

# Land known as Bull Field

## Changes to NPPF and National Policy (December 2024)

### Applicant's Response

Addendum to November 2024 Addendum Report submitted in support of the redetermination of the Section 62a Application relating to the Land known as Bull Field, following the High Court Judgement and quashing of the decision to refuse planning permission under Section 62A Application Ref. No. S62A/2023/0019.

**Weston  
Homes**



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## Document History

Date	Version	Author	Revision/ Notes
06.01.2025	Draft 1	J.Spencer	Draft issued for review
10.01.2025	2	J.Spencer / D.Poole	Issued to the Planning Inspectorate

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared in support of the redetermination of s.62A Application Ref. No. S62A/2023/0019 relating to the land known as Bull Field and should be read in conjunction with the Redetermination Addendum Report (November 2024). It addresses the following matters:
  - **Written Ministerial Statement – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024;**
  - **Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024);**
  - **Changes to the Standard Method for Calculating Housing Need; and,**
  - **Updates to the Housing Delivery Test Score;**
- 1.2. The report sets out those changes which are most relevant and have a material impact on the determination of this application following the above and how this impacts upon the proposed development and any previous conclusions set out in the November 2024 report.

## 2. Written Ministerial Statement

- 2.1. On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, Matthew Pennycook, The Minister of State for Housing and Planning issued a Written Ministerial Statement ('WMS') on behalf of The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government entitled: "*Building the homes we need*" which accompanied the updates to the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') issued on the same day. The Minister's Statement is itself a material consideration indicating the direction of travel of national planning policy and the reasons behind why the changes to national policy were made. The WMS can be found at **Appendix A** for ease.
- 2.2. The WMS began with highlighting the housing crisis which the new Government has inherited, with just 220,000 new homes built in the previous year (2023), the lowest rate of delivery in a decade. In order to address this crisis, the Minister set out the Government's ambitious goal of delivering 1.5million new homes in the current Parliament, as well as vital supporting infrastructure and services. In order to meet this goal, the following objectives were set out in the WMS, which are dealt with individually in the following paragraphs:
- Restoring and raising housing targets;
  - Building in the right places;
  - Supporting local planning;
  - Securing high-quality development and more affordable housing; and
  - Building infrastructure to grow the economy.

### **Restoring and raising housing targets;**

- 2.3. Firstly, turning to Housing Targets, the WMS sets out that the Standard Method ('SM') for calculating housing need would once again become mandatory. The SM was also updated to reflect more up to date population projections, which has increased the national annual target of houses required from 300,000 to 370,000 per year. The WMS also set out the removal of the arbitrary 35% 'urban uplift' that resulted in an uneven distribution of proposed growth to the main cities. This highlights the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of new homes in all areas to address need. With this in mind, the proposals of this application to deliver 96no. new homes will contribute towards the increased housing targets, including for Uttlesford District Council ('UDC').

### **Building in the right places**

- 2.4. With regard to building in the right places, this sets out that the ambitious targets for housing delivery can only be achieved when sufficient land is allocated for such housing. In doing so, this part of the WMS included details around a number of changes to Green Belt Policies to provide for more growth in these areas, as well as the support for delivering affordable housing. Although this section of the WMS does not directly relate to the proposed development, as the Site allocation in the Emerging Local Plan ('ELP') is not yet confirmed and does not fall within the Green Belt, it does however highlight the Governments' increased support for new housing in sustainable locations.

### Supporting local planning

- 2.5. Turning to supporting local planning, within this section of the WMS the Government's support for the objective of achieving universal local plan coverage is highlighted. Uttlesford is one such area where an up-to-date Local Plan has not been provided for over 20 years, despite three previous unsuccessful attempts to bring forward a plan, but that did not carry forward or were found unsound. As the Inspector will be aware, a fourth Regulation 19 Plan has recently been consulted on and was submitted by the Council to the Planning Inspector for examination on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The ELP is thus still some way from adoption and as such carries limited weight at this stage. Whilst the ELP reflects the objective of ensuring up-to-date universal local plan coverage and supporting increased housing development to deliver on the ambitious housing targets, the Regulation 19 Plan does not meet the full up-to-date need as set out in the SM (See Section 4).

### Securing high-quality development and more affordable housing

- 2.6. With regards to securing high-quality development and more affordable housing, the WMS sets out the aim of:

*“Rapidly driving up planning consents in the context of a system with woefully inadequate local plan coverage will increase the number of permissions secured outside of local plan allocations in the short-term. This is necessary if we are to see the scale of delivery we need to meet our commitment to 1.5 million homes. Therefore, where it applies, the presumption in favour of sustainable development must have real teeth.”*

- 2.7. The WMS also sets out that to drive the reformed housebuilding industry, the Government is making changes to set an expectation of mixed-tenure developments on larger sites, supporting small sites to come forward and support Small and Medium Size Enterprise ('SME') delivering those sites and make clear the Government's support for Social Rent schemes. In particular, the Minister emphasised the Government's support for SME developers in delivering smaller sites to help meet these targets, with Weston Homes and this Application a prime example of an SME proposing a small scheme, which can quickly contribute to meeting housing needs.
- 2.8. The WMS therefore highlights that increased numbers of planning permissions need to be granted on sites such as the Application Site, which are outside of historic, outdated, local plan boundaries, in order to help address housing need in the short term. The WMS states:

*“The changes we make today ensure that the presumption carries real weight, acting as a significant adjustment to the decision-making balance in favour of approving development.”*

### Building infrastructure to grow the economy

- 2.9. Finally, with regard to building infrastructure to grow the economy, the WMS set out the need to support new or upgraded facilities and infrastructure, setting out support for a number of proposals in this regard. As the proposal delivers and facilitates the expansion of Roseacres Primary School, this further iterates the importance of such benefits, and the weight Government is placing upon sustainable growth.

### 3. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

3.1. One of the main elements of the Governments strategy for delivering the ambitious housing targets set out in the WMS discussed in the previous section are the changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') published on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Although the original Addendum Report (November 2024) dealt with the proposed changes to the NPPF, set out in the draft version issued for consultation, this section will directly deal with the most relevant changes which have come into fruition and that have a material impact upon the determination of this Application, which includes:

- **Amendments to paragraph 11 and the tilted balance**
- **General Changes to Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes**
- **Changes to Paragraph 73 – Small and Medium Enterprise Housebuilders**
- **Changes to Paragraph 78 – 5-Year Housing Land Supply**

#### **Amendments to Paragraph 11 and The Tilted Balance**

3.2. Firstly, turning to paragraph 11, this is now worded as follows:

*“d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date<sup>6</sup>, granting permission unless:*

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance<sup>7</sup> provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination<sup>8</sup>.”*

3.3. Paragraph 11(d)(ii) has been amended to include the word 'strong' instead of 'clear' when describing the severity of the breach of the footnote 7 designations required to disengage the tilted balance. Regardless of whether this change has any impact upon the way in which a tilted balance is undertaken, the High Court Judgement which quashed the previous refusal, clearly established that the footnote 7 policies referenced in the earlier reasons for refusal (namely, Heritage and impact on the Ancient Woodland) are neither clear nor strong reasons to refuse planning permission as explained below. As such, the change from 'clear' to 'strong' would still not disengage the tilted balance as per the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11(d)(ii).

3.4. Regarding the heritage impact more specifically, the Inspector made clear in the Quashed Decision (paragraph 75) that the 'less than substantial harm' to heritage assets would not constitute a clear or strong reason for refusal which would disengage the tilted balance.

- 3.5. With regard to impact on the Ancient Woodland, the Inspector in the Quashed Decision suggested this would provide a clear reason for refusal, as the test was. However, the High Court Judgement upheld Ground 4, which related to how the Inspector dealt with the impact upon the Ancient Woodland. Within the Judgement, whilst dealing with the impact on the Ancient Woodland, Holgate J (as he was) set out that:

*“[...]the 2023 Inspector had wholly failed to give any reason for disagreeing with the 2022 Inspector on air quality, so as to comply with the North Wiltshire principle.*

*In my judgment the errors identified thus far are sufficient for Weston to succeed on ground 4. But, in addition, I note Weston’s submission that the representations from the Woodland Trust in 2023 were essentially the same as those they had put before the 2022 Inspector. I do not see how the 2023 Inspector could properly say that the Trust’s representations in 2023 raised “detailed” concerns (DL 50). They were merely of a broad brush or generalised nature. The only matter in the Trust’s representations that Ms. Dehon identified as being additional compared to their 2022 representations was the possibility of those generalised concerns having a cumulative effect. But that aspect was so insignificant in the Inspector’s mind that it did not find its way into DL 54. Given the focus of DL 54 upon air quality, I am in no doubt that the obligation to give reasons laid down in North Wiltshire was not satisfied in this case.”*

(Paragraph 149 and 150 of the Judgement).

- 3.6. It must follow that the impact on the Ancient Woodland was therefore not a clear reason for refusal and cannot now constitute a strong reason for disengaging the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d)(i) of the NPPF.
- 3.7. The position on the Ancient Woodland must revert to that set out by the earlier Inspector dealing with the Appeal relating to the wider Warish Hall Farm Development, where, at paragraph 74, the Appeal Inspector set out that *“[...] as agreed in the [Statement of Common Ground], that no trees within Prior’s Wood would be removed or would be impacted on directly as a result of the proposed access road and cycle way route within the buffer, including the road layout at the pinch point.”* The Appeal Inspector also found that there would be no indirect impact on the Woodland, where, at paragraph 77 of the Decision, it is stated *“[...] I am content from the submitted written evidence and what I have heard at the Inquiry, that neither the proposed road or cycleway within the buffer or proposed housing in the vicinity, would lead to indirect effects on the ancient woodland as identified in the Standing Advice [...]”*. The arrangements in this part of the proposed development remain consistent with the layout which the Appeal Inspector assessed, and as such the same conclusions must also be drawn in regard to this Application.
- 3.8. Accordingly, there are no footnote 7 policies which would provide a clear or strong reason for refusal, as such, the tilted balance remains engaged in this regard.
- 3.9. Turning to the changes made to paragraph 11(d)(iii), which includes the additional reference to specific part of the Framework which should be considered when assessing an application against the policies of the NPPF as a whole, namely; directing development to sustainable locations; making effective use of land; securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes. These matters are considered in the paragraphs below.

