



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Felsted & Stebbing Ward

District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans



DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: JULY 2022

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

Our report this month is quite brief and there is nothing specific to draw to your attention relating to Felsted Parish alone, as the matters of interest are we consider of a district wide nature/relevance.

PLANNING AND THE LOCAL PLAN - TIMETABLE

We have been providing further information to you as it evolves regarding progress towards making the Local Plan and associated timetables. An extension of the timetable has proved to be needed, which results from an opportunity for a significant site to be considered, over and above those sites originally submitted in the Call for Sites process, prior to commencement of the Regulation 18 consultation exercise, which will be to enable representations to be made on preferred spatial options and draft policies. The Chief Executive of UDC has written to your Clerk describing the revisions necessary, which for convenience are set out again here:

Update on revised Local Plan timetable after recent pause

key milestones:	Previous timetable:	Revised timetable:
• commence Regulation 18 consultation	May 2022	November 2022
• commence Regulation 19 publication period	March 2023	November 2023
• submit Local Plan for public examination (circa 12 months, outside our control)	Sept 2023	April 2024
• Adopt Local Plan	July 2024	April 2025

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A detailed explanation was also provided by him in his communication.

If Members or residents would like to ask questions about this or any other local plan related topics, we would be pleased to answer them at your meeting and/or separately in correspondence.

Up to date information, in bite size chunks, will be available via the local plan news site to which we encourage Members and residents to subscribe via:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/Local-Plan-News>

The formalities of making representations at the Regulations 18 and 19 stages are proscribed by legislation and regulations thereunder but UDC may seek to extend the means of response, in addition thereto, to digital means using smart phone technologies. This might result in greater engagement by younger community members than would otherwise be the case and it needs to be remembered of course that as the new Local Plan will be in place until 2040, the input of such members should be secured as well as that from older residents who are perhaps more accustomed than the younger generation in having their voices heard in topics such as this.

CENSUS 2011 – 2021

The social historians among us will have been anxiously awaiting the publication of the Census 10 days or so ago! Others of us will have been very interested to understand the population and housing changes affecting our own area which the Census reveals and the links to it as it relates to Uttlesford are to be found in the link below.

It is noteworthy that population growth in Uttlesford was highest in the East of England at **8.3%** (compared to 6.6% nationally). Uttlesford's population grew from 79,440 in 2011 to 91,300 in 2021 while there were some 31,000 households in Uttlesford in 2011 which had increased by some 6,000 in 2021. The increase in households in the period is **18.2%**, greater than any other district in the country other than London Borough of Tower Hamlets, occasioned by redevelopment post Olympics 2012. It is not a surprise to learn of these statistics given the explosion in house building and consequent arrival of residents arriving in our parishes across the District.

There is a very helpful interactive summary of change in population in each district across UK from Census 2021 and if an entry of "Uttlesford" is made, the data is tailored for the reader.

The data obtained through the following links will be of interest to many:

[Census 2021 - Uttlesford District Council](#)

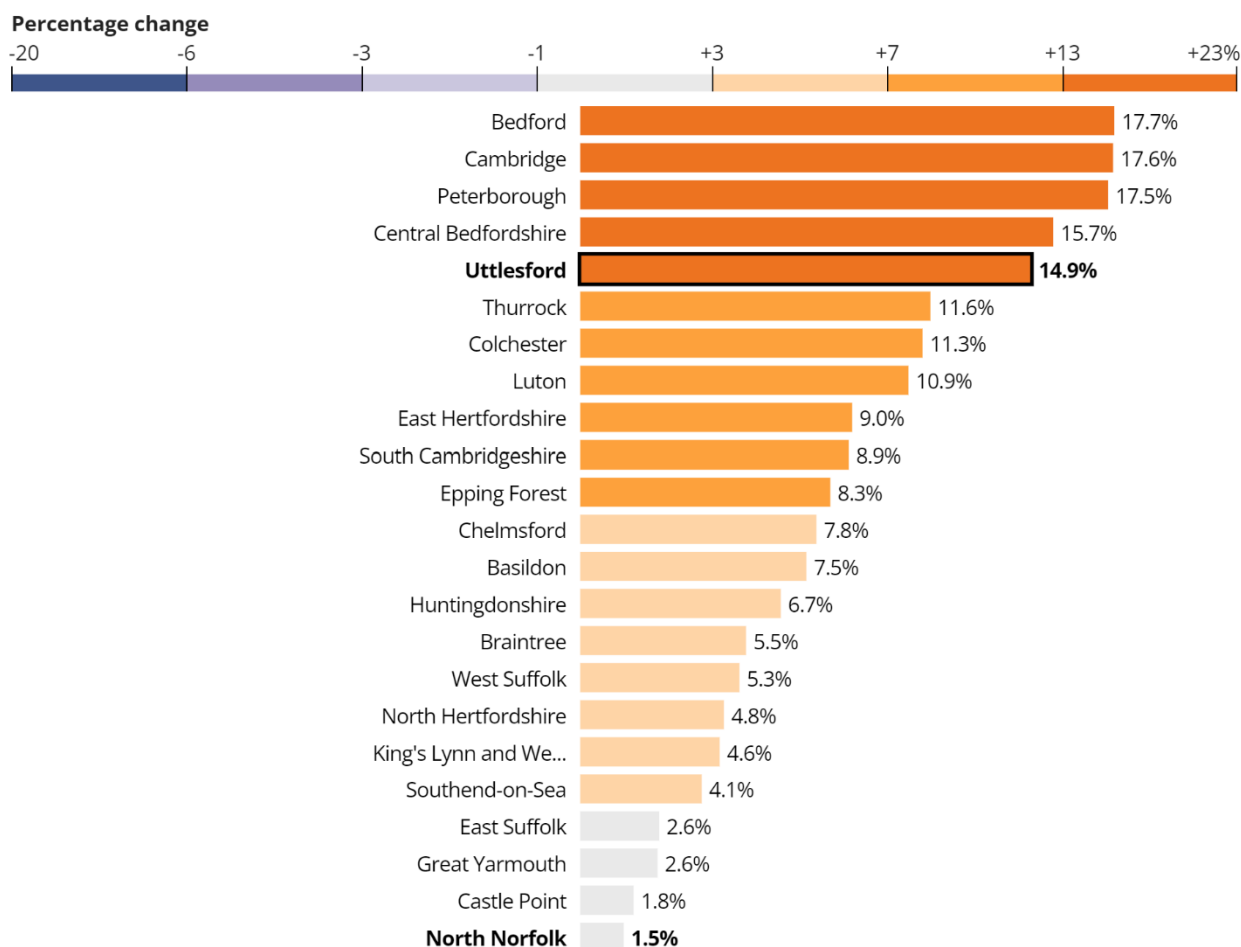
[How the population changed in Uttlesford, Census 2021 - ONS](#)

