PAS Workshop 14.02.2023
Design and the LURB

Uttlesford Design Code

Pathfinder Programme
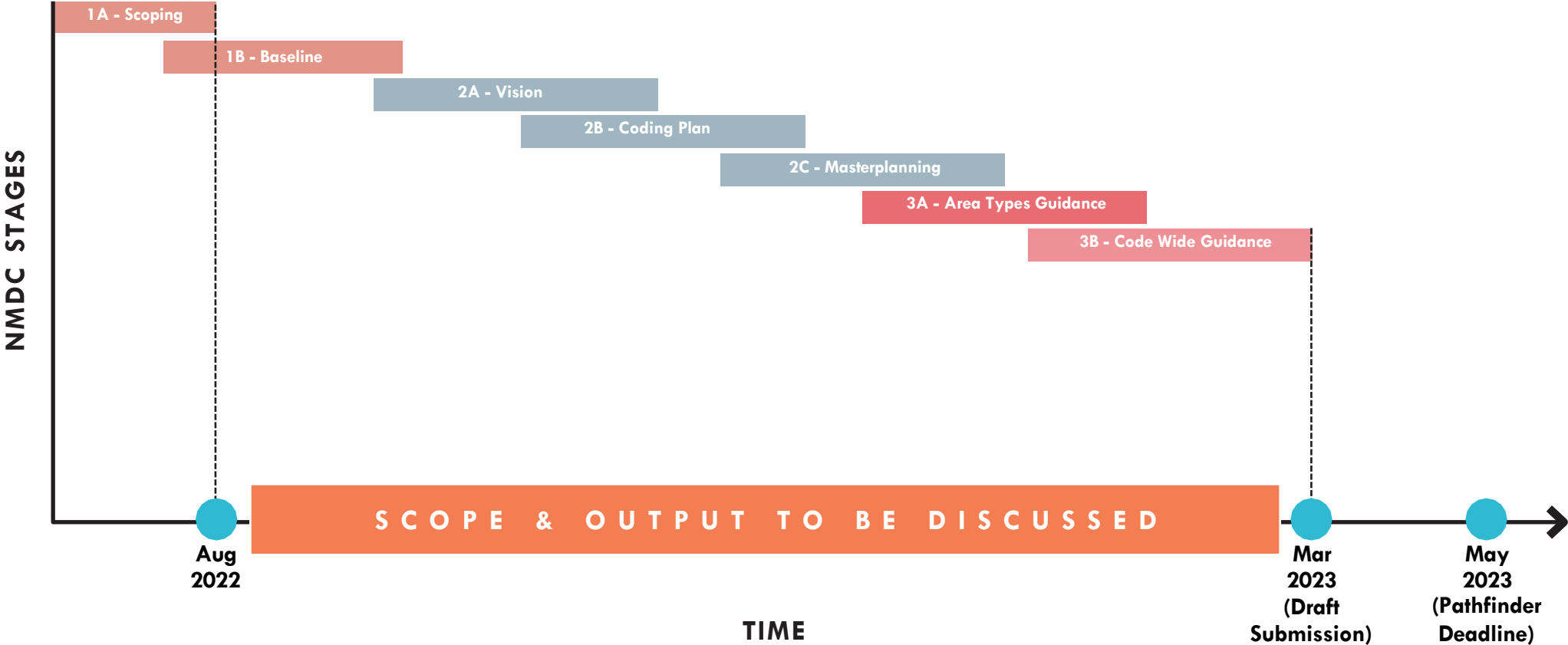
Section 1
Overview and Process

1. Overview and Process

NMDC Programme

NMDC STAGES

- 1A - Scoping
- 1B - Baseline
- 2A - Vision
- 2B - Coding Plan
- 2C - Masterplanning
- 3A - Area Types Guidance
- 3B - Code Wide Guidance

SCOPE & OUTPUT TO BE DISCUSSED

Aug 2022

Mar 2023 (Draft Submission)

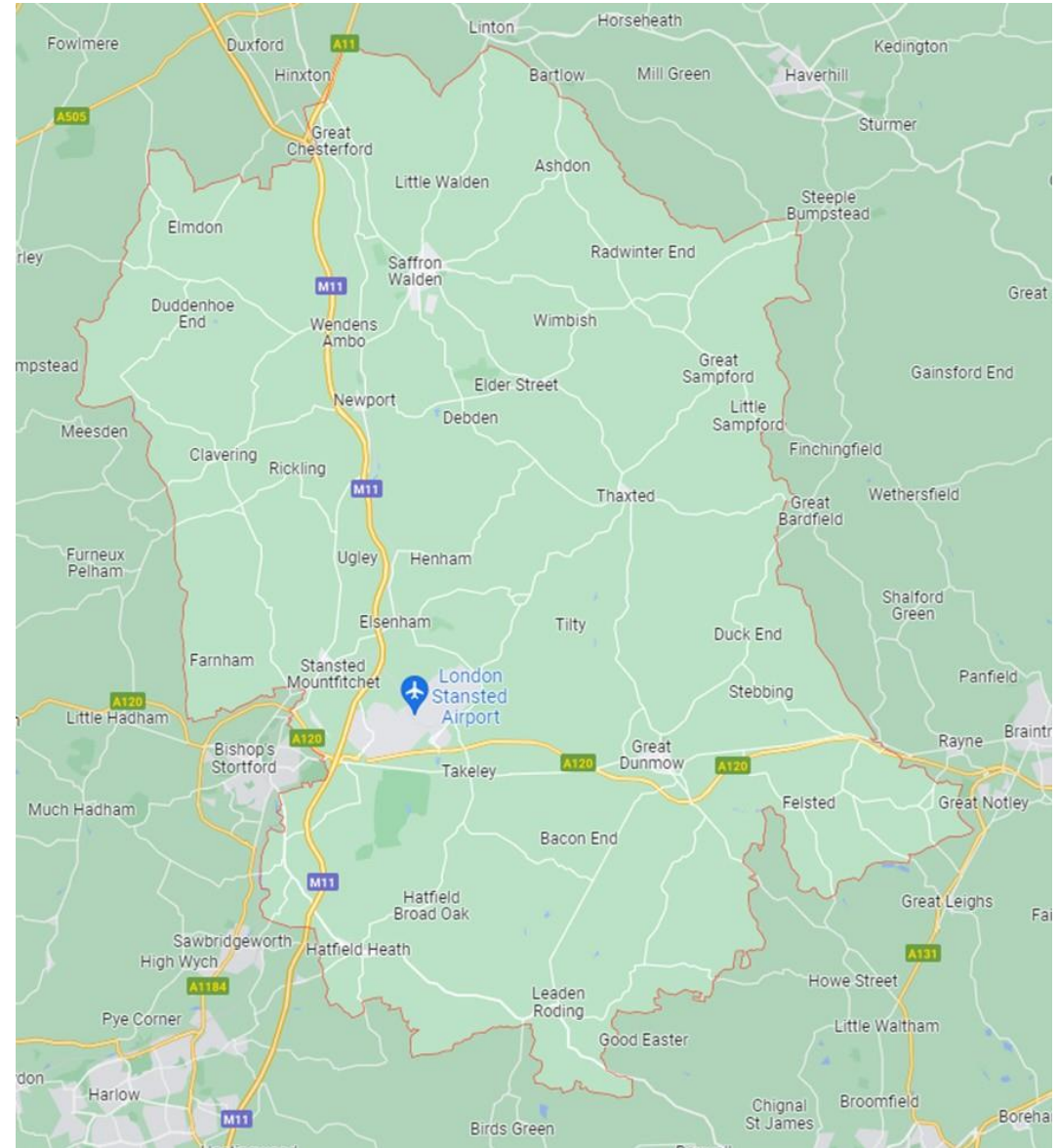May 2023 (Pathfinder Deadline)

