Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.~~	~~No shops.~~ ~~Eco Thaxted Group~~	~~5~~ ~~Addition of trailers to loan scheme.~~
~~Newport~~	~~3300~~	~~Leisure rides with children~~	~~Small rural roads some of which could be quiet, others pose a danger if busy.~~	~~The Bicycle Shop. No community groups found~~	~~4~~ ~~Addition of trailers to loan scheme.~~

4. Best practice in shared transport in small settlements and new developments

4.1 Car club

Operators were asked to provide information on schemes identified by CoMoUK to be in similar small settlements as part of new developments. Operators empathised that car clubs often struggle in rural settings due to the lower density of housing and lack of regular, quality public transport to succeed. Table 5 provides a handful of examples which appear to be successful with accompanying notes on the reasons for their viability.

Table 5: Commercial led schemes in smaller sized rural settings

Settlement & population	Operator	Funding source / details	Factors for success
Northstowe, Cambridgeshire (4100)	Enterprise Mobility*	S106	New medium density housing development. Proximity to Cambridge linked with guided bus route. Additional use from Cambridge residents coming out of the city using the guided bus to access the car club. Basic amenities in walking distance. Active community hub.
Melbourn, between Cambridge and Stevenage (4895)	Enterprise Mobility	S106	New medium density housing development. Proximity to rail station with high frequency connections to Cambridge, Stevenage and south. Basic amenities in walking distance. Community hub with café and library. Not working as well as Northstowe, has had extra funding and marketing.
Wallingford, Oxfordshire* (8455)	Co Wheels	County Council	Historic old town with high density housing in centre with some surrounding medium / low density development. Bus links to Oxford and Didcot Parkway with rail links to Reading and Oxford.

			Basic amenities in walking distance. A number of active environmental groups.
Calderwood, East Calder (3880)	Hiyacar	S106	New development with mix of housing density. Bus links to rail lines into Edinburgh. A range of core amenities provided on site Car club led by the housing developer.

*Cowheels reported that in Oxfordshire pilot where a rural EV car club pilot has been taking place, there have been unusual results. Larger locations like Bicester and Witney have been less successful but much smaller and apparently less promising locations have fared better. Wallingford (8,455 Population) is sustainable or near sustainable, on current performance. In these areas it came down to mindset. The villages had active environmental groups who were trying to get people to change behaviour.

4.2 Peer to peer car sharing

An alternative to providing self-service access to a vehicle owned by a third party is Peer to Peer sharing where residents place their own vehicles on a platform which connects them to those who wish to hire a car in the area and provides the insurance cover for the trip.

Hiyacar provided the following locations outlined in table 6, in similar sized settings which are working well.

Table 6: Peer to peer schemes in smaller sized rural settings

Settlement & population	**Factors for success**
Eynsham, Oxfordshire (5324)	Historic old town with high density housing in centre with some surrounding medium / low density development. Regular bus route to Oxford. Shops and amenities in walking distance Community and environmental groups

Ilkley, West Yorkshire (14,854)	High density Victorian housing with limited parking. Rail link into Leeds Variety of shops and other amenities in walking distance Active environmental group, Climate Action Ilkley.

4.3 Bike share & e-cargo bike share schemes

The table (7), below provides examples of similar small settlements, some of which are part of new developments, which appear to be successful with accompanying notes on the reasons for their viability.

Table 7: Bike share in smaller sized rural settings

Settlement & population	Operator	Factors for success
Hougton Regis and Bidwell (18,820)	App bike	S106 funded medium density, new development which will be expanding as the new development grows over the next few years. Cycle ways are being improved which will provide better and more useful links to destinations. Shops and amenities in walking distance
Strathaven, South Lanarkshire (8180)	Climate Action Strathaven (CAST)	Medium density housing Shops and amenities in walking distance. Community run (CAST) bus service running 12 services daily to and from Glasgow. Community run back to base, bike hire, and e-cargo bike short and long-term hires.

Stansted Staff Bike Share Scheme

As Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet are so close to Stansted Airport it is useful to understand the corporate staff scheme which is running successfully there.

The surface transport team at Stansted approached App-Bike looking for an effective and greener solution to getting workers to and from the terminal from outlying car parking. Given that running a shuttle bus service costs over £100K per year, they were keen to look at more cost-effective options. For less than a 10th of the annual cost of a bus service, we have been able to provide a large fleet of bikes using our App-Bike system to shuttle these employees to the terminal and back again. There is no waiting around for a bus, and a user simply unlocks the bike with our app and locks it again when at their destination. In all it is quicker and more convenient for the user. We have also configured the app so that only authorised users can access the bikes, and all maintenance, support and insurance is provided by App-Bike.

Source https://www.app-bike.co.uk/case-studies

4.4 Mobility hubs

Examples of mobility hubs in similar small settlements are set out in table 8, some of which are part of new developments, which appear to be successful with accompanying notes on the reasons for their viability.

Table 8: Examples of mobility hubs in similar settings

Settlement & population	**Operator**	**Factors for success**
Calderwood, East Calder (3880)	Stirling Developments	New development with mix of housing density. Bus links to rail lines into Edinburgh. A range of core amenities provided on site. Mobility hub led by the developer.
Huntly, Aberdeenshire (4550)	Huntly Development Trust	Connected by rail to local towns and Aberdeen. Higher density housing in and around town centre, lower on the edges of the settlement. Shops and amenities in walking distance. See case study below on community activity and success factors.
Maybole, South Ayrshire (4550)	South Ayrshire Community Transport & the Carrick Community Centre	Located on the rail line with connections to Ayr and Glasgow. Medium density housing. Limited shops and amenities in walking distance. E-bike hire is managed by community schemes based at the hub which has a range of complementary services and income streams.

Case study of a community led mobility hub with car club & bike share scheme

Huntly, Aberdeenshire, (4550 population)

Huntly Travel Hub (HTH) run by Huntly and District Development Trust, which includes three low emissions cars, 24 e-bikes and a community mini bus. The organisation has a broader green initiative, including a farm and eco-bothy, sustainable regeneration, and work on active travel routes.

The group developed HTH to provide more sustainable travel options for the local community. Local consultations with residents showed that access to travel was a key issue and in need of improvement. As part of the investigations, they explored a range of options but decided that a franchise option, working with Co-Wheels as a delivery partner, would be best suited to their ambitions and local needs. This model is more expensive to run than other approaches, but there are fewer burdens on the group and less strain to manage the day to day operational requirements.

The cars are located in Huntly: one at the train station, one in the town square, and one at the Market Muir Car Park near a major road into the town. The e-bikes are kept in a building that is in the process of being redeveloped. The e-bikes are rented out on weekly or monthly contracts, rather than on a short-term (hourly or daily) basis.

One of the challenges of being based in a rural area is a lack of users in close proximity to the cars. In small satellite villages and hamlets with five hundred or fewer residents, there is no business case for a vehicle which is within a short walking distance of enough houses. The development trust is exploring how they can connect residents from across the community to the car club. Options being explored include a shuttle minibus and peer to peer car-sharing. The rural roads are problematic for e-bikes; many are unsafe for cycling and this can impact people's confidence. Work is being undertaken to improve active travel routes.

For HTH, proper staffing of the scheme is vital in ensuring its success. There is an ongoing challenge to secure enough funding to employ enough staff. Most available grants are for capital investment and not revenue for staff. When the scheme was managed by a part-time staff member it struggled to gain traction. It was only after appointing a full-time member of staff that they were able to make significant progress.

The car club and e-bike schemes are integral to the suite of activities that the Huntly and District Development Trust deliver. They use the cars for their own activities, and they help them achieve their aspirations for the redevelopment and regeneration of the town centre.

5. Recommendations

The following set of recommendations have been split by mode with any difference in approach between the settlements being highlighted in each section, The recommendations are based upon the provision of significant funding, in the region of several millions, through S106 contributions tapered over 5 to 10 years.

5.1 Electric car clubs

The report has explored the degree to which each of the key success factors for car club will exist once the new houses are in place. Based on this analysis and comparisons with similar sites CoMoUK provides the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

a) **Housing density & parking ratios**: Ensure the new houses are built at high density with reduced parking allowance. Make any parking chargeable. Avoid double garages and drive, separating parking spaces from the driveaway also challenges the assumption that a privately owned car is essential.
b) **Electric charging**: Ensure all car club bays have dedicated reliable charging infrastructure.
c) **Saffron Walden**: Continue to support and expand the car club in Saffron Walden providing new bays within 5 minutes' walk of the new houses.
d) **Stansted Mountfitchet**: Expand the car club to Stansted Mountfitchet which also exhibited sufficient supportive characteristics.
e) **Business use**: Promote the car club to employers in the area who use fleet or grey fleet for staff work trips.
f) **Peer to peer sharing**: Unless parking ratio can be reduced from two per 2+ bedroom properties and there is an improvement in public transport, the following locations are unlikely to support a car club but the sharing of vehicles via a Peer to Peer platform may help provide some reduction in car numbers: Newport, Thaxted, Great Dunmow, and Takeley.

As plans are developed CoMoUK recommends testing these assumptions with the market and requesting feedback on the plans.

5.2 Bike share,

The report has explored the degree to which each of the key success factors for different models of bike sharing will exist once the new houses are in place. Based on this analysis and comparisons with similar sites CoMoUK provides the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

a) **Saffron Walden**: Continue and expand the one-way self-service electric bike share service, currently provided by APP Bike, in Saffron Walden to the new sites whilst also maintaining the longer term loans for those wishing to "try before they buy".
b) **Great Dunmow, Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet**: Provide a back-to-base pool bike model located at the site of the new developments, alongside longer term loans.
c) **Newport and Thaxted**: Provide access to longer term loan bikes, possibly provided on a regular monthly visit or on-demand basis from Saffron Walden.
d) **Vouchers**: Alongside the provision of long term loans, offer vouchers towards the purchase of similar specification bikes or e-bikes to be redeemed at local bike shops.
e) **Long term funding**: Schemes such as the app bike scheme in Saffron Walden are service based and therefore have a fixed cost with revenue deducted from the monthly fee. As the scheme and revenue grows, the fees will increase and cost will reduce but is unlikely to be self-sustaining. At the end of the life of the S016 funding, on-going costs would need to be covered by other sources such as ground rent charges or sponsorship.

As plans are developed CoMoUK recommends testing these assumptions with the market and requesting feedback on the plans.

5.3 E-cargo bike share

Recommendations:

a) **Saffron Walden**: Continue and expand the e-cargo bike hire to the new development sites, consider adding trailers and longer term loans as a flexible option for those wishing to "try before they buy".
f) **Great Dunmow, Takeley and Stansted Mountfitchet**: Provide a back-to-base e-cargo bike or trailers hires located at the site of the new developments, alongside longer term loans.
g) **Newport and Thaxted**: Provide access to trailers alongside longer term loan bikes, possibly provided on a regular monthly visit or on-demand basis from Saffron Walden.
b) **Vouchers**: Alongside the provision of long term loans, offer vouchers towards the purchase of similar specification bikes or e-bikes to be redeemed at local bike shops.
c) **Long term funding**: Schemes such as the app bike scheme in Saffron Walden are service based and therefore have a fixed cost with revenue deducted from the monthly fee. As the scheme and revenue grows, the fees will increase and cost will reduce but is unlikely to be self-sustaining. At the end of the life of the S016 funding, on-going costs would need to be covered by other sources such as ground rent charges or sponsorship.

5.3 Mobility hubs

Recommendations:

a) Co-locate shared and public transport services into mobility hubs to raise their profile, boost connectivity and carve out space for public realm, and accessibility to services.
b) Just signage at each site to house a common branding and information about the local services.
c) Look for opportunities to diversify activities to share staffing costs and bring in additional income streams.

5.4 Cycle infrastructure & storage

Recommendations:

a) Improve cycling infrastructure between the new developments, transport interchanges, key amenities and leisure routes.
b) Provide appropriate covered, and overlooked cycle storage for the bike share bikes.
c) Provide secure lockable storage units for bike loan schemes and privately owned bikes following best practice guidance such as that developed by Cambridge County Council[6].

5.5 Public transport

The scope of the commission does not include recommendations on bus services, however for the settlements without train services the quality and regularity of the service will be key to the success of the shared transport schemes to ensure residents do not need to depend on owning their own car. This applies to Thaxted, and Great Dunmow in particular. The former is already served by the DRT 299 DART service which could be extended to support the other settlements. There is a need to ensure there is a bus connection to Stansted from the new development at Takeley as well as good cycling infrastructure.

Recommendation:

a) Extend the DRT 299 DART service to support the other settlements.

[6] https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6771/cycle-parking-guide-for-new-residential-developments.pdf

5.6 Behaviour change interventions

The need to provide information and support to change behaviour should not be underestimated. People often have preconceived ideas about bus services and may need incentives to it try out again after bad experiences. Although many people have an interest in cycling they may need information on cycle routes and cycle training to get started. Moving to a new home is an idea time to trigger changes in travel behaviour as long as the services, information and support are there from day one of dwellings being occupied and included in marketing materials.

Recommendations:

a) Ensure all sustainable and shared transport services and infrastructure are in place for the first residents arrival.
b) Ensure marketing materials and welcome packs include details of the services, and how they work, alongside the incentives and support available.
c) Add signage for promotion of cycle routes and tap into local community groups to develop led rides and offer “Bike buddies”

Site Selection Topic Paper

Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 19)

July 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 This Topic Paper summarises Uttlesford District Council's approach to selecting strategic sites proposed for housing allocation within the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 to 2041. It was published alongside the draft Plan for Regulation 18 Consultation in November 2023 and has been subsequently updated, taking into account representations submitted to the Regulation 18 Consultation and new or updated evidence base documents.

1.2 Uttlesford District Council has prepared a new Local Plan to replace the existing Uttlesford Local Plan 2005. The Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (hereafter referred to as the Plan) puts forward the spatial vision and strategic objectives for achieving sustainable development. It plans for at least 14,937 homes within the District over the plan period, including around 3,777 homes on strategic allocations. This is above the housing requirement of 13,500 homes in the interest of providing for flexibility and contingency.

1.3 The Plan proposes to allocate 7 strategic housing sites that represent the most sustainable locations to deliver the housing requirement of the District and meet the objectives of the Plan. For the purpose of the Plan, a strategic site has been defined as a site (or a cluster of adjacent sites) that could deliver 100 dwellings or more.

1.4 These sites have been selected following a five-stage evidence-led and proportionate assessment in line with national policy and guidance. This Topic Paper explains what the Plan considered in identifying, assessing and selecting strategic sites, and how it has narrowed down reasonable site options, resulting in the recommendation of the proposed allocations.

1.5 All site options considered have been tested through the Sustainability Appraisal of the Uttlesford Local Plan (July 2024). It is a legal requirement for the Local Plan under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and has taken place alongside the preparation of the Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies Reasonable Alternatives to help inform the selection of site options, overall spatial strategy and direction of the Plan.

1.6 This Topic Paper is published alongside the Local Plan for consultation. It should be read in conjunction with a series of complementary topic papers and evidence studies, including the Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal of the Uttlesford Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Villages Housing Requirement Topic Paper, and Employment Land Site Selection Topic Paper.

1.7 The Topic Paper consists of the following sections:

- **Section 2 Policy Context** provides a summary of the relevant national policies and guidance relevant to the selection of residential development sites
- **Section 3 Site Selection Methodology** explains our approach to identifying, assessing and selecting strategic sites for proposed allocations in the Plan
- **Section 4 Recommendations** sets out the strategic sites proposed for allocation in the Plan

1.8 The detailed outcomes of site selection are presented in **Appendix A Stage 1 to Stage 5 Site Selection Assessment** of this Topic Paper. Appendix A provides the

assessment outcomes of all sites considered within or adjacent to the top two-tier settlements, including Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres.

1.9 The draft Local Plan does not identify any non-strategic sites below 100 dwellings for allocation; but does identify housing requirement figures for our Larger Villages. The Council invited Parish Councils and neighbourhood planning groups, through the Regulation 18 Consultation, to consider if they wished to take responsibility for planning for any non-strategic development in their villages through a future Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Plan update.

1.10 Following the Regulation 18 Consultation and further engagement with the relevant Parish Councils, all Larger Villages have now confirmed that they wish to plan for the housing requirement in their villages and therefore this Local Plan does not need to consider any non-strategic sites in Larger Villages in further detail beyond the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). The Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Villages Housing Requirement Topic Paper provides further information on the housing requirement figures for our Larger Villages and next steps for considering non-strategic sites in Neighbourhood Plans.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The policies of relevance to site selection are set out below, but the Plan has regard to all other aspects of relevant national policy, where appropriate.

2.2 At its heart the Framework requires all plans and decisions to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making, this means that:

All plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

Strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses…[1]

2.3 The NPPF further expands on the role of local planning authorities in planning and allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area and meet objectively assessed needs over the plan period through strategic policies:

Broad locations for development should be indicated on a key diagram, and land-use designations and allocations identified on a policies map. Strategic policies should provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should include planning for and allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area (except insofar as these needs can be demonstrated to be met more appropriately through other mechanisms, such as brownfield registers or non-strategic policies)[2]*.*

Strategic policy-making authorities' should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability[3]*.*

2.4 The NPPF also sets out, at a high level, key considerations which should be taken into account when identifying and selecting suitable locations for development in varying contexts. These considerations have been included as part of the site selection methodology assessment criteria, as detailed in Section 3 of this Topic Paper. The key considerations are:

Planning for larger scale development

The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a

[1] Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework
[2] Paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework
[3] Paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework

genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:

a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;

b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;

c) set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles); and ensure that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community;

d) make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally-led development corporations); and

e) consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size[4].

Rural Areas

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby[5].

Site Assessment

In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and

d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree[6].

2.5 The NPPF stresses that Local Plans should be informed throughout their preparation by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that meets the relevant legal requirements[7]. This should demonstrate how a plan has addressed relevant economic, social and

[4] Paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework
[5] Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework
[6] Paragraph 114 of the National Planning Policy Framework
[7] Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework

environmental objectives. The SA process has been integral to the site selection process, as detailed in **Section 3** of this Topic Paper.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

2.6 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides complementary guidance on key policy themes included within the NPPF. Of relevance to the site selection process, the 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' chapter sets out the method for assessing housing and economic land availability and guides local authorities in identifying appropriate land to meet development needs.

2.7 The PPG states that an assessment of land availability is required to identify the future supply of land that is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking, and the identification of a 5-year supply of housing land[8].

2.8 The PPG clarifies that the assessment 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 the local authority's requirements, but it is for the development plan itself, to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements. Plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) which is most appropriate. An assessment should:

- identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;
- assess their development potential;
- assess their suitability for development; and
- the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability).

2.9 The PPG notes that plan-making bodies should consider constraints when assessing the suitability, availability and achievability of sites and broad locations. For example, assessments should reflect the policies in Footnote 6[9] of the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out the areas where the Framework would provide strong reasons for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area (such as the Green Belt and other protected areas).

2.10 The PPG emphasises the importance of taking a proactive approach when identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations for development as possible (including those existing sites that could be improved, intensified or changed). It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area.

2.11 The assessment of land availability for the Plan is prepared through the Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) in accordance with national policy and guidance. It has considered key suitability constraints noted in Footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The HELAA effectively forms

[8] Paragraph 001, Reference ID: 3-001-20190722

[9] Now Footnote 7 (previously Footnote 6) of the National Planning Policy Framework. This includes: habitat sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 181) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park or defined as Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets or archaeological interest referred to in footnote 63); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

the first stage of the Council's site selection process and provides the initial long-list of sites for more detailed consideration through the plan making process.

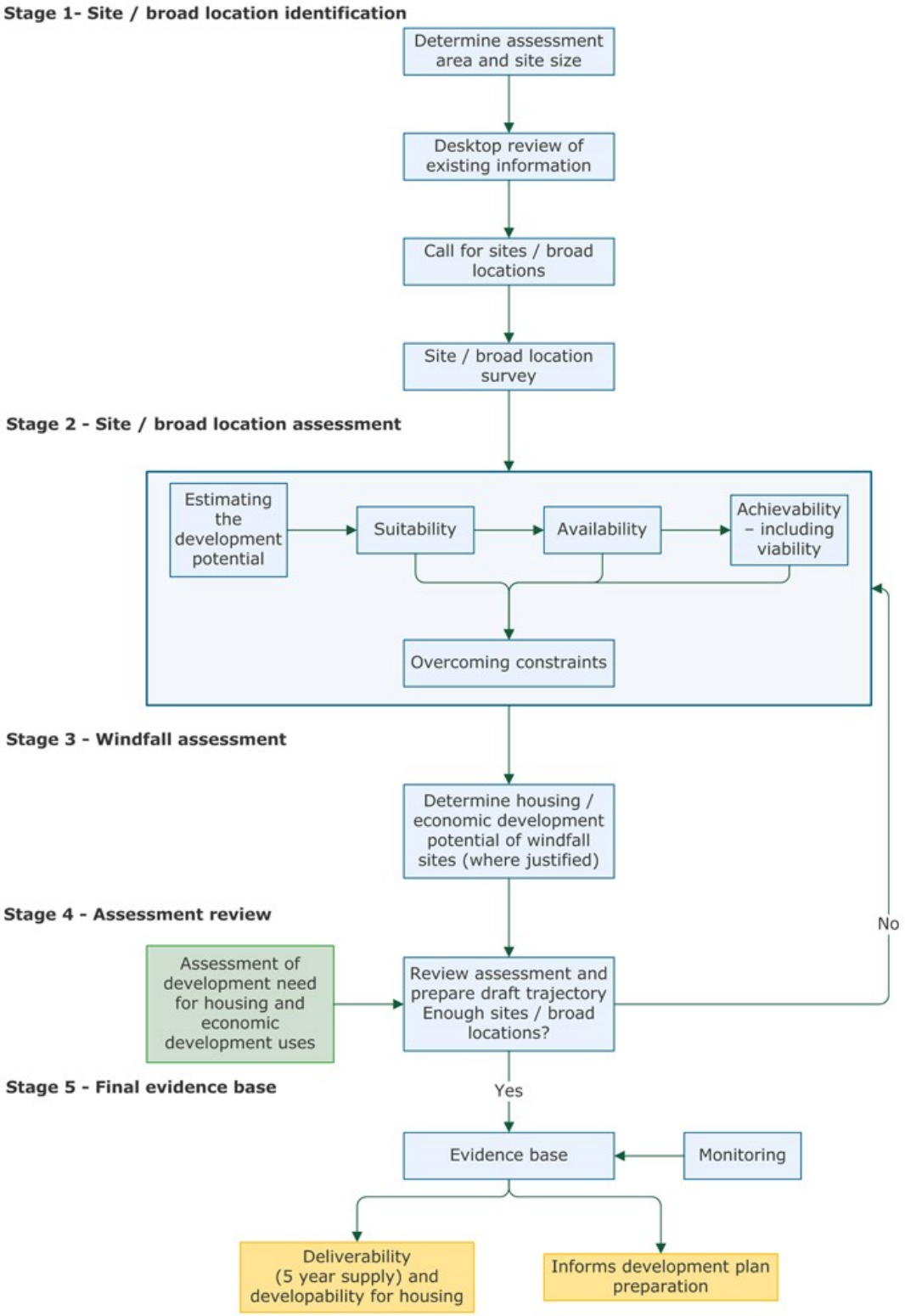


Figure 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Method Flowchart
(Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 3-005-20190722)

3. Site Selection Methodology

3.1 The site selection methodology undertaken, as illustrated in **Figure 2,** follows a robust and proportionate five-stage assessment comprising the following stages:

- **Stage 1:** Identification and initial assessment of sites through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). This effectively provides a 'long-list' of sites which have potential to demonstrate suitability, availability and achievability for more detailed consideration from Stage 2 onwards. 452 sites were assessed at Stage 1 with 181 sites identified as appropriate for further assessment at Stage 2. The Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is published separately and should be read in conjunction with this Topic Paper.
- **Stage 2:** An initial sift of sites which discounts non-strategic sites or site clusters unable to deliver 100 dwellings or more, as well as strategic growth (excluding standalone Garden Communities) not located at our top two-tier settlements (Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres). In other words, strategic growth at the smaller and less sustainable rural settlements were ruled out for not being consistent with the Plan's objectives of supporting sustainable development. This stage helps to 'filter' the 'long-list' and creates a 'shorter long-list' for further consideration. 181 sites were considered at Stage 2 with 50 identified as appropriate for consideration at Stage 3[10].
- **Stage 3:** Proportionate assessment of constraints and opportunities based on the available technical evidence base, engagement with selected stakeholders and a review of the relevant planning history. This stage enables us to identify 'Reasonable Alternatives' for further consideration. 50 sites were assessed at Stage 3, with 20 sites assessed as 'Clear Preferred Site Option' or 'Marginal Preferred Site Option'.
- **Stage 4:** Reasonable Alternatives testing through the Sustainability Appraisal. This stage establishes reasonable growth scenarios on the quantum and distribution of growth in Uttlesford within the plan period. It considers the strategic growth context at Uttlesford (top-down) and develops site options at the settlement level (bottom-down), then explores growth options at each of the District's sub area (including growth from sites allocated in combination). 6 Reasonable Growth Scenarios were considered and appraised through the Sustainability Appraisal.
- **Stage 5:** Selection of proposed strategic allocations

3.2 All sites submitted to the Call for Sites 2021 or actively identified by officers in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance have been assessed through this process. Detailed outcomes of the site selection process are presented in **Appendix A** of this Topic Paper.

3.3 Following the Regulation 18 Consultation undertaken between November 2023 and December 2023, representations submitted to the consultation and new or updated evidence base documents have also been taken into account throughout the site selection process. This includes the assessment of 31 new HELAA sites and

[10] Non-strategic growth at Larger Villages, which form the third tier of settlements of Uttlesford's settlement hierarchy, is considered appropriate to support community vitality in accordance with Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Villages Housing Requirement Topic Paper sets out our approach in considering non-strategic growth at Larger Villages.

consideration of additional supporting information or site boundary amendments submitted during the Regulation 18 Consultation.

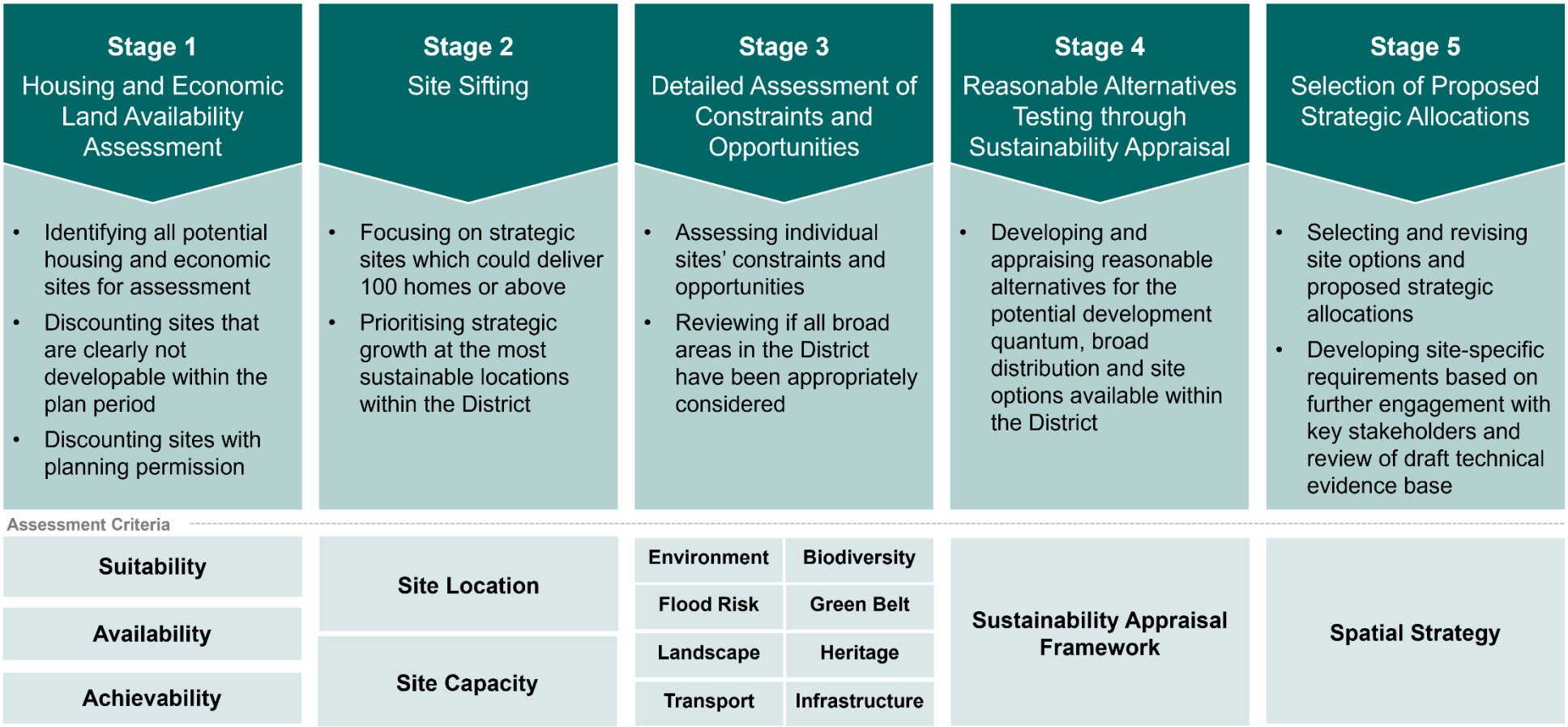


Figure 2 Key Stages in Site Selection

Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

3.4 The first stage of site selection was to identify all potential housing and economic development sites in the District and undertake a high level assessment of suitability, availability and achievability through the Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (June 2024).

3.5 The HELAA assessed a total of 452 sites across the District from a wide range of sources, including a Call for Sites in Spring 2021 and a desktop review of potential information sources in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. The updated Regulation 19 HELAA also included new sites that were submitted during the Regulation 18 Consultation or by email, and considered any additional supporting information or site boundary amendments submitted. Sites that have the capacity to deliver 5 or more dwellings (or 0.2 hectare or above), or 500 sqm or more economic floorspace (or 0.25 hectares) are considered in the HELAA.

3.6 Whereas in the Regulation 18 HELAA a ‘policy off’ position was applied with relation to adopted and emerging Local Plan policy, the Regulation 19 HELAA applies a ‘policy on’ position since the draft policies have been tested through the Regulation 18 Consultation and the earlier HELAA has identified sufficient available land to meet the District’s housing requirement without the need for amendments to the Green Belt. This has resulted in local policy constraints including Green Belt and Protected Open Spaces being considered as ‘showstopper constraints’.

3.7 The emerging settlement hierarchy has also been applied to the Regulation 19 HELAA, and the consideration of ‘Settlement Development Limits' which appeared in the Regulation 18 HELAA has been replaced with a consideration of the site’s location in relation to the built extent of the settlements identified in the top three tiers of the settlement hierarchy set out in Core Policy 3.

3.8 Some sites have been submitted for consideration as new standalone communities. Where these sites are outside and not adjacent to the settlements listed above, they are not considered developable according to the emerging settlement hierarchy in the same manner that small sites in the open countryside have been classified as unsuitable for the purposes of the Local Plan.

3.9 A total of 172 sites, including 131 sites proposed for residential or mixed use development, with a ‘theoretical’ capacity of approximately 61,271 dwellings (including 32,770 dwellings within the plan period) are considered deliverable within 0-5 years (Category A) or have the potential to demonstrate suitability, availability and achievability within 5-15 years (Category B) for further consideration at Stage 2.

3.10 It is important to stress that the HELAA provides a high-level consideration of potential future supply of land and does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. Nonetheless, its findings continuously demonstrate that there is more than sufficient land available in the District to meet the development requirements of the Plan. This has been used as the ‘long-list’ of potential development sites for consideration.

3.11 Sites that are not considered developable within the plan period through the HELAA[11], including sites which are unable or unlikely to address physical constraints;

[11] Category C within the Uttlesford Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)(October 2023)

where development is unlikely or will not take place within the plan period; or, unable or unlikely to address achievability issues, are excluded from further consideration. It is considered that these sites have no potential for housing and economic development within the plan period and are therefore not taken forward to Stage 2.

3.12 Sites with planning permission are also discounted at this stage as they do not need to be allocated within the Local Plan. However, they have been taken into account in as any 'commitments' (sites with planning permission that will deliver within the Plan period) are discounted from the 'additional' housing that the Council needs to plan for.

3.13 Full details of the HELAA assessment methodology and outcomes, including the long list of detailed assessment criteria of suitability, availability and achievability, are provided in the Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability.

Stage 2 Site Sifting

3.14 The long-list of sites identified at Stage 1 was subject to a high-level assessment to establish which sites could be reasonably taken forward for a further detailed assessment of constraints and opportunities. The initial sift focused on:

Site capacity threshold for strategic sites

3.15 To differentiate between strategic and non-strategic sites, only sites that could potentially accommodate 100 dwellings or more[12] were considered. Where individual sites were too small to accommodate 100 homes, consideration was given to whether the site could be joined with neighbouring sites to deliver strategic development in combination. As explained above and in line with national policy, it is considered that Neighbourhood Plans provide an appropriate approach for planning for non-strategic sites (below 100 dwellings). These are considered separately in the Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Village Housing Requirement Topic Paper.

Prioritising the most sustainable locations

3.16 The initial sift was based on prioritising the most sustainable locations in the District, to reflect the inherent need to support sustainable development. Strategic sites within or adjoining the top two-tier settlements of the District, are taken forward for further consideration. This includes three Key Settlements (Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet) and six Local Rural Centres (Takeley, Thaxted, Hatfield Heath, Elsenham, Newport and Great Chesterford). These settlements are the most sustainable settlements in the District to support growth, containing the highest level of services with a relatively high level of connectivity to the transport network.

3.17 Strategic growth at smaller and less sustainable rural settlements were discounted, as this does not align with the council's commitment to deliver sustainable development and support the climate change agenda. Non-strategic development at appropriate Larger Villages in accordance with Paragraph 79 of the NPPF is discussed separately in the Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Village Housing Requirement Topic Paper.

3.18 Following the Regulation 18 Consultation and further engagement with the relevant Parish Councils, all Larger Villages have now confirmed that they wish to plan for the

[12] Based on calculated theoretical capacity. The density multipliers used, ranging from 35 dwellings per hectare to 45 dwellings per hectare, are detailed in Table 2 of the Uttlesford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (October 2023).

housing requirement in their villages and therefore the Local Plan does not need to consider those non-strategic sites in any more detail.

Approach to standalone Garden Communities (1500+ dwellings)

3.19 Strategic sites, which could deliver standalone Garden Communities of 1500 dwellings or more, were considered during Stage 3 of the site selection process at Regulation 18. This capacity is deemed the minimum requirement to support a new primary school and local centre at a standalone location not associated with an existing top two tier settlement. These sites were considered capable of delivering a minimum critical mass, capable of providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities, including a genuine choice of transport modes, to support a sustainable community.

3.20 However, as outlined in Stage 1 of the methodology, the Regulation 19 HELAA has now adopted a 'policy on' approach. Consequently, sites located outside and not adjacent to the top three tier settlements, including new standalone communities, are not considered developable according to the emerging settlement hierarchy and would not have advanced to Stage 2.

3.21 Overall, Stage 2 resulted in 50 potential strategic sites being identified for further consideration at Stage 3.

Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

3.22 Stage 3 focused on a more detailed assessment of constraints and opportunities associated with each of the 'shorter long-list' of sites identified at Stage 2. This helped to establish the sites suitability for development and consistency with the draft Plan's spatial strategy and objectives to deliver sustainable development. The assessment was informed by a proportionate range of available technical evidence[13], engagement with selected stakeholders and the review of relevant planning history.

3.23 The information collected for each site included:

- Whether the site is located within or adjacent to important environmental or biodiversity designations and their impact risk zones or Zone of Influence. This included Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, (including the Essex Coast RAMS Zone of Influence), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) (including Hatfield Forest) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Whether the site contains irreplaceable habitats such as Ancient Woodland and ancient or veteran trees. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF resists development resulting in the loss and deterioration of irreplaceable habitats.
- Whether the site is subject to risks of flooding, including whether it falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3, based on the Uttlesford District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment conducted by JBA Consulting
- Whether the site is located within the Green Belt

[13] This included evidence prepared as part of the current Development Plan (including 'made' Neighbourhood Plans), new evidence base prepared for the Plan published alongside this Topic Paper and, where applicable, submitted through a planning application or Call for Sites submission.

- Landscape sensitivity of the site, as assessed through the Uttlesford Landscape Sensitivity Assessment conducted by LUC and informed by the updated Landscape Character Assessment. As detailed in Chapter 2 of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the study considers the landscape susceptibility and value of land parcels taking into account their physical character (landform, scale and field pattern); natural character; sense of time depth and historic landscape character; settlement character; visual character (including skylines); and perceptual and scenic qualities (including recreational value)
- Heritage sensitivity of the site, including high-level considerations of development impacts on the significance and setting of heritage assets, based on the Uttlesford Heritage Sensitivity Assessment
- Whether a potentially suitable access could be achieved based on high level desktop assessment and site visits working in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC) as the Highway Authority
- Whether the site may put unacceptable pressure on the local highway network based on high level desktop assessment working in partnership with ECC as the Highway Authority
- Whether the site is well located to the rail network to promote sustainable travel based on high level desktop assessment working in partnership with ECC as the Highway Authority
- Whether the site is in an area subject to potential water supply, wastewater and environmental capacity issues, as investigated through the Water Cycle Study conducted by JBA and consulted with the relevant infrastructure providers
- Whether the site is likely to be subject to abnormal significant infrastructure requirements and costs, beyond the developer's ability to address, for example, mitigation required to address cumulative impacts on the strategic road network, as informed by engagement with selected stakeholders, including ECC
- Whether the site may be subject to challenges in primary and secondary education provision, considering the location and capacity of existing and committed education infrastructure and the potential for improved or new facilities. This is informed by engagement with education officers at ECC
- Relevant planning history of the site

3.24 Each site was assessed against the topic areas above based on their impacts and capacity to accommodate development, considering any potential mitigation measures that are likely to be required. It is informed by informal consultation with selected stakeholders, including ECC and consultants undertaking the Sustainability Appraisal. Subsequent to the Regulation 18 Consultation, this has also considered representations submitted to the consultation and new or updated evidence base documents available.

3.25 An overall 'traffic light' rating (**Table 1**) is given to indicate if the site is an appropriate candidate as part of the Preferred Site Option to support the draft Plan. A total of 20 sites were considered as either 'Clear Preferred Site Options' or 'Marginal Preferred Site Options' to inform Stage 4.

Table 1 Stage 3 Assessment Rating Descriptors

Overall Rating	Description
Clear Preferred Site Option	The site or site cluster is in a sustainable location for strategic growth, consistent with the objectives and broad spatial strategy of the Plan. The assessment may have identified potential constraints, however there is a reasonable prospect for the identified constraints to be mitigated successfully. The site is recommended for further consideration in Stage 4.
Marginal Preferred Site Option	The site or site cluster is in a relatively sustainable location for strategic growth, largely consistent with the objectives and broad spatial strategy of the Plan. The assessment may have identified potential constraints, however whilst there may be reasonable prospect for the identified constraints to be mitigated, the site is considered to meet the Plan objectives to a more marginal extent. The site is recommended for further consideration in Stage 4.
Marginal Omission Site Option	The site or site cluster is subject to one or multiple, and more significant development constraints and aligns to a more marginal extent with the objectives and spatial strategy of the Plan. The site is discounted from further consideration.
Clear Omission Site Option	The site or site cluster is subject to one or multiple, and more significant development constraints that are unlikely to be overcome through potential mitigation strategies and does not meet the objectives and broad spatial strategy of the Plan. The site is discounted from further consideration.

3.26 There is no weighting system for the different technical areas assessed and a degree of planning balance and professional judgement has been applied in relation to the broad spatial strategy of the Plan. It is important to recognise that this stage does not attempt to assess all the potential effects a development may have, but aims to identify, following a robust and proportionate approach, key constraints and opportunities critical to the broad spatial strategy of the Plan and/or 'showstoppers' to development.

3.27 Following the detailed assessment, the Council has undertaken an officer-led review of whether all broad areas in the District have been appropriately considered, including land which may not have been promoted for development through the Call for Sites. No additional sites were identified through this process.

3.28 A review of available site options within the District at Stage 3, shows that there is sufficient land outside of the designated Green Belt to deliver the local housing need. This fact limits the progression of any Green Belt development sites in the selection of preferred site options given the requirement under Paragraph 140 of the NPPF to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances' with respect to Green Belt release. As a result, no sites at Birchanger, Hatfield Heath and south of Stansted Mountfitchet are carried forward to Stage 4.

Stage 4 Reasonable Alternatives Testing through Sustainability Appraisal

3.29 At Stage 4, site options were tested through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which appraised Reasonable Alternatives for the potential scale and location of growth in Uttlesford that could meet the Plan's objectives.

3.30 The Sustainability Appraisal is central to the site selection process and is a legal requirement for the Local Plan preparation. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Uttlesford Local Plan (July 2024) considered the range of development quantum, broad distribution of development and site options available within the district.

3.31 It considered the strategic growth context at Uttlesford (top-down) and developed site options at the settlement level (bottom-up). It then identified reasonable alternatives that sites might be allocated in combination and the quantum of homes that are broadly appropriate for the District's sub-areas[14]. **Table 2** provides a summary of site options considered, including reasonable alternatives identified as constant or variable and omitted sites noted.

[14] The sub-areas considered include Key Settlements (Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet), Local Rural Centres (Thaxted, Takeley, Newport, Hatfield Heath, Elsenham and Great Chesterford) and Larger Villages.

Table 2 Summary of Site Options

Category	Description	Sites
1	**Proposed allocations** that are a **constant** across the growth scenarios now, and were also at Reg 18.	All proposed allocations bar those below
2	**Proposed allocations** that are a **constant** across the scenarios now but were a variable at Reg 18.	South Saffron Walden; North Stansted Mountfitchet
3	**Proposed allocations** that are a **variable** across the RA growth scenarios now.	East and NE Great Dunmow
4	**Omission sites** that feature (as a **variable**) in the RA growth scenarios.	SE GD, East of Thaxted
5	**Omission sites** that do not feature in the RA growth scenarios now (i.e. are a **constant**) but did at Reg 18.	Ugley GC; West Pennington Lane
6	**Omission sites at Newport** which were explored at Reg 18 and will now be reconsidered through the NP.	West/SW Newport; SE Newport
7	**Other omission sites 'noted'** as part of SA work at either Reg 18 or 19 but not progressed to the RA growth scenarios.	Sites at Great Chesterford; Great Chesterford GC (1,500); South-south Saffron Walden; NE Stansted Mountfitchet; North Elsenham.
8	**Two notable large garden community options** that could be reconsidered through a Local Plan Review	Great Chesterford GC (4,500); Easton Park
9	**Other omission sites** that could deliver a **strategic** scheme and are developable in the HELAA but not perform poorly in light of plan-making.	All other strategic site options
10	**Other omission sites** that could deliver a **non-strategic** scheme and are developable in the HELAA.	All non-strategic site options

3.32 A total of six district-wide Reasonable Alternative growth scenarios were developed and tested through combining sub-area scenarios, illustrating a range of lower to higher growth scenarios across the district between 3,777 homes and up to 4,802 homes to be delivered strategic allocations (including a potential housing requirement at Thaxted), including:

- Scenario 1: Constants plus strategic growth to the northeast of Great Dunmow
- Scenario 2: Scenario 1 plus strategic growth to the east of Thaxted
- Scenario 3: Constants plus strategic growth to the southeast of Great Dunmow
- Scenario 4: Scenario 3 plus strategic growth to the east of Thaxted
- Scenario 5: Constant plus strategic growth to the southeast of Great Dunmow plus low growth to the northeast
- Scenario 6: Scenario 5 plus strategic growth to the east of Thaxted

Table 3 Reasonable Alternative Growth Scenarios

Supply component	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6
Completions, permissions & windfall	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193	10,193
Larger villages allowance	900	900	900	900	900	900
Takeley	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546	1,546
Saffron Walden	879	879	879	879	879	879
Stansted Mountfitchet	325	325	325	325	325	325
Elsenham	110	110	110	110	110	110
Great Chesterford	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield Heath	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Dunmow	**917**	**917**	**1,250**	**1,250**	**1,453**	**1,453**
Thaxted	0	**489**	0	**489**	0	**489**
Total	**14,870**	**15,359**	**15,203**	**15,692**	**15,406**	**15,895**
% above LHN (13,500)	**10**	**14**	**13**	**16**	**14**	**18**

3.33 The Sustainability Appraisal then appraised the six district-wide growth scenarios on their likely significant effects against 13 sustainability objectives under the 'SA Framework' and ranked them by their performance. **Table 4** provides an extract of the summary appraisal findings of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Table 4 Extract of the Summary Appraisal Findings of the Sustainability Appraisal

Topic	Scenario 1: GD low Thax low	Scenario 2: GD low Thax high	Scenario 3: GD med Thax low	Scenario 4: GD med Thax high	Scenario 5: GD high Thax low	Scenario 6: GD high Thax high
	Rank of preference (numbers) and categorisation of effects (shading)					
Accessibility	1	4	2	5	3	6
Biodiversity	1	1	2	2	2	2
Climate change adaptation	=	=	=	=	=	=
Climate change mitigation	2	2	2	1	2	2
Communities, equality, health	4	1	5	2	6	3
Economy and employment	2	2	1	1	1	1
Historic environment	3	4	1	3	2	3
Homes	6	5	4	3	2	1
Land and soils	1	2	1	2	1	2
Landscape	=	=	=	=	=	=
Transport	1	2	1	2	2	3
Water	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.34 The summary appraisal matrix shows a very mixed picture, serving to highlight that the choice between the Reasonable Alternative growth scenarios is potentially quite finely balanced. Scenarios 1 and 3 are found to be the best performing scenarios under the highest number of sustainability topic headings and these two scenarios are also associated with the most predicted positive effects.

3.35 In consideration of the appraisal outcomes, the Council considers that the preferred scenario is Scenario 1, which the appraisal shows to perform reasonably well relative to the alternatives, to the extent that it can clearly be argued to be "an appropriate strategy" (Paragraph 35 of the NPPF).

3.36 At Great Dunmow, it is recognised that the choice between growth to the northeast and growth to the southeast is quite finely balanced, but the site to the southeast does not relate well to the settlement edge and growth to the northeast will deliver valuable new strategic green and blue infrastructure. Also, the site to the southeast is considerably larger but would likely deliver little in the way of additional infrastructure.

3.37 At Thaxted there is a clear case for growth, other than in respect of the primary school viability issue, and notwithstanding this is a rural village with high car dependency. However, the primary school capacity issue is understood to be a barrier to growth that cannot be overcome, in the context of the current Local Plan (but it is important to recall that there will be a Local Plan Review within five years, which could potentially direct further growth to Thaxted, to assist with school viability).

3.38 With regards to higher growth, the preferred scenario is considered to represent a suitably proactive approach to both housing and employment growth, and there have been few calls for higher growth other than from the development industry. However, the Council will remain open to evidenced reasons in support of higher growth.

3.39 Large Garden Communities capable of delivering 5,000 homes or above are considered inappropriate for further consideration in this Local Plan, to avoid over-relying on the delivery of single sites above the identified need to be accommodated on strategic sites without adequate evidence to demonstrate their viability. This reflects the Inspector's comments[15] on previously rejected plans, which stresses the need to allocate more small and medium sized sites that could deliver homes in the short to medium term and help to bolster the five year housing land supply. This does not mean larger scale development would not be appropriate for consideration in the longer term through the next Plan.

[15] Paragraph 114 of the Inspector Report (10 January 2020) on the Examination of the Uttlesford Local Plan

Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

3.40 The final selection of proposed strategic allocations is based on the information collected from Stages 1 to 4. A total of 7 sites were selected for inclusion in the Plan as the most sustainable and deliverable locations for development and consistent with the Spatial Strategy. This stage included the further development of indicative masterplans and identification of any infrastructure requirements and/or mitigation strategies as part of the policy requirements, where required. These are presented as Site Development Frameworks in Appendix 2-4 of the Plan.

3.41 The proposed strategic allocations selected has considered the Regulation 18 Consultation comments and were subject to further engagement with the site promoters and key stakeholders to help refine the exact nature of any proposals and the policy requirements for each site. This included engagement with Essex County Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England, Highways England and the Integrated Care Board and our neighbouring authorities in terms of Duty to Co-operate. The Duty to Co-operate Topic Paper sets out the detail in relation to the efforts undertaken to incorporate joint working with key stakeholders on the Plan. The development of the detailed policy requirements was supported by a series of evidence base documents published alongside the Local Plan.

3.42 It is perhaps helpful to provide some additional explanation for why there are no proposed strategic allocations at Great Chesterford, Newport, Thaxted or Hatfield Heath given that these are four of our six Local Rural Centres, which form the second tier of most sustainable settlements in our Settlement Hierarchy:

Great Chesterford:

3.43 There were a number of sites considered at Great Chesterford, but these were all ruled out for various reasons as explained in Appendix A Stage 1 to Stage 5 Site Selection Assessment. In some cases, some of the sites in question may be suitable for consideration in a future Local Plan but were not considered deliverable in the current Plan.

Hatfield Heath:

3.44 As has already been explained, this settlement falls entirely with the Green Belt and as such has not been considered for strategic development. It is demonstrated by this paper that there are more than sufficient sites available to meet the housing need elsewhere in the District and for that reason, it is considered that ‘exceptional circumstances’ would not exist to justify development in the Green Belt.

Newport:

3.45 Newport has been identified as a suitable location for sustainable development. The Regulation 18 Consultation and further transport evidence development have however shown that additional traffic generated from the proposed Regulation 18 site allocations, which are concentrated at the east of the settlement, would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues at the B1383 High Street / Wicken Road junction. The three tested access strategies were unable to mitigate these impacts to an acceptable level. A scaled down growth of approximately 300 homes, to be delivered by smaller, more dispersed non-strategic sites through the Neighbourhood Plan, is considered to provide a more appropriate and balanced strategy. This approach can

support the vitality of Newport and provide essential new facilities while also being well integrated into the town and protecting its important historic character. Consequently, no strategic development site allocations are proposed at Newport.

Thaxted:

3.46 There are no allocations, either strategic or non-strategic, made at Thaxted within the Local Plan. This is principally because further consultation with Essex County Council shows that the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess of what the Council consider would be appropriate in this settlement, and especially considering some of the constraints to development that affect Thaxted, such as its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths. However, the Council would support the community to continue to explore if smaller scale development could come forward without negatively impacting infrastructure provision and the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Thaxted, will apply in accordance with the Plan.

4. Recommendations

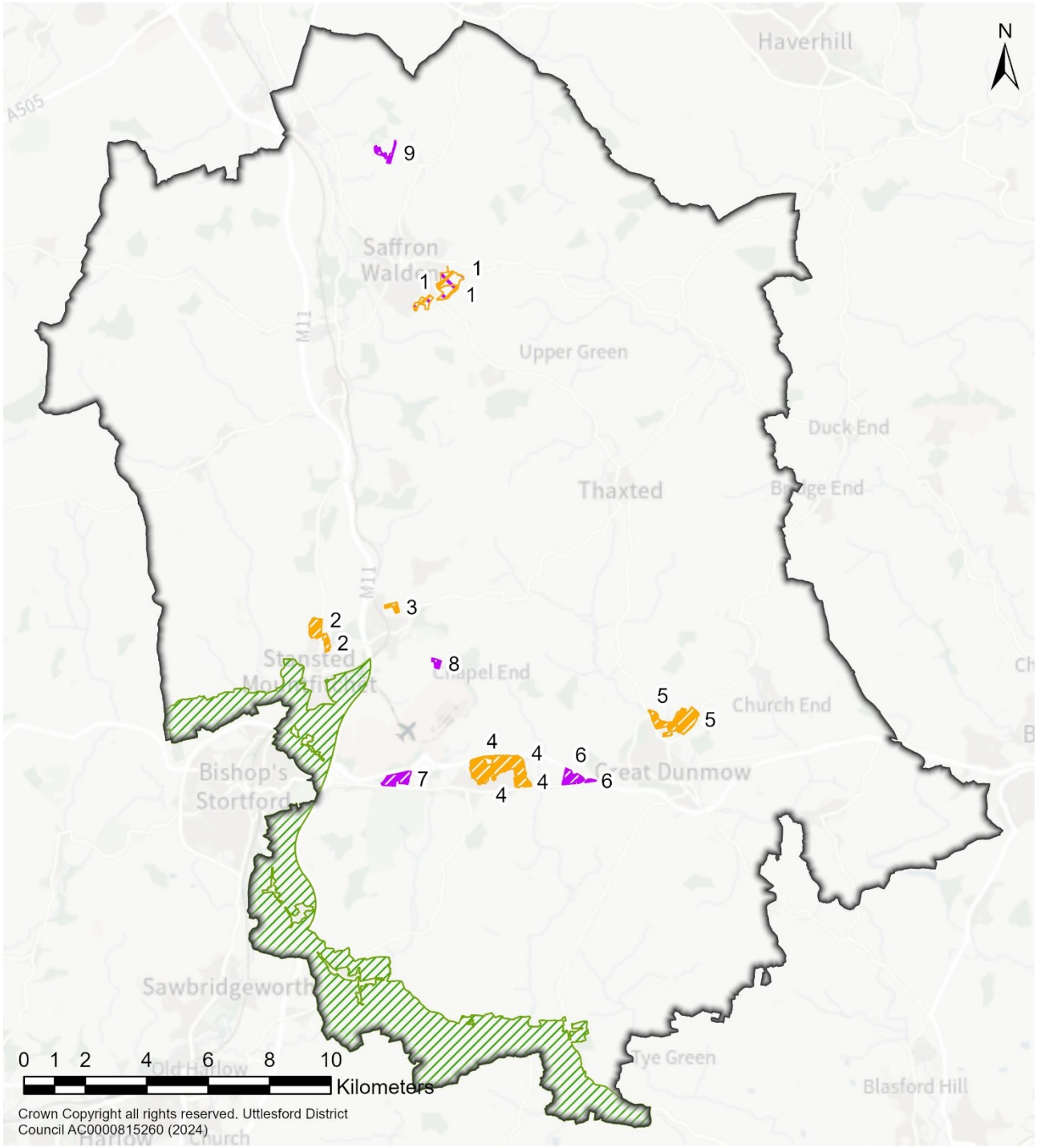
4.1 This Topic Paper summarises the site selection process Uttlesford District Council has undertaken to identify strategic housing sites proposed for allocation within the draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 to 2041 as proposed in the Regulation 19 Plan.

4.2 A proportionate and robust site selection process has been followed in accordance with national policy and guidance. It was informed by a wide range of available technical evidence and engagement with key stakeholders including site promoters and infrastructure providers. The approach has been integral to the broad Spatial Strategy and the importance of supporting sustainable development. The work was undertaken iteratively and informed by the Sustainability Appraisal and Regulation 18 Consultation Responses.

4.3 The staged process described in this paper illustrates a comprehensive yet proportionate approach. Sufficient sites were identified that could meet the identified housing need at the top-tier and most sustainable settlements such that less sustainable options did not need to be considered in more detail.

4.4 Non-strategic development is supported at Larger Villages, but this is discussed more within the Neighbourhood Plan and Larger Village Housing Requirement Topic Paper. This is important to support the vitality of our larger and more sustainable rural communities in accordance with Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.5 The Plan includes 7 proposed strategic housing sites concentrated at five locations, as highlighted in **Figure 3**. The Council considers that, collectively, the strategic housing sites proposed are a sustainable approach to meeting the objectively assessed housing need for the District. The proposed allocations are of varying sizes, types and geographical locations and can contribute to housing delivery in the first five years of the Plan and beyond.



