



MEETING : DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015
TIME : 7.00 PM

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

Councillors L Haysey (Chairman), E Buckmaster and G Jones

All other Members are invited to attend and participate if they so wish.

Members are requested to retain their copy of the agenda and bring it to the relevant Executive and Council meetings.

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DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:
 - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
 - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
 - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
 - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
 - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.
2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.
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- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Chairman's Announcements

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 March 2015.

4. Declarations of Interests

To receive any Member(s)' Declaration(s) of Interest

5. East Herts Green Belt Review August 2015 (Pages 11 - 168)

This item will include a presentation by Peter Brett Associates.

6. Village Hierarchy Study Stage 1 August 2015 (Pages 169 - 194)

7. Duty to Co-operate Update Report (Pages 195 - 222)

8. Buntingford Transport Model Report August 2015 (Pages 223 - 240)

9. Affordable Housing – Amendment to Policy (Pages 241 - 248)

10. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON THURSDAY
19 MARCH 2015, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Carver (Chairman)
Councillors L Haysey and S Rutland-Barsby.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, S Bull, G Jones,
J Jones, P Moore, M Newman, T Page,
M Pope and N Symonds.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Kay Mead	- Senior Planning Officer
Martin Paine	- Senior Planning Officer
Jenny Pierce	- Senior Planning Officer
Claire Sime	- Planning Policy Team Leader
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services

30 DELIVERY STUDY UPDATE REPORT

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report which provided an update on progress with the Delivery Study. He also set out delays with critical pieces of evidence, particularly relating to transport planning, and the implications of this for the overall timeline for the District Plan. He also

explained that the delays with the District Plan were part of a wider picture of plan-making across England.

In respect of transport planning delays, Officers explained the difficulties that Essex County Council were experiencing with validating the data used in the modelling. This would be critical also for the planned consultation on the M11 junction 7a proposal.

In response to Members' questions, Officers clarified the Duty to Co-operate and the impact on East Herts of neighbouring Local Authorities' plans being deemed unsound. Officers also reminded Members of the transparency of meetings held with site promoters, as minutes of these were available on the Council's website.

Officers also outlined the ongoing work with education and health providers and the need to maximise section 106 funding for infrastructure requirements. The Panel Chairman referred to the national picture and the impact of government funding reductions on the District Council's plan making.

Finally, the Panel discussed the level of congestion in town centres and on the M11 and the lack of definition of "severe disruption" within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Panel supported the recommendation now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Update Report, including the slow progress with Local Plans across England, and the risks of proceeding without sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, be noted.

31 **DRAFT APPENDIX TO THE DISTRICT PLAN CONCERNING VEHICLE PARKING STANDARDS**

The Panel considered a report presenting revised vehicle

parking standards which would form an appendix to the District Plan. It was noted that, at present, the vehicle parking standards for East Herts were contained both within the Adopted Local Plan 2007, at Appendix II, and within the 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2008' which supplemented the Adopted Local Plan and provided additional guidance on provision beyond the standards themselves. The existing maximum standards reflected a local interpretation of the content of Hertfordshire County Council's 'Best Practice Guide: Parking Provision at New Development' (2003), which in turn was based on Supplementary Planning Guidance to the now superseded Hertfordshire Structure Plan. The currently adopted standards were also based on the now deleted PPG 13, which only allowed for the provision of maximum standards based on average provision of 1.5 spaces per dwelling across the District.

As recent decisions taken by Inspectors through Local Plan Examinations had demonstrated a clear preference for including any policy requirements or standards within the Local Plan document itself, the Panel considered a draft Appendix to the East Herts District Plan to enable new standards to be included which better reflected current circumstances and which, while partly based on the currently adopted parking standards, also reflected provisions contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

In response to Members' questions and comments, Officers confirmed that the proposed revised parking standards would offer more flexibility in allowing the Authority to impose different standards in different zones of the District. As the document had not been subject to public consultation, it could not be adopted at this time. However, the standards could be considered a material consideration and be given weight in determining planning applications.

The Panel supported the recommendations now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the draft District Plan Appendix concerning Vehicle Parking Standards be noted, with a decision on its final content being deferred and considered alongside the rest of the District Plan; and

(B) a replacement Supplementary Planning Document on Vehicle Parking be prepared alongside the District Plan which will include updated guidance on design issues.

32 **DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN CHAPTERS 15 AND 16:
RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING PREFERRED
OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND DRAFT REVISED
CHAPTERS**

The Panel considered a report highlighting the issues raised through the recent consultation in connection with Chapters 15 – 16 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, together with Officer responses to those issues. The report also presented draft revised chapters showing proposed amendments, for subsequent incorporation into a revised Draft District Plan.

The proposed amendments were presented as working Draft Revised Chapters only at this stage, as they might change before final agreement of a revised Draft District Plan. Therefore, these Revised Chapters would only be presented for approval until such time that the complete suite of amendments were collated and presented as one comprehensive Revised Draft District Plan.

In response to Members' questions, Officers advised that the policies maps would come forward in due course. In respect of the Retail and Town Centres chapter, Officers confirmed that the proposed revisions provided more flexibility that would enable the changing retail landscape to be accounted for.

The Panel supported the recommendations now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the issues raised in respect of Chapters 15 and 16 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, as detailed at Essential Reference Papers B and C to the report submitted, be received and considered;

(B) the Officer response to the issues referred to in (A) above, as detailed in Essential Reference Papers B and C to the report submitted, be noted; and

(C) the draft revised chapters, as detailed in Essential Reference Papers B and C to the report submitted, be noted, with decision on their final content being deferred to allow consideration of further technical work and other issues.

33 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Panel Chairman welcomed Members and the public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

He advised that a further meeting with parish and town council representatives had been arranged for 28 April 2015.

The Panel Chairman referred to the referendum being held today on the Neighbourhood Plan in Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads wards and looked forward to further public engagement with the local planning process.

The Chairman acknowledged this being his last meeting as he was retiring from the Council in May 2015. He thanked Members for their support throughout his time as Panel Chairman and paid tribute to the hard work and endeavours of the Planning Policy team.

On behalf of Officers, the Head of Planning and Building Control thanked the Panel Chairman for his support over the

years and wished him well in his retirement.

On behalf of Members, Councillor L Haysey thanked the Panel Chairman for his hard work on planning policy matters over many years and expressed the wish that this would not be lost after his retirement.

34 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 8 December 2014, be approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – that the date of the next meeting on 2 July 2015, be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm

Chairman

Date

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EAST HERTS GREEN BELT REVIEW AUGUST 2015

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents the findings of the Green Belt Review 2015
- The report seeks agreement to use the Green Belt Review as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the District Plan.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	the Green Belt Review 2015 be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan.

1.0 Background

1.1 Government policy on Green Belt is set out in chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 80 sets out that Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

1.2 Although it is intended that Green Belt land has a degree of permanence, it is possible for a local planning authority to conduct

a review of Green Belt land and consider redefining boundaries in order to meet local planning requirements. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF sets this out:

'Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation of review of the Local Plan...'

- 1.3 In order to determine whether or not the Green Belt in East Herts continues to fulfil the purposes for including land within it, the Council carried out a Green Belt Review in 2013. Undertaken by officers, the Review consisted of Part 1 which provided a District-wide review of broad parcels, and Part 2 which provided a detailed site assessment and boundary review of selected parcels. The findings of this Review were used to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options District Plan consultation.
- 1.4 Following the Preferred Options consultation the Council sought a critical friend appraisal of the internally conducted Green Belt Review. The key issue raised in the appraisal was that some of the parcels identified in Part 1 were quite large and the contribution towards Green Belt purposes may be different in one part of the parcel compared to another. It was important that all parcels were subjected to the same rigorous assessment across the District rather than discounting some parcels before the detailed assessment stage.
- 1.5 Peter Brett Associates (PBA) were subsequently commissioned to undertake a further Green Belt Review of the District. This report presents their work. PBA will be in attendance at the Panel meeting and will be presenting the findings of the Green Belt Review.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Green Belt Review (contained in full at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**) consists of 4 chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction sets out the purpose of the Green Belt Review, including the approach and details of previous Green Belt work.

- 2.2 Chapter 2: Method explains that the Green Belt Review has been carried out in a number of stages:
1. Identifying the study area and excluding areas subject to absolute constraints;
 2. Identifying land parcels for the assessment;
 3. Consideration of boundaries;
 4. Assessing the parcels against the purposes for including land in the Green Belt;
 5. Identifying the suitability of parcels as areas of search for development, according to Green Belt policy.
- 2.3 The methodology was shared with neighbouring authorities, town and parish councils, as well as with the local development industry and a number of comments were received. The report identifies the key issues raised and consequent changes to the methodology.
- 2.4 Chapter 3: Findings sets out how four of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt (see paragraph 1.1 above) have been used in assessing the land parcels. The fifth purpose: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, has not been included in the assessment. This is because the Green Belt as a whole has a restrictive nature that limits the supply of developable land thereby encouraging the re-use of urban land or the location of development beyond the Green Belt. It is therefore impossible to judge how any given parcel of land would contribute towards this purpose more than another. The Review therefore assumes that all Green Belt land in East Herts performs this function equally.
- 2.5 The Review then carries out a detailed parcel-by-parcel, purpose-by-purpose assessment of the Green Belt in the district. Overall 71 parcels and six sub-parcels were assessed.
- 2.6 Chapter 4 concludes the Review and identifies the following locations as having least importance to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes, and as such are identified as 'Potential Areas of Search' for development locations:
- a. Parcel 31a – west of Hertford
 - b. Parcel 59 – north of Sawbridgeworth
 - c. Parcel 59a – north of Sawbridgeworth
 - d. Parcels 66-70 – south/west of Bishop's Stortford

- 2.7 Two further parcels are identified as having moderate suitability and are identified as 'Potential longer-term Areas of Search' for development locations:
- a. Parcel 24 – south east of Hertford
 - b. Parcel 37a – west of Ware
- 2.8 There are several key recommendations within the Review which warrant further explanation. Firstly, it should be noted that the conclusions are recommendations only and need to be considered on balance alongside all other technical evidence presented through the Plan-making process. Therefore, for example, whilst the green wedges in Bishop's Stortford are identified as having limited contribution in purely Green Belt terms, the decision to remove the designation is one for the development strategy. The NPPF facilitates such changes if there are other policy designations that can provide an alternative level of protection, such as a Local Green Space designation.
- 2.9 It should also be noted that the aggregation of the assessment of the purposes has assumed that all the purposes are of equal importance, and there is no basis in Green Belt policy (or guidance) for taking any different approach. However, it is likely to be informative to look at how different areas perform in relation to different purposes. For example, a parcel may have limited or no contribution in terms of checking sprawl, however, the same parcel may have a significant contribution in terms of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 2.10 This is considered likely in the case of East Herts settlements where there is very little land that has the characteristics of 'urban fringe', where unpopular uses are located on the edge of settlements in fragmented and uncared for conditions. Nor are there many large recreation uses which are often found on the outer edges of towns, being appropriate uses within the Green Belt. Instead, in most cases the transition between the built up area and the countryside occurs almost immediately, such as where agricultural uses abut urban areas. This is why most of the Green Belt on the periphery of each settlement is considered to perform an important contribution to the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 2.11 Finally it should be noted that for purposes one and two (checking unrestricted sprawl and preventing towns from merging), the assessment considers only the potential effects of *strategic scale*

development. This is an important distinction to make. The Review does not look at individual sites. This is where another level of assessment is necessary such as that provided by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and the settlement-wide assessments underpinning the emerging development strategy. These are areas of work currently being undertaken.

Conclusion

- 2.12 The Review is an important piece of evidence for the plan-making process. However, it is only one part of the complicated and conflicting aspects of plan-making, and the recommendations of the Review will need to be taken into account alongside other evidence to create a robust and sound development strategy.
- 2.13 Whilst the Green Belt Review identifies parcels that have more contribution in Green Belt terms, it does not suggest any areas where development would cause significant harm to the integrity of the Green Belt as a whole. The Review instead makes clear recommendations where development could be acceptable even in parcels which have low suitability as an area of search, if properly planned, in a manner which respects the landscape and creates reinforced boundaries.
- 2.14 This report demonstrates that there has been a full and proper examination of how the Green Belt in East Herts performs. Ultimately how Green Belt is considered within the mix of different planning considerations leading to the development strategy is a matter for the local planning authority to decide. A reasonable interpretation of the NPPF might be that development should take place in locations that promote more sustainable patterns of development (NPPF, Paragraph 84) i.e. those where infrastructure, services and facilities are available to support new communities, and that other locations should only prevail if there would be significant harm to the integrity of the Green Belt as a whole or to the role it is there to perform.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

- National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
- East Herts Green Belt Review (August 2015)
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/greenbeltreview2015>

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute</p> <p>This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place – Safe and Clean</p> <p>This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities</p> <p>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.</p>
Consultation:	The draft methodology was subject to a period of consultation and peer review by neighbouring planning authorities, town and parish councils and representatives of the development industry.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None other than Planning Policy Team resource.
Risk Management:	None
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The emerging East Herts District Plan in general will have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through a range of policy approaches that seek to create sustainable communities.

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East Herts Green Belt Review

Final Report
CONFIDENTIAL

On behalf of **East Herts District Council**



Document Control Sheet

Project Name: East Herts Green Belt Review
Project Ref: 30589
Report Title: Final Report
Doc Ref: 30589
Date: August 2015

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Jo Lee	Associate		19.12.14
Reviewed by:	John Baker	Partner		23.12.14
Approved by:	John Baker	Partner		23.12.14
For and on behalf of Peter Brett Associates LLP				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
V1	27.04.15	Final report	SJ	JL	JB
V2	05.08.15	Revised final report	SJ	JL	JB
V3	21.08.15	Revised final report	SJ	JB	JB

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 Map of Green Belt in East Herts and adjoining districts
- Appendix 2 Map of Absolute Constraints
- Appendix 3 Parcels used in the Green Belt Assessment
- Appendix 4 Maps of the findings of the assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes
- Appendix 5 Draft District Plan SLAA sites, Broad Locations and Parcels

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Green Belt review

- 1.1.1 This report by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) has been undertaken on behalf of East Herts District Council to assist in the preparation, explanation and justification of the East Herts District Plan.

1.2 The Green Belt in East Herts District

- 1.2.1 Parts of East Herts District are designated as Green Belt. The plan at Appendix 1 identifies the land that is within the Green Belt. Green Belt is a strategic designation concerned with the relationships between built and unbuilt areas and between settlements, and so the plan shows the Green Belt within adjoining local authority areas as well as within East Herts. This review however only relates to the Green Belt in East Herts District.
- 1.2.2 Part of the role of the East Herts District Plan is to establish a spatial strategy within which the development needs of the community for the plan period are addressed, as well as helping bring about the kind of place wanted for the future. The spatial strategy will be driven by the role intended for different settlements in the future, the maintenance and enhancement of the district's environment, and by the infrastructure requirements of the district and how infrastructure and development are to be integrated. The District Council as a plan making authority is under the statutory duty to carry out its plan making role in such a way as to seek more sustainable development.
- 1.2.3 As there is Green Belt in the District the spatial strategy has to consider Green Belt. Green Belt policy can be seen as a tool for shaping settlement patterns and is in any case something to be addressed when the needs of the District require that additional development is to be accommodated. It should be noted that though there is land designated as Green Belt in East Herts District, these areas of Green Belt are Metropolitan Green Belt. That is, they were included in the Green Belt designated around London in the 1950's under the Ministerial Guidance prevailing at the time that suggested that the Green Belt be drawn 'a few miles wide'. The extent of the Green Belt, which has been largely unchanged since, is rather arbitrary therefore, and has arisen primarily from other considerations than the characteristics of East Herts District.
- 1.2.4 Green Belt is a powerful planning policy, particularly in relation to development management decisions (the determination of planning applications). Where there is Green Belt, the normal reasoning process is reversed in that rather than the onus being on the planning authority to provide sound planning reasons why development proposal should be refused, if that's its preference, the onus is on the promoter to demonstrate why planning permission should be granted. This makes Green Belt policy an attractive proposition if there is a general resistance to development, and can mean that other considerations, such as the avoidance of increased risk of development flooding, the retention

of productive agricultural land, the protection of wildlife habitats or the maintenance of the most valued landscape features, may attract less concern.

- 1.2.5 None of these examples of matters to be taken into account in deciding on where development takes place are part of the reason for which Green Belt can be designated, and are not matters that can have a bearing on whether Green Belt should be maintained. The achievement of sustainable development is not any part of the origin of Green Belt policy, and the designation of parts of a district or the country as Green Belt was not intentionally the spatial expression of a strategy for sustainable development.

1.3 Green Belt and the spatial strategy for East Herts District

- 1.3.1 The Council's task in establishing its preferred spatial strategy for the District Plan is to have regard to all material planning considerations, and given that there is Green Belt in the district, the future of that Green Belt is one of the considerations. Another of the considerations in making a spatial strategy is the need for a local planning authority to cooperate with other local planning authorities on strategic issues, as has always been the case, and is currently provided for in legislation and policy (specifically in the test of soundness of a local plan set out in national planning policy as the 'duty to cooperate'). Green Belt is a strategic issue and some groups of local planning authorities are undertaking joint Green Belt reviews, but this has not been the case here, with Epping Forest District Council for instance undertaking a review separately.
- 1.3.2 This report is specifically and exclusively about Green Belt. PBA was not asked to consider other matters that are part of determining the most appropriate spatial strategy for the District, and the report does not present a spatial strategy. It is for the local planning authority to take Green Belt issues into consideration alongside all other relevant considerations, informed by this report alongside other views on Green Belt, as it wishes.
- 1.3.3 How Green Belt is considered within the mix of different planning considerations leading to the spatial strategy, having regard to the Framework, is a matter for the local planning authority. A reasonable interpretation of legislation and policy might be that development should take place in locations that promote more sustainable development patterns and where more sustainable forms of development can be promoted, and other locations should only prevail if there would be significant harm to the integrity of the Green Belt as whole or to the role it is there to perform.

1.4 Approach

- 1.4.1 The examination of the Green Belt in East Herts District has been undertaken according to its contribution to the five purposes set out in the Framework for the inclusion of land in the Green Belt (see section 2 of the report). It is improper to take any other considerations into account when considering the contribution of Green Belt (as opposed to the use of land as part of the spatial strategy set out in the local plan).

- 1.4.2 In the absence of a separate strategic level of plan in the current planning system, it falls to a local plan to identify the general extent of the Green Belt and to define its boundary. This examination of the Green Belt in East Herts cannot propose a new Green Belt boundary however, as this will depend (amongst other things) on the amount of development the plan seeks to provide for. At this stage the Council is proposing to bring forward a District Plan with some of the development need provided for at 'broad locations', so that the development boundaries will not be determined until a further component of the local plan is produced, or a planning application is determined.
- 1.4.3 It is to be noted in any case that the new Green Belt boundary is unlikely to be drawn co-terminous with the extent of the allocations made for development in the District Plan, because of the provision in the Framework for the identification of 'safeguarded land'.
- 1.4.4 One of the requirements set for local planning authorities with Green Belt in their areas in the Framework is that in making a plan for their area, they *'should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period'*. The Framework continues that they should, *'where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer term development needs well beyond the plan period'*.
- 1.4.5 It will be for the Council in setting out proposals in its District Plan to determine how to address this requirement for safeguarded land when drawing up new boundaries for the Green Belt.

1.5 Development Plan

- 1.5.1 The East Herts Local Plan was adopted in 2007. The Local Plan will be replaced as the development plan by the District Plan. Preparation of the District Plan with a plan period to 2031 is currently at the Preferred Options stage, and has included a period of public consultation which ended in May 2014. The next stage in the preparation of the District Plan is intended to be a 'Pre-Submission' consultation in late 2015/early 2016, followed by submission of the plan for Independent Examination later in 2016.

