





## Foreword

North Hertfordshire is one of the best places to live in the country and with that comes a unique set of challenges to keep it that way.

People want to move here to enjoy our lifestyle, those of us who are lucky enough to live here want to stay and our children and grandchildren want to make their homes here too. Couple all that with the fact that people are living longer and the result is a rapidly growing population in the District, which inevitably leads to the need for more homes, more jobs and the infrastructure, shops, schools, medical and leisure facilities to meet that growth.

That growth needs to be managed and controlled in a way that will protect and enhance the area in which we live and keep it one of the best places to live. The Proposed Submission Local Plan seeks to set out how we manage that challenge until 2031 and identifies the strategies, policies and development opportunities that will guide us.

A key part of the growth is of course the homes we will need for our growing population. It is over 20 years since we identified any places that can build the homes we need and this Local Plan seeks to identify those places where those new homes may be built. But we cannot accept uncontrolled development, those homes must address the impact they may have on the environment and most of all meet the needs of our local population including ensuring that our families can afford to live here and that the right type of homes are provided for them. We also make provision for employment needs and seek to support our town centres in making them vibrant places to meet the needs of our local community.

The Proposed Submission Local Plan is the result of a long and complex preparation process during which we have engaged with statutory bodies, infrastructure providers, residents, community groups and agencies. We have also worked closely with adjoining local authorities in resolving those cross boundary issues which need to be addressed.

We are now consulting on the final draft of the Local Plan. This is your opportunity to give us your views, before it is submitted to the Government for examination by an independent Planning Inspector, on whether the Local Plan is “sound” to enable present and future generations to continue to live, work and prosper in one of the best places in the country. North Hertfordshire.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Councillor David Levett

Executive Member for Planning and Enterprise  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
September 2016





### *About this consultation*

This document is the proposed submission draft of the new Local Plan for North Hertfordshire. Consultation will take place over a 6 week period from Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October until Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November. You can respond online, by post or email and complete the response form which will ensure that your response contains the necessary information.

Completed representation forms can be returned to one of the following addresses:

Online : [www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan)

By email : [local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk)

By post : Planning Policy, PO Box 480, M33 0DE

Please note that we cannot accept late representations. Any comments that you send us will be public documents, we cannot accept confidential or anonymous responses. Your comments and your name will be published when the consultation is complete, but personal information (such as your address or email address) will remain confidential.

All responses will be considered by the Council before deciding whether or not to submit this Local Plan for examination to the Planning Inspectorate.

### *What can you comment on and how you should respond*

The Council has prepared a guidance note which relates to the matters the Inspector will consider at the Examination, and will help you to complete the response form. You can comment on any policy or part of this document, the Policies Map or the Sustainability Appraisal of this Plan but you will need to identify which document and section you are commenting on<sup>1</sup>.

The Inspector will need to know whether you support or object to the Plan and, if you object, what is the basis for your concern. The Inspector will want to know whether the Council has met the legal requirements for the preparation of the Plan and whether it meets the “tests of soundness” which are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The tests of soundness are set out below:

### *Tests of Soundness*

**Positively prepared** – the plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

**Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;

**Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities; and

**Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Any comments on the Policies Map should be made against the relevant policy or section of the Plan.



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# SECTION ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

# SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Planning is about making important decisions affecting the environment and character of our towns, villages and countryside and ensuring that development happens in the right place at the right time. These decisions affect how we live and work and how we feel about places.
- 1.2 The process of preparing local plans and controlling development are firmly based within a legal framework set by the Government. The legislation and national planning advice state that all local authorities should have an up-to-date local plan. The last District Local Plan was adopted in 1996. North Hertfordshire District Council's new Local Plan directs where new development will take place across the plan area, describes what changes will occur and identifies how our towns and villages will be shaped in the future.
- 1.3 This Local Plan seeks to address the key issues facing North Hertfordshire and will set a strategic vision and spatial strategy for the District over the period 2011 to 2031. The Local Plan contains five main sections, not including the appendices. A separate Local Plan Proposals Map is published alongside the Local Plan to show the spatial implications of policies:
- **Section One: Introduction and Context** – this section explains the planning system and provides an overview of North Hertfordshire and the wider area. It also sets out the key challenges and issues facing the District.
  - **Section Two: Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies** – This section sets out the spatial strategy and vision for the future of the District and links this to the strategic policies which provide the guidance on the main issues that the Plan seeks to address. It sets out our overall approach to topics such as housing, employment, Green Belt and countryside. It also contains a separate policy for each of the Strategic Housing Sites (defined as sites of 500 or more homes) which will make a substantial contribution towards housing requirements over the plan period.
  - **Section Three: Development Management Policies** – This section covers the detailed requirements that new development must meet to be granted planning permission. It includes issues such as open space, design and car parking.
  - **Section Four: Communities** – This section sets out the site allocations for each community on a parish / town basis. It identifies the detailed site-specific criteria for each local housing allocation. Retail and employment allocations are also identified.
  - **Section Five: Implementation, Monitoring and Review** – This section sets out how the proposals in the Plan will be delivered. It identifies key supporting infrastructure and the partners that will help to deliver it. It sets out a monitoring framework that will be used to ensure that our vision and strategic policies are being met and sets out an approach to a future review of the Plan.
- 1.4 It is important to note that the policies and supporting text in this Plan are inter-related and need to be read together when considering a specific proposal or issue.

This Local Plan supersedes the saved policies from the 1996 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 (with Alterations). Appendix 1 provides a list of policies that have been superseded. Appendix 2 provides a list of Local Plan designations as shown on the Proposals Maps and where to view other designations which policies in the Local Plan refer to.

## **The Planning Framework:**

### National Policy and Guidance

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup> published in 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and must be taken into account along with other national planning policy in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and in determining planning applications. The NPPF is supplemented by detailed Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), released in 2014, which provides additional detail on certain topics. Local plans must be consistent with national planning policy to pass examination.
- 1.6 One of the key elements of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local plans must be based on and reflect the presumption and include clear policies setting out how the presumption should be applied locally. It also states that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs for housing, business and other requirements, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits or other specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.
- 1.7 In relation to local plans, matters covered by the NPPF include (but are not limited to) requirements to:
- Properly assess the need for new development (known as objectively assessed needs) and planning to meet these insofar as is consistent with the framework;
  - Where appropriate, carry out these assessments with regard to market areas which may cross administrative boundaries and ensuring that development needs across these wider areas are also met;
  - Protect existing Green Belt and only alter it in exceptional circumstances;
  - Identify what infrastructure will be required to support planned development;
  - Address issues such as climate change and ensure a positive approach to the conservation and enhancement of natural and historic environments; and
  - Where potential harm to relevant natural or historic assets may occur, consider this against the public benefits that may arise from any proposed development.

### Duty to co-operate

- 1.8 Another important element of the National Planning Policy Framework is the Duty to Co-operate. The 'Duty-to-Co-operate' was introduced via the 2011 Localism Act. Public bodies have a legal duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, with local planning authorities working together to meet

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG) March 2012 – <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas. Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their local plans are submitted for examination.

- 1.9 The Council has sought to engage constructively and on an on-going basis with other neighbouring authorities and public bodies throughout the preparation of the Plan. This includes the joint commissioning and sharing of evidence base studies and the identification of infrastructure requirements. In particular the Council has worked with Stevenage Borough Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire District Council in terms of addressing housing and employment requirements. The Council has also worked with Hertfordshire County Council and other national bodies in terms of transport and other infrastructure requirements.

### Relationship to Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.10 Neighbourhood plans have been introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and enable local communities to shape development in their area. These are plans produced by a parish council or a neighbourhood forum. Towns and parishes also have the option of working together to prepare a joint neighbourhood plan. If a neighbourhood plan is prepared, independently examined, is supported by the Council and receives a majority vote in a referendum it becomes part of the statutory development plan for that neighbourhood and is used when determining planning applications, alongside the Local Plan.
- 1.11 In order for a neighbourhood plan to become part of the statutory development plan for an area it must:
- have appropriate regard to national policy and guidance;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area; and
  - not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU obligations.
- 1.12 The first step in preparing a neighbourhood plan is to define a neighbourhood area. There are currently eleven neighbourhood planning areas designated within the District with another two communities considering preparing a neighbourhood plan. Those plans under preparation include the parishes of Ashwell, Barkway and Nuthampstead, Codicote, Ickleford, Kimpton, Knebworth, Pirton, Preston, St Ippolyts, St. Pauls Walden and Wymondley.
- 1.13 National policy makes it clear that once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the relevant local plan, and has been brought into force, the policies it contains will take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the local plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict.
- 1.14 This local plan clearly distinguishes between strategic and non-strategic policies to assist in the development and interpretation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.15 Local planning authorities have a general duty to support communities producing neighbourhood plans. The Council is committed to neighbourhood planning as a process, and offers support and guidance to parish councils in preparation of their plans.



### Appraisals and Assessments

- 1.16 The Local Plan must undergo a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) as part of its preparation. These are required under both national and European law. SEA takes into consideration the likely impacts of the Plan on the environment. The SA appraises the likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed policies in the Plan and how these can be mitigated and controlled. These assessments are normally carried out as a single process and this approach has been taken.
- 1.17 This Plan is accompanied by a sustainability appraisal report. The findings of the assessments have fed directly into the development of the policies. For the strategic policies reference is made in the Plan to the most important findings of the report.
- 1.18 In preparing the Local Plan, we have also carried out a Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment to determine whether the Plan is likely to have any significant effects on known European wildlife habitat sites. This assessment concluded that, within the measures and safeguards included in this Plan, the scale and type of development being proposed is unlikely to have a significant effect upon and European sites<sup>2</sup>.

### Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.19 The Local Plan has been prepared following consultation with the local community in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement<sup>3</sup> which sets out when the Council will consult the community in relation to the Local Plan, how the Council will engage with the community and who the Council will involve in that consultation. Consultation on the Local Plan has also been carried out in accordance with requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

### Local Development Scheme

- 1.20 The Local Plan has also been prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme<sup>4</sup> which provides information about the programme for preparing planning documents to be prepared as part of the Local Plan. This includes documents that have been produced already and a timetable for the production of future documents.

### The Local Plan Evidence Base

- 1.21 All local plans are required to have an evidence base to draw from during their preparation to ensure that accurate, robust and up-to-date information is available to formulate meaningful and effective policies. The Council has prepared a wide-ranging evidence base for the Local Plan. This is listed on the Council website and is updated on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>2</sup> NHDC HRA Screening Assessment (2016)

<sup>3</sup> North Hertfordshire Statement of Community Involvement updated xxx 2015.

<sup>4</sup> North Hertfordshire Local Development Scheme January 2016

## Previous Consultation:

- 1.22 The policies and proposals within this Local Plan have evolved through a number of previous consultation stages.
- 1.23 Under new legislation in 2004 with the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the local plan process was renamed the 'Local Development Framework' (LDF). The contents of the LDF were guided by regional plans, formally known as Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). These set out development targets and strategic policies for the local planning authorities in their area. North Hertfordshire was located within the East of England region and an RSS for this area was adopted in 2008.
- 1.24 The Council published several consultation papers as part of the LDF between 2005-2009 to conform to the emerging and adopted proposals of the RSS, including:
- Core Strategy and Development Policies Issues & Options (2005);
  - Core Strategy Preferred Options (2007);
  - Development Policies Preferred Options (2007);
  - Stevenage & North Herts Action Plan Issues and Options (2007, jointly with Stevenage Borough Council);
  - Land Allocations Issues & Options (2008); and
  - Land Allocations Additional Suggested Sites Issues & Options (2009)
- 1.25 The publication of the NPPF in March 2012, followed by the eventual revocation of the East of England Plan in January 2013 effectively 'reset the clock' for North Hertfordshire's Local Plan. A decision was made to merge the work on the emerging core strategy and the land allocations into a single local plan. As a consequence of these events, the Council became responsible for determining strategic planning matters formerly set out in the RSS, such as the setting of housing targets for the area.
- 1.26 Since March 2012, the Council has carried out three public consultations on a new Local Plan for North Hertfordshire. Given the significant changes above, it is these consultations that are viewed as marking the formal preparation of this Plan. This was in response to the evidence work carried out in assessing the objectively assessed need for housing and requiring consultation on proposed housing sites. These included the:
- Housing Options Growth Levels and Locations 2011-2031 (February 2013)
  - Housing Additional Local Options (July 2013); and
  - Local Plan Preferred Options (December 2014)
- 1.27 All three of these consultations saw relatively strong responses from residents, businesses, organisations, elected representatives and other stakeholders. All representations have been assessed and summarised and have been key in shaping this document. The Statement of Consultation<sup>5</sup> sets out how the Council has taken into account the comments it has received and forms part of the Council's evidence base.

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<sup>5</sup> Statement of Consultation (NHDC - September 2016)

## 2 A Picture of North Hertfordshire

**Figure 1: North Hertfordshire in Context:**



- 2.1 North Hertfordshire is a predominantly rural district covering approximately 375 square kilometres of land and is the most northern district within the County of Hertfordshire. The District is bounded by eight local authority areas – Stevenage, East Hertfordshire, St. Albans and Welwyn Hatfield within Hertfordshire, but also Luton, Central Bedfordshire, South Cambridgeshire and Uttlesford (Essex). Stevenage and Luton are relatively small in size and primarily urban by nature.
- 2.2 North Hertfordshire is characterised by a number of small to medium sized towns with a range of facilities and smaller settlements located within open countryside. The main settlements within North Hertfordshire are Hitchin, Baldock, Royston and the world's first Garden City, Letchworth, each representing a significant focus for employment and housing. Most of the Great Ashby estate on the edge of Stevenage lies in North Hertfordshire. There are also about 40 villages and hamlets. Although there is no one dominant centre serving the District, there is a high degree of interdependency between the various towns and villages, as well as with surrounding larger towns like Stevenage, Luton, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Welwyn Garden City and London.
- 2.3 A large proportion of the rural area of the District is covered by Green Belt, with the remainder classified as rural area beyond the Green Belt. North Hertfordshire has two areas of Green Belt, the London Metropolitan Green Belt covering Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Stevenage and nearby settlements, and the Luton Green Belt covering parts of the west of the District<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> See Green Belt Review (NHDC 2016)

- 2.4 The District is strategically positioned with good rail and road connections. It is less than 40 miles from central London. The five railway stations within North Hertfordshire provide direct services north to Peterborough, north-east to Cambridge and King's Lynn, and south to London and Hertford. There are also services to Stevenage that offers access to the North East and Scotland. However no rail links from the District to the west exist, meaning towns like Luton and Milton Keynes are less accessible via public transport.
- 2.5 The A1 linking London to the North also passes through the District, as does the A505 running from east to west. Other main roads serving the local authority area include the A600, A602 and A507, while the two airports of Stansted and Luton are also situated in close proximity to the District as shown on Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: North Hertfordshire in detail**



## Demographic Profile<sup>7</sup>:

### Population & Distribution

- 2.6 North Hertfordshire is a diverse area. The total population figure for North Hertfordshire, from the 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, was 131,696 (males = 64,621 and females = 67,075)<sup>8</sup>. Over 70% of the population live in the four main settlements of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston and Baldock

<sup>7</sup> Summary of the demographic profile of North Hertfordshire is based on data taken from nationally recognised sources such as the Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Sport England and Experian.

<sup>8</sup> ONS (2016) Mid 2015 Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland



- 2.7 The District age profile differs from the East of England profile as there is a lower proportion of 15-29 year olds (North Hertfordshire 15.7% compared to East of England 17.8%). There are, however, more in the age groups from 30-54 (North Hertfordshire 36 % compared to East of England 33.6%)<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.8 Official statistics indicate that the population is likely to increase over the next 15 years by just over 24,000 residents (population estimate at 2031 – 153,400)<sup>10</sup>. This is due to a combination of factors, including people living longer, changes in social patterns, and the attractiveness of the District as a place to live. This will put considerable pressure not just on our housing numbers but on vital social support mechanisms such as schools and GP surgeries as well as our transport infrastructure.

### Ethnicity

- 2.9 The District has a diverse population, with a black and minority ethnic population comprising 10.5% of the total population, compared with 14.6% for England, and 9.2% for the East of England region.

### Economic Activity and Inactivity

- 2.10 8 in 10 (86.9%) of North Hertfordshire's 16-64 year olds are economically active (in or seeking employment) compared to a national figure of 77.8%<sup>11</sup>. The unemployment rate in North Hertfordshire is 3.4%; this is below the East of England figure (3.8%) and below the national rate (5.1%)<sup>12</sup>. Approximately 1 in 5 (13.1%) of North Hertfordshire's 16-64 year olds are economically inactive<sup>13</sup>.

### Deprivation

- 2.11 According to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, North Hertfordshire is relatively affluent compared to other local authority areas. The District ranks 271<sup>st</sup> out of 326 local authority areas in England (1 being the most deprived)<sup>14</sup>. None of the District's population lives in areas within the bottom 10% of Super Output Areas (SOA) nationally, i.e. in the most deprived parts of the country. North Hertfordshire does however have four areas in the next two cohorts, i.e. those which are in the top 30% are seen as being most deprived, this includes one area in Hitchin and three in Letchworth Garden city.

### Health

- 2.12 On the whole the quality of life in North Hertfordshire is good. Life expectancy in North Hertfordshire is similar to the national figure; the male rate is currently 80.4 years compared to 79.4 years for England, and the female equivalent is 83.2 years

<sup>9</sup> ONS (2016) Population Estimates by single year of age

<sup>10</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire SHMA Update 2015

<sup>11</sup> Nomis (2016) – Official Labour Market Statistics; Employment and unemployment (Apr 2015 – Mar 2016)

<sup>12</sup> Nomis (2016) – Model based estimates of unemployment (July 2016)

<sup>13</sup> Nomis (2016) – Official Labour Market Statistics; Employment and unemployment (Apr 2015 – Mar 2016)

<sup>14</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2015) – English indices of deprivation 2015

compared to 83.1 years nationally. Life expectancy is 3.7 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of North Hertfordshire than in the least deprived areas<sup>15</sup>.

- 2.13 Projected population changes for North Hertfordshire to 2031 and beyond shows the impact that higher life expectancy has in regard to the age of the general population, with a higher proportion of our residents living between the 70 to 90+ age bands who will require differing degrees of support in terms of health and social care.
- 2.14 Adult and child obesity rates in North Hertfordshire are below the national and regional averages. 19.1% v 23.0% for adults and 12.6% v 19.1% for children; however, these figures still present a key challenge for the District<sup>16</sup>.

### **Economy:**

- 2.15 Like most areas North Hertfordshire did not escape the detrimental affects of the economic downturn in 2009 and many variables including unemployment and job growth figures suffered as result. Figures have only recently returned to pre-2008 levels and the local employment environment is improving and the figures are moving in the right direction. It is estimated that there are around 48,800 jobs<sup>17</sup> in North Hertfordshire.
- 2.16 There is a higher concentration of people working in the District employed in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, retail, motor trades, property, entertainment and recreation. Many higher skilled residents commute out of the District for employment. Nonetheless sectors such as finance & insurance and information & communication make a substantial contribution to the District's overall economic output, although not employing a huge number of people. These represent opportunities for future expansion and development<sup>18</sup>.
- 2.17 The District hosts a number of internationally important businesses in the environmental technologies, insurance and electronics, as well as companies in pharmaceutical technologies, advanced engineering. Information technology and in the service and business support sectors.
- 2.18 The District has a working age population of 81,700 of which 71,800 are economically active. The majority of these are employees and work full-time but a small proportion of the population are self employed (10.4%).
- 2.19 In 2015 the median gross pay for full-time workers in the area (residence based) was £637.3 per week. This was considerably higher than the median earnings of those living in the East of England region (£551.0 per week) and the National Average (£529.6 per week), reflecting the high earnings associated with the proportion of the public that commute out of the District.
- 2.20 15.7% of the population do not have access to a car. This is much lower than the national figure (24.9%) and slightly lower than regionally (17.7%).

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<sup>15</sup> Public Health England (2015) – North Hertfordshire Health Profile 2015

<sup>16</sup> Public Health England (2015) – North Hertfordshire Health Profile 2015

<sup>17</sup> Nomis (2014)

<sup>18</sup> Employment land review (Regeneris Consulting, 2013)

## Housing:

- 2.21 At the start of the plan period in 2011, there were approximately 55,000 homes in North Hertfordshire. Almost one-quarter of homes in North Hertfordshire were detached houses. This proportion was slightly higher than both the Hertfordshire county and national figures. Conversely, the proportion of flats (including converted houses) was slightly lower<sup>19</sup>.
- 2.22 House prices in the District are well above the regional and national averages, although slightly below the average for Hertfordshire which is skewed significantly upwards by prices in areas such as St Albans. The average cost of a home in the District is around £350,000, meaning prices are around one-quarter higher than the national average<sup>20</sup>.
- 2.23 Plainly, these district-wide figures mask some fairly significant variations within and between North Hertfordshire's towns and villages.
- 2.24 In the ten-year period preceding this Plan, almost 5,500 new homes were built. The level of housing completions was highest over the period 2001-2008. On average, more than 600 homes were built each year during this period, with more than 700 new homes built in both 2001/02 and 2007/08. However, the completion of work at Great Ashby coincided with the financial 'crash' and general downturn in the property market. Since 2008, housing completion rates in the District have almost halved to around 330 new homes per year<sup>21</sup>.
- 2.25 There are currently more than 1,600 households on the local authority housing register awaiting assistance with their housing needs<sup>22</sup>.

## Natural and Built Environment:

### Natural environment

- 2.26 The natural environment of North Hertfordshire contributes to its character and distinctiveness. North Hertfordshire has a diverse range of green infrastructure and environmental assets of local, regional and national importance. This includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Wildlife Sites, protected trees and woodlands, extensive areas of agricultural land, minerals reserves, rivers, floodplains, and a comprehensive network of open space.
- 2.27 North Hertfordshire comprises a broad band of attractive undulating countryside following the chalk escarpment of the Chiltern Hills. This ridge forms the watershed between the river basins of the Thames and The Wash. The highest point is Telegraph Hill at Lilley, at 184m above sea level and the lowest point of 32m above sea level is where the River Rhee leaves the District north of Ashwell. Most of the rural area is farmland, although there is some woodland, especially in the west of the District. Part of the District is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty located to the far north west, an area designated for its nationally significant landscape.

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<sup>19</sup> 2011 Census, Table KS401EW

<sup>20</sup> Quarterly House Price Data for Hertfordshire (HertsLIS, 2016)

<sup>21</sup> NHDC monitoring data

<sup>22</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: Volume Two (ORS, 2016)

- 2.28 The District contains a variety of habitats for wildlife and plants, including areas of high biodiversity - notably the chalk grasslands and chalky boulder clay woodlands and meadows in the east of the District, the oak and hornbeam woodlands in the west and the wet meadows and fens along the River Hiz and tributaries.
- 2.29 North Hertfordshire is located at the head of both Great Ouse and Thames river catchments and as a result fluvial flooding is not a huge issue based on the size and flow of the watercourses. Of greater significance is surface and groundwater flooding associated with historic settlement pattern topography. Also of concern is the potential for pollution of watercourses linked to the lack of dilution in the river environment. Additionally North Hertfordshire is identified as an area of water stress.
- 2.30 Minerals such as sand, gravel, crushed rock, chalk and clay are an important natural resource locally. The southern part of the District falls within a sand and gravel belt which stretches across Hertfordshire from Bishops Stortford to Hemel Hempstead. This provides the raw minerals required for constructing and maintaining roads, buildings and other infrastructure. Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for minerals planning for Hertfordshire.

### Built Environment

- 2.31 The settlements of Hitchin, Baldock and Royston are all historic market towns each with their own distinctive character. Letchworth Garden City is based on Ebenezer Howard's original concept of a self contained settlement combining both town and country living. Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock lie very close to each other and have strong relationships in terms of housing markets and job movements. All four towns are service centres with a range of shops, jobs and community facilities that serve their respective rural hinterlands. The District has 35 civil parishes and three unparished areas (Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City). The Communities Chapter provides more detail on each of the towns and rural settlements across north Hertfordshire.
- 2.32 All the towns and many of the villages have historic areas and buildings; there are 40 conservation areas and approximately 2750 listed buildings. There are also a number of registered historic parks and gardens. The District has a long history of human habitation and is crossed by the prehistoric Icknield Way. It also contains many ancient monuments, including the iron age Ravensburgh Castle at Hexton, the largest fort in south-east England.
- 2.33 It is important for the Council to review and understand changes and trends in its economy and local population and associated pressures on its environment. The Spatial Strategy and policies in this Plan make provision for guiding development, improving and providing for facilities for the future, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment. This cannot be done in isolation without understanding cross boundaries issues and working with key agencies.

### **Relationship with Other Plans and Strategies:**

- 2.34 In preparing this Local Plan for North Hertfordshire, we also need to consider how it relates to, and affects, the wider area and the plans of other local authorities and agencies, including taking into consideration our own district plans and strategies.

### Wider Area Plans and Strategies

- 2.35 The Plan has been developed in consultation with nearby councils and other bodies under the duty to co-operate. National policy is clear that development should be co-ordinated across wider 'market areas' for both housing and employment. These are zones that share similar characteristics in terms of house prices, commuting patterns or the costs of business premises. They will not necessarily follow administrative boundaries and authorities should work together to try and meet development needs across these areas.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.36 The evidence work that supports this Local Plan has defined both the Housing Market Areas<sup>24</sup> and Functional Economic Market Area in which North Hertfordshire sits<sup>25</sup>.

### Housing Market Areas and Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- 2.37 The District Council has worked collaboratively with six other authorities to identify *Housing Market Areas in Bedfordshire and surrounding areas*. This identifies that the substantial majority of North Hertfordshire (98.7%) lies in a housing market area stretching from Welwyn Garden City, through and across the District to the Cambridgeshire borders and into Bedfordshire. This covers all of Stevenage's administrative area, smaller parts of Welwyn Hatfield, Central Bedfordshire and East Hertfordshire and a minimal area within South Cambridgeshire. This functional HMA has a population of around 350,000 and is referred to as the Stevenage HMA. This area is shown green in figure 3 over page.
- 2.38 The small area to the west of the District, including Hexton, Lilley and Breachwood Green, lies within a different housing market area centred on Luton. This HMA covers all of Luton's administrative area, a substantial area of Central Bedfordshire and a small area of Aylesbury Vale. This functional HMA has a population of around 323,000 and is referred to as the Luton HMA.
- 2.39 The HMA geography has informed the preparation of Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) which have been completed on a 'best fit' basis by groups of local authorities. The Council has prepared a joint SHMA<sup>26</sup> with Stevenage which identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) for 13,800 homes in North Hertfordshire and 7,600 homes within Stevenage over the period 2011-2031. The plans of both authorities show that their individual housing needs can be accommodated in full within their administrative areas.

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<sup>23</sup> NPPF paragraphs 47, 159 and 160.

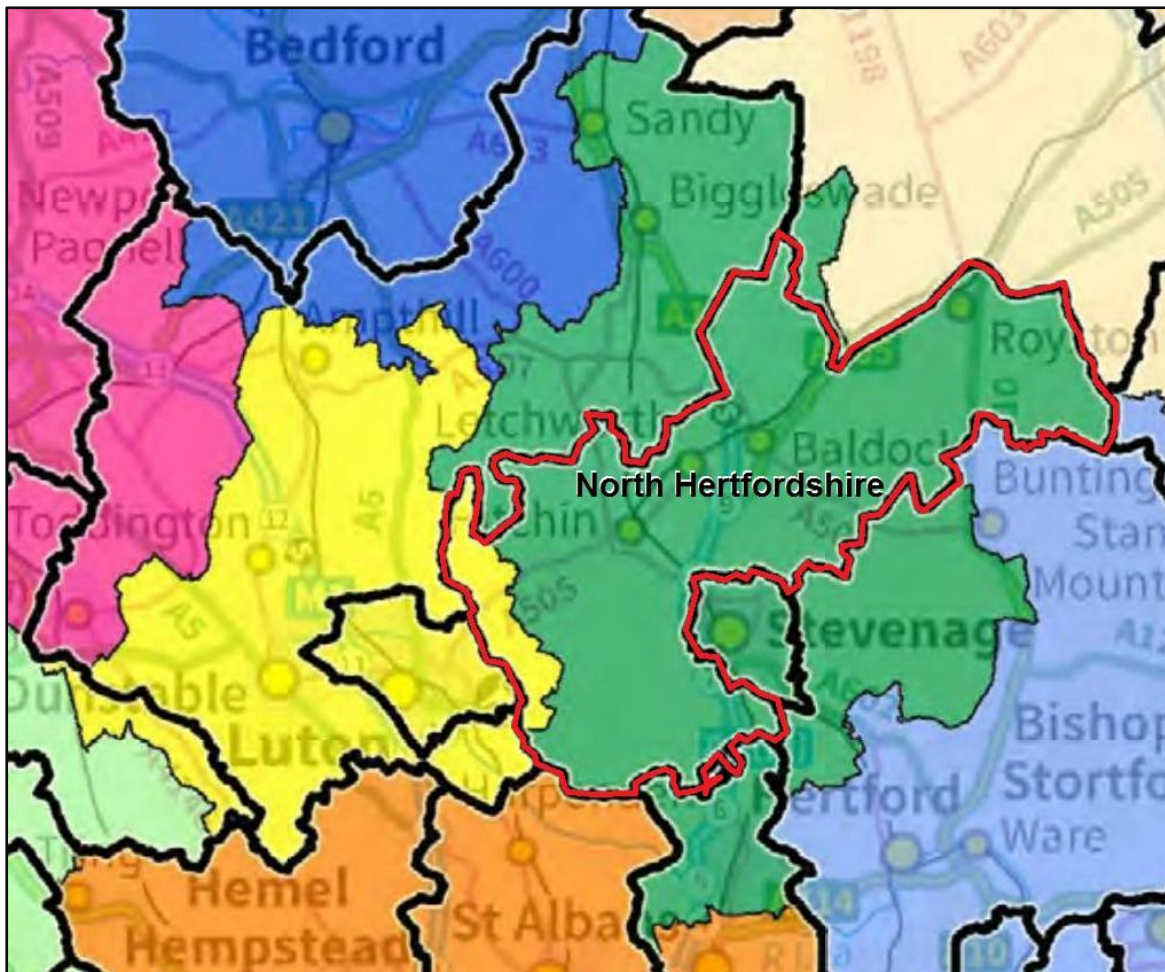
<sup>24</sup> Housing Market Areas in Bedford and Surrounding Areas (ORS 2015)

<sup>25</sup> Functional Economic Market Area Study: Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and Central Bedfordshire Councils (NLP 2015)

<sup>26</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (ORS 2015) as updated / superceded by Updating the Overall Housing Need (ORS, 2016)



**Figure 3: HMA Areas**



*The majority of North Hertfordshire (outlined in red) falls within the Stevenage Housing Market Area (shown green). A small area to the west of the district falls within the Luton Housing Market Area (shown yellow)*

- 2.40 The Council has also been involved in the SHMA prepared for Luton and Central Bedfordshire<sup>27</sup>. The identified need for housing in this area is significant.
- 2.41 Luton's plan and associated evidence base identifies a requirement for approximately 18,000 homes in the Borough but has capacity for just 7,000. The issue of unmet needs from Luton is therefore a significant matter to be considered under the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.42 The Council's own evidence base establishes with sufficient certainty that there are sites within North Hertfordshire which could contribute towards these needs, and the approach proposed for our own Plan will maximise the amount of housing that can reasonably be accommodated within this part of the Luton HMA that falls within the District.

Functional Economic Market Area

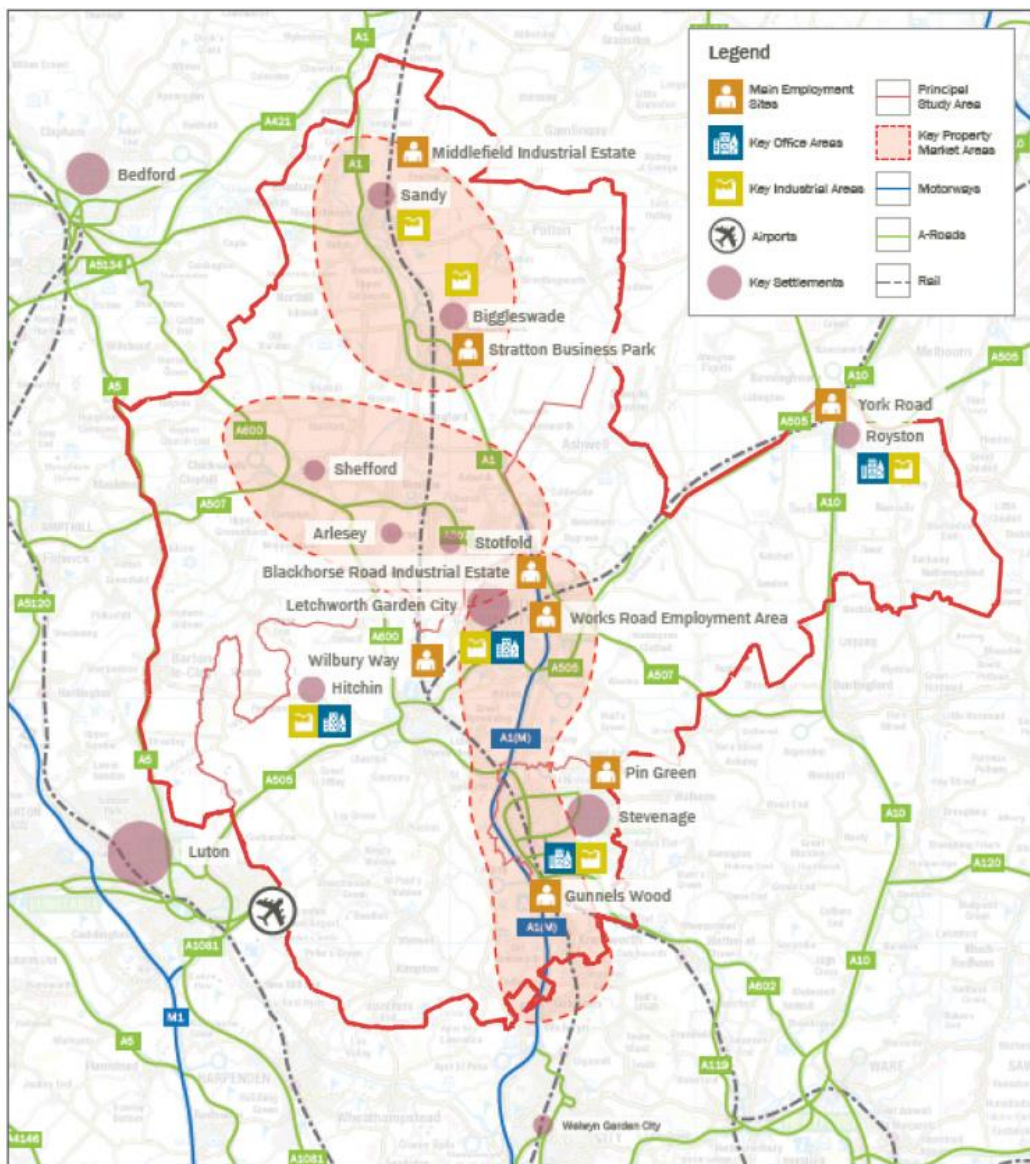
- 2.43 The Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) covers a similar area to the Stevenage HMA . Our evidence shows that Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and the

<sup>27</sup> Luton and Central Bedfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (ORS 2014)

eastern half of Central Bedfordshire form a clearly defined FEMA that stretches along the A1 corridor<sup>28</sup>. 70% of people that work in this area, also live here. The economic profiles of the three areas are complementary while commercial property market data does not suggest that nearby commercial property markets, such as Luton, Bedford or Watford, extend this far). The FEMA is shown in figure 4 on the following page.

2.44 The FEMA considers the employment strategies of the associated authorities and the overall supply of jobs and employment land and future employment requirements that could arise from changes to future commuting patterns. It concludes that there will be a requirement for additional employment land to be provided within the FEMA to meet Stevenage’s growth which cannot be met within their own administrative boundary.

**Figure 4: Extent of FEMA**



*North Hertfordshire shares a Functional Economic Market Area with Stevenage and the eastern half of Central Bedfordshire*

<sup>28</sup> Functional Economic Market Area Study - Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) 2015.



## Hertfordshire Plans and Strategies

- 2.45 A number of key plans and strategies are produced at a county level to which the Council should have regard to in preparing the Local Plan. Key amongst these is the:
- Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal of both the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough LEP.
  - Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership
  - Hertfordshire Waste and Minerals Local Plans
  - Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan

### Hertfordshire LEP and the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough LEP

- 2.46 In October 2013 the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) published their Strategic Economic Plan for the county. This strategy sets out the LEPs vision, that by 2030, Hertfordshire will be the leading economy at the heart of the UKs Golden Triangle, which encompasses Cambridge, Oxford and London. To deliver the vision, the LEP has identified a number of priority areas, which represent major opportunities for Hertfordshire. These include:
- Maintaining Hertfordshire's global excellence in science and technology;
  - Harnessing Hertfordshire's relationship with London (and elsewhere); and
  - Re-invigorating Hertfordshire's places for the 21st Century.
- 2.47 The aim of the strategy is to promote growth in the county and ensure that Hertfordshire is perfectly placed for business. The plan focuses on three key growth corridors. North Hertfordshire lies within the A1 (M) corridor.
- 2.48 Given that the northern part of the District is heavily influenced by the Cambridgeshire economy, the District is also part of Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough LEP. The goal of the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough LEP is to create an economy with 100,000 major businesses and create 160,000 new jobs by 2025, in an internationally significant low carbon, knowledge-based economy, balanced wherever possible with advanced manufacturing and services.
- 2.49 The LEPs are responsible for bidding and prioritising infrastructure investment within their areas.

### Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership

- 2.50 The purpose of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is to ensure the county's natural environment is fully considered and valued in local decision making and that it delivers benefits for wildlife, people, landscapes and the local economy. To this end the LNP has prepared a strategy covering the period from 2013 to 2016, which identifies the following priorities for Hertfordshire:
- Healthy and resilient ecological networks;
  - Delivering health and wellbeing through the natural environment;
  - Sustainable economic growth through the natural environment; and Water for people and wildlife.
- 2.51 Underpinning the strategy is the need to deliver new green infrastructure and to protect/ enhance existing green infrastructure. To support growth in Hertfordshire

local authorities will need to work together and with the LNP to achieve this.

#### Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan

- 2.52 The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) adopted in 2012, covers the period from 2011 to 2026. These documents set out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for waste planning in Hertfordshire up to 2026 and also contain the policies needed to implement these objectives, along with detailed generic development management policies that will be used to make decisions on waste planning applications.
- 2.53 This document is supported by the Waste Site Allocations (WSA) DPD which was adopted in 2014 and identifies sites for waste management facilities across the county. In addition to the Waste Local Plan, the County Council has produced Supplementary Planning Document for Employment Land Areas of Search for new waste management facilities, reflecting that designated Employment Land Areas are often an appropriate location for waste management uses.
- 2.54 When planning for new growth in North Hertfordshire, it will be necessary to have regard to this document when considering the implications of new development on waste disposal.

#### Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan

- 2.55 The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan adopted in 2007 covers the period 2002 -2016. Policy 5 of that plan sets out the approach to minerals sterilisation. These have been taken into account in the selection of sites in this Plan. The County Council has commenced a review of the Minerals Local Plan.

#### Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan

- 2.56 The County Council is also the Highway Authority with responsibility for transport matters. This Plan supports key priorities and proposals from the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) adopted in 2011. LTP3 sets out the transport strategy for Hertfordshire (over the period from 2011 to 2031), the goals and challenges to be met, and outlines a programme of transport schemes and initiatives to be delivered subject to available funding. The LTP covers all modes of transport - including walking, cycling, public transport, car based travel and freight - and takes account of the effect of transport on wider aspects including the economy, environment, climate change and social inclusion.
- 2.57 It will therefore be necessary to both have regard to this strategy and work with the Highway Authority when taking forward the development sites set out in the Local Plan. Work on the next iteration of the LTP – the 2050 Transport Vision – is well under way and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2016. This vision will set out proposals for accommodating growth in this Local Plan and other local plans in Hertfordshire.

## District Plans and Strategies

2.58 The Local Plan is a key Council document. It is the spatial expression of the District's priorities and development needs going forward. It provides the planning framework to support the priorities identified in other Council plans and programmes including the Council's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2021, and other Council strategies covering economic development, housing, leisure, climate change, environment and waste.

### North Hertfordshire Corporate Plan

2.59 The North Hertfordshire Corporate Plan 2017-2021 recently reviewed in 2016 sets out the Council's vision and corporate objectives for the District. The council's vision set out in the Corporate Plan is:

*'making North Hertfordshire a vibrant place to live, work and prosper'*

2.60 The Corporate Plan draws together the key elements of the Council's proposals for how it will serve the District over the next few years. As well as looking at the current status of the authority, it considers the opportunities and risks facing the District, and also identifies the high level projects which will ensure the Corporate Plan is being delivered.

2.61 The Corporate Plan sets the following three objectives:

1. *To work with our partners to provide an attractive and safe environment for our residents, where diversity is welcomed and the disadvantaged are supported*
2. *To promote sustainable growth within our District to ensure economic and social opportunities exist for our communities, whilst remaining mindful of our cultural and physical heritage*
3. *To ensure that the Council delivers cost effective and necessary services to our residents that are responsive to developing need and financial constraints.*

### North Hertfordshire Economic Development Strategy

2.62 'Productive North Herts' the Council's economic development strategy adopted in September 2015 covers the period 2015 to 2025. The Strategy identifies a number of priorities that will provide a more coordinated and focussed approach to the needs of the local economy, and at the same time links to the Council's corporate objective to promote sustainable growth within our District. The Strategy and its associated Action Plan seek to guide economic activities across the District whilst also providing the basis for greater connection with the business community and key stakeholders. It recognises the need to work in partnership with key stakeholders to support and grow new and existing businesses and to attract inward investment.

### Other relevant plans and Strategies

- 2.63 The spatial implications of other plans and strategies have been taken into account in the preparation of this Local Plan. These include the investment plans of key infrastructure and utilities providers including Network Rail, Highways England and Thames Water, emerging local plans of neighbouring authorities, the public health strategy for Hertfordshire and relevant European directives and requirements that need to be incorporated. Of particular relevance to this Plan is the Water Framework Directive, which seeks to improve the quality of all water bodies as well as those directives relating the protection of key species and the environmental assessment of relevant plans and strategies.

### **Key Challenges and Opportunities for North Hertfordshire**

- 2.64 There are a number of challenges facing North Hertfordshire over the next 15 years which the Local Plan will need to address in terms of national policy and at the District and local level. There are also a number of opportunities associated with development which the Council should seek to utilise for the benefit of the District as a whole.
- 2.65 The National Planning Policy Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It also identifies a need for the planning system to perform an economic role, a social role and an environmental role, if sustainable development is to be achieved<sup>29</sup>. These roles give rise to many issues and challenges for the District.
- 2.66 The key challenges are:
- Identifying and delivering the most sustainable forms and patterns of development around the District,
  - Providing the right type and level of growth to meet the needs of the District and considering the strategic needs of adjoining authorities,
  - Protecting and enhancing the environment and encouraging the prudent use of resources, and
  - Creating places where people want to live, work and spend their leisure time.
- 2.67 In addressing these key challenges the following issues will need to be taken into account.
- 2.68 Our evidence states that North Hertfordshire needs to provide a significant number of homes and jobs over the plan period. We also need to ensure that our Plan helps meet development requirements in market areas that cross our administrative boundaries. Managing the growth of the economy, housing and meeting the needs of our existing communities, against a backdrop of financial constraint, are key issues for the District.
- 2.69 Some of the sites to be developed will be substantial new communities. Each will need careful planning to ensure that the development is properly integrated into the surrounding area, has the appropriate level of facilities on site and mitigates its

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<sup>29</sup> NPPF paragraphs 6 and 7

impact on the local area. The most appropriate way to achieve this is, is through the preparation of masterplans with relevant bodies and joint plans where sites are close to or straddle the district boundary with neighbouring authorities.

- 2.70 The population is increasing, migration levels have been high in recent years, more people are living on their own, people are living longer and household sizes are becoming smaller all of which creates a high demand for housing and places additional pressure on community facilities. In addition the market cost of housing is increasingly out of reach for many households. There is also a need for more affordable housing.
- 2.71 The District is generally prosperous with lower levels of unemployment than the national average, and some areas of North Hertfordshire are amongst the most deprived in Hertfordshire. There is a need for job growth to continue to support the local economy and meet the needs of a growing population.
- 2.72 Recent changes in planning legislation and policy mean the Council does not have the same ability to protect the supply of employment land for the future.
- 2.73 A number of our employment areas are tired and dated and are in need of investment. There are also access issues with some employment areas as well as infrastructure constraints across the District and wider area.
- 2.74 There is a need to ensure that our town centres remain vibrant in a changing and volatile retail environment. The nature of our town centres has also transformed with changing shopping patterns and practices. There is a need to be more flexible in our approach towards the changing needs of our town centres whilst ensuring that they retain their market share in supporting their local communities.
- 2.75 Transport connections from north to south are strong with the main road and rail routes radiating from London. Links from east to west are generally less well developed placing pressures on local routes and rural roads are being used as cut-throughs, particularly in the western part of the District between Stevenage, Luton and Hitchin.
- 2.76 The District has a considerable daily outflow of commuters, to highly skilled employment areas mainly in central London but also to the high tech and development industries which surround Cambridge. Working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, the business sector, and other key stakeholders will help identify opportunities for inward investment to increase our employment base and encourage new enterprise.
- 2.77 Improving physical and mental health is a key element of quality of life. The need to plan for new development creates the opportunity to build in the infrastructure and facilities for 'healthy living' from the start as well as providing opportunities to improve existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure.
- 2.78 Infrastructure that may be needed to accommodate this growth across the District includes; schools, surgeries, community buildings and sports facilities as well as roads, energy and sewerage. This is likely to require considerable inward investment to overcome issues related to transportation, health care, education and the provision of more new homes.

- 2.79 Inward investment can be secured through the planning system but only if it does not compromise the viability of new development. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>30</sup> (IDP) prepared alongside this Plan identifies the infrastructure requirements, cost, timing, potential funding mechanisms and responsibilities for delivery.
- 2.80 The quality of the District's natural and historic environment, its open spaces and countryside are highly valued by its residents. Protecting these areas and assets for the future alongside balancing the needs for development and ensuring suitable mitigation measures are put in place to reduce their impact will need to be addressed through the policies in the Plan.
- 2.81 Housing and economic growth is likely to lead to an increase in overall greenhouse gas emissions arising from domestic, transport and industrial sectors. It is also likely to lead to an increase in overall water consumption, and the associated need to treat waste water.
- 2.82 Changes to legislation and national planning policy in 2015 and 2016 mean that the CO2 and water performance of new dwellings is now governed by Building Regulations L, with changes to the Building Regulations in 2016 and 2019 expected to bring in tighter standards for CO2 emissions.
- 2.83 Any new development will need to be located in places which have good access to jobs, shops, services and public transport and also provide opportunities to travel by foot or on a bike. Provision of measures for water conservation, improved biodiversity, increasing energy efficiency of new development, and renewable energy can help to ensure that development is more sustainable.

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<sup>30</sup> North Hertfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan September 2016





# SECTION TWO

## SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC POLICIES

# SECTION TWO - SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC POLICIES

## 3 Spatial Strategy and Spatial Vision

- 3.1 The spatial strategy sets out our overall approach for sustainable development and growth and how this will be distributed across the District. The key components of the strategy are meeting future housing needs and supporting economic growth as well as making provision for infrastructure and services whilst protecting the natural and historic environment.
- 3.2 In preparing our spatial strategy a number of options have been considered through the SA/SEA<sup>31</sup> process, this includes identifying policy options for how the District should develop, and in particular where development should happen, and how much development there should be.
- 3.3 Our spatial strategy is one of promoting sustainable development by supporting the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings and by focusing the majority of development on our towns (including urban extensions) in order to make maximum use of existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure, and maximise opportunities to deliver new infrastructure. It also allows for some growth of our villages in order to allow those communities to continue to thrive.
- 3.4 Our vision for the District, strategic objectives and strategic policies together with their supporting text sets out our Spatial Strategy.

