



Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (2021 – 2041)

PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT (REGULATION 14)

CONSULTATION: 30th September 2024 – 11th November 2024

FOREWORD

To set out a long-term vision for the future of our parish and to provide guidance for future planning applications, Little Dunmow Parish Council decided to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. This is so that future development proposals take account of the distinctiveness of Little Dunmow and contribute positively to the local community.

Since 2021, Little Dunmow Parish Council, via the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan 'steering group' have been working hard to prepare the plan. So far, we have:

- Prepared a Vision and mission statement
- Consulted with the local community at a variety of events
- Commissioned design guidance and codes
- Commissioned a housing needs assessment
- Commissioned a landscape character assessment
- Developed a vision, a set of objectives, and a suite of draft policies (set out later within this document)
- Prepared a Policy Intentions Document (2023) in order to test our emerging ideas with the community

This document represents the outcomes of that work and has been created to be positive about future change whilst seeking to reflect the importance of our heritage, identity, and character. It also seeks to address the comments that our stakeholders have made throughout the various consultation and engagement activities that we have undertaken.



OVERVIEW

As stated in the preface to our plan we came up with a Vision statement. We propose to use the parts of our Vision statement to introduce our plan to the reader.

“To enhance Little Dunmow as a rural and historic parish with a mediaeval settlement style and a beautiful Magna Carta village at its heart.”

Little Dunmow parish, which archaeologically has Roman settlements and is in the Domesday Book, is the proud possessor of a high-quality conservation area with 15 listed buildings in the village alone, some dating from the 14th century. The Grade I listed church dates to the 12th Century.

The Little Dunmow Landscape Assessment, commissioned by the Parish Council to support the neighbourhood plan development, highlights the mediaeval settlements style within the parish, with small clusters of buildings, hamlets, and a rural village in mediaeval style fields.

Our policies seek to enhance and maintain this style and the various listed buildings in the parish. We especially want to conserve these buildings and the conservation area from being harmed by unsympathetic development.

“For any new development to be sustainable and a beautiful inheritance for future generations.”

Parishioners have said that they appreciate the historic nature of the parish. Our vision would be for dwellings and buildings to be created that would be the historic buildings of the future, beautiful, withstanding the inroads of time and sustainable for the future.

We, in line with local plan sustainability aspirations, are very keen for settlements to be ecologically friendly and have low carbon impact, with solar panels, sustainable heating and good active travel connectivity with surrounding areas and parts of the parish.

There is also the consideration on how to manage any construction with the narrow roads and historic buildings and bridges within the village.

We must, of course, also consider the needs of the current older generations, and to this end we seek to introduce housing policies which with locally identified housing needs both for starter homes, affordable housing and the need for housing suitable for older people. These have been identified as a shortfall in our parish within our housing needs assessment.

“To nurture the flourishing community spirit within the parish and the different hamlets.”

During our consultations with the parish, we found a desire for a community space where parishioners could meet. The loss of the village pub was decried. It has become obvious with the various Royal events and with the Neighbourhood Plan that we need more than a village portacabin to hold community events.

Part of this is working with the various developments going on in the parish to improve connectivity and excitingly to develop a community space. We are also fortunate to have a village recreation ground, and we have a policy regarding this asset.



Parking has been an issue for a few years as there is no village car park. The lack of a car park also holds back our local restaurant from flourishing as it could do.

“To encourage enjoyment of the Flitch way Country Park and the many pathways which lead to delight in the surrounding landscape and views across to five other parishes.”



Little Dunmow Parish has a network of footpaths, some mediaeval in origin. We are also fortunate enough to have part of the Flitch Way Country Park run through the parish.

As we are on the Rayne plateau and the Chelmer Valley so we have excellent views to Stebbing Church, Felsted Church and village and even Barnston Church. Dunmow can be seen too, as well as Flitch Green.

Living in a rural parish, we also seek to retain key features that make our rural environment unique, such as our dark sky and habitats with special mention of hedgerows, rural lanes, the village pond, small woodlands and copses and tree belts. Mention must be made, too, of the wildlife to be seen within the parish.

Most people who live in the parish appreciate its rural nature and the access to the countryside. Their main sadness has been in the continuing encroachment on the rural and tranquil nature by greenfield development.

A drawback to development has been the increased traffic on Station Road and while the scope of the neighbourhood plan to address highway matters is limited, we have included community actions that seek to address these concerns.

In order to make this document easier to read we have 5 themed sections:

- A. Rural Landscape, Nature and the Environment
- B. Heritage and Green Spaces
- C. Housing, Design, and Development
- D. Recreation and Community Facilities
- E. Getting Around

We hope after you have examined the plan, you will find that it is in keeping with our stated intentions and with what the parishioners want for their parish and will agree that we are attempting to preserve and enhance this small part of Essex for the future generations and current generations to enjoy in all its quiet beauty.

LITTLE DUNMOW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT



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INTRODUCTION



What is the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan?

The Government's Localism Act of 2011 empowered communities like Little Dunmow to be able to shape the future development of their areas through the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans (Neighbourhood Plans). Once approved by the local community in a formal referendum, neighbourhood plans become "made", meaning that they form part of the statutory development plan for the area. As a result, planning applications must be decided in accordance with the neighbourhood plan, and other statutory development plan documents, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

A neighbourhood plan can be used to decide where new development takes place, what type of development it should be and what it should look like, together with other matters of local interest such as green spaces, nature, and heritage. A neighbourhood plan cannot be used to stop development that has already been permitted or promote less development than is set out in the local plan. It can, however, propose development than required in the local plan, if this was supported by the community and there was evidence of need.

The Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by local opinions on a variety of planning matters, such as the local landscape and nature, scale and design of new developments, provision of community and recreational facilities, movement and accessibility, and other matters that are important locally. However, neighbourhood plans must relate to land-use planning, and there have been some issues that are raised through the consultation process that the neighbourhood plan cannot address. Where this is the case, we seek to recognise the issue in some way, for example by identifying a local community project, and it will be for the Parish Council and others to take those projects forwards where possible.

The Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan will run until 2041 in line with the timescale of the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan, which was published for consultation at the Regulation 19 Consultation in July 2024.

Where is Little Dunmow in the process?

In March 2021, the Parish Council took the decision to undertake the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. The decision was based on concerns about the amount of possible and proposed development in the small parish, and a desire to have input into the amount, type and design of new development in order to protect and enhance the nature and heritage of the parish. At the time, a small steering group consisting of 3 local residents formed to oversee work on the plan, reporting back to the Parish Council at appropriate intervals.

On 25th April 2021, the Parish Council submitted a formal application to designate the Parish of Little Dunmow as a 'Neighbourhood Area', i.e., the area to which the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan will relate (Appendix 1). As the application consisted of the whole of Little

Dunmow, the designation process was 'automatic', as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. On 18th May 2021, Uttlesford District Council formally designated the Little Dunmow Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Area (Appendix 2).



Since then, the steering group has sought to consult with the local community, commissioned a range of technical evidence base material, and engaged with UDC regarding the potential impact of the emerging Local Plan on the area.

In November 2023, the Parish Council published the 'Little Dunmow Policy Intentions Document' which set out the overall intention of the plan, a set of proposed policies, together with some community projects. The Policy Intentions Document was subject to informal consultation, with feedback received from a range of different stakeholders.

The Parish Council is now publishing the first 'official' draft of the neighbourhood plan, known as the Pre-Submission Draft Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan, for formal consultation. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) establish a set of statutory requirements for this consultation, including the consultation period, the people and organisations that must be consulted as part of the process, and how the neighbourhood documents should be made available.

The pre-submission consultation process provides anyone with an interest in the plan, such as those who live, work, or do business in Little Dunmow, with an opportunity to make formal comments. As part of the examination process, the independent examiner will review the comments that have been made, and how the Parish Council / Steering Group has responded to those comments, including making changes to the neighbourhood plan where it is appropriate to do so.