1.6 Previous Green Belt work

- 1.6.1 The Council undertook a Draft Green Belt Review in 2013. This consisted of Part 1 which provided a District-wide review of broad parcels, and Part 2 which provided the detailed site assessment and boundary review of selected areas of search. This Draft Review identified a number of areas which could be removed from the Green Belt as development sites or broad locations within which development sites would be subsequently refined.
- 1.6.2 The Council commissioned Peter Brett Associates in 2014 to provide a critical friend Appraisal of the Draft Green Belt Review. The appraisal provided a

review of policy and practice; review of the Council's methodology and application; and a review of Local Plan Policy and Proposed Green Belt Approach.

- 1.6.3 The key issue raised in the Appraisal was that some of the parcels (based on the Landscape Character Assessment areas) were quite large and the contribution of Green Belt purposes may be quite different in one part compared to another.
- 1.6.4 Subsequently, the Council have commissioned Peter Brett Associates to undertake a full Green Belt Review. This report addresses the issue above by assessing Green Belt purposes for smaller parcels of land. The issues raised within the Appraisal of the Council's work were integrated into the methodology of this report.
- 1.6.5 This report, subject to how the Council deals with it, is intended to supersede all other work previously undertaken by the Council and stand as the only assessment of the Green Belt to be used in evidence to help in the preparation of the District Plan.

1.7 Area of Study

- 1.7.1 The work is to assist the Council in setting out proposals in the District Plan for the development as part of the overall plan strategy and if necessary to make changes to the current Green Belt. It is proposed to focus on the examination of the Green Belt on the periphery of the main towns in the district and those that edge up to the district boundary, together with several villages in the Green Belt. These are set out in the table below:

Main Towns	Villages
Bishop's Stortford	Watton-at-Stone
Hertford	Tewin
Sawbridgeworth	Hertford Heath
Ware	Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets

- 1.7.2 In terms of the villages within the Green Belt, Watton-at-Stone is designated in the Draft District Plan (Preferred Options) as a Group 1 Village, as these are deemed to be the most sustainable villages in the District.

- 1.7.3 The other villages in the Green Belt are Group 2 Villages which are identified for limited infilling.
- 1.7.4 The Draft District Plan (2014) identified a number of Broad Locations for potential future development as set out below. Green Belt parcels within these broad locations have been assessed against Green Belt purposes.

Broad Locations
East of Welwyn Garden City
Gilston North of Harlow
North and East of Ware

- 1.7.5 Not all of the land in the District outside the settlements is designated as Green Belt, but those parts where development is most likely to be appropriate for other reasons is generally Green Belt. That is, land on the periphery of the main settlements in the district (and some settlements in neighbouring districts that adjoin the district boundary) are designated as Green Belt. In terms of where population change and growth is occurring and where economic growth with new jobs is likely to arise, the main settlements are naturally the locations where most of the development should be accommodated, and in terms of the location of facilities and services together with access to public transport services and opportunities, the periphery of the main settlements is where new development should achieve the greatest accessibility, once the opportunities for satisfactory development within the settlements has been taken into account. As such, land to the East of Stevenage is being reconsidered as an option for development of a smaller scale than that previously tested.

Locations Reconsidered
East of Stevenage

- 1.7.6 This study has therefore focussed on the periphery of the settlements identified, to accommodate development to meet the needs of that particular settlement as part of the wider development requirement.

2 Method

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The method followed for the Green Belt study is described here.
- 2.1.2 The Council consulted on a proposed methodology and comments were received. The main issues raised are detailed below, including consequent changes to the methodology:

Key comment	Changes to methodology
More detail is required to why the review has not assessed parcels against Green Belt Purposes 4 and 5.	Further explanation provided in the method to why the review has not assessed Green Belt Purpose 5. The review does undertake an assessment of Purpose 4.
The Green Belt parcels should be smaller and each SLAA site should be a parcel.	Method amended to include assessment of SLAA sites within each Green Belt parcel identified as 'high suitability' or 'moderate suitability' for development.
Sustainability/accessibility issues should be included within the Green Belt Review.	Sustainability/accessibility assessment is a separate piece of work which has been undertaken by the Council.
Clarification required to the study area, whether it is the entire Green Belt (Section 4) or periphery of towns, edge of boundary and several villages (para 3.1.1).	Study area clarified

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2.1 National policy on Green Belts is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) published in March 2012. The Green Belt review has been undertaken in the context of this policy. There is no published guidance from Government sources on how a Green Belt review should be undertaken.
- 2.2.2 The Framework provides for changes to the Green Belt to be made through the development plan, and with the removal of strategic plans, the district plan necessarily defines the Green Belt boundary as well as making strategic

changes that are required. This will need to be the case in East Herts District, with the District Plan now in preparation.

2.3 Assessment against Green Belt Purposes

2.3.1 The Framework establishes five purposes for including land within the Green Belt. These are:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and spatial character of historic towns
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.3.2 The Framework does not give numbers to the five purposes, but this has been done for convenience in this report (numbering the purposes in the order presented in the box). Neither does the Framework attach any hierarchy to the purposes so that they are assumed to all be of equal importance, and this is the approach followed in this review.

2.3.3 The review does not assess all of the Green Belt in East Herts against all of the purposes. This is not a reflection on the significance of the different purposes but simply on their relevance to different places and the practicality of their application. This is explained further, in section 3.2.

2.4 Stages of the Green Belt review

2.4.1 The Green Belt review has been carried out in a number of stages:

- Identifying the study area and excluding areas subject to absolute constraints
- Identifying land parcels for the assessment
- Assessing the parcels against the purposes for including land in the Green Belt

- Identifying the sensitivity of areas to development, according to Green Belt policy.

2.4.2 These stages are described below.

2.5 Excluding areas subject to strategic absolute constraints

2.5.1 This stage considered the entire Green Belt in East Herts and identified areas which are subject to absolute constraints. These areas have been excluded from the study prior to the division of the study area into parcels, and hence play no further part in the study undertaken, and reported here.

2.5.2 These absolute constraints were agreed with the Council and are as follows:

- Large areas of land at risk from flooding – flood zone 3
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Protection Area (SPA) and associated buffer
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and associated buffer
- Ancient Woodland
- Registered Parks and Gardens.

2.5.3 The map at Appendix 2 shows the locations subject to these absolute constraints.

2.5.4 There are not many areas where absolute constraints precluded the identification of parcels of land for subsequent consideration in relation to the Green Belt purposes. The main strategic absolute constraint is where land is at risk of flooding and some areas were excluded from the study on this basis, such as the north edge of Harlow and the area between Ware and Hertford.

2.6 Identifying parcels for the assessment

2.6.1 In order to carry out a meaningful assessment of the way in which different areas of land performed in Green Belt terms the study area has been divided up into separate parcels. This division has been informed by site work carried out in parallel with the desk review. Parcels have been defined wherever possible along identifiable physical/visual features, particularly where these are consistent with a change in physical or visual characteristics (see also reference to the district landscape character assessment below); however in some places, where features are weak, a parcel boundary may be defined along less robust features which may not be considered to be an entirely suitable enduring boundary for the definition of a new Green Belt edge. In such areas, further consideration may need to be given to the strengthening of

such boundaries by additional measures (such as woodland planting) as part of any potential release of land to meet development needs.

- 2.6.2 It is a benefit to this study that a (separate) landscape character assessment has already been carried out which *'establishes landscape character areas and identifies the distinct landscapes describing their key characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features'*. The descriptions of the landscape character areas can be found on the East Herts website at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/landscapecharacterspd>. This division of the area according to the landscape character assessment is useful in managing the study, and helpful in understanding how the area works.
- 2.6.3 Whilst necessary in understanding the area, the character areas are not sufficient on their own for the purposes of this study.
- 2.6.4 A map of the parcels used for the assessment is presented in **Appendix 3**.

Consideration of boundaries

- 2.6.5 As part of the assessment, consideration has been given to the nature of the existing boundaries of the Green Belt. The NPPF (paragraph 85) states that boundaries should be defined 'clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'. Features that are most likely to fulfil this requirement are roads, railways, watercourses, woodlands and strong tree belts. Green Belt designation has rarely considered the permanence (and sometimes the rationality) of 'inner' boundaries, such boundaries simply being drawn along the edge of development wherever it existed at the time of designation. This means that boundaries are often defined along the boundaries of back gardens. However, such boundaries can be quite easily (and sometimes surreptitiously) changed and they also often form poor visual boundaries meaning that development is poorly contained and there is a sense of visual encroachment and adverse effect on the character of the adjoining countryside. Stronger features, such as those mentioned above (although some will not form visual boundaries), are well-defined and less likely to change, although garden boundaries can be considered stronger boundaries where they follow other features, such as tree belts or strong hedgerows.
- 2.6.6 When considering the potential for new boundaries, consideration has been given to the availability of alternative or stronger boundaries which may form a new boundary consistent with the NPPF advice; however, in some areas no such features exist. In such circumstances, if land is to be released from Green Belt, such enduring boundaries are likely to need to be created by new enduring features on the ground, preferably supported by strategic woodland planting (where this is appropriate in character terms) to contain the influence of development and strengthen the boundary (such as has occurred along the eastern side of Stevenage for example).

2.7 Assessing the parcels against the purposes for including land in the Green Belt

- 2.7.1 Each of the parcels has been assessed in terms of its performance in fulfilling the purposes for including land in the Green Belt set out in the Framework and presented in this report at para. 2.3.1.
- 2.7.2 The purpose *‘to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns’*, is only considered to be relevant to the area around Hertford. This is the only historic town where there is any relationship between the older part of the settlement and the wider landscape setting designated as Green Belt. There are also local ‘setting/special character’ considerations at Bishop’s Stortford where ‘inner’ parts of the green fingers that penetrate the urban area lie within the town’s Conservation Area. This is considered further in the consideration of this purpose in section 3 below.
- 2.7.3 The purpose *‘to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land’*, is not used at all in the assessment. If there is any effect at all in this respect, it is the overall restrictive nature of having Green Belt policy that encourages regeneration and the re-use of previously used land by stifling the supply of other land. That said, the modern evidence-based planning system is intended to deal with the supply of land primarily through positive provision in a development plan rather than through the piecemeal consideration of planning applications for development proposals. Either way it is generally not possible to judge how any given parcel of land would contribute to the fulfilment of this purpose, or to distinguish between different parcels on this basis. This is particularly so in East Herts where there are no parts of the District distinguished from other parts of the District by their need for regeneration.
- 2.7.4 The table below outlines the criteria used in the assessment against which the parcels have been assessed in respect of the Green Belt purposes. The assessment is based on the significance of the impact on the particular purpose of Green Belt that would arise from development of a parcel of land rather than leaving it open. The criteria seek to establish a consistent set of characteristics for use in assessing the significance of change and hence to provide the basis for categorising different pieces of land against the different Green Belt purposes.
- 2.7.5 The use of the purposes in the assessment is described further at the start of section 3.

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		
Paramount importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Paramount	Land where strategic level of development would conflict fundamentally with Green Belt purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land provides a distinct, well-defined area that contains the town/large village and provides strong containment that prevents the perception of ‘sprawl’. There may be/is no alternative strong

		<p>physical/landscape boundary(s) further from the edge of the town/large village that would perform a similar role in containing growth and ensuring a 'good fit' for development - strategic level of development may lead to perception of uncontained growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land may/may not be affected already by the existing physical/visual presence of the town/large village and may have a varied character.
Major importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	Major	<p>Land where strategic level of development would conflict substantially with Green Belt purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land contains/contributes to the containment of the town/large village (although its character may be influenced by it). Strategic level of development has potential to create perception of poorly contained growth, although other physical/landscape boundaries may exist further from the town/large village edge that could define and contain growth and prevent the perception of 'sprawl' (although these may require reinforcement to achieve a well-defined limit to development and a new Green Belt boundary).
Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate	<p>Land where strategic level of development would conflict significantly with Green Belt purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land provides some containment of the town/large village although it is significantly influenced by its presence and related features/land uses leading to a poorly defined edge, or it may be slightly removed from the town/large village edge and therefore contribute less to the purpose (other land closer to the edge performs the function of containment).
Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/ Negligible	<p>Land where strategic level of development would have limited/negligible impact on this purpose of Green Belt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land may be physically <u>and</u> visually related to the town/large village and already perceived to be part of/or closely related to the built up area, giving a poorly defined edge and possibly the perception of 'sprawl'; or is an area that has very little relationship to the town/large village and of little importance to containing 'sprawl' (land closer to the settlement fulfils this function to a greater degree) Development may allow opportunities for enhancement of degraded land and the definition of a stronger long-term Green Belt boundary, or there are other strong boundaries that would contain development.
No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None	<p>Land where strategic level of development would have no impact on this purpose of Green Belt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land is largely contained by existing development and already forms part of, and is perceived as, part of the town/large village; or

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land is not related to a town/large village.
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2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another (see Note 1 below)		
Paramount importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Paramount	Land that is fundamental to physical separation of neighbouring towns/larger villages (either within or adjoining Green Belt). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any significant reduction in extent would result in physical coalescence, or a perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identity and character of either/both settlements.
Major importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	Major	Land that provides substantial contribution to separation between neighbouring towns/larger villages (either within or adjoining Green Belt). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no significant inter-visibility between these settlements currently. Some development may be possible without causing merger or perception of merging between these settlements.
Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate	Land that provides significant contribution to separation between neighbouring towns/larger villages (either within or adjoining Green Belt). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land may be part of a substantial gap (3km or more) between neighbouring towns/larger villages with separate identities. Land where well planned strategic level of development unlikely to result in merger or a perception of merging as a consequence of inter-visibility (although intervening smaller settlements within Green Belt may be affected significantly by reduction of separation, merger or inter-visibility).
Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/ Negligible	Land does not lie between two towns/large villages or makes limited/negligible contribution to separation; or land does not provide strategic level of separation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic level of development would have little impact on this Green Belt purpose, although smaller settlements may be affected by reduction in separation, merger, or inter-visibility depending on their proximity to the existing settlement edge. Other strong/well-defined boundary(s) may exist to restrain growth/prevent merging. Width of Green Belt may already be narrower at an adjacent location.
No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None	Land does not lie between two towns/large villages and makes no contribution to separation.

NOTE 1: Towns are taken to be the main towns Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City, Harlow, Hoddesdon, Hertford, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford, and the larger village of Watton-at-Stone (a Group 1 village) and Knebworth outside the district boundary, it does not include smaller

villages (Group 2 villages, such as Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets, Hertford Heath, Tewin) although reference is made to these and other small settlements as appropriate.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment		
Paramount importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Paramount	Countryside is <u>fundamental</u> to the purpose of retaining land within Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a strong, unspoilt rural character which Green Belt designation protects. There may be no other fundamental constraint(s) to encroachment (such as a strong landscape feature or environmental constraint that would assist in fulfilling this purpose by containing/restricting development from encroaching into outlying countryside).
Major importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	Major	Countryside is of <u>substantial</u> importance to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a predominantly rural character. There may be other constraints (such as a noticeable landscape feature) that would limit encroachment but the Green Belt provides valuable protection.
Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate	Countryside is of <u>significant</u> importance to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may already be a perception of significant encroachment by development (or other uses, such as large scale mineral extraction) and land may possess a semi-rural character. There may be other constraints to further encroachment.
Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/ Negligible	Countryside is of <u>limited/negligible</u> importance to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land may possess a semi-urban character and is no longer perceived to be part of the open countryside. It may contain degraded land that provides opportunities for enhancement.
No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None	Countryside is no importance on this purpose of Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land forms very narrow area between existing parts of the town or other strong boundary and does not make any recognisable contribution to separation. Such areas may be protected by other designations (such as open space or Green Wedge)

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (see Note 2 below)		
Critical importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Paramount	Land makes a <u>fundamental contribution</u> to the setting and/or special character of a historic town/large village. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land is a highly prominent element on main approaches into the town/large village where the setting and/or special character is readily appreciated. The land is a highly prominent element or defining

		<p>feature in views from within or around the town/large village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic development would have a fundamentally adverse impact on the setting and/or special character of the town/large village.
Major importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	Major	<p>Land makes a substantial contribution to the setting and/or special character of a historic town/large village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land is prominent on approaches into the town/large village, or in views from within or around the town/large village. Strategic development likely to have a substantial adverse impact on the setting and/or special character of the town/large village.
Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate	<p>Land makes a significant contribution to the setting and/or special character of a historic town/large village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land forms a recognisable element in the approaches to the town/large village, or in views from within or around the town/large village, but is not important to its setting and/or special character. Strategic development likely to have a moderately adverse impact on the setting and/or special character of the town/large village.
Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/ Negligible	<p>Land makes limited/negligible contribution to the setting and/or special character of a historic town/large village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land is not particularly visible in views from within or around the town/large village, or may have very little relationship to the setting and/or special character of the historic parts of the town/large village. The land may include degraded land that detracts from the setting and/or special character of the town/large village.
No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None	<p>Land makes no contribution to the setting and/or special character of a historic town/large village and/or is unrelated to the historic town/large village.</p>

NOTE 2: This purpose has been assessed at:

- Hertford and north east side of Sawbridgeworth only as these are the only towns that have a noticeable historical character that extends to the edge of the settlement. The other towns have no apparent relationship between their older historic parts and the wider landscape setting provided by the surrounding land within the Green Belt. At Bishop's Stortford, some 'inner' parts of the green wedges that extend into the town form part of the town's Conservation Area. Whilst these 'historic' areas do not contribute to the wider setting of the historic part of the town they do provide a local contribution to setting and have been considered in the context of purpose 4.
- Group 1 villages, of which only Watton-at-Stone lies within Green Belt and has a Conservation Area which extends to and beyond its periphery; for the purposes of this assessment this settlement (which is inset within Green Belt) has been considered a 'historic town'.

Group 2 villages within Green Belt (Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots/ St Margarets, Hertingfordbury, High Wych, Wadesmill/Thundridge, Tewin, Aston) have Conservation Areas that extend to their peripheries adjoining Green Belt (and sometimes beyond) but these are not towns so this purpose is deemed not to be relevant to them.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose has not been assessed as it is the overall restrictive nature of the Green Belt that encourages recycling, not the restriction that it places on specific areas of land.

2.8 Identifying the sensitivity of areas to development, according to Green Belt policy

2.8.1 Following the assessment of the parcels against the individual purposes, the separate assessments have been combined to suggest those parcels that could be the most suitable within which to seek development sites, according to Green Belt policy. The way that the assessments against individual purposes have been combined into an overall assessment is set out in the table below. It is to be noted that because of the way the work has been done, the parcels are already in areas **without absolute or major environmental constraints**, as described at para. 2.5.2, and are in locations where it ought to be possible to achieve relatively sustainable development.

Relative Suitability of Land as Area of Search			
Very Low Suitability	Very Low	One or more Green Belt purpose(s) is considered to be of Paramount importance.	Land Fundamental to Green Belt
Low Suitability	Low	One or more Green Belt purpose(s) is considered to be of Major importance; there are no purposes that are of Paramount importance.	Retain Land in Green Belt
Moderate Suitability	Moderate	One or more Green Belt purpose(s) is considered to be of Moderate importance; there are no purposes that are of Paramount or Major importance.	Potential longer-term Area of Search
High Suitability High Development Potential so removal from Green Belt recommended.	High	One or more Green Belt purpose(s) is considered to be of Slight/Negligible importance; there are no purposes that are of Paramount, Major or Moderate importance.	Potential Area of Search

3 Findings

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section demonstrates how the purposes of including land in the Green Belt have been used in assessing the performance of the land parcels and illustrates this with examples from the findings.
- 3.1.2 This explanation is followed by the detailed parcel-by-parcel, purpose-by-purpose assessment of the Green Belt in East Herts District, set out as a table.
- 3.1.3 The findings presented in the table are also presented graphically by the maps in **Appendix 4**, with individual maps for each of the four purposes used, and with a map which aggregates the assessment by four purposes with one composite presentation.