### Spatial Vision

- 3.5 Having identified the main challenges facing North Hertfordshire, this section sets out the spatial vision for North Hertfordshire. The vision is a statement of what North Hertfordshire will be like in 2031.
- 3.6 In developing the vision we have had regard to the Council's aspirations set out in its Corporate Plan, other organisations strategies and plans and to the views expressed by organisations and individuals to previous consultations on the preparation of this Plan.

Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By 2031 North Hertfordshire will be an attractive and vibrant place where people will want to live, work and spend their leisure time.</li><li>• A mixture of quality new homes including affordable houses with a choice of tenure catering for the needs of North Hertfordshire's residents, will be provided in appropriate sustainable locations.</li></ul>



<sup>31</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of North Hertfordshire Local Plan Submission Version (CAG 2016)

- New development will have contributed to the creation of sustainable communities. These are safe, attractive and inclusive; well integrated into settlements; respect local distinctiveness; raise the standards of sustainable design and architectural quality; make a positive contribution to the local area; and ensure the protection, restoration and enhancement of valuable natural and historic resources. Strategic sites will have been masterplanned in accordance with the guiding principles set out within this Plan.
- New development will help to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of existing settlements, enabling the towns and villages to embrace their roles within the District's settlement hierarchy and provide an enhanced variety of new housing, employment opportunities and essential infrastructure that is of benefit to existing and future residents.
- North Hertfordshire will have a robust and prosperous economy (including sustainable tourism) with a greater mix of skilled jobs, focused in locations that best support the District's growing population. Local and smaller scale businesses will have had the opportunity to thrive and grow.
- The vitality and viability of the towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston and Baldock are safeguarded in a way that takes account of their distinctive role. This will have been achieved through carefully planned development which meets the needs of these centres, retaining their market share in terms of their retail offer, whilst recognising the importance of preserving and enhancing their historic character. In local and village centres shopping facilities that meet local needs will be supported.
- The District's important natural and historic areas and buildings that help to create the distinctive identity of the District in both urban and rural areas will have been protected and enhanced where possible. The quality and attractiveness of the landscape of North Hertfordshire, which contributes to its distinctive character, will have been conserved and enhanced where possible. New green infrastructure will have enhanced the network of green corridors linking settlements to the open countryside, providing greater opportunities for healthy lifestyles.
- The rich biodiversity and geodiversity of North Hertfordshire will have been protected and enhanced where possible. Where new development could potentially have an adverse impact on biodiversity and geodiversity, measures will have been taken to ensure that the impact was either avoided or mitigated.
- North Hertfordshire will have a range of community, leisure, cultural and recreational facilities in locations that are accessible to the local population, creating cohesive communities that recognise the needs of the older population; and enhance the opportunities for children and young people.

- The District will play its part in addressing climate change by improving opportunities for travelling by public transport, walking and cycling, using natural resources more efficiently, reducing the demand for water, securing high quality sustainable design and managing the risk of flooding.
- By working in partnership with service providers, government bodies, the Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, other local authorities and other key bodies we will ensure the timely delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure.

## Strategic Objectives

- 3.7 The strategic objectives provide the link between our vision for the District and the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan.

### Environmental:

- ENV1 Direct development towards the most sustainable locations which seek to maintain the existing settlement pattern.
- ENV2 Protect and enhance the historic character of North Hertfordshire's towns, villages, hamlets and landscape by promoting good design that creates a distinctive sense of place.
- ENV3 Protect, maintain and enhance the District's historic and natural environment, its cultural assets and network of open spaces, urban and rural landscapes.
- ENV4 Mitigate the effects of climate change by encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques, the appropriate use of renewable energy technologies and reducing the risk of flooding.
- ENV5 Reduce water consumption, increase biodiversity and protect and enhance the quality of existing environmental assets by enhancing new green spaces and networks of green space for both recreation and wildlife.

### Economic:

- ECON1 Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities enabling new and existing businesses to grow and thrive.
- ECON2 Ensure an adequate supply of employment land, office accommodation and support facilities to meet the needs of new and existing businesses within our urban and rural areas.
- ECON3 Provide for a greater mix of skilled jobs as well as providing opportunities for further education and skills training to promote investor confidence in locating to, or remaining in the District.
- ECON4 Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of our town, neighbourhood and village centres, as well as strengthening the retail roles of our town

centres ensuring that they remain competitive and attractive for modern-day use.

- ECON5 Support and enhance local businesses, services and facilities in urban and rural areas through tourism.
- ECON6 Sustain the vitality of our villages and the rural economy in supporting rural diversification whilst ensuring development is of an appropriate scale and character.
- ECON7 Improve access opportunities, minimise the need to travel, and encourage journeys to be made by sustainable means of transport to ease congestion, reduce carbon emissions and the impacts on air quality management areas.
- ECON8 Ensure all development is supported by the necessary provision of, or improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in an effective and timely manner to make development sustainable and minimise its effect upon existing communities

Social:

- SOC1 Identify locations for a range of types and tenures of homes, including affordable homes, to meet identified needs and provide adequate housing for an increasing and ageing population.
- SOC2 Encourage safe and vibrant mixed communities that provide for the needs of all North Hertfordshire's residents.
- SOC3 Improve access to, maintain and make provision for new facilities including community, sports, leisure, health and cultural facilities, that meet the needs of all North Hertfordshire's communities
- SOC4 Enable rural communities to plan to meet their own local needs, especially through neighbourhood planning.

## 4 Strategic Policies

### Sustainable Development

#### Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire

This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will:

- a. Maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land where possible;
- b. Ensure the long-term vitality of the District's villages by supporting growth which provides opportunities for existing and new residents and sustains key facilities;
- c. Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively:
  - i. deliver an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan;
  - ii. create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices;
  - iii. provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population;
  - iv. protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and
  - v. secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and
- d. Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.

- 4.1 Government policy is clear that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. This means improving our lives today while not compromising our ability to do so in the future. It means supporting growth whilst protecting key elements of the natural and historic environment.
- 4.2 In implementing this Plan, we will take a positive approach that ensures we can continue to permit the significant majority of planning applications for new development.
- 4.3 Policy SP1 sets out guiding principles for planning in the District over the period to 2031. We will seek to grant permission wherever proposals support these strategic aims and meet the requirements set out in this Plan.
- 4.4 These principles are already evident across the District. Letchworth has a global reputation as the world's first garden city. Hitchin, Baldock and Royston are established market towns built around a historic core. Our villages provide highly valued environments in which to live away from the main towns, yet also have provided opportunities for sensitive growth over time.

- 4.5 These settlements are located within a wider setting of which the District can be proud. North Hertfordshire has a rich and varied historic environment while high quality landscapes and areas of national importance surround our towns and villages. These factors help to maintain separate identities and also provide opportunities for residents to interact with the wider countryside around them.
- 4.6 This Plan accommodates necessary growth whilst maintaining these characteristics. New development will integrate with its surrounds rather than being remote. We will make use of previously developed land where possible. Key protections will be respected.
- 4.7 In setting a framework for growth, this Plan also recognises the value of local knowledge and the importance of local choice. A number of parishes within the District are already designated Neighbourhood Planning areas and our Local Plan is structured flexibly in response. This chapter contains the policies and aspirations with which any neighbourhood plans, or other local planning initiatives, must be in general conformity.
- 4.8 Beyond this, there remains scope for local interpretation. Local housing allocations and, beyond the Green Belt, village boundaries are examples of issues which are open to debate and change through the Neighbourhood Planning system. Local communities will be able to supplement the policies in this Plan or identify alternate approaches whilst adhering to the key principles we have set out.
- 4.9 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that our policy provides an overarching expression of what sustainable development would look like in North Hertfordshire; it is strategic in nature and broadly covers sustainable development priorities.

### Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy

The majority of the District's development will be located within or adjoining the following towns:

- Baldock;
- Hitchin;
- Letchworth Garden City;
- Royston;
- Stevenage (including Great Ashby)<sup>32</sup>; and
- Luton<sup>32</sup>.

General development will also be allowed within the defined settlement boundaries of the Category A villages of:

<sup>32</sup> These settlements are (substantively) located outside of North Hertfordshire's administrative area, but the urban areas adjoin, or already lie partially within, the District.



- Ashwell;
- Barkway;
- Barley;
- Breachwood Green;
- Cockernhoe;
- Codicote;
- Graveley;
- Hexton;
- Ickleford;
- Kimpton;
- Knebworth;
- Little Wymondley;
- Lower Stondon<sup>32</sup>;
- Oaklands<sup>32</sup>;
- Offley;
- Pirton;
- Preston;
- Reed;
- Sandon;
- St Ippolyts;
- Therfield;
- Weston; and
- Whitwell.

Infilling development which does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed in the Category B villages of:

- Blackmore End;
- Great Wymondley;
- Hinxworth;
- Holwell;
- Kelshall;
- Lilley;
- Newnham;
- Old Knebworth;
- Rushden;
- Wallington; and
- Willian.

Only limited affordable housing and facilities for local community needs will be allowed in the Category C settlements of:

- Bygrave;
- Caldecote;
- Clothall;
- Langley;
- Nuthampstead;
- Peters Green; and
- Radwell.

- 4.10 North Hertfordshire includes a range of settlements, including isolated rural hamlets, numerous villages, the four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, and large parts of the Great Ashby estate on the edge of Stevenage.
- 4.11 The Council wishes to focus the majority of new development on the towns (including urban extensions to existing towns) in order to make maximum use of existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure, and maximise opportunities to deliver new infrastructure. However, it is important to allow growth of the villages in order to allow those communities to continue to function.
- 4.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges sometimes development in one village may support services in other nearby villages. Although some communities may lack a full range of facilities themselves, they should not be barred from further development. In many of the District's rural areas the average number of people per household is falling. Some of the villages have seen very little growth in recent years and their populations have actually fallen. Our evidence gives further consideration to these issues and explains how the settlement hierarchy has

been developed<sup>33</sup>. For those areas within the Green Belt, we have additionally considered how villages contribute to openness<sup>34</sup>.

- 4.13 Category A villages, normally those containing primary schools, all have defined boundaries within which development will be allowed and sites have been allocated to meet the District's overall housing totals. Category A villages have defined settlement boundaries and are excluded from the policy designation (either Green Belt or Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt – see Policy SP5) which affects the surrounding countryside.
- 4.14 Category B villages are those with a lower level of facilities such as village halls and public houses. Category B villages will be allowed to accommodate limited infill development that does not expand the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside.
- 4.15 Blackmore End has been excluded from the Green Belt because of its limited contribution to the openness and purposes of the Green Belt. For the remaining Category B villages, this Plan does not define a settlement boundary or the extent of the built core. The Council believes it should be possible to assess on a case-by-case basis whether a site is in the built core. However, that may be something that affected communities wish to explore through neighbourhood plans.
- 4.16 The Category C settlements are
- those which give their names to a parish that does not contain any category A or B villages; and / or
  - those with a modest level of facilities but which make an important contribution to the open character of the Green Belt.
- 4.17 Within Category C settlements, a more restrictive approach will be taken. We will support limited affordable housing and schemes for community facilities which meet proven needs from that parish in line with the detailed policies of this Plan.
- 4.18 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that our policy will have a range of positive effects in seeking to focus new development within or adjoining existing settlements. There may be some potential negative impacts in terms of interaction with exiting residential areas and environmental aspects due to development being on greenfield sites. However these impacts can be mitigated and addressed through design and layout considerations and other policies in this Plan.

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<sup>33</sup> Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

<sup>34</sup> Green Belt Review (NHDC, 2016). Paragraph 86 of the NPPF explains how planning authorities should consider villages within the Green Belt when setting boundaries.

## Economy & Town Centres

### Policy SP3: Employment

The Council will proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, support new and existing businesses and seek to build on the District's strengths, location and offer. We will:

- a. Bring forward an adequate supply and range of employment land in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston to meet the requirements of the local economy over the plan period to 2031;
- b. Designate existing employment areas within the District's main settlements to enhance and safeguard employment potential;
- c. Support additional employment provision through new designations at:
  - i. the former Power Station, Letchworth Garden City (1.5ha);
  - ii. east of Baldock (19.6ha); and
  - iii. west of Royston (10.9ha);
- d. Work with landowners, developers and, for sites on the edge of the District, adjoining authorities to identify an appropriate amount of employment land to be included through the masterplanning process in major new developments;
- e. Permit an appropriate range of B-class employment uses within these areas;
- f. Promote and support the expansion of the knowledge based economy in the District. Proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment sites and the development of new allocated employment sites which increase the level of knowledge-intensive employment will be supported in principle;.
- g. Support B-class uses in appropriate locations outside of designated employment areas, including offices in main town centres and concentrations of B-class uses in certain Category A villages; and
- h. Ensure relevant policies of this Plan recognise the contribution of non-B-class sectors, including tourism, to the provision of jobs in the District.

4.19 In planning, employment land usually refers to 'B-class' uses<sup>35</sup> and includes:

- B1(a) – offices
- B1(b) – research and development
- B1(c) – light industry
- B2 – general industry; and
- B8 – storage and distribution

4.20 The Council wants to see sustainable economic growth within North Hertfordshire. Skills, housing and economic development should be appropriately balanced. This will be achieved, in part, by working with other partners and through delivery of the Council's own economic development plans and projects.

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<sup>35</sup> As defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order (1987) (as amended)

- 4.21 North Hertfordshire District Council is a member of both the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP. This reflects its location and the varying economic influences on the District's settlements and rural area. Both LEPs will be important stakeholders regarding how the North Hertfordshire economy grows and develops in the future. In particular the Hertfordshire LEP is seeking to regain the county's competitive edge by encouraging increased employment growth and enterprise.
- 4.22 The employment strategy of this Plan is driven by three, interlinked priorities for the North Hertfordshire economy:
- Increasing representation in high skilled and high value sectors;
  - Reducing out-commuting by providing greater opportunities for people to both live and work in the District; and
  - Aligning employment development with housing growth to promote sustainable patterns of development and access by non-car modes.
- 4.23 Our evidence shows that, compared to national averages there is a higher concentration of people working in the District employed in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, retail, motor trades, property, entertainment and recreation in North Hertfordshire. Many higher skilled residents commute out of the District for employment. Nonetheless sectors such as finance & insurance and information & communication make a substantial contribution to the District's overall economic output, although not employing a huge number of people. These represent opportunities for future expansion and development<sup>36</sup>.
- 4.24 North Hertfordshire also fails to perform as well as some other Districts in Hertfordshire with regard to the knowledge economy. In partnership with key stakeholders, we will seek to increase the number of highly skilled jobs in the District. Economic growth sectors which are knowledge-intensive will be targeted. This includes research and development (R&D), life sciences, advanced manufacturing, computer-related activities, and other business activities in combination with growth of the low-carbon economy. With other stakeholders, the Council will:
- encourage business start-ups in the knowledge economy;
  - help develop existing local businesses in the knowledge economy;
  - target knowledge based businesses into North Herts; and
  - promote the take up of any new jobs by local people by promoting specific training and targeting recruitment at local residents.
- 4.25 Due to the good levels of connectivity to other centres of employment, such as Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield, and London it is unlikely that all the extra economically active population over the plan period will take up jobs within the District. In 2011, over a quarter of North Hertfordshire's working population were employed in these three centres, within another quarter employed elsewhere outside the District<sup>37</sup>.
- 4.26 Trend-based forecasts reflect these patterns and anticipate continued increases in out-commuting from North Hertfordshire over the plan period<sup>38</sup>. Unchecked, this would lead to increased pressure on transport infrastructure that is already under strain at peak periods. This Plan therefore makes employment provision at above modelled levels.

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<sup>36</sup> Employment land review (Regeneris Consulting, 2013)

<sup>37</sup> Annual population Survey (ONS, 2010-2011)

<sup>38</sup> East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2014)

- 4.27 The settlements of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock are very close together. There is a significant amount of commuting between these settlements. However, Baldock presently has a relatively low amount of employment land per person.
- 4.28 A significant new employment site will be developed at the east of Baldock, supporting the proposed increase in residential development in the town (see Policy SP8). The allocation benefits from proximity to existing employment uses as well as existing and planned residential development. It has access to the strategic road network via the A505 Baldock Bypass.
- 4.29 Economic activity is not contained by the District boundary and North Hertfordshire needs to be viewed within its wider Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). Joint work has identified a FEMA along the A1(M) corridor. This area broadly covers North Hertfordshire, Stevenage and the eastern part of Central Bedfordshire<sup>39</sup>. The allocation at Baldock also takes account of the long term needs which will arise within the wider FEMA. Stevenage, in particular, anticipates a shortfall of employment land against modelled requirements<sup>40</sup>. These models assume continued commuting from North Hertfordshire to Stevenage, yet there is insufficient land in Stevenage to cater for the resultant growth.
- 4.30 Within Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City, employment area designations from the previous local plan will be broadly retained, with some modest releases of sustainable, brownfield sites for residential development. Within Letchworth, the former power station site at Works Road has been brought back into use for employment purposes and is reflected in a new planning designation.
- 4.31 Royston is somewhat separate from the Hitchin / Letchworth Garden City / Baldock area, in geographical terms and in employment and labour market terms. The Royston economy is influenced by both Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire economies. Consequently, the employment area has a low vacancy rate. The allocation of further land here as a planned extension to the York Way employment area is a sustainable approach that will enable flexibility in the long term, especially in conjunction with the additional residential growth allocated to this area.
- 4.32 Over the plan period this approach will provide substantial opportunities to reduce commuting that occurs across and beyond the District, redressing the employment balance.
- 4.33 Within these designated areas, an appropriate range of B-class uses will be permitted in line with the detailed policies of this Plan.
- 4.34 B-class uses will not be solely confined to designated employment areas. A number of employment premises are located outside of defined areas and these will continue to be supported where they are compatible with other surrounding uses. In particular, office uses will continue to be supported in the main town centres (see Policy SP4), in line with national planning policy.
- 4.35 Beyond our main towns, there is a steady demand for rural employment land and premises. Owing to the size and extensive spread of rural settlements these types of development are best dealt with on a case-by-case basis rather than through allocations, although our general approach will be to direct concentrations of rural business to the Category A villages. There are quite sizeable employment sites in

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<sup>39</sup> Functional Economic Market Area Study (NLP, 2015)

<sup>40</sup> Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031: Publication Draft (Stevenage Borough Council, 2016)

villages such as Ashwell, Codicote, Kimpton, Little Wymondley and Weston which provide rural jobs and should be retained.

- 4.36 Approximately 45% of all jobs fall into the B uses classes. The rest of the jobs in the local economy consist of services such as retail, health, education and leisure, or 'footloose' careers in sectors such as construction and the trades. The role of these non-B-class sectors in the overall employment balance of the District is recognised and will continue to be supported.
- 4.37 Our Sustainability Appraisal says our policy provides strong support for employment growth and diversification in North Hertfordshire.

#### **Policy SP4: Town and Local Centres**

The Council will make provision for an appropriate range of retail facilities across the District and are committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres. We will:

- a. Promote, protect and enhance the retail and service functions of the following centres in our retail hierarchy:
  - i. the town centres of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston;
  - ii. 13 existing local centres consisting of:
    - village centres at Ashwell, Codicote and Knebworth;
    - seven centres in Hitchin
    - two centres in Letchworth Garden City; and
    - the centre at Great Ashby; and
  - iii. 2 new local centres north of Baldock and East of Luton within the strategic housing sites identified in this Plan;
- b. Support proposals for main town centre uses in these locations where they are appropriate to the size, scale, function, catchment area, historic and architectural character of the centre;
- c. Identify Primary Shopping Frontages within town centres where A1 retail uses will be expected to concentrate
- d. Make provision for 38,100m<sup>2</sup> of additional A-class floorspace over the plan period, consisting of:
  - i. 22,500m<sup>2</sup> comparison goods (e.g. clothes, shoes, furniture, carpets);
  - ii. 8,500m<sup>2</sup> convenience (e.g. food, drink, toiletries); and
  - iii. 7,000m<sup>2</sup> other town centre uses
- e. Maintain up-to-date town centre strategies to support this approach and / or adapt to change; and
- f. Support the retention and provision of shops outside of identified centres where they serve a local need.

- 4.38 The District contains a range of retail and service centres, from medium sized towns to small village and neighbourhood centres. Each one performs a particular role to meet the needs of its catchment population, and is part of a network of centres within the District. The Council is committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres.
- 4.39 North Hertfordshire lies within complex shopping catchment areas, which include Cambridge as a regional centre and Bedford, Luton, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City as major town centres. The District itself has four town centres: Hitchin is the largest, followed by Letchworth Garden City and then the smaller town centres of Royston and Baldock. There are also a number of local village and neighbourhood centres.
- 4.40 We are committed to promoting the well-being of the four town centres in the District. Town centre strategies have been produced for the main centres of Hitchin, Baldock, Letchworth Garden City, and Royston. These promote the vitality and viability of the centres and cover all those aspects of policy guidance with a spatial dimension relevant to town centres, including economic, environmental and social well-being and matters such as community safety, community facilities, traffic management, marketing and delivery. The strategies provide a method of keeping town centre development up-to-date and flexible to take account of ongoing changes in the retail environment.
- 4.41 Our detailed policies set out our approach to development applications, including for changes of use. In general terms, A1 retail uses will be expected to concentrate within the defined primary frontages with a wider variety of A-class uses permissible in secondary frontage areas.
- 4.42 The village centres of Codicote and Knebworth are large enough to provide a focus for the communities local to them and a range of everyday shopping facilities and services. The village centre of Ashwell contains a more limited range of shops and services, and is more fragmented than Codicote and Knebworth's village centres. However, Ashwell still has enough shops, services and facilities to have a designated centre, unlike many other small settlements in the District.
- 4.43 The suburban neighbourhood centres in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Great Ashby vary considerably, in terms of size, range of shops and services and catchment area. However, they are all worthy of a level of protection. The Council wants to improve and protect the District's centres, reduce the need for unnecessary travel to alternative facilities and ensure that the proportion of expenditure going outside the District does not increase.
- 4.44 The growth of the District will require additional centres to be provided to serve the largest new developments at Baldock and on the edge of Luton. Once built, these will become local centres in our retail hierarchy and future proposals within them will be assessed appropriately.
- 4.45 These will be supplemented by smaller, neighbourhood-level centres in these and other Strategic Housing Sites which will not form part of the formal retail hierarchy but will be protected by the general retail policies of this Plan.
- 4.46 Our evidence shows there will be a steady growth in retail demand over the plan period. Driven in part by planned population growth but also by underlying changes in the way people shop and how much money they have available to spend. It is



anticipated that on-line shopping will continue to grow whilst a certain amount of future demand can be accommodated through the re-occupation of existing, vacant shop units. However, it is also necessary to identify new sites for retail<sup>41</sup>.

- 4.47 Some of this future demand will be met within the development sites identified in this Plan, ensuring that new residents have access to an appropriate range of local shops. Where planned urban extensions adjoin towns outside of the District, we will work with neighbouring authorities to identify the most appropriate types and levels of additional provision.
- 4.48 Further allocations and broad locations are identified within our main towns to accommodate the remainder.
- 4.49 A number of shops are located outside of our retail hierarchy. This includes individual premises and small groups of shops that perform a neighbourhood function, including those in a number of rural settlements. Our detailed policies set out our approach.
- 4.50 Our Sustainability Appraisal concludes that this policy provides clear support for existing town and local centres and should have direct economic benefits and contribute to the achievement of sustainable patterns of land use.

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<sup>41</sup> North Hertfordshire Retail Study Update (Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, 2016)

## Countryside and Green Belt

### Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

We support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. Green Belt and Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are shown on the Proposals Map. We:

- a. Have conducted a comprehensive review of the Green Belt. Land has been removed from the Green Belt to:
  - i. enable strategic development at the locations referred to in Policies SP8 and SP3;
  - ii. enable local development around a number of the District's towns and villages; and
  - iii. define boundaries for villages referred to in Policy SP2 which fall within the Green Belt but were previously 'washed over' by this designation;
- b. Have provided new Green Belt to cover, in general terms, the area bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the east, the Luton Green Belt to the west and the A505 Offley bypass to the north;
- c. Will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development; and
- d. Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

- 4.51 The vast majority of land in North Hertfordshire is rural in nature. Whilst more than three-quarters of the District's homes are in the towns, the land area of these main settlements covers less than 7% of the District.
- 4.52 Restraint on unsustainable development in rural areas is a well established policy in this area. The District has previously had two distinct areas of Green Belt. The London (Metropolitan) Green Belt covers Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Stevenage and nearby areas. The Luton Green Belt covers parts of the west of the District. There are also rural areas beyond the Green Belt.
- 4.53 National policy allows for Green Belt boundaries to be altered through the preparation of local plans where 'exceptional circumstances' exist. Although there is no definition of this term within Government guidance, this matter has been considered by the courts<sup>42</sup>. Our evidence considers the approach that has been recommended<sup>43</sup>. On balance, it is considered that the relevant circumstances do exist within North Hertfordshire to review boundaries and enable development to meet locally identified needs.
- 4.54 Green Belt boundaries have been reviewed around all of the main towns within and adjoining the District, with the exception of Royston which lies beyond the Green Belt. Boundaries have also been reviewed where they previously surrounded or covered ('washed over') Category A and Category B villages within the Green Belt.

<sup>42</sup> Including in *Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council & Ors* [2015] EWHC 1078 (Admin) (21 April 2015)

<sup>43</sup> Green Belt Review (NHDC, 2016), Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

- 4.55 In part to offset the Green Belt releases necessary to meet housing needs, particularly in the Stevenage, Hitchin and Luton area, an additional area of Green Belt is designated around Offley and Whitwell to cover an area which was not previously Green Belt. This has the effect of linking the formerly separate Metropolitan and Luton Green Belts. This new area of Green Belt is intended to strengthen protection in the area of the District between Stevenage and Luton.
- 4.56 Proposals for development within the Green Belt will be considered against national guidance. Where the proposed use can be considered acceptable in principle, we will use the detailed policies of this Plan to determine whether permission should be granted.
- 4.57 National policy generally guards against further alterations to Green Belt in the short- to medium-term following a review<sup>44</sup>. However, this requirement is not absolute. Given the potential direction of future local plan reviews, and the need to properly consider long-term solutions, it is not considered appropriate to identify significant areas of safeguarded land at this point. The exception to this is to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage (see Policy SP8 and Delivery chapter).
- 4.58 The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt covers the majority of the east of the District including most of the land between Baldock and Royston as well as the villages and countryside to the south of Royston.
- 4.59 In terms of intrinsic character and beauty, this area contains some of the highest quality countryside in the District. However, the settlements are generally more dispersed meaning a Green Belt designation cannot be justified. This sparser pattern of development additionally means that, outside of the defined settlements, many sites are not well located in relation to key services. On these grounds it remains appropriate to have a policy of restraint. Our detailed policies set out the approach that will apply in this area.
- 4.60 Wherever possible, the inner boundaries of the Green Belt and Rural Area have been drawn around our settlements using strong features that provide clear, defensible boundaries. In certain cases this means that some land that we wish to remain undeveloped lie within the settlement envelopes. Urban Open Land designations are used at Baldock, Royston and Little Wymondley to ensure the affected land remains protected. Our detailed policies set out these allocations and our approach.
- 4.61 Both the Green Belt and the Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are policy designations designed to restrict the types and amount of new development that can occur. Our approach to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and areas of countryside which are valuable in terms of their landscape and biodiversity is set out in Policy SP12.
- 4.62 Our Sustainability Appraisal recognises that releasing Green Belt sites for housing and economic development should help to support economic growth in the District and will play an important role in providing the necessary level of new housing, including affordable housing. However, it will also have some negative environmental effects. We will concentrate on reducing and mitigating these impacts through other policies in this Plan.

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<sup>44</sup> Paragraph 85 of the NPPF

## Transport and Infrastructure

### Policy SP6: Sustainable transport

We will deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable. We will:

- a. Comply with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan and other supporting documents as considered necessary;
- b. Encourage development in locations which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key services and facilities;
- c. Work with Hertfordshire County Council, Highways England and service providers to ensure that a range of sustainable transport options are available to all potential occupants or users. This may involve new or improved pedestrian, cycle and passenger transport (including rail and/or bus) links and routes;
- d. Seek the early implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure on Strategic Housing Sites in order to influence the behaviour of occupiers or users, along with supporting Travel Plans in order that sustainable travel patterns become embedded at an early stage;
- e. Assess development proposals against the parking standards set out in this Plan and relevant supplementary advice;
- f. Require applicants to provide assessments, plans and supporting documents to demonstrate the safety and sustainability of their proposals; and
- g. Protect existing rights of way, cycling and equestrian routes and, should diversion be unavoidable, require replacement routes to the satisfaction of the Council.

- 4.63 North Hertfordshire has a relatively good transport network, although the strategic road and rail links are generally better for north-south access than for east-west access. There is also an extensive local road network, which connect the four main towns within North Hertfordshire with its surrounding rural area.
- 4.64 National and local policies and guidance seek to reduce the growth of car usage and achieve greater use of more sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.65 The primary responsibility for delivering transport provision in North Hertfordshire rests with Hertfordshire County Council as the local highway authority. Highways England are responsible for the strategic road network which includes the A1(M) within North Hertfordshire. The involvement of North Hertfordshire District Council relates mainly to Development Planning and the management and enforcement of parking which could have implications on the local and strategic highway network.
- 4.66 The overarching transport policy document for the area is the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which provides the framework for achieving better transport systems in Hertfordshire for the plan period 2011-2031. The LTP4 is in progress which will cover the Hertfordshire 2020 Transport vision and will be consulted on in late 2016. The Local Transport Plan covers all modes of transport including walking, cycling, public transport, car based travel, reducing road freight movements and making provision for those with mobility impairments.

- 4.67 Although the LTP3 identifies some specific schemes, the majority of transport schemes are identified at settlement level. From time to time the County Council publishes other documents and strategies which will also need to be taken into account.
- 4.68 New development can help to improve the range of transport opportunities available in the District by helping to improve existing facilities and providing new components where required.
- 4.69 However, national policy also recognises that the scope for passenger transport and/or other sustainable transport measures may be more limited in some locations<sup>45</sup>. Best endeavours should still be made to ensure that the best outcomes can be achieved for all new developments, regardless of their location.
- 4.70 In pursuing this approach, we need to take a pragmatic and realistic approach that recognises the role of the car in modern lifestyles. Even if sustainable alternatives are used for journeys to school or work, most households will still have access to a car for other trips.
- 4.71 Parking standards will be used to assess applications for development. These take a balanced approach that reflects the levels of car ownership we expect from new development. Our detailed policies additionally set out the approach we will take to the assessment of highway proposals and provision for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.72 Due to the largely rural nature of much of the District, there are many public rights of way that exist across North Hertfordshire. These are protected under their own statutory regime. However, diversion applications to facilitate development are made to the District Council. A number of the sites identified in this Plan contain public rights of way. Any applications to modify or divert these routes will be considered separately to any planning application. However, our general expectation is that existing rights of way should be incorporated into the green infrastructure of development proposals. Wherever possible, existing routes and alignments should be maintained.
- 4.73 Our Sustainability Appraisal says our policy provides strong and clear support for sustainable patterns of development. The early provision of sustainable travel infrastructure as part of new developments is supported.

#### **Policy SP7: Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions**

The Council will require development proposals to make provision for infrastructure that is necessary in order to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development. We will:

- a. Require developers to provide, finance and / or contribute towards provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, including:
  - i. on-site and/or off-site improvements and infrastructure necessary as a result of the development in order to:
    - ensure appropriate provision of facilities and infrastructure for new residents;

<sup>45</sup> Paragraph 29 of the NPPF

- help address cumulative impacts that might arise across multiple developments;
  - avoid placing unreasonable additional burdens on the existing community or existing infrastructure;
  - mitigate any adverse impacts; and/or
  - enhance critical assets or make good their loss or damage; and
- ii. maintenance and/or operating costs of any such new provision;
- b. Ensure new infrastructure to support new development is operational no later than the completion of development or phase in which it is needed, unless otherwise agreed with relevant providers;
- c. Refuse planning permission where appropriate agreements or processes ensuring criteria (a) and (b) can be met are not in place;
- d. Have regard to any guidance or requirements in relation to planning obligations and any Community Infrastructure Levy which may be introduced;
- e. Work with landowners, developers and other agencies in facilitating the delivery of sites identified in the Local Plan and seek to overcome known obstacles; and
- f. Take a stringent approach where developers consider that viability issues impact the delivery of key infrastructure and/or mitigation measures.

- 4.74 The nature of planned growth in the District is such that new facilities and infrastructure will be required. Our strategic policy seeks to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and appropriate mitigation is provided.
- 4.75 On the largest development sites, it will be necessary to directly provide facilities alongside the primary use – schools within residential areas, bus stops within business parks, cycling route and new footways etc.. In other areas, much of the growth arises from a number of smaller developments. A small development on its own may not be enough in itself to have a major impact within an area. However, cumulatively a number of developments can create additional demands and burdens on existing infrastructure which may require suitable mitigation to be implemented.
- 4.76 Development can also impact upon existing built and natural assets. This could be through removing trees leading to a change in the biodiversity and landscape character of a site, to altering the setting of a listed building. One of the aims of the Local Plan is to seek to conserve and enhance such features. However, if there are reasons to allow proposals that outweigh any harmful effects, then appropriate mitigation or compensation will be required.
- 4.77 The provision of infrastructure will need to be linked directly to the phasing of development to ensure that it is delivered in line with the timing of future growth. The Council will put in place formal arrangements for ensuring key infrastructure is delivered by the relevant bodies and that all funding sources, in addition to developer contributions are explored. Initial support (pump priming) may be necessary to reflect the time lag between provision and other funding streams. Where new facilities are provided then start-up, maintenance and operating costs will be required.

- 4.78 Our evidence base sets out in greater detail the infrastructure that we anticipate will be required<sup>46</sup>. This will be reviewed throughout the plan period to ensure that decisions on infrastructure are made in light of up-to-date information. This provides flexibility as the role and nature of infrastructure providers will change over the period to 2031.
- 4.79 At present, infrastructure contributions are normally secured through legal agreements. The Council will explore new mechanisms for contributions to new infrastructure provision.
- 4.80 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a way of collecting contributions from development through the use of standard charges. Any decision to develop a CIL for North Hertfordshire would be taken separately to the Local Plan. It would be subject to its own processes and Examination.
- 4.81 Even if a CIL were to be implemented, legal agreements would still be necessary in many cases. On the largest sites they would be used to secure the delivery of on-site improvements such as schools and off-site improvements on the local highway network. On all sites, securing affordable housing will be dealt with by means of planning obligations. It is not currently the Government's intention to provide affordable housing through the CIL.
- 4.82 Our evidence demonstrates that the requirements placed upon development by this Plan should not prove a serious risk to its implementation. It shows there is scope for many of the sites identified in this Plan to make significant contributions towards infrastructure and other policy objectives<sup>47</sup>. However, there may be individual circumstances where this is not the case. This may arise for a number of reasons. It may be as a result of (unexpected) site-specific circumstances. It may be as a result of wider factors, such as the state of the economy.
- 4.83 In cases where viability is an issue, developers will be expected to pay for an independent assessment and analysis of their viability evidence to scrutinise the assumptions that have been made. The methodology and scope of any such assessment should be agreed in advance between the applicant and the Council. If, following this assessment, it is accepted that the viability of a scheme would be critically undermined by application of the Council's usual standards and expectations, we will exceptionally:
- consider which requirements are most critical to securing development and meeting the overall vision and objectives of this Plan;
  - assess the extent to which these might be met in a way which makes any scheme viable; and
  - determine whether this would result in an appropriate and acceptable level of contribution and / or mitigation.
- 4.84 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that this policy is critical in ensuring that the Plan delivers against a significant number of the sub-objectives in the sustainability appraisal framework, not only through ensuring the delivery of needed infrastructure but also through making provision for the mitigation of the adverse impacts of new development. The implementation and impacts of the policy will be carefully monitored through other policies in this Plan to ensure that it does hinder future development.

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<sup>46</sup> Infrastructure Delivery Plan (RS Regeneration, 2016)

<sup>47</sup> North Hertfordshire Whole Plan Viability Assessment (DSP, 2016)



## Housing and Development

### Policy SP8: Housing

Over the period 2011-2031, housing growth will be supported across the District. We will:

- a. Release sufficient land to deliver at least 14,000 new homes for North Hertfordshire's own needs. Of these:
  - i. around 13,800 will be provided within that part of the District falling within the Stevenage Housing Market Area (HMA); while
  - ii. around 200 will be provided within that part of the District falling within the Luton HMA;
- b. Provide additional land within the Luton HMA for a further 1,950 homes as a contribution towards the unmet needs for housing arising from Luton;
- c. Deliver these homes through the sites and allowances identified in this Plan that will support approximately<sup>48</sup>:
  - i. 4,340 homes from completions and permissions achieved since 2011 and other allowances;
  - ii. 7,700 homes from six Strategic Housing Sites:
    - BA1 - North of Baldock for 2,800 homes (2,500 to be delivered by 2031);
    - LG1 - North of Letchworth for 900 homes;
    - NS1 - North of Stevenage in Graveley parish for 900 homes;
    - HT1 - East of Hitchin for 700 homes;
    - GA2 - North-east of Great Ashby in Weston parish for 600 homes; and
    - EL1 / EL2 / EL3 - East of Luton for 2,100 homes;
  - iii. 4,860 homes through local housing allocations that will provide homes on:
    - newly identified sites and land within pre-existing settlement limits;
    - sites released from the Green Belt as part of a comprehensive, District-wide review; and
    - land identified following a review of other relevant boundaries or designations.
  - iv. 7 new, permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- d. Maintain a five-year housing land supply and target the completion of 20% of new homes over the plan period on previously developed land;

<sup>48</sup> These requirements include a small buffer of approximately 7% over and above the targets for North Hertfordshire's housing needs identified in criterion (a) to ensure sufficient flexibility. See Monitoring and Delivery chapter for further information.

- e. Seek to provide long-term certainty by:
  - i. working with the Government and other relevant agencies to identify new settlement options within North Hertfordshire that can provide additional housing supply in the period after 2026; and
  - ii. safeguarding land to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage, as shown on the Proposals Map, for up to 3,100 dwellings in the period beyond 2026 subject to a future review of this Plan;
- f. Support a range of housing tenures, types and sizes measured against targets to provide:
  - i. 33% of all homes over the plan period as Affordable Housing for local needs with targets to deliver up to 40% Affordable Housing where viable;
  - ii. a broadly even split between smaller (1- and 2-bed) and larger (3+ bed) properties; and
  - iii. 100 plots for self-build development over the plan period; and
- g. Provide up to 350 bed spaces in suitable, supported accommodation to meet the needs of those who cannot live in their own home.

- 4.85 The need for housing is one of the biggest issues for local plans to address. A balance needs to be struck between the large and pressing need for housing with the desirability of protecting the countryside. Green Belt boundaries in North Hertfordshire were last reviewed between 1984 and 1992. At that time access to housing was comparatively much easier than it is today, especially for younger newly-forming households.
- 4.86 Our evidence identifies a requirement for 13,800 homes to be built between 2011 and 2031 to meet the needs of North Hertfordshire<sup>49</sup>. A modest uplift has been added. This predominantly reflects the fact that, as people live for longer and live in their own homes for longer, it may be more appropriate to assume that more of their needs will be met in the normal housing stock<sup>50</sup>.
- 4.87 It is also necessary to consider the wider needs of housing market areas which affect North Hertfordshire. In particular, the Luton housing market area covers parts of North Hertfordshire, and the need for development in this area is significant. A contribution towards unmet needs is made by this Plan.
- 4.88 It would only be possible to deliver a modest proportion of these housing requirements on land within the village and Green Belt boundaries established in the previous District Plan<sup>51</sup>. Having considered a wide range of evidence, this Plan concludes that sensible, planned expansion of towns and villages is the best way of delivering the growth needed whilst protecting the largely rural character of the remainder of the District.
- 4.89 More than 4,300 of the required homes are accounted for by completions since 2011, sites which have already obtained planning permission and other allowances. These allowances include windfalls (those sites which will continue to come forward for development outside of the local plan process) as well as broad locations. These are

<sup>49</sup> Updating the Overall Housing Need (ORS, 2016)

<sup>50</sup> Housing requirements are normally calculated on the basis that the proportion of older persons needing specialised accommodation will not change over time.

<sup>51</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (NHDC, 2016)

areas where it is reasonable to assume development might occur in the latter years of the plan, but where we cannot currently identify the exact location. The majority of these 4,300 homes will be on previously developed land.

- 4.90 Just under half of all new homes over the plan period will be delivered on six Strategic Housing Sites removed from the Green Belt. Three of these sites adjoin some of North Hertfordshire's largest settlements – Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock.
- 4.91 Stevenage adjoins North Hertfordshire to the south-east. The tight administrative boundaries here mean it is possible to develop two strategic sites that are within North Hertfordshire, but will integrate with the planned urban area of Stevenage.
- 4.92 These sites will all be built wholly to meet the housing needs of North Hertfordshire.
- 4.93 Luton lies immediately to the west of the District. This strategic allocation for 2,100 homes is predominantly to meet the needs of Luton, but around 150 of the homes here will contribute to North Hertfordshire's housing needs<sup>52</sup>.
- 4.94 A strategic policy has been prepared for each site setting out the site-specific measures we will require. These are in addition to the general requirements on matters such as affordable housing and open space set out in the detailed policies of the Plan which apply in all instances.
- 4.95 The remainder of new homes will be delivered through a range of local housing allocations set out in the detailed policies of this Plan:
- More than 850 further homes are identified within pre-existing settlement boundaries and have influenced our target to build 20% of new homes on previously developed land;
  - As part of our comprehensive review of the Green Belt, a number of additional villages have been 'inset' with boundaries drawn to release additional land for development. These locations will contribute around 2,600 homes to our target whilst also ensuring the long-term sustainability of these settlements.
  - A series of developments around the edge of Royston will contribute almost 1,000 further homes; while
  - A review of settlement boundaries in the Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt allows for approximately 400 homes.
- 4.96 This Plan also makes provision to meet the future needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Existing arrangements at the Pulmer Water site near Codicote will be formalised allowing requirements over the period to 2031 to be met.
- 4.97 These targets require housing completions within the District to accelerate well above those achieved historically. However, past rates have been constrained, in part, by tight village and Green Belt boundaries that have not been reviewed for twenty years whilst Government policy supports a 'significant boost' in the supply of housing.
- 4.98 This needs to be balanced against realistic expectations about when we can expect to see new homes being built. This is especially the case on the largest sites which can require significant up-front investment in infrastructure such as new roads. As a result, most of the planned new homes are likely to be delivered after 2021.

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<sup>52</sup> The remaining 50 homes within the Luton Housing Market Area for North Hertfordshire's needs identified in criterion (a)(ii) will be met from local housing allocations, completions, permissions and windfalls. See Housing and Green Belt Technical Paper (NHDC, 2016).

- 4.99 A stepped approach is considered most appropriate. Housing supply will be measured against targets to deliver an average of 500 homes per year over the first ten years of the plan period (2011-2021). For the period beyond 2021, a target of 1,100 homes per year will apply.
- 4.100 As this Local Plan was developed, many residents suggested that a new settlement in North Hertfordshire would be the best way to meet future needs. We recognise many of the merits of this argument. In the longer term, continual incremental additions to existing settlements may not be the best solution.
- 4.101 The Council is committed to fully exploring new settlement options in the District. Our evidence shows that we cannot expect a new settlement to make a substantial contribution to housing requirements in this Plan period to 2031<sup>53</sup>.
- 4.102 The outcomes of the new settlement process will be reflected in the next review of this Plan. The review will supplement rather than replace the allocations in this Plan and provide greater certainty for the period beyond this Plan.
- 4.103 If a new settlement is pursued, it would be unlikely to meet all future needs and it would probably still remain necessary to identify additional sites<sup>54</sup>. This issue is exacerbated by the constrained nature of some surrounding authorities. Stevenage Borough's current plan strategy is likely to leave only limited development opportunities within their administrative area by 2031<sup>55</sup>.
- 4.104 Land to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage within North Hertfordshire has long been identified as a sustainable location for a substantial urban extension to the town. Given the history of this site, it is considered there is sufficient justification to remove this site from the Green Belt now and safeguard it for future use. No development will be permitted until a plan review determines that the site is required to meet long-term needs and remains (part of) the most appropriate solution.
- 4.105 In taking this approach, it is recognised that a review of this Local Plan will need to conclude before the end of the plan period in 2031. It is reasonable to assume that some development will be realised from whichever sites are identified through this process in the period after 2026. An allowance of 500 homes has been included in our housing figures.
- 4.106 Chapter 14 of this Plan sets out in greater detail how we expect the local plan review process to occur.
- 4.107 As well as setting targets for the amounts of housing, it is vital that the Local Plan sets clear expectations as to the types of homes that will be built.
- 4.108 The price of housing in North Hertfordshire is a key issue and many local residents are unable to afford housing without some form of assistance. At least one out of every three new homes built over the plan period will be Affordable Housing<sup>56</sup> to meet local needs. This will be achieved through a tiered approach requiring up to 40% provision on allocated sites, with 100% affordable schemes appropriate in some instances.

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<sup>53</sup> North Hertfordshire New Settlement Study (ATLAS, 2016)

<sup>54</sup> Long-term Government household and population projections, which form the starting point for consideration of local plan housing targets, continue to predict substantial growth within North Hertfordshire well beyond 2031.

<sup>55</sup> Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031: Publication draft (Stevenage Borough Council, 2016)

<sup>56</sup> This term is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF.

- 4.109 Self-build provides another route to home ownership. On strategic sites, 1% of plots will be reserved for people with a local connection who wish to build their own home. No specific self-build targets have been set on Local Housing Allocation sites and local demand will be considered on a site-by-site basis having regards to the Council's self-build register. Self build may additionally be an issue that local communities wish to explore through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.110 Detailed policies will ensure that development sites deliver an appropriate range of property sizes. Sites in the most accessible locations will generally be expected to provide smaller units at higher densities while we will also ensure appropriate levels of provision for the family market.
- 4.111 We also need to provide the right sort of homes for older residents. Up to 650 bed spaces of specialist accommodation may be required<sup>57</sup>. However, this needs to be viewed in the context of changes in the ways in which older people might seek to live, and in which providers might seek to deliver services over the plan period. A slightly lower requirement has been set, offset against the additional requirement for 'mainstream' housing identified in paragraph 4.86.
- 4.112 Our Sustainability Appraisal concludes that this policy provides clarity about the scale and location of housing which will be delivered in North Hertfordshire up to 2031. As well as securing long-term housing supply, stipulating the type and mix of housing required, the policy should help to support economic growth in the District through increasing local demand and spend and by creating jobs in construction and other development-related industry.

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<sup>57</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (ORS, 2015)

## Design

### Policy SP9: Design and sustainability

The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. We will:

- a. Support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context;
- b. Require masterplans for significant developments;
- c. Assess proposals against detailed policy requirements set out in this Plan and the Design SPD; and
- d. Adopt the Government's technical standards for the size of new homes, water efficiency and, in specified circumstances, accessibility.

- 4.113 Design is central to good planning. The achievement of high quality, sustainable design is required by Government guidance. Planning policies should promote high quality, inclusive design in layouts and buildings in terms of function and impact. Design which does not make the most of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area should be refused.
- 4.114 North Hertfordshire has a high quality natural and built environment. Promoting sustainable growth is one of the priorities for the District. Achieving this objective depends on securing development that is of a high quality and inclusive design which reinforces local distinctiveness through fully addressing the creation of a sense of place and a safe and healthy environment.
- 4.115 North Hertfordshire is fortunate in having three historic market towns, the world's first Garden City and many villages all with unique characters set in a high quality rural environment. As development pressures increase in the District it is important to respect, retain and where possible enhance the existing character of both the urban and rural areas to maintain the quality of the District's environment.
- 4.116 The largest sites will be masterplanned in accordance with any requirements set out in Policies SP14 to SP19 and the Communities section of this Plan to maximise their benefits.
- 4.117 The detailed policies of this Plan and supplementary guidance set out standards that will apply to new development in the District. Government reforms and technical standards have streamlined the type and amount of additional requirements that we can ask of new development. Having regard to relevant evidence, we consider it appropriate to introduce these standardised requirements in North Hertfordshire.
- 4.118 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that this policy with its broad strategic approach should help to ensure that the plan delivers against a number of the sustainability appraisal framework objectives and is particularly important given the scale of new development proposed by this Plan.