- 3.10. In terms of **directing development to sustainable locations**, it is clear that Site is sustainably located, with connections to the Prior's Green Neighbourhood Centre, The Four Ashes Shopping Parade, various bus routes and cycle routes as well as wider connectivity from Stansted Airport including the railway station and public transport interchange. Furthermore, the Site is in close proximity to the strategic road network, including the A120 and M11. It is clear that the previous Inspector dealing with the quashed decision agreed that the Site was sustainably located, where at paragraph 26 of the quashed decision, they state “[...]the site provides in general terms an accessible and sustainable location for some additional new dwellings adjacent to the built up area of Takeley.”
- 3.11. In terms of whether or not the proposals make efficient use of the land, the comments provided by the UDC Urban Design Officer (16 July 2021) (see **Appendix B** for ease) on the original wider Warish Hall Farm Application (Ref. No. UTT/21/1987/FUL) set out the following:
- “Density generally deemed appropriate balance between providing new homes and reflect existing character.”*
- 3.12. It is noted that at present, no specific urban design comments have been provided in relation to this Application. However, the existing proposal follows many rounds of positive pre-application discussions and consultation on high level principles, as well as detailed elements of the scheme, including density and making efficient use of land, whilst achieving high quality design. This was established through discussions with the UDC Urban Design Officer with regard to the original wider Warish Hall Farm Application and have been retained in the design of the proposals for this Application. As such, it is concluded that the proposals make appropriate and **efficient use of land**.
- 3.13. In terms of **securing well-designed places**, it is again important to reiterate the discussion between Weston Homes and the former UDC Urban Design Officer on the previous wider Warish Hall Farm Application, which has informed the design principles of this Application. Furthermore, it is noted that, within the Quashed Decision, the Inspector sets out, at paragraph 81 that: *“the scheme is well-designed in several respects and Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that significant weight should be given to development that reflects local and national design guidance and codes.”* It is evident that the proposals of this Application **secure well-designed places**.
- 3.14. Finally, in terms of **providing affordable housing**, it is noted that the scheme provides a fully policy compliant provision of affordable housing, which, following discussions with UDC Housing Officers, has recently been updated to reflect the latest requirements set out in UDCs latest Housing Need Assessment. As such, the scheme provides a policy-compliant provision of 39no. affordable homes, which precisely meets the latest identified need and mix in both size and tenure.
- 3.15. The planning balance, including detailed commentary on the individual harms and benefits of the proposed development can be found in Section 9 of the Addendum Report (November 2023) submitted in support of the redetermination of this Application. It is imperative to note that the benefits of the affordable housing and housing provision in general would, if anything, have increased in terms of their significance as a benefit. This is as a result of the Government setting out in the WMS that, in planning terms, housing delivery and particularly affordable housing, is a key priority. Accordingly, this makes evidently clear that the limited identified harm would not outweigh the significant and demonstrable public benefits of the proposed development.

- 3.16. Considering the above, it is clear that the proposals of this Application will not lead to a clear reason for refusal, with particular regard to those elements of the Framework which are now referenced under paragraph 11(d)(iii) as recently updated. Accordingly, the tilted balance remains engaged by the provision of paragraph 11(d)(iii), notwithstanding the recent additions to the previous wording.

### General Changes to Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

- 3.17. One of the main changes to Chapter 5 is the clarification that the SM will revert back to being a mandatory requirement for calculating 5-year Housing Land Supply ('5YHLS'), as set out in the WMS discussed in the previous section.
- 3.18. As a result, this would lead to a notable decrease in UDC's 5YHLS from 4.12 years as per the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Statement published by UDC on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to **3.46 years**, a significant shortfall. This is calculated as follows:

Annual Target	N/A	804 <sup>1</sup>
20% of Target	804 x 20%	160.8
Annual Target incl. Buffer	804 + 106.8	964.8
Overall 5-Year Target	910.8 x 5	4,554
Supply	Based on Latest Position Statement	3,335
<b>Supply in years</b>	<b>(3,335 / 964.8)</b>	<b>3.46 years</b>

Figure 1 - Calculation of 5YHLS based on updated Standard Method

- 3.19. UDC's Annual Target based on the SM has increased by 129 homes per annum from 675 to 804. The implication this has had on the resulting 5YHLS is set out in **Figure 1** and paragraph 3.17 above.
- 3.20. Accordingly, the change to the SM for calculating Annual Housing Targets has led to a decrease in UDC's 5YHLS by a further 0.66 years. As a result, the tilted balance in favour of granting permission is engaged as per the provision of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.
- 3.21. Furthermore, **Figure 1** above demonstrates a clear illustration of exactly how many homes are required to meet the deficit between the need and supply (155no. dwellings each year), which the 96no. dwellings proposed by this Application would go a long way towards. In fact, the proposed development alone would contribute toward 12% of the annual supply required to meet the identified need. This reiterates how smaller sites being delivered by SME housebuilders can play a vital role in the delivery of new homes which are needed to meet the increased housing requirements.
- 3.22. The changes to the SM result in a significant shortfall to UDC's 5YHLS position. This clearly sets out that there is greater need for housing than prior to the changes to the SM, in line with the WMS, which supports the delivery of new homes as proposed within this Application.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm\\_source=18af80f2-5b57-4e80-ad14-6ba145e95b48&utm\\_content=immediately](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=18af80f2-5b57-4e80-ad14-6ba145e95b48&utm_content=immediately)

- 3.23. As such, there is also now greater importance and emphasis placed on supporting the delivery of affordable housing within Chapter 5 of the NPPF. As set out above, following the publication of UDC's latest Housing Needs Assessment, the proposed affordable housing provision has been updated to reflect the most up-to-date need. The Application provides a policy-compliant level of affordable housing, which caters precisely for the identified local need. This is against a backdrop of increasing need and falling levels of both market and affordable housing delivery (See below Section on Housing Delivery Test). As such, the affordable housing provision should be considered a **very significant benefit** of the proposals, in line with the increased importance placed upon the delivery of new affordable homes set out in the latest iteration of the NPPF and the significant adjustment to the decision-making balance in favour of approving development, as outlined in the WMS.

### Changes to Paragraph 73 – Small and Medium Enterprise Housebuilders

- 3.24. The updated version of paragraph 73 (formerly paragraph 69) now includes reference to Small and Medium Enterprise ('SME') housebuilders and the importance of their role in delivering the ambitious housing targets. Paragraph 73 is worded as follows:

*"Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. [...]"*

- 3.25. This is reflective of the WMS discussed in the previous section, where great emphasis is placed on SME's delivering smaller sites, playing an essential role in meeting increased housing delivery. As set out above, Weston Homes and the Site related to this Application are reflective of both an established SME and a small sites which are referred to both in paragraph 73 and within the WMS.

### Changes to Paragraph 78 – 5-Year Housing Land Supply

- 3.26. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF has been updated to reverse a number of changes made by the previous iteration of the Framework. The amended wording is as follows:

*"Strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies<sup>38</sup>, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old<sup>39</sup>. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:*

*a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or*

*b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery<sup>40</sup> of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply; or*

*c) From 1 July 2026, for the purposes of decision-making only, 20% where a local planning authority has a housing requirement adopted in the last five years examined against a previous version of this Framework<sup>41</sup>, and whose annual average housing requirement<sup>42</sup> is 80% or less of the most up to date local housing need figure calculated using the standard method set out in national planning practice guidance."*

- 3.27. These changes have placed greater importance on the need to provide a 5-year supply of housing, also reflecting the Government's drive for additional housing outlined in the WMS. These changes therefore support the delivery of the new housing proposed by this application. The updated 5YHLS figure based on the now mandatory SM has resulted in a significant shortfall in 5YHLS for UDC to just 3.4 years, as discussed above. This places even greater emphasis on the need for windfall planning applications, such as this, which are sustainably located to be approved in order to meet the deficit in housing land supply and contribute to increasing housing delivery in the district (See below).

## 4. Updates to the Housing Delivery Test Score

- 4.1. Following the WMS on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, updated Housing Delivery Test ('HDT') scores were published by the Government for the period between 2020 and 2023. The updated Table with an extract of the UDC HDT data can be found at **Appendix C**.
- 4.2. The new data shows that UDC have delivered just 46% of their housing need, which further triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out under paragraph 11 (d), under footnote 8. Accordingly, not only are UDC unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS, a position which has deteriorated as a result of the updated SM, but UDC are also one of the most poorly performing Local Planning Authorities in terms of housing delivery across the whole country. This is a position that has endured for a considerable number of years. This further exacerbates the need to support applications for new homes, particularly in a Local Authority who have a poor track record in regard to maintaining an appropriate level of supply and where, as a result, delivery has been extremely poor.

