

Great Hallingbury Parish Council

UDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan Baseline Review. Dec 2021 - Reviewed Feb 2022.

Great Hallingbury Parish Council would like to make the following observations regarding the UDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan Baseline Review issued Dec 2021 (IDP).

Overview

Great Hallingbury is located in the South West of Uttlesford District on the border with East Herts and relies heavily on facilities in the neighbouring districts for health provision, secondary and sixth form education, shopping, access to mainline rail stations and to access the M11.

We find in this recently issued UDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan Baseline Review;

- There is little understanding of the secondary schools serving our area as the report states 'the crossboundary movements between Uttlesford and Bishop's Stortford are not known'.
- The same situation applies to the review of Sixth Form education.
- There is no mention of Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow which serves residents in this part of Uttlesford.
- Whilst the report states that the presence of the Airport creates demand for services in the South of the district, bus services here in Great Hallingbury do not exist.

Given that one of the larger sites put forward in the Local Plan HBO005 MIX is situated very close to both Great & Little Hallingbury, it is important that the IDP pays proper regard to the situation in the South West of Uttlesford. It is essential to have an IDP report which provides data and a meaningful review for the whole District.

Current infrastructure strains.

The report indicates that there are strains on infrastructure now without further development coming on stream; these are issues which cannot all be dealt with solely under the Local Plan heading. Developers cannot be asked to make up the shortfall in services which exists already. In particular:

- Primary Schools - due to new developments and demographic pressures.
- Secondary Schooling - no planned increase in capacity in 10 year plan despite known increase in demand currently.
- GP Practices. - 'Capacity in Uttlesford South is significantly constrained and not able to meet the current population.'
- Water resources - over extraction, negative effect on chalk streams, infrastructure not available for 15yrs, pollution events above EA standards.

How will these fundamental issues that have been identified and which affect Uttlesford as a whole now, be addressed?

We recognise that the IDP is a 'desk top' exercise however, the situation in South West Uttlesford, where many of the infrastructure and services are across the boundary, needs to be more accurately represented in the report; particularly given that the IDP baseline review will form the basis on which the future infrastructure needs are determined. More detail on these and other points is given in the comments below...

COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION

APPENDIX A. Great Hallingbury is not listed. This is a major oversight.

Great Hallingbury PC understands that; 'This Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) provides the baseline context for infrastructure in Uttlesford District Council, based on literature review and initial consultation with infrastructure providers at two workshops which took place on 23 June and 1 July 2021....As the Uttlesford Local Plan develops and spatial options are considered and eventually determined, this IDP will be further developed to consider the infrastructure needs of proposed growth, how these will be delivered and by when.'

TRANSPORT - CYCLING

The IDP identifies that: 'In the smaller settlements, cycling, particularly with the use of e-bikes, is likely to offer the greatest potential to achieve the switch to more sustainable modes. It is also suggested that 'long-range cycle routes which are mostly traffic free will be required to deliver the zero-carbon agenda'. Para 3.28 states, 'Just 1% of the journeys to work in Uttlesford are made by bicycle, lower than the Essex average of 2.1%. A key reason for this may be that, other than the above, there is very little dedicated cycling infrastructure in Uttlesford, which has resulted in in low levels of participation when compared with other Essex Boroughs'.

However, one of the overriding reasons for the lack of cycling journeys is the safety of cyclists. In the smaller settlements in the South West of Uttlesford and no doubt elsewhere, the roads are currently unlit, there is fast moving traffic, there are no pavements most of the way and certainly no cycle paths, therefore cycling is a theoretical rather than a practical option for the majority. The use of e bikes would in no way mitigate this situation.

The IDP states; 'Significant effort to creating improved and new cycle routes should be made, alongside travel planning, educational and other support measures to deliver this transition. Electric scooters and electric bikes powered by renewable energy can be a key tool in encouraging people not to use their car, and are cited as one of the key steps to reaching net zero by 2050 in the Essex Climate Actions Commission report⁵⁶'. The emphasis being placed on the transition to e bikes in the IDP to deliver the net zero target, without recognising the underlying problem, certainly in existing settlements; which is one of journeys by bike being dangerous above all else, is unlikely to produce the outcome the report suggests.

