

UTTLESFORD'S NEW LOCAL PLAN

HOUSING CHAPTER

(Housing, affordable housing, Gypsies & Travellers, space standards)

Housing

(Community Stakeholder Forum points)

Design to respect environment, local vernacular, traditional materials, landscape and heritage setting, develop local design guides.

Plan for sheltered housing as part of larger developments.

Prioritise mitigation of climate change in design of homes.

Apply minimum space standards.

Design in opportunities for home working.

Need for quality smaller houses, affording more choice to 'down-sizers'.

Type and size of housing should support economic strategy.

Offer a variety of schemes.

Introduction

Meeting housing needs is dealt with in the Spatial Strategy and Future Growth chapters. This chapter looks at the non-strategic policies that will shape residential development in Uttlesford.

Housing in Uttlesford has an important part to play in supporting both the local and national economy, as well as being critical in promoting well-being and achieving positive health outcomes. Uttlesford is a rural district with historic market towns and beautiful villages. Overall, the quality of life of residents is high, although demand for housing is also high, with high rents and house prices, preventing many people from living in the district. It is important to increase the supply of all types of housing, including affordable housing, and maintain a mix of different sizes, types and tenures of housing to meet a wide range of housing needs. The previous Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Uttlesford assessed the housing needs and helps to inform the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that are required to meet the need. The Council is producing a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) to update the information in the SHMA.

Housing Mix

It is important that the Local Plan provides for a choice and mix of housing across the District in order to create balanced and sustainable communities in relation to both the choice and mix provided on larger, individual sites and overall choice and mix of specific communities. Widening housing choice broadens the appeal of an area and helps in meeting the needs of existing residents. The Council will expect the mix of new residential schemes to reflect the most recent evidence of need

taking into account local character considerations and viability which will be assessed on a site-by-site basis as necessary. If necessary, evidence of scheme viability will need to be demonstrated at the time a planning application is submitted, or alongside a request for a variation of a S106 agreement.

The 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assessed the housing mix and tenure in terms of number of bedrooms for market and affordable housing. It was concluded that the majority of the need for market housing is for 3 and 4+ bedroom houses, whilst the greatest need for affordable housing units is for 2- and 3-bedroom houses.

Work undertaken since the SHMA has identified that there is currently a 'demographic gap' in Uttlesford, young adults move out of the district and new/returning residents do not come back until they are in their 40's. This is linked to the push-pull factors of house prices and lifestyle, with young adults being unable to afford a home in the district and desiring to live nearer services and facilities aimed at young people.

Ensuring there are sufficient properties to meet the needs of an aging population is also important, to that effect all larger sites will be expected to include suitable housing on site, for example bungalows, retirement flats or extra care facilities.

In the last ten years, between 50% and 90% of dwellings built have had 3 or less bedrooms. This is considered helpful as provides a supply of smaller properties that are more likely to assist first time buyers purchase a property.

The Council will be producing a Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) to replace the SHMA, further evidence from this study will inform future iterations of this policy.

Policy H1 Housing Mix

Within all developments providing 10 or more new dwellings the Council will require the provision of an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes that contribute to current and future housing needs and create mixed communities. This will include a significant proportion of dwellings with 3 or less bedrooms and a minimum of 5% of properties will be suitable for an aging population.

Subdivision and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The use Class (C4) covers small, shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities. Planning permission is generally not required for a change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to C4, as it is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). A change use from a C3 or C4 to a large house in multiple occupation (HMO) (with more than 6 people sharing) requires planning permission. HMOs can provide useful accommodation but

can cause issues, as in many cases the property was not originally designed for intensive residential use.

The character of an area may be adversely affected by subdivision of existing properties or change of use to multiple occupancy resulting in alteration of population mix, impact on facilities and services. HMOs can result in an increase in on-street parking requirement, loss of amenity due to the use of garden space for car parking, an increase in overlooking of adjacent properties and general noise and disturbance. If a dwelling is within a flood risk area, subdivision creating a ground floor flat could mean a flat being created with no access to a first-floor level for refuge. The potential adverse effects of the subdivision or multiple occupancy of residential properties will be controlled by Policy H2 below.

