
Our Vision: Making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play

Mandate for change

You elected us with a significant mandate to radically change how your district council operates to make sure that you are always the priority. Our Residents Charter makes this deliverable by Uttlesford District Council. We are delighted it has now been embedded in the Council's Corporate and annual Delivery Plans.

Created by and for residents

The Residents Charter was created with direct input from many local residents. Residents like you have had direct input in to our policies through engagement at town and village hall events, surgeries and online. Our manifesto summarised those policies, of which 40,000 were distributed to residents before the election. That meant that residents would know exactly what they would get if they trusted us with their vote. The Residents Charter maintains our open approach by making it 100% transparent to you that we are delivering what we promised.

Delivering on our promises

The Residents Charter is supported by 100s of initiatives to deliver on our pledges. We used a Balanced Scorecard model to prioritise and track all of these initiatives. This allows us to say with confidence that "we promised X and delivered it by doing Y and Z".

Our approach is to work hands-on with senior council officers of each council we lead. With them we build our policies and initiatives into that council's strategic and delivery plans. At Uttlesford District Council these are called the Corporate Plan and annual Delivery Plans. The Residents Charter pulls it all together in one place as a high level summary.

A Residents Charter built on four themes

The Residents Charter is built around four themes of Residents, Towns and Villages, Environment, and District. These commit Uttlesford District Council to **putting residents first**; being an **active place-maker (community builder) for our towns and villages**; being a **progressive custodian of our rural environment**; and **championing our district with other authorities**. Delivering the charter will **make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play**.

Charter Theme: Putting Residents First

Why this is important:

We are elected by residents. Their needs and welfare are our first and highest priority.

They expect us to be open, honest and responsible. They deserve high standards of governance and trustworthiness.

They want good levels of service and expect their council taxes to be used efficiently and wisely.

The result will be:

Residents will know their views have been listened to; they will feel they have the opportunity to influence the decision making; they will understand why decisions have been made even if they disagree with them. They will report increased levels of trust and confidence in the way the Council conducts its business and manages its resources.

We will:

- 1) **Be a council that listens to and acts for residents**
 - a) Increase the voice and influence of residents in planning and other Council matters
 - b) Administer public consultations that are effective, accessible, timely and high quality
 - c) Increase the reach of the Youth Council
 - d) Improve the council's use of the web and social media to increase communication with residents
 - e) Actively and positively engage with and listen to our town and parish councils
 - f) Support town and parish councils to better represent their communities
- 2) **Deliver local government with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability**
 - a) Implement a corporate change programme to increase accountability, transparency and democracy at the Council
 - b) Seek external review of and recognition for positive change achieved by the Council
 - c) Deliver a comprehensive continuing member development programme
- 3) **Be responsible with your money and mitigate the impact of government cuts.**
 - a) Be a self-sufficient Council that generates its own resources from local taxation (Business Rates and Council Tax) and commercial investments thereby removing the reliance on Central Government grants
 - b) Deliver cost-effective and efficient services that live within the Council's means
 - c) Constantly seek to improve the quality of contracted out services
 - d) Apply for all relevant grants
 - e) Set a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to fund council services by a prudent mix of investment, services and tax income, while maintaining adequate reserves
 - f) Follow best-practices for investment risk management and board composition

Charter Theme:	Active Place-Maker For Our Towns And Villages
<p>Why this is important: A focus on strategic master-planning in partnership with towns and villages will create better resident-centred places to live.</p> <p>Our unique connectivity, location, and character can be used to drive a local economy that creates local jobs and prosperity.</p> <p>Taking an active role in providing homes and services for in need will safeguard the health and welfare of all our residents.</p> <p>The result will be: District, town and parish councillors will feel they have participated in decision making that positively shapes the communities they represent.</p> <p>New policies and plans will be implemented that give our towns and villages a strong sense of purpose and place.</p> <p>Residents will see that their council is working hard for them and their families to create great places for them to live, work and play.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Masterplan our new communities for and with residents <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use locally led Development Corporations to deliver sustainable new settlements b) Provide the greatest level of influence and protection for communities adjacent to new settlements 2) Support our towns and villages to plan their neighbourhoods <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Deliver an outstanding planning and place-making capability with the right capacity to create quality outcomes with and for all our communities b) Facilitate Neighbourhood Planning across the district through strong engagement with and support of all town and parish councils c) Implement policies which create better homes and neighbourhoods that meet or exceed national standards d) Work with partners and stakeholders to deliver new sports, play and community facilities 3) Secure greater benefits for our community from new development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement the Community Infrastructure Levy along with s106 to deliver strategic community projects and greater local benefit from development b) Increase the transparency of the Section-106 Agreement process and councillor engagement in it c) Ensure that strong Planning Enforcement holds developers to account d) Require developers to be considerate of the communities in which they build 4) Work with the airport on issues of concern to communities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Seek a reduction in night flights b) Implement programmes to reduce airport related village fly-parking c) Work to secure investment in sustainable transport to and from airport, including for local workers 5) Nurture employment and retail areas to create jobs and retain businesses <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect and grow our town centres as economic hubs b) Increase tourist spend c) Support the creation of amenities that stimulate and facilitates local businesses, such as enterprise zones, business parks, office blocks, industrial areas, and start-up hubs d) Support the expansion and promotion of key relevant employment sectors for the district e. Work with partners to promote the economic opportunities of the London - Cambridge e) Innovation Corridor, Stansted Airport and our main transport corridors f) Work with the airport to increase local airport-based employment opportunities 6) Enforce good business standards in our district <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make sure that businesses and trades in our district meet the national standards and licensing required of them