TIME

1. Overview and Process

Authority Overview:

- Uttlesford is a large rural District in northwest Essex
- The district has a total population of 85,100 people.
- The two major settlements, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, are market towns with town centres providing a range of services to an extensive rural catchment area.
- Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted are larger villages that provide local centres.
- There are many smaller villages and hamlets scattered across the district that mainly provide services for their local communities.
- About 70% of the district's population live in the villages and countryside outside Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.
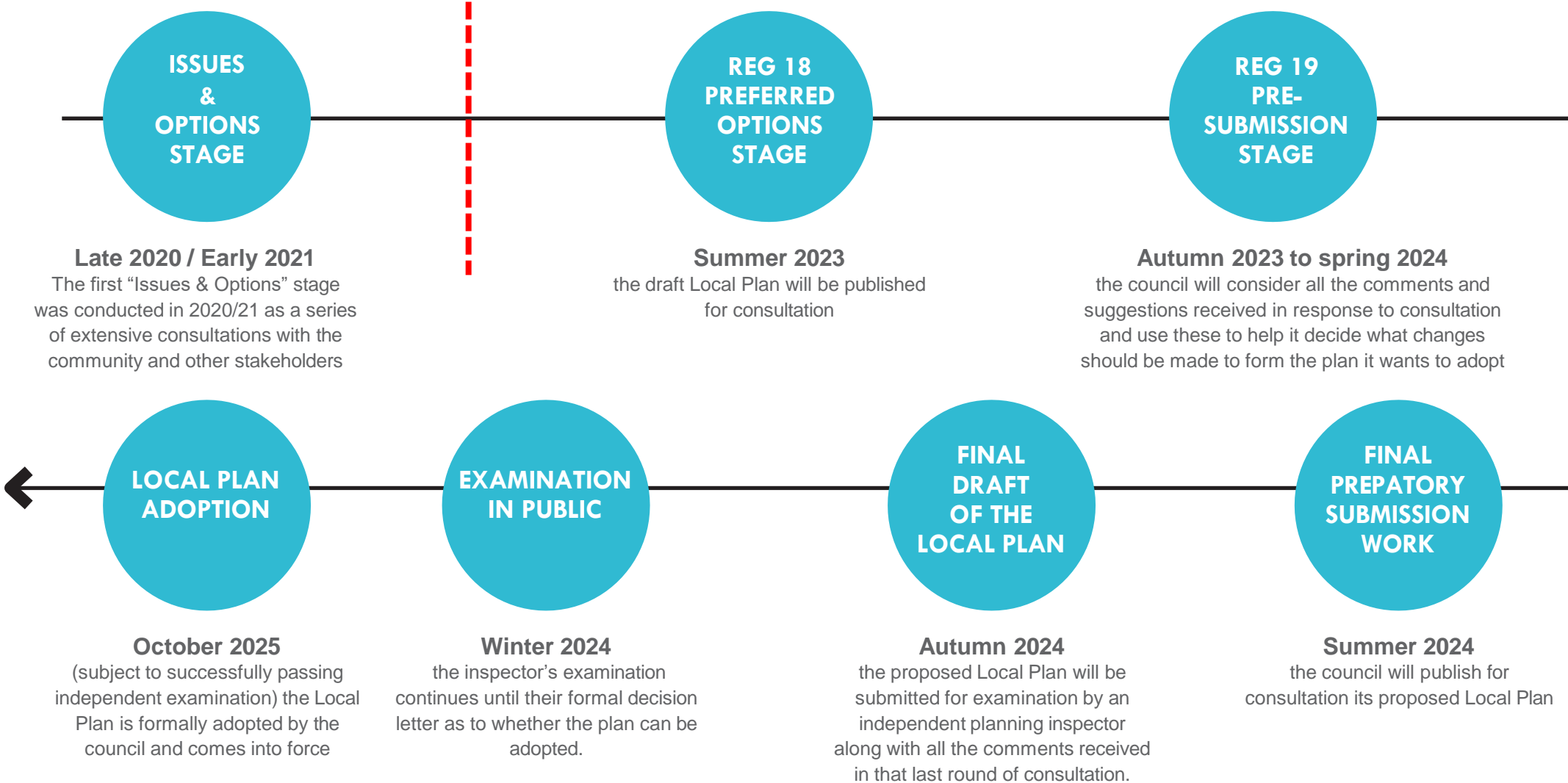
- The quality of the cultural heritage in the district is high
- It has a significant proportion of ancient woodland including the Hatfield Forest which is an important remnant of a medieval forest.
- The district has two National Nature Reserves, 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 281 Local Wildlife Sites as well as more than 100 designated Special Roadside Verges which are important for their ecological value.

1. Overview and Process

Local Plan timings and programme

UTTLESFORD DESIGN CODE

ISSUES & OPTIONS STAGE

Late 2020 / Early 2021
The first "Issues & Options" stage was conducted in 2020/21 as a series of extensive consultations with the community and other stakeholders

REG 18 PREFERRED OPTIONS STAGE

Summer 2023
the draft Local Plan will be published for consultation

REG 19 PRE-SUBMISSION STAGE

Autumn 2023 to spring 2024
the council will consider all the comments and suggestions received in response to consultation and use these to help it decide what changes should be made to form the plan it wants to adopt

LOCAL PLAN ADOPTION

October 2025
(subject to successfully passing independent examination) the Local Plan is formally adopted by the council and comes into force

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Winter 2024
the inspector's examination continues until their formal decision letter as to whether the plan can be adopted.