3.2 Interpretation of the Green Belt purposes for the assessment

Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 3.2.1 The sense of permanence provided by Green Belt designation is fundamental to the limitation of 'sprawl' and it is the wholesale restriction that the designation places upon development within the designated area that ensures that the outward expansion of urban areas (the Purpose explicitly refers to large-built up areas which, for the purposes of this study, are taken to be the main towns and the one large 'Group 1' village (Watton-at-Stone) which is located within the Green Belt) remains heavily constrained, thereby limiting 'sprawl'. However, well located and planned urban extensions are unlikely to constitute 'sprawl' (a term that is based on negativity suggesting the unplanned, uncontrolled spread of development).
- 3.2.2 Most land is likely to contribute to the fulfilment of this Purpose to some degree. Land that lies close to the periphery of an urban area is likely to contribute substantially to this Purpose as it is that land that provides the boundary and zone of constraint to urban expansion. Land that is more remote is likely to become progressively less important to this Purpose (although development in such areas, by virtue of being remote, is likely to be perceived potentially as 'sprawl'). Another important consideration in assessing the potential of land parcels against this Purpose is whether the land is well contained or not. Where land is well contained it is more likely that development may be accommodated within it without giving rise to the perception of 'sprawl' as the development would be contained by logical and clearly identifiable physical and/or visual boundaries, reducing its influence upon the land beyond.
- 3.2.3 Within East Herts there are some areas where the urban area has expanded to boundaries that are poorly defined – such as the northern edge of

Hoddesdon where development forms a stark edge to an open field, and some western parts of Sawbridgeworth. As a consequence there is the perception of poorly contained growth. To the contrary, well planned settlements (such as the New Town of Stevenage) have been very well defined by a combination of sensitivity to local topography and the inclusion of strategic woodland planting, and the town has a very limited influence on the countryside within the district beyond and there is no perception of 'sprawl'.

- 3.2.4 This Purpose has a strong relationship with Purpose 3 (safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment).
- 3.2.5 There are areas around the towns where land and/or features create defined thresholds between the edge of the urban area and the outlying countryside beyond (such as parcels 1 and 14). Such areas provide clear physical and visual containment of the urban area and protect the land beyond. These areas are judged as being of fundamental importance to the containment of the urban area, where there are no other similar areas that lie further from the urban edge that could fulfil a similar function in respect of this Purpose if urban expansion were to take place.
- 3.2.6 The south western, western and northern periphery of Bishop's Stortford is very clearly defined and contained by the bypass and associated 'inner' strategic landscape and recreational 'buffers' and 'wedges'. Countryside beyond (within parcels 62-64) is strongly rural and often open. Any development extending beyond these well-defined limits is most likely to lead to the perception of 'sprawl' with development being particularly apparent and uncontained within the landscape. Road and landscape buffers (in the Green Belt) form the 'first line of defence' against the extension of the town and preventing 'sprawl' of the town into the wider countryside.
- 3.2.7 The perception of 'sprawl' can, of course, be reduced by sensitive development planning including the creation of robust green infrastructure which provides a framework to new development. This is very evident at Stevenage and at Bishop's Stortford where development has been planned and strategic planting used to assimilate development (although at Bishop's Stortford the pattern of development has also been influenced by the line of the bypass). Therefore, whilst areas may be identified as being of importance to this purpose, this does not necessarily mean that development could not be accommodated in a sensitive manner which reduces/avoids the perception of 'sprawl'. Early investment in green infrastructure to establish frameworks for future development should be a key component in strategic planning to meet future long term development needs.
- 3.2.8 In other areas thresholds are much less defined, but the land nevertheless still provides a good level of containment around the urban edge, ensuring a reasonable 'fit' of the urban area within its landscape context. These areas are categorised as being of 'Major' importance. There may be other locations, further from the urban edge that have the potential to perform a similar function if the urban area were to expand (for example at parcel 03 where an

area adjoining the eastern edge of Stevenage is well contained by rising land beyond and is distinct from the wider area).

3.2.9 The 'Moderate' category applies to land that is more remote from the urban area where other intervening land fulfils a containment function. Further away from the settlement the land generally provides less of a contribution of this purpose and may be categorised as being of 'Slight/Negligible' importance with respect to this Purpose, purely because of distance. However, any large scale development in these more remote areas is very likely to be perceived as 'sprawl' as such development will be unrelated to existing built up areas. Sustainability considerations are in any case likely to preclude such development unless a new settlement is proposed. The emerging District Plan does not propose any new settlements, although the identification of the Gilston area for the development of some 5-10,000 homes, whilst not described as such, seems rather like to a new settlement.

3.2.10 Where the parcel is very closely related to an existing town and particularly influenced by its physical and visual presence, the land may also be categorised as being of 'Slight/Negligible' importance with respect to this Purpose as the perception of 'sprawl' is already readily apparent. In such locations there may be opportunities to adjust the Green Belt boundary to a create a boundary that provides greater containment, a better 'fit' for existing or potential development, and one that respects the landscape characteristics of the place (as at parcel 59).

3.2.11 Land considered to be of 'No' importance to the Purpose is generally land that is almost entirely contained by existing urban development (parcels 65-67 at Bishop's Stortford, for example). However, these areas may be important for other reasons – such as local landscape character, contribution to settlement form or recreation and may be afforded local policy protection.

Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

3.2.12 The primary function of this Purpose is clear – it is to prevent towns merging. However, it raises the question about whether closing the gap between towns without them merging (either physically or visually) would be acceptable, and whether the merger of other smaller settlements is strictly covered by this Purpose. The Framework makes no mention of minimum distances (para. 2.9 of superseded PPG2 indicated that "*wherever practicable a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable open zone all around the built-up area concerned*").

3.2.13 For this assessment we have assumed that the main towns and large village of Watton-at-Stone should remain separate with a clear physical and visual distinction between them such that they retain their separate identities and setting. Despite the fact that the strict definition of the Purpose appears to exclude them, significant smaller settlements are also of relevance and these are considered within the assessment, but do not influence the assessment of

the performance of land against this Purpose. The review of the performance of areas of Green Belt against this Purpose is informed by an understanding of whether there is the potential for the intervening land to accommodate a strategic level of development without prejudicing the physical and visual distinction between the main settlements.

- 3.2.14 In areas where new development is likely to result in physical coalescence, or at the very least a clearly recognisable perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identity and character of either / both settlements, the land is considered to be 'Paramount' to this Purpose and its retention in Green Belt is of fundamental importance. Unsurprisingly parcels that are of this level of importance to the Purpose are limited to areas where towns are in very close proximity (parcel 44 between east Hertford and south Ware, and parcels 53 and 54 which separate north east Harlow from Sawbridgeworth, for example).
- 3.2.15 In areas where there is no significant existing inter-visibility between towns, and where some development could be accommodated without causing merger or the perception of merging, the retention of the land within Green Belt is considered to be of 'Major' importance to this Purpose. In such areas development may lead to a substantial reduction of the separation between other smaller settlements (such as Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets, for example) and this will be a consideration that is important particularly where development could lead to coalescence between smaller settlements which, in turn, may lead to a perception of merging between neighbouring towns.
- 3.2.16 The performance of the land against this Purpose reduces with the increase in distance between settlements, as not all of the land is likely to be important to maintaining separation. Where a strategic level of development may be accommodated without compromising this Purpose the land may be categorised as being of 'Moderate' importance to the Purpose. However, smaller settlements may be subject to a significant reduction in physical and visual separation, or potential merger as a result of such development.
- 3.2.17 There are areas of Green Belt on the edge of a town which has a relationship with another town, but which do not lie directly between two towns, and where the separation between the adjoining towns is already less at another point. Subject always to the details of the particular situation, and with due regard to potential cumulative effects, such areas of Green Belt could be considered to be of 'Slight/Negligible' importance in contributing to this purpose, as strategic development could be accommodated without reducing the separation any more than may already be the case in the overall relationship between the two built up areas. In such cases, much will depend on local landscape and visual characteristics – where land is very well contained such that development would not lead to a noticeable 'merging', the cumulative effect is likely to be less of a consideration.
- 3.2.18 Where Green Belt land does not lie between two principal settlements it is adjudged as being of 'No' importance to the Purpose (such as the parcels

north and east of Ware, and Green Belt parcels contained within the urban area of Bishop's Stortford).

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 3.2.19 Any Green Belt land around the periphery of the town may be said to fulfil this Purpose. It is the overall restrictive nature of Green Belt policy that protects the surrounding countryside by preventing development and directing it towards existing settlements.
- 3.2.20 The former guidance provided in PPG2 made it clear that the quality of the landscape is not a reason for designating land as Green Belt. Whilst this is not included in the Framework, for the purposes of this review it has been assumed that the principle remains. The reasons for which the designation was originally made must be taken as the reasons for land being in the Green Belt.
- 3.2.21 The consideration of this Purpose has been informed by an understanding of the principal landscape and visual characteristics of the parcels of land based on site work, and by the information provided in the East Herts Landscape Character Assessment (2007) (EHLCA). Unfortunately, the published assessment did not include an evaluation of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of the character areas to different types of development, which would have informed the consideration of this Purpose. However it follows that, all other things being equal, areas that have a strong unspoilt, largely intact rural character could be afforded particular protection via this Purpose, in contrast with those areas that possess a semi-urban character and where encroachment has already occurred. Such areas may offer the potential for repair and/or enhancement through a well-considered approach to development. Any urban extension may be considered to be an 'encroachment' into countryside. This is where consideration of landscape character and the potential ability of the landscape to accommodate change fulfil an important role.
- 3.2.22 Whilst the quality of the land is not a reason for designation, where land is identified as possessing a strong unspoilt rural character the land is likely to perform a more critical role in protecting the countryside from encroachment. In such areas any such encroachment is likely to have a far more significant adverse effect on the characteristics of the countryside and its perception compared to land that possesses a much weaker or semi urban character where the influences of development are already apparent and an intrinsic part of the prevailing character. Such areas may be deemed to contribute less to safeguarding land from encroachment or may no longer be perceived to be part of the open countryside.
- 3.2.23 Whilst the EHLCA does define landscape strategies which are appropriate to the various character areas, the simple assumption that a character area that has a 'Conserve and Restore' landscape strategy is 'more important or

valuable' and could accommodate development more successfully than an area that has an 'Improve and Restore' strategy would be misplaced. Each character area is different. An open, simple arable landscape that is visually exposed having, perhaps, suffered from an erosion of its landscape structure through intensive agricultural practices (and therefore subject to an 'Improve and Restore' strategy), may still have a strong character (influenced by topography, for example) and would be vulnerable to change by development which is likely to be widely visible and poorly assimilated leading to a very evident visual and perceived sense of encroachment. On the other hand, sensitive development in an area that has a strong landscape structure may perhaps be integrated more successfully and be less apparent as an encroachment into wider countryside.

Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 3.2.24 Hertford and the north east side of Sawbridgeworth are the only towns that have a noticeable historical character (as identified by Conservation Areas for instance) that extends to the outer edge of the settlements. The other towns have no apparent relationship between their older historic parts and the wider landscape setting provided by the surrounding land within the Green Belt due to more recent development which has separated such areas from the hinterland. Nor are the towns within the Green Belt of a nature where principal historic features are evident over a wide area (as is the case at such as Salisbury or Chichester with their cathedrals, for example).
- 3.2.25 At Bishop's Stortford parts of the town's Conservation Area extend into the inner parts of the defined 'green wedges'. These 'historic' areas do not contribute to the wider setting of the historic part of the town (which is generally contained by more recent development); however, the parts of the designated area lying within these 'wedges' do contribute to its setting/historic character at a local level and have therefore been considered in connection with purpose 4 in the relevant parcel assessments.
- 3.2.26 Of the Group 1 villages, only Watton-at-Stone lies within Green Belt and has a Conservation Area which extends to and beyond its periphery; it therefore has a direct relationship with its wider setting provided by surrounding land within Green Belt. For the purposes of this assessment this purpose has been used in assessing the Green Belt at this settlement (which is inset within Green Belt).
- 3.2.27 Group 2 villages within the Green Belt (Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets, Hertingfordbury, High Wych, Wadesmill/Thundridge, Tewin, Aston) have Conservation Areas that extend to their peripheries adjoining Green Belt (and sometimes beyond) but the Green Belt has not been assessed in relation to these settlements.

Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land

3.2.28 If there is any effect at all, it is the overall restrictive nature of Green Belt that, though its limitation of the supply of other development opportunities encourages regeneration and re-use of land. It is therefore impossible to judge how any given parcel of land would contribute to the fulfilment of this Purpose. This purpose is not considered within the Green Belt review as all land in the Green Belt in East Herts District would fulfil the purpose equally.

3.3 Matrix of the assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
1	Paramount	None	Paramount	None	1. Land creates strong distinctive strong edge to the town, with large areas of woodland which provide visual containment. No other such strong boundaries lie beyond. Inner Green Belt boundary well defined. Outer edge poorly defined in part along field boundaries. 3. Strong, unspoilt landscape with no intrusion from development, protected by Green Belt.	Very Low
2	Paramount	None	Paramount	None	1. Land creates strong distinctive edge and containment to the town, with land falling away eastwards into Beane valley. Green Belt boundary adjoining town well defined. Outer edge (outside parcel) reasonably well defined along lanes but poor along field boundaries in some places 3. Strong unspoilt landscape; well-defined landscape structure of fields/vegetation pattern	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					falling generally eastwards away from Stevenage. Little/no sense of encroachment due to well contained urban edge and area being almost entirely free of development; very slight encroachment at edge of Aston.	
3	Major	None	Major	None	1. Land partly under influence of adjoining part of Stevenage but designation does prevent outward growth of urban edge, particularly into area with smaller field pattern which is reasonably contained. Gresley Way provides a very clearly defined and robust edge, except at Aston End where development has extended to the east and part of Green Belt boundary is defined only by a tree belt. An alternative eastern boundary is likely to involve following Aston End Road (contiguous with the ridge) and Broadwater Lane back to Gresley Way, although this would involve potential development rising up onto conspicuous slopes which contain the	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>urban area. Inner Green Belt boundary (within district) reasonably well defined along identifiable features</p> <p>3. Parcel provides containment of Stevenage through combination of strong landscape structure, and ridge on west side of Beane valley (on eastern edge of parcel) which provides containment of central part from open countryside beyond.. Perception of encroachment with development extending up to district boundary at Aston End. Some encroachment at Aston but influence is limited. If alternative boundary considered (as described re. purpose 1 above), development would lead to clear encroachment into countryside beyond generally well-defined boundary and loss of separate identity of Aston within its intimate landscape setting.</p> <p>4. Aston has a Conservation Area (but is not a</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					historic town/large village).	
4	Paramount	Major	Paramount	None	<p>1. Green Belt between Stevenage and district boundary checks sprawl, with parcel separated from urban edge, Raised landform contains town to west of parcel.</p> <p>2. Lies between edge of Stevenage and Watton-at-Stone which is 1.5km wide.</p> <p>3. Designation prevents potential encroachment from Stevenage along valley/road/rail corridor on southern edge and from encroachment onto higher land with strong character. Southern part contains eastward expansion along A602 corridor.</p>	Very Low
5	Moderate in north western part (Slight/Negligible in southern	Major (reducing to Moderate in south)	Paramount	None	<p>1. Railway provides strong boundary on south edge of Stevenage, although crematorium has gone beyond this boundary; large scale open landscape where development would be perceived as 'sprawl'. Green Belt boundaries largely outside parcel; well-defined on edge of Stevenage on northern edge.</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
	part)				<p>2. Northern part lies between Stevenage and the large village of Knebworth (lying outside district); just over 1km apart) but no intervisibility or perception of relationship between these two main towns. Also contributes to separation between smaller settlements of Woolmer Green (beyond district boundary) and Datchworth and large village of Watton-at-Stone. Gap between Stevenage and Hertford is large (8km+).</p> <p>3. Countryside possesses strong rural and open character that is very vulnerable to encroachment of development beyond the very well defined boundary formed by the railway on the edges of Stevenage and Watton-at-Stone.</p>	
6	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Major	Major	<p>1. Other designations and constraints limit encroachment but Green Belt deters encroachment of development out to bypass.</p> <p>2. Northern edge of village lies 3km from south east</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					edge of Stevenage. North edge of Hertford is 4.8km to south. 3. Green Belt designation assists with preventing encroachment on northern side and eastern sides; additional constraints restrict development on south side. 4. Applies in southern part where Conservation Area extends out from village and forms part of setting.	
7	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	1. Land does not adjoin large built up area; other factors restrict 'sprawl' of Watton-at-Stone. Outer Green Belt boundary poorly defined along tracks/field boundaries in places. 2. North edge of Hertford is 4.8km to south. 3. Encroachment of Watton-at-Stone into this area is constrained by parcel 6 and A602. Little impact from existing built development. Strong rural character protected by Green Belt.	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
8	Slight/Negligible	Slight/Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Parcel forms part of land which limits 'sprawl' of dispersed smaller settlements. Northern part provides contribution to containment of Datchworth (a village, not a large built-up area).</p> <p>2. Northern part of parcel lies between Knebworth and Watton-at-Stone (two large villages rather than towns), where smaller settlement of Datchworth is located. It therefore provides a limited contribution to the separation of these smaller settlements.</p> <p>3. Some encroachment from smaller settlements/dispersed development. Designation provides constraint to further development in and around existing settlements.</p>	Low
9	Slight/Negligible	Slight/Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Parcel does not adjoin large built up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose, although it does restrict 'sprawl' of Tewin (which are not a large built up areas).</p> <p>2. Burnham/Bull's Green not a town. Parcel lies</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					partly between eastern and north eastern suburbs of Welwyn (1.6-1.7km), and large village of Watton-at-Stone (1.6km) to the east. 3. Significant encroachment from Burnham Green but well integrated with little wider impact on countryside. Designation provides constraint to further development in and around existing loose settlements.	
10	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	1. Land does not adjoin large built up area but Welwyn Garden City is in close proximity to west and south. 2. Lies in western part of countryside separating north east side of Welwyn Garden City from north west side of Hertford. The gap between these two towns is narrower to the south. 3. Little encroachment from development in parcel with development boundaries well defined. Designation is deterrent to encroachment along	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					south west side of Burnham Green/Tewin Wood and south west side of Tewin. 4. Tewin has a Conservation Area which adjoins east side of parcel (but is not a historic town/large village).	
11	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	1. Land does not adjoin large built up area but Welwyn Garden City is in reasonable proximity to west. 2. Lies in countryside separating north east side of Welwyn Garden City from north west side of Hertford. Gap between these two towns is narrower to south. 3. Designation is deterrent to encroachment along south side of Tewin Wood. Boundary on north west side of Tewin is along edges of small fields/back gardens which is a less robust, well-defined Green Belt edge to inset settlement. More coherent boundary possible along the tree-lined track/byway	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					to the west (Back Lane) but this is significantly beyond the village and would open up this small scale landscape area to encroachment, potentially joining Tewin to Upper Green leading to loss of settlement character/identity. 4. Tewin (which is not a historic town/large village) has a Conservation Area, the north west side of which adjoins south east edge of parcel	
12	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	1. Land remote from large built up area. 2. Part of a wide gap (6km) between north east Welwyn Garden City and north west Hertford and distinct from both towns. 3. Designation is deterrent to encroachment into open unsettled countryside beyond east side of Tewin and Tewin Wood. Boundary to Tewin is along edges of small fields/back gardens which is a weak Green Belt edge to inset settlement. No obvious location for an alternative, more coherent	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					boundary available although some minor rationalisation around the village edge may be possible, such as north of Godfries Close where a small field is largely contained within the village envelope and distinct from countryside beyond, and an area of 'back land' south of Harwood Close.	
13	Major/ Moderate	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	<p>4. Tewin has a Conservation Area which adjoins west side of parcel (but is not a historic town/large village).</p> <p>1. Land south and west of district boundary, which is narrow in parts, fulfils purpose except at north west end where parcel boundary runs very close to edge of Welwyn Garden City, and contribution to this purpose is therefore higher.</p> <p>2. Parcel lies, in part, between edge of Welwyn Garden City and west Hertford (3km).</p> <p>3. Designation contributes to strong constraint to encroachment of development on edge of Welwyn</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
14	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	<p>Garden City into Mimram valley.</p> <p>1. Whilst recreational land and woodland on edge of town contain the town edge, the area contributes to the very well defined and clear edge of the town which checks 'sprawl' of Welwyn Garden City. Western side of Green Belt in district (adjoining Welwyn Garden City) is well defined by woodland.</p> <p>2. Lies at western edge of gap (4km wide) that separates east side of Welwyn Garden City from west side of Hertford. No perception of proximity between the two.</p> <p>3. Parcel makes particular contribution to preventing encroachment; development extending out from town would be perceived as separate, unrelated development. It would be possible to create new outer edge with large scale structure planting linking existing woodlands to contain area.</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
15	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Contributes to containment of town, although intervening land within parcel 14 to north and beyond District to south west/west fulfills purpose to greater degree.</p> <p>2. Lies at western edge of gap (4km wide) that separates east side of Welwyn Garden City from west side of Hertford. No perception of proximity between the two.</p> <p>3. Parcel contributes to purpose by restricting encroachment but intervening land fulfills this purpose to a greater degree. Landfill site well contained from land to east. Any development would be perceived as separate development unrelated to Welwyn Garden City.</p>	Low
16	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Contributes little to containment of town and intervening land on edge of Welwyn Garden City fulfills purpose to greater degree.</p> <p>2. Lies towards western edge of gap (4km wide) that</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					separates east side of Welwyn Garden City from west side of Hertford. No perception of proximity between the two. 3. Parcel contributes to purpose by restricting encroachment of development at Cole Green (village) and adjoining major road junction. Any significant development would be perceived as clear encroachment into open countryside altering the character of Cole Green.	
17	Slight/ Negligible	Major	Paramount	None	1. Contributes little to containment of Hertford and intervening land fulfils purpose to greater degree. 2. Occupies large central part of gap (4km wide) that separates east side of Welwyn Garden City from west side of Hertford. No perception of proximity between the two but development could lead to perception of narrowing of separation. 3. Parcel contributes to purpose by restricting encroachment of development at small settlements,	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					maintaining their compact and separate forms. Any significant development would be perceived as encroachment into open countryside.	
18	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible	Major	Moderate	<p>1. Adjoins edge of Hertford and provides strong deterrent to encroachment, although there are other constraints in some parts (flood risk; Conservation Area around Hertingfordbury; TPO woodland between A414 and edge of Hertford). The A414 forms a well-defined edge to the north, although a small generally wooded area of Green Belt lies in the north east corner between the A414 and rear garden boundaries on the settlement edge. The A414 forms a more robust and clear enduring boundary in this area.</p> <p>2. Lies on eastern edge of gap (4km wide) that separates west side of Hertford from east side of Welwyn Garden City. No perception of proximity between the two. Risk of merger with</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>Hertingfordbury but as Hertingfordbury is a village this purpose has limited weight.</p> <p>3. Distinctive character to the parcel with Mimram valley, historic village, Hertingfordbury Park (where there is some development), which Green Belt designation assists in safeguarding from encroachment by development.</p> <p>4. Hertingfordbury has a Conservation Area and there are other historic characteristics to the area; whilst not a historic town/large village its historic character contributes to local setting of Hertford.</p>	
19	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Little contribution as land is separated from Welwyn Garden City.</p> <p>2. Limited contribution; other land provides separation and other strong boundaries exist to contain growth of adjoin towns.</p> <p>3. Land is rural and designation deters encroachment of development into countryside</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					around the village of Letty Green.	
20	Slight/ Negligible (Paramount at eastern end)	Moderate	Major	None	1. Extensive parcel making very little contribution as remote from Welwyn Garden City and Hertford (except eastern end). Outward growth of Hertford limited by flood risk and clear threshold of railway. 2. Moderate contribution as forms large part of gap between Welwyn Garden City/Hertford. Currently no perception of proximity between the two towns. 3. Parcel with generally strong rural character extending along broad ridge and slopes separating Lee valley from Mimram tributary valley to north, enhanced by topographical variation; largely devoid of development (but some encroachment from mineral extraction although reasonably well contained).	Low/ Very Low
21	Major	None	Major	Slight/ Negligible	1. Outward growth of Hertford limited by clear threshold of railway, reinforced by woodland. Extension beyond this edge likely to be perceived as	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>'sprawl'; no stronger boundaries exist beyond.</p> <p>2. Parcel lies on fringe of large area that lies directly between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City but gap is narrower to north.</p> <p>3. Railway contains Hertford, preventing physical and visual encroachment of development. Broadly rural character with limited development in historic parkland at Bayfordbury.</p> <p>4. Very limited contribution from parkland at Bayfordbury to setting of this edge of town.</p>	
22	Paramount	None	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible	<p>1. Existing settlement edge well defined such that extent of town has very little/no influence on parcel. Extension beyond this edge likely to be perceived as 'sprawl'; weaker boundaries exist beyond.</p> <p>2. Does not lie directly between two towns.</p> <p>3. Provides strong constraint to development; no influence of urban area. Development would be perceived as encroachment into unspoilt rural and</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					elevated countryside which is almost entirely free of development and contributes to wider character and setting of adjacent parkland and southern approach to town; landscape strategy is to resist development that affects such areas. 4. Slight contribution of area owing to setting provided by parkland on this edge of the town.	
23	Major	None	Major	Moderate	1. Varied settlement edge, weak in places where Green Belt boundary aligned along back gardens, which gives impression of poorly contained development. Boundaries further south are all generally weak and offer little scope for alternative well defined Green Belt boundary unless reinforced. 2. Does not lie directly between two towns (village of Hertford Heath is closer to south eastern edge of Hertford as opposed to this southern edge). 3. Some influence and sense of encroachment of urban area along northern parts of parcel. Otherwise	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>broadly elevated area with strong rural and parkland character associated with Brickendonbury; landscape strategy is to resist development that affects such areas. Discreet valley and pocket of land in north eastern part where Oak Grove comprises a small residential estate separated from the urban area by a redundant playing field (both within Green Belt). The residential estate does not contribute to the openness of the Green Belt and so could be removed with no significant adverse effect on the integrity of the Green Belt in this location. To create a rational boundary this would also require removal of the intervening disused playing field. Whilst this would lead to a reduction in openness, it would not have a significant effect on the integrity of the Green Belt due to the well-contained nature of the field.</p> <p>4. Locally distinctive area of parkland within much of</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					parcel which contributes locally to town's setting.	
24	Moderate	Slight/ Negligible	Moderate	Moderate	<p>1. Existing institutional and open space uses appear to limit opportunities for extension of urban area into this parcel. Existing inner boundaries well defined along roads and outer boundaries of parcel defined primarily by tree belts on east side of Balls Park and at caravan park which could, with reinforcement in places, provide alternative Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>2. Development within parcel would lead to slight reduction in separation between Hertford and north west side of Hoddesdon, although gap is currently nearly 4km wide. Hertford Heath 1km to east of parcel (and is a village) but topography and vegetation provide containment.</p> <p>3. Encroachment evident with school related and other development evident within parcel. Caravan site on southern side of parcel is also a local encroachment into countryside. Other designations</p>	Moderate

