

Do you want 5000 houses on Ickleton's doorstep?

Please Act Now

5,000 new houses North of Great Chesterford

This could mean 20,000 people and 10,000 cars



This proposal has been put forward for inclusion in the Uttlesford Local Plan. The Council is launching a consultation which runs until **4 September** so you can have your say. Read on for more information and what you can do to help try and stop this.



What is North Uttlesford Garden Community? According to the draft Local Plan:

- A new settlement promoted by Bidwells and known as North Uttlesford Garden Community to be built on farmland. Eventually 5,000 new dwellings. A minimum of 1,900 built by 2033. Including affordable homes and homes for older people. The first houses delivered in 2021/22. Development beyond 3300 houses dependent on dualling of the A505 between the M11 and A11 junctions.
- Development to be sustainable and must be in accordance with Garden City Principles supported by development plans including infrastructure and delivery plans.
- Eventually providing a range of local employment opportunities and services and facilities including schools, health, retail and leisure. Economic links with the Wellcome Genome Campus and Chesterford Research Park to be maximised.
- Design to be high quality. Careful consideration to landscape.
- Reliance on private cars reduced by providing transport choices, including high quality, frequent and fast public transport services to Saffron Walden, Cambridge, Great Chesterford Rail Station and nearby employment parks (including the Wellcome Genome Campus and Chesterford Research Park). A network of safe walking and cycling routes also to be provided, including cycle routes connecting with the employment parks.
- Connections to the A11, A1301 and the Cambridge Park & Ride (on the A1307), with the A11 being the preferred route for northbound travel. Contributions towards capacity improvements along the A505 and junction of the A505 and A1301 to be sought, requiring cross boundary discussion with South Cambridgeshire.
- In the medium to longer term new electricity substations, upgrades to water recycling and sewerage treatment. Drainage systems to prevent flooding.
- Leisure facilities and green space.

This may sound pretty good but the devil is in the detail and we don't believe all these conditions and aspirations can be met. The process for drawing up the Plan requires it to be based on evidence ie factual data, but much of that is still lacking, particularly on transport. Instead, Bidwells has provided illustrative indications of what might happen. More on this a little further on.

How could this affect us in Ickleton? For example:

- An eventual size of 5000 houses which could mean something like **20,000 people**. Sawston has about 3000 and Saffron Walden fewer than 7,000 households.
- Building will go on until 2033 and many years beyond with construction traffic and workers going to and fro and associated pollution.
- 5000 houses could mean something like **10,000 cars** as we don't believe the claims about the amount of non car travel. Traffic through Ickleton and on our local roads will become far worse than it already is.
- Pressure on school places, GP surgeries, hospital and other services. The new settlement will not get its own schools etc. for many years.
- Proposals for dealing with sewage, avoiding flooding downstream and ensuring water soaks through the chalk to the aquifer are lacking in any detail.
- The settlement will be on the rising ground above the new crematorium and highly visible.
- Parking at the local train stations will be even more difficult.

Please write in response to the consultation by 4 September.

The draft Local Plan is at <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/draftplan2017>.

Responses can be made:

- online using the Online Consultation Portal or downloading a form at <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/draftplan2017>
- by e-mail to planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk
- by letter to: Planning Policy Team, Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4ER

To be effective, objections have to be on planning grounds showing, as far as possible, how claims made are not based on evidence and the settlement will not be sustainable. Here (and overleaf) are some suggestions of what you might say. You don't have to comment on everything – perhaps the points you feel most strongly about. The online forms don't seem to allow much space but please don't be deterred – just continue on another sheet.