Safe, preferably traffic free, lit, dedicated cycle routes are necessary to encourage cycling. Only with safe, direct, high quality cycle routes and networks, especially segregated cycle paths will journeys be made by bike. All-weather, secure bicycle storage would also be required. Given the rural nature of much of Uttlesford, adapting existing infrastructure to accommodate this seems highly unlikely.

TRANSPORT -BUSES

There are no bus services in the village of Great Hallingbury. Bus services such as the HERTSLYNX recently introduced in E Herts would certainly be a popular alternative. However, the bus service would need to take travellers across the boundary to Bishops Stortford in E Herts.

CRITICAL ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

The IDP States in para 3.39; '... where journeys are necessary, a shift away from private car-based vehicle use towards more active and sustainable forms of travel such as walking, cycling and buses must be a fundamental element of achieving carbon reductions.' However, the recent

report from the Transport for New Homes group (TfNH) states that of 20 new housing developments visited, those on Greenfield sites rarely lived up to sustainable transport pledges. Residents of some estates have reported being unable to walk anywhere, due to the lack of pavements or footpaths on surrounding roads. Pledges for cycling, walking and public transport have been left unfulfilled on these developments. What will Uttlesford do to ensure new developments here do not suffer the same problem, particularly given how critical this issue is?

EDUCATION - SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The secondary school situation in the South West of Uttlesford seems to have been misrepresented in the report. Indeed the report states 'the cross-boundary movements between Uttlesford and Bishop's Stortford are not known'. The schools which serve the Villages in the South are sited across the boundary in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth. The schools in Bishops Stortford are highly regarded and whilst the catchment area is also served by Forest Hall School in Stansted, it is not the school chosen by the majority. Demand for places at the schools in Stortford and Sawbridgeworth is extremely high and recent new development in the town has exacerbated this.

The IDP report does recognise '3.62 The distribution of pupils around the district results in some long journeys, and due to parental choice, ECC officers advise that some pupils living within the west of the district attend schools in Bishop Stortford, rather than Forest Hall School which does have some capacity'.

The IDP states; 'The Bishop's Stortford South development includes land for a 6FE secondary school that can be expanded to 8FE when there is demand. Whilst the cross-boundary movements between Uttlesford and Bishop's Stortford are not known this may affect high school provision requirements in the west of Uttlesford, particularly at Forest Hall School in Stansted Mountfitchet.'

The comment that the development may affect Forest Hall School is incorrect and underlines the lack of local knowledge. This school in BS South is a replacement for the exiting TBSH School; pupils will move from the old to the new school once it is built. The increased 6FE to 8FE capacity is to cater for the new BS South development. None of this affects Forest Hall School.

Planned development in Bishops Stortford North will be served by Avanti Grange; a new secondary school being developed in Bishop's Stortford North. A brand new building will cater for 180 students from September 2023. However, the school is planning to open temporarily on the site of Avanti Meadows Primary School in September 2022 with spaces for 120 children. This school is much nearer to Forest Hall School than TBSHS mentioned above.

Similarly Leventhorpe School is expanding due to the new housing developments in Sawbridgeworth, E Herts. The IDP states; 'Leventhorpe School in Sawbridgeworth is currently considering a project to expand by 2FE34. Whilst the crossboundary movements between Uttlesford and Bishop's Stortford are not known this may affect high school provision requirements in the west of Uttlesford, particularly at Forest Hall School in Stansted Mountfitchet.' It is difficult to see how this has any effect on Forest Hall School.

EDUCATION - Sixth Form Provision

All secondary schools in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth offer a 6th form and demand for these places is high from those who live in the South West of Uttlesford. The majority of sixth form pupils in South West of Uttlesford attend schools in E Herts. A small minority travel to Harlow and Cambridge Sixth form colleges.