Strategic Allocations

Legend

- District Boundary
- Strategic Allocation - Residential
- Strategic Allocation - Mixed Use
- Strategic Allocation - Employment
- Metropolitan Green Belt

Label	Site Address	Proposed Land Use
1	Land east of Shire Hill Farm and south of Radwinter Road	Mixed Use
2	Land east of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	Residential
3	Land East of Station Road, Elsenham	Residential
4	Land at Warrens Farm, Little Canfield	Residential
5	Land off The Broadway, Great Dunmow	Residential
6	Land between A120 and Stortford Road B1256	Employment
7	Land Noth of Takeley Street, Takeley	Employment
8	Land at Guants End, Elsenham	Employment
9	Land at Little Chesterford Research Park	Employment

Figure 3 Strategic Sites Proposed for Allocation

Appendix A Stage 1 to Stage 5 Site Selection Assessment

Contents

Key Settlements

Great Dunmow

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
GtDunmow 012 RES	Wood Field, Woodside Way, Great Dunmow	5.38	Have potential to demonstrate suitability, availability, and achievability within 5-15 years. Since the Stage 1 assessment was undertaken, the site has a resolution to grant (UTT/22/1802/FUL) for the construction of 120 dwellings, car parking, landscaping, play area and associated infrastructure subject to conditions and S106 Agreement in January 2023. Given its advanced stage, it is not required for further consideration at Stage 2. Planning permission has been subsequently granted on 17th May 2024.
GtDunmow 014 RES	Land south of Stortford Road and west of Buttleys Lane, Great Dunmow	2.13	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 016 RES	Garden to Pharisee House	3.94	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 024 RES	Sectors 2 & 3 Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow	0.85	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 025 RES	Sector 3, Phase 3, Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow	3.76	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 026 RES	Sector 3, Woodland Park, Great Dunmow	12.37	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
			as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 027 RES	Sector 2, Phase 4, Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow	8.56	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 028 RES	Sector 1, Emblems 2, Land to the north of Godfrey Way, Great Dunmow, CM6 1EF	4.97	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 029 RES	Ld at Smiths Farm, Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow (West of Chelmsford Road)	20.62	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 030 RES	Land East Of Green Hollow, Clapton Hall Lane, Great Dunmow	0.38	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 031 RES	Sector 3 Woodland Park, Great Dunmow, Woodside Way, Dunmow	0.33	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 033 RES	Land East Of St Edmunds Lane, Great Dunmow	1.79	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 036 RES	The Old Mill, Haslers Lane, Great Dunmow, CM6 1XS	0.04	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
GtDunmow 037 RES	Plots 417-546 Woodlands Park	1.41	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 038 RES	The Cricketers, 22 Beaumont Hill, Great Dunmow, CM6 2AP	0.11	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 039 RES	Green Hollow, Clapton Hall Lane, Great Dunmow, CM6 1JF	0.48	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 040 RES	DS3 Land South of Stortford Road	17.85	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 041 RES	DS2 The Existing HRS Site	10.89	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 042 RES	Land East Of St Edmunds Lane North Of Tower View Drive, St Edmunds Lane, Great Dunmow	2.92	Have potential to demonstrate suitability, availability, and achievability within 5-15 years. The site was considered for the erection of 30 no. self build and custom dwellings (UTT/22/2035/FUL) and the Planning Committee resolved to grant permission on the 8th February 2023. Given its advanced stage, it is not required for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 044 RES	Land Adjacent The Granary, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow	0.29	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
GtDunmow 045 RES	77 High Street, Great Dunmow, CM6 1AE	0.3	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 046 RES	Sector 2, Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow	2.17	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtDunmow 048 MIX	Land at Marks Farm House, Great Dunmow	2.93	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
LtEaston 008 RES	Sector 4, Parsonage Park, Gt Dunmow, Parsonage Downs, Gt Dunmow	11.94	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
GtDunmow 001 RES	Highwood Farm, Buttleys Lane, Great Dunmow	1.3	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
GtDunmow 020 RES	Alexia House, Randall Close. Dunmow, CM6 1UN	0.91	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
GtDunmow 022 RES	UBLR/17/008 Council Depot, New Street, Great Dunmow, CM6 1BH	0.29	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
GtDunmow 034 RES	Dunmow Farm, The	0.94	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
	Broadway, Great Dunmow, CM6 3BJ		or cumulatively with adjacent sites. It is not located within or in close proximity to the top two-tier settlements of the District.
GtDunmow 035 RES	Tiggers Ongar Road, Great Dunmow, CM6 1EX	0.5	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
GtDunmow 003 RES	Land east of St Edmunds Land and north of Braintree Road, Great Dunmow	7.9	Clear Omission Site Option	The majority of the site has planning permission and is assessed as GtDunmow042RES. The remaining area of the site is proposed for retention for agricultural use and is not promoted for strategic residential development.
GtDunmow 006 MIX	Land between B1008 and Clapton Hall Lane, Great Dunmow	28.84	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is poorly related to the existing settlement of Great Dunmow, given that the A120 separates it from existing facilities and services.
GtDunmow 007 MIX	Land south of A120, Great Dunmow	133.92	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is poorly related to the existing settlement of Great Dunmow, given that the A120 separates it from existing facilities and services.
GtDunmow 008 MIX	Land east of Great Dunmow, Braintree Road, Great Dunmow	86.31	Marginal Preferred Site Option	The site is removed from the main built-up area of Great Dunmow but is in close proximity to a committed economic development south of Braintree Road. It is relatively close to the town centre of Great Dunmow. However, it is physically separated from Great Dunmow by the existing road network to the north and the River Chelmer to the east. The eastern part of the site is in Flood Zones 2 and 3, which would need to be

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				mitigated. The site is of high landscape sensitivity due to the smaller scale of the landscape and extensive scattered semi-natural habitats across the parcel. It is noted that a landscape concept plan noting the opportunities to support comprehensive landscaped green/blue infrastructure along the River Chelmer Corridor has been submitted. The development of the site is likely to impact the setting of a number of Grade II listed buildings in proximity, which would need to be considered.
GtDunmow 009 RES	Land off The Broadway, Great Dunmow	111.5	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Church End. Development of the site would deliver a strategic urban extension to Church End and is considered to relate suitably well to Great Dunmow. It is not subject to any 'showstopper' constraints and has the potential to deliver a sustainable and proportionate extension to the existing built-up area. It is in a relatively sustainable location in relation to walking and cycling to key destinations within the town centre through appropriate enhancements. Access is available onto the adjacent highway network. Development impacts on the existing highways network could be mitigated through reducing the development capacity to approximately 900 dwellings and improvements via B1057 eastbound through the town centre. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to residential development. The site is within the setting of a number of designated heritage assets including the setting of Church End Conservation Area, St Mary's Church, Crouches, and Diamond Cottage which would need to be considered. Part of the site is in Flood Zone 3. The site contains or is adjacent to a number of woodlands identified as priority habitats or ancient woodland, but these could be positively incorporated through sensitive

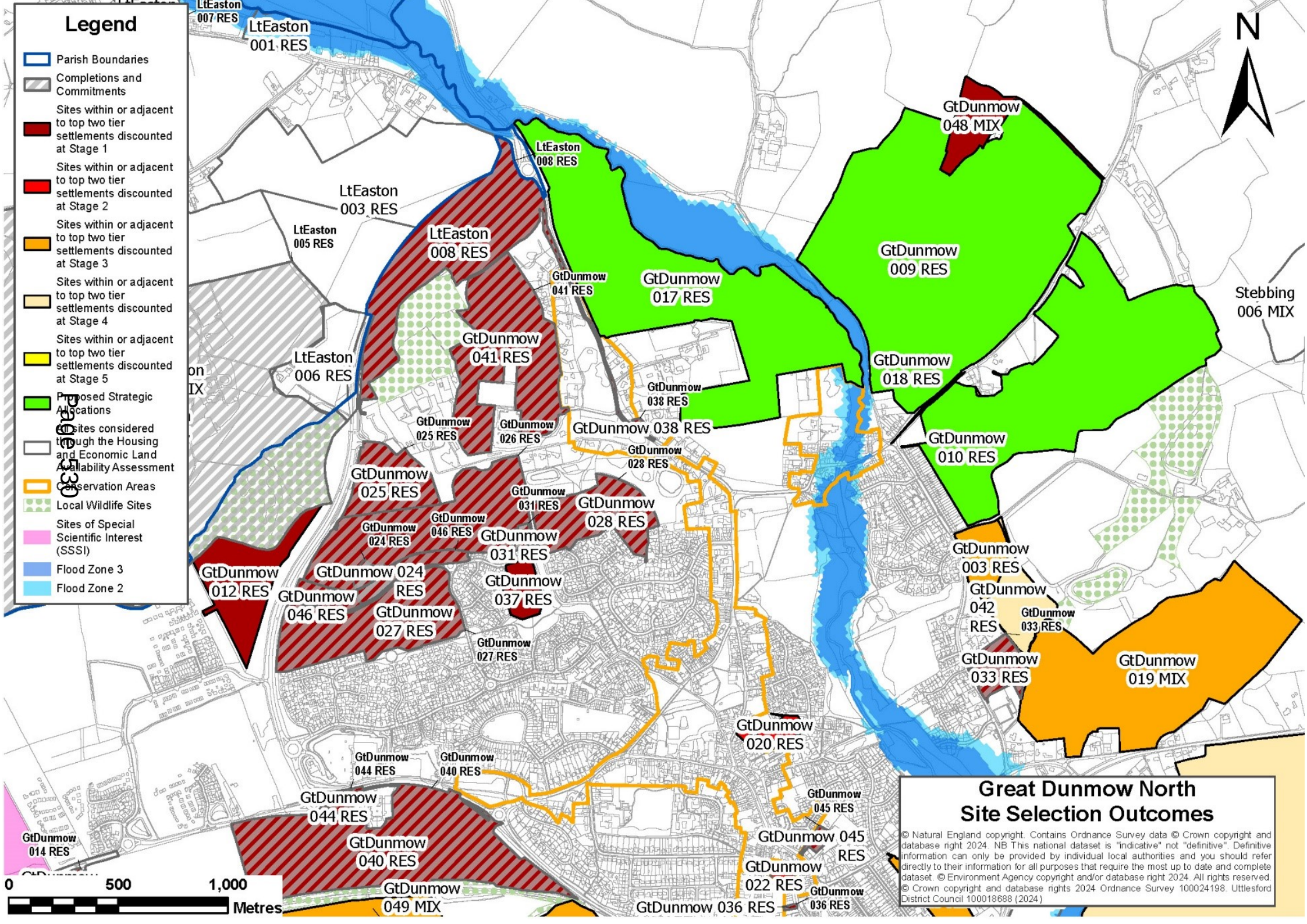
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				design. The assessment has considered the planning history of the site including UTT/19/1802/OP. Owing to the size of the site, it is considered that the potential impacts on the rural landscape and heritage assets have a reasonable prospect to be mitigated through a strengthened landscape framework and sensitive design.
GtDunmow 010 RES	Land off The Broadway, Great Dunmow	6.69	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Church End. Development of the site in isolation would limit opportunities for mitigating its impacts on the urbanisation of the rural area, which makes a significant contribution to the setting of the Church End (Great Dunmow) Conservation Area and a number of designated heritage assets in close proximity. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to residential development. The site is therefore discounted from further assessment.
GtDunmow 013 RES	Land north of B1256, Great Dunmow	3.74	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Great Dunmow. Development of the site would harm the character and appearance of the setting of Chelmer Valley and significantly encroach upon the historically isolated Grade II listed building at Dunmow Park and its parkland setting. There is limited potential to appropriately mitigate the significant adverse impacts on the existing landscape character and heritage setting. The site is therefore discounted from further assessment.
GtDunmow 017 RES	Land east of B1008, Great Dunmow	27.54	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Great Dunmow and Church End. Previous assessments show that development of the site would have significant adverse impacts on the

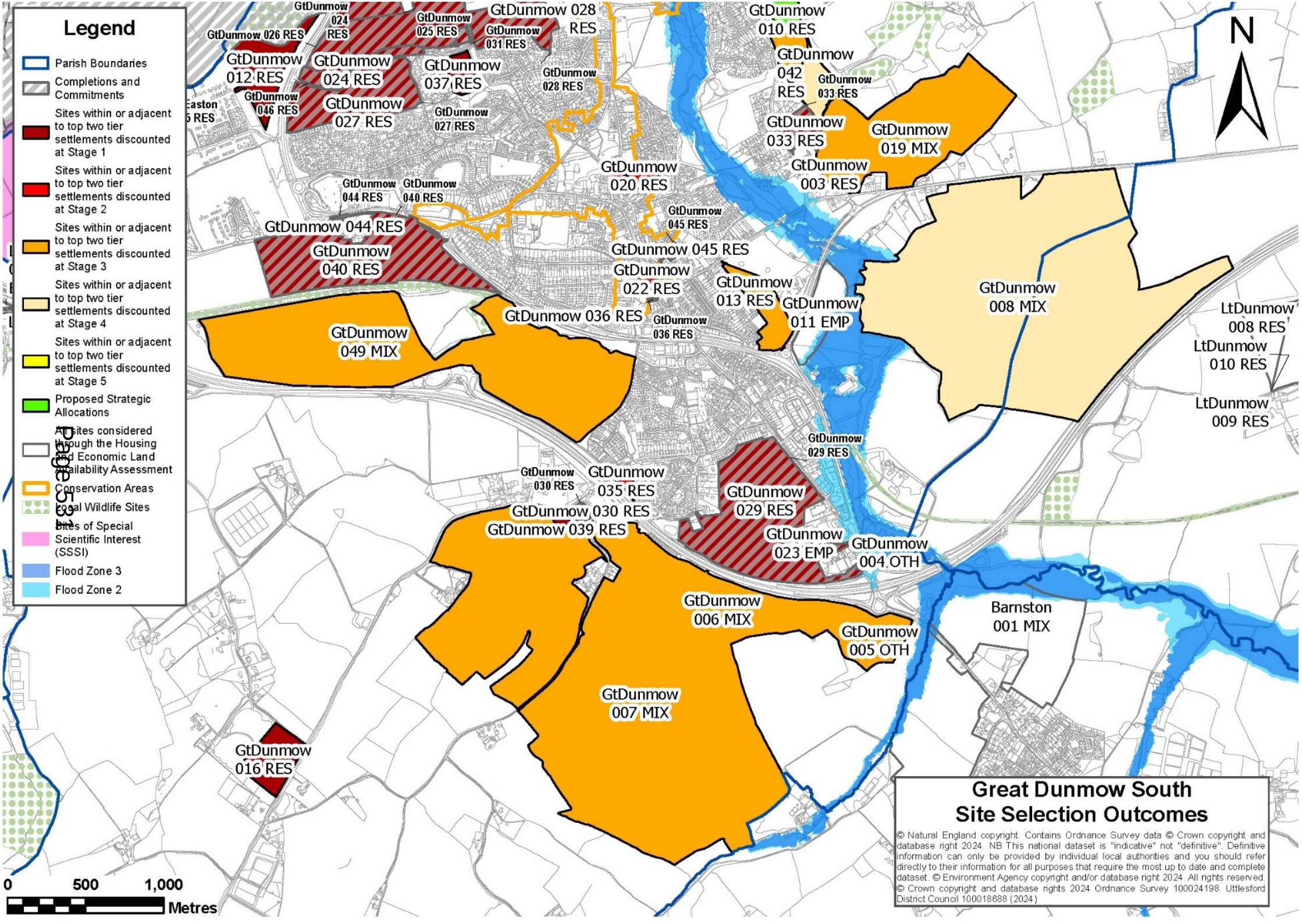
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				landscape setting of Chelmer Valley. The eastern edge of the site is in Flood Zone 3. The site is also of high heritage sensitivity within and adjacent to nationally significant Scheduled Ancient Monuments including the Parsonage Farm moated site and Square and Circular Barrows 260m southeast of Parsonage Farm, a number of listed buildings, and the setting of the Church End (Great Dunmow) Conservation Area. Further site-specific consideration of the promoted scheme resubmitted at Regulation 18 Consultation demonstrates its potential to appropriately mitigate the identified development impacts. The resubmitted scheme aims to provide a mix of custom/self-build homes, care home, and senior living housing concentrated at the southwestern corner of the site fronting the B1008 and existing/committed development, and over 20 hectares of publicly accessible green space to enhance the landscape character of the River Chelmer corridor. It maintains the separation of Great Dunmow and Church End. This also offers opportunities to preserve and enhance the setting views to and from Church End, St Mary's Church, and Chelmer Valley, as well as views identified in the Neighbourhood Plan from the B1008.
GtDunmow 018 RES	Land east of Bigods Lane, Great Dunmow	3.84	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Church End. Development of the site in isolation would provide limited opportunities for mitigating its harm to the rural landscape character and appearance. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to residential development. The site is therefore discounted from further assessment.
GtDunmow 019 MIX	Land north of	9.08	Marginal	The site is located to the north of Braintree Road, partly

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
	Braintree Road, Great Dunmow		Omission Site Option	adjacent to committed residential development to the north. The western part of the site adjacent to the built-up area has planning permission for 32 self-build and custom-build dwellings, with vehicular access from Braintree Road. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to residential development. It wraps around two Grade II listed heritage assets and is located in close proximity to a number of other designated heritage assets. The site is subject to risk of surface water flooding which would need to be mitigated. The site is likely to elongate the linear settlement pattern along St Edmund Lane to the east, with limited development frontage connecting to the existing built-up area. Full development of the site is likely to impact the settlement and landscape character at this location. The site contains priority habitats (deciduous woodland). The site is identified as a potential archaeological site.
GtDunmow 049 MIX	Land south west of Great Dunmow, Great Dunmow	49.09	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is greenfield located to the south of B1256 and north of A120, adjacent to the built up area of Great Dunmow. It is characterised by a network of woodland identified as priority habitats (deciduous woodland) and designated Local Wildlife Sites located along its northern and eastern area adjacent to the existing built up area, as well as centrally across the site. The site does not have a clear access. Development of the site is likely to be fragmented and located at the southern part of the site, poorly related to the existing built up area (including committed development). The site is subject to risk of surface water flooding. The site is in close proximity to a number of designated heritage assets. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to mixed-use development.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
GtDunmow 008 RES	Land east of Great Dunmow, Braintree Road, Great Dunmow	86.31	Strategic growth to the southeast (GtDunmow 008 RES) is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 4 site, which consists of omission sites that feature (as a variable) in the RA growth scenarios.	N/A. Site discounted at earlier stage.
GtDunmow 009 RES	Land off The Broadway, Great Dunmow	111.5	Strategic growth to the northeast (GtDunmow 017 RES) and east (GtDunmow 009RES) is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 3 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a variable across the RA growth scenarios now.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.
GtDunmow 017 RES	Land east of B1008, Great Dunmow	27.54	Strategic growth to the northeast (GtDunmow 017 RES) and east (GtDunmow 009RES) is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 3 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a variable across the RA growth scenarios now.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.





Saffron Walden

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
SafWalden 002 RES	Land to the north of De Vigier Avenue, Saffron Walden	0.48	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 003 RES	Land south of Radwinter Road, (East of Griffin Place) Saffron Walden	17.47	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 008 RES	Land north east of Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden	4.09	Have potential to demonstrate suitability, availability, and achievability within 5-15 years. Since the Stage 1 assessment was undertaken, outline planning permission (S62A/2023/0031) has been granted for the erection of 55 dwellings (April 2024).
SafWalden 010 RES	Former Friends School Playing Field, Saffron Walden	7.05	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 011 RES	Former Friends School, Saffron Walden, CB11 4AL	3.28	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 013 RES	Land east of Petts Lane, Little Walden	1.00	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 014 RES	Parkside, Saffron Walden	0.32	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 021 MIX	Commercial Centre, Ashdon Road,	4.78	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
	Saffron Walden, CB10 2NH		of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 024 RES	Ashdon Rd, Commercial Centre, Ashdon Rd, Saffron Walden	12.88	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 025 RES	Land South Of Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden	13.13	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 026 RES	Land Off Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden	4.49	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 027 RES	Land Behind The Old Cement Works, Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden	0.96	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 028 RES	Land East Of Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden	9.27	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 029 RES	Land At Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden	0.54	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 030 RES	Former Walden Dairy, 135 Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3BJ	0.14	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
SafWalden 034 RES	The Gate Inn, 74 Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3AG	0.13	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
SafWalden 035 RES	Land North Of Shire Hill Farm, Shire Hill, Saffron Walden	7.05	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
SafWalden 004 RES	46 Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden	0.43	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
SafWalden 012 RES	Land west of Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden	1.22	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
SafWalden 016 MIX	UBLR/17/001 56 High Street, Saffron Walden CB10 1EF	0.09	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
SafWalden 017 RES	UBLR/17/002 Viceroy Coaches, Rear of 10-12 Bridge Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1BU	0.244	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
SafWalden 018 RES	UBLR/17/005 Jossaume, Thaxted Road, Saffron	0.417	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
	Walden CB11 3AA		
SafWalden 031 RES	Auton Croft, Saffron Walden	0.52	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
SafWalden 036 RES	Land to the North East of Thaxted Road, Granite, Knight Park, Saffron Walden	2.09	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

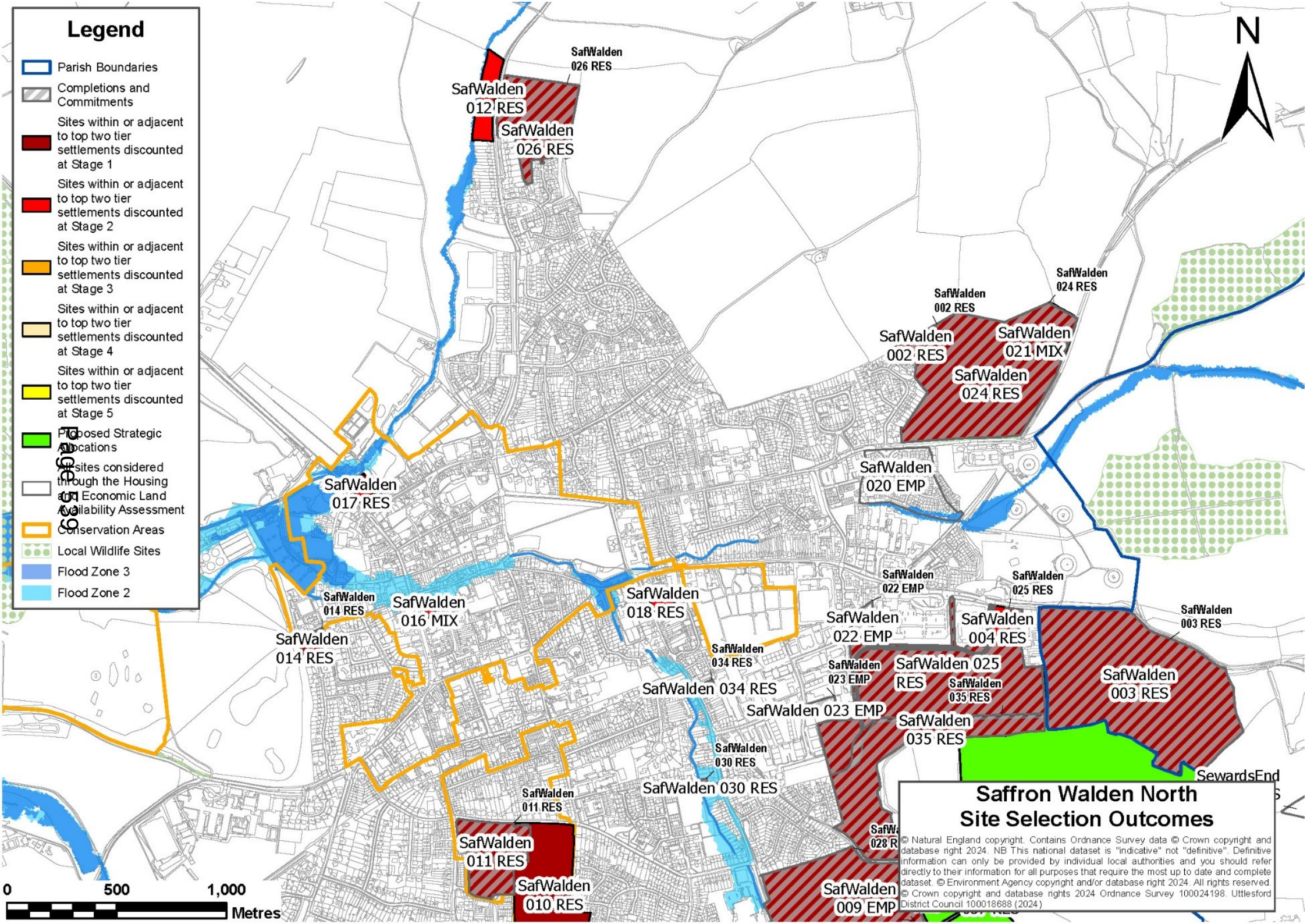
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
SafWalden 001 RES	Land east of Shire Hill Farm and south of Radwinter Road	30.02	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area and committed residential developments in Saffron Walden. Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the District and is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is to the east of Saffron Walden and is relatively well connected to its services, facilities, and employment offer, as well as being on the relatively less sensitive side of the town in landscape terms. Housing would also be delivered in one of the more affordable areas of the district (notwithstanding relatively high house prices). Mitigation measures would be required in terms of access, landscape, heritage, education provision, and other infrastructure requirements, but there are no issues that suggest development can't proceed within the plan period.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
SafWalden 005 RES	Herberts Farm, Debden Road, Saffron Walden	12.07	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area and committed residential developments in Saffron Walden. Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the District and is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is to the southeast of Saffron Walden and is relatively well connected to its services, facilities, and employment offer, as well as being on the relatively less sensitive side of the town in landscape terms. Housing would also be delivered in one of the more affordable areas of the district (notwithstanding relatively high house prices). Further investigation during Regulation 18 shows that the site is subject to high heritage sensitivity associated with a listed farmhouse making it less suitable for development, with elevated visual sensitivity associated with its topography rising to the south towards a high point within the site.
SafWalden 006 RES	Land south of Saffron Walden	23.02	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area and committed residential developments in Saffron Walden. Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the District and is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is to the southeast of Saffron Walden and is relatively well connected to its services, facilities, and employment offer, as well as being on the relatively less sensitive side of the town in landscape terms. Housing would also be delivered in one of the more affordable areas of the district (notwithstanding relatively high house prices). Mitigation measures would be required in terms of access, heritage, landscape, education provision, and other infrastructure requirements, but there are no issues that suggest development can't proceed within the plan period. The site contains Tree Preservation Orders. Part

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				of the site has planning permission for residential development.
SafWalden 037 MIX	Land to the South of Debden Road	10.91	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area and committed residential developments in Saffron Walden. Saffron Walden is the largest settlement in the District and is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is to the east of Saffron Walden and is relatively well connected to its services, facilities, and employment offer, as well as being on the relatively less sensitive side of the town in landscape terms. Housing would also be delivered in one of the more affordable areas of the district (notwithstanding relatively high house prices). Mitigation measures would be required in terms of access, heritage, landscape, education provision, risk of surface water flooding, and other infrastructure requirements, but there are no issues that suggest development can't proceed within the plan period.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Allocation
SafWalden 001 RES	Land east of Shire Hill Farm and south of Radwinter Road	30.02	Strategic growth to the east and southeast of Saffron Walden is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 2 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now but were a variable at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed allocations for mixed use development.
SafWalden 006 RES	Land south of Saffron Walden	23.02	Strategic growth to the east and southeast of Saffron Walden is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 2 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now but were a variable at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed allocations for mixed use development.
SafWalden 037 MIX	Land to the South of Debden Road	10.91	Strategic growth to the east and southeast of Saffron Walden is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 2 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now but were a variable at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed allocations for mixed use development.


Legend
Parish Boundaries
Completions and Commitments
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 1
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 2
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 3
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 4
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 5
Proposed Strategic Allocations
Sites considered through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
Conservation Areas
Local Wildlife Sites
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
N
SafWalden 026 RES
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SafWalden 002 RES
SafWalden 024 RES
SafWalden 002 RES
SafWalden 021 MIX
SafWalden 024 RES
SafWalden 020 EMP
SafWalden 017 RES
SafWalden 014 RES
SafWalden 016 MIX
SafWalden 014 RES
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Saffron Walden North
Site Selection Outcomes
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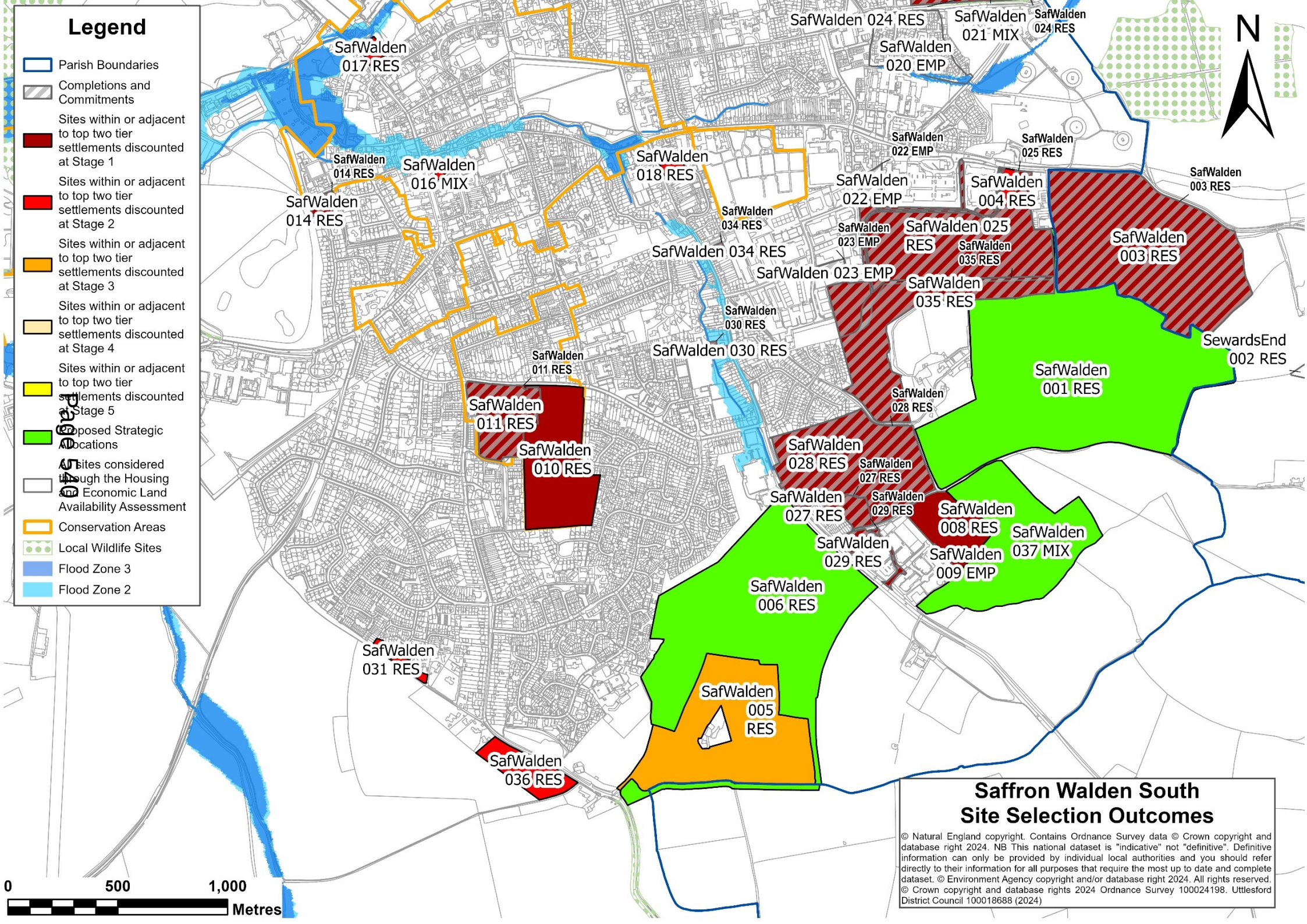
Legend
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Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 1
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 2
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 3
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 4
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 5
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Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
SafWalden 017 RES
SafWalden 014 RES
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SafWalden 023 EMP
SafWalden 035 RES
SafWalden 028 RES
SewardsEnd 002 RES
SafWalden 001 RES
SafWalden 028 RES
SafWalden 027 RES
SafWalden 027 RES
SafWalden 029 RES
SafWalden 008 RES
SafWalden 037 MIX
SafWalden 029 RES
SafWalden 009 EMP
SafWalden 006 RES
SafWalden 005 RES
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Metres
Saffron Walden South
Site Selection Outcomes
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Stansted Mountfitchet

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Stansted 002 RES	Land south of Elsenham Road, Stansted Mountfitchet	4.34	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 003 RES	Land at Pines Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet	1.71	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 008 RES	Land off B1051 Elsenham	0.43	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 009 RES	Land to the west of Stansted Mountfitchet	39.7	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 010 RES	Land south of Bentfield End Causeway, Stansted Mountfitchet	5.96	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 011 RES	Land west of Pennington Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	9.12	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 014 RES	Land at Snakes Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	0.3	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 016 RES	Eastfield Stables, May Walk, Stansted Mountfitchet	3.3	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 017 RES	B1051, Stansted	3.55	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 018 RES	Land at Elms Farm, Stansted Mountfitchet	8.81	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 021 RES	Land to rear of 19 Bentfield Causeway,	1.23	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
	Stansted Mountfitchet		
Stansted 023 RES	Land east of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	3.45	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 024 RES	Land east of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	3.45	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 028 RES	Land North Of Water Lane, Stansted	0.15	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 029 RES	West Winds Normans Way, Stansted	0.2	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 036 RES	Marlensdale, Burton End, Stansted	0.27	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Stansted 038 MIX	Land northwest of Stansted Airport, Stansted Mountfitchet	60.70	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
Stansted 019 RES	Stansted Youth Centre, Lower Street Stansted	0.18	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Stansted 026 RES	Almont House, High Lane, Stansted, CM24 8LE	0.65	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Stansted 032 RES	Police Station Hargrave Close Stansted, CM24 8DL	0.08	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

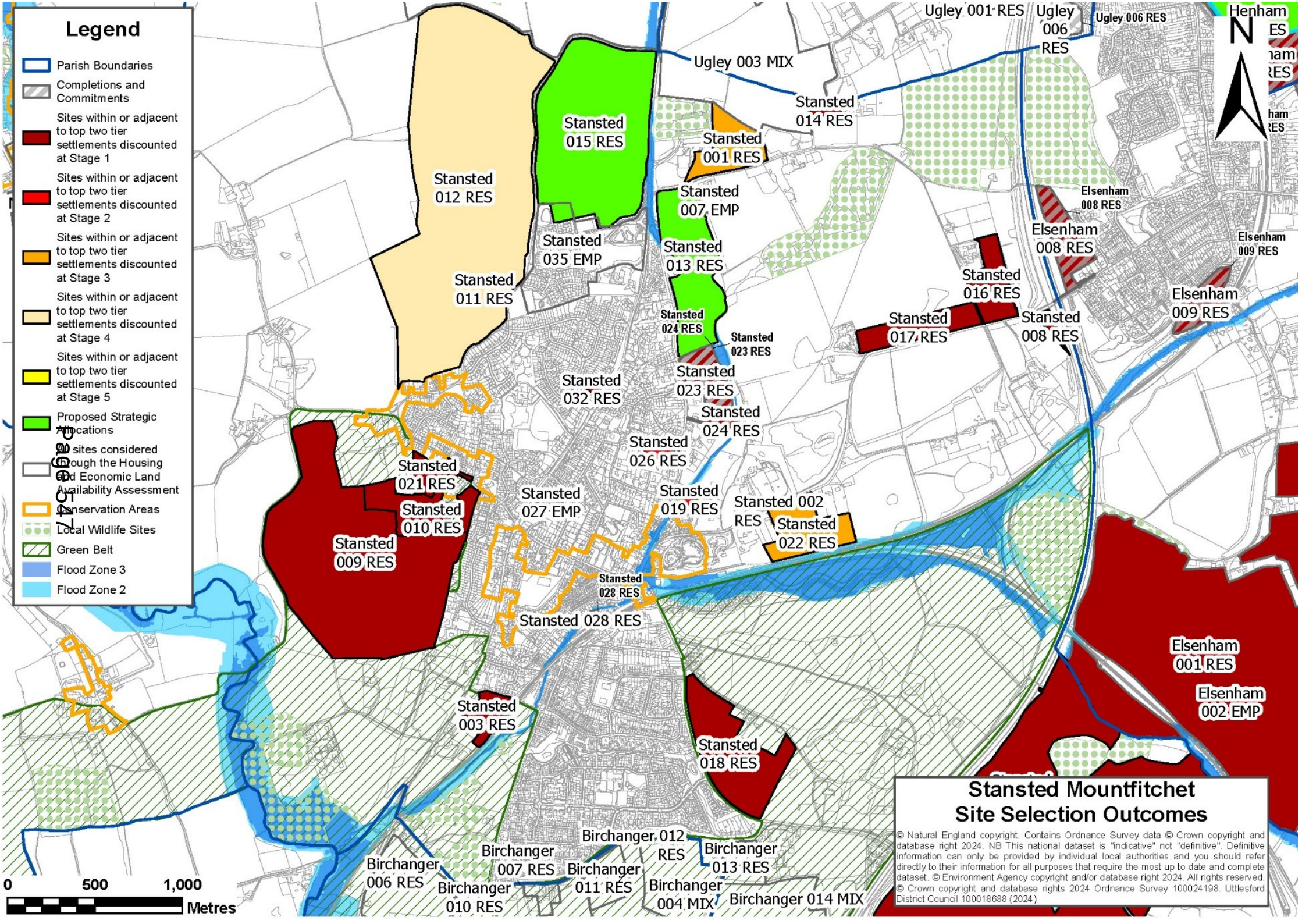
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
Stansted 001 RES	Alsa Lodge, Alsa Street, Stanst ed	3.82	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is poorly related to the existing settlement and is therefore discounted from further assessment. The site also does not have satisfactory access. Residential development in this location would require significant off-site upgrades to the local road network. The site contains a Grade II listed building and priority habitats at the periphery.
Stansted 012 RES	Land west of Pennington Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	52.84	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Stansted Mountfitchet. Stansted Mountfitchet is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth as a Key Settlement. The north of Stansted Mountfitchet is identified to be of moderate to high landscape sensitivity, which is

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				the lowest impact area in this location apart from the Green Belt. West of Pennington Lane is considered more sensitive in landscape terms. The site does not currently have satisfactory access owing to the status of Pennington Lane as a historic route. Strategic development at this location would require significant off-site upgrades to the local road network.
Stansted 013 RES	Land east of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	8.98	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Stansted Mountfitchet. Stansted Mountfitchet is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth as a Key Settlement. The site is in an accessible location within walking distance of Stansted railway station. The site has suitable access onto the Strategic Road Network via the B1383 and through the main settlement. The north of Stansted Mountfitchet is identified to be of moderate to high landscape sensitivity, which is the lowest impact area in this location apart from the Green Belt. The site partly falls within Flood Zone 3 and mitigation measures would need to be included within a site-specific policy.
Stansted 015 RES	Land west of Cambridge Road and north of Walpole Meadows, Stansted Mountfitchet	23.01	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Stansted Mountfitchet. Stansted Mountfitchet is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth as a Key Settlement. The site has suitable access onto the Strategic Road Network via the B1383 and through the main settlement. The north of Stansted Mountfitchet is identified to be of

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				moderate to high landscape sensitivity, which is the lowest impact area in this location apart from the Green Belt. The site partly falls within Flood Zone 3 and mitigation measures would need to be included within a site-specific policy.
Stansted 022 RES	Land south of Elsenham Road, Stansted Mountfitchet	4.56	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site is located at the rural transitional edge of Stansted Mountfitchet along the B1051. It is relatively poorly located to the main built-up area and key services. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity to residential development owing to its rural character, undulating topography, valued semi-natural habitats, time-depth, and the wooded rural setting they provide to Stansted Mountfitchet.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Stansted 012 RES	Land west of Pennington Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	52.84	The site was examined closely through the appraisal of reasonable alternative growth scenarios at the draft Plan stage to deliver a strategic scale scheme to support a new primary school. However, as explained in the Sustainability Appraisal, the situation has now moved on, including on the basis of increased confidence regarding potential to deliver a new primary school at nearby Elsenham. Site 015 includes flexibility to potentially deliver a primary school, as per the County Council's recommendation. There is also quite a strong argument for drawing upon Pennington Lane to define the settlement edge and, in turn, an overall strong argument for ruling out Site 012 from the Stansted Mountfitchet growth scenarios.	N/A. Site discounted at earlier stage.
Stansted 013 RES	Land east of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet	8.98	The site is considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Stansted Mountfitchet. It aligns with the Local Plan's draft Spatial Strategy.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.
Stansted 015 RES	Land west of Cambridge Road and north of Walpole Meadows, Stansted Mountfitchet	23.01	The site is considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Stansted Mountfitchet. It aligns with the Local Plan's draft Spatial Strategy.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.


Legend
Parish Boundaries
Completions and Commitments
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 1
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 2
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 3
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 4
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 5
Proposed Strategic Allocations
All sites considered through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
Conservation Areas
Local Wildlife Sites
Green Belt
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
0 500 1,000
Metres
N
Stansted Mountfitchet
Site Selection Outcomes
Ugley 001 RES
Ugley 006 RES
Ugley 003 MIX
Stansted 014 RES
Stansted 015 RES
Stansted 001 RES
Stansted 012 RES
Stansted 007 EMP
Stansted 035 EMP
Stansted 013 RES
Stansted 011 RES
Stansted 024 RES
Stansted 023 RES
Stansted 016 RES
Stansted 017 RES
Stansted 008 RES
Elsenham 008 RES
Elsenham 009 RES
Stansted 032 RES
Stansted 026 RES
Stansted 021 RES
Stansted 010 RES
Stansted 009 RES
Stansted 027 EMP
Stansted 019 RES
Stansted 002 RES
Stansted 022 RES
Stansted 028 RES
Stansted 003 RES
Stansted 018 RES
Elsenham 001 RES
Elsenham 002 EMP
Birchanger 006 RES
Birchanger 007 RES
Birchanger 010 RES
Birchanger 011 RES
Birchanger 012 RES
Birchanger 013 RES
Birchanger 004 MIX
Birchanger 014 MIX
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Local Rural Centres

Elsenham

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Elsenham 001 RES	Land at Tye Green, Elsenham, CM22 6DY	181.26	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 003 MIX	Water Circle, London Stansted, CM22 6DR	18.59	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 005 RES	Land south of Henham Road, Elsenham, CM22 6DH	5.35	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 007 RES	Land To The West Of The Oak Barn, Green Street, Elsenham, CM22 6DR	0.35	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 008 RES	Land To The West Of, Isabel Drive, Elsenham, CM22 6LL	3.19	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 009 RES	Land South Of Rush Lane, Elsenham, CM22 6ED	2.26	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Elsenham 010 RES	Land To The North West Of Henham Road, Elsenham, CM22 6DF	19.70	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Elsenham 011 RES	South of Hall Lane, Gaunt's End	8.03	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Henham 010 RES	Land South Of The Farmhouse, Old Mead Road, Henham	0.99	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Henham 012 RES	Land At Old Mead Road, Henham, CM22 6JL	0.44	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

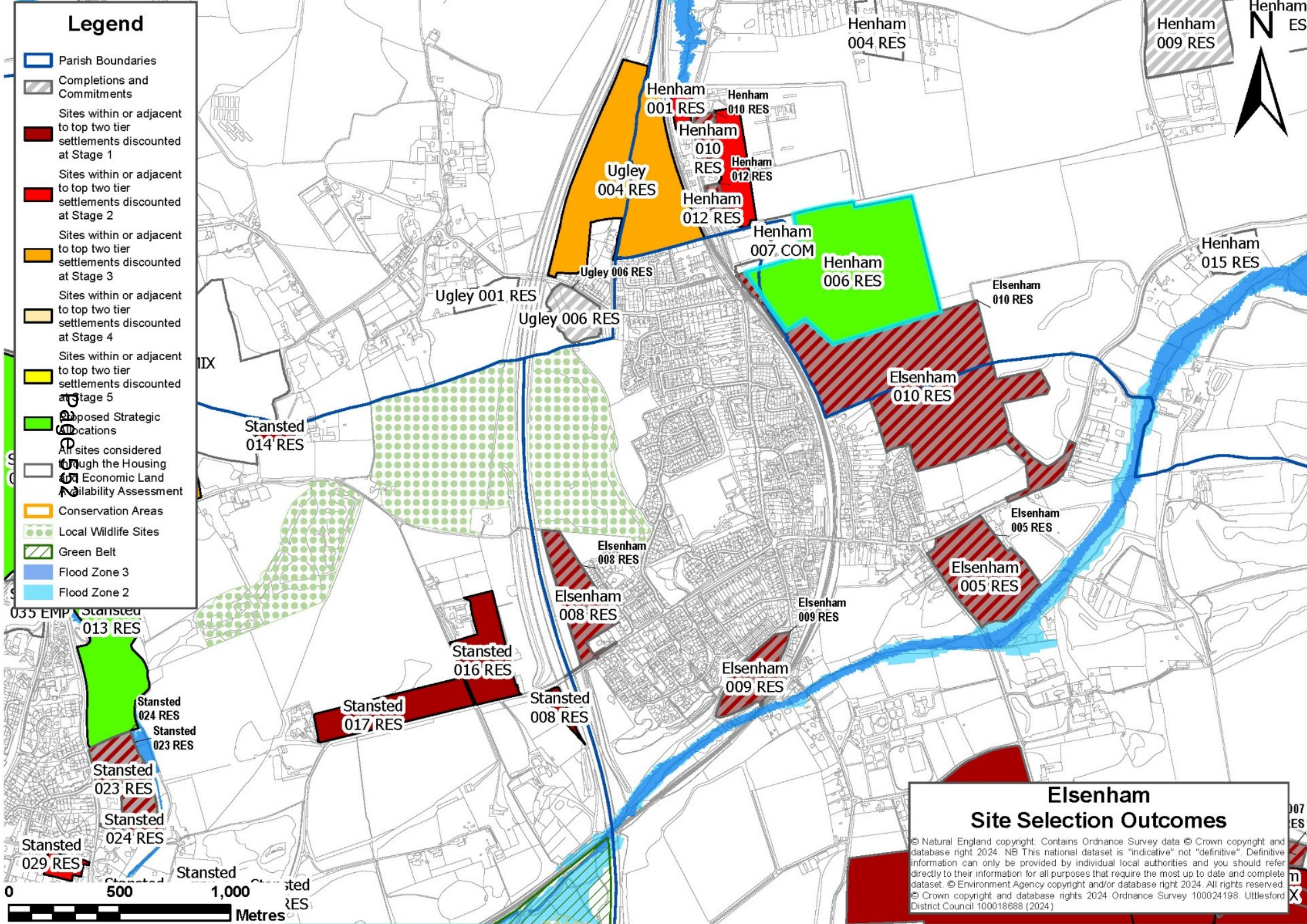
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Henham 001 RES	Land west of Old Mead Road, Elsenham	0.61	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Henham 002 RES	Land east of Old Mead Road, Elsenham	2.5	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
Henham 006 RES	Land east of Station Road, Elsenham	4.14	Clear Preferred Option	The site is located adjacent to the settlement of Elsenham and within close walking distance to Elsenham railway station. The majority of the site has planning permission for residential development, with approximately 4.15 Ha of the remaining land available for further development. This part of the site is capable of delivering strategic growth of more than 100 homes. The site falls within an area of low to moderate landscape sensitivity to development. The site is in close proximity to the Grade II listed Waiting Room on the east side of the line at Elsenham station, which would need to be considered. Other key constraints identified relate to the risk of surface water flooding.
Ugley 004 RES	Land at Bedwell Road, Elsenham	13.13	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located within the Parish of Ugley but is adjacent to the settlement of Elsenham. Currently, there is no evidence to show that the noise from the M11 motorway and the West Anglia Main Line Railway could be appropriately mitigated. Therefore, the site is assessed as a Clear Omission Site Option. The site is also of high landscape sensitivity and is within a medium to high heritage sensitivity area. Part of the site is subject to the risk of surface water flooding, which would need to be mitigated. The northwestern part of the site is identified to be of archaeological value. Multiple public rights of way run across the site.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Henham 006 RES	Land east of Station Road, Elsenham	4.14	The uncommitted part of Henham 006 RES is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 1 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the growth scenarios now, and were also at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations. Further masterplanning work shows that the site presents opportunities to extend to the east in order to align with the wider committed development to the south. This part of the site is confirmed as available with no showstopper suitability constraints. The total site area proposed for allocation is 7.5 Ha.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Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 3
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 4
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 5
Proposed Strategic Allocations
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Conservation Areas
Local Wildlife Sites
Green Belt
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
Henham 004 RES
Henham 009 RES
Henham 001 RES
Henham 010 RES
Henham 010 RES
Henham 012 RES
Ugley 004 RES
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Elsenham
Site Selection Outcomes
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Great Chesterford

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
GtChesterford 003 RES	Burtonwood Farm Cow Lane, Great Chesterford	141.17	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtChesterford 008 RES	Field House Farm Field Farm Drive, Great Chesterford	7.98	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtChesterford 012 RES	Land North Of Bartholomew Close Bartholomew Close, Great Chesterford, CB10 1QA	0.44	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
LtChesterford 001 RES	Land East of London Road, Little Chesterford	7.08	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
LtChesterford 005 RES	Land To The South West Of London Road Little Chesterford	3.2	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
GtChesterford 001 RES	The old chalk pit Walden Road, Great Chesterford	0.91	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above. Development of the site with adjacent sites are considered in GtChesterford 011 MIX.

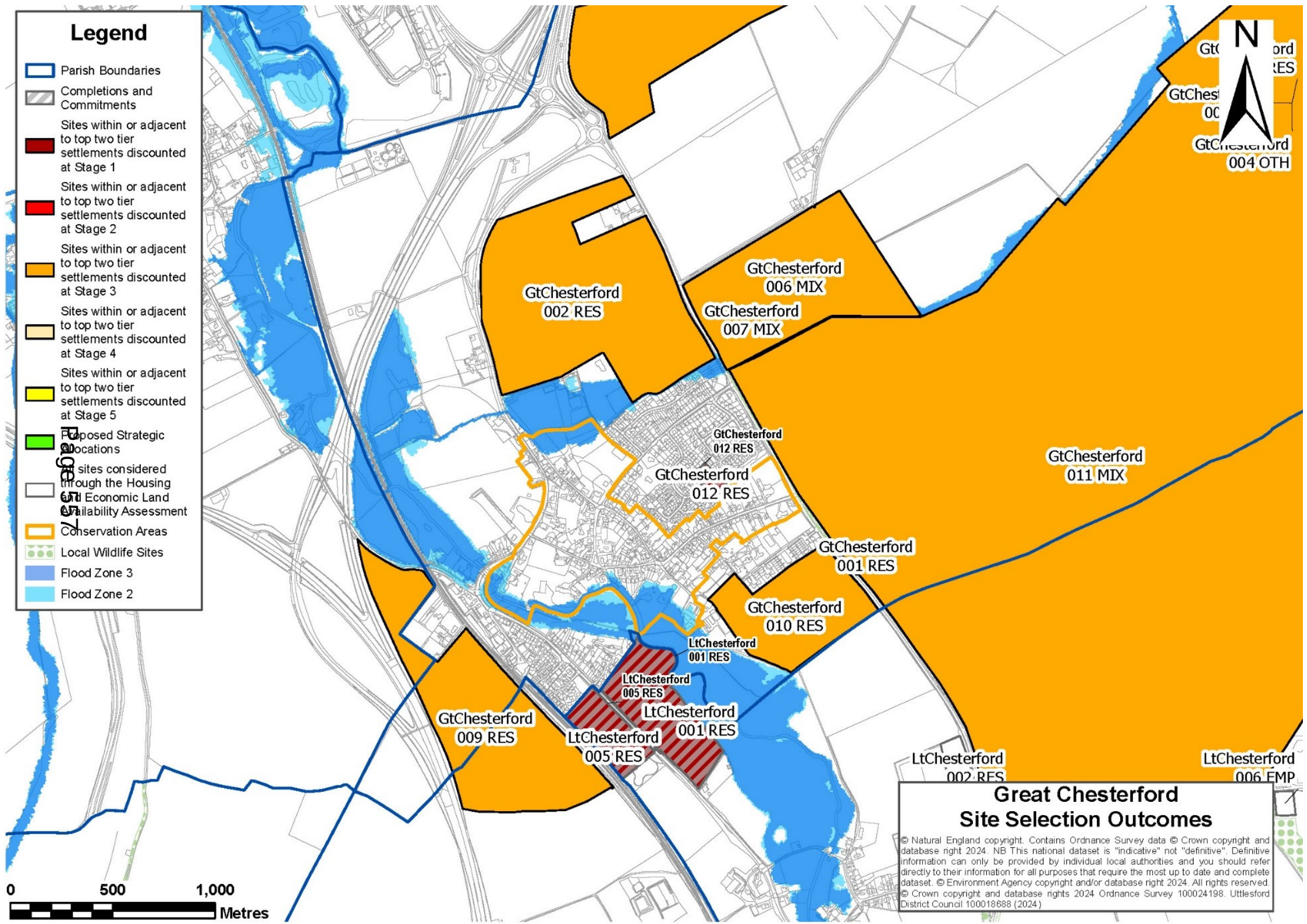
HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
GtChesterford 002 RES	Land between Walden Road and Newmarket Road, Great Chesterford	30.16	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located to the north of Great Chesterford. Great Chesterford is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is relatively well connected to local services, facilities, and employment opportunities. It is located on the less sensitive side of the town in landscape terms. Part of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3, which would require appropriate mitigation. The site contains and is adjacent to the Scheduled Monument of the Roman fort, Roman town, Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Great Chesterford. Consultation with Historic England identifies the potential development impacts on the Scheduled Ancient Monument as significant and could not be appropriately mitigated.
GtChesterford 006 MIX	Land south east of A11 and north east of B184 (1500 scheme)	148.78	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is in a relatively elevated position, removed from the settlement of Great Chesterford but adjacent to the A11. Development of the site would poorly relate to the settlement of Great Chesterford and significantly impact its historic settlement pattern and character. There is currently no adequate evidence to suggest that the site would be supported by frequent sustainable transport. The site includes a Grade II listed building, which would need to be considered as part of the development proposals.
GtChesterford 007 MIX	Land south east of A11 and north east of B183 (3500 scheme)	332.44	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is removed from the settlement of Great Chesterford but is adjacent to the A11. It is assessed to have a higher landscape sensitivity to mixed-use development due to the small scale and open character of the landscape and the general pattern of the built form. There are also extensive long views from Park Farm, and new development in this location may intrude on views from the surrounding countryside. Development of the site as a standalone Garden Community is likely to have significant

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				adverse impacts on landscape character, unlikely to be overcome through the potential mitigation strategies identified. The site includes a Grade II listed building which would need to be considered as part of the development proposals. For the purpose of this Local Plan, at present, the site is not appropriate for allocation owing to the lack of adequate evidence which demonstrates the deliverability and viability of a standalone Garden Community in this location.
GtChesterford 009 RES	Land south of Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford	21.16	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located to the west of Great Chesterford. Great Chesterford is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. The site is relatively well connected to local services, facilities, and employment offers. The site is in an accessible location adjacent to Great Chesterford Railway Station. Further investigation shows that access would be required through a neighbouring district and on that basis, the site could not be considered deliverable. Greater Cambridge is unable to progress a Local Plan at present and therefore there is currently no certainty to the delivery of the site through Local Plan allocation.
GtChesterford 010 RES	Land west of Walden Road, Great Chesterford	10.39	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is to the south of Great Chesterford and is relatively well connected to its services, facilities, and employment offers. Great Chesterford is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth. Mitigation measures would be required in relation to heritage sensitivity, landscape sensitivity, and other infrastructure requirements, but nothing suggests that development cannot proceed within the plan period. The site was submitted through the Call for Sites but on investigation, it is confirmed as not available for residential development.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
GtChesterford 011 MIX	Land North of Walden Road, Great Chesterford	647.0	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located to the east of Great Chesterford which is identified to be of high landscape sensitivity. Development of this site is likely to significantly extend the historic settlement pattern of Great Chesterford, unlikely to be appropriately mitigated. The site includes a Local Wildlife Site which would need to be considered as part of the development proposals. For the purpose of this Local Plan, at present, the site is not appropriate for allocation owing to the lack of adequate evidence which demonstrates the deliverability and viability of a standalone Garden Community in this location.

No sites in Great Chesterford are carried forward to Stage 4.



