The Parish Council thanks those who commented on the draft version published in the October2021 edition of Village Views. The council has responded personally to all who submitted written comments. An updated version follows.

Future Development in Littlebury Parish

Introduction

Whilst the Parish Council is not encouraging significant development it recognises that, given the geographic location of the parish, economic growth in the region and central government policy, there will be increasing pressure to increase the size of local communities. Though the ultimate planning authority is Uttlesford District Council it is within the mandate of the Parish Council (PC) to comment on all planning applications within the Parish and those in adjoining parishes or town councils where they are judged to have a material impact on Littlebury Parish. The PC also expects, to be asked to comment at various stages on the revised Local Plan being prepared by Uttlesford District Council.

This document sets out the criteria that the PC proposes to apply when commenting on future development and planning applications. It is not a formal Neighbourhood Plan. It does not identify any specific sites in the Parish where development might be preferred nor does it solicit any particular development.

Criteria for Future Development

1. Any development must respect the unique character of the parish. The village of Littlebury contains a historic central core in which over 20 of the buildings are either Grade1 or Grade 2 listed. The area bounded by High Street, Cambridge Road, Walden Road and Mill Lane is designated a conservation area. The views of the village on the approaches from the east (Walden Road) and the south (B1383) are historic and relatively unspoiled by modern development. The hamlets (Littlebury Green and Catmere End) are small rural communities surrounded by attractive countryside. Both have relatively low housing densities with large gardens and open spaces.

2. Growth should be compatible with the character and size of a modest sized rural community in the case of Littlebury and small hamlets in the case of Littlebury Green and Catmere End. Overdevelopment of infill sites increases overall housing density and reduces green space so should be carefully controlled. Backfill, particularly on individual properties, should be discouraged.

3. Ribbon development alongside existing roads, of the type that is being built next to much of the B1383, does not relate to existing adjacent communities and changes the character of the locality significantly. In general development should be restricted to the perceived village limits, typically defined by the 30 and 40 mph speed limits.

4. Any development places increased constraint on existing infrastructure and this should be considered in the PC response to planning applications. Whilst there is little that the Parish Council can do on its own it can and must, in conjunction with adjacent parishes, lobby for improvements to infrastructure now and before any significant housing growth. There is probably little scope for improving the local highway network but there is scope for improvements to bus services, pedestrian paths, cycle ways and school places. Water supply is under increasing pressure in the area.

5. Careful consideration should be given to the types of homes built. Vibrant communities need a mix of housing types and households. The parish would benefit from some smaller homes suitable for single people, young couples and those wishing to downsize. Consideration should also be given to a small number of affordable homes.

6. New development should be sustainable in its own right and if possible add to the sustainability of the community. It should, therefore:

- be resilient against the effects of climate change
- be designed to be carbon neutral through the use of non-fossil fuel heating, solar water heating and solar PV and appropriate building materials.
- provide off street parking and charging infrastructure for electric vehicles
- facilitate active travel for local journeys.

7. Any development must protect, and ideally enhance, local ecosystems and biodiversity. The Parish includes a number of important and increasingly threatened ecosystems such as spring-fed ponds in Catmere End, and natural wetlands and chalk streams (Cam Valley).

8. In sites where multiple dwellings are proposed the Parish Council should work with developers to provide increased open space and community facilities.

9. The Parish Council should look favourably on small scale conversions of existing non-residential buildings or development of new ones that provide employment opportunities such as office or technology or craft based micro-employment, with the proviso that they do not create disturbance or significantly increase traffic.

10. The Parish Council should actively support the development of local amenities such as the pub, a community shop, shared EV charging facilities.

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