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1. This report has been produced to set out the relevance of the WMS (12<sup>th</sup> December 2024), alongside the changes to the NPPF (12<sup>th</sup> December 2024), the changes to the SM for calculating housing need, and the updated figure for Housing Delivery as material considerations which impact the determination of this application.
- 5.2. It is clear from all sections of this report that the Government are strongly supportive of the delivery of new homes, to contribute towards the ambitious target of 1.5million over this Parliament. In doing so, more weight has been given to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as well as the tilted balance. Both the updated HDT figures and UDC's updated 5YHLS based on the new SM engage the titled balance as per footnote 7 & 8 respectively, under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. As set out in the report, there are no exceptions under paragraph 11(d) (i) or (ii) which would disengage the tilted balance.
- 5.3. Both the WMS and the NPPF (paragraph 73) demonstrate the important role which smaller sites delivered by SME housebuilders can play in meeting the deficit of housing provision required to meet the ambitious targets set by the Government. This report has demonstrated that based on the latest SM, UDC have just a **3.4 year supply**. The 96no. units proposed by this Application would go a considerable way to meeting this deficit and delivering the homes needed within the early stage of the 5-year supply. With the above, in mind, it is deemed that the recent NPPF and other publications further emphasise the clear need for housing and the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development signals that approval for proposals, such as those contained with this Application, should attract strong support.
- 5.4. When undertaking a planning balance and applying the tilted balance in light of the publications discussed in this Report, it is demonstrated that the proposed housing and policy compliant affordable housing provision has increased and would be a **very significant benefit** which would contribute to meeting the severe shortfall for new homes, including affordable housing. As set out in the WMS, the drive for increasing housing delivering as set out in the publications discussed in this report, act as "[...] a *significant adjustment to the decision-making balance in favour of approving development*". Decisions should be made with this in mind and as such, if planning decisions, particularly in relation to housing, are to apply the tilted balance with 'real teeth' as the WMS suggests, then the limited identified harms arising from the proposals of this application would not outweigh the **very significant benefits** of the proposed new homes and affordable housing in isolation, notwithstanding the numerous other public benefits highlighted in Section 9 of the earlier Addendum Report (November 2024). Accordingly, the changes to the NPPF and government policy provide an even greater imperative to grant planning permission.

**Appendix A – Ministerial Statement – Building the homes we need  
(Matthew Pennycook) – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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# Building the homes we need

## Statement made on 12 December 2024

Statement UIN HCWS308

### Statement made by



**Matthew Pennycook**

Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Labour

Greenwich and Woolwich

Commons



### Statement

This Government has inherited an acute and entrenched housing crisis. The average new home is out of reach for the average worker, housing costs consume a third of private renters' income, and the number of children in temporary accommodation now stands at a historic high of nearly 160,000. Yet just 220,000 new homes were built last year and the number of homes granted planning permission has fallen to its lowest in a decade.

That is why the Plan for Change committed to rebuild Britain, with the hugely ambitious goal of delivering 1.5 million new homes this Parliament, and the vital infrastructure needed to grow our economy and support public services.

The Government has responded with the urgency this demands. We published a consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework within a month of gaining office, proposing measures to reverse anti-supply changes introduced in December 2023 and in their place setting out pro-growth reforms. Since then, we have published proposals to prioritise and fast-track building on previously developed urban land through a 'brownfield passport' and for speeding up decision making through modernisation of planning committees. Next year, we will introduce a Planning and Infrastructure Bill to speed up and streamline the planning process, to build more homes of all tenures and accelerate the delivery of major infrastructure projects. At the Budget on 30 October, we committed an additional £50 million to boost capacity to deliver this ambitious planning reform agenda, alongside providing an additional £500 million in grant for affordable housing, and further £3 billion of additional support to the private housing market, to translate permissions into build out.

Today's publication marks the next step in delivering on our promise to radically reform the planning system. The measures set out below build on more than 10,000 consultation responses and extensive engagement with private housebuilders, affordable housing providers, local authorities and other organisations from the sector. Taken together, they reflect our commitment not to duck the hard choices that must be confronted in order to tackle the housing crisis – because the alternative is a future in which a decent, safe, secure and affordable home is a privilege enjoyed only by some rather than being the right of all working people.

## **RESTORING AND RAISING HOUSING TARGETS**

The plan-led approach is, and must remain, the cornerstone of our planning system. It is through local plans that communities shape decisions about how to deliver the housing and wider development their area needs. But we are clear that these decisions must be about how to meet those needs, not whether to do so at all. We are therefore restoring mandatory housing targets. This means that local authorities must use the standard method as the basis for determining housing requirements in their local plans.

As we set out in July, a mandatory method is insufficient if the method itself is not adequate to meet housing need. We consulted on an ambitious revision of the existing standard method, increasing the total annual national target from 300,000 to 370,000, ending the reliance on decade-old population projections, and removing the arbitrary 35 percent 'urban uplift' that resulted in a skewed national distribution, disproportionately focused on London to the detriment of the rest of the country. Instead, the new method relies on a baseline set at a percentage of existing housing stock levels, to better reflect housing pressures right across the country, and uses a stronger affordability multiplier to focus additional growth on those places facing the biggest affordability challenge.

We heard through the consultation that our method could go even further in targeting growth at those places where house prices are most removed from local incomes, and so we have made an adjustment to the method to make it more responsive to demand pressures. The final method now incorporates an even stronger affordability adjustment – nearly four times as strong as the inherited formula. This will have the effect of altering the distribution, increasing numbers in those places facing the most acute affordability pressures while maintaining ambitious targets across the whole of the country.

## **BUILDING IN THE RIGHT PLACES**

Meeting ambitious new targets relies on allocating sufficient land to do so. We have been clear that developers should first look to brownfield, or previously developed, land. That is essential to protect our most valuable countryside and agricultural land. And we have made changes to support that, making the default answer to proposals to build on brownfield 'yes' and expanding the current definition of brownfield land to include hard standing, ahead of further reforms planned for next year on the back of our brownfield passport working paper. Together, these changes will ensure that we make full and efficient use of previously developed land.

But we know that there are simply not enough sites on brownfield land registers to deliver the volume of homes that the country needs each year, let alone enough that are viable and in the right location. And that is why we have grasped the nettle and proposed a modernised, strategic approach to Green Belt land designation and release, fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the first instance, it requires local authorities to use the local plan process to adopt a 'sequential approach', considering brownfield, then grey belt, and only then higher performing land – all while ensuring that sustainability is a central consideration throughout. We expect authorities to conduct Green Belt reviews, to identify the right land to bring forward in their areas. Where authorities fail to meet development needs, developers may bring forward proposals on low-performing grey belt land outside of the plan process, but with higher performing land protected from this form of release.

Through our consultation we found broad support for this strategic approach to Green Belt release, and for the concept of grey belt, which recognises that there are significant parts of the Green Belt that contribute little by way of aesthetic, public access, or ecological value. However, we did see evidence that our proposed definition of grey belt was likely to leave too much room for subjectivity and debate. In response, we have set out a clearer description of how to assess whether land meets the definition, and we will be providing further guidance in the new year. We remain clear that existing protections for land covered by environmental and national landscape designations – for example National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest – will remain.

At the centre of our reformed Green Belt policy lie our golden rules, which mean that housing can only be built on Green Belt land if developers deliver high levels of affordable housing, appropriate local infrastructure, and accessible public green space. Our consultation proposed rules requiring that residential schemes across the country would deliver 50 percent affordable housing, while recognising that because land values vary, the limited use of viability assessments should be permitted within certain constraints. The objective of these rules was to make sure that the public would receive the fair share of the 'planning uplift' driven by the new rules, and that returns to landowners would be fair but not excessive.

We received significant feedback from a wide range of stakeholders who welcomed the ambition of these rules and the commitment to maximising affordable housing delivery, but who shared strong evidence that fixing the affordable housing requirement at 50 percent nationally would not reflect regional variations in viability and would hinder delivery. This risked leaving authorities with a choice: allow flexibility and turn the amount of affordable housing into a negotiation; or hold firm and make sites unviable, delivering no homes, affordable or otherwise. Responding to this, our final policy introduces a 15 percentage point premium on top of existing affordable housing requirements, up to a maximum of 50 percent, and rules out any negotiation until we have strengthened national planning practice guidance on viability – in which we will consider the case for permitting viability negotiations on previously developed land and larger strategic sites, likely to carry greater infrastructure costs.

In a majority of authorities, this will result in an affordable housing requirement of 50 percent. Local authorities will be required to adopt their own ambitious golden rules through the local plan process, which will supersede these national requirements as new plans come into force. This revised approach delivers on our commitment to sharing the proceeds of land value uplift fairly, securing clear public benefits, while delivering more homes and more affordable homes than a flat 50 percent rate. It will increase the speed of housing provision by giving all actors greater certainty about what is required and what will achieve planning permission.

## **SUPPORTING LOCAL PLANNING**

We have made clear our commitment to universal local plan coverage – local plans are the best way of engaging communities in decisions about the future of their area, of optimising use of land to deliver for the economy and for the environment, and for giving the certainty businesses need to invest in development. A plan-led system in which fewer than a third of places have up-to-date plans does not work. That is why we are taking a tough but pragmatic approach to imposing new housing numbers on local plans; one which sees new numbers feed through into local plans as quickly as possible, while allowing well-developed plans to be adopted.

We are making three changes to the proposals we consulted on, reflecting these twin objectives. First, we will give local authorities an extra two months to progress their plans under the existing framework. Those that reach examination will be assessed in line with existing housing targets, but where there is a significant shortfall will be required to begin work on a new plan as soon as the new plan-making system commences next summer. Similarly, those that reach the final stage of plan preparation will be allowed to progress only where there is no significant shortfall. Second, responding to feedback that we should measure significant shortfall in proportionate rather than absolute terms, we are replacing the 200 home threshold with a requirement that plans provide for at least 80 percent of the new standard method figure. Third, we are introducing a new requirement that authorities with plans adopted under the old standard method must provide an extra year's worth of homes in their five-year housing pipeline. This requirement will kick in from 1 July 2026 and drive authorities to take steps to close the gap between existing housing requirements and the new targets by bringing more land into the system.

