



## UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Felsted & Stebbing Ward

District Councillors John Evans & Richard Silcock



#### **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: OCTOBER 2025**

Please find below our monthly Report to the Parish Council.

This edition might give readers a feeling of déjà vu, since a number of items covered in our September Report are also included here, but have required to be updated by events and decisions taken during the course of last month – so apologies for the lack of completely fresh topics to describe on this occasion !

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

As anticipated last month, an extraordinary meeting of UDC members was held on 23 September to enable members to express their opinions and preferences concerning the LGR proposals for the benefit of Cabinet, since it was their sole decision which was required, under the relevant statutory provisions, to enable a preference to be expressed on behalf of Uttlesford District Council as to which of the competing “business cases” it preferred to be submitted to Government. As will be recalled, it will be the Secretary of State in MHCLG who will ultimately decide the question, towards the end of March/beginning of April 2026.

As previously explained, it was the preference of the UDC Administration to support the “Five Council” Unitary Model, along with the majority of the other Essex Districts and Cities, while Essex County Council itself has promoted heavily as its preference the “Three Council” model. Under the former, UDC would merge with its western neighbours (Epping Forest DC and Harlow Council) while under the latter, UDC would merge with Braintree, Tending Districts and Colchester City Councils.

There was a recommendation put to Council by the Leader of the Council ie the Administration (seconded by Cllr Sell, Leader of the Lib Dem Opposition) for the “Five Council Model” while an amendment was put by the Conservative Leader for the “Three Council” model. The amendment was very clearly defeated (while there were some abstentions).

There was a difference in the estimates (substantial in some instances) as to the costs and savings involved in LGR under the models examined but while all were agreed by independent assessors, the underlying assumptions upon which those costs/savings might result were not agreed by the proponents of the different cases.

Informed observers of LGR elsewhere in the country however frequently but wryly observe that the costs and savings predicted by the supporters of unitarization have very rarely (or even never) been attained!

Anyway, Cabinet having heard all the competing arguments put by colleagues in Council in a very well attended and even tempered debate, resolved to support the Five Model along with the majority of Essex Councils and their submission was delivered to MHCLG accordingly at the end of last week. The other councils supporting the Five Model were Southend City, Chelmsford City, Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Colchester, Harlow, Maldon and Uttlesford. The cabinets of Braintree and Epping Forest DCs by contrast supported the ECC preference of the Three Model; it is noteworthy that the Cabinets of both those Cabinets comprise several members of ECC's own Cabinet – all these Councils have Conservative Administrations.

There is a dedicated page on UDC website which will be kept up to date and which interested Members and residents may well wish to bookmark:

[Devolution and local government reorganisation - Uttlesford District Council](#)

We do not expect to refer to this subject again for a few months until we hear from Government as to its reaction to the submissions.

#### **ANDREWSFIELD – PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Braintree DC is currently reviewing and updating its Local Plan and is undertaking site allocations across its district. We learned that its Local Plan Committee will be considering the possible allocation of land around Rayne and Andrewsfield as suitable for a very large development (some 7,000 dwellings) and will be meeting to discuss this potential site and others on 1<sup>st</sup> October. We will let you know of the outcome.

We have advised Cllr Freeman as Chair of your Planning Sub-Committee of this news. It would be of far greater impact on Stebbing than Felsted, if it were allocated and development were to come about, but the traffic and general change/impact on the entire Ward would be very substantial.

#### **LOCAL COMMUNITY LIAISON FORUM**

A very successful meeting was held on 29 September at UDC Saffron Walden (which was attended by John) when some 25 representatives of various Parish and Town Councils attended to receive presentations from 8 members of the Planning Policy Team, the Director of Planning on updates to the Local Plan process, Neighbourhood Planning and CIL and from the Leader and Cjief Executive on LGR. A slide pack has been made available to your Clerk which we would recommend for further familiarisation with the subjects covered.