FINAL DRAFT OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Autumn 2024
the proposed Local Plan will be submitted for examination by an independent planning inspector along with all the comments received in that last round of consultation.

FINAL PREPATORY SUBMISSION WORK

Summer 2024
the council will publish for consultation its proposed Local Plan

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Uttlesford Local Plan (2005)
        │
        ▼
District-Wide Design Code  ──►  | Area Specific   | Village        | Neighbourhood Plan |
                                | Design Codes    | Design Codes   | Design Codes       |

New Local Plan  (2025)

Strategic Spatial SPD

Masterplan SPD's / Development Briefs

| Existing Settlement | New Community 1 |
| Existing Settlement | New Community 2 |
| Existing Settlement | Potential additional site SPD's |  ──►  | Planning      | Detailed       | Reserved Matters        |
| Existing Settlement |                                          | Applications  | Design Codes   | Planning Applications   |
| Existing Settlement |
```

1. Overview and Process

Summary of key challenges

Policy Challenges

- Lack of existing policy for officers to use (current local plan was adopted in 2005) no Open Space Standards, Nationally Described Space Standards not adopted, high parking requirements above county policy etc
- Local authority currently in special measures
- Challenge of speculative applications which are approved through appeal
- Lack of infrastructure and spatial strategy
- Uttlesford has declared a Climate Emergency
- Local Election May 2023
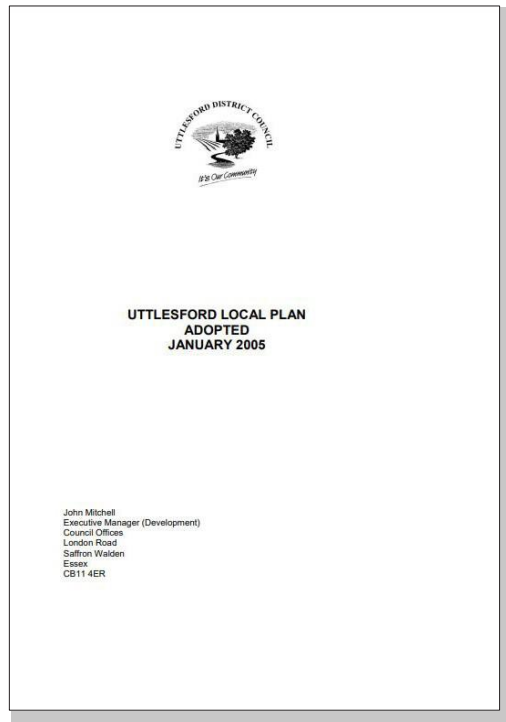
What 'green' looks like

✓ 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, urban 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'[12] 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).

[12] These are water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity.

🚶 green = go ahead

What 'red' looks like

✗ 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.

🚶 red = stop & rethink

1. Overview and Process

Summary of key challenges

Policy Challenges

- Lack of existing policy for officers to use (current local plan was adopted in 2005, no Open Space Standards, Nationally Described Space Standards not adopted, high parking requirements above county policy etc
