

**Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Examination**  
**Inspector Louise Crosby MA MRTPI**  
**Inspector Elaine Worthington BA (Hons) MT MUED MRTPI**

---

**Programme Officer:** Louise St John Howe  
PO Services, PO Box 10965,  
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 3BY,  
email: [louise@poservices.co.uk](mailto:louise@poservices.co.uk):  
Tel: 07789-486419

11 June 2019

Mr. Stephen Miles  
Planning Policy Team Leader  
Uttlesford District Council  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
Essex CB11 4ER

Dear Mr. Miles,

Following the local elections in May 2019, we are aware that most of the elected Councillors, including the Leader of the Council, are described as 'Residents for Uttlesford' on the Council's website.

The Local Plan currently being examined was submitted for examination on 18 January 2019, by a previous administration. We note that a local organisation called 'Residents for Uttlesford' made representations about the plan and have requested to speak at most forthcoming hearing sessions.

'Residents for Uttlesford's' representations raised several significant concerns about the plan. These include, a detailed objection to the sustainability appraisal. Other representations say that the plan is not justified or effective and is unsound in relation to the delivery of infrastructure, lack of provision of green infrastructure, lack of economic strategy, the lack of cognisance of the Stansted Airport Expansion, lack of financial modelling for the new settlements, lack of evidence to support the spatial strategy, inadequate transport study, missing air quality assessment, objection to a site in Saffron Walden and conflict with the NPPF on a number of counts.

These are fundamental objections that go to the heart of the Plan's strategy and which question whether the plan is supported by an adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence base.

At the hearing sessions we will seek clarification from those speaking for 'Residents for Uttlesford' about whether they are representing the Council or a local community group. Also, if any Councillors for 'Residents for Uttlesford' are appearing we will ask if they are speaking as representatives of the Council or otherwise.

As you will know the Act requires the Council to submit a plan which it thinks is ready for examination. The clear implication of this is that the LPA should only submit a plan it considers to be sound. The role of the Inspectors is to assess whether that plan is sound and, if requested by the LPA, to recommend any changes (main modifications) necessary to make that plan sound if. There is no other way in which a submitted plan can be changed. Consequently, the expectation is that the Council will go into the examination supporting the plan it has submitted. The examination is not intended to allow a LPA to initiate major changes to its own plan or to finalise its preparation.

This is set out in the Procedural Practice as follows:

*'there is a very strong expectation that further LPA-led changes will not be necessary, and this is a key premise for delivering an efficient examination timetable. Provision for changes after the submission is to cater for the unexpected. It is not intended to allow the LPA to complete or finalise the preparation of the plan. Main modifications after submission will only be considered where they are necessary to make the plans sound and/or legally compliant... This also applies to any changes of approach to policy (including site allocation) instigated by a LPA' (paragraph 1.3)*

*'.. a LPA's change of approach could not be accommodated unless the policy/site as submitted is, in the Inspector's view, unsound or not legally compliant and the proposed change initiated by the LPA would make the plan sound/legally compliant' (paragraph 5.20)*

It is important to note that at this early stage of the examination we have not reached any conclusions on whether the plan is sound or whether any main modifications might be required. Accordingly, it is not possible for us to say now whether, or not, we agree with any of the concerns about the soundness of the plan which have been raised by 'Residents for Uttlesford'. Given the plan cannot be changed unless we find some aspect of it unsound, there is no certainty that changes suggested by any party, including the LPA, could be recommended by us.

Consequently, at the start of the first hearing session, we will ask the Council to confirm whether it continues to think that it has submitted a plan which is sound and ready for examination and therefore, whether it still supports it. Alternatively, if the Council no longer supports key

aspects of the plan it has submitted, the appropriate action would be to consider withdrawing that plan from examination.

We would be grateful if the Council could confirm its position in writing by no later than by the close of play on 27 June so that the Inspectors and all participants are aware of the Council's stance.

Louise Crosby and Elaine Worthington

Examining Inspectors