



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Felsted & Stebbing Ward

District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans



DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: JUNE 2022

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

Following our report last month which was specifically dedicated to general matters across the District, and especially to the topic of climate change, we have been asked to present our reports with “bullet points” set out in the first section in order to highlight any particular matters of direct application or relevance to Felsted Parish, which of course we shall be pleased to do.

This month, however, there are none specific to report and indeed it will be appreciated that, apart from individual constituent’s issues or concerns which are dealt with by correspondence or in person, the majority of our work is of general application. We are always ready of course to support the sterling work undertaken by your own Planning Sub-Committee whenever possible.

PLANNING AND THE LOCAL PLAN

Evidence in way of consultants’ reports commissioned by UDC Planning Policy officers continues to be assembled to enable informed decisions to be made on where within the District it is most “appropriate” for land to be allocated for development in the period to **2040**. The period to be planned for in way of land use for housing and employment, as well as leisure, is typical and decisions taken now will clearly affect future generations as well as ourselves. As a District, we are required, not as you know being a matter of voluntary choice by us and Council colleagues to “find” **701** dwellings every year between now and 2040. This is the result of the Government’s requirement for the District, and there were no signs in the Bills referred to in the Queen’s Speech of a couple of weeks ago, that this requirement would be reduced.

The Bill relating to levelling-up and planning was extensive however and promises many new arrangements and if there are members who would like additional information about it, we shall be pleased to prepare a “potted version” of the important provisions as we see them (including as to Strategic

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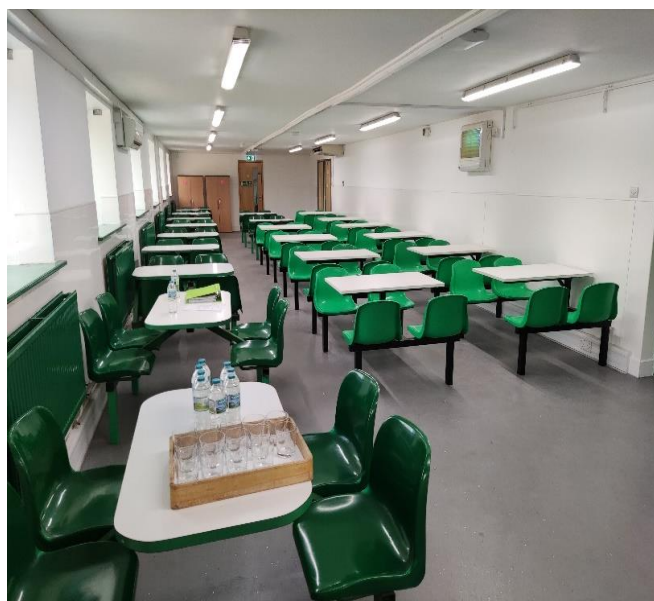
Infrastructure Levies, Heritage and Neighbourhood Planning – all of which we consider will provide positive benefits for our represented parishes).

The need to assemble and consider the necessary evidence does mean some additional delay to the local plan schedule but will we consider be worthwhile. This continues to be assembled prior to the public consultation under Regulation 18 being opened later in the Summer. We shall provide you with a more detailed update in our next monthly report.

LITTLE CANFIELD – UDC OFFICES AND COUNCIL WASTE SERVICE/DEPOT RELOCATION

We have previously referred to the plan to relocate the waste service depot to Little Canfield, to the premises previously occupied by the “Banana Factory”. This has now come about, following the purchase of the site and the premises, on advantageous terms, which include offices and large volume storage buildings, by UDC from the insolvency administrators of the previous owners. This has meant that all the vehicles and operatives will now be deployed from that site, enabling the unsuitable premises at New Street, Great Dunmow to be closed and for better and safer working conditions to be provided to the operatives. Vehicles can be cleaned using recycled water and closed- system wash techniques on site.

The facility importantly has large full height covered storage buildings which have been refurbished and are to be let out in their entirety to a local logistics company. Additionally, some office space is available for UDC office-based personnel and meeting rooms of a size to accommodate council and committee meetings as necessary. The images show the lorry cleaning machine, which cleans and recycles the water, thus hugely reducing water consumption, and part of the staff facilities. There is a workshop, with an inspection pit and brake testing equipment – commercial vehicles are required to be inspected every six weeks



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This investment permits substantial rentals to be generated, thus making a yet further positive contribution to UDC's income and allowing Council Tax to be held at previously reported upon levels.

UDC OFFICES – SAFFRON WALDEN

Officers are, as a result of changes put in place during COVID and advances in remote working facilities and techniques now being permitted to work under flexible working arrangements partly from home and partly from the offices (at London Road or Little Canfield). They will be working in open plan conditions without individually allocated desks, and thus "hot desking" as required with suitable IT facilities in support. This has enabled office space within the building to be freed up and again, it is being let out to locally based businesses, generating an attractive rent and thus further assisting in the Council's finances.

UDC HOUSING STOCK

The need to provide additional housing stock to residents has not been overlooked of course and we are pleased to report that an opportunity has arisen for UDC to purchase 19 new properties on a Section 106 site. Council will be asked to consider approval of this prospect in June and if approved, the properties will be added to existing council stock owned within the Housing Revenue Account and be funded using Right to Buy Receipts and Housing Revenue Account Borrowing.

WASTE AND RECYCLING MATTERS

While writing above about the waste service, it might be appropriate to be reminded that the service is, according to a satisfaction survey undertaken in 2021 by UDC, very highly regarded and its operatives almost universally praised and appreciated. However, there is the need to appreciate always the adverse impact resulting from inefficient and non compliant recycling practice by householders. We take this opportunity to repeat the recycling guidance recently reissued by UDC as follows:

"Contamination of your recyclables happens when incorrect items are placed in your recycling bin.

When this is not identified at point of collection it can cause an entire lorry load of good, clean recycling to be rejected. Where spotted, we may not collect your recycling in order to prevent contamination of the entire lorry load.

Unfortunately, during COVID-19 the contamination levels within household recycling bins increased – and is continuing to be of concern.

*Recycling charity [Wrap](#) estimates a tonne of contaminated recycling costs around £93 to dispose of. With an average lorry load of recycling weighing approximately 5 tonnes, each contaminated load of recycling costs the council over **£460**.*

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The most common things that are **wrongly** put into recycling bins are **black bin bags, nappies, food waste, textiles and electrical items.**

Please help us reduce contamination by checking what can and cannot be placed into your green lidded recycling bin.

Check our [Can I recycle it?](#) page to check individual items, or email wasteaware@uttlesford.gov.uk if you cannot find the answer or for further information."

DEMOCRACY AT WORK - LGA

While this piece will not be of application to current Members of the Parish Council, it might be of interest to some residents who read our reports who might at some point wish to learn more about representing their communities or finding out more about what councils and councillors do. The Local Government Association is holding a [Be a Councillor webinar](#) shortly and is asking local councillors to help spread the word in their communities. The webinar, reached via the hyperlink above, is free to attend and people can book a place on the LGA website. We are happy to make the existence of the event more widely known.

OUR ASSISTANCE AND MEMBERS' INITIATIVE

We have not been approached since our last report for any assistance which might be possible using funds jointly available from our UDC Councillors' Initiative Allocation. As you know, we are always ready to consider requests for financial support for appropriate projects.

Of course, we would be very happy to hear from any parish councillors or residents and to meet them separately, whether at our Surgery held immediately before your Parish Council meeting or otherwise, should there be anything they think we can help with or answer any questions.

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