

Uttlesford District Council Meeting 17 December 2024

Responses to Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

Published on 16 December 2024

1. By Councillor Haynes to Councillor John Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:

“Council approved the submission of the Regulation 19 draft but there is still scope for UDC to propose modifications. Perhaps the most contentious element of the draft is the employment allocation to the north of Taylor’s Farm, Takeley Street. Has discussion taken place with regard to possible modifications associated with this allocation? Specifically,

- i) Is this allocation really needed now given the large amount of employment space already consented at Stansted Airport North and other opportunities further east along the B1256?; and
- ii) Is it not possible, so as to ensure that it does actually happen, to incorporate the new access onto the A120 into the allocation itself, rather than having it as a safeguarded area?”

Response from Councillor Evans:

“Thank you for raising this point, which touches on the next steps of our local plan journey. The proposed allocation for employment development at land north of Taylor’s Farm in Takeley Street forms part of our spatial strategy which was agreed by majority vote at the July meeting of Council. The council is required to meet our employment need in full or risk the plan being found ‘unsound’. The site contributes towards the council meeting this need. All of our proposed site allocations have been through a robust selection process and were found to be the most appropriate sites available. This does include land north of Taylor’s Farm. It will be noted that the council cannot make modifications to the plan beyond the Regulation 19 Stage. Any potential modifications are a matter for the Planning Inspector through the Examination process. The Council can suggest some minor proposed modifications in an effort to assist the Inspector, but these cannot be significant nor substantial in nature.

The transport evidence supporting the local plan indicates that a link road from the site to the A120 is not required to support the site allocation. The land required to build the road has also not been put forward by the landowners for this purpose. For these reasons it cannot be included as part of the site allocation but instead is 'safeguarded' so that the issue can be explored further throughout the local plan period up until 2041."

2. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Arthur Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

"What are the costs of fire safety remediation works in sheltered housing to date?

What progress on recovering those sums from external contractors?"

Response from Councillor Coote:

"The two sheltered housing schemes in question are The Close and Priors Wood Court. I can confirm that Uttlesford District Council has not incurred any direct costs for these remediation works, as Uttlesford Norse Services Limited (UNSL) is covering all expenses due to the non-compliant door installations being their responsibility. UNSL, has to date invested approximately £275, 961.51.

- Waking watch services
- Temporary Installation of new audible sounders to individual properties until fire remediation is completed

Further costs will be incurred by UNSL for remediation works to fire door installations and any other works as identified through ongoing assessments of fire safety in the blocks."

3. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:

"City and Country have recently announced proposals for a development of over 1000 houses on green belt between Stansted and Birchanger. What does Cllr Evans consider to be the impact of this announcement on our emerging local plan?"

Response from Councillor Evans:

"Thank you Cllr Sell, for raising this point. At this time the proposals have no bearing on our Local Plan. It is another speculative proposal from a developer. The site in question was promoted by a site promoter during our 'call for sites' but

did not fare well in our site selection process, principally due to its situation within our Green Belt.

Once the Local Plan is adopted, we should see fewer proposals for speculative development”

4. By Councillor Dean to Councillor Reeve – Portfolio Holder for the Environment:

“What is the current vacancy rate for loaders and drivers for our refuse service? How is this impacting refuse delivery?”

Response from Councillor Reeve:

“Thank you Cllr Dean. Within our waste and recycling teams we have 23 LGV Driver positions, 2 of which are currently vacant. Of our 30 Loader positions, 3 are vacant. All these positions are covered by agency staff. In general, refuse service levels are very good, with very few delays. However, as has been reported operational issues do crop up from time to time, and these do have an impact.

To improve communications concerning reported operational issues, a ‘Service Disruption Communications protocol’ has been drafted, and will shortly go live. The objective of this is advise appropriate individuals and groups (both within the Council and the general public) of such disruption as soon as practicable.

5. By Councillor Dean to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for the Housing:

“Since 1/1/24 how much money has the council spent on the refurbishment of the flats at Manor Road, Stansted? What is the projected spending for 2025?”

Response from Councillor Coote:

“The refurbishment works programme expenditure at Manor Road from 1st January 2024 through till end of December 2024 is £377, 838.05. The Works Programme has included Main roof replacement over flats 9-16 (Block 2) Balcony surface replacement over flats 17 & 19. Balcony surface replacement over flats 37 & 39, Main roof replacement over flats 33-40 (Block 5) Balcony surface replacement over flats 9 & 11, 13 & 15. Balcony surface replacement over flats 25 & 27 and 29 & 31.

The projected expenditure of the refurbishment works at Manor Road for 2025 is £393, 000.00. Works will include Main roof replacement over flats 1-8 (Block 1), Main roof replacement over flats 25-32 (Block 4), Balcony surface replacement over flats 1 & 3, 5 & 7. Balcony surface replacement over flats 21 & 23 and Balcony surface replacement over flats 33 & 35. Boundary wall refurbishment to the front of all blocks, Refurbishment of outhouse Asbestos roofs to the rear of blocks, Repair/Replacement of leaking guttering/downpipes and Refurbishment of communal hallway ceilings.”

6. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council:

“UDC meetings are now regularly attended by a security guard. What is the cost to the Council for each meeting?”

Response from Councillor Lees:

“The Chief Executive and colleagues recently carried out their periodic reassessment of risks including to Member safety and security, in line with the commitment given at full council in the debate following the tragic murder of Sir David Amess MP elsewhere in Essex. Specifics of that advice were shared in a Part Two private session report with the Audit and Scrutiny Committee just this September, but it would be counter-productive and indeed irresponsible to publish the specifics of the considerations or of the mitigation measures in an open meeting. That Part Two private session report contains a direct answer to Cllr Sell’s question, and has been sent to him directly (and is available to all councillors on our ModGov system).”