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>exist (Balls Park Registered Parks and Gardens which forms much of area; Green Finger) which also constrains development.</p> <p>4. North west side adjoins Hertford Conservation Area and there is a relationship between Balls Park and this area; land contributes locally to setting of historic part of town but already contains some development.</p>	
25	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible; None	<p>1. Land separated from urban edge therefore contributes less to this purpose, although any development likely to be perceived as unrelated to town.</p> <p>2. Lies within gap between south east Hertford and north west Hoddesdon (4km+). Woodland and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side.</p> <p>Hertford Heath (a large village) lies to east and development in parcel would lead to reduction in</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					separation. 3. Strong rural and partly open character where any development would appear as encroachment and unrelated to Hertford. 4. Limited contribution (northern end only) to landscape setting of Balls Park.	
26	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	1. Land separated from urban edge therefore contributes less to this purpose. Boundaries defined by roads and woodland edges. Any development in parcel would be unrelated to existing town and perceived as 'sprawl'. 2. Lies within gap between south east Hertford and north west Hoddesdon (2km+). Vegetation and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side. Hertford Heath (a large village) adjoins parcel on north east side and development in parcel would lead to reduction in separation with Hertford.	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					3. Parcel has strong rural character and is almost entirely free of development; very large areas of woodland (much of it Ancient) and mosaic of small fields, with latter vulnerable to western expansion of Hertford Heath (although this boundary is very clearly defined, physically and visually).	
27	None	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	<p>1. Parcel does not adjoin large built-up area.</p> <p>2. Lies within gap between north west Hoddesdon and south east Hertford (3.5km+). Vegetation and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side.</p> <p>Hertford Heath (a large village) adjoins parcel on north side and development in south east part of parcel would lead to reduction in separation/possible merger with Hoddesdon, although A10 and Parcel 27A intervenes.</p> <p>3. Strong varied undulating character comprising mosaic of small scale farmland and extensive</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					woodland (some Ancient) with very limited ribbon development on south/south east side of Hertford Heath. SSSI on south side of village.	
27a	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Major	None	<p>1. Adjoins north west edge of Hoddesdon and restricts development extending out to A10, although this major road forms a well-defined physical boundary which would limit outward expansion.</p> <p>2. Lies within gap between north west Hoddesdon and south east Hertford (3.5km+). Vegetation and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side. Development within parcel would not lead to physical or perception of merging.</p> <p>3. In character terms forms part of Parcel 27 although small scale nature has been eroded by field amalgamation and land is now separated from landscape to west by A10. Green Belt boundary</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					along urban edge unclear with scope for some rationalisation (such as exclusion of narrow finger of woodland between Ellis Close and Gosse Close. If the entire parcel were to be excluded this could lead to encroachment of development beyond the 'soft' edge which currently defines the edge of the town, although the A10 could provide an alternative robust boundary in conjunction with Hailey Lane to the north; this will require cross-boundary co-operation as not all of the existing Green Belt boundary lies within the District.	
28	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	1. Does not adjoin large built up area (Hertford Heath is a large village). Parcel distinct from clusters of development east of A10 which forms strong physical boundary set back from those areas of development. 2. Lies within gap between north west Hoddesdon and south east Hertford (3km+). Vegetation and	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side. Hertford Heath (is a large village) adjoins parcel on west side and is contained by woodland. 3. Woodland (Ancient Woodland and network of wildlife sites, including SSSI) contains Hertford Heath to the east and extends to A10. Significant development at Haileybury College (major Developed Site in Green Belt) and associated recreational uses assimilated well by woodland and trees. Other areas have strong wooded character with some small pockets of contained pasture. Whilst the constraints largely preclude encroachment in most of area, Green Belt designation provides over-arching constraint, particularly at college.	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
29	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	<p>1. Does not adjoin large built up area (Hertford Heath is a large village). North east boundary of village formed by rear gardens which defines Green Belt edge. Parcel separated from clusters of development north east of A10, which forms clear physical boundary to those areas of development that lie beyond in parcel 45; south east edge of Hertford contained by A414 and associated planting.</p> <p>2. Lies within gap between north west Hoddesdon and south east Hertford (2.8km). Vegetation and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or perception of towns on either side. However, intervisibility with development to north/north east means that any development in prominent location will lead to a perception of a reduction in separation. Hertford Heath (is a large village) adjoins parcel on south west side 3. Unsettled and open with folded, elevated topography with rural character, and</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					exposed to views from north/north east. Provides clear perception of open countryside in a locality that contains significant development. 4. Whilst north/north east part of Hertford Heath is a Conservation Area it is not a historic town.	
30	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	1. Northern side adjoins south east Hertford but separated from it by A414 and associated woodland belt; it is this strong boundary that checks 'sprawl' of town but Green Belt designation provides constraint to development extending beyond this threshold. Boundary defined along rear edges residential development at Hertford Heath. Development extending into parcel likely to be perceived as 'sprawl' and only roads on parcel boundaries beyond form potential alternative boundaries. 2. Lies within gap between south east Hertford and north west Hoddesdon (2.8km). Woodland and landform intervenes such that no intervisibility or	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
1					<p>perception of towns on either side. Hertford Heath (a large village) lies to south-east and development in parcel would lead to reduction in separation.</p> <p>3. Open, rather plain rural character, contrasting sharply with urban area to north (which is quite well screened), rising up through open fields to edge of Hertford Heath. Mid and upper slopes exposed to wide views from north/north east. Only settlement is small cluster of properties at Rush Green and Foxholes Farm set in a local fold in the landform. Provides clear perception of openness in a locality that contains significant development.</p> <p>4. Whilst north part of Hertford Heath is a Conservation Area it is not a historic town. No connection or contribution to setting of historic core of Hertford.</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
31	Major	Major	Major	Slight/ Negligible	<p>1. Eastern edge adjoins west edge of Hertford where existing roads form Green Belt boundary; woodland beyond provides containment and a potential alternative Green Belt boundary which would contain development preventing perception of sprawl.</p> <p>2. Area forms substantial part of gap (3km wide) which separates west side of Hertford from east side of Welwyn Garden City. No intervisibility or sense of proximity although western edge is very close (0.5km) to edge of Welwyn Garden City.</p> <p>3. Mimram valley and associated slopes, with wooded edges and very strong designed parkland character with series of ponds/lakes. Almost whole parcel is a Registered Parks and Gardens. Some encroachment from sand/gravel extraction.</p> <p>4. No relationship between parkland landscape and historic core of Hertford; also little perception of</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					valley as largely concealed from view by fringing woodland.	
31a	None	None	None	None	<p>1. Area of Green Belt that already lies within the town. Additional development would not constitute sprawl.</p> <p>2. No contribution to separation – parcel lies within urban area, with Thieves Lane and development forming clear boundary to west.</p> <p>3. No contribution to purpose – the land is partly developed and other parts are in recreational use; it does not form countryside.</p> <p>4. No relationship to historic core of Hertford</p>	High
32	Slight/ Negligible; Major (south eastern part)	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount (Moderate in area just north of Welwyn Road)	None	<p>1. Woodland and development forms boundary on north west side of Hertford (very weak Green Belt edge just north of Welwyn Road). Potential to define more robust edge (in physical and visual terms) along woodland a little further out from existing edge. Development beyond this edge likely to be</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					evident as uncontained growth as landscape is open with no other clearly defined boundaries. 2. Parcel lies in gap between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City (over 3km wide); substantial woodland intervenes. No intervisibility or sense of proximity. 3. Broad open, exposed landscape beyond more immediate vicinity of town, containing very little settlement, bisected by valley of Beane tributary, with some distant woodland blocks. Any development beyond more immediate woodland would be a clear encroachment into open countryside.	
33	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	None	1. Separated from edge of large built-up areas. Where parcel forms outer edge of Green Belt, boundary defined along minor roads. 2. Occupies large tract of land north of Hertford and south of Watton-at-Stone (large village) which are separated by some 4.7km; intervening parcels 6 and	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					34 provide principal constraint on edges of these built up areas. 3. Strong distinctive rural character of the Lower Beane valley, with flat valley floor and steep valley sides. Little settlement. Overlooked from valley slopes. Parkland character associated with Woodhall Park to north. Substantial areas of flood risk. Designation protects valley landscape which is highly sensitive to change.	
34	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount	Major	1. Area lies on northern fringe of Hertford and much of it is subject to other constraints; contains area from encroachment of urban area which is well defined by roads/woodlands in places but poorly defined in south east corner where there are various developments that create an incoherent built up edge. Contains some areas of development including a small estate of detached houses between disused railway and edge of Bengoe, part	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>of the linear settlement of Waterford and the developed parts of the Goldings estate; also a cemetery south of Bramfield Road which makes no contribution to Green Belt purpose as it is contained on three sides by existing development; Bramfield Road forms clear northern boundary.</p> <p>2. Very small part of substantial gap (5km) between town and Watton-at-Stone.</p> <p>3. Varied landscape of Lower Beane valley floor and associated slopes with large area of parkland at Goldings (Registered Parks and Gardens) and many other constraints (flooding along River Beane, access land, wildlife sites, Conservation Area in south east part; cemetery in southern part); significant woodland and tree belts creates small scale landscape, bisected by railway, which is well integrated in landscape. Fragmented in places with areas of development but generally well integrated</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					by vegetation. Areas of restored mineral workings on north east side where there is public access. Designation provides important protection, restricting further encroachment from piecemeal development. Cemetery prevents encroachment on southern edge but Bramfield Road forms a more logical boundary between town and countryside. 4. Important contribution to setting/character of town with Conservation Area which extends into town in south east part; parkland also contributes to northern setting.	
35	Paramount (Slight/ Negligible in southern corner)	Slight/ Negligible	Paramount (Slight/ Negligible in southern corner)	Slight/ Negligible	1. Only southern end of parcel adjoins built up area where Green Belt boundary follows weak boundary where there are allotments and a nursery. Outer boundary defined along minor roads. Designation has constrained growth of town into this area. Any significant development extending beyond	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>immediate edge of town would be perceived as 'sprawl'; local opportunity here to strengthen boundary in conjunction with small development of nursery site.</p> <p>2. Parcel is of no relevance to purpose. Nearest outlying settlement of significance is the large village of Watton-at-Stone 5km to north.</p> <p>3. Large tract of primarily arable land, with strong rural character; visually very exposed on raised broad ridge that separates the Beane and Rib valleys and contains the town from the countryside to the north. Some blocks of woodland (some Ancient). Little settlement except for small 'isolated' hamlet at Chapmore End on north east edge of parcel. Clear defined transition to urban area at Bengoe at southern end, partly softened by weak vegetation and fringe uses (nursery and allotments). Any development beyond this small area would lead</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					to very prominent encroachment into this widely exposed, generally open and largely elevated area of mainly unspoilt countryside. 4. Conservation Area, extending out from town, abuts southern end of parcel where land is urban fringe and makes limited contribution to setting.	
36	Paramount	None	Paramount	Major	1. Rib valley where floodplain provides substantial constraint to expansion of town. Southern boundary abuts north east edge of Hertford and defines edge of open arable valley farmland. No stronger boundary exists within parcel. 2. Parcel is of no relevance to purpose. 3. Flood constraint imposes limitation to encroachment but Green Belt boundary on edge of town on southern edge is visually weak in places; designation has assisted in containing development from encroaching physically into the open and distinctive landscape of the Rib valley. Settlement in	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>parcel limited to cluster of development in vicinity of Crouchfield Farm/Crouchfield Lane. Southern part of Valley allows views towards east central part of Hertford, and wooded raised ridge at interfluvium of Rib and Lee valleys. Any development would be a clear encroachment into this open and distinctive valley landscape.</p> <p>4. South eastern corner of parcel very close to edge of Conservation Area extending into town. Valley allows views towards east central part of Hertford, and wooded raised ridge at interfluvium of Rib and Lee valleys. The land therefore contributes to the historic setting and character of Hertford.</p>	
36a	Major	None	Major	Paramount	<p>1. Green Belt acts as constraint to development extending into the Lee valley, which could be perceived as sprawl.</p> <p>2. Provides local separation between two parts of the same town, not between separate towns.</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>3. Distinctive part of the Lee valley forming part of Hertford Green Finger extending into the centre of town. Belt of woodland along steep northern valley side provides strong buffer on edge of town; tree belts also contain other parts of urban edge. Recreational uses in western part but overall the area has a mainly rural character which belies its proximity to the town. Whilst other constraints exist (wildlife sites, recreational uses) Green Belt does provide protection.</p> <p>4. Most of area forms part of large Conservation Area extending to the heart of the town. The area makes a very significant contribution to the north eastern setting of the historic town.</p>	
37	Major	Major	Paramount	Major	1. Wooded raised ridge at interfluvium of Rib and Lee valleys. East boundary defined by the A10, southern and western edges by break of slope on edge of floodplain. Separated from Hertford by floodplain	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>which checks outward growth. A10 provides strong boundary adjoining west edge of Ware. North boundary with similarly elevated land to the north, which is extensively quarried, is defined by woodland and tree belt. Designation contributes to restriction of westward extension of Ware, although A10 provides clear defensible edge.</p> <p>2. Land lies between western edge of Ware and north east side of Hertford, where the width of separation is around 1.5km. Development on this high land would erode a clear perception of the containment/separation that this area provides between the two built up areas.</p> <p>3. A distinctive heavily wooded raised landscape with areas of parkland. Woodland forms some strong internal boundaries. Development limited to Ware Park and farms, generally well contained by woodland and parkland. Due to elevation the area is</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					locally prominent, particularly from across the Lee valley, and forms an area of countryside extending between and separating the two towns. Development likely to be perceived as significant encroachment into countryside; inner parts more contained by woodland. 4. Prominent area of countryside which does contribute to the wider setting of Hertford and has visual connections into and out of the Lee valley within the town's Conservation Area.	
37a	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Moderate	Moderate	1. River Lea and related flood zone to south, and A10 provide limits to expansion on south west edge of Ware; Parcel therefore makes limited contribution to checking sprawl. Existing recreational uses provide significant constraint to development. 2. Ware and Hertford are much closer to each other to south but retention of undeveloped land on these exposed valley slopes does make some limited	Moderate