Policy H2 Subdivision of Dwellings and Dwellings in Multiple Occupancy

The subdivision of dwellings into two or more units or the change of use of dwellings to houses of multiple occupancy will be permitted provided that:

- 1. Development does not harm the character or amenity of the area;**
- 2. Sufficient car parking is provided in accordance with the standards set out in **Policy XX** in the Transport and Movement chapter;**
- 3. There would be no unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring properties;**
- 4. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent design guidance for the occupiers of the newly created units;**
- 5. If the dwelling is located within a flood risk area, no residential unit is created without access to a first-floor level for refuge;**
- 6. The development would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area by reason of:**
 - i. Unacceptable increases in on-street parking;**
 - ii. Unacceptable loss of garden space for use as car parking; and**
 - iii. Unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.**

Permission granted will normally be subject to a condition that restricts the number of occupants allowed to reside at the property as their main residence.

While extensions to homes reduce the stock of smaller and cheaper housing, an extension may be the only way many households can afford to secure the accommodation they need to meet their changing family requirements.

The projected population between 2019-2039 will be primarily driven by the 65+ age group. This age group is projected to grow at a rate of 2% per annum in the period 2019-2039. Over time as the level of housing support and care for the elderly changes, extensions offer a solution for some independence within the family unit as well as providing close support thus reducing the need for the premature need to enter care facilities.

Extensions to homes offer an opportunity to support the living needs of the elderly thus avoiding premature entry into assisted living. This type of residential development reduces the need to move home, whilst adapting to a family's changing lifestyle and societal needs as well as reducing the need for larger homes.

The changes in working patterns which will include remote, flexible, and hybrid working, will require home offices that in turn will likely result in an in the need for home extensions.

Applications for residential extensions will be considered against all policies within the Local Plan, where relevant, and, in particular the design policies set out in the chapter 'Protecting and Enhancing Uttlesford'.

Policy H3 Small Scale Residential Extensions and Annexes

Residential Extensions and Annexes will ensure:

- 1. The scale, massing and appearance would be in keeping with or improve the existing building and the character and the appearance of the surrounding area;**
- 2. The residential amenity of privacy and daylight of any adjoining properties be safeguarded;**
- 3. Any additional car parking is provided in accordance with the standards set out in **Policy XX** in the Transport and Movement chapter;**
- 4. It would not cause harm to the setting of a heritage asset and would preserve or enhance the special architectural of historic character and appearance of a conservation area and its setting: and**

Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside and the Green Belt

The construction of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a number of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of the individual properties and their surroundings. To help protect the character of Uttlesford's countryside and its Green Belt there is a need to control the amount and design of new development in the countryside. Applications for

small-scale residential extensions should be considered against Policy H4 of the Local Plan.

To help protect the character of Uttlesford's countryside and its Green Belt there is a need to control the amount and design of new development in the countryside. The construction of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a number of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of the individual properties and their surroundings. Applications for small-scale residential extensions should be considered against Policy D3 of the Local Plan. Regards should also be given to Policy SP10 – Protection of the Countryside and Policy C1 – Protection of Landscape Character as well as the design policies in the Design section of the Local Plan.

Policy H4 House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside and the Green Belt

House extensions and replacement dwellings beyond the Green Belt:

- 1. Proposals to extend or replace existing dwellings within the area designated as Countryside or Countryside Protection Zone will be permitted provided that the proposal would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding Countryside or the open character of the Countryside Protection Zone by virtue of its siting, scale, height, character, and design.**
- 1. A replacement dwelling should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity or other environmental grounds indicate that a more appropriate location on the plot can be justified.**

House extensions and replacement dwellings within the Green Belt

- 2. House extensions which would not result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling or harm the purposes of the Green Belt will be permitted; and**
- 3. Replacement dwellings should be positioned on or close to the footprint of the existing dwelling and will only be permitted if they are not materially larger than the one it replaces.**

Both within the Green Belt and beyond it, account will be taken of the footprint of the existing dwelling, the extent to which it has previously been extended or could be extended under permitted development rights, and the character of the area.

Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

Infilling between existing dwellings and the development of villages without development limits often provide opportunities for the provision of additional homes. However, care should be taken to make sure that such development is appropriate, well designed, in scale with, and well related to its surroundings. This will be particularly important beyond development limits, where the sensitive nature of these sites requires development only to be allowed where it will not adversely affect the local environment and where it will not lead to overdevelopment.

It is also important to safeguard the interests of residents in surrounding houses by making sure that residential amenity such as large gardens, privacy, and the character of the area is maintained.

Policy H5 Residential Development in Settlements without Development Limits

Proposals for small scale residential development on sites in settlements without development limits will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. The development is limited in scale and proportionate to the existing settlement;**
- 2. The setting of existing buildings, the natural and historic environment, and the character of the area are protected;**
- 3. A reasonable amount of amenity space is provided in accordance with the Essex Design Guide or subsequent guidance;**
- 4. The development would not have an overbearing effect or cause disturbance to neighbouring properties;**
- 5. There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties; and**
- 6. The resulting development would not result in unreasonable noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties from vehicles or any other cause.**

Affordable housing

The 2017 SHMA identified that the affordable housing component of the District's total housing need is 19.5%. In the light of national policy which does not permit affordable housing contributions from sites of 10 units or less, it is considered appropriate to require developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings in order to ensure that the affordable housing need is met.

There are, and will continue to be, many households in Uttlesford lacking their own housing or living in housing that is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

For affordable housing to be relevant to those in housing need in Uttlesford it must be available, both initially and for subsequent occupancy, only to those with a demonstrable housing need.

The Council encourages meeting affordable housing requirements through one of its preferred Registered Providers (RP) who have the management abilities and local knowledge to effectively manage new affordable housing. Increasingly though there are a range of different types of affordable housing and developers and property managers as well as Registered Providers. The Council will consider a range of different types of affordable housing subject to it meeting the overall intention of affordable housing. Innovative affordable housing products and development designs will be supported particularly within the larger developments.

Starter Homes can help to widen opportunities for home ownership for those households able to afford market rents but unable to afford to buy housing in the Housing Market Area. The Council is supportive of the model and awaits the publication of the Regulations. The SHMA found that Starter Homes are unlikely to be affordable to those households identified as being unable to afford market housing. The provision of Starter Homes are therefore considered as being additional to (and not part of) the affordable housing need.

The percentage and type of affordable housing on any given site may be subject to negotiation at the time of a planning application, to allow issues such as site size, sustainability and viability to be considered. An appropriate mix of tenures and property size would need to be agreed in the light of the most up to date housing need evidence and will be determined by local circumstances. The Council will set out in its Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and specific site layout and design requirements for affordable housing. Currently the tenure split is 71% affordable rent or social rented tenure and 29% shared ownership or intermediate housing tenure. Affordable housing units will be normally be distributed throughout the development in clusters of no more than 10 units, depending on the size of the development.

Requirements for affordable housing provision can render some schemes unviable, especially when faced with a downturn in the housing market or changes to funding. The viability of schemes is a key consideration. It is the responsibility of the applicant to commission a viability study by specialists to be agreed with the Council to prove that the affordable dwellings requirement as set out in the policy will make their scheme unviable and to propose alternatives to meet the requirements set out in Policy H6 below.

Policy H6 Affordable Housing

Developments on sites which provide for 10 dwellings or more, or residential floorspace of more than 1,000 sq m (combined gross internal area), will be required to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings on the application site and as an integral part of the development. The council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.