What happens next?

Once the Pre-Submission Consultation is complete, the plan will be modified further, and submitted to UDC for further scrutiny and a 6-week publicity period during which identified stakeholders will be given a final opportunity to comment on the plan.

The plan and the associated evidence base will then be sent to an independent examiner. The examiner will test the plan against a suite of legal tests known as the 'Basic Conditions' which are as follows:

- Having appropriate regard to national planning policy (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework)
- Being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan (as set out in the Uttlesford Local Plan)
- Contributing to sustainable development
- Compliance with environmental legislation (such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations and Habitat Regulations)

If the examiner finds that the neighbourhood plan does satisfy the Basic Conditions, they will recommend that it proceeds to a local referendum. This referendum will be organised by UDC and everyone who is eligible to vote in the Little Dunmow parish will be able to vote. If more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan, it will be legally 'made' and come into force.



The Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan, once it has been 'made' (i.e., adopted), will be a statutory planning document with the same status as the Uttlesford District Local Plan. It is therefore essential that the final version of the plan is written in the form of legally enforceable planning policies and proposals.

Planning Policy Context

The Localism Act sets out some important 'Basic Conditions' for Neighbourhood Plans, the legal requirements that we are required to meet before the plan can proceed to a local referendum. Full analysis of how the Plan meets Basic Conditions will be in the Basic Conditions Statement, to be submitted alongside the Plan.

In short, the Basic Conditions that the Plan must meet are as follows:

- The Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to National Planning Policy; Guidance, namely the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance;
- The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the development plan;
- The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The Neighbourhood Plan must not breach or be otherwise incompatible with European Union obligations, including Human Rights; and
- The Neighbourhood Plan must not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

To provide context, this section provides an overview how the made Plan for Little Dunmow fits within local and national planning policy:

At a national level, Government establishes planning policies for England through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out how sustainable development should be achieved through the plan-making and decision-making processes across the country. The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2023. However, at the time of writing, the new Government has recently published an updated National Planning Policy Framework for consultation, with an updated version due to be confirmed by the end of 2024.

At a district level, Uttlesford District Council are responsible for preparing the Local Plan, which sets district-wide policies for use in the determination of planning applications. The extant Local Plan for Uttlesford was adopted in 2005, and thus the Neighbourhood Plan must

be in general conformity with those policies within the 2005 Local Plan that apply within the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Area.

At the time of writing, Uttlesford District Council has published UDC published the Reg 19 (Submission Draft) Uttlesford Local Plan (2021 – 2041) for consultation prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. The draft Reg 19 Local Plan for Uttlesford confirms that there will be no housing requirement for Little Dunmow during the 2021 – 2041 plan period.

The Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the 2005 Uttlesford Local Plan which remains the extant development plan for Little Dunmow until such a time as the new Local Plan is adopted, but the SG has also been mindful of the emerging draft Local Plan (2024) so as to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan does not become out of date upon adoption of the Local Plan.

Planning practice guidance and planning legislation states that where a neighbourhood plan policy conflicts with a local plan policy, the decision-maker must resolve the conflict in favour of the policy that has most recently become part of the development plan (adopted). It is, however, fully within the scope of guidance that neighbourhood plans be brought forward in advance of an up-to-date Local Plan, as long as there has been positive collaboration between the Qualifying Body preparing the Plan (the Parish Council) and the Local Planning Authority. The SG worked positively with Uttlesford District Council as a key stakeholder and is grateful for their advice and assistance in preparing the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to add a locally-distinctive layer of policies to ensure that development that comes forward is appropriate and suitable for our Parish.

A specific set of county-wide policies are set by Essex County Council, who are responsible for minerals and waste planning across Essex. Although it is not within the remit of neighbourhood planning to address minerals or waste planning issues, neighbourhood plans should have due regard to any such matters where there are implications for a given area. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted in 2014) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted in 2017) form part of the development plan for the and relevant policies relate to safeguarding areas of land where there are minerals or waste planning issues, in addition to identifying consultation areas around those parcels of land where Essex County Council must be consulted on planning applications. The SG has worked to ensure that none of the policies in the plan would undermine or affect those issues addressed by the Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

The Essex Minerals Local Plan is currently under review for 2025 to 2040, and this will be kept under review as the neighbourhood plan progresses.

The draft Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan provides a positive vision for the future of the parish and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. As required by the Localism Act these policies accords with higher level, strategic planning policies of UDC and the National Planning Policy Framework.



LITTLE DUNMOW NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA



Little Dunmow is a picturesque rural parish located in the heart of Essex, within the Uttlesford District. Steeped in history and surrounded by the scenic landscapes of the Chelmer Valley, the parish is a quintessential English village with a rich medieval heritage. It is situated between the bustling market town of Great Dunmow to the west and Braintree to the east, with the A120 running through its centre, providing convenient access to both areas and to London Stansted Airport, which lies to the west.

The parish is primarily agricultural, with expansive arable fields, tranquil hedgerow-lined lanes, small woodlands, and scattered hamlets contributing to its rural character. Historically significant, Little Dunmow is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and has strong connections to medieval England. The village is famous for being home to Little Dunmow Priory, founded in the 12th century, with the remaining portion now part of St Mary the Virgin Church, a Grade I listed building. This church, along with numerous other historic buildings, gives the village a distinctive medieval aesthetic, with around 15 listed buildings in the conservation area alone.

The parish's Conservation Area protects key historical and landscape features, such as the central paddocks, Grange Lane, and the traditional pattern of open green spaces that separate buildings, preserving the feel of a medieval rural settlement. The surrounding landscape, as highlighted in the Little Dunmow Landscape Character Assessment (2023) (appendix 3), includes the Upper Chelmer River Valley and the Rayne Farmland Plateau, characterized by undulating farmland, scattered farmsteads, and a network of ancient winding lanes.

Little Dunmow is also home to a section of the Flitch Way Country Park, a 1.5-mile-long walking and cycling route that follows the path of the former railway line. The Flitch Way offers panoramic views across the valley, connecting Little Dunmow to the neighbouring parishes and offering residents and visitors alike access to green spaces and the wider countryside.

The parish retains its tranquil and rural feel despite recent development pressures, with efforts being made through the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan to protect its natural beauty and historic core. Our policies seek to highlight the importance of maintaining the distinctive landscape, protecting biodiversity in key habitats such as hedgerows and woodlands, and conserving views across the Chelmer Valley.

In addition to its historical and natural assets, the community has a strong connection to its heritage, with local traditions such as the Flitch of Bacon custom—a medieval ritual in which a married couple demonstrating harmony for a year and a day is awarded a flitch (or side) of bacon. This local identity, combined with a rich environment, makes Little Dunmow a vibrant and historic parish that is dedicated to preserving its character while adapting to the needs of the future.

The population of Little Dunmow is relatively small, in line with its rural character. According to the 2011 Census, the parish had a population of approximately 523 people. However, the parish has experienced some growth in recent years, with the construction of new housing

developments, including Cromwell Place and homes near Station Road. As a result, the population has likely increased modestly since the last census.

While Little Dunmow itself remains a small and quiet village, the growth of nearby areas such as Flitch Green, which was originally part of the parish before becoming a separate civil parish in 2009, has added to the broader community's overall size. Despite these changes, Little Dunmow maintains its rural charm and sense of close-knit community, with policies in place through the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that future developments respect the parish's character and scale.

The parish's relatively small population is one of the key factors contributing to its tranquil environment, allowing it to retain a strong sense of identity rooted in its historic and rural setting.



THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR LITTLE DUNMOW

Neighbourhood Plans should include a shared vision for how the area should develop over time. The vision for Little Dunmow was developed through community consultation which considered the issues that were important to local people.

