

Yourviews

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ON THE WEB

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5. Surprise royal visit at Stansted

Tweet of the week

Bronze for #Essex girl Chloe Rogers with #TeamGB's women's hockey team. #Great-StuffWellDone

@JamesColasanti

Planning 'free-for-all' in the district

AS leader of the opposition Liberal Democrat group on Uttlesford District Council, I want to comment on recent letters relating to the Conservative administration's proposed Local Plan.

Serious problems have arisen because the council's Conservative cabinet were forced to put this plan together in a hurry because they have had to abandon their proposed Option 4 for a new town in Elsenham. This option was introduced without consultation, officer support nor expert reports.

Consequently, a number of insurmountable problems such as transport issues and a lack of other infrastructure such as water supply and drainage, together with sustained opposition from residents and the Lib Dems, forced the Conservatives to back down on Elsenham, a plan which evidence has shown is simply not sensible or deliverable.

If the Lib Dems had been in control of the council, we would have embarked on a staged, considered and transparent consultation process with communities to formulate a plan based on maximum consensus. We would have taken proper account of transport concerns and made evidence-based decisions.

The council's ruling Conservatives have not been able to follow this path because of the amount of time wasted stubbornly defending the failed Option 4.

This has resulted in a failure to work with communities to deliver an evidence-based plan over the past five years and has now left Uttlesford residents on the wrong end of a planning 'free-for-all'.

Cllr David Morson
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Henham

Find the solution

LIBERAL Democrat group leader Councillor David Morson has attacked the process used to formulate the Local Plan currently under review. While I agree with his points regarding transparency and community involvement, it is puzzling that councillor Morson should raise doubts about a process his party supported and was involved in.

At what point did the Lib Dem group decide that the process had failed to take account of community involvement? Did the Lib Dem members of the Local Development Framework working group ever voice any such concerns ahead of the consultation process? Or was the Lib Dem group criticism of secrecy, accountability and transparency only voiced when they found that the dispersal of sites for development, which they championed over a single site development, had resulted in broad public unease across the district?

Any plan will face vociferous opposition because few people want to see the countryside built on, including those who have benefited from recent housing development. In an era of austerity and cuts, people are worried that public services will be put under further stress.

Yet, no plan is not an option. As we have seen in recent years, developers will take advantage of a policy vacuum to put houses in places the community objects to and without adequate contributions to infrastructure. A single site gives the council leverage to ensure adequate infrastructure, but this makes addressing the short-term supply deficit that has arisen due to the council's lack of strategy more difficult to address. Then there is the issue of where hous-

ing development should be dispersed and what level of housing growth communities can realistically absorb.

I do not envy those who will make the difficult decisions. But instead of berating them over a process he supported, perhaps Cllr Morson could come up with solutions to the dilemmas of development.

While I congratulate him on his election as Lib Dem group leader, he will need to show far more evidence that he is capable of leadership if his party is to win control in 2014. It is easy to jump on any passing bandwagon and moan all the time, but strength of leadership is shown in the ability to solve problems and provide convincing answers with integrity. In that respect, all parties have been found lacking, both locally and nationally.

Daniel Brett
Spencer Close
Stansted Mountfitchet

Full of contradictions

I AM writing in response to Councillor David Morson's letter about the proposed Local Plan. His comments are extraordinary.

This is especially so given that Cllr Morson himself, as Vice Chairman of the council's Scrutiny

Committee which met on June 12, 2012, proposed the recommendation "to approve a strategy of dispersed development reflecting the existing hierarchy of settlements for the preparation of a Local Plan".

In moving this recommendation Cllr Morson is minuted as saying: "That he appreciated the comments made by Cllr Watson, and felt that there would not be anyone who was entirely happy with the proposed

option, but the Local Plan had now benefitted from two good discussions and the dispersal option did allow all areas to be considered for housing and also affordable housing.

"There was no dispute that the emergent option was supported by expert reports which all suggested this option was the most viable in terms of empirical evidence".

It is very difficult to square this with the comments made by Cllr Morson in his letter.

It is a shame that the Liberal Democrats see such an important and sensitive issue as an opportunity to play political games as demonstrated by recent letters from Lib Dem councillors and activists.

The Lib Dem website proclaims their opposition to a new settlement, but their recent comments are opportunistic and contradictory, how can Cllr Morson have forgotten that as recently as June he proposed endorsement of the very plan that he now takes issue with!

Jim Ketteridge
Leader
Uttlesford District Council

Set the record straight

MR Dean, in his letter of last week ('UDC needs a clean up'), is incorrect in his statement that "no one at Uttlesford told the public during two consultations this year that some sites had already been given at least an amber light".

UDC Planning's literature at its public exhibitions June 19-28, included the statement: "House numbers, 2001/12: 4,600, 2012/2028: 5,100; already built/approved: 6,400, balance to build 3,300".

Anthony Goodwin
Henham

Join the conversation – www.streetlife.com

LAST week the *Broadcast* launched streetlife.com – a new local social network designed to help neighbours connect online and share practical information, advice and opinions about their area. Over the past few days, readers have signed up, and the conversations are starting – proving that good old fashioned neighbourliness is alive and well.



How it works

- Go to streetlife.com and sign up with your postcode and email address. It's free and easy, and you'll automatically be linked to the people and conversations where you live.
- You can post messages, events, polls and pictures, and locals will be able to respond. And you can help out your neighbours by sharing your knowledge, opinions and advice about the area.



Becca C

Where's best for a nice pint of real ale in Gt Dunmow?
I'm moving to Dunmow and would like to know which pubs a real ale drinker (and quizzer) should check out?

Vivien T
The Three Horses shoes Duton Hill, just outside Dunmow. No food but great company and well looked after beer.



Pam G

Best places to go for dinner?
I've got my favourites but would love to hear other people's in case I'm missing out! Also would be interested in nice Sunday lunch spots.

JS
Jalsa Ghar is always a hit and has a nice ambience. We also think the service is better than at the Pride of Sylhet.