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>contribution to separation between south west Ware and north east Hertford.</p> <p>3.Land provides soft south western edge to Ware, with significant mature vegetation providing some visual containment from river valley (although larger employment development is prominent beyond) and valley slopes west of A10.</p> <p>4. Land separated from Ware Conservation Area by employment development although does contribute to southern setting of town and river valley which contributes to wider setting of historic parts of town</p>	
38	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Moderate	None	<p>1. Raised ridge north of interfluvium of Rib and Lee valleys. East boundary defined by the A10, southern edge by woodland and tree belt along boundary with parcel 37, northern boundary by A602, west boundary by break of slope on edge of floodplain. Area is extensively quarried (now landfill) and degraded; these uses and A10 is a strong constraint</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					to westward expansion of Ware, such that any development in this area (even if possible due to existing/past uses) would be divorced from the town and could be perceived as 'sprawl'. 2. Development would not give rise to merger or reduce the separation between Hertford and Ware as this is already narrower to the south. 3. Whilst in countryside, the area is degraded and in need of restoration when activities cease. Any development would be perceived as an encroachment into this area of countryside (although currently degraded, this could be restored). 4. No relationship with historic parts of Ware or Hertford.	
39	Major	Slight/ Negligible	Major (Moderate in south western part)	None	1. Designation contributes to restriction of north west extension of Ware, although A10 provides clear defensible edge to town. South east edge of parcel separated from land to west by A10 - land forms part	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>of Registered Parks and Gardens (see below) and restricts outward growth of Ware, although A10 exists as alternative boundary.</p> <p>2. Parcel is more than 4km from Watton-at-Stone to north west.</p> <p>3. Three areas of distinct character but unified by landform, forming south eastern valley side and elevated land above the Rib valley. South western part is a large area of mineral extraction (visually well contained); central part occupied by Hanbury Manor Hotel & Country Club complex discreet within golf course/remnant parkland, with small severed area of parkland south east of A10; northern part contains small ribbon development and small fields extending to edge of Thundridge.</p> <p>4. Whilst Hanbury Manor is Registered Parks and Gardens it has no clear relationship to setting or character of the closest Conservation Area, as it is</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					separated by extensive more recent development.	
40	Moderate	None	Major	None	<p>1. Parcel separated from northern edge of Ware by parcel 41.</p> <p>2. No relevance to purpose. Small village of Thundridge extending to Wadesmill directly to north.</p> <p>3. Open area of level farmland, bisected by A10, the character of which has been eroded by arable uses and the road, containing small areas of woodland; forms part of land that separates Thundridge/Wadesmill from northern edge of Ware. Protects land from southward expansion of village which forms a visible edge to the parcel.</p>	Low
41	Paramount	None	Paramount (Major in contained southern parts)	None	<p>1. Southern part of parcel adjoins north edge of Ware and provides constraint to extension of Ware, which is well contained by combination of vegetation, minor changes in landform and hedgerow structure within area of small fields immediately beyond northern edge of town. Some</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>potential to accommodate carefully sited development in this area which benefits from some containment and therefore limiting perception of uncontained growth, with the Green Belt boundary being relocated further out along existing (rather weak) features which could be reinforced further, development beyond these areas would be perceived as 'sprawl' and would appear largely unrelated to the town. The landscape is open beyond this more immediate area and no well-defined boundaries exist that could form an alternative Green Belt edge. Designation prevents development that could be perceived as 'sprawl' in this open gently undulating and quite exposed landscape beyond the immediate landscape of smaller fields. Outer Green Belt boundary poorly defined along field boundaries.</p> <p>2. No relevance to purpose. Small village of</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>Thundridge/Wadesmill to north separated from this parcel by parcel 40.</p> <p>3. Urban edge generally well contained by landscape with quite strong structure with some local visually prominent areas. Designation has limited encroachment into the countryside, which has strong, rural character that is visually exposed further away from the urban edge, and contains very little settlement; agricultural uses extend up to the urban boundary except at leisure/sports centre where there are recreational uses. Encroachment of any development outwards into the area adjoining the urban edge would be limited by the stronger landscape structure close to the settlement edge where there is scope to strengthen field boundaries to provide a new Green Belt edge; further beyond the landscape is open and any development would be a clear and very apparent encroachment into the</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					wider countryside.	
42	Paramount	None	Paramount	None	<p>1. Open landscape contained by local topography with variable boundaries to rear of development along most of the eastern edge of Ware. Designation prevents development that could be perceived as 'sprawl' in this mainly open gently undulating and quite exposed landscape. Some potential for local rationalisation of boundary in area south of Fanhams Hall Road where strong belt of trees along bridleway connects Elders Road to Fanhams Hall Road; this, together with the road could form a new boundary and provide containment. Outer Green Belt boundary defined along field boundaries and farm track.</p> <p>3. Parcel within southern part of extensive Wareside-Braughing Uplands LCA which is elevated and gently undulating due to small valleys of</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					Farnham Tributaries; characterised by exposed open arable land with extensive and far-reaching views, broken only by small copses and trees. Existing urban area generally well contained within lower lying land. Any strategic level of development would appear as substantial encroachment into this strongly rural area. If area mentioned above removed from Green Belt, any development within would encroach into this area of countryside but could be contained from wider area to north. Southern edge of parcel forms top of Lee and Ash valleys; any development up to this edge is likely to be apparent as an encroachment into countryside along the skyline above the valley.	
43	Moderate	None	Paramount	None	1. Parcel separated from large built up areas, except at western corner which abuts Ware but where topography provides constraint. Boundaries defined by roads and farm accesses. Outer Green Belt	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>boundary defined along track following field and woodland boundaries; no other more definitive or logical boundaries exist within reasonable proximity beyond.</p> <p>2. No significant contribution to purpose. Potential to reduce separation between south east side of Ware, Stanstead St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots (which are not towns).</p> <p>3. Very distinctive landscape in lower part of the Lower Ash Valley with a very distinctive wooded character extending around the steep valley sides and at the manor house at Easneye on southern promontory above Lee valley. Widely visible but valley floor concealed. Much Ancient Woodland and Wildlife Site.</p> <p>4. Whilst there is a large Conservation Area at Stanstead St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots they are not historic towns.</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
44	Moderate	Paramount	Moderate	None	<p>1. Triangular area of land contained by roads and development between southern edge of Ware and eastern edge of Hertford, boundary of which is defined by major road (A10) creating strong edge. Land checks expansion of Ware where existing boundaries are defined along back gardens.</p> <p>2. Designation constrains ribbon development along Ware Road where the undeveloped gap is narrow (0.4km at narrowest point) between southern edge of Ware and east side of Hertford -</p> <p>3. Area characterised by golf course, playing fields and area of pasture fields; part of visually disturbed and incoherent landscape with some urban fringe uses and high impact of A10.</p>	Very Low
44a	Major	Paramount	Paramount	Moderate	<p>1. The area provides strong containment to the northward expansion of the town into the Lee valley, an open level landscape where any significant development would give perception of uncontained</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>growth. Railway and area of flood risk area beyond railway would check development to north of parcel.</p> <p>2. Parcel lies between north east edge of Hertford and south west side of Ware, where there is already intervisibility between the two towns. Any significant development would reduce this already limited separation.</p> <p>3. The parcel forms an integral part of the Lee valley which has a well-defined, broad and open character. Most of the parcel is Open Access Land and also identified as a wildlife site. The railway which forms the northern boundary of the parcel provides no visual containment from the valley landscape to the north; the parcel appears as an integral part of the valley landscape.</p> <p>4. Whilst the parcel does not lie adjacent to a Conservation Area it does contribute to the wider strategic setting of Hertford and, to a more limited</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					extent, Ware.	
45	Moderate	Major	Major	None	<p>1. Green Belt boundary on edge of Ware defined along edge of development but edge is reinforced by woodland to create strong boundary; no other better boundaries appear to exist. The southern part of the parcel contains the village of Great Amwell which has a dispersed nature. Poorly sited development here could lead to amalgamation of the partially developed character of the area and reduce the perception of openness.</p> <p>2. Lies between southern edge of Ware and north side of Hoddesdon (2.4km apart) with areas of intervening development.</p> <p>3. Linear tract of land sloping/undulating land forming edge of Lee valley. Area characterised by range of uses – educational, industrial, recreational, retail with clustered and scattered residential areas, particularly in southern part. Significant woodland</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					along valley side (some Ancient and most of which is a Wildlife Site) which helps to contain south edge of Ware and assimilate other residential areas. There is significant encroachment of development within countryside, although this is often quite well contained by strong framework of vegetation. The designation provides constraint to further physical encroachment and loss of intervening areas of countryside.	
46	Moderate	Major	Moderate (Major in southern part)	None	<p>1. Parcel not adjoining large built up areas but contains/adjoins other significant areas of development where amalgamation of existing development could give perception of sprawl. Green Belt boundary on south east edge weakly defined along field boundary/edge of Stanstead St Margarets.</p> <p>2. Larger fields in southern part provide separation between Great Amwell and Stanstead St Margarets</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>(although they are not towns). Development could link with areas of existing development to create connection between the villages (where Stanstead St Margarets is close to Hoddesdon) and south east edge of Ware.</p> <p>3. Western part of Lee valley and distinctive wooded knoll at Great Amwell. Disjointed landscape with areas of development with small gaps between linked by network of lanes. Significant areas of vegetation assimilate existing development. Views generally short and contained but more expansive in southern area to south. Some urban fringe uses Including large car boot sale). Distinctive linear character along New River linked to historic settlement of Great Amwell. Development in southern part would be an apparent encroachment into an area of quite open landscape that is visually distinct from Great Amwell and provides a clear</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					perception of openness between Stanstead St Margarets and Great Amwell. 4. Historic settlement of Great Amwell (a dispersed village) covered by Conservation Area.	
47	Major	Major	Major (Moderate in southern part)	None	1. Parcel lies immediately north of north edge of Hoddesdon where the Green Belt is poorly defined along rear gardens creating a very stark edge. South west boundary of parcel defined along district boundary beyond which Green Belt boundary (within Broxbourne District) appears to be defined along some weak/unclear features. Boundary with Stanstead St Margarets defined clearly along New River. Designation does constrain northward extension of Hoddesdon which, in the open landscape context, could be perceived as 'sprawl' although A414 could form stronger Green Belt	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>boundary.</p> <p>2. Parcel of limited importance to preventing merger of Hoddesdon and Ware which is some 2.6km to north. However, development would extend development closer to other intervening settlements (Stanstead St Margarets and Great Amwell)., which are loosely connected to each other in the intervening landscape. Therefore there is the potential for any significant levels of development in this area to lead to the erosion of the distinction and separation that this area provides between the two towns.</p> <p>3. Southern part of Great Amwell Ridge and Slopes LCA comprising open areas of two gently sloping arable fields bisected by A414, with southern field forming a very visible open area extending to stark edge of Hoddesdon. Development in this area would be very apparent extension to Hoddesdon although</p>	

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	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>the existing built up edge is poorly defined. Western and north western part is smaller scale more steeply sloping pasture with scattered development in vegetation on sloping land, bisected by A10 link road, which is prominent as part of slopes rising up to elevated land at Herford Heath. Development on these slopes would be a clear encroachment into prominent and attractive countryside extending southwards.</p> <p>4. East side adjoins Conservation Area on south west edge of Stanstead St Margarets (not a historic town).</p>	
48	Slight/ Negligible	None	Paramount	None	1. Parcel not adjoining large built up area but adjoins eastern edge of Stanstead St Margarets (not a large built up area) where Green Belt boundary is weakly defined along rear gardens. Topography provides	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>significant constraint to development along this edge. Outer Green Belt boundary on south east edge weakly defined along field boundaries/farm track; no stronger boundaries exist in more immediate area beyond.</p> <p>2. Does not lie between towns.</p> <p>3. Western part of very large Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands area which, in this location, defines the eastern side of the Lee valley comprising steep valley slopes and open elevated arable farmland above. Very little settlement except on fringe and north of Stanstead St Margarets. Open views from elevated areas across Lee valley but most development below concealed. Development on valley side and elevated land above would appear as a clear encroachment into prominent rural area, the elevated parts of which are largely visually independent of the main areas of development</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					below. 4. West side adjoins Conservation Area extending north from Stanstead St Margarets (not a historic town).	
49	Moderate	None	Paramount	None	<p>1. Parcel not adjoining a large built up area. Other intervening land contributes more to this purpose. Designation has provided constraint to development from 'leap-frogging' the floodplain where it would be perceived as 'sprawl'. Outer Green Belt boundary well defined along road woodland and tree belts at Hunsdonbury</p> <p>2. Lies within substantial tract of land (6.5km wide) that separates south eastern edge of Ware from Harlow, and between Sawbridgeworth and north end of Hoddesdon (over 10km apart).</p> <p>3. Forms western and central part of the Stanstead</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					to Pishiobury Parklands LCA, an area with a strong landscape character defining the northern valley slopes of the Stort valley. A generally very open landscape of estate farmland with extensive views south across valley to north western fringes of Harlow. Varied topography interrupted by tributary valley, where the landscape is distinctively wooded (some Ancient Woodland, and a Wildlife Site) and more contained, extending up to Hunsdonbury and associated parkland. Broad ridge extends south west/north east across area and land beyond has no visual association with the valley or development in Harlow beyond. Any development would represent a very apparent encroachment into open countryside where there are few features to provide containment (although the area adjoining the south east edge of Stanstead Abbots is part of the extensive village Conservation Area). There is scope to realign the	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					outer boundary along similar and, in some places, better defined boundaries to include Hunsdonbury within Green Belt to provide greater protection to encroachment within this area of scattered settlement and distinctive landscape; this would also create a more consistent width of Green Belt in this location	
50	Moderate	None	Major	None	<p>1. Parcel separated from Harlow by floodplain and Green Belt land to south and within adjoining part of Harlow District; that intervening land contributes more to this purpose. Designation has prevented development from 'leapfrogging' the floodplain where it would be perceived as 'sprawl' unrelated to existing town.</p> <p>2. Lies within substantial tract of land (6.5km wide) that separates south eastern edge of Ware from Harlow, and between Sawbridgeworth and north end of Hoddesdon (over 10km apart).</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					3. Western part of the Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands containing gently undulating lower slopes of the northern valley side, bisected by a tributary valley, and part of the Stort valley floor. A rather discreet area within the landscape with a varied field pattern, orientated towards the valley and possessing a varied rural character broken up by vegetation, including parkland at Briggens Park (now a golf course); separated from the rising land to the north by the A414 which cuts across the area. Large parts designated as Registered Parks and Gardens. Parts of Harlow apparent in views south across valley and some urban fringe influences apparent. Access land and SSSI adjoins to south east; Lee Valley Regional Park in western end of parcel. Designation protects countryside from development which would represent a clear and isolated encroachment into open countryside.	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
51	Moderate	Moderate	Paramount	None	<p>1. Parcel not adjoining a large built up areas but does lie within 0.5km of northern edge of Harlow. Other intervening land contributes more to this purpose. Designation has prevented development from 'leapfrogging' the floodplain where it would be perceived as 'sprawl' unrelated to existing town. Outer Green Belt boundary reasonably defined along minor lane and track.</p> <p>2. Lies within substantial tract of land (9km wide) that separates south eastern edge of Ware from north east Harlow, and between Sawbridgeworth and north end of Hoddesdon (over 10km apart).</p> <p>3. Forms eastern part of the Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands, an area with a strong landscape character defining the northern valley slopes of the Stort valley. A generally very open landscape of estate farmland with extensive views south across valley to northern fringes of Harlow. Varied</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					topography, interrupted by tributary valleys on either side of parcel where the landscape is smaller in scale and more enclosed with ribbons of trees. Woodland (some Ancient) and parkland define Gilston Park on the northern edge of the parcel (outer Green Belt boundary) follows a track; no stronger alternative Green Belt boundary exists within this area. Settlement is confined to small compact hamlets at Eastwick, Gilston Park and associated estate houses. Any development in this area would represent a very apparent encroachment into open countryside.	
52	Moderate	None	Paramount	None	1. Parcel not connected to large built up areas. Other intervening land contributes more to this purpose although southern part is close to edge of Harlow and contributes more significantly to this purpose where designation has prevented development from 'leapfrogging' the floodplain	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>where it would be perceived as ‘sprawl’ unrelated to existing town. Outer Green Belt boundary reasonably well defined along minor lanes.</p> <p>2. Lies within substantial tract of land (9-10km wide) that separates south eastern edge of Ware from north eastern edge of Harlow, and between Sawbridgeworth and north end of Hoddesdon (over 10km apart).</p> <p>3. Forms north eastern part of the Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands, an area with a strong landscape character which generally defines the north eastern side of the Stort valley, with variable undulating topography formed by two tributaries cutting through the area. A generally very open large scale arable landscape interrupted by some blocks of Ancient Woodland and estate farmland with extensive views. Very little settlement - confined to farms and cottages accessed off peripheral lanes</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					(some associated with adjoining Gilston Park) and associated estate houses. Any development in this area would represent a very apparent encroachment into open countryside, with a strong remote feel, where there are very few features to provide containment. 4. North eastern edge adjoins Conservation Area at High Wych (not a historic town).	
53	Major	Paramount	Moderate	None	1. Designation provides constraint to development on north eastern edge of Harlow and southern edge of Sawbridgeworth, although area of flood risk along River Stort provides an immediate constraint along edge of Harlow. 2. North eastern part contributes to separation of north east edge of Harlow and southern side of Sawbridgeworth where separation is only 0.4km wide. Other parts of parcel, where there is greater separation between the two towns, contribute less to	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>purpose (but are considered to be of Major importance to purpose).</p> <p>3. Central part of the narrow River Stort comprising the valley floor of the northern valley side forming shoulders of sloping land orientated towards Harlow where development is readily visible, particularly from elevated parts, but softened by woodland and tree belts. Other uses include large gravel pit/landfill site east of Pye Corner (reasonably contained); adjoining Major Development Site in Green Belt now being developed for housing set in parkland landscape; some houses at Pye Corner. Small scale pasture in north east corner on southern edge of Sawbridgeworth. Generally a discordant urban fringe area with some rural qualities, yet highly valued, unified by the river and associated vegetation running through it. Designation provides protection of countryside and integrity of river valley</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					as important linear green infrastructure (although flood constraint also exists in part), particularly to encroachment on southern edge of Sawbridgeworth.	
54	Paramount	Paramount	Major	Major (northern end only)	<p>1. Land lies on southern side of Sawbridgeworth, adjoined by built up area defining edge of Green Belt; area of development along Pishiobury Drive 'projects' into area. Some parts of Green Belt boundary poorly defined along rear gardens but creation of stronger landscape structure in these areas would strengthen these edges..</p> <p>2. Parcel lies between/along south side of Sawbridgeworth. Southern edge abuts north east edge of Harlow where separation is only 0.4km wide.</p> <p>3. Parcel comprises part of River Stort, following river, and Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands extending around Pishiobury Park. Landscape is a mosaic of woodland, managed pasture and wet</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					grasslands along river with the area north of Pishiobury Drive forming a country park. Much of the area is a Registered Parks and Gardens and there are several Wildlife Sites. Large house in extensive private grounds to south of Pishiobury Drive. Designation and recreational use prevent 'encroachment' into an attractive very accessible area associated with the Stort corridor. Northern end lies partly within flood zone and forms an integral part of the narrow valley corridor that extends northwards along the River Stort; although it contains some unauthorised development which disrupts the continuity of the riverside landscape and has a local impact on the open and linear character of the valley, any development would be perceived as an encroachment into this well-defined and valued parcel leading to a reduction in the river corridor landscape at this narrow point between	