We recognise that going back and increasing housing numbers will create additional work, which is why we will provide financial support to those authorities asked to do this. To ensure that local authorities are well-equipped and supported to implement our policy changes, we will provide grant funding to support authorities with local plan delivery and Green Belt reviews. A total of £14.8 million is available across both funds to support local planning authorities with these costs. In light of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, I will be writing to all local planning authorities with more details, and asking them to provide an updated plan-making timetable within 12 weeks, in order to drive delivery and give transparency over progress.

I expect authorities to rise to this challenge – over the last five months we have seen an acceleration on plan-making, which demonstrates what is possible with clear policy direction from national government and the right political will at a local level. But we will use the full range of ministerial intervention powers at our disposal if that does not happen – including taking over an authority's plan making directly. The revised local plan intervention criteria, published today, will boost our ability to act quickly where plan-making stalls.

The pressure on planning departments goes beyond plan-making, as we drive towards the unprecedented numbers of planning permissions needed to meet our 1.5 million homes and wider development objectives. That is why, responding to consultation feedback, we will set householder application fees at what we estimate is cost-recovery level, in order that applicants cover the costs of processing their planning applications. This will bring a boost of more than £50 million per year into local planning authorities from next year, enabling authorities to provide a quicker, better service. We will, through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, go further in enabling local planning authorities to vary or set fees to cost recovery levels as appropriate for their area. This funding comes on top of the additional £50 million of planning capacity and capability funding announced at Budget. In combination with the dedicated support for updating local plans, this amounts to a package of over £100 million in the coming year.

## **SECURING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Rapidly driving up planning consents in the context of a system with woefully inadequate local plan coverage will increase the number of permissions secured outside of local plan allocations in the short-term. This is necessary if we are to see the scale of delivery we need to meet our commitment to 1.5 million homes. Therefore, where it applies, the presumption in favour of sustainable development must have real teeth. The changes we make today ensure that the presumption carries real weight, acting as a significant adjustment to the decision-making balance in favour of approving development. We are however absolutely clear that this is not a green light for low-quality development. That is why we have amended the presumption to call out the existing safeguards that exist in national policy around the provision of affordable housing, design quality, and sustainability of location, in line with the proposals we consulted on. We simply do not accept there is an inherent trade-off between supply and quality.

We have taken wider steps to drive the reformed housebuilding industry we are committed to delivering – one that is more responsive to consumer needs, which places affordability at the heart of what it does, and which builds out faster. We are therefore making changes to set an expectation of mixed-tenure on large sites, support more small sites to come forward to support SME delivery, and make clear our support for Social Rent schemes. Reflecting the absolute priority we attach to delivering Social Rent homes, we are amending the definition of Affordable Housing to carve it out as a separate category, distinct from the broader category of affordable housing for rent.

As part of the Government's plans to deliver much needed affordable homes, Homes England is today launching a new clearing service to help unblock the delivery of section 106 affordable housing. This follows reports in recent months of developers experiencing greater difficulty in selling section 106 affordable homes for which they have planning permission. This new service will help improve the functioning of the market for affordable housing, by supporting buyers and sellers to find each other more effectively – with developers able to share details of unsold section 106 affordable homes for registered providers and local authorities to search. The service aims to facilitate dialogue and partnerships that allow homes to be delivered in line with the originally agreed tenure mix set out in section 106 agreements. It will also provide new data and insight into the section 106 market. The Government is calling on all developers with uncontracted section 106 affordable homes, including small and medium builders, to proactively and pragmatically engage with the new clearing service, and on registered providers and local planning authorities to engage positively as providers and enablers of affordable housing. This is an important step in unlocking these homes and driving delivery.

As new land enters the system, we expect to see new permissions rapidly translated into build out. In order that we have transparency and accountability, I will introduce secondary legislation next year to implement powers brought forward under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to require developers to commit to a build out trajectory upfront and report on delivery against it. Where that does not happen, authorities will be empowered to hold them to account – including through declining to determine applications from developers with a poor record of delivery. We will publish technical consultations to guide delivery of the necessary regulations in the new year.

## **BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE TO GROW THE ECONOMY**

Finally, in July we proposed changes to the planning system to drive greater commercial development in those sectors which will be the engine of the UK's economy in the future. We will confirm the changes as detailed in the consultation and make it easier to build laboratories, gigafactories, data centres and digital infrastructure, and the facilities needed to support the wider supply chain. We will also specifically recognise the need to support proposals for new or upgraded facilities and infrastructure, setting the expectation that suitable sites for these types of modern economy uses are identified in local plans. As proposed in the summer, we will bring onshore wind back into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime, and raise the threshold of projects for both onshore wind and solar to 100MW. We will follow through with prescribing data centres, gigafactories and laboratories as types of business or commercial development capable of being directed into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime, depending on the scale of the project.

## **PART OF A BIGGER PLAN**

These are necessary changes to unlocking the land needed to deliver 1.5 million homes and the scale of new infrastructure we will need to support growth. But we are clear that they must form part of a wider plan to address wider blockers in the planning system and to drive rapid build out. We will use the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to improve certainty in decision-making, create a win-win for development and nature, and streamline processes for critical infrastructure. Since we know that we cannot meet housing need without planning for growth on a larger than local scale, we will empower local leaders to work cross-boundary to deliver strategic plans.

Only by delivering these reforms will we unlock investment and delivery. It is also vital that, alongside the appropriate infrastructure, these reforms also deliver substantial affordable housing. It is vital that local communities can see the benefits of development in terms of enhancements to public services and more affordable housing for local people. We recognise that to deliver on these reforms we will need to work in partnership with local leaders, housebuilders and infrastructure developers to deliver investment into these sectors, and we are grateful for the support for these proposals from across the sector.

These reforms are essential to transform the housing crisis, deliver growth, protect the environment, and provide hope to the many thousands of people locked into substandard and unaffordable housing.

## Statement from

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**



## Linked statements

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**



Building the homes we need



[Baroness Taylor of Stevenage](#)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

Labour, Life peer

Statement made 12 December 2024

HLWS307

Lords

**Appendix B – Urban Design Officer Comments on original wider  
Warish Hall Farm Application (Ref. No.  
UTT/21/1987/FUL) – July 2021**

## Building for a Healthy Life - Uttlesford Assessment Tool

### Land At Warish Hall Farm Smiths Green Takeley

UTT/21/1987/FUL

16.07.21

Mixed use development including: revised access to/from Parsonage Road between Weston Group Business Centre and Innovation Centre buildings leading to: light industrial/flexible employment units (c.3568sqm) including health care medical facility/flexible employment building (Use Class E); 126 dwellings on Bulls Field, south of Prior's Wood: 26 dwellings west of and with access from Smiths Green Lane; 38 dwellings on land north of Jacks Lane, east of Smiths Green Lane including associated landscaping, woodland extension, public open space, pedestrian and cycle routes

Assessment by Jack Bennett - Principal Urban Design Officer

## Integrated Neighbourhoods

### Natural connections

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.
Look beyond the red line that marks the extent of your site. Ordnance Survey maps along with satellite mapping software such as Google Earth are useful tools to help you understand the wider context and how you can best stitch a new development into a place.
Identify the places, facilities and services you need to connect to.
Draw points of connection into and through your site - creating a strong and direct street, path and open space network.
Create well-connected street and path networks, providing opportunities for these to be extended beyond the site boundary in the future.
Research and respond to how water flows and nature moves across your site and the wider surroundings.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Edge to edge connectivity
Respond to pedestrian and cyclist desire lines.
Connected street patterns. These work best when they include straight or nearly straight streets to makes pedestrian routes as direct as possible.
Filtered permeability. A useful technique that designs out rat running and creates a pleasant low traffic environment around people's homes whilst still allowing pedestrian and cycle movement.
Continuous streets (with public access) along the edges of a development. Private drives can frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement along the edges of a development.
Connecting existing and new habitats; safeguarding existing or creating new movement corridors for nature.
Where retained, keeping hedgerows within the public realm, safeguarding their future retention and management.
Streets and routes that can be extended in the future.
Adoption to site boundaries.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Single or limited points of access for pedestrians and cyclists.
Extensive use of private drives.
Pedestrian or cycle routes that are not well overlooked and lit after dark.
Failing to respond to existing (or anticipate future) pedestrian and cycle desire lines.
No opportunities to connect or extend streets and paths if required by later development.
Internal streets and paths that are not well connected or are indirect.
Retaining existing hedgerows between the back gardens of individual homes.
Ransom strips

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f
National Design Guide: Sections B3; M1; M2; N1; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Streets and Roads; Landscape and Greenspaces; Highways Technical Manual

### Officer comments

a	There should be potential for a pedestrian connection to the north from the commercial area, should any development come forward to the north of the application site. Pedestrian connection marked as 'recreational' from school to north of site would actually be functional (depending on any development coming forward to the north) and should be treated as such with regards surfaces, detailing etc. Existing PROWs not shown on access diagram in DAS, these should be shown and retained. Not all connections to Leyfield are shown in DAS access diagram. Concern raised about quality of connection between site and Leyfield with regards to active overlooking, lighting, surface etc - what mitigation measures are included?
g	Routes generally respond to desire lines apart from route around amenity green in commercial area - the desire line is across the green and through the car park - suggest this is reflected in the layout - currently a car friendly space rather than pedestrian. East of woodland neighbourhood: short path connection from turning head/edge lane to woodland path needed.
g	
g	
g	Extensive private drives/culdesacs will need to be clearly demarcated through detailing/layout etc as private to avoid being misunderstood as a through route.
?	Landscape officer to comment
g	Hedgerow appears to be retained but existing PROW not marked on plans, also this hedgerow and PROW are addressed by rear garden walls which is not ideal
g	Most routes achieve this apart from car park at northern end of site.
a	Appears to be feasible but case officer/highways officer to confirm no ransom strips etc remain