## Healthy Communities

### Policy SP10: Healthy communities

We will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for our residents. We will:

- a. Support the retention of existing community, cultural, leisure or recreation facilities;
- b. Require appropriate levels of new community, cultural, leisure and built sport & recreation facilities to be provided in new development;
- c. Work with the NHS Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and other relevant providers to ensure appropriate coverage of healthcare facilities across the District;
- d. Maintain the network of local retail centres identified in Policy SP4 and support the retention of locally-important shops;
- e. Work with Hertfordshire County Council and education providers to ensure the planning system contributes to the provision of sufficient school places and facilitates the provision of new or expanded schools in appropriate and accessible locations; and
- f. Protect, enhance and create new physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.

- 4.119 National policy recognises that the planning system plays a role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Community and recreation facilities together with green spaces can play an important role in the life of local people enabling people not only to participate in physical activities but also in cultural pastimes, all of which can help to enhance physical, spiritual and mental well being. Community, leisure, recreation and cultural facilities can include village halls, community centres, sports halls, theatres, museums, libraries, places of worship, doctors and dental surgeries and schools. Retail facilities in the towns and villages are afforded protection by Policy SP4.
- 4.120 Community provision requires partnership with key agencies. A number of community halls, for example, are owned and / or operated by parish councils.
- 4.121 Our general presumption will be that existing facilities should be retained. However, there may be exceptions to this. Where facilities are being replaced, are not in the right location to address future patterns of demand, or are no longer viable in their current form some limited losses of existing premises will be permitted.
- 4.122 Our detailed policies set out our approach to considering applications, including proposals affecting Assets of Community Value.
- 4.123 The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust are responsible for hospital services. Health care delivered through GP surgeries and other secondary facilities is primarily managed by the East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. The largest sites will be expected to make appropriate provision for new, on-site healthcare facilities.



- 4.124 Most of the District operates a two-tier education system, with children attending primary schools from ages 4-11 and secondary schools from ages 11-16 (and up to 18 where sixth-form provision is made).
- 4.125 The east of the District operates a three-tier system of lower (ages 5-9), middle (9-13) and upper (13-16/18) schools. This system is also used in neighbouring Bedfordshire. On sites close or adjacent to the County boundary, consideration will need to be given as to the most appropriate forms of provision or contribution.
- 4.126 At the same time, the Government's changes may allow for more innovative and flexible approaches to school provision in the future. Concepts such as 'all through schools' – which provide education for all ages from 4 to at least 16 – may be appropriate in certain locations, including the largest development sites. This approach might also enable more sustainable travel patterns by providing modest levels of secondary school provision in locations where children currently have to travel further afield.
- 4.127 We will work with Hertfordshire County Council, landowners, Academy Trusts and other relevant bodies to deliver appropriate solutions. Our Strategic Housing Sites will see the on-site provision of new primary and, where appropriate, secondary school facilities to serve the growing population. Some Local Housing Allocations will also result in new school places being provided, including at Ickleford, Codicote and Knebworth.
- 4.128 The NPPF addresses the importance that access to open space has for the health and wellbeing of a community. Physical infrastructure, for instance walking and cycling routes, can have dual benefits of improving health through exercise, whilst sustainable modes of transport also lessen the impact on the natural environment. Green infrastructure assets can also be a driver for economic growth and investment.
- 4.129 The towns and villages of North Hertfordshire are attractive places in which to live and work. The green infrastructure network forms an essential part of the quality and character of the settlements, providing accessible formal recreation opportunities, informal open space, wildlife habitats and links to the countryside. During the plan period up to 2031 the District will need to accommodate housing growth and it is important that the green infrastructure network is protected where possible, and opportunities are taken to enhance the network to ensure that the settlements remain attractive and healthy places to live.
- 4.130 In promoting the creation of healthy communities, the NPPF states that local authorities should identify specific needs, qualitative and quantitative deficits and any surpluses in open space provision, as well as any open space that is required. These requirements are set out in the detailed policies.
- 4.131 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that this policy is critical to the delivery of a number of the social and environmental sub-objectives in the sustainability appraisal framework.

## Natural and Historic Environment

### Policy SP11: Natural resources and sustainability

This Plan seeks to meet the challenges of climate change and flooding. We will:

- a. Support proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations;
- b. Take a risk based approach to development and flood risk, directing development to areas at lowest risk in accordance with the NPPF and ensuring the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other appropriate measures;
- c. Support the principles of the Water Framework Directive and seek to protect, enhance and manage the water environment; and
- d. Give consideration to the potential or actual impact of land contamination and support proposals that involve the remediation of contaminated land.

- 4.132 To assist in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the Council is required to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will be favourably considered subject to consideration of the impacts. A balance needs to be struck between the beneficial outcomes of renewable energy, and any adverse impacts produced by the development itself.
- 4.133 Risk of flooding can arise from a number of sources including river flooding, surface water runoff, sewer or groundwater flooding. Within North Hertfordshire there are a number of rivers and streams. Localised flooding has also occurred away from those water courses.
- 4.134 Our evidence has identified those areas of the District most at risk from flooding<sup>58</sup>. Development allocations have been identified in line with its recommendations. Where necessary, specific mitigation measures have been identified while our detailed policies set out the general requirements that will apply in all cases.
- 4.135 This includes the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS are an important flood risk mitigation measure to manage surface water run-off. They can take a variety of forms, including green roofs, swales, permeable pavements and retention ponds and, when well designed, integrate with wider green infrastructure provision (see Policy SP12).
- 4.136 This Plan also seeks to have regard to the wider water environment. The Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>59</sup> is a piece of European legislation that requires member states to make plans to protect and improve the water environment. It seeks to improve the condition of all qualifying water bodies to a “good” status and prevent deterioration in the water environment.
- 4.137 North Hertfordshire is located at the watershed between the Great Ouse and Thames river catchments. Headwaters of river catchments are, by their nature, small in terms of volume. This means that environmental capacity for change can be limited.

<sup>58</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment update (North Hertfordshire District Council, 2016)

<sup>59</sup> For information on the Water Framework Directive, see: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33362.aspx>

- 4.138 Water Cycle Studies have been produced for both the Rye Meads catchment area<sup>60</sup> and Royston<sup>61</sup>, where identified foul treatment infrastructure issues have arisen as a result of potential future development. Both studies identify that technical solutions can be realised. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought and / or conditions used in accordance with Policy SP7.
- 4.139 Much of North Hertfordshire's water supply comes from an unconfined aquifer sited beneath the District. We will ensure that development does not have an adverse impact upon groundwater.
- 4.140 This approach should prevent pollution of the water environment. However, it is also important to have regard to pollution and contamination in a broader context.
- 4.141 There are numerous sites in the District which are potentially affected by contamination as a consequence of their historical land uses. Our detailed policies set out the approach we will take to (potentially) contaminated sites and polluting uses.
- 4.142 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that this policy supports a number of the sustainability appraisal framework objectives.

#### **Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape**

We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced. We will:

- a. Protect, enhance and manage the green infrastructure network and seek opportunities to create new green infrastructure;
- b. Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites and seek opportunities for net gains for biodiversity; and
- c. Consider and respect landscape character and locally sensitive features, particularly in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- 4.143 North Hertfordshire has a varied and attractive natural environment which is under increasing pressure from development, recreational uses and changing agricultural practices, particularly in the areas which are adjacent to the towns and villages.
- 4.144 The natural environment forms the setting to the towns and villages in which people live, work and spend their leisure time. Where possible, it should be protected and enhanced in the future to maintain the existing high quality of life that people in the District enjoy.
- 4.145 Green infrastructure refers to all assets within and between towns and villages, both urban and rural. It is a network of multi-functional open spaces, including urban parks, gardens, woodlands, hedgerows, watercourses and associated buffer zones, and green corridors in addition to protected sites, nature reserves and open countryside.
- 4.146 Benefits to be gained from green infrastructure include a healthy environment, improved biodiversity value, climate change mitigation and flood attenuation as well

<sup>60</sup> Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy (Hyder, 2009); Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy Review (Stevenage Borough Council, 2015)

<sup>61</sup> Royston Sewage Treatment Work Water Cycle Study (NHDC, 2012)

as enhanced networks for walking and cycling, which contributes to a carbon neutral development. The retention of substantial connected networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to serve growing communities is vitally important in ensuring these benefits are maximised.

- 4.147 Our detailed policies set out our approach to green infrastructure provision in new developments.
- 4.148 There are a wide range of important habitats within North Hertfordshire, including hedgerows, wildflower meadows, orchards, ponds, lakes, reed bed and fen, ancient woodlands in the south, chalk grasslands and chalk streams in the east and wet woodlands along the River Hiz and its tributaries. Many of these habitats are subject to specific designations, reflecting their value in terms of wildlife interest, for instance national sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves, and local sites such as local wildlife sites.
- 4.149 North Hertfordshire is also host to a number of Local Geological Sites, which are identified as the most important sites for geology not covered by land protection designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Our detailed policies set out the designations for biodiversity and geodiversity assets.
- 4.150 Much of North Hertfordshire is largely unspoilt, very attractive landscape encompassing a range of natural, man-made and urban and rural spaces. The natural landscape to the west of Hitchin towards Hexton and Lilley follows the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills and part of the District here falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are also locally important landscapes which contribute to a feeling of remoteness in other parts of the District, for example Lilley Bottom and the East Anglian Heights. Our detailed policies set out how we expect landscape issues to be taken into account.
- 4.151 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that our policy directly addresses the environmental protection objectives as set out in our sustainability appraisal and recognises the need to provide environmental protection in the context of accommodating significant growth.

#### **Policy SP13: Historic environment**

The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

- a. Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting;
- b. Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or the local risk register;
- c. Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and
- d. Publication of detailed guidance.

- 4.152 The District has a rich built heritage with many ancient monuments (many being associated with the prehistoric Icknield Way), 44 conservation areas and over 2,500 listed buildings.

- 4.153 These factors make a strong positive contribution to North Hertfordshire, but can be among the most vulnerable features of the District when major development is proposed.
- 4.154 National policy seeks to conserve the historic environment which contributes to the local distinctiveness of the area, but also to facilitate development where it would not lead to substantial harm. In addition to this, the historic environment is among environmental matters that must be considered when pursuing sustainable development. The Council will take a positive and pro-active approach to this historic environment. This section is our heritage strategy setting out the main features of the historic environment in North Hertfordshire.
- 4.155 Currently identified Heritage assets in North Hertfordshire include:
- Over 2,500 Listed Buildings
  - 44 Conservation Areas
  - 13 Registered Parks and Gardens
  - 62 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
  - Over 1,000 sites of Archaeological Interest
- 4.156 Listed Buildings are designated by central Government. With the District's fine urban and rural history, the statutory list includes buildings and structures of a wide range of sizes, ages, types and uses and of varying architectural styles, methods of construction and materials, both local and imported.
- 4.157 Of the 2500 listed buildings within North Hertfordshire, 29 buildings have the highest Grade I listing, whilst a further 135 are Grade II\* listed.
- 4.158 The forty-four Conservation Areas in North Hertfordshire include (parts of) settlements of varying characters from the historic linear core of Barkway to the original town centre and residential neighbourhoods of Letchworth Garden City.
- 4.159 Conservation Areas are designated under separate legislation to that which is used for local plans. Appraisal and review can therefore take place on a rolling-basis alongside and / or outside of the local plan process.
- 4.160 Over the lifetime of this Plan, we will carry out a programme of work relating to our Conservation Areas with priority for locations with potential development pressures and where there have been significant changes since the designation was first made. The reviews will include the production of character statements and will provide opportunities to consider amending boundaries.
- 4.161 We will consider the need to develop supplementary guidance for Conservation Areas in the form of management plans. Where this is pursued, it will become a material consideration in the determination of relevant applications.
- 4.162 Historic England maintains a national register of Heritage at risk for sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. The Council will also explore, with parish councils and designated neighbourhood planning groups, the possibility of developing a list of locally designated heritage assets at risk. If implemented, we would work with Historic England, owners and occupiers to find new, appropriate uses and solutions to secure the future of heritage assets.

- 4.163 Historic assets can also form part of the green infrastructure network. Of the thirteen Registered Parks and Gardens in the District, one is Grade I (St Paul's Walden Bury); one is Grade II\* (Knebworth Park) and eleven are Grade II. These sites contain listed buildings and so also form part of their setting. The registered sites are of varying ages and character dating from the 18th century through to the early 20th century. Historic England's advice suggests about two-thirds of the sites on the register are of national significance.
- 4.164 Working with the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and based on its advice the Council will, where possible, identify other sites of interest. These will be added to the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and will be considered by the Council as non-designated heritage assets, as defined in the NPPF, and given appropriate consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.165 In addition, because there are no special controls for works within historic parks and gardens, we will consider serving Tree Preservation Orders outside conservation areas where the character of a site may be threatened by the loss of important trees.
- 4.166 North Hertfordshire has an especially rich archaeological heritage, including Archaeology Areas and Areas of Archaeological Interest.
- 4.167 There is archaeological evidence of human activity from early prehistoric times but with the District probably being best known for its late Iron Age and Roman remains. In addition, there are Iron Age hill forts, a number of important ancient roads and routes including the Icknield Way and Roman Ermine Street and small mediaeval castles and moated manor sites.
- 4.168 As well as the sixty-two scheduled ancient monuments there are a number of sites within the District that have been identified as being of comparable national importance to the sixty-two scheduled ancient monuments.
- 4.169 In accordance with the NPPF, these will be considered in the same way as scheduled sites in the determination of development proposals. Many other sites of interest are known and new sites are becoming known on a regular basis. Because of this, a finite list of sites and their areas cannot be identified. Sites of interest are included in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, which is updated on an annual basis.
- 4.170 The Council recognises the importance of these heritage assets and has additionally been developing and adopting Registers of Buildings of Local Importance on a parish by parish basis in conjunction with Conservation Area reviews.
- 4.171 The detailed policies of this Plan identify those sites where impact upon the historic environment must be carefully managed.
- 4.172 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that our policy directly addresses the sustainability appraisal framework objectives relating to the protection, conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and landscapes.

## Strategic Housing Sites

- 4.173 The following policies identify our Strategic Housing Sites and set out site-specific measures to be addressed in any proposals. These are in addition to matters set out in the detailed policies of this Plan, such as affordable housing and open space, which apply in all cases.
- 4.174 The supporting text to Policy SP8 sets out the key findings of our Sustainability Appraisal in relation to housing. Each Strategic Housing Site has additionally been subject to an individual appraisal which has informed the policies below. Further details can be found in the Environmental Report, which should be referred to for more information<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Sustainability Appraisal (CAG, 2016)



### Policy SP14: Site BA1 – North of Baldock

Land to the north of Baldock, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 2,800 homes. Planning permission for residential-led development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
- b. A new local centre along with additional neighbourhood-level provision providing around 500m<sup>2</sup> (net) class A1 convenience retail provision and 1,400m<sup>2</sup> (net) of other A-class floorspace;
- c. Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east;
- d. A new link road connecting the A507 London Road to the A505 Baldock bypass including a new bridge across the railway;
- e. Sustainable transport measures to include:
  - i. a secondary rail crossing for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of Ashville Way;
  - ii. safe access routes to / from, and upgrades to, Baldock station;
  - iii. sensitive integration of Bridleway Baldock 034 / Bygrave 002 as a north-south route through the development; and
  - iv. the use of Bygrave Road / Ashwell Road from the south-western edge of the allocated site to the link road as a sustainable transport corridor
- f. At least 28 serviced plots for self-build development;
- g. A community hall and GP surgery;
- h. Up to 6 forms of entry (FE) of additional primary-age and secondary-age education provision;
- i. Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly to the south of Ashwell Road, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;
- j. Appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity as informed by detailed assessments including:
  - i. Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve;
  - ii. Bygrave Road local wildlife site; and
  - iii. identified protected species and priority habitats;
- k. Built development contained to the south and south-west of the ridgeline that generally extends eastwards from the A507 south of Blackhorse Farm and southwards from Ashwell Road; and
- l. Sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings including:
  - i. an access solution from the A507 London Road which satisfactorily addresses potential impacts;
  - ii. retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the site;

- iii. using the location of areas of archaeological significance to inform a site-wide green infrastructure strategy; and
- iv. Ivel Springs Scheduled Ancient Monument.

- 4.176 Land to the north of Baldock is the largest, single development site allocated through this Plan. A total of 2,800 homes can be accommodated here, 2,500 of which are anticipated to be built within the plan period to 2031.
- 4.177 The location of the site, and the way in which Baldock has historically developed, enables substantial new development within relatively close proximity to both the train station and Baldock town centre.
- 4.178 This site enables growth to meet needs arising from the surrounding areas in such a way that does not erode the narrow gaps between the towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock.
- 4.179 The site is also large enough to support new schools, local facilities and a new link road, including an additional road bridge over the railway so that not all traffic has to use the Station Road bridge and the Whitehorse Street/Royston Road crossroads.
- 4.180 A range of sustainable transport measures will be required. Critically, this will include measures that allow safe access to the northern side of Baldock station and the town centre as well as routes through the development to provide access to the wider countryside for all Baldock residents.
- 4.181 To the north, the allocation extends to the line of Bridleway Bygrave 001. This right of way is considered the most appropriate long-term, defensible boundary for the Green Belt<sup>63</sup>. Additional planting may be required to reinforce its role. However, there is a clear ridgeline located approximately 200 metres to the south of this which is considered the most appropriate limit for built development.
- 4.182 To the south of the ridgeline, the site faces towards the existing town. To the north it relates to the countryside beyond. This area would be most appropriate for the provision of some types of open space, school playing fields and / or replacement habitat where it creates an appropriate transition between the rural and urban.
- 4.183 Along the eastern edge, the boundary to the north of Ashwell Road is defined by a field boundary hedgerow which should be reinforced. The boundary and ridgeline to the south of Ashwell Road are less well defined.
- 4.184 The masterplanning process should address these issues and, where possible, mitigate against adverse impacts upon the wider landscape.
- 4.185 The site and surrounding area has been specifically identified as (potentially) hosting a variety of habitats and species protected by legislation. This includes the corn bunting<sup>64</sup>. Appropriate measures will be required as part of any application. This may range from the localised retention of habitats on-site to biodiversity offsetting. This is where habitats lost are re-provided at an appropriate alternate location.
- 4.186 Baldock and its surrounds are home to a wide-range of heritage assets. This includes sites associated with ancient settlements, the town centre Conservation Area and a range of individually listed buildings.

<sup>63</sup> Green Belt Review (NHDC, 2016)

<sup>64</sup> Blackhorse Farm, Baldock. Guidance Note; Corn Bunting (BSG Ecology, 2016)

### Policy SP15: Site LG1 – North of Letchworth Garden City

Land to the north of Letchworth Garden City, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for approximately 900 homes. Planning permission for residential development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters which also sets out:
  - i. how the site will follow and implement Garden City principles;
  - ii. the most appropriate points of vehicular access considering landscape and traffic impacts;
  - iii. an appropriate education solution with a presumption in favour of on-site provision of a new primary school; and
  - iv. any measures required to address nearby heritage assets including the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Radwell Lodge and the Croft Lane and Norton Conservation Areas;
- b. Neighbourhood-level retail and community facilities providing around 900m<sup>2</sup> (net) of A-class floorspace;
- c. At least 9 serviced plots for self-build development;
- d. Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SuDS approach;
- e. Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into the surrounding landscape and a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary, particularly to the north-west and east; and
- f. Diversion and / or re-provision of the Letchworth Greenway to provide a revised route around the new urban edge.

4.187 Letchworth holds a special place as the world's first garden city. Although development of the town to Ebenezer Howard's original vision of 32,000 residents has been achieved, it is considered there remains scope for a sensitive extension of the town to the north, which respects the town's original ideals while making provision for the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A masterplan will be required for this site which demonstrates how these principles will be incorporated.

4.188 The masterplan will also be required to demonstrate an access solution which works in both highway and urban design terms. Previous work has shown that a new access from Stotfold Road could be accommodated in landscape terms<sup>65</sup>. However, this needs to be balanced against a requirement to properly integrate this site with the existing Garden City. At the same time, any impacts upon the existing local highway network need to be managed within acceptable limits.

4.189 Sites at this scale generate enough demand to support the provision of new primary schools on-site. The presumption is that site LG1 will follow this principle. However, the irregular shape of the site and the location of surrounding schools and an existing reserve school site in the area mean that this requires further consideration.

<sup>65</sup> Land north of Letchworth: landscape sensitivity study (LUC, 2013)

- 4.190 Although this site will not generate a requirement for a local centre which forms part of the formal retail hierarchy, it will be necessary to provide neighbourhood-level shops and facilities to ensure that the new development is sustainable.
- 4.191 This site forms part of the elevated northerly edge to Letchworth. Much of the site is relatively flat though falls away to the north-west towards Pix Brook and to the north / north east to the Ivel Valley, with several ordinary watercourses on the site draining broadly in these directions.
- 4.192 Our evidence shows that, within the plateau on which most of the site sits, there is only low landscape sensitivity to development. In the peripheral areas, there are views across a much wider landscape which continues into neighbouring Central Bedfordshire<sup>66</sup>.
- 4.193 Although parts of the north-eastern boundary are quite clearly defined, there are currently limited features demarcating the north-west and eastern edges of the site. These should be addressed in a comprehensive strategy which limits any harm to the wider landscape and preserves the setting of nearby heritage assets whilst creating new defensible limits to the town.
- 4.194 The Letchworth Greenway is an off-road circular route around the edge of the town. It was constructed in 2003 to celebrate the town's centenary. Development of this site will result in incorporation of part of the existing Greenway into the urban area. These affected sections should be re-routed and re-provided as part of any application. The possibility of providing radial link paths from the existing urban area, through the site to the Greenway (and beyond) should be explored as part of a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy.

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<sup>66</sup> Land north of Letchworth: landscape sensitivity study (LUC, 2013)

### Policy SP16: Site NS1 – North of Stevenage

Land to the north of Stevenage within Graveley parish, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for approximately 900 homes. Planning permission for residential development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
- b. Integration with adjoining development in Stevenage Borough including site-wide solutions for access, education, retail and other necessary social infrastructure;
- c. An upgraded junction at the intersection of Graveley Road / North Road;
- d. A detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;
- e. At least 9 serviced plots for self-build development;
- f. Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into surrounding landscape and a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north as informed by detailed assessments;
- g. Integration of existing public rights of way to provide routes through the site to the wider countryside including
  - i. footpath Graveley 006 and Bridleway Gravely 008 along the perimeter of the site; and
  - ii. footpath Graveley 007 as a south-east to north-west route through the site and link path from the urban area to the Stevenage Outer Orbital Path; and
- h. Sensitive consideration of existing settlements, landscape features and heritage assets including:
  - i. Graveley village and Conservation Area;
  - ii. the St Nicholas & Rectory Lane Conservation Area;
  - iii. Chesfield Park;
  - iv. Church of St Etheldreda; and
  - v. Manor Farm.

4.195 The area north of Stevenage is currently undeveloped farm land in the parish of Graveley. Adjoining land within Stevenage Borough to the south has been identified for development and this provides an opportunity for a coherent extension of the town to the north<sup>67</sup>. A masterplanning exercise for this site will need to consider the implications of these cross-boundary allocations and demonstrate appropriate solutions. This may lead to some facilities which will serve the whole development being located wholly within either North Hertfordshire's or Stevenage's administrative areas.

4.196 It is envisaged that principal access to the site will be in the form of a looped estate road, one end of which will be in Stevenage Borough. The northern end of this road

<sup>67</sup> Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031: Publication Draft (SBC, 2016)

will emerge at, or close to, the existing junction of the B197 at Graveley Road / North Road. A new arrangement, possibly a roundabout, will need to be provided.

- 4.197 Existing field boundaries in this area are generally quite well defined. However, in order to preserve the setting and separation of Graveley village and its Conservation Area, it is considered most appropriate to draw back the allocation and Green Belt boundaries to a new alignment. This will require new planting and sensitive design and layout to preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 4.198 These perimeter areas also incorporate statutory rights of way which should be retained. A further footpath bisects the development and this should be incorporated as a green route from the Stevenage urban area, through the development site to the countryside beyond.
- 4.199 This route also forms a recognised link to the Stevenage Outer Orbital Path (StOOP). StOOP is a 27-mile walking route around the town using footpaths and other routes that are open to the public.
- 4.200 To the south-east of the site, the adjoining land within Stevenage Borough is known colloquially as 'Forster Country' in recognition of author EM Forster. His childhood home is listed with its setting protected by a Conservation Area.
- 4.201 To the east lies Chesfield Park. Although not formally recognised through statutory listings or registers, the house and surrounding parkland are important local features. These are generally well separated from the allocated site by an existing tree belt but the transition between these areas will need to be considered.

### Policy SP17: Site HT1 – Highover Farm, Hitchin

Land to the east of Hitchin, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for approximately 700 homes. Planning permission for residential development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
- b. Neighbourhood-level retail facilities providing approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> (net) of A-class floorspace;
- c. Principal access from Stotfold Road with appropriate integration to the local highway network;
- d. At least 7 serviced plots for self-build development;
- e. On-site provision of a new primary school;
- f. Appropriate separation distances from the adjoining railway embankment to safeguard residential amenity; and
- g. Lower density development and / or green infrastructure provision as informed by detailed landscape assessments at the north of the site to:
  - i. maintain appropriate visual and physical separation between Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City;
  - ii. address surface water flood risk; and
  - iii. respect the setting of the scheduled burrows to the north-east.

- 4.202 The land at Highover Farm provides opportunity for a strategic-scale site on the edge of Hitchin to address locally arising needs.
- 4.203 Although this site will not generate a requirement for a local centre which forms part of the formal retail hierarchy, it will be necessary to provide neighbourhood-level shops and facilities to ensure that the new development is sustainable.
- 4.204 This development will necessitate a new principal access from Stotfold Road. However, it is important to ensure that this does not result in new development 'turning its back' on the remainder of Hitchin.
- 4.205 A site at this scale will generate sufficient demand to support a new primary school on site. This will need to be at least 1FE in size. Further information on likely pupil yields, along with an understanding of any extent to which the nearby Highover JMI School may be able to meet future demands, will determine if it is necessary to secure a 2FE school on-site.
- 4.206 A number of existing roads run to the edge of the allocated land, including Highover Way and High Dane. These provide opportunities to integrate development with the surrounding area whilst ensuring that any such routes do not create an alternate access from Stotfold Road to the industrial areas located between the railway lines
- 4.207 The most appropriate solutions will be determined through the Development Management process having regard to the detailed policies of this Plan.
- 4.208 Although the gap between Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City is relatively narrow in this location, it is considered that Stotfold Road and the Cambridge railway provide



definitive, defensible boundaries. Notwithstanding this point, it will be necessary to demonstrate an appropriate design solution as the site tapers to its northern end to respect this separation and nearby heritage assets.

### Policy SP18: Site GA2 – Land off Mendip Way, Great Ashby

Land to the north-east of Great Ashby within Weston parish, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for approximately 600 homes. Planning permission for residential development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
- b. Neighbourhood-level retail facilities providing approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> (net) of A1-class floorspace;
- c. Up to four hectares of land for education purposes subject to up-to-date assessments of need including, at minimum, 2FE of primary-age provision;
- d. Principal access from Mendip Way;
- e. A detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;
- f. At least 6 serviced plots for self-build development;
- g. Structural planting along the alignment of footpath Weston 044 as informed by detailed landscape assessments to reinforce the revised Green Belt boundary and mitigate landscape impacts;
- h. Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly running south-east from Dell Spring to Newberry Grove, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;
- i. Appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including:
  - i. local wildlife sites at Tilekiln Wood, Parsonsgreen Wood, New Spring Wood, Brooches Wood and Claypithills Spring Wood; and
  - ii. identified protected species and priority habitats;
- j. Integration of existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside including
  - i. footpaths Weston 027 and Weston 044 and Bridleway Weston 033 as features which help define the perimeters of the site; and
  - ii. footpath Weston 029 as a potential green corridor through the site;
- k. Provision of a green infrastructure corridor beneath the current alignment of the pylon lines; and
- l. Lower intensity development and / or green infrastructure provision to the north of the site to minimise harm to the setting of listed buildings.

- 4.209 Great Ashby is a relatively new parish, representing the residential area adjoining Stevenage that has been substantially completed since the turn of the century. For the purposes of our settlement hierarchy it is considered to be a town.
- 4.210 Land to the north-east of the existing settlement limits is identified for the development of approximately 600 homes within the parish of Weston.
- 4.211 Although this site will not generate a requirement for a local centre which forms part of the formal retail hierarchy, it will be necessary to provide neighbourhood-level shops and facilities to ensure that the new development is sustainable.

- 4.212 Great Ashby's existing primary school is significantly oversubscribed. As a consequence, it draws its intake from a very tight catchment area. There is also no local secondary school and Hertfordshire County Council has identified future pressures on secondary-age provision in the Stevenage area as a key concern.
- 4.213 Development of this site provides the opportunity to address these issues. 2FE of primary-age provision will exceed the requirements arising from the site itself and help alleviate pressures arising from existing and planned development in Great Ashby.
- 4.214 We will continue to work with the landowner and Hertfordshire County Council to explore options for secondary school provision in this area. A modest level of secondary-age provision, potentially in the form of an all-through school, could provide a local solution for Great Ashby and create a more sustainable residential neighbourhood at the north-east of Stevenage.
- 4.215 The revised Green Belt boundary has been drawn along the route of a public right of way. Although a clearly defined feature, parts of its alignment cut across open fields. Structural planting here will reinforce the boundary as well as providing visual containment of the development.
- 4.216 Distinct areas of woodland lie between the site and the existing development at Great Ashby. These should be sensitively incorporated into the development having regard to their status as local wildlife sites. These woods will be integral to the green infrastructure of the site, which will also include incorporation of key rights of way.
- 4.217 A green infrastructure corridor currently runs through Great Ashby following the alignment of the overhead power lines. This should additionally be carried through the new development to provide a continuous link through the neighbourhood to the wider countryside.
- 4.218 The site adjoins a number of Grade II listed buildings at Tile Kiln Farm and care should be taken in the detailed design of any scheme to ensure this area retains an appropriate setting.

### Policy SP19: Sites EL1, EL2 & EL3 – East of Luton

Land to the east of Luton, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 2,100 homes. Planning permission for residential-led development will be granted where the following site-specific measures requirements are met:

- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
- b. A new local centre with additional neighbourhood-level provision providing around 250m<sup>2</sup> (net) class A1 convenience retail provision and 850m<sup>2</sup> of other A-class floorspace;
- c. Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into the surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the east and mitigate landscape impacts;
- d. Principal access to be taken from Luton Road and integrated into Luton's existing highway network via Crawley Green Road;
- e. Up to 4FE of primary-age and secondary-age education provision to ensure the needs arising from this allocation can be met within the site;
- f. At least 21 serviced plots for self-build development;
- g. Built development contained within the Breachwood Ridge and avoiding adverse impacts on the wider landscape of the Lilley Valley or the Chilterns AONB as informed by detailed landscape assessments;
- h. Integration of existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside including:
  - i. footpath Offley 001 as a route from south-east Luton to the rural area; and
  - ii. footpaths Offley 039, Offley 002 and Offley 003 as potential north-west to south-east green corridors through the site;
- i. Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly along the south-western perimeter of the site, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;
- j. Appropriate noise mitigation measures, to potentially include insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces;
- k. Mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity as informed by detailed assessments including:
  - i. the local wildlife sites at Stubbocks Wood; and
  - ii. priority deciduous woodland habitat at Brickkiln Wood; and
- l. Sensitive integration of existing settlements and heritage assets, including
  - i. minimising the visual impacts of development upon the historic parts of Cockernhoe, including relevant listed buildings;
  - ii. using the location of the Mangrove Green and Cockernhoe areas of archaeological significance to inform a site-wide green infrastructure strategy; and
  - iii. retaining an appropriate setting to the adjoining Putteridge Bury.

- 4.219 Three adjoining sites are identified to the East of Luton totalling 2,100 dwellings. Around 150 homes will meet requirements arising from within North Hertfordshire, with the remaining 1,950 homes addressing needs that cannot be physically accommodated within Luton.
- 4.220 Our assessment shows that the land broadly bounded by Mangrove Green, Brick Kiln Lane and Brickkiln Wood (site EL3 and parts of site EL1) is most supportable in terms of impacts upon landscape and Green Belt. Beyond these limits, impacts become more pronounced<sup>68</sup>.
- 4.221 However, this needs to be balanced against the acute levels of unmet needs arising from Luton and the associated requirements of the NPPF and Duty to Co-operate. It is considered that the strategic allocation represents North Hertfordshire's reasonable maximum contribution<sup>69</sup>.
- 4.222 Our assessments show that this level of development can be accommodated without a significant adverse impact on the wider highway networks of Luton and Hertfordshire<sup>70</sup>. This will be achieved, in part, by ensuring that education needs arising from the allocation will be met within the site itself.
- 4.223 The eastern section of site EL1 and all of site EL2 will require sensitive design and landscaping (including structural planting) to visually contain development from longer views. The revised Green Belt boundaries predominantly follow existing, recognisable features such as roads, tree belts and rights of way. Where necessary, additional planting should be provided for reinforcement and to mitigate against impacts upon the wider landscape.
- 4.224 The site is in close proximity to the Luton Airport noise corridors and mitigation measures may be required, particularly towards the south-east of the site which lies closest to the flight path.
- 4.225 The allocation will adjoin existing small settlements including Cockernhoe, Mangrove Green and Tea Green as well as the registered park at Putteridge Bury. The relationship of these areas to the new development will need to be carefully considered, notably for the two greens at Cockernhoe Green and Mangrove Green.

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<sup>68</sup> North Herts Site Selection Report (Peter Brett Associates, 2016)

<sup>69</sup> A review conducted by Sir Michael Heseltine suggested that authorities should "leave no stone unturned" in seeking solutions to growth. This has been broadly accepted as the benchmark against which the Duty to Co-operate is tested, especially where unmet needs exist.

<sup>70</sup> East of Luton Urban Extension Stage 2 – Traffic Modelling Results (AECOM, 2016); Preferred Local Plan Model Testing (AECOM, 2016)



SECTION THREE

DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
POLICIES

# SECTION THREE - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

## 5 Economy & Town Centres

### Policy ETC1: Appropriate uses in Employment Areas

Within the allocated Employment Areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted where:

- a. Within those parts of the Employment Areas designated for business use only, development is for Use Class B1;
- b. Elsewhere within Employment Areas, development is for Use Classes B1, B2 or B8;
- c. Any relevant site-specific criteria are met; and
- d. Any Use Class B8 development is easily accessible from the primary road network.

Planning permission for other uses will only be granted as an exception to the above criteria where they are:

- i. Ancillary to the above uses;
- ii. Essential to the continued operation of an established premises;
- iii. Would bring comparable benefits to a B-class use in the same location; or
- iv. Would make use of a site that would otherwise be likely to become or remain vacant for an extended period of time.

- 5.1 Within the four main towns there are a number of established Employment Areas, where the majority of employment-generating premises are located. They include B1 business, B2 general industrial and B8 storage and distribution uses. They are well-established areas and are a valuable resource to the District.
- 5.2 Over the lifetime of this Plan these will be supplemented by the new allocations identified by Policy SP3 which will become Employment Areas covered by this policy. Detailed considerations for these sites are set out in the Chapter 13 of this Plan which must be taken into account.
- 5.3 In order to maintain an adequate level of employment land to meet the needs of the local economy, we will protect defined Employment Areas from uses which would undermine their purpose or be better located in other areas of the District. The Council does not wish to inhibit the ability of existing firms to expand. It will be supportive of the redevelopment of sites which would lead to an improvement in the quality of employment floorspace suited to modern day needs.
- 5.4 Within the employment areas, certain areas will be reserved for B1 uses such as offices, research and development and light industry only. Due to the constrained nature of the District's Town Centres, and the competition from other land uses, much of the new office development anticipated over the plan period is likely to be within Employment Areas.



- 5.5 However, the Council recognises that Employment Areas are often sought after locations for a number of other uses. It is recognised that there is a need for some flexibility to meet the needs of uses such as: tyre and exhaust centres, trade wholesalers, vehicle hire, plant hire, motor trade uses and taxi vehicle depots. These are often partial B uses, combining a retail element with a predominantly business, industrial or storage use, or are sui generis<sup>71</sup>. These uses tend to cause conflict in other parts of the towns, such as town centres or residential areas as a result of impacts on residential amenity and living condition.
- 5.6 Motor vehicle premises, in particular, usually include a mixture of sales and repairs. The sale of motor vehicles tends to provide lower density of employment than normally expected in an employment area. The amount of the retail sales element on larger developments will be restricted in order to protect the availability of, and maximise the use of, employment land. In addition, in order to prevent the change of use of buildings to Class A1 (shops) a condition will be imposed on any grant of permission removing permitted development rights. These considerations apply to the sale of all types of vehicles.
- 5.7 Development proposals which seek to make use of the exception criteria of this policy will be considered on their merits. When assessing such proposals, the Council will have regard to (as applicable in each instance):
- employment generation on site;
  - impact on relevant town centres;
  - where appropriate, the level and type of retail involved on the site;
  - any potential benefits to the community or surrounding businesses from the proposed use;
  - the proportion of the site to be used for sales and display as opposed to repairs and servicing, in the case of motor trade uses;
  - accessibility by non-car modes of transport;
  - any evidence clearly demonstrating that:
    - the land or premises is no longer required to meet future employment needs of the District;
    - the land or premises is inappropriate or unfeasible for employment use, based on market conditions or amenity / living condition problems; and
    - no other suitable sites outside designated employment areas are viable and available; and
  - details of any sequential and / or impact testing.
- 5.8 A number of the District's Employment Areas are identified through the Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan as Employment Land Area of Search (ELAS) and parts of them may be acceptable for waste uses. The Hertfordshire County Council ELAS SPD<sup>72</sup> sets out specific considerations for each employment area.

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<sup>71</sup> 'Sui generis' is a term used to mean any use which does not fall within the use classes defined in the Use Classes Order.

<sup>72</sup> Hertfordshire County Council Employment Land Area of Search SPD (2015)

### **Policy ETC2: Employment development outside Employment Areas**

Planning Permission for employment uses outside of allocated Employment Areas will be granted where:

- a. They are located consistently with the principles of sustainable development;
- b. The proposal is appropriate to the area in terms of size, scale, function, catchment area and / or historic and architectural character;
- c. There would be no significant adverse impacts on living conditions; and
- d. If major in scale, evidence is provided that there are no more suitable sites within the existing Employment Areas.

The Council will only permit the loss of existing employment uses on unallocated sites, where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The land or premises is no longer required to meet future employment needs of either the local community or the District;
- ii. The existing use has a significant adverse impact on the amenities of surrounding land uses; or
- iii. The existing use is detrimental to highway safety.

- 5.9 There are a number of employment sites across North Hertfordshire that are outside the designated Employment Areas but which provide sources of local employment and services. These are in other parts of the main towns including town centres, in category A villages, and sometimes within category B and C villages or in the countryside following the re-use or redevelopment of agricultural buildings. Some have been there for a long time and may not be in the most appropriate location while others exist perfectly well adjacent to other uses such as residential and / or in their wider setting.
- 5.10 These sites are often small scale, although there are larger office developments in and around Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City town centres for example. The provision and retention of appropriate dispersed employment sites contributes to sustainable development aims by reducing the need to travel for local residents, something which is advocated in the NPPF. We will have regard to these factors to determine whether the proposed use is appropriately located.
- 5.11 The Council will permit appropriate proposals for farm and other land-based diversification schemes that benefit the rural area. The re-use or redevelopment of rural buildings for employment purposes will be subject to Policy CGB4.

### **Policy ETC3: New retail, leisure and other main town centre development**

Planning permission for new retail, leisure and other main town centre development will be granted where:

- a. The sequential test is passed;
- b. Impact assessments are provided based on locally set thresholds demonstrating there is no unacceptable harm to the vitality or viability of a designated centre;

- c. Within retail allocation sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, any relevant site-specific criteria are met;
- d. The proposal is appropriate to the area in terms of use, size, scale, function, catchment area, historic and architectural character; and
- e. There would be no significant adverse impact upon living conditions.

- 5.12 Our evidence establishes the need for additional retail, commercial and leisure floorspace in the District over the period to 2031<sup>73</sup>. This Plan identifies six allocated sites where a substantial proportion of these needs will be met.
- 5.13 In assessing proposals for main town centre uses, we will adopt the 'sequential approach' as set out in Government guidance<sup>74</sup>. Therefore retail uses will be considered in the following order of preference:
1. within the primary or secondary shopping frontages of town centres, on allocated sites within town centres, or in local centres;
  2. other parts of the town centres;
  3. the edge of centres; and
  4. out of centre, only where there are no available, suitable and viable sites which are sequentially preferable.
- 5.14 Business uses within town centres can add to the vitality and viability of centres. Office workers within a town centre will create more custom for shops and services. The Council is therefore generally supportive of new office development in town centres in accordance with the sequential test. Office development will be encouraged above ground floor retail.
- 5.15 The District has a number of local scale leisure facilities such as leisure centres and swimming pools. The provision of large scale leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities within the District is limited but this reflects the size of its catchment and the fact that residents also have good access to facilities in neighbouring towns such as Stevenage, Luton and Cambridge. North Hertfordshire's location within the catchment area of these larger centres will limit the potential for further commercial leisure and entertainment facilities.
- 5.16 Nevertheless, the first preference for the location of leisure facilities encompasses a wider area than retail as leisure uses should not be re-directed from the wider town centre areas to the primary shopping area. Therefore, the first preference for leisure facilities includes both the primary shopping area and wider town centre area.
- 5.17 For other town centre uses the test will start at number two in the list above.
- 5.18 With regard to retail use, the edge of centre is generally taken to mean up to 300m from the primary shopping frontage. For other main town centre uses, edge of centre means up to 300m from the town centre boundary<sup>75</sup>.
- 5.19 This Plan identifies thresholds for the application of the impact test in North Hertfordshire's towns in line with our evidence<sup>76</sup>. Applications for main town centre uses on sites outside the town centres, not otherwise in accordance with the

<sup>73</sup> Town Centre and Retail Study (NLP, 2016)

<sup>74</sup> Paragraph 24 of the NPPF

<sup>75</sup> Annex 2 of the NPPF

<sup>76</sup> Town Centre and Retail Study (NLP, 2016)

development plan and exceeding the thresholds below must also be assessed against the impact considerations set out in Government guidance before planning permission will be granted:

- Hitchin: 2,500m<sup>2</sup> and above
- Letchworth Garden City: 1,000m<sup>2</sup> and above;
- Baldock, Royston and elsewhere: 500m<sup>2</sup> and above

#### **Policy ETC4: Primary Shopping Frontages**

Town Centre boundaries for Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston are shown on the Proposals Map. Within the designated Primary Shopping Frontages, planning permission will be granted at ground-floor level:

- a. For retail A1 uses; or
- b. Exceptionally for an A3 or similar use if they do not, individually or cumulatively, undermine the retail function of the centre and where the proposal will attract people to the centre, enhancing the centre's vitality and viability.

#### **Policy ETC5: Secondary Shopping Frontages**

In the Secondary Shopping Frontages of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted at ground-floor level:

- a. For retail, professional services and restaurants (A1, A2 or A3); or
- b. Exceptionally for other main town centre uses if they do not, individually or cumulatively, undermine the retail function of the centre and where the proposal will attract people to the centre, enhancing the centre's vitality and viability.

- 5.20 We want to ensure that the town centres maintain their primary retail function whilst increasing their diversity with a range of complementary uses, promoting competitive, flexible town centre environments. The concept of shopping as a leisure activity supports the encouragement of uses which increases the vitality throughout the day, extending the range of services for local people throughout the day and into the evening. The main function of the primary shopping area is retail, but town centres in general need a variety of other services such as banks, restaurants, pubs and personal services, which add interest and vitality and extend the use of the centres into the evening.
- 5.21 Too many non-A1 uses can create 'dead frontages' (units not normally open during normal shopping hours or which attract relatively few customers), reduce the interest and attraction of the primary shopping area, and harm the retail function. This is particularly a problem where there are a number of units in a row which are not shops. This is something the Council is keen to prevent.
- 5.22 We monitor all retail units within the four main town centres on an annual basis, as well as those in the local centres. There is evidence in some centres that shop (A1 use class) units are being lost to non-shop uses in the core shopping areas.

- 5.23 Within Primary Frontages we will retain the attractiveness of the essential and continuous shopping cores of our town centres; only retail (A1) will generally be permitted here.
- 5.24 For Secondary Frontages the policy is more flexible, allowing retail, office and restaurant (A1, A2, and A3 ) uses based on their contribution to vitality and viability and their ability to attract people to the centre. Other uses such as pubs (A4) and hot food takeaways (A5) can add to an areas attractiveness and vitality, however, control is needed to ensure that these uses do not detract from the centre and affect the shopping pattern.
- 5.25 Evidence in the form of predicted footfall, opening times and linked trips will be required for any application seeking to meet the exception criteria. Where a shop unit has been vacant for an extended period of time (normally at least six months), documentary evidence should demonstrate that all reasonable attempts to sell or let the premises for the preferred use(s) have failed.

#### **Policy ETC6: Local Centres**

Within Local Centres, as shown on the Proposals Map or identified in approved masterplans, planning permission will be granted where:

- a. It is for use class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 or D2 at ground floor level;
- b. The centre would continue to provide a range of uses with a majority of units being retained in A1 use; and
- c. Any change of use from class A1 would:
  - i. maintain the general vitality and viability of the centre; and
  - ii. not seriously diminish the provision of local shopping facilities.

Proposals of over 500m<sup>2</sup> gross will not generally be suitable in local centres.

- 5.26 Local centres consist of village centres such as Codicote, Knebworth and Ashwell, and neighbourhood centres such as Walsworth (Hitchin), Jackmans (Letchworth Garden City) and Great Ashby. These centres vary in size from five units up to around twenty five units. Their composition also varies with some being almost all retail units, while others contain a mix of retail, food and drink and community facilities.
- 5.27 Local Centres are identified as forming part of our retail hierarchy in Policy SP4. The general locations of local centres are shown on the Proposals Map. Detailed maps for each centre showing where the provisions of Policy ETC6 are applied are contained in Appendix 3.
- 5.28 The village centres of Codicote and Knebworth are large enough to provide a focus for the communities local to them and a range of everyday shopping facilities and services. This includes: convenience stores, post offices, hairdressers, dry cleaners and food and drink establishments.
- 5.29 The Council considers that it is important that the neighbourhood centres continue to provide a mix of shopping, services and community facilities, and in particular retail units. A predominance of shops is considered to be necessary to secure future viability of these centres. However, some non-retail uses may be appropriate in the centres where this does not harm the mainly retail function.

- 5.30 In all local centres, the Council wants to retain local facilities and at the same time prevent changes to non-retail uses that would be more appropriate in larger centres or employment areas.
- 5.31 Where a vacant shop premises is subject to a proposed change of use, then documentary evidence will be necessary to show that all reasonable attempts to sell or let it for use as a shop for a year or more have failed. If there are other vacant units in the centre this will also be taken into account.
- 5.32 The Council may consider other non-retail uses, such as surgeries or other community and leisure uses appropriate, if it can be demonstrated that they would meet a local community need.

**Policy ETC7: Scattered local shops and services in towns and villages**

Planning permission for small-scale proposals providing new shops and services will be granted within existing settlements to serve the local community as an exception to the sequential approach set out in Policy ETC3(a).

Planning permission for the loss or change of use of any shops, services or facilities outside the defined retail hierarchy will be granted where:

- a. There is another shop, service or facility of a similar use available for customers within a convenient walking distance; and
- b. The proposed replacement use would complement the function and character of the area.

An exception to criterion (a) above will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the unit has remained vacant for a year or more, and documentary and viability evidence has been provided that all reasonable attempts to sell or let the premises for similar uses in that period have failed.

- 5.33 Scattered local shops, services and other facilities in towns and rural areas provide residents with access to important goods and services. They also minimise the need to travel. The less mobile are particularly reliant on these facilities which include shops, post offices, pubs and petrol filling stations<sup>77</sup>.
- 5.34 New facilities of an appropriate scale and location within Category A and Category B villages will generally be supported without the need for sequential testing of alternate locations.
- 5.35 However, given the high value of residential land in the rural area, there is often pressure from landowners to change the use of, or redevelop, existing facilities for residential purposes. This may be the case even where the business is thriving, if the return on an existing use is less than can be gained from residential development.
- 5.36 These facilities should be protected wherever possible and the policy seeks to prevent their loss. However, where it can be shown such facilities are no longer needed and not viable, then permission may be granted for a change of use.