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	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					adjoining built-up areas 4. Northern end of parcel includes/adjoins eastern end of Conservation Area where the river contributes to the setting of the nearby former Maltings. Whilst large part of parcel is Registered Parks and Gardens this does not contribute to setting of the historic core of the town being separated from it by extensive modern development.	
55	Paramount (southern part); Major in northern part	Major	Paramount (southern part); Major in northern part	None	1. Area of land located on south east side of Sawbridgeworth where development has extended along roads with some infilling of areas behind with development. South western part more remote from this area. Designation has constrained growth of town in this area where landscape is smaller in scale and more contained and potentially attractive for development. Inner Green Belt boundaries sometimes poorly defined by rear gardens. 2. Land forms separation between southern part of	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>Sawbridgeworth and north eastern edge of Harlow; Stort valley to south provides narrow separation (0.4km wide) between development on Redricks Lane and edge of Harlow. Contributes to separation of Sawbridgeworth from High Wych (but High Wych is not a town). Northern part of parcel contributes less to purpose.</p> <p>3. Forms south eastern part of High Wych slopes which has two areas of distinct character. North eastern part is a small to medium scale transitional landscape with pasture fields defined by hedgerows, containing areas of unmanaged or rough grazing land, with small areas of woodland, tree belts and scrub which soften the edges of the built up area/associated Green Belt boundary which follows boundaries of back gardens. This landscape is well contained by existing development and vegetation and a slight ridge running south west/north east</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					across the area and has benefited from protection as Green Belt, although there is a sense of encroachment. Development in this area would be a further localised encroachment into countryside but could be contained. The southern part is large scale arable land which is open and has an affinity with land of a similar character lying north west in parcel 52. The extension of the ridge through this area creates a threshold between the Stort valley and countryside beyond and any development would be readily apparent as an uncontained encroachment into open countryside. 4. High Wych (not a historic town) Conservation Area extends into northern part of parcel.	
56	Major	None	Major	None	1. Designation restricts westward development of Sawbridgeworth which is likely to appear as 'sprawl' in this broad open landscape with very few significant landscape features that could contain	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>development; also safeguards narrow gap between High Wych and edge of town on High Wych Road. Existing Green Belt boundary along western edge of town is partly defined along a watercourse/related tree line which forms a clear boundary; further south development has encroached into the field west of The Crest/Brook End and the boundary is weakly defined along garden fences. Arbitrary Green Belt boundary in area around hospital where there is scope to adjust the boundary to follow the access road. If further expansion of the hospital is envisaged consideration could be given to realigning the boundary along the edge of the open area/woodland to the north which, together with landform, provides containment.</p> <p>2. Does not lie between two towns.</p> <p>3. Occupies eastern part of High Wych slopes comprising open, predominantly arable farmland</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>rising gently away westwards from the town, broken only by poor hedgerows. Areas of woodland and slight local ridge in south eastern part contain the area around the hospital. Visual associations with existing development in Sawbridgeworth where this extends onto west facing slopes.</p> <p>Watercourse/associated vegetation forms defined edge to settlement to north east side but further south the edge is poorly defined with development locally intrusive detracting from character. Area largely devoid of settlement except for High Wych and some limited development along northern boundary. Development in almost any part of this parcel is likely to be an apparent encroachment into countryside where there are no clear alternative boundaries to provide containment, although in eastern/south eastern parts area there are some areas that are more contained. Designation</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					safeguards narrow area of countryside between town and High Wych. 4. High Wych (not a historic town) Conservation Area adjoins south western part. Parcel separated from historic core of Sawbridgeworth by large area of modern housing so no contribution to purpose.	
57	Slight/ Negligible	None	Paramount	None	1. Separated from Sawbridgeworth by parcel 56, therefore currently limited contribution to purpose. Outer Green Belt boundary generally defined along lanes except at north west corner where defined along small watercourse and field boundary. 2. Does not lie between two towns. 3. Within northern part of High Wych slopes comprising land on either side of a north/south small tributary valley with shallow sides merging into wide open arable landscape to north. Parkland/golf course landscape at Manor Of Groves at High Wych at southern end. Settlement limited to occasional	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					farms and some houses scattered along lanes. Any development in this landscape would appear as a clear encroachment into open countryside and unrelated to any significant development. 4. High Wych (not a historic town) Conservation Area adjoins/extends into south eastern part.	
58	Major	None	Paramount	Moderate	1. Small area of land lying beyond north east edge of Sawbridgeworth which forms parts of Green Belt extending north and east beyond district boundary. Separated from town to west by river floodplain and railway; development adjoins parcel to south west. 2. Does not lie between two towns. 3. Parcel comprises a distinctive area which forms an integral part of valley slopes defining the eastern side of the Stort valley, consisting of a large sloping arable field and surrounding woodland with Hyde Hall on crest of slope set in parkland and woodland. Any development within the arable field would give a	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					clear sense of encroachment into the countryside. To the west of the parcel is a SSSI and several very important Local wildlife Sites. 4. A distinctive parcel which does provide some contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area to the south west.	
59	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	Slight/ Negligible	None	1. Parcel lies on northern periphery of Sawbridgeworth where there is a sense of sprawl with a poorly contained development edge. Green Belt boundary poorly defined along edge of unscreened development; better defined boundaries lie to the north (the lane which is followed by a right of way). 2. Lies on northern edge of Sawbridgeworth at southern end of area that separates the town from Bishop's Stortford which is currently 3.5km wide. 3. Parcel lies in south east corner of Thorley Uplands and forms part of western slopes of the	High

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	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					Stort valley adjoining the northern edge of the town. Area characterised by stark housing edge and degraded, poorly managed land. Contains G&T development and group of properties in north west corner. Prominent position and exposed to views from rights of way and from valley floor and eastern valley side. Lower part, although degraded, is more sensitive as it forms part of valley and development to the south has been limited to mid valley slopes.	
59a	None	None	None	Slight/ Negligible	1. Area of land contained within northern part of Sawbridgeworth and therefore does not contribute to purpose. 2. No contribution to purpose as land lies within town rather than lying between towns. 3. Land comprises recreation ground, section of Bullfields road and Reedings Junior School and is not countryside. Outer boundary of parcel in Stort	High

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	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					valley well defined along east (also boundary of adjoining Conservation Area) and north sides of school which would be appropriate as adjusted Green Belt boundary. 4. Very limited contribution of eastern part (school) to setting of Conservation Area northern part of which adjoins parcel.	
60	Moderate	Major	Major	None	1. Southern end of parcel is removed from north edge of Sawbridgeworth where there is a perception of sprawl (parcel 59), and therefore contributes more to this purpose than the adjacent parcel. 2. Parcel extends from just north of Sawbridgeworth to small loose settlement of Spellbrook, and forms part of 3km gap between town and southern side of Bishops Stortford. Development within parcel could reduce perception of separation but would not lead to merging, although it is likely to be perceived as reducing separation.	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					3. The parcel lies within the eastern fringe of the Thorley Uplands; the characteristics of this area are in the parcel where the farmland is arable and quite open. Spellbrook forms a small linear development along the A1184 which lies midway between the towns. Overall, this landscape is vulnerable to development which would encroach into this well-defined area, the openness of which is protected by the designation.	
60a	Major	Major	Major	None	<p>1. Northern part adjoining south eastern edge of Bishop's Stortford restricts 'sprawl' of town although this is restricted to some degree by the limited access, the railway and river. If the land west of Thorley Street were to be released, this area will be even more important in providing containment of the built up area.</p> <p>2. Parcel extends from southern side of Bishops Stortford to small loose settlement of Spellbrook,</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>and forms part of 3km gap between town and northern side of Sawbridgeworth. It contains some significant ribbon development along the A1184 corridor (Thorley Street and northern part of Spellbrook), as well as a small area of distinctive development at Twyford Bury lock. These areas of development, within this small scale landscape, are vulnerable to infilling which may lead to erosion of separation between the two towns, and the linking of development between Thorley Street and Spellbrook. If land west of Thorley Street is released for development the separation between the two towns will reduce meaning that the southern part of this parcel will assume a higher level of importance in respect of this purpose.</p> <p>3. A small scale and intimate landscape, subdivided by the railway corridor, associated with the Stort valley which runs beyond the eastern edge of the</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					parcel where there are areas of flood constraint and SSSI which are overriding constraints (and therefore omitted from parcel). The area has a distinctive linear small scale character which is vulnerable to encroachment and which the designation protects.	
61	Major (Moderate in south eastern part)	Moderate	Major	None	<p>1. Restricts north west growth of Sawbridgeworth where Green Belt boundary along town edge is reasonably defined except at Leventhorpe School and leisure centre which creates a locally dominant, stark interface with open countryside beyond, although the boundary is clear physically.</p> <p>2. Lies on northern edge of Sawbridgeworth extending north to the small intermediate settlement of Spellbrook within the area of land that separates the town from Bishop's Stortford which is currently 3.5km wide.</p> <p>3. Located within the south eastern part of the Thorley Uplands, an area characterised by broad</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					scale gently undulating landscape of arable farmland with little significant vegetation cover giving a sense of exposure and wide views in most directions; settlement limited to occasional farms. Noticeable influence of urban area along south eastern edge, especially the leisure centre. South eastern corner of parcel adjoining north west side of Sawbridgeworth is slightly more contained by local landform. The open landscape of the area is vulnerable to encroachment as no significant landscape boundaries exist beyond. Potential to reinforce existing weak landscape boundaries to strengthen Green Belt/urban edge. Mandeville Primary School forms a local encroachment into countryside of the Green Belt. The school boundaries are defined and the school does not contribute to openness, such that it would not be inappropriate to adjust the boundary to exclude the	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					school. The situation is the same at Leventhorpe School, where the buildings complex forms part of the urban area rather than countryside and reduces openness; it would be appropriate to adjust the Green Belt boundary accordingly (with playing fields to west being retained in Green Belt).	
62	Paramount	Major (eastern part); Slight/Negligible elsewhere	Paramount	None	<p>1. Land restricts growth of Bishop's Stortford; although this is contained by the physical boundary of the bypass, within which growth has been directed, designation constrains expansion of development beyond which would appear as uncontained growth. Outer Green Belt boundary well defined along lanes.</p> <p>2. Lies on southern/south western edge of Bishop's Stortford extending south to the small intermediate settlement of Spellbrook within the area of land that separates the town from Bishop's Stortford which is currently 3.5km wide. Ribbon development along</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>eastern boundary (A1184) between bypass and Spellbrook vulnerable to infilling which would erode separation, which designation prevents.</p> <p>3. Located within the northern part of the Thorley Uplands, an area characterised by broad scale gently undulating landscape of open arable farmland with little significant vegetation cover giving a sense of exposure and wide views in most directions; settlement limited to occasional farms. No clear influence of urban area at Bishop's Stortford which is contained by vegetation and ridge along existing southern urban edge. Open landscape is very vulnerable to encroachment as no significant landscape boundaries exist beyond, although A1184 bypass provides a clear physical limit to potential southern expansion of town (inside bypass) and would reduce perception of encroachment from any development inside bypass into this parcel.</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
63	Paramount	None	Paramount	None	<p>1. Land constrains growth of Bishop's Stortford, but this has been contained by the physical boundary of the bypass and associated inner strategic landscape buffer areas; collectively these form a strong boundary, although designation constrains expansion of development beyond which would appear as uncontained growth. Outer Green Belt boundary well defined along lanes except on south west edge where it follows less distinct features.</p> <p>2. Does not lie between towns.</p> <p>3. Northern part of Thorley Uplands and eastern part of Perry Green Uplands, which are undulating areas of arable farmland; those parts within the Thorley Uplands are typically open and exposed whilst the Perry Green Uplands are smaller scale and broken by blocks of woodland. Both areas are largely unsettled and have a strong rural character. Any development extending beyond the bypass would be</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					very apparent as an encroachment into open unspoilt countryside.	
64	Paramount	Slight/ Negligible (in north-eastern part); None	Paramount	None	<p>1. Land (in association with Green Belt beyond district boundary) constrains growth of Bishop's Stortford, but this has been contained by the physical boundary of the bypass and associated inner strategic landscape buffer areas; whilst these features collectively form a strong boundary, designation constrains expansion of development into area beyond which would appear as uncontained growth. Outer Green Belt boundary (beyond district boundary) appears to be well defined along lanes.</p> <p>2. Does not lie between towns, except at north-eastern side where land does lie between the northern edge of Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Mountfitchet (considered to be a large village).</p> <p>3. Whilst this narrow parcel contains parts of three</p>	Very Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					character areas (Bourne Brook Valley, Hadhams Plateau, and Stort Meads) they have been combined into one as they fulfil the same function in terms of this Green Belt purpose. The area has a strong rural character consisting of a varied pattern of arable fields, with some pasture, and areas of woodland, which are incised by tributaries of the Stort giving a very varied topography. The north east part includes the part of the Stort valley which extends southwards through the town from the bypass. Any development extending beyond the bypass would be very apparent as an encroachment into open unspoilt countryside.	
65	None	None	None	Major	1. Parcel (which includes triangle of land between railway and Dolphin Drive) is contained on three sides by development; development within parcel could not be considered to be 'sprawl' as area is contained by existing urban area. Whilst it would be	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>undesirable to develop within such 'wedges', if they were developed such development would not be 'unrestricted sprawl' as that development would be contained growth within the principal limits of the urban area. Areas such as these fulfil a more local environmental / green infrastructure and urban planning function/ purpose, as opposed to a wider Green Belt purpose.</p> <p>3. Parcel does not comprise open countryside, being contained by existing development on three sides and by the bypass to the north. The area could therefore be removed from Green Belt and safeguarded by other designations (open space, Green Wedge (proposed), and some areas of flood risk which would provide appropriate protection.</p> <p>4. Southern part forms part of Conservation Area contributes directly to the historic character of the town.</p>	

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
66	None	None	None	None	<p>1. Wedge of land retained between permitted urban extension and will be contained on three sides by development; development within parcel could not be considered to be 'sprawl' as area will be contained within existing and new urban area. Whilst it would be undesirable to develop within such 'wedges', if they were developed such development would not be 'unrestricted sprawl' as that development would be contained growth within the principal limits of the urban area. Areas such as these fulfil a more local environmental / green infrastructure and urban planning function/ purpose, as opposed to a wider Green Belt purpose.</p> <p>3. Parcel, which comprises a well-defined pattern of small fields and woodland, will not comprise part of open countryside once permitted development has taken place, and will be contained by development. Other designations (open space, wildlife sites and</p>	High

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					Green Wedge) provide protection. The area could therefore be removed from Green Belt and safeguarded by these other policies.	
67	None	None	None	Slight/ Negligible	<p>1. Land contained on three sides by development; development within parcel could not be considered to be 'sprawl' as area is contained by existing urban area. Whilst it would be undesirable to develop within such 'wedges', if they were developed such development would not be 'unrestricted sprawl' as that development would be contained growth within the principal limits of the urban area. Areas such as these fulfil a more local environmental / green infrastructure and urban planning function/ purpose, as opposed to a wider Green Belt purpose.</p> <p>3. Parcel does not comprise open countryside, being contained by existing development and comprising a largely recreational landscape. Other designations (open space, Green Wedge) provide protection. The</p>	High

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					area could therefore be removed from Green Belt and safeguarded by these other policies. 4. Limited contribution at eastern end to adjoining Conservation Area. Whilst educational uses occupy the CA immediately adjoining this boundary the parcel makes some limited contribution to the setting and character of the historic core	
68	Slight/ Negligible	None	Slight/ Negligible	None	1. Parcel constrains outward growth of town, although M11 to east provides well defined edge further from town which would provide containment. 3. Parcel comprises golf course crossed by disused railway, part of which is a Local Wildlife Site. Green Belt constrains development from extending into this area, although its character is not that of open countryside.	High
69	None	None	None	None	1. Narrow linear area of land contained on three sides by development; development within parcel could not be considered to be 'sprawl' as area is	High

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>contained by existing urban area.</p> <p>3. Parcel does not comprise open countryside, being contained by existing development. Other designations (open space, Green Wedge) provide protection. The area is also subject to flooding which has acted as a constraint to development.</p>	
70	None	None	None	None	<p>1. Block of land contained by development to north, bypass to south and west, and road to east. Bypass forms well defined edge to the town. Development would be well related to the existing built up edge. Whilst it would be undesirable to develop within such 'wedges', if they were developed such development would not be 'unrestricted sprawl' as that development would be contained growth within the principal limits of the urban area. Areas such as these fulfil a more local environmental / green infrastructure and urban planning function/ purpose, as opposed to a wider Green Belt purpose.</p>	High

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>3. Parcel does not comprise open countryside being principally in recreational or strategic landscape buffer areas, and is contained by the countryside to west by the bypass.</p> <p>Other designations (open space – part of Southern Country Park, Green Wedge) provide protection. The area could therefore be removed from Green Belt and safeguarded by these other policies.</p>	
71	Major	None	Major	None	<p>1. Clearly defined Green Belt and urban boundary along northern and western sides (along Whittington/Obrey Way) restricts growth or extension of urban area into large area of open countryside. Whilst development in this open area is likely to be perceived as being apparently unrelated to the existing urban area and therefore has the potential to be perceived as ‘sprawl’; however, the bypass beyond provides a well-defined alternative Green Belt boundary which could, coupled with</p>	Low

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt				Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. To prevent neighboring towns from merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns		
					<p>strategic planting could limit and contain growth.</p> <p>3. An open area of countryside forming a rural setting to the southern side of the town. As the existing southern town edge is very well contained (along Whittington/Obrey Way) development within parcel would be perceived as an encroachment into countryside, although the bypass provides a boundary that would assist with containing any development in this parcel from the wider open countryside beyond.</p>	

4 Conclusions

- 4.1.1 This study has examined the Green Belt in East Herts District in recognition that the District Council needs to prepare a spatial strategy as part of the District Plan informed by all relevant considerations. Parts of the District are designated as Green Belt and therefore the Green Belt is both a factor in identifying the most appropriate spatial strategy and may need to be changed to enable locations for development to be identified in the plan. It remains the national policy position (as set out in section 9 of the NPPF, with some explanation in the PPG), that established Green Belts can be altered through the preparation of a local plan, if there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The requirement to seek to meet the objectively assessed housing need can provide the exceptional circumstances, and whilst the presence of Green Belt may be one factor in a planning authority proposing a level of provision less than the need, it could not expect its plan to found sound on this basis unless it could demonstrate that locations in the Green Belt that could otherwise be suitable for development for housing had been assessed against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
- 4.1.2 The study of the Green Belt has focussed on the periphery of the main settlements and those smaller settlements identified by the planning authority as appropriate to consider for development (the Group 1 settlements). It is to be noted that the original concept of the Green Belt, carried forward in the current purposes Green Belt is said to serve, was about preventing the 'sprawl' of large built up areas, and preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. Whilst development properly and positively planned through a development plan cannot be construed as 'sprawl', this means that the Green Belt around the major settlements is likely to be the most important according to these long established ideas.
- 4.1.3 The outer extent of the Green Belt in East Herts is because of its history rather arbitrarily identified in relation to the settlements within East Herts or adjoining the District's administrative boundary. The significance of the Green Belt designation of land well removed from the periphery of the main settlements for the purpose of identifying locations for strategic development is negligible. These types of area are in any case protected for their own sake by the long established planning principle and policy of avoiding development in the open countryside in less accessible and unsustainable locations.

4.2 Assessment

- 4.2.1 The plan at **Appendix 4** combines the findings of the assessment of the land parcels examined against the four relevant purposes of Green Belt considered individually, and presents graphically the overall conclusions on the suitability these parcels have for development in terms (solely) of the effect on the fulfilment of the role being performed by the Green Belt. How this aggregation has been done is explained at **para.2.8.1**.

