



DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: NOVEMBER 2020

This is my first report for you and obviously it is one that I wish that I would not have to make. Cllr Storah was a diligent, hardworking and knowledgeable councillor, a colleague and a friend, he will be sadly missed.

CORONAVIRUS

The latest provisions nationwide are well publicised and I will not repeat the advices or information on any help available sent directly to all Parish Councils by Uttlesford DC.

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/coronavirus>

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL ("UDC")

The past month seems to have been taken over by planning matters and no doubt this will be continue to be the case for months to come

Local Plan and Policy Matters

The Local Plan Leadership Group ("LPLG") which I am a member of continues to meet and has now reviewed and approved the draft Important 'process documents':

- Project Initiation Document
- Local Development Scheme
- Statement of Community Involvement and Strategy

These have subsequently been approved by the Scrutiny Committee (Local Plan) and also by the Cabinet. Concerning the Statement of Community Involvement and Strategy there is presently a **consultation** being undertaken. They have been sent to you and have been published on the website for consultation [here](#), and the [New Local Plan](#) landing page. The closing date for comments is 5 pm on 9th December 2020. These links might usefully be retained for convenient future reference

Community Stakeholder Forum

The Community Stakeholder Forum has been established to complement and enhance the consultation process by providing a platform for discussion amongst the community. During the first consultation, local representatives from a range of backgrounds will liaise with others and bring different perspectives to a discussion around each of the themes.

There will be nine different themes commencing on 11th November until. Firstly, each theme will be considered by members of the Community Stakeholder Forum. This forum is chaired by an independent person, Ms Angela Dixon the CEO of Saffron Hall. This is designed to engage with as many people and interests as possible, including members of the youth community. Further details can be seen here:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/consultation-and-the-community-stakeholder-forum>

Below is an info-gram of the nine stakeholder themes which we think will be of interest and will show you all nine themes that will go out for consultation and the dates. I hope that the Parish Council will be able to encourage their residents to take part in the consultations as they will help influence and shape the future of this district in the new developing Local Plan.



In addition, the Town and Parish Councils will continue to be consulted via their own Forum. I would encourage you to attend the Town and Parish Council Forums.

Government Consultation

A response was submitted to the government's White Paper "Planning for The Future" on 28 October 2020. The response, which took into account the views of many Councillors as passed to them by the public and the Local Plan Leadership Group, may be found here:



UDCPlanning for the future 201020 report.

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=424>

The Community Stakeholder Forum has been established to complement and enhance the consultation process by providing a platform for discussion amongst the community. During the first consultation, local representatives from a range of backgrounds will liaise with others and bring different perspectives to a discussion around each of the themes.

On the initial Local Plan engagement, i.e. the consideration by the Local Plan Leadership Group of a number of different themes over a period will be commencing shortly. Firstly, each theme will be considered by members of the Community Stakeholder Forum. This forum is chaired by an independent person, Ms Angela Dixon the CEO of Saffron Hall. This is designed to engage with as many people and interests as possible,

Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER
Email: cllrmerifield@uttlesford.gov.uk mobile: 07958 389059

including members of the youth community. In addition, the Town and Parish Councils will continue to be consulted via their own Forum and we were pleased to see that you were able to attend the last meeting of this body. Further details can be seen here:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/consultation-and-the-community-stakeholder-forum>

As to the necessity for “calls for sites” and “areas of search”, consideration as to these by LPLG will commence shortly including by way of detailed mapping of theoretical “constraints and opportunities”.

STANSTED AIRPORT APPEAL

Matters move on and an 800 + page Environmental Addendum has been served by MAG as part of its evidence base in response to that of UDC. Five Independent Consultants are retained by UDC and their evidence will be submitted to support the decision of the UDC Planning Committee in January 2020 refusing planning permission for the expansion (from 35 million) of the airport’s capacity for up to 43 million passengers a year. Three Planning Inspectors have been appointed to conduct the Inquiry which will begin on 12th Jan 2021, anticipated to last 40 + days. The timetable and procedure are matters entirely within the direction of PINS and not the parties. As previously reported, PINS proposes to conduct the enquiry partly in person and partly virtually with very limited/ restricted attendance of the public but steps will be taken to have live streaming of proceedings. The Grenfell Inquiry is being conducted in such a way and is likely to be used as an example of how remote hearings can be arranged and conducted so as to protect the health of participants and yet provide public accessibility to proceedings.

A copy of all documents may be found at the dedicated UDC web page:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/airport-appeal>

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

This is a body whose purposes are to reflect the interests of the rural community and previous administrations have not taken an active part in its affairs. It is presently consulting (at the request of MHCLG) upon the ongoing relevance of Neighbourhood Planning post the White Paper consultation and you will be contacted by UDC to solicit your views in this regard.

Matters of rural housing, crime and transport are also topical and if there are matters of concern in these connections, we shall be pleased to hear of views to be passed forward.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Despite initially understanding that this was a topic to which urgent action was being taken by Central Government, this seems no longer to be a pressing topic. A number of District Councils within Essex, including Uttlesford, have expressed significant reservations as to the initial proposals made as have many other local authorities nationwide. I will let you know of any further relevant developments.

GENERAL

As I am still unable to hold face to face councillor surgeries, I would be very happy to hear from any parish councillors or residents by email or phone should there be anything they think I can help with.

CLlr Sandi Merifield

Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER
Email: cllrmerifield@uttlesford.gov.uk mobile: 07958 389059