

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr Neil Gregory & Cllr Richard Pavitt

Wk comm. 6th July 2026

Rivers Return (film)

If you haven't seen this film, we would encourage you to do so. It was filmed mostly on our stretch of the Cam in May this year and looks at the work of volunteers in restoring and conserving the river, and the involvement (and enthusiasm) of younger residents. You can find it at the Uttlesford District Council YouTube channel.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

UDC is poised to become a CIL-charging local authority. CIL is a tax on most types of new development and, as the name suggests, is intended to help pay for local infrastructure projects that are needed to support development, such as schools, health services, leisure, open spaces, and transport improvements. It is a fixed, non-negotiable tax charged on the size and type of development. Section 106 (s106) contributions will continue to apply, negotiated with the developer to secure direct site-specific mitigation such as affordable homes, onsite play areas, and local highways changes.

Local Government Reorganisation

Since taking control of Essex and Suffolk county councils - and Norfolk with minority control - the Reform Party has said it will challenge the basis of the Government's decision to move to unitary authorities in those counties. We have done a post about this ("all change") on our website proudlyindependent.uk We wait to see if the challenge will progress and if it will affect the reorganisation timetable for Essex.

Local Government Finance

Local government expenditure represents a fifth of all public expenditure in the United Kingdom. If figures are your thing, you might enjoy the 36th edition of 'Local government financial statistics England', which provides a comprehensive overview of local government finance for 2024-25. Alternatively, you might prefer to walk barefoot over hot coals. You'll find it at gov.uk.

Local Plan

The Local Plan had its first serious challenge at committee on 10th June, when two speculative applications totalling 480 dwellings at Birchanger and Stansted were refused. However, because the Government has failed to publish the latest district-by-district housing delivery figures (as it is obligated to do), Uttlesford appears not to have a 5-year Housing Land Supply. The applicant relied on this out-of-date Government figure, using it as an argument for consent of the sites. Under new rules recently introduced by the Ministry of Housing, these applications will now go to the Secretary of State for adjudication.

And on the subject of planning ...

we expect the new NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) to be announced imminently. This will likely include a permanent presumption in favour of sustainable development within established development boundaries, together with other policy changes that the Town & Country Planning Association says 'will have significant implications both for the quality of development and local democracy.'