## Walking, cycling, and public transport

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.
Cycle and walk the neighbourhood to understand where off-site interventions will be most useful. Local residents and councillors can help you understand where investment in improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure might have most impact.
Invite people to cycle within the site and beyond to destinations within at least a three mile radius; with routes through green spaces, quiet streets alongside prioritised and protected routes on busy streets, junctions and roads.
If there is an existing protected cycle network, connect to it. Alternatively, begin a new one by building or funding routes to key destinations.
Ensure access for all and help make walking feel like an instinctive choice for everyone undertaking short journeys (such as the school run or older generations accessing local facilities and services).
Streets and paths that connect people to places and public transport services in the most direct way, making car-free travel more attractive, safe and convenient.
Make sure that all streets and routes pass in front of people's homes rather than to the back of them – creating a well overlooked public realm.
Exploit existing (or planned) public transport hubs, such as train stations and bus interchanges, to build at higher densities and channel a higher percentage of journeys to public transport.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Share street space fairly between pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.
Cycle friendly streets (see Local Transport Note 1/12) with pedestrian and cycle priority (and protection) with across junctions and side streets.
Nudge people away from the car. Offer cycle (and cargo bike) parking closer to the entrance of commercial, leisure and community facilities than car parking spaces.
Provide scooter and cycle parking at schools. Scooters can encourage younger children to get active on the way to school.
Design out school runs dependent on cars.
Demand Responsive Transport car clubs and car shares.
Start or contribute to the delivery of a Local Cycle and Walking Strategy Infrastructure Plan.
Short and direct walking and cycling connections that make public transport an easy choice to make.
Zebra, parallel and signalised crossing.
New or improved Park and Ride schemes.
Tight corner radii (<3m) at street junctions and side streets.
20mph design speeds, designations and traffic calming.
Concentrate new development around existing or new transport hubs.
Protected cycle ways along busy streets.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Travel Packs that fail to influence people's travel choices.
White line or undivided shared pavement/cycle ways.
Pedestrians and cyclists losing priority at side junctions.
Oversized radii corners on streets that are principally residential that allow motor vehicles to travel around corners at high speeds.
Streets that twist and turn unnaturally in an effort to control vehicle speed but make walking and cycling routes longer than they need to be.
Streets principally designed around waste collection vehicles.
Overwide carriageways that reduce space for pedestrians and cyclists, making it more difficult for people to get around easily especially when social distancing restrictions are in place.
Serviced parcel developments where pedestrian and cycle connections between different phases of development are frustrated.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 20c; 91a; 91c; 127e
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B3; M1; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

### Officer comments

g	
?	Highways officer to comment
r	No cycle parking shown
	n/a
g	Good pedestrian/cycle connectivity to existing school
?	Highways officer to comment
?	Highways officer to comment
g	Generally good
?	Highways officer to comment - noted that some pedestrian crossings on woodland boundary don't appear to have raised tables
?	Highways officer to comment
g	Highways officer to confirm but there could be improvement in some areas to conform with general principle of minimising corner radii to slow vehicle speeds to create pedestrian friendly streets
?	Highways officer to comment - raised tables and road narrowing noted.
g	Relatively good walking and cycling connectivity to buses, rail, primary school, local centre, employment, food retail
g	Good within development - highways officer to confirm if any provision made to improve wider routes

## Facilities and services

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.
Developments that provide community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, health facilities, co-working spaces, parks, play spaces, cafés and other meeting places that respond to local community needs.
Locate any new facilities in the best location for those walking, cycling and using public transport.
Consider whether improving existing facilities will add more value to the local community than adding new ones.
Assess or identify what sport and leisure provision there is for people of all ages, paying particular attention to the needs of children, teenagers and older people.
Create places where people can meet each other such as public spaces, leisure facilities, community buildings, cafes and restaurants to provide opportunities for social interaction – helping to improve public health by encouraging physical activity and helping to tackle those affected by loneliness and isolation.
Play on the way can make car-free trips more fun for children making them want to walk or cycle to school.
Sustainable drainage schemes that contribute towards an attractive and accessible network of streets and public spaces.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Intensifying development in locations that benefit from good public transport accessibility, in particularly around public transport hubs such as train stations and bus interchanges.
Reserving land in the right locations for non-residential uses.
Active frontages.
Clear windows along the ground floor of non-residential buildings (avoid obscure windows).
Mixing compatible uses vertically, such as placing supported accommodation at the heart of new developments above active ground floor uses.
Giving places where routes meet a human scale and create public squares.
Frequent benches can help those with mobility difficulties to walk more easily between places.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Local centres that are not easily accessible and attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.
Non-residential developments that are delivered as a series of individual parcels with their own surface level car parks set back from the street.
Where routes converge, avoid creating places that are of an inhuman scale and that frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement.
Inactive street edges, dead elevations, service yards next to the street and obscure ground floor windows.
Play and other recreational facilities hidden away within developments rather than in located in more prominent locations that can help encourage new and existing residents to share a space.
Not anticipating and responding to desire lines, such as between public transport stops and the entrances to buildings and other facilities.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 102; 103
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details

## Officer comments

g	Relatively good walking and cycling connectivity to buses, rail, primary school, local centre, employment, food retail
g	Non-residential uses are in a logical location adjacent to existing commercial. Landscape officer to comment on impact of proximity to woodland. Planning officer to confirm quantum and type of use are appropriate considering wider context.
a	Entrance space does not appear to take the opportunity to create a good design following good placemaking principles. This is an important entrance threshold and is currently defined by blank commercial unit walls and dense parking. The vehicle route through has large radii and no pedestrian crossings or raised tables are shown. Space would benefit from using shared surfaces, changes in surfaces material, soft landscaping etc to define a distinct entrance square, defined by buildings and with parking hidden with buildings or landscaping as far as possible.
a	The medical building appears well designed from an urban design perspective with large windows addressing the public realm but the setting of parking, blacktop road and undefined public open space could be improved.
n/a	n/a
a	See points in 'active frontage' box above
a	Benches specified but locations not defined (other than woodland and 'recreational area')

## Homes for Everyone

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

A range of homes that meet local community needs.
A mix of housing types and tenures that suit the needs of the local community. This may include first time buyer homes, family homes, homes for those downsizing and supported living.
Maximising the opportunities offered by supported accommodation, placing these homes at the heart of new developments above active ground floor uses such as shops, community facilities and pre-schools.
Offering people access to at least some private outdoor space. This is particularly important for people's mental health and wellbeing especially when social distancing and travel restrictions are in place.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing homes and streets where it is difficult to determine the tenure of properties through architectural, landscape or other differences.
Apartment buildings might separate tenure by core but each core must look exactly the same.
A range of housing typologies supported by local housing needs and policies to help create a broad-based community
Homes with the flexibility to meet changing needs.
Affordable homes that are distributed across a development.
Access to some outdoor space suitable for drying clothes for apartments and maisonettes.
Consider providing apartments and maisonettes with some private outdoor amenity space such as semi-private garden spaces for ground floor homes; balconies and terraces for homes above ground floor.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Grouping affordable homes in one place (except on smaller developments).
Dividing places and facilities such as play spaces by tenure.
Revealing the different tenure of homes through architecture, landscape, access, car parking, waste storage or other design features.
Not using the space around apartment buildings to best effect and where these could easily be used to create small, semi-private amenity spaces allocated to individual ground floor apartments.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 60-62
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B2; U2; U3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Architectural Details; Internal Design Details; Layout Details

### Officer comments

g	No obvious differences in architecture or detailing as same housetypes are used for affordable and market housing (apart from 2C bungalows)
n/a	n/a - apartments all affordable
g	Case officer to confirm housing needs and policies met - from a design point of view there are a good range of typologies however no evidence of innovative typologies that meet intergenerational/multigenerational needs, or live/work typologies etc
r	No evidence of this - housing typology document referred to in DAS but not found in submitted documentation
a	Affordable homes are grouped in a manner that could help to identify homes as affordable which is not in line with guidance - as same housetypes are used this should be straightforward to rectify
g	
g	

## Distinctive Places

### Making the most of what's there

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Understand and respond.
Allow time for good design, walk the site and the surroundings with the local planning authority. Discuss, understand and agree opportunities and constraints building a shared vision that makes use of the topography and other existing assets on and beyond the site.
Explore conceptual ideas before settling on an agreed way forward and producing a site layout. For instance, if there are existing site features explore how these might be best integrated into a place.
Identify any visual connections into, out, through and beyond the site.
Work with the contours of the land.
Understand how water flows across and pools on the site. Explore how water can be used to enhance biodiversity, create character and improve people's sense of wellbeing.
Draw all these considerations together to get the street, block and open space structure right from the start (a framework or concept plan).
Consider opportunities for natural lighting, cooling and ventilation. Take care not to compromise important urban design principles such as perimeter block structure.
Identify opportunities to integrate and reuse existing features of value, these might be natural or manmade, on or beyond the site.
Be careful that hedges are not simply retained and prevent a sensible and practical new development layout. It may be more effective to create and plant new hedgerows and tree belts into development proposals than work around existing hedges. A well thought out approach may even increase habitat and biodiversity.
Be sensitive to existing development but avoid creating buffer spaces between existing and new back gardens.
Using the landform and ground conditions (soil) in a considered way. For instance, low-nutrient subsoils are ideal to put to one side if you wish to establish wildflower meadows rather than importing new topsoil.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Taking a walk to really understand the place where a new development is proposed and understand how any distinctive characteristics can be incorporated as features.
Using existing assets as anchor features, such as mature trees and other existing features.
Positive characteristics such as street types, landscape character, grain, plot shapes and sizes, building forms and materials being used to reflect local character.
Sensitive transitions between existing and new development so that building heights, typologies and tenures sit comfortably next to each other.
Remember the four pillars of sustainable drainage systems.
Protecting and enhancing existing habitats; creating new habitats.
Interlocking back gardens between existing and new development (where existing back gardens adjoin a site boundary).