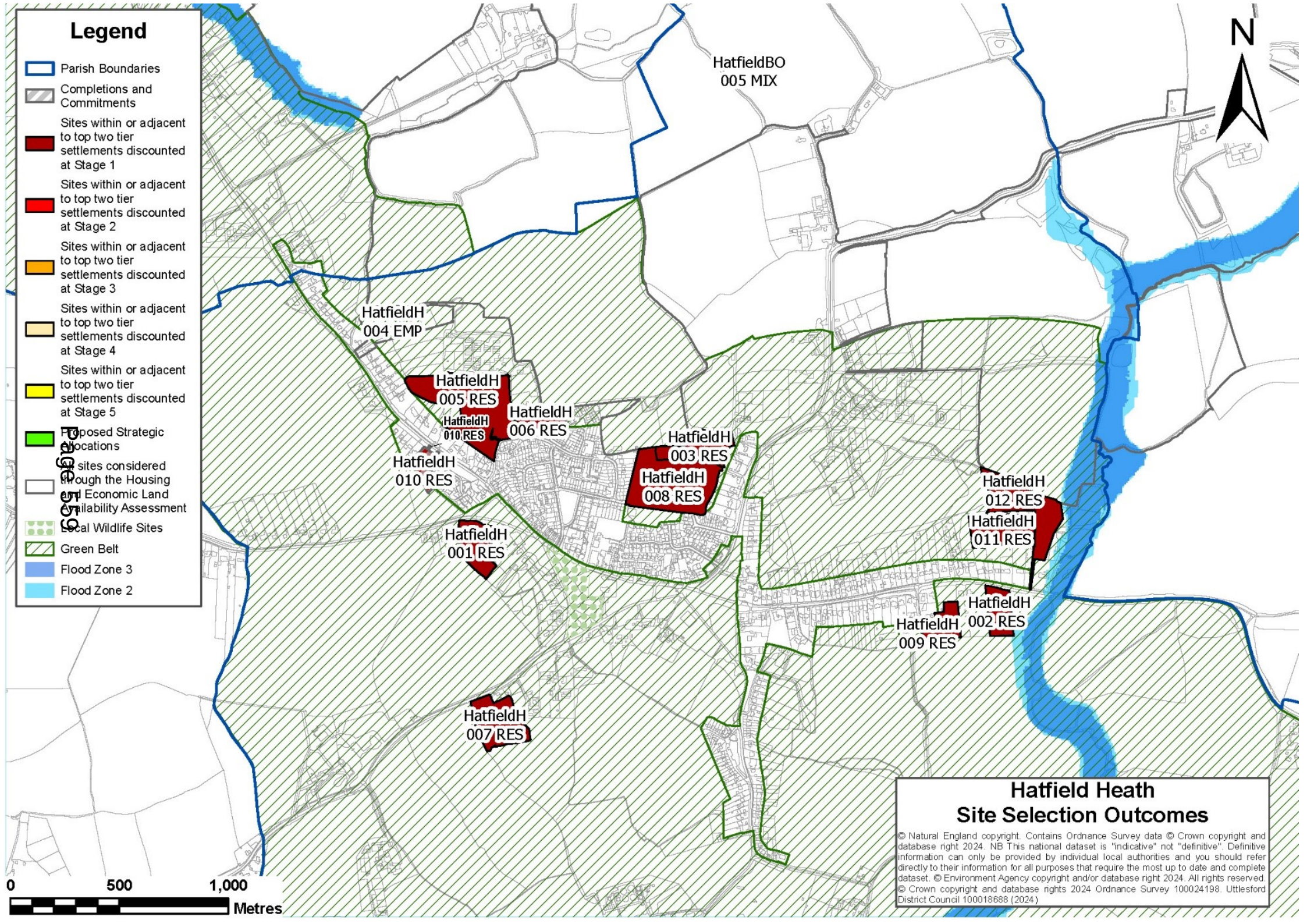
Great Chesterford Site Selection Outcomes

Hatfield Heath

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
HatfieldH 001 RES	Land south of Sawbridgeworth Road, Hatfield Heath	1.24	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 002 RES	Land south of A1060 (Chelmsford Road), Hatfield Heath	0.9	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 003 RES	Rainbow Field (land to the west of) Dunmow Road, Hatfield Heath	1.42	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 005 RES	Land on the north west of Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath	4.16	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 006 RES	Land on the East of Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath	0.81	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 007 RES	Land at Peggerells Farm, Hatfield Heath	1.67	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 008 RES	Land at Cox Ley, Hatfield Heath	3.59	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 009 RES	Land east of Oakhanger, Friars Lane, Hatfield Heath	0.74	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 010 RES	Millside, Stortford Road, Hatfield Heath, CM22 7DL	0.54	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 011 RES	Land at Hatfield Heath	1.61	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
HatfieldH 012 RES	Land at Stonebridge Farm, Hatfield Heath	2.36	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

No sites in Hatfield Heath are carried forward to Stage 2.


Legend
Parish Boundaries
Completions and Commitments
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 1
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 2
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 3
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 4
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 5
Proposed Strategic Allocations
Other sites considered through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
Local Wildlife Sites
Green Belt
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
HatfieldBO 005 MIX
HatfieldH 004 EMP
HatfieldH 005 RES
HatfieldH 010 RES
HatfieldH 006 RES
HatfieldH 010 RES
HatfieldH 003 RES
HatfieldH 008 RES
HatfieldH 001 RES
HatfieldH 012 RES
HatfieldH 011 RES
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Hatfield Heath
Site Selection Outcomes
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Newport

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Newport 002 RES	Land south of Bury Water Lane, Newport	2.28	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Newport 014 RES	Land West Of London Road, Newport	4.5	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Newport 015 RES	Bricketts, London Road, Newport, CB11 3PP	1.25	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Newport 016 RES	The Joyce, Frankland Academy, Cambridge Road, Newport, CB11 3TR	4.41	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Newport 017 RES	Land At Holmwood, Whiteditch Lane, Newport, Saffron Walden, CB11 3UD	1.42	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
Newport 001 RES	Land north of Salmon Field, Cambridge Road, Newport	1.56	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 003 RES	Land south of Bricketts, London Road, Newport	0.64	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 004 RES	Land North of Bury Water Lane, Newport	3.2	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 005 RES	Land south of Bury Water Lane, Newport	0.49	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 006 RES	Five Acres, Whiteditch Lane, Newport	0.58	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 011 RES	Wyndhams Croft, Whiteditch Lane, Newport	0.79	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Newport 018 RES	Coach And Horses Inn, Cambridge Road, Newport, Saffron Walden, CB11 3TR	0.44	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites. It is not located within or in close proximity to the top two-tier settlements of the District.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
Newport 007 RES	The Old Chalk Pit, Chalk Farm Lane, Newport	0.95	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is wholly identified as priority habitat. The site is not suitable to be developed for residential use in isolation. Newport 012 RES and Newport 013 RES are identified as Clear Omission Sites owing to their poor relationship with the existing settlement pattern and high landscape sensitivity. Newport Pond Chalk Pit is identified as a potential Local Wildlife Site. Development of the site may have significant adverse

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				impacts on biodiversity.
Newport 008 RES	Land north of Wicken Road, Newport	6.43	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Newport. It is in an accessible location within walking distance from Newport Railway Station and could be accessed via active travel modes, supported by a continuous pedestrian network. It is in close proximity to the existing facilities in Newport including the local primary school. The relevant planning history (UTT/18/1026/OP) of the site, which highlights potential development impacts on the character and appearance of the local landscape and less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets in close proximity, has been considered as part of the assessment. The Phase 1 Landscape Sensitivity Study identifies the site as moderate-high and less sensitive to growth when compared to the East of Newport. A site-specific policy could mitigate the impacts of development. The site is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site to the north which would need to be considered.
Newport 009 RES	Land at Pond Cross Farm, Frambury Lane, Newport	10.74	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Newport. It is in an accessible location within walking distance from Newport Railway Station and could be accessed via active travel modes, supported by a continuous pedestrian network. It is in close proximity to the existing facilities in Newport including the local primary school. The relevant planning history (UTT/17/2868/OP) of the site, which highlights potential development impacts on the character and appearance of Newport and the surrounding local landscape, has been considered as part of the assessment. The Phase 1 Landscape Sensitivity Study identifies the site as moderate-high and less sensitive to growth when compared to the East of Newport. The site is adjacent to the M11 where an appropriate buffer would be required to mitigate the any noise and air quality impacts. The site contains an established vegetated edge, identified as priority habitats, which could support this function. A site-

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				specific policy could mitigate the impacts of development.
Newport 010 RES	Land at Pond Cross Farm, Frambury Lane, Newport	26.18	Clear Preferred Site Option	This site is a larger version of Newport 009 RES and could be used to enhance the development opportunity at this location.
Newport 012 RES	Land to the east of Newport, east of Chalk Farm Lane	13.65	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located to the east of the railway and B1383, opposite the built-up area of Newport. Residential development at this location would poorly relate to the existing settlement and local services. This side of the village is also identified as being of a higher landscape sensitivity than other areas of Newport. Significant improvements on the local road network would be required to support residential development at this location.
Newport 013 RES	Chalk Farm Quarry, Newport	12.77	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located to the east of the railway and B1383, opposite the built-up area of Newport. Residential development at this location would poorly relate to the existing settlement and local services. This side of the village is also identified as being of a higher landscape sensitivity than other areas of Newport. The site currently does not have suitable access onto the Strategic Road Network and has limited opportunities for improvements to support strategic residential development owing to the presence of priority habitats. Significant improvements on the local road network would be required to support residential development at this location. Newport Pond Chalk Pit is identified as a potential Local Wildlife Site. Development of the site may have significant adverse impacts on biodiversity.

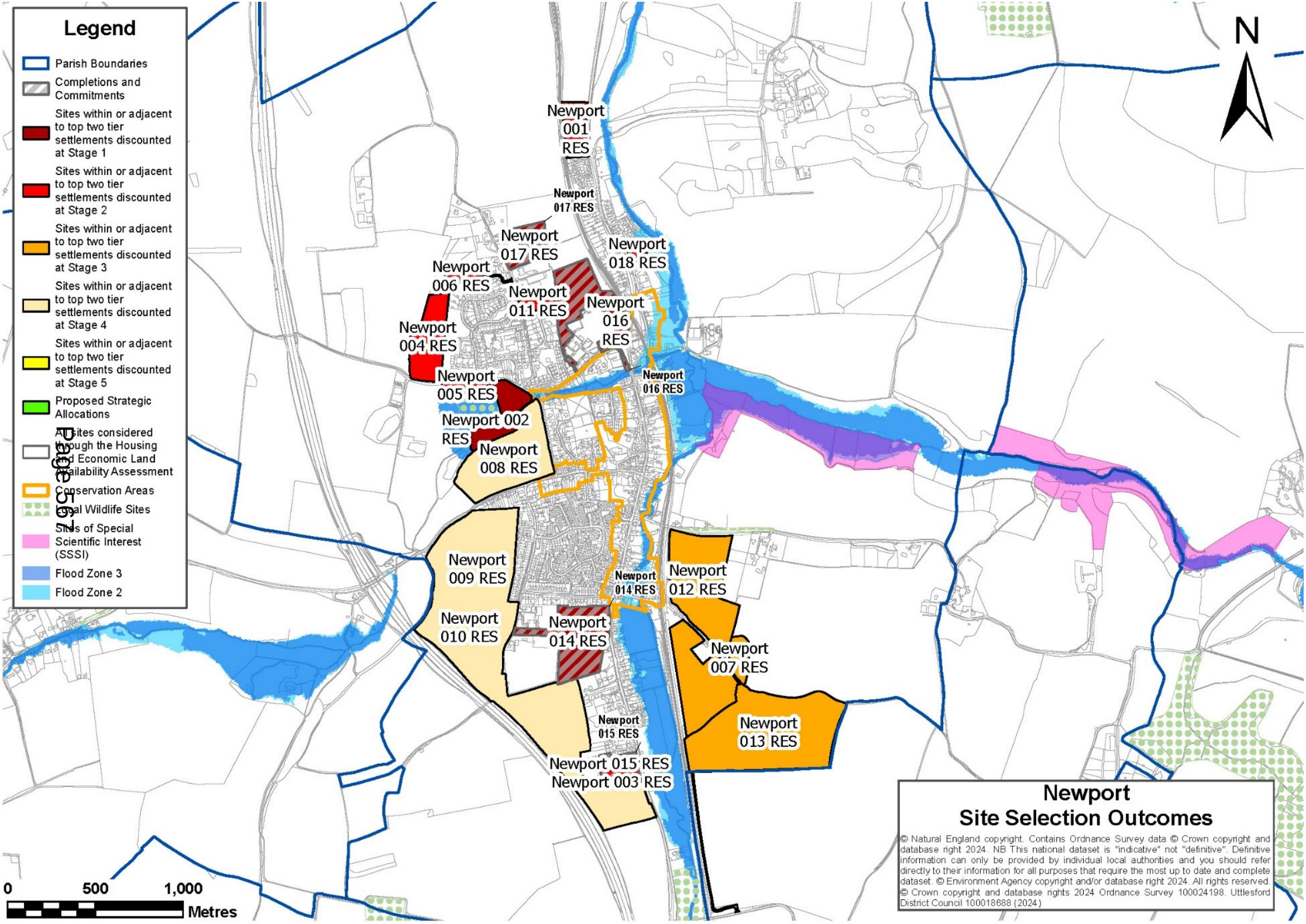
HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Newport has been identified as a suitable location for sustainable development. The Regulation 18 Consultation and further transport evidence development have however shown that additional traffic generated from the proposed Regulation 18 site allocations, which are concentrated at the east of the settlement, would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues at the B1383 High Street / Wicken Road junction. The three tested access strategies were unable to mitigate these impacts to an acceptable level. A scaled down growth of approximately 300 homes, to be delivered by smaller, more dispersed non-strategic sites through the Neighbourhood Plan, is considered to provide a more appropriate and balanced strategy. This approach can support the vitality of Newport and provide essential new facilities while also being well integrated into the town and protecting its important historic character. Consequently, no strategic development site allocations are proposed at Newport.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Newport 008 RES	Land north of Wicken Road, Newport	6.43	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Newport at Regulation 18. The Regulation 18 Consultation and further transport evidence development have however shown that additional traffic generated from the proposed Regulation 18 site allocations, which are concentrated at the east of the settlement, would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues at the B1383 High Street / Wicken Road junction. The three tested access strategies were unable to mitigate these impacts to an acceptable level. A scaled down growth of approximately 300 homes, to be delivered by smaller, more dispersed non-strategic sites through the Neighbourhood Plan, is considered to provide a more appropriate and balanced strategy. Consequently, no strategic development site allocations are proposed at Newport.	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Newport 009 RES	Land at Pond Cross Farm, Frambury Lane, Newport	10.74	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Newport at Regulation 18. The Regulation 18 Consultation and further transport evidence development have however shown that additional traffic generated from the proposed Regulation 18 site allocations, which are concentrated at the east of the settlement, would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues at the B1383 High Street / Wicken Road junction. The three tested access strategies were unable to mitigate these impacts to an acceptable level. A scaled down growth of approximately 300 homes, to be delivered by smaller, more dispersed non-strategic sites through the Neighbourhood Plan, is considered to provide a more appropriate and balanced strategy. Consequently, no strategic development site allocations are proposed at Newport.	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.
Newport 010 RES	Land at Pond Cross Farm, Frambury Lane, Newport	26.18	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Newport at Regulation 18. The Regulation 18 Consultation and further transport evidence development have however shown that additional traffic generated from the proposed Regulation 18 site allocations, which are concentrated at the east of the settlement, would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues at the B1383 High Street / Wicken Road junction. The three tested access strategies were unable to mitigate these impacts to an acceptable level. A scaled down growth of	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
			approximately 300 homes, to be delivered by smaller, more dispersed non-strategic sites through the Neighbourhood Plan, is considered to provide a more appropriate and balanced strategy. Consequently, no strategic development site allocations are proposed at Newport.	


Legend
Parish Boundaries
Completions and Commitments
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 1
Sites within or adjacent to top two tier settlements discounted at Stage 2
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Local Wildlife Sites
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
N
Newport 001 RES
Newport 017 RES
Newport 017 RES
Newport 018 RES
Newport 006 RES
Newport 011 RES
Newport 016 RES
Newport 004 RES
Newport 005 RES
Newport 016 RES
Newport 002 RES
Newport 008 RES
Newport 009 RES
Newport 010 RES
Newport 014 RES
Newport 014 RES
Newport 012 RES
Newport 007 RES
Newport 013 RES
Newport 015 RES
Newport 015 RES
Newport 003 RES
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500
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Metres
Newport
Site Selection Outcomes
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Takeley / Prior's Green

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
LtCanfield 006 RES	Land south of Stortford Road, Little Canfield	6.64	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
GtCanfield 002 RES	Land at Great Canfield Road, Takeley	23.06	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 003 RES	Land adjoining Millers, Takeley (Option 1)	0.42	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 008 RES	Land east of Parsonage Road, Takeley	6.05	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 009 RES	Land east of Parsonage Road, Takeley	0.72	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 010 RES	Land north of Dunmow Road and west of Garnetts, Takeley	14.34	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 011 RES	Land west of Parsonage Road, Takeley	9.61	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 023 RES	Land Adjacent	1.44	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
	to Coppice Close, Dunmow Road, Takeley		planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 028 RES	Remarc, Dunmow Road, Takeley	0.13	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Takeley 029 RES	Land To The South Of The Street, Takeley, CM22 6LY	0.46	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
Takeley 017 RES	United House, The Street, Takeley	0.28	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Takeley 020 RES	Beech Close, Takeley	0.15	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Takeley 026 RES	Land Adj. Swan Farm, School Lane, Takeley, CM22 6PJ	3.30	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Takeley 030 RES	Land south of Dunmow Road, Takeley	2.10	The site is unable to deliver 100 home or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

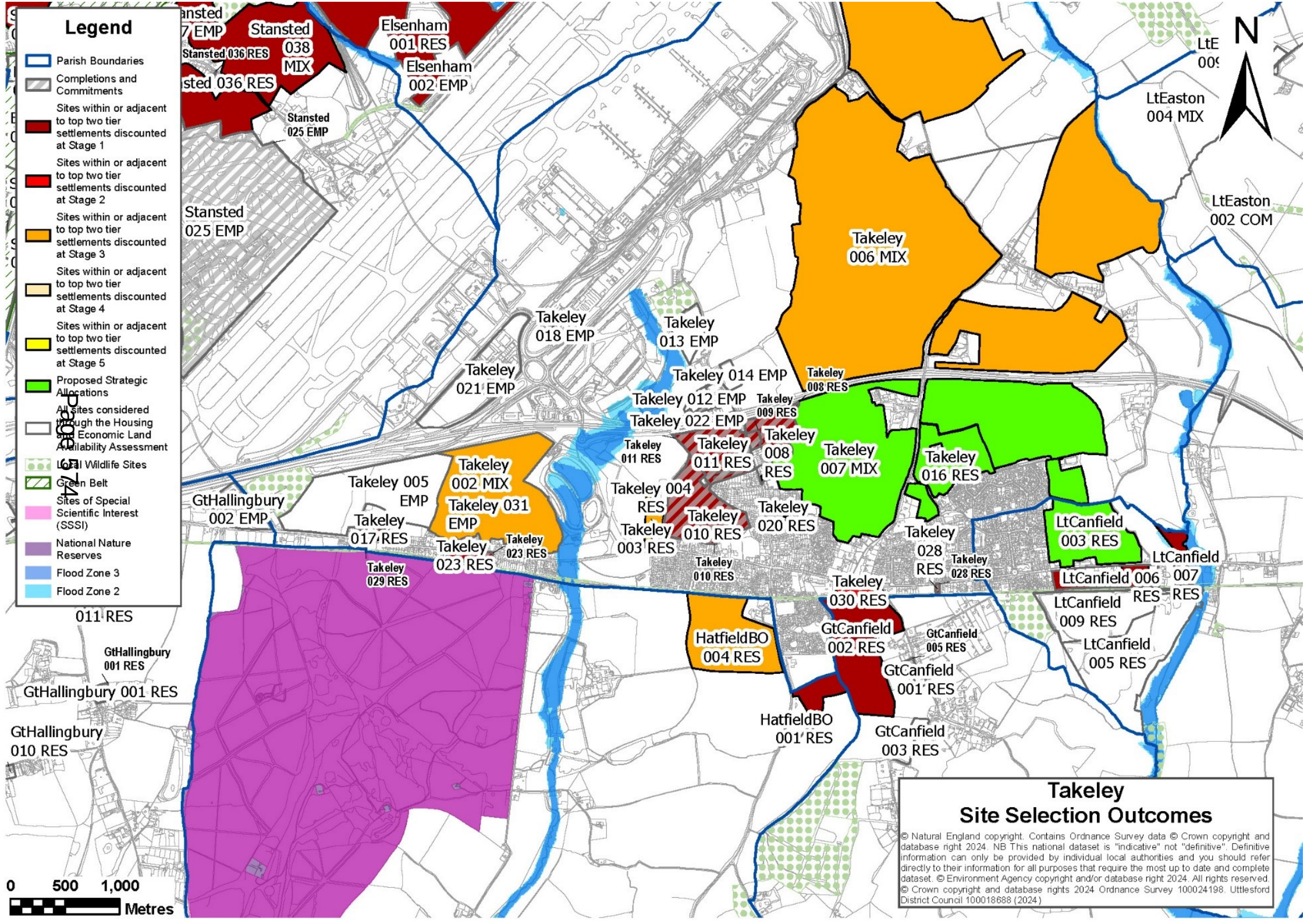
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
HatfieldBO 004 RES	Land West of Station Road, Takeley	18.71	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is opposite the main built-up area of Takeley, with Flitch Way acting as a clear and defining physical boundary to development. It also intersects with the Local Wildlife Site of Flitch Way, with potential impacts on identified priority habitats. The site is subject to significant landscape and heritage sensitivities, including potential impact on the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse Bonningtons. The site is in close proximity to Hatfield Forest and falls within the Hatfield Forest Zone of Influence.
LtCanfield 003 RES	Land at Warrens Farm, Little Canfield	19.88	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Takeley. Takeley is considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. The site has limited showstopper constraints. The site has access to the existing highway network and active modes of travel. It is in close proximity to existing employment offer and Stansted Airport.
Takeley 002 MIX	Land north of Dunmow Road, Takeley Street	34.47	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located immediately to the south of Stansted Airport and the A120. It is in close proximity to Hatfield Forest. It is relatively remote from key services in Takeley, separated by Pincey Brook which defines the eastern extent of Takeley Street. It is unclear whether the site has suitable access onto the wider highway network to support strategic development. The site contains a number of designated heritage assets which front Dunmow Road.
Takeley 004 RES	Land adjoining	2.12	Marginal	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Takeley.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
	Millers, Takeley (Option 2)		Omission Site Option	Takeley is considered a sustainable location for strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity for residential development. It provides a rural character to Takeley and separation between Takeley and Takeley Street to the west. The site is in an area of medium heritage sensitivity and adjacent to the Grade I listed Church of Holy Trinity. It is likely to contribute to the setting of the designated heritage asset which would need to be mitigated through a site-specific policy. Access is available onto the adjacent highway network.
Takeley 006 MIX	Land at Bambers Green	307.06	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is located immediately to the east of Stansted Airport and north of the A120. It was previously considered inappropriate for residential development in this area, however, it is acceptable to enable infrastructure development necessary to support development elsewhere. The site contains a number of interspersed woodlands identified as priority habitats which would need to be considered. Part of the eastern boundary falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3. Development of the site is likely to significantly impact the setting of a number of designated heritage assets at Smith's Green, Bamber's Green, the Granger's moated site, and near Stansted Airport. The site is a Clear Omission Site Option.
Takeley 007 MIX	Warish Hall Farm, Takeley	87.4	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Takeley. Takeley is considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. Recent planning history at this location highlights its

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
				landscape and heritage sensitivity, however, this could be potentially mitigated through careful master planning and comprehensive place-making at Takeley when considering all sites in this location as a whole. Other key constraints to be considered include ecology, biodiversity, risk of surface water flooding, proximity to Hatfield Forest, landscape sensitivity, heritage sensitivity and TPOs.
Takeley 016 RES	Land at Parkers Farm Takeley	11.79	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Takeley. Takeley is considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. Recent planning history at this location highlights its landscape and heritage sensitivity, however, this could be potentially mitigated through careful master planning and comprehensive place-making at Takeley when considering all sites in this location as a whole.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Takeley 007 MIX	Warish Hall Farm, Takeley	87.4	Strategic growth to the north of Takeley is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 1 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now, and were also at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.
Takeley 016 RES	Land at Parkers Farm Takeley	11.79	Strategic growth to the north of Takeley is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 1 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now, and were also at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.
LtCanfield 003 RES	Land at Warrens Farm, Little Canfield	19.88	Strategic growth to the north of Takeley is identified as one of the growth scenarios progressed to Section 5.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal. It is assessed as a Category 1 site, which consists of proposed allocations that are a constant across the scenarios now, and were also at Regulation 18.	The site is selected as part of the proposed strategic allocations.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Green Belt
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
National Nature Reserves
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
N
Stansted 038 MIX
Elsenham 001 RES
Elsenham 002 EMP
Stansted 025 EMP
LtEaston 004 MIX
LtEaston 002 COM
Takeley 006 MIX
Takeley 018 EMP
Takeley 013 EMP
Takeley 021 EMP
Takeley 014 EMP
Takeley 012 EMP
Takeley 022 EMP
Takeley 008 RES
Takeley 009 RES
Takeley 011 RES
Takeley 007 MIX
Takeley 016 RES
Takeley 004 RES
Takeley 020 RES
Takeley 010 RES
Takeley 003 RES
Takeley 005 EMP
Takeley 002 MIX
Takeley 031 EMP
Takeley 017 RES
Takeley 023 RES
GtHallingbury 002 EMP
Takeley 029 RES
Takeley 028 RES
LtCanfield 003 RES
LtCanfield 007 RES
LtCanfield 006 RES
LtCanfield 009 RES
LtCanfield 005 RES
Takeley 030 RES
GtCanfield 002 RES
GtCanfield 005 RES
GtCanfield 001 RES
HatfieldBO 004 RES
HatfieldBO 001 RES
GtCanfield 003 RES
GtHallingbury 001 RES
GtHallingbury 010 RES
0 500 1,000
Metres
Takeley
Site Selection Outcomes
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Thaxted

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 1 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
Thaxted 002 RES	Land at Barnards Fields, Thaxted (2ha)	1.79	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 004 RES	Land north of Mayes Place, Monk Street, Thaxted	0.85	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 005 RES	Land at Sibley's Lane, Sibley's Green, Thaxted	2.78	Not considered developable 15+ years. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 006 RES	Land at Sibley's Lane, Sibley's Green, Thaxted	0.99	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 007 RES	Bardfield Road, Thaxted	0.34	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 009 MIX	Land south of Sampford Road, Thaxted (Option 4)	30.44	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 018 RES	Land south of Sampford Road, Thaxted (Option 2)	12.93	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 019 RES	Land south of Sampford Road, Thaxted (Option 1)	9.19	Discounted from the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment owing to duplication of other identified sites. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 023 RES	UBLR/17/004 Claypits Farm, Bardfield Road,	0.523	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comment
	Thaxted, CM6 2LW		of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 026 RES	J F Knight Roadworks Ltd (Warners Field) Copthall Lane, Thaxted, CM6 2LG	0.83	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 027 RES	Land East Of Claypit Villas, Bardfield Road, Thaxted	0.35	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.
Thaxted 029 RES	Cutlers Green Farm, Cutlers Green, Cutlers Green Lane, Thaxted	0.86	Site submitted for consideration and has subsequently either been granted planning permission for development or has been completed as of 31st March 2024. It is not taken forward for further consideration at Stage 2.

HELAA sites discounted at Stage 2 Site Sifting

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Comments
Thaxted 010 RES	Hunters, Bardfield Road, Thaxted	0.15	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Thaxted 011 RES	East of Dunmow Road, Thaxted	0.88	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Thaxted 012 RES	Land north of Bolford Street, Thaxted	1.49	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.
Thaxted 021 RES	TX HD8, Brethren Hall	0.3	The site is unable to deliver 100 homes or above individually or cumulatively with adjacent sites.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 3 Detailed Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
Thaxted 003 RES	Land at Barnards Fields, Thaxted (10ha)	10.41	Clear Preferred Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Thaxted. Thaxted is considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. The site is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity, which is the lowest impact area in Thaxted. Development at this location is likely to 'round off' the existing settlement pattern of Thaxted. An acceptable access will need to be created through the site requirement and master plan process working with the Council, landowner and developer. Strategic development at this location would also require significant off-site upgrade.
Thaxted 008 RES	Land south of Bardfield Road, Thaxted	25.17	Marginal Omission Site Option	The site poorly relates to the settlement pattern of Thaxted. It is remote from the strategic round network. Access from Bardfield Road is relatively less accessible when compared to other options in Thaxted.
Thaxted 013 RES	Land west of Walden Road, Thaxted	5.5	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is within an area of high landscape sensitivity to residential development, owing to its steeper topography, strong rural and perceptual characteristics, setting to the historic edge of Thaxted and open views to the windmill and church. The site is remote from the strategic road network.
Thaxted 014 RES	Land south of Thaxted between B1051 and B184	0.91	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is within an area of high landscape sensitivity to residential development, owing to its steeper topography, strong rural and perceptual characteristics, setting to the historic edge of Thaxted and open views to the windmill and church. The site is also in close proximity to a number of designated heritage assets and may impact their historic setting. The site is remote from the strategic road network. Part of the site is in Flood Zone 3.
Thaxted 015 RES	Land east of	2.66	Clear	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Thaxted. Thaxted is

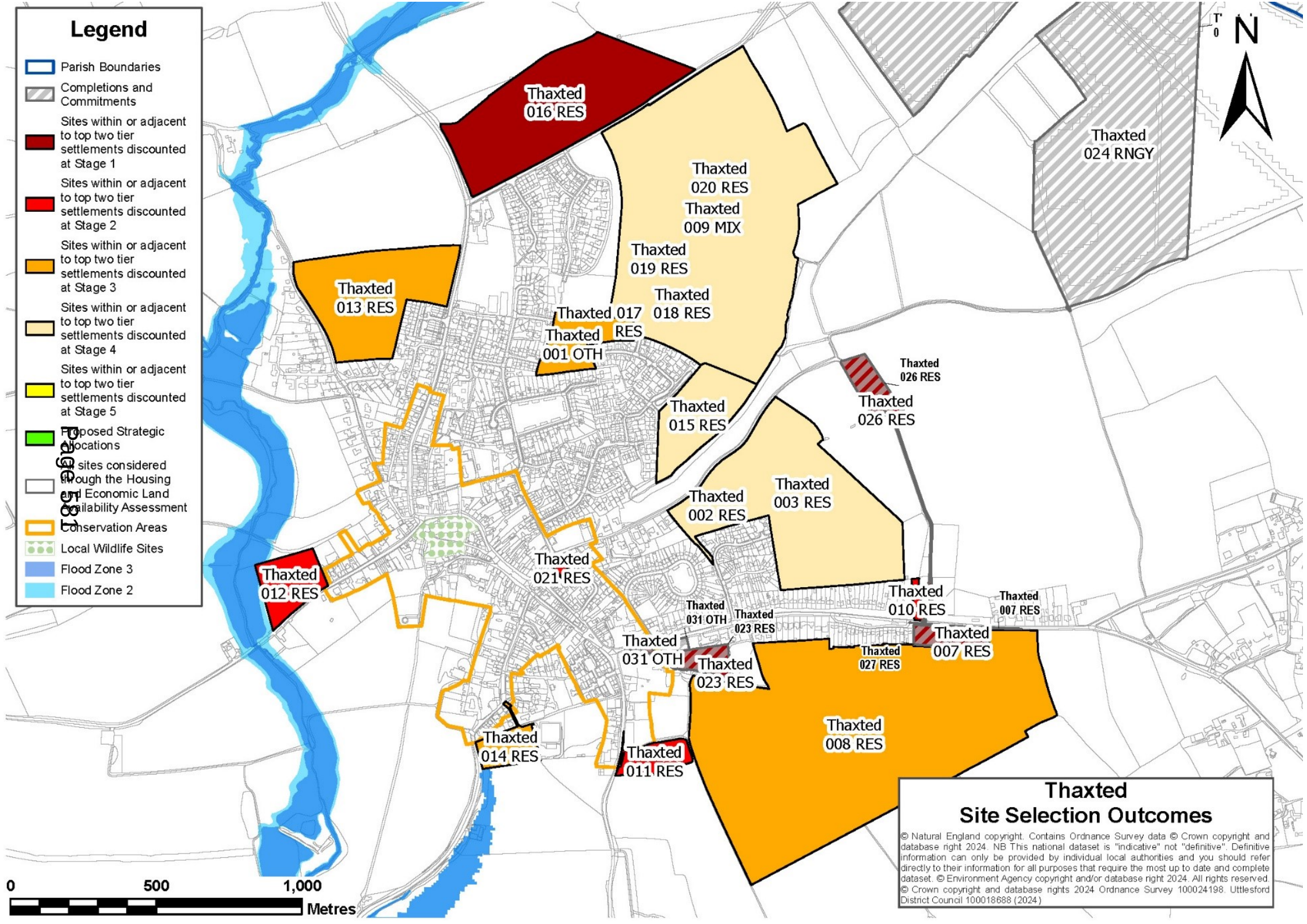
Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Rating	Comment
	Wedow Road, off Elers Way, Thaxted		Preferred Site Option	considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. It is assessed as less sensitive to landscape pressure from development given it has existing development to its northern and western boundary within this moderate to high landscape sensitivity area and therefore suitable for consideration for development.
Thaxted 016 RES	Land north of B1051, Thaxted	8.24	Clear Omission Site Option	The site lies to the north of the B1051, which is a physical boundary for the settlement. Landscape sensitivity in this location is also high for residential development.
Thaxted 017 RES	Land to the east of Guelph's Lane Thaxted	1.64	Clear Omission Site Option	The site is adjacent to the built-up area of Thaxted. Thaxted is considered a sustainable location for moderate strategic growth as a Local Rural Centre. No direct connection to highway but would be via existing development if available. Further investigation shows that the site contains vegetation of natural quality and is not suitable for residential development. It could however support adjacent Clear Preferred Site Option's comprehensive development as a semi-natural open space.
Thaxted 020 RES	Land south of Sampford Road, Thaxted (Option 3)	22.2	Clear Preferred Site Option	This is a larger version of 018 RES and could be considered at this scale to incorporate a higher level of housing or green infrastructure and open space and education provision that is needed.

HELAA sites carried forward to Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal and Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations

Further consultation at Regulation 18 shows that the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess of what the Council consider would be appropriate in this settlement, especially considering some of the constraints to development that affect Thaxted, such as its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within the noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths. There are therefore no allocations either strategic or non-strategic to be made at Thaxted within the Local Plan.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
Thaxted 003 RES	Land at Barnards Fields, Thaxted (10ha)	10.41	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Thaxted at Regulation 18. However, further consultation at Regulation 18 shows that the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess of what the Council consider would be appropriate in this settlement, especially considering some of the constraints to development that affect Thaxted, such as its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within the noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths. There are therefore no allocations either strategic or non-strategic to be made at Thaxted within the Local Plan.	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.
Thaxted 015 RES	Land east of Wedow Road, off Elers Way, Thaxted	2.66	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Thaxted at Regulation 18. However, further consultation at Regulation 18 shows that the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.

Site Reference	Site Address	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 4 Sustainability Appraisal	Stage 5 Selection of Proposed Strategic Allocations
			of what the Council consider would be appropriate in this settlement, especially considering some of the constraints to development that affect Thaxted, such as its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within the noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths. There are therefore no allocations either strategic or non-strategic to be made at Thaxted within the Local Plan.	
Thaxted 020 RES	Land south of Sampford Road, Thaxted (Option 3)	22.2	The site was considered as part of the Reasonable Alternatives for Thaxted at Regulation 18. However, further consultation at Regulation 18 shows that the scale of growth needed to deliver a viable primary school would be in excess of what the Council consider would be appropriate in this settlement, especially considering some of the constraints to development that affect Thaxted, such as its landscape setting, historic environment and falling within the noise restrictions relating to Stansted Airport flight paths. There are therefore no allocations either strategic or non-strategic to be made at Thaxted within the Local Plan.	The site is not proposed for allocation in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.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Local Wildlife Sites
Flood Zone 3
Flood Zone 2
Thaxted 016 RES
Thaxted 020 RES
Thaxted 009 MIX
Thaxted 019 RES
Thaxted 018 RES
Thaxted 017 RES
Thaxted 001 OTH
Thaxted 013 RES
Thaxted 024 RNGY
Thaxted 026 RES
Thaxted 026 RES
Thaxted 015 RES
Thaxted 002 RES
Thaxted 003 RES
Thaxted 012 RES
Thaxted 021 RES
Thaxted 010 RES
Thaxted 007 RES
Thaxted 031 OTH
Thaxted 023 RES
Thaxted 007 RES
Thaxted 027 RES
Thaxted 031 OTH
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Uttlesford District Council: Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Final Report

June 2024

Prepared for:
Uttlesford District Council

www.jbaconsulting.com

Document Status

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This report describes work commissioned by Uttlesford District Council, by an instruction dated 21st February 2024. The Client's representative for the contract was Tim Fearn of Uttlesford District Council. Rebecca Lee, Martha Gurney, and Joanne Chillingworth of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Uttlesford District Council, the Environment Agency, Essex County Council, Thames Water, Anglian Water, the Canal and River Trust, and planners at the neighbouring authorities.

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Abbreviations

AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AStGWF	Areas Susceptible to Groundwater flooding
AW	Anglian Water
CC	Climate Change
CFMP	Catchment Flood Management Plan
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EU	European Union
FAA	Flood Alert Area
FCERM	Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
FRMP	Flood Risk Management Plan
FWA	Flood Warning Area
FWMA	Flood and Water Management Act
FWS	Flood Warning System
GSPZ	Groundwater Source Protection Zone
IDB	Internal Drainage Board
JBA	Jeremy Benn Associates
LFRMS	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPU	Local Plan Update
mAOD	metres Above Ordnance Datum
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NRD	National Receptor Database
NVZs	Nitrate Vulnerable Zones
PFRA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
RBD	River Basin District
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RMAs	Risk Management Authorities

RoFSW	Risk of Flooding from Surface Water
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SoP	Standard of Protection
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
SWMP	Surface Water Management Plan
TW	Thames Water
UDC	Uttlesford District Council
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Definitions

1D model: one-dimensional hydraulic model

2D model: two-dimensional hydraulic model

Annual Exceedance Probability: the probability (expressed as a percentage) of a flood event occurring in any given year.

Brownfield: previously developed parcel of land

Catchment Flood Management Plan: a high-level planning strategy through which the EA works with their key decision makers within a river catchment to identify and agree policies to secure the long-term sustainable management of flood risk.

Climate Change: long term variations in global temperature and weather patterns caused by natural and human actions.

Cumecs: the cumec is a measure of flow rate. One cumec is shorthand for cubic metre per second (m^3/s).

Design flood: This is a flood event of a given annual flood probability, which is generally taken as: fluvial (river) flooding likely to occur with a 1% annual probability (a 1 in 100 chance each year), or tidal flooding with a 0.5% annual probability (1 in 200 chance each year), or surface water flooding likely to occur with a 1% annual probability (a 1 in 100 change each year), plus an appropriate allowance for climate change, against which the suitability of a proposed development is assessed and mitigation measures, if any, are designed.

Exception test: Set out in the NPPF, the exception test is a method used to demonstrate that flood risk to people and property will be managed appropriately, where alternative sites at a lower flood risk are not available. The exception test is applied following the sequential test. As set out in Paragraph 170 of the NPPF (December, 2023), the exception test should demonstrate that: development that has to be in a flood risk area will provide wider benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

Flood defence: Infrastructure used to protect an area against floods such as floodwalls and embankments; they are designed to a specific standard of protection (design standard).

Flood Map for Planning: The EA Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) is an online mapping portal which shows the Flood Zones in England. The Flood Zones refer to the probability of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of defences and do not account for the possible impacts of climate change.

Flood Risk Area: An area determined as having a significant risk of flooding in accordance with guidance published by Defra and WAG (Welsh Assembly Government).

Flood Risk Assessment: a site-specific assessment of all forms of flood risk to the site and the impact of development of the site to flood risk in the area.

Flood and Water Management Act: Part of the UK Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's Report on the Summer 2007 floods, the aim of which is to clarify the legislative framework for managing surface water flood risk in England.

Fluvial Flooding: Flooding resulting from water levels exceeding the bank level of a river (main river or ordinary watercourse).

Green Infrastructure: a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities, and prosperity (NPPF, December 2023).

Greenfield: undeveloped parcel of land

Indicative Flood Risk Area: nationally identified flood risk areas based on the definition of 'significant' flood risk described by Defra and WAG.

Lead Local Flood Authority: the unitary authority for the area or if there is no unitary authority, the county council for the area.

Main river: a watercourse shown as such on the statutory main river map held by the Environment Agency. They are usually the larger rivers and streams. The Environment Agency has permissive powers (not duties) to carry out maintenance and improvement works on main rivers).

Major development: defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a housing development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, or as a non-residential development with additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 available here.

Ordinary watercourse: any river, stream, ditch, drain, cut, dyke, sluice, sewer (other than a public sewer) and passage through which water flows but which does not form part of a main river. The local authority or internal drainage board has permissive powers (not duties) on ordinary watercourses.

Permissive Powers: authorities have the power to undertake flood risk management activities, but not a duty to do so. This will depend on priorities in flood risk management.

Pitt Review: Comprehensive independent review of the 2007 summer floods by Sir Michael Pitt, which provided recommendations to improve flood risk management in England.

Resilience measures: Measures designed to reduce the impact of water that enters property and businesses; could include measures such as raising electrical appliances.

Resistance measures: Measures designed to keep flood water out of properties and businesses; could include flood guards for example.

Return period: Is an estimate of the interval of time between events of a certain intensity or size, in this instance it refers to flood events. It is a statistical measurement denoting the average recurrence interval over an extended period of time.

Riparian owner: A riparian landowner, in a water context, owns land or property, next to a river, stream or ditch.

Risk Management Authority: the Environment Agency; a lead local flood authority; a district council in an area where there is no unitary authority; an internal drainage board; a water company and a highway authority.

Risk: In flood risk management, risk is defined as a product of the probability or likelihood of a flood occurring, and the consequence of the flood.

Sequential test: Set out in Paragraph 168 of the NPPF (December 2023), the sequential test is a method used to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The sequential test is a risk-based approach, taking into account all sources of flood risk and climate change.

Sewer flooding: Flooding caused by a blockage or overflowing in a sewer or urban drainage system.

Stakeholder: A person or organisation affected by the problem or solution or interested in the problem or solution. They can be individuals or organisations, includes the public and communities.

Standard of Protection: Defences are provided to reduce the risk of flooding from a river and within the flood and defence field standards are usually described in terms of a flood event return period. For example, a flood embankment could be described as providing a 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) standard of protection.

Surface water flooding: Flooding as a result of surface water runoff as a result of high intensity rainfall when water is ponding or flowing over the ground surface before it enters the underground drainage network or watercourse or cannot enter it because the network is full to capacity.

Surface Water Management Plan: The SWMP plan should outline the preferred surface water management strategy and identify the actions, timescales, and responsibilities of each partner. It is the principal output from the SWMP study. There are three key partners who must be involved and engaged in the SWMP study process: the Local Authority, the Environment Agency and the relevant Water and Sewerage Companies.

Sustainable Drainage Systems: SuDS are methods of management practices and control structures that are designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable manner than some conventional techniques, such as grates, gullies, and channels.

Water Framework Directive: Under the WFD, all waterbodies have a target to achieve Good Ecological Status (GES) or Good Ecological Potential (GEP) by a set deadline. River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) set out the ecological objectives for each water body and give deadlines by when objectives need to be met.

Windfall site: a site which becomes available for development unexpectedly and therefore not included as allocated land in a planning authority's local plan.

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive and robust evidence base on flood risk issues to support the review and update of the planning policies for Uttlesford District Council (UDC). The review process is known as the Local Plan Update (LPU). This report uses the best available information, including input from key stakeholders. The SFRA applies the latest national planning policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was revised in July 2021 and further updated in December 2023, the updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Flood Risk and Coastal Change dated August 2022, and the updates to the EA climate change guidance in July 2021 and May 2022.

Introduction

To support the review and update of the Local Plan for UDC, the key objectives of the assessment are:

- To collate and analyse the latest available information and data for current and future (i.e., climate change) flood risk from all sources, and how these may be mitigated for development.
- To inform decisions in the emerging LPU, including informing the sustainability appraisal, the selection of development sites, and planning policies.
- To provide evidence to support the application of the sequential test for the allocation of new development sites, to support UDC in the preparation of the LPU.
- To provide a comprehensive set of maps presenting flood risk from all sources that can be used as evidence base for use in the update to the Local Plan.
- To help decide when a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required for individual planning applications.
- To provide advice for applicants carrying out site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs), including those at risk from sources other than river and sea flooding, or at risk of flooding in the future due to climate change, and outline specific measures or objectives that are required to manage flood risk.
- To provide the basis for applying the sequential test on planning applications, including by identifying sources of flooding other than those in 'Flood Zones' and those at risk of flooding in the future.
- To identify opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding and gather information on the land that is likely to be required for flood risk management structures.

Summary of the study area and flood risk

Uttlesford District is primarily rural. Its main urban centres are located sporadically across the study area, the largest of which are Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet, and Thaxted.

Flood risk from all sources has been assessed in the SFRA in Sections 4 and 5. Parts of the study area are at risk of flooding from the following sources: fluvial, surface water,

groundwater, sewers, reservoir inundation, and overtopping/breach. This study has shown that the most significant sources of flood risk in the study area are fluvial, and surface water. The points below summarise the findings:

- Fluvial: The primary sources of fluvial flood risk in the study area are the River Cam, River Stort, River Roding, and River Chelmer, as well as their associated tributaries. The River Cam flows north through Newport and Saffron Walden, exiting the study area at Great Chesterford. The River Chelmer flows south east through the study area, flowing through Great Dunmow and Flitch Green. The River Stort and Stansted Brook flow south west through Stansted Mountfitchet and out of the study area. Finally, the River Roding flows south, from Molehill Green, through Great Canfield and The Rodings to the southern border of the District. *Fluvial flood risk is discussed in Section 4.3 and Appendix E and flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*
- Surface Water: The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map shows prominent overland flow routes that largely follow the topography of the River Cam, River Stort, and River Chelmer floodplains. There are some areas where there are additional flow paths and areas of ponding, for example where water is impounded at road or rail embankments and in low-lying areas. While the study area is largely rural, there are also flow routes following the roads through the main urban areas of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, and Stansted Mountfitchet, which may affect many properties across these settlements. *Surface water flood risk is discussed in Section 4.4 and Appendix E and the flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*
- Climate Change: Areas at risk of flooding today are likely to become at increased risk in the future and the frequency of flooding will also increase in such areas, due to climate change. Flood extents will increase; in some locations, this may be minimal, but flood depth, velocity and hazard may have more of an impact due to climate change. This SFRA provides an assessment of the impacts of climate change on fluvial, and surface water flood risk. *The approach to climate change is discussed in Section 5 and the flood extents are also shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A*. It is recommended that the Council work with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to review the long-term sustainability of existing and new development when developing climate change plans and strategies for the study area.
- Sewer: Thames Water, Anglian Water, and Affinity Water provide water services and sewerage services across the study area and have provided details of historic sewer flooding across the study area. On receipt of detailed site boundaries, water companies will be able to further assess the risk of flooding from the public sewer to a specific site using sewer modelling data. *Sewer flood risk is discussed in Section 4.5.*
- Groundwater: The JBA Groundwater Emergence Map shows the north of the study area, particularly around the course of the River Cam, to have significantly higher groundwater levels. This includes levels at, or very near, the surface along

an unnamed tributary near Royston Road. There are also increased groundwater levels along the course of the River Stort, and its tributaries, but to a lesser extent. Elsewhere in Uttlesford district, groundwater levels are quite low. *Groundwater flood risk is discussed in Section 4.6 and Appendix E, and the AStGWF map and JBA emergence map are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

- Canals: The River Stort Navigation flows along part of the south west border of the study. It runs north to south along the Uttlesford border between Rushy Mead Nature Reserve and Gaston Green and Hallingbury Marina. *Canal flood risk is discussed in Section 4.7.*
- Reservoirs: There are 4 reservoirs located within the study area, and a further 3 located outside the study area where the 'wet day' or 'dry day' scenarios encroach into the study area. There is a potential risk of flooding from reservoirs both within the study area and those outside. The level and standard of inspection and maintenance required under the Reservoirs Act means that the risk of flooding from reservoirs is relatively low. However, there is a residual risk of a reservoir breach, and this risk should be considered in any site-specific FRAs (where relevant) in accordance with the updated PPG. *Reservoir flood risk is discussed in Section 4.8 and Appendix E. The 'Dry Day' and 'Wet Day' flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

Defences

The EA Asset Information Management System (AIMS) dataset provides information on flood defence assets across the study area. The main defence type across the study area is 'Natural High Ground', primarily located along the along the left and right banks of the River Chelmer, River Stort, River Cam, and many of the smaller watercourses in the south of the study area. Engineered defences include 3 embankments, 1 wall, and a section of engineered high ground. *Further information on defences across the study area is available in Section 6.4 and shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

Development and flood risk

The sequential and exception test procedures for both Local Plans and FRAs have been documented, along with guidance for planners and developers. Links have been provided for relevant guidance documents and policies published by other Flood RMAs such as the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and the Environment Agency (EA).

The risk of flooding should be reviewed as early as possible in the development process to ensure that opportunities are taken to reduce the risk of flooding on and off the site. Where necessary, development and redevelopment within the study area will require an FRA appropriate to the scale of the development and to the scope as agreed with the LLFA and/or EA. FRAs should consider flood risk from all sources including residual risk, along with promotion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to create a conceptual drainage strategy and safe access/egress at the development in the event of a flood. Latest climate change guidance (last updated in May 2022) should also be taken into account, for the

lifetime of developments. Planners and developers must check that modelling in line with the most up to date EA climate change guidance has been run.

How to use this report

Planners

The SFRA provides recommendations regarding all sources of flood risk across the study area, which can be used to inform policy on flood risk within the emerging LPU. This includes how the cumulative impact of development should be considered.

It provides the latest flood risk data and guidance to inform the sequential test, for both allocations and individual planning applications, and provides guidance on how to apply the exception test. UDC can use this information to apply the sequential test to strategic allocations and identify where the exception test will also be needed.

The SFRA provides guidance for the development industry and development management officers to establish when an FRA is required and to assess whether site-specific FRAs meet the required quality standard. It can be used to help identify which locations and development may require emergency planning provision.

Developers

For sites that are not strategic allocations, developers will need to use this SFRA to help apply the sequential test. For both strategic allocations and windfall sites, developers will need to apply the exception test in the following cases:

- Highly vulnerable development in Flood Zone 2
- Essential infrastructure in Flood Zone 3a or 3b
- More vulnerable development in Flood Zone 3a
- Proposed development in locations affected by surface water flood risk
- A site-specific FRA should be used to inform the exception test at the planning application stage.

This SFRA is a strategic assessment and **does not** replace the need for site-specific FRAs where a development is either within Flood Zones 2 or 3 or greater than a hectare in Flood Zone 1, is less than a hectare and located in an area affected by sources of flooding other than rivers and the sea, or is in an area within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems as notified by the EA. In addition, a sustainable surface water drainage strategy will be needed for development requiring an FRA, or in any other case for major category development, to satisfy Essex County Council as LLFA. Further assessments may also be required at this stage to manage the risk from sewer flooding to a site, and developers should contact United Utilities for further advice.

Developers can use the information in this SFRA, alongside site-specific research to help scope out what additional work will be needed in a detailed FRA. To do this, they should refer to Section 4, Appendix A (Interactive GeoPDF mapping), and Appendix B (Data sources used in the SFRA). At the planning application stage, developers may need to undertake more detailed hydrological and hydraulic modelling assessments of the watercourses to verify flood extent (including latest climate change allowances, last

updated in May 2022), inform master-planning, and demonstrate, if required, that the exception test is satisfied. As part of the EA's updated guidance on climate change, which must be considered for all new developments and planning applications, developers will need to undertake a detailed assessment of the impact of climate change on flood risk to the site as part of the planning application process when preparing FRAs. Additionally, at planning application stage, flood risk from other sources should be assessed if identified at the development site.

Developers need to check and ensure that new development does not increase surface water runoff rates and volumes from a site or contribute to cumulative effects at sensitive locations, see Section 7 and Appendix F: Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA). Section 9 provides information on the surface water drainage requirements of the LLFAs. SuDS should be considered at the earliest stages that a site is planned to be developed which will help to minimise costs and overcome any site-specific constraints.

Site-specific FRAs will need to identify how flood risk will be mitigated so development is safe from flooding for its lifetime and does not have an adverse effect on third parties or other areas. The FRA will also need to consider emergency arrangements, including how there will be safe access and egress from the site.

Any developments located within an area protected by flood defences and where the Standard of Protection (SoP) is not of the required standard (either now or in the future) should be identified and the use of developer contributions considered to fund improvements to the defences.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning groups can use the information in this SFRA to assess the risk of flooding to sites within their community, using Section 4, the sources of flooding across the study area and the interactive flood mapping in Appendix A. The SFRA will also be helpful for developing community level flood risk policies in high flood risk areas. Similarly, all known available recorded historical flood events across the study area are listed in Section 4.1. This can be used to supplement local knowledge regarding areas worst hit by flooding. Ongoing and proposed flood alleviation schemes planned within the study area are outlined in Section 6 and Section 8.3 discusses mitigations, resistance and resilience measures which can be applied to alleviate flood risk to an area.

Mapping

The SFRA mapping highlights on a strategic scale flood risk from fluvial, surface water and reservoirs sources, and where groundwater emergence may occur; as well as where the effects of climate change are most likely. The maps are useful to provide a community level view of flood risk but may not identify if an individual property is at risk of flooding or depict small scale changes in flood risk. Local knowledge of flood mechanisms will need to be included to complement this mapping. Similarly, all known available recorded historical flood events across the study area are listed in Section 4.1. This can be used to supplement local knowledge regarding areas worst hit by flooding. Ongoing and proposed flood alleviation schemes planned by the UDC are outlined in Section 6.5, and Section

8.3**Error! Reference source not found.** discusses mitigations, resistance and resilience measures which can be applied to alleviate flood risk to an area. The mapping data should always be supplemented by direct consultation with the relevant wastewater company to ascertain if there is any site-specific risk from a public sewer. This is because sewer flood risk information is not publicly available and would need to be considered on a site-specific basis.

Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)

Under the NPPF, strategic policies and their supporting SFRAs, are required to 'consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding' (Paragraph 166). A Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) has identified which catchments in the study area are more sensitive to the cumulative impact of development and where more stringent policy regarding flood risk is recommended. Any development in these areas should seek to contribute to work that reduces wider flood risk in those catchments.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

“Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the EA and other relevant flood RMAs, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.”.
(NPPF, Paragraph 166).

The data available for SFRAs and the relevant legislation is continually changing; therefore, an SFRA should be updated to reflect changes where applicable and reasonably practicable. Under any changes in guidance or legislation, the implications on the SFRA should be considered and a review undertaken where this is deemed reasonably necessary.

Since the previously published L1 SFRA in December 2021, and following Regulation 18 Consultation in late 2023, Uttlesford District Council (UDC) commissioned an updated Level 1 SFRA update to reflect the latest legislation and guidance, and to inform the updates to their Local Plan as a comprehensive and robust evidence base. This SFRA replaces the previous 2021 L1 SFRA report.

This 2024 L1 SFRA will be used to inform decisions on the location of future development and the preparation of land use planning policies for the long-term management of flood risk, reflecting the implications of the August 2022 changes to the PPG.

1.2 Levels of SFRA

The PPG identifies the following two levels of SFRA:

- All LPAs are required to undertake a Level 1 assessment. Where potential site allocations are not at major flood risk and where development pressures are low a Level 1 assessment is likely to be sufficient, without the LPA progressing to a Level 2 assessment. The Level 1 assessment should be of sufficient detail to enable application of the sequential test, to inform the allocation of development to areas of lower flood risk.
- A Level 2 assessment is required where land outside flood risk areas cannot appropriately accommodate all necessary development, creating the need to apply the NPPF’s exception test, or if an LPA believe they may receive high numbers of applications in flood risk areas on sites not identified in the local plan. In these circumstances the assessment should consider the detailed nature of the flood characteristics within a Flood Zone and assessment of other sources of flooding.