<sup>77</sup> This policy is generally directed at proposals for main town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF). Applications for relevant sui generis uses including petrol filling stations will also be considered against this policy. Proposals for other community uses will be considered against Policy HC1.

- 5.37 Convenient walking distance, as set out in the policy, will be taken to be up to 800m for most existing users of the current facility, in line with Government guidance<sup>78</sup>.
- 5.38 Some local facilities, such as pubs, can be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This provides additional protections if the owners wish to change the use of, demolish and / or sell the facility. The fact that a facility is an ACV can be an additional material consideration in the determination of any planning applications. The Monitoring and Delivery section of this Plan provides additional information on ACVs.

### Policy ETC8: Tourism

Planning permission for tourism-related development will be granted as an exception to the sequential approach set out in Policy ETC3(a) where it:

- a. Increases the attractiveness of the District as a tourist destination;
- b. Improves visitor accommodation; or
- c. Delivers sustainable tourist and visitor attractions in appropriate locations.

In the rural area outside settlement boundaries proposals will need to evidence why they cannot be accommodated within existing settlements and how they will support the rural economy.

- 5.39 Tourism can bring benefits to an area both directly as a source of employment and income for the local tourism industry, and indirectly through tourism expenditure (e.g. retail, catering, and accommodation).
- 5.40 The three historic market towns of Hitchin, Baldock and Royston, along with Letchworth Garden City make North Hertfordshire attractive to visitors. Its rural area is also a place for people to visit, for tourism as well as leisure.
- 5.41 Although North Hertfordshire is not a major tourist destination, the inclusion of a tourism policy reflects this sector's growing significance as a form of economic development, and its potential to diversify both urban and rural economies. There are a wide range of attractions in the District, particularly those based on heritage and the countryside. Some, such as Letchworth, the world's first Garden City, Royston Cave and the British Schools in Hitchin are unique, whilst Knebworth House and grounds is a major day visitor destination and venue for music events in the region.
- 5.42 Tourism fulfils some of the aims of sustainable development because its survival depends upon conserving and maintaining the quality of the resources upon which it depends. Tourism provides an incentive and income to protect the built and natural environment, promoting these features for the enjoyment of local people and visitors, and enhancing local diversity and cultural traditions.
- 5.43 The Council supports proposals for new or extended tourist developments as a means to strengthen the local economy and increase visitors to the area in line with policies in the NPPF. To encourage sustainable forms of tourism, Policy ETC3 prioritises the location of possible developments within town centres in line with the sequential approach. Here, passenger transport can best be utilised and so limit associated traffic congestion.

<sup>78</sup> *Manual for Streets* (Department for Transport, 2007). This will be measured as the distance from prospective customers' places of residence to the alternate facility.

- 5.44 Hotels and guest houses provide for both business and tourist visitors. Additional hotel bed-spaces should be encouraged in sustainable locations. The preferred locations for large hotels will be in town centres. Where there are no suitable sites, edge of town centre or other locations easily accessible by public transport may be considered.
- 5.45 However, in controlled circumstances, it may be appropriate to allow exceptions to a strictly sequential approach. Small hotels and guest houses may be appropriate in residential areas of towns and in villages.
- 5.46 Tourism growth trends indicate that the demand for bed and breakfast accommodation will increase. It is likely that the regular use of even one or two rooms of a house for bed and breakfast accommodation will be a material change of use requiring planning permission.
- 5.47 For rural proposals, the need is to protect the countryside for its own sake, with aspects such as nature conservation, archaeology, landscape and agricultural land in mind.
- 5.48 In the rural area the Council will be supportive of appropriately located facilities that support the rural economy and rural businesses and which respect the character of the countryside. The Council will weigh the degree to which proposals can be accessible by a variety of modes of transport with benefits to the rural economy and the potential of widening access to the countryside.
- 5.49 The Council will consider all tourism-related development proposals that fall to be considered under this policy in terms of:
- the sustainability of the location, scale and extent of the development;
  - the expected level of activity;
  - the number of visitors;
  - the intensity of use; and
  - the impact on the highway network.



## 6 Countryside and Green Belt

### Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted where the development:

- a. Is infill within the built core of a Category B village;
- b. Meets a proven local need for community facilities and services or rural housing;
- c. Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- d. Relates to an existing rural building;
- e. Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or
- f. Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area.

- 6.1 The Rural Area beyond the Green Belt covers the countryside to the east of the District that lies outside of the towns and Category A villages identified in Policy SP2. These areas do not meet the necessary criteria to be designated as Green Belt, but it is still necessary to impose restraints on development to prevent inappropriate schemes.
- 6.2 Where schemes meet one or more of the criteria above, they will be judged against other relevant policies of the Plan.
- 6.3 Policy SP5 explains that proposals within the Green Belt will be judged against the policies of the NPPF to determine whether they are acceptable in principle.

### Policy CGB2: Exception sites in rural areas

Planning permission for community facilities and services or affordable housing

- Adjoining Category A villages;
- Beyond the built core of Category B villages; or
- Within Category C settlements

will be granted where:

- a. It meets a proven local need as identified through a parish survey or other relevant study;
- b. There are no reasonable alternate, suitable and available sites within the defined settlement boundaries of relevant towns or Category A villages or the built core of relevant Category B villages;
- c. The proposal would meet relevant criteria of Policy HS2, particularly in relation to need, affordability and retention of dwellings;
- d. The proposed development would not have a substantial adverse impact on the openness or general policy aims of the Green Belt or Rural Area beyond the Green Belt; and
- e. The public benefit of the proposal outweighs any harm that might arise against these aims.

The provision of limited market housing to cross-subsidise schemes under this policy will be granted planning permission in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of market housing proposed is strictly necessary to make the required development deliverable and would accord with criteria (d) and (e) of this policy.

- 6.4 The cost of housing in the District's villages is often higher than in the towns. As such, whilst there are problems of affordability across the District, they are most acute in the rural area.
- 6.5 This Plan proactively identifies a range of development allocations across the District. These will all be expected to contribute towards affordable housing provision resulting in a significant boost in new homes for local needs.
- 6.6 However, on occasion a small-scale need may still be identified for affordable housing or other types of community facilities to meet rural needs which cannot be met within the main towns and villages. This policy continues North Hertfordshire's historic approach of allowing specified development on exception sites.
- 6.7 This exception sites policy does not override other relevant policies, such as those relating to biodiversity and landscape. Where a need is identified, it will be necessary to identify an appropriate site for the development.
- 6.8 Any applications under this policy should be supported by specific evidence of need commissioned, or otherwise endorsed by, the relevant Parish Council.
- 6.9 A number of the settlements identified in Policy SP2 are located relatively closely to one another. In justifying the exception site, applicants should have regard to actual and potential sites:
- within the parish where development is proposed;
  - in immediately adjoining parishes and towns; and
  - otherwise within a reasonable travelling distance (by various modes) of the location where the need has been identified.
- 6.10 Even where affordable housing is delivered under exception policies, residents may still require a significant income. In some instances, this has led to providers requesting a relaxation of the local occupancy restrictions that are normally placed upon exception sites. This means that the eventual occupants of new homes are not necessarily those for whom the scheme was originally envisaged. In compiling evidence of need, applicants should give consideration to these issues (see Policy HS2 and supporting text).
- 6.11 In exceptional cases, it may be necessary to allow some enabling development. Where market housing is proposed, it must be justified by the submission of viability evidence which will be independently tested at the cost of the applicant.
- 6.12 In all cases, there will remain a general presumption against development which would have a significant adverse impact on the general aims of countryside and Green Belt policies.
- 6.13 Over the lifetime of this Plan, parish councils (or other relevant bodies) may be able to make use of new powers that will enable them to deliver the types of scheme

envisaged by this policy directly, and without the need for planning permission<sup>79</sup>. However, in many instances, it may remain preferable to meet such needs through a planning application.

### **Policy CGB3: Rural workers' dwellings**

Planning permission for new homes to support existing agricultural, forestry and other rural businesses will be granted where:

- a. There is a clearly established existing functional need;
- b. The unit and the rural business concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and should remain so;
- c. The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
- d. The proposal responds appropriately to the site's local context in terms of design, scale and function.

Planning permission for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will only be granted where:

- i. The circumstances which led to the imposition of the relevant condition(s) have significantly changed;
- ii. The building is demonstrably not required or suitable for an agricultural or rural business use; and
- iii. It is clearly evidenced that there is no further need in the locality for an agricultural worker's dwelling.

- 6.14 The significant majority of land in North Hertfordshire remains rural and in productive agricultural use. Agriculture and other rural businesses underpin both the rural economy and the landscape character of the rural areas.
- 6.15 In some limited cases there may be a need for workers to live in close proximity to a specific rural location or use<sup>80</sup>. A functional need test will be applied to establish whether it is necessary for one or more workers to be available at all times in order to sustain the business. This will need to be demonstrated over a period of time.
- 6.16 We will consider the history of the business and land holding to establish the recent pattern of use of the land and buildings. This will include consideration, for example, of whether any existing homes, or buildings suitable for conversion, have recently been sold separately from the land holding concerned. Such a sale could constitute evidence of a lack of need.
- 6.17 If a new home is deemed essential to support a rural business, it should first be permitted through a time-limited permission, or temporary accommodation such as a caravan. Permission for permanent dwellings will normally only follow in the event of

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<sup>79</sup> The Localism Act (2011) includes powers such as Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build. These can require examinations and / or referenda in order to be established.

<sup>80</sup> Paragraph 55 of the NPPF

a persistent need. Any temporary or permanent home will be restricted to the occupancy of a worker associated with the business.

- 6.18 Agricultural occupancy conditions are normally imposed to recognise that permission would not otherwise have been granted. Removing these conditions can undermine policies which otherwise seek to restrict the building of new homes in the countryside.
- 6.19 Any such applications will be closely scrutinised. In particular, where criterion (ii) is met, the Council may subsequently resist future applications for further agricultural or rural business premises on the same site.

#### **Policy CGB4: Existing rural buildings**

Planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Green Belt or Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted where:

- a. Any existing building to be converted does not require major extension or reconstruction;
- b. The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Green Belt or Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and
- c. Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.

- 6.20 North Hertfordshire has a large number of rural buildings. The traditional houses in the rural area tend to be small cottages which would have been occupied by agricultural labourers. Many of the other rural buildings are barns and agricultural buildings. Such buildings define the character of parts of the District.
- 6.21 However, there are pressures for change to rural buildings which need to be managed. Smaller houses might be attractive in their own right, but often come under pressure for large extensions or complete rebuilding to a larger scale. Likewise, non-residential rural buildings sometimes become obsolete for their original purpose and come under pressure for re-use or replacement.
- 6.22 In these cases, we will ensure that proposals do not cause harm to the rural area. Such harm may come from a variety of sources. The extension, alteration or replacement of buildings can change their character negatively, for example where a modest cottage, over time, becomes a mansion.
- 6.23 National guidance seeks to support economic growth in rural areas and also avoid the provision of new, isolated homes in the countryside<sup>81</sup>. Policy CGB4 should be read alongside that advice and viewed in light of the Council's consequential preference that rural buildings be re-used for economic development purposes where possible and consistent with the other policies of this Plan.
- 6.24 In some instances, buildings affected by this policy may additionally be listed or subject to other heritage designations and other relevant policies and guidance will need to be taken into account. All proposals will be considered against the general design policies of this Plan.

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<sup>81</sup> Paragraphs 28 and 55 of the NPPF

### Policy CGB5: Urban Open Land

In areas of Urban Open Land, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted where the development:

- a. Would provide land or limited ancillary built facilities for:
  - i. outdoor sport, outdoor recreation or cemeteries;
  - ii. rural land uses or buildings appropriate in an urban fringe location; or
  - iii. landscaping or other earthworks associated with the development of adjoining allocated sites;
- b. Is low intensity in nature; and
- c. Would maintain openness and respect the transition from the urban area to the rural area beyond.

- 6.25 Green Belt and the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt provide strong policy protections for the countryside of North Hertfordshire. However, it is important that these designations are, wherever possible, defined using clearly recognisable features.
- 6.26 To the south-east of Baldock, north-east of Royston and south of Little Wymondley, dual carriageway bypasses provide clear, defensible boundaries which can be used to help establish the limits of Green Belt and Rural Area designations.
- 6.27 Leaving all unallocated areas within these boundaries as undesignated 'white land' would mean some land parcels on the urban fringe would not benefit from any specific policy protections. They could be subject to speculative applications which would be detrimental to local character, or would not provide an appropriate transition from the urban to the rural.
- 6.28 However it is also recognised that, in appropriate circumstances, this land could provide opportunities for the location of general landscaping, school playing fields, sports pitches or other low-intensity uses associated with nearby development and / or the adjoining settlements. Where such uses are sought within Urban Open Land, all reasonable attempts should be made to maintain openness and careful consideration should be given to the scale of any ancillary and treatments such as boundary fencing or bunding.
- 6.29 Intensive agricultural uses and larger rural buildings, such as new barns and storage facilities, will not be considered appropriate on Urban Open Land. However, it may be possible to accommodate some less-intensive rural land uses and facilities, such as paddocks or small holdings without prejudicing the overall aims of this policy.
- 6.30 In considering the intensity of any proposed uses of Urban Open Land, consideration will be given to the nature and scale of any associated secondary effects, such as vehicular movements, as well as the development itself..

## 7 Transport

### Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters

Planning permission will be granted where:

- a. Development would not adversely impact upon highway safety;
- b. Mechanisms to secure any necessary sustainable transport measures and / or improvements to the existing highway network are secured in accordance with Policy SP7;
- c. Suitable Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and / or Travel Plans along with supporting documents are provided where required; and
- d. For major developments, applicants demonstrate (as far as is practicable) how:
  - i. the proposed scheme would be served by public transport; and
  - ii. safe, direct and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided.

7.1 Every year, developers add around 20km of new highway to the Hertfordshire's road network. It is important to ensure quality and consistency in these works.

7.2 In assessing development proposals, we will generally be guided by the advice and responses of Hertfordshire County Council as the local highway authority who assess the impacts of development proposals on behalf of the Council as a Statutory Consultee to the planning process. The County Council support the use of Transport Statements, Assessments and supporting documents in order to do this. These reports also guide requirements within the development site.

7.3 Guidance published by the County Council sets out the thresholds at which these are required<sup>82</sup>. The current thresholds are set out below, though it should be noted that:

- site-specific circumstances may result in statements or assessments being requested for development below these thresholds; while
- guidance may be updated over the lifetime of this Plan.

7.4 The most up-to-date requirements, including highway design standards, should be referred to as proposals are developed. We will also have regard to relevant national guidance in our decision-making<sup>83</sup>.

Table 1: Thresholds for Transport Statements and Transport Assessments

	Transport Statement	Transport Assessment
Residential (C3)	>50 homes	>80 homes
Business (Use Class B1)	>1,500m <sup>2</sup> Gross Floor Area (GFA)	>2,500m <sup>2</sup> GFA
Industrial (B2)	>2,500m <sup>2</sup> GFA	>4,000m <sup>2</sup> GFA
Warehousing (B8)	>3,000m <sup>2</sup> GFA	>5,000m <sup>2</sup> GFA
Non-food retail	>800m <sup>2</sup> GFA	>1,500m <sup>2</sup> GFA

7.5 Travel Plans should be provided for all developments which exceed the Transport Assessment Threshold. Travel Plans should set out measures that will be adopted by

<sup>82</sup> Roads in Hertfordshire – A Guide for New Development (HCC, 2011)

<sup>83</sup> Including advice in Paragraph 32 of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance.

developers that encourage the use of sustainable modes for journeys and reduce single occupancy vehicular travel. We and / or the County Council may require other supporting documents to assess the development, particularly to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate delivery, servicing and / or waste collection.

- 7.6 Transport models have been developed to support, and assess the proposals contained in, this Plan. Using these, we have identified a number of mitigation measures that would be needed to support the plan's implementation<sup>84</sup>. Developers should make use of these models and their results when preparing their proposals to ensure assessments are carried out consistently. Developers need to detail the design of schemes and test appropriate mitigation measures.
- 7.7 However, it is also recognised that the modelling carried out to support the Local Plan is more strategic in its nature and developers will be required to supplement these findings with additional local intelligence and modelling to ensure the impacts of their schemes on individual settlements, localities and / or junctions are fully understood and, where necessary, mitigated. Contributions will be sought towards the implementation of relevant schemes in the vicinity of the development site under the requirements of Policy SP7.
- 7.8 It is important to ensure that new developments offer appropriate and practicable sustainable transport alternatives. All major developments should set out how public transport, walking and cycling will be addressed. In doing so, it is recognised that it may not always be appropriate to incorporate clearly defined provision for all modes, and solutions will vary from urban to more rural areas<sup>85</sup>.
- 7.9 Notwithstanding this, development proposals should provide safe pedestrian access in all instances. On larger developments, demarcated cycle routes should additionally be provided along principal arterial roads. These should connect to lower order streets where safe on-street cycling can be encouraged or where shared spaces might be an appropriate response.

### **Policy T2: Parking**

Planning permission will be granted where:

- a. Parking is provided in accordance with the minimum standards set out in this Plan;
- b. Proposals have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, strategies or advice and;
- c. Applicants clearly identify how they provide for all likely types of parking demand.

- 7.10 Most development proposals generate demand for parking relating to different users be it for visitors, residents, employees or solely for operational purposes.
- 7.11 Parking is one tool that can be used to influence travel demand and mode of travel. Previous policies to influence car ownership based on maximum standards of parking provision at trip origin (residential parking) are acknowledged to be flawed. Experience in North Hertfordshire shows that insufficient parking provision in

<sup>84</sup> Preferred Local Plan Model Testing (AECOM, 2016); Infrastructure Delivery Plan (RS Regeneration, 2016)

<sup>85</sup> Paragraph 29 of the NPPF



residential environments can have an adverse impact. Limiting parking availability at trip origins does not necessarily reduce car ownership and can displace vehicles onto the adjacent local highway network, diminishing the streetscape, causing increased levels of congestion, and potentially obstructing emergency vehicles.

- 7.12 It is now recognised and accepted that, in most locations, demand management through parking is most appropriate at the trip destination (for example commercial, leisure and retail parking). The need for greater parking control has developed in line with the growth of motorised traffic, particularly in the rise in ownership and use of private cars. The emphasis of sustainable transport is now placed on locating residential development where car use is less likely / and or necessary for many trips.
- 7.13 The main priority of this policy is, therefore, to seek to influence car use, through application and assessment of parking standards, promoting use of alternative modes of transport and travel planning, as opposed to restricting car ownership. Many residents may have cars, which influence car ownership levels, but choose to travel sustainably for school or commuting purposes.
- 7.14 Car parking can also impact on the design quality and flood risk of development and as such, consideration should be given to this in accordance with Policy D1.
- 7.15 Residential parking standards are set out in Appendix 4 of this Plan. Parking provision in accordance with these standards will generally meet the day to day needs of the occupiers but without over provision. Relevant applications will be required to meet these standards. Recommended standards for other uses, and other types of parking, including cycle parking, are set out in supplementary guidance<sup>86</sup>. This document also provides general guidance on issues such as design and layout.
- 7.16 Applications should have regard to this advice and other relevant plans and strategies including those produced by Hertfordshire County Council as the local highway authority, and show how they have been taken into account in developing proposals. Advice will be regularly reviewed over the plan period to take account of changes in car ownership and travel patterns and mode share, national policy guidance and any other relevant matters.

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<sup>86</sup> Vehicle Parking at New Development Supplementary Planning Document (NHDC, 2011)



## 8 Housing strategy

### Policy HS1: Local Housing Allocations

Local Housing Allocations are listed by parish and settlement in Chapter 13 and shown on the Proposals Map. Planning permission for residential development and associated infrastructure on these sites will be granted where:

- a. Development broadly accords with the indicative number of homes shown;
- b. Proposals successfully address site specific considerations; and
- c. Unless site-specific considerations state otherwise, a variety of homes are provided in accordance with the general policy requirements of this Plan.

Planning permission for other uses will be refused.

- 8.1 This Plan establishes targets to provide 15,950 homes in North Hertfordshire over the period 2011-2031. Approximately 75% of this number is accounted for by the general allowances and Strategic Housing Sites set out in Chapter 4 (see Policies SP8 and SP14 to SP19)
- 8.2 The remainder will be delivered through Local Housing Allocations within and adjoining the District's towns and villages. These are individually set out in the Communities chapter of this Plan.
- 8.3 An indicative number of homes is shown for each site based on our evidence<sup>87</sup>. We will take a design-led approach to each site as schemes are brought forward. This may result in housing numbers changing in response to the pre-application and planning application process and our policy approach allows for development to fall within a reasonable range of our initial expectations.
- 8.4 Chapter 13 also sets out detailed considerations for each site that must be taken into account. This includes specific requirements, such as the provision of space for school expansions, or mitigations. Beyond these, all developments will have to comply with any other relevant policies in this Plan.
- 8.5 Where local communities prepare neighbourhood plans, these allocations may be subject to additional requirements or change. Prospective applicants should be mindful of emerging and adopted neighbourhood plans in the parish or settlement where the site is located.

### Policy HS2: Affordable housing

Planning permission for new homes will be granted where:

- a. Affordable housing provision is
  - i. maximised having regard to the targets set in this policy; and
  - ii. made on-site;
- b. The size, type and tenure of any affordable housing has regard to:

<sup>87</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (NHDC, 2016); Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

- i. the Council’s starting point for negotiation that 65% of homes will be rented and 35% other forms of affordable housing;
  - ii. the housing needs of the area;
  - iii. the likely affordability of any affordable housing provision in real terms;
  - iv. relevant local authority housing register data; and
  - v. the requirements of Policy HS3 and the proposed mix of housing across the site as a whole;
- c. The affordable housing is secured for first and subsequent occupiers through an appropriate condition or legal agreement providing for
- i. the retention of dwellings through the Council, a registered provider or similar body agreed with the Council; and
  - ii. where appropriate, review mechanisms
- d. Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, strategies or advice have been taken into account.

Where development of a site is phased or divided into separate parts, or could reasonably be considered part of a larger development which would exceed the thresholds, it will be considered as a whole for the purposes of affordable housing provision.

<i>Size of site (gross dwellings)</i>	<i>Target percentage of dwellings to be affordable</i>
11 – 14 dwellings	25%
15 – 24 dwellings	35%
25 or more dwellings	40%

- 8.6 North Hertfordshire is going to be affected by considerable housing growth over the plan period. However, if all the new houses were to be sold privately, the District’s own housing needs would fail to be met. New-forming households on lower incomes would not be able to afford to live locally.
- 8.7 These problems are well recognised across the country as a whole and the Government encourages local planning authorities to set out policies on affordable housing<sup>88</sup>, based on assessments of local housing needs.
- 8.8 Affordable housing is provided for those who cannot access open market housing. It includes social rented and affordable rented housing and intermediate housing, such as shared ownership schemes. It is secured with planning conditions and legal agreements to make sure that the benefit of the housing continues in the long term.
- 8.9 At least one-third of new-forming households in the District over the plan period may require assistance with their housing<sup>89</sup>. Over the plan period, this target should be achievable. On most sites, targets to provide up to 40% affordable housing can be supported<sup>90</sup>. Policy SP7 sets out our approach where developers consider that the

<sup>88</sup> As defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF

<sup>89</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: Volume Two (ORS, 2016)

<sup>90</sup> Local Plan Viability Assessment Update (DSP, 2016); Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

policy requirements of our plan will adversely affect viability. We will robustly examine any schemes which seek to make affordable housing provision at below target levels.

- 8.10 In circumstances where below target levels of affordable housing are agreed but the Council considers that viability may improve over the lifetime of the proposed scheme, review mechanisms will be built into any relevant agreements. This is more likely to occur in developments with long build-out times, where there is presently a limited comparable market with which to compare viability factors or where approvals are granted at a time of adverse economic conditions.
- 8.11 Our general expectation is that any affordable housing provision required and secured under this policy will be made on site. Although sites of between 10 and 14 units will deliver relatively low numbers of affordable homes, Registered Providers operating in the District are normally willing to take on these small groups of new homes. The onus will be firmly upon the applicant to demonstrate that any exceptional circumstances exist to justify off-site provision contributions in lieu or, on Strategic Housing Sites, a phased approach to affordable housing delivery.
- 8.12 Our normal approach will be to request 65% rented tenures and 35% other tenures for affordable housing to meet the needs of local people. This will be used as a starting point for negotiation, but this may change as the plan period progresses or to reflect site-specific circumstances.
- 8.13 The strength of local house prices means that affordable housing products which are linked to open-market sales or rental values will remain out of reach for many households and this issue will need to be taken into consideration.
- 8.14 We will also need to respond to any changes at the national level such as funding regimes or proposals for new housing products, such as Starter Homes.
- 8.15 In all instances, the most appropriate mix of affordable housing will be negotiated having regard to relevant information including the results of the latest local (parish) or district-wide Housing Needs Surveys, the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the location of the site and nature of the proposed scheme as a whole.
- 8.16 The Council has previously issued supplementary guidance which provides further information on the provision of affordable homes in the District<sup>91</sup>. This will be updated and / or replaced over the lifetime of this Plan. Development proposals should have regard to this information and any other relevant housing strategies.
- 8.17 The situation regarding the provision of affordable housing on the edge of rural settlements as an exception to normal policies of rural restraint is considered in Policy CGB2.

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<sup>91</sup> Planning Obligations SPD (NHDC, 2006)

### **Policy HS3: Housing mix**

Planning permission for new homes will be granted where:

- a. An appropriate range of house types and sizes are provided taking into account:
  - i. the findings of the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
  - ii. the location and accessibility of the site; and
  - iii. recent completions, existing permissions and sites in the five year supply; and
- b. The scheme would provide a density, scale and character of development appropriate to its location and surroundings.

- 8.18 National policy requires local plans to provide for a mix of housing that meets the requirements of different groups within the community<sup>92</sup>. Having regards to our evidence, we will seek to deliver a broad balance between smaller (defined as 2-bed or less) and larger (3-bed or more) homes over the plan period.
- 8.19 The majority of completions since 2011 have been for smaller units whilst some of the sites identified through this Plan are specifically anticipated to focus upon small homes and / or flats. These are identified in the relevant site-specific considerations in Chapter 13.
- 8.20 On most suburban and edge-of-settlement sites, applicants should therefore make an initial assumption of 60% larger (3+ bed) and 40% smaller (1 or 2 bed) homes to ensure an overall mix is achieved. The most appropriate solution will be considered on a site-by-site basis having regard to this, the criteria set out above and the outcomes from applying Policy HS2.
- 8.21 Given the design-led approach to development set out through this Plan, district-wide density standards have not been prescribed. Development on the periphery of settlements should generally be at a lower density to mark the transition to the rural area beyond. In town centres and close to the railway stations higher densities will be considered appropriate in principle but will require particular care in the design with respect to avoiding the sense of overcrowding or congestion. Further advice is set out in the Design policies of this Plan.

### **Policy HS4: Supported, sheltered and older persons housing**

Planning permission for sheltered and supported housing in uses classes C2 and C3 will be granted where:

- a. There is good access to local services and facilities;
- b. The site is well served by public transport;
- c. Appropriate levels of on-site landscaping, amenity space and car parking (for residents, visitors and staff) are provided; and
- d. It would accord with Policy HS3(b).

Planning permission for residential developments of 100 units or more will be

<sup>92</sup> Paragraph 50 of the NPPF

granted where:

- e. An element of accommodation within Use Class C3 for older persons housing is included under the requirements of Policy HS3(a) where this would be consistent with criteria (a) to (d) above; and
- f. On Strategic Housing Sites, provision is made for some accommodation in Use Class C2.

- 8.22 Over the plan period, there will be a substantial increase in the number of and proportion of older residents in North Hertfordshire. The number of people aged 70 or over is predicted to increase by more than 10,000. By 2031, they will account for 1 in every 6 of the population, compared to 1 in 8 now<sup>93</sup>.
- 8.23 This reflects national trends. The 'baby boom' generation born in the period after World War II are now reaching, and surpassing, retirement age.
- 8.24 Older people are living longer, healthier lives and the forms of specialist housing offered today might not offer the best solutions in future years. Government policy seeks to support people living at home for as long as possible<sup>94</sup>. As a result, the types of home that will be needed by our older residents will vary. Many will continue to live in their own homes with a minimum of support. Others may seek to downsize. However, some people will require more specialist accommodation or assistance.
- 8.25 Other groups will also have support needs, including people of all ages with physical or learning disabilities.
- 8.26 A number of models exist to meet the housing needs that this creates.
- Homes with extra care, sheltered housing and assisted living normally consist of self-contained accommodation in a purpose-built block or small group of homes. Care is provided for those who would like the comfort of knowing assistance is available, or cannot live completely on their own, but do not need significant levels of personal care; while
  - Care or nursing homes provide a degree of personal care and / or long-term assistance for those who cannot live independently.
- 8.27 Accommodation that is self-contained with only modest levels of care will normally fall within use class C3. For the purposes of planning, this will contribute towards the overall targets for new homes identified in Policy SP8. Accommodation with greater levels of care, support and / or communal facilities will tend to fall within use class C2. However, the distinction between these uses can be fine.
- 8.28 Some future sheltered and supported housing needs will be delivered by the market in response to perceived demand. Further accommodation will be delivered by registered providers. Individual proposals will be assessed having regard to the criteria above.
- 8.29 On the largest housing sites we will additionally expect a modest proportion of sheltered and / or supported housing to be provided to contribute towards the

<sup>93</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire SHMA update (ORS, 2015)

<sup>94</sup> Stevenage and North Hertfordshire SHMA update (ORS, 2015)

modelled demand for older persons housing<sup>95</sup>. This should include affordable housing provision where appropriate.

- 8.30 All of our Strategic Housing Sites will be large enough to support the provision of local facilities such as shops and bus routes. It should be possible for each of the sites identified in Policy SP14 to SP19 to accommodate the requirements of this policy.
- 8.31 On other sites, we will take a common sense approach. Where an application is close to essential facilities, and can accommodate supported, sheltered or other older persons provision in a coherent way, we will expect it to be provided. In some instances, such as sites on the edge of villages with fewer facilities, it may not be as practical to insist on these types of homes.

#### **Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing**

Planning permission for major residential development will be granted where

- a. Applicants demonstrate that at least 50% of homes can be built to the M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standard; and
- b. On schemes where 10 or more affordable units will be delivered, 10% of these can additionally be built to the M4(3) wheelchair user standard<sup>96</sup>.

- 8.32 The Government's revised approach to technical standards for new development identifies three categories of accessibility:

- M4(1) – visitable dwellings
- M4 (2) – accessible and adaptable dwellings; and
- M4 (3) – wheelchair user dwellings<sup>97</sup>.

- 8.33 Our evidence demonstrates that it is both appropriate and viable to pursue the higher M4(2) and M4(3) standards in North Hertfordshire<sup>98</sup>. Requiring 50% of new homes on major residential schemes to meet the intermediate standard will make a positive contribution to future needs as the population ages. This requirement should be applied across both market and affordable homes.
- 8.34 The highest M4(3) standard should only be applied to homes where the District Council will be responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling<sup>99</sup>. A modest proportion of affordable homes will be required to adhere to this additional standard.
- 8.35 Compliance with M4(2) and M4(3) standards will be monitored through the Building Regulations regime as new homes are built. Planning permissions will be appropriately conditioned to say that this requirement must be met.

<sup>95</sup> The housing types encompassed by this are set out in Figure 38 of the Stevenage & North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: Volume 2 (ORS, 2016)

<sup>96</sup> Under the requirements of Policy HS2, this will normally be on schemes of 25 or more homes.

<sup>97</sup> Building Regulations 2010, Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings, 2015 edition

<sup>98</sup> North Hertfordshire & Stevenage Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: Volume 2 (ORS, 2016); Local Plan Viability Assessment Update (DSP, 2016)

<sup>99</sup> Planning Practice Guidance: Housing Optional Technical Standards, Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 56-009-20150327

- 8.36 However, it is also necessary to ensure that schemes can be built out in accordance with a granted planning permission. Appropriate information should be submitted alongside planning applications. Applicants should demonstrate through their drawings and / or Design & Access statements that the standards can be accommodated when the scheme is built.

#### **Policy HS6: Relatives' and dependents' accommodation**

Planning permission for relatives' and dependents' accommodation formed by the adaptation or extension of the main dwelling will be permitted where:

- a. A genuine need for the accommodation is demonstrated;
- b. The annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated into the main house if use as an annex ceases;
- c. Any development would not exceed the size of extensions that would otherwise normally be acceptable; and
- d. The occupation of the accommodation is restricted by condition.

Free standing annexes will exceptionally be allowed where the above criteria are met and it can be demonstrated that adaptation or extension of the main house is not possible.

- 8.37 In certain instances, it can be desirable for additional residential accommodation to be provided alongside an existing dwelling. For example, a family with elderly or infirm relatives may wish to provide an annex for them. This is to be encouraged, because it can strengthen family ties and, where the dependants were previously occupying a family-sized house, can increase the amount of available housing for others.
- 8.38 Where such accommodation can be provided as a self-contained planning unit such as through subdivision of the existing home or the provision of an additional dwelling, it will be treated as a windfall and normal policies will apply.
- 8.39 Where interdependent accommodation is proposed, or where subdivision or the creation of an additional dwelling would not otherwise be acceptable, this policy will be applied.
- 8.40 Case law surrounding the provision of annexes is complex. Anyone considering building an annex for relatives or dependents should seek professional advice and engage with the Council at an early stage in the process.

#### **Policy HS7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Land at Pulmore Water, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for the provision of 7 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the District's needs up to 2031.

Planning permission for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople will be granted where:

- a. It satisfies a demonstrated local need for accommodation;



- b. The intended occupants meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers, or Travelling Showpeople, as set out in government guidance or case law;
- c. Residents of the proposed site can access local services such as shops, schools, public transport and medical facilities within a reasonable distance from the site and where those facilities have capacity to meet the needs of the site's residents;
- d. The proposed site:
  - i. does not conflict with any other development plan policy or national policy including flood risk, agricultural land classification, contamination and hazardous development, and has no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, or on features of significant biodiversity or heritage importance;
  - ii. has no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents or adjoining land users and can be successfully screened and contained within a specified boundary;
  - iii. has adequate and safe access from a suitable road, and adequate parking, storage, turning and servicing on site;
  - iv. is capable of being serviced with water, electricity, sewerage and rubbish disposal; and
  - v. will provide a safe, inclusive and secure environment for the residents in an appropriate location to meet their needs.

Where all the above criteria are met, proposals for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may be appropriate in the countryside as rural exception sites (in line with Policy CGB2) but Green Belt policies would still apply.

- 8.41 The Local Plan should make appropriate provision to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in North Hertfordshire. There is recognition that the three groups are different and have very different needs, but for the purposes of this policy the key considerations are very similar.
- 8.42 There is currently one private Traveller site at Pulmore Water in the parish of Codicote. This consists of twelve permanent and six temporary pitches. There is no public site in the District. Historically, the District has not been an area where significant numbers of Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople have resided in or resorted to, which is supported by figures for unauthorised encampments and developments.
- 8.43 As with affordable housing, current government guidance allows Gypsy and Traveller sites to be located in the open countryside, as an exception to normal policies of control. This is in recognition of the particular difficulties that Gypsies and Travellers have obtaining and affording land within settlements.
- 8.44 Our evidence identifies a requirement for 7 additional pitches over the period to 2031<sup>100</sup>. The area covered by the temporary planning permission on the Pulmore Water site meets this requirement though the existing permission expires in 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Study, ORS 2014



8.45 This area is therefore allocated for permanent provision and to provide certainty going forward. Based on current evidence, it should prevent the need for future 'single issue' reviews of this policy and the long-term needs of these communities will be considered as part of the next general review of the plan alongside the needs of the settled community.

## 9 Design

### Policy D1: Sustainable design

Planning permission will be granted where development proposals:

- a. Respond positively to the site's local context;
- b. Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:
  - i. create or enhance public realm;
  - ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
  - iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;
  - iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;
  - v. maximise accessibility, legibility and connectivity;
  - vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;
  - vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and
  - viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;
- c. Have regard to the Design SPD and any other relevant guidance; and
- d. For residential schemes, meet or exceed the nationally described space and water efficiency standards.

- 9.1 National guidance states that planning should achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development. Development proposals should consider the potential for minimising their impact on the environment both during construction and throughout the life of the development whilst creating development that responds to and enhances its surroundings. It's also recognised that good quality design is essential for health and well-being.
- 9.2 Development must respond positively to the site and the local context taking into consideration position, orientation, scale, height, layout, massing, detailing and use of materials.
- 9.3 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be undertaken to assess the significance and effect of development proposals on the landscape and peoples views and visual amenity. Design and Access Statements (DAS) are required for most planning applications. A DAS require applicants to explain and justify the key elements of the proposal and show that the physical, economic, policy and social context of the site and its locality have been taken into account.
- 9.4 Public realm, publicly accessible space, creates the character and sense of place for our environment. Enhancing existing public realm or creating new using high quality materials, design and workmanship will result in a high quality environment that makes a positive contribution to a sense of place and healthy communities. Developers are expected to have regard to emerging advice and good practice to ensure that development schemes positively contribute to the public realm, local street scene and wider landscape through high quality design.
- 9.5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) if incorporated into the layout of the development at the early stages can have a positive impact not only on the local drainage system but also on the landscape amenity and biodiversity of the site.

Trees, shrubs and other soft landscaping provide a number of environmental benefits, ranging from climate change mitigation to the management of surface water drainage and flood risk. Further information is provided in Natural Environment Policy NE8: Reducing Flood Risk and NE9: Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 9.6 Using innovative design to reduce energy consumption and waste from the construction and use of buildings can optimise the potential of the site and have a positive influence on the environment. Development should meet the requirements of the most up to date standards on carbon emissions and embedded renewable sources. The reduction of carbon emissions should be achieved by both making new development as energy efficient as possible and through increasing the amount of energy gained from renewable sources. The efficient use of new materials from local or sustainable sources, together with the reuse and recycling of materials will help to reduce the energy used and the waste created in the development. It will also help the development to achieve local character and distinctiveness. The policy encourages sustainable design, and the use of materials and technologies that will ensure that the energy used in the construction and throughout the life of the development will be minimised.
- 9.7 Existing vegetation should influence the layout and design of development. A vegetation condition survey should be undertaken to ascertain what plants within and adjoining the site, which would be effected by development, are worthy of retention and what protection measures should be put in place during construction. The British Standard BS5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations sets out guidance on tree retention, effect of trees on design considerations and means of protecting trees during construction.
- 9.8 Development proposals should consider how the scheme will integrate with the existing circulation patterns particularly pedestrian, cycle and public transport. Safe and secure pedestrian and cycle routes should be provided both within the site and linking into the wider network. The policy seeks to ensure that the design and location of new development makes it accessible to all potential users. There is a need to ensure that where appropriate, new development includes facilities or open space that is conveniently located and easy to gain access to by all potential users.
- 9.9 The potential for future changes in technology and lifestyles should be considered when planning and designing schemes to ensure flexibility in the use of buildings throughout their life.
- 9.10 Creating safe and attractive places by designing-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour through the incorporation of physical and management measures will help to minimise the risk of crime. Development should be built to the Police preferred minimum security standard of Secured By Design SBD Part 2. The location of parking areas should ensure that they create safe and secure places to leave and access vehicles.
- 9.11 Street furniture such as signs, lighting columns, bins and seats can create clutter and have a negative impact on the visual quality of an area. Similarly, parking areas need to be well designed and integrated into the development scheme. Good design can ensure that cars and street furniture are not dominant features in new developments.
- 9.12 Development proposals should be in line with current regulations and guidelines and any future changes in Legislation or to the Building Regulations that will affect the sustainability of a building.

- 9.13 Building Futures<sup>101</sup> is an interactive tool for new development in Hertfordshire. Building Futures is mentioned in the Design SPD<sup>102</sup> and developers are strongly encouraged to look at this suite of documents, which provide practical and technical guidance on reducing the environmental impact of development, and will be helpful in enabling developments to satisfy this policy. Information on the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel and the way it can advise on development proposals is also available.
- 9.14 Sport England's Active Design guidance on how the design and layout of residential and other areas plays a vital role in keeping communities healthy and active should be considered.
- 9.15 Further guidance is set out in the Design SPD which covers key principles for all development within the District and specific principles for each of the four towns, the villages and the rural area. The Design SPD identifies other relevant guidance prepared for North Hertfordshire such as Conservation Area Statements, Town Centre Strategies, Urban Design Assessments, Landscape Character Assessments, the Green Space Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Plan. These documents are available to view on the Council's website and are updated on an on-going basis.
- 9.16 For development proposals in Letchworth Garden City reference should be made to the Design Principles available on the Heritage Foundation's website.

#### **Policy D2: House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings**

Planning permission for house extensions will be granted where:

- a. The extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, window details and materials;
- b. Pitched roofs are used where appropriate, particularly if the extension is more than the height of a single storey;
- c. Rear extensions do not dominate adjoining properties and are well related to the levels of adjoining properties, the direction the house faces and the distance between the extension and the windows in the next door properties; and
- d. Side extensions, at first floor level or above, adjoining a residential plot to the side are at least 1 metre from the boundary to ensure there is no adverse impact on the character of the streetscene..

Planning permission for replacement dwellings and outbuildings will be granted where:

- e. The proposal enhances the character and setting of the site; and
- f. The location of the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the character of the streetscene or area.

- 9.17 There is a need to maintain a high quality environment in residential areas and across the District as a whole whilst allowing flexibility with regard to house extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings. The policy requires that consideration is given to the effect that a proposal may have on the living conditions

<sup>101</sup> Building Futures – A Hertfordshire web-based guide to promoting sustainability in development.

<sup>102</sup> Design SPD (NHDC 2011)

of neighbouring occupiers and the character and appearance of the locality in which they are proposed as these are matters that can often be overlooked with the desire for increased living space.

- 9.18 This policy also serves to protect the character and appearance of those remaining modest rural workers dwellings and to ensure that proposals for replacement or extension of dwellings in the countryside would not have a materially greater impact. Further guidance for proposals in rural areas is set out in the Countryside and Green Belt policies.

### **Policy D3: Protecting living conditions**

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

Where the living conditions of proposed developments would be affected by an existing use or the living conditions of an existing development would be affected by a proposed use, the Council will consider whether there are mitigation measures that can be taken to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.

- 9.19 All development has the potential to have an adverse impact on its neighbours, in a wide variety of ways. Such harm may arise from traffic generation, parking, loss of daylight and sunlight, noise, overlooking, pollution (including light pollution) and dominance as well as other issues.
- 9.20 A significant number of proposed sites for housing in the District are on previously developed land within urban areas. Such sites are often close to existing residential areas. Care is needed to ensure that the adverse impacts of any such development on neighbouring residents is minimised. It is not practical to provide absolute protection for existing residents' current living conditions, instead, there is a need to ensure that any impacts a development has are identified and appropriate mitigation built into the scheme.
- 9.21 In the rural area, farm diversification schemes can help support the District's rural economy. However, some diversification schemes could seriously affect the living conditions of the surrounding area, especially if they generate significant traffic.
- 9.22 There are two ways mitigation may occur. Either the development can incorporate measures to reduce the effect it has, or it can fund works off site to reduce the impact on those affected by it. This latter course of action may be appropriate for development such as the expansion of airfields, where there will inevitably be an increase in noise, but it may be possible to provide sound protection to those buildings affected by that noise.
- 9.23 This policy also covers the situation where there is an existing use which will have an adverse impact on a proposed residential development site. The proposed development will need to show that satisfactory living conditions will be achieved taking into account the nature of the existing development – for example, homes proposed in a noisy area.

#### Policy D4: Air quality

Planning permission will be granted where development proposals:

- a. Give consideration to the potential or actual impact on local air quality, both during the demolition/ construction phase and as a result of its final occupation and use;
- b. Propose appropriate levels of mitigation to minimise emissions to the atmosphere and their potential effects upon health and the local environment; and
- c. Carry out air pollution impact assessments, where required, to determine the impact on local air quality of the development, otherwise the development may be refused.

Where air pollution impact assessments are not required there will still be a requirement on developers to provide appropriate levels of mitigation to address emissions of pollutants to the atmosphere.

- 9.24 This policy supports Policy D3: Protecting living conditions but also encourages sustainable development, in particular sustainable transport (Policy SP6). The District will be accommodating a significant amount of development during the plan period which will undoubtedly generate additional road traffic and put added pressure on existing road networks. Therefore, because the major source of local air pollution in the District originates from road traffic emissions it is important for this Plan to deal with the implications for air quality of the anticipated development.
- 9.25 The outcome of the air pollution impact assessment will be used to determine the nature and scale of the steps that should be taken to remove or reduce the scale of those concerns. Ideally this will occur at the design, planning and/or development stage, but may in certain circumstances rely on post development mitigation measures. It is conceivable that in certain circumstances the outcome of an air quality impact assessment may demonstrate that a development is unsustainable from a local air quality perspective and may be refused.
- 9.26 Two of the main roads that cross the District do so on a north – south axis: the A1(M) and A10. Another main road is the A505 that traverses the District on a southwest – northeast axis. It is the A505 that is currently directly associated with air quality concerns because it passes through the four main population centres of the District namely Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston. Of particular concern is the area in the south of Hitchin. Notably Stevenage Road (A602) near the Hitchin Hill roundabout, which has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and the Payne’s Park roundabout at the A602 junction with the A505 which is to be designated an AQMA in 2016.
- 9.27 The NPPF<sup>103</sup> states that air pollution is a material planning consideration and more specifically that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards national objectives for air pollutants and the presence of AQMAs and their Action Plans. Furthermore, it states that the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health should be taken into account. Therefore, because each local authority will have its own unique causes and contributing factors to elevated levels

<sup>103</sup> Paragraph 124 of the NPPF.

of air pollution it is vital that local development documents include policies to appropriately influence the District's specific development demands.

- 9.28 The policy addresses the protection of the health of the residents of proposed developments, as well as the protection of the residents of existing properties particularly, although not exclusively, those that live in close proximity to the District's roads. In addition to the air quality problems identified in Hitchin that are associated with elevated nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), levels of NO<sub>2</sub> are close to exceeding a national air quality objective around the A505 in the Hitchin Street / Whitehorse Street area of Baldock. Furthermore, particulate matter air pollution is a public health concern, which is reflected by the presence of a national air quality objective and a public health outcome indicator.
- 9.29 The policy will allow the Council to achieve a consistent and transparent approach to the development of land where air quality concerns are relevant. It will also help to influence the nature of such developments so as to minimise or remove the potential for adverse impacts on air quality. Or where appropriate, identify and justify the need for and nature of measures to help to mitigate any otherwise unavoidable adverse air quality impacts from permitted developments.
- 9.30 The following are types of developments for which the Council would expect consideration to be given to the submission of an air quality impact assessment:
- Within, or adjacent to an AQMA, applications for:
    - housing;
    - biomass or other forms of combustion boiler;
    - industrial developments;
    - car parks; and
    - any other development likely to significantly increase vehicle movements
  - Anywhere else in the District, applications that are considered to be 'major' in scale for example:
    - significantly increase car parking facilities;
    - significantly increase vehicle movements, particularly heavy duty vehicles;
    - introduce biomass or other combustion boilers and industrial processes of a particular scale;
  - Or that:
    - introduce humans to an area where air pollution is an issue, but where humans were previously not present.
- 9.31 For other types of developments an air quality impact assessment will not be required but there will be an expectation for the developer to negotiate and agree air quality mitigation measures that are proportionate to the scale of the proposed development.
- 9.32 A more detailed description of the type of air pollution mitigation required for developments and those developments considered to be 'major' can be found in the NHDC Air Quality Planning Guidance Document<sup>104</sup>.
- 9.33 Methods available to mitigate the impact of developments on air quality may fall into a number of categories and will be considered against other relevant policies in the Plan:

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<sup>104</sup> North Herts Air Quality Planning Guidance Document (2016)

- appropriate parking standards
- accommodating infrastructure to support the use of low emission vehicles
- appropriate location and design of buildings
- incentives to support initiatives for public transport, car sharing and using alternative modes of travel
- contributions to improve road and traffic management, infrastructure to support alternative modes of travel and air quality monitoring.

9.34 This is not an exhaustive list and more detail will be found in the NHDC supplementary Air Quality Planning Guidance Document.