Neighbourhood plans also provide an opportunity to set out a community's non-planning aspirations, such as local projects that could be delivered, or issues that should be addressed that aren't necessarily related to land use planning policy. This is so neighbourhood plans can set out a comprehensive vision and blueprint for the future. Further detail of how this could be delivered is provided in the 'implementation' section.

The neighbourhood plan is presented in 5 themed sections, covering:

- A. Rural Landscape, Nature, and the Environment
- B. Heritage and Green Spaces
- C. Housing, Design and Development
- D. Recreation and Community Facilities
- E. Getting Around



Vision

Our vision for the future of Little Dunmow is:

To enhance Little Dunmow as a rural and historic parish with a mediaeval settlement style and a beautiful Magna Carta Essex village at its heart.

For any new development to be sustainable and a beautiful inheritance for future generations.

To nurture the flourishing community spirit within the parish and the different hamlets.

To encourage enjoyment of the Flitch Way Country Park and the many pathways which lead to delight in the surrounding landscape and views across to five other parishes.

Objectives

The following objectives will help to achieve the vision, they have been developed using the community consultation feedback and evidence base work:

Theme A: Rural Landscape, Nature, and the Environment

1. To maintain and enhance the rural nature of the parish, views to surrounding churches, and the Vale of Chelmer.
2. To protect and enhance local habitats such as our valued hedgerows and river corridor, to the benefit of local wildlife and biodiversity.
3. To protect the dark skies within the parish.
4. To help the parish become more resilient to climate change.

Theme B: Heritage and Green Spaces


5. To conserve and enhance heritage assets in the parish including Little Dunmow's historic core and medieval settlement style.
6. To strengthen the identity of Little Dunmow, preventing coalescence between settlements within the parish and with neighbouring parishes, and to maintain important gateways.
7. To protect the green spaces within the parish.

Theme C: Housing, Design, and Development

8. To ensure that any new housing meets identified needs within the parish, such as being suitable for young people and to meet the needs of an ageing population.
9. To encourage new housing developments to be environmentally sustainable, well-designed, and in keeping with the parish.
10. To identify pressures on and highlight the needs of local infrastructure.

Theme D: Recreation and Community Facilities



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11. To recognise the importance of the Flitch Way Country Park, the many footpaths and bridleways in the Parish, and to seek to encourage and assist in their maintenance and management.
 12. To maintain and enhance the village recreation ground.
 13. To seek to deal with the parish parking issues.
 14. To work towards a community hub, increase community wellbeing, and social responsibility.

Theme E: Getting Around

15. To encourage environmentally friendly means of transport, such as the introduction of cycle paths, and to support the maintenance of the current network.
16. To highlight and lobby Essex County Council on road safety issues.

LITTLE DUNMOW PLANNING POLICIES

Theme A: Rural Landscape, Nature, and the Environment

Little Dunmow is a small, predominantly rural, parish within Uttlesford District, in north west Essex. It is characterised by the small village centre, surrounding farmland, and several smaller hamlets. The parish is bisected by the A120 which travels through the parish on an arc from south west to north east. The B1256 and Station Road serve as the main routes into the parish, which is otherwise characterised by small, tranquil lanes.

The parish does not have defined settlement boundaries, which is indicative of the scale of development present here. The settlement patterns have been in existence for hundreds of years and have given the area a distinctive character. Overall, the parish is considered to be tranquil. Adding to this tranquillity and richness, the north of the parish is a dark sky area, which is considered to be an important feature, not only for the historic character of the parish, but for the varied wildlife present in the area.

The Chelmer Valley dominates the southern half of the parish and is a defining characteristic of the landscape and rural character, including the views, topography and vegetation. The Stebbing Brook waterway and associated topography also provides a defining landscape feature.

The majority land use in the parish is agricultural, with the main built up area being contained in the village of Little Dunmow itself. Within the wider parish, there are several smaller scattered settlements, predominantly located at river crossings (e.g. Brook Street, Brookend and Stebbingford). There are pockets of contemporary development which do not necessarily follow the historic development patterns within the parish.

As a result of this rural character, the parish is fairly rich in wildlife, including badgers, hares, deer, songbirds and birds of prey, as well as substantial hedgerows within the main village and across the parish, considered to be increasingly important given the extent of habitat and nature decline seen across the UK. The landscape characteristics, such as the expanses of open farmland, river valley and watercourses, scattered woodland, the network of mature hedgerows and The Flitch Way (a Local Nature Reserve and Country Park) mean that the parish has priority areas for habitat.

In addition, there is recognition that the Parish has an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to addressing the challenges of climate change, which includes locally-appropriate energy generation and addressing local vulnerabilities such as flood risk zones in the parish.

Throughout community consultation, many residents have said that the rural setting and tranquil nature of Little Dunmow are key features of why they like living here. The neighbourhood plan will therefore seek to recognise the importance of that tranquillity.

Objectives:



1. To maintain and enhance the rural nature of the parish, views to surrounding churches, and the Vale of Chelmer.
2. To protect and enhance local habitats such as our valued hedgerows and river corridor, to the benefit of local wildlife and biodiversity.
3. To protect the dark skies within the parish.
4. To help the parish become more resilient to climate change.



Evidence Base:

- Little Dunmow Landscape Character Assessment (2023)
- Little Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal (2014)
- Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)
- Uttlesford District Landscape Character Assessment (2006)
- UK State of Nature Report (2023)
- Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024) (part of Reg 19 Local Plan evidence base)

KEY VIEWS AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The rural setting of Little Dunmow offers expansive views across the surrounding landscape, including iconic views to nearby churches and agricultural landmarks. These views are integral to the character of the parish and must be protected from inappropriate development that could diminish their aesthetic or historic value.

Views have been identified through the Little Dunmow Landscape Character Assessment (2023) and within the Conservation Area Appraisal and further assessed by the Steering Group. The Landscape Character Assessment identifies recommended landscape planning guidance, including for future development to support the conservation and enhancement of local views.

By safeguarding key views and view corridors, Policy A-1 ensures that the unique rural and historical characteristics of Little Dunmow are maintained. The visual connections to landmarks such as the St Mary the Virgin Church and other historical structures contribute to the sense of place and identity that defines the parish. This aligns with the vision of enhancing Little Dunmow as a rural and historic parish with a medieval settlement style.

The policy encourages the maintenance of sightlines and vistas that enhance enjoyment of the Flitch Way Country Park and other pathways. By safeguarding views that frame the landscape and highlight natural features, it supports recreational activities such as walking and cycling, making the natural beauty of the parish accessible to residents and visitors alike. This aligns with the vision to encourage enjoyment of the Flitch Way Country Park and surrounding landscapes.

Appendix 4 provides a map of the view corridors identified below.





POLICY A-1 KEY VIEWS AND VIEW CORRIDORS

Development proposals affecting key views or within view corridors must demonstrate consideration of their visual impact and careful design.

Proposals affecting key views as shown on the Key Views Map (Appendix 4) and listed below must demonstrate how adverse visual impact has been avoided or minimised. Proposals to make a positive contribution to key views will be encouraged.