This is a Level 1 SFRA assessment. If all the development proposed is not located outside areas of Flood Risk, a Level 2 assessment may be required to inform the exception test. The PPG can be accessed on the Government's website here.

1.3 SFRA Outputs

This SFRA aims to provide the following outputs:

- Identification of existing national and local policy and technical updates.
- Identification of any strategic flooding issues or cumulative effects which may have cross boundary implications.
- Appraisal of all potential sources of flooding, including main river, ordinary watercourse, surface water, sewers, groundwater, and reservoirs.
- Review of historic flooding incidents.
- Reporting on the SoP provided by existing flood risk management infrastructure.
- Mapping showing distribution of flood risk across all Flood Zones from all sources of flooding including climate change allowances.
- Mapping defining the extent of Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain).
- Assessment of the potential increase in flood risk due to climate change to identify areas at risk of flooding in the future.
- FRA guidance for developers.
- Identification of the requirements for developers to consider emergency planning arrangements.
- Assessment of strategic surface water management issues, how these can be addressed through development management policies and the application of SuDS.
- Recommendations of the criteria that should be used to assess future development proposals and the development of a sequential test and sequential approach to flood risk.
- Assessment of strategic flood risk solutions that can be implemented to reduce risks.
- Information to assist identifying land that is likely to be needed for flood risk management infrastructure.

1.4 SFRA Study Area

Uttlesford in located in Essex, in the south east of England. The main urban areas in the study area are the towns of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, and the villages of Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley, Elsenham, Thaxted, and Newport.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Uttlesford is Essex County Council (ECC), as shown in Figure 1-1.

The study area is bounded by six other authorities:

- South Cambridgeshire District
- Braintree District

- Chelmsford District
- Epping Forest District
- East Hertfordshire District
- North Hertfordshire District

An overview of the study area showing the neighbouring authorities is presented in Figure 1-2.

The water service provider for Uttlesford is Affinity Water. Anglian Water and Thames Water are also responsible for managing sewerage, as shown in Figure 1-3. Some developments within the study area may be supplied by New Appointment and Variations (NAV) suppliers; locations where these companies supply can be found on the UK Parliament website, here.

The main watercourses which run through the study area are shown in Figure 1-4, and are as follows:

- River Chelmer: Flows north to south from north of Thaxted, through Great Dunmow, to the southern border of the District.
- River Roding: Flows north to south through Great Canfield to the southern border of the District.
- River Cam: Flows from south to north, from Elsenham to the northern border of the District.
- River Stort: Flows north to south, in the far west of the site, through Clavering and Manuden to the western border of the site.
- River Pant: Flows west to east through Radwinter and Great Sampford to the eastern border of the District.
- Stebbing Brook: A tributary of the River Chelmer flowing north to south to its confluence near Flitch Green.
- Pincey Brook: A tributary of the River Stort, flowing north to south west from London Stansted Airport to the south western border of the site.
- Stansted Brook: Flows east to west through Stansted Mountfitchet to the western border of the site.

Uttlesford lies across both the Thames and Anglian River Basin Districts, as shown in Figure 1-5.

1.5 Consultation

SFRAs should be prepared in consultation with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). In addition to the LPAs the following parties have been consulted during the preparation of this version of the SFRA through data requests and draft report reviews:

- Essex County Council (ECC) as LLFA
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Anglian Water (AW)
- Thames Water (TW)

- Internal Council departments, including the drainage and engineering teams, emergency planners, and technical services.

In addition, the following parties were consulted through data requests during the preparation of this SFRA:

- Neighbouring LPAs to provide data on cross-boundary development implications:
  - South Cambridgeshire District Council
  - Braintree District
  - Chelmsford City Council
  - Epping Forest District Council
  - East Hertfordshire Council
  - North Hertfordshire Council
- Canal and River Trust

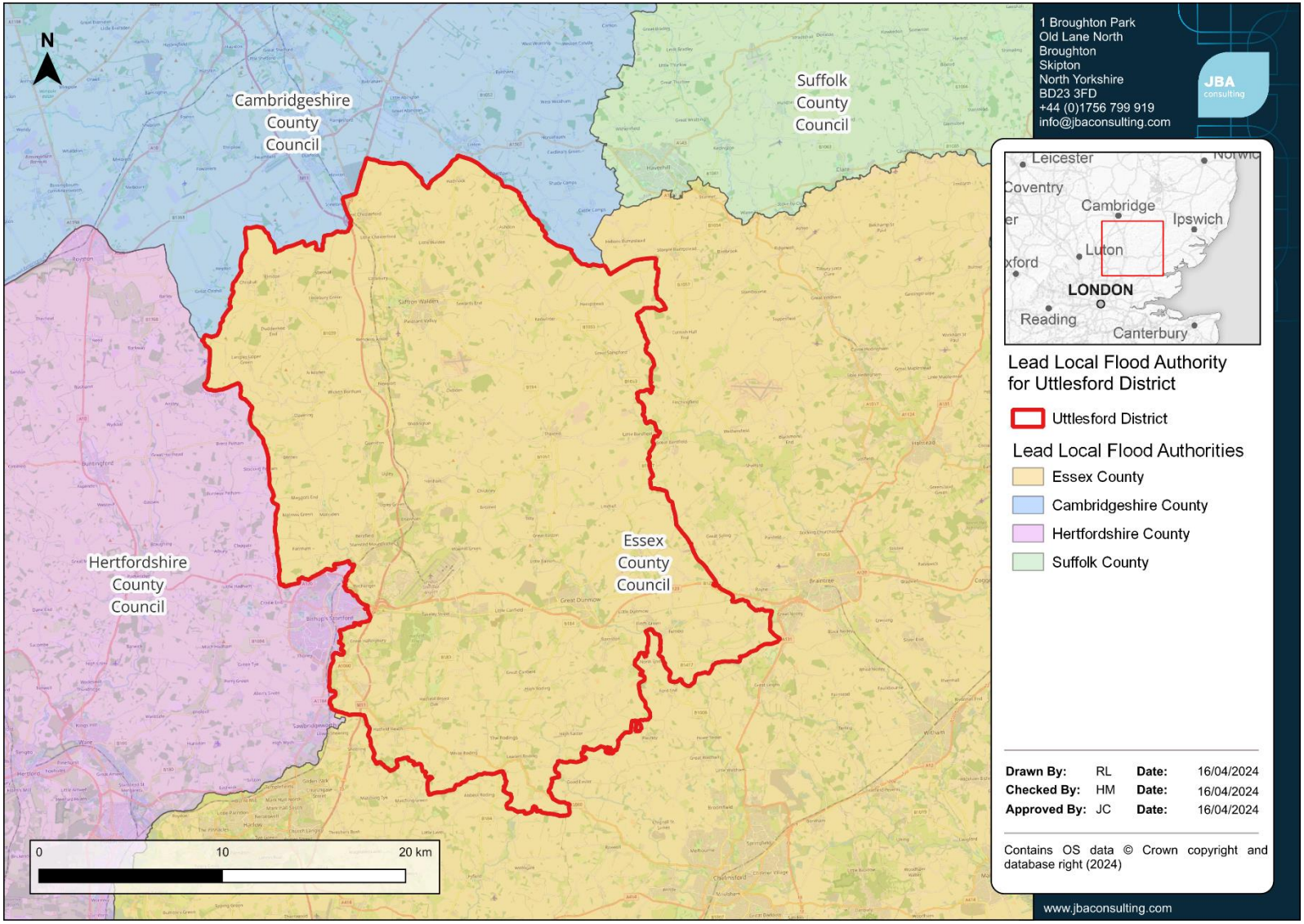


Figure 1-1: Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) in Uttlesford District

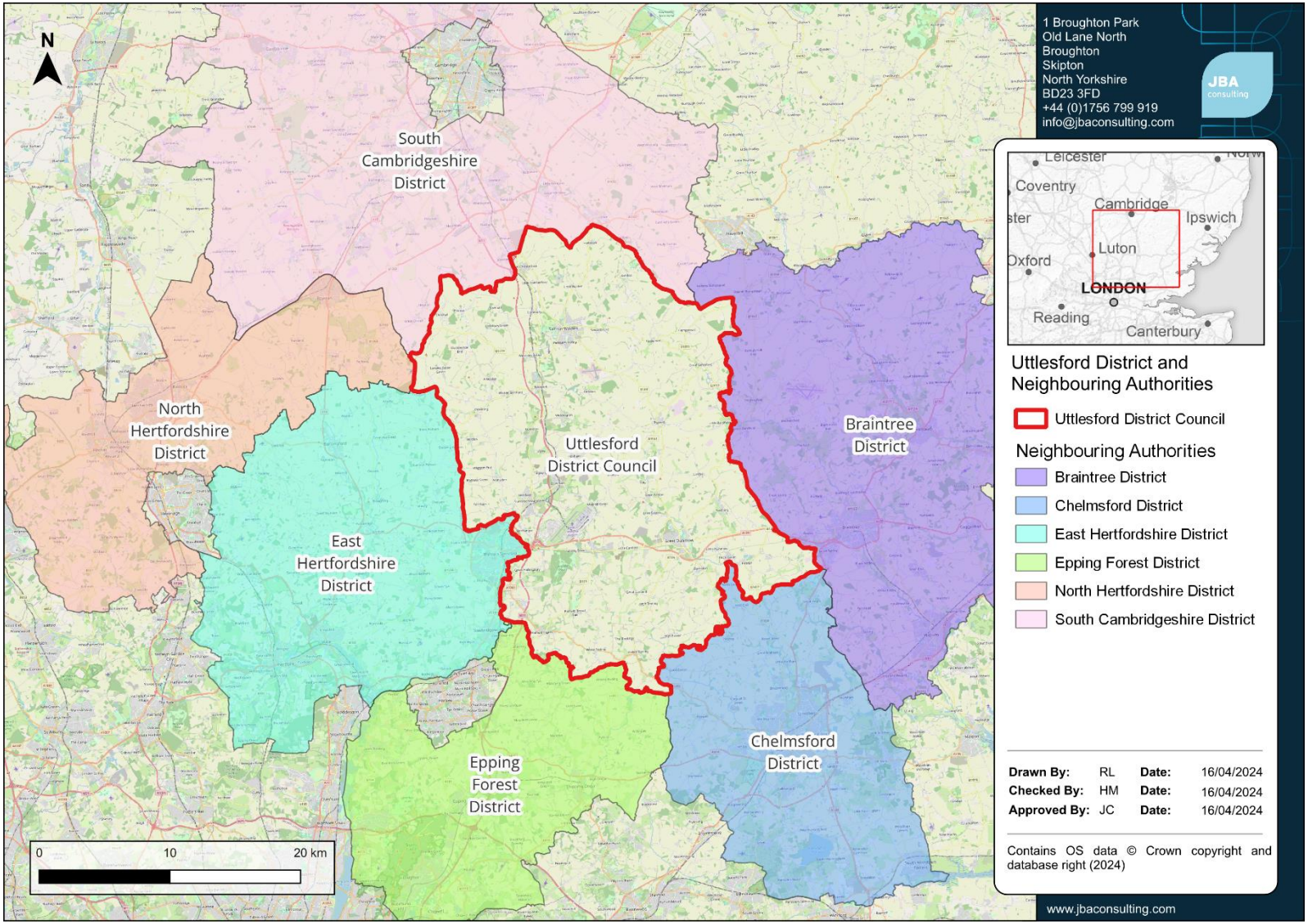


Figure 1-2: Neighbouring authorities to Uttlesford District Council

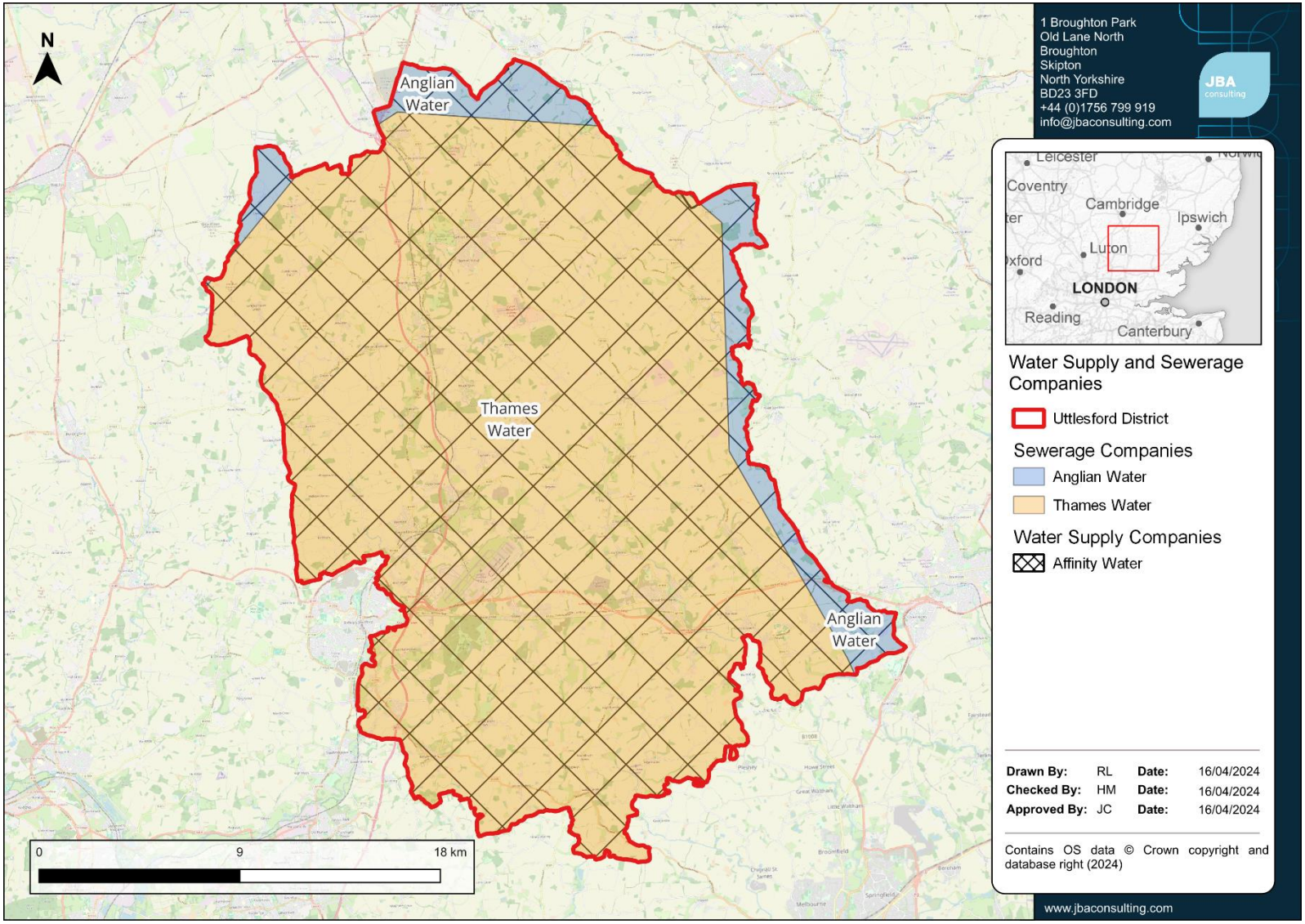


Figure 1-3: Water supply and sewerage companies in Uttlesford District

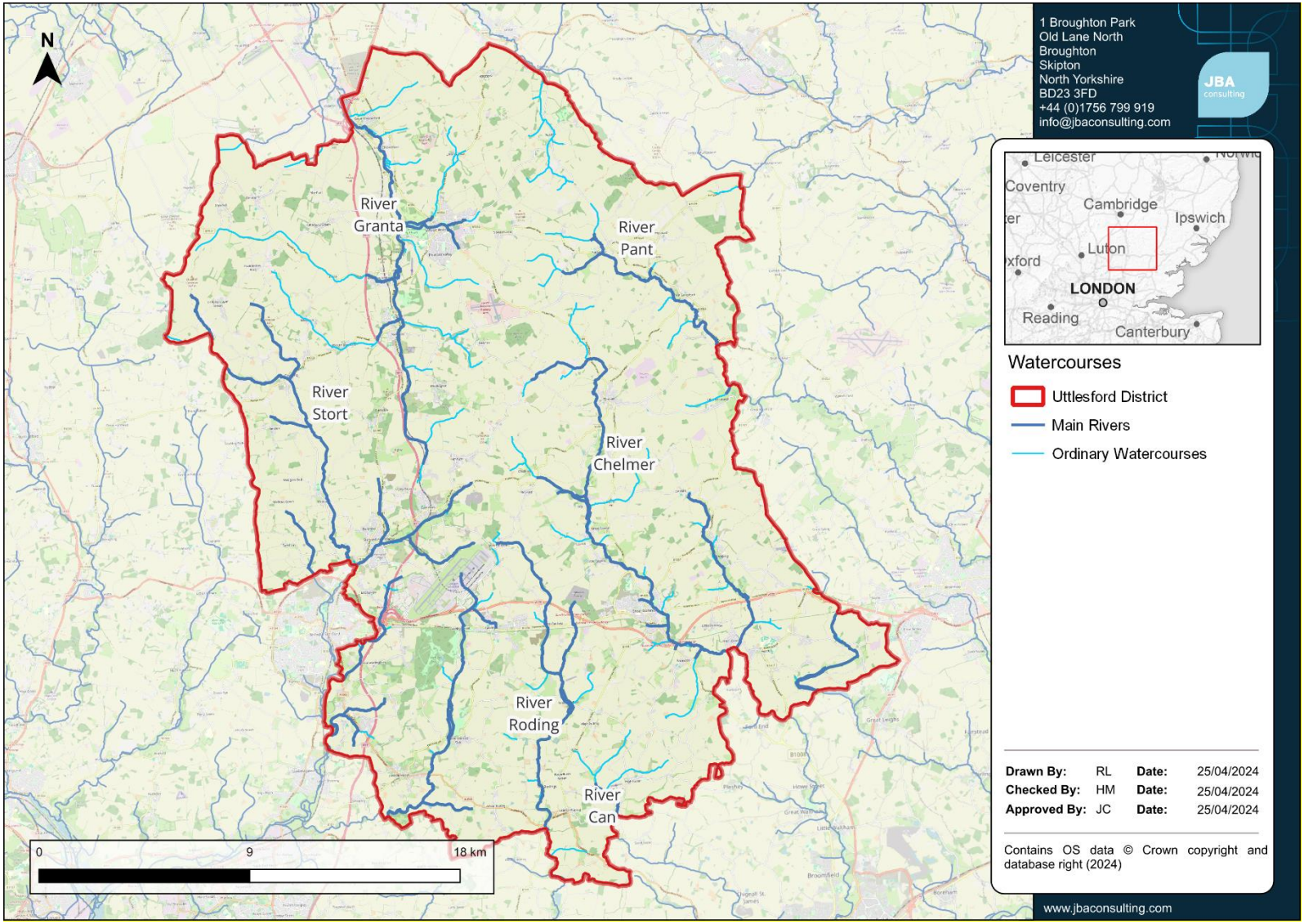


Figure 1-4: Watercourses within Uttlesford District

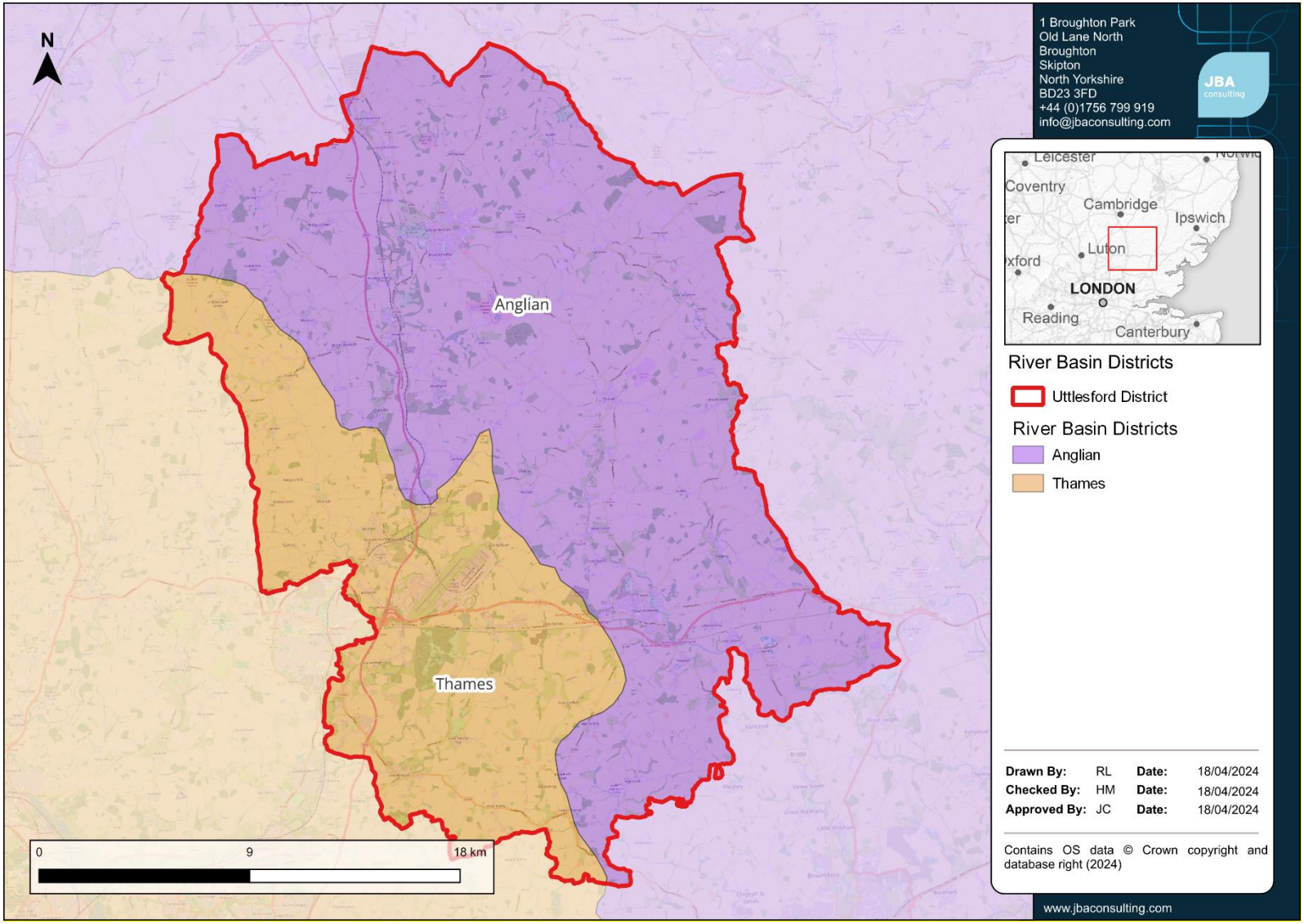


Figure 1-5: Water Framework Directive River Basin Districts

1.6 Use of SFRA data

Level 1 SFRAs are high-level strategic documents and do not go into detail on an individual site-specific basis. The primary purpose is to provide an evidence base to inform the preparation of Local Plans and any future flood risk policies.

Developers will still need to undertake site-specific FRAs where required to support Planning Applications. Developers will be able to use the information in the SFRA to scope out the sources of flood risk that will need to be explored in more detail at site-specific level.

Appendix C presents a SFRA User Guide, further explaining how this SFRA data should be used, including reference to relevant sections of the SFRA, how to consider different sources of flood risk and recommendations and advice for sequential and exception tests.

As per the date of this report, this SFRA contains the latest available flood risk information. Over time, new information will become available to inform planning decisions, such as updated hydraulic models (which then update the Flood Map for Planning), updated information on other sources of flood risk or evidence showing future flood risks, new flood event information, new defence schemes and updates to policy, legislation, and guidance. The EA are currently producing new national flood risk mapping (NaFRA2) which is due to go live in August 2024, although these timescales are subject to change due to the complexities of the project. Developers should check the online Flood Map for Planning in the first instance to identify any major changes to the Flood Zones and the long-term flood risk mapping portal for any changes to flood risk from surface water or inundation from reservoirs.

1.7 Structure of this report

Table 1-1 sets out the contents of each section of the report, and guidance on how to use each section. Appendices included as part of this SFRA are also included. For further information on this document, please contact the UDC.

Table 1-1: Sets out the contents of the report and how to use each section.

Section	Contents	How to use
Executive summary	This section focuses on how the SFRA can be used by planners, developers, and neighbourhood planners.	Users should refer to this section for a summary of the Level 1 findings and recommendations.

Section	Contents	How to use
1. Introduction	This section provides a background to the study, the Local Plan stage the SFRA informs, the study area, the roles and responsibilities for the organisations involved in flood management and how they were involved in the SFRA. It also provides a short introduction to how flood risk is assessed and the importance of considering all sources.	Users should refer to this section for general information and context.
2. Flood risk policy and strategy	This section sets out the relevant legislation, policy, and strategy for flood risk management at a national, regional, and local level.	Users should refer to this section for any relevant policy which may underpin strategic or site-specific assessments.
3. Planning policy for flood risk management	This section provides an overview of both national and existing Local Plan policy on flood risk management. This includes the Flood Zones, application of the Sequential Approach and sequential/exception test process. It provides guidance for Councils and developers on the application of the sequential and exception test for both allocations and windfall sites, at allocation and planning application stages.	Users should use this section to understand and follow the steps required for the sequential and exception tests.
4. Understanding flood risk in the study area	This section provides an overview of the characteristics of flooding affecting the study area and key risks including historical flooding incidents, flood risk from all sources and flood warning arrangements.	This section should be used to understand all sources of flood risk across the study area including where has flooded historically. This section may also help identify any data gaps, in conjunction with Appendix B.

Section	Contents	How to use
5. Impact of climate change	This section outlines the latest climate change guidance published by the EA and how this was applied to the SFRA. It also sets out how developers should apply the guidance to inform site-specific FRAs.	This section should be used to understand the climate change allowances for a range of epochs and conditions, linked to the vulnerability of a development.
6. Flood alleviation schemes and assets	This section provides a summary of current flood defences and asset management and future planned schemes. It also introduces actual and residual flood risk.	This section should be used to understand if there are any defences or flood schemes in a particular area, for further detailed assessment at site specific stage.
7. Cumulative impact of development and strategic solutions	This section introduces the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), which is included as Appendix F.	Planners should use this section to help develop policy recommendations for the cumulative impact of development, in conjunction with Appendix F.
8. Flood risk management for developers	This section contains guidance for developers on FRAs, considering flood risk from all sources.	Developers should use this section to understand requirements for FRAs and what conditions/guidance documents should be followed, as well as mitigation options.
9. Surface water management and Sustainable Drainage Systems	This section provides an overview of SuDS, Guidance for developers on Surface Water Drainage Strategies, considering any specific local standards and guidance for SuDS from the LLFA.	Developers should use this section to understand what national, regional, and local SuDS standards are applicable. Hyperlinks are provided.
10. Summary and recommendations	This section summarises sources of flood risk in the study area and outlines planning policy recommendations. It also sets out the next steps.	Developers and planners should use this as a summary of the SFRA. Developers should refer to the Level 1 SFRA recommendations when

Section	Contents	How to use
		considering site specific assessments.
Appendices	Appendix A: GeoPDFs and User Guide Appendix B: Data sources used in the SFRA Appendix C: SFRA User Guide Appendix D: Flood Alert and Flood Warning Areas Appendix E: Summary of flood risk across the study area Appendix F: Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)	Planners should use these appendices to understand what data has been used in the SFRA, to inform the application of the sequential and exception tests, as relevant, and to use these maps and tabulated summaries of flood risk to understand the nature and location of flood risk.

1.8 Understanding flood risk

The following content provides useful background information on how flooding arises and how flood risk is determined.

1.8.1 Sources of flooding

Flooding is a natural process and can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. It constitutes a temporary covering of land not normally covered by water and presents a risk when people and human or environmental assets are present in the area that floods. Assets at risk from flooding can include housing, transport and public service infrastructure, commercial and industrial enterprises, agricultural land, and environmental and cultural heritage. Flooding can occur from many different and combined sources and in many ways. Major sources of flooding include:

- Fluvial (rivers) - inundation of floodplains from rivers and watercourses; inundation of areas outside the floodplain due to influence of bridges, embankments and other features that artificially raise water levels; overtopping or breaching of defences; blockages of culverts; blockages of flood channels/corridors.
- Surface water - direct run-off from adjacent land.
- Sewer flooding - surcharging of piped drainage systems, including public sewers.
- Groundwater - water table rising after prolonged rainfall to emerge above ground level remote from a watercourse; most likely to occur in low-lying areas underlain by permeable rock (aquifers); groundwater recovery after pumping for mining or industry has ceased.

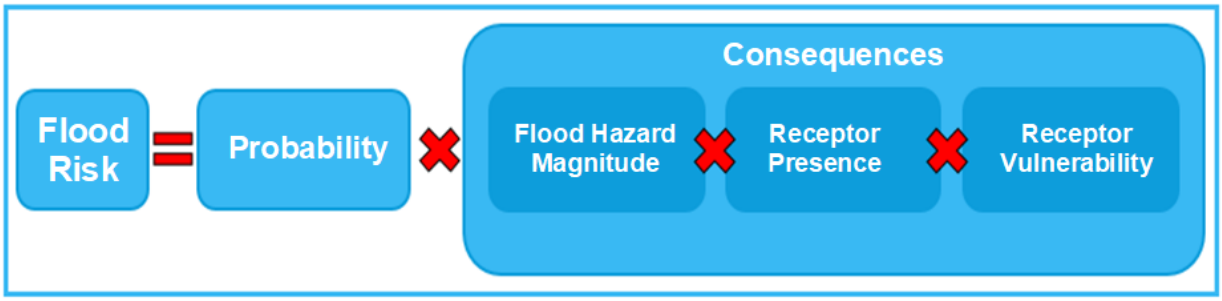
- Infrastructure failure - reservoirs; industrial processes; burst water mains; blocked sewers or failed pumping stations.
- Other sources of flooding including breaching of flood defences, overwhelmed canals, lakes, and other artificial sources.

Different types and forms of flooding present a range of different risks and the flood hazards of speed of inundation, depth, and duration of flooding, can vary greatly. With climate change, the frequency, pattern, and severity of flooding are expected to change and become more damaging.

1.8.2 Defining flood risk

Section 3 (subsection 1) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) defines the risk of a potentially harmful event (such as flooding) as 'a risk in respect of an occurrence is assessed and expressed (as for insurance and scientific purposes) as a combination of the probability of the occurrence with its potential consequences.'

Thus, it is possible to summarise flood risk as:



1.8.2.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

Flood risk can be assessed using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model where:

- The source is the origin of the floodwater, principally rainfall.
- A pathway is a route or means by which a receptor can be affected by flooding, which includes rivers, sea, drains, sewers, and overland flow.
- A receptor is something that can be adversely affected by flooding, which includes people, their property, and the environment.

This is a standard environmental risk model common to many hazards and should be the starting point of any assessment of flood risk. All these elements must be present for flood risk to arise. Having applied the Source-Pathway-Receptor model it is possible to mitigate the flood risk by addressing the source (often very difficult), blocking, or altering the pathway, or removing the receptor, e.g., steer development away.

The planning process is primarily concerned with the location of receptors, taking appropriate account of potential sources and pathways that might put those receptors at risk. It is therefore important to define the components of flood risk to apply this guidance in a consistent manner.

1.8.2.2 Probability

The probability of flooding is expressed as a percentage based on the average frequency measured or extrapolated from records over many years. A 1% probability indicates the flood level that is expected to be reached on average once in a hundred years, i.e., it has a 1% chance of occurring in any one year, not that it will occur at least once every hundred years.

Considered over the lifetime of development, such an apparently low frequency or rare flood has a significant probability of occurring. For example:

- A 1% flood has a 26% (1 in 4) chance of occurring at least once in a 30-year period - the period of a typical residential mortgage.
- And a 49% (1 in 2) chance of occurring in a 70-year period - a typical human lifetime.

1.8.2.3 Consequences

The consequences of flooding include fatalities, property damage, disruption to lives and businesses, with severe implications for people (e.g., financial loss, emotional distress, health problems). Consequences of flooding depend on the hazards caused by flooding (depth of water, speed of flow, rate of onset, duration, wave-action effects, water quality), the receptors that are present and the vulnerability of these receptors (type of development, nature, e.g., age-structure, of the population, presence, and reliability of mitigation measures etc).

2 Flood risk policy and strategy

This section sets out the flood risk management roles and responsibilities for different organisations and relevant legislation, policy, and strategy.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities for Flood Risk Management across the study area

There are different organisations in and around the study area that have responsibilities for flood risk management, known as RMAs. These are listed in Table 2-1 with a summary of their responsibilities.

The Local Government Association also provide further information on the roles and responsibilities for managing flood risk on their website here.

Table 2-1: Roles and responsibilities for RMAs.

Risk Management Authority	Strategic Level	Operational Level	Planning role
EA	Strategic overview for all sources of flooding, National Strategy, and general supervision	Main River (e.g., the River Chelmer) and reservoirs (Flood Risk Activity Permits (FRAPs), enforcement, and works)	Statutory consultee for certain development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and all works within 20 metres of a main river. Advice on when to consult the EA is available on the Government website here.
ECC as LLFA	Coordination of Local Flood Risk Management and maintaining a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)	Surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses (consenting, enforcement, and works)	Statutory consultee for major developments
Affinity Water, AW, and TW	Asset Management Plans, supported by Periodic Reviews (business cases), develop drainage and wastewater management plans	Public sewers and some reservoirs	Non-statutory consultee

Risk Management Authority	Strategic Level	Operational Level	Planning role
Highways Authorities (National Highways for motorways and trunk roads and UDC for non-trunk roads)	Highway drainage policy and planning	Highway drainage	Statutory consultee regarding highways design standards and adoptions

2.1.1 Riparian ownership

Land and property owners are responsible for the maintenance of watercourses either on or next to their properties, called Riparian Owners. Riparian Owners are also responsible for the protection of their properties from flooding as well as other management activities, for example by maintaining riverbeds/ banks, controlling invasive species, and allowing the flow of water to pass without obstruction. More information can be found on the Government website in the EA publication 'Owning a watercourse' (2018), available from the Government website here.

When it comes to undertaking works to reduce flood risk, the EA, ECC as LLFA do have permissive powers, but limited resources must be prioritised and targeted to where they can have the greatest effect. Permissive powers mean that RMAs are permitted to undertake works on watercourses but are not obliged.

2.1.2 Partnership working

There are several groups and partnerships set up across the study area, involving representatives from the RMAs mentioned above, as well as additional stakeholders with interest in flood risk management. These organisations help with coordination and engagement in flood risk management across the study area.

2.2 Relevant legislation

The following legislation is relevant to development and flood risk in the study area. Hyperlinks are provided to external documents:

- Town and Country Planning Act (1990), Water Industry Act (1991), Land Drainage Act (1991), Environment Act (1995), which set out the regulations for development on land in England and Wales.
- Flood and Water Management Act (2010) – as amended and implemented via secondary legislation. These set out the roles and responsibilities for organisations that have a role in Flood Risk Management.

- The Land Drainage Act (1991, as amended) and Environmental Permitting Regulations (2018) also set out where developers will need to apply for additional permission (as well as planning permission) to undertake works to an ordinary watercourse or main river.
- The Water Environment Regulations (2017) – these transpose the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000) into law and require the EA to produce River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). These aim to improve/maintain the water quality of aquatic ecosystems, riparian ecosystems, and wetlands so that they reach 'good' status.
- The Environment Act 2021 requires developers to provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and for LPAs to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). Strategic site allocations in Local Plans which present opportunities for BNG or areas for habitat improvement/creation identified by the LNRS could have parallel opportunities to contribute to reduced flood risk from a range of sources.
- Other environmental legislation such as the Habitats Directive (1992), Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014), and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001) also apply as appropriate to strategic and site-specific developments to guard against environmental damage.
- Flood Risk Regulations (2009) - these transpose the European Floods Directive (2000) into law and require the EA and LLFAs to produce PFRAs and identify nationally significant Flood Risk Areas (FRAs).
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) Section 19(1A) requires local planning authorities to include in their Local Plans 'policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.'

2.3 Key national, regional, and local policy documents and strategies

Table 2-2 summarises relevant national, regional, and local flood risk policy and strategy documents and how these apply to development and flood risk. Hyperlinks are provided to external documents. These documents may:

- Provide useful and specific local information to inform FRAs within the local area.
- Set the strategic policy and direction for flood risk management and drainage – they may contain policies and action plans that set out what future flood mitigation and climate change adaptation plans may affect a development site. A developer should seek to contribute in all instances to the strategic vision for flood risk management and drainage in the study area.
- Provide guidance and/or standards that inform how a developer should assess flood risk and/or design flood mitigation and SuDS.

The following sections provide further details on some of these documents and strategies.

Please note that the links to these documents may change over time and any requests for these documents should be directed toward the author.

Table 2-2: National, regional, and local flood risk policy and strategy documents.

Policy level	Document, lead author and date	Contextual information	Policy and measures	Development design requirements	Next update due
National	National Planning Policy Framework updated in December 2023	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
National	Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) updated in August 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
National	How to prepare a strategic flood risk assessment	Yes	No	No	-
National	Building Regulations Part H (MHCLG) 2010	Yes	No	Yes	-
Regional	Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan (EA) 2009	No	Yes	No	-
Regional	Thames river basin district river basin management plan (EA) 2022	No	Yes	No	2027
Regional	Thames river basin district flood risk management plan (EA) 2022	No	Yes	No	2027
Regional	Anglian river basin district river basin management plan (EA) 2022	No	Yes	No	-
Regional	Anglian river basin district flood risk management plan (EA) 2022	No	Yes	No	2027
Regional	Affinity Water Water Resources Management Plan, 2023 *	Yes	No	No	-
Regional	Anglian Water Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, 2023	Yes	Yes	No	-

Policy level	Document, lead author and date	Contextual information	Policy and measures	Development design requirements	Next update due
Regional	Thames Water Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, 2023	Yes	Yes	No	2028
Local	Essex County Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2017	Yes	No	No	-
Local	Essex County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2018	Yes	Yes	No	-

* Please note that at the time of writing, Affinity Water have just concluded the public consultation stage of their WRMP, with the view to publish it in 2024, after it is approved by DEFRA. Further information of WRMPs can be found in Section 2.3.10.

2.3.1 Flood Risk Regulations (2009)

The Flood Risk Regulations (FRRs) 2009 translate the European Union (EU) Floods Directive into UK law, which is at the time of writing retained in UK law post-Brexit, and can be accessed on the Government website. The EU requires Member States to complete an assessment of flood risk, known in England as a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) and then use this information to identify areas where there is a significant risk of flooding. For these Flood Risk Areas, States must then undertake Flood Risk and Hazard Mapping and produce Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). This cycle is repeated on a six-yearly basis.

The FRRs direct the EA to do this work for river, sea, and reservoir flooding. LLFAs must do this work for surface water, ordinary watercourse, and groundwater flooding.

The first cycle of planning ran from 2009 until 2015. Within this time LLFAs published their first PFRAs. The first FRMPs were also published.

The second cycle of planning commenced in 2016. Within this cycle, LLFAs published addendums to their existing PFRAs, the EA published their PFRA, and the second cycle FRMPs were published in December 2022, with actions to manage flood risk across England for the period 2021 to 2027.

The EA PFRA (2018) for river, sea and reservoir flooding identifies nationally significant Flood Risk Areas for these sources. This PFRA identified 25 flood risk areas in the Thames RBD and 8 in the Anglian RBD.

The Essex County Council PFRA was published in 2011 with an addendum in 2017 with updated flood risk data and information. This greater understanding of flood risk from the LLFA has been updated to include all significant flood events since 2011.

Although there is no specific reference to Uttlesford in this documentation, key outputs of the 2011 PFRA include:

- Overall flood risk is expected to increase as a result of climate change, particularly relating to winter storms (12% increase in winter precipitation from 2011 to 2050). Peak flows are also expected to increase between 8 and 14%.
- No past floods with significant consequences were identified, although this is likely due to a lack of robust evidence.

More information on district and national scale measures is available on the EA's online interactive mapping.

It is also recognised that there are areas at flood risk outside of these FRAs. The plan has therefore been expanded to show what is happening across the RBD and in locally important areas referred to as 'Strategic Areas' which were put forward by the EA providing they were not already designated FRAs.

As of 1 January 2024, the Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Bill automatically repealed any retained EU law (REUL) not otherwise preserved or replaced in UK law before the end of 2023, including the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 which transposed the EU

Floods Directive into legislation. This is because much of the FRRs is duplicated in existing domestic legislation, namely the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The EA and LLFAs in England will therefore no longer be required to comply with the third cycle of planning, however the government expects to see continued implementation of the FRMPs 2021-2027.

2.3.2 Flood and Water Management Act (2010)

The FWMA was passed in April 2010 following the recommendations made within the Pitt Review (2009) following the flooding in 2007. It aims to improve both flood risk management and the way water resources are managed.

The FWMA (2010) has created clearer roles and responsibilities and helped to define a more risk-based approach to dealing with flooding. This included the creation of a lead role for Local Authorities, as LLFAs, designed to manage local flood risk (from surface water, ground water and ordinary watercourses) and to provide a strategic overview role of all flood risk for the EA. Schedule 3 of the FWMA 2010 is expected to be implemented by the government in the short term, following periods of consultation, making SuDS mandatory for new developments in England. Further information on Schedule 3 is provided in Section 9.1.

The content and implications of the FWMA (2010) provide considerable opportunities for improved and integrated land use planning and flood risk management by Local Authorities and other key partners. The integration and synergy of strategies and plans at national, regional, and local scales is increasingly important to protect vulnerable communities and deliver sustainable regeneration and growth.

2.3.3 The Water Framework Directive and Water Environment Regulations and River Basin Management Plans

The purpose of the WFD, which was transposed into English Law by the Water Environment Regulations (2003), is to deliver improvements across Europe in the management of water quality and water resources through a series of plans called RBMPs.

The WFD requires the production of RBMPs for each RBD. RBMPs support the government's framework for the 25-year environment plan and allow local communities to find more cost-effective ways to further improve our water environments. Water quality and flood risk can go hand in hand in that flood risk management activities can help to deliver habitat restoration techniques.

The EA manages the RBMPs and must review and update them every six years. The first cycle of RBMPs were published in 2009 and were most recently updated in 2022.

Uttlesford District lies within both the Anglian River Basin District and Thames River Basin District. The updated Anglian and Thames RBMPs for 2022 can be found here and here respectively.

2.3.4 Updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment guidance

There was an update to the 'How to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment guidance' in March 2022, which requires further adjustment to the approaches to both Level 1 and Level 2 assessments. This Level 1 assessment is undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance. The latest guidance can be accessed on the Government website.

2.3.5 Catchment Flood Management Plans

Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) are high-level strategic plans providing an overview of flood risk across each river catchment. The EA use CFMPs to work with other key-decision makers to identify and agree long-term policies for sustainable flood risk management.

The study area lies within both the Thames CFMP and Anglian CFMP regions, which set out the policies relating to flooding from rivers, surface water, and groundwater within their respective catchment areas.

2.3.6 Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) (2018)

ECC are responsible for developing, maintaining, applying, and monitoring the LFRMS. The most recent strategy was published in 2018 and is available here. It is used as a means by which the LLFA co-ordinated Flood Risk Management on a daily basis.

The Essex LFRMS aims to set out how flood risk will be reduced and managed in the study area, using 7 measures:

1. Investigating Floods
2. Mapping local routes for water
3. Looking after our watercourses
4. Planning for future floods
5. Influencing new development and drainage
6. Building new flood defences
7. Involving the community

2.3.7 Local policy and guidance for SuDS

The 2023 NPPF states that: 'Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate' (Paragraph 175) and 'development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where… it can be demonstrated that… c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate' (Paragraph 173). When considering major planning applications, local planning authorities (LPAs) should consult the relevant LLFA on the management of surface water to satisfy that:

- The proposed minimum standards of operation are appropriate.
- Using planning conditions or planning obligations there are clear arrangements for on-going maintenance over the development's lifetime.

At the time of writing this SFRA, the following documents and policies are relevant to SuDS and surface water in the study area. Hyperlinks are provided to external documents:

- SuDS Manual (C753), published in 2007 and updated in 2015.
- Defra Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems, 2015
- Defra National Standards for sustainable drainage systems Designing, constructing (including LASOO best practice guidance), operating and maintaining drainage for surface runoff, 2011
- Building Regulations Part H (MHCLG), 2010
- Essex County Council Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide, 2020

The 2023 NPPF states that flood risk should be managed “using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in blue green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding" (Paragraph 167). Alongside flood risk management, SuDS can provide amenity, biodiversity, recreation, community, and water resources benefits. Where possible, priority should be given to SuDS that can deliver multiple benefits.

2.3.8 Water Cycle Studies

Water Cycle Studies assist local authorities to select and develop growth proposals that minimise impacts on the environment, water quality, water resources, infrastructure, and flood risk and help to identify ways of mitigating such impacts. The existing Water Cycle Study for Uttlesford was completed in 2019 and can be accessed here; however, UDC commissioned an updated Water Cycle and Management Study in 2021 prior to the update of the Uttlesford District Local Plan, which is ongoing at the time of writing.

2.3.9 Surface Water Management Plans

Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) outline the preferred surface water management strategy in a given location. SWMPs are undertaken, when required, by LLFAs in consultation with key local partners who are responsible for surface water management and drainage in their area. SWMPs establish a long-term action plan to manage surface water in a particular area and are intended to influence future capital investment, drainage maintenance, public engagement and understanding, land-use planning, emergency planning, and future developments. ECC has developed 10 SWMP, all covering different parts of the county. Only the Lower Sheering SWMP, last updated in 2022, intersects the Uttlesford study area to the east of Hatfield Heath.

2.3.10 Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs)

Under the duties set out in sections 37A to 37D of the Water Industry Act 1991, all water companies across England and Wales must prepare and maintain a WRMP. This must be prepared at least every five years and reviewed annually.

WRMPs should set out how a water company intends to achieve a secure supply of water for their customers and a protected and enhanced environment.

Thames Water published their revised Draft WRMP 24, in August 2023, after public consultation. It defines their strategy to undertake sustainable plans for water supplies and sets out the actions and investments they will make to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply for the next 50 years. Anglian Water also published their revised Draft WRMP24 in August 2023, taking into account feedback received from the public consultation, and setting out how they plan to maintain a sustainable and secure supply of drinking water for their customers over the period of 2025 to 2050. At the time of writing, Affinity Water have recently concluded the public consultation stage of their final WRMP, with the view to publish it in 2024. Their WRMP aims to address a significant future shortfall in water resources in their supply area between 2025-2075.

2.3.11 Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs)

The aim of the Drainage Water Management Plans (DWMPs) is to identify future catchment risks to drainage and wastewater treatment systems and develop sustainable, efficient solutions to ensure that systems remain robust and resilient to future pressures. This assessment then informs a long-term strategic plan, setting out how wastewater systems (and the drainage systems that impact them) will be maintained, improved, and extended over the next 25 years.

Water companies are required to publish DWMPs for river basin catchments across England as part of the Environment Act. Uttlesford District is served by two water companies, Anglian Water and Thames Water. Both companies have recently published their DWMPs.

The DWMPs provide a wider geographical extent of information on sewer flood risk than has previously been available. In doing this, the DWMPs include risk assessment and mapping which could potentially be used in the proposed land use planning prioritisation process and could potentially be perceived as being appropriate for consideration in the Sequential and Exception Tests.

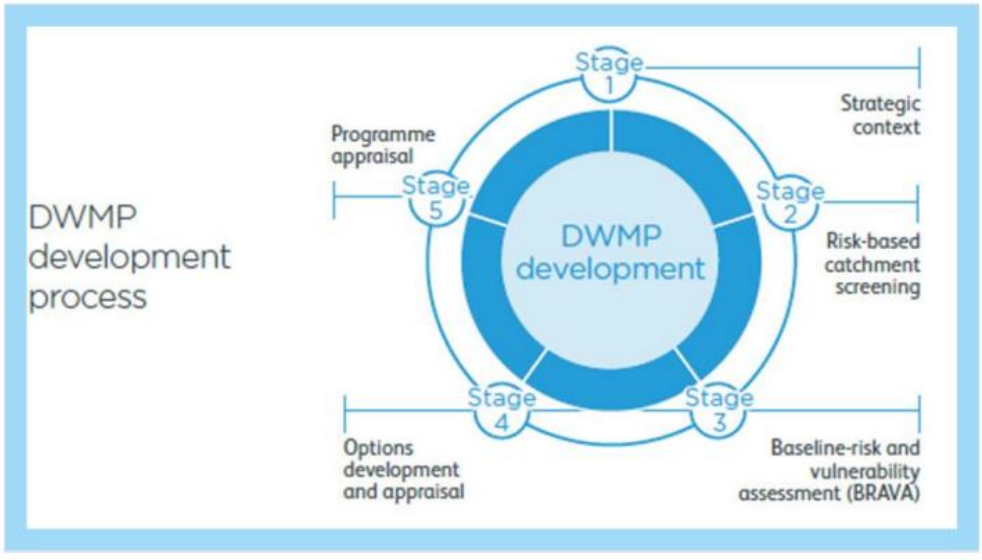


Figure 2-1: DWMP development process (Thames Water, 2023)

The planning objectives of the Thames Water and Anglian Water DWMPs are as follows:

Anglian Water

- Adaptive plan to meet the challenges faced over the next 25 years.
- A strategic direction for the approach to minimise the risks the region faces.
- Takes a catchment-based approach to these risks and challenges the region faces.
- Promotes the use of nature based solutions, especially when it comes to surface water removal.
- Protects the environment through improvements to discharges.
- Demonstrates how a growing population will be served over the next 25 years.
- Shows what is needed to protect assets and customers from the impacts of heavy rainfall caused by climate change.
- Identifies opportunities for partnership working to release benefits and resolve risks through matched funding.
- Aligns with other strategic plans, such as the Long Term Delivery Strategy (LTDS), Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), Water Resources East (WRE) Regional Plan, Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) and Local Plans.
- Includes all water recycling customers, regardless of who serves their water.
- Excludes upstream water supply and downstream resources, which will be reviewed separately through the business plan.

Thames Water

- Flooding
  - Stop property flooding internally (within the home or business) and externally (outside the home or business) from sewers where possible, up to a 1 in 50-ear storm event,
- Storm overflows
  - Limit environmental impact by discharging on average, no more than 10 times per year, per storm overflow, and no more than three in designated bathing waters, by 2045.
- Sewage Treatment Works (STWs)
  - Enhance the ability of sewage treatment works to recover from difficulties, without impacting service or the environment.
- Carbon
  - Support the carbon neutrality goals of stakeholders.
- Wellbeing
  - Enhance the wellbeing in communities by increasing access to green space.

Uttlesford District Council published a Level 1 Addendum in 2023 detailing the development of both the Thames and Anglian Water DWMPs. It provides and overview of the risk-based

catchment screening process, baseline risk and vulnerability assessment, and highlights any implications for the sequential test.

It is recommended that the DWMP information and mapping is not used to assess sewer flooding in the sequential test alongside river and surface water flooding on the basis that the available information is not of appropriate resolution or format. This understanding should be addressed with Anglian Water and Thames Water and formal confirmation obtained as necessary to support the Local Plan and Examination, to clarify the necessity and extent to which identified DWMP sewer flood risk should be addressed at sites where this is potentially an influential matter. This can then inform the necessity to include content on sewer flood risk in a Level 2 SFRA and where possible, the DWMP information should be used to inform the scope of site-specific Flood Risk Assessments.

Further information on the DWMPs can be found in the Level 1 Addendum here.

3 Planning policy for flood risk management

This section summarises national planning policy for development and flood risk.

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

The revised NPPF was published in July 2021, and was most recently updated in December 2023. The NPPF sets out Government's planning policies for England and is available on the Government website. It must be considered in the preparation of local plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF advises on how flood risk should be considered to guide the location of future development and FRA requirements. The NPPF states that:

"Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards" (Paragraph 166). The PPG on flood risk and coastal change was published in March 2014 and sets out how the policy should be implemented. Diagram 1 in the PPG sets out how flood risk should be considered in the preparation of Local Plans. It was updated on the 25 August 2022. The most up-to-date guidance is available on the Government website.

3.2 The risk-based approach

The NPPF takes a risk-based approach to development in flood risk areas. Since July 2021 the approach has adjusted the requirement for the sequential test (as defined in Paragraph 167 of the NPPF) so that all sources of flood risk are to be included in the consideration. The requirement for the revised sequential test has been addressed by adopting the following approach:

- The test will no longer be purely based on the use of the Flood Zones describing river and sea flood risk, and instead be based on whether development can be located in the lowest risk areas (high-medium-low) of flood risk both now and in the future. The test now applies to all sources of flood risk – whereas previously the test was only performed for present day flood risk for the "Flood Zones" i.e., river and sea flood risk.
- Understanding flood risk to sites based on their vulnerability and incompatibility as opposed to whether development is appropriate.
- In addition to the flood risk mapping describing river and sea flood risk, there is mapping available to describe surface water flood risk. Although, this is not conceptually similar to the flood risk mapping for rivers and sea due to the differing nature of flooding.
- As there is no available competent risk mapping for other sources of risk it is not considered appropriate to use such mapping in a strict process that involves

comparison of differing levels of flood risk. Reservoir, groundwater, and sewer flood risk are addressed through the SFRA using a variety of datasets to analyse and describe the risk to areas across the study area.

- A more formal assessment of these sources is undertaken in a Level 2 SFRA and involves a more detailed assessment at site level of the implications of reservoir, sewer, and groundwater flood risk to establish that more appropriate locations at lower risk are not available. Consultation with the sewerage undertaker is necessary to take in to account any hydraulic incidents and the latest available modelling information on sewer flood risk.
- Consideration is given to all sources of flood risk using the available data to complete the sequential test so decisions on the selection of preferred sites for allocation address the potential implications of groundwater, reservoir, and sewer flooding. Also, where necessary it identifies sites where consideration should be given to satisfying the requirements of the exception test.

3.2.1 Flood Zones - fluvial risk

The definition of the Flood Zones is provided below. The Flood Zones do not consider defences, except when considering the functional floodplain. This is important for planning long term developments as long-term policy and funding for maintaining flood defences over the lifetime of a development may change over time.

The Flood Zones are:

- Flood Zone 1: Low risk: less than a 0.1% chance of river and sea flooding in any given year.
- Flood Zone 2: Medium risk: between a 1% and 0.1% chance of river flooding and between a 0.5% and 0.1% of flooding from the sea in any given year.
- Flood Zone 3a: High risk: between a 3.3% and 1% chance of river flooding and between a 3.3% and 0.5% chance of flooding from the sea in any given year.
- Flood Zone 3b: Functional Floodplain: land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood (greater than 3.3% AEP). SFRAs identify this Flood Zone in discussion with the LPA and the EA. The identification of functional floodplain takes account of local circumstances. Only water compatible and essential infrastructure are permitted in this zone and should be designed to remain operational in times of flood, resulting in no loss of floodplain or blocking of water flow routes. Information on flood risk vulnerability classification is available online in Annex 3 of the NPPF, here. It may be required to consider climate change on the functional floodplain; this would need hydraulic modelling to confirm extents and therefore it is recommended that this is considered in an FRA and a suitable approach is agreed with the EA.
    - Flood Zone 3b is based on the best available modelled data:
        - 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) where available
        - 2% or 1.3% AEP where the 3.3% is not available.

- Where model data is not available, Flood Zone 3a is used as a conservative proxy.

Flood Zones 2 and 3a consider undefended fluvial risk whilst Flood Zone 3b considers defended fluvial risk. The Flood Zones do not risk mapping for surface water, sewer, groundwater flooding or the impacts of reservoir failure or climate change. Hence, there could still be a risk of flooding from other sources and that the level of flood risk will change over the lifetime of a development. In addition to the Flood Zones, areas at future flood risk need to be considered within the sequential test. The approach to consideration of climate change within this SFRA and the available data are set out in Section 5 and Appendix C: User Guide details the approach for assessing future flood risk within the SFRA.

Important note on Flood Zone information in this SFRA

Flood Zones 2 and 3a, as shown in Appendix A: GeoPDFs, show the same extent as the online EA's Flood Map for Planning (which incorporates latest modelled data).

