



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Felsted & Stebbing Ward

District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans



DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: NOVEMBER 2021

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

LOCAL PLAN

We continue to bring you up to date regarding significant steps in the progress towards making of the policies and possible land allocations for development in the Local Plan, still on track for submission, leading towards examination, in Q4/2023. A convenient presentation of the timetable might be found here, as presented to Scrutiny Committee – Local Plan at its last meeting in September. The next work progress report will be presented at its November meeting

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25069/LP%20PO%20TIMETABLE%2010.09.21%202.pdf>

Currently, the UDC Officers are evaluating the 299 sites put forward by landowners/promoters in the Call for Sites stage of the plan making and contact has been made with you (and all the Town and Parish Councils) with the request that you fact check the accuracy or otherwise of the main features contained in the submissions made. Responses have been invited by 29 November 2021 and we are sure that you will be actively engaged in this exercise already. 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.

Additionally, initial discussions have been held with the promoters of the larger sites (17 in number) - several of which are within the Parish or its surrounds - on a without prejudice basis to understand what each is proposing and their ideas. Several have already agreed to enter into a Collaboration Partnership with UDC, which would only come into play if a site were to be allocated, but importantly this would represent a framework whereunder the prospective developer/landowner undertakes to adhere to concepts of good governance, place making and other concepts in accordance with "Garden Principles".

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For ease of reference, these “larger” sites are those described in this report document:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25415/Update%20on%20larger%20development%20sites.pdf>

We think that those Members and residents who are following the Local Plan making process will continue to find the meetings of the Local Plan Leadership Group to be relevant and interesting, the latest of which having been held on 28 October 2021 and will be found here:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5813/Public%20reports%20pack%2028th-Oct-2021%2019.00%20Local%20Plan%20Leadership%20Group.pdf?T=10>

This meeting received a great volume of papers, including first stage evidence/reports on heritage and landscape topics and which related to the current major settlements in the District. Further reports on the same subject matters will be received in respect of the smaller communities which might be considered as relevant as the discussions progress.

Interestingly, for the first time, evidence and policies towards design of housing developments for “healthy living” was also brought forward and will be taken into account for the making of the new local plan – perhaps made all the more essential in the post-Covid environment.

STANSTED AIRPORT - NIGHT FLIGHTS AND OTHER MATTERS

This serves as a further update regarding flights to/from Stansted since our last report when we touched upon the topic.

There is a body of UDC Members who would favour a ban on night flights from Stansted and policy in this regard will evolve in due course. Currently, Stansted has permission for 13,700 night flights (defined as between 2330 and 0600) pa (more than twice as many as at London Heathrow) and many of these are undertaken by older (and more noisy) aircraft.

This issue (and overflying aircraft noise generally) remains a matter of considerable concern to a great number of our residents and we will continue to monitor the debate closely, especially in light of the unsuccessful Stansted expansion appeal challenge which we reported in October.

If residents have gained the impression that there has been a greater number of flights passing over the Parish this year than previously, they would be correct. It is the use of Runway 04 – with easterly winds - which generally bring aircraft over parts of the Parish. Runway 22 – with westerly winds - provides for departures in a South-Western direction over the Hallingburys and Hatfield Heath. Given the 20 year average prevailing wind directions being 73% westerly and 27% easterly, the use of Runway 04 in 2021 is far greater than usual and accounts for the greater overhead traffic experienced. We shall enquire

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whether this routing is in fact due to a change in wind patterns this year or is in order to give “respite” to others and will continue to report further on this topic.

The total average 04/22 runway departure usage for the first 9 months modal split is **43/57 %** - that represents a far greater use of the 04 runway when compared to the **20 year long term** average 04/22 split of **27/73 %** respectively.