- No demonstratable 5 year housing supply
- Local authority currently in special measures
- Challenge of speculative applications which are approved through appeal
- Lack of infrastructure and spatial strategy
- No specific SPD or Policy promoting sustainable design, which is not covered by BfHL 12. Uttlesford has declared Climate Emergency.

Implementation Challenges

- Lack of local policy hooks to provide weight to design code
- No spatial strategy or draft spatial strategy to enable site specific design coding
- Resource challenges and lack of design training within development management
- Lack of community support for development - oppostition to principle of growth in addition to concern regarding developments which have been delivered

Design Challenges

- Difficult to encourage volume housebuilders / developers to deviate from standard house-types or include details more specific to Uttlesford
- Un-planned growth not delivering the required infrastructure or any community facilities
- Lack of distinctive character of developments
- Overall aspiration for the district is too low
- Open spaces and landscape - lack of useable high quality open spaces, lack of surveillance, lack of use of native species, poorly located
- Car-dominated with poor pedestrian and cycling routes and integration into the wider area
- Developments are typically not of a scale or volume to accommodate a mix of uses - sprawling low-density
- Developments are not future-proofed for growth or changes to travel patterns
- Stansted Airport

Overall engagement strategy

- Reach a representative cross section of the district through offering a variety of ways (online and in person) to engage

- Website to host public surveys alongside clear information, including instructive videos uttlesforddesigncode.co.uk

- Build mailing list of interested participants

- Follow the NMDC staged process, incorporating feedback loops, bringing community on the journey

- Visit town /village centres (high streets, market places) to go to people who might not normally engage

- Use coach and walking tours to introduce people to high quality more modern developments

- Use workshop settings for more in-depth round-table discussion

- Use online public meetings to overcome challenges of people spread across a large district attending an in-person meeting