The EA Flood Zones do not cover all catchments or ordinary watercourses with areas <3km². As a result, whilst the EA Flood Zones may show an area is in Flood Zone 1, there may be a flood risk from a smaller watercourse(s) not shown in the Flood Zones.

Functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) is identified as land which would flood with an annual probability of 3.3% AEP (1 in 30 years). Flood defences should be considered when delineating the functional floodplain. The 3.3% AEP defended modelled flood extents have been used to represent Flood Zone 3b, where available from the EA.

The 3.3% AEP modelled flood extents have been used to represent Flood Zone 3b, where available. 3.3% AEP extents were available for the following models:

- Chelmer
- Roding
- Blackwater
- Stort Tributaries (Stickling Green Brook)
- Chelmer Tributaries (Olives Wood and Godfrey Way in Great Dunmow)

For areas covered by detailed models, but with no 3.3% AEP output available, the 2% AEP (1 in 50 years) outputs were used as a worst-case proxy. This was the case for the following models:

- Cam Rural (including the Slade)
- Stansted Mountfitchet
- For the Upper and Middle Stort model, only the 5% or 1% AEP events were available, therefore Flood Zone 3a has been used as a conservative proxy.

For areas outside of the detailed model coverage, Flood Zone 3a has been used as a conservative indication for Flood Zone 3b. Further work should be undertaken as part of a detailed site-specific FRA to define and refine the extent of Flood Zone 3b where no detailed modelling exists. Caution should also be applied where the conservative Flood Zone 3b extent encompasses existing urban areas which would not otherwise be "designed to flood".

3.2.2 Flood Zones - surface water risk

To address the requirement that flood risk from all sources is included in the sequential test in addition to the fluvial Flood Zones, a further set of surface water zones have also been defined.

The surface water zones define locations at either lower or higher risk of surface water flooding based on the extent of the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change allowance surface water event. This is the upper end allowance for the 2070s epoch which the EA climate change guidance recommends is assessed within SFRAs.

- Zone A – lower risk of surface water flooding (lies outside the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change surface water extent)
- Zone B – higher risk of surface water flooding (lies within the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change surface water extent)

Surface water mapping does not strictly describe the same conceptual risk zone as is defined for river and sea flooding (even though it is notionally associated with the same probability) as the mapping is based on different assumptions. However, it does create a product that can accommodate sequential testing, as it can facilitate strategic decisions that direct development to land in a “lower risk surface water flood zone”.

Surface water flood risk can be of much shallower depth and is not normally experienced for such extensive durations as river flooding. However, the safety implications of placing proposed development at locations where there is surface water flood risk together with the potential effects on third parties is a material consideration and thus if it is proposed to place development in a Zone of high surface water flood risk then consideration should be given to the demonstrating that part “b” of the Exception Test (outlined in section 3.2.5) can be satisfied (with the presumption that part “a” was satisfied if the land was allocated in the Local Plan).

3.2.3 Flood Zones - other sources of flooding

Other sources of flooding also need to be considered as part of the sequential test. This includes reservoir, groundwater, and sewer flooding.

While all sources of flood risk should inform the sequential test, the national data available for use in this SFRA for other sources of flooding are not sufficient 'risk-based' datasets to inform the sequential test in the same way as the available data for fluvial and surface water risk, and therefore a more detailed assessment will be required in a Level 2 assessment.

A reservoir's primary function is to provide water storage; however, they can be a source of flooding. The latest available mapping now shows “wet day” and “dry day” reservoir inundation extents. The “wet day” being a reservoir breach at the same time as a 0.1% AEP river flood (as this is a likely time when a reservoir might fail) and the "dry day" shows the failure just from the water retained by the dam. However, neither set of mapping describes a risk-based scenario, as they do not indicate the relative risk to land based on the probability of dam failure but are intended to show a “worst credible case”.

By comparing the extent of Fluvial Flood Zone 2 with the Reservoir Flood Map Wet Day Extent, two zones can be defined:

- Where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse.
- Where reservoir flooding is not predicted to make fluvial flooding worse.

The mapping could be used to direct proposed new development away from locations that could potentially be affected by reservoir flood risk. However, it is different to the risk pertaining to river and sea flooding and further assessment would be required to understand the magnitude of the potential hazard. This mapping will also identify locations where proposed development could result in a change to the risk designation of a reservoir. If proposed sites are located in a zone at reservoir risk, it will be necessary to include a more detailed assessment in a Level 2 SFRA.

With regards to sewer and groundwater flood risk, for the purposes of this SFRA it is not possible to prepare zone maps as the appropriate analyses and data are not available nationally. Sewer flooding is presented as postcode point locations, and groundwater mapping data shows susceptibility of risk and likelihood of emergence. The latter could be viewed in conjunction with the surface water mapping to ascertain where emerging overland flows may travel above ground. The existing datasets on sewer flooding and groundwater are therefore used to inform the sequential approach to development at a site in accordance with Paragraph 167 of the NPPF (which could in some instances result in alternative sites being considered).

It is recommended that the DWMP information and mapping is not used to assess sewer flooding in the Sequential Test alongside river and surface water flooding on the basis that the available information is not of appropriate resolution or format. This understanding should be addressed with Anglian Water and Thames Water and formal confirmation obtained as necessary to support the Local Plan and Examination and clarify the necessity and extent to which identified DWMP sewer flood risk should be addressed at sites where this is potentially an influential matter. Where possible, the DWMP information should be used to inform the scope of site-specific FRAs and inform the necessity to include content on sewer flood risk in a Level 2 SFRA.

Direct consultation with Anglian Water and Thames Water on any sewer flood risks will be necessary once site-specific details are known.

3.2.4 The sequential test

Firstly, land at the lowest risk of flooding from all sources should be considered for development. A test is applied called the ‘sequential test’ to do this.

The LPA are required to undertake the sequential test in the preparation of their local plan, and the process is set out within this section. Developers are also required to follow a sequential approach to development, for both local plan allocations and windfall sites.

This section sets out the sequential test for the local plan process. The sequential test for developers is outlined in Section 3.3.

Figure 3-1 summarises the sequential test.

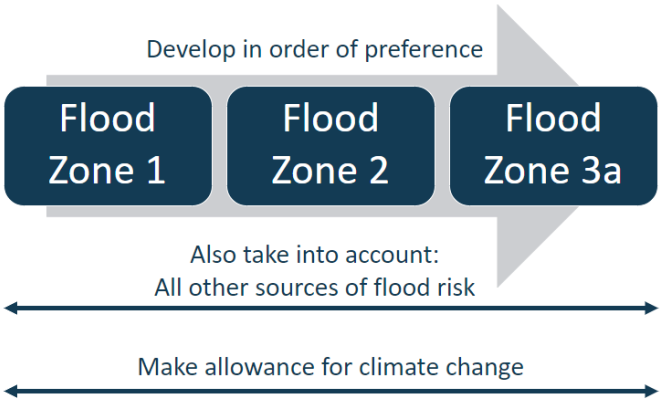


Figure 3-1: A summary of the sequential test.

The sequential approach steers development away from areas of flood risk and where the sequential and exception test have been applied (where required) and have not been met, development should not be permitted. It is advised that this approach should be considered early in the design process. This SFRA provides mapping of the flood risk from fluvial sources in 'Flood Zones', surface water, groundwater, and reservoirs, alongside the future flood risk from fluvial sources.

The sequential test should be applied to all relevant planning applications, as set out below. Developers must supply evidence to the LPA, with a planning application, that the development has passed the test.

A sequential test should be carried out if the development is:

- Within Flood Zones 2, 3a, or 3b
- Within Flood Zone 1 where:
    - This SFRA shows it to be at risk of flooding from rivers or sea in the future; or
    - It is at risk of flooding from other sources
        - Surface water (identified as Zone B in this SFRA)
        - Groundwater, reservoirs, and sewer (see Section 3.2.3 which refers to the limitations with data currently available to assess flood risk these sources)

Mapping of these sources of flooding are available in the GeoPDF mapping in Appendix A.

Exceptions to this requirement are for changes of use (except for changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park site, where the sequential and exception tests should be applied as appropriate), householder development, and non-residential extensions with a footprint less than 250 square metres.

The LPA should define a suitable search area for the consideration of alternative sites in the sequential test. The sequential test can be undertaken as part of a Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal. Alternatively, it can be demonstrated through a free-standing document, or as part of Strategic Housing Land / Employment Land Availability Assessments.

Whether any further work is needed to decide if the land is suitable for development will depend on both the vulnerability of the development and the Flood Zone it is proposed for. Annex 3 of the NPPF sets out the flood risk vulnerability classifications for different development types. Table 2 of the PPG defines the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'incompatibility' of different development types to flooding which can be found on the Government website here.

Figure 3-2 illustrates the sequential and exception tests for local plan preparation as a process flow diagram (Diagram 2 of the PPG) using the information contained in this SFRA to assess potential development sites against the EA's Flood Map for Planning Flood Zones and development vulnerability compatibilities.

This is a stepwise process, but a complex one, as several of the criteria used are qualitative and based on experienced judgement. The process must be documented, and evidence used to support decisions recorded. In addition, the risk of flooding from other sources and the impact of climate change must be considered when considering which sites are suitable to allocate. The SFRA User Guide in Appendix C shows where the sequential and exception test may be required for the datasets assessed in the SFRA, and how to interpret different sources of flood risk, including recommending what proposed development sites should be assessed at Level 2. The application of both the sequential test and exception test is also outlined in diagrams 2 and 3 in the PPG here.

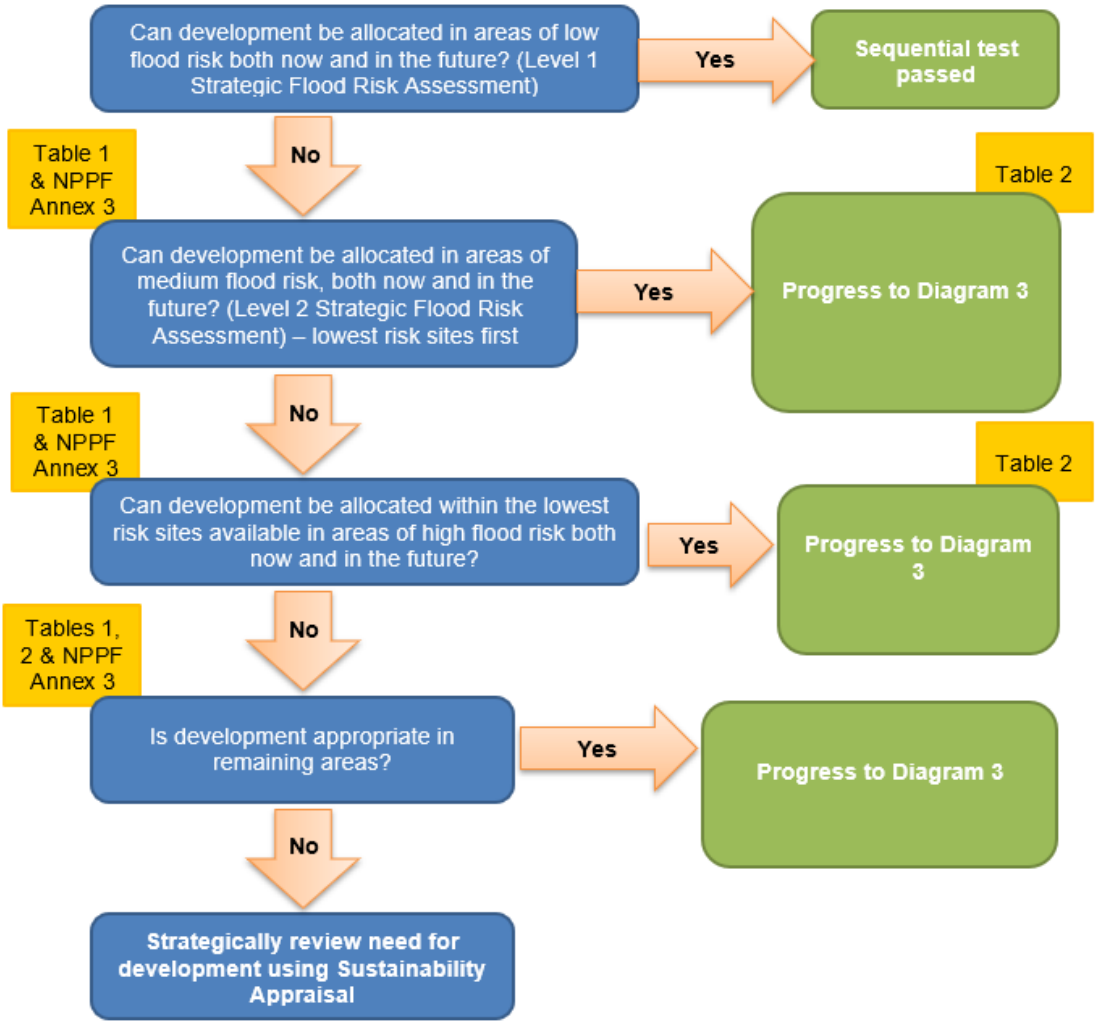


Figure 3-2: Local Plan sequential approach to site allocation.

3.2.5 The Exception Test

It will not always be possible for all new development to be located on land that is not at risk from flooding. To further inform whether land should be allocated, or Planning Permission granted, a greater understanding of the scale and nature of the flood risks is required. In these instances, the exception test will be required.

The exception test should only be applied following the application of the sequential test. It applies in the following instances:

- 'More vulnerable' development in Flood Zone 3a
- 'Essential infrastructure' in Flood Zone 3a or 3b
- 'Highly vulnerable' development in Flood Zone 2
- Any development where a higher risk of surface water has been identified (surface water Zone B) and the site does not clearly show that development can be achieved away from the flood risk.

'Highly vulnerable' development should not be permitted within Flood Zone 3a or Flood Zone 3b. 'More vulnerable' and 'Less vulnerable' development should not be permitted within Flood Zone 3b.

While current guidance in Table 2 of the PPG only applies to the EA's Flood Map for Planning, which displays risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, the updated PPG (August 2022) now requires all sources of flood risk to be assessed within the sequential test and therefore it follows that, where sufficient datasets are available, the exception test is recommended to take into account all sources of flood risk.

Figure 3-3 summarises the exception test. For sites proposed for allocation within the Local Plan, the LPA should use the information in this SFRA to inform the exception test. At the planning application stage, the developer must design the site such that it is appropriately flood resistant and resilient in line with the recommendations in national and local planning policy and supporting guidance and those set out in this SFRA. This should demonstrate that the site will still pass the flood risk element of the exception test based on the detailed site level analysis.

For developments that have not been allocated in the Local Plan or where the sequential test was not applied at the development plan stage and new information becomes available that identifies a flood risk, developers must undertake the sequential and exception tests and present this information to the LPA for approval. The Level 1 SFRA can be used to scope the flooding issues that a site-specific FRA should investigate in more detail to inform the exception test for windfall sites.

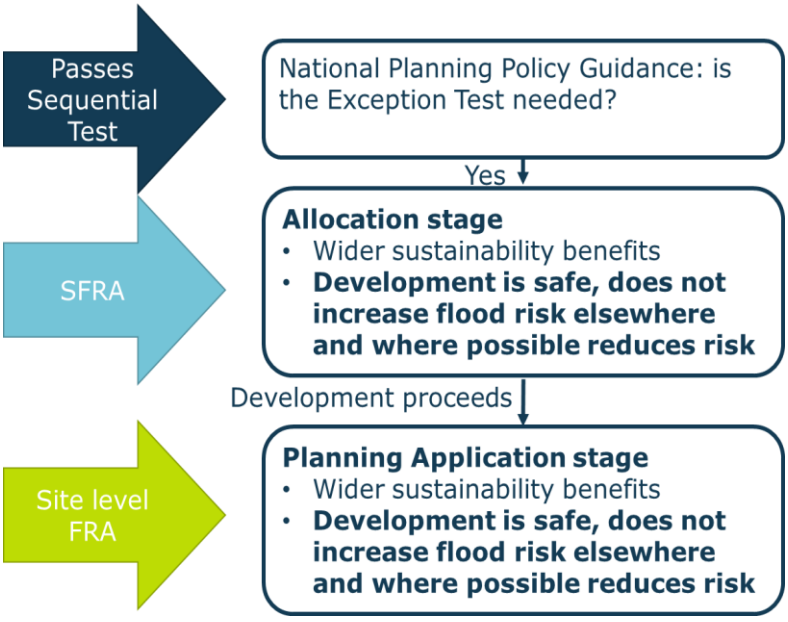


Figure 3-3: The exception test.

There are two parts to demonstrating a development passes the exception test:

1. Demonstrating that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk.

LPAs will need to set out the criteria used to assess the exception test and provide clear advice to developers on the information required. If this information is not provided, the LPA should consider whether the use of planning conditions and / or planning obligations could allow it to pass the exception test. If this is not possible, this part of the exception test has failed, and planning permission should be refused.

At the stage of allocating development sites, LPAs should consider wider sustainability objectives, such as those set out in Local Plan Sustainability Appraisals. These generally consider matters such as biodiversity, blue green infrastructure, housing, historic environment, climate change adaptation, flood risk, green energy, pollution, health, transport etc.

The LPA should consider the sustainability issues the development will address and how far doing so will outweigh the flood risk concerns for the site, e.g., by facilitating wider regeneration of an area, providing community facilities, infrastructure that benefits the wider area etc.

2. Demonstrating that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

In circumstances where the potential effects of proposed development are material a Level 2 SFRA is likely to be needed to inform the exception test for strategic allocations to provide evidence that the principle of development can be supported. At the planning application stage, a site-specific FRA will be needed. Both will need to consider the actual and residual risk and how this will be managed over the lifetime of the development.

3.2.6 Making a site safe from flood risk over its lifetime

LPAs will need to consider the actual and residual risk of flooding and how this will be managed over the lifetime of the development:

- Actual risk is the risk to the site considering existing flood mitigation measures.
- The PPG refers to the 'design flood' against which the suitability of a proposed development should be assessed and mitigation measures, if any, are designed.
- The 'design flood' is defined as the 1% AEP fluvial event or 1% AEP surface water event, plus an appropriate allowance for climate change. Allowances for climate change can be found on the EA website here.
- Safe access and egress should be available during the design flood event. Firstly, the design of the development should seek to avoid areas of a site at flood risk. If that is not possible then access routes should be located above the design flood event levels. Where that is not possible, access through shallow and slow flowing water that poses a low flood hazard may be acceptable.
- Residual risk is the risk that remains after the effects of flood defences have been taken into account and/ or from a more severe flood event than the design event. The residual risk can be:

- The effects of an extreme 0.1% annual probability flood event. This could lead to the overtopping of flood defences, which may lead to erosion and/or failure, and/ or
- Structural failure of any flood defences, such as breaches in embankments or walls.

- Flood resistance and resilience measures should be considered to manage any residual flood risk by keeping water out of properties and seeking to reduce the damage caused, should water enter a property. Emergency plans should also account for residual risk, e.g., through the provision of flood warnings and a flood evacuation plans where appropriate.

In line with the NPPF, the impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development should be taken into account when considering actual and residual flood risk.

3.3 Applying the sequential test and exception test to individual planning applications

3.3.1 Applying the sequential test

Councils, with advice from the EA, are responsible for considering the extent to which sequential test considerations have been satisfied.

Developers are required to apply the sequential test to all development sites, unless the site is:

- A strategic allocation and the test have already been carried out by the LPA as part of preparing the local plan, or
- A change of use (except to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site), or
- A minor development (householder development, small non-residential extensions with a footprint of less than 250m²), or
- A development in fluvial Flood Zone 1 unless there are other flooding issues in the area of the development (i.e. surface water, ground water, sewer flooding).

The SFRA contains information on all sources of flooding and takes into account the impact of climate change. This should be considered when a developer undertakes the sequential test, including the consideration of reasonably available sites at lower flood risk.

Local circumstances must be used to define geographical scope of the sequential test (within which it is appropriate to identify reasonably available alternatives). To determine the appropriate search area criteria, include the catchment area for the type of development being proposed. For some sites this may be clear, e.g. school catchments, in other cases it may be identified by other Local Plan policies. For some sites, e.g. regional distribution sites, it may be suitable to widen the search area beyond LPA administrative boundaries.

The sources of information on reasonably available sites may include but is not restricted to:

- Site allocations in Local Plans

- Sites with Planning Permission but not yet built out
- Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (SHELAAs)/ five-year land supply/ annual monitoring reports
- Locally listed sites for sale

It may be that a number of smaller sites or part of a larger site at lower flood risk form a suitable alternative to a development site at high flood risk.

Ownership or landowner agreement in itself is not acceptable as a reason not to consider alternatives.

3.3.2 Applying the exception test

If, following application of the sequential test, it is not possible for the development to be located in areas with a lower probability of flooding the exception test must then be applied (as set out in Table 2 of the PPG).

Where a development proposal is in accordance with an allocation made in a Local Plan following the application of the sequential and exception tests, the exception test will only be required to be repeated if:

- Elements of the development that were key to it satisfying the exception test at the plan-making stage (such as wider sustainability benefits to the community or measures to reduce flood risk overall) have changed or are not included in the proposed development; or
- The understanding of current or future flood risk has changed significantly.

The applicant will need to provide information that the application can pass both parts of the exception test:

1. Demonstrating that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk.
    - Applicants should refer to wider sustainability objectives in Local Plan Sustainability Appraisals. These often consider matters such as biodiversity, blue green infrastructure, housing, historic environment, climate change adaptation, flood risk, green energy, pollution, health, transport etc.
    - Applicants should assess the suitability issues the development will address and how doing it will outweigh the flood risk concerns for the site, e.g. by facilitating wider regeneration of an area, providing community facilities, infrastructure that benefits the wider area etc.
2. Demonstrating that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
    - The site-specific FRA should demonstrate that the site will be safe, and the residents/occupiers will not be exposed to hazardous flooding from any source. The FRA should consider actual and residual risk and how this will be managed over the lifetime of the development, including:
    - the design of any flood defence infrastructure,

- access and egress,
- operation and maintenance,
- design of the development to manage and reduce flood risk wherever possible,
- resident awareness,
- flood warning and evacuation procedures, including whether the developer would increase the pressure on emergency services to rescue people during a flood event, and
- any funding arrangements required for implementing measures.
- Further guidance on FRAs for new developments can be downloaded from the government website here.

4 Understanding flood risk across the study area

This section explores the key sources of flooding in the study area and the factors that affect flooding including topography, soils, and geology. The main sources of flooding affecting the study area are from watercourses, surface water, and sewers, as detailed in information provided by the Council, ECC, the EA, and Thames/ Anglian Water.

This is a strategic summary of the risk in the study area. Developers should use this section to scope out the flood risk issues they need to consider in greater detail in a site-specific FRA to support a Planning Application.

Appendix B contains a list of the sources of data used in the SFRA and the approach to using hydraulic model data to inform the mapping.

4.1 Historical flooding

4.1.1 Historical flood records

Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1 detail the flood events shown within the EA Recorded Flood Outlines dataset. ECC provided locations of a further 6 incidences in postcode areas CM6, CM22, and CB11; but the dates of these are unknown.

Table 4-1: Historic flooding incidents shown in the EA Recorded Flood Outlines dataset.

Flood date	Flood source	Flood cause	Areas affected
March 1947	Fluvial - Various	Channel capacity exceedance	River Cam around Little Chesterford. River Pant through Radwinter, Great Sampford, and Little Sampford. River Chelmer through Thaxted, Great Easton, and Great Dunmow. Stebbing Brook through Stebbing and Plitch Green. River Stort through Clavering and Manuden Stansted Brook through Elsenham and Stansted Mountfitchet Pincey Brook from Little Barrington Hall Farm to Downhall Wood Unnamed watercourses east of White Roding.
November 1974	Fluvial - River Stort	Channel capacity exceedance	River Roding through Great Canfield, Rythorpe Roding, and The Rodings. River Stort Navigation
May 1978	Fluvial -	Channel	Pincey Brook from Little Barrington Hall

Flood date	Flood source	Flood cause	Areas affected
	Various	capacity exceedance	Farm to Downhall Wood River Stort Navigation River Roding through Great Canfield, Rythorpe Roding, and The Rodings.
May 1987	Fluvial - River Stort	Unknown	River Stort in Manuden
October 1993	Fluvial - Various	Channel capacity exceedance	River Roding through Great Canfield, Rythorpe Roding, and The Rodings. River Stort Navigation at Gaston Green River Stort in Clavering and Manuden
December 2000	Fluvial/ Canal	Unknown	River Stort Navigation at Gaston Green
February 2001	Fluvial - River Stort	Channel capacity exceedance	River Stort Navigation at Gaston Green River Stort through Clavering and Manuden
October 2001	Fluvial - Various	Unknown	River Cam north of Little Chesterford, east of Littlebury, and west of Audley End Estate. River Bourn through Ashdon River Chelmer at select locations within Great Dunmow.
February 2009	Fluvial/ Canal	Unknown	River Stort Navigation at Gaston Green
February 2014	Fluvial/ Canal	Unknown	River Stort Navigation at Gaston Green

In addition, the EA's Historic Flood Map (HFM) shows areas of land that have been previously subject to flooding in the area. This includes flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater springs but excludes surface water. The HFM outlines for the study area are shown in Figure 4-1, alongside the Recorded Flood Outlines (RFO) which also show records of historic flooding from surface water and are included in Appendix A: GeoPDFs. Across Uttlesford, the HFM and RFO detail the same flood events aside from a small area to the north west on the River Pant. Please note some of the historic extents may refer to older historic flood events, prior to flood defence improvements.

Information on sewer flooding across the study area is included in Section 4.5 and a list of historic flooding incidences provided by the Water Companies is available in Table 4-2.

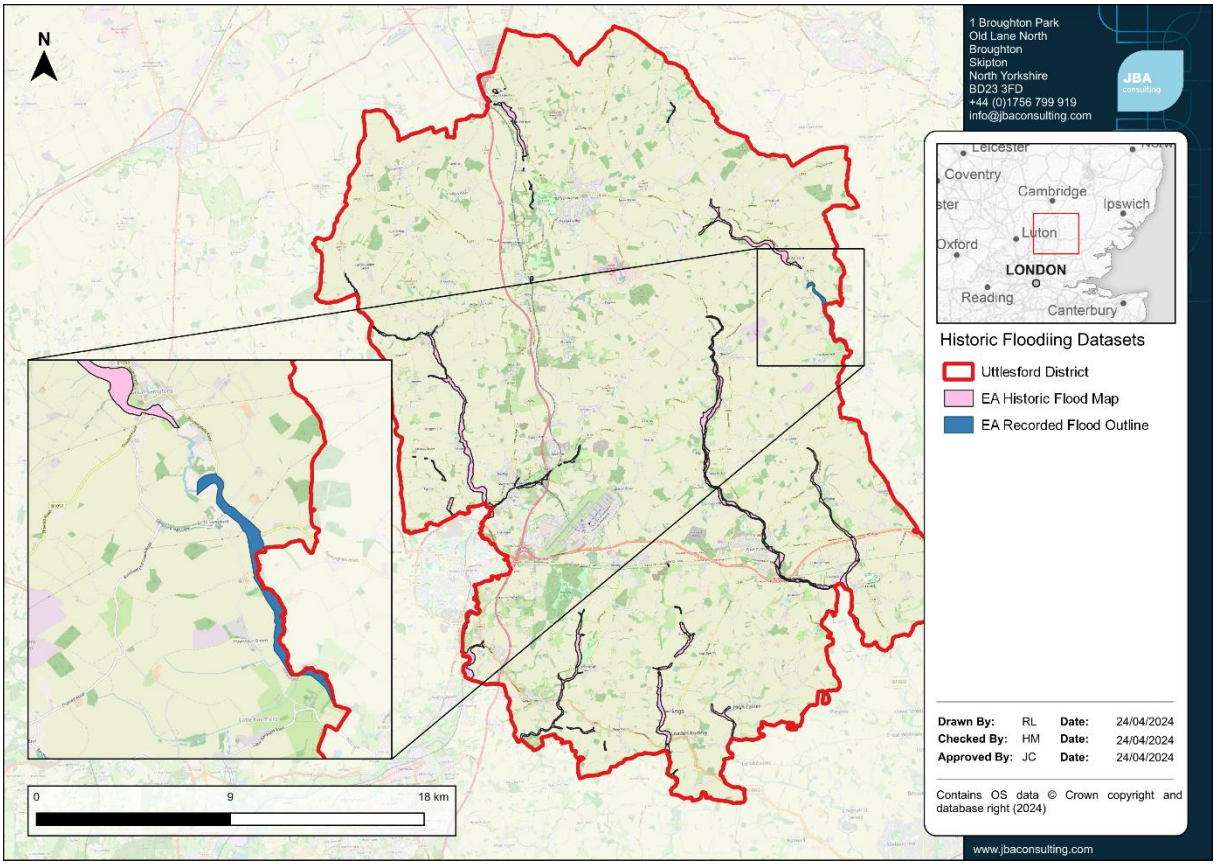


Figure 4-1: Historic Flood Map and Recorded Flood Outlines for Uttlesford

4.1.2 Section 19 Flood Investigations

Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), the LLFA has a duty to investigate flood incidences, where considered necessary or appropriate and produce a report. Section 19 Flood Investigation reports are available for specific events and locations on request from ECC here, this includes the following events:

- Essex Countywide Flooding (2011)
- Little Hallingbury (June 2012)
- Essex Countywide Flooding (June 2016)
- Saffron Walden (July 2017)

4.2 Topography, geology, soils, and hydrology

The topography, geology and soil are all important in influencing the way the catchment responds to a rainfall event. The degree to which a material allows water to percolate through it, the permeability, affects the extent of overland flow and therefore the amount of run-off reaching the watercourse. Steep slopes or clay rich (low permeability) soils will promote rapid surface runoff, whereas more permeable rock such as limestone and sandstone may result in a more subdued response.

4.2.1 Topography

Figure 4-2 highlights the changes in topography across Uttlesford. The northwestern corner of the study area, Crishall Common, lies at the highest elevation, approximately 146m AOD. This slopes steeply downwards towards the east and the River Cam, which lies at approximately 33m AOD where it flows out of the district.

The centre of the study area is a peak of 123m AOD - 128m AOD (Lovecotes Hill), sloping downwards on each side towards the Uttlesford District boundary. To the north, topography slopes with the River Cam, detailed above. To the southeast, the topography slopes with the River Chelmer and Stebbing Brook, which converge immediately south of Flitch Green at approximately 42m AOD. The southwest of the study area slopes down following a series of tributaries of the River Roding and River Lea, with the lowest point of the south west border lying at approximately 47m AOD.

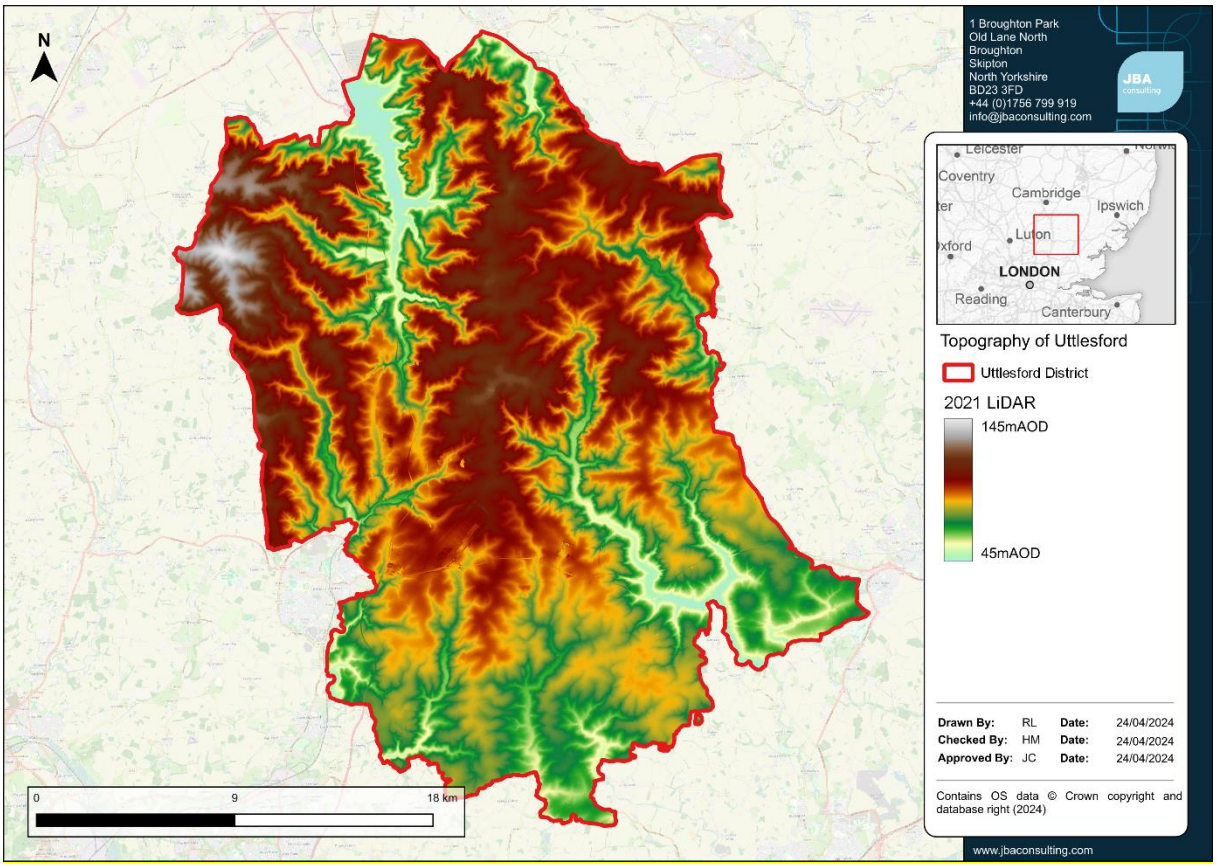


Figure 4-2: Topography of Uttlesford District

4.2.2 Geology

Information on the bedrock and superficial geology in the study area can be viewed online in the British Geology Society Geology Viewer.

The study area largely consists of London Clay Formation bedrock geology, which is a combination of clay, sand, and silt. Towards the north, near Safford Walden this bedrock geology changes to Lewes Nodular and Seaford Chalk Formations. Superficial geology is primarily the Lowestoft Fomation and river terrace deposits.

The EA also provides mapping of different types of aquifers, the underground layers of water-bearing permeable rock from which groundwater can be extracted. Aquifers are designated as either principal or secondary aquifers. Principal aquifers are designated by the EA as strategically important rock units that have high permeability and water storage capacity.

The north of Uttlesford District is underlain by a chalk aquifer; however, due to the actual depth (20 to 50m) of the water table compared to the ground surface and the clay till that overlays the underlying chalk the risk from groundwater flooding is low.

4.2.3 Soils

Much of the soils in the study area are lime rich, loamy, and clayey. This means there is slightly impeded drainage. Along many of the watercourses, soils become freely draining slightly and acid, but base-rich.

Soils data across the study area is available from the British Geological Survey website

4.3 Fluvial flood risk

The major watercourses flowing through the study area are:

- River Cam
- River Chelmer
- River Roding
- River Stort
- Stebbing Brook
- Pincey Brook
- Stansted Brook

Tributaries of these watercourses include smaller ordinary watercourses and numerous unnamed drains. There are also several ponds and lakes within the study area. A map of the key watercourses is included in Figure 1-4 and in Appendix A: GeoPDFs.

The primary fluvial flood risk in the study area is from rivers running through developed areas such as the River Cam, River Chelmer, and Stansted Brook.

The Flood Zone maps for the study area are provided in Appendix A: GeoPDFs, split into Flood Zones 2, 3a, and 3b. Section 3.2.1 describes how the fluvial Flood Zones have been derived for this SFRA. The flood risk associated with the major locations in the study area are detailed in Appendix E.

4.4 Surface water flooding

Surface water runoff is most likely to be caused by intense downpours e.g. thunderstorms. At times the amount of water falling can completely overwhelm the drainage network, which is not designed to cope with extreme storms. The flooding can also be complicated by blockages to drainage networks, sewers being at capacity and/ or high-water levels in watercourses that cause local drainage networks to back up.

The EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping (RoFSW) highlights several communities in the study area at risk from surface water flooding. Surface water flow paths generally follow the topography of existing watercourses, although there are some areas at risk from isolated ponding. Additionally, surface water flow routes are also established on roads in the more urban areas within the study area, highlighting risk to transport networks while posing a risk to buildings which water can be routed to. The RoFSW mapping for the study area can be found in Appendix A: GeoPDFs.

The impacts of climate change on surface water flooding are discussed in Section 0.

4.5 Sewer flooding

Sewer flooding occurs when intense rainfall/river flooding overloads sewer capacity (surface water, foul or combined), and/or when sewers cannot discharge to watercourses due to high water levels.

Sewer flooding can also be caused by blockages, collapses, equipment failure or groundwater leaking into sewer pipes.

Since 1980, the Sewers for Adoption guidelines mean that new surface water sewers have been designed to have capacity for a 3.3% AEP rainfall event, although until recently this did not apply to smaller private systems. This means that sewers can be overwhelmed in larger rainfall and flood events.

New developments should not cause additional pressures on existing sewers due to the requirements to maintain greenfield runoff rates. However, increases in rainfall as a result of climate change can lead to existing sewers becoming overloaded, although this can be reduced through the use of well-designed SuDS to reduce surface water runoff.

The management of drainage networks across the study area is the responsibility of either AW or TW, depending on location. Records of flood incidents relating to public foul, combined or surface water sewers between 2021 and 2023 have been provided by Thames Water. Table 4-2 below displays this data using truncated postcodes to avoid identifying specific streets or properties.

Data from Anglian Water was not received for the 2024 study; however, the table below details data received as part of the 2021 SFRA.

Table 4-2: Sewer flooding incidents recorded by Thames Water (2009 - 2023) and Anglian Water (2016 - 2021)

Postcode	Number of recorded incidents pre 2021	Number of recorded incidents 2021	Number of recorded incidents 2022	Number of recorded incidents 2023	Total flooding incidents between 2021 and 2023
CB1 1	9	1	0	0	10
CB1 2	14	1	0	0	15
CB1 3	22	7	0	0	29

Postcode	Number of recorded incidents pre 2021	Number of recorded incidents 2021	Number of recorded incidents 2022	Number of recorded incidents 2023	Total flooding incidents between 2021 and 2023
CB1 7	1	0	0	0	1
CB1 8	8	0	0	0	8
CB1 9	5	0	0	0	5
CB10 2	37	4	0	0	41
CB11 3	16	4	0	0	20
CB11 4	9	8	1	1	19
CM22 6	0	1	1	1	3
CM22 7	0	3	3	0	6
CM23 5	0	0	2	1	3
CM24 8	0	8	2	3	13
CM6 1	0	10	1	0	11

4.6 Groundwater flooding

In general, less is known about groundwater flooding than other sources and availability of data is limited. Groundwater flooding can be caused by:

- High water tables, influenced by the type of bedrock and superficial geology.
- Seasonal flows in dry valleys, which are particularly common in areas of chalk geology.
- Rebounding groundwater levels, where these have been historically lowered for industrial or mining purposes.
- Where there are long culverts that prevent water easily getting into watercourses.
- Perched aquifers underlain by impermeable geology, particularly in low lying areas.

Groundwater flooding is different to other types of flooding. It can last for days, weeks, or even months and is much harder to predict and warn for. Monitoring does occur in certain areas, for example where there are major aquifers or when mining stops.

Two datasets were used to identify potential areas that are likely to be at higher risk of groundwater flooding:

- The EA's Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding (AStGWF) dataset, showing the degree to which areas are susceptible to groundwater flooding based on geological and hydrogeological conditions. It does not show the likelihood of groundwater flooding occurring, i.e., it is a hazard, not risk, based dataset.

- The JBA Groundwater Emergence map, showing the risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets, based on predicted groundwater levels. This divides groundwater emergence into five categories:
    - Groundwater levels are either at or very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface. Within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets. Groundwater may emerge at significant rates and has the capacity to flow overland and/or pond within any topographic low spots.
    - Groundwater levels are between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface. Within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets. There is the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally.
    - Groundwater levels are between 0.5m and 5m below the ground surface. There is a risk of flooding to subsurface assets, but surface manifestation of groundwater is unlikely.
    - Groundwater levels are at least 5m below the ground surface. Flooding from groundwater is not likely.
    - No risk. This zone is deemed as having a negligible risk from groundwater flooding due to the nature of the local geological deposits.

The areas at most risk of groundwater emergence is discussed in Appendix E. It should be noted that these datasets only identify areas likely to be at risk of groundwater emergence and do not allow prediction of the likelihood of groundwater flooding or quantification of the volumes of groundwater that might be expected to emerge in a given area.

The JBA Groundwater Emergence map and the EA AStGWF dataset for the study area are provided in Appendix A. In high-risk areas, a site-specific risk assessment for groundwater flooding may be required to fully inform the likelihood of flooding.

4.7 Flooding from canals

Canals are regulated waterbodies and are unlikely to flood unless there is a sudden failure of an embankment or a sudden ingress of water from a river in areas where they interact closely. Embankment failure can be caused by:

- Culvert collapse
- Overtopping
- Animal burrowing
- Subsidence/ sudden failure e.g., collapse of former mine workings
- Utility or development works close or encroaching onto the footings of a canal embankment.

Flooding from a breach of a canal embankment is largely dictated by canal and ground levels, canal embankment construction, breach characteristics and the volume of water within the canal that can discharge into the lower lying areas behind the embankment. The volume of water released during a breach is dependent on the pound length (i.e. the distance between locks) and how quickly the operating authorities can react to prevent

further water loss, for example by the fitting of stop boards to restrict the length of the canal that can empty through the breach, or repair of the breach. The Canal and River Trust monitor embankments at the highest risk of failure.

Although there are no canals within the study area, the River Stort Navigation flows along part of the south west border of the study area, as shown in Figure 4-4, and could therefore pose risk. The canal runs north to south along the Uttlesford border between Rushy Mead Nature Reserve and Gaston Green and Hallingbury Marina. The residual risk from canal flooding should be assessed as part of a site-specific FRA.

The canals have the potential to interact with other watercourses in the study area, including the River Stort and other smaller watercourses. These have the potential to become flow paths if these canals were overtopped or breached. Any development proposed adjacent to a canal should include a detailed assessment of how a canal breach would impact the site, as part of a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. Guidance on development near canals is available from the Canal and River Trust website.

4.8 Flooding from reservoirs

Reservoirs with an impounded volume greater than 25,000 cubic metres are governed by the Reservoirs Act 1975, available on the Government website here, and are on a register held by the EA. The level and standard of inspection and maintenance required by a Supervising Panel of Engineers under the Act means that the risk of flooding from reservoirs is very low. Some reservoirs are designated as high risk by the EA, where an uncontrolled release of water could put people's lives at risk and are subject to increased inspection and maintenance requirements. However, this designation does not mean they are at a high risk of flooding.

Flooding from reservoirs occurs following partial or complete failure of the control structure designed to retain water in the artificial storage area. Reservoir flooding is very different from other forms of flooding; it may happen with little, or no warning and evacuation will need to happen immediately. The likelihood of such flooding is difficult to estimate but is extremely low compared to flooding from other sources. It may not be possible to seek refuge upstairs from floodwater as buildings could be unsafe or unstable due to the force of water from the reservoir breach or failure.

The EA hold mapping showing what might happen if reservoirs fail. Developers and planners should check the Long-Term Risk of Flooding website before using the reservoir data shown in this SFRA to make sure they are using the most up to date mapping. The EA provide two flooding scenarios for the reservoir flood maps: a ‘dry-day’ and a ‘wet-day’. The ‘dry day’ scenario shows the predicted flooding which would occur if the dam or reservoir fails when rivers are at normal levels. The ‘wet day’ scenario shows the predicted worsening of the flooding which would be expected if a river is already experiencing an extreme natural flood. It should be noted that these datasets give no indication of the likelihood or probability of reservoir flooding.

The current mapping shows that there are four reservoirs located within the study area with flood extents impacting the study area, detailed in Table 4-3, with their locations shown in Figure 4-3. There is a further three reservoirs are located outside the study area but whose flood extents lie within the study area, also detailed on Table 4-5. Section 8.4.3 provides further considerations for developing in the vicinity of reservoirs. The reservoir flood mapping for both the 'dry day' and 'wet day' scenarios in the study area has been provided in and in in Appendix A: GeoPDFs. The EA maps represent a credible worst-case scenario. In these circumstances it is the time to inundation, the depth of inundation, the duration of flooding and the velocity of flood flows that will be most influential.

Table 4-3: Reservoirs with flood extents that impact the study area.

Reservoir	Easting and Northing	Reservoir owner	Risk Category	Within Uttlesford Boundary	Local Authority
Balancing Pond C	554999, 221632	Stansted Airport Ltd	High-risk	Yes	Essex
Hatfield Forest Lake	554092, 219900	The National Trust	Not high-risk	Yes	Essex
Little Easton Reservoir	560198, 224146	Mr C J Trembath	High-risk	Yes	Essex
Shrubbs Farm Reservoir	551873, 213589	Liddell	Not high-risk	Yes	Essex
Lancaster Lake	54656, 218420	MJ & SC Collins	High risk	No	Hertfordshire
Bomb Pond	546563, 218430	MJ & SC Collins	High-risk	No	Hertfordshire
Berners Hall Farm	558997, 209737	Essex Farm	High-risk	No	Essex

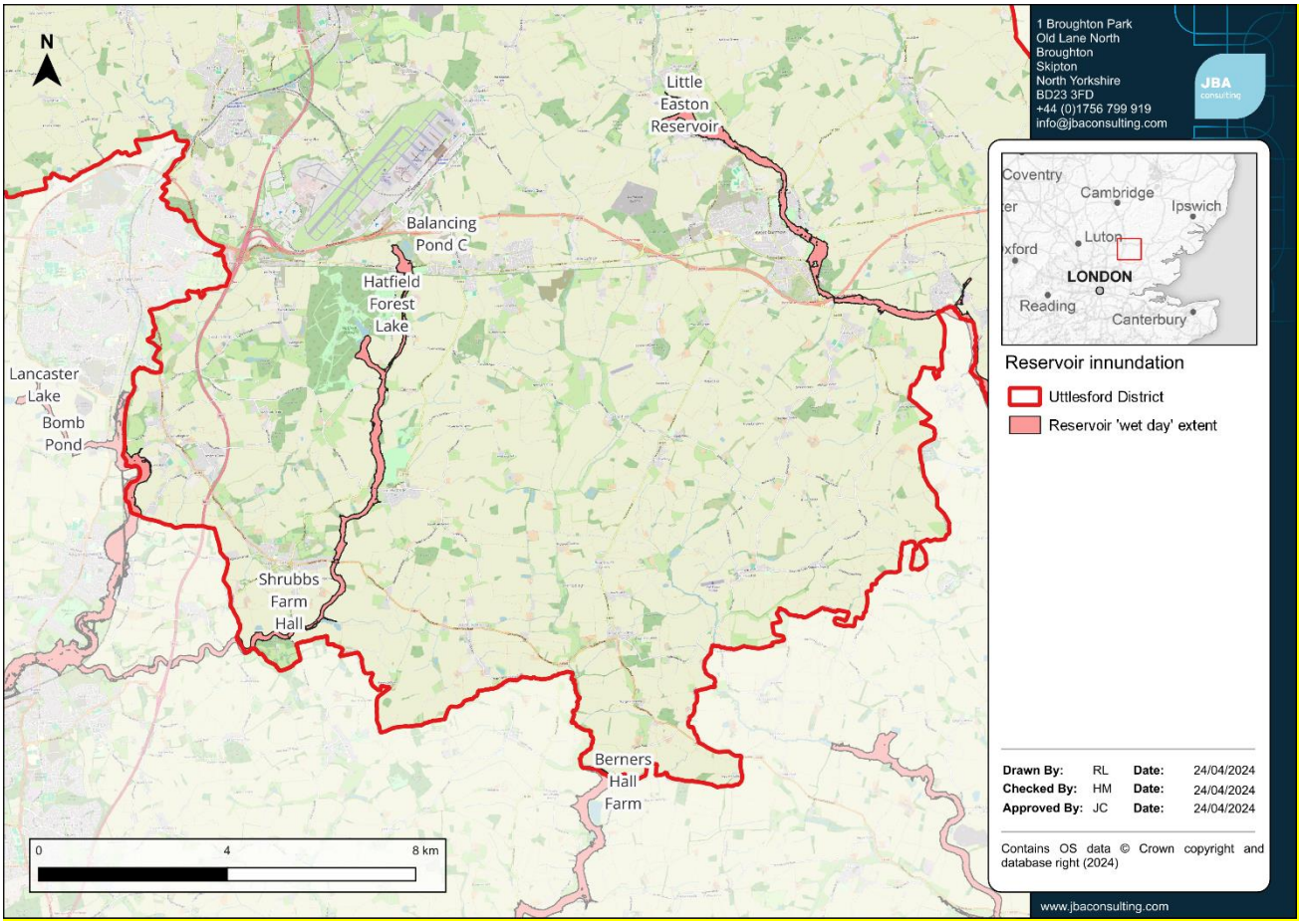


Figure 4-3: Reservoir 'wet day' scenario

As above, the risk of reservoir flooding is extremely low. However, there remains a residual risk to development from reservoirs which developers should consider during the planning stage.

- Developers should seek to contact the reservoir owner to obtain information which may include:
  - Reservoir characteristics: type, dam height at outlet, area/volume, overflow location.
  - Operation: discharge rates/maximum discharge.
  - Discharge during emergency drawdown.
  - Inspection/maintenance regime.
- Developers should apply the sequential approach to locating development within the site.
- Consult with relevant authorities regarding emergency plans in case of reservoir breach.
- The reservoir owners are contacted to confirm the Reservoir Risk Designation (if determined) and the inspection and maintenance regime of the reservoir.
- Consider the impact of a breach and overtopping, particularly for sites proposed to be located immediately downstream of a reservoir. This should consider whether there is sufficient time to respond.

- It should also be understood that the “risk category” of a reservoir is set by the potential damage and loss of life in circumstances where there is a breach or an extreme flood event. Accordingly, it is possible that allocation of new development downstream of an existing reservoir could potentially change the risk category and result in a legal requirement (under the Reservoirs Act 1975) to improve the structural and hydraulic capacity of the dam. As the cost of implementing such works can be substantial consideration should be given to considering the implications and whether it would be more appropriate to place development in alternative locations not associated with such risk.
- The EA online Reservoir Flood Maps contain information on the extents following a reservoir breach (note: flood extents are not included for smaller reservoirs or for reservoirs commissioned after the reservoir modelling programme began in October 2016). For proposed sites located within the extents, consideration should be given to the extents shown in these online maps.
- In addition to the risk of inundation, those considering development in areas affected by breach events should also assess the potential hydraulic forces imposed by the rapid flood event and check that that the proposed infrastructure fabric can withstand the loads imposed on the structures by a breach event.

4.9 Flood alerts and flood warnings

The EA is the lead organisation for providing warnings of river flooding. Flood Warnings are supplied via the Flood Warning System (FWS) service, to homes and business within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Further information on how to sign up for these warnings is available on the EA website.

There are currently 10 Flood Alert Areas (FAA) and 28 Flood Warning Areas (FWAs) covering the study area, as detailed in Appendix D.

Flood Alerts are issued when there is water out of bank for the first time anywhere in the catchment, signalling that ‘flooding is possible’, and therefore FAAs usually cover the majority of main river reaches.

Flood Warnings are issued to designated FWAs (i.e., properties within the extreme flood extent which are at risk of flooding), when the river level hits a certain threshold; this is correlated between the FWA and the gauge, with a lead time to warn that ‘flooding is expected’.

The FAAs and FWAs are listed in Appendix D and included in Appendix A: GeoPDFs.

4.10 Combined sources of flood risk

The sections above set out the various sources of flooding, which all individually present a flood risk within the study area. However, it is important to note that there is also the likelihood of increased or altered flood risk as a result of different sources of flooding interacting within the study area. The combined influence of fluvial and surface water

flooding for example could differ from what the datasets show separately, and this should be considered further by developers within a site-specific FRA, where appropriate.

4.11 Summary of flood risk in the study area

A table summarising all sources of flood risk to key settlements in the study area can be found in Appendix E. For this summary, the study area has been delineated into three sub-areas which are detailed below and shown in Figure 4.4:

- Sub-area 1 covers the north of the study area and includes the urban centres of Saffron Walden and Newport.
- Sub-area 2 is located to the east of the District and includes the urban centres of Great Dunmow and Thaxted.
- Sub-area 3 is in the west of the study area and includes the urban centres of Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham.

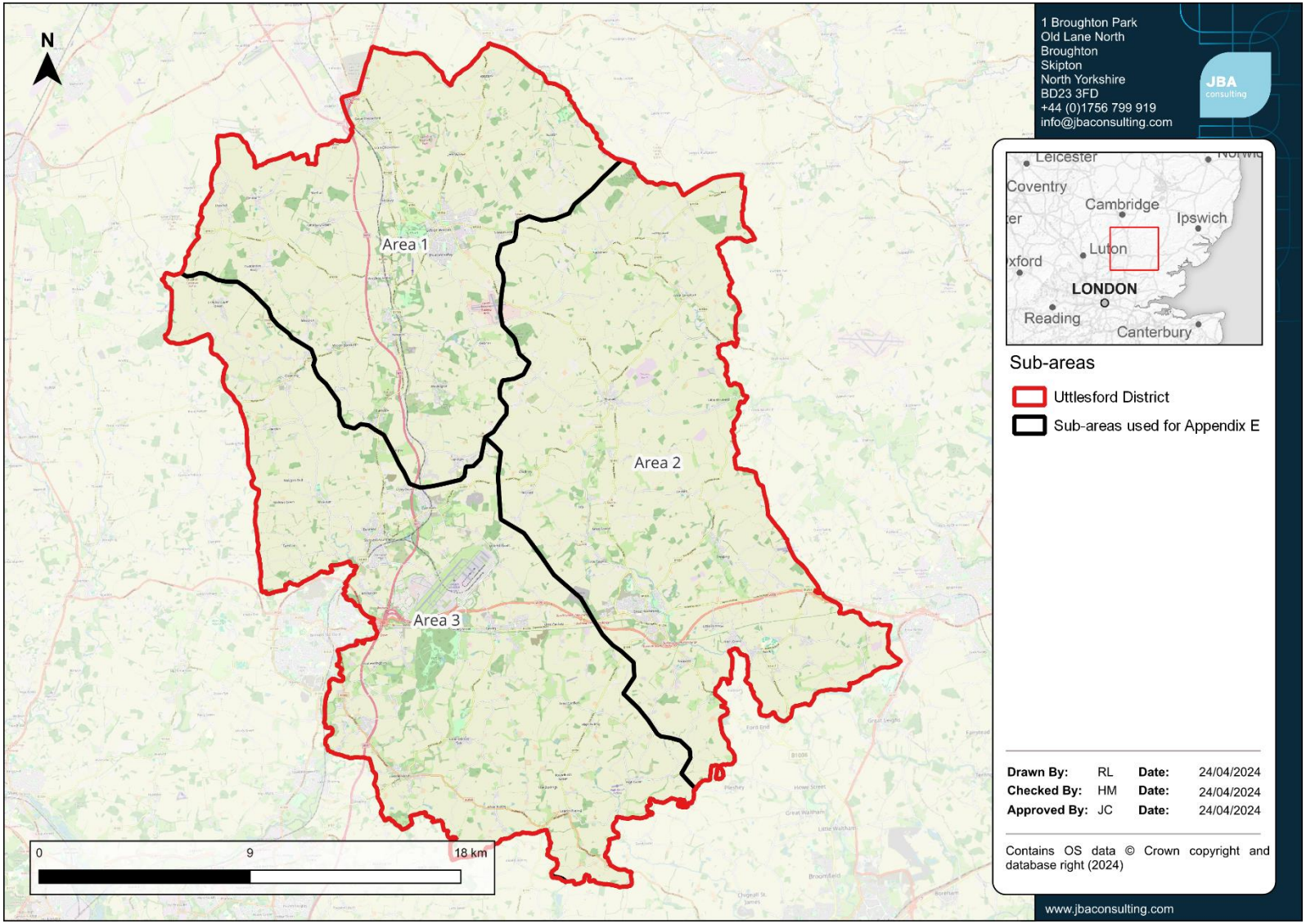


Figure 4-4: Uttlesford sub-areas for Appendix E

5 Impact of Climate Change

Climate change projections show an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers with a higher likelihood of more frequent and intense rainfall. This is likely to make severe flooding happen more often.

