



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Felsted & Stebbing Ward
District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans



DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: DECEMBER 2021

Cllrs Sandi Merifield and John Evans are pleased to present their Monthly Report to the Parish Council.

COVID

With the emergence of yet another COVID variant, namely Omicron, we are reminded of the importance of vaccination. We think that you and residents will be interested to know that access is available to up to date COVID statistics which are published and kept updated by the health officer team at Essex County Council. This is one set which reveals the position as regards uptake of vaccinations in Uttlesford for 18+ yoa – there is some scope for a yet greater take-up among members of our community.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/latest-covid-19-data-for-essex/covid-19-vaccinations-in-essex>

Uttlesford DC Eligible Population	1st dose	% uptake	2nd dose	% uptake
82,923	72,060	86.9	66,069	79.6

A fuller table of other relevant data is also viewable via the link.

We think it is worth remembering that in excess of 400 cases of COVID infected patients in Uttlesford were recorded last week and in the interests of continuing precautionary steps and vigilance, we would urge all residents eligible for 2nd and booster doses who have yet to take them up to do so as soon as possible.

LOCAL PLAN

We continue to bring you up to date regarding progress in the making of the draft Local Plan. You and the other Town and Parish Councils in Uttlesford have just sent, as requested by UDC, detailed observations upon the technical considerations referable to the Call for Sites lying within the Parish. Thank you for

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providing a copy of your response to us and as some sites cross over the boundary with Stebbing Parish and vice versa, we were pleased to share your response with Stebbing PC and theirs with you.

The work of the Local Plan Leadership Group in reviewing the technical evidence assembled to date continues and at the last meeting earlier this week on 29 November 2021 considered materials regarding the following topics in the District:

- Employment Opportunities and Needs
- Flooding Risk
- Landscape sensitivity issues in respect of certain submitted larger sites (one relating to the Parish was commented on, namely the 133ha location South of A120 in respect of potentially 2,000 dwellings, education, medical and commercial facilities)
- Process for discussion of possible development options/sites

The papers brought to the last Local Plan Leadership Group may be found at:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=510&MId=5815>

For ready reference, the discussion regarding the Felsted location mentioned above is to be found at Agenda Item 3 appendix C / Enc 2, commencing at pages 55 and following of the Agenda pack.

The Parish Councils will be asked to comment further on local flooding incidents to verify the accuracy and completeness of those referred to in the table appended to the Flooding Risk consultants' report. (Agenda Item 5 in above link)

A further exercise regarding sensitivity of other smaller (but still of a larger scale) sites as put forward in the Call for Sites will be undertaken and presented at a further meeting of Local Plan Leadership Group.

Substantive responses to the possible site allocations and other matters will be actively encouraged from all representors at the Regulation 18 and 19 stages, the former of which will be anticipated in April 2022.

STANSTED AIRPORT – FLIGHT ROUTEINGS AND OTHER MATTERS

The early consultation by MAG (on behalf of CAA) regarding airspace up to 5,000' (flight paths) usage and design – stage 2 continues and John has attended on behalf of UDC two pre-consultation events relating to possible options for both departure and arrival routeings, as have other representative bodies including Stansted Airport Watch. The methodologies regarding these possibilities will be submitted to CAA to verify the extent to which any changes might be acceptable to them, by reference to their interrelationship with routeings to/from nearby airports such as Luton, Southend and City and the supply of access to/from the airspace above 5,000', which is a matter for NATS. For those interested, a brief guide to how UK airspace is managed may be discovered by a visit <https://nats.aero> and <http://caa.co.uk>.

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At the next phase, public consultation will take place as regards revisions to both departure and arrival routes in the Spring 2022 and we will keep you advised of the timing and detail since we are sure that you (as well as residents) will wish to make representations as to routes favoured (or not), including the approach to be best adopted in respect of “relief and/or respite” ie scheduling of overhead flights to predetermined periods or their switching to a different route to provide a period of quiet to residents living beneath another.

UDC GENERAL NEWS

The usual round of Council and other meetings continue during December and it occurred to us that it might be of interest to Members and residents to have an appreciation of the range of work and activities in which we participate and make contributions. This might explain further the need regrettably to extend our apologies if we are on occasion unable to attend your meetings. Our upcoming meetings and commitments in the first half of the month include:

Date 2021	Event/Meeting
29 November	Essex CC - Planning Portfolio Holders Meeting Joint Executive Meeting Local Plan Leadership Group Meeting
30 November	Transport East Strategy Meeting – consultation update
1 December	Stansted Airport Business EXPO
2 December	Cabinet
3 December	Harlow & Gilston Garden Community Board - Briefing
7 December	UDC Council
8 December	Uttlesford CAB AGM
9 December	Essex CC Planning Department - Climate Change Meeting Local Plan Leadership Group Workshop

