

**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 30  
September 2025

**Title:** Local Plan: Project Plan Update

**Report Author:** Dean Hermitage – Strategic Director of  
Planning

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## Summary

1. This report provides an update on local plan progress following the Examination in Public (EiP) hearings in June, including risks, mitigations, and resourcing. The revised Local Plan timetable (LDS), first established at this Committee in March 2023, remains on track, and adoption of the Local Plan is expected next spring.
2. The risk register risks are all but closed. There is one risk remaining.

## Recommendations

3. That the Committee notes the conclusions of the report on risk and project management and provides its views on the matters covered in the report.

## Financial Implications

4. Within existing local plan budget.

## Background Papers

5. The Regulation 19 Local Plan can be found at [Local Plan \(Regulation 19\) consultation - Uttlesford District Council](#)
6. All examination paperwork can be found at [Uttlesford Local Plan Examination](#)
7. Main Modifications to the plan can found at [Uttlesford Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation - Uttlesford District Council - Citizen Space](#) (bottom of page).

## Impact

Communication / Consultation	The Reg19 Local Plan was subject to a 10 week consultation. Main modifications to the plan are currently out to 6 week consultation.
Community safety	None
Equalities	None
Health & Safety	None

Human Rights / Legal	None
Sustainability	The plan will have positive impacts on sustainability and bio-diversity district-wide.
Ward-specific Impacts	All wards
Workforce / Workplace	None

## Situation

### *General Update*

8. Since the Committee last reviewed progress, the Local Plan hearings were held (between 10 and 19 June). This was slightly later than anticipated in the LDS timetable however, the lost time has been recovered, and the Main Modifications (MM) schedule is already out for consultation.
9. In their closing remarks the Inspectors were positive and implied the Local Plan was likely to be found sound subject to MMs. 'MMs' are changes to the submitted Local Plan that are identified and developed as part of discussions during the examination process. They are a decision for the Inspectors. The MM consultation is the last stage of the Examination in Public (EIP) before the Inspectors issue their report and recommendation.
10. Uttlesford's extensive evidence base held up well under examination. This is reflected in the Inspectors post hearing note (see background papers) and MM schedule (see background papers). The time and effort put into preparing for the hearings was evident, and the challenges offered by this committee and the Local Plan Panel throughout the process no doubt contributed to that.
11. Additional resources were required during the EiP, including a further study on Gypsy and Traveller provision and other minor evidence-base updates. While the project remains within budget, contingency funds are now very limited. No further costs are expected unless the Inspectors decide to reopen hearings following the MMs consultation. This is possible but perhaps unlikely given the nature of the MMs.
12. The possibility of a significant / unforeseen issue being raised during the MM consultation is the only remaining, open risk, as per the insert below.

Risk ID	Date Raised	Description	Risk Score	Mitigation	After Mitigation Score	Comment
ID7	14.10.24	Examination programme slips if another hearing is needed.	6	Work during EIP and on MM schedule – prompt MM consultation.	3	A further hearing may add 2-3 months to programme + costs. Mitigations make this unlikely.

*Table 1. Remaining Risk Register risk*

13. Whilst not part of this project per se, there is also risk that the council is required to start an immediate review of the Local Plan should it not, at time of adoption, make provision for a five year housing land supply. This would have resource and budgetary implications in 2026/27. Officers are liaising with MHCLG and working on housing figures to ensure that this is avoided. The council would likely start early issues and options work on a new local plan later in 2026/7 in any case, as is good practice however, an immediate review would require more intensive work.

14. All other risks have been closed.

### *Next Steps*

15. A high level project plan for the MM stage is currently being worked to. It is summarised as follows:

- 15 Sept to 27 October 2025 – MM consultation.
- W/C 10 Nov 2025 – Submit responses and post-consultation material to PINS
- Estimated end of 2025 – Receipt of Inspectors' final report
- Early 2026 - Incorporate final modifications into plan\*.
- Early 2026 - Local Plan Panel reviews final plan; Cabinet reviews final plan\*.
- March / April 2026 – Full council considers adoption of Local Plan (date TBC)\*.

*\*subject to content and timing of Inspectors' report.*

16. It is possible that Local Plan adoption will be one month earlier than envisaged in the published LDS.

### **Conclusion**

17. The Council has made meaningful progress on the Local Plan and navigated the risks identified. The Council remains well placed to be able to deliver an up-to-date local plan by spring 2026, as planned.

## Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Failure to successfully Project Manage the Local Plan will result in an unsound Plan or inability to adopt the plan within government deadlines.	1 – various elements of risk involved (see appendix 1)	4 - Lack of an adopted (or advanced local plan) leading to potentially unacceptable development and government intervention.	Various mitigations in place. See body of report.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.