Challenges

Some aspects of coding and process very technical

Efficient way of reaching wide geographic area with low-density population

Unable to erect pop-up stalls on high streets or outside commuter train stations (used markets instead)

Consultation fatigue following (Neighbourhood Plan, Local Plan)

Strong opposition to new development in this rural district

Low numbers from Community Stakeholder Forum (inherited from Local Plan) as core steering group – meetings have now been opened up to all

Process to date

Followed NMDC stages

Step 1: Baseline – What makes Uttlesford unique?
Website & online survey 1 (from August); walkabouts (Aug); Pop-ups (Oct)

Step 2: Vision
Coach tour; Workshop & drop-in exhibition; online survey 2 (all Oct)

Step 3: Area types
Online community meeting (Nov); online survey 3 (from Dec)
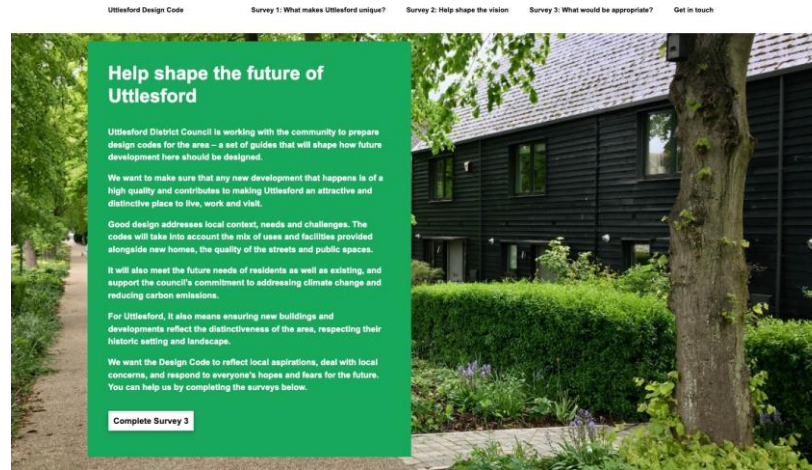
uttlesforddesigncode.co.uk

Find out more and get involved

Survey 1: What makes Uttlesford unique?
By completing this survey, you will be helping us to understand what makes Uttlesford unique, what you would like to see here, and what you wouldn't.

Survey 2: Help shape the vision
The purpose of this survey is to get your feedback on the emerging vision for Uttlesford District and the aspects of a new place that are most important for the code to consider.

Survey 3: What would be appropriate?
For some aspects of new development there will be different codes depending where they are being built.

Next steps

Outreach to schools and youth groups, including offer to Great Chesterford Scouts to work on Local Knowledge badge

Drawing competition for children to be launched prior to Christmas

Work with Council's Equalities Officer to ensure all groups have been reached

Continue to update participants via e-mailings and website

Engagement on draft codes scheduled for March 2023 (prior to Purdah)

Website
UttlesfordDesignCode.co.uk

Section 2
Design Code Approach

2. Design Code Approach

Overview of structure and relationship to policy

Contents

2. Design Code Approach

District Wide Coding and Area Type Options
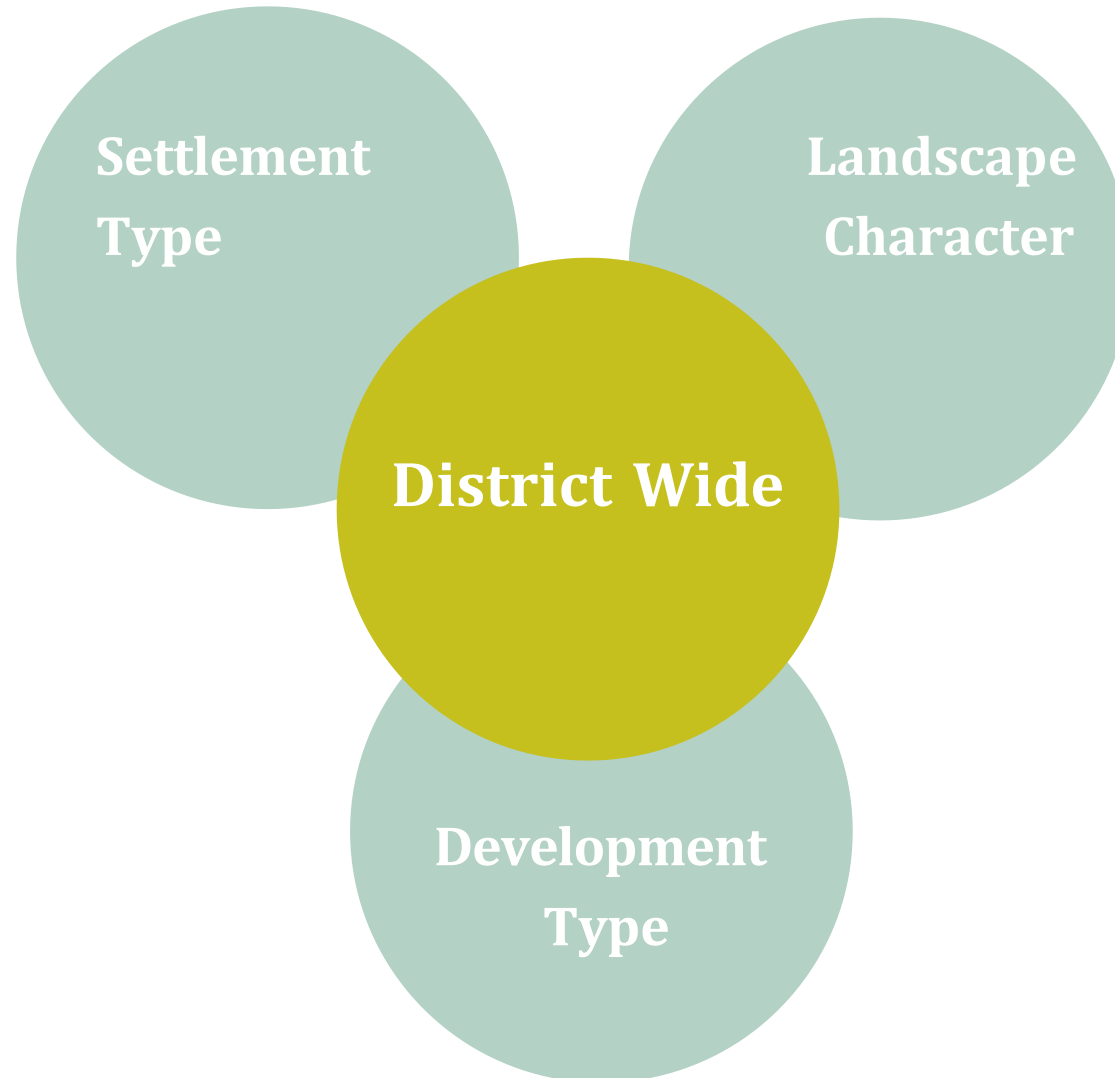
2. Design Code Approach

Code Approach

