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Richard Fox  
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Dear Richard

**New Local Plan: Takeley/Hatfield Broad Oak**

The purpose of the attached report is to set out the concerns about the prospect of more housing development in Takeley, and the wider southern area of Uttlesford, and especially to demonstrate why the possible site at 'Bonnington Green' is unsuitable for housing development. This Report considers the likely Local Plan proposals and then makes the case against allocating this site in the Local Plan, and a rebalance between new allocations north and south of the District. When the Pre-Submission Local Plan is finally published, after reconsideration, then that site (or any other similar sites in and around Takeley) should not be included as a proposed allocation for housing. The Report is fully supported by Hatfield Broad Oak and Gt Canfield Parish Councils.

Takeley Parish Council (TPC) understands that the proposed strategy is to accommodate 2,800 homes at two new settlements - Easton Park (near Gt Dunmow) and Stebbing (straddling the Uttlesford/Braintree border), 550 homes at Gt Dunmow and 230 at Takeley - a total of 3,580 homes (78%) in the south of the District. It is also noteworthy, and difficult to understand, that of the total capacity of some 9,750 homes in the two new settlements, only 30% (2,800) are relied upon to be completed over the next 17 years.

The north of the District is proposed to accommodate just 700 homes at Saffron Walden and 94 at Newport - a total of 794 (17% of 4,600). This seems wholly unbalanced when the north of the District contains the main settlement (Saffron Walden) and serves the **Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor** - the subject of a National Infrastructure Commission Interim Report (October 2016). The just published NIC Interim Report has a strong and positive message about future housing/development/infrastructure strategic planning for this important Corridor which covers an extensive area including North Essex as shown in Figure 9 (p33). The recognition that the Corridor needs to be supported by



substantial new housing is an important, and new, Government message. It changes the policy guidance framework for the UDC Local Plan. The importance of the Growth Corridor and its implications for development in Uttlesford is not yet recognised by UDC, but the pause in the Local Plan process allows this to now be seriously considered - it should result in a major change to the spatial pattern of development between south and north of the District in the Local Plan.

District commitments (November 2015) show a total of 5,903 units 2015-2033. Takeley accounts for 236 of those, or 4%. District completions between 2011-2015 were 1,894 of which Takeley sites accounted for 418 or 22%. Without any further allocations, therefore, Takeley is already contributing 654 homes to the Local Plan or 5% of the total 12,500. At a meeting with the Leader of UDC and Development Manager on 20 October 2016 TPC was informed that it is the 'Bonnington Green' site which is likely to be allocated (Site refs: 02, 03, 04HBO15). This is clearly contrary to what was agreed by Members in July 2016 when PPWG, Cabinet and Council agreed that 'Key Villages' in total should accommodate 5% (200) of the 4,600 new homes, with no explanation to justify why Takeley alone should accommodate an extra 230 homes on a single site which would be a significant departure from that decision.

**The NPPF clearly recognises the need to be mindful of the cumulative impact of development on a community.** It advocates an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. To add another '230' homes (or considerably more) at/adjacent to Takeley, as well as the two proposed new settlements and allocations at Gt Dunmow in the south of the District, is not justified by any available evidence and now needs to be re-examined.

There are **specific objections to any further development at Takeley and to the 'Bonnington Green' site** (whatever its extent). Whilst this site is within Hatfield Broad Oak Parish, it is located in the countryside on the south-west edge of Takeley. The essence of the SHLAA summaries is that if there is a proven need to allocate further significant development at Takeley, then the principle of breaching the long-standing southern limit of the Flitch Way would be justified. However, there is no proven need for sites in this locality, but it is at least recognised that the Flitch Way is an important boundary.

Development of this land would introduce an area of built form detrimental to its character and would significantly impact on the views from Hatfield Forest. This land is adjacent to the Flitch Way which is a wildlife corridor and a linear country park, and leads to the adjacent Hatfield Forest (the District's largest SSSI). There is a great need for wildlife corridors in maintaining viable populations that would otherwise suffer as a result of fragmentation and isolation.



A separate report by highway consultants Railton TPC on transportation impacts and pedestrian connectivity is attached, demonstrating that the Four Ashes cross-roads has no capacity to take extra traffic - the sites' only access is from the B183. Pedestrian access to the site would be via a sub-standard footway which is constrained by the railway bridge abutments. The access of the B1256 to the M11 Junction 8 is already overloaded. So access to 'the site' is wholly unsatisfactory.

Given the changes introduced through the Government led Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor initiative, and the need to support this, it is imperative that UDC reassess the spatial strategy to ensure maximum benefit for the whole of Uttlesford; to make greater provision in the north of the District and less in the south, and choose not to allocate the 'Bonnington Green' site(s) or anything further in Takeley.

Could you please ensure that the attached Report and the NIC Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor Interim Report (October 2016) are background reports as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

Regards

*Geoff Gardner*

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Director

Gardner Planning Ltd.

cc Cllr Harold Rolfe Leader UDC

Dawn French – Chief Executive UDC