1. From the river Chelmer, looking East towards Bumpsted Hill
2. Looking northwest toward Great Dunmow from Bumpsted Hill
3. Looking east along the Chelmer Valley from Grange Lane
4. Looking southwest at Branston from the Flitch Way embankment
5. Looking east from the A120 farm bridge, towards Little Dunmow
6. Looking south from Grange Lane, towards Barnston
7. Looking northeast from the A1256 towards Stebbing
8. Looking north over the Chelmer Valley toward Little Dunmow from the Barnston Hall footpath
9. Looking east along the Chelmer Valley from the river footbridge
10. Looking southwest from the Brick House footpath over the Chelmer Valley
11. Looking northeast along Brook Street at cottages
12. Looking south towards Little Dunmow from the A120 flyover
13. Looking southeast from Manor Barns towards Barnston Church
14. Looking northwest towards Homelye Farm from A1256 at Throws Mill
15. Looking south from Brook Street over the Chelmer Valley towards Absol Park
16. Looking east from Brookend Lane over the Stebbing Brook Valley
17. Looking west over the fields from the footpath near Flitch Green along the Chelmer Valley
18. Looking northwest over the Chelmer Valley from the footpath to Absol Park
19. Looking southwest from outside the parish over Stebbing Brook Valley towards Throws Farm
20. Looking southeast towards the Stebbing Brook Valley from the Blatches Farm footpath
21. Looking southeast towards Felsted from the Flitch Way near Bouchiers
22. Looking northwest towards the Flitch Way near Bouchiers from the Saffron Trail near Felsted
23. Looking east over the Stebbing Brook Valley from the Brook Farm footpath

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Little Dunmow's landscape is shaped by its medieval settlement pattern, as highlighted by the Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 5) and Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 3) which emphasises the importance of the open spaces, paddocks, and village green within the conservation area. The parish's landscape is characterised by the agricultural land, Chelmer River Valley, and scattered woodlands, all of which contribute to its distinct rural charm. The LCA adds further detail by identifying areas sensitive to development, such as the Upper Chelmer River Valley and Rayne Farmland Plateau and providing landscape management guidelines.

Policy A-2 will help to achieve the vision for Little Dunmow by ensuring that new developments respect and enhance the parish's unique landscape characteristics and historical context.

The policy emphasises that new development must be in harmony with the existing landscape character. This approach promotes sustainable development that does not detract from the parish's aesthetic and ecological qualities, ensuring that any new buildings or infrastructure contribute positively to the environment.

By seeking to protect and enhance key landscape characteristics, Policy A-2 helps to maintain the landscape integrity, it encourages exploration and appreciation of the broader regional landscape, aligning with the vision of delighting in views across to five other parishes.





POLICY A-2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Development proposals must demonstrate how they have had regard to the area's landscape character and contribute positively to landscape restoration or enhancement.

Development proposals must demonstrate how they have had regard to the special characteristics identified within the Little Dunmow Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 3), as appropriate, within the following landscape character areas:

1. Upper Chelmer River Valley
2. Rayne Farmland Plateau
3. Village Settlement
4. Hamlets / Small Settlements
5. A120 Corridor
6. ECC Traveller Site
7. Flitch Way Country Park.

Development outside of the existing built settlement would be contrary to local plan policy.

KEY HABITATS

The natural habitats within Little Dunmow, including mature hedgerows, ponds, and woodlands, are vital for supporting a wide range of wildlife. The LCA and Conservation Area Appraisal identify these habitats as crucial to both the natural and historic environment. These habitats include ancient woodlands, hedgerows, and watercourses such as the River Chelmer and Stebbing Brook. The LCA identifies these areas as critical for local biodiversity, supporting a range of species including deer, birds of prey, and smaller wildlife.

By prioritising the protection of key habitats such as hedgerows, woodlands, and river corridors, Policy A-3 maintains the rural landscape that is integral to Little Dunmow's historic character. The preservation of these natural features helps retain the parish's scenic beauty and ecological integrity, enhancing its status as a rural and historic parish. The Steering Group has undertaken a habitat study which identifies the different types of flora and fauna that can be found within the parish including threats and opportunities (Appendix 6).

Policy A-3 encourages sustainable practices in new developments by requiring them to consider their impact on local biodiversity. This ensures that new developments minimise or avoid the harm existing natural habitats and instead promote and improve biodiversity. By protecting local habitats and promoting biodiversity, Policy A-3 enhances the natural environment that residents enjoy.





POLICY A-3 KEY HABITATS

The following key habitat features have been identified within the Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Area: Habitat locations are detailed in Appendix 6.

1. Mature hedgerows (such as on The Street, Grange Lane, Bramble Lane, Brook Street, and the unmade road within the village)
2. Green corridors
3. Larger semi-natural or ancient woodlands (such as Clobbs Wood)
4. Open farmland
5. Ponds and reservoirs
6. Rivers, streams and their corridors

Development proposals that affect habitat features should demonstrate how harm has been avoided. Proposals to enhance habitat features will be supported.

The Flitch Way is identified as a Local Nature Reserve. Development proposals that harm the Flitch Way such as encroaching on the verges, hedgerows and trees will not be supported.

DARK SKY

The northern part of Little Dunmow benefits from areas with minimal light pollution, preserving the natural dark skies that contribute to the rural environment and support nocturnal wildlife. The **LCA** highlights the importance of maintaining these dark skies, as they are integral to the parish's tranquillity and biodiversity.



POLICY A-4 DARK SKY

In order to conserve the historic rural character of Little Dunmow, new development must respect and maintain the 'dark' nature of the parish.

New security, decorative, feature or commercial lighting should be carefully designed so that it does not create unnecessary light pollution or cause nuisance to adjacent residents.

All external lighting should be designed to minimise light spill and minimise the harm caused to local wildlife habitats, as well as the dark nature of the parish.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

As part of Uttlesford's commitment to becoming carbon-neutral, Little Dunmow will play its role in addressing the challenges of climate change. This includes sustainable energy generation, improved water management, and the reduction of carbon emissions through thoughtful design.

As climate change increasingly impacts rural areas, Little Dunmow must adopt strategies that support sustainability and environmental resilience. The LCA and associated studies outline the flood risk zones in the parish and recommend measures for improving water management and reducing carbon emissions.

By requiring new developments to incorporate climate resilience features like sustainable drainage systems and renewable energy solutions, Policy A-5 seeks to encourage the introduction of climate-friendly measures within the historic setting of the parish.

Historic England's Advice Note 18 provides further guidance for the adaptation of historic buildings for energy and carbon efficiency in order to support consistency of decision-making on proposals.

Theme B: Heritage, Design, and Greenspaces

POLICY A-5 CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The introduction of small-scale energy generation measures will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts in terms of noise, nuisance or visual amenity. Proposals for small-scale energy generation must demonstrate how they have had regard to the historic character of the parish and the many views towards the other five parishes.

Proposals for new housing or employment development should utilise open water attenuation such as ponds or swales, where appropriate, in order to reduce water run-off rates and help to prevent flooding.

New development proposals should, where possible, include filtration infrastructure to prevent harm to water quality and/or incorporate Green / Blue sustainable drainage systems and natural features.

The use of permeable paving will be supported.

Little Dunmow is a historic parish, as evidenced by the medieval settlement pattern, the array of historic buildings, including 45 Listed Buildings or groups of Listed Buildings in the parish, and the Little Dunmow Conservation Area, which was designated in 1980. Within the conservation area there are 15 Listed Buildings, mostly all Grade II, with the exception of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin. Nearly 50% of the Listed Buildings date to the 17th Century, compared to a national average of 19%, with over 20% dating from the 14th Century.



The conservation area in the centre of the village is characterised by central open spaces in the churchyard and extensive paddock areas between the churchyard and Grange Lane. These provide an important visual amenity setting to the many listed buildings in the conservation area.



The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2014) notes that several Bronze Age and Iron Age sites were recorded when the new A120 was constructed, with fieldwork undertaken in advance of the development of what is now known as Flitch Green recording a Roman villa and industrial site. There are 9 designated archaeological sites in the parish.

In addition, the parish is rich in medieval remains, with a dispersed settlement pattern, isolated farms, and small hamlets strung out around linear and triangular greens, with the Church of St Mary the Virgin being the remains of a priory. The fields in the parish reflect the ancient / medieval settlement style that was part of the estate of the leading Baron who promulgated the sealing of the Magna Carta by King John in 1215.