The NPPF sets out that flood risk should be managed over the lifetime of a development, taking climate change into account. This section sets out how the impact of climate change should be considered.

5.1 Revised climate change guidance

The Climate Change Act 2008 creates a legal requirement for the UK to put in place measures to adapt to climate change and to reduce carbon emissions by at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. This was updated in June 2019 under the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order to a 100% reduction (or net zero) by 2050. The full Act is available on the Government website here and the amendment order is available on the Government website here.

In 2018, the government published new UK Climate Projections (UKCP18). The EA used these projections to update their climate change guidance for new developments with regards to updated fluvial and rainfall allowances. The EA published updated climate change guidance for fluvial risk in July 2021 on how allowances for climate change should be included in both strategic and site-specific FRAs. The guidance adopts a risk-based approach considering the vulnerability of the development and considers risk allowances on a management catchment level, rather than a river basin level. The guidance was further updated in May 2022 to address the changes to the requirements for peak rainfall allowances.

Before undertaking a detailed FRA, developers should check the government website for the latest guidance.

5.1.1 Applying the Climate Change Guidance

To apply the appropriate climate change guidance to a site, the following information is required:

- The vulnerability of the development – see Annex 3 in the NPPF.
- The likely lifetime of the development – in general 75 years is used for commercial development and 100 for residential, but this needs to be confirmed in an FRA. For development that will have an anticipated lifetime significantly beyond 100 years a higher allowance is required.
- The Management Catchment (assigned by the EA) that the site is located in (as shown in Figure 5-1. The study area lies across four Management Catchments:

- The north of the study area lies within the Cam and Ely Ouse Management Catchment.
- The east and centre of the study area lies within the Combined Essex Management Catchment.
- The south of the study area lies within the Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne Management Catchment.
- The west of the study area lies within the Upper Lee Management Catchment.

Developers should consider the following when deciding which allowances to use to address flood risk for a development or local plan allocation:

- Likely depth, speed, and extent of flooding for each allowance of climate change over time considering the allowances for the relevant epoch (2020s, 2050s and 2080s).
- The 'built in' resilience measures used, for example, raised floor levels.
- The capacity or space in the development to include additional resilience measures in the future, using a 'managed adaptive' approach.

Developers should refer to the EA guidance when considering which climate change allowances to use, available on the government website here.

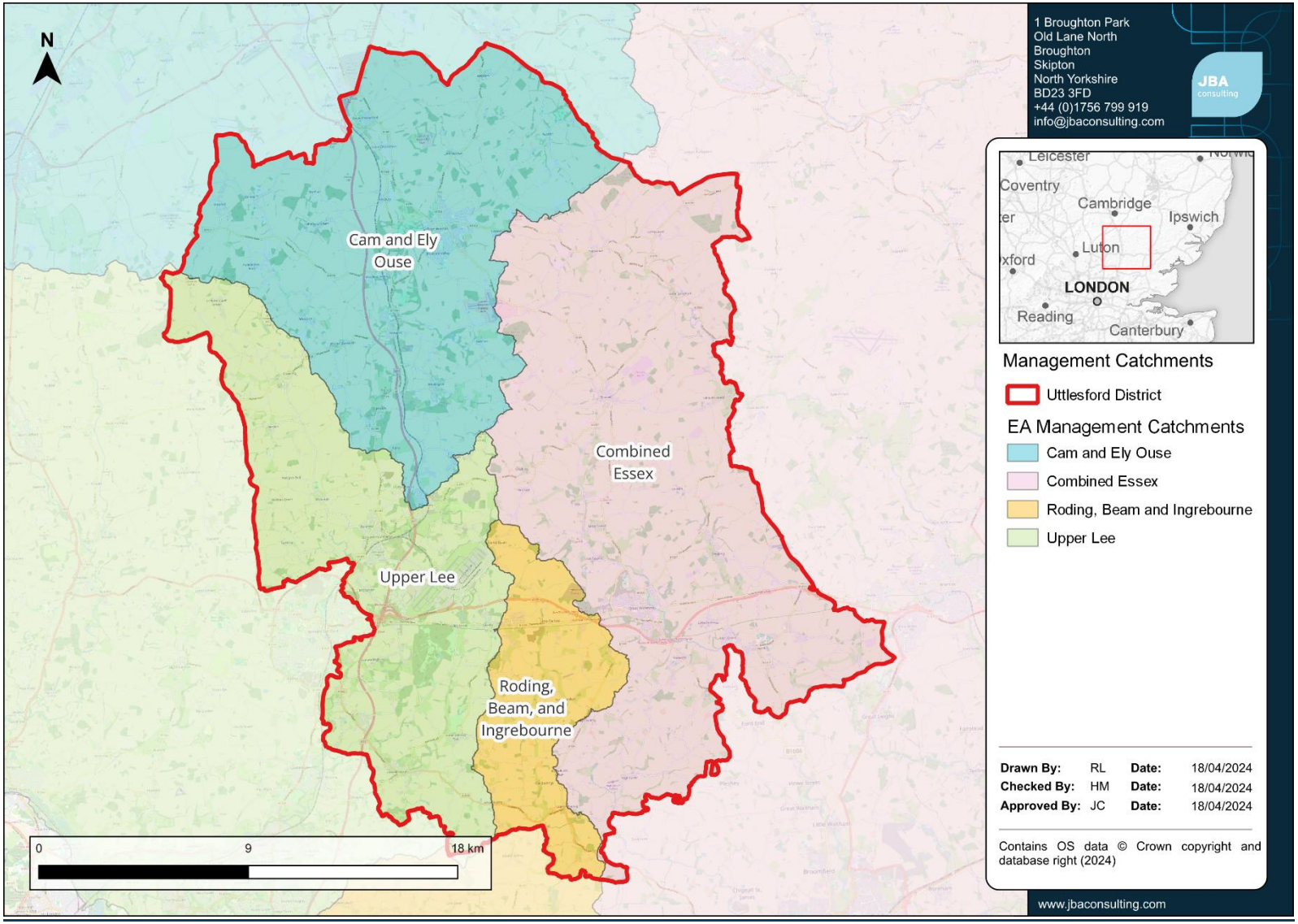


Figure 5-1: EA Management catchments for Uttlesford

5.2 Relevant allowances for the study area

Table 5-1 shows the updated peak river flow allowances that apply across the study area for fluvial flood risk for the Cam and Ely Ouse; Combined Essex; Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne; and Upper Lee Management Catchments. These allowances supersede the previous allowances by River Basin District.

The range of allowances are based on percentiles which describe the proportion of possible scenarios that fall below an allowance level:

- The central allowance is based on the 50th percentile (exceeded by 50% of the projections in the range).
- The higher central allowance is based on the 70th percentile (exceeded by 30% of the projections in the range).
- The upper end allowance is based on the 95th percentile (exceeded by 5% of the projections in the range).

Table 5-1: Peak river flow allowances for the Management Catchments which cover the study area.

Management Catchment	Allowance category	Total potential change anticipated for '2020s' (2015 to 2039)	Total potential change anticipated for '2050s' (2040 to 2069)	Total potential change anticipated for '2080s' (2070 to 2115)
Cam and Ely Ouse	Upper end	21%	22%	45%
Cam and Ely Ouse	Higher central	7%	5%	19%
Cam and Ely Ouse	Central	2%	-2%	9%
Combined Essex	Upper end	27%	37%	72%
Combined Essex	Higher central	13%	16%	38%
Combined Essex	Central	7%	9%	25%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	Upper end	31%	38%	64%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	Higher central	20%	21%	36%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	Central	15%	14%	26%
Upper Lee	Upper end	23%	27%	59%
Upper Lee	Higher central	9%	7%	22%
Upper Lee	Central	3%	-1%	10%

Table 5-2 shows the updated rainfall intensity allowances that apply across the study area for surface water flood risk for the different Management Catchments. These allowances supersede the previous country wide allowances. These allowances should be used for site-scale applications and for surface water flood mapping in small catchments (less than 5km²) and urbanised drainage catchments.

Table 5-2: Peak rainfall intensity allowances for small and urban catchments for the Management Catchments which cover the study area.

Management Catchment	Allowance category	Total potential change anticipated for '2050s' (2022 to 2060) 3.3% AEP	Total potential change anticipated for '2050s' (2022 to 2060) 1% AEP	Total potential change anticipated for '2070s' (2061 to 2125) 3.3% AEP	Total potential change anticipated for '2070s' (2061 to 2125) 1% AEP
Cam and Ely Ouse	Upper end	35%	40%	35%	40%
Cam and Ely Ouse	Central	20%	20%	20%	25%
Combined Essex	Upper end	35%	45%	35%	40%
Combined Essex	Central	20%	20%	20%	25%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	Upper end	35%	40%	35%	40%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	Central	20%	20%	20%	25%
Upper Lee	Upper end	35%	40%	35%	40%
Upper Lee	Central	20%	20%	20%	25%

Section 5.3 details the methodology applied to represent climate change within this Level 1 SFRA. Further details on the models used can be found in Appendix B.

5.3 Representing climate change in the Level 1 SFRA

Representation of climate change within the SFRA was discussed and agreed with the EA via an online meeting and agreement of a scoping methodology on 24th April 2024. This discussed the model data received, available data in the models, the latest climate change allowances, the approach adopted in the 2021 SFRA and the proposed approach for this updated 2024 SFRA.

The models requested and received are shown below, along with the available data for each model and the latest climate change allowances:

Table 5-3: Available modelling for the study

Model	Year	Catchment basin	Existing data	Pre-2021 allowances: Central, Higher Central & Upper End (2080s)	2021 allowances: Central, Higher Central & Upper End (2080s)
Upper Roding	2016	Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 70%	26%, 36%,64%
Upper Middle Stort	2010	Upper Lee	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 70%	10%, 22%,59%
Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook)	2015	Upper Lee	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 70%	10%, 22%,59%
Stansted Mountfitchet	2015	Upper Lee	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 70%	10%, 22%,59%
Chelmer - Upper Chelmer Tribs	2020	Combined Essex	2016 allowances (25%, 35%, 65%)	25%, 35%, 65%	25%, 38%,72%
Upper Blackwater	2016	Combined Essex	1% AEP +CC and 0.1% (20%)	25%, 35%, 65%	25%, 38%,72%
Cam	2012	Cam and Ely Ouse	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 65%	9%, 19%, 45%
Cam Rural Model (Phase 2 Slades 2012)	2014	Cam and Ely Ouse	1% AEP +CC (20%)	25%, 35%, 65%	9%, 19%, 45%

Green denotes a lowering in climate change allowances.

Red denotes an increase in climate change allowances.

Black denotes the same/ low difference in climate change allowances.

A pragmatic approach to climate change was proposed to the EA for the Uttlesford L1 SFRA in 2021. As the centre of the authority area forms a catchment boundary for three major basins, this means the watercourses are in their headwaters where the topography is very confined, meaning generally narrow floodplains with little difference seen between FZ2 and FZ3 extents (climate change usually sits between these events).
It was proposed to the EA that no new climate change modelling would be carried out for the L1 SFRA based on the following justifications:

- For all EA models provided, there is at least one existing climate change model output, and for one model there are the three 2080s pre-July 2021 allowances.
- The majority of updated 2021 catchment climate change allowances are lowered (the only increase is Chelmer and Blackwater Upper End, though the focus for FRAs is now on the Central allowance in the new guidance).

- There is a minor difference on the whole between FZ3 and FZ2 extents. Modelling climate change would show minimal difference as the extents would fall between these scenarios – all watercourses are in their headwaters with confined topography, and therefore negligible difference would be seen in the mapping. This approach was agreed in the previous L1 SFRA, and allowances have since decreased further, meaning FZ2 is a conservative indication.
- Climate change flows in the 2016 L1 SFRA (quote below) were compared and were contained within the 1,000-year event (FZ2) and now the flows are lower again with latest guidance:
    - *"The majority have a 'climate change' flood outline for the 100 year +20% event, with the exception of the two studies of the River Cam and its tributaries (including The Slade), which both used +25%. These outlines reasonably represent the 'Central' allowance for both river basin districts. Analysis of the 1,000-year flow estimation points for these studies (most studies usually include a 1000-year event) shows the average increase for each model is between +39% and +79% above the 100-year flows. These outlines can therefore be used as an approximation for the 'Upper end' estimate for most areas. The exception is the River Stort catchment, which is probably more representative of the 'Higher central' estimate. Following discussion with the Environment Agency it was decided to take a precautionary approach based on the assumption that the current Flood Zone 2 outline (1 in 1,000-year flood extent) represents a future Flood Zone 3a taking into account climate change."*
- The focus in the latest guidance for the vulnerability of developments is on Central allowance. The previous 1% AEP +20% climate change event covers the majority of the models' Central allowances conservatively.

It was agreed in April 2024, that this approach is still acceptable for the Upper Middle Stort, Stort Tribs, Stansted Mountfitchet, Chelmer and Cam models. However, for the Blackwater model, concerns were raised in 2021 as to whether the existing climate change runs were sufficient for the updated uplifts. Checks were undertaken on comparative flows to see whether the allowances were covered by the 0.1% AEP or 0.1% AEP + climate change event. Following checks, the 1% AEP +25%, +38% and +72% climate change uplifts were run and mapped for the Blackwater model in 2021. For the River Roding, where the Central allowance is +36% (i.e. above an accepted 'tolerance' for the +20%), Flood Zone 2 will be used as a proxy which is more conservative.

At the time of this L1 SFRA update, the sites requiring L2 assessment were also known, and only 1 site was located within detailed model coverage: the Chelmer, where detailed outputs were already present. Therefore, it was agreed than any modelling efforts required, should be focussed on the L2 SFRA and subsequent site-specific FRAs.

More detailed modelling of different climate change scenarios may need to be undertaken in future SFRA updates as hydraulic models become older, and if and when a Level 2 assessment is required or during a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

The Council should note that if new large settlements/ significant urban extensions or essential infrastructure are proposed in flood risk areas, the Upper End allowance would be required to be modelled as part of a Level 2 SFRA or a Flood Risk Assessment proposal.

The sections below detail the approaches taken to consider climate change for fluvial and surface water flooding.

5.3.1 Fluvial climate change

5.3.1.1 3.3% AEP (Functional floodplain - Flood Zone 3b)

Where model data is present for the 3.3% AEP event with climate change scenario (e.g. the River Chelmer), this has been used in preference (named "Modelled 3.3% AEP Central (River Chelmer only) in the mapping).

Where there is no available 3.3% AEP event with climate change, a pragmatic proxy approach has been used in agreement with the EA. Where model data was available, this involved looking at the model inflows, and aligning a 3.3% AEP + CC (Central) event with the nearest representative return period output, to act as a more accurate proxy, rather than defaulting to FZ3a which may be more conservative. As the table shows below, in some cases this better aligned with a 2% or 1.3% AEP event. The flood extents of the chosen return period events were merged to form a composite proxy (named "Indicative 3.3% AEP Central (modelled proxy)" in the mapping).

Where there was no modelling present, the proxy defaults to Flood Zone 3a of the EA's FMfP, and for Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

It should be noted that at site-specific Flood Risk Assessment stage, detailed hydraulic modelling may be needed to confirm the effects of climate change on the functional floodplain, but this is deemed a pragmatic approach for the strategic assessment of sites.

Table 5-4: Flood Zone 3b + CC Proxy Investigation

Model	FZ3b representation	Central 2080s allowance	Peak flows comparison - FZ3b + Central CC	FZ3b+CC Proxy
Roding	3.3% AEP	26%	Between 1.3% and 1% AEP	**1% AEP**
Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook)	3.3% AEP	10%	2% AEP	**2% AEP**

Model	FZ3b representation	Central 2080s allowance	Peak flows comparison - FZ3b + Central CC	FZ3b+CC Proxy
Upper and Middle Stort (2010)	FZ3a proxy (only 5% or 1% available)	10%	n/a	**FZ3a proxy**
Blackwater	3.3% AEP	25%	Similar to 1%	**1% AEP**
Cam rural	2% AEP	9%	Granta = 1.3% Cam = 1%	**1% AEP**
Slade	2% AEP	9%	1.3%	**1.3% AEP**
Stansted Mountfitchet	2% AEP	10%	Mostly like 1.3% AEP but some flows between 1.3%-1% AEP	**1.3% AEP**
Chelmer Tribs (Godfrey Way/ Olives Wood)	3.3% AEP	25%	Both between 1.3% and 1% AEP, but nearer 1% AEP	**1% AEP**
Chelmer	3.3% AEP	25%	n/a	**n/a (modelled)**

5.3.1.2 1% AEP (Flood Zone 3a)

Where model data is present for the 1% AEP event with climate change scenario, this has been used in preference. Table 5-4 below shows a summary of which event has been used for each model. For some models where only the +20% allowance was available, this was replicated for both the Central and Higher Central allowance. This means for the Central allowance, the +20% allowance is conservative for some models and more closely represents the Higher Central allowance. The Chelmer, Chelmer Tributaries and Blackwater have more representative allowances already run. For the Roding model, as the Central allowance (+26%) was above an acceptable tolerance to use the existing +20% output, the EA requested that Flood Zone 2 was used to represent climate change.

These outputs have been merged to form composite extents for the 1% Central and Higher Central climate change events (named "Indicative 1% AEP Central/ Higher Central (modelled proxy)" in the mapping).

In the absence of detailed hydraulic modelling, but where the EA's national Flood Map for Planning is available, Flood Zone 2 has been used as a proxy (named "Indicative 1% AEP (FZ2)" in the mapping). This is appropriate given the Higher Central/ Upper End climate change extents are often similar to the Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP) extents.

For Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 0.1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will need to model Flood Zone 3a+CC at a site if this data is not already available.

Table 5-5: Climate change allowances for various locations within the study area

Model	Existing data/ Proxy for Central CC	Central (2080s) Uplift	Existing data/ Proxy for Higher Central CC	Higher Central (2080s) Uplift
Upper Roding	Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP)	26%	Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP)	36%
Upper Middle Stort	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%
Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook)	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%
Stansted Mountfitchet	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%
Chelmer - Upper Chelmer	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +35%	38%
Chelmer Tribs (Godfrey Way Olives Wood)	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +35%	38%
Upper Blackwater	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +38%	38%
Cam Rural	1% AEP +20%	9%	1% AEP +20%	19%
Cam Rural (Slades 2012)	1% AEP +20%	9%	1% AEP +20%	19%

5.3.1.3 0.1% AEP (Flood Zone 2)

Where model data is present for the 0.1% AEP event with climate change scenario (e.g. the River Chelmer - Central allowance +25%), this has been used in preference. Where there is no available 0.1% AEP event with climate change, the EA's FMfP Flood Zone 2 can be used to represent this.

For Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 0.1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

Most hydraulic models are not built to run events of this magnitude, and often present instabilities and an inability to run. Given that generally across the district the floodplain

topography is confined, climate change allowances have lowered, and the Upper End climate change extents are often similar to the Flood Zone 2 extents, it is not expected that there would be significant differences from the 0.1% AEP event.

This may need to be considered further at a Level 2 assessment or for a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

5.3.2 Surface water climate change

Modelled Climate Change uplifts for the 3.3% and 1% AEP events for the Upper End scenario were included as part of this SFRA and are presented in Appendix A: GeoPDFs. The study area is covered by four management catchments (Cam and Ely Ouse, Combined Essex, Upper Lee and Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne), and the following uplifts have been provided:

- 3.3% AEP with +35% uplift (Upper End)
- 1% AEP with +40% uplift (Upper End)

The 0.1% AEP surface water extent can be used as an indication of surface water risk, and the risk from smaller watercourses, which are too small to be covered by the EA's Flood Map for Planning.

5.3.3 Developers

Developers may need to undertake a more detailed assessment of climate change as part of the planning application process when preparing FRAs, using the percentage increases which relate to the proposed lifetime and the vulnerability classification of the development. In areas where no modelling is present, this may require development of a 'detailed' hydraulic model, using channel topographic survey. Developers should consult the EA to provide further advice on how best to apply the new climate change guidance.

Where the peak river flow allowance is particularly high or the upper end is used, there should be an allowance for encroachment out of Flood Zone 2 and development in these areas should be avoided until proven at a site-specific FRA stage.

When undertaking a site-specific FRA, developers should:

- Confirm which national guidance on climate change and new development applies by visiting the Government website here.
- Apply this guidance when deciding the allowances to be made for climate change, having considered the potential sources of flood risk to the site (using this SFRA), the vulnerability of the development to flooding and the proposed lifetime of the development. If the site is just outside the indicative climate change extents in this SFRA, the impact of climate change should still be considered because the site may be affected should the more extreme climate change scenarios materialise.
- Refer to Section 8 which provides further details on climate change for developers, as part of the FRA guidance, and the SFRA User Guide in Appendix C.

5.4 Impacts of climate change across the study area

This section explores which areas of the study area are most sensitive to increases in flood risk due to climate change. It should be noted that areas that are already at high risk will also become at increasing risk in future and the frequency of flooding will increase in such areas.

It is recommended that the Council works with other RMAs to review the long-term sustainability of existing and new development in these areas when developing climate change plans and strategies for the study area.

5.4.1 Impact of climate change on fluvial flood risk

The sensitivity of an area to climate change can be analysed through comparison between design flood event extents and design flood events extents with modelled climate change uplifts applied. Due to the presence of formal flood defences across large parts of the study area, the defended climate change model flood extents have been compared with the defended 1% AEP flood extent. It should be noted that there is a residual risk should the defences breach or overtop. Further details on defences within the study area and residual risk can be found in Section 6.

Areas in the study area identified as most sensitive to fluvial impacts of climate change from defended modelled outputs are:

- The River Blackwater around Great Sampford
- The River Cam around Broom Wood, Saffron Walden, and Great Chesterford.
- The River Stort around Stansted Mountfitchet

Where no detailed modelling exists, the 1% AEP flood extent (Flood Zone 3a) can be compared against the 0.1% AEP flood extent (Flood Zone 2), for an indication of areas most sensitive to climate change.

5.4.2 Impacts of climate change on surface water flood risk

The 1% AEP surface water event with a 40% climate change uplift can be compared to the present day 1% AEP extent for an indication of areas most sensitive to climate change.

While across the study area, a significant difference in surface water flood extents is observed, areas in the study area most sensitive to changes in surface water flood risk are typically in low lying, urban locations such as Great Sampford, Saffron Walden, and Stansted Mountfitchet.

5.4.3 Impacts of climate change on groundwater flood risk

There is no technical modelling data available to assess climate change impacts on groundwater. It would depend on the flooding mechanism, historic evidence of known flooding and geological characteristics, for example prolonged rainfall in a chalk catchment. Flood risk could increase when groundwater is already high or emerged, causing additional overland flow paths or areas of still ponding.

A high likelihood of groundwater flooding may mean infiltration SuDS are not appropriate and groundwater monitoring may be recommended.

5.4.4 Adapting to climate change

The PPG Climate Change guidance contains information and guidance for how to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change. Examples of adapting to climate change include:

- Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites so that the risks are understood over the development's lifetime.
- Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development.
- Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality.
- Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm, for example by building in flexibility to allow future adaptation if needed, such as setting new development back from watercourses.
- Identifying no or low-cost responses to climate risks that also deliver other benefits, such as blue green infrastructure that improves adaptation, biodiversity, and amenity, for example by leaving areas shown to be at risk of flooding as public open space.
- Considering the Standard of Protection (SoP) of defences and sites for future development, in relation to sensitivity to climate change. The authorities and developers will need to work with RMAs and use the SFRA datasets to understand whether development is affordable or deliverable. Locating development in such areas of risk may not be a sustainable long-term option, such as at the defence locations mentioned in Section 6; and
- It is recommended that the differences in flood extents from climate change are compared by the authorities when allocating sites, to understand how much additional risk there could be, where this risk is in the site, whether the increase is marginal or activates new flow paths, whether it affects access/ egress and how much land could still be developable overall. Recommendations for development are made for the levels of risk in the SFRA User Guide in Appendix C.

6 Flood alleviation schemes and assets

This section provides a summary of existing flood alleviation schemes and assets in the study area. Planners should note the areas that are protected by defences where further work to understand the actual and residual flood risk through a Level 2 SFRA may be beneficial. Developers should consider the benefit they provide over the lifetime of a development in a site-specific FRA.

6.1 Asset management

RMAs hold databases of flood risk management and drainage assets according to their jurisdiction as follows:

- The EA holds a national database that is updated by local teams.
- The LLFA holds a database of significant local flood risk assets, required under Section 21 of the FWMA (2010).
- Highways Authorities hold databases of highways drainage assets, such as gullies and connecting pipes.
- Water Companies hold records of public surface water, foul and combined sewers, the records may also include information on culverted watercourses.
- The databases include assets RMAs directly maintain and third-party assets. The drainage network is extensive and will have been modified over time. It is unlikely that any RMA contains full information on the location, condition, and ownership of all the assets in their area. They take a prioritised approach to collecting asset information, which will continue to refine the understanding of flood risk over time.

Developers should collect the available asset information and undertake further survey as necessary to present an understanding of current flood risk and the existing drainage network in a site-specific FRA.

6.2 Standards of Protection

Flood defences are designed to give a specific Standard of Protection (SoP), reducing the risk of flooding to people and property in flood prone areas. For example, a flood defence with a 1% AEP SoP means that the flood risk in the defended area is reduced to at least a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.

Over time the actual SoP provided by the defence may decrease, for example due to deterioration in condition or increases in flood risk due to climate change. The understanding of SoP may also change over time as RMAs undertake more detailed surveys and flood modelling studies.

It should be noted that the EA's on-going hydraulic modelling programme may revise flood risk datasets and, therefore, the SoP offered by flood defences in the area may differ from those discussed in this report.

Developers should consider the SoP provided by defences and residual risk as part of a detailed FRA.

6.3 Maintenance

Different authorities have responsibilities relating to maintenance of flood risk assets.

- The EA and local authorities have permissive powers to maintain and improve main rivers and ordinary watercourses, respectively. The ultimate responsibility for maintaining watercourses rests with the landowner.
- Highways authorities have a duty to maintain public roads, making sure they are safe, passable, and the impacts of severe weather have been considered. They are also responsible for maintaining sections of watercourses where they are crossed by highways.
- Water companies have a duty to effectually drain their area. What this means in practise is that assets are maintained to common standards and improvements are prioritised for the parts of the network that do not meet this standard e.g., where there is frequent sewer flooding.
- ECC as the LLFA have permissive powers and limited resources are prioritised and targeted to where they can have the greatest effect.

There is potential for the risk of flooding to increase in areas where flood alleviation measures are not maintained regularly. Breaches in raised flood defences are most likely to occur where the condition of a flood defence has degraded over time. Drainage networks in urban areas can also frequently become blocked with debris and this can lead to blockages at culverts or bridges.

It is important that the authorities work in partnership to maintain flood risk assets and manage flood risk across the study area.

Developers should not assume that any defence, asset, or watercourse is being or will continue to be maintained throughout the lifetime of a development.

They should contact the relevant RMA about current and likely future maintenance arrangements and make future users of the development aware of their obligations to maintain watercourses.

Formal structural defences are given a rating based on a grading system for their condition. A summary of the grading system used by the EA for condition is provided in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Grading system used by the EA to assess flood defence condition.

Grade	Rating	Description
1	Very good	Cosmetic defects that will have no effect on performance.
2	Good	Minor defects that will not reduce the overall performance of the asset.
3	Fair	Defects that could reduce the performance of the asset.

Grade	Rating	Description
4	Poor	Defects that would significantly reduce the performance of the asset. Further investigation required.
5	Very poor	Severe defects resulting in complete performance failure.

Source: Condition Assessment Manual – EA 2006

6.4 Major flood risk management assets in the study area

The EA retired the Flood Map for Planning 'Areas Benefiting from Defences' (ABD) dataset in December 2022. This dataset will no longer be available on online mapping. Instead, a developer can enter an address on the EA website here to get information about their specific site and request flood risk assessment data for planning (also known as Product 4).

The EA now provide a dataset called the 'Reduction in risk of flooding from rivers and sea' which provides areas that are offered some level of reduced flood risk from defences, but with no defined SoP.

In the study area, a number of areas are shown to have reduced flood risk due to defences. Often these are small, isolated, pockets of land including along the River Roding, River Stort, and River Cam. Additional areas to the east of Stansted Mountfitchet, around Stansted Park, are also shown as having reduced flood risk due to defences.

Aside from a few sections of embankment, primarily along the River Stort Navigation Canal, the most common form of flood defence within Uttlesford is natural high ground. It is present on the banks of most major watercourses in the study area.

The EA 'AIMS' (Asset Information Management System) flood defence dataset gives further information on flood defence assets within the study area.

Table 6-2 details the locations which benefit from flood defences within the 'AIMS' dataset. In addition to the information shown in Table 6-2, there is considerable natural high ground across the study area, which provides a level of protection against fluvial flood risk. Most high ground lies along the left and right banks of the River Chelmer, River Stort, and River Cam. For further details of specific defences, developers should refer to the dataset, available to download from the EA website here. Additionally, the AIMS dataset can be viewed in Appendix A: GeoPDF Mapping.

If flood defences are proposed in the future (excluding property flood resilience measures which protect only residential properties, but not their curtilage e.g. flood doors), there is a requirement for the developer/ landowner to demonstrate through modelling that the risk is not increased elsewhere as a result, therefore the building of a defence alone without supporting modelling is not a reason to alter Flood Zones.

Table 6-2: Locations shown in the EA 'AIMS' data set (also shown in Appendix A: GeoPDF Mapping).

Watercourse	Location	Type	Design SoP (AEP)	Condition Rating (1-5)	Ownership
River Stort	Along the western bank of the river near Manuden.	Embankment	5%	Unknown	Private individual, company, or charity
River Stort	Along the eastern bank of the river, south of the B1038 at the confluence with The Bourne.	Embankment	1%	Unknown	Local Authority
River Stort	Along the northern bank between the river and Lower Road in Clavering	Wall	20%	Unknown	Private individual, company, or charity
River Stort Navigation Canal	Along the eastern bank of the canal near Thorley Wash Nature Reserve	Embankment	10%	Unknown	Private individual, company, or charity
River Roding	Engineered high ground along the northern bank of a connecting channel between two branches river	Engineered high ground	Unknown	Unknown	Private individual, company, or charity

6.5 Existing and future flood alleviation schemes

Below are the current and potential future schemes led by the EA and other local groups in the area.

6.5.1 Fluvial flood alleviation schemes

The following flood alleviation schemes (FAS) have been confirmed within Uttlesford District:

- Functional Floodplain and Flood Alleviation Scheme at Elms Farm, Stansted Mountfitchet - This included the realignment of Stansted Brook, floodplain compensation upstream to increase the functional floodplain area and storage to ensure no loss in flood storage. More information is available here.
- The FCRM Capital Programme for the Great Ouse catchment shows one Flood Alleviation Scheme within this area, which is a culvert repair and upgrade to trash screens on The Slades in Saffron Walden to reduce flood risk. This project is supported by the Environment Agency for capital investment next financial year (2024/25). This is led by Essex County Council.
    - The project also includes a Phase 2 involving the repair of culverted sections of the watercourse.
- Essex County Council have delivered a leaky dam scheme in Thaxted and are working with UDC to upgrade the trash screens here.
- Lower High Street in Stansted Mountfitchet - Essex County Council have supported the installation of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures in the known fluvial and surface water hotspot.
- Various small scale works to prevent culvert blockage in Clavering, Manuden, and Takeley.

The Environment Agency also confirm that their Partnership & Strategic Overview team covering Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex do not currently have any planned Natural Flood Management or Flood Alleviation Schemes within Uttlesford District.

6.6 Actual and residual flood risk

A Level 2 SFRA (for strategic allocations) or developer site-specific FRA will need to consider the actual and residual flood risk due to the presence of flood and drainage assets in greater detail (although it should be noted that Zone 3b is based on the actual flood risk).

6.6.1 Actual flood risk

This is the risk to the site considering existing flood mitigation measures and any planned to be provided through new development. Note that it is not likely to be acceptable to allocate developments in existing undefended areas on the basis that they will be protected by developer works, unless it can be demonstrated there is a wider community benefit.

The assessment of the actual risk should consider that:

- The level of protection afforded by existing defences might be less than the appropriate standards and hence may need to be improved if further growth is contemplated.
- The flood risk management policy for the defences will provide information on the level of future commitment to maintain existing standards of protection. If there is a conflict between the proposed level of commitment and the future needs to support growth, then it will be a priority for this to be reviewed.
- The standard of safety must be maintained for the intended lifetime of the development. Over time the effects of climate change will erode the present-day SoP afforded by defences and so commitment is needed to invest in the maintenance and upgrade of defences if the present-day levels of protection are to be maintained and where necessary, land secured and safe-guarded that is required for affordable future flood risk management measures.
- By understanding the depth, velocity, speed of onset and rate of rise of floodwater it is possible to assess the level of hazard posed by flood events from the respective sources.
- Consider what the SMP Policy is for the defences on the coastline, where relevant, and if it is intended to Hold the Line (HTL), what evidence is available for securing HTL.

6.6.2 Residual risk

Residual risk is the risk that remains after the effects of flood risk infrastructure have been considered. It is important that these risks are quantified to confirm that the consequences can be safely managed. The residual risk can be:

- The effects of a larger flood than defences were designed to alleviate (the 'design flood'). This can cause overtopping of flood banks, failure of flood gates to cope with the level of flow or failure of pumping systems to cope with the incoming amount of water.
- Failure of the defences or flood risk management measures, such as breaches in embankments or walls, failure of flood gates to open or close or failure of pumping stations.
- It is the responsibility of the developer to fully assess flood risk, propose measures to mitigate it and demonstrate that any residual risks can be safely managed.

This SFRA does not assess the probability of failure other than noting that such events are very rare. However, in accordance with NPPF, all sources of flooding need to be considered. If a breach or overtopping event were to occur, then the consequences to people and property could be high. Developers should be aware that any site that is at or below defence level, may be subject to flooding if an event occurs that exceeds the design capacity of the defences, or the defences fail, and this should be considered in a detailed FRA.

The assessment of residual risk should consider:

- The flood hazard, depth and velocity that would result from overtopping or breach of defences. Flood gate or pumping station failure and/ or culvert blockage (as appropriate). The EA can provide advice at site-specific development level for advice on breach/ overtopping parameters for flood models.
- The design of the development to take account of the highest risk parts of the site e.g., allowing for flood storage on parts of the site and considering the design of the development to keep people safe e.g., sleeping accommodation above the flood level.
- A system of warning and a safe means of access and egress from the site in the event of a flood for users of the site and emergency services.
- Climate change and/ or policy-dependent residual risks (such as those that may be created, if necessary, future defence improvements are required, or those associated with any managed adaptive strategies).

6.6.3 Overtopping

The risk from overtopping of defences is based on the relative heights of property or defence, the distance from the defence level and the height of water above the crest level of the defence. The Defra and EA Flood Risks to People guidance document, available from the Government website here, provides standard flood hazard ratings based on the distance from the defence and the level of overtopping.

Any sites located next to defences or perched ponds/ reservoirs, may need overtopping assessments at the site-specific FRA stage, and climate change should be considered.

6.6.4 Defence breach

A breach of a defence occurs when there is a failure in the structure and a subsequent ingress of flood water. Where defences are present, risk of breach events should be considered as part of the site-specific FRA. Flood flows from breach events can be associated with significant depths and flow velocities in the immediate vicinity of the breach location and so FRAs must include assessment of the hazards that might be present so that the safety of people and structural stability of properties and infrastructure can be appropriately considered. Whilst the area in the immediate vicinity of a breach can be subject to high flows, the whole flood risk area associated with a breach must also be considered as there may be areas remote from the breach that might, due to topography, involve increased depth hazards.

Considerations include the location of a breach, when it would occur and for how long, the depth of the breach (toe level), the loadings on the defence and the potential for multiple breaches. There are currently no national standards for breach assessments and there are various ways of assessing breaches using hydraulic modelling. Work is currently being undertaken by the EA to collate and standardise these methodologies. It is recommended that the EA are consulted if a development site is located near to a flood defence, to understand the level of assessment required and to agree the approach for the breach assessment.

7 Cumulative impact of development and strategic solutions

7.1 Cumulative Impact Assessment

Under the NPPF, strategic policies and their supporting SFRAs, are required to 'consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding' (Paragraph 166), rather than just to or from individual development sites.

When allocating land for development, consideration should be given to the potential cumulative impact of the loss of floodplain storage volume from any source, as well as the impact of increased flows on flood risk downstream. Whilst the loss of storage for individual developments may only have a minimal impact on flood risk, the cumulative effect of multiple developments may be more severe. Similarly, the effect of the loss of surface water flow paths / exceedance paths from sewers, surface water ponding and infiltration can also give rise to cumulative effects and potentially exacerbate flood risk.

All developments are required to comply with the NPPF and demonstrate they will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Therefore, providing developments comply with the latest guidance and legislation relating to flood risk and sustainable drainage, and appropriate consideration is given to flow paths and storage proposals should normally not increase flood risk downstream.

Local planning policies can also be used to identify areas where the potential for development to increase flood risk is highest and identify opportunities for such new development to positively contribute to decreases in flood risk downstream.

Catchments within the study area that are most sensitive to future increases in fluvial and surface water flood risk were identified. This provides a relative assessment of the catchments within the study area and are not comparable across other boroughs/districts. The following catchments were identified to be most sensitive:

- Chelmer (Great Easton - River Can)
- Stort and Navigation, Bishop's Stortford to Harlow
- Cam
- Stort and Bourne Brook
- Slade
- Stort (at Clavering)

The availability of development data varied across the authorities and therefore was not included within the quantitative ranking assessment, however, a qualitative assessment of the potential cumulative impact of development has been undertaken for each authority area.

The Cumulative Impact Assessment can be found in Appendix F.

7.2 Natural Flood Management (NFM)

NFM is used to protect, restore, and re-naturalise the function of catchments and rivers to reduce flood risk. A wide range of techniques can be used that aim to reduce flooding by working with natural features and processes in order to store or slow down flood waters before they can damage flood risk receptors (e.g., people, property, infrastructure, etc.). Techniques and measures, which could be applied in the study area include:

- Creation of Offline Storage Areas
- Re-meandering streams (creation of new meandering courses or reconnecting cut-off meanders to slow the flow of the river)
- Targeted woodland planting
- Reconnection and restoration of functional floodplains
- Restoration of rivers and removal of redundant structures, i.e. weirs and sluices no longer used or needed
- Installation or retainment of large woody material in river channels
- Improvements in management of soil and land use
- Creation of rural and urban SuDS

To maximise the benefits of NFM, it is important that land which is likely to be needed for NFM is protected by safeguarding land for future flood risk management infrastructure. This is particularly important for infrastructure that reduces the risk of flooding to large amounts of existing development, or where options for managing risk in other ways are limited to achieve multiple benefits for flood risk and the environment.

It is important to recognise the value of maintenance or restoration of natural riparian zones, such as grasslands, which protect the soils from erosion and 'natural' meadows which can tolerate flood inundation. The use of blue and green infrastructure throughout river corridors can also play a vital role in enhancing the river environment as well as safeguarding land from future development, protecting people and buildings from flooding and reducing flood risk downstream.

In 2017, the EA published an online evidence base to support the implementation of NFM and maps showing locations with the potential for NFM measures. These maps are intended to be used alongside the evidence directory to help practitioners think about the types of measure that may work in a catchment and the best places in which to locate them. The EA evidence directory can be found on the Government website here.

7.2.1 Opportunities and projects in and/or affecting Uttlesford District

The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) was introduced by the Government to establish catchment partnerships throughout England to jointly deliver improved water quality and reduce flood risk, directly supporting achievement of many of the targets set out within the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. CaBA partnerships are actively working in all 100+ river catchments across England and cross-border with Wales. Further details are available on the CaBA website.

Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne (RBI) Catchment Partnership:

The RBI Catchment Partnership is co-hosted by Thames21 and the Thames Chase Trust. It is a collaboration between relevant partners to deliver projects that will improve the health of the area's rivers and wetland environments. It consists of three separate tributary catchments to the River Thames; the River Roding, River Beam and, the most relevant to Uttlesford District, the River Ingrebourne.

Their key objectives are:

- To improve opportunities for recreation across the catchment and in turn raise awareness for a more sustainable use of this resource and ensure it is valued and appreciated.
- To manage flood risk and sustainable drainage; improve connectivity, manage Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and litter.
- To improve the way in which water is captured and managed; and to reduce nutrients in our watercourses.
- To work with land managers to improve habitats, and the way in which people can access their rivers and associated green spaces.
- To work with land managers; businesses and funding bodies to create inward investment opportunities for the Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne Catchment.

The partnership has created an interactive map that details of a range of project data that is being collated and opportunities for improvements across the catchment, including de-culverting and weir removals, NFM studies and pollution control schemes.

Upper Roding Farm Engagement

The Upper Roding Catchment Farm Cluster, comprising of local farmers and landowners, and representatives from Thames21 and the Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne Catchment Partnership is an EA funded project to encourage the improvement of environmental health and biodiversity in the area.

Since its inception in 2023, the Cluster have provided over 100 farmers and landowners a space to develop a shared ambition to improve water quality, soil health, and biodiversity on their land whilst maintaining sustainable farm businesses. Projects have included tree planting, natural fertiliser use, pond creation, hedge laying, turtle dove conservation, and deer management.

River Lea Catchment Partnership:

The River Lea Catchment Partnership is co-hosted by Thames21, the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and Groundwork. It is a collaboration between relevant partners to deliver projects that will improve the health of the area's rivers and wetland environments. The Partnership covers the River Lea catchment and its tributaries, of which the River Ash and River Stort are the most relevant to Uttlesford District.

The partnership has created interactive maps for each tributary/ catchment (Ash, Stort) that details a range of project data that is being collated and opportunities for improvements including water quality improvements, weir removals, NFM studies and community engagement.

Cam & Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment Partnership:

The CamEO Catchment Partnership is co-hosted by The Rivers Trust and Anglian Water. Its scope covers five river catchments: the River Lark, Little Ouse and Thet, Wisey, South Level and, the most relevant to Uttlesford District, Cam.

Their key objectives are:

- To encourage community-led management of river catchments by empowering local decision making.
- To ensure farming and land use sectors contribute to, and benefit from, healthy ecosystems.
- To maintain and restore healthy-functioning, biodiverse and resilient ecosystems, and increase 'natural capital' understanding.
- To mitigate the impact of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).
- To improve strategic co-operation at the catchment scale in order to maximise resources and facilitate more effective delivery.
- To ensure there is enough water of sufficient quality to support the needs of the environment and wider society.

Combined Essex Catchment Partnership:

The Combined Essex Catchment Partnership is co-hosted by the Essex Rivers Hub (which is in-turn hosted by the Essex Wildlife Trust) and the Environment Agency. It is a collaboration between relevant partners to deliver projects that will improve water quality and availability, reduce agricultural pollution, improve navigation and community engagement, biodiversity and land use. The Partnership covers the combined areas of previous catchment partnerships, as well as other catchments relevant to Uttlesford District, such as the River Can, River Chelmer, River Pant and River Ter.

The Essex Forest Initiative:

The Essex Forest Initiative launched in November 2019 with a five-year commitment to plant 375,000 trees across Essex. The scheme is part of wider efforts by Essex County Council to tackle climate change, reduce carbon, promote environmentally friendly infrastructure, and protect green spaces.

Uttlesford Nature Recovery Network:

The Uttlesford Nature Recovery Network is collating local knowledge of environmental project work, environmental volunteering, and general local environmental knowledge across the district. This is due to be used as an evidence base for the review of Uttlesford Districts' natural habitats within the upcoming Local Plan.

Local nature reserves:

The following nature reserves, which are owned by Essex Wildlife Trust, contain some of the country's rarest species. NFM techniques could be encouraged here to aid flood storage and slow surface water flows:

- Aubrey Buxton nature reserve - located in the Stansted Brook catchment near Stansted Mountfitchet. Contains Common Spotted-Orchids, Black Poplar, Adder's Tongue Fern, Lesser Lady's Mantle and Great Crested Newts.
- Rushy Mead nature reserve - located in the Great Hallingbury Brook catchment near Bishop's Stortford. Contains Water Voles.
- Shadwell Wood nature reserve - located in the Granta catchment close to the River Bourn near Ashdon and Saffron Waldon. Contains Oxlip, Wood Violets, Wood Anemones, Early Purple Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids, Meadowsweet and Sanicle.

Hatfield Forest

Hatfield Forest is owned by the National Trust is located in the Pincey Brook catchment near Takeley. This forest is a designated National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for butterflies, beetles and dragonflies, as well as being home to over 4000 species of wildlife including mammals such as Fallow Deer and Muntjac, insects, birds, over 650 species of fungi and over 320 wildflower species. Large scale NFM techniques could be encouraged here to aid flood storage as well as increase instream habitats.

8 Flood risk management requirements for developers

This section provides guidance on site-specific FRAs. These are carried out by (or on behalf of) developers to assess flood risk to and from a site. They are submitted with Planning Applications and should demonstrate how flood risk will be managed over the development's lifetime, considering climate change and vulnerability of users.

The report provides a strategic assessment of flood risk within the study area. Prior to any construction or development, site-specific assessments will need to be undertaken so all forms of flood risk and the actual and residual risk and SoP and safety at a site are considered in more detail. Developers should, where required, undertake more detailed hydrological and hydraulic assessments of watercourses to verify flood extents (including latest climate change allowances), to inform the sequential approach within the site and prove, if required, whether the exception test can be satisfied.

A detailed FRA may show that a site, windfall or other, is not appropriate for development of a particular vulnerability or even at all. The sequential and exception tests in the NPPF apply to all developments and an FRA should not be seen as an alternative to proving these tests have been met.

8.1 Principles for new development

8.1.1 Apply the sequential and exception tests.

Developers should refer to Section 3 for more information on how to consider the sequential and exception tests. For allocated sites, UDC should use the information in this SFRA to apply the Sequential test. For windfall sites a developer must undertake the Sequential test, which includes considering reasonable alternative sites at lower flood risk. Only if it passes the sequential test should the exception test then be applied if required.

Where planning applications come forward on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test, applicants need not apply the sequential test again. However, the exception test will need to be applied as proposals at the application stage will need to demonstrate flood risk is not increased elsewhere and is safe.

Developers should also apply the sequential approach to locating development within the site. The following questions should be considered:

- can risk be avoided through substituting less vulnerable uses or by amending the site layout?
- can it be demonstrated that less vulnerable uses for the site have been considered and reasonably discounted? and
- can the site layout be varied to reduce the number of people, the flood risk vulnerability or the building units located in higher risk parts of the site?

8.1.2 Consult with statutory and non-statutory consultees at an early stage to understand their requirements.

Developers should consult with the EA, ECC as LLFA, and the relevant water companies at an early stage to discuss flood risk including requirements for site-specific FRAs, detailed hydraulic modelling and foul and surface water drainage assessment and design. It should be noted that some of these consultees may need to charge for advice requested by developers or landowners.

8.1.3 Consider the risk from all sources of flooding and that they are using the most up to date flood risk data and guidance.

The SFRA can be used by developers to scope out what further detailed work is likely to be needed to inform a site-specific FRA. At a site level, developers will need to check before commencing on a more detailed FRA that they are using the latest available datasets. Developers should apply the most up-to-date climate change guidance (last updated in May 2022) and consider climate change adaptation measures. Site-specific consultation with United Utilities will be critical to identify any risk of flooding from the public sewer (especially when a sewer passes through a site) and if the site is located in a reservoir flood zone.

8.1.4 Confirm that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Section 9 sets out these requirements for taking a sustainable approach to surface water management. Developers should also confirm that mitigation measures do not increase flood risk elsewhere and that floodplain compensation is provided where necessary.

8.1.5 Make the development safe for future users.

Consideration should first be given to minimising risk by planning sequentially across a site. Once risk has been minimised as far as possible, only then should mitigation measures be considered. Developers should consider both the actual and residual risk of flooding to the site, as discussed in Section 6.6.

Further flood mitigation measures may be needed for any developments in an area protected by flood defences, where the condition of those defences is ‘fair’ or ‘poor’, and where the SoP is not of the required standard.

8.1.6 Enhance the natural river corridor and floodplain environment through new development.

Developments should demonstrate opportunities to create, enhance, and link green assets. This can provide multiple benefits across several disciplines including flood risk and biodiversity/ecology and may provide opportunities to use the land for an amenity and recreational purposes. Development that may adversely affect blue green infrastructure assets should not be permitted. Where possible, developers should identify and work with partners to explore all avenues for improving the wider river corridor environment. Developers should open up existing culverts and should not construct new culverts on site except for short lengths to allow essential infrastructure crossings.

8.1.7 Consider and contribute to wider flood mitigation strategy and measures in the area and apply the relevant local planning policy.

Wherever possible, developments should seek to help reduce flood risk in the wider area, e.g., by contributing to a wider community scheme or strategy for strategic measures, such as defences or NFM or by contributing in-kind by mitigating wider flood risk on a development site. Developers must demonstrate in an FRA how they are contributing towards this vision. Further information and guidance on surface water management and SuDS is presented in Section 9.

8.2 Requirements for site-specific Flood Risk Assessments

8.2.1 When is an FRA required?

Site-specific FRAs are required in the following circumstances:

- Proposals on sites of one hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1.
- Proposals for new development (including minor development such as non-residential extensions, alterations which do not increase the size of the building or householder developments and change of use) in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Proposals for new development (including minor development and change of use) in an area within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems (as notified to the LPA by the EA) (see Section 9.4.4 for more information on critical drainage problems).
- Land identified in this SFRA as being at increased flood risk in the future.
- Where proposed development or a change of use to a more vulnerable class may be subject to other sources of flooding (high risk surface water flooding Zone B, groundwater, or reservoirs).

8.2.2 Objectives of a site-specific FRA

Site-specific FRAs should be proportionate to the degree of flood risk and the scale, nature, and location of the development.

Site-specific FRAs should establish:

- Whether a proposed development is likely to be affected by current or future flooding from any source.
- Whether a proposed development will increase flood risk elsewhere.
- Whether the measures proposed to deal with the effects and risks are appropriate.
- The evidence, if necessary, for the LPA to apply the sequential test; and
- Whether, if applicable, the development will be safe and pass the exception test.

FRAs should follow the approach recommended by the NPPF (and associated guidance) and guidance provided by the EA and ECC. Guidance and advice for developers on the preparation of site-specific FRAs is available from the following websites with hyperlinks provided:

- Standing Advice on Flood Risk (EA)
- Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications (EA); and
- Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment: Checklist (NPPF PPG, Defra)

Guidance for LPAs for reviewing FRAs submitted as part of planning applications has been published by Defra in 2015 and is available on the Government website here.

Guidance should be sought from the EA and ECC at the earliest possible stage, and opportunities should be taken to incorporate environmental enhancements and reduce flooding from all sources both to and from the site through development proposals. Developers should seek to go beyond managing the flood risk and support reduction of wider flood risk, whilst enhancing and conserving the natural environment. Further advice can be found at: Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

8.2.3 Site layout and design

Flood risk should be considered at an early stage in deciding the layout and design of a site to provide an opportunity to reduce flood risk within the development. It is recommended that there is early engagement with the EA, ECC and also the appropriate water company.

The NPPF states that a sequential, risk-based approach should be applied to try to locate more vulnerable land uses away from Flood Zones to higher ground and lower flood risk areas, while more flood-compatible development (e.g., vehicular parking, recreational space) can be located in higher risk areas. Higher risk areas can also be retained and enhanced as natural green space. Whether parking in floodplains is appropriate will be based on the likely flood depths and hazard, evacuation procedures and availability of flood warning.

Waterside areas, or areas along known flow routes, can act as blue green infrastructure, being used for recreation, amenity, and environmental purposes, allowing the preservation of flow routes and flood storage, and at the same time providing valuable social and environmental benefits contributing to other sustainability objectives. Landscaping should provide safe access to higher ground from these areas and avoid the creation of isolated islands as water levels rise.

When designing sites, developers should consider the Hierarchy of Drainage, as stated in the PPG, aiming to discharge surface water runoff as high up the drainage hierarchy as reasonably practicable:

- into the ground (infiltration)
- to a surface water body
- to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system
- to a combined sewer

8.2.4 Modification of ground levels

Any proposal for modification of ground levels will need to be assessed as part of a detailed FRA.

Modifying ground levels to raise the land above the required flood level is an effective way of reducing flood risk to a particular site in circumstances where the land does not act as conveyance for flood waters. However, care must be taken as raising land above the floodplain could reduce conveyance or flood storage in the floodplain and could adversely impact flood risk downstream or on neighbouring land. Raising ground levels can also deflect flood flows, so analyses should be performed to demonstrate that there are no adverse effects on third party land or property.

Compensatory flood storage should be provided where development is proposed within the 1 in 100-year (1% AEP) flood extent, including an appropriate allowance for climate change, and would normally be on a level for level, volume for volume basis on land that does not currently flood but is adjacent to the floodplain (for it to fill and drain). It should be in the vicinity of the site and within the red line of the planning application boundary (unless the site is strategically allocated). Ideally, proposed developments should have a net gain of floodplain storage to reduce the risk of flooding, on site and elsewhere. Guidance on how to address floodplain compensation is provided in Appendix A3 of the CIRIA Publication C624, available to download from the CIRIA website here.

Where proposed development results in a change in building footprint, the developer should confirm that it does not impact upon the ability of the floodplain to store or convey water and seek opportunities to provide floodplain betterment.

Raising levels can also create areas where surface water might pond during significant rainfall events. Any proposals to raise ground levels should be tested to check that it would not cause increased ponding or build-up of surface runoff on third party land. Consideration should be given to the impact of raising ground levels on adjacent properties, particularly the impact of raising ground levels on surface water runoff from a site, with potential to increase surface water flood risk.

Applicants should note that changes to manhole cover levels on public sewers may increase / displace flood risk which will therefore require careful consideration with United Utilities. Applicants should not assume that any alteration to a public sewer, including diversion, will be acceptable as this could have adverse flood risk consequences.

For all developments regardless of any identified sewer flood risk that is identified on or near to the site, it is good practice for the finished floor levels and manhole cover levels (including those that serve private drainage runs) to be higher than the manhole cover level at the point of connection to the receiving sewer. Where the ground level of the site is below the ground level at the point where the drainage connects to the public sewer, care must be taken to ensure that the proposed development is not at increased risk of sewer surcharge.

8.2.5 Raised floor levels

If raised floor levels are proposed, these should be agreed with UDC and the EA. The minimum Finished Floor Level (FFL) may change dependent upon the vulnerability and flood risk to the development.

The EA advises that minimum FFL for 'More Vulnerable' development such as residential properties should be set 600mm above the 1% AEP fluvial plus climate change peak flood level, where the appropriate new climate change allowances have been used (see Section 5.2 for the climate change allowances). Where development is categorised as 'Less Vulnerable' or 'Water Compatible Development', FFL can be a minimum of 300mm above the 1 in 100-year plus climate change level and seek to maximize mitigation measures such as property resilience. An additional allowance may be required because of risks relating to blockages to the channel, culvert or bridge and should be considered as part of an FRA. Lowering existing FFLs below the existing levels within the 1% AEP plus climate change floodplain would not be acceptable and should be discouraged. New development offers opportunities to improve the resilience of buildings.

Allocating the ground floor of a building for less vulnerable, non-residential, use is an effective way of raising living space above flood levels. Single storey buildings such as ground floor flats or bungalows are especially vulnerable to rapid rise of water (such as that experienced during a breach). This risk can be reduced by use of multiple storey construction and raised areas that provide an escape route.

Similarly, the use of basements should be avoided. Habitable uses of basements within Flood Zone 3 and areas at risk of surface water flooding in the surface water flood zone B should not be permitted, whilst basement dwellings in Flood Zone 2 will be required to pass the exception test. Access should be situated 300mm above the design flood level and waterproof construction techniques used.

Where the ground level of a site is below the ground level at the point where the drainage connects to the public sewer, care must be taken to ensure that the proposed development is not at an increased risk of sewer surcharge. It is good practice for the finished floor levels and manhole cover levels (including those that serve private drainage runs) to be higher than the manhole cover level at the point of connection to the receiving sewer. Alternatively, mitigation measures may need to be incorporated into the proposals to protect against sewer surcharge.

8.2.6 Development and raised defences

Construction of localised raised floodwalls or embankments to protect new development is not a preferred option, as a residual risk of flooding will remain. Compensatory storage must be provided where raised defences remove storage from the floodplain.