Where it can be evidenced to the satisfaction of the Council that this requirement would render the development unviable the Council will negotiate an appropriate provision of affordable housing.

In exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be achieved, off-site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on-site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.

Affordable housing units will be distributed through the development in appropriately sized, non-contiguous clusters. The tenure mix of affordable housing should reflect the most up to date local housing need evidence and viability on individual sites. Affordable housing will be tenure blind and indistinguishable from market housing.

Developers may not circumvent this policy by artificially subdividing sites. Where sites are sub-divided, the Council will expect each subdivision or smaller development to contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable housing which would have been appropriate on the whole or larger site.

To prevent the loss of affordable housing to the general housing market, the Council will, where appropriate, require long term safeguards to be in place to ensure the benefit of affordable housing will be enjoyed by successive occupiers. This will normally be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Affordable housing on Exception Sites

As a consequence of the scale of affordable housing needs and the need to retain mixed and balanced communities, the Council will also exceptionally release suitable land in rural areas for local needs housing that would not otherwise normally receive planning permission.

It is important to establish that a need exists and then to make sure that accommodation is made available for those people who have a genuine need for housing in the locality that they cannot meet in the market. Such people may for example, include existing residents who need separate accommodation locally, key workers or people who have longstanding links with the local community, such as

people who used to live in the village but were forced to move away because of a lack of affordable housing, and people who need to move back into a village to be near relatives. 'Local' in this context means 'within the parish', principally, although the needs of those who live or work in an adjoining parish may also be accepted. This would particularly apply where a scheme is proposed in a larger village that would meet the needs of adjoining smaller communities. Properties need to meet an identified local need and be provided and maintained by a registered or other provider, to be agreed by the Council at an early stage. On some exception sites the Council may consider development that includes cross-subsidy from open market sales on the same site. The applicant would need to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that a mixed tenure scheme was essential to the viability and delivery of the development. The District Council will work with Registered Providers, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups in identifying suitable sites.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of affordable housing including discounted market sale and intermediate homes to rent or buy. The Council supports the development of CLTs to meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies, CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

Policy H7 Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

Development of affordable housing will be permitted outside settlements on a site where housing would not otherwise normally be permitted, if it meets all the following criteria:

- 1. The development will meet a local need that cannot be met in any other way, as demonstrated by an up-to-date housing needs survey prepared within the last three years;**
- 2. The development is of a scale appropriate to the size and facilities of the settlement; and**
- 3. The site adjoins the settlement;**

The inclusion of market housing in such schemes will be supported provided that:

- 4. Viability assessments demonstrate that the need for the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the development; and**
- 5. The proportion of market housing is the minimum needed to make the scheme viable.**

Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

Paragraph 62 of the NPPF clarifies that Local Planning Authorities should identify and make provision for people wishing to build their own home. Enabling self-build and custom-building homes provides an important opportunity to bring more choice into the housing market and enable people to design and build homes that meet their specific needs.

Self-build and custom housebuilding mean the building or completion by (a) individuals, (b) associations of individuals, or (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals as their sole or main residence for at least three years. The three years is relevant in terms of qualifying for self-build Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) exemption¹. However, the CIL exemption will apply in future when Uttlesford District Council adopts the CIL regime.

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires each local planning authority to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority area in order to build houses for those individuals to occupy as homes. The self-build register also provides information about the demand for such housing. The self-build and custom housebuilding need as identified from the Council's register is reported and published annually.

In December 2020 the Council introduced eligibility criteria and set a local connection test to try and gain a more accurate identification of those with a local need for self-build and custom house building. As of December 2021, there were 121 individuals and no associations on the Council's Self and Custom Build Register (Part 1) and 122 individuals and no associations in Part 2 of the same Register.