The pub in the village has been named after a local tradition in which a local married couple who could prove that had lived in harmony for a year and a day were awarded a flitch of bacon (now renamed the Pig and Truffle although the Flitch of Bacon remains on the exterior).

The use of traditional materials, such as thatch lime render with a mix of plain or decorated finishing, oak timber frame construction, flintwork panels, moulded window copings, arches, and distinctive 18th Century handmade red bricks (with occasional use of black stock bricks), make a significant contribution to the character and identity of the parish.

As a result, the parish has a highly distinctive character, with a medieval core to the village, with clusters of dwellings or hamlets thereabouts. The dispersed settlements have distinctive gateway features and are connected by green infrastructure such as the lanes that are such a valued feature of the parish, however they are vulnerable to coalescence and recent developments have demonstrated it can be harmful to not respect and enhance the local character. Furthermore, central green spaces within the main village provide a distinctive character as well as offering recreational, health and amenity benefits to local residents.

Local community consultation has suggested that the character and heritage of the parish is important to local people. The neighbourhood plan therefore aims to identify the features which define the local character, and to protect and enhance that character, including the green spaces and other green infrastructure features that are locally important.

Objectives:

1. To conserve and enhance heritage assets in the Parish including Little Dunmow's historic core and medieval settlement style.
2. To strengthen the identity of Little Dunmow, preventing coalescence between settlements within the parish and with our neighbouring parishes, and to maintain important gateways.
3. To protect the green spaces within the parish.

Evidence Base:

- Little Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2014)
- Uttlesford Local Heritage List
- Little Dunmow Design Guidance and Codes (2022)
- Little Dunmow Local Green Space Assessment (2023)



NON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Non-designated heritage assets play a significant role in shaping the character and history of Little Dunmow. While these assets may not have the formal protection afforded to listed buildings or scheduled monuments, they contribute substantially to the local identity, historic continuity, and sense of place within the parish. These assets include historic buildings, structures, landmarks, and features that are not formally recognised on the national Heritage List.

Uttlesford District Council has also prepared a Local List of heritage assets in 2018 and 2021. In Little Dunmow, the Old Vicarage on School Lane, the Old School House and Priory Farmhouse and 1 – 2 Priory Cottages are all on the Local Heritage List. Neighbourhood Plans can also identify non-designated heritage assets. Those identified in Appendix 7 provides an assessment of those that have been identified for consideration within the neighbourhood plan.

The preservation and enhancement of these non-designated heritage assets are key to maintaining Little Dunmow's medieval settlement style and ensuring that its historic fabric is retained for future generations.

Although these assets do not have the statutory protection of listed buildings, they are vital to the understanding of the parish's historical development and contribute to the visual character of Little Dunmow. By ensuring that these assets are considered properly through the planning process, the plan helps to ensure that the village retains its distinct rural identity, helps maintain the historic continuity of the landscape, and fosters a deeper connection between residents and their local environment.

Developers and applicants are encouraged to use conservation-led practices that maintain the integrity of non-designated heritage assets, ensuring any interventions are minimal and reversible where possible, in line with Historic England guidance.





POLICY B-1 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The following sites (as shown on Map) are identified as non-designated heritage assets:

1. Priory Farm Cottages and adjacent Priory Farm
2. Railway bridge
3. The Old Vicarage
4. The Old School House
5. Walls:
 - a. Eastern Boundary to Old Vicarage
 - b. Wall to Barley Barn
6. Priory Farm House
7. Village sign 2015 to commemorate being a Magna Carta village

Development proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of non-designated heritage assets, including their setting, will be assessed having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage assets, including their importance to local distinctiveness, character, and sense of place.

Sympathetic enhancement of any non-designated heritage asset will be supported.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

The Little Dunmow Conservation Area, designated in 1980, encompasses the historic core of the village, including significant buildings such as St Mary the Virgin Church, the remains of Little Dunmow Priory, and various listed and non-listed traditional structures.

This area embodies the parish's medieval settlement pattern, with narrow lanes, paddocks, and village green spaces contributing to its rural and historic charm. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the architectural and landscape features that define its unique character, providing the framework for guiding any new development or alterations to existing properties.



POLICY B-2 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

To be supported, development proposals within the Little Dunmow Conservation Area (as shown in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014, Appendix 5) must demonstrate a positive response to its setting in terms of scale, form, materials, and the nature of construction, and demonstrate how they have regard to the following key considerations:

- The potential need to undertake Archaeological Evaluation.
- Important and distinctive architectural features such as chimneys, windows and other key features.
- The open and verdant nature of the conservation area. Open spaces and features such as the space fronting the south elevation of St Mary's church, open space to the south west of the church and between Priory Place, St Mary's Churchyard, open paddocks between the churchyard and Grange Lane, small pond area to the south east of the Flitch of Bacon PH (now known as the Pig & Truffle).
- Trees within the churchyard and native hedgerows surrounding the central paddocks.
- Key views as identified in Policy A1.
- Building heights
- Roof styles and variety
- House styles and variety

HISTORIC CHARACTER

The village retains its traditional vernacular architecture, which reflects its rural and agricultural past. Historic farmhouses, cottages, and outbuildings are scattered across the parish, with narrow, winding lanes connecting these settlements and creating a strong sense of rural seclusion. These lanes and streets, along with the boundary walls and hedgerows, form an essential part of the village's character and must be preserved in any future development.

The relationship between the built environment and the natural landscape is a defining feature of Little Dunmow's historic character. The village is surrounded by open fields, woodlands, scattered hamlets, and the Chelmer River Valley, which has shaped the settlement's layout and growth. Important views across the landscape, particularly from the Flitch Way and towards neighbouring parishes, play a significant role in maintaining the sense of place. Any development within or near the village must respect these visual and physical connections between the built and natural environments, ensuring that Little Dunmow's historic integrity is preserved for future generations.

POLICY B-3 HISTORIC CHARACTER

Development outside of the existing built settlement would be contrary to local plan policy.

Development proposals within the hamlets should demonstrate how they have regard to the particular character of those parts of the parish.

Any proposed development should respect the historic pattern of scattered dwellings, isolated farmsteads and hamlets throughout the rural parts of the parish. Buildings should not dominate the landscape, therefore the layout, scale, size and siting of any proposed development should be considered.



LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Local green spaces are vital components of the community fabric in Little Dunmow, offering invaluable opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature. These spaces contribute significantly to the parish's character, providing essential habitats for wildlife while enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. Recognising the importance of these areas, this policy aims to identify, protect, and manage local green spaces that are cherished by the community and contribute to the health, well-being, and biodiversity of the parish.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local communities are encouraged to designate areas as local green spaces if they are of particular importance to them. The NPPF outlines criteria for such designations, stating that local green spaces should be:

- In close proximity to the community they serve.
- Demonstrably special to a local community for their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of wildlife.
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

The Steering Group have assessed a range of local green space opportunities within the Parish. The Local Green Spaces Assessment, Appendix 8 assesses each space against the required National Planning Policy Framework criteria.