## 10 Healthy Communities

### Policy HC1: Community facilities

Planning permission for new community facilities will be granted where they are:

- a. Appropriate in scale having regard to their local context;
- b. Accessible by a range of transport modes; and
- c. Would meet an identified need in the local community.

The loss of community facilities will only be permitted where this is justified by:

- i. The provision of replacement facilities, either on site as part of the development proposal or in an alternative appropriate location;
- ii. Showing that there is no local need for the facility or service and that any appropriate, alternative community use of the existing premises to meet local needs is not required; or
- iii. Demonstrating that the facility, or any reasonable replacement, is not, and will not be viable on that site.

- 10.1 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that the planning system plays a role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Community and recreation facilities, together with green spaces play an important role in enabling people not only to participate in physical activities but also in cultural pastimes, all of which can help to enhance physical, spiritual and mental well being.
- 10.2 Community facilities include: town and village halls, community centres, sports halls, theatres, museums, libraries, places of worship, doctors and dental surgeries and schools. Development proposals which affect local shops and pubs will be considered under Policy ETC7: Scattered local shops and services in towns and villages.
- 10.3 The Local Plan can help towards meeting the objective of making communities healthier through the retention and provision of cultural, leisure and community facilities.
- 10.4 It is anticipated that many of the new community facilities that will be required over the lifetime of this Plan will be provided in association with the strategic developments allocated in this Plan. However, there may still be occasions where the provision of new, of extension of existing, facilities in other locations is required.
- 10.5 It is important that these facilities are situated within local communities so that they are accessible, help to reduce the need to travel and provide opportunities for people to participate in activities within their own community.
- 10.6 The Council's Community Halls Strategy and Indoor Sports Facility Strategy and Action Plan set out detailed guidelines for the provision of new community facilities which developers should take into account in the design of any new development<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> Community Halls Strategy for North Hertfordshire (NHDC, 2011); Indoor Sports Facility Study, (NHDC, 2016)

- 10.7 At the same time, existing facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, can be subject to development pressures for alternative uses. It is important that, where appropriate, such facilities are retained within the local community.
- 10.8 Some local facilities can be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This provides additional protections if the owners wish to change the use of, demolish and / or sell the facility. The fact that a facility is an ACV can be an additional material consideration in the determination of any planning applications. The Monitoring and Delivery section provides additional information on ACVs.

## 11 Natural Environment

### Policy NE1: Landscape

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- a. Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and accord with the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;
- b. Do not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of their immediate surroundings and the landscape character area unless suitable mitigation measures can satisfactorily address the adverse impact;
- c. Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and
- d. Have considered the long term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping.

- 11.1 National policy<sup>106</sup> requires the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. The emphasis of the policy is to ensure that the design of a development proposal is sensitive to the local context to ensure that the scheme makes a positive contribution to the landscape.
- 11.2 The policy aims to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment by requiring development proposals to take into account the landscape character and environmental features and built form of its surrounding area.
- 11.3 The North Herts Landscape Study<sup>107</sup> is an assessment of the character of the landscape within the District. There are 37 separate landscape character areas covering the District, some lie totally within the District while some extend into adjoining districts. The study provides a description of the distinctive characteristics of each landscape character area based on factors such as the geology, landform, soil types and historical activities for each area.
- 11.4 The North Herts Landscape Study also identifies the inherent sensitivities of each character area in landscape and visual terms together with its capacity to accommodate a range of different types of development. Development should respect the sensitivities of each landscape character area and accord with the guidelines for managing change identified for each landscape character area in relation to built development and landscape management.

### Policy NE2: Green infrastructure

Planning permission will be granted where development:

- a. Protects, conserves and where possible enhances the green infrastructure network;
- b. Avoids the loss, fragmentation, severance or negative impact on the function of the green infrastructure network;

<sup>106</sup> Paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

<sup>107</sup> North Hertfordshire Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity and Capacity) 2011

- c. Is accompanied by a plan for the long term maintenance and management of any new green infrastructure proposed; and
- d. Has suitable mitigation measures or appropriate replacement to satisfactorily address adverse impacts on the green infrastructure network.

- 11.5 Protection of those sites which contribute to the diversity of green infrastructure throughout the District from inappropriate development is important. However, in some cases it needs to be acknowledged that appropriate mitigation measures would enable development to take place
- 11.6 This policy will also ensure that where new green infrastructure is created appropriate management and maintenance regimes are in place to provide the framework for its long-term use.
- 11.7 North Hertfordshire has significant green infrastructure assets. These are identified in the North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan<sup>108</sup> and include ancient woodlands (e.g. at Newton Wood), biodiversity rich landscapes (e.g. Therfield Heath), chalk streams, rivers, and valleys (e.g. Lilley Bottom and the Mimram valley). They also include the historic designed landscapes of Letchworth Garden City and the literary associations of Forster Country, north of Stevenage. The plan also identifies areas of green infrastructure deficiency as well as opportunities to create new green infrastructure. Developers should use the guiding principles set out in the Green Infrastructure Plan to influence all development proposals from an early stage in the design process.

**Policy NE3: The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

- Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB, or affecting the setting of the AONB, will only be granted when it:
- a. Is appropriate in scale having regard to national planning policy;
  - b. Conserves and enhances the Chilterns AONB’s special qualities, distinctive character, biodiversity, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;
  - c. Is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or is desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;
  - d. Meets the aims of the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan, making practical and financial contributions towards management plan delivery as appropriate;
  - e. Complies with the Chilterns Building Design Guide and technical notes by being of high quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, its traditional built character and reinforces the sense of place and local character; and
  - f. Avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects), unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.

<sup>108</sup> North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan (2009)

- 11.8 Part of the District between Hitchin, Lilley and Hexton (which follows the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills) has been recognised as being of national importance and forms part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 11.9 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England and Wales are conserved and enhanced. In policy terms they have the same planning status as National Parks.<sup>109</sup> The Chilterns AONB was designated in 1965 and extended in 1990. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities relating to, or affecting, land within these areas.<sup>110</sup>
- 11.10 The Chilterns AONB covers 13 local authorities and the Councils work together to safeguard the future of this shared nationally protected area through the Chilterns Conservation Board. The Board prepares a statutory AONB Management Plan which has been endorsed by the Council as a material consideration in planning decisions.<sup>111</sup>
- 11.11 Proposals for development within the AONB will be considered against national guidance. Where the proposed use can be considered acceptable in principle, we will use the detailed policies of this Plan to determine whether permission should be granted.
- 11.12 The AONB is a nationally designated landscape and as such permission for major developments will be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail as defined by national planning policy.<sup>112</sup> National guidance explains that whether a proposal constitutes major development is a matter for the relevant decision taker, taking into account the proposal in question and the local context.<sup>113</sup>
- 11.13 In determining compliance with criterion b, actions to conserve and enhance the AONB shall be informed by landscape assessment, having considered any relevant landscape character assessments and landscape and visual impact assessments and shall focus upon:
- i. the Chilterns AONB's special qualities which include the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich downland, broadleaved woodlands (especially beech), commons, tranquil valleys, the network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, chalk streams and a rich historic environment of hillforts and chalk figures;
  - ii. the scope for enhancing and restoring those parts of the landscape which are previously developed, degraded or subject to existing intrusive developments, utilities or infrastructure;
  - iii. locally distinctive patterns and species composition of natural features such as chalk downland, trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, rivers and chalk streams;

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<sup>109</sup> NPPF paragraph 115

<sup>110</sup> Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 185.

<sup>111</sup> Government's Planning Practice Guidance 8-004-20140306 paragraph 004.

<sup>112</sup> NPPF paragraph 116.

<sup>113</sup> Government's Planning Practice Guidance 8-004-20140306 paragraph 005.

- iv. the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings, including the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the edge of settlements;
- v. visually sensitive skylines, geological and topographical features;
- vi. landscapes of cultural, historic and heritage value;
- vii. important views and visual amenity;
- viii. Tranquillity, dark skies and remoteness and the need to avoid intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion; and
- ix. in the case of major development proposals, shall be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment, having considered all relevant landscape character assessments.

11.14 Development proposals which lie outside the AONB but within its setting can also have impacts on it. The Council's duty of regard applies to development outside but which would affect land in an AONB.<sup>114</sup> Although it does not have a defined geographical boundary, the setting of the Chilterns AONB is the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design could be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns AONB. Advice on development in the setting of the AONB is contained within guidance produced by the Chilterns Conservation Board.<sup>115</sup>

#### **Policy NE4: Protecting publically accessible open space**

Planning permission will be granted for any proposed loss of open space only where:

- a. It can be demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements, or otherwise justified on the basis of:
  - i. the quality and accessibility of the open space;
  - ii. the extent to which the open space is serving its purpose;
  - iii. the quality and accessibility of alternative public open space; and
- b. It is mitigated against by:
  - i. re-provision of an appropriate open space taking into account quality and accessibility; and/ or
  - ii. financial contributions towards new or existing open space where:
    - the required provision cannot reasonably be delivered on-site; or
    - the required provision cannot be provided on site in full; and
    - the proposal has over-riding planning benefits.

<sup>114</sup> Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 85.

<sup>115</sup> Chilterns Conservation Board position Statement on Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB.

11.15 Over the plan period it is anticipated that some open spaces could come under pressure for development. It is therefore vital that any proposed loss of open space is carefully considered to ensure that the both the existing and future population of North Hertfordshire has sufficient access to open space.

11.16 Types of open spaces for the purposes of this policy are categorised as:

- Parks and Gardens
- Amenity Green Space
- Provision for Children and Young People
- Outdoor Sports Facilities (including schools)
- Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace
- Green Corridors
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Allotments and Community Gardens

11.17 In 2009 the Council commissioned the Green Space Study to understand the existing quantity and accessibility of different types of open space. To ensure the evidence is up to date in accordance with current national policy, the Council has undertaken a review of open space provision across the District in 2016.

11.18 The Open Space Review sets out the current provision of open space, identifying deficits, surpluses as well as priorities for improvement. The review analyses open space provision in the four main towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, as well as in the rural areas.

11.19 The Open Space Review and any other relevant Council reports should be used when interpreting this policy. In parts of the District where there are identified deficiencies in open space, any proposed loss would be subject to increased scrutiny.

11.20 Financial contributions may be appropriate subject to the criteria set out in the policy. In such instances, the Council will direct such contributions towards areas with an identified open space deficiency or towards projects for new or improved open spaces.

#### **Policy NE5: New and improved public open space and biodiversity**

Planning permission will be granted for relevant development proposals that:

- a. Provide high quality, on-site, fully publically accessible open space having regard to the Council's open space standards;
- b. Incorporate an open space buffer(s) where necessary for landscape, visual, ecological or air quality reasons;
- c. Contribute to net gains for biodiversity, ecological networks and the water environment and/or restores degraded or isolated habitats; and
- d. Submit a long term maintenance and management plan, and where required phasing plans, to demonstrate delivery.

Any proposed facilities within open space must be small scale and ancillary to the primary use.

Financial contributions towards the provision of open space as an exception to

critterion (a) will be considered only in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the requirements of policy NE4 part (b)(ii) are met.

Where a development is phased, or a site is either divided into separate parts or otherwise regarded as part of a larger development, it will be considered as a whole.

- 11.21 To support growth over the plan period, relevant development proposals will be expected to contribute towards open space provision in the District. Relevant development proposals are:
- over 200 residential units; or
  - over 10,000 sqm gross external floorspace; or
  - where a specific need has been identified by the Council.
- 11.22 It is vital to ensure that any on-site open space is high quality, complements the landscape setting and is fully publically accessible to support sustainable and inclusive communities. Further to this, the provision of new open spaces across the District will be valuable in alleviating visitor and recreational pressure on designated biodiversity sites.
- 11.23 The Open Spaces Review undertaken in 2016 sets out open space standards that should be taken into account when determining the quantity of open space provision required. These standards will also be used at masterplanning stage for the strategic sites outlined in the Plan.
- 11.24 Where large-scale developments are intended to be phased over a number of years, forward projections of the population and / or households may be considered.
- 11.25 Whilst in most cases open space provision on-site will be required as the development exceeds the thresholds set out above, there may be instances where there is a specific need for open space. For example, in an area with an open space deficiency, or where an open space improvement project has been identified.
- 11.26 The Open Spaces Review also outlines locations where there is currently under-provision of certain types of open space. This Review, or as superseded, should be used in determining the most appropriate type of open space to provide or contribute towards.
- 11.27 In addition, the Council has a number of other relevant documents which can be used when determining the type of open space required. The Green Space Management Strategy and accompanying Action Plan sets out priorities for open space for across the District between 2014 and 2019. The priority actions are disaggregated by the type of open space, timescales and cost within a clear framework for delivery.
- 11.28 The Council also currently has a number of Action Plans that that set out open space priorities comprising:
- Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Action Plan
  - Outdoor Play Provision Action Plan
  - Outdoor Sports Facilities Action Plan
  - Allotments Action Plan



- 11.29 Play and recreational space has an important role in the function of many of the District's open spaces. Play space provision should be made in accordance with the relevant guidelines.<sup>116</sup> A balance must be achieved between a level of supervision for child safety and crime prevention, and the potential for noise amenity impacts.
- 11.30 No additional allotment sites are designated in this Plan. However, the Council will require appropriate contributions towards allotment provision given the demand for allotment space.
- 11.31 This Plan does not designate Local Green Space. However, the Council will support the designation and enhancement of Local Green Space as proposed by local communities, for instance in Neighbourhood Plans, where appropriate.
- 11.32 Designing new open spaces to meet community needs and enable community access can be extremely valuable in maximising access to open space. For example, enabling open spaces associated with schools to be used by the community can be helpful in meeting the demands for specific types of open space, such as playing fields.
- 11.33 It is acknowledged that some types of open space can only realistically be delivered on a larger scale due to the amount of space that would be required and management arrangements. As such, in exceptional circumstances it may be acceptable for financial contributions to be provided towards the provision of open space.
- 11.34 Where a financial contribution is accepted instead, or in addition to, on-site open space provision, the contribution will be allocated to new open space provision elsewhere, or improvements towards existing open spaces. This is to ensure that the additional demand created by the proposed development is met.
- 11.35 The Council will support proposals for facilities within open spaces, for instance changing rooms or a kiosk, where the proposed facility is small scale and ancillary to the primary use. The Council will take a flexible approach to the format and scale of the floorspace in accordance with national policy and guidance.
- 11.36 The provision of open space can also serve a dual purpose of flood risk management, and the Council will encourage proposals that provide multiple benefits.
- 11.37 In some developments, there may be a requirement for open space buffers to protect against sources of pollution, such as roads or railway lines, or for landscape, visual or ecological purposes, for instance connective features such as hedgerows and watercourses. In these cases it will be expected that the open space standards will be delivered alongside any buffer areas which are necessary.
- 11.38 Development proposals will be expected to maximise opportunities for net gains, or contribute to improvements in biodiversity, which can be demonstrated by using the Biodiversity Impact Calculator.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Fields in Trust Guidelines (October 2015) or as superseded, Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance>

<sup>117</sup> The Biodiversity Impact Calculator is a tool used to quantify the value of biodiversity at any site and can form an evidence base on required mitigation for a development, the amount of residual biodiversity impact, and if necessary, the amount of require offsite compensation. The current

- 11.39 Net gains can be delivered through the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation to support wildlife habitats as identified by the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, the provision of permanent integrated features for wildlife can contribute to net gains, for instance the provision of bat and swift boxes, particularly where development borders open space.
- 11.40 Long-term management and maintenance plans will be required to ensure that open spaces can continue to be enjoyed by the community in years to come, and to provide necessary protection to biodiversity assets.

#### **Policy NE6: Designated biodiversity and geological sites**

Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals affecting designated sites that:

- a. Protect, enhance and manage designated sites in accordance with the following hierarchy of designations:
  - internationally designated sites
  - nationally designated sites
  - national Planning Policy Framework sites
  - locally designated sites
- b. Submit an ecological survey and demonstrate that adverse effects can be satisfactorily minimised by following the hierarchy below:
  - i. locating on an alternative site with a less harmful impact;
  - ii. providing adequate mitigation measures; or
  - iii. as a last resort compensated for.
- c. Manage construction impacts by:
  - i. demonstrating how existing wildlife habitats will be retained, safeguarded and managed during construction; and
  - ii. providing a buffer of complimentary habitat for all connective features for wildlife habitats or priority habitats; and
- d. Provide a long term management plan including mitigation measures as necessary.

Development proposals on non-designated sites that include important habitats and species will be expected to meet parts (b) to (d) of this policy.

Local Geological Sites are ratified by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) and are afforded the same protection as Wildlife Sites.

- 11.41 Whilst there are no biodiversity sites designated at the European level in the District, for example Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas, there are a number of nationally designated sites. This includes six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) as shown on the Proposals Map and eight designated Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

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Biodiversity Impact Calculator is available on the Environment Bank website at :

<http://www.environmentbank.com/impact-calculator.php>

<sup>118</sup> Hertfordshire Environmental Forum (2006) A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, [http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity\\_vision/index.htm](http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/index.htm)

- 11.42 There are also a number of National Planning Policy Framework sites comprising ancient woodland, and aged or veteran trees. Ancient woodland is a nationally agreed designation for land that has been woodland since at least 1600 AD. The District's woodlands will be managed over the plan period to provide recreation and amenity for local residents, and also to ensure their survival to benefit biodiversity.
- 11.43 Species or Habitats of Principal Importance as identified in S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 are defined at the national level and the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>119</sup> sets out an approach to biodiversity at the county level. In addition to this, the Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Guiding Principles have informed the policies in this Plan.
- 11.44 The District has over 300 designated Wildlife Sites.<sup>120</sup> The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre updates the list of designated Wildlife Sites on a regular basis. Sites identified or designated as Wildlife Sites are afforded protection as sites of substantive nature conservation value.
- 11.45 Local Geological Sites are given the same level of protection as Wildlife Sites and are considered important for their educational or historical value. There are currently 11 Local Geological Sites in North Hertfordshire.
- 11.46 Sites allocated in this Plan that have the potential to impact on designated biodiversity sites are required to provide an ecological survey and provide mitigation and/or off-setting measures as necessary. Where appropriate the Strategic Policies and Communities sections of this Plan provide site specific policies relating to the impact on designated sites, for instance on Therfield Heath SSSI or Wain Woods SSSI.
- 11.47 Sites can contain important habitats or species even where they are not formally designated. These sites are identified by the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre as being of ecological interest and should be afforded protection.
- 11.48 Ecological surveys will be expected to involve an objective assessment of ecological value. Surveys should be consistent with BS42020 Biodiversity- Code of Practice for Planning and Development, or as superseded, and use the Biodiversity Impact Calculator<sup>121</sup>, or as superseded, to assess ecological value. This methodology will ensure that appropriate mitigation or compensation is provided to meet the aims of national policy.
- 11.49 Where off-site compensation is delivered as a last resort, the ecological networks mapping system developed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Local Nature Partnership should be used. This provides the basis of targeted habitat creation to maximise the benefits to biodiversity of any required ecological measures.

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<sup>119</sup> Hertfordshire Environmental Forum (2006) A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, [http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity\\_vision/index.htm](http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/index.htm)

<sup>120</sup> Please refer to the list held by the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre for the current list of designated Wildlife Sites.

<sup>121</sup> The Biodiversity Impact Calculator is a tool used to quantify the value of biodiversity at any site and can form an evidence base on required mitigation for a development, the amount of residual biodiversity impact, and if necessary, the amount of required offsite compensation. The current Biodiversity Impact Calculator is available on the Environment Bank website at : <http://www.environmentbank.com/impact-calculator.php>

- 11.50 Certain habitats (such as chalk grassland) are priority habitats for the District. Restoration, mitigation and any compensation measures should focus on these priority habitats as described in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.<sup>122</sup>
- 11.51 Developments are required to demonstrate how existing wildlife habitats such as trees, hedgerows, woodlands and rivers will be retained, safeguarded and managed during and after development, including the provision of buffers where required. Where buffers are provided, these should be a minimum of 10 metres of complimentary habitat for all connective features for wildlife habitats or priority habitats.
- 11.52 Where necessary, a management plan outlining mitigation measures may be required to sensitively manage any issues arising as a result of the development on biodiversity or geodiversity assets.

#### **Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk**

Planning permission for development proposals will be granted where (as applicable): :

- a. The sequential and exception tests as set out in the NPPF have been applied using the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Environment Agency flood maps;
- b. A FRA has been prepared in accordance with national guidance;
- c. A reduction in flood risk will be managed through flood resistant, resilient design and construction;
- d. It will be located, designed and laid out to ensure the risk of flooding is minimised whilst not increasing flood risk elsewhere;
- e. Flood protection and mitigation measures which may be necessary do not have an unacceptable impact on nature conservation, heritage assets, landscape and recreation; and
- f. Overland flow routes and flood storage areas are protected from all development other than that which is “water compatible” and this must be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe for users during flood events, resulting in no net loss of flood plain storage and not impeding water flows or increasing flood risk elsewhere.

- 11.52 The PPG sets out the definitions for the zones of flood risk (rivers and sea flooding), ranging from zone 1 with a low probability of flooding to zone 3b which is the functional floodplain. It also sets out the sequential test and exception test which should be used to assess the suitability of a site for development.
- 11.53 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been carried out for the District, which will help to provide the basis for applying the sequential and exception tests for development sites. It is acknowledged that it may be necessary for water infrastructure to be provided. This is considered to be water-compatible development and therefore can be appropriate in areas of flood risk; although such development in Flood Zone 3b should be designed and constructed to: remain operational and safe for users during flood events, result in no net loss of flood plain storage and not

<sup>122</sup> Hertfordshire Environmental Forum (2006) A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, [http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity\\_vision/index.htm](http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/index.htm)

impede water flows or increase flood risk elsewhere.. In areas of flood risk development should take into account flood resilience measures.

- 11.54 Flood zone maps are produced by the Environment Agency. These maps define flood zones 1, 2 and 3, according to the NPPF. North Hertfordshire's SFRA defines flood zone 3b. Proposals for development in an area at risk of flooding may be refused planning permission where it increases flood risk or conflicts with the sequential approach set in the NPPF.
- 11.55 Where development is proposed in an area at risk from flooding, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the site passes the flood risk Sequential Test before providing a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as part of the planning application submission. The flood risk Exception Test may also need to be demonstrated at this stage. An FRA is applicable to development over 1 hectare in flood zone 1 and all types of development in flood zones 2 and 3. Flood risk impacts should be taken into account for the lifetime of the development, and consideration given to the mitigation that needs to be provided for the increased future flood risk with predicted climatic changes

#### **Policy NE8: Sustainable drainage systems**

Planning permission for development will only be granted where:

- a. The most sustainable drainage solution is used to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, enhance biodiversity, water quality and provide amenity benefits.
- b. It aims to mimic the natural drainage patterns and processes as far as possible.
- c. Drainage solutions follow the SuDS hierarchy; and
- d. Developers have consulted with the Lead Local Flood Authority at the earliest possible opportunity, to ensure SuDS are incorporated at the design stage.


- 11.56 In addition to fluvial flooding, surface water and other forms of flooding provide a significant risk to development in North Hertfordshire. An increase in the number of hard, impermeable surfaces can prevent rainwater soaking naturally into the ground and generate additional rainwater runoff. However, incorporating sustainable drainage systems into a development scheme can help to reduce the impact of rainwater runoff and therefore surface water flooding.
- 11.57 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for new developments. SuDS need to be incorporated into the design of schemes from the outset. This is because many SuDS features will influence the layout of a development and may be interlinked with open space, highways, ecological and/or landscape features.
- 11.58 The Council will consult and work with the Lead Local Flood Authority<sup>123</sup> (LLFA) and the Environment Agency as required on development proposals that are at risk from flooding or may contribute to additional surface run off. . At risk areas are identified in

<sup>123</sup> Currently Hertfordshire County Council

the SFRA and mitigation measures need to be considered when designing development in order to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water. Evidence will need to be provided that development has followed the surface water management hierarchy as detailed below.

11.59 For major development the LLFA is a statutory consultee in relation to the management of surface water drainage. Whilst SuDS is only a requirement for major development, it is recommended for all development to ensure surface water is appropriately managed.

**Figure 5: Sustainable Drainage Hierarchy**

<i>Most Sustainable</i>	<i>SUDS technique</i>	<i>Flood Reduction</i>	<i>Pollution Reduction</i>	<i>Landscape &amp; Wildlife Benefit</i>
	<b>Living roofs</b>	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Basins and ponds</b> - Constructed wetlands - Balancing ponds - Detention basins - Retention ponds	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Filter strips and swales</b>	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Infiltration devices</b> - soakaways - infiltration trenches and basins	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Permeable surfaces and filter drains</b> - gravelled areas - solid paving blocks - porous paviers	✓	✓	
	<b>Tanked systems</b> - over-sized pipes/tanks - storms cells	✓		
<i>Least Sustainable</i>				



### Policy NE9: Water quality and environment

Planning permission for development proposals will be granted where they make appropriate space for water, including (as applicable):

- a. Maintaining a minimum 9 metre<sup>124</sup> wide undeveloped buffer zone from all designated main rivers;
- b. Maintaining a minimum 5m wide undeveloped buffer zone for ordinary watercourses; and
- c. River restoration and resilience improvements where proposals are situated close to a river or considered to affect nearby watercourses.

11.60 Groundwater is an important resource for both water supply and biodiversity as it discharges into surface waters and wetlands, and maintains river and stream flows during dry spells. Most potable water (water which is safe to drink) in North Hertfordshire is abstracted from the ground. As a consequence it can be vulnerable to pollutants. It is therefore important to protect these water resources from any potential pollutants and recapture as much water run off as possible. Development proposals therefore must demonstrate that available improvements in the efficiency of water use, surface drainage systems and pollution prevention measures have been optimised, and that they have strived to mitigate future problems. Policy NE9; Contaminated Land specifically sets the requirements for contaminated land.

11.61 The policy encourages development proposals to incorporate sustainable water management measures into the design. The policy will ensure that where development takes place that appropriate measures are taken to protect the development against flooding and ensure that the design of the development conserves precious water resources, improves water quality and enhances the natural environment. This will enhance and protect local biodiversity and wildlife corridors and ensure the preservation of acceptable flood flow routes is maintained

11.62 The NPPF<sup>125</sup> emphasises the importance of natural networks of linked habitat corridors to allow the movement of species between suitable habitats and promote biodiversity. River corridors are particularly effective in this way.

11.63 Rivers and watercourses enhance the quality of the environment. Their protection and enhancement will improve the enjoyment of these assets, enhancing biodiversity and make them more resilient to current and future pressures. This can be achieved through the use of buffers alongside watercourses and through restoration projects as part of development schemes.

11.64 Where proposals **are** considered to affect nearby watercourses or sites that are situated close to a river, the Council will seek river restoration and resilience improvements as part of the proposal. In some instances financial contributions may be appropriate towards these measures the restoration of rivers

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<sup>124</sup> Water Resources Act 1991

<sup>125</sup> Paragraph 109

## Policy NE10 : Water Framework Directive and wastewater infrastructure

Planning permission for new development will be granted where;

- a. It does not result in the deterioration of any watercourse in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD);
- b. It helps contribute towards WFD actions and objectives.
- c. It helps achieve the objectives of flood management goals from the Anglian and Thames River Basin Management Plans; and
- d. Mechanisms for delivering any necessary new or improved water infrastructure are secured under the requirements of Policy SP7.

New development around Stevenage within the Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works Catchment will need to demonstrate that additional potable water supply and wastewater treatment capacity can be achieved and implemented ahead of development without significant environmental impact, including adverse effects on designated sites.

- 11.65 North Hertfordshire is located at the watershed between the Great Ouse and Thames river catchments. Headwaters of river catchments are small which means as a consequence there is very little dilution available for large sewage discharges.
- 11.66 As a result there is little environmental capacity that can be taken up without causing a breach of statutory environmental targets including the Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>126</sup>. Additionally water supply also has implications under the WFD, not just water quality. The Great Ouse and Thames catchments are both highly water stressed. Any proposed increase in groundwater abstraction from the catchment is likely to have implications on compliance with WFD regulations also.
- 11.67 The WFD is being implemented in the UK largely through River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) which detail the pressures facing the water environment and what actions need to be taken in order for the WFD to be met in each area. For North Hertfordshire this includes both the Thames and Great Ouse RBMPs<sup>127</sup>. Working with the Environment Agency and key stakeholders will be important to deliver future outcomes of these plans and improve the District's water environment.
- 11.68 The Stevenage Water Cycle Strategy (WCS) requires that for new development to proceed in the area, it will need to be demonstrated that it can be delivered within the water resource and water quality constraints. Developers will need to ensure that additional potable water supply requirements can be met and that waste water will not exceed available treatment capacity. Any necessary upgrades to infrastructure will have to be implemented ahead of the development. Rainwater harvesting and grey water reuse need to be strategically planned across larger sites and a strategy of retrofitting water efficiency features could also take place in the area. Reducing potable demand for water will reduce the consequent loading on the sewerage network.

<sup>126</sup> For information on the Water Framework Directive, see: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33362.aspx>

<sup>127</sup> For information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-ouse-catchment-flood-management-plan>



- 11.69 In Royston, the Environment Agency and the wastewater undertaker have agreed that in principle a technically feasible engineering solution can be delivered to accommodate all of the growth proposed. Should a new permit be required in order to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, this would involve a tightening of standards and would necessitate a costly upgrade of Royston Sewage Treatment Works.
- 11.70 Drainage strategies should be used to demonstrate that a proposed development has considered the available surface and foul water drainage options during a scheme's preparation stage to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place before development commences.

#### **Policy NE11: Contaminated land**

Planning permission for development affecting contaminated land will be granted where:

- a. A contaminated land study / contaminated land risk assessment is submitted as part of the application
- b. Appropriate mechanisms are in place to investigate, and where necessary remediate the risks; and
- c. The site is suitable for the new use taking account of ground conditions and pollution arising from previous use and land remediation.

- 11.71 The District will be accommodating a significant amount of development during the plan period. This policy supports Policy NE1: Environmental and Landscape Protection in protecting and enhancing the environment in the context of accommodating significant development. As a significant proportion of the District's housing growth will take place on previously developed land, it is important for this Plan to deal with the implications of contamination.
- 11.72 There are numerous sites in the District which are potentially affected by contamination as a consequence of their historical land uses.
- 11.73 The policy addresses the protection of the health of end users of proposed developments, as well as the protection of the historic, built and natural environment, including groundwater. The latter is of particular relevance in North Hertfordshire because much of the District's water supply comes from an unconfined aquifer.
- 11.74 The policy will allow the Council to achieve a consistent and transparent approach to the redevelopment of land where contamination of the ground may be a constraint. It will also help to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. The policy also allows us to approve higher value land uses on sites where serious contamination may make other types of development unviable. In the policy below, the term 'receptors' includes human beings, the historic built environment and the natural environment, including controlled waters as defined in Section 4 of the *Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance* (DEFRA, 2012)<sup>128</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> Currently defined in Section 4 of the DEFRA Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance, April 2012.

- 11.75 The contaminated land assessment / study will need to demonstrate how the site will be safely managed before, during and after development and highlight any remedial action where required. Development must ensure that water quality is not compromised and improvements to water quality will be secured where appropriate, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

#### **Policy NE12 : Renewable and low carbon energy development**

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development which would contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be permitted subject to an assessment of the impacts upon:

- i. Landscape quality, landscape character and visual amenity, including consideration of cumulative impacts of development;
- ii. Environmental assets;
- iii. The historic environment, including the impact on the setting of historic assets ;
- iv. The transport network;
- v. Air quality;
- vi. Aviation interests; and
- vii. The amenity of residents.

In assessing renewable and low carbon energy proposals against the above criteria the Council will give significant weight to their local and wider benefits, particularly the potential to reduce greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions, and the social benefits of community owned schemes where this is relevant.

Proposals for decentralised energy schemes associated with development of the strategic sites allocated in the Plan will be encouraged subject to an assessment of the impacts.

In all cases, end of life/redundant plant, buildings, apparatus, and infrastructure must be removed and the site restored to its former state or a condition agreed with the Council.

- 11.76 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy<sup>129</sup> sets out how the UK will ensure that 15% of all energy will come from renewable sources by 2020. Renewable sources of energy include wind, wave, tidal, hydro or solar power and biomass fuels. Nationally, the increased use of renewable and low carbon technology will contribute to improving energy security, increased economic activity and help to slow down climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The National Planning Policy Framework says that local plans should maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily.

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<sup>129</sup> Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2009

- 11.77 The Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Study<sup>130</sup> identifies energy opportunity areas in the District. This may assist developers to choose the appropriate renewable technology, depending on the location of the development. The Study also identified that there may be areas of opportunity to investigate decentralised energy schemes, this could be particularly relevant in those areas where larger scale development may take place. Broadly, decentralised energy schemes refer to energy that is generated off the main grid and can include micro-renewables, heating and cooling. Schemes can serve a single building or a whole community. Although development proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported in appropriate locations, it is also important that development proposals incorporate energy efficient measures to help reduce the demand for energy in the first place.
- 11.78 Renewable energy technologies evolve rapidly in response to technical innovation and consequently funding regimes can also change significantly. This can result in differing levels of interest in development proposals for renewable technology and indeed changes to where those developments might best be located.

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<sup>130</sup> Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Study, AECOM, July 2010

## 12 Historic Environment

### Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets.

Planning applications relating to Designated heritage assets shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

- i. Assess the significance of heritage assets, including their setting, impacted by the proposal;
- ii. Justify and detail the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated asset(s); and
- iii. Inform any necessary mitigation measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms;

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

- a. Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;
- b. Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified.

- 12.1 Designated heritage assets include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens. National guidance states that great weight should be given to the conservation of those assets<sup>131</sup>, including (where appropriate) securing an asset's optimum viable use.
- 12.2 The Council recognises the significance of designated heritage assets within the District and the contribution they make to defining local character, providing a sense of place and achieving sustainable development. Their conservation and preservation is an important consideration within the planning process and is recognised within specific legislation<sup>132</sup> and national planning policy. The Council will require applicants to assess the significance of the designated heritage asset, including its setting, and justify and detail the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the asset to ensure proposals preserve the significance of assets.
- 12.3 The NPPF sets out that substantial harm to designated heritage assets should generally be avoided, unless specific exception criteria are met.<sup>133</sup> In some cases where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, it is necessary to weigh any harm against the public benefits of the proposal including (where appropriate) securing an asset's optimum viable use<sup>134</sup>, and ensure that necessary mitigation measures are identified to minimise any identified harm. Sites allocated in this Plan that have the potential to lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset and or its setting have been weighed against the

<sup>131</sup> NPPF paragraph 132

<sup>132</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>133</sup> NPPF paragraphs 132 and 133

<sup>134</sup> NPPF paragraph 134

public interest test and mitigation or guidance measures are set out in this Plan where necessary<sup>135</sup>.

- 12.4 North Hertfordshire contains forty-four conservation areas. These have been designated due to their particular historic or architectural significance. The conservation area boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map. Particular care will be required when considering the scale, layout, design and materials of development proposals within or adjacent to conservation areas. They must be designed to harmonise with their surroundings and in conservation areas preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the heritage asset. The Council will provide guidance for shopfront design and advertising within conservation areas to encourage high quality design and enhance the character and significance of conservation areas.

#### **Policy HE2: Heritage at risk**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that seek to restore or provide new uses for designated heritage assets identified on the national register, or the local risk register maintained by the Council, that are justified and appropriate to the significance of the asset to return a heritage asset to beneficial use.

Proposals that harm the significance of heritage assets included on national and local registers will be resisted unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh that harm, taking account of the assets significance and importance, and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully implemented.

- 12.5 As part of its heritage strategy the Council will maintain and review a list of heritage assets at risk and work with Historic England, owners and occupiers to find new, appropriate uses and solutions to secure the future of heritage assets. Generally the Council will work constructively with landowners to seek to prevent heritage assets from becoming 'at risk' in the first place, trying to find appropriate uses where possible.
- 12.6 Where possible, planning obligations shall be sought to contribute to the conservation of such assets and legal agreements will be used to ensure the repair of assets alongside new developments. Proposals that lead to substantial harm to, or loss of, the significance shall comply with the test detailed in paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

#### **Policy HE3: Local heritage**

Permission for the loss of a building of local interest will only be granted where

- a. The replacement building contributes to preserving the local character and distinctiveness of the area; and
- b. A continuous contract for the demolition and redevelopment of the site has been secured, unless there are justifiable grounds for not developing the site.

<sup>135</sup> See Policies SP14 to SP19 and the Communities section for guidance and mitigation. The Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016) sets out how the strategy in this Plan has been balanced against heritage and other harms.

- 12.7 North Hertfordshire has a rich heritage of designed landscapes and historic buildings, many of which are not designated, but contribute to a strong sense of place and contribute much to the character of historic towns, villages and the wider countryside.
- 12.8 Buildings of local interest are those identified on Registers of Buildings of Local Interest adopted by the Council and are selected based on criteria found in those documents.
- 12.9 Buildings that do not satisfy the criteria for buildings of local interest but which have townscape merit and contribute to the special interest of a Conservation Area are identified as 'positive buildings' and often form notable groups that help to define the streetscape.
- 12.10 As and when a Conservation Area review is undertaken, further additions to the Buildings of Local Interest Register or positive buildings will be identified.
- 12.11 Where appropriate, the Council intends to continue its programme of producing local lists for each town and parish. This will be in accordance with historic England's published advice for the establishment and management of local lists<sup>136</sup>.
- 12.12 The Council will seek to conserve the character and significance of parks and gardens identified as locally important heritage assets and include these on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record or identified on adopted local lists or maps of heritage assets.
- 12.13 Because of the developing programme for producing local lists and the ongoing potential for discovering assets of interest, the Council will determine development proposals affecting all identified non-designated heritage assets in accordance with the NPPF.

#### Policy HE4: Archaeology

Permission for development proposals affecting heritage assets with archaeological interest will be granted where:

- a. Developers submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where justified, an archaeological field evaluation.
- b. It is demonstrated how archaeological remains will be preserved and incorporated into the layout of that development, if in situ preservation of important archaeological remains is considered preferable; and
- c. Where the loss of the whole or a material part of important archaeological remains is justified, appropriate conditions are applied to ensure that the archaeological recording, reporting, publication and archiving of the results of such archaeological work is undertaken before it is damaged or lost.

Where archaeological sites have been assessed to meet the criteria for inclusion on adopted registers or maps of locally important heritage assets these shall be treated in the same way as archaeology areas and areas of archaeological significance.

- 12.14 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are the most important archaeological and historical sites and are given statutory protection. Historic England is responsible for

<sup>136</sup> Historic England (2016) Local Heritage Listing. Historic England Advice Note 7.

identifying SAMs and any works on them require special permission from the Government. There are currently 60 SAMs in North Hertfordshire, and this list is under constant review.

- 12.15 There are also a number of archaeological areas and Areas of Archaeological Significance across North Hertfordshire which, although not nationally recognised or designated are considered to be of local importance. This is because they contain or have the potential for moderate or high archaeological remains within them. Known heritage assets of national and local significance are recorded on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. The Historic Environment Record is a dynamic dataset, which is updated constantly to reflect new discoveries made in Hertfordshire. This data is available to view on the 'Heritage Gateway'<sup>137</sup>.
- 12.16 This does not mean that areas outside the SAMs or Areas of Archaeological Significance are without archaeological potential, and important archaeological remains may exist elsewhere within the District. The Council will seek to protect other valuable remains throughout the District. From time to time alterations to existing areas of archaeological significance, or identification of new areas will be required based on new data or understanding of significance.
- 12.17 Where development proposals will affect any of these areas, prospective developers will be required to undertake an archaeological assessment (if necessary with a field evaluation) of the site in line with Government guidance and in consultation with the County Council's Historic Environment Unit. A full report of this recording work and any findings should be submitted to the local planning authority for approval before an application can be determined.
- 12.18 In the event of previously unknown archaeological remains being uncovered after works have commenced on site, both the Council and Historic England should be informed. Should the remains be deemed important enough to schedule, Scheduled Monument Consent will be required.

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<sup>137</sup> [www.heritage-gateway.org.uk](http://www.heritage-gateway.org.uk)





# SECTION FOUR

# COMMUNITIES

# SECTION FOUR - COMMUNITIES

## 13 Communities

13.1 This chapter sets out the site allocations for development for each community in North Hertfordshire. It identifies the detailed site-specific criteria for each local housing allocation. Retail and employment allocations are also identified and site-specific criteria are provided where considered necessary.

13.2 All development sites listed in this chapter are shown on the Proposals Map. The communities are generally based on the established network of town and parish boundaries<sup>138</sup> and are arranged alphabetically as follows:

- Ashwell;
- Baldock;
- Barkway;
- Barley;
- Bygrave;
- Caldecote;
- Clothall;
- Cockernhoe and East of Luton
- Codicote;
- Graveley and North of Stevenage;
- Great Ashby and north-east of Stevenage;
- Hexton;
- Hinxworth;
- Hitchin;
- Holwell;
- Ickleford;
- Kelshall;
- Kimpton;
- King's Walden;
- Knebworth;
- Langley;
- Letchworth Garden City;
- Lilley;
- Lower Stondon;
- Newnham;
- Nuthampstead;
- Offley;
- Pirton;
- Preston;
- Radwell;
- Reed;
- Royston;
- Rushden;
- Sandon;
- St Ippolyts;
- St Paul's Walden;
- Therfield;
- Wallington;
- Weston; and
- Wymondley.

13.3 Information on new homes is provided for each community. This is based upon any proposed housing allocations in that area along with new homes built since 2011 and existing planning permissions. These figures are not a target and do not necessarily represent the maximum number of new homes that will be built<sup>139</sup>.

**Note:** *For the avoidance of confusion, sites retained from the Preferred Options version of the plan have kept the same reference number. References for sites that were included in the Preferred Options but have not been carried forward have not*

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<sup>138</sup> Exceptions to this include where development is proposed on the edge of an existing settlement but using land (partly) in an adjoining parish. Sites on the edge of Baldock but in Clothall parish, for example, are included in the Baldock section.

<sup>139</sup> The housing requirements set out in Policy SP08 include allowances for windfall development. These are sites which come forward for development outside of the local plan process. It is not possible to say exactly where in the District these schemes will occur.

*been re-used. Any new sites have been given the next available reference number. This means that site allocation references for individual communities may not necessarily run sequentially.*

## Ashwell

### Introduction

13.4 Ashwell is the northernmost parish in the District (and county). The village of Ashwell has a relatively good range of facilities. At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 1,870, and there were 841 dwellings in the parish. Apart from the village the parish also includes a wide tract of countryside and some scattered farms.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.5 Ashwell is identified as a Category A village. A development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to allow for Ashwell's development needs during this Plan period.

### Heritage

13.6 Ashwell has one conservation area, covering much of the central part of the village, and numerous listed buildings. The parish church of St Mary is Grade I listed. To the north of the village the grounds of Ashwell Bury are designated as a historic park and garden. To the south-west of the village lies the Arbury Banks Scheduled Ancient Monument.

### Housing

13.7 One housing site is identified in Ashwell for 33 new homes. 62 further homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
AS1	<p><b>Land west of Claybush Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of pedestrian access into the village;</li> <li>• Sensitive design and layout required in terms of ridge line and setting within landscape, additional planting required on the east and west boundaries to improve views from Arbury Banks and screen properties on Claybush Road;</li> <li>• Heritage Impact Assessment required informing design and layout at southern extent of site to respect setting of Arbury Banks Scheduled Ancient Monument and the views of St Marys Church; and</li> <li>• Provide archaeological survey prior to development.</li> </ul>	33 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>33 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>62 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>95 homes</b>

### Economy

13.8 The facilities of Ashwell are designated as a Local Centre under policy SP4, Town and Local Centres. The extent of the neighbourhood centre is shown on a map in

Appendix 3. Any applications in this area will be considered in accordance with the detailed policies of this Plan.

*Infrastructure & mitigation*

- 13.9 The impact of the proposed site on heritage assets and the landscape is a key consideration. Our overall evidence base concludes that, in order to meet our housing requirements over the plan period, it will be necessary to allocate some sites which may impact upon heritage assets and landscape<sup>140</sup>. Our aim will be to ensure that the overall integrity of relevant heritage assets are protected and that the development is designed to minimise impact on the landscape.
- 13.10 Currently there is no pedestrian access along Claybush Road, therefore the development should deliver a pedestrian access route into the village to enable access to services and facilities.
- 13.11 The footpath network in Ashwell currently extends to the junction of Bear Lane and Ashwell Street and there may be opportunities to connect to here from the north of the allocated site.
- 13.12 Additional education provision will be needed in Ashwell during the Plan period, funding will therefore be sought to ensure the local education infrastructure can accommodate the additional demand arising from the site.

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<sup>140</sup> Housing and Green Belt Technical Paper (NHDC, 2016)

# Baldock

## *Introduction*

- 13.13 Baldock is a market town near the source of the River Ivel. It lies on the site of a Roman town which stood at the junction of the Icknield Way and the Roman roads to Godmanchester, Braughing, and St Albans. The site of the Roman town appears to have been abandoned after the Roman withdrawal; the modern town was founded by the Knights Templar in the twelfth century on an area of land which formerly belonged to Weston. A parish was created for the new town which covered a relatively small area. The town's original parish boundaries were Icknield Way to the north, Station Road / Clothall Road to the east, South Road / Crabtree Lane to the south and Weston Way / Norton Road to the west. Baldock has since grown beyond those medieval boundaries to take in areas which formerly belonged to Norton, Bygrave, Clothall, Weston and Willian.
- 13.14 Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock lie very close to each other and have strong relationships linking them in terms of housing markets and job movements. That said, each town retains a distinct identity of its own. The needs for development arising from the three towns are comparatively high, but the gaps separating the towns are small and of great importance if the town's urban areas and identities are to be kept distinct. Managing growth in this relatively developed part of the District whilst allowing each town to retain its identity is one of the challenges to be addressed.
- 13.15 At the 2011 census the population of Baldock (defined as the unparished area) was 10,280, and there were 4,491 dwellings in the town.

## *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.16 Baldock is classed as a town in Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy. A boundary for the town is shown on the Proposals Map. Land beyond this boundary is classed as Green Belt.

## *Heritage*

- 13.17 Baldock has one conservation area, covering the town centre and older parts of the town. Most of the town's listed buildings are on one of the four streets radiating from the Town Hall crossroads: Hitchin Street, Church Street, Whitehorse Street and High Street. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building.
- 13.18 Baldock also has an important history as a Roman settlement, which was centred on Walls Field to the east of the town centre, which is a scheduled ancient monument. A large area around this is also of archaeological significance.

## *Housing*

- 13.19 8 housing sites are allocated in and around Baldock. These will deliver an estimated 3,436 new homes (3,136 during the plan period to 2031). A further 154 new homes have been built or granted planning permission since the start of the plan period in 2011.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Strategic Housing Sites</b>	<b>Dwelling estimate</b>
BA1	<b>Land North of Baldock</b> (see Policy SP14)	2,800 homes
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria</b>	<b>Dwelling estimate</b>
BA2	<b>Land west of Clothall Road</b> (Clothall parish)	200 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along south-western perimeter of site;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Weston Hills Local Wildlife Site;</li> <li>• Heritage Impact Assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
BA3	<b>Land south of Clothall Common</b> (Clothall parish)	200 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver, in combination with Site BA4, a southern link road connecting Wallington Road to B656 Royston Road;</li> <li>• Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>• Appropriate solution for short- and long-term education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Incorporate alignment of former Wallington Road and Bridleway Clothall 027 as green corridor along northern perimeter of site;</li> <li>• Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SuDS approach;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>• Heritage Impact Assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
BA4	<b>Land east of Clothall Common</b> (part in Clothall parish)	95 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver, in combination with Site BA3, a southern link road connecting Wallington Road to B656 Royston Road</li> <li>Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure</li> <li>Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SuDS approach;</li> <li>Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
BA5	<b>Land off Yeomanry Drive</b>	25 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SuDS approach;</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Appropriate treatment of south-eastern and south-western boundaries to maintain access to, and integrity of, Footpath Baldock 036;</li> <li>Heritage Impact Assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
BA6	<b>Land at Icknield Way</b>	26 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination where identified from previous employment use;</li> <li>Incorporate footpath Baldock 001 through the site</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>Adequate mitigation measures for noise associated with the railway to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces; and</li> <li>Sensitive design to respect setting of Baldock Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	
BA7	<b>Land rear of Clare Crescent</b>	20 homes



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	
BA11	<b>Deans Yard, South Road</b>	20 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage Impact Assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>Sensitive design to enhance the setting of Building of Local Interest;</li> <li>Investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination associated with previous use.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites*</b>		<b>3,386 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>204 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted 2011-2031*</b>		<b>3,290 homes</b>

\* Land North of Baldock is allocated for 2,800 homes in total with 2,500 of these anticipated to be completed by 2031. The higher number is used in the total allocated sites. The lower number is used in the total allocated, completed and permitted 2011-2031

### *Economy*

- 13.20 The town's current employment areas are relatively modest. In part this is due to the town's close proximity to the major employment area east of Letchworth Garden City. This Plan proposes extending the current small employment area on Royston Road into a larger business park to take advantage of the good location close to the junction with the bypass and within reasonably close proximity of the railway station and town centre.
- 13.21 In order to help deliver additional local jobs in the District in combination with residential development over the plan period, policy SP3 identifies that 19.6 hectares of employment land should be allocated at Baldock. Given the site's location adjacent to the A505 it provides an ideal location for employment development and it is considered this will allow for future growth over the plan period.