The Council will work with developers on sites where the delivery of serviced plots for affordable housing are negotiated to enable some of these to be offered for self-build where a need is identified.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are recognised as one potential arrangement to deliver, own and manage the provision of self-build schemes. CLTs are non-profit, community-based organisations run by volunteers that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community, are owned and controlled by the community and are made available at permanently affordable levels. The Council supports the development of CLTs to

¹ Regulation 54A, The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

meet local housing needs. As corporate bodies CLTs must satisfy conditions within relevant legislation and furthermore should be willing to enter into planning obligations to secure the future affordability and occupancy of any dwellings they provide.

The Council further recognises the opportunity of custom and self-build housing partly satisfying the affordable housing obligations from a residential development. Self-build development can provide for intermediate housing for rent or sale but would be subject to applying affordability and eligibility criteria. Several alternatives can be used to secure delivery. These include providing a specific number of fully serviced plots or homes that can be partly built out to be self-finished by purchasers. In all cases these should be made available to households in housing need with a relevant local connection and provided for sale or rent at an appropriate discount below market values. Affordable self-build properties should meet the definition for affordable housing provided by the Local Plan and Annex 2 of the NPPF for people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home on the open market.

Support for this growing sector can make a positive contribution to development within the district. Where areas of land are identified for self-build, either as part of a strategic development site, or through other smaller scale or windfall development, good design principles will apply.

Masterplans and Plot Passports should be prepared that provide the parameters within which these new homes can be designed and build, allowing for individual interpretation, but within a framework that establishes the grain, scale and rhythm of new development.

Plot Passports are a summary of the design parameters for any given plot, helping private homebuilders understand what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission for the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The Passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built, as well as height restrictions and other details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.

Policy H8 Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported where they seek to address the need and demand for self and custom build housing and:

- 1. The site is located within development limits;**
- 2. Are of high-quality design and accord with plot passports (where appropriate);**
- 3. Are constructed sustainably and are energy efficient; and**
- 4. Do not conflict with other policies in the local plan.**

5. **Self and Custom Build proposals will be supported as part of strategic sites.**

Where land is proposed for self and custom build plots located within strategic sites, a design code and Individual Plot Passports should be prepared and submitted to the Council for approval. Together, these will regulate the form of development, establishing building parameters such as heights, footprints, setbacks, densities, and parking requirements.

Neighbourhood plans may designate self and custom-build sites where demand is identified.

In line with identified demand, a proportion of the self-build plots should be provided as affordable housing. These should be provided:

6. **At an appropriate discount below market value; and**
7. **To households in housing need with a relevant local connection.**

If Self or Custom Build plots are not sold after being marketed appropriately for 24 months, then they should remain on the open market as Self or Custom Build plots or be offered to the Council as land to deliver additional affordable housing. If there is no interest from the above after a further 12 months then the developer can build out the site as open market housing.

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004² states that every local housing authority must, when undertaking a review of housing needs in their District carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers residing in or resorting to their district. Local planning authorities are required to provide culturally suitable accommodation for all their community under the Housing Act (2004).

The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) (2015)³ requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets and provide a sufficient supply of sites for those families who meet the definition of 'gypsy and traveller' and 'travelling showpeople'. Gypsy and traveller under the PPTS are defined as:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

³ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2015)

excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- a. Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life;*
- b. The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.*
- c. Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.*

Travelling showpeople are defined in the PPTS as:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

In partnership with the Councils across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, the District Council commissioned the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for gypsy and traveller and travelling Showpeople families. The latest GTAA was published in January 2018 and the baseline for the Uttlesford Study in 2016. Essex authorities are currently commencing an update of the GTAA.

The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Uttlesford through a combination of desk-based research and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites. A total of 16 interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised and unauthorised sites and yards.

The GTAA identified that in the District there is a need for no additional pitches up to 2033 for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition contained in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; a need for up to 8 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may meet the planning definition; and a need for 10 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition. The policy on specialist housing supports meeting these needs. No needs for travelling showpeople were identified. The Council is working with the other Councils in Essex to identify the need and the appropriate location(s) for transit provision as well as to review the study published in 2018.