POLICY B-4 LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following sites (shown on Appendix and Map 8) are designated as Local Green Spaces, where development will be ruled out other than in Very Special Circumstances:

1. Central Paddocks
 - a. Carla's Field
 - b. Three fields behind
 - c. Two Gardens
 - d. Churchyard
2. Church Surrounds:
 - a. Greensward in between the Church and the Road
 - b. Land to front of Priory Place
 - c. Land opposite the front door of the Church
 - d. Church Yard
3. The Village Gateway, including the greensward in front of the houses on Station Road / The Street continuation
4. Land in front of the Moors, the Village Signpost
5. Village recreation ground and entrance from St Mary's Place
6. The village pond
7. Station Road Hedgerows
8. Green areas to middle of Brook Street
9. Pine Trees in Brook Street
10. Green Space adjacent to Brights Cottage
11. Green space and noticeboard in front of Cromwell Place
12. Green space between Ivy House and The Moors should remain for rural character and aesthetic reasons
13. Green space between the proposed development next to Pound Villas and Brights Cottage (Moors field)
14. Proposed green space between the Moorsfield Development and the village of Little Dunmow and Brook Street

KEY GATEWAYS AND AVOIDING COALESCENCE

The character and identity of Little Dunmow are significantly shaped by its distinct gateways and the spatial relationship between its individual settlements. Gateways serve as important entry points into the parish, providing first impressions for residents and visitors alike.

These areas not only mark the transition from rural to urban landscapes but also encapsulate the unique charm and historical significance of the village. As such, it is crucial to recognise and protect these gateways from inappropriate development that could diminish their character or alter the perception of the village as an historic rural parish.

Appendix 9 describes and identifies the gateways within the parish and provides an assessment of their significance and the contribution that they make to parish identity.

Coalescence, the merging of neighbouring settlements into a single built up area, poses a substantial threat to the rural character of Little Dunmow, with adjacent settlements of Flitch Green, for example. It is essential to maintain clear boundaries between the village and its surrounding settlements to preserve the distinctiveness of each area and the natural landscapes that separate them. By avoiding coalescence, we hope ensure that the unique identity of Little Dunmow is retained while promoting a sense of community and belonging among its residents.

This section outlines the policy framework for safeguarding gateways and preventing coalescence within and around Little Dunmow. We aim to protect the character of the parish, enhance its visual appeal, and preserve the rural landscape that contributes to the overall quality of life for the community.





POLICY B-5 KEY GATEWAYS AND AVOIDING COALESCENCE

The following sites (shown in Appendix 9) are identified as Key Gateways which are valuable to the visual interest, character, identity and sense of place in Little Dunmow.

Little Dunmow:

1. The Street from the north
2. Station Rd from the east
3. Brook St from the south
4. Grange Lane from the west

Brook Street:

5. Brook St from the south west
6. Brook St from the east

Throws Corner:

7. B1256 from the west
8. B1256 from the east
9. Stebbing Lane from the north

Pound Hill:

10. Station Rd from the west
11. Station Rd from the south east

Brook End:

12. Stebbing Lane from the north
13. Stebbing Lane from the south

Stebbingford:

14. B1256 from the west
15. B1256 from the east

Cromwell Place:

16. Station Rd from the south
17. Station Rd from the north

Development proposals within or affecting Key Gateways must demonstrate how they make a positive contribution to the character and identity of Little Dunmow and avoid coalescence between Little Dunmow and surrounding parishes and between different settlements within the parish.

Development proposals that involve the loss of Key Gateways, or cause unacceptable harm to their visual interest, character, or identity, will not be supported.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is essential to enhancing the quality of life in Little Dunmow, providing a network of natural and semi-natural spaces that contribute to ecological health, biodiversity, and community well-being. This policy aims to establish a comprehensive framework for developing, enhancing, and maintaining green infrastructure across the parish, ensuring that it serves as a vital resource for residents and wildlife alike. By integrating green spaces and green corridors, into the built environment, we can foster a resilient environment that supports sustainable growth and a healthy community.

The role of green infrastructure extends beyond mere aesthetics; it plays a critical function in addressing environmental challenges such as climate change, flooding, and habitat loss. By creating interconnected green spaces, we can enhance biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and provide natural solutions to urban issues, such as managing surface water runoff through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of green infrastructure in promoting sustainable development, reinforcing the need for local policies that prioritize environmental stewardship and ecological connectivity.

Through this Green Infrastructure Policy, Little Dunmow seeks to prioritise the development of a robust network of green spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and beneficial to all residents.





POLICY B-6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not adversely affect, or result in the loss of, the Little Dunmow green infrastructure network (as identified on Appendix 11), as part of a multi-functional wildlife, amenity and recreational network:

1. Hedgerows
2. Green screens
3. Lanes:
4. Riverbanks

GREEN WEDGES

The concept of green wedges plays a crucial role in maintaining the rural character and integrity of Little Dunmow. These strategically located green spaces act as vital buffers between the built up areas and the surrounding countryside, preventing the coalescence of neighboring settlements and preserving the distinct identity of the village.

Green wedges not only serve as a visual and physical separation between built up areas but also provide essential habitats for wildlife, support biodiversity, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Incorporating green wedges into the planning framework is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and promoting environmental resilience.. By safeguarding these areas, Little Dunmow can mitigate the impacts of coalescence and settlement spread, enhance connectivity between habitats, and ensure that the natural landscape remains an integral part of the community.

This Green Wedge Policy outlines the framework for identifying, protecting, and enhancing green wedges within and around Little Dunmow. It aims to guide development decisions, ensuring that new projects respect the integrity of these green spaces while promoting sustainable land use practices. By prioritizing green wedges, Little Dunmow can preserve its unique rural character, foster community well-being, and protect the natural environment for generations to come.





POLICY B-7 GREEN WEDGES

The following areas (as shown on Appendix 12) are identified as Green Wedges that make a positive contribution to local character and provide an important buffer function to offset the impact of built development. Green Wedges also help prevent coalescence:

1. GW Between Brook Street and Flitch Green
2. GW Structural landscape separating main village centre and Station Road
3. GW Between Brights Cottage and the new 'Troy' development
4. GW Between Bayleys and Flitch Green
5. GW Between Little Dunmow and Brook Street Hamlet
6. GW In the land associated with listed buildings Bouchiers, Haydens, Bayley's and Brick House.
7. GW Between the conservation area and The Moors

Development proposals should not harm the open character and function of Green Wedges.

Theme C: Housing, Design, and Development

There are over 200 new homes in the local housing supply pipeline. It is important to recognise the impact of these proposed developments, as well as those that have been completed recently, and this includes the impact on local infrastructure capacity.



The scale of housing development locally can be directly attributed to Uttlesford District Council's lack of what is known as a '5 Year Housing Supply', i.e. a calculation of whether there is a deliverable supply of homes to meet the planned housing requirement or local housing need over the next 5 years. The 5 Year Housing Supply is calculated on a rolling basis by the Government, and local planning authorities that do not have an up-to-date local plan which identifies their 5 year supply of housing sites (including housing permissions to match), are vulnerable to speculative development proposals, with decision-making place significant weight on the delivery of new housing, above other local considerations.

As a result, Little Dunmow has been vulnerable to significant development proposals, with a suite of sites having gained planning approval in recent years, causing local concern over their appropriateness and what contribution they will make to addressing, rather than exacerbating, local issues. Recent developments have been poorly designed and have not contributed to the special character of the parish.

In addition, it is considered that development that has been permitted, hasn't sufficiently addressed locally identified housing need, such as that set out with the Little Dunmow Housing Needs Survey. The parish remains an unaffordable place to live, and the housing typologies, in the parish, do not lend themselves to being adapted to enable them to be more accessible to disabled people or elderly people.

The Housing Needs Survey, which sought to understand the needs of residents already living in the parish, identified a low level of housing need, but with needs for particular types of accommodation especially affordable rented accommodation, homes that are accessible for disabled people and / or, and smaller homes (typically 1 – 2 bedrooms) to enable younger people to remain in the parish.

At the time of writing, Uttlesford District Council have published their draft Local Plan for public consultation prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. This categorises Little Dunmow as a small rural village with no requirement to provide any housing between 2021 and 2041.

On this basis, it is not currently the intention that the neighbourhood plan will allocate specific sites for development. However, some windfall development may be expected within the next 15 – 20 years, and it is therefore appropriate for the neighbourhood plan to seek to shape the type and nature of development. In addition, in recognition of the importance of climate change, there are opportunities for new developments to be of a higher environmental standard, whilst maintaining the historic character of the parish.