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13 December	Planning Committee Site Visits Planning Committee Chair's Briefing Joint Executive Meeting Felsted Parish Christmas Tree Lighting
14 December	UDC Carol Service – Saffron Walden Baptist Church
15 December	Planning Committee
16 December	SASIG – Strategic Aviation Interest Group Planning Committee Working Group Scrutiny Committee – Local Plan

At Council level, a change of leadership will be considered at full Council on 7 December 2021 and which takes place in light of the planned retirement (at the next Election) of the current Leader, Cllr Lodge. Given the recent change in officer leadership with the appointment of a new Chief Executive at UDC and the prospective appointment of senior officers, including a new Director of Planning, it was thought that this would be a convenient time to provide for a change of political leadership. The current Deputy Leader, Cllr Petrina Lees (Member for Elsenham and Henham) will succeed Cllr Lodge and Cllr Neil Hargreaves (Member for Newport) will become Deputy Leader. Both are experienced councillors (both at District and Parish level) and come to their responsibilities with significant professional backgrounds, in palliative nursing and accounting respectively. Cllr Lees will incidentally be the first female Leader in the history of the Council. An adjustment of portfolio responsibilities will also take place and matters relating to infrastructure and the Airport will be added to John's planning and the local plan portfolio functions.

UDC PLANNING DEPARTMENT

We reported to you at your last meeting about the independent recommendations provided by the East of England Local Government Association with a view to reforming and improving the planning functions of the Council. Steps have already been taken to recruit and reorganise and provide stringer managerial oversight into the performance and standards expected of the Department.

These were presented to Scrutiny Committee last week and a copy of the table of actions commenced will be of particular interest to members of your Planning Committee and may be read here:

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<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25638/Implementation%20update%20-%20Planning%20Service%20Review.pdf>

On a separate theme, we are pleased to report that Uttlesford has, on 30 November 2021, won the RTPI East of England Awards for Planning Excellence in respect of its work involved in setting up and managing the early Local Plan consultation exercise represented by the Community Stakeholder Forum process. We thank your representatives for taking part in it and they should thus bask in some indirect congratulations!

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This Committee is very active and meets quarterly for the business of reviewing decisions to be taken by the Administration and providing constructive and non-political criticism. In addition, it also reviews the process and progress involved in the making of the Local Plan. At last week's meeting, in addition to receiving a report as to changes and upgrading of the planning department just described, it also considered reports in regard to climate change, economic recovery and the matter of Stansted Airport appeal costs. The link to the entire meeting which contains as usual a link to the YouTube recording of proceedings is to be found via:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5741&Ver=4>

HOUSEHOLDER AND VEHICLE SECURITY

You might have received from Essex Police an update concerning the risk of organised vehicle thefts from driveways outside houses when vehicles can be stolen through interception of keyless fob signals by organised gangs of thieves. Their informative "Organised Crime News" is contained in this pdf (to which we are unable currently to provide a link) which is somewhat alarming. Residents and owners of vehicles equipped with keyless technology are encouraged to protect the signals emitted from such systems by buying and using "**Faraday pouches or boxes**" into which keyless devices are placed and which is likely to frustrate attempts to intercept such signals and thus permitting unapproved starting of vehicles and their theft.



Essex OCN 8 -
Keyless Car Theft- No

WARD MEMBER'S INITIATIVE

We would like to remind community organisations from within the Parish that we are able to provide some financial support, using our annual UDC Councillor initiative funds, whenever the opportunity arises and are always ready to receive proposals or enquiries.

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Indeed, we have been pleased this month to pool our combined resources and support a request for assistance going towards the installation costs of a mains foul water connection for The Scout Hut in the High Street, Stebbing. This is a valuable venue and facility which serves scouting needs for young people living in and around both Felsted and Stebbing. Without its installation, use of the hut would have to be discontinued as, previously unbeknown to all and as only recently discovered, the current foul connection is to a septic tank lying in the garden of an adjacent private dwelling which will no longer be available as it too is now to be replaced by a mains connection.

OUR ASSISTANCE

While COVID limitations continue in terms of use of the URC Hall during the Winter months, we will not hold a person to person surgery but as ever, of course, we would be very happy to hear from any parish councillors or residents by email or phone and of course to meet them should there be anything they think we can help with or answer any questions both they or you may have on our report.

Meanwhile, we wish all Members, Residents and our friends in Felsted a very Happy and Healthy Christmas, to be roundly enjoyed and appreciated with family and friends and of course a positive and safe 2022.

Cllr Sandi Merifield

Cllr John Evans