

Uttlesford Local Plan Stage 1 Examination Hearings, Day 5, 17 July 2019
Matter 8 – The proposed new Garden Communities – SP7 North Uttlesford Garden Community
Statement by Hinxton Parish Council

To: Planning Inspectors Louise Crosby and Elaine Worthington

Hinxton Parish Council's objections to the proposed North Uttlesford Garden Community

1. Hinxton would be directly affected by the proposed North Uttlesford Garden Community. It would share 2 km of our parish boundary and come within 1 km of our village High Street. We set out our strong objections in detail to Uttlesford District Council at pre-submission stage (dated 7 August 2018) and updated these for the revised sustainability appraisal (dated 18 February 2019). We confirm these objections.
2. There can be no valid justification for the choice of this site for the new town. There is no planning rationality in choosing a site that has over half of its perimeter defined by the county boundary with Cambridgeshire. Alternative sites to this unspoilt farmland, such as the nearby brownfield site of the disused Little Walden airfield, appear not to have been seriously considered.
3. The proposed siting of the new town on an escarpment above the River Cam valley would have profoundly adverse consequences for Hinxton and South Cambridgeshire. In our objections we demonstrated that it would have damaging visual impact on this sensitive landscape for many miles to the north and west. The town would destroy the unique heritage and amenity value of the landscape, of the prehistoric Icknield Way and Roman remains, and of the SSSI of Hildersham Wood.
4. The downstream villages of South Cambridgeshire are already flood-prone. Uttlesford offers no evidence or credible assurances that the siting of the new town higher in the Cam watershed would do other than seriously increase the flood risk that we face in Hinxton and downstream. The hills of the site are vulnerable groundwater source protection zones; these are of central importance to South Cambridgeshire's fresh water supply but Uttlesford's would be unaffected.
5. The sole access proposed for the new town is from the B184/A1301 Saffron Walden to Cambridge road. We have shown that this winding single-carriageway is already barely adequate for existing traffic with long queues in the approach to the A505/B1301 roundabout. It will be completely inadequate to take the new town's traffic load. The resulting rat-running and congestion, for which no mitigation is proposed, would economically paralyse Hinxton and neighbouring Cambridgeshire villages.
6. The infrastructure burdens of the proposed new town would fall overwhelmingly on South Cambridgeshire communities, but the Uttlesford draft Local Plan makes no credible commitment to meet their cost. We urge the Inspectors to take a cross-county perspective on the North Uttlesford Garden Community and to reject it as environmentally and financially unsustainable.

William Brown (Chair and on behalf of Hinxton Parish Council) 9 July 2019