Community consultation has expressed concern regarding the impact of development, as well as issues raised during the construction period, such as noise, inappropriate workforce parking, construction traffic issues and communication with residents. The neighbourhood plan will therefore seek to encourage the submission of construction management information as part of the planning process in order to mitigate adverse impacts of development on the parish. However, consultation has also recognised the potential contribution that small-scale development can make to addressing housing needs. The neighbourhood plan will therefore recommend that new housing developments address local needs, are appropriately designed, and sufficiently address local infrastructure considerations.



Objectives:

1. To ensure that any new housing meets identified needs within the parish, such as being suitable for young people and to meet the needs of an ageing population.
2. To encourage new housing developments to be environmentally sustainable, well-designed, and in keeping with the parish.
3. To identify pressures on and highlight the needs of local infrastructure.

Evidence Base:

- Little Dunmow Housing Needs Survey (2022)
- Little Dunmow Design Guidance and Codes (2022)

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The provision of high-quality housing is essential to the sustainability and vitality of Little Dunmow, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and inclusive community for current and future residents. This policy aims to create a balanced approach to housing development that meets the needs of the community while preserving the unique character and heritage of the parish. By promoting a range of housing types and tenures, we can accommodate the diverse needs of the population, including families, young professionals, and older residents, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion.

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this policy recognises the importance of delivering sustainable housing that is well-designed and integrated into the local context. New developments must not only provide adequate housing but also enhance the quality of the built environment, ensuring that they contribute positively to the overall character of Little Dunmow and reflect the needs of residents.

The Housing Needs Survey (Appendix 13), prepared by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) has identified local housing needs, which this policy seeks to respond to.



POLICY C-1 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

New development should demonstrate how it has regard to locally identified needs (as set out within the Little Dunmow Housing Needs Survey), as follows:

- a. Affordable social rented homes
- b. Accessible and adaptable homes (capable of meeting the M4(2) and M4(3) Building Regulations standards)
- c. 1 and 2 bedroom homes that are suitable for younger people or young families

DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES

In 2022, the Parish Council commissioned the preparation of Design Guidance and Codes from AECOM, supported by Locality. The Design Code (Appendix 14) provides comprehensive guidance for the design of new development.

By encouraging new development to take full account of the Design Guidance and Codes, it is anticipated that new development will respect the unique character, heritage and visual identity of the parish.

By establishing clear design principles and standards, the policy aims to foster an environment where new developments complement the existing built environment while promoting innovation and sustainability.

POLICY C-2 LITTLE DUNMOW DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES

To be supported, development proposals must demonstrate how regard has been had for the Little Dunmow Design Guidance and Design Codes (provided at Appendix 14), including the following key considerations:

1. The resilience and durability of buildings, many of which have stood for hundreds of years;
2. Local character and settlement patterns;
3. Preventing coalescence;
4. Scale and density;
5. Views and gateways; and
6. Materials, details, and finishing.



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

As the parish faces the challenges of climate change this policy aims to promote design practices that promote sustainability, energy efficiency, and the conservation of natural resources. By embedding sustainability into the fabric of new developments, we can ensure that Little Dunmow remains a vibrant, liveable, and environmentally conscious community for both current and future residents.

In alignment with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this policy emphasizes the importance of achieving sustainable development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

POLICY C-3 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

New development must, where feasible, incorporate measures that improve the energy efficiency of individual dwellings / units and the development as a whole. The use of the following measures will be supported, subject to local design, character, and amenity considerations:

1. Use of thermal insulation;
2. Airtightness and use of triple glazing;
3. Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery;
4. Use of building orientation to optimise natural daylight and maximise solar gain;
5. Solar control window films;
6. Low-energy light fittings with daylight sensors;
7. Solar photovoltaic panels;
8. Air / ground source heat pumps;
9. Combined heat and power systems;
10. Sustainably sourced, carbon neutral / low carbon, durable materials;
11. Reusing materials.

In addition, proposals to retrofit existing buildings will be supported, subject to local design, heritage, and amenity considerations.



INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The Infrastructure Considerations Policy is critical for guiding the development and enhancement of essential services and facilities within Little Dunmow. As the parish grows and evolves, it is imperative that new development is supported by the appropriate infrastructure and services.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasises the importance of infrastructure in achieving sustainable development, this policy outlines the requirements for integrating infrastructure considerations into the planning process.

POLICY C-4 INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

New development proposals should utilise the capacity of existing infrastructure provision, or otherwise contribute to increased provision as required, including for the following:

- a. Local health / medical facilities
- b. School place provision
- c. Social facilities
- d. Transport infrastructure



CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

The Construction Management Policy is essential for ensuring that development activities within Little Dunmow are conducted in a manner that minimises disruption to the community, protects the local environment, and maintains the character of the parish.

As construction projects can impact traffic, air quality, noise levels, and the surrounding landscape, it is crucial to establish clear guidelines that promote responsible construction practices. This policy aims to provide a framework for managing construction activities effectively while safeguarding the interests of residents and the integrity of the built and natural environment.

POLICY C-5 CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Proposals for new development must be accompanied by a construction management plan that details how the developer will minimise adverse impacts on local amenity, or otherwise provide mitigation measures for the impact of construction on local amenity, including the following matters:

1. Workforce parking
2. Construction traffic / access routes
3. Working times
4. Communications and engagement with local residents (including complaints procedures)
5. Road closure notices
6. Restrictions to Rights of Way
7. Repairs to the road caused by intense HGV usage for the road/byway



Theme D: Recreation and Community Facilities

Little Dunmow is fortunate to be home to a substantial part of The Flitch Way Country Park, which traverses the parish east/west following the former railway line between Bishops Stortford and Braintree. It is a well-used, popular, long-distance walking and cycling route and is a great asset to the parish. In total, it offers users a 15 mile, flat, and traffic-free route, taking in the best of the Essex countryside, managed by country park rangers who are assisted by the Friends of Flitch Way group.



In addition, the parish benefits from a wide range of footpaths and bridleways, that offer access to the countryside within and surrounding Little Dunmow. These public rights of way offer benefits to health and wellbeing, and help to ensure that local residents are able stay connected to nature. In addition, they provide access to key viewpoints identified elsewhere in this document. Some of these pathways are overgrown and poorly maintained and there are opportunities for these to be upgraded.

The village recreation ground is another valuable parish asset, it is the only parish-owned green space. It could potentially serve the parish better, for example through better facilities, additional planting, and enhanced greenery. It houses the village portacabin which serves as a poor substitute for a village hall, with an inadequate level of space and poor facilities. The portacabin and Church provide the only public spaces within the parish for villagers to meet. The lack of an appropriate village meeting space is harmful to the social sustainability of the parish and prevents more social gatherings and events from taking place.

There are a number of residential properties which rely on on-street parking, owing to the historic nature of the parish. Whilst there is some public transport provision, the parish is largely reliant on cars as a main mode of transport, meaning that the extent of on-street parking sometimes causes public safety concerns, as well as being harmful to the overall character of the parish.

During community consultation, residents highlighted the issue of problematic parking, the need for additional community facilities, and The Flitch Way and local public rights of way as important issues. The neighbourhood plan therefore seeks to address these issues by supporting the maintenance and enhancement of local footpath and bridleway network, seeking to enhance the village recreation ground, identify opportunities to meet social infrastructure needs, and address long-standing parking issues.

Objectives:

1. To recognise the importance of the Flitch Way Country Park, the many footpaths and bridleways in the Parish, and to seek to encourage and assist in their maintenance and management.
2. To maintain and enhance the village recreation ground.
3. To seek to deal with the parish parking issues.