- 4.2.2 The plan illustrates the conclusion from the assessment that the great majority of the parcels and hence the great majority of the Green Belt assessed in the study appears important to the fulfilment of the purposes of Green Belt.
- 4.2.3 The parcels that are identified as having least importance to the fulfilment of the purposes of Green Belt and identified as 'Potential Areas of Search' for development locations are:
- Parcel 31a – west of Hertford
 - Parcel 59 – north of Sawbridgeworth
 - Parcel 59a - north of Sawbridgeworth
 - Parcels 66-70 – south/west of Bishop's Stortford.
- 4.2.4 The Council will need to consider other planning considerations relating to these locations, including housing need; spatial strategy and other policy and constraint considerations, to identify the most sustainable locations for development.
- 4.2.5 The parcels that are identified as having moderate suitability and identified as 'Potential longer-term Areas of Search' for development locations are:
- Parcel 24 – south east of Hertford
 - Parcel 37a – west of Ware
- 4.2.6 This conclusion arises from combining the assessment of the parcels combined against each of the four purposes considered. There are further considerations arising from the findings of the assessments undertaken against each of the purposes.

4.3 Green Belt assessment according to individual purposes

- 4.3.1 The aggregation of the assessment of the purposes has assumed that all of the purposes are of equal importance, and there is no basis in Green Belt policy (and no guidance either) to provide any basis for doing anything else. It is likely to be informative however to look at how different areas perform in relation to different purposes.
- 4.3.2 Achieving the required scale of development in East Herts to address the needs of the community over the plan period, and doing so in ways which advance sustainable patterns of development, is likely to require a combination of development within and beyond the settlements, and given the distribution of Green Belt, using land currently designated as Green Belt and land outside the Green Belt.

- 4.3.3 Whilst this study has not been an assessment of landscape sensitivity, it is a noticeable characteristic of East Herts that the distinction between town and country in most areas is quite clear.
- 4.3.4 It is an important aspect of Green Belts that the distinction between Green Belt land and non Green Belt land should feel inevitable. That is, it ought to be clear to the casual observer what the difference is either side of the boundary. All too often Green Belt boundaries are simply drawn to the back of the last houses in a settlement, a reflection of the use of Green Belt policy as a powerful tool in the development management armoury. Marked changes in the landscape or the way land is used may provide for the identification of inevitable and defensible Green Belt boundaries in the proper sense, and certainly some of the edges created through the original planning of the new towns are present in some of the areas being examined for this study.
- 4.3.5 It is a feature of Hertfordshire, that the area has a number of new towns. These are settlements conceived and planned as a whole, rather than having simply grown to a larger settlement from small beginnings though development which may or may not have been identified through a development plan. A critical feature of these planned settlements is that the edges have been designed as part of the overall scheme, with a combination of the incorporation of natural features, the configuration of transport corridors and the creation of strategic landscape features. Parts of the eastern edge of Stevenage are an excellent example.
- 4.3.6 It is generally the case that there is very little of the District that displays the classic characteristics of 'urban fringe', whereby uses necessary to support urban populations but which are unpopular in urban areas are accommodated on the edge of the town in a rather fragmented landscape with a rather uncared for appearance. In contrast, in most cases the transition between the built up areas and open countryside occurs almost immediately. The land around most of the settlements is in agricultural use in larger units and is well managed and productive (which, at least in part, is probably due to high agricultural land quality/productivity value).
- 4.3.7 This is why most of the Green Belt on the periphery of the settlements has been found to be performing an important role in relation to the purpose of 'preventing encroachment', as well as the purpose of 'preventing sprawl'. These two purposes are often the hardest to assess land against, because they are the least spatially specific and tend to be relevant to all urban edges, though the quality of the urban edge, the nature of the transition to openness and the way the landscape are managed all have some bearing.

4.4 Green Belt and historic towns in East Herts District

- 4.4.1 One of the five purposes of Green Belt from the Framework is '*to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*'. For this study the view taken has been that Hertford is a historic town and hence the area around the town

in the Green Belt has been considered according to its significance in fulfilling this purpose.

- 4.4.2 There are also local 'setting/special character' considerations at Bishop's Stortford where 'inner' parts of the green fingers that penetrate the urban area lie within the town's Conservation Area.
- 4.4.3 As Watton-at-Stone is a Conservation Area and is a Group 1 settlement, this area has also been considered in relation to this purpose. That is, the study has considered whether the land in Green Belt for these two locations is part of the setting and how important to the preservation of the parts of the town which are part of its historic character, and the findings are presented in section 3 and on the map in Appendix 3. Other parts of the East Herts Green Belt have not been assessed in relation to this purpose as there is simply no connection.
- 4.4.4 Hertford and Bishop's Stortford have developed with a particular urban form, with wedges of green infrastructure (largely open because they follow water bodies) interspersed with fingers of development. Whilst the open land is Green Belt, development of these green areas is effectively prevented in any case, and this pattern of green wedge protection should be continued, connecting the heart of the town with the open countryside, as they are an important source of open space and recreational areas for town residents and visitors.

4.5 Green Belt and coalescence

- 4.5.1 The Green Belt purpose that relates most particularly to different locations and hence the purpose that is most likely to provide some distinction between different parts of the Green Belt is that which says, '*to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another*'. In national planning policy, coalescence is specifically and solely a Green Belt issue. There is no other mention of how the relationship between towns (or any other settlements) should be addressed.
- 4.5.2 A common interpretation of the objective of achieving more sustainable patterns of development is that development should be directed to larger towns, to take advantage of a greater range of services and facilities, to enable more needs including employment to be met with shorter trips, and for more of those trips to be made by lower energy modes. Linear development forms are noted to be efficient in terms of achieving good public transport services, though there is a direct tension here with the operation of Green Belt policy.
- 4.5.3 A concern for places to be kept separate from each other is commonly expressed through community involvement on planning strategies and in the consideration of planning proposals. What constitutes 'identity' is difficult to ascertain and (by definition) is particular to a place, but is likely to involve something more sophisticated than the width of an undeveloped patch of land

between the place and another place, though this is how national planning policy is generally applied.

- 4.5.4 In this study Green Belt policy is applied as it was originally conceived and as it is written in the Framework, in that the purpose is written in terms of towns. Appropriating such a strong policy and using it in other ways than was intended, though frequently seen elsewhere, is not something done here nor recommended in the preparation of the District Plan spatial strategy.
- 4.5.5 From the assessment reported in section 3, the area within the Green Belt in East Herts where coalescence is most an issue, where two towns are close to each other, is in the east of the District around Sawbridgeworth and Harlow (though Harlow is not in the District). There is a ribbon of narrow development to the south west of Sawbridgeworth along A1184 which on a map or as seen from the road means the gap or area of openness between the two places is very small. This gap could be seen as either nominal or strategic, depending on the commentator, and the slight physical separation of Sawbridgeworth and Harlow viewed to be important or not. However, the continued application of Green Belt policy in East Herts would require this gap to be maintained.

4.6 SLAA sites and Broad Locations

Sites Promoted for Development

- 4.6.1 The Council are currently undertaking a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA), to inform the District Plan. The SLAA has not yet been finalised or published. However, the Council have undertaken a 'call for sites' exercise and received a number of sites being promoted for development. The Council provided PBA the GIS layer of SLAA sites which are currently being considered by the Council.
- 4.6.2 The table below lists the SLAA sites which fall within parcels identified in this study as having a 'Moderate' or 'High' potential for development, in Green Belt terms only. These are shown in **Appendix 5**.

SLAA site	Site size inside parcel (ha)	Parcel	Suitability for development in the Green Belt
03/006	3.65	24	Moderate
04/008	1.05	59	High
04/012	5.3	59	High
01/020	12.33	66	High

01/024	28.52	66	High
01/017	3.08	67	High
01/018	0.11	67	High
01/019	0.29	67	High
01/014	2.04	68	High
01/136	4.16	68	High
01/011	0.56	70	High

Broad locations

- 4.6.3 The Draft District Plan (2014) identified a number of Broad Locations for potential future development. Green Belt parcels within these broad locations have been assessed and the suitability of these parcels for development is detailed below and shown in **Appendix 5**.

Broad Locations	Green Belt Parcel number	Suitability of Green Belt land for development according to Green Belt purposes
East of Welwyn Garden City	14	Very Low
Gilston north of Harlow	49/51	Very Low
North and East of Ware	41/42	Very Low
East of Stevenage	2/3	Very Low/Low

- 4.6.4 All of the parcels, identified in the Broad Locations, were identified as having 'Very Low' or 'Low' suitability as an area of search for development, in relation to Green Belt purposes.

4.7 Implications for the spatial strategy

- 4.7.1 The Council has to set out a spatial strategy addressing the development needs of the District over the plan period, and take account of the present Green Belt in doing so. The degree to which the presence of Green Belt can be used to avoid addressing the 'objectively assessed' housing needs of a district is frequently debated, though there is nothing in the Framework to indicate that a planning authority can abdicate its role in seeking an adequate supply of land on the basis of there being a historic Green Belt designation in its area. At the very least the Council has to be able to demonstrate that there has been a full and proper examination of how parts of the Green Belt perform in relation to the purposes for which Green Belt policy can be used. This will certainly have been the case for East Herts.
- 4.7.2 In addition to strategic allocations which will have to be considered against the findings of the Green Belt study where relevant, amongst other things, the Council is looking to propose 'broad locations' – areas within which development could take place subject to the scale, location and form being determined through subsequent elements of the District Plan.
- 4.7.3 It is noted that there are various parties interested in developing in the general areas the Council is considering. This is significant as the District Plan will have to be demonstrated by the Council to be deliverable, and this will include the need to be able to say there are willing landowners and promoters. Market interest also raises the possibility of applications being received ahead of the District Plan process for development either in locations the Council considers to be the most appropriate, or in other locations. Should such applications arise to be determined ahead of the plan being adopted, the evidence the Council has on the performance of parts of the Green Belt will become very significant.
- 4.7.4 The area contemplated in the emerging District Plan for the most significant development is the broad location of land to the north of Harlow, and the relevance of this Green Belt study to this current proposal needs some comment.
- 4.7.5 The Stort Valley forms a natural northern edge to Harlow and much of it lies within the administrative area of Harlow. The land north of Stort Valley is within the Green Belt in East Herts District. Land here is being considered for development. The immediate northern edge of Harlow, regardless of its Green Belt designation, is not an area where development could take place, because with the River Stort it is a river valley and there is a considerable area at risk of flooding. This area of green infrastructure forms a strong edge and natural constraint to the northern side of Harlow.
- 4.7.6 The Green Belt is not very wide around Harlow and there is land further north outside the Green Belt which is one of the largest undeveloped areas of East Herts District. Development could be accommodated here on a substantial scale if the Council accepts that not all of the development needs of the

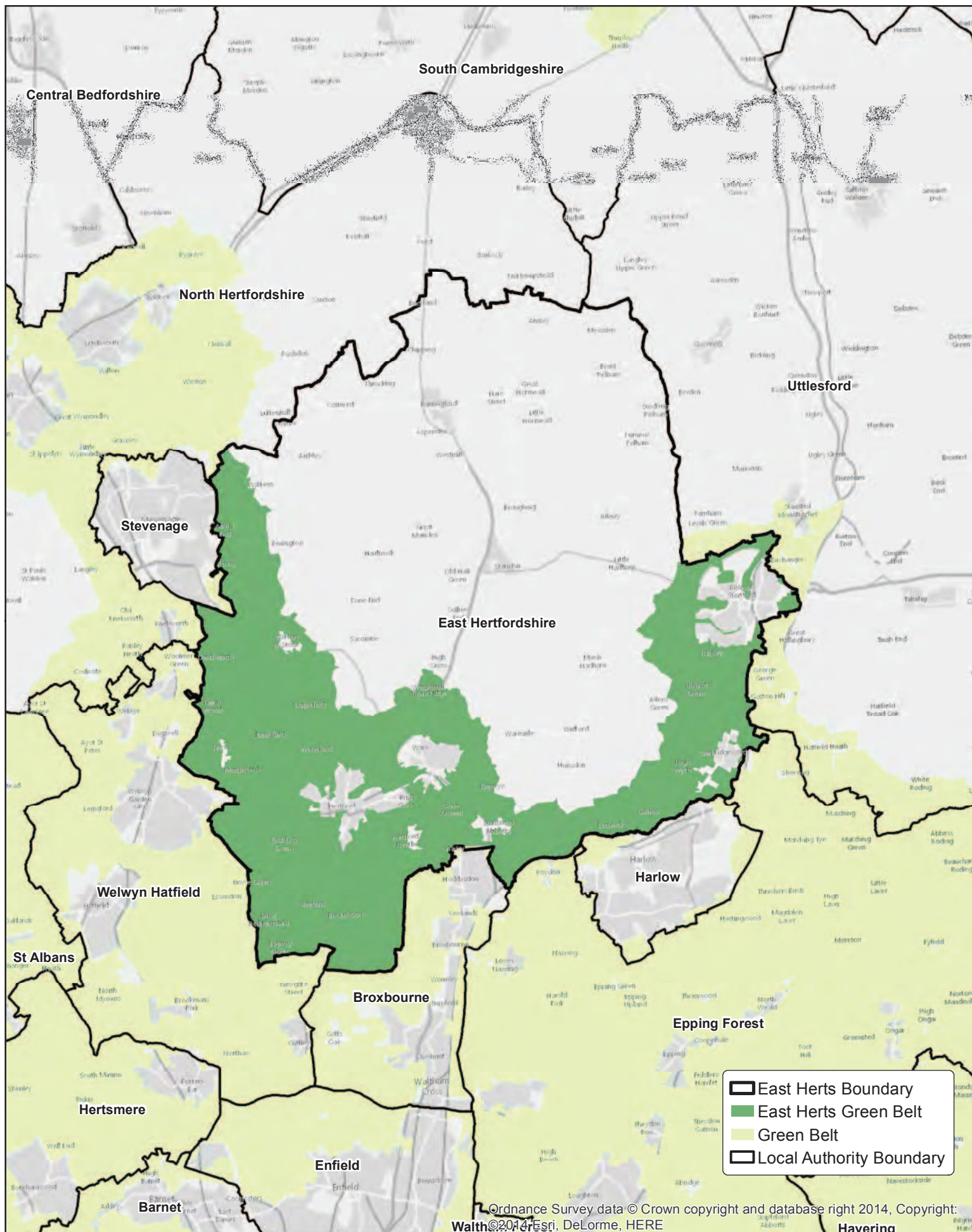
District can be accommodated satisfactorily within settlements or on the edge of the main settlements, with or without changes to the Green Belt. If this idea is to be pursued, the development has to be properly conceived and well planned, beginning with the District Plan, rather than flowing entirely from the aspirations of landowners. The location and the form of development should emerge from a careful examination of the landscape as well as the way in which infrastructure needs will be met, together with a clear concept for the form and role of the intended development.

- 4.7.7 It would be rather misleading to present such development as an extension to Harlow. Extending Harlow is not a matter that can be dealt with entirely by East Herts District Council, and the development would be better thought of as a large freestanding development, close to but distinct from Harlow. The development would necessarily share some of the transport facilities and green infrastructure available to Harlow residents and visitors, but would need to be developed as a mixed use scheme to achieve deliverability and greater sustainability.




4.8 Informing the District Plan - What next

- 4.8.1 This Green Belt Review has identified those areas of the Green Belt which meet the purposes least well. It does not suggest or propose the removal of particular areas from the Green Belt. This is the function of the development plan and plan making.
- 4.8.2 To inform the location of development in the Green Belt, and redraw Green Belt boundaries, the Council need to:
- Identify a housing target for the whole district and spatial strategy for individual settlements;
 - Finalise a SLAA, identifying sites and the capacity within each urban area and Category 1 and 2 Villages, and identify the amount of housing that cannot be accommodated in urban areas and Category 1 and 2 Villages;
 - Taking account of issues of sustainability, identify locations for development in the Green Belt i.e. those where infrastructure services and facilities are available to support communities, identifying the quantum of development and potential amount of land to be released from the Green Belt.
- 4.8.3 The District Plan needs to ensure that all planning considerations, including Green Belt, are taken into account when determining its development strategy, and this report will form one part of the balance of considerations necessary to produce a sound Plan.

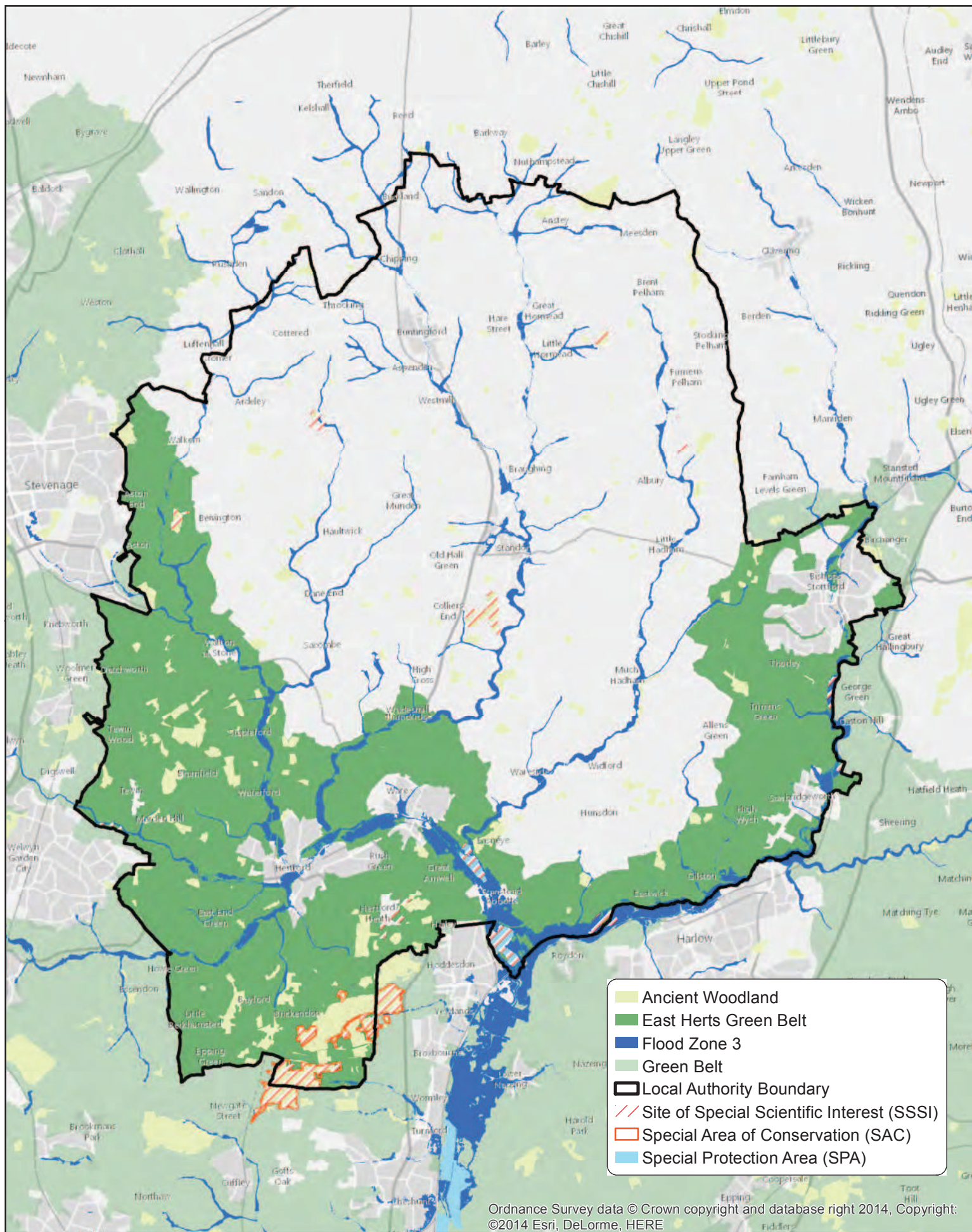
Appendix 1 Map of Green Belt in East Herts and adjoining districts