The code sets out clear requirements for applicants who are considering and preparing development proposals in Uttlesford District. Responses to each of the ten characteristics of well designed places, as defined by the government, will be set out below in the following format:

- **Policy hooks -** The relevant policy wording where possible (Starting point is the National Design Guide - TBC in relation to local plan – this may need to be national policy / mandates in places);

- **The expected outcome** – this is a description of what the council is seeking to achieve;

- **Code Requirements** – this provides clear, illustrated guidance on the dos and don'ts. This will also set out where information is district-wide, or area-type specific.

- **Signposts** - links to other documents such as manual for streets or Essex Design Guide, with clear page numbers to relevant sections.

- **Examples** – this consists of clearly annotated illustrations of mainly local and regional examples that show the sort of development that the council seeks to encourage. This is supported by the earlier chapter on Uttlesford Places however seeks to inspire appropriate responses to requirements. Examples from the Uttlesford BHL12 may be used and explain why these are good responses.

- **Examples -** What we don't want to see – examples with a clear indication of the issue (such as fences to the public realm)

- **Code Checklist -** this section sets out the information that the council requires developers and prospective applicants to provide in order to demonstrate that they have considered how a particular characteristic can be successfully incorporated into the overall scheme design.
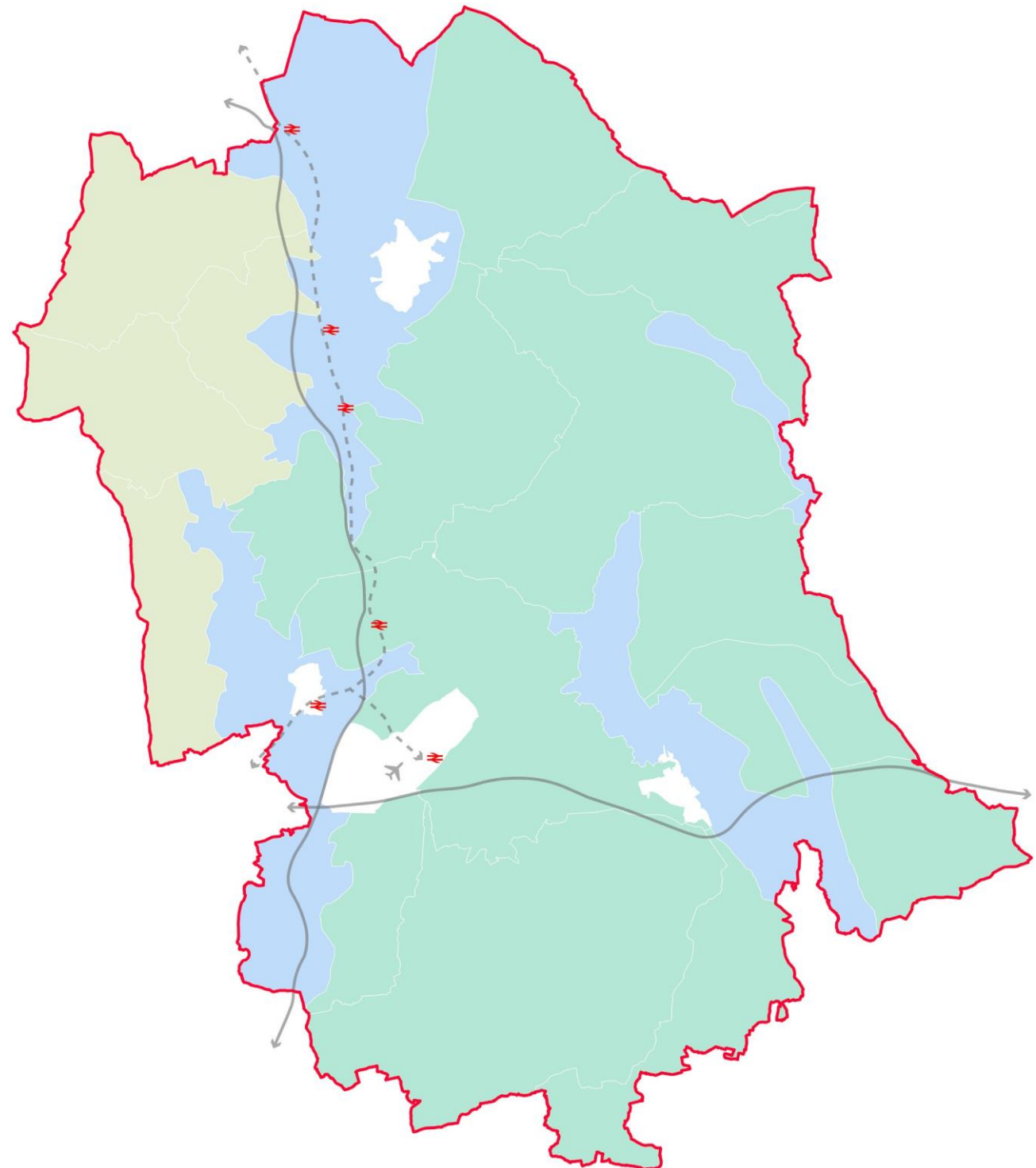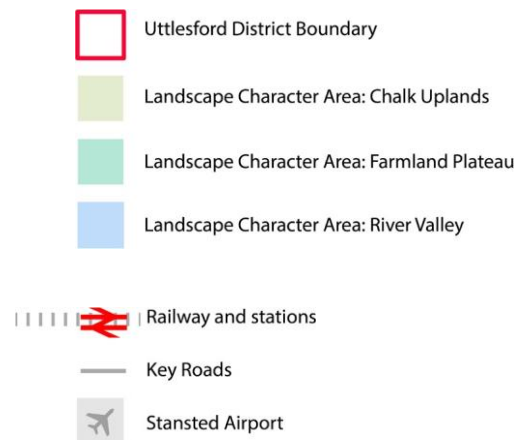
Settlement Area Types

- **Towns:** The major settlements provide a range of services to an extensive rural catchment area. These towns provide vital facilities for the district such as schools, health services and food shopping needs. They are also important cultural and leisure destinations for the district and beyond.

- **Larger Villages:** There are a number of larger villages within the district which provide a range of facilities to the surrounding rural areas. These are key rural settlements located on main transport networks and have local employment opportunities.

- **Villages**: There are a number of smaller villages which mainly provide services for their local communities such as a primary school, public house and in some instances post offices.

- **Open Countryside:** Smaller hamlets, groups of cottages and isolated homes and farmsteads are scattered across the district within the rural open countryside.
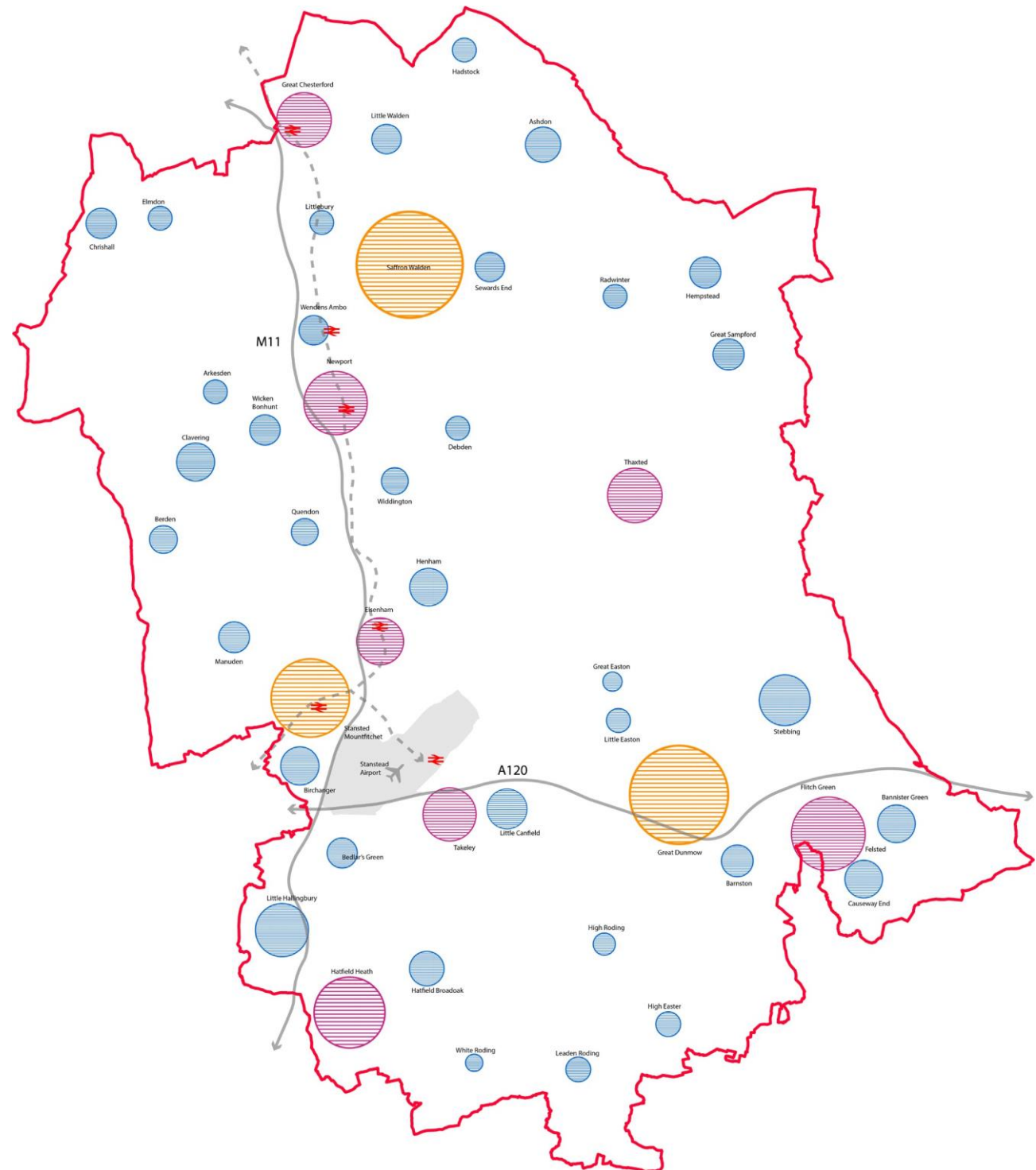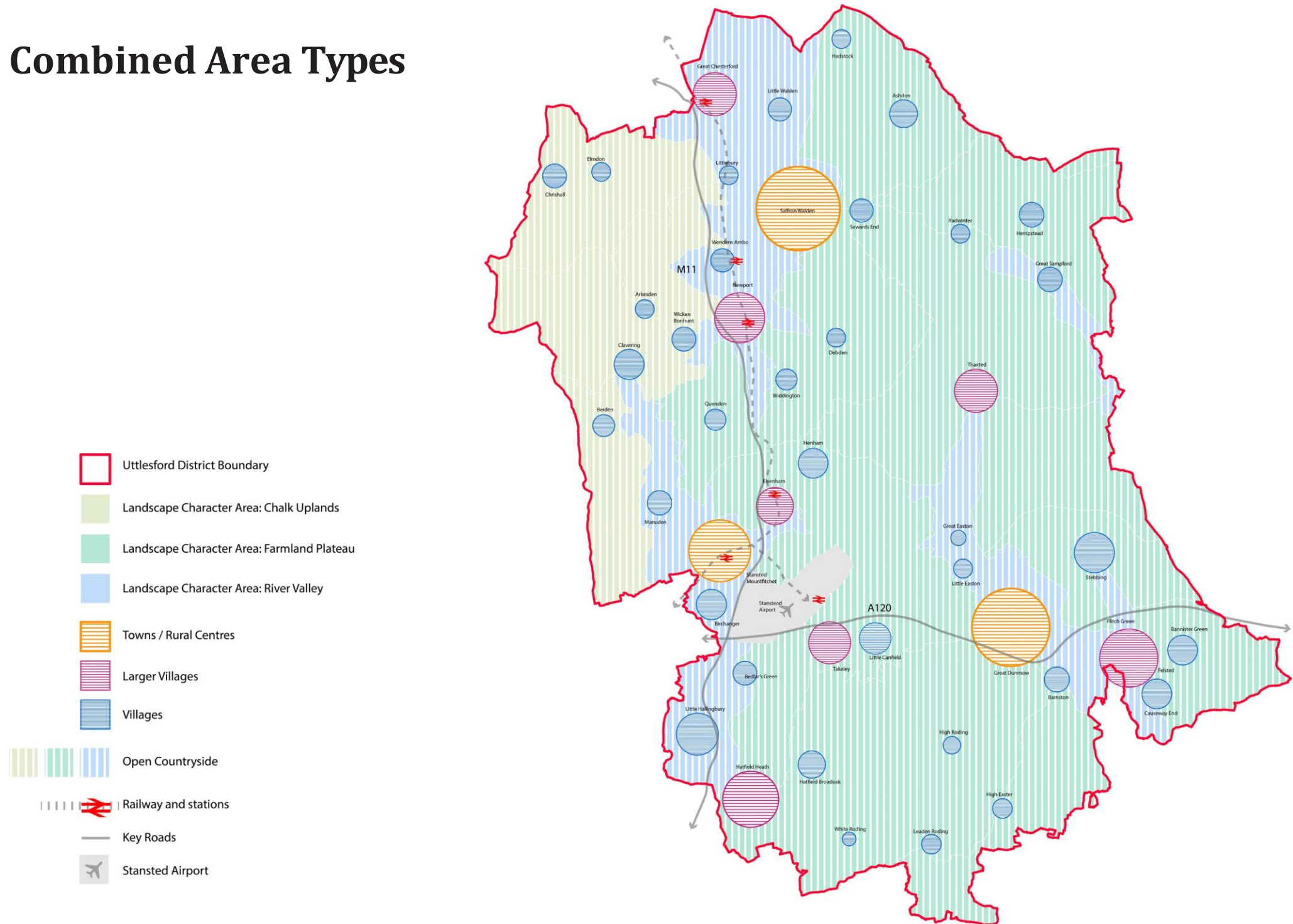
Landscape Area Types

- In addition to undertaking coding by settlement area type we will also define key principles on landscape character. Any new development will need to have regard to the district wide coding, coding relating to the settlement area type the development is within or adjacent to, and also the landscape character area, or areas, it lies within. This aims to ensure that new development responds to historic settlement pattern, and that the use of materials, and colour, is appropriate to the local landscape character. New development should be well integrated within the surrounding landscape.

- Defined by Landscape Character Assessment (2006)

Uttlesford District Boundary

Landscape Character Area: Chalk Uplands

Landscape Character Area: Farmland Plateau

Landscape Character Area: River Valley

Railway and stations

Key Roads

Stansted Airport

Combined Area Types

Legend:

- Uttlesford District Boundary
- Landscape Character Area: Chalk Uplands
- Landscape Character Area: Farmland Plateau
- Landscape Character Area: River Valley
- Towns / Rural Centres
- Larger Villages
- Villages
- Open Countryside
- Railway and stations
- Key Roads
- Stansted Airport

Map labels:

Hadstock, Great Chesterford, Little Walden, Ashdon, Elmdon, Littlebury, Chrishall, Saffron Walden, Sewards End, Radwinter, Hempstead, Wendens Ambo, M11, Great Sampford, Newport, Arkesden, Wicken Bonhunt, Debden, Thaxted, Clavering, Widdington, Berden, Quendon, Henham, Elsenham, Great Easton, Manuden, Little Easton, Stebbing, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stansted Airport, A120, Fitch Green, Bannister Green, Birchanger, Takeley, Little Canfield, Great Dunmow, Felsted, Bedlar's Green, Barnston, Causeway End, Little Hallingbury, High Roding, Hatfield Heath, Hatfield Broadoak, High Easter, White Roding, Leaden Roding

Design Cues: Towns (Saffron Walden)

Alpha Place

Saffron Walden Almshouses

King Edward Almshouses, Saffron Walden

Audley St. End, Saffron Walden

Old Sun Inn, Saffron Walden

Market Square, Saffron Walden

King St. Saffron Walden
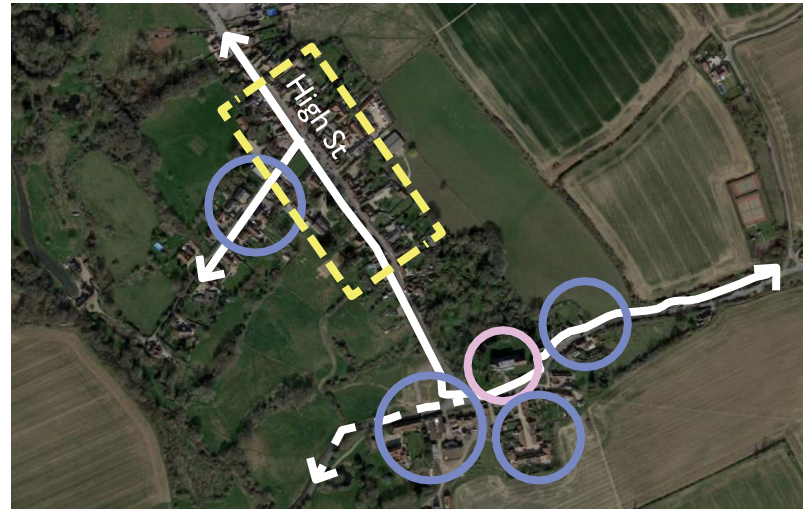

The Common

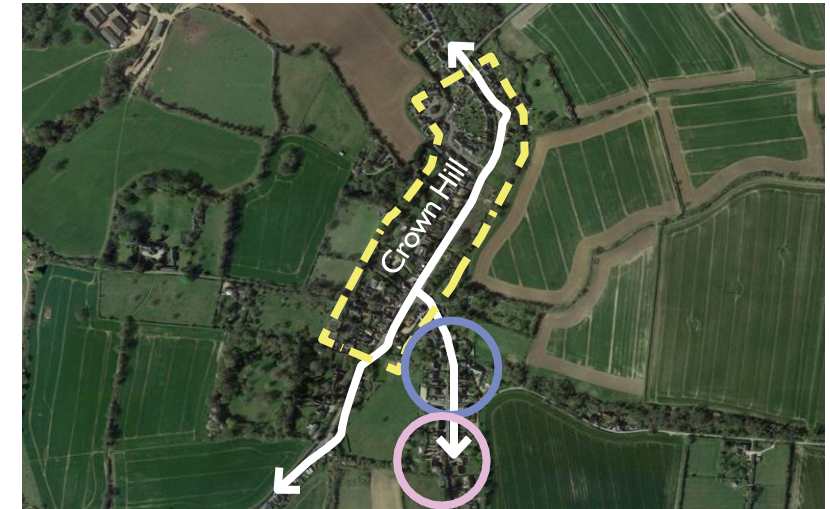Walsingham Street

Design Cues: Villages

Settlement structure

Principles:

- Most common - Linear Village.
- Historic Uttlesford structure.
- Clear residential-led (village halls, public houses and post offices are often found) high street.
- Density surrounding main route.
- Medium density on connecting main route roads.
- One row of development either side of main routes.
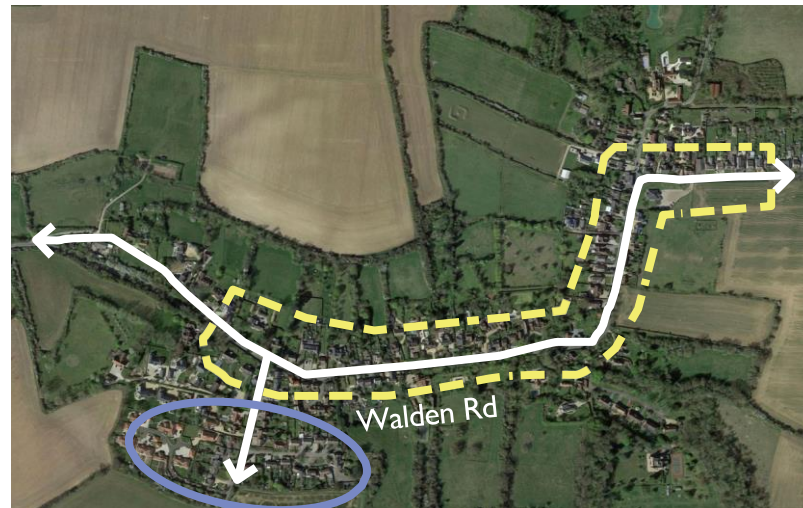- Large back gardens.

Stebbing

Ashdon

Sewards End

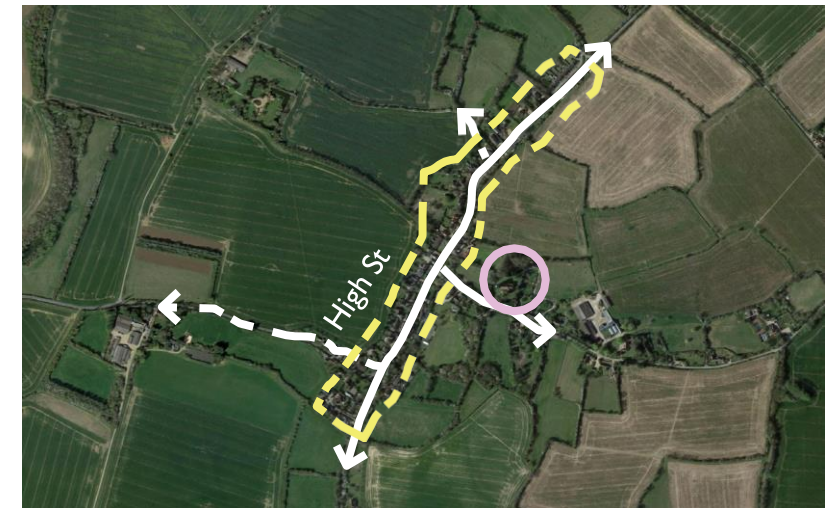*Hempstead*

Legend:
- Residential-led High street
- Community facilities
- Residential

Design Cues: Open Countryside

Examples of elements to be coded by Landscape Area Type

River Valley

V and U shaped landforms dissect boulder clay and chalky till plateau, river valleys served by tributaries, and flat or gently undulating valley floors. In places these areas are intimate and wooded.

Chalk Upland

The chalk upland landscapes are characterised by strongly rolling landforms of broad roundbacked ridges and large scale arable farmland. This character type has a distinctive elevated, expansive, and generally open character with panoramic views from ridgetops. The settlement pattern is sparse with small linear villages alongside stream courses and hamlets with greens.

Farmland Plateau

The Farmland plateau area is characterised by an elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay / Chalky Till plateau landscape which is incised by river valleys. The area contains a network of winding lanes and minor roads with medium to large scale enclosed arable fields. There are long distance views across the valleys and some areas are well wooded in places.

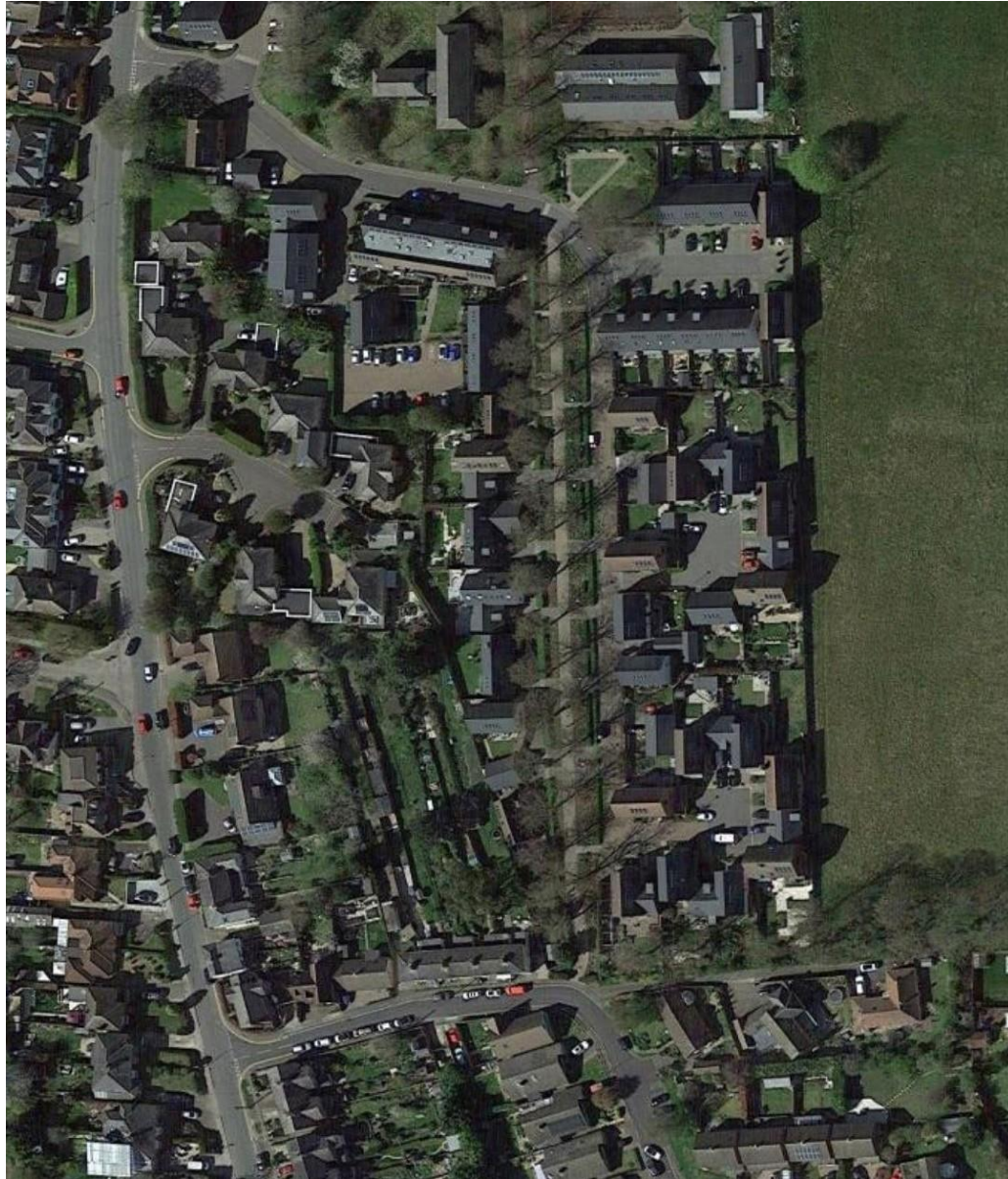**Potential topics to be coded by landscape character area:**

- **Materials**

- **Colour and tone**

- **Response to flood risk and approach to water management**

- **Biodiversity**

- **Types of planting**

Coding by Develoment Scale

Flitch Green

Coding by Develoment Scale

The Avenue: Saffron Walden

Coding by Develoment Scale

Stansted Mountfitchet: Walpole Meaodows

Coding by Develoment Scale

Thaxted: Morris Dance Place