Where development is located behind, or in an area benefitting from defences, the residual risk of flooding must be considered.

8.2.7 Developer contributions

In some cases, and following the application of the sequential test, it may be appropriate for the developer to contribute to the improvement of flood defence provision that would benefit both proposed new development and the existing local community. Developer contributions can also be made to maintenance and provision of flood risk management assets, flood

warning and the reduction of surface water flooding (i.e., SuDS). This relates to the Community Infrastructure Levy, a charge that can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area, and planning obligations including Section 106. The government website provides further information on the Community Infrastructure Levy and planning obligations. ECC have also developed The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex, 2020.

8.2.8 Buffer strips

The provision of a buffer strip to 'make space for water', allows additional capacity to accommodate climate change and means access to the watercourse, structures including bridges and culverts, and flood defences are retained for future maintenance purposes. It also enables the avoidance of disturbing riverbanks, adversely impacting ecology, and having to construct engineered riverbank protection. Any watercourse crossings should ensure that flood risk is not impacted. A buffer strip of 8m is required from any main river. Where flood defences are present, these distances should be taken from the toe of the defence.

Building adjacent to riverbanks can cause problems to the structural integrity of the riverbanks and the building itself, making future maintenance of the river much more difficult. Any development in these areas will likely require Flood Risk Activity Permits from the EA alongside any permission. There should be no built development within these distances from main rivers / flood defences / culverts (where present). Further advice and guidance on Flood Risk Activity Permits is available on the government website here.

8.2.9 Making space for water

The PPG sets out a clear aim in Flood Zone 3 to create space for flooding by restoring functional floodplain. Generally, development should be directed away from these areas.

All new development close to rivers should consider the opportunity to improve and enhance the river environment. Developments should look at opportunities for river restoration and enhancement as part of the development. Options include de-culverting, backwater creation, de-silting, in-channel habitat enhancement, fish passage creation, and removal of structures. Opportunities such as these should be pursued, as when designed properly, such measures can have benefits such as reducing the costs of maintaining hard engineering structures, reducing flood risk, improving water quality, and increasing biodiversity. Social benefits are also gained by increasing green space and access to the river.

8.3 Resistance and resilience measures

The consideration of resistance and resilience measures should not be used to justify development in inappropriate locations. However, having applied planning policy there may be some instances where development (such as essential infrastructure) is permitted in high flood risk areas.

In these cases, the above measures should be considered before resistance and resilience measures are relied on. The effectiveness of these forms of measures are often dependant on the availability of a reliable forecasting and warning system and the use of back up pumping to evacuate water from a property as quickly as possible. The proposals must include details of how the temporary measures will be erected and decommissioned, responsibility for maintenance and the cost of replacement when they deteriorate. Available resistance and resilience measures include:

- Permanent barriers which can include built up doorsteps, rendered brick walls and toughened glass barriers.
- Temporary barriers which consist of moveable flood defences which can be fitted into doorways and/or windows. The permanent fixings required to install these temporary defences should be discrete and keep architectural impact to a minimum. On a smaller scale, temporary snap on covers for airbricks and air vents can also be fitted to prevent the entrance of flood water.
- Community resistance measures which include demountable defences that can be deployed by local communities to reduce the risk of water ingress to several properties. The methods require the deployment of inflatable (usually with water) or temporary quick assembly barriers in conjunction with pumps to collect water that seeps through the systems during a flood.
- Flood resilience measures which aim to limit any permanent damage, prevent the structural integrity of the building being compromised and make the clean up after the flood is easier. Interior design measures to reduce damage caused by flooding can include electrical circuitry installed at a higher level and water-resistant materials for floors, walls, and fixtures.

Guidance on flood resilient and flood resistant construction techniques is available on the government website, here.

There are also opportunities for 'change of use' developments to be used to improve the flood resistance and resilience of existing development, which may not have been informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment when it was first constructed.

8.4 Reducing flood risk from other sources

8.4.1 Groundwater

Groundwater flooding has a very different flood mechanism to any other and so many conventional flood mitigation methods are not suitable. The only way to fully reduce flood risk would be through building design (development form), ensuring floor levels are raised above the water levels caused by a 1% AEP plus climate change event. Site design would also need to preserve any flow routes followed by the groundwater overland so that flood risk is not increased downstream.

Infiltration SuDS can cause increased groundwater levels and subsequently may increase flood risk on or off a site. Developers should provide evidence that this will not be a significant risk. Other underground works, such as basements, may also need to be

assessed as part of a site-specific FRA in certain prone areas susceptible to groundwater issues.

8.4.2 Surface water and sewer flooding

Developers should discuss public sewerage capacity with the water utility company at the earliest possible stage. It is important that a Surface Water Drainage Strategy (often undertaken as part of an FRA) shows that this will not increase flood risk elsewhere, and that the drainage requirements regarding runoff volumes and rates and SuDS for new development are met.

If residual surface water flood risk remains, the likely flow routes and depths across the site should be modelled. The site should be designed so that these flow routes are preserved and building design should provide resilience against this residual risk.

When redeveloping existing buildings, the installation of some permanent or temporary floodproofing and resilience measures could protect against both surface water and sewer flooding. Non-return valves prevent water entering the property from drains and sewers. Non-return valves can be installed within gravity sewers or drains within a property's private sewer upstream of the public sewerage system. These need to be carefully installed and must be regularly maintained.

Consideration must also be given to attenuation and flow ensuring that flows during the 1% AEP plus climate change storm event are retained within the site if any flap valves shut. This should be demonstrated with suitable modelling techniques. As noted above, early consultation with United Utilities will be critical to understand sewer flood risk especially when a sewer passes through a site. Where an existing sewer flood risk affects a site, applicants will need to carefully consider how this can be managed with United Utilities. Sewer flood risk could affect the developable area and the detailed design of the site.

8.4.3 Reservoirs

As discussed in Section 5.8, the risk of reservoir flooding is extremely low. However, there remains a residual risk to development from reservoirs which developers should consider during the planning stage:

- Developers should contact the reservoir owner for information on:
  - the Reservoir Risk Designation
  - reservoir characteristics: type, dam height at outlet, area/volume, overflow location
  - operation: discharge rates / maximum discharge
  - discharge during emergency drawdown; and
  - inspection / maintenance regime.
- The EA online Reservoir Flood Maps contain information on the predicted extents following a reservoir breach both when rivers are at normal levels and in conjunction with rivers in flood conditions (note: only for those reservoirs with an impounded volume greater than 25,000 cubic metres are governed by the

Reservoir Act 1975). Consideration should be given to the extents shown in these online maps. Depths and velocities were also prepared as part of this study but have not been made publicly available.

- The GOV.UK website on Reservoirs: owner and operator requirements provides information on how to register reservoirs, appoint a panel engineer, produce a flood plan, and report an incident.

Developers should use the above information to:

- Apply the sequential approach to locating development within the site.
- Consider the impact of a breach and overtopping, particularly for sites proposed to be located immediately downstream of a reservoir. This should consider whether there is sufficient time to respond, and whether in fact it is appropriate to place development immediately on the downstream side of a reservoir.
- Assess the potential hydraulic forces imposed by sudden reservoir failure event and check that that the proposed infrastructure fabric could withstand the structural loads.
- Develop site-specific Emergency Plans and/ or Off-site Plans if necessary and make the future users of the development aware of these plans. This may need to consider emergency drawdown and the movement of people beforehand.

The potential implications of proposed development on the risk designation of the reservoir should also be considered, as it is a requirement that in particular circumstances where there could be a danger to life, that a commitment is made to the hydraulic capacity and safety of the reservoir embankment and spillway. The implications of such an obligation should be identified and understood before new development is permitted, to ensure it can be achieved.

8.5 Emergency planning

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 lists Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and emergency services as Category 1 responders. Category 1 responders are responsible for reducing, controlling, and mitigating the effects of emergencies in both response and recovery phases.

The National Planning Policy takes this into account by seeking to avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood risk and considering the vulnerability of new developments to flooding.

The 2023 NPPF (Paragraph 173) requires site level FRAs to demonstrate that “any residual risk can be safely managed; and safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.”

In accordance with the NPPF, SFRAs, PFRAs and SWMPs can be used in the preparation and execution of a flood emergency plan as they can indicate areas that may be at risk of flooding. These can be provided as part of an FRA or as a separate document. Decisions regarding whether an Emergency Plan is required sits with the LPA, with advice from their Emergency Planning Teams, the EA and LLFA.

According to the PPG, an emergency plan is needed wherever emergency flood response is an important component of making a development safe; this includes the free movement of people during a 'design flood' and potential evacuation during an extreme flood.

Emergency plans are essential for any site with transient occupancy in areas at risk of flooding, such as holiday accommodation, hotels, caravan, and camping sites (PPG Paragraph 043).

Emergency Plans should consider:

- The type of flood risk present, and the extent to which advance warning can be given in a flood event.
- The number of people that would require evacuation from the area at risk.
- The vulnerability of site occupants.
- The impact of the flooding on essential services e.g., electricity, gas, telecommunications, water supply and sewerage.
- Safe access and egress for users and emergency services.

Further information is available from the following documents / websites with hyperlinks provided:

- The National Planning Policy Guidance
- 2004 Civil Contingencies Act
- Defra (2014) National Flood Emergency Framework for England
- FloodRe
- The EA and Defra's Standing Advice for FRAs
- Essex County Council's Flood and Water Management webpage
- Uttlesford District Council's Flooding webpage
- EA's 'How to plan ahead for flooding'
- Sign up for Flood Warnings with the EA
- The National Flood Forum
- GOV.UK 'Prepare for flooding' page
- ADEPT Flood Risk Plans for new development

8.5.1 Flood forums and community resilience

The Essex Resilience Forum provide emergency planning information and alerts about large-scale emergencies in the community. It is a multi-agency partnership, made up of local councils, emergency services, health providers, and the voluntary sector; working together to plan and prepare for a multi-agency response to major emergency. This includes warn of hazardous conditions, such as flooding, snow, drought, and extreme weather events, power failure, and National Emergency Alerts etc. Information is available on their website here.

Although Uttlesford District does not have its own resilience forum, Uttlesford District Council have prepared a page targeted at community resilience and emergency planning that can found here.

9 Surface water management and SuDS

This section provides guidance and advice on managing surface water runoff and flooding.

9.1 Roles of the Lead Local Flood Authority and Local Planning Authority in surface water management

Essex County Council as the LLFA is a statutory planning consultee. They provide technical advice on surface water drainage strategies and designs put forward for major development proposals, to confirm that onsite drainage systems are designed in accordance with the current legislation and guidance.

When considering planning applications, the drainage/flood risk engineering team will provide advice to the Planning Department on the management of surface water. The LPA should satisfy themselves that the development's proposed minimum standards of operation are appropriate and, using planning conditions or planning obligations, that there are clear arrangements for on-going maintenance over the lifetime of the development.

It is essential that developers consider sustainable drainage at an early stage of the development process – ideally at the pre-application or master-planning stage. To further inform development proposals at the master-planning stage, pre-application submissions are accepted by the Council. This will assist with the delivery of well designed, appropriate, and effective SuDS. Applicants are also encouraged to engage with the appropriate water provider (Affinity Water) to discuss their surface water proposals, especially where adoption is proposed.

Currently the implementation of SuDS is driven through planning policy. However, Schedule 3 of the FWMA 2010 is expected to be implemented in 2024 following a government review making SuDS mandatory for new developments in England. Schedule 3 will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of drainage systems, a SuDS Approving Body (SAB) within unitary and county councils, and national standards on the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of SuDS for the lifetime of the development.

9.2 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

SuDS are designed to maximise the opportunities and benefits that can be secured from surface water management practices.

SuDS provide a means of dealing with the quantity and quality of surface water and can also provide amenity and biodiversity benefits. Given the flexible nature of SuDS they can be used in most situations within new developments as well as being retrofitted into existing developments. SuDS can also be designed to fit into most spaces. For example, permeable paving could be used in parking spaces or rainwater gardens as part of traffic calming measures. A wide range of small SuDS features such as retention and conveyance features should be incorporated in the proposed development in the early design stages -

ideally at the pre-application or master-planning stage, to maximise effectiveness. Large, deep, featureless infiltration and detention basins should be avoided where possible.

It is a requirement for all new major development proposals that SuDS for management of runoff are put in place, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate (NPPF Paragraph 175). Where possible, SuDS that offer multiple benefits should be given priority. Use of infiltration SuDS are not appropriate on contaminated land.

It is important that SuDS are maintained for the lifetime for the development so that features can function as designed. Consideration should be given to enhancing SuDS to achieve biodiversity net gain.

9.3 Sources of SuDS guidance

9.3.1 C753 CIRIA SuDS Manual (2015)

The C753 CIRIA SuDS Manual (2015) provides guidance on planning, design, construction, and maintenance of SuDS. The manual is divided into five sections ranging from a high-level overview of SuDS, progressing to more detailed guidance with progression through the document. The manual can be downloaded from the CIRIA website here.

9.3.2 Non-Statutory Technical Guidance, Defra (March 2015)

Non-Statutory Technical guidance provides non-statutory standards on the design and performance of SuDS. It outlines peak flow control, volume control, structural integrity, flood risk management and maintenance and construction considerations. This guidance can be accessed on the Government website here.

9.3.3 Non-statutory Technical Guidance for Sustainable Drainage Practice Guidance, LASOO (2016)

The Local Authority SuDS Officer Organisation (LASOO) produced their practice guidance in 2016 to give further detail to the Non-Statutory technical guidance. This guidance is available on the SUS Drain website here.

9.3.4 Water Industry Design and Construction Guidance

The Design and Construction Guidance (DCG), part of a new Codes for Adoption covering the adoption of new water and wastewater infrastructure by water companies, contains details of the water sector's approach to the adoption of SuDS and can be accessed here.

9.3.5 Local Authority SuDS Guidance

The 2023 NPPF states that flood risk should be managed "using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in blue green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding" (NPPF Paragraph 167).

As the time of writing, UDC do not have any specific SUDS guidance; however, ECC produced The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex (2020). This

guidance includes current storage, discharge locations, and rates, planning advice, water quality advice, and maintenance guidance. More information can be found here.

In addition, all SUDS construction should be undertaken in line with the CIRIA SuDS Manual C753 and C768 and the DEFRA Technical Standards for SuDS to meet the adoption criteria for United Utilities.

9.4 Other surface water considerations

9.4.1 Groundwater Vulnerability Zones

The EA published new groundwater vulnerability maps in 2015. These maps provide a separate assessment of the vulnerability of groundwater in overlying superficial rocks and those that comprise of the underlying bedrock. The map shows the vulnerability of groundwater at a location based on the hydrological, hydro-ecological, and soil properties within a one-kilometre grid square.

The groundwater vulnerability maps should be considered when designing SuDS. Depending on the height of the water table at the location of the proposed development site, restrictions may be placed on the types of SuDS appropriate to certain areas. Groundwater vulnerability maps can be found on Defra's interactive mapping.

9.4.2 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (GSPZ)

The EA also defines Groundwater Source Protection Zones (GSPZs) near groundwater abstraction points. These protect areas of groundwater used for drinking water. The GSPZ requires attenuated storage of runoff to prevent infiltration and contamination. GSPZs can be viewed on Defra's interactive mapping. Three main zones are defined as follows:

- Inner protection zone (Zone 1) - areas from where pollution can travel to the groundwater source within 50 days or is at least a 50m radius.
- Outer protection zone (Zone 2) - areas from where pollution can travel to the groundwater source within 400 days or lies within the nearest 25% of the total catchment area (whichever is largest).
- Total catchment (Zone 3) - the total area needed to support removal/discharge of water from the groundwater source.

Online mapping shows there are currently 25 GSPZs which lie partially or wholly within the study area, as shown in Figure 9-1. Where a site is located in a GSPZ used for public water supply, applicants should engage with United Utilities to understand any concerns and any necessary mitigating measures to manage the risk of development to public water supply.

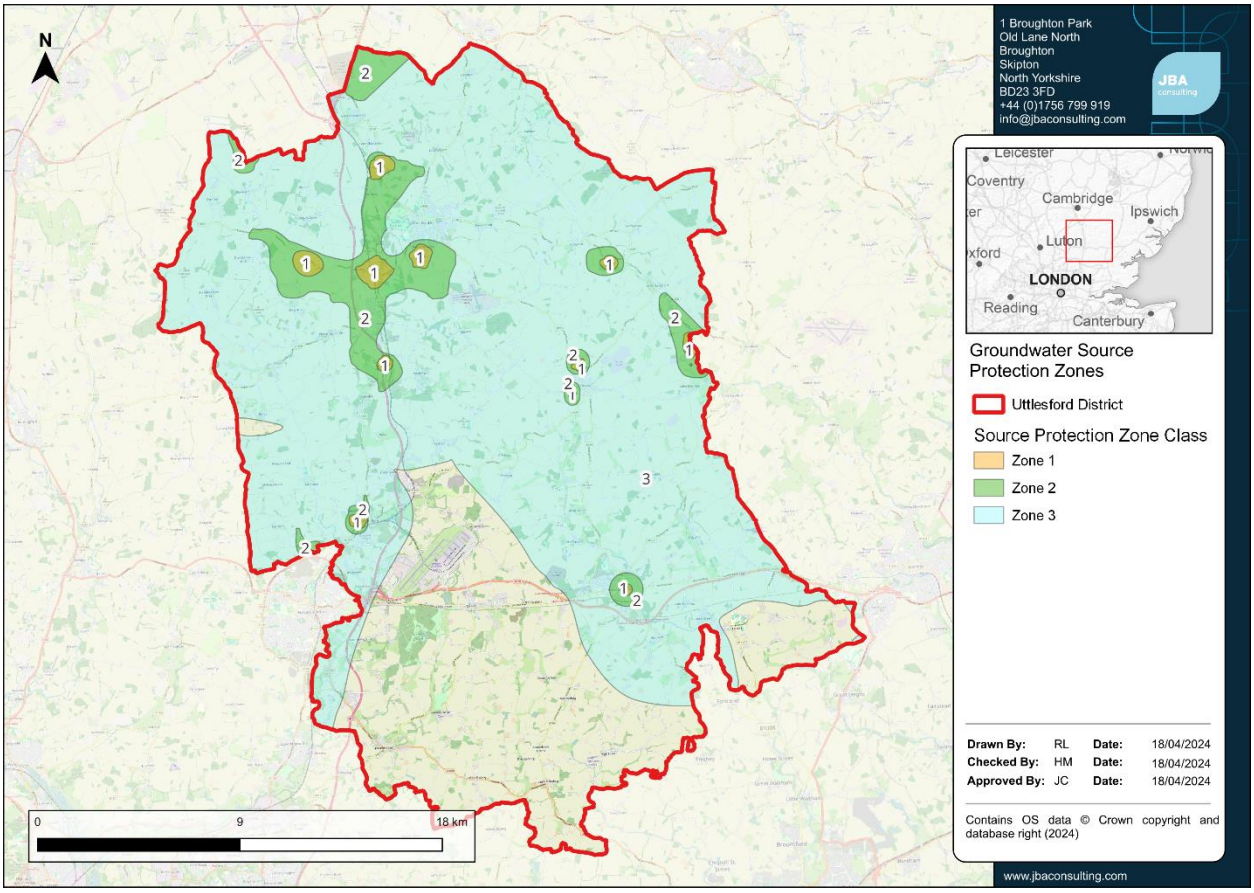


Figure 9-1: Groundwater Source Protection Zones within Uttlesford District

9.4.3 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Nitrate levels in waterbodies are affected by surface water runoff from surrounding agricultural land entering receiving waterbodies. The level of nitrate contamination will potentially influence the choice of SuDS and should be assessed as part of the design process.

NVZs can be viewed on the EA's website here. There are 11 NVZ 2021 to 2024 areas affecting the study area, as shown below.

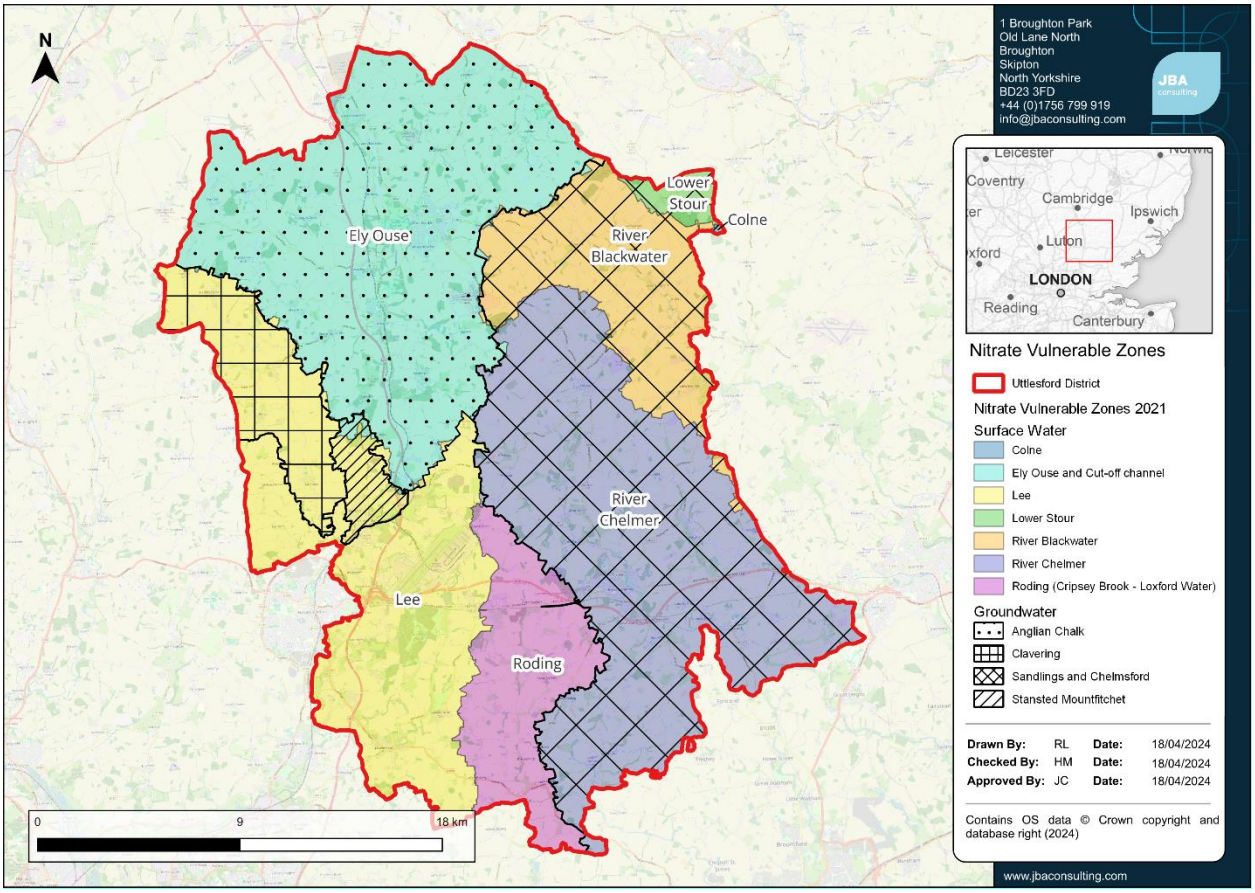


Figure 9-2: Surface water and groundwater nitrate vulnerable zones.

Currently, information on the 2021 to 2024 NVZs post-appeal is unavailable. Landowners can appeal an NVZ designation once notified if their land (or part of it):

- Does not drain into water that has been identified as polluted.
- Drains into water that should not be identified as polluted.

9.4.4 Critical Drainage Areas

Areas with Critical Drainage Problems (ACDPs) is land formally notified to the LPA by the EA as having critical drainage problems. Within ACDPs, proposed development may present increased risks of flooding both on and off site if the surface water runoff is not effectively managed. A dataset containing ACDPs is available to download from the EA website here. There are currently no ACDPs identified within the study area.

Local Authorities can also choose to designate Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs). Any development within these CDAs will need demonstrate an adequate surface water drainage system which is maintainable for the lifetime of the development within a site-specific FRA. Developers will need to provide details of the long term maintenance of the surface water drainage system.

10 Summary and recommendations

10.1 Summary of flood risk

Parts of the study area are at risk of flooding from the following sources: fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewers, reservoir inundation, and overtopping/ breaches. This study has shown that the most significant sources of flood risk in the study area are fluvial, and surface water.

Fluvial: The primary sources of fluvial flood risk in the study area are the River Cam, River Stort, and River Chelmer, as well as their associated tributaries. The River Cam flows north through Newport and Saffron Walden, exiting the study area at Great Chesterford. The River Chelmer flows south east through the study area, flowing through Great Dunmow and Flitch Green. The River Stort and Stansted Brook flow south west through Stansted Mountfitchet and out of the study area. Finally, the River Roding flows south, from Molehill Green, through Great Canfield and The Rodings to the southern border of the District. *Fluvial flood risk is discussed in Section 4.3 and Appendix E and flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

Surface Water: The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map shows prominent overland flow routes that largely follow the topography of the River Cam, River Stort, and River Chelmer floodplains. There are some areas where there are additional flow paths and areas of ponding, for example where water is impounded at road or rail embankments and in low-lying areas. While the study area is largely rural, there are also flow routes following the roads through the main urban areas of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, and Stansted Mountfitchet, which may affect many properties across these settlements. *Surface water flood risk is discussed in Section 4.4 and Appendix E and the flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

Climate Change Areas at risk of flooding today are likely to become at increased risk in the future and the frequency of flooding will also increase in such areas, due to climate change. Flood extents will increase; in some locations, this may be minimal, but flood depth, velocity and hazard may have more of an impact due to climate change. This SFRA provides an assessment of the impacts of climate change on fluvial, and surface water flood risk. *The approach to climate change is discussed in Section 5 and the flood extents are also shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.* It is recommended that the Council work with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to review the long-term sustainability of existing and new development when developing climate change plans and strategies for the study area.

Sewer: Thames Water, Anglian Water, and Affinity Water provide water services and sewerage services across the study area and have provided details of historic sewer flooding across the study area. On receipt of detailed site boundaries, water companies will be able to further assess the risk of flooding from the public sewer to a specific site using sewer modelling data. *Sewer flood risk is discussed in Section 4.5.*

Groundwater: The JBA Groundwater Emergence Map shows the north of the study area, particularly around the course of the River Cam, to have significantly higher groundwater

levels. This includes levels at, or very near, the surface along an unnamed tributary near Royston Road. There are also increased groundwater levels along the course of the River Stort, and its tributaries, but to a lesser extent. Elsewhere in Uttlesford, groundwater levels are quite low. *Groundwater flood risk is discussed in Section 4.6 and Appendix E, and the AStGWF map and JBA emergence map are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

Canals: The River Stort Navigation flows along part of the south west border of the study. It runs north to south along the Uttlesford border between Rushy Mead Nature Reserve and Gaston Green and Hallingbury Marina. *Canal flood risk is discussed in Section 4.7.*

Reservoirs: There are 4 reservoirs located within the study area, and a further 3 located outside the study area where the 'wet day' or 'dry day' scenarios encroach into the study area. There is a potential risk of flooding from reservoirs both within the study area and those outside. The level and standard of inspection and maintenance required under the Reservoirs Act means that the risk of flooding from reservoirs is relatively low. However, there is a residual risk of a reservoir breach, and this risk should be considered in any site-specific FRAs (where relevant) in accordance with the updated PPG. *Reservoir flood risk is discussed in Section 4.8 and Appendix E. The 'Dry Day' and 'Wet Day' flood extents are shown in the GeoPDFs in Appendix A.*

10.2 Recommendations

10.2.1 Sequential approach to development

The NPPF supports a risk-based and sequential approach to development and flood risk in England, so that development is located in the lowest flood risk areas where possible; it is recommended that this approach is adopted for all future developments within the study area.

New development and re-development of land should wherever possible seek opportunities to reduce overall level of flood risk at the site, for example by:

- Reducing volume and rate of runoff through the use of SuDS.
- Relocating development to areas with lower flood risk.
- Creating space for flooding.
- Blue Green Infrastructure should be considered within the mitigation measures for surface water runoff from potential development and consider using areas at risk of flooding as public open space.
- Consideration must be given to the potential cumulative impact of development on flood risk.

10.2.2 Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments

Site-specific FRAs are required to be produced by developers to provide a greater level of detail on flood risk and any protection provided by defences and, where necessary, demonstrate the development passes Part B of the Exception Test.

Developers should, where required, undertake more detailed hydrological and hydraulic assessments of the watercourses to verify flood extent (including latest climate change allowances), inform development zoning within the site and prove, if required, whether the Exception Test can be passed. The assessment should also identify the risk of existing flooding to adjacent land and properties to establish whether there is a requirement to secure land to implement strategic flood risk management measures to alleviate existing and future flood risk. Any flood risk management measures should be consistent with the wider catchment policies set out in the CFMP, FRMPs and LFRMS.

Developers should consult with the Council, ECC as LLFA, the EA, and the appropriate water companies at an early stage to discuss flood risk including requirements for site-specific FRAs, detailed hydraulic modelling, and drainage assessment and design.

10.2.3 Sequential and Exception tests

The SFRA has identified that parts of the study area are at high risk of flooding. Therefore, it is expected that several proposed development sites will be required to pass the Sequential Test and, where necessary, Exception Test in accordance with the NPPF.

The Council should use the information in this SFRA when deciding which development sites to take forward in their LPU. It is the Council's responsibility to determine whether the Sequential Test has been satisfied.

10.2.4 Council review of planning applications

The Council should consult the EA's 'Flood Risk Assessment: Local Planning Authorities', last updated February 2022, when reviewing planning applications for proposed developments at risk of flooding.

The Council will consult the relevant statutory consultees as part of the planning application assessment and they may, in some cases, also contact non-statutory consultees that have an interest in the planning application.

10.2.5 Drainage strategies and SuDS

Planners should be aware of the conditions set by the LLFAs for surface water management. The enactment of Schedule 3 of the FWMA means that there will be mandatory standards for delivery and adoption of SuDS in new developments.

SuDS design should demonstrate how constraints have been considered and how the design provides multiple benefits e.g. landscape enhancement, biodiversity, recreation, amenity, leisure, and the enhancement of historical features.

Planning applications for phased developments should be accompanied by a drainage strategy, which takes a strategic approach to drainage provision across the entire site and incorporates adequate provision for SuDS within each phase. Applicants will need to demonstrate a holistic and co-ordinated approach to both foul and surface water drainage and the management of flood risk.

Use of the SuDS management train to prevent and control pollutants to prevent the 'first flush' polluting the receiving waterbody.

SuDS are to be designed so that they are easy to maintain, and it should be set out who will maintain the system, how the maintenance will be funded and should be supported by an appropriately detailed maintenance and operation manual.

10.2.6 Residual risk

Residual risk is the risk that remains after mitigation measures are considered. The residual risk includes the consideration of flood events that exceed the design thresholds of the flood defences or circumstances where there is a failure of the defences, e.g. flood bank collapse. Residual risks should be considered as part of site-specific FRAs.

Further, any developments located within an area protected by flood risk management measures, where the condition of those defences is 'fair' or 'poor', where the standard of protection is not of the required standard or where the failure of the intended level of service gives rise to unsafe conditions should be identified.

The risk to development from reservoirs is residual but developers should consider reservoir flooding during the planning stage. They should seek to contact the reservoir owner to obtain information and should apply the sequential approach to locating development within the site. Developers should also consult with relevant authorities regarding emergency plans in case of reservoir breach.

Consideration should be given to the potential for safe access and egress in the event of rapid inundation of water due to a breach with little warning.

10.2.7 Reduction of flood risk through site allocations and appropriate site design:

- To locate new development in areas of lowest risk, in line with the sequential test, by steering sites to Flood Zone 1 from the Flood Map for Planning and avoiding where possible areas with a higher risk of surface water flooding and by avoiding any other sources of flooding. If a sequential test is undertaken and a site at flood risk is identified as the only appropriate site for the development, the exception test shall be undertaken. If development can't be avoided in the higher risk surface water Zone (Zone B), then part "b" of the exception test should be satisfied.
- After application of the exception test, a sequential approach to site design will be used to reduce risk. Any re-development within areas of flood risk which provide other wider sustainability benefits will provide flood risk betterment and made resilient to flooding.
- Identification of long-term opportunities to remove development from the floodplain and to make space for water.
- Ordinary watercourses not currently afforded flood maps should be modelled to an appropriate level of detail to enable a sequential approach to the layout of the development.

- Identify opportunities for brownfield sites in functional floodplain to reduce risk and provide flood risk betterment.
- Identify opportunities to help fund future flood risk management through developer contributions to reduce risk for surrounding areas.
- Seek opportunities to make space for water to accommodate climate change.

10.2.8 Safe access and egress

According to the Government's guidance on 'Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice' minimum FFLs for vulnerable development in Flood Zone 2 should normally be a minimum of whichever is higher of the following:

- 300mm above average ground level of the site.
- 300mm above the adjacent road level to the building.
- 300mm above estimated river or sea flood level.

The estimated river or sea flood level is the 1% AEP fluvial flood level with an appropriate allowance for climate change.

For development in Flood Zone 3, as the risk of flooding is greater, the standard of mitigation sought will be higher. While the minimum FFLs outlined above are applicable to development in Flood Zone 2, they are not necessarily applicable to development in Flood Zone 3, where they EA would typically expect FFLs to be at least 600mm above the estimated river or sea flood level.

Safe access and egress will need to be demonstrated at all development sites. Emergency vehicular access should be possible during times of flood. If at risk, then an assessment should be made to detail the flood duration, depth, velocity, and flood hazard rating in the 1% AEP plus climate change flood event, in line with FD2320.

Where detailed hydraulic modelling of a watercourse is not already available, modelling will need to be undertaken as part of a site-specific FRA to estimate the 1 in 1,000-year (0.1% AEP) flood level, including an appropriate allowance for climate change. Where development is located behind, or in an area benefitting from, defences, consideration should be given to the potential safety of the development, FFLs and for safe access and egress in the event of rapid inundation of water due to a defence breach with little warning.

10.2.9 Promote SuDS to mimic natural drainage routes to improve water quality

- SuDS design should demonstrate how constraints have been considered and how the design provides multiple benefits e.g. landscape enhancement, biodiversity, recreation, amenity, leisure, and the enhancement of historical features.
- Planning applications for phased developments should be accompanied by a drainage strategy, which takes a strategic approach to drainage provision across the entire site and incorporates adequate provision for SuDS within each phase.
- Use of the SuDS management train to prevent and control pollutants to prevent the 'first flush' polluting the receiving waterbody.

- SuDS are to be designed so that they are easy to maintain, and it should be set out who will maintain the system, how the maintenance will be funded and should be supported by an appropriately detailed maintenance and operation manual.

10.2.10 Reduce surface water runoff from new developments and agricultural land

- Space should be provided for the inclusion of SuDS on all allocated sites, outline proposals and full planning applications.
- Promote biodiversity, habitat improvements and Countryside Stewardship schemes help prevent soil loss and to reduce runoff from agricultural land.
- Identify opportunities to maintain and enhance permeable surfaces and greenspaces to help reduce surface water runoff whilst promoting other benefits, including biodiversity and wellbeing.

10.2.11 Enhance and restore river corridors and habitat

- Assess condition of existing assets and upgrade, if required, to confirm that the infrastructure can accommodate pressures/flows for the lifetime of the development.
- Natural drainage features should be maintained.
- Identify opportunities for river restoration/enhancement to make space for water.
- A presumption against culverting of open watercourses except where essential to allow highways and/or other infrastructure to cross, in line with CIRIA's Culvert design and operation guide, (C689) and to restrict development over culverts.
- There should be no built development within 8m from the top of a watercourse or main river for the preservation of the watercourse corridor, wildlife habitat, flood flow conveyance and future watercourse maintenance or improvement.

10.2.12 Mitigate against risk, improved emergency planning and flood awareness

- Work with emergency planning colleagues and stakeholders to identify areas at highest risk and locate most vulnerable receptors.
- Exceedance flows, both within and outside of the site, should be appropriately designed to minimise risks to both people and property.
- For a partial or completely pumped drainage system, an assessment should be undertaken to assess the risk of flooding due to any failure of the pumps to be assessed. The design flood level should be determined if the pumps were to fail; if the attenuation storage was full, and if a design storm occurred.
- An emergency overflow should be provided for piped and storage features above the predicted water level arising from a 1% AEP rainfall event, inclusive of climate change and urban creep.
- Consideration and incorporation of flood resilience measures up to the 0.1% AEP event.
- Produce and implement robust emergency (evacuation) plans for major developments.

- Increase awareness and promote sign-up to the EA Flood Warnings within the study area.

10.3 Requirements for Level 2 SFRA

Following the application of the sequential test, where sites cannot be appropriately accommodated in low-risk areas, the Council will apply the NPPF's exception test. In these circumstances, a Level 2 SFRA may be required, to assess in more detail the nature and implications of the flood characteristics.

As part of this Level 1 SFRA, an initial site screening exercise has been undertaken for Uttlesford District Council to help inform the application of the sequential test and subsequent potential requirement for a Level 2 SFRA. This used sites submitted as part of recent call for sites. These sites had been submitted as potential future development sites.

10.4 Technical recommendations

10.4.1 Updates to SFRA

SFRAs are high level strategic documents and, as such, do not go into detail on an individual site-specific basis. This SFRA has been developed using the best available information, supplied at the time of preparation.

The EA regularly reviews its hydrology, hydraulic modelling, and flood risk mapping, and it is important that they are approached to determine whether updated (more accurate) information is available prior to commencing a site-specific FRA. When using the SFRA to prepare FRAs it is important to check that the most up to date information is used, as is described in amendments to the flood mapping prepared and issued by the EA at regular intervals.

Other datasets used to inform this SFRA may also be updated periodically and following the publication of this SFRA, new information on flood risk may be provided by RMAs.

10.4.2 Modelling updates

Limited modelling updates were undertaken as part of this SFRA, due to the age, scale, and suitability of the available modelling across the study area. Where development is planned in an area where detailed hydraulic modelling is not available, or where the latest climate change uplifts and functional floodplain outputs are not available, further detailed modelling is likely to be required either as part of a Level 2 SFRA or within a site-specific FRA.

11 Appendices

A GeoPDF Mapping and User Guide

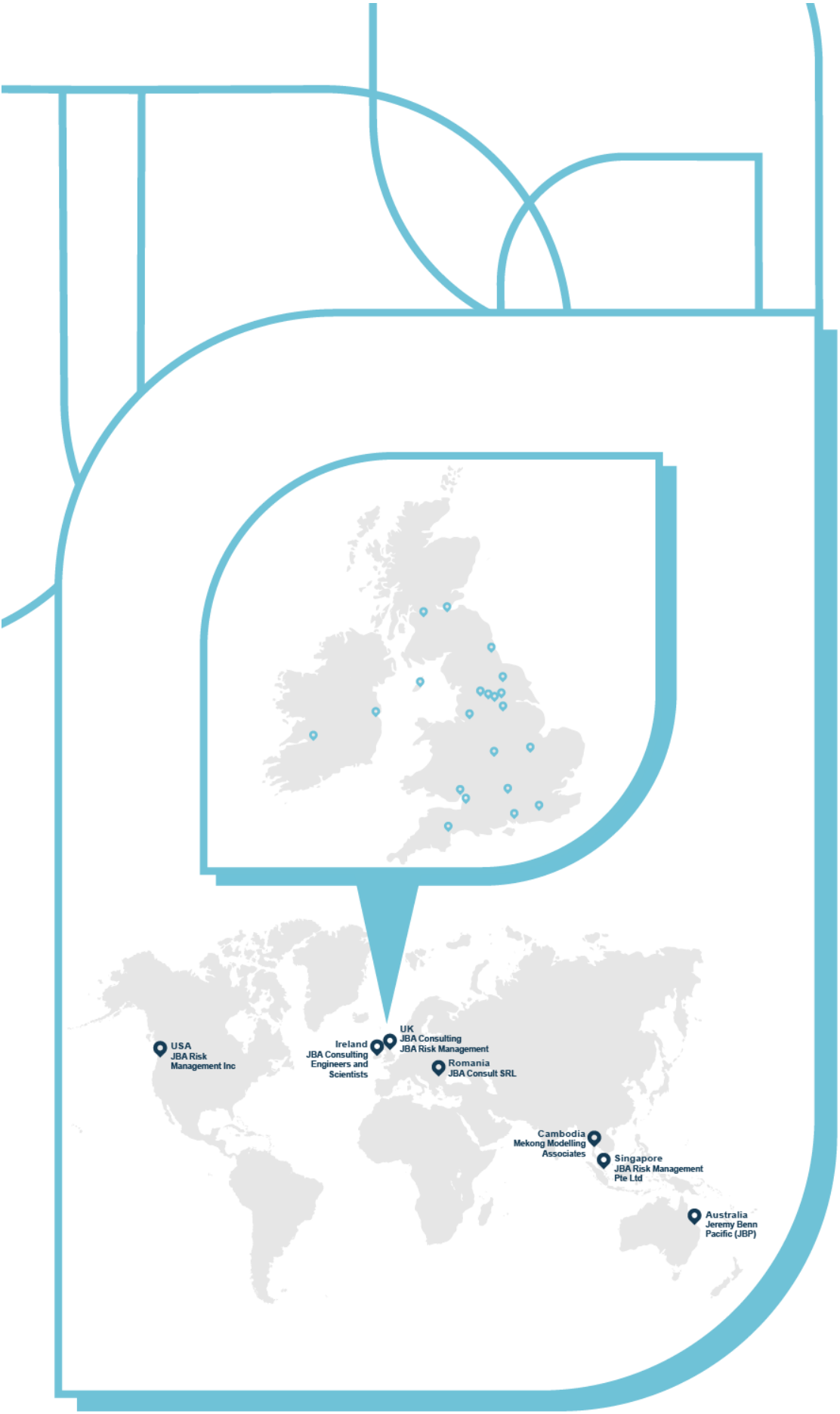
B Data Sources used in this SFRA

C SFRA User Guide

D Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings

E Summary of flood risk in Uttlesford District

F Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)



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Appendix B - Data sources used in the SFRA

1 Historical flooding

Essex County Council provided information on historic flood incidents across the study area. The Environment Agency's (EA's) Historic Flood Map is also presented in Appendix A: GeoPDF Mapping and the EA's Recorded Flood Outlines dataset has also been used to understand the flood history across the study area.

Section 4.1 of the Main Report documents the historic flooding records obtained.

2 Fluvial flooding

2.1 Flood Zones 2 and 3a

Flood Zones 2 and 3a, as shown in the Appendix A mapping, show the same extent as the online EA's Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) (which incorporates latest modelled data). Over time, the online mapping is likely to be updated more often than the SFRA, so SFRA users should check there are no major changes in their area.

The following models are included in the EA's FMfP Flood Zones 2 and 3a, and therefore have been incorporated into this SFRA:

- Upper Roding
- Upper Middle Stort
- Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook)
- Stansted Mountfitchet
- Chelmer - Upper
- Chelmer - Tribs
- Upper Blackwater
- Cam
- Cam Rural Model (Phase 2 Slades)

2.2 Flood Zone 3b (the Functional Floodplain)

Functional floodplain is land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood (greater than 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)), and has been identified in discussions with Uttlesford District Council (UDC) and the EA.

Flood Zone 3b, as shown in Appendix A mapping, has been compiled for the study area as part of this SFRA and is based on the 3.3% AEP (1 in 30-year chance of flooding in any given year) extents produced from detailed hydraulic models, where

available, which is in line with the recent updates to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The 3.3% AEP modelled flood extents have been used to represent Flood Zone 3b, where available. 3.3% AEP extents were available for the following models:

- Chelmer
- Roding
- Blackwater
- Stort Tributaries (Stickling Green Brook)
- Chelmer Tributaries (Olives Wood and Godfrey Way in Great Dunmow)

For areas covered by detailed models, but with no 3.3% AEP output available, the 2% AEP (1 in 50 years) outputs were used as a worst-case proxy. This was the case for the following models:

- Cam Rural (including the Slade)
- Stansted Mountfitchet

For the Upper and Middle Stort model, only the 5% or 1% AEP events were available, therefore Flood Zone 3a has been used as a conservative proxy.

For areas not covered by detailed hydraulic models, a precautionary approach should be adopted for Flood Zone 3b with the assumption that the extent of Flood Zone 3b would be equal to Flood Zone 3a (1% AEP). If development is shown to be in Flood Zone 3a, further work should be undertaken as part of a detailed site-specific FRA to define and refine the extent of Flood Zone 3b where no detailed modelling exists. Caution should also be applied where the conservative Flood Zone 3b extent encompasses existing urban areas which would not otherwise be "designed to flood".

If the area of interest is located somewhere that shows major changes to the extent of the Flood Zones; having checked the online mapping, developers will also need to remap Flood Zone 3b as part of a detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

3 Surface water flooding

Mapping of surface water flood risk in the study area has been taken from the Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFSW) maps published online by the EA. These maps are intended to provide a consistent standard of assessment for surface water flood risk across England and Wales in order to help LLFAs, the EA, and any potential developers to focus their management of surface water flood risk.

The RoFSW is derived primarily from identifying topographical flow paths of existing watercourses or dry valleys that contain some isolated ponding locations in low lying areas. They provide a map which displays different levels of surface water flood risk

depending on the annual probability of the land in question being inundated by surface water.

Table 3-1: RoFSW risk categories.

Category	Definition
High	Flooding occurring as a result of rainfall with a greater than 1 in 30 chance in any given year (annual probability of flooding 3.3%).
Medium	Flooding occurring as a result of rainfall of between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 30 (3.3%) chance in any given year.
Low	Flooding occurring as a result of rainfall of between 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) and 1 in 100 (1%) chance in any given year.

Whilst the categories in Table 4-1 are used in the national RoFSW mapping, we have used the following approach to inform the sequential test.

To inform the Sequential test for this SFRA, surface water zones have been used to define locations at either lower or higher risk of surface water flooding based on the extent of the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change allowance surface water event:

- Zone A – lower risk of surface water flooding (lies outside the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change surface water extent)
- Zone B – higher risk of surface water flooding (lies within the 1% AEP plus 40% climate change surface water extent)

Although the RoFSW offers improvement on previously available datasets, the results should not be used to understand flood risk for individual properties. The results should be used for high level assessments such as SFRAs for local authorities. If a site is indicated in the EA mapping to be at risk from surface water flooding, a more detailed assessment should be considered to illustrate the flood risk more accurately at a site-specific scale.

4 Climate change

4.1 Fluvial flooding

Detailed EA hydraulic models were obtained under licence for the SFRA.

Uttlesford District falls across four different Management Catchments: Cam and Ely Ouse; Combined Essex; Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne; and Upper Lee. As each Management Catchment has different climate change allowances, the allowances for the 2080s epoch vary for the different watercourses across the study area. This is detailed further in Section 5 of the Main Report.

A pragmatic approach to climate change was proposed to the EA for the Uttlesford L1 SFRA in 2021. No new climate change modelling has been carried out as part of this L1 SFRA based on the following justifications:

- For all EA models provided, there is at least one existing climate change model output, and for one model there are all three outputs for the 2080s pre-July 2021 allowances.
- The majority of updated 2021 catchment climate change allowances are lowered (the only increase is Chelmer and Blackwater Upper End, though the focus for FRAs is now on the Central allowance in the new guidance).
- There is a minor difference on the whole between Flood Zone 3 and Flood Zone 2 extents. Modelling climate change would show minimal difference as the extents would fall between these scenarios – all watercourses are in their headwaters with confined topography, and therefore negligible difference would be seen in the mapping. This approach was agreed in the previous L1 SFRA, and allowances have since decreased further, meaning Flood Zone 2 is a conservative indication.
- Climate change flows in the 2016 L1 SFRA were compared with the 0.1% AEP extent (Flood Zone 2) and were shown to be contained within the 0.1% AEP extent. The flows are lower again with the latest guidance.
- The focus in the latest guidance for the vulnerability of developments is on Central allowance. The previous 1% AEP +20% climate change event covers the majority of the models' Central allowances conservatively.

4.1.1 3.3% AEP (Functional floodplain - Flood Zone 3b)

Where model data is present for the 3.3% AEP event with climate change scenario (e.g. the River Chelmer), this has been used in preference.

Where there is no available 3.3% AEP event with climate change, a pragmatic proxy approach has been used in agreement with the EA. Where model data was available, this involved looking at the model inflows, and aligning a 3.3% AEP + CC (Central) event with the nearest representative return period output, to act as a more accurate proxy, rather than defaulting to FZ3a which may be more conservative. As the table shows below, in some cases this better aligned with a 2% or 1.3% AEP event. Chapter 5 of the L1 SFRA and Chapter 4 of the L2 SFRA provide details of the events chosen for each model. The flood extents of the chosen return period events were merged to form a composite proxy.

Where there was no modelling present, the proxy defaults to Flood Zone 3a of the EA's FMfP, and for Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

It should be noted that at site-specific Flood Risk Assessment stage, detailed hydraulic modelling may be needed to confirm the effects of climate change on the functional

floodplain, but this is deemed a pragmatic approach for the strategic assessment of sites.

4.1.2 1% AEP (Flood Zone 3a)

Where model data is present for the 1% AEP event with climate change scenario, this has been used in preference. Table 5-4 below shows a summary of which event has been used for each model. For some models where only the +20% allowance was available, this was replicated for both the Central and Higher Central allowance. This means for the Central allowance, the +20% allowance is conservative for some models and more closely represents the Higher Central allowance. The Chelmer, Chelmer Tributaries and Blackwater have more representative allowances already run. For the Roding model, as the Central allowance (+26%) was above an acceptable tolerance to use the existing +20% output, the EA requested that Flood Zone 2 was used to represent climate change.

These outputs have been merged to form composite extents for the 1% Central and Higher Central climate change events.

In the absence of detailed hydraulic modelling, but where the EA's national Flood Map for Planning is available, Flood Zone 2 has been used as a proxy. This is appropriate given the Higher Central/ Upper End climate change extents are often similar to the Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP) extents.

For Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 0.1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will need to model Flood Zone 3a+CC at a site if this data is not already available.

Table 4-1: Climate change allowances for various locations within the study area

Model	Existing data/ Proxy for Central CC	Central (2080s) Uplift	Existing data/ Proxy for Higher Central CC	Higher Central (2080s) Uplift
Upper Roding	Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP)	26%	Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP)	36%
Upper Middle Stort	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%
Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook)	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%
Stansted Mountfitchet	1% AEP +20%	10%	1% AEP +20%	22%

Model	Existing data/ Proxy for Central CC	Central (2080s) Uplift	Existing data/ Proxy for Higher Central CC	Higher Central (2080s) Uplift
Chelmer - Upper Chelmer	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +35%	38%
Chelmer Tribs (Godfrey Way Olives Wood)	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +35%	38%
Upper Blackwater	1% AEP +25%	25%	1% AEP +38%	38%
Cam Rural	1% AEP +20%	9%	1% AEP +20%	19%
Cam Rural (Slades 2012)	1% AEP +20%	9%	1% AEP +20%	19%

4.1.3 0.1% AEP (Flood Zone 2)

Where model data is present for the 0.1% AEP event with climate change scenario (e.g. the River Chelmer - Central allowance +25%), this has been used in preference. Where there is no available 0.1% AEP event with climate change, the EA's FMfP Flood Zone 2 can be used to represent this.

For Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 0.1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.

Most hydraulic models are not built to run events of this magnitude, and often present instabilities and an inability to run. Given that generally across the district the floodplain topography is confined, climate change allowances have lowered, and the Upper End climate change extents are often similar to the Flood Zone 2 extents, it is not expected that there would be significant differences from the 0.1% AEP event.

This may need to be considered further at a Level 2 assessment or for a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

4.2 Surface water flooding

The 0.1% AEP surface water extent can be used as an indication of surface water risk, and risk to smaller watercourses that are too small to be covered by the EA's Flood Zones.

Modelled Climate Change uplifts for the 3.3% and 1% AEP events were included as part of this SFRA and are presented in in Appendix A: GeoPDFs as 'SW Climate Change Uplifts' for the following events and scenarios:

Management Catchment	3.3% AEP 2050s upper end	1% AEP 2050s upper end	3.3% AEP 2070s upper end	1% AEP 2070s upper end
Cam and Ely Ouse	35%	40%	35%	40%
Combined Essex	35%	45%	35%	40%
Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne	35%	40%	35%	40%
Upper Lee	35%	40%	35%	40%

5 Groundwater

Two datasets were used to assess potential areas that are likely to be at higher risk of groundwater flooding:

- The EA's Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding 2010 (AStGWF) dataset, showing the degree to which areas are susceptible to groundwater flooding based on geological and hydrogeological conditions on a 1km square grid. It does not show the likelihood of groundwater flooding occurring, i.e., it is a hazard, not risk, based dataset. This dataset covers a large area of land, and only isolated locations within the overall susceptible area are likely to suffer the consequences of groundwater flooding.
- The JBA groundwater emergence map, showing the risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets, based on predicted groundwater levels on a 5m square grid. For each grid cell, a depth range is given for modelled groundwater levels in the 1% AEP event. It takes account of factors including topography, groundwater recharge volumes and spatial variations in aquifer storage and transmission properties.

Section 4.6 of the Main Report details the approach adopted in this SFRA to assess the risk of groundwater flooding.

6 Sewers

Records of flood incidents relating to public foul, combined or surface water sewers between 2021 and 2023 have been provided by Thames Water. Data from Anglian Water was not received for the 2024 study; however, data received as part of the 2021 SFRA has also been detailed. For confidentiality, this data was only provided on a 3-digit postcode basis.

Section 4.5 of the Main Report presents this data.

7 Reservoirs

The risk of inundation because of reservoir breach or failure of reservoirs within the area has been mapped using the outlines produced as part of the National Reservoir Flood Mapping (RFM) study and are shown online on the Long-Term Risk of Flooding website at the time of publication.

The EA provide two flooding scenarios for the reservoir flood maps: a ‘dry-day’ and a ‘wet-day’. The ‘dry-day’ scenario shows the predicted flooding which would occur if the dam or reservoir fails when rivers are at normal levels. The ‘wet-day’ scenario shows the predicted worsening of the flooding which would be expected if a river is already experiencing an extreme natural flood.

Section 4.11 of the Main Report presents the reservoirs affecting Uttlesford.

8 Flood defences

The EA supplied the location of all flood defences within the district in their AIMS database, including information relating to the type of flood defence and their standard of protection. The 2014 coastal defence dataset from the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes was also used. Section 6 of the Main Report provides information on flood defences and schemes.

9 Overview of supplied data

Table 9-1 below provides an overview of the supplied data from stakeholders which has been used to inform the Uttlesford District SFRA.

Table 9-1: Summary of supplied to inform the Fylde Authorities SFRA.

Source of flood risk	Data used to inform the assessment	Data supplier
Historic (all sources)	Historic flood map Recorded flood outlines	Environment Agency
Historic (all sources)	Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports	Essex County Council
Fluvial (including climate change)	Upper Roding (2016) Upper Middle Stort (2010) Stort Tribs (Stickling Green Brook) (2015) Stansted Mountfitchet (2015) Chelmer - Upper (2020) Chelmer Tribs (2020) Upper Blackwater (2016) Cam (2012) Cam Rural Model (Phase 2 Slades) (2014)	Environment Agency
Fluvial (including climate change)	Flood Map for Planning	Environment Agency
Surface water (including climate change)	Risk of Flooding from Surface Water dataset	Environment Agency
Sewers	Internal and external historic drainage records	Thames Water and Anglian Water
Groundwater	Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding dataset	Environment Agency
Groundwater	Groundwater Emergence map	JBA
Reservoir	National Inundation Reservoir Mapping (Long term flood risk map)	Environment Agency
Flood defences	AIMS Spatial Flood Defences dataset	Environment Agency
Cross-boundary impacts	Neighbouring authority sites and Local Plan information, to help assess cross-boundary impacts and the cumulative impact assessment	Planners at neighbouring authorities (South Cambridgeshire, Braintree,

Source of flood risk	Data used to inform the assessment	Data supplier
		Chelmsford, Epping Forest, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire)
Other datasets	Source Protection Zones Aquifer Designation maps (Bedrock Geology and Superficial Deposits) Detailed River Network Flood Alert and Flood Warning areas Groundwater Vulnerability Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea National Receptor Dataset	Environment Agency (via Uttlesford District Council)

Appendix C – SFRA User Guide

This SFRA User Guide provides guidance on how the SFRA data should be used, including reference to relevant sections of the SFRA, how to consider different sources of flood risk and recommendations and advice for how each source of flood risk should be considered within the sequential and exception tests.