The Council is committed to providing for the housing need of all of its community as required under the 2004 Housing Act. The Council will closely monitor the Gypsy and Traveller population and keep the evidence base on gypsy and Traveller need and supply under review. The Council will publish an annual statement indicating the supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches when compared to the latest identified need.

The Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address the identified need for Gypsy and Travellers who fall outside the definition of the PPTS as part of the Council's overall objective to meet district-wide housing needs. Any need that arises during the Local Plan period will be considered against the criteria based Policy H9 below, or if it proves necessary in the future, through the preparation of a specific site allocations plan.

Policy H9 Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

In determining all planning applications, only those who meet the PPTS definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson will have weight attributed to the need for a site.

When considering planning applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation, planning permission will be granted where all of the following criteria are met:

- 1. The site is not in the Green Belt, unless there are very special circumstances;**
- 2. The site is in a sustainable location in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities;**
- 3. The site is suitable in terms of vehicular access to the highway, parking, turning, road safety and servicing arrangements and has access to essential services such as water supply, sewerage, drainage, and waste disposal;**
- 4. Adequate provision is made for on-site facilities for storage, play, residential amenity and sufficient on-site utility services for the number of pitches or plots proposed;**
- 5. The proposal is well related to the size and location of the site and respects the scale of the nearby communities;**
- 6. There is no significant adverse impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the site would not lead to the loss of, or adverse impact on, important historic and natural environment assets;**
- 7. There is no significant risk of land contamination or unacceptable risk of flooding;**
- 8. The site provides a satisfactory residential amenity both within the site and for neighbouring occupiers and there is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby communities;**
- 9. Safe and convenient vehicular access to the local highway network can be provided; and**
- 10. Plots for Travelling Showpeople should also be of a sufficient size to enable the storage, repair and maintenance of equipment.**

Change of use Planning permission will be refused for the change of use of all Gypsy and Traveller sites or Travelling Showpeople yards identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment unless acceptable replacement accommodation can be provided, or it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer required to meet any identified needs.

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Uttlesford has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing over the Local Plan period. Essex County Council (ECC) is the provider of social services in the District. Its independent Living Programme is encouraging the provision of specialist accommodation in Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities. This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care, which is a considerably more expensive way of meeting the needs of older people, and can unnecessarily restrict independence within this age group.

Housing intended specifically for older people should be located where it is easy for residents to access community facilities and services, such as day-to-day shops and healthcare, and to be able to travel by public transport to larger centres to access a greater range of higher order facilities and services such as hospitals and libraries, this supports the concept of walkable neighbourhoods. If the day-to-day facilities and services are not available locally they should be available on site. Research has shown that the incorporation of certain design features in housing can have positive implications for the health and well-being of older people. In 2009 the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) published a report examining the design of housing for older people and made recommendations to improve it. This included 10 key design principles which are now known as the HAPPI principles and are considered best practice that should be adopted in the design of housing for older people. Bungalows provide a popular form of housing in Uttlesford which means that older people can downsize to accommodation that is fit for purpose but still maintains their independence. It also meets a need for those with a physical disability who require accommodation on one floor. The provision of 1 and 2 bed bungalows will be supported.

There is also a need to ensure that the needs of wheelchair users are met within the District. It is therefore essential that planning policy be provided to ensure that the needs of older people and wheelchair users are met over the Local Plan period. The Local Plan aims to give people more choice and control over where and how they live and receive care. Sites of 10 or more dwellings are therefore required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). This threshold reflects the possibility that the costs associated with such provision may make smaller developments unviable. Where this would result in only a part dwelling being provided, it is expected that the total requirements will be rounded up. 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be

required to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(3): Category 3 (Wheelchair Users Dwellings) to meet the needs of wheelchair users in the District.

Policy H10 Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Provision will be made for housing, including bungalows, that meets the needs of the ageing population and those with disabilities.