Ref	Employment allocations and site-specific criteria	Hectares
<b><i>New employment allocation</i></b>		
BA10	Royston Road	19.6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure access arrangements control HGV movements to direct vehicles towards the A505 rather than through Baldock.</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution</li> <li>• Provide adequate mitigation measures for noise associated with the railway line and for any potential employment activity in relation to Clothall Common;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Designated employment areas</i></b>		
BE1	Bondor Business Centre	2.5
BE2	Royston Road	3.3
<b><i>Parts of employment areas designated for business use only</i></b>		
BB1	Bondor Business Centre East	1.0

13.22 Baldock's town centre provides for day to day shopping, with a range of shops mostly along High Street and Whitehorse Street and a large supermarket on the edge of the town centre. A traditional street market is held in the High Street on Wednesdays, whilst specialist farmers and craft markets are occasionally held. Baldock has been bypassed twice: first by the north-south A1 in the 1963 and then by the east-west A505 in 2006. Following the second bypass's opening a programme of enhancement works were carried out to the town centre improving the quality of the street-scene.

13.23 The shops along High Street and Whitehorse Street lie within the designated town centre. Proposals here will be determined in line with our detailed policies on shopping frontages.

#### *Infrastructure & mitigation*

13.24 It is anticipated that development of the large, greenfield sites around Baldock will occur sequentially with those to the south of the town coming forward first and being used to support some of the upfront costs associated with our Strategic Housing Site to the north of Baldock.

13.25 Over the plan period, the education requirement for Baldock will see up 8FE of additional schools provision. The exact configuration of the education infrastructure is still to be finalised.

13.26 With regards to primary provision it is likely that 2FE will be provided south of the railway and 6FE to the north.

13.27 Our Strategic Policy for north of Baldock sets out our expectations in relation to that site, including provision of a new secondary school.

13.28 Ahead of, or alongside this, some expansion of Knights Templar School may be possible. Equally, it may be necessary to include some secondary provision to the

south of the town in the short- to medium-term until the long-term arrangements are finalised and put in place.

- 13.29 The Station Road / Clothall Road / Royston Road junction is identified as a pinch point in the Council's transport modelling. Provision of a new road associated with BA1 linking the A507 with the A505 will help mitigate this issue enabling movement from north to east without the need to use the junction.
- 13.30 Additionally a southern link road is also proposed to enable the development of BA3 and BA4 but also improving connectivity to the south of the town providing the ability to bypass this junction.
- 13.31 For much of its length, the A505 Baldock Bypass provides the most appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary to the south of the town. This requires the removal of some land to the south of Wallington Road lying outside of the allocated housing areas and which should generally remain undeveloped. Our detailed policies set out the approach we will take to areas of Urban Open Land.
- 13.32 Heritage and archaeology are key considerations in Baldock owing to the rich history of the settlement. It is considered that sites closest to the scheduled ancient monuments (namely BA2, BA3, BA5 and BA11) can avoid substantial harm to the significance of this asset. Sensitive design will be a critical factor in the development of these sites.
- 13.33 The mapped extent of surface water flooding, illustrates a potential issue in Baldock, although this may not reflect the true nature of the extent of flooding in the area. SuDS techniques will need to be employed to ensure that the issue is adequately mitigated and risk is not increased

## Barkway

### Introduction

13.34 Barkway is located in the rural area to the east of the District. At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 775 people, living in 329 dwellings. The village has a limited range of facilities including a primary school, garage, pub and golf course.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.35 Barkway is identified as a Category A village in the settlement hierarchy and is the largest in population terms of three villages located in the area to the east of the A10 and to the south of Royston. Despite this, facilities are limited and so residents would be likely to travel to either Royston to the north or Buntingford to the south for many day to day items. A development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to allow for Barkway's development needs during this Plan period.

### Heritage

13.36 Many properties in the village date back to the 17th and 18th century although there are also a number from the 16th century and even some from the 15th century. The older part of the village has a linear form with many of the oldest properties fronting the High Street. Many are rendered, with some displaying distinctive pargetting (ornamental plasterwork), whilst several properties have thatched roofs. Barkway has had a village church for over 1000 years, although the current flint and stone church dates back to the 13th century. The designated conservation area covers much of the historic linear section of the village. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed building. To the north-east of the village the Cokenach estate is designated as a historic park and garden.

### Housing

13.37 Three sites are allocated in Barkway for an estimated 173 new homes. A further 31 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
BK1	<p><b>Land off Cambridge Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site layout designed to integrate with any future use of adjoining reserve school site;</li> <li>• Appropriate treatment of northern boundary to maintain integrity of Bridleway Barkway 017;</li> <li>• Sensitive design to respect setting of Barkway Conservation Area and Cokenach Registered Park and Garden to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reinforcing hedgerows and landscaping along southern boundary of site; and</li> <li>○ Access arrangements designed to minimise harm to heritage assets</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	13 homes

BK2	<b>Land off Windmill Close</b>	20 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the site to be retained as open space; and</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development</li> </ul>	
BK3	<b>Land between Cambridge Road &amp; Royston Road</b>	140 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development should be set back from the road;</li> <li>• Lower density housing would be appropriate on the eastern part of the site;</li> <li>• Incorporation of footpath Barkway 017 as a north-south green corridor through the site;</li> <li>• Appropriate treatment of northern boundary to maintain alignment and integrity of Bridleway Barkway 018</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for connecting road from Royston Road to Cambridge Road having regard to heritage considerations (below);</li> <li>• Sensitive integration into existing village, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for pedestrian and cycle access;</li> <li>• Provision of local convenience shop;</li> <li>• Site layout designed to integrate with any future use of adjoining reserve school site;</li> <li>• Development should include extensive tree planting, maintenance of the existing boundaries and hedgerows.</li> <li>• Sensitive design to respect setting of Cokenach Registered Park and Garden and listed buildings within Newsells estate to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reinforcing of hedgerows and landscaping along site boundaries; and</li> <li>○ Access arrangements designed to minimise harm to heritage assets</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>173 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>31 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>204 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.38 The visible economic activity of the village is limited to a petrol filling station/garage, soft furnishings business and car repairs business. Barkway Park Golf Club is also located near to the edge of the village.

### *Infrastructure & mitigation*

13.39 The existing first school site in Barkway is constrained and is considered difficult to expand. Hertfordshire County Council hold a reserve school site in the village, lying between sites BK1 and BK3. This will be retained providing the opportunity to respond to the increase in the number of dwellings for the village.

- 13.40 We will work with the County Council and Diocese (who operate the school in Barkway) to explore the most appropriate long-term education solution.
- 13.41 Although Barkway has a range of local facilities, there is presently no shop in the village. The development of land to the north of the village, provides an opportunity to remedy this and support the long-term role of the village.

## Barley

### *Introduction*

13.42 Barley is located in the rural area on the eastern edge of the District. At the 2011 census the parish had a population of approximately 662 people and 287 dwellings. It has a reasonable range of services for a village of its size. These services include a primary school, doctor's surgery, post office and general store, petrol filling station/garage and two public houses.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.43 Barley is identified as a Category A village in the settlement hierarchy. General development will be permitted within the defined village boundary. Beyond the village boundary, land is classified as Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

13.44 Whilst Barley is smaller than the neighbouring village of Barkway, it does have a wider range of facilities and so does attract visits from both Barkway and other nearby settlements. However, for many requirements residents visit the nearby town of Royston.

### *Heritage*

13.45 Barley has grown slowly but more or less continuously over recent centuries and so contains a wide variety of buildings. This includes buildings from the start of the 17th century as well as St Margaret of Antioch Church which originally dates from the 12th century. The Barley conservation area covers much of the village.

### *Housing*

13.46 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Barley. Four homes have been granted planning permission or built since 2011.

### *Economy*

13.47 The economy of Barley is mixed and reflects the relatively diverse range of facilities and businesses that exist in the village. In addition to those mentioned above this also includes a coach hire company, doctor's surgery and livery operation.

## Bygrave

### *Introduction*

- 13.48 Bygrave is a small village to the north-east of Baldock. The older part of the village is clustered around the parish church just off the road from Baldock to Ashwell. More recent development has been built along the main road towards Baldock, notably at Lower Bygrave in the mid-twentieth century. The parish extends up to the edges of Baldock, and used to include part of the town; Baldock Station and the surrounding area were historically in Bygrave parish, gradually being transferred to Baldock between 1881 and 1928.
- 13.49 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Bygrave was 304 and there were 108 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.50 Bygrave village is identified as a Category C settlement where only limited affordable housing or facilities for local community needs will be allowed. Most of the parish, including the village itself, is within the Green Belt.

### *Housing*

- 13.51 Our Strategic Housing Site to the north of Baldock (see Policy SP14) is mostly within the parish of Bygrave. No other housing sites are allocated in Bygrave. There have been no planning permissions granted or new homes built in the parish since 2011.

### *Economy*

- 13.52 Site BA10, Royston Road, Baldock, is mostly in the parish of Bygrave and is discussed on the Baldock page. No other employment sites are allocated in Bygrave.



## Caldecote

### *Introduction*

- 13.53 Caldecote is North Hertfordshire's smallest parish. Whilst it remains administratively a separate parish, it now shares a joint parish council with neighbouring Newnham. The village today is much smaller than it was in medieval times; the church (now closed) was rebuilt in the 14th century, just before the village was effectively abandoned (around the time of the Black Death), leaving just a manor house and a couple of farm cottages.
- 13.54 Away from the shrunken village, the parish does include a couple of buildings on the A1, including a petrol filling station with shop. Apart from this the parish has little in way of facilities.
- 13.55 Population statistics are not available for Caldecote separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.56 Caldecote is identified as a Category C settlement where only limited affordable housing or facilities for local community needs will be allowed. The whole of the parish is designated as Rural Area beyond the Green Belt within which there is general restraint on development.

### *Housing*

- 13.57 No sites are allocated for housing in Caldecote. There have been no planning permissions granted or new homes built in the parish since 2011.

## Clothall

### *Introduction*

- 13.58 Clothall is a long, narrow parish stretching from the southern edges of Baldock to the District's southern border with East Hertfordshire near Luffenhall. The parish contains the small village of Clothall and the hamlet of Luffenhall. It also gives its name to the Clothall Common area of Baldock, which used to be part of Clothall parish before being transferred to Baldock.
- 13.59 The village contains a village hall and church but has few other facilities.
- 13.60 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Clothall was 150 and there were 67 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.61 Clothall is identified as a Category C settlement where only limited affordable housing or facilities for local community needs will be allowed. Much of the parish, including the village itself, is washed over with Green Belt, with southern and eastern parts of the parish classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Housing*

- 13.62 Some of the sites on the south-eastern edges of Baldock are in the parish of Clothall. For further discussion of these, see the Baldock page. No other housing sites are allocated in Clothall. There have been no planning permissions granted or new homes built within that part of Clothall parish outside of the Baldock urban area since 2011.

## Cockernhoe and East of Luton

### *Introduction*

- 13.63 Cockernhoe and the area east of Luton is part of Offley parish. The Cockernhoe ward of Offley parish covers the area between Luton and Lilley Bottom Road and includes Cockernhoe, Mangrove Green and Tea Green. There are also a number of scattered farms and Putteridge Bury.
- 13.64 The remainder of Offley parish is discussed in its own section of this chapter.
- 13.65 At the 2011 census the population of the Cockernhoe ward of Offley parish was 493 and there were 205 dwellings in the ward.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.66 Cockernhoe is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to include both the village and the adjoining expansion of Luton. Outside this boundary the rest of the Cockernhoe ward is classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

- 13.67 This area includes the Putteridge Bury historic park and garden, now used by the University of Bedfordshire.

### *Housing*

- 13.68 Our strategic site to the East of Luton is located in Cockernhoe ward. This will deliver 2,100 homes over the plan period. The significant majority of these homes are included as an allowance towards unmet needs arising from Luton. No further local housing allocations are proposed in this area. Five homes have been built or granted planning permission within the Cockernhoe ward of Offley parish since 2011.

Ref	Strategic Housing Sites	Dwelling estimate
EL1, EL2 & EL3	Land East of Luton (see Policy SP19)	2,100 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>2,100 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>5 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>2,105 homes</b>

### *Economy*

- 13.69 There is a school and a village hall in Cockernhoe and public houses in Tea Green and Mangrove Green. Outside the village, there is significant employment generated by the Putteridge Bury campus of the University of Bedfordshire.
- 13.70 There are likely to be small scale opportunities for additional employment development associated with the East of Luton sites, notably in the neighbourhood

centre. Opportunities for other employment development on those sites will be considered through the masterplanning process.

## Codicote

### Introduction

- 13.71 The parish of Codicote covers an area much wider than just the village as it includes some developed parts of Oaklands (Pottersheath) and areas north of Welwyn (Danesbury). It also includes hamlets such as Nup End to the north as well as a number of scattered farms.
- 13.72 The village of Codicote has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shops, several public houses, village hall, car repairs garage and a church.
- 13.73 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 3,344 and there were 1,496 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

- 13.74 Codicote is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent but also allow for Codicote's future development needs.
- 13.75 The part of Oaklands in Codicote parish is also identified as a Category A village under Policy SP2. The rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

### Heritage

- 13.76 The village has one conservation area covering the linear part of the settlement which grew up along the High Street (B656). The wider parish also includes parts of the Ayot St Lawrence and Old Knebworth conservation areas, and also parts of the Ayot House and Knebworth Park designated historic parks and gardens.

### Housing

- 13.77 Four sites are allocated in and around Codicote village for an estimated 315 new homes. A further 49 homes have been built or granted planning permission with the parish since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
CD1	<p><b>Land south of Cowards Lane</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;</li> <li>Sensitive integration into existing village, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for cycle and pedestrian access</li> <li>Sensitive design, particularly at north-east of site, to prevent adverse impact upon setting of Listed Buildings on High Street;</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Hollands Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site and adjoining priority</li> </ul>	73 homes

	woodland habitat	
CD2	<b>Codicote Garden Centre, High Street</b>	54 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon adjoining priority deciduous woodland habitat;</li> <li>• Sensitive design taking opportunities to enhance setting of Grade II* Listed Church of St Giles</li> </ul>	
CD3	<b>Land north of The Close</b>	48 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Sensitive incorporation of Footpaths Codicote 007 and 008 as perimeter features around the site and a connection from the High Street to the wider countryside;</li> <li>• Heritage impact assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate approach to nearby Grade II* listed The Bury;</li> </ul>	
CD5	<b>Land south of Heath Lane</b>	140 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land broadly to the east of the current alignment of footpath Codicote 014 to be reserved for expansion of the existing school;</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon nearby features of biodiversity interest including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Codicote Lodge Icehouse &amp; surrounds Local Wildlife Site;</li> <li>○ Heath Plantation Local Wildlife Site;</li> <li>○ Meadow NW of First Spring Local Wildlife Site; and</li> <li>○ Priority deciduous woodland habitat adjoining the site;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sensitive incorporation of existing rights of way, including footpaths Codicote 014, 015 &amp; 016 as green corridors through the site connecting the existing village to the wider countryside;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment, particularly ensuring development at the south-west of the site does not encroach beyond acceptable limits into longer views across the Mimram Valley;</li> <li>• Lower density of development to southern edge of site to respect</li> </ul>	

	local character; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive treatment of Heath Lane frontage to minimise impact upon nearby Listed Buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Total allocated sites</b>	<b>315 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>	<b>49 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>	<b>364 homes</b>

13.78 A site adjoining the existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Pulmore Water has been identified for six additional pitches.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Pitch estimate</b>
CD4	Land at Pulmore Water, St Albans Road	6

### *Economy*

13.79 The facilities of Codicote are designated as a village centre under policy SP4. Proposals in this area will be determined in accordance with our detailed policies. The extent of the village centre is shown on the map in Appendix 4.

### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.80 The existing 1 FE Codicote school regularly fills most of its available places from the local area. Its current site is physically constrained. Expansion of the existing primary school is required to accommodate demand from the additional residential development that is planned in Codicote.

13.81 Our transport modelling does not identify a requirement for any specific mitigation measures in Codicote. However, there can be localised pinch points on the High Street, particularly at peak times or when delays or incidents on the A1(M) result in the B656 being used as an alternate route between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin.

13.82 Sites in Codicote will need to ensure that any transport assessments appropriately take these issues into account and contribute reasonably to any necessary mitigation measures which may seek to address these issues.

13.83 Codicote lies within the Thames Water area and the water company have identified localised constraints in wastewater infrastructure. Prospective applicants should work with Thames Water, and together, identify the likely cumulative nature of infrastructure required.

## Graveley and North of Stevenage

### Introduction

- 13.84 The parish of Graveley includes the village and the surrounding areas to the north and east. This incorporates Jacks Hill, Manor Farm and Chesfield. The area to the south abuts Stevenage Borough Council administrative boundary.
- 13.85 The village includes a school, two public houses, a village hall and a church. At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 487 and there were 198 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

- 13.86 Graveley is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent but also allow for Graveley's future development needs.
- 13.87 Most of the parish is covered by the Green Belt, but the southern part of the parish contains the North of Stevenage strategic site and the eastern part of the parish contains a site adjoining Great Ashby (discussed on the Great Ashby page).

### Heritage

- 13.88 The village contains one conservation area, which includes the majority of the listed buildings. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. There are also a number of heritage assets in the hamlet of Chesfield, including listed buildings and the ruined church of St Etheldreda.

### Housing

- 13.89 Our strategic site to the north of Stevenage is located in Graveley parish. One site is allocated within the village for an estimated 8 new homes. A further 8 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Strategic Housing Sites	Dwelling estimate
NS1	Land North of Stevenage (see Policy SP15)	900 homes
Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
GR1	Land at Milksey Lane	8 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon Graveley Conservation Area;</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>Maintain Public Right of Way (Graveley 018) through the site.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>908 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>8 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>916 homes</b>



## Great Ashby and north-east of Stevenage

### Introduction

13.90 Great Ashby is a relatively new parish, representing the residential area adjoining Stevenage. Formerly part of Graveley parish (and a small strip of Weston parish), the new parish covers the residential estate adjoining the north east Stevenage.

13.91 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Great Ashby was 5,706 and there were 2,172 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.92 Great Ashby adjoins Stevenage and so for the purposes of settlement hierarchy is considered part of the town.

### Heritage

13.93 There are no conservation areas or listed buildings within Great Ashby.

### Housing

13.94 Two sites are allocated in and around Great Ashby for an estimated 930 new homes. There have been no new homes built or granted planning permission within Great Ashby since 2011.

Ref	Strategic Housing Sites	Dwelling estimate
GA2	Land North-East of Great Ashby (Weston parish) (see Policy SP18)	600 homes
Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
GA1	<p>Land at Roundwood (Graveley parish)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> <li>Sensitive integration into existing settlement in terms of development layout and building orientation;</li> <li>Principal vehicular access taken from existing residential streets within Great Ashby;</li> <li>Maintain general integrity of Weston Road, including as a through route for pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>Retention and sensitive treatment of priority woodland habitats surrounding site to north and west;</li> <li>Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjacent local wildlife site at Parsonsgreen Wood;</li> <li>Integration of Footpath Graveley 010 as a perimeter feature around the north of the site;</li> </ul>	330 homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive design and landscaping around northern and western peripheries to minimise impacts upon wider landscape and heritage assets, including the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Chesfield Church.</li> </ul>
<b>Total allocated sites</b>	<b>930 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>	<b>0 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>	<b>930 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.95 The facilities of Great Ashby are designated as a neighbourhood centre under policy SP4. The extent of the neighbourhood centre is shown on the map in Appendix 4. Proposals in this area will be considered in accordance with the detailed policies of this Plan.

### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.96 Our Strategic Policies set out the key requirements in relation to the land at north-east of Great Ashby (see Policy SP18).

13.97 School place provision in Great Ashby is a key issue. The existing primary school at Round Diamond was built to serve the original development but is regularly oversubscribed. This results in some children having to travel further afield for their education.

13.98 Hertfordshire County Council have identified expansion potential at The Leys Primary School within Stevenage as an option for providing additional capacity in the wider north Stevenage and Great Ashby area.

13.99 Our proposals for site GA2 also require consideration of education provision, including a minimum requirement to provide a new 2FE primary school. Between them, these measures should ensure sufficient provision to serve Great Ashby as a whole.

13.100 Our transport modelling does not identify any specific mitigation scheme requirements for Great Ashby. However, it is recognised that there are localised highway issues in the area, particularly relating to on-street car parking<sup>141</sup>. These have arisen, in part, as a result of national planning policies in place at the time Great Ashby was developed which restricted the amount of off-street car parking the District Council could require.

13.101 Potential highway management measures, such as the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), lie outside the direct control of the planning system and it is therefore not for this Local Plan to dictate the most appropriate solution(s).

13.102 It is recognised that a careful balance needs to be struck between facilitating new development, ensuring safe vehicular access throughout Great Ashby, the provision

<sup>141</sup> This also explains why high-level traffic modelling, which will not contain this level of intelligence, considers there to be sufficient capacity.

of parking places and the need to ensure that any measures which might be implemented do not simply displace problems to other locations.

13.103 We will continue to work with the community council and highway authority to determine the most appropriate solution(s). Sites in Great Ashby will need to ensure that any transport assessments appropriately take these matters into account and contribute reasonably to any necessary mitigation measures, or wider strategies which may seek to address these issues.

13.104 Thames Water have identified that additional wastewater infrastructure capacity is likely to be required to support development at Great Ashby. Applicants should provide sufficient detail alongside any applications to demonstrate that these requirements have been understood and addressed.

## Hexton

### *Introduction*

13.105 The parish of Hexton contains the village and surrounding countryside. It adjoins Central Bedfordshire to the north, east and west. Most of the parish is covered by the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

13.106 The village includes a school, shop, public house, village hall and church.

13.107 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 123 and there were 52 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.108 Hexton is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent.

13.109 Beyond the village boundary, the whole of the parish is designated as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.110 The parish contains the Hexton Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings. Ravensburgh Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden.

### *Housing*

13.111 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Hexton. Planning permission has been granted for one new home since 2011.

## Hinxworth

### *Introduction*

13.112 The parish of Hinxworth contains the village and surrounding farmland. It adjoins Central Bedfordshire to the west and north. There is a village hall, public house and church, but little else by way of facilities.

13.113 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 313 and there were 127 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.114 Hinxworth is identified as a Category B village, within which infilling development which does not expand the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be allowed.

### *Heritage*

13.115 The parish contains the Hinxworth Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings.

### *Housing*

13.116 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Hinxworth. Three new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

# Hitchin

## *Introduction*

- 13.117 Hitchin is one of North Hertfordshire's main towns. Historically it forms the main market town serving the area, and administratively it was the base for the Hitchin Rural District Council, which until 1974 covered most of the territory which now comprises North Hertfordshire.
- 13.118 Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock lie very close to each other and have strong relationships linking them in terms of housing markets and job movements. That said, each town retains a distinct identity of its own. The needs for development arising from the three towns are comparatively high, but the gaps separating the towns are small and of great importance if the town's urban areas and identities are to be kept distinct. Managing growth in this relatively developed part of the District whilst allowing each town to retain its identity is one of the challenges to be addressed.
- 13.119 At the 2011 census the population of Hitchin (defined as the unparished area of the town) was 32,731 and there were 14,702 dwellings in the unparished area. A further 870 people and 329 dwellings are found in the part of St Ippolyts parish which falls within Hitchin Priory ward, giving a combined population of 33,601 for the urban area of Hitchin, making it the most populous individual urban area in the District, narrowly overtaking Letchworth Garden City, which had been larger in the 2001 census.
- 13.120 The town has grown over the years and has absorbed the former village of Walsworth within its urban area, as well as smaller hamlets such as Bearton Green, giving different parts of the modern town different characters. In the east of the town Walsworth Common / Purwell Meadows forms a major open space along the River Purwell.
- 13.121 The town has some small areas of relative deprivation, notably on the Westmill estate in the north-west of the town. The Council is working with partners to try and regenerate the neighbourhood centre there and improve community facilities.

## *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.122 Hitchin is classed as a town under Policy SP2. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map), within which new development is encouraged. Beyond the settlement boundary is Green Belt.

## *Heritage*

- 13.123 Hitchin developed around its medieval market place, which ran parallel to the River Hiz and stretched from Bancroft in the north to Bridge Street and Tilehouse Street in the south, adjoining Hitchin Priory. The parish church of St Mary's is between the historic market place and the river. Both Hitchin Priory and the parish church of St Mary's are Grade I listed buildings.
- 13.124 Infilling within the historic market place created the streets of Sun Street and Bucklersbury to the south and High Street and Churchyard to the north, leaving the smaller area now known as Market Place which forms the visual and commercial heart of the town. This area is covered by the Hitchin conservation area, which also includes some of the early suburban areas, notably between Walsworth Road and Wymondley Road which developed between the old town and the railway.

13.125 Separate conservation areas cover the area around Hitchin Station and nearby Ransom's Recreation Ground, Hitchin Hill Path, Butts Close, and the hamlet of Charlton to the south-west of the town.

### Housing

13.126 Seven sites are allocated in and around Hitchin for an estimated 1,009 new homes. The significant majority of these will be built at our Strategic Housing Site at Highover Farm. A further 638 homes have been built or granted planning permission in Hitchin since 2011.

Ref	Strategic Housing Sites	Dwelling estimate
HT1	Land at Highover Farm (see Policy SP17)	700 homes
Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
HT2	Land north of Pound Farm (St Ippolyts parish)	84 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Maintain appropriate buffer zone from Ippolitts Brook at south-east of site;</li> <li>Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat (deciduous woodland) and key features of interest of adjacent local wildlife site (Folly Alder Swamp);</li> <li>Sensitive design towards south-west of site and in areas viewed from Mill Lane to minimise harm to heritage assets.</li> </ul>	
HT3	Land south of Oughtonhead Lane	46 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access from Westbury Way or Long Innings whilst maintaining the general integrity and character of Oughtonhead Lane (Restricted Byway Hitchin 003);</li> <li>Consider and mitigate against potential adverse cumulative impacts of sites in this area on Oughtonhead Lane SSSI;</li> <li>Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon landscapes to the west, including longer views from the Chilterns AONB.</li> </ul>	
HT5	Land at junction of Grays Lane & Lucas Lane	16 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements to Grays Lane to provide access to sites HT5 and HT6 whilst maintaining appropriate access to Bridleway Hitchin 004 and Byway Open to All Traffic Hitchin 007;</li> <li>Consider and mitigate against potential adverse cumulative impacts of sites in this area on Oughtonhead Lane SSSI;</li> <li>Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon landscapes to the west, including longer views from the Chilterns AONB.</li> </ul>	

HT6	<b>Land at junction of Grays Lane &amp; Crow Furlong</b>	53 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to Grays Lane to provide access to sites HT5 and HT6 whilst maintaining appropriate access to Bridleway Hitchin 004 and Byway Open to All Traffic Hitchin 007;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat (deciduous woodland);</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse cumulative impacts of sites in this area on Oughtonhead Lane SSSI;</li> <li>• Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon landscapes to the west, including longer views from the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to take place prior to development.</li> </ul>	
HT8	<b>Industrial Area, Cooks Way</b>	50 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>• Higher intensity development to take account of site location and surrounding completed schemes.</li> </ul>	
HT10	<b>Former B&amp;Q site</b>	60 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Enhance routes to nearby open space and / or on-site provision of open space;</li> <li>• Higher intensity development to take account of site location and surrounding completed schemes;</li> <li>• High quality and innovative design accentuating the site's corner location and as a gateway to the Hitchin Station area.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>1,009 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>638 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>1,647 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.127 Hitchin contains a number of existing employment areas spread across the town. The largest of these is at Wilbury Way. Although no new sites for employment uses are proposed in Hitchin in this Plan, protection of the existing employment areas will be important to ensure the future of the economy and support wider economic growth.

13.128 The following sites are designated employment areas shown on the Proposals Map. Applications will be considered in accordance with our detailed policies.



Ref	Employment allocations and site-specific criteria	Hectares
<b>Designated employment areas</b>		
HE1	Wilbury Way	38.9
HE2	Burymead Road	7.1
HE3	Station approach	1.4
HE4	Land adjacent to Priory Park	0.9
<b>Parts of employment areas designated for business use only</b>		
HB1	Wilbury Way	3.6
HB2	Cadwell Lane	0.8
HB3	Burymead Road	7.1
HB4	Land adjacent to Priory Park	0.9

13.129 Hitchin town centre is the District's largest town centre. It has a good range of shops, with the primary shopping area being largely around Market Place and along High Street and Bancroft, with secondary shopping areas along Hermitage Road, Bucklersbury and Sun Street.

13.130 The Churchgate Centre and its surrounds make an important contribution to the vitality of the town centre. It supports a significant amount of retail floorspace, provides the location of Hitchin Market and ensures a large quantity of surface level car-parking in easy access of the shops and facilities.

13.131 However, our evidence also recognises that this area lacks amenity value and is largely a negative contribution to the Hitchin Conservation Area and to the setting of individual listed buildings<sup>142</sup>.

13.132 A need for additional retail floorspace has been recognised and national guidance is clear that, where this is the case, sites should be allocated where this need can be met. Our evidence sees the Churchgate Centre and the surrounding area as a location where up to 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace could be provided as part of a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment<sup>143</sup>.

13.133 Redevelopment of this area at a suitable scale and reflecting the historic properties of Hitchin town centre has the potential to enhance the character, appearance and significance of this area.

13.134 This scheme will be retail-led. Consequently, no specific housing allocation or requirement is identified and any residential units here will contribute towards the windfall allowances identified in Policy SP8 of this Plan.

13.135 A number of high-level, site-specific criteria are identified below. Any scheme here will need to take these into account and take a comprehensive approach to the treatment of heritage assets to ensure an appropriate scheme.

<sup>142</sup> Heritage Assessment of Churchgate, Hitchin (Amec Foster Wheeler, 2016)

<sup>143</sup> North Hertfordshire Retail Study Update (NLP, 2016); Retail Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

Ref	Retail allocations and site-specific criteria	
HT11	<b>Churchgate and its surrounding area</b>	Mixed-use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment to provide approximately 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>• Provision of residential accommodation on upper floors;</li> <li>• Identification of suitable, long-term location for Hitchin Market;</li> <li>• Ensure an appropriate level of car parking is retained and / or provided across the town centre as a whole;</li> <li>• Provision of high quality public realm including strengthened pedestrian links between Market Place, Queen Street, Portmill Lane, Bancroft and along the River Hiz;</li> <li>• Preservation and enhancement of heritage assets including Hitchin Conservation Area and listed buildings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Protection of key views of Grade I listed St Mary's Church, including from Hollow Lane;</li> <li>○ Consideration and sensitive treatment of key listed buildings and their settings including the Sun Hotel, the Biggin and various buildings in Market Place;</li> <li>○ Retention and enhancement of terracing to River Hiz;</li> <li>○ Any replacement buildings required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ respect existing building frontage lines on Sun Street and Market Place; and</li> <li>▪ provide architectural variation to reflect rhythm of historic building plots.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
HT12	<b>Paynes Park</b>	Mixed use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment to provide approximately 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>• Preservation and enhancement of heritage assets including Hitchin Conservation Area and listed buildings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Protection and enhancement of Paynes Park House and The Cock Public House which lie within the site boundary;</li> <li>○ Respect for the setting of the Green Hythe, Bank Flat and 3-4 High Street which are adjacent to the site;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Incorporate and maintain alignment of PROW along West Alley (Hitchin 090);</li> <li>• Environmental improvements to the area and frontage along Paynes Park.</li> </ul>	

13.136 Policy SP4 identifies there are seven local centres in Hitchin, which will be encouraged to thrive and protected under policy ETC6. They are:

- Grove Road;
- Nightingale Road;
- Ninesprings;
- Redhill Road;
- Walsworth Road
- Walsworth (Cambridge Road); and
- Westmill (John Barker Place).

13.137 The extent of these centres is shown on the maps in Appendix 3.

#### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.138 Our Strategic Policies set out the key requirements in relation to the land at Highover Farm (see Policy SP17).

13.139 This includes a presumption in favour of an on-site primary school. The cumulative demand arising from the remaining sites within Hitchin will create further demand for additional school places.

13.140 Land at Bearton Green was identified as a reserve school site in the previous local plan. This is currently used as a detached playing field by William Ransom Primary to allow the school to expand. This land could be used to facilitate expansion of other existing primary schools by providing detached playing fields.

13.141 Hertfordshire County Council will need to undertake further work to understand the dynamics of school place allocations within Hitchin and to identify the most appropriate location(s) to make any additional primary school provision.

13.142 Some expansion of existing secondary schools is considered feasible. This Plan removes the Priory School from the Green Belt to facilitate additional provision where this is considered the most suitable approach.

13.143 Our transport modelling identifies that a number of junction improvement schemes will be required in Hitchin by 2031:

- A505 Cambridge Road / Willian Road / Woolgrove Road
- A505 Upper Tilehouse Street / B655 Pirton Road
- A505 & A602 Paynes Park
- A602 / B656 / Gosmore Road
- Cadwell Lane / Wilbury Way / Woolgrove Road

13.144 A number of these highway mitigation schemes are on the routes of the A505 and A602 as they pass through the town. It is notable from the transport work that the majority of these schemes would be required even if no further development was being proposed through this Plan.

13.145 All schemes in Hitchin will be required to make reasonable contributions towards the funding of these works. However, appropriate funding arrangements will need to be made. These need to reflect the fact that background traffic growth triggers the requirement for the schemes with new development then utilising some of the additional capacity that would be provided.

- 13.146 Any highway mitigation scheme at the A602 / B656 / Gosmore Road roundabout will need to consider the effects upon the Air Quality Management Area which has been declared on the approach to this junction.
- 13.147 Anglian Water recognise that there is capacity within the environmental consent for Hitchin Water Recycling Centre to accommodate planned growth in the town. Local upgrades may be required for certain schemes, notably site HT2. The need for such upgrades will be determined at the planning application stage when Anglian Water is approached by the developer.

## Holwell

### *Introduction*

13.148 Holwell is a small parish on the border with Bedfordshire. Until 1897 it was part of Bedfordshire. The parish contains the village of Holwell and the surrounding rural area. There is a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities.

13.149 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Holwell was 361 and there were 164 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.150 Holwell is defined as a Category B village within which infilling development that does not extend the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be allowed. The whole parish is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Housing*

13.151 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Holwell. 10 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

## Ickleford

### *Introduction*

- 13.152 Ickleford lies to the north of Hitchin. Apart from the village the parish includes some scattered farms and tracts of countryside. The village of Ickleford has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shops, public houses, village hall and church.
- 13.153 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Ickleford was 1,833 and there were 844 dwellings in the parish.
- 13.154 The civil parish extends north to the District and county boundary with neighbouring Central Bedfordshire. This Plan allocates land for development along the administrative boundary. This site is considered under a specific section of this chapter on Lower Stondon. This is the settlement within Central Bedfordshire that the site will adjoin.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

- 13.155 Ickleford is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. Most of the rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt, save a small area in the far north of the parish on the Bedfordshire border which is rural area beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

- 13.156 Ickleford has one conservation area which covers the central area of the village, covering the two greens (Upper Green and Lower Green) between which the village grew. The parish church of St Katherine's is a Grade I listed building.

### *Housing*

- 13.157 Three sites are allocated around the edge of Ickleford village for an estimated 199 new homes. 10 further new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
IC1	<b>Land at Duncots Close</b>	9 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>No built development in north-east corner of site to protect views from Grade I listed church</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
IC2	<b>Burford Grange, Bedford Road</b>	40 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts key features of interest of adjoining local wildlife site (Westmill Lane)</li> <li>Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> </ul>	

IC3	<b>Land at Bedford Road</b>	150 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate solution for primary education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Appropriate junction access arrangements to Bedford Road;</li> <li>• Sensitive incorporation of Footpaths Ickleford 013 &amp; 014 as green routes around the edge of the site including appropriate measures to reinforce the new Green Belt boundary along their alignment;</li> <li>• Integration of Bridleway Ickleford 015 as a green corridor through the site;</li> <li>• Sensitive treatment of priority deciduous woodland habitat or, where this cannot be (fully) retained, compensatory provision elsewhere within or adjoining the site;</li> <li>• Development proposals to be informed by site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>• Sensitive integration into existing village, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for cycle and pedestrian access;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts of sites on Oughtonhead Lane SSSI.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>199 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>10 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>209 homes</b>

### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.158 Our transport modelling work does not identify any specific mitigation works that are required on the Ickleford road network. Development here will, however, contribute toward traffic generation within Hitchin and appropriate contributions will be sought towards identified schemes in the town.

13.159 Site IC3 will require the creation of a new access onto the A600 Bedford Road. The most appropriate solution, along with any consequential works – such as changes to speed limits entering / exiting the village from / to the north – will be explored through transport assessments.

13.160 Ickleford Primary is a 1FE school and regularly fills most of its available places from the local area. However, it is located on a constrained site. The school premises lie partially within the Conservation Area and the original school building is listed. There is no capacity to expand within the current site.

13.161 The estimated number of homes on site IC3 makes allowance for the provision of a new primary school of up to 2FE on this site. This would allow for the relocation of the existing school and additional provision to meet requirements arising from new development if this is determined to be the most appropriate solution.

13.162 In considering this issue, regard will need to be given to the nature of the existing school's catchment, the relationship with other schools on the northern edges of Hitchin and the most desirable format(s) for delivering primary education in the village.

13.163 Anglian Water consider there is capacity in the relevant treatment works to support the level of growth proposed.



## Kelshall

### *Introduction*

13.164 Kelshall is a small village in hilly country to the south-west of Royston. It is one of a group of villages established by the Saxons along the line of the chalk ridge from Baldock to Royston.

13.165 Kelshall has a village hall and church but few other facilities.

13.166 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Kelshall was 163 and there were 65 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.167 Kelshall has limited facilities and is identified as a Category B village within which infilling development which does not extend the built up area of the village into the surrounding countryside will be allowed.

### *Housing*

13.168 No sites are allocated in Kelshall for residential development. One new home has been built in the parish since 2011.

## Kimpton

### Introduction

13.169 Kimpton parish is on the south-western edge of the District. The village of Kimpton has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. Apart from the village itself, the parish also includes the smaller settlements of Peters Green and Blackmore End as well as some scattered farms and a wide tract of countryside.

13.170 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Kimpton was 2,167 and there were 884 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.171 Kimpton is identified as a Category A village under policy SP2. It has been excluded from the Green Belt with its settlement boundary being shown on the Proposals Map. Blackmore End is classed as a Category B settlement. It has also been excluded from the Green Belt and infilling development that does not extend the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be permitted. Peters Green is a Category C settlement. Development here will be restricted to limited affordable housing and facilities for local community needs in accordance with our detailed policies.

### Heritage

13.172 Kimpton has two conservation areas. Kimpton Village covers the eastern part of the village around the church and green, and Kimpton Bottom lies at the western end of the village. The parish church of St Peter and St Paul is a Grade I listed building.

### Housing

13.173 One site is allocated in Kimpton for an estimated 13 new homes. 32 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
KM3	<b>Land north of High Street</b>	13 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon adjoining Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>13 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>32 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>45 homes</b>

### Economy

13.174 Kimpton has a small employment area along Claggy Road. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas.

## King's Walden

### Introduction

13.175 King's Walden parish lies on the western edge of the District, close to Luton Airport. The largest village in the parish is Breachwood Green. It also includes the smaller village of King's Walden (including Ley Green). The parish also includes several scattered smaller hamlets and farms and the surrounding countryside. Breachwood Green has a school, public house, village hall and church. King's Walden has a shop, public house and church.

13.176 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of King's Walden was 1,015 and there were 410 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.177 Breachwood Green is classed as a Category A village in Policy SP2. It has been excluded from the Green Belt and development will be supported within the defined settlement boundary. The rest of the parish is designated as Green Belt, including the settlement of King's Walden itself.

### Heritage

13.178 There are no conservation areas in the parish. The parish church of St Mary's is a Grade I listed building.

### Housing

13.179 One site is allocated in King's Walden parish, at Breachwood Green, for an estimated 16 new homes. One additional new home has been built since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
KW1	<p><b>Land west of The Heath, Breachwood Green</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate noise monitoring and mitigation measures, to potentially include insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces, demonstrating WHO and BS8223 standards will be met;</li> <li>• Re-provision of existing allotments subject to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Sensitive treatment on site frontage to minimise impacts upon setting of nearby Listed buildings on The Heath;</li> <li>• Reinforce western site boundary to screen views, enhance Green Belt boundary and maintain rural setting of Listed buildings on Brownings Lane;</li> <li>• Incorporation of Footpath Kings Walden 008 as green corridor through the site.</li> </ul>	16 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>16 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>1 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>17 homes</b>

*Infrastructure and mitigation*

- 13.180 Breachwood Green is located on the approach and departure flightpaths from Luton airport and any schemes will need to demonstrate that noise issues have been appropriately addressed and that internal noise levels within any new homes are within relevant guideline levels.
- 13.181 This site is currently in use as allotments and, subject to appropriate surveys and evidence at the point of any application, will need to be replaced. There is a second allotment site within Breachwood Green at Colemans Road and consideration should be given as to whether land in this area may be able to accommodate the displaced plots.
- 13.182 Thames Water have identified that some improvements may be required to existing wastewater infrastructure. However, it is considered that this can be dealt with through the planning application process and / or by condition.

# Knebworth

## *Introduction*

13.183 Knebworth parish lies on the southern edge of District between Stevenage and Welwyn. The village of Knebworth has a good range of facilities including a railway station, school, doctors and dentists, library, a range of shops, village hall and churches. The railway and A1(M) both cross the parish. East of the A1(M) is Knebworth village, which grew up around Knebworth Station. West of the A1(M) is Old Knebworth, adjoining the Knebworth House estate. Apart from the two villages the parish also includes the Knebworth House parkland and surrounding countryside.

13.184 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Knebworth was 4,496 and there were 2,002 dwellings in the parish.

## *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.185 Knebworth is identified as a Category A village. It is excluded from the Green Belt with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map. General development will be permitted in this area. The rest of the parish is designated Green Belt. Old Knebworth is identified as a Category B village within the Green Belt where limited infilling will be allowed.

## *Heritage*

13.186 Knebworth village has moved twice. The original village was in what is now Knebworth Park, clustered around the parish church of St Mary and St Thomas. The church, which is a Grade I listed building, now stands alone in the park, after one of the owners of Knebworth House moved the village to enlarge the park. The village's new location was what is now called Old Knebworth. The settlement now called Knebworth grew up around the railway station a little way to the east of Old Knebworth.

13.187 Knebworth Parish has three conservation areas. The Old Knebworth conservation area covers that village, whilst the Deards End Lane and Stockens Green conservation areas cover suburban parts of the main village with particular distinctive characteristics. Knebworth Park is designated as a historic park and garden. The smaller Homewood estate, built as the dower house to Knebworth House, is also a designated historic park and garden.

## *Housing*

13.188 This Plan identifies four local housing allocations within Knebworth for an estimated 598 new homes. A further 65 homes have already been built or granted planning permission.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
KB1	<p><b>Land at Deards End</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive design and / or lower density housing at east of site to respect setting of Deards End Lane Conservation Area and listed buildings;</li> <li>• Creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along north-western perimeter of site;</li> <li>• Transport assessment (or equivalent) to demonstrate highway impacts, including construction traffic, will not significantly affect Deards End Lane railway bridge (Scheduled Ancient Monument);</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Appropriate noise mitigation measures, to potentially include insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Knebworth Woods SSSI and priority habitat (deciduous woodland) adjoining site; and</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	200 homes
KB2	<p><b>Land off Gypsy Lane</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where site affects setting of Stockens Green Conservation Area;</li> <li>• Creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along southern perimeter of site;</li> <li>• Provision of 1FE Primary School</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off from A1(M), through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Transport assessment (or equivalent) to demonstrate highway impacts, including construction traffic, will not significantly affect Deards End Lane railway bridge (Scheduled Ancient Monument);</li> <li>• Appropriate noise mitigation measures, to potentially include buffer strip, insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces; and</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	184 homes
KB3	<p><b>Chas Lowe site, London Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues through removal of hardstanding, SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	14 homes

KB4	<b>Land east of Knebworth</b>	200 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural landscaping and planting to provide and / or reinforce Green Belt boundary to east;</li> <li>• Up to 4ha of land for education purposes subject to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Integrate Bridleway Knebworth 001 as part of green infrastructure strategy;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Preserve longer views from Knebworth to wider countryside along dry valley to south of Watton Road; and</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>598 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>65 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>663 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.189 The facilities of Knebworth are designated as a village centre in our retail hierarchy under policy SP4. Applications in this area, outside of the allocated housing site, will be assessed using our detailed development management policies. The village centre is shown on the Proposals Map and the detailed in Appendix 4.

### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.190 The new homes in Knebworth will require additional school places. There is currently one primary school in Knebworth to the east of the high street. This takes 60 Reception aged pupils each year. In recent years, school places have been filled by local children and the catchment is relatively tightly drawn.

13.191 Site KB2 will provide an additional primary school that will meet the needs arising from new development at the west of Knebworth and provide capacity to serve some existing residential areas.

13.192 There is currently no secondary education provision in Knebworth. Pupils travel to a variety of schools in Hitchin, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City. Although some of these journeys can, and are, made by public transport, many are also made by car. This contributes to some of the known traffic issues in the town and across the wider road network.

13.193 New development, particularly on site KB4 to the east of Knebworth, provides the opportunity to look at alternate approaches. Making smaller-scale secondary provision, possibly as an 'all-through school'<sup>144</sup> may be an appropriate solution which meets future needs, benefits existing residents and provides a more sustainable approach.

<sup>144</sup> All-through schools make provision for all children from age 4 to 18. See Policy SP10.

- 13.194 We will work with Hertfordshire County Council, the Parish Council, the landowner and Knebworth Primary School to explore the most appropriate education solution for this site.
- 13.195 Our transport modelling does not identify any specific mitigation scheme requirements for Knebworth. However, the high street is a known pinch point, particularly when delays or incidents on the A1(M) result in the B197 being used as an alternate route between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.
- 13.196 Some of the capacity issues here arise from the way in which the local highway is managed and in particular, the provision of short-stay on-street parking adjacent to the shops<sup>145</sup>.
- 13.197 Highway management measures, such as the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), lie outside the direct control of the planning system and it is therefore not for this Local Plan to dictate the most appropriate solution(s).
- 13.198 It is recognised that a careful balance needs to be struck between ensuring the continued vitality of the local centre, providing access to local facilities and supporting the new development planned for Knebworth. We will continue to work outside of the local plan process to identify and implement the most appropriate future strategy.
- 13.199 Sites in Knebworth will need to ensure that any transport assessments appropriately take these issues into account and contribute reasonably to any necessary mitigation measures, or wider strategies which may seek to address these issues.
- 13.200 A planning application has recently been submitted for a new library, doctors surgery and pharmacy on the site of the current library within the identified village centre.
- 13.201 Knebworth lies within the Thames Water area with wastewater draining to their facility at Rye Meads near Hoddesdon. Previous work identifies that this treatment works should have sufficient capacity to handle all planned development within its catchment until at least 2026 with a reasonable prospect of being able to accommodate development to 2031.
- 13.202 However, it is also recognised that there are constraints in the infrastructure connecting to Rye Meads and capacity from Knebworth is an issue that has been identified. Scheme promoters should work with Thames Water, and together, to identify the likely nature of infrastructure required to ensure this can be programmed appropriately.

