

25 March 2015

## **R4U's position on large-scale development at UDC's Great Chesterford site GtCHE7**

*Residents for Uttlesford* has been asked by a resident for its position with regard to the development of a potential new settlement in Great Chesterford. This is an important issue for Chesterford residents, so we have provided a full and detailed reply that outlines our position.

As background, we have outlined our related policy positions in the R4U [manifesto](#), including:

*Our planning will be driven by identified housing needs and realities and we will put in place a series of measures to conserve the natural and built environment of Uttlesford.*

*To meet that identified housing need we will explore the possibility of building a single settlement in a suitable area that will take the majority of new housing. We will consult with residents about any such proposals. Recommendations will be based on evidence and best practice – not Westminster party politics or central government edicts.*

*We will encourage parish Neighbourhood Plans and consult about implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy so that towns and villages can directly receive up to 25% of the financial proceeds of any homebuilding in their communities.*

The District Council has a requirement to provide new housing through its Local Plan. If elected, we have also stated in our manifesto that:

*We will produce a new Local Plan which will both guarantee that all development in Uttlesford relates closely to identified need and also satisfies the Planning Inspectorate. We shall involve Town and Parish councils in arriving at decisions based on evidence, not on political influence. We shall hold to account both developers and the agencies responsible for the delivery of key infrastructure, ensuring that this is reviewed prior to giving planning permission.*

These policy statements set the context, which in more detail means:

- We will fulfil the requirement to provide new homes against the identified need;
- We will use an evidence-based process to determine (i) that housing need, (ii) the appropriate location strategy (e.g. new settlement, in existing communities, or some combination), and (iii) suitable locations for new homes, which could include the site of a new settlement.
- Previous evidence, the Local Plan Planning Inspector, and the majority of residents who expressed an opinion have twice favoured a new settlement, and so we will explore this option – however the evidence-led process will actually determine the best strategy for the district;
- We will engage with town and parish councils about any proposals that may result;
- We will not arbitrarily pick or use party-politics to select any locations for development; the evidence-led process cannot be pre-judged. When he rejected draft Uttlesford Local Plan, the

Planning Inspector found the current UDC administration lacking in regard to this with respect to Elsenham; and other locations are under appeal. And whilst some R4U prospective candidates and councillors may have personal opinions over possible development locations (as may those of other parties), these do not represent R4U party policy and will not influence any evidence-led process that we may administer;

- Whilst R4U has these policies with regard to strategic development across the district, we will of course need to respond to specific planning applications as they arise. But to be clear and for the avoidance of doubt, R4U does not have a policy about strategic development at any particular location until the Local Plan evidence-driven process concludes.

The District Council is required to deliver a steady stream of new homes ad-indefinitum. This is currently c.580 each year. That means that sites have to be selected which can assure this constant supply, otherwise national legislation relaxes the rules on where developers can build, and UDC loses control of the planning process.

R4U has been specifically asked about possible future large-scale development in Great Chesterford. R4U does not have a policy or preference with specific regard to this location; we will honour our policy commitments for this site, as with any other location.

We understand that no formal proposals have been created or brought forward for the whole site that UDC identified for 6,435 homes at Great Chesterford (GtCHE7). We also understand that the site is owned by multiple landowners. In our opinion this reduces the likelihood of a “whole site” proposal coming forward and calls in to question the site’s ability to meet the 580 new homes per year deliverability requirement. If a proposal were to come forward for GtCHE7 however, the District Council are required to consider the proposal. If R4U were to control the District Council at the time, R4U would also be guided by its own policies, as outlined above, as well as those of the Council.

The prospective R4U candidates for the new *Littlebury, Chesterfords and Wenden Lofts Ward*, [Belinda Irons](#) and [Patrick Hawke-Smith](#), do not personally advocate large-scale building in Great Chesterford.

Yours faithfully

Dan Starr  
Residents for Uttlesford