#### **LOCAL PLAN**

A consultation is now under way to the proposed Major Modifications to the Local Plan, before they are further considered by PINS. Subject to their views, we are still on track for adoption by Council (if members agree!) in March/April 2026.

Core Policy 19 and Table 8.2 shows the Major Modifications and the residual housing provision for the Larger Villages (including Felsted and Stebbing) reflecting reductions in the allocations required by reason of housing developments permitted since the first draft of the LP was published. Your Planning Sub-Committee and NPSG are of course fully aware of these proposed Modifications, which are to a slight degree beneficial to the additional housing development requirements imposed upon the Parish.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

At the Forum described above, a helpful presentation was given by UDC Officers and also by Mrs Nicky Joshua of RCCE. A protocol is being finalised describing the Officer support to be provided by UDC in future to NPSGs in the formulation of their NPs and review work which will be accompanied also by financial support for the Larger Villages of £ 5,000 each. Further details are to be made available shortly.

The usefulness of recently NPs has just been further demonstrated last week at Newport when a Planning Appeal was dismissed on grounds of non compliance with its NP; apparently Newport PC considers that its NP has been influential in securing dismissals in excess of 20 cases since its NP was first made !

### **HEDGEHOG SOLAR**

We continue to attend the Community Liaison Group as members and as to which your Chairman will no doubt be reporting further. We also attended the Exhibition recently organised at the Memorial Hall by TOTAL and were able to speak directly to a good number of residents and learn of their concerns and indeed also the support expressed by some for the provision of alternative energy generation.

### **STEBBING GREEN CONSERVATION AREA**

By way of information, an evidence base has been concluded and paid for by Stebbing PC providing for designation of Stebbing Green as a Conservation Area. This is supported by UDC in principle. It will come to Cabinet for its consideration in due course. Its existence may be of value in due course in the context of any threatened development around Andrewsfield.

### **FRAILITY AND AGEING WELL**

Please find information below about a new project exploring 'Experiences of Frailty and Ageing Well' from **Healthwatch Essex** on behalf of the NHS in Hertfordshire and West Essex.

We have been asked to share this opportunity with our Parishes via networks, groups or newsletters. **Healthwatch Essex** are interested in speaking with anyone from West Essex with experiences or insights around frailty and ageing, including residents 65+ years old, family and friends, carers, healthcare professionals and voluntary sector professionals.

We are fortunate in the Parish of having several friendship groups, clubs and societies which are attended by residents aged 65+. **Healthwatch Essex** would be very pleased to be invited to join in on any discussions and receive views on how they can improve local health and social care services for our community.

For more information, this is their website: <https://healthwatchesessex.org.uk/2025/06/experiences-of-frailty-and-ageing-well-in-west-essex/> , or email [lily.boag@healthwatchesessex.org.uk](mailto:lily.boag@healthwatchesessex.org.uk) , or call 07742 072740 or scan the QR code below,



**We're looking to speak to people in West Essex to hear your thoughts about:**

- Understandings of ageing and frailty
- Experiences of ageing and frailty
- Care preferences and planning
- Information and resources
- Anything else you would like to share

**Register your interest here:**



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### **WARD MEMBER'S INITIATIVE**

We are very happy to consider requests for financial support, utilising our Members' Initiative Grant as appropriate and which can be made available to community groups for suitable purposes. We draw to your attention however, as previously reported by us to you, that this will be the last year (2025/2026) that the grant will be available.

### **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' AND CONSTITUENTS' SURGERY**

We will be holding our usual monthly surgery in the URC Hall at 1730 immediately prior to your PC Meeting.

We are always, of course, pleased to meet up by appointment, as required, with any resident who wishes to discuss a matter of concern or indeed anything we have commented upon in our Monthly Reports.

If any resident would like to receive a personal copy of our Monthly Reports, we shall be pleased to send one directly to them by e mail but do remind all concerned that they are published and included by way of a link in each Month's Parish Council Minutes. Back Editions commencing as far ago as June 2019 are available additionally on request !

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