4. To work towards a community hub, increase community wellbeing, and social responsibility.

Evidence Base:

- Essex Public Rights of Way Network
- Little Dunmow Design Guidance and Codes



THE FLITCH WAY COUNTRY PARK AND PROW NETWORK

The Public Rights of Way policy is a vital component of Little Dunmow's commitment to enhancing community connectivity, promoting outdoor recreation, and preserving the natural landscape.



Public rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways, and cycle routes, serve as essential corridors for pedestrians and cyclists, allowing residents and visitors to explore the parish's beautiful countryside and historic sites. This policy aims to protect and enhance these pathways, ensuring they remain accessible, well-maintained, and integrated into the wider transport network.

Appendix 15 provides an assessment of the Public Rights of Way Network in the parish, including their condition and key features, providing a comprehensive overview on the status of the network within the parish.

POLICY INTENTION D-1

THE FLITCH WAY COUNTRY PARK AND PROW NETWORK

Development proposals should have regard for the Flitch Way Country Park and local Public Rights of Way Network (as shown on Appendix 15).

Proposals should aim to provide non-motorised connectivity to the network, and otherwise avoid severance or other adverse impacts.

Proposals to improve, extend, or otherwise contribute to the maintenance of the PROW network will be supported.

VILLAGE RECREATION GROUND

The Village Recreation Ground serves as a vital community hub in Little Dunmow, providing essential recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and fostering community spirit. This green space not only offers a venue for sports and leisure activities but also promotes social interaction, health, and well-being among community members.

Policy D2 addresses the need for high-quality facilities, diverse recreational opportunities, and inclusive access, all while ensuring that the natural environment is preserved and enhanced.

Moreover, the Village Recreation Ground Policy emphasises the need for sustainable management practices that improve the quality of the space for the benefit of the community. This includes promoting biodiversity through native planting, managing facilities responsibly, and engaging the community in stewardship activities.

POLICY D-2 VILLAGE RECREATION GROUND

The village recreation ground is a valued asset within the parish. The following improvements to the recreation ground will be supported:

- Enhanced tree planting
- Food growing
- Improvements to the playground



PARKING

The Parking Policy for Little Dunmow is designed to address the community's need for effective, efficient, and sustainable parking solutions that support both residents and visitors. It is a recognised issue within the parish that the village centre is hampered by the lack of available parking facilities for residents and visitors. The historic nature of the village centre means that residential plots are not designed to accommodate the parking of cars. As a result of this, on street parking is substantial.

Policy D3 focuses on creating a balance between accommodating vehicles and prioritising pedestrian safety, ensuring that parking facilities are conveniently located, well-maintained, and designed to minimise their impact on the village's aesthetic character.

Appendix 16 provides a study of potential parking options to address the lack of parking in the village. At this stage it is not proposed that the neighbourhood plan allocates land for further parking, and this may be taken forward as a project in the future.

POLICY D-3 PARKING

New development proposals must include parking provision commensurate to the scale and density of development. Car parking infrastructure should be designed to minimise the impact of the car on the street scene, include sufficient provision for electric vehicle charging, and maximise opportunities for active travel, such as the provision of cycle parking infrastructure.

The provision of a centrally-located public car park will be supported.



PARISH HUB

A Parish Hub would be a vital asset for the Little Dunmow community, serving as a central gathering place that fosters social interaction, supports local initiatives, and enhances community cohesion.

Having access to a place to meet and host events has been a longstanding aspiration in the parish. Policy D-4 seeks to support the development of an appropriate facility.



POLICY D-4 PARISH HUB

The provision of an appropriately sited parish hub will be supported.

Any new parish hub should include the following:

- Provision of meeting space
- Co-working opportunities
- Public WC provision
- Indoor sports
- Creche / day care facilities

Theme E: Getting Around



The two key routes in the parish are the A120 (a dual-carriageway bisecting the parish, running east-west, which is accessed via the B1256, the Braintree Road which runs east-west through the parish (the old A120). This provides access into the parish via Station Road. Station Road connects Little Dunmow to Flitch Green, on to Felsted and beyond. Station Road bypasses the main village centre, which is accessed via The Street, meaning that the village centre doesn't have through-traffic. The building of the A120 also resulted in severance, meaning that many routes within the parish are 'dead-ends' which do not connect to the wider road network. Off-road connectivity is provided by the Flitch Way and PROW network as described above.

There is currently very poor cycling provision in the parish, despite the success and growing profile of the area as a destination for cyclists. On-road provision is limited and there are few segregated cycle routes, causing road safety concerns. Much of the parish is characterised by the lack of footway provision.

Station Road and the junction of the B1256 and Station Road raise particular concerns regarding road safety, owing to the speed of traffic. There are frequent accidents. The level of new development along Station Road has exacerbated safety concerns.

In respect of public transport, the parish is served by two local buses. The 133 bus provides access to Stansted Airport and Braintree, both of which provide onward travel opportunities (locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally) with a service running approximately every hour, 7 days per week. The 16 bus runs between Wethersfield and Chelmsford via Little Dunmow and runs 4 times per day, 6 days a week, and calls at Broomfield Hospital. A privately operated taxi service is available in the village.

Community consultation showed support for addressing safety concerns. In addition, improved transport networks may help to reduce car dependency and therefore help the parish's contribution to addressing climate change. The neighbourhood plan therefore supports improved transport routes and identifies community projects to continue lobbying on safety matters.

Objectives:

1. To encourage environmentally friendly means of transport, such as the introduction of cycle paths, and to support the maintenance of the current network.
2. To highlight and lobby Essex County Council on road safety issues.

Evidence Base:

- Essex Local Transport Plan



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY

The Improved Connectivity Policy is essential for enhancing the accessibility and mobility of residents and visitors throughout Little Dunmow.



POLICY E-1 IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY

The following connectivity improvements will be supported:

1. Improved pedestrian footways
2. Provision of cycle routes
3. Enhancing the existing cycle network
4. *Connectivity into Moorsfield*
5. *S106 funding between Dunmow & Rayne*
6. *Hazard survey of Station Road*

New development proposals should demonstrate consideration of public transport accessibility and make provision for active travel.



COMMUNITY PROJECTS

ROAD SAFETY, TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Neighbourhood plans are required to consider land-use planning policies only. In practice this means that if development requires planning permission, a neighbourhood plan can influence that development.

Transport matters are largely outside of the scope of neighbourhood planning. Nevertheless, the issues raised through community consultation are important.

Projects will be identified to:

- *Continue lobbying Essex Highways (Essex County Council) on safety matters*
- *Establish a better understanding of local transport projects to understand where the parish may benefit*
- *Continue lobbying developers and Essex Highways for the provision of pavements / footways where needed*

IMPLEMENTATION

Delivery

The Little Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over the plan period 2021 – 2041. It seeks to provide direction to change in the parish and protect and enhance those assets that are so highly valued by parishioners. The plan will be subject to monitoring by the Parish Council and may be subject to periodic review should there be a change in circumstances, or every 5 years as appropriate.

The policies within the plan, once the plan has been ‘made’ will be delivered through their application to development proposals by planning officers and planning committee members at Uttlesford District Council, as the decision-maker on planning applications (or by the Secretary of State in the case of planning appeals, or for however long Uttlesford District Council remains designated for intervention by the Secretary of State). Developers will have an important role to play in helping to ensure that the plan is delivered. Policies will also help to identify important issues for consideration as part of the Section 106 negotiation process.

The Parish Council will continue to work with parishioners to identify and address local issues, and to support the delivery of local community projects. This may include seeking grant / support where appropriate.

The final draft neighbourhood plan will pull together all the identified projects into a “project delivery plan” which will theme and prioritise them and identify delivery partners.