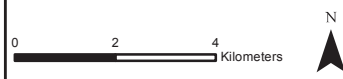
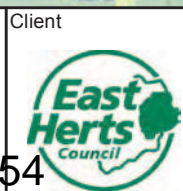
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 <p>www.pba.co.uk Peter Brett Associates LLP Tel: 0117 928 4560 Fax: 0117 459 7489</p>	<p>Client</p> 	<p>0 2.5 5 Kilometers</p> <p>N</p> 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">East Herts Green Belt Review</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Location of Green Belt in East Herts and Adjoining Districts</p>	<p>Havering</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date</td> <td>03/2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scale</td> <td>1:200,000 @ A4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drawn By</td> <td>CM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Checked By</td> <td>JB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revision Number</td> <td>03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Figure Number</td> <td>Appendix 1</td> </tr> </table>	Date	03/2015	Scale	1:200,000 @ A4	Drawn By	CM	Checked By	JB	Revision Number	03	Figure Number	Appendix 1
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Revision Number	03															
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Appendix 2 Map of Absolute Constraints



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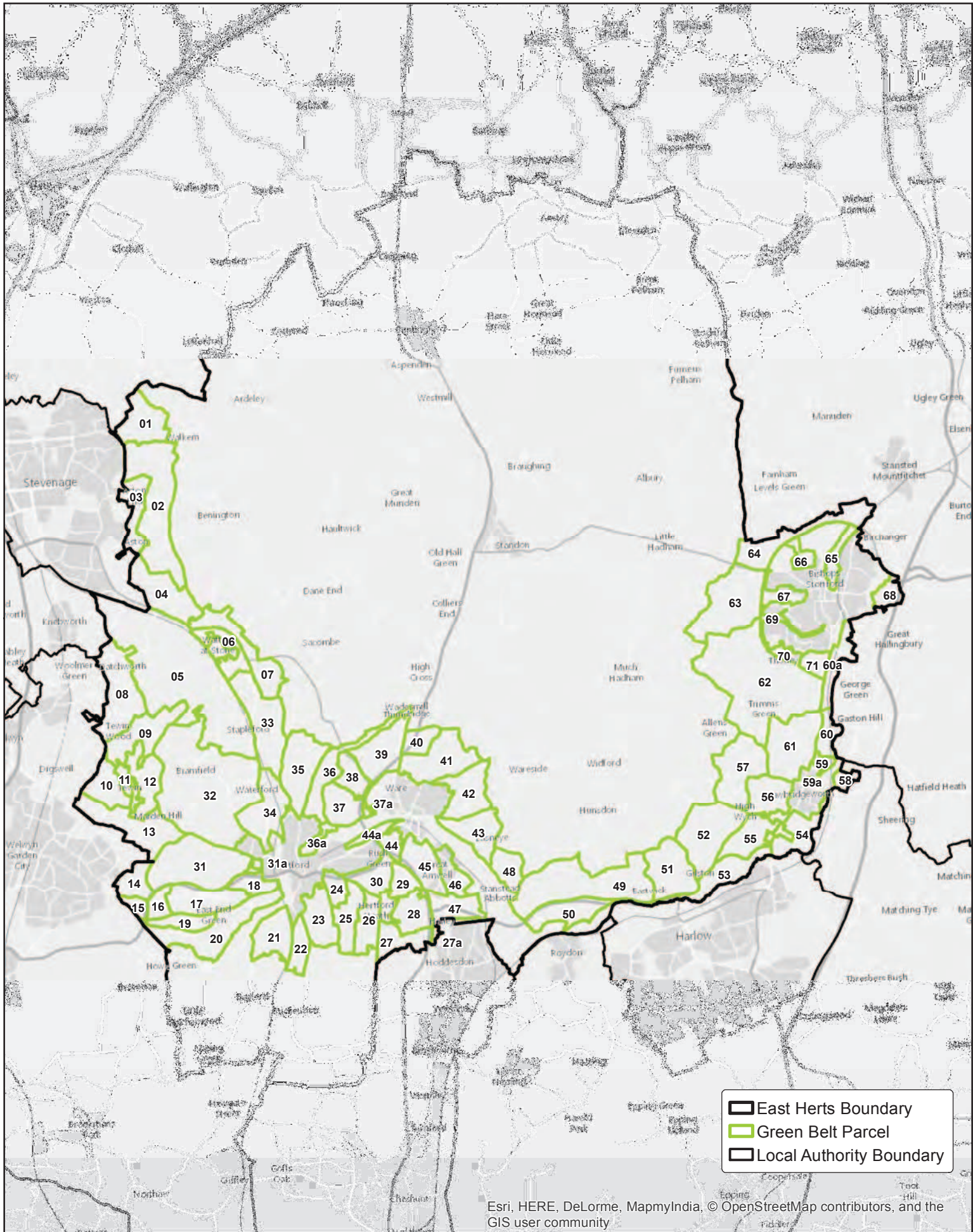
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East Herts Green Belt Review

Absolute Constraints

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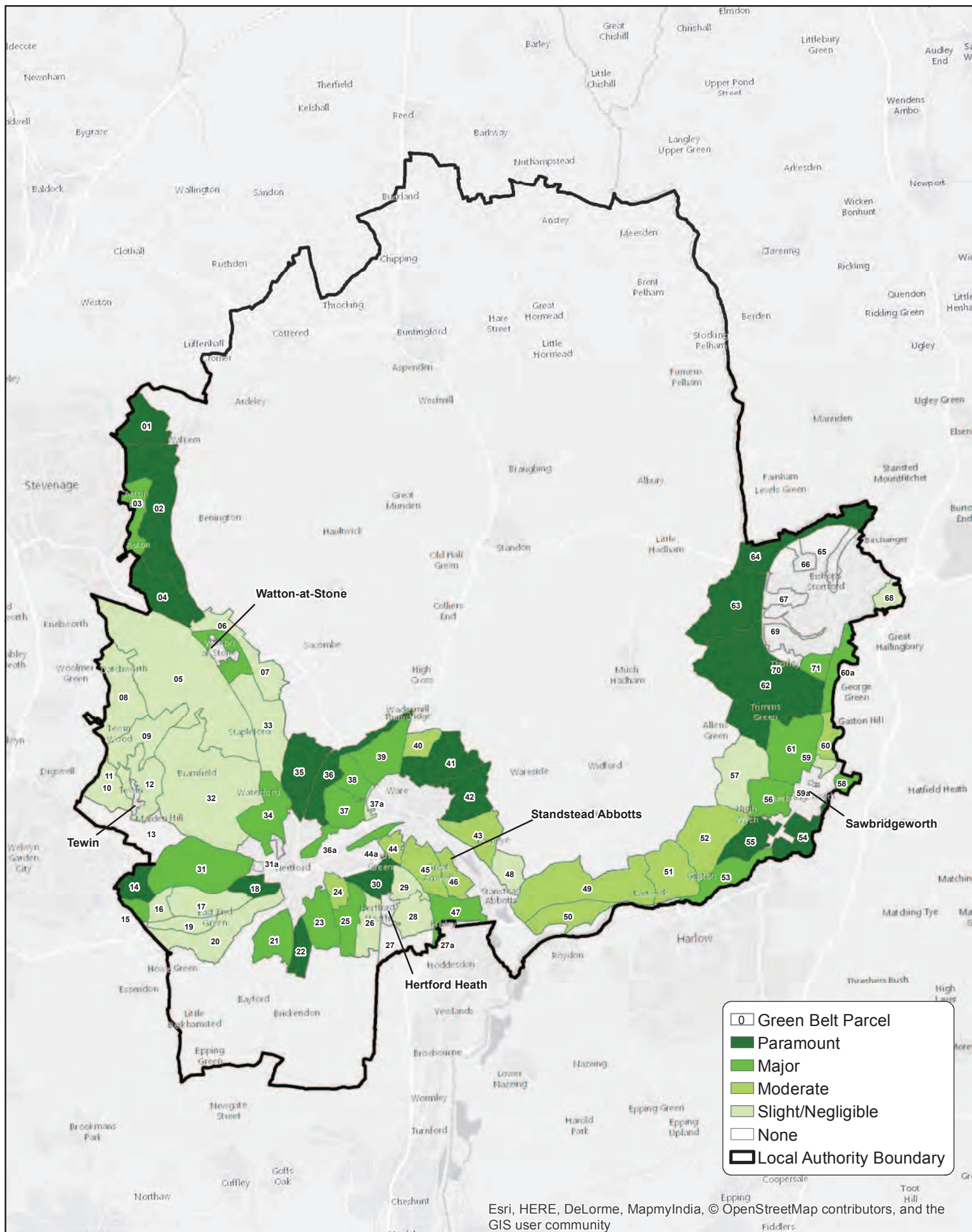
Appendix 3 Parcels used in the Green Belt Assessment



- East Herts Boundary
- Green Belt Parcel
- Local Authority Boundary

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Appendix 4 Maps of the findings of the assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes



01

Green Belt Parcel

Paramount

Major

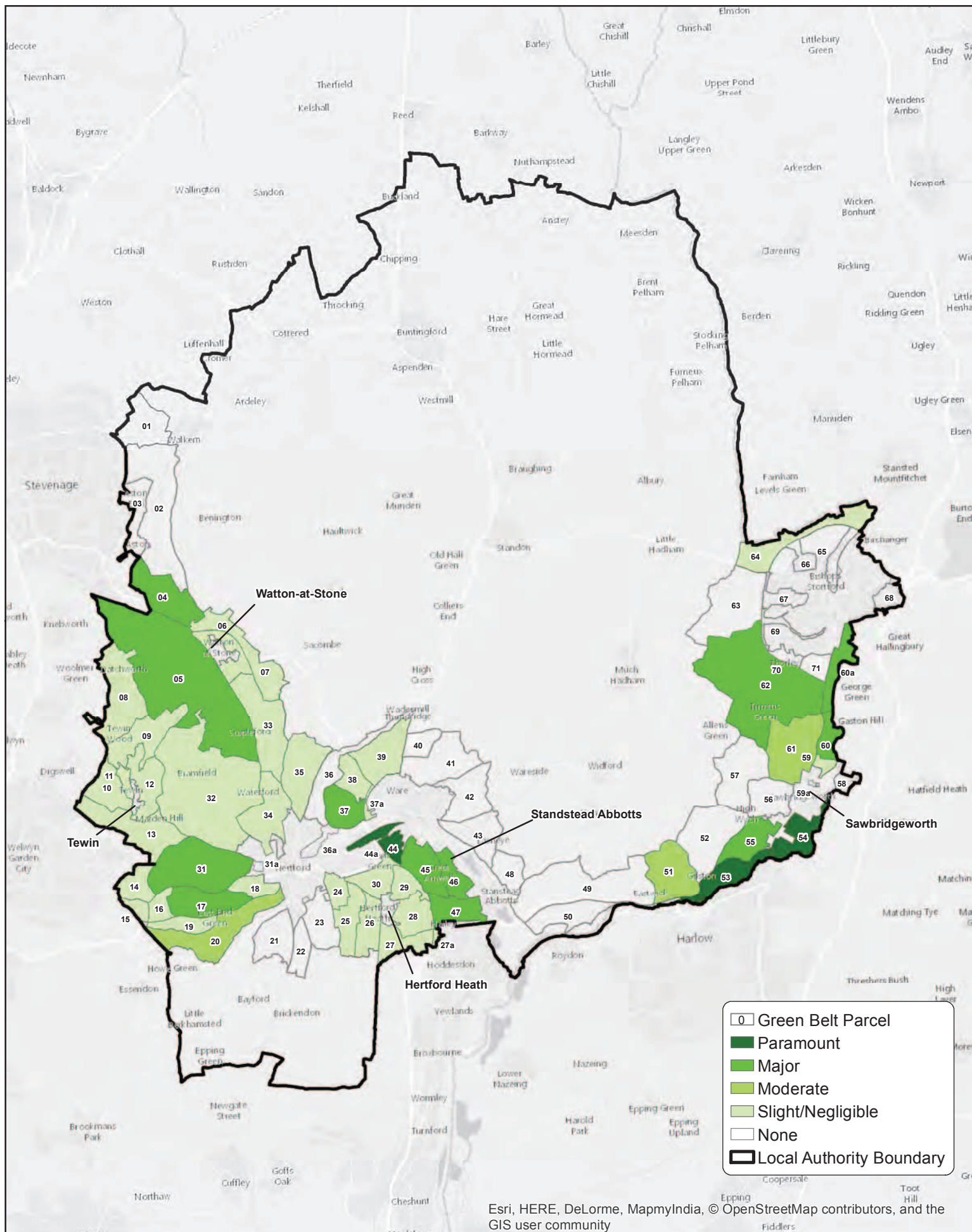
Moderate

Slight/Negligible

None

Local Authority Boundary

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East Herts Green Belt Review

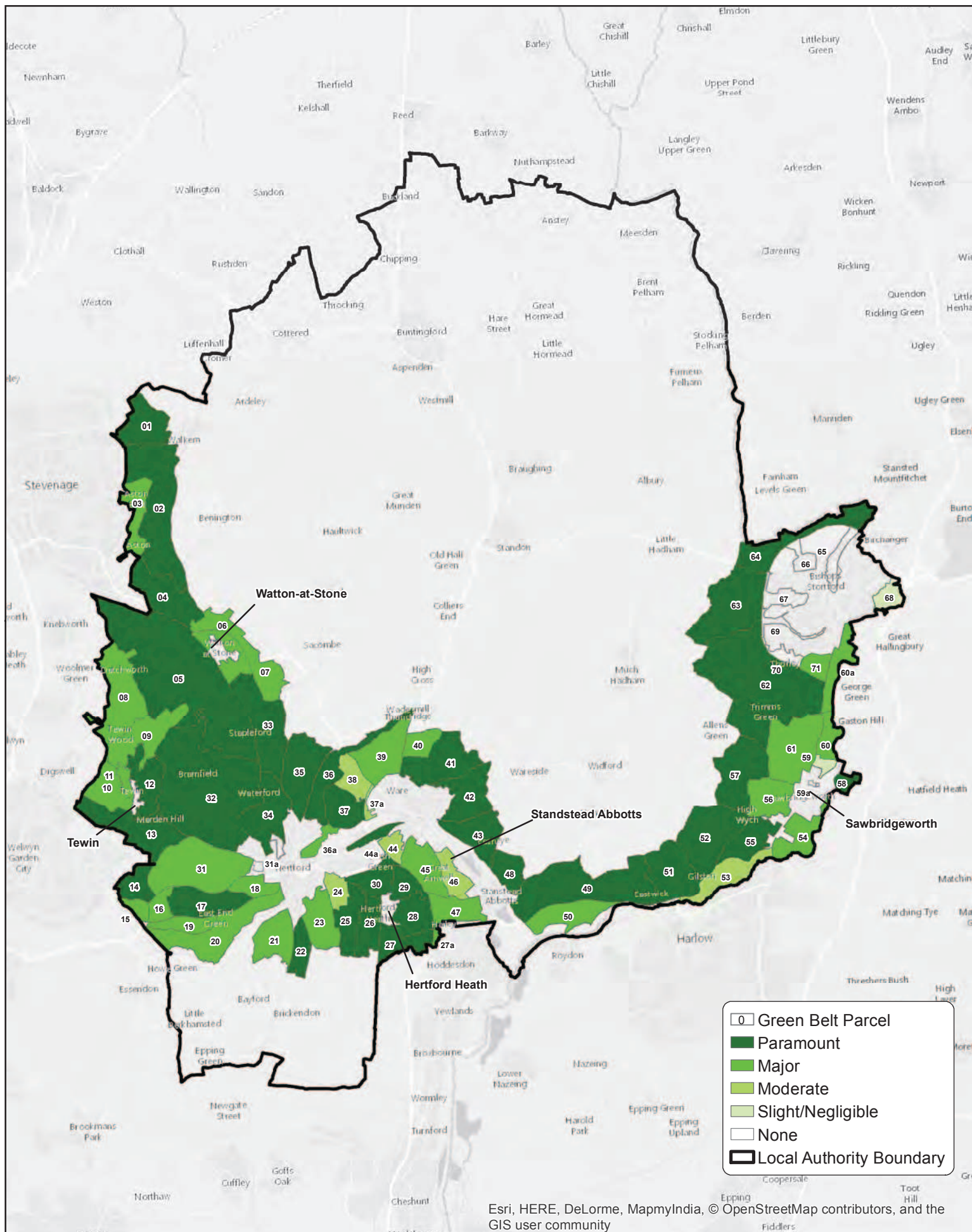
Purpose of Green Belt

2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

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Figure Number	Appendix 4

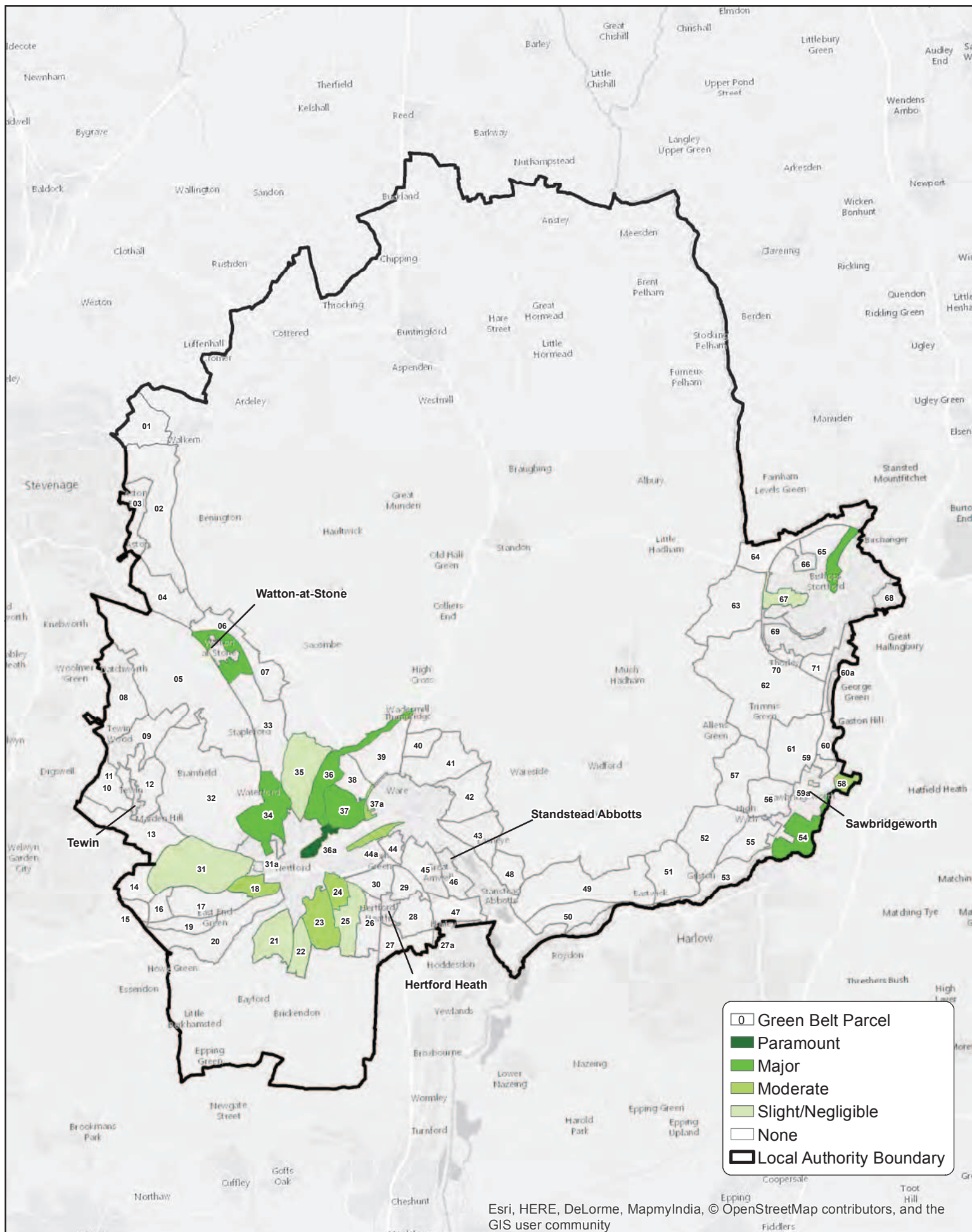
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0 2 4 Kilometers



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East Herts Green Belt Review