The Planning Performance Guidance requires the 2014 population projections to be used when assessing housing need, but these have proved to be inaccurate in some areas. Our district growth is larger than predicted, perhaps attributable to some residents choosing to move to Uttlesford because of lower house prices than in north and east London. All these matters will be looked at in the context of demographics for the local plan evidence base. This image gives an illuminating overview of population growth in our region:

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Population change of selected local authority areas in the East of England between 2011 and 2021



STANSTED AIRPORT PLANNING APPEAL COSTS

We have commented on several occasions at the disappointment experienced when UDC were unsuccessful in resisting the planning application by Stansted Airport Ltd to increase their taxiway capacity so as to allow an increase in aircraft movements permitting passenger throughput potentially to increase to 43 million pa. Attempts to resist the proposals to take into account increased noise, carbon emissions and climate change arguments were rejected by the Planning Inspectors on the grounds of non-compliance with Government policy which permitted the aviation sector to increase their capacity by making “best use” of the facilities and infrastructure already in place. This extended thus to permitted increase of taxi and access ways rather than additional runway capacity as such.

So, very regrettably, this unsuccessful challenge before the Planning Inspectors and in the Planning Court has come with a large legal bill to be borne by UDC. Following submission of particulars of those costs by Stansted Airport Limited, a decision was taken by Council on 15 June 2022 to offer the sum of £ 1.4m in

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settlement thereof, and it remains to be seen whether that offer will be accepted. In addition, UDC incurred costs on their side also which amounted to something in the region of £ 1.1m.

The background to the liability for costs is set out in the papers brought to Council and appears here:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=159&MIId=6010>

PERSONNEL CHANGES AT UDC

We do not usually make mention of personnel changes at UDC, but did so in the case of the new Chief Executive, Mr Peter Holt, who joined the Council early last Autumn and whom several of you have met in person. His recruitment has we think been universally and positively recognised. It is now worth adding to that the significant appointment as Head of Planning, made at Director level, of Mr Dean Hermitage, who joined UDC on 29 June 2022.

He comes with considerable experience of both local and central government policy making and also development practice, having in the immediate past been Deputy Director of Planning at the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities, where he was involved in providing advice to the Secretary of State and other Ministers and contributing to planning reform. At a practical level, he was prior to that Head of Development Management and Enforcement at London Borough of Haringey. He is a “local and Essex man”, living in Chelmsford and spent the early part of his professional career at Southend Borough Council.

There are important challenges facing the District in way of making the Local Plan and strong leadership and management are also required in the discharge of the many different functions required to be discharged within the Planning Department as well as due support to be provided to the Planning Committee. We are optimistic that the new appointment will lead to an improvement in the planning function generally for the benefit of residents in the District.

STEBBING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

We have mentioned previously that work on the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan has been progressing for quite some time - John is incidentally the Chairman of its Steering Group. It proceeded to referendum on 23 June 2022 and an exceptionally high voter turn-out of 48 % was recorded with a majority of 97% returned in favour of the question put (ie should the Neighbourhood Plan become part of the development plan for the District). This outcome is particularly pleasing and the Plan will go forward to Full Council of UDC on 19 July 2022, thereafter becoming the fifth Neighbourhood Plan in the District to be made.

OUR ASSISTANCE AND MEMBERS' INITIATIVE

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

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

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