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<sup>145</sup> This also explains why high-level traffic modelling, which will not contain this level of intelligence, considers there to be sufficient capacity.



## Langley

### *Introduction*

13.203 Langley is one of the District's smaller parishes. Historically it was part of the parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish of Langley has no meaningful facilities. Apart from the small village of Langley the parish also includes a wide tract of countryside and some scattered farms.

13.204 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Langley was 175 and there were 71 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.205 Langley is identified as a Category C settlement, within which only limited additional development will be allowed to meet defined local needs. The parish is classed as Green Belt, apart from a small area which falls within the land west of Stevenage which is safeguarded for potential long-term development by Policy SP8.

### *Housing*

13.206 No sites are allocated in Langley for residential development. Seven new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

# Letchworth Garden City

## *Introduction*

13.207 Letchworth is the world's first garden city based on Ebenezer Howard's original concept of a self contained settlement combining both town and country living. Much of the town is the product of a master plan, with areas of low, medium and higher density housing, industry, open space and the town centre in broadly separate land uses with attractively planned landscapes. Large open spaces are integrated into the town's layout, notably at Norton Common and Howard Park and Gardens.

13.208 The original masterplan for the garden city was focussed on the area between the three parallel roads of Wilbury Road / Norton Road in the north, Icknield Way across the middle of the area, and Hitchin Road / Baldock Road (the A505) to the south. After the Second World War development spread beyond the original masterplan, with the Grange estate to the north and the Jackmans, Lordship and Manor Park estates to the south.

13.209 The town's administrative boundaries also include the three villages of Willian, Norton and the old village of Letchworth, which were the three pre-garden city parishes covering the area. Today Willian remains a distinct village, being slightly separated from the urban area of Letchworth by one or two thin fields. Norton abuts the urban area with no clear point where Norton ends and the garden city begins. The old village of Letchworth, which stretched from St Mary's Church and Letchworth Hall up the length of Letchworth Lane to the corner shop on Baldock Road, is effectively absorbed within the urban area of the garden city.

13.210 At the 2011 census the population of Letchworth Garden City (including Willian and Norton) was 33,249 and there were 14,271 dwellings in the town<sup>146</sup>.

## *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.211 Letchworth Garden City is the District's second largest urban area, with only slightly fewer people than neighbouring Hitchin. Letchworth has largely grown to fill most of the space between Hitchin and Baldock, leaving little room for further growth that does not erode the separation between those towns. North and south of the town are the villages of Stotfold (in Central Bedfordshire) and Willian. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map) within which new development is encouraged. Beyond the settlement boundary is Green Belt.

## *Heritage*

13.212 As the world's first garden city, the importance of the original design and layout of the Garden City is recognised in the two conservation area designations, Letchworth and Croft Lane. There are many listed buildings in the town. There are also conservation areas for the old villages of Willian and Norton.

13.213 The Broadway and Broadway Gardens are designated as a historic park and garden, as is Howard Park and Gardens.

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<sup>146</sup> At the time of the 2011 census this was the area of the Letchworth Garden City parish, which has subsequently been abolished. The area is the same as the combined five Letchworth wards on NHDC.

13.214 New development within Letchworth Garden City will need to demonstrate how it accords with Garden City principles.

*Housing*

13.215 Fourteen sites are allocated in Letchworth for an estimated 1,546 additional dwellings. A further 594 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011 and the town will see more than 2,000 new homes built over the plan period.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Strategic Housing Sites</b>	<b>Dwelling estimate</b>
LG1	<b>Land north of Letchworth</b> (see Policy SP15)	900 homes
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria</b>	<b>Dwelling estimate</b>
LG3	<b>Land east of Kristiansand Way and Talbot Way</b>	120 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural planting to reinforce Green Belt boundary along north-eastern perimeter of site;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with motorway and / or adjoining employment are to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area, especially if access to the site is via Flint Road;</li> <li>• Re-provision of allotments if access to the site is from the west. Re-provision prior to commencement of development, within the vicinity of the site and the same or better quality;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>• Retention of Public Right of Way Letchworth Garden City 026 and diversion if necessary;</li> <li>• Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where the site affects setting of the Norton Conservation Area and nearby Grade II Listed Buildings on Church Lane and Norton Road;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
LG4	<b>Land north of former Norton School, Norton Road</b>	45 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate access arrangements to minimise impact upon Croft Lane Conservation Area;</li> <li>• Justification for any loss of open space. Re-provision or contributions towards improvements to existing provision where appropriate;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution, particularly on the western boundary of the site;</li> <li>• Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where site affects the setting of the Letchworth Conservation Area, the setting of the Croft Lane Conservation Area and setting of the</li> </ul>	

	Grade II Listed Croft Corner and Grade II Listed Treetops;	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
LG5	<b>Land at Birds Hill</b>	86 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher density/flatted development may be achieved given surrounding built form, subject to heritage considerations;</li> <li>Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with railway and / or adjoining employment are to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area;</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination from previous land uses</li> <li>Sensitive design where site affects setting of the Letchworth Conservation Area and Grade II Listed buildings on Birds Hill;</li> <li>Retention of any buildings of historic and/or architectural interest.</li> </ul>	
LG6	<b>Land off Radburn Way</b>	35 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-provision or relocation of any garages lost as a result of development subject to up-to-date evidence of occupation and demand;</li> <li>Retention of an area of priority orchard habitat within any scheme with appropriate compensatory provision for any habitat lost as a result of development.</li> </ul>	
LG8	<b>Pixmore Centre, Pixmore Avenue</b>	80 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher density/flatted development may be achieved given surrounding built form, subject to heritage considerations;</li> <li>Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area;</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>Sensitive design where site affects setting of the Letchworth Conservation Area and various Grade II Listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.</li> </ul>	
LG9	<b>Former Lannock School</b>	45 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justification for any loss of open space. Re-provision or contributions towards improvements to existing provision where appropriate;</li> <li>Lower density development with retention of some existing trees and green space to retain sense of openness and accord with Garden City principles;</li> <li>Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	
LG10	<b>Former playing field, Croft Lane</b>	37 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justification for the loss of outdoor sports facilities. Re-provision or contributions towards improvements to existing provision where appropriate;</li> <li>Sensitive design and lower density development to minimise harm to the Croft Lane Conservation Area and setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings along Cashio Lane, Croft Lane and Norton Road;</li> <li>Access arrangements to minimise impact upon heritage assets;</li> <li>Provide archaeological survey prior to development.</li> </ul>	
LG13	<b>Glebe Road industrial estate</b>	10 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area;</li> <li>Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where site affects the Letchworth Conservation Area;</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination from previous land uses</li> <li>Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	
LG14	<b>Site at Icknield Way</b>	8 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where site affects the setting of the Letchworth Conservation Area;</li> <li>Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	
LG15	<b>Garages, Icknield Way</b>	25 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	
LG16	<b>Foundation House</b>	47 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area;</li> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination from previous land uses</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where site affects the setting of the Letchworth Conservation Area;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> <li>• Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	
LG17	<b>Hamonte</b>	30 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No site-specific requirements identified.</li> </ul>	
LG18	<b>Former Depot, Icknield Way</b>	55 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to investigate and provide adequate mitigation measures/remediation for contamination from previous land uses.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>1,523 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>594 homes</b>
<b>Broad location – Letchworth Garden City town centre</b>		<b>50 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>2,167 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.216 Letchworth Garden City plays a significant role in the District's economy, with a major employment area centred on Works Road and Avenue One. The town centre also provides a range of shops and employment opportunities.

13.217 In order to help deliver the additional local jobs estimated to be needed in the District over the plan period, policy SP3 identifies that 1.5 hectares of employment land should be allocated at the former Power Station on Works Road, partly to compensate the loss of employment sites on the western fringes of the main employment area, but also to provide new employment space for business growth.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Employment allocations and site-specific criteria</b>	<b>Hectares</b>
LG12	Former power station, Works Road	1.5
<b><i>Designated employment areas</i></b>		
LE1	Works Road	70.9
LE2	Blackhorse Road	11.8
LE3	Icknield Way	11.4
LE4	Spirella	2.8

<b>Parts of employment areas designated for business use only</b>		
LB1	Amor Way	0.2
LB2	Blackhorse Road North	4.8
LB3	Ickniel Way North	3.7
LB4	Ickniel Way South	3.0
LB5	Spirella	2.8

13.218 Letchworth has the second largest town centre in the District as identified on the Proposals Maps. The town centre contains both primary and secondary frontage located in the main retail area around Eastcheap, Leys Avenue, Station Road and the Garden Square shopping centre. These areas will be defined on the Proposals Map.

13.219 There is no immediate identified need (up to 2021) for additional retail floorspace in Letchworth as existing permissions and filling vacant units help meet the town's short term requirement. However, beyond 2021 there is a need to identify sites to accommodate additional floorspace. This will be in the form of mixed use allocations.

13.220 Additionally in the longer term Letchworth has the potential capacity to meet wider District needs, recapturing trade that is currently diverted to Hitchin. There are a number of opportunities within the town centre boundary that could accommodate this additional provision as detail below.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Retail allocations and site-specific criteria</b>	
LG19	The Wynd, Openshaw Way	Mixed use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redevelopment to provide approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>No net loss of residential accommodation;</li> <li>Ensure an appropriate level of car parking is retained and / or provided across the town centre as a whole;</li> <li>A public pedestrian link should be provided through the site from Norton Way South and Howard Gardens;</li> <li>Sensitive design to respect Letchworth Conservation Area and the listed building at 52-58 Leys Avenue;</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off, through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	
LG20	Gernon Road	Mixed use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redevelopment to provide approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>Development should seek to retain parts of the library that make a positive contribution to the appearance and street-scene;</li> <li>Development should enhance the setting of Broadway Gardens;</li> <li>Preservation or enhancement of the setting of the listed museum;</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive design to respect Letchworth Conservation Area and Letchworth Museum, Vasanta Hall and Town Hall listed buildings;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off, through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>		
LG21	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Arena Parade</td> <td>Mixed use</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment to provide approximately 5000m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>• No net loss of residential accommodation;</li> <li>• Ensure an appropriate level of car parking is retained and / or provided across the town centre as a whole;</li> <li>• Maintenance of building lines along Broadway and Eastcheap;</li> <li>• Improve east to west pedestrian links;</li> <li>• Vehicle access/egress and servicing should be from Broadway;</li> <li>• Sensitive design to respect Letchworth Conservation Area and the Town Hall and Broadway Chambers listed buildings;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off, through SuDS or other appropriate solution.</li> </ul>	Arena Parade	Mixed use
Arena Parade	Mixed use		

13.221 Policy SP4: Town and Local Centres identifies two neighbourhood centres in Letchworth. Proposals in these areas will be determined using our detailed policies. The centres are:

- Jackmans; and
- Grange.

13.222 The extent of these neighbourhood centres is shown on the maps in Appendix 3.

#### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.223 The provision of more than 2,000 homes across Letchworth Garden City will require a range of supporting infrastructure.

13.224 Our strategic policy for the land north of Letchworth Garden City (see Policy SP15) sets out a range of matters that will need to be considered. The cumulative impacts of a number of smaller developments across the town will also need to be addressed.

13.225 Further schools provision will be needed. However, Hertfordshire County Council need to undertake further work to determine which schools have capacity to expand on their existing sites and how this relates to the proposed pattern of development across the town. This applies to both primary and secondary level education.

13.226 Our transport modelling identifies two specific junctions where works will be required to support traffic growth in Letchworth Garden City over the plan period:

- A505 / Norton Way; and
- Junction 9 of the A1(M), known locally as Letchworth Gate



- 13.227 It is notable from the transport work that both of these schemes would be required even if the development being proposed through this Plan did not occur.
- 13.228 Schemes in Letchworth will be required to make reasonable contributions towards these schemes and / or other schemes in nearby locations (see Baldock and Hitchin sections of this chapter in particular) where traffic generation arising from new development will have an impact.
- 13.229 However, appropriate funding arrangements will need to be made. These need to reflect the fact that background traffic growth triggers the requirements with new development then utilising some of the additional capacity that would be provided.
- 13.230 This issue should be explored further through the transport assessments that will accompany any planning applications on these sites. This will help to determine the most appropriate approach, and any other local measures which may be required, on a case-by-case basis.
- 13.231 Anglian Water have previously identified that there is sufficient capacity within the environmental consent at Letchworth Water Recycling Centre to accommodate the levels of growth being proposed.

## Lilley

### *Introduction*

13.232 Lilley is in the northwest of the District. The village of Lilley has a limited range of facilities. Apart from the village the parish also includes the surrounding countryside, most of which is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

13.233 Lilley has a public house, village hall and church. At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Lilley was 386 and there were 161 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.234 Lilley is identified as a Category B village, within which infilling development that does not extend the built up area into surrounding countryside will be allowed. The whole parish is also classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.235 Lilley has one conservation area covering the central part of the village.

### *Housing*

13.236 No sites are allocated in Lilley for residential development. One new home has been granted planning permission since 2011.

## Lower Stondon

### *Introduction*

13.237 Lower Stondon lies outside of North Hertfordshire in neighbouring Central Bedfordshire. It consists of the original village core and more recent development which lies between the A600 Bedford Road and Henlow airfield. This development extends to the administrative boundary between the two authorities.

13.238 Land within North Hertfordshire adjoining Lower Stondon lies within Ickleford parish. The remainder of Ickleford parish has its own section in this chapter.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.239 Land within North Hertfordshire adjoining Lower Stondon is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed.

13.240 Land beyond this boundary forms part of the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.241 The Grade II\* listed Old Ramerick Manor lies immediately to the east of the settlement boundary.

### *Housing*

13.242 One new site is located adjoining Lower Stondon. Four further new homes have been completed adjacent to the site since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
LS1	<p><b>Land at Bedford Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate junction access arrangements to Bedford Road;</li> <li>• Sensitive integration into existing settlement, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for cycle and pedestrian access;</li> <li>• Sensitive incorporation of Footpaths Ickleford 001 &amp; 002 as green routes through and around the edge of the site;</li> <li>• No residential development within Flood Zones 2 or 3;</li> <li>• Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) and address existing surface water flood risk issues within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SuDS approach;</li> <li>• Development proposals to be informed by site-specific landscape and heritage assessment;</li> </ul>	120 homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development-free buffer along eastern edge of site to minimise harm to adjacent listed building;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>
<b>Total allocated sites</b>	<b>120 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>	<b>4 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>	<b>124 homes</b>

*Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.243 Our transport modelling work does not identify any specific mitigation works that are required in this area. Development here will, however, contribute toward traffic generation within Hitchin and appropriate contributions will be sought towards schemes in the town.

13.244 Site LS1 will require the creation of a new access onto the A600 Bedford Road. The most appropriate solution, along with any consequential works – such as changes to speed limits entering / exiting the village from / to the north – will be explored through transport assessments.

13.245 The nearest school within Hertfordshire is Ickleford Primary. Our approach to education here is set out in the Ickleford section of this chapter. However, development of this site will tie in to the urban area of Lower Stondon and parents may express a preference for their children to go to school within the village.

13.246 On this and all other relevant matters it will be necessary to consider how the proposed development interacts with land and facilities in the administrative area of Central Bedfordshire Council.

## Newnham

### *Introduction*

13.247 Newnham is a small parish to the north of Baldock, containing the village of Newnham and the surrounding countryside. Newnham shares a parish council with the neighbouring small parish of Caldecote.

13.248 Population statistics are not available for Newnham separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.

13.249 Newnham has a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.250 Newnham is identified as a Category B village, where infilling development will be allowed which does not extend the built up area of the village into surrounding countryside. Most of the parish (including the village) is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, except the southernmost part of the parish which is within the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.251 A conservation area covers almost the whole village.

### *Housing*

13.252 No sites are allocated in Newnham for residential development. No new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

## Nuthampstead

### *Introduction*

13.253 Nuthampstead is a small parish located in the far east of the District, to the south east of Royston. Historically it was part of the parish of Barkway, becoming a separate civil parish in 1866. The area is characterised by thick woodland and rich farmland and is on the county boundary with Essex. Nuthampstead's dwellings are grouped in the hamlets of Nuthampstead and Morrice Green. Apart from a pub at Nuthampstead there is little by way of facilities.

13.254 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Nuthampstead was 142 and there were 52 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.255 Nuthampstead is identified as a Category C settlement, within which only limited additional development to meet community needs will be permitted. The parish is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, within which there is general restraint on development.

### *Housing*

13.256 No sites are allocated in Nuthampstead for residential development. No new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

### *Economy*

13.257 In terms of the economy of the local area, there are, unusually for this size of settlement, two industrial areas in the parish providing premises for a range of businesses. These are not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but do perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. Our detailed policies set out our approach to employment development outside of formally allocated areas.

## Offley

### *Introduction*

13.258 Offley is a large parish in the western part of the District between Luton and Hitchin. The parish is split into two wards: Offley and Cockernhoe. At the 2011 census the population of the whole parish was 1,398 and there were 607 dwellings in the parish. Of these, 493 people and 205 dwellings were in the Cockernhoe ward (discussed on the Cockernhoe and East of Luton page of this chapter) and the remaining 905 people and 402 dwellings were in the Offley ward (the subject of this page).

13.259 The village of Offley (also known as Great Offley) has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. Apart from Offley, the ward includes the surrounding countryside and the hamlet of Little Offley. The northern part of the ward is designated as part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.260 Offley is identified as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the Offley ward is classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.261 Offley has one conservation area covering the core of the village. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed building.

### *Housing*

13.262 No sites are allocated in Offley. Since 2011, 73 new homes have been built or granted planning permission in the Offley ward of the parish.

## Pirton

### *Introduction*

13.263 Pirton is a medium sized village in the north-west of the District, on the border with Central Bedfordshire. The parish contains the village and the surrounding countryside, with just a couple of isolated buildings outside the village itself. The village has a reasonable range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. The western part of the parish is designated as part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

13.264 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Pirton was 1,274 and there were 521 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.265 Pirton is designated as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map within which development will be allowed. The majority of the remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, apart from a small section of Green Belt in the south-east of the parish.

### *Heritage*

13.266 Pirton has a conservation area covering much of the older part of the village, including the site of the castle, Great Green and Little Green. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. To the west of the village in the Chilterns, High Down House is also a Grade I listed building.

### *Housing*

13.267 No sites are allocated in Pirton by this Plan. Around 94 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>147</sup> Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 82 new homes at Holwell Turn. The precise number of homes to be built will be determined by a detailed, 'reserved matters' application. An estimate of 70 homes has been used for the purposes of calculating overall housing numbers in this Plan. This figure is without prejudice to the determination of any future planning applications on this site.



## Preston

### *Introduction*

13.268 Preston is a small village to the south of Hitchin. Historically it was part of the parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish covers the village and surrounding countryside. The village has a school, village hall, public house and a church. It is also home to a private school in the former manor house of Temple Dinsley.

13.269 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Preston was 420 and there were 158 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.270 Preston is classed as a Category A village, with a boundary within which development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is designated as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.271 The grounds of Temple Dinsley form a historic park and garden, whilst much of the village is covered by a conservation area.

### *Housing*

13.272 One site is allocated in Preston for an estimated 21 new homes. A further 17 homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
PR1	<p><b>Land off Templars Lane</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon nearby Wain Wood SSSI;</li> <li>Sensitive design that considers any impacts upon the setting of Preston Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings;</li> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	21 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>21 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>17 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>38 homes</b>

## Radwell

### *Introduction*

13.273 Radwell is a small parish to the north of Baldock on the River Ivel and on the border with Central Bedfordshire. The village essentially comprises one street, with a village hall and church but little else by way of facilities. The parish also includes the Baldock Service Station at junction 10 of the A1(M).

13.274 Population statistics are not available for Radwell separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.275 Radwell is classed as a Category C settlement where only limited development to meet defined community needs will be permitted. The southern part of the parish is classed as Green Belt, whilst the northern part is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Housing*

13.276 No sites are allocated for residential development in Radwell. Since 2011, six new homes have been either built or granted planning permission.

## Reed

### *Introduction*

13.277 Reed is located to the east of the A10, approximately 3 miles south of Royston. Reed forms part of the group of Saxon villages established on the chalk ridge which dominates the area. The village has a school, village hall and a church.

13.278 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Reed was 310 and there were 134 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.279 Reed is identified as a Category A village in the settlement hierarchy. A settlement boundary is shown on the Proposals Map within which development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.280 The village is located just east of Ermine Street, the old Great North Road and now the A10. The Saxon parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. Much of the village is covered by the conservation area. The village has a loose-knit layout, with the fields and open spaces in and around the village forming an important part of the village's character.

### *Housing*

13.281 One site is allocated in Reed for an estimated 22 new homes. A further 12 new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
RD1	<b>Land at Blacksmiths Lane</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;</li> <li>• Sensitive design required where the site affects the Reed Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings; and</li> <li>• Existing Right of Way should be incorporated or diverted as appropriate.</li> </ul>	22 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>22 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>12 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>34 homes</b>

# Royston

## *Introduction*

13.282 Royston lies in a shallow bowl set in the East Anglian Heights chalk escarpment, overlooking and bounded by the Cambridgeshire Plain to the north. At the time of the 2011 census the town had a population of 15,781 and there were 6,800 dwellings in the town. Development of the town has tended to be informed by the busy roads running through and around the town and the Cambridge to London railway line which bisects the town.

13.283 The town historically straddled Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire; the original county boundary was Icknield Way. The town did not exist at the time of the Domesday Book. Instead it appears to have been founded in the medieval period and did not become a separate parish until 1540. Prior to that it straddled the parishes of Barkway, Reed and Therfield (in Hertfordshire) and Melbourn and Bassingbourn (in Cambridgeshire). The boundary was last changed as recently as 1989 after the construction of the A505 bypass.

13.284 On the south-western edge of Royston is Therfield Heath, which forms an important open heathland. As well as providing open space for the town it is a rare chalk grassland habitat, and is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve. Therfield Heath is also recognised for its historic and archaeological importance.

## *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.285 Royston is the third largest of the four towns in North Hertfordshire when measured by population. The relative isolation of the town means that it plays an important service role for many of the surrounding villages in both Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map) within which additional development will be allowed.

## *Heritage*

13.286 The town grew up around the crossroads of Icknield Way and Ermine Street, although the market place is not at the crossroads itself but to the south-east. One theory as to why the market is not at the crossroads is that Ermine Street originally approached the town from the south-east along Grange Bottom, avoiding the steepest parts of the hill to the south, and that the present line of High Street / London Road is a result of medieval realignments. The town centre is covered by a conservation area.

13.287 The parish church of St John's is a Grade I listed building, being originally the church of an Augustinian Priory, becoming the parish church after the dissolution of the monasteries. The Old Palace at 23 Kneesworth Street, 18 Melbourn Street and Royston Cave are also Grade I listed buildings.

13.288 Therfield Heath contains Scheduled Ancient Monuments due to the presence of prehistoric barrows. The round barrow cemetery is the largest known example of its type in Hertfordshire, and provides important information on the beliefs and social organisation of early prehistoric communities.

## Housing

13.289 Eight sites are allocated in Royston providing a total of more than 1,000 new homes. 663 further homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
RY1	<p><b>Land west of Ivy Farm, Baldock Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate solution for primary education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need and geographical distribution of existing provision;</li> <li>• Retention of Public Right of Way Royston 017 as a green corridor through the site;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the adjoining railway to potentially include insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Design to minimise visual impact of the development from Therfield Heath;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment and to retain trees as a buffer to the railway line;</li> <li>• Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Therfield Heath SSSI including provision of green infrastructure within the development to reduce recreational pressure;</li> <li>• Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> <li>• Sensitive design and mitigation measures to address any impact on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments (pre-historic barrows).</li> </ul>	279 homes
RY2	<p><b>Land north of Newmarket Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New vehicular access from the A505;</li> <li>• Appropriate solution for education requirements arising from sites RY2 and RY10 having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Design to minimise visual and landscape impact, including development limits below the 70 metre contours;</li> <li>• Undertake an ecological survey (including reptiles) due to adjacent habitats and provide mitigation and/ or off-setting measures as necessary. Developer to ensure management of the chalk grassland;</li> <li>• Protect and enhance hedgerows and trees where possible. Retain roadside trees and tree clump along the A505 and Newmarket Road;</li> <li>• Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> </ul>	330 homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional wastewater treatment capacity to be provided prior to commencement of development;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	
RY4	<b>Land north of Lindsay Close</b>	40 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access connecting from Old North Road in the west to Burns Road at the east;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 Royston Bypass to potentially include insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Site design and landscaping to mitigate landscape impacts;</li> <li>• Protect and enhance tree belts where possible;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution, particularly to the east of the site;</li> <li>• Site layout design to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>• Undertake a detailed assessment of the impact of the Royston Water Recycling Centre in relation to odours, lighting, noise and traffic impacts and provide mitigation measures where necessary.</li> </ul>	
RY5	<b>Agricultural supplier, Garden Walk</b>	20 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain tree belts where possible;</li> <li>• Address surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution, particularly along Garden Walk;</li> <li>• Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation.</li> </ul>	
RY7	<b>Anglian Business Park, Orchard Road</b>	48 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher density/flatted development may be achieved given surrounding built form;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the railway to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate residential amenity for any properties adjoining employment area or likely to be affected by existing, permitted operations;</li> <li>• Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure.</li> </ul>	
RY8	<b>Land at Lumen Road</b>	14 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure appropriate residential amenity having regard to adjoining employment uses</li> <li>• Design and layout to take account of foul pumping station within proximity to the site ensuring a buffer of 15m from the boundary of</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proposed occupied buildings;</li> <li>Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li> <li>Phasing of development to link with Sewage Treatment Works improvements;</li> <li>Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;</li> <li>Sensitive design and / or lower density housing where the site affects the setting of the Grade II Listed 21 Mill Road.</li> </ul>	
RY10	<b>Land south of Newmarket Road</b>	300 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate solution for education requirements arising from sites RY2 and RY10 having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>Provide a site-specific landscape assessment and tree survey. Retention of trees and hedgerows where possible;</li> <li>Design and layout to respond to topography;</li> <li>Address potential surface water flood risk through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;</li> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	
RY11	<b>Land at Barkway Road</b>	18 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive treatment of western boundary to maintain integrity of Bridleway Royston 010</li> </ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>1,049 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>663 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>1,712 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.290 The economy of Royston is split between the town centre functions and the large employment area to the north of the town although both are covered by the Business Improvement District (BID) area.

13.291 In order to help deliver the additional local jobs estimated to be needed in the District over the plan period, policy SP3 identifies that 10.9 hectares of employment land should be allocated at York Way. The existing employment area is currently thriving feeding off both the Hertfordshire and Cambridge economies, with a wide range of businesses located there including many operations associated with Johnson Matthey.

Ref	Employment allocations and site-specific criteria	Hectares
RY9	Land north of York Way	10.9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site is within Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Consultation Zone;</li> <li>• Site should deliver a new access to the Orchard Road employment area from the A505;</li> <li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>• Sensitive design / layout considering views to and from the Scheduled Ancient Monuments located on Therfield Heath;</li> <li>• Compensatory or offsetting measures for loss of existing grassland habitat.</li> </ul>	
<b>Designated employment areas</b>		
RE1	Orchard Road	38.9

13.292 The town centre contains a range of small independent shops and services as well as a small number of national retailers. There is also a wide range of eating and drinking establishments in the town centre.

13.293 The town centre contains both primary and secondary shopping frontages which will be defined on the Proposals Map for the main retail area around the High Street, Market Hill, Lower King Street and Melbourn Street.

13.294 There is no immediate identified need (up to 2021) for additional retail floorspace as a result of existing permissions and filling of vacant units, however, post 2021 additional floorspace will be needed, which should be accommodated at the Town Hall site.

13.295 This scheme will be retail-led. Consequently, no specific housing allocation or requirement is identified and any residential units here will contribute towards the windfall allowances identified in Policy SP8 of this Plan.

Ref	Retail allocations and site-specific criteria	Hectares
RY12	Town Hall Site, Melbourn Street	1.4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment to provide approximately 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross additional main town centre use floorspace;</li> <li>• Provision of residential accommodation on upper floors;</li> <li>• Retention or re-provision of civic uses across the town or onsite;</li> <li>• Retention of existing trees where possible;</li> <li>• Ensure an appropriate level of car parking is retained and / or provided across the town centre as a whole;</li> <li>• Consideration of retaining the Town Hall;</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive high quality design given the prominent location of the site as a gateway to the town centre and to respect the setting of Royston Conservation Area and Banyers Hotel and No18 Melbourn Street listed buildings.</li> </ul>
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### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.296 More than 1,000 homes are planned for Royston over the period 2011-2031. This will require the provision of supporting infrastructure.

13.297 The potential impacts of site RY1 on the SSSI and heritage assets and Therfield Heath is one of the key consideration. Our overall evidence base concludes that, in order to meet our housing requirements over the plan period, it will be necessary to allocate some sites which may impact upon heritage assets and landscape<sup>148</sup>. Our aim will be to ensure that the overall integrity of relevant heritage assets are protected and that the development is designed to minimise impact on the landscape.

13.298 The A505 Royston Bypass provides the most appropriate, settlement boundary to the north of the town. This requires the removal of some land within the bypass, but beyond the existing and proposed employment areas, which should generally remain undeveloped. Our detailed policies set out the approach we will take to areas of Urban Open Land.

13.299 Hertfordshire County Council has recently provided additional First School capacity within the town. As a consequence, it is considered that existing school sites have been developed to capacity.

13.300 A further 2FE will be required over the plan period. This is the County Council's preferred school size and would normally require the provision of one new site. However, the majority of new development in Royston will be around the peripheries of the existing town. It may be more appropriate for the provision of two separate, smaller schools to the east and west of the town respectively to best accommodate future patterns of demand and increase the sustainability of new developments in these locations.

13.301 In its role as Highway Authority, Hertfordshire County Council has recently developed a new county-wide transport model, 'COMET'. This will be used to identify transport mitigation schemes in the Royston area. These will be reflected in future iterations of the Infrastructure Development Plan.

13.302 There are known capacity constraints in the wastewater treatment works at Royston<sup>149</sup>. Specific evidence has been prepared to help identify potential solutions. We will work together with developers and Anglian Water to ensure sufficient capacity is available for new developments to proceed. Where appropriate 'Grampian conditions' – which prevent development from occurring until such as time as specific conditions are met – will be used.

<sup>148</sup> Housing and Green Belt Technical Paper (NHDC, 2016)

<sup>149</sup> Royston Sewage Treatment Work Water Cycle Study (NHDC, 2012)

## Rushden

### *Introduction*

13.303 Rushden is a small village to the south-east of Baldock. It shares a parish council with neighbouring Wallington, although they remain separate parishes. The village has a public house, village hall and church.

13.304 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Rushden was 242 and there were 103 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.305 Rusden is classed as a Category B village, where infilling development that does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed. The whole parish is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.306 There are two conservation areas in Rushden, one covering the core of the village around the church, and the other covering Southern Green to the east. The Julians estate to the north of the village is designated as an historic park and garden.

### *Housing*

13.307 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Rushden. Two new homes have been built since 2011.

## Sandon

### *Introduction*

13.308 Sandon is a village to the east of Baldock. The parish covers a large area of countryside as well as the main village, including numerous small hamlets such as Roe Green and Green End. The main village has a school, village hall and church.

13.309 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Sandon was 495 and there were 214 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.310 Sandon is classed as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary within which further development will be allowed shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the parish is classed as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.311 There are two conservation areas in Sandon, one for the main village and one for Roe Green. The parish church of All Saints is a Grade I listed building.

### *Housing*

13.312 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Sandon. 13 new homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

## St Ippolyts

### *Introduction*

13.313 St Ippolyts is a parish to the south of Hitchin. As well as St Ippolyts village it includes Gosmore and the southern part of the urban area of Hitchin. The parish includes a significant rural area, especially to the south of the village.

13.314 Whilst St Ippolyts and Gosmore are perceived as separate villages, it is hard to say where one ends and the other begins. The core of St Ippolyts is around the church on the hill to the east and the core of Gosmore is along Gosmore High Street to the west, but the largely developed area between the two has an ambiguous identity with some properties having St Ippolyts postal addresses and others having Gosmore postal addresses. Facilities in this conjoined pair of villages include a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church.

13.315 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of St Ippolyts was 2,047 and there were 799 dwellings in the parish. Of these, 870 people and 329 dwellings were found in the part of the parish which falls in Hitchin Priory ward, leaving 1,177 people and 470 dwellings in the more rural part of the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.316 The northern part of the parish forms part of the town of Hitchin. St Ippolyts is classed as a Category A village, with the boundary drawn so as to include Gosmore. The settlement boundary is shown on the Proposals Map within which development will be allowed.

13.317 In the south of the parish is part of the West of Stevenage site. This land is safeguarded for long-term potential development by Policy SP8. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.318 There are two conservation areas, one for the original hilltop settlement part of St Ippolyts and one for Gosmore. The medieval farmhouse at Almshoe Bury and the parish church of St Ippolyts are both Grade I listed buildings.

### *Housing*

13.319 Two sites are allocated in St Ippolyts for an estimated 52 new homes. A further 34 homes have been built or granted planning permission in the parish since 2011.

13.320 Site HT2, Pound Farm, which is in the parish but on the edge of Hitchin, is covered in the Hitchin section of this document.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
SI1	Land south of Waterdell Lane	40 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> </ul>	
SI2	Land south of Stevenage Road	12 homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> <li>• Trees should be incorporated into the design of the development;</li> <li>• Maintain the existing right of way through the site.</li> </ul>
<b>Total allocated sites</b>	<b>52 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>	<b>34 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>	<b>86 homes</b>

## St Paul's Walden

### *Introduction*

13.321 St Paul's Walden is a rural parish in the west of the District. The main village in the parish is Whitwell, with St Paul's Walden itself and the hamlet of Bendish being smaller settlements.

13.322 Whitwell has a school, shop, village hall, and public houses. St Paul's Walden has a public house and church.

13.323 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of St Paul's Walden was 1,293 and there were 537 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.324 Whitwell is classed as a Category A village, with a boundary shown on the Proposals Map within which further development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.325 There are conservation areas for both Whitwell and Bendish. The parish church of All Saints is a Grade I listed building. The parks of St Paul's Walden Bury and The Hoo are both designated as historic parks and gardens.

### *Housing*

13.326 One site is allocated in St Paul's Walden at Whitwell for an estimated 41 new homes. A further nine homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
SP2	<p><b>Land between Horn Hill and Bendish Lane, Whitwell</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> <li>Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> <li>Integration of Byway Open to All Traffic St Paul's Walden 036 as a green corridor through the site and boundary feature;</li> <li>Sensitive design approach, particularly towards north-east of site to minimise impacts on adjoining Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	41 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>41 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>9 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>50 homes</b>

## Therfield

### *Introduction*

13.327 Therfield is a village to the east of the District, south of Royston. It has a school, public house, village hall and churches. The surrounding parish includes a sizable rural area, including Therfield Heath in the north on the edge of Royston.

13.328 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Therfield was 556 and there were 217 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.329 Therfield is identified as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary within which additional development will be allowed shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.330 Therfield has a conservation area covering much of the older part of the village, including the remains of the motte and bailey castle.

### *Housing*

13.331 One site is allocated in Therfield for an estimated 12 new homes. 10 further homes have been either built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
TH1	<p><b>Land at Police Row</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontage development facing Police Row only;</li> <li>• Sensitive treatment of western boundary to maintain integrity of Footpath Therfield 022;</li> <li>• No infiltration drainage SuDS (or other) features without prior consent of Environment Agency;</li> <li>• An assessment of the impact of development on the Therfield Conservation Area should be undertaken;</li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>	12 homes
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>12 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>10 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>22 homes</b>

## Wallington

### *Introduction*

13.332 Wallington is a small village to the east of Baldock. It shares a parish council with neighbouring Rushden, but remains a separate parish. The village has a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities. The parish also includes the surrounding countryside.

13.333 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Wallington was 150 and there were 60 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.334 Wallington is classed as a Category B village, where infilling development that does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed. Most of the parish is classed as Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, except a small area on the western edge of the parish which is Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.335 The Wallington conservation area covers most of the village.

### *Housing*

13.336 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Wallington. One new home has been built since 2011.



## Weston

### Introduction

13.337 Weston is a medium sized village to the south of Baldock. The parish is large, stretching from the southern edges of Baldock down to the north-eastern edges of Stevenage at Great Ashby. The village sites on a plateau, which drops sharply away on the edge of Baldock as the Weston Hills.

13.338 The village has a school, shop, village hall, public house and church, and some small businesses. Beside the main village the parish also includes the hamlet of Halls Green (also with a public house) and several other smaller hamlets and isolated farms and dwellings.

13.339 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Weston was 1,054 and there were 441 dwellings in the parish.

### Role in settlement hierarchy

13.340 Weston is classed as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary defined on the Proposals Map within which additional development will be allowed. In the south of the parish site GA1 at Great Ashby is mostly in Weston parish. Most of the rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt, apart from the eastern edges of the parish which are classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

### Heritage

13.341 The Weston conservation area covers the older parts of the village. The parish church of Holy Trinity is a Grade I listed building.

### Housing

13.342 One site is allocated in Weston for an estimated 40 new homes. A further seven new homes have been built or granted planning permission.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
WE1	<b>Land off Hitchin Road</b>	40 homes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;</li><li>• Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li><li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li></ul>	
<b>Total allocated sites</b>		<b>40 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>		<b>7 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>		<b>47 homes</b>

### Economy

13.343 Weston has a number of small businesses, notably at Weston Barns on Hitchin Road. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under the detailed policies of this Plan.

## Wymondley

### *Introduction*

13.344 Wymondley is a parish to the east of Hitchin. It was created in 1937 by the merger of the two former parishes of Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley. Despite the names, Little Wymondley has long been the more populous, overtaking Great Wymondley between the 1851 and 1861 censuses.

13.345 As well as the villages of Great and Little Wymondley the parish includes the hamlets of Titmore Green, Redcoats Green and Todds Green. The parish also includes the surrounding rural area, stretching from the edges of Hitchin in the north to the edges of Stevenage in the south.

13.346 Great Wymondley has a public house, village hall and church. Little Wymondley has a school, non-food shop, churches and public houses.

13.347 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Wymondley was 1,153 and there were 480 dwellings in the parish.

### *Role in settlement hierarchy*

13.348 Little Wymondley is classed as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map within which additional development will be allowed.

13.349 Great Wymondley is classed as a Category B village, where infilling that does not extend the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside will be allowed.

13.350 In the south of the parish is part of the West of Stevenage site. This land is safeguarded for long-term potential development by Policy SP8. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

### *Heritage*

13.351 A conservation area covers most of Great Wymondley village. Wymondley Bury, The Priory and the parish church of St Mary at Great Wymondley are all Grade I listed buildings.

### *Housing*

13.352 One site is allocated in Wymondley for an estimated 300 additional homes. 15 further homes have been built or granted planning permission since 2011.

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
WY1	<p><b>Land south of Little Wymondley</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate solution for primary education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;</li> <li>• Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.</li> <li>• Address existing surface water and river flood risk issues, particularly along Stevenage Road, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;</li> </ul>	300 homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive integration into the existing village, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for cycle and pedestrian access;</li> <li>• Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with A602 Wymondley Bypass to potentially include landscaping and / or insulation and appropriate orientation of living spaces;</li> <li>• Access to the site to take into account the impact on heritage assets and surface water flooding;</li> <li>• Minimise impact upon the heritage assets and their settings near the site, to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any access from Stevenage Road to consider impact upon setting of Listed Buildings;</li> <li>○ Consideration of key views from Wymondley Bury and St Mary's Church;</li> <li>○ Reinforcing existing boundary planting;</li> <li>○ Retention of significant groups of trees within the site;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.</li> </ul>
<b>Total allocated sites</b>	<b>300 homes</b>
<b>Completions and permissions</b>	<b>16 homes</b>
<b>Total allocated, completed and permitted</b>	<b>316 homes</b>

### *Economy*

13.353 Wymondley has a number of small businesses, notably along Stevenage Road in Little Wymondley. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under the detailed policies of this Plan.

### *Infrastructure and mitigation*

13.354 Wymondley JMI School is currently 0.5FE but has the potential to expand to 1FE on the existing site. There is also the opportunity to explore moving the school to a new site within the land south of Little Wymondley. However, this would result in some existing residents having to travel further to school across Stevenage Road. This issue should be explored through any application.

13.355 Our transport modelling identifies the junction between Hitchin Road and Arch Road in Great Wymondley as a location where a mitigation scheme will be required to support new development.

13.356 Any development on site WY1 will need to make appropriate contributions, recognising that developments in Hitchin, Letchworth and, to a lesser degree, Stevenage are all likely to contribute to traffic movements through this junction.

- 13.357 Anglian Water recognise that improvements to wastewater infrastructure may be required to support the proposed development.
- 13.358 There are known flooding issues in Wymondley from both surface and river flooding. The key flood route broadly follows the alignment of Stevenage Road with an additional surface water flood route along Priory Lane.
- 13.359 Any development to the south of Little Wymondley will be required to achieve the equivalent of greenfield run off rates to ensure existing issues are not exacerbated. Opportunities will also be sought to alleviate existing problems.
- 13.360 The A602 Wymondley Bypass provides the most appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary to the south of the village. This requires the removal of some land from the Green Belt that lies within the bypass but which should generally remain undeveloped. Our detailed policies set out the approach we will take to areas of Urban Open Land.

# SECTION FIVE

## IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REVIEW

# SECTION FIVE - IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REVIEW

## 14 Delivery

- 14.1 One of the key tests that the Local Plan must meet is to ensure that it is effective. This means that it should be capable of being delivered within the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities. This section demonstrates how this will be achieved through implementation and monitoring.

### Implementation

- 14.2 Alongside the Council there are many organisations that will contribute towards the delivery of the aims of the Local Plan. For example:
- **Hertfordshire County Council** has a significant role to play in relation to education and highways alongside other functions;
  - **North Hertfordshire Homes** and other providers in relation to the delivery of affordable housing;
  - The **health authorities** will need to ensure there are the right medical facilities at the right time;
  - The **water companies** and the **Environment Agency** in relation to water supply and treatment;
  - The **development industry** will play a significant role in bringing development forward, together with the provision of or contribution towards infrastructure alongside other forms of funding;
  - North Hertfordshire has seven **neighbouring authorities**, each producing their own local plans. We will ensure that these plans complement each other and address issues which cross local authority boundaries;
  - Communities can also choose to become **neighbourhood planning areas** to help shape and deliver development and infrastructure in their areas;
- 14.3 The Council will continue to work in partnership with these and other relevant bodies and will put further mechanisms in place to ensure delivery within the plan period. Some of the key methods and schemes that will be used to ensure delivery are summarised below:

### *Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Key Infrastructure:*

- 14.4 Ensuring that existing and new communities are sustainable involves a co-ordinated and flexible approach to the provision of infrastructure. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared as a background document to support the Local Plan and assist as a delivery mechanism<sup>150</sup>.
- 14.5 It takes into account the growth targets and sets out the infrastructure that is likely to be needed to support growth within the District to 2031. We have worked with a variety of infrastructure providers to understand likely future requirements.
- 14.6 Predicting infrastructure needs so far into the future is not straightforward. The precise detail of most development schemes is not known and the nature of public services can change along the way.

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<sup>150</sup> North Hertfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (R S Regeneration, 2016)

- 14.7 The IDP represents current strategic thinking and provides a guide for planning future infrastructure. It will continue to be updated on an iterative basis over the lifetime of the plan to reflect change.
- 14.8 Notwithstanding this point, the IDP has identified a number of areas where significant interventions will be required to support the delivery of the plan:
- **Strategic Transport** – The scale of growth within the District will result in a significant number of new trips on a transport network that is already under stress in certain areas. Congestion issues are particularly focused within Hitchin and junctions relating to the A1(M). Not only as a result of growth in North Hertfordshire, but also in relation to existing issues and development in nearby authorities. There is a clear need to focus on promoting sustainable travel modes to limit the impacts of growth whilst delivering significant physical mitigation measures. Our transport modelling has helped to identify 11 specific schemes that will be required in the District over the period to 2031 as well as other schemes in neighbouring Stevenage which are influenced by this Plan’s proposals<sup>151</sup>.
  - **School Places** – The County Council believe that, in many areas, existing schools are reaching, or at, capacity. This is addressed in this Plan through the provision of new schools or school expansion on Strategic Housing Sites and elsewhere. Schemes will need to demonstrate acceptable education solutions in order to gain planning permission;
  - **Sewerage Infrastructure** – Our evidence has highlighted potential capacity issues with wastewater treatment capacity, particularly at Royston Sewage Treatment Works and Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works. Technical solutions are possible and further detailed discussions are taking place with the water companies and the Environment Agency to inform appropriate mitigation measures.
- 14.9 Whilst these issues are not absolute constraints to the Local Plan, continued and proactive engagement with relevant parties, such as the developers, Highways Agency and Highways Authority, the Local Education Authority, the Environment Agency and Water companies and the Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership is fundamental in achieving appropriate solutions.
- 14.10 The IDP should be referred to for a full programme of mitigation measures required to support the Local Plan. Delivery of these schemes will be monitored on an on-going basis through our Authority Monitoring Reports.

*Developer Contributions and Other Funding Sources:*

- 14.11 The development industry will also be expected to reasonably contribute to the delivery of the Local Plan. Our approach to securing infrastructure and mitigation measures through new development is set out in Policy SP7. At the same time, it is acknowledged that the sites and schemes identified in this Plan are unlikely to make sufficient contributions to support the full range of infrastructure envisaged by the IDP.
- 14.12 This does not mean that development cannot occur. The Council will continue to work in partnership with other agencies to enable much needed funding for infrastructure. This might include:

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<sup>151</sup> AECOM transport modelling (AECOM, 2016)

**Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** – LEPs are partnerships between businesses and local authorities set up by Government to support growth. North Hertfordshire is covered by two separate LEPs – Hertfordshire and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough.

LEPs received substantial funding settlements from central Government to meet strategic growth priorities and are responsible for then identifying specific projects which contribute to their aims;

**Central funding** – although a number of bodies are likely to ‘bid’ to the District Council for infrastructure contributions in the form of developer contributions, they also have access to their own funding programmes. Major hospital works, for example, are often ultimately funded directly through the Department for Health. Highways England similarly receive direct settlements to deliver key projects. This includes the proposed conversion of the A1(M) between Junction 6, near Codicote, and Junction 8, near Little Wymondley to a ‘SMART’ motorway. This will provide additional capacity by creating a third lane in each direction through hard-shoulder running at peak times.

**Grants and programmes** – Where individual projects meet specific objectives, they can receive grant funding. Well known examples include lottery funding, particularly where there are heritage or health benefits, and programmes currently run by the European Union. North Hertfordshire, for example, benefits from access to the *Eastern Plateau Fund* which helps to support economic development in rural areas.

#### *Development Management through the Planning Application Process*

- 14.13 This is a key mechanism for ensuring development is delivered appropriately. The Council has a primary role in determining planning applications and ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with this Local Plan, other elements of the statutory Development Plan, national policy and legislation<sup>152</sup>.
- 14.14 A number of schemes have been worked up in tandem with this Plan to ensure early delivery and compliance with policy. A pro-active approach will continue to be taken to all schemes. This should not only promote delivery, but should also ensure that developers are fully aware of how their planning applications will be assessed. Appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to ensure delivery of infrastructure and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place for schemes.
- 14.15 An estimate of the number of new homes has been provided against each site. However, as set out in the policies of this Plan, these figures are not binding and the Development Management process will be used to explore design-led solutions on individual sites. Where it proves possible to deliver higher numbers of homes within the policy framework of the plan, this will be supported and will contribute greater flexibility to the plan by increasing the ‘buffer’ of new homes over and above the targets in Policy SP8.

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<sup>152</sup> Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As well as this Local Plan, the Development Plan includes any Neighbourhood Plans produced by local communities and the Waste Local Plan and Minerals Local Plan produced by Hertfordshire County Council.



*Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), other plans and documents:*

- 14.16 Where appropriate, local authorities can set out further guidance that supports the policies in the Local Plan. Formal guidance takes the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Current guidance includes that on parking standards and design.
- 14.17 There are also Town Centre Strategies for each of the four towns while communities are choosing to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their area to assist implementation.
- 14.18 The Council will review SPD and other guidance on an on-going basis throughout the lifetime of this Local Plan.