Source of Flooding	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Present Day	Future	Sequential and Exception Tests	Relevant sections of the SFRA
Fluvial	Greater than 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) (FZ3)	Between 1% and 0.1% AEP (1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 year) (FZ2)	Less than 0.1% AEP (1 in 1000 year) (FZ1)	EA's Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 use a risk-based approach. Functional Floodplain (FZ3b) is displayed using the best available model data, see Section 3.2.1 of the Main Report for details of the models used. Where model data is not available, Fluvial Flood Zone 3a is used as a proxy for FZ3b.	EA's Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 use a risk-based approach. Climate change uplifts should be assessed as part of the screening process. Where significant parts of a site's area is shown to be at risk in the 0.1% AEP event, a review of whether the site is sequentially appropriate may be required following a Level 2 assessment. This may result in slightly larger numbers of sites requiring assessment at Level 2. Climate Change uplifts use the best available data: Where there is no available 3.3% AEP event with climate change, a pragmatic proxy approach has been used, using the best available AEP event aligned with a Central uplift on the 3.3% AEP event (e.g. for some modelled watercourses this is the 2%, 1.3% or 1% AEP event). Where there is no 1% AEP event with climate change, Flood Zone 2 of the EA's FMfP has been used as a proxy. Where no fluvial model outputs are available, Flood Zone 3a (1% AEP) of the EA's FMfP has been used to infer climate change impacts on the functional floodplain, and Flood Zone 2 (0.1% AEP) of the EA's FMfP has been used as a proxy for the 1% AEP with climate change, and for Ordinary Watercourses where there is no national mapping available, the 1% RoFfSW dataset has been used as a proxy to infer risk.	Sites at high or medium risk of fluvial flooding either now or in the future should be explicitly addressed in a Sequential Test and may require preparation of further evidence to substantiate that the Exception Test can be satisfied. Evidence from a Level 2 SFRA (including detailed modelling of the impact of climate change) is required to demonstrate that the principle of development is supported.	3.2.1 – Flood Zones – fluvial and tidal risk. 4.3 – Fluvial Flood Risk 5.3.1 – Fluvial climate change Appendix A – GeoPDF Mapping Appendix E – Summary of Flood Risk

Source of Flooding	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Present Day	Future	Sequential and Exception Tests	Relevant sections of the SFRA
Surface Water	Greater than 1% AEP plus 40% climate change (Zone B)	N/A	Less than 1% AEP plus 40% climate change (Zone A)	Different assumptions are used to derive surface water risk than is the case for fluvial flood zones. The RoFSW dataset potentially does not provide the confidence or certainty required to define areas of high medium and low flood risk that are comparable with the risk zones for river and sea flooding. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken so development is located in areas of lower flood risk. This approach will require that sites where proposed development is located in a higher risk surface water zone, and do not clearly show that development can be achieved away from the flood risk, are assessed in more detail in the Level 2 SFRA.	Different assumptions are used to derive surface water risk than is the case for fluvial and tidal flood zones. The RoFSW dataset potentially does not provide the confidence or certainty required to define areas of high, medium, and low flood risk that are comparable with the risk zones for river and sea flooding. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken so development is located in areas of lower flood risk. This approach will require that sites where proposed development is located in a higher risk surface water zone, and do not clearly show that development can be achieved away from the flood risk, are assessed in more detail in the Level 2 SFRA. Climate change datasets exist for the upper end climate change allowances for the 2070s for the 3.3% and 1% AEP events. Surface water flood risk into the future should be sequentially assessed using the extent of the 1% AEP extent including 40% uplift for Climate Change.	Sites at high risk of surface water flooding should be explicitly addressed in a Sequential Test and may require preparation of further evidence to substantiate that the Exception Test can be satisfied. Evidence from a Level 2 SFRA (including detailed modelling of the impact of climate change) is required to demonstrate that the principle of development is supported.	3.2.2 Flood Zones – surface water risk 4.7 – Surface water flooding 5.3.3 – Surface water climate change Appendix A – GeoPDF Mapping Appendix E – Summary of Flood Risk
Groundwater	Groundwater flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Groundwater flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Groundwater flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Datasets do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from groundwater as with surface water and fluvial flood risk. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken to determine the level of groundwater risk and need for further assessment in the Level 2 SFRA or FRA. This includes the use of the following datasets: . - Groundwater risk zoning - Emergence mapping and flow routes - Consultation with the LPA.	Datasets do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from groundwater as with surface water and fluvial flood risk. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken to determine the level of groundwater risk and need for further assessment in the Level 2 SFRA or FRA. This includes the use of the following datasets: - Groundwater risk zoning - Emergence mapping and flow routes - Consultation with the LPA.	Level 2 SFRA required to provide evidence that the principle of development is supported.	3.2.3 – Flood Zones – other sources of flooding 4.9 – Groundwater flooding Appendix A – GeoPDF Mapping Appendix E – Summary of Flood Risk

Source of Flooding	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Present Day	Future	Sequential and Exception Tests	Relevant sections of the SFRA
Sewer	Sewer flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Sewer flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Sewer flood risk is assessed on a case-by-case basis using best available data.	Datasets potentially do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from sewers. Therefore, further assessment will be undertaken at a Level 2 SFRA where significant risk from sewers is noted. This may be through historical sewer flood records and additional information from water companies.	Datasets potentially do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from sewers. Therefore, further assessment will be undertaken at a Level 2 SFRA where significant risk from sewers is noted. This may be through historical sewer flood records and additional information from water companies.	Level 2 SFRA required to provide evidence that the principle of development is supported.	3.2.3 – Flood Zones – other sources of flooding 4.8 – Sewer flooding
Reservoir	Sites where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse to be assessed in a Level 2 SFRA.	Sites where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse to be assessed in a Level 2 SFRA.	Sites where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse to be assessed in a Level 2 SFRA.	Datasets potentially do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from reservoirs. In addition, the reservoir flood map identifies the consequence of a reservoir breach rather than risk, so applying high, medium, and low 'risk' is not possible using this dataset. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken and sites where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse for development will be assessed in Level 2 SFRA and the implications for sequential selection of alternative locations considered at that stage.	Datasets potentially do not have the confidence or certainty required to provide mapping that enables a comparative assessment to be made of the risk of flooding of land from reservoirs. In addition, the reservoir flood map identifies the consequence of a reservoir breach rather than risk, so applying high, medium, and low 'risk' is not possible using this dataset. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be taken and sites where reservoir flooding is predicted to make fluvial flooding worse for development will be assessed in Level 2 SFRA and the implications for sequential selection of alternative locations considered at that stage.	Level 2 SFRA required to provide evidence that the principle of development is supported.	3.2.3 – Flood Zones – other sources of flooding 4.11 – Flooding from reservoirs Appendix A – GeoPDF Mapping Appendix E – Summary of Flood Risk

Appendix D - Flood Alert and Flood Warning Areas

To register for the free Targeted Flood Warning Service, visit the.gov.uk website here, or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Once registered, you will be alerted by phone, email, or text when flooding is expected in your area.

For more information on managing flood and coastal risk, visit FloodHub here.

1.1 Flood Alert Areas

Flood Alert Code	Flood Alert Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
051WAFEF6D	The lower River Chelmer, including the River Ter and brooks around Sandon	River Chelmer	Essex County Council	The River Chelmer from the A138 at Chelmsford to Langford, the River Ter from A120 at Stebbing Green to Boreham, and the brooks around Sandon
051WAFEF1	The upper Stour and surrounding tributaries	River Stour, Stour Brook, Bumpstead Brook	Cambridgeshire County Council, Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council	The upper Stour and surrounding tributaries, at Little Yeldham, Steeple Bumpstead, Haverhill, Kedington, Glemsford and Brockley, to and including, Sudbury
051WAFEF5	The Rivers Pant, Blackwater, and Brain	River Pant, River Blackwater, River Brain	Essex County Council	The Rivers Pant and Blackwater from, Great Bardfield to Langford including Braintree, and the River Brain from, Black Notley to Witham

Flood Alert Code	Flood Alert Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
052WAFUPCAM	Upper River Cam in Essex and Cambridgeshire	River Cam	Cambridgeshire County Council, Essex County Council	River Cam from Newport to Whittlesford including the Slades
051WAFEF6A	The upper River Chelmer	River Chelmer	Essex County Council	The River Chelmer from Great Dunmow to Rivermead campus and the Industrial Estate in Chelmsford
051WAFEF6BC	The Rivers Wid and Can	River Wid, River Can	Essex County Council	The River Wid from Brentwood, to and including Writtle, and the River Can at Chelmsford
052WAFGRANTA	River Granta in Essex and Cambridgeshire	River Granta	Cambridgeshire County Council, Essex County Council	River Granta from Linton to Babraham
062WAF54UpRoding	Upper Roding	River Roding	Essex County Council	The Upper River Roding including Molehill Green, Dunmow, Ongar, Fyfield, High Ongar and Stapleford
062WAF51Stort	River Stort and Stansted Brook catchment	River Stort, Stansted Brook	Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council	The River Stort, Stansted Brook and their tributaries from Clavering to Hoddesdon including Stanstead Mountfitchet, Bishops Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Harlow
062WAF51PinceyBk	Pincey Brook from Takeley to Harlow	Pincey Brook	Essex County Council	The Pincey Brook and its tributaries from Takeley to Harlow including Hatfield Broad Oak, Hatfield Heath and Sheering

1.2 Flood Warning Areas

Flood Warning Code	Flood Warning Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
051FWFEF5C	The River Brain through Braintree, to and including Witham	River Brain	Essex County Council	The River Brain, including Podds Brook, through Braintree, Black Notley, White Notley and Witham
051FWFEF6D	The River Chelmer from the A138 at Chelmsford to Maldon	River Chelmer	Essex County Council	The River Chelmer from the A138 at Chelmsford to Maldon, including Sandford Mill Bridge, Chelmer Village, Paper Mill Bridge and Ulting
051FWFEF5A	The River Pant, from Great Bardfield to Braintree	River Pant	Essex County Council	The River Pant, from Great Bardfield to Braintree, including Shalford
051FWCDV4C7a	The Blackwater estuary at Heybridge	Essex Coast	Essex County Council	The north bank of the Blackwater estuary from Goldhanger to Maldon, including Heybridge Basin
051FWFEF6A	The River Chelmer from Churchend to the Rivermead Industrial Estate in Chelmsford	River Chelmer	Essex County Council	The River Chelmer from Churchend, through Great Dunmow, Hartford End, Howe Street and Little Waltham to the Rivermead Industrial Estate in Chelmsford
051FWFEF5B	The River Blackwater from Braintree to Langford	River Blackwater	Essex County Council	The River Blackwater from Braintree to Langford, including Coggeshall and Kelvedon
052FWFGRLB2	Wider area at risk	River Granta	Cambridgeshire	Mill Lane, Horn Lane, High Street, Symonds

Flood Warning Code	Flood Warning Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
	from the River Granta at Linton and Babraham		County Council	Lane and Cambridge Road in Linton, Bridge House, Hall Farm, Pear Tree Cottages and West Lodge in Hildersham and High Street and Granta Park in Great Abington
052FWFGRLB1	Low lying areas close to the River Granta at Linton and Babraham	River Granta	Cambridgeshire County Council	Mill Lane, Church Lane, Horn Lane, High Street and Meadow Lane in Linton, The Granary, Farm Lodge and Galantus House in Hildersham, High Street and Cambridge Road in Abington, High Street and Babraham Institute in Babraham
051FWFEF1A	Bumpstead Brook through Steeple Bumpstead to New England	Bumpstead Brook	Essex County Council	Bumpstead Brook from Helions Bumpstead through Steeple Bumpstead and Broad Green to New England
051FWFEF1B	The Stour Brook from Haverhill to Sturmer	Stour Brook	Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council	The Stour Brook from Meldham Bridge in Haverhill to Linnetts Lane in Sturmer
052FWFUCNL	River Cam at Henham, Newport and Littlebury	River Cam	Essex County Council	Old Mead Road in Henham, North Hall Road in Quendon, London Road, Station Road, High Street, Bridge End, Willow Vale, Bury Water Lane, Belmont Hill and Cambridge Road in Newport, Duck Street in Wendons Ambo, Mill Lane and Walden Road in Littlebury

Flood Warning Code	Flood Warning Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
052FWFRHGMH	River Rhee at Guilden Morden, Arrington and Harston	River Rhee	Cambridgeshire County Council, Central Bedfordshire Council	Potton Road in Guilden Morden, Ermine Way in Arrington, Foxton Road and Mill Lane in Barrington and Royston Road in Harston
052FWFUCLCW	River Cam at Little Chesterford, Great Chesterford and Whittlesford	River Cam	Cambridgeshire County Council, Essex County Council	High Street in Little Chesterford, Manor Lane, Newmarket Road and London Road in Great Chesterford, Church Street and Mill Lane in Ickleton, Hinxton Hall and Mill Lane in Hinxton, Mill Lane in Duxford and Mill Lane in Whittlesford
051FWFEF2	The River Stour from downstream of Kedington to Sudbury	River Stour	Essex, Suffolk County Council	The River Stour from downstream of Kedington to Sudbury, including Clare and Cavendish
052FWFUCSW	Slades at Saffron Walden	River Cam	Essex County Council	Thaxted Road, Peaslands Road, Farmadine, Radwinter Road, East Street, Hill Street, Gold Street, Cross Street, Market Walk, Market Row, George Street, High Street, Bartletts, Abbey Lane, Primes Close, Park Lane, Freshwell Street and Bridge Street
062FWF50Hadhams	River Ash at The Hadhams	River Ash	Hertfordshire County Council	The River Ash at Little Hadham, Hadham Ford, Much Hadham, Widford and Wareside
062FWF51Claverin	River Stort at Clavering and Manuden	River Stort	Essex County Council, Hertfordshire	The River Stort at Clavering and Manuden

Flood Warning Code	Flood Warning Name	Watercourse(s)	Local Authority Area	Coverage
			County Council	
062FWF51Bishop	River Stort at Bishops Stortford	River Stort	Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council	The River Stort at Bishops Stortford including Spellbrook
062FWF51Sawbridg	River Stort at Sawbridgeworth	River Stort	Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council	The River Stort at Sawbridgeworth
062FWF51Harlow	River Stort at Harlow	River Stort	Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council	The River Stort at Harlow including Roydon
062FWF51StnMtFit	Stansted Brook at Stansted Mountfitchet	Stansted Brook	Essex County Council	The Stansted Brook at Stansted Mountfitchet
062FWF51PinceyBk	Pincey Brook near Sheering	Pincey Brook	Essex County Council	The Pincey Brook near Sheering
062FWF49Braughing	River Quin at Braughing	River Quin	Hertfordshire County Council	The River Quin at Braughing
062FWF50FurneuxP	River Ash at Furneux Pelham	River Ash	Hertfordshire County Council	The River Ash at Furneux Pelham including Clapgate

Appendix E – Summary of flood risk in Uttlesford District

The table below summarises the areas where there are notable flood risks within Uttlesford District. For this summary, the district has been delineated into three sub-areas, taking into account the direction of flow of watercourses. Further information on the Uttlesford District sub-areas can be found in Section 5.10 of the main report.

Sub-area	Fluvial flood risk	Existing defences	Surface water flood risk	Susceptibility to Groundwater flood risk	Reservoir inundation risks	Historic, recorded flood events
Sub-area 1: River Cam North Flowing	This area is largely rural and located in the north of the District. The River Cam runs through the centre of the sub-area, in a northerly direction, into the River Cam (outside the District). There is fluvial flood risk through the centre of the sub-area, following the route of the River Cam. Significant proportions of this are in Flood Zone 3, including the centre of Saffron Walden, Wendens Ambo and Newport. One flow path of Flood Zone 3 follows the B1039. It is also likely that roads in and around Saffron Walden will be inundated, particularly the B1053, Thaxted Road and Little Walden Road. The east of the sub-area is at fluvial risk from the River Bourne, flowing in a northerly direction towards the River Cam. The centre of Ashdon is within Flood Zone 3 and therefore at fluvial flood risk. Church Hill Road and Bartlow Road are at risk from inundation in both Flood Zones 2 and 3.	The EA AIMS dataset shows a series of 'natural high ground' defences along the River Cam and its tributaries, through the centre of the sub-area.	Surface water flood risk follows the topography of the area. The RoFfSW map shows that in general, most surface water flow paths route water to the centre of the sub-area from the western border and eastern border of the sub-area. During the 3.3% AEP events and greater, a major flow path flowing from south to north puts Newport at risk from surface water flooding. A second flow path flowing east to west puts Saffron Walden at risk. As the AEP event increases, the extent, depths and velocities of this flooding intensifies. During the 3.3% AEP event residential areas such as Wicken Bonhunt and south Wendens Ambo are at risk of inundation. During the 1% AEP event the number of residential areas inundated increases to include Quendon and Arkesden. During the 0.1% AEP event Widdington, Hadstock, Little Chesterford and	The JBA Groundwater Emergence map dataset shows groundwater levels at or very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface surrounding the River Cam. Saffron Walden, Little Chesterford, Great Chesterford and the east of Newport are susceptible to Groundwater flooding due to being in this zone. Groundwater levels between 0.025m and 5m below the surface are present down the centre of the sub-area. Based on the RoFfSW dataset, it is likely any groundwater that emerges in sub-area 1 will flow south to north through the centre of the sub-area, following the route of the River Cam. This is a risk to urban centres such as Newport, Saffron Walden, Little Chesterford and Great Chesterford.	There are no reservoir flood extents which impact the area during the 'Dry Day' nor the 'Wet day' scenarios.	Historic flood mapping, EA recorded flood outlines, and LLFA historic flood points suggest the following: • Northwest Newport- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • West of Audley End Estate- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • West of Saffron Walden Golf Club- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • East of Littlebury- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • Centre of Little Chesterford- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • East of Great Chesterford- Fluvial flooding from the River Cam in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • North of Great Chesterford- Surface water runoff in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • East of Ashdon- Fluvial flooding from the River Bourne in October 2001, however the cause of the flooding is unknown. • The LLFA historic flood points and recorded flood outlines also show other isolated incidents of surface water flooding in the sub-area. • There are 3 recorded incidences of sewer flooding in this sub-area, centred around Saffron Walden.

Sub-area	Fluvial flood risk	Existing defences	Surface water flood risk	Susceptibility to Groundwater flood risk	Reservoir inundation risks	Historic, recorded flood events
			Great Chesterford are also inundated, along with several other smaller residential areas. To the northeast of the sub-area, surface water flow paths are flowing from southwest to northeast, putting Ashdon at risk. There are also small, isolated areas of surface water ponding which suggest localised flood risk.			
Sub-area 2: River Chelmer and River Pant	This area is largely rural and located in the east of the District. The River Chelmer runs through the centre of the south of the sub-area, in a southeasterly direction. There is fluvial flood risk through the centre of the sub-area, following the route of the River Chelmer. Significant proportions of this are in Flood Zone 3, including the west of Thaxted, west of Great Dunmow and the east of Stebbing. Smaller residential areas which would be impacted include Flitch Green and Lindsell. The south of the sub-area is at fluvial risk from the River Ter, flowing in a southeasterly direction. This is in Flood Zone 2, but due to the rural nature of the area, no	The EA AIMS dataset shows high ground defences along the River Chelmer to the east of the sub-area, Stebbing Brook to the south, the River Ter to the southwest and the River Pant to the north of the sub-area.	Surface water flow paths follow the topography of the land, flowing south. The RoFfSW map shows Great Stamford is at risk of flooding due to a surface water flow following the River Pant. Great Dunmow is at risk of surface water flooding following the alignment of the River Chelmer floodplain. During the 3.3% AEP event residential areas such as Radwinter, Little Bardfield, Stebbing and Little Dunmow are at risk of inundation. During the 1% AEP event the number of residential areas inundated increases to include settlements such as Flitch Green. During the 0.1% AEP event several other	The JBA Groundwater Emergence map dataset shows groundwater levels at or very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface in the immediate floodplain surrounding the River Pant and Stebbing Brook. Groundwater levels between 0.025m and 5m below the surface are present in the wider floodplain of Stebbing Brook, River Chelmer and the River Pant. This will impact Thaxted, Stebbing and Great Dunmow. Based on the RoFfSW dataset, it is likely any groundwater that emerges in sub-area 1 will flow southwest through the sub-area, following the route of Stebbing Brook, River Chelmer and the River Pant. This is a risk to urban centres such as	The following reservoirs impact the sub-area in the ‘dry day’ scenario. • Little Easton Reservoir – Located to the west of Little Easton the flow path of this reservoir in a ‘dry day’ scenario is moving in a south-easterly direction through the centre of the sub-area, and then along the boundary of Uttlesford District in the south. The extent of the flooding does not impact any residential areas. The following reservoirs impact the sub-area in the ‘wet day’ scenario. • Little Easton Reservoir- The ‘Wet Day’ scenario inundates to a greater extent. The west of Great Dunmow is inundated, as well as the south of Flitch Green.	Historic flood mapping, EA recorded flood outlines, and LLFA historic flood points suggest the following: • Southwest of Great Sampford- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Pant in 1947. • East and south of Radwinter- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Pant in 1947. • East of Thaxted- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Chelmer in 1947. • East of Great Easten- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Chelmer in 1947. • East of Little Easten- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Chelmer in 1947. • East of Great Dunmow- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Chelmer in 1947. • South of Flitch Green- Fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Chelmer in 1947. • The LLFA historic flood points and recorded flood outlines also show other isolated incidents of surface water flooding in the sub-area.

Sub-area	Fluvial flood risk	Existing defences	Surface water flood risk	Susceptibility to Groundwater flood risk	Reservoir inundation risks	Historic, recorded flood events
	large residential areas are at risk. The north of the sub-area is at fluvial risk from the River Pant, flowing in a southeasterly direction. Parts of this are in Flood Zone 3, putting Radwinter and Great Stampford at risk. The B1053 and B1055 are also at risk from inundation.		smaller residential areas are inundated. There are also a significant number of small, isolated, areas of surface water ponding, which may suggest localised flood risk. These are focussed to the east of the sub-area, impacting agricultural land.	Thaxted, Stebbing and Great Dunmow .		• There are 11 recorded incidences of sewer flooding in this sub-area, mostly centred around Dunmow.
Sub-area 3: River Stort, Stansted Brook, Pincey Brook and River Roding	This area is largely rural and located in the west of the District. The River Stort runs through the north of the sub-area in a southerly direction. Clavering is at risk from flooding due to being in Flood Zones 2 and 3 however, fluvial flood risk is more centred to the south of the river with the east of Manuden in Flood Zone 3. The B1383 to the south of the river is inundated by Flood Zones 2 and 3. Bourne Brook flows parallel to the River Stort, to the east of the Catchment however, due to the rural nature of the area, no large residential areas are within Flood Zones 2 or 3. Ugley Brook flows parallel to the River Stort, to the west of the sub-area with Flood Zones 2 and 3 putting	The EA AIMS dataset shows that in numerous sites along the main channel of the River Stort, Embankments are present. This protects the north of the sub-area. A tributary to the River Stort, along the southwestern sub-area boundary is also protected by embankments. Stansted Brook running through the centre of the sub-area, Bourne Brook, Ugley Brook, Pincey Brook and associated tributaries are protected by natural high ground.	Surface water flow paths follow the topography of the land, flowing from northeast to southwest. An extensive surface water flow path crosses the M11 to the north of the sub-area. Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley are impacted in the 3.3% AEP events and greater with surface water flow paths mainly flowing down roads. There is extensive ponded surface water flooding in and around Hatfield Forest and south of London Stansted airport. There are also small, isolated areas of surface water ponding, which may suggest localised flood risk. During the 3.3% AEP event residential areas	The JBA Groundwater Emergence map dataset shows groundwater levels at or very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface surrounding Stansted Brook and the River Stort. The centre of Stansted Mountfitchet is susceptible to Groundwater flooding due to being in this zone. Groundwater levels between 0.025m and 5m below the surface are present in the wider floodplain of Stansted Brook and the Rivert Stort, as well as Bourne Brook. This will impact Stansted Mountfitchet, Elsenham, Manuden and Hatfield Heath. Based on the RoFfSW dataset, it is likely any groundwater that emerges in sub-area 1 southeast through the centre of the sub-area, following the route of Stansted Brook, the River Stort and Bourne	The following reservoirs impact the sub-area in the ‘dry day’ scenario. • Balancing Pond C – Located to the west of Takeley, the flow path is moving in a southerly direction through the southwest of the sub-area. The flow path converges with that of the ‘dry day’ Hatfield Forest Lake. The extent of the flooding does not impact any residential areas, but the north of Dunhall Wood is inundated. • Hatfield Forest Lake – This lake is located to the east of Hatfield Forest and the flood water flows in a southerly direction, through the southwest of the sub-area. The extent of the flooding does not impact any residential areas, but the north of Dunhall Wood is inundated. • Lancaster Lake- This lake is located outside the sub-area, to the east of Uttlesford District, east of Mathams Wood. A small proportion of the ’dry day’ scenario flows along the western boundary of the sub-area but does not inundate any residential areas.	Historic flood mapping, EA recorded flood outlines, and LLFA historic flood points suggest the following: • March 1947- There is recorded fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the Bourne Brook and Pincey Brook. These inundate multiple sites along the water courses, including the east of Mauden and the east and centre of Stansted Mountfitchet. • October 1993- There is recorded fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the River Roding. This inundates a number of sites along the River Roding including the centre of Great Canfield. • October 2001- There is recorded fluvial flooding due to channel capacity exceedance of the Pincey Brook and River Stort. These inundate multiple sites along the water courses, including the east of Clavering and the east and centre of Stansted Mountfitchet. • March 1947- Flooding due to surface water run-off in the northeast of the Sub-area • November 1974, May 1978 and October 1993- Flooding due to surface water run-off in the southeast of the Sub-area • The LLFA historic flood points and recorded flood outlines also show other isolated incidents of surface water flooding in the sub-area.

Sub-area	Fluvial flood risk	Existing defences	Surface water flood risk	Susceptibility to Groundwater flood risk	Reservoir inundation risks	Historic, recorded flood events
	Bentfield and Stansted Mountfitchet at risk. Stansted Brook flows in a westerly direction through the centre of the sub-area. The east of Stansted Mountfitchet is at risk from Flood Zones 2 and 3 as well as Elsenham and the M11. The Bourne flows in a westerly direction, to the south of Stansted Brook, putting the M11 at risk from fluvial flooding. The Pincey Brook flows in a southerly direction in the southeast of the sub-area. The west of Hatfield Broad Oak, the east of Hatfield Heath and the A120 are within Flood Zone 3. The River Roding flows in a southerly direction in the southwest of the sub-area. Flood Zones 2 and 3 put Molehill Green, Little Canfield and Great Canfield at risk. The River Can flows in a southerly direction in the southwest of the sub-area. However, due to the rural nature of the area, no residential areas are within Flood Zones 2 or 3.		such as Clavering and Manuden are at risk of inundation. During the 1% AEP event the number of residential areas inundated increases to include settlements such as Hatfield Broad Oak and Little Canfield. During the 0.1% AEP event several other smaller residential areas.	Brook. This is a risk to urban centres such as impact Stansted Mountfitchet, Elsenham, Manuden and Hatfield Heath .	The following reservoirs impact the sub-area in the 'wet day' scenario. • Balancing Pond C – The 'wet day' scenario inundates to a greater extent however, the extent of the flooding does not impact any residential areas, but the north of Dunhall Wood is inundated. • Hatfield Lake - The 'wet day' scenario inundates to a greater extent however, the extent of the flooding does not impact any residential areas, but the north of Dunhall Wood is inundated. • Lancaster Lake- proportion of the 'wet day' scenario flows along the western boundary of the sub-area but does not inundate any residential areas.	• There are 25 recorded incidences of sewer flooding in this sub-area, based on postcode area. Most of these are to the west of Bishop Stortford.

Appendix F - Cumulative Impact Assessment

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

The cumulative impact of development should be considered at both the Local Plan making stage and the planning application and development design stages. Paragraph 166 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) states:

'Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.'

Appropriate mitigation measures should be undertaken to prevent exacerbation of flood risk, and where possible the development should be used to reduce existing flood risk issues, both onsite and downstream of the development.

To understand the impact of future development on flood risk in Uttlesford District, catchments were identified where development may have the greatest potential effect on flood risk, and where further assessment would be required within a Level 2 SFRA or site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). To identify the catchments at greatest risk, various factors were considered, including the potential change in developed area within each catchment and communities sensitive to increased risk of surface water and fluvial flooding, alongside evidence of historic flooding incidents. Where catchments have been identified as sensitive to the cumulative impact of development, the assessment sets out planning policy recommendations to help manage the risk.

1.2 Assessment of Cross-Boundary Issues

Figure 1-1 shows the local authority areas which border Uttlesford District.

The topographic characteristics of the district are dictated by chalk hills that rise in the north-west, creating the watershed between three separate river catchments. Valleys of the River Cam (or Granta) run north into Cambridgeshire, the Rivers Chelmer and Pant flow south-east, and the River Roding and River Stort flow south into the Thames River basin. Stansted Brook and Pincey Brook are tributaries of the River Stort. Section 1.5 of the Main Report provides further details on the study area.

Overall flow direction means that the neighbouring authorities of Braintree, Chelmsford, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, and South Cambridgeshire have the

potential to be affected in terms of flood risk by Uttlesford District. Therefore, future development both within and outside Uttlesford District could have the potential to affect flood risk to existing communities and surrounding areas, depending on the effectiveness of SuDS and drainage implementation.

Table 1-1 summarises which catchments drain out of Uttlesford District, where the impact of flood risk downstream should be assessed when considering development.

Table 1-1: Summary of catchments that drain into the neighbouring Local Authorities from Uttlesford District.

Catchment	Neighbouring downstream authority
U/S Newport (River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Newport to Audley End (River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Audley End to Stapleford (River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Slade (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Wendon Brook (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Wicken Water (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Debden Water (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Granta (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Unnamed Watercourse (Tributary of River Cam)	South Cambridgeshire
Hoffer Brook	South Cambridgeshire
Bumpstead Brook	Braintree
River Pant	Braintree
Toppesfield Brook	Braintree
Brain	Braintree
River Ter	Braintree / Chelmsford
U/S Gt Easton (River Chelmer)	Chelmsford
Gt Easton – River Can (River Chelmer)	Chelmsford
Stebbing Brook (Tributary of River Chelmer)	Chelmsford
River Can	Chelmsford
Roxwell Brook	Chelmsford
Upper Roding (to Cripsey Brook)	Epping Forest
Pincey Brook	Epping Forest
Higher Laver Brook	Epping Forest
Stort and Navigation, B Stortford to Harlow	Epping Forest / East Hertfordshire
Little Hallingbury Brook	East Hertfordshire
Stanstead Brook	East Hertfordshire
Stort (at Clavering)	East Hertfordshire
Stort and Bourne Brook	East Hertfordshire
Ash (from Meesden to confluence with Bury Green Brook)	East Hertfordshire
Great Hallingbury Brook	East Hertfordshire

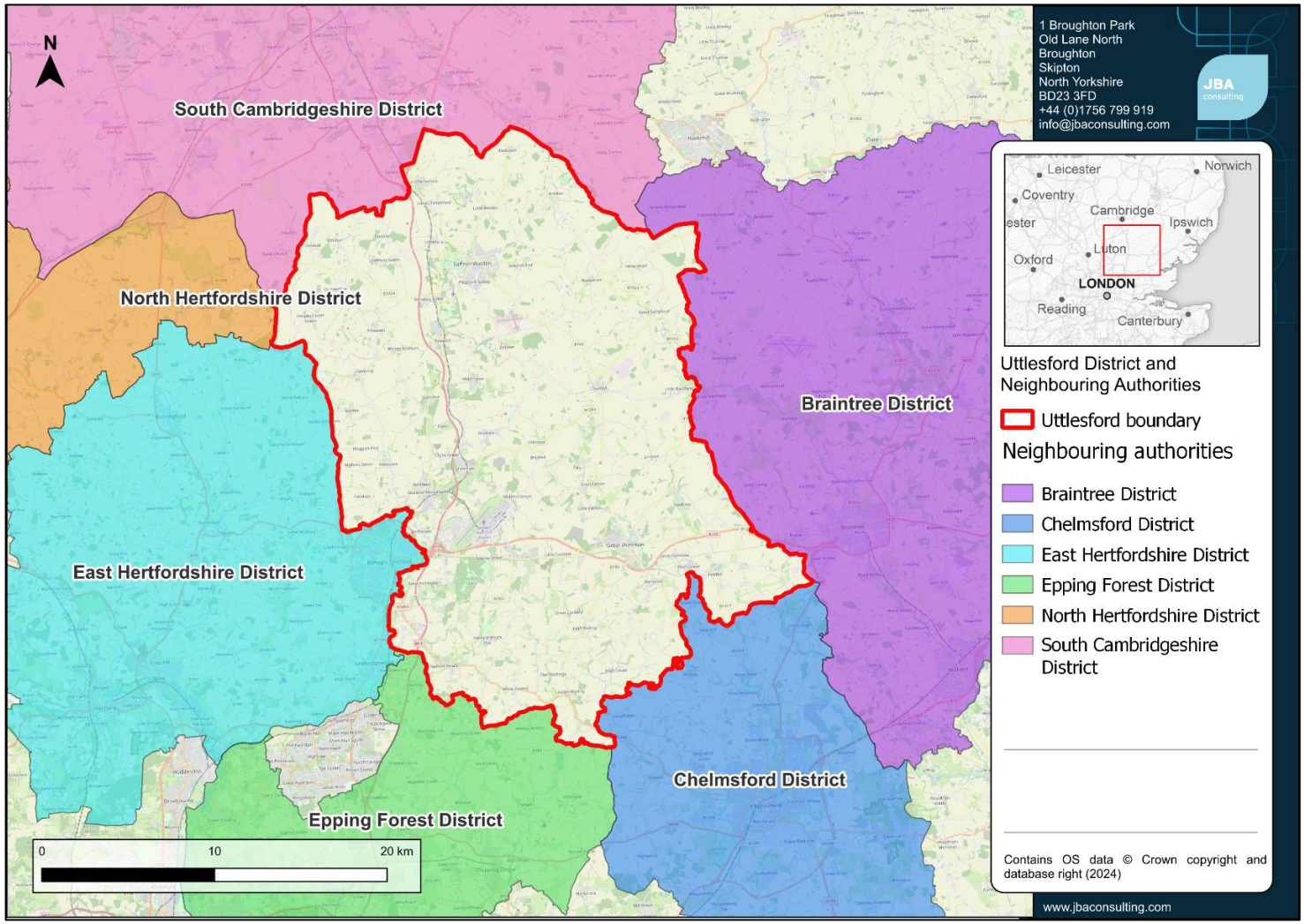


Figure 1-1: Neighbouring authorities to Uttlesford District

1.3 Cumulative Impact Assessment Methodology

For the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), Uttlesford District was assessed at a catchment level using the Water Framework Directive (WFD) catchments, with these catchments shown in Figure 1-2. There are a total of 30 WFD catchments which fall within the district to some extent; however, six of these have less than 5% of their area within the district and have therefore been removed from the assessment. These six catchments all drain out of Uttlesford into neighbouring authority areas and are not areas with proposed allocations within Uttlesford. The six catchments are listed below:

- Toppesfield Brook
- Roxwell Brook
- Higher Laver Brook
- Brain
- Hoffer Brook
- Ash (from Meesden to confluence with Bury Green Brook)

There are four stages to the Level 1 CIA:

1. Assess sensitivity to fluvial and surface water flood risk.
    - This will be assessed by calculating the change in the building area shown to flood from the 1% AEP to the 0.1% AEP events for fluvial and surface water flooding respectively, given as a percentage of the total building area in the catchment.
2. Identify historic flooding incidents.
    - Identify the total number of historic flooding incidents within each catchment.
3. Assess the catchments with the highest degree of proposed new development.
    - This will be assessed by calculating the percentage area of each catchment covered by proposed development.
4. Identify the catchments at greatest risk.
    - Rank catchments in each category.
    - Discussion of catchments which are at high risk in all categories/individual categories.
    - Policy recommendations for developments in higher risk catchments.
    - Identify catchments needing further consideration within a Level 2 SFRA (if required).

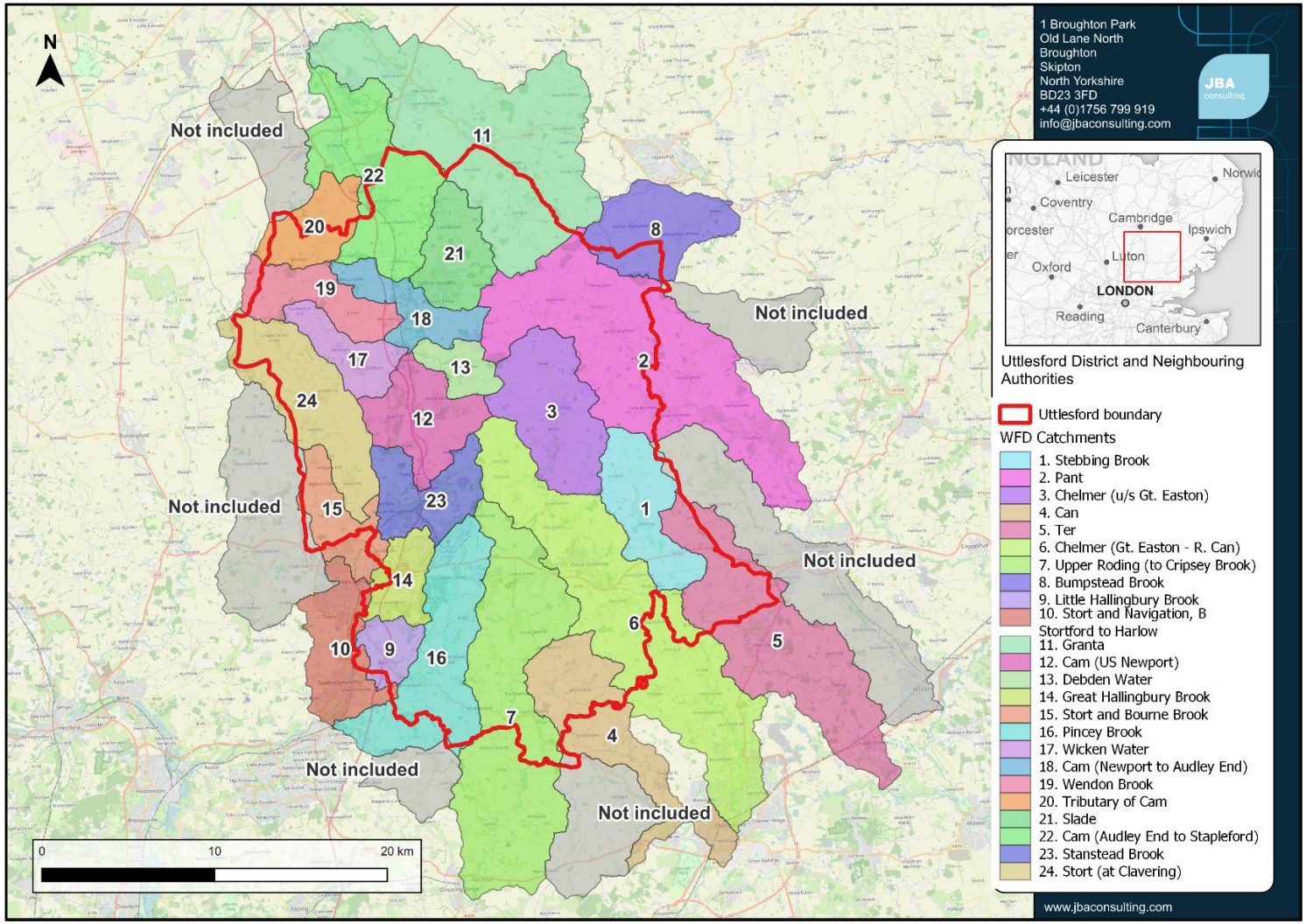


Figure 1-2: Catchments within Uttlesford District

Catchments within the study area were ranked on four metrics: sensitivity to increased fluvial flood risk, sensitivity to increased risk of surface water flooding, prevalence of recorded historic flood incidents (limited by the data available), and area of new development proposed within the catchment.

The final results of this assessment gave a rating of low, medium, or high risk for each metric, for each catchment within the study area, the boundaries of which were derived from the WFD. The rating of each catchment in each of these assessments was combined to give an overall ranking.

Table 1-2: Summary of datasets used within the Broadscale CIA.

Dataset	Coverage	Source of data	Use of data
Catchment Boundaries	Uttlesford District and neighbouring authorities	Water Framework Directive Catchments	Assessment of susceptibility to cumulative impacts of development by catchment
OS Open Zoomstack Local Buildings	Uttlesford District and neighbouring authorities	Ordnance Survey	Built area for the assessment of flood risk
Risk of Surface Water Flooding Mapping	Uttlesford District and neighbouring authorities	Environment Agency	Assessing the building area at risk of surface water flooding within each catchment
Fluvial Flood Zones 2 and 3a	Uttlesford District and neighbouring authorities	EA Flood Map for Planning	Assessing the building area at risk of fluvial flooding within each catchment
Future development areas	Uttlesford District, South Cambridgeshire District and Chelmsford District	Uttlesford District Council, South Cambridgeshire District and Chelmsford District	Assessing the impact of proposed future development on risk of flooding
Historic Flooding Incidents	Uttlesford District, Braintree District, Chelmsford District and Epping Forest District	Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council	Assessing incidences of historic flooding

1.3.1 Sensitivity to increases in fluvial flooding

This is the measure of the increase in the area of buildings at risk of fluvial flooding from the 1% AEP event to the 0.1% AEP event. It is an indicator of where local topography makes an area more sensitive to increases in flood risk that may be due to any number of reasons, including climate change, new development etc. It is not an absolute figure or prediction of the impact that new development will have on flood risk.

The OS Open Zoomstack Local Buildings layer was used to identify all buildings within the catchments as this is an open data source which provides full coverage of the district and cross boundary catchments.

The buildings layer was intersected with the 1% and 0.1% AEP fluvial flood extents separately to determine the area of buildings flooded in each catchment, in each flood extent. The difference between the two values was then taken as a percentage of the total building area within the catchment to allow comparison between catchments of different sizes.

The fluvial flood risk is shown to be generally low across the district. Catchments with greater than 3% of the building area at increased risk were considered to be highly sensitive.

1.3.2 Sensitivity to increases in surface water flooding

This is the measure of the increase in the area of buildings at risk of surface water flooding in a 1% AEP event to a 0.1% AEP event and follows the same process as for fluvial flood risk, see Section 1.4.1 above.

Catchments with greater than 5% of the building area at increased risk were considered to be highly sensitive.

1.3.3 Growth in the area

Development within Uttlesford District has the potential to affect flood risk in neighbouring authorities, especially if there are existing flood risk issues.

Areas for future proposed development were received from Uttlesford District Council. The area of new development within each catchment was expressed as a percentage of the total catchment area to determine the potential for increase in flood risk as a result of new development.

Data was received from South Cambridgeshire District and Chelmsford District for development sites surrounding Uttlesford District, and were assessed as part of this CIA. It should be noted that data was not received from other neighbouring authorities. However, the risk from neighbouring districts' development proposals is negligible as no watercourses flow into Uttlesford District.

Catchments with more than 4% of their area earmarked for development were considered high risk.

1.3.4 Historic flood risk

Recorded flooding event data was provided by Essex County Council for Uttlesford District for this assessment. This dataset also covers the neighbouring districts of Braintree, Chelmsford and Epping Forest. No historic flooding data was made available for the other neighbouring authorities. Therefore, historic events in catchments that cross these local authorities' boundaries are unknown.

Details of historic flood events can be found in Section 4.1 of the Main Report. The historic data was represented as point data, where each point represents a location where it is known there has been at least one flood event (however, the nature and scale of these flood events varies significantly).

A count of each historical flood incident was conducted for each catchment to determine the historic flood risk within the catchments. Where historic flooding data was not available for over 50% of the catchment area, the historic assessment result was not included in calculating the overall ranking for the catchment. The historic assessment was therefore excluded from the following catchments:

- Granta
- Tributary of Cam

Catchments with 50 or more recorded flooding incidents were considered high risk.

1.3.5 Ranking the results

The results for each assessment were ranked into high, medium, and low risk as shown in Table 1-3. Ranking delineations were given at natural breaks in the results.

The ranking results were combined from all four assessments (except for the historic assessment for some catchments as discussed in Section 1.4.4) to give an overall high, medium, and low ranking for all catchments within Uttlesford District. Each catchment was assigned a score for each assessment based on its ranking (high = 3, medium = 2, low = 1) and these were then averaged to produce a final score and ranking. Any catchment producing an overall score of 2 or greater was considered high risk.

There is currently no national guidance available for assessing the cumulative impacts of development. These rankings provide a relative assessment of the catchments within Uttlesford and are not comparable across other boroughs/districts. The thresholds used have been based on natural breaks in the data and professional judgement.

Table 1-3: Ranking assessment criteria

Flood risk ranking	Percentage of increased building area at risk of fluvial flooding	Percentage of increased building area at risk of surface water flooding	Total number of historic flooding incidents	Percentage area of catchment covered by new development
Low risk	<1	<3	<30	0
Medium risk	1 to 3	3 to 5	30 to 50	1 to 4
High risk	>3	>5	>50	>4

1.3.6 Assumptions

The assumptions made when conducting the CIA are shown in Table 1-4.

- Policy recommendations with regards to managing the cumulative impact of development have been made in Section 2 below. This will help to ensure there is no incremental increase in flood risk both within and downstream of Uttlesford District.

Table 1-4: Assumptions of the CIA

Assessment aspect	Assumption made	Details of limitation in method	Justification of method used
Surface water flood risk; Flood Zone 2 and 3a	Total building area	Assumption that all buildings have been included in the OS Open Zoomstack Local Buildings dataset. It may not include all new buildings. It also does not include all buildings across some of the larger cross-boundary catchments.	This was the most up to date and accurate data available.
Fluvial flood risk	Climate change proxy	Used the Flood Map for Planning Flood Zone 2 as an indicative estimate of the impacts of climate change across the district.	Although detailed climate change modelling was available for some watercourses, the broader Flood Map for Planning covers the entire area of the catchments both within and outside the district and therefore provided a consistent approach for this high level assessment.
Historic Flooding incidents	Total number of historic events and severity of flooding	Only flooding incidents recorded that could be georeferenced with XY coordinates to produce GIS files were used. Each point represents a location where it is known there has been at least one flood incident. The severity of the historic flooding event relating to the point has not been considered, just the total number of points within each catchment where there has been a flood incident.	GIS data sourced provided the most accurate results possible for the location of historic flooding incidents across the district.

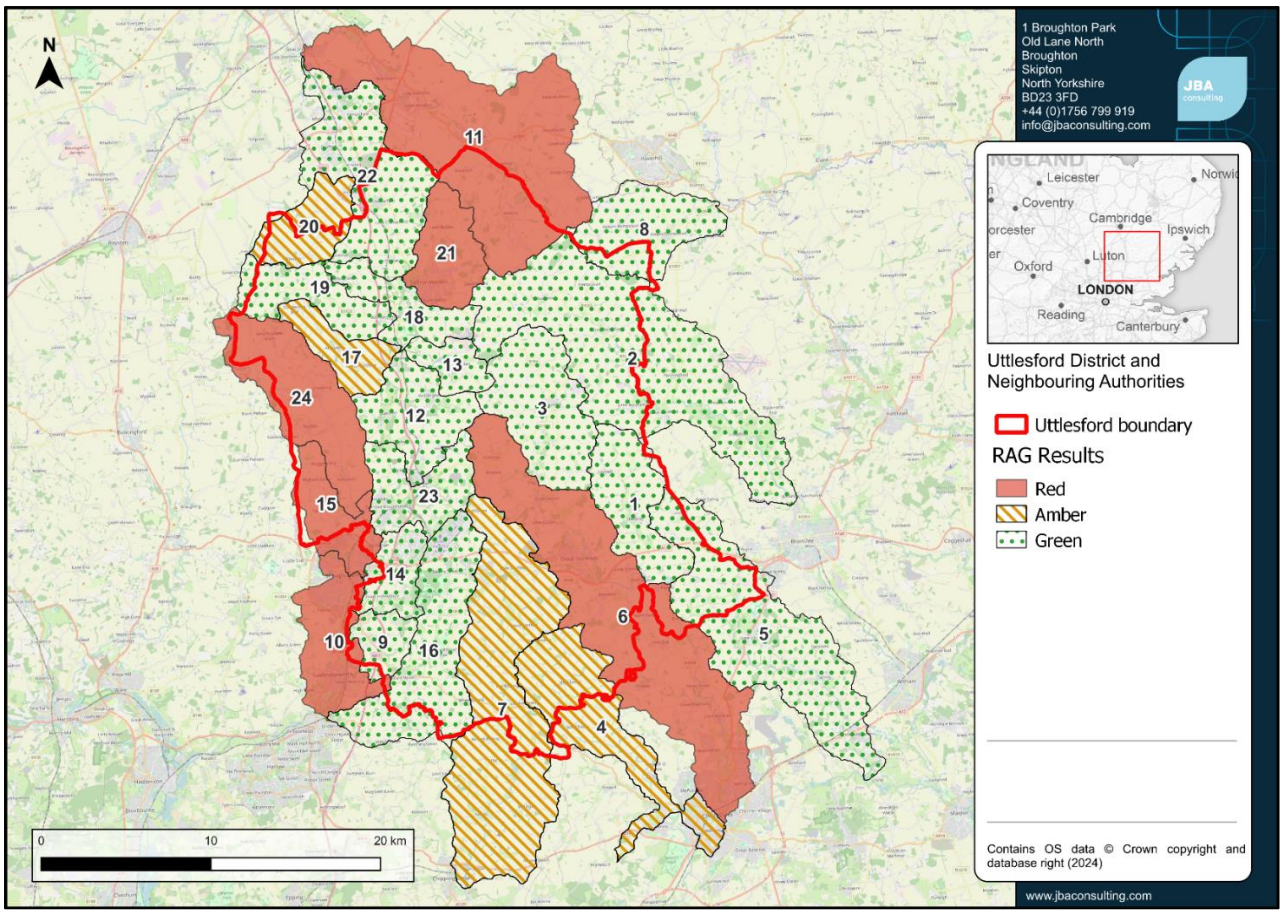
Assessment aspect	Assumption made	Details of limitation in method	Justification of method used
Historic Flooding incidents	Coverage	Historic data provided by Essex County Council only covered Uttlesford, and the following neighbouring authorities: Braintree, Chelmsford and Epping Forest. Therefore, this does not provide data across some of the other cross-boundary catchments.	Best available historic data has been used. To reduce any impacts of the limited data coverage, for catchments where greater than 50% of their area lies outside the District, and where historic flooding data was not available for the neighbouring authorities, the historic assessment was not included within the overall ranking as the count is likely to be a considerable underestimate for these catchments.
Development	Area of development	Assumed that the whole site area will be developed.	Information on site layout not available at this time so this assumes a worst-case scenario.

1.4 Overall rankings

For each assessment, catchments were given a score of 3 (high), 2 (medium), or 1 (low) risk, excluding the historic data assessment where sufficient information was not available. These scores were then averaged across the assessment to give a combined score.

A Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating was then applied to the catchments, with red being high risk, amber being medium risk, and green being low risk. The RAG ratings are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**. The catchments with an average score of greater than or equal to 2 were deemed high risk.

Figure 1-3: Results of the RAG assessment for Uttlesford District



2 Level 1 SFRA Policy recommendations

2.1 Broadscale recommendations

All developments are required to comply with the NPPF and demonstrate they will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Therefore, providing developments comply with the latest guidance and legislation relating to flood risk and sustainable drainage, and appropriate consideration is given to surface water flow paths and storage proposals should normally not increase flood risk downstream.

The high-level CIA for Uttlesford District has highlighted areas where there is the potential for development to have a cumulative impact on flood risk. Catchments have been identified as high, medium, or low risk, relative to the other catchments within the district.

Flood risk can be affected by several different factors, which have been assessed as part of the CIA. As a result, incremental action and betterment in flood risk terms across the whole district should be supported where possible.

The following policy recommendations therefore apply to all catchments within the study area:

- Uttlesford District Council should work closely with neighbouring local authorities to develop complementary Local Planning Policies for catchments that drain into and out of the area to other local authorities in order to minimise any cross-boundary issues of cumulative impacts of development.
- Developers should incorporate SuDS and provide details of adoption, ongoing maintenance, and management on all development sites. Proposals will be required to provide reasoned justification for not using SuDS techniques, where ground conditions and other key factors show them to be technically feasible. Preference will be given to systems that contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure where practicable. Developers should refer to the relevant Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) guidance for the requirements for SuDS in Uttlesford District. Further guidance on SuDS can be found in Section 9 of the Main Report.
- Essex County Council as LLFA will review Surface Water Drainage Strategies in accordance with their local requirements for major and non-major developments. These should consider all sources of flooding to ensure that future development is resilient to flood risk and does not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- Where appropriate, the opportunity for NFM in rural areas, SuDS retrofit in urban areas and river restoration should be maximised. Culverting should not be supported, and day-lighting existing culverts should be promoted through new developments.

- Runoff rates from all development sites must be limited to greenfield rates (including brownfield sites) unless it can be demonstrated that this is not practicable. If it is demonstrated that greenfield rates are not practicable then the runoff rates should be restricted to the closest rate that is practicable, not exceeding brownfield rates.
- Where required, site-specific FRAs should explore opportunities to provide wider community flood risk benefits through new developments. Measures that can be put in place to contribute to a reduction in flood risk downstream should be considered. This may be either by the provision of additional storage on site e.g. through oversized SuDS, NFM techniques, green infrastructure, and green-blue corridors, and/ or by providing a Partnership Funding contribution towards any flood alleviation schemes.
- Uttlesford District Council should consider requiring developers to contribute to community flood defences outside of their red line boundary to provide wider benefits and help offset the cumulative impact of development.

Section 8 of the Main Report details the local requirements for mitigation measures. Catchment-specific recommendations are made for high and medium risk catchments below.

If any future windfall sites are proposed within these catchments, then developers should consider the recommendations set out below so that existing flooding issues in the catchment are not exacerbated by any future development and options for betterment are considered.

2.2 Recommendations for high-risk catchments

High risk catchments are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**. From analysing the results produced above, high-level recommendations for flood storage and betterment have been proposed for sites in each of the high-risk catchments. These recommendations should be considered by developers as part of a site-specific assessment, but more detailed modelling must be undertaken by the developer to ascertain the true storage needs and potential at each site at the planning application stage. The FRA should consider the potential cumulative effects of all proposed development and how this affects sensitive receptors.

The following recommendations are made for high risk catchments:

- Developers should include a construction surface water management plan to support the Construction Drainage Phasing Plan. This should provide information to the EA, the LLFA and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) regarding the proposed approach to surface water management in storm events during the construction phase.
- The LLFA and LPA should consult with Local Not-For-Profit organisations such as wildlife trusts, rivers trusts, and catchment partnerships. This will help to

understand ongoing and upcoming projects where NFM, flood storage and attenuation, and environmental betterment may be possible alongside developments and aid in reducing flood risk.

- The LPA should work closely with the EA and the LLFA to identify any areas of land that should be safeguarded for any future flood alleviation schemes and NFM features. Investigations should seek to determine where developments have the potential to contribute towards works to reduce flood risk and enable regeneration in catchments as well as contributing to the wider provision of green infrastructure.

This is applicable to the following catchments:

- Chelmer (Gt. Easton - R. Can)
- Stort and Navigation, B Stortford to Harlow
- Granta
- Stort and Bourne Brook
- Slade
- Stort (at Clavering)

2.3 Development within medium risk catchments

Catchments that have scored an overall ranking of medium, but where development is proposed should also consider the following recommendations:

- LPAs should work closely with the EA and the LLFA to identify any areas of land that should be safeguarded for any future flood alleviation schemes and NFM features.
- There is the potential for development in these catchments to contribute towards works to reduce flood risk and enable regeneration as well as contributing to the wider provision of green infrastructure.

This is applicable to the following catchments:

- Can
- Upper Roding (to Cripsey Brook)
- Wicken Water
- Tributary of Cam