7) Deliver more affordable homes and protect those in need in our district

- a) Increase the number of affordable homes delivered and different tenure options including social renting
- b) Refurbish our existing council homes to sustainable standards when required c. Reduce the number of empty homes
- c) Ensure that landlords maintain high quality private sector housing conditions
- d) Ensure that services to protect vulnerable women and men who live in our district are accessible and appropriate

8) Promote healthy lifestyles in diverse and inclusive communities

- a) Work with partners, including the voluntary sector, to improve the general quality of life for residents, including for residents that experience social isolation, poor mental health, obesity, addiction and dementia
- b) Continue to be an active partner of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to promote healthy lifestyles

Charter Theme: Progressive Custodian Of Our Rural Environment

Why this is important:

Residents live here because of our beautiful and historical rural character. We need to protect it for those that live here now.

We must act quickly and responsibly to reduce the chances of a climate catastrophe. We have a clear obligation to ensure a clean, healthy and safe future.

The result will be:

Residents will see that their council is a strong protector of our environment; they will feel that the council is taking affirmative action on combating the effects of climate change locally.

We will:

1) Take action on Climate Change

- a) Adopt policies to meet new environmental national guidelines/standards as they emerge
- b) Drive policies to deliver low carbon homes
- c) Improve average energy efficiency of council housing stock
- d) Increase the number of trees in the district
- e) Oppose a second runway at Stansted Airport
- f) Set a Net Zero Carbon goal for the Council and implement supporting policies
- g) Increase walking, cycling and sustainable transport
- h) Recognise the district's 'greenest' business and developers

2) Conserve our natural resources

- a) Implement and enforce policies that protect water and reduce energy consumption
- b) Drive programmes that increase biodiversity
- c) Support local energy production initiatives
- d) Implement programmes to reduce single-use plastics
- e) Work to reduce per-capita landfill in the district

3) Protect and enhance our rural character and heritage

- a) Meet or exceed national standards for open and green spaces
- b) Encourage positive planning that values and protects our heritage
- c) Work with others to increase access to the heritage and history of our district
- d) Work with our rural partners and developers to maintain habitat and wildlife corridors
- e) Target littering and fly-tipping

4) Take strong action on dealing with pollution

- a) Increase air quality monitoring across the district
- b) Deliver reductions in pollution at identified problem areas

Charter Theme: Champion For Our District

Why this is important:

Residents deserve clear accountability, but they would like us to step in to help solve problems even when others are responsible.

In our role as a place-maker we must work with other authorities and organisations to influence, prioritise and coordinate actions to collectively deliver the best for our district and its residents. This will include, when necessary, holding others to account.

The result will be:

Residents will feel that the council is proactively working on their behalf for the good of the district with other authorities and organisations.

We will:

- 1) **Improve Uttlesford's connectivity**
 - a) Work to set the agenda for ECC highway maintenance and pothole fixing
 - b) Work with ECC and communities to develop the highway improvement schemes we need
 - c) Hold Essex Highways to account to deliver what they promise
 - d) Promote and support sustainable transport initiatives, such as bus, rapid transport and rail upgrades
 - e) Lobby Highways England to improve the capacity and safety of the M11
 - f) Work with ECC and hold them to account to deliver rural superfast broadband in our district
- 2) **Support our students, schools and libraries**
 - a) Conduct a wholesale review of school transport to understand the gap in provision of what ECC provides
 - b) Ensure that developer contributions are collected for ECC to provide our local school and Early Years places
 - c) Create and support new services inside our libraries to increase their viability
- 3) **Work with partners to keep the district safe**
 - a) Work with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to reduce crime on our area
 - b) Continue to be an active partner of the Community Safety Partnership
- 4) **Work to create a better local Health Service for residents**
 - a) Work with NHS on in-district local healthcare provision
 - b) Work to secure Addenbrookes, The Princess Alexandra Harlow, and Mid-Essex hospitals as our recognised local hospital providers
 - c) Deliver programmes to support our aging population