*Council Owned Land and Property*

- 14.19 The Council can use its own assets to assist in delivery and promote growth. Protection and improvement of environmental assets on Council owned land will also be important.

*Acquisition powers*

- 14.20 The Council can use its resources to assemble land and sites. However, it is envisaged that almost all of the development that is set out in, or will be controlled by, this Plan will be delivered by third parties.
- 14.21 Recent legislation provides greater opportunities for local communities to take control of assets in their local areas. This includes the community Right to Bid which gives local people additional time to develop a strategy where local facilities which have been identified as an Asset of Community Value are earmarked for sale by their owners.
- 14.22 As a last resort, the Council's Compulsory Purchase powers can be used to ensure implementation of the policies and priorities of the Local Plan. This includes for buildings identified as Assets of Community Value which are perceived to be under threat. However, the Council's preferred approach remains pro-active negotiation with, and advising of, landowners, developers and other relevant parties to assist the delivery of schemes and the retention of important local facilities.
- 14.23 Where a local community considers that an Asset of Community Value is under threat and that they may wish to request the use of the Council's Compulsory Purchase powers, they should contact the Council for further advice on the appropriate procedure(s) and any financial implications.

**Monitoring**

- 14.24 A monitoring framework will allow us to assess whether the policies in this Plan are being successfully implemented. This will be set out in, and form the basis of, our authority monitoring reports (AMRs) that we must produce annually.
- 14.25 The AMR will show whether policies are working or having the right effect. It will demonstrate whether we are meeting the targets we have set for ourselves, or on track to do so.
- 14.26 As well as tracking the direct effects of implementing the plan, monitoring also allows us to consider the wider social, economic and environmental impacts. There is

considerable cross-over here with the requirements of environmental assessment legislation which requires on-going monitoring of significant effects<sup>153</sup>.

- 14.27 The table below sets out some of the key indicators and targets (where applicable) that will be measured. These will be supplemented by other indicators and contextual data on matters such as unemployment rates, retail vacancies and travel choices.
- 14.28 The table is followed by a housing trajectory setting out how the delivery of new homes is currently anticipated to occur over the plan period. Figure 6 over-page shows the anticipated housing trajectory. This will be kept up-to-date in future monitoring reports. This programme of delivery will allow the plan to demonstrate a five-year land supply at the point of adoption and, subsequently, on an on-going basis<sup>154</sup>.
- 14.29 Although many of these indicators will be influenced by the implementation of this plan they are also subject to wider forces, such as the state of the economy, and the choices made by individuals, businesses and other service providers. Failure to meet these targets should not necessarily be read as a failure of the plan and future monitoring reports will identify where external factors have influenced performance.

Table 2: Key Indicators and Targets for Monitoring Policies

<b>Strategic Policy</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
SP1	Number of designated neighbourhood planning areas	(none)
SP1	Number of Neighbourhood Plans submitted and compliant and made	(none)
SP2	Housing completions by settlement type	For at least two-thirds of development to occur within or adjoining identified towns
SP3	Employment floorspace completions by location	For at least 90% of business development to occur within designated employment areas or allocated employment sites
SP4	Retail floorspace completions by location	For at least 75% of retail development to occur within identified centres
SP4	% of primary frontages in A1 retail use	For at least 66% of units and floorspace within the primary frontage to remain in A1 use
SP4	Land-use in local centres	For at least one unit in all centres to remain in use as a shop
SP4	Services available in villages	(none)
SP7	s106 / CIL Monitoring	(none)
SP7	Infrastructure delivery	To ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure necessary to support the plan
SP8	Housing completions	For housing completions to remain broadly aligned to the trajectory established in the plan

<sup>153</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (CAG, 2016)

<sup>154</sup> Further information on the calculation of five-year land supply is set out in the Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

Strategic Policy	Indicator	Target
SP8	Five-year land supply	To maintain a five-year land supply at all times
SP8	2031 land supply	To ensure projected completions over the period to 2031 will meet or exceed the housing targets of the plan
SP8	Housing completions on previously developed land	For at least 20% of homes over the plan period to be on previously developed land
SP8	Affordable housing completions	For at least one-third of housing completions to be for affordable housing
SP8	Affordable housing supply by scheme type	For affordable housing to meet target levels of provision
SP8	Housing completions by size	To supply a broadly even split between small (1- or 2-bed) and large (3+ bed) properties
SP11	Applications permitted against the advice of the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority	To not permit development against the advice of these statutory agencies
SP12	Number and area of designated biodiversity sites	No loss of designated sites in terms of number or area
SP12	Open space provision in new development (permissions)	For new development to achieve current open space standards
SP12	Open space provision per 1,000 population	For district-wide provision to achieve current open space standards
SP13	Number and status of Conservation Areas	No loss of designated areas and for all areas to be supported by up-to-date appraisals
SP13	Number and status of Listed Buildings	No loss of Listed Buildings and for no buildings to be at risk

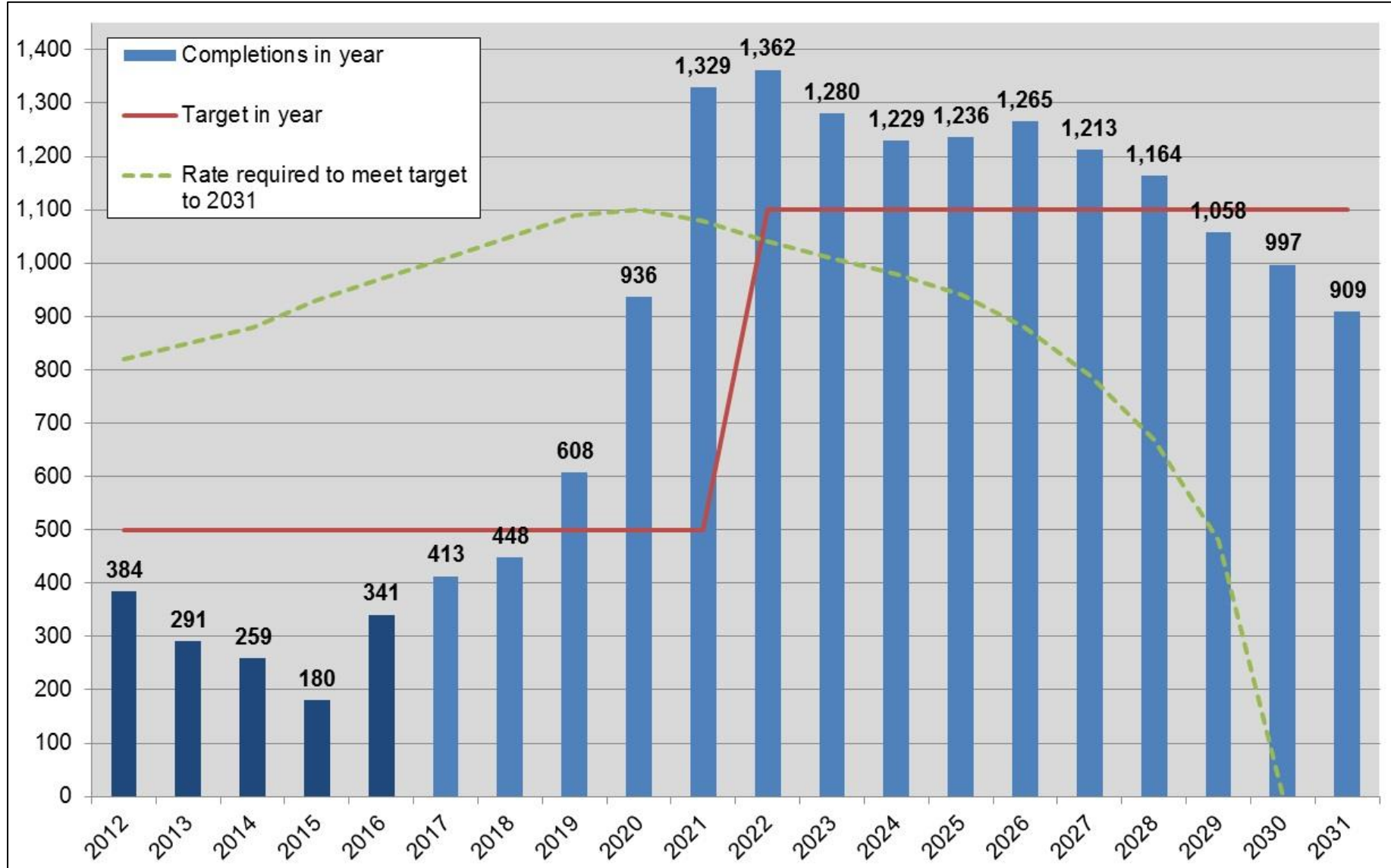
## **Review**

- 14.30 The Government expects plans to be regularly reviewed, preferably every five years<sup>155</sup> and we will need to update our Local Plan more regularly than has happened in the past. National guidance recognises that plans can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances<sup>156</sup>. We will use the monitoring framework, set out above, to keep the effects of this Plan under review.
- 14.31 Where monitoring shows that we are consistently failing to meet relevant targets, or are unlikely to do so in the future, or that wider conditions have changed to the extent that the strategy in this plan is no longer appropriate, we will initiate a review of the Plan that relates to those specific issue(s) identified.

<sup>155</sup> As set out in the Government's Technical consultation on implementation of planning changes (DCLG, 2016)

<sup>156</sup> Paragraph 153 of the NPPF

**Figure 6: North Hertfordshire housing trajectory 2011-2031**



- 14.32 In addition to our monitoring, we recognise that other events may trigger a future review of the Plan. Local plans should normally set out where development will occur over a 15-year period from the point of adoption<sup>157</sup>. This Plan shows how we will meet our needs over the period to 2031, 13 years from the anticipated date of adoption.
- 14.33 We already recognise that further work is required to ensure we meet our needs in full in the period beyond 2026. However we believe that, due to the progress already made on these issues, the approach set out in this Plan is the most appropriate one for North Hertfordshire.
- 14.34 We consider that this Plan makes maximum use of reasonable and available development sites at the time of writing. On-going processes are likely to supplement the range of spatial options available in North Hertfordshire in the period after 2026. It is considered most appropriate to let these 'run their course' in order to properly inform longer-term planning.
- 14.35 The Council has resolved to fully explore the possibilities of a new settlement within the District. Our work to date recognises the long-term nature of these projects. Further work will be initiated to identify potential locations where any new settlement(s) might be located and this continues to be progressed.
- 14.36 At the same time, future decisions by other bodies may significantly influence future options for growth in North Hertfordshire. We will continue to work with central government and other relevant agencies to better understand the likely nature of potential projects<sup>158</sup>.
- 14.37 We currently consider it most likely that the outcomes of these deliberations and the new settlement process will be reflected in a full review of the Plan. Our present intention is that the next full review of this Plan will be completed by the mid-2020s at the latest. It will roll the Plan forward to a new time horizon of at least 2041 and deliver specific additional land and sites that we already recognise will be needed.
- 14.38 This Plan recognises the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate and makes a positive contribution towards unmet development needs from Luton. This maximises the contribution that we feel can be made from that part of the District within the Luton Housing Market Area (HMA).
- 14.39 We are actively working with the other authorities in the HMA – Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Aylesbury Vale – to understand the extent to which the market area as a whole will be able to accommodate development needs<sup>159</sup>. If there proves to be insufficient capacity within the Luton HMA, it will be necessary to look further afield for potential solutions. This would be likely to involve a number of authorities.
- 14.40 We will continue to engage constructively in this process and, if necessary, consider how best to reflect the outcomes. Dependant on the nature of any issues raised, it may be possible to deal with this through partial or focused reviews of any relevant policy/ies.
- 14.41 Beyond these defined events, there may be changes in circumstances that we cannot currently foresee but which have a substantial impact upon the District. This

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<sup>157</sup> Paragraph 157 of the NPPF

<sup>158</sup> The Hertfordshire LEP, for example, has identified a long-list of potential strategic transport projects over the period to 2050 which could unlock new locations or directions for growth.

<sup>159</sup> Luton Housing Market Area Growth Study (Land Use Consultants, forthcoming)

might be a major change to the way in which the planning system operates or the cancellation of a key project required to support growth. We will determine the most appropriate response as and when any such circumstances arrive.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Superseded Policies

The schedule below is taken from the Local Development Scheme, January 2016 and sets out how, where and when (if appropriate) policies within the saved District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations (1996) will be replaced. Those policies which were not saved by the Secretary of State in September 2007 do not appear in the schedule.

District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations To be replaced		Replacement Policy contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031	
Policy 2	Green Belt	Policy SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
Policy 3	Settlements within the Green Belt	Policy SP2	Settlement hierarchy
Policy 4	North East Stevenage		Not applicable
Policy 5	Excluded villages	Policy SP2	Settlement hierarchy
Policy 6	Rural area beyond the Green Belt	Policy CGB1	Rural areas beyond the Green Belt
Policy 7	Selected villages beyond the Green Belt	Policy SP2	Settlement hierarchy
		Policy D1	Sustainable design
Policy 8	Development in towns	Policy SP2	Settlement hierarchy
Policy 9	Royston's development limits	Policy SP2	Settlement hierarchy
		Policy CGB1	Rural areas beyond the Green Belt
		Policy CGB5	Urban Open Land
Policy 11	Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Policy NE3	The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Policy 14	Nature conservation	Policy NE5	New and improved public open space and biodiversity
		Policy NE6	Designated biodiversity and geological sites
Policy 16	Areas of archaeological significance and other archaeological areas	Policy HE4	Archaeology
Policy 19	Historic parks and gardens	Policy HE1	Designated heritage assets
Policy 21	Landscape and open space patterns in towns	Policy NE4	Protecting open space
Policy 25	Re-use of rural buildings	Policy CGB4	Existing rural buildings
Policy 26	Housing proposals	Policy SP8	Housing
		Policy HS1	Local housing allocations
Policy 28	House extensions	Policy D2	House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings



<b>District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations To be replaced</b>		<b>Replacement Policy contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031</b>	
Policy 29	Rural housing needs	Policy CGB2	Exception sites in rural areas
Policy 29A	Affordable housing for urban local needs	Policy HS2	Affordable housing
Policy 30	Replacement or extension of dwellings in the countryside	Policy CGB4 Policy D2	Existing rural buildings House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings
Policy 33	Relatives and staff accommodation	Policy CGB3 Policy D2	Rural workers dwellings House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings
Policy 34	Residential caravans and mobile homes		No replacement policy
Policy 36	Employment provision	Policy SP3 Policy ETC1	Employment Appropriate uses in employment areas
Policy 37	Business uses (B1 Use Class)	Policy SP3 Policy ETC1	Employment Appropriate uses in employment areas
Policy 39	Leisure uses	Policy ETC3	New retail, leisure and other main town centre development
Policy 42	Shopping	Policy SP4 Policy ETC3	Town and Local Centres New retail, leisure and other main town centre development
Policy 43	Shopping areas in town centres	Policy ETC4 Policy ETC5	Primary shopping frontages Secondary shopping frontages
Policy 45	Shopfronts	Policy D1	Sustainable design
Policy 47	General aviation		No replacement policy
Policy 51	Development effects and planning gain	Policy SP7	Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions
Policy 55	Car parking standards	Policy T2	Parking
Policy 57	Residential guidelines and standards	Policy SP9 Policy D1	Design and sustainability Sustainable design
Policy 58	Letchworth Garden City design principles	Policy SP13 Policy SP15 Policy D1	Historic Environment North of Letchworth Garden City Sustainable design

## Appendix 2: Local Plan Designations

The Local Plan Proposals Map includes the following designations, which are set by, and specifically relate to, policies in the Plan:

- Green Belt
- Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- Urban Open Land
- Business Areas
- Employment Areas
- Employment Sites
- Housing Sites
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Settlement Boundaries
- Town Centre Boundaries
- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Secondary Shopping Frontages
- Mixed use Allocations
- Safeguarded Land
- Gypsy / Traveller Site

The Proposals Map also includes the following designations, which although referred to by policies in the Plan, are not the responsibility of the Local Plan and the extents of the designations are not set by the Local Plan process. The relevant authority listed next to the allocation (below) is responsible for their designation. Their extents may change throughout the duration of the Local Plan and so viewing the organisations websites is recommended for the most up-to-date position (In the case of Conservation Areas, whilst the local authority is responsible for setting their extent it is a separate process to the Local Plan):

Designation	Designating authority
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Natural England
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Natural England
Conservation Areas	North Hertfordshire District Council

Additionally there are a number of other designations which policies in the Local Plan refer to; however, as the Local Plan does not control their designation or set their extents and they are so numerous and extensive that they would confuse the other designations, they are not included on the Proposals Map. Again the authority listed next to the allocation is responsible for their designation and so viewing the organisations websites is recommended for the most up-to-date position (again, in the case of designations that are the responsibility of the District Council the process for setting their extents is separate to the Local Plan).

Designation	Designating authority
Flood Risk	Environment Agency
County Wildlife Sites	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust / Natural England / Hertfordshire County Council

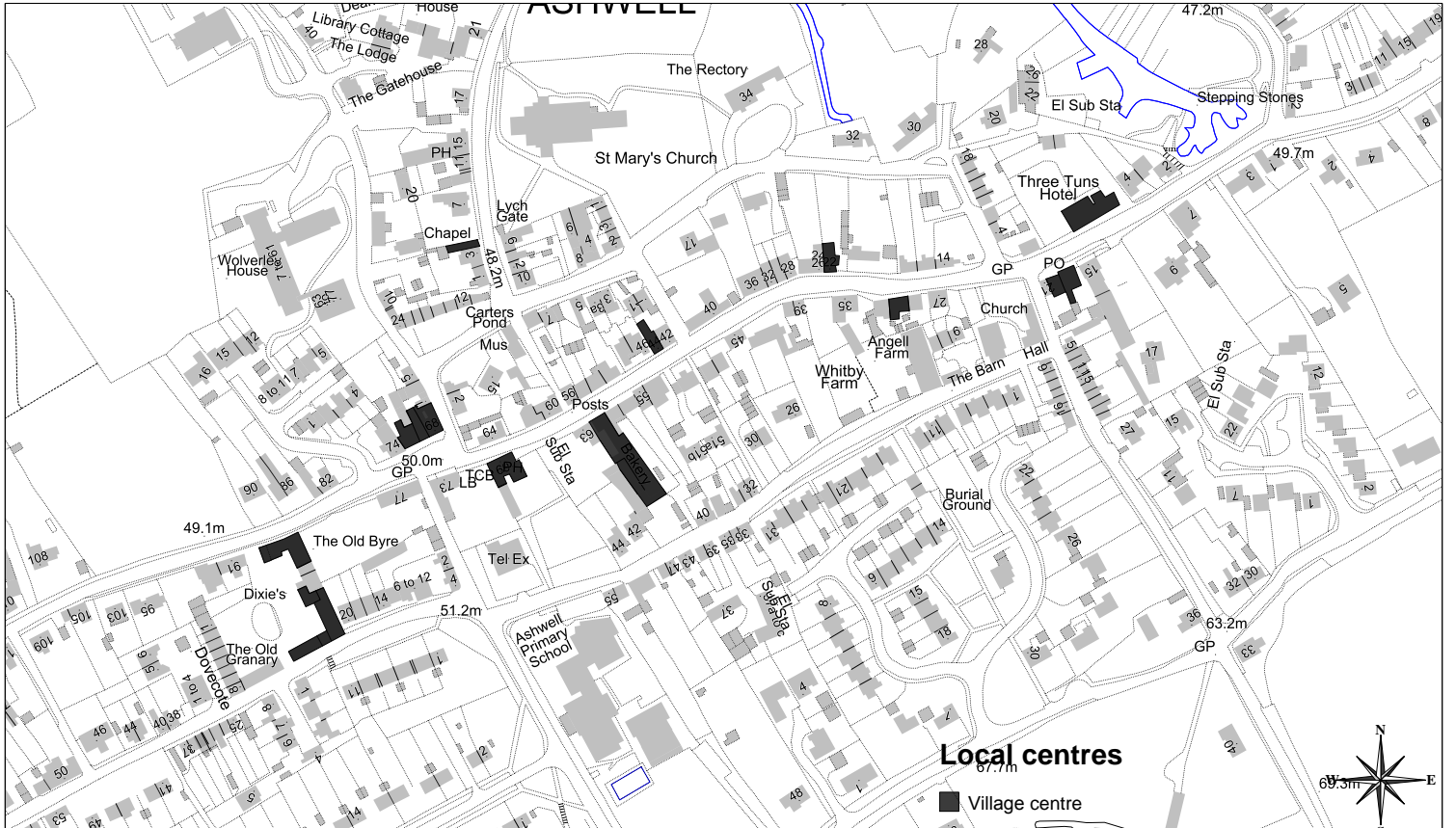
<b>Local Nature Reserves</b>	North Hertfordshire District Council / Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</b>	Historic England
<b>Archaeological Areas</b>	Historic England
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Historic England
<b>Air Quality Management Areas</b>	North Hertfordshire District Council
<b>Contaminated land</b>	North Hertfordshire District Council
<b>Waste Site Allocations</b>	Hertfordshire County Council
<b>Minerals Site Allocations</b>	Hertfordshire County Council

ALL LAYERS CAN BE VIEWED USING THE COUNCIL'S INTERACTIVE ONLINE MAPPING SYSTEM.

## Appendix 3: Local Centres



Ashwell Village Centre



Scale: 1:2500  
Date: 24:10:14

# Codicote Village Centre



Scale: 1:2500  
Date: 24:10:14



Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre



Scale: 1:2500  
Date: 24:10:14



Jackmans Neighbourhood Centre



Scale: 1:1000  
Date: 24:10:14



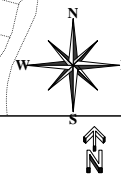




Knebworth Village Centre



Scale: 1:2500  
Date: 24.10.14



# The Grange Neighbourhood Centre

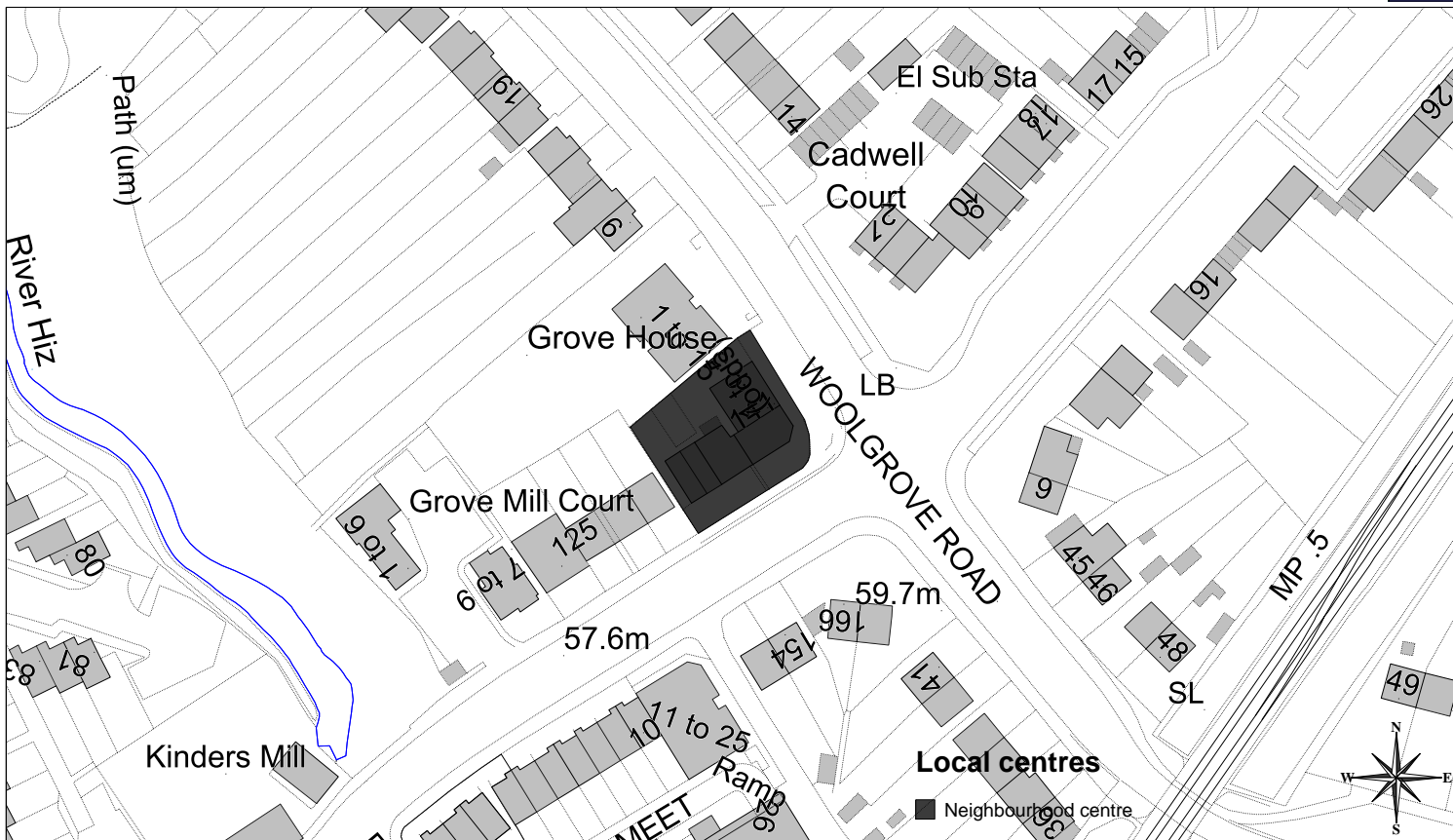


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# Grove Road Neighbourhood Centre



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Date: 24:10:14





# Nightingale Road Neighbourhood Centre

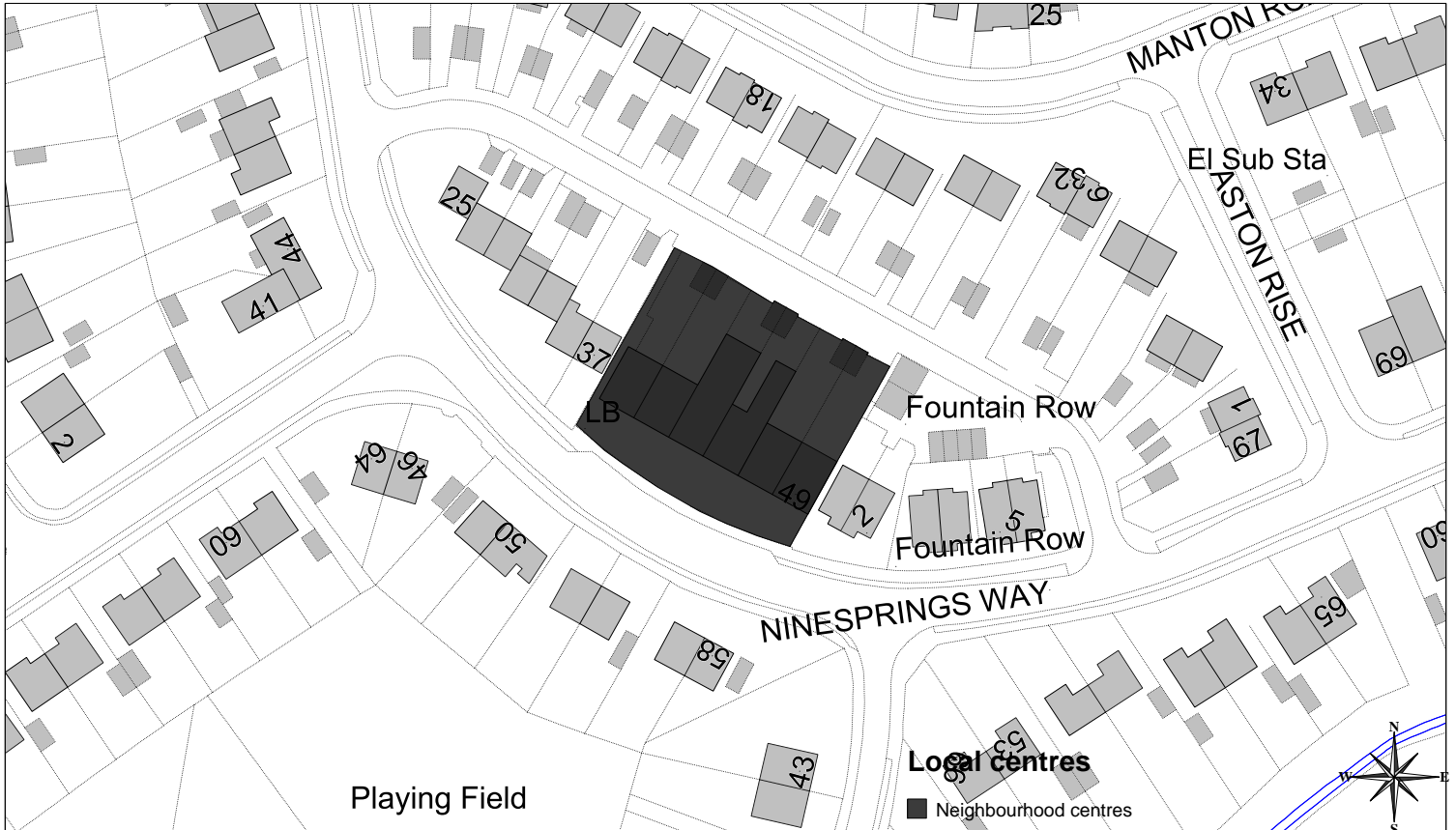


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Ninesprings Neighbourhood Centre



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Date: 24:10:14



# Redhill Road Neighbourhood Centre



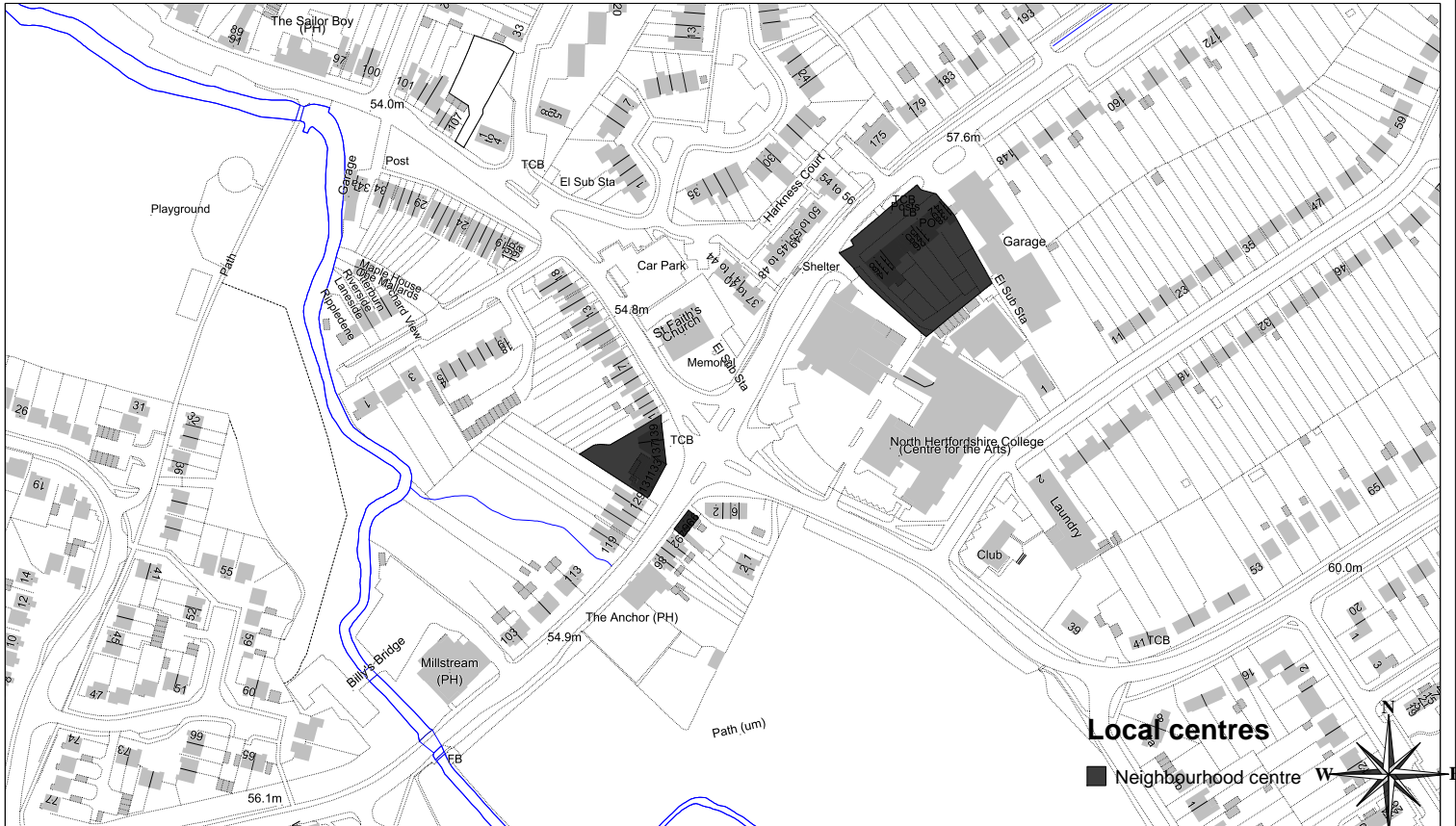
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Date: 24:10:14







# Walsworth (Cambridge Road) Neighbourhood Centre



Scale: 1:2500  
Date: 24:10:14



# Walsworth Road Neighbourhood Centre



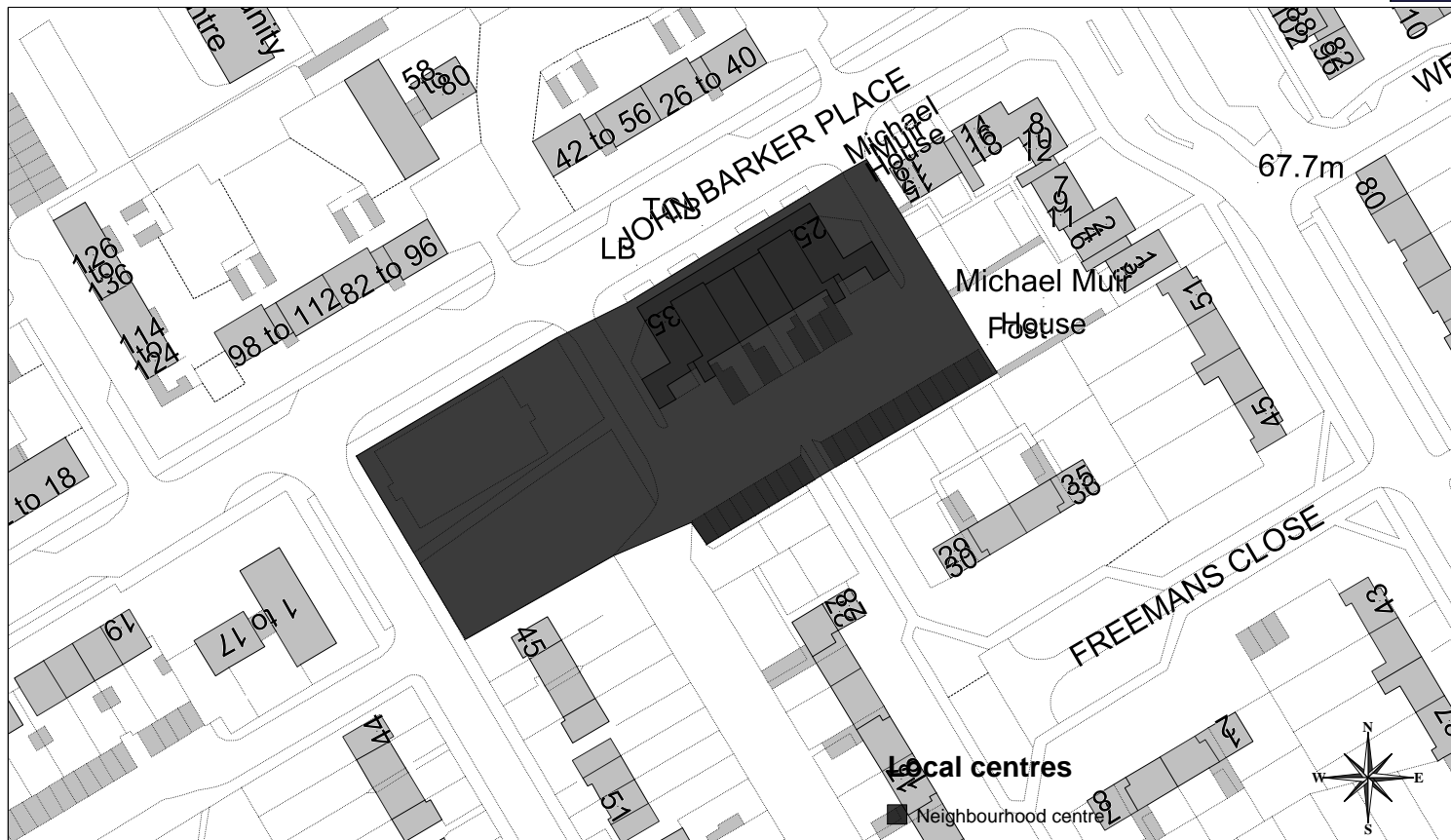
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Date: 24:10:14







Westmill (John Barker Place) Neighbourhood Centre



Scale: 1:1000  
Date: 24:10:14



## Appendix 4: Car Parking Standards

### *Residential Parking Standards*

<b>Class Use C3</b>	<b>Car Parking Standard</b>	<b>Minimum Cycle Parking Standard</b>
1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling <b>minimum</b>	1 secure covered space per dwelling. None if garage or secure area provided within curtilage of dwelling
2+ bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling <b>minimum</b>	

The above standard will also require visitor / unallocated parking as set out below to be added. Garages will be counted towards meeting the standards only if they are at least 7m x 3m measured internally. Reductions will be considered only in exceptional circumstances e.g. in town centres or other accessible locations with the availability of a range of local services and good local sustainable transport options and for e.g. small-scale conversion of buildings for a small number of residential units in defined town centres

Retirement developments (e.g. warden assisted independent living accommodation)	1 space per dwelling <b>minimum</b>	1 space per 8 units (visitors)
Visitor / unallocated	Between 0.25 and 0.75 spaces per dwelling (rounded up to nearest whole number) with the lower standard being applied where there are no garages in the schemes and the higher standard applied where every dwelling in the scheme is to be provided with a garage	If no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling then 1 covered and secure space per dwelling in a communal area for residents plus 1 space per dwelling for visitors

For the above two standards, reductions in provision will be considered where

1. Alternative publicly available off-street parking is available within 2 minutes walk of the site
2. Visitor parking arising from small-scale (i.e. infill) development can be accommodated on-street without compromising highway safety, the amenity of existing residents or the ability for businesses to operate; or

Relevant evidence is submitted by the applicant which supports a reduction in standard and considers existing and future car ownership and likely visitor

## **Glossary**

### **Adoption**

Confirmation, usually by a legal notice in a newspaper, stating the final adoption of a planning policy document by a Local Planning Authority.

### **Affordable Housing**

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing for specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market and which seeks to meet the needs of current and future eligible households at a cost low enough for them to afford.

### **Allocated Site/Site Allocation**

Sites which are identified for a specific use e.g. housing or Green Belt on the Local Plan Policies Map.

### **Biodiversity**

The variety of life in all forms (e.g. wildlife, plants etc).

### **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

An overarching framework for habitat and species conservation, which works on the basis of partnership to identify local priorities and targets.

### **Brownfield site/Previously Developed Land (PDL)**

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

### **Buildings of Local Interest**

Buildings designated by the local planning authority to be of local significance and included in a local list. Although they are not statutorily protected, close scrutiny will be given to any development affecting them.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area. The CIL must be collected through the preparation of a Charging Schedule, supported by a range of infrastructure planning and economic viability evidence.

### **Communities and Local Government, Department for (DCLG or CLG)**

The government department which sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. DCLG also has responsibility for all race equality and community cohesion related issues in England, and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales.

### **Comparison Goods/Convenience Goods**

Comparison goods include clothing, shoes, household appliances, books, etc, where the customer can make a comparison between different retailers. This differs from convenience goods, which include everyday items such as food and drink.

### **Conservation Area**

An area defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as 'an area of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Councils must publish a map showing the boundaries of these areas where extra planning controls apply and also produce a conservation area proposals statement.

### **Deliverable Site**

To be considered deliverable for housing development, sites should:

- Be available now;
- Offer a suitable location for development now and contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities; and
- Have a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

## **Density**

A measurement of how intensively land is occupied by built development. For housing, this is measured in dwellings per hectare (dpha).

## **Design and Access Statement**

A document that explains the design concepts, implications and justification associated with a planning application. This includes how an applicant has carefully considered how everyone, including disabled people, older people and young children, will be able to use the development.

## **Developer Contribution**

In-kind or financial contributions provided by developers to contribute to the cost of infrastructure and other items, in order that the development is acceptable in planning terms and accords with the policies in the Local Plan. This can take the form of a legal agreement or the operation of a tariff-based system for contributions. Legal agreements may take the form of a 'planning obligation', which is a legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

## **Development Plan**

Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, which have been adopted or made under powers in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

## **Development Plan Document (DPD)**

Planning policy documents which carry the most weight in a Local Plan. Once they have been prepared they have to be submitted to the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government. They are then examined by an independent planning inspector to make sure that they meet legislative, regulatory and national policy requirements.

## **Development Management**

The process by which proposals for new development are assessed by the Local Planning Authority. This is undertaken primarily through the determination of planning applications.

## **Evidence Base**

The range of reports, studies, data and surveys specifically collected and used to inform Local Plan preparation.

## **Green Belt**

Designated land – primarily open land – around built-up areas designed to limit urban sprawl and to define town and country areas. It is generally protected land with a strong presumption against development.

## **Green Infrastructure (GI)**

A concept recognising the environmental, social and economic, often multi-functional value of the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between towns and villages. In the same way that the transport infrastructure is made up of a network of roads, railways and airports, etc. Green Infrastructure has its own physical components, including parks, rivers, street trees and moorland.

## **Greenfield Sites**

Greenfield sites are land which is not previously developed and can include agricultural land in rural areas, but also undeveloped land within the urban area.

## **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**

Published by the Government, and provides an overall measure of ‘deprivation’ across a range of indicators, against which social and economic conditions in one area can be compared to other areas in England.

## **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**

Supporting the Core Strategy and the wider Local Plan, this will set out the range of existing, planned and required infrastructure within the local authority area. This will identify standards of provision which should be adhered to, and set out the key infrastructure projects which will be critical to the successful delivery of the Local Plan.

## **Listed Buildings**

Buildings or other built structures included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest of national significance. Listing decisions are made by the

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the listing system is administered by English Heritage.

### **Local Development Document (LDD)**

A collective term for planning policy documents, including all parts of the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents.

### **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

The term previously used to refer to the portfolio of Local Development Documents, including Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and various process documents. This term has been replaced with the term Local Plan, although this refers only to the portfolio of Development Plan Documents.

### **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

The business plan for production of the Local Plan. It identifies and describes the Development Plan Documents and when they will be produced. It covers a three-year period and is subject to updating following production of Monitoring Reports to check progress.

### **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

A body designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to create or improve the conditions for economic growth in an area.

### **Local Nature Partnership (LNP)**

A body designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to protect and improve the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

### **Local Nature Reserve (LNR)**

A statutory designation made by local authorities (under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949) relating to places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. LNRs are designated to support biodiversity and geodiversity, and offer opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural environment.

### **Local Plan (LP)**

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

### **Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

A plan which sets out sub-regional objectives, strategies and policies for transport, detailing the schemes and initiatives that will be delivered, together with the performance indicators and targets used to monitor progress.

### **Local Wildlife Site (LWS)/Local Geological Site (LGS)**

Previously known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), or alternatively Site of Biological Interest (SBI)/Site of Geological Interest (SGI), these are areas of land with significant wildlife or geological value. Typically they can comprise an area of woodland, grassland meadows or a local water body.

### **Localism Act**

Enacted in late 2011, the Act contains a wide range of legislative changes, including many affecting local authorities and local spatial planning. The Act introduced the legislative basis for: the abolition of Regional Strategies; a new 'duty to co-operate'; changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system; and neighbourhood planning. Further details are available on the DCLG website.

### **Main Town Centre Uses**

Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres), leisure, entertainment facilities, intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls), offices, and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

### **Major Development**

Defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as:

development involving any one or more of the following—

- (a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- (b) waste development;
- (c) the provision of dwellinghouses where—



- (i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
- (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c)(i);
- (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- (e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

### **Masterplan**

An outline of the vision for the development of an area indicating the broad principles which should be followed in its development.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Introduced by the Government in 2012, this replaced the majority of adopted national planning policy, including most Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes. The NPPF is supplemented by remaining guidance, and a number of other policy statements. The NPPF sets out national priorities for delivering sustainable development and economic growth, including a very wide range of policies and guidance, relating to themes such as housing, environment and economy, and procedural matters (such as plan-making and decision-taking).

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011). A neighbourhood plan would, once brought into effect, comprise part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. It would therefore, alongside any adopted Local Plan documents, need to be considered when assessing any development proposals affecting the area.

### **Plan Period**

Refers to the time period of operation for a Local Plan.

### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

This Act made provision relating to spatial development and town and country planning, and the compulsory acquisition of land. It introduced the Local Development Framework (LDF) system for planning policy, and remains the main legislative basis for production of Local Plans.

### **Planning Condition**

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

### **Preferred Options Report**

Refers to a stage in the preparation of a Local Plan document, involving consultation on a set of preferred policy options.

### **Previously Developed Land (PDL)**

See entry for 'Brownfield site'.

### **Registered Provider (of Social Housing)**

Independent, not-for-profit private sector organisations providing social housing. They are the UK's major provider of homes for rent, as well as providing opportunities for shared ownership. They were previously also known as 'Registered Social Landlords' or 'Housing Associations'.

### **Renewable and low carbon energy**

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, the sun and from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

### **Scheduled Monument**

A nationally important historic building or structure or archaeological site, given protection against detrimental and unauthorised change. When designated, Scheduled Monuments are added to the schedule (which has been kept since 1882) of monuments whose preservation

is given priority over other land uses. Scheduled Monuments are also sometimes referred to as 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments'.

### **Shared Ownership**

An arrangement where the ownership of a property is shared, usually between a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a private purchaser.

### **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

Protected sites designated in the UK under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC codified from 79/409/EEC).

### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

Sets out how the Council will consult and engage with the community and other stakeholders in the production of all documents within the Local Plan, and when determining planning applications.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment, known as Strategic Environmental Assessment. To meet the requirements of the directive, a body must prepare an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan, are identified, described and evaluated.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

A document which is normally produced by a local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency, and which forms the basis for preparing appropriate policies for flood risk management at the local level.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

A systematic assessment of the availability of land which is developable and deliverable for new housing within an area. The assessment includes a 'Call for Sites' where the public can promote sites as being suitable for housing development and an appraisal of deliverability by a panel of developers and Registered Social Landlords active in the local market.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

A study across an identified largely 'self contained' housing market to assess how the market operates and is likely to operate in the future. A SHMA assesses past, current and future trends in housing type and tenure, household size, and housing need, and of the housing needs of specific groups with particular requirements. It is important to engage sub-regional partners and other key stakeholders involved in the local housing market when preparing a SHMA.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

A planning policy document which provides supplementary information in respect of the policies contained in the Local Plan, and which focus on particular issues or places. They are subject to consultation, but are not subject to an independent examination.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

An assessment of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

### **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

These systems provide an alternative to the traditional methods of dealing with water drainage, aiming to mimic the natural movement of water from a development, slowing run-off, reducing flood risk, improving water quality and potentially providing attractive features.

### **Transport Assessment (TA)**

A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

### **Obe Travel Plan**

A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action which is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

### **Use Classes Order**

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments, group a number of land uses into categories or 'Use Classes'. Changes of use within the same Use Class or between certain different Use Classes as set out in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) are normally deemed to have consent and do not in most cases require specific planning permission.

### **Vitality and Viability (Town Centres)**

Terms used to assess the health of a town centre or other centre as measured by a number of indicators, such as the overall floorspace for retail and leisure, diversity of uses, range of goods that are sold, retailer representation, expenditure retention, rental values, level of vacancies, pedestrian 'footfall' figures, etc.