Housing designed specifically for older people should offer easy access to community facilities, services and frequent public transport, or where this is not possible facilities and services should be available on-site. Where possible schemes should be well-related and integrated with the wider neighbourhood. Subject to viability older people's housing developments should be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.

New housing must be designed and constructed in a way that enables it to be adapted to meet the changing needs of its occupants over time. For this reason the Council requires all new housing on sites of 10 or more dwellings (market and affordable) to meet the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4 (2): Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). 10% of market housing and 15% of affordable housing will be required to meet Category 3 (M4(3)) requirements (Wheelchair user dwellings).

Only where circumstances exist where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is not practically achievable or financially viable to deliver will new development be exempt from this policy.

Specialist housing

There are certain groups of people within the community that need Specialist Residential Accommodation that caters for their specific needs. Specialist Residential Accommodation includes housing for older people such as Independent Living schemes for the frail elderly, student accommodation, homes for those with disabilities and support needs, residential institutions and also non-nomadic Gypsy and Travellers who, for cultural reasons, choose to live in caravans. Proposals to meet the needs of non-nomadic Gypsies and Travellers will be tested against the criteria in policy H9.

Policy H11 Specialist Housing

Within all developments of more than 100 dwellings the Council will require 5% self-build homes which can include custom housebuilding. At the time an application is submitted, the Council will review this percentage against the latest local housing need requirement for self-build/custom build homes; and provision of Specialist Residential Accommodation (including Independent

Living and non-nomadic Gypsy and Traveller needs) taking account of local housing needs.

The inclusion of self-build and custom build homes and Specialist Residential Accommodation on smaller sites will also be encouraged.

Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings

The erection of a new dwelling for someone engaged in agriculture or rural activity who has to live permanently at or near their place of work at all times is one instance where new buildings may exceptionally be permitted in the countryside.

Applications for planning permission in such circumstances will need to demonstrate that the agricultural or rural enterprise or intention to engage in one is genuine and will be sustained for a reasonable period of time that is sufficient to warrant a dwelling in the countryside where it would not otherwise be permitted.

Applications should include clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis. It will also be necessary to establish that the enterprise needs one or more full-time workers to be readily available at most times, for example, to provide essential care to animals or processes at short notice and to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or produce.

Such dwellings may be exceptionally permitted in open countryside only because of the needs of the enterprise. Before permission is granted there has to be a clearly established existing need.

In these cases, dwellings will normally be modest in size, in line with the function of providing appropriate care, and be related to the needs of the holding in terms of its scale. The test is a stringent one. The application must demonstrate that new residential accommodation is essential for the enterprise, and not just convenient.

Policy H12 Agricultural/Rural Workers' Dwellings

New isolated dwellings in the countryside intended for occupation by agricultural/rural workers will be permitted if it can be shown that there is an essential need for an agricultural/rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. In determining whether such need exists, the following criteria must be met:

- 1. The dwelling is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise to enable one or more full-time workers to be readily available at most times;**
- 2. The need relates to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed in agricultural/rural employment and does not relate to part-time requirements;**

3. The enterprise is economically viable and has clear prospects of remaining so to the extent that it can sustain the dwelling proposed;
4. The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;
5. The size and location of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier; and
6. The proposed dwelling should satisfy other planning requirements including access arrangements, energy efficiency, siting and impact on the countryside and flood risk.

In granting planning permission, the Council will:

7. Make sure that the dwellings are kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists; and
8. Remove the Permitted Development Rights.

An occupancy condition restricting the occupancy of a dwelling to a person employed or last employed in agriculture or rural worker will not be removed unless the council is satisfied that:

9. Comprehensive evidence has been submitted to show that the business does not need the dwelling for its current or future labour needs, and it has been marketed for sale or rent for a minimum period of 24 months (12 months)? at a market price to reflect the occupancy condition, and confirmation of a lack of interest; and
10. The long-term need for the dwelling has ceased; and
11. There is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in agriculture or other rural work in the locality.