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing without walking the site first.
Funnelling rainwater away in underground pipes as the default water management strategy.
Unmanaged gaps between development used as privacy buffers to existing residents.
Placing retained hedges between rear garden boundaries or into private ownership.
Building orientations and designs that fail to capitalise on features such as open views.
Not being sensitive to existing neighbouring properties by responding to layout arrangements, housing typologies and building heights.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184
National Design Guide: Sections C1; C2; I1; B2; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Understanding Context; Layout Details; Landscape and Greenspaces

### Officer comments

a	Concern has been raised about the development along Smiths Green and the impact on heritage buildings and landscaped verges. Priors Wood is respected with appropriate distances (with pinch point due to site constraints) and wood is enhanced with addition - Landscape officer to provide further comments.
g	
g	Notwithstanding heritage concerns, proposals along Smiths Green do reflect local character to some degree, although double the density with 2 rows of houses rather than 1. Opportunity for these rear homes to address POS is not taken, and rear garden fences are shown which is not acceptable. Density generally deemed appropriate balance between providing new homes and reflect existing character.
g	
	Landscape officer to comment
	Landscape officer to comment
a	Generally acceptable however some concerns about northern edge of 'garden village' could these homes work harder to address the PROW to the north rather than turn their back. General lack of clarity around southern boundary of 'woodland neighbourhood' with some boundaries formed by walls, others open, others timber fencing, strips of left over land shown as meaningless open space - requires detailed plan showing ownerships, access, uses etc.

## A Memorable Character

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create places that are memorable
Create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character.
Review the wider area for sources of inspiration. If distinctive local characteristics exist, delve deeper than architectural style and details. Where the local context is poor or generic, do not use this as a justification for more of the same. Inspiration may be found in local history and culture.
Understand where positive local character comes from: streets, blocks and plots (urban grain), green and blue infrastructure, land uses, building form, massing and materials often underpin the essence of the distinctive character of settlements rather than architectural style and details.
Using a local materials palette (where appropriate) can be a particularly effective way to connect a development to a place. This is often more achievable and credible than mimicking traditional architectural detailing which can be dependent on lost crafts.
Brownfield sites can offer sources of inspiration for new development. Greenfield and edge of settlement locations often require more creativity and inspiration to avoid creating places that lack a sense of local or otherwise distinctive character.
Character can also be created through the social life of public spaces. Create the physical conditions for activity to happen and bring places to life.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

A strong, hand drawn design concept. To find the right solution a number of different ideas and options might need to be explored.
Drawing inspiration from local architectural and/or landscape character.
Reflecting character in either a traditional or contemporary style.
Structural landscaping as a way to create places with a memorable character.
Memorable spaces and building groupings.
Place names that have a connection to the locality can help stimulate ideas and design thought. A place name like Valley View will always be more helpful on larger, multi-developer developments than generic terms such as Parcel R5.1.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Using a predetermined sequence of house types to dictate a layout.
Attempting to create character through poor replication of architectural features or details
Arranging buildings next to each other in a way that does not create a cohesive street scene.
Referencing generic or forgettable development nearby to justify more of the same.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 122d; 127c; 127d
National Design Guide: Sections C2; I1; I2; I3; B3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Architectural Details; Internal Design Details; Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Landscape and Greenspaces

### Officer comments

g	A process has evidently been followed.
g	A thorough analysis of local architecture has been undertaken which references quality examples and draws inspiration from them. Poor quality examples are also shown (for context) but it is important inspiration is not drawn from them e.g. UPVC windows will not be allowed.
g	Housetypes successfully create distinct character in a contemporary style. Windows shown are generous and would help create good quality of internal spaces. Detailing shown is restrained, neat, and appropriate for materials shown. Would suggest pitched porches shown to housetypes 3B, 3C, and 3D are incongruous with successful contemporary aesthetic. More details required on material specification particularly windows and weatherboarding - no plastic or UPVC allowed. Pale brick is not evidently drawn from local precedent however is supported as contributes to variety and distinct character using quality materials. Overall reviewing local precedent and responding with a variety of bespoke housetypes over a number of logical character areas is a process which is strongly supported.
g	Central open space and linear park well considered, recreational space has issues as outlined in earlier comments. Garden village open space is compromised by blank garden walls addressing it in some locations. Trees and verges as shown to pedestrian and cycle routes would help create character. <b>Landscape officer to provide further comments</b>
a	Variety of housetypes, character areas, and successful landscaping do support this aim, but there are missed opportunities for placemaking at the commercial/recreational entrance square as outlined previously, and around apartment blocks where shared surfaces, surface material changes, benches, structural landscaping etc could be used to create a public square central to this part of the scheme - this would help create character through social interaction, especially as on key route to school.
g	

## Well defined streets and spaces

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.
A strong framework of connected and well overlooked streets and spaces.
Look beyond the plan and illustrative street scenes; what will you actually see and experience walking along the street?
Perimeter blocks with clearly defined public fronts and private backs.
Active frontages. Front doors, balconies, terraces, front gardens and bay windows are a good way to enliven and add interest to the street and create a more human scale to larger buildings such as apartments and supported living accommodation.
Carefully considered street corners.
Three dimensional models (physical or computer generated) and simple, hand drawn street cross sections can be particularly useful tools to understand and test the spatial qualities of a place.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets with active frontages.
Well defined streets and spaces, using buildings, landscaping and/or water to enclose and define space
Cohesive building compositions and building lines.
Front doors that face streets and public spaces.
Apartments that offer frequent front doors to the street.
Dual aspect homes on street corners with windows serving habitable rooms.
Perimeter blocks.
Well resolved internal vistas.
Building typologies that are designed to straddle narrow depth blocks.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Distributor roads and restricted frontage access.
Broken or fragmented perimeter block structure.
Presenting blank or largely blank elevations to streets and public spaces.
Lack of front boundaries, street planting and trees.
Apartment buildings with single or limited points of access.
Apartment buildings accessed away from the street.
Staggered and haphazard building lines that are often created by placing homes with a mix of front and side parking arrangements next to each other.
Street corners with blank or largely blank sided buildings and/or driveways. Street edges with garages, back garden spaces enclosed by long stretches of fencing or wall.
Buffers between new and existing development that create channels of movement between back gardens whether access is permitted or not.
Single aspect homes on street corners.
Bits of left over land between the blank flank walls of buildings.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91a
National Design Guide: Sections B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

## Officer comments

a	Woodland neighbourhood streets are generally well defined apart from key areas of concern which are NS street lined with FOGs and rear garden walls which also has issues with poorly defined corners, and would generally create a lonely atmosphere in this part of the plan. Timber boundary fences of rear gardens to 'rural lane' would not be acceptable - suggest homes that address the POS or lower level soft landscaping forming boundary and secured in planning condition. FOG located in apartment car park is unfortunate. Terraces and apartments do not take the opportunity to create defined public spaces see previous point about memorable places. There are issues with street corners defined with meaningless green space, kinked rear garden boundaries, or car parking spaces which should be addressed - this is particularly problematic in the 'garden village' area. There are many instances where this is dealt with well, the approach just needs to be consistent. Rural edge is essentially a long block severed occasionally by pedestrian routes which it does not properly address.
a	See above
a	See above
g	
g	
r	No evidence of this - some housetypes do show small windows to side elevations but not evident that these are used to turn corners 'Housing Typology Document' not found - this needs to be addressed (not clear if house type 3B or 3C used in key locations)
a	See above
a	Some views are terminated well with landscaping, principal elevations, or considered corners of buildings. Others are unsuccessful as terminated with blank garden walls, blank gables. Entrance to scheme dominated by parking and commercial units is a missed opportunity. View along eastern edge of woodlands neighbourhood addressing park is successful.
g	Homes along Jack's Lane

## Easy to find your way around

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.
Streets that connect with one another .
Streets that are as straight and as direct as possible.
Use street types, buildings, spaces, non-residential uses, landscape, water and other features to help people create a mental map of a place.
Streets with clearly different characters are more effective than character areas in helping people grasp whether they are on a principal or secondary street.
For larger sites, it will be necessary to use streets and spaces with different characters to help people to find their way around.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing for legibility when creating a concept plan for a place.
Using streets as the main way to help people find their way around a place. For instance, principal streets can be made different to more minor streets through the use of different spatial characteristics, building typologies, building to street relationships, landscape strategies and boundary treatments.
Navigable features for those with visual, mobility or other limitations.
Frame views of features on or beyond a site.
Create new legible elements or features on larger developments – further reinforce legible features where necessary through the landscape strategy, building and layout design, hard landscaping and boundaries.
Simple street patterns based on formal or more relaxed grid patterns.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

No meaningful variation between street types.
Disorientating curvilinear street patterns.
Disconnected streets, paths and routes.
Building typologies, uses, densities, landscaping or other features are not used to create places that are different to one another.
Cul de sac based street patterns

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91b; 127b
National Design Guide: Sections I1; M1; M2; U1
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

### Officer comments

a	Not specifically referenced.
g	Streets do have general hierarchy but issues outlined in 'well defined streets and spaces' section undermine legibility of the place overall. Variety and character of housetypes and landscaping generally aids legibility and distinctive areas.
a	Not referenced specifically
a	Not referenced specifically
a	See above.
g	Street patterns are generally simple and well connected. Extensive private drives/culdesacs will need be clearly demarcated through detailing/layout etc as private to avoid being misunderstood as a through route.