All E Herts schools serving the South West of Uttlesford are oversubscribed and the planned extension of existing schools and the building of a new school are specifically to cater for the

demand arising from the new and planned housing developments in East Herts.

Given the comment made in the IDP 3.61 'It is important to note that provision of new secondary schools is more challenging than for primary schools due to the scale of population needed to support them, as such new secondary school provision is generally focussed on existing schools, unless there is a strategic opportunity to provide a new facility', any future development of scale in the South West of Uttlesford will either need a new secondary school with a sixth form; or the expansion beyond that already planned in existing schools over the border in East Herts. The alternative of travelling to existing schools in Uttlesford would be unsustainable, as the schools in Uttlesford are at too greater distance.

It is somewhat surprising that the IDP review fails to include any figures for the number of pupils verses number of school places available in Uttlesford in order to give some measure of the under supply or capacity for growth.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACES 3.72

The report states that; 'Hatfield Forest is a key site in Uttlesford, as it accounts for 75% of the provision of natural and semi-natural green space⁸³. It is understood to be under significant recreational pressure which has led to the conclusion that the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) units here are in unfavourable condition⁸⁴. Provision of additional green infrastructure and open space would help to relieve this.

Hatfield Forest is currently surrounded by fields, other forests and agricultural land. It is vitally important to retain the current Green Infrastructure in the vicinity as well as seeking to provide new Green Infrastructure elsewhere in order to relieve the pressure on this key SSSI resource. The report should make mention of this, as providing new Green Infrastructure without retaining that which exists would obviously further threaten this ancient woodland and SSSI. Particularly when the report goes on to state that funding for new green infrastructure is difficult to obtain.

A recent article in the Bishops Stortford Independent gives evidence of the variety of wildlife which can be seen on just one walk in the South West of Uttlesford in the country side bordering Hatfield Forest.

https://www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/whats-on/nature-notes-my-latest-7-mile-walk-proves-far-from-fallow-f-9239679/?fbclid=IwAR2V9lgrZmUePqdL14KFsagvob4vy2wX1NXQYeJj75RdNOkxPa_WLWhXdiU

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The surgery in Hatfield Broad Oak is not mentioned in the list, it is part of the Eden Surgery group sharing doctors with Hatfield Heath Surgery.

The report states 'Capacity in Uttlesford South is significantly constrained and not able to meet the current population'. Details of the capacity of GP existing practices verses patient numbers would assist in understanding the scale of this problem.

NB Data from NHS Digital (Sept 2020 - there are 6708 GP practises in England with an average number of 9007 patients each. This represents a 30% rise in 7 years.

On average one GP has 2038 patients across England. This represents a 5% rise since 2015 given a background of a significant national GP recruitment and retention crisis. There are also workforce development issues to consider in relation to other healthcare professionals in primary care eg: Practise Nurses, Pharmacists, Optometrists etc. It is needed to take all this into account in relation to future population growth in the district.

(DN. An increase in population growth within the district will undoubtedly put more pressure on an already overstretched social services.)

HARLOW HOSPITAL

3.88 The IDP states: 'There are, however, a number of hospitals located in neighbouring districts which serve Uttlesford residents in the following locations:' This list fails to include Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) in Harlow which serves residents of South West Uttlesford. The hospital is not mentioned as one of the key delivery organisations in para 3.95

Para 3.100 states ; 'Information collected via infrastructure provider engagement to inform this report identified that GP practices within the District are largely at capacity already, but that hospital capacity is however stable at this time'. Given that PAH is not listed in the report relevant data and information should be obtained from this service provider and included in the report.

Para 3.102 states; 'Future iterations of the IDP will be informed by continuing discussions with the CCG and other healthcare providers (such as Hospital trusts) to ensure proposed growth is accounted for'. These discussions should also include PAH.

FRIENDS SCHOOL

Friends school mentioned in para 3.78 is no longer open, it closed at the end of the summer term 2017.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Although there is a site in Bishop's Stortford and Harlow, the one in Saffron Walden far exceeds these two in accessibility and management. We would like to see another site in the south West region of Uttlesford.