2021	Movements Runway 04 (over Felsted & Stebbing)	Movements Runway 22 (over Hallingburys & Hatfield Heath)	Runway 04 Movements (over Felsted & Stebbing) %	Runway 22 Movements (over Hallingburys & Hatfield Heath) %
January	1545	1699	47.63%	52.37%
February	743	1433	34.15%	65.85%
March	932	1725	35.08%	64.92%
April	2252	614	78.58%	21.42%
May	796	3372	19.10%	80.90%
June	3913	2964	56.90%	43.10%
July	4817	4991	49.11%	50.89%
August	4275	7739	35.58%	64.42%
September	4922	7355	40.09%	59.91%
2021 AVERAGE TO DATE (09/21)			43%	57%

[Figures courtesy of MAG and SAW]

Meanwhile, consultation goes on by MAG (on behalf of CAA) regarding airspace (flight paths) usage and design – stage 2 and John is attending events relating to both departure and arrival routings shortly and we will advise as to developments on this connection.

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UDC EXECUTIVE NEWS

The new permanent Chief Executive, Mr Peter Holt, is in post and is proving to be a very energetic leader and implementer of policy – despite being obliged to isolate for 10 days, following a positive COVID test.

In this context, we were concerned to read published ONS statistics that nationally, one in four adults between the ages of 35 and 54 are not adhering to self-isolating requirements for the necessary 10-day period after testing positive for COVID-19. The survey found that those in their mid-30s to mid-50s are the least likely of all age groups to self-isolate in full. We take this opportunity to urge all residents who do test positive to self-isolate properly and for the entire stipulated period.

UDC PLANNING FUNCTION

An interim Director of Planning, Ms Tracey Coleman, having considerable experience in managing change in the planning function, has been appointed with effect from 1 November in anticipation of a permanent appointment which will be made when a suitable candidate has been identified. The appointment has been made at Director level, rather than Assistant Director, as was the case previously, this being decided upon to reflect the significance of the role and the extent of the work to be undertaken in the planning development management and enforcement areas, which we reported on last month.

A detailed report of the steps taken and implemented following the detailed report conducted by consultants appointed by the East of England Local Government Association (“EELGA”) - which we described last month - will be provided to you in the months to come.

FIREWORKS

As a council, UDC has pledged to take local action to encourage everyone to consider the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people in the district. Consequently, UDC is promoting the use of quieter fireworks and asking residents and other groups to be considerate if planning to make a bonfire. It is also recommended that sky lanterns nor helium balloons are launched to celebrate events.

A detailed guide has been prepared which is to be found here:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/firework-safety>

SOLAR FARMS

This is a topical matter, not only nationally in the light of the need for renewable energy provision in the context of decarbonisation, but also locally in respect of the current application for further development at Willows Green.

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We will not go into that specific application further here as it will be coming forward in due course for consideration and decision by the Planning Committee, but suffice it to say that in a general and non site-specific context, we are both interested in questions and solutions relevant to decommissioning of any such facilities and requirements to be met at that long-off stage, including as to security for applicable obligations by way of planning and/or other covenants, such as performance bonds. A working party, made up of UDC Officers and relevant Cabinet portfolio holders, has been established to consider such topics as they are of general application and district wide relevance, and we will keep you advised of matters as they emerge.

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (“RSN”)

We are not aware of your familiarity with the non-governmental body, Rural Services Network (with our apologies if Members and your Clerk are already au fait with its work). Historically, Uttlesford’s representative to this body (not representing a rural ward nor this area) had not disseminated widely its publications and research which all concern the issues affecting rural communities. This was unfortunate since the written materials available and webinars organised have been of interest and use to us and other UDC Members also.

Greater awareness of its work has now been promoted and John is the UDC nominee to RSN and receives their bulletins of which this is one example and which might be of interest and potential relevance to the community:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/category/rural-funding-digest>

RSN has also been looking to communicate directly with Parish Councils and establish a network and possibly they might have been in direct contact with you, as reported here:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/page/rural-village-services-group>

We would be pleased to provide further details of this and other excellent RSN initiatives, which are many and various, such as this one relating to decarbonising in a rural environment:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/remember-rural-in-cop-26>

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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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.

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