## Streets for All

### Healthy streets

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.
Low-speed streets and neighbourhoods with pedestrian and cycle priority.
The right balance between movement and place functions.
Rethinking the way we distribute street space. At times of more relaxed social distancing, demand for better quality cycle provision is expected to increase as public transport capacity reduces. Congestion caused by motor vehicles will make it unattractive for people to switch from public transport to cars creating a unique opportunity to change the way we move around our cities, towns and villages.
Healthy streets improve people's physical and mental health. Encouraging walking, cycling, outdoor play and streets where it is safe for younger children to cycle (or scooter) to school can create opportunities for social interaction and street life bringing wider social benefits.
Street trees.
Avoid streets that are just designed as routes for motor vehicles to pass through and for cars to park within.
Boulevards and streets with active edges rather than distributor roads and bypasses with no (or limited) frontage access.
Streets that are easy to cross; providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists across junctions and accesses.
Well overlooked streets with front doors facing streets and public spaces.
Provide conditions for cycling appropriate to the speed and volume of motor traffic.
Inclusive design: think about how people with visual, mobility or other limitations will be able to use the street confidently and safely.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets for people.
20mph (or lower) design speeds; 20mph designations.
Tree lined streets. Make sure that trees have sufficient space to grow above and below ground, with long term management arrangements in place.
Tight corner radii (3m or less).
Places to sit, space to chat or play within the street.
Pavements and cycleways that continue across side streets.
Anticipating and responding to pedestrian and cycle desire lines (the most direct routes between the places people will want to travel between).
Landscape layers that add sensory richness to a place – visual, scent and sound (including SUDS)

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Roads for cars.
Failure to adhere to the user hierarchy set out in Manual for Streets.
Wide and sweeping corner radii (6m or more). 6m+ wide carriageways.
Highways engineering details that make pedestrian and cycle movements more complex and difficult.
Street trees conveyed to individual occupiers.
Distributor roads with limited frontage access, served by private drives.
Painted white line cycle routes on pavements or on carriageways.
Speed control measures that rely on significant shifts in street alignment that contribute towards wasting land whilst also creating disorientating places.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91b; 102c and e; 110a-d
National Design Guide: Sections M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual; Landscape and Greenspaces

### Officer comments

g	Generally good measures have been taken to create streets for people including tight corners, pedestrian and cycle lanes, desire lines, raised tables, continuous paths, shared surfaces, hidden parking, low speeds, play on the way, wider connections. Re. shared surface edge lanes: 6m width is only required to enable manoeuvring into car parking spaces, in other locations roads can be narrowed to enable more soft landscaping and reduce vehicle speeds (this must be confirmed with highways officer).
g	Streets should be designated as such
r	Some street trees shown however unclear if they are in private ownership. All street trees must not be conveyed to private ownership to ensure longevity. Must be covered by management company or adopted. Missed opportunity for streets trees along entrance street adjacent to woodland.
g	Highways officer to confirm but there could be improvement in some areas to conform with general principle of minimising corner radii to slow vehicle speeds to create pedestrian friendly streets
a	Benches specified but locations not defined (other than woodland and 'recreational area') good opportunities for play provided including potential LAPS, LEAPS, and play on the way. Confirm LAPS within 100m of homes
a	Achieved in some locations, whereas only indicated in others but needs to be confirmed with raised tables shown or similar more localised solution
g	Routes generally respond to desire lines apart from route around amenity green in commercial area - the desire line is across the green and through the car park - suggest this is reflected in the layout - currently a car friendly space rather than pedestrian. East of woodland neighbourhood: short path connection from turning head/edge lane to woodland path needed.
r	Many homes benefit from aspect over green open space/woodland. Unclear if pedestrianised route to school has any landscaping, currently shown as front gardens which would result in a lack of control of landscape quality along this route - rain garden shown as 'potential' - this would be a good addition if confirmed. Soft landscaping shown to parking courts which is good, but more trees would be beneficial - could be included in soft landscaping zones already shown. Turning arm of turning heads provided for refuse - suggest grasscrete (highways to confirm if acceptable) to reduce visual impact of turning head on open green space. Collection day refuse storage surface to be grasscrete or similar to reduce visual impact. Biggest issue is lack of structural landscaping to secondary streets - this could easily be resolved by reducing size of front gardens to provide managed verge with soft landscaping and tree planting.



## Cycle and car parking

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.
Provide secure cycle storage close to people's front doors so that cycles are as convenient to choose as a car for short trips.
Integration of car parking into the street environment.
Anticipate realistic levels of car parking demand, guarding against displaced and anti-social parking; thinking about the availability and frequency of public transport
Avoid confusing car ownership with car usage.
Creative solutions for attractive, convenient and safe cycle parking or higher density developments (such as apartment buildings).
Generous landscaping to settle frontage car parking into the street.
Shared and unallocated parking.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

At least storage for one cycle where it is as easy to access as the car.
Secure and overlooked cycle parking that is as close to (if not closer) than car parking spaces (or car drop off bays) to the entrances of schools, shops and other services and facilities.
Shared and unallocated on street car parking. Landscaping to help settle parked cars into the street.
Frontage parking where the space equivalent to a parking space is given over to green relief every four bays or so.
Anticipating and designing out (or controlling) anti-social car parking.
A range of parking solutions.
Small and overlooked parking courtyards, with properties within courtyard spaces with ground floor habitable rooms.
Staying up to date with rapidly advancing electric car technology.
<b>More creative cycle and car parking solutions.</b>

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Providing all cycle storage in garages and sheds.
Over reliance on integral garages with frontage driveways.
Frontage car parking with little or no softening landscaping.
Parking courtyards enclosed by fencing; poorly overlooked, poorly lit and poorly detailed.
Over-reliance on tandem parking arrangements.
Failing to anticipate and respond to displaced and other anti-social parking
Views along streets that are dominated by parked cars, driveways or garages.
Car parking spaces that are too narrow making it difficult for people to use them.
Cycle parking that is located further away to the entrances to shops, schools and other facilities than car parking spaces and car drop off bays.
Relying on garages being used for everyday car parking.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 101e; 127f; 105d
National Design Guide: Sections B2; M1; M3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

### Officer comments

r	Could not find specification/location of cycle storage
r	Could not find specification/location of cycle storage
a	Some houses have 3 parking spaces facing the public realm which is undesirable as creates wide gaps between houses degrading street scene and creates car domination. Could 4 spaces at entry pinchpoint align with house in this location and be tucked behind landscaping. Would suggest that visitor parking shown in apartment car park is not placed in an intuitive location, this may be better on the NS street in a parallel arrangement as elsewhere as this would also reduce anti-social parking pressure (highways to confirm) this also create an opportunity to include a green verge to liven this otherwise fairly inactive street. Visitor car parking to be hidden with soft landscaping as far as possible.
a	This rule is generally adhered to but needs reviewing in some areas particularly the area currently shown as affordable.
a	Low-timber bollards specified to 'linear park' are supported. Rear parked homes whilst creating pleasant pedestrianised route create problems with anti-social parking. NS route through 'woodland neighbourhood' would need strong anti-social parking controls due to high level of rear parked homes - applicant to make proposals.
g	
a	Rear courts are overlooked by FOGs but not ground floor rooms. It is recognised that the rear parking courts create pedestrianised frontages to the school route but the courts rely on FOGs which deaden the street scene, and some surrounding streets are defined by FOGs, parking, and rear garden walls. Rear parking courts also create anti-social parking problems see point above. Rear parking courts also tend to be wasteful of space as two movement corridors are required per run of houses rather than one. On balance the benefits of the rear parking courts don't appear to outweigh the disbenefits and conventional streets could enable better placemaking.
a	Electric vehicle charging included for all dwellings but more technical detail required particularly in relation to on-street and rear parking courts.
a	Standard approaches shown

## Green and blue infrastructure

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Creative surface water management such as rills, brooks and ponds enrich the public realm and help improve a sense of wellbeing and offer an interaction with nature. As the richest habitat for a range of flora and fauna, they are also a key play in achieving the net gain in biodiversity sought by the 2020 Environment Bill.
Create a strong landscape strategy that has impact from day one. Don't layer landscape onto a scheme at the end of the process. Landscape changes can offer opportunities to reintroduce lost habitats and species.
Create a network of different types of spaces.
Weave opportunities for habitat creation throughout the development. Plan these as movement corridors to support biodiversity.
Create food growing opportunities such as allotments and orchards on larger developments.
Have a sustainable drainage treatment train thinking about the four pillars. Capture water as close as possible to where it falls. Be creative with rain gardens, ponds and swales and avoid steeply sided or fenced holes in the ground.
Well-designed multi-functional sustainable drainage will incorporate play and recreational opportunities.
Well-overlooked public open spaces with strong levels of natural surveillance.
Robust management and long term stewardship

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Biodiversity net gain.
Movement and feeding corridors for wildlife, such as hedgehog highways. Bird boxes, swift nesting bricks and bat bricks may be appropriate.
Plans that identify the character of new spaces, such as parks, woodland, allotments, wildflower meadows rather than P.O.S. Be more specific about the function and character of public open spaces.
Create Park Run ready routes on larger developments and other ways to encourage physical activity and social interaction.
Capturing and managing water creatively and close to where it falls using features such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces. Allow people to connect with water.
Create a habitat network providing residents with opportunities to interact with nature on a day to day basis. Wildlife does not flourish within disconnected back gardens, artificial lawns and tightly mown grass.
Provide natural surveillance opportunities.
A connected and accessible network of public open spaces with paths and other routes into and through.
Sports and play facilities
Well considered management arrangements whether public or privately managed.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Surface water management by way of a large, steep sided and fenced holes in the ground.
Small pieces of land (typically grassed over) that offer little or no public, private or biodiversity value that over time become neglected and forgotten.
Large expanses of impervious surfaces.
Not designing paths and routes through open spaces where it is difficult for people to create distance between themselves and other people when social distancing restrictions are in place.
Buildings that turn away from open spaces.
Poor quality finishing, detailing and maintenance

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174
National Design Guide: Sections C1; B3; M1; N1; N2; N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Flood Management; Landscape and Greenspace

### Officer comments

	Landscape officer to comment - plans appear to have good potential to achieve this
	Landscape officer to comment - again plans do appear to have good potential to achieve this
g	Community allotments shown as hard-standing on coloured masterplan please confirm treatment specified here. Overall public open spaces have individual, considered, and appropriate characters/functions
	Landscape officer to comment - 2 laps of SANG route would technically enable Park Run ready 5km route depending on suitable running surface
	Landscape officer to comment - SUDs are shown as dry ponds also functioning as public open space which is potentially a good approach but the technical detail of how this would work needs to be secured in the planning permission.
	Landscape officer to comment - would suggest more habitat and vegetation secured within street network with managed/planted verges and ensure private front gardens are not solely relied upon for street greenery
g	Notwithstanding previous points about lack of active frontages in some areas
g	
g	Facilities appear to have potential to be in accordance with Fields in Trust guidance pending confirmation of LAP locations
a	Adopted/private/managed plan not found

## Back of pavement, front of home

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of a place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.
Clearly define private spaces through strong boundary treatments.
Manage changes in level in a way that does not compromise the qualities of the street.
Design the space between the back of the pavement and building façades carefully to integrate services, waste storage and utilities cabinets (meter boxes) so their impact is reduced.
Avoid pieces of leftover land that serve no useful public or private function. Homes with shallow street backs need careful thought as it is not uncommon to see these spaces poorly resolved with small pieces of grass turf or gravel.
Outdoor amenity space for apartment buildings, such as a balcony for relaxing or the drying of clothes.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Defensible space and strong boundary treatments.
Boundary treatments that add ecological value and/or reinforce distinctive local characteristics.
Well integrated waste storage and utility boxes. If relying on rear garden storage solutions for terraces and townhouses, provide direct access to these from the street.
Front garden spaces that create opportunities for social interaction.
Ground floor apartments with their own front doors and semi-private amenity spaces help to enliven the street whilst also reducing the amount of people using communal areas.
Consider providing terraces or balconies to above ground floor apartments – these can also help to enliven the street, increase natural surveillance and provide residents with access to the open air.
No left over spaces with no clear public or private function.
Consider apartment buildings whose access is from a deck rather, than a corridor, enabling cross ventilation of apartments while limiting shared common parts which are enclosed.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Poorly considered spaces between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings that erode the quality of the street environment.
Narrow and small grass frontage strips for space between the back of the street and the façades of buildings that are impractical to maintain.
Waste storage solutions for terraced homes that rely on residents storing bins and crates in rear garden spaces and instead often sees bins and crates placed next to front doors.
Slab on edge.
Concrete screed with pebbles.
Prominent external pipes, flues and utility boxes.
Pieces of left over land between or to the side of buildings with no clear public or private function.
Poorly resolved changes in level.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: 127a-b; d; f
National Design Guide: Sections M3; H3; L3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Architectural Details; Layout Details

## Officer comments

r	In some locations homes are accessed via parking spaces which is not an ideal arrangement - e.g. if parking is uncontrolled anti-social parking could result in restricted access. Unclear exactly where boundary lies between private space and managed/adopted space - suggest reducing some front gardens to enable managed verges which can have soft landscaping secured in perpetuity. Boundary treatments to front gardens require further specification and specific locations shown. Picket fence considered not suitable character for Uttlesford nor for contemporary housetypes shown, timber post and rail fence considered not suitable for smaller front gardens and tighter streets. Suggest hedges, brick walls, low fences, estate fencing or similar varied and appropriate to street type, house type, and character area and defined per character area
r	Close-boarded timber fence will not be acceptable to any rear garden boundary addressing public realm. Particularly problematic at Smiths Green properties which back onto POS. Also shown in various other locations which would be highly detrimental to streetscape.
r	Locations of meter boxes not demonstrated, although noted that flues will exit through front elevations for some housetypes which is not acceptable. Meter box locations will need to be demonstrated and should not be on principle elevations. Details required for external bin store shown in parking court (south western corner).
a	No detail to demonstrate that front gardens would be used to sit out, or grow vegetables or similar function that would encourage people to socialise with their neighbours whilst using their front gardens. Opportunity is there however.
g	Ground floor apartments do not have their own ground floor entrances to the street however access strategy is acceptable and brick boundary treatment to apartment amenity is strong and would encourage use of this outdoor amenity and therefore socialisation with street users
g	Provided.
a	Some areas of 'no mans land' on western boundary which require resolution. See also point above about managed/adopted spaces. Many corners are green spaces that are left over with no clear function because corner not formed with building this is prevalent in the garden village area.
g	Apartments are well accessed.

**Table 1: Fields in Trust recommended benchmark guidelines – formal outdoor space**

Open space typology	QUANTITY GUIDELINE <sup>2</sup> (hectares per 1,000 population)	WALKING GUIDELINE (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards.</li> <li>* Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.</li> <li>* Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.</li> <li>* Appropriately landscaped.</li> <li>* Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.</li> <li>* Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.</li> <li>* Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.</li> <li>* Provision of footpaths.</li> <li>* Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</li> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for playing pitches, taking into account the level of play, topography, necessary safety margins and optimal orientation<sup>3</sup>.</li> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using the <a href="#">Play England Quality Tool</a>.</li> </ul>
All outdoor sports <sup>1</sup>	1.60	1,200m	
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 See <a href="#">table 4</a> for recommended minimum sizes	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m	
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m	

**Table 2: Recommended Application of Quantity Benchmark Guidelines – Equipped/Designated Play Space**

Scale of Development	Local Area for Play (LAP)	Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
5-10 dwellings	✓			
1-200 dwellings	✓	✓		Contribution
201-500 dwellings	✓	✓	Contribution	✓
501+ dwellings	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Table 3: Fields in Trust Recommended Benchmark Guidelines –**

**Table 3: Fields in Trust Recommended Benchmark Guidelines -**

## Informal Outdoor Space

Open Space Typology	QUANTITY GUIDELINE <sup>3</sup> (hectares per 1,000 population)	WALKING GUIDELINE (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Parks and Gardens	0.80	710m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Parks to be of Green Flag status.</li> <li>* Appropriately landscaped.</li> <li>* Positive management.</li> <li>* Provision of footpaths.</li> <li>* Fields in Trust protection.</li> <li>* Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</li> </ul>
Amenity Green Space	0.60	480m	
Natural and Semi-Natural	1.80	720m	

**Table 4: Recommended minimum sizes - formal outdoor space**

Open space typology	Minimum sizes		Minimum dimensions	Buffer zones	
Playing pitches	<u>Association football</u>			-	
	Adult soccer	0.74ha	106 x 70 metres		
	Mini soccer U7/U8 pitch	0.14ha	43 x 33 metres		
	Mini soccer U9/U10 pitch	0.25ha	60 x 42 metres		
	<u>Rugby Union</u>		0.70ha	100 x 70 metres	-
	<u>Hockey</u>				-
	Mini Hockey	0.31ha	65 x 48 metres		
	<u>Lacrosse</u>		0.66ha	100 x 60 metres	-
	<u>Cricket</u>			-	
	Senior recreational 12 pitch	1.43ha	111.56 x 128.04 metres		
Other outdoor (non-pitch) sports	<u>Athletics</u>			-	
	6 lane track	1.51ha	172.03 x 87.64 metres		
	<u>Tennis courts</u>				-
	1 recreational court	0.06ha	34.75 x 17.07 metres		
	2 recreational courts For each adjacent court	0.11ha 0.05ha	34.75 x 31.70 metres 34.75 x 14.63 metres		
	<u>Bowling greens</u>			-	
	Flat green	0.12ha	34.4 x 34.4 metres		
	Crown green	0.08ha	27.4 x 27.4 metres		
Equipped/designated	<u>LAP</u>	0.01ha	10 x 10 metres (minimum activity zone of 100sqm)	5m min separation between activity zone and nearest property containing a dwelling	
	<u>LEAP</u>	0.04ha	20 x 20 metres (minimum activity zone of 400sqm)	20m min separation between activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings	

play areas	<u>NEAP</u>	0.1ha	<b>31.6 x 31.6 metres</b> <i>(minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures &amp; a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football))</i>	<b>30m</b> min separation between activity zone and the boundary of the nearest property containing a dwelling
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	<u>MUGA</u>	0.1ha	<b>40 x 20 metres</b>	<b>30m</b> min separation between activity zone and the boundary of the nearest property containing a dwelling

## **Appendix C – Extract of Housing Delivery Test Scores - 2023**

***Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement***

**Local Planning Authorities**

ONS Code	Area Name	Number of homes required			Total number of homes required	Number of homes delivered			Total number of homes delivered	Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement	Housing Delivery Test: 2023 consequence
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23			
E07000077	Uttlesford	470	700	692	1862	340	208	301	849	46%	Presumption