- **Uttlesford's housing needs** – the new settlement is promoted by Bidwells as meeting housing needs resulting largely from growth of the biotech clusters which are mostly in Cambridge City and South Cambs. However Cambridge City and S Cambs Councils have made provision for the necessary housing in their Plans. A settlement in this location right at the northern edge of the District will do little to meet Uttlesford's housing needs, but will encourage commuting to Cambridge, London and the science and biotech clusters in South Cambs.
- **Development Framework** – the Plan requires development plans to be provided prior to planning applications but these should be available now to inform the decision on where development should be sited. There is no developer in place yet for this settlement and the financial and economic viability of the settlement has not been determined.
- **Transport** – the issues around transport mean that the settlement cannot be sustainable.
 - Detailed transport assessment work has not been undertaken prior to deciding to include the settlement in the Plan. Many of the assertions about moves to non-car travel and traffic impacts are not based on factual evidence.
 - Bidwells propose a network of foot and cycle paths and claim that the science clusters in S Cambs could be accessible by walking, cycling, rail and bus services. For most people the distances for walking or cycling are too far and buses will take too long and be too infrequent. It cannot be assumed that the partners of these residents will also work in the science clusters. People are most likely to travel by car. Car ownership in this area is significantly above national average – why should it be any different in this settlement?
 - There is no N bound access to the M11 at junction 9. The draft Local Plan states that the preferred route for northbound travel would be the A11. However, direct access to the A11 from the site is not planned. As traffic will exit on to the B184 and A1301, rat running through Ickleton and Duxford to M11/J10 (already a problem) will increase significantly. Direct access northbound to the A11 and at M11/J9 and southbound exits should be a condition for granting permission for the new settlement.

- It is suggested the settlement will not significantly add to congestion on roads south of Cambridge, particularly the A505 and junctions with the A1301 and M11. This assumes mitigation measures would be in place at the M11/A505 and A505/A1301 junctions. While funding is being sought for a study of the A505, improvements could be a long way off. This stretch of the A505 is already beyond capacity at peak times and simply will not cope with the extra traffic generated. Growth taking place or being proposed in S Cambs is also ignored and the assumed numbers of non-car based journeys are unrealistic.
- Essex County Council has made it clear it will not pay for infrastructure. S106 developer contributions are unlikely to be enough.
- Rail stations are too far away for most people to cycle. Bus services between the settlement and the stations cannot be so frequent and reliable as to make them preferable to car journeys. Commuters who choose to park their cars will be adding to the traffic on local roads and parking is already problematic at all the local stations.
- The draft Plan requires the settlement to meet Garden City Principles. The Town and Country Planning Association’s guidance states “A Garden City’s design must enable at least 50% of trips originating in the Garden City to be made by non-car means, with a goal to increase this over time to at least 60%” and “Garden Cities should be located only where there are existing rapid public transport links to major cities, or where plans are already in place for their provision.” These conditions cannot be met. Bidwells have not committed to meeting Garden City Principles.
- **Landscape impact** – the settlement is being designed to mitigate the impact on Great Chesterford but it will be highly visible from S Cambridgeshire even if building is mainly on the plateau. It will permanently destroy the uplands, the sky-line, good quality agricultural land and add to urbanisation of what is currently essentially a rural landscape which is acknowledged to have high sensitivity to change.
- **Water supply, sewage disposal and flooding concerns** – Bidwells’ responses and reassurances to concerns raised about these matters lack any detail and do not seem to be based on sound evidence. They state that some 55% of the site is expected to be hard impermeable surfaces. There will be a considerable reduction in the amount of water reaching the aquifer on which we depend for our water supply.
- **Schools, GPs and other services** –the new settlement is planned to grow at a slow rate (about 150 a year). It will be years before the population is such that services will be provided within the settlement. Since existing schools and GP practices are at capacity the new settlement cannot be viewed as sustainable.
- **Conflict of interest** – Uttlesford District Council has recently bought a substantial holding in the Chesterford Research Park. The draft Local Plan states that the North Uttlesford Garden Community should maximise economic links with Chesterford Research Park. There appears to be a conflict here as UDC is the planning authority for both the new settlement and the Research Park. This raises the question of whether the new settlement’s location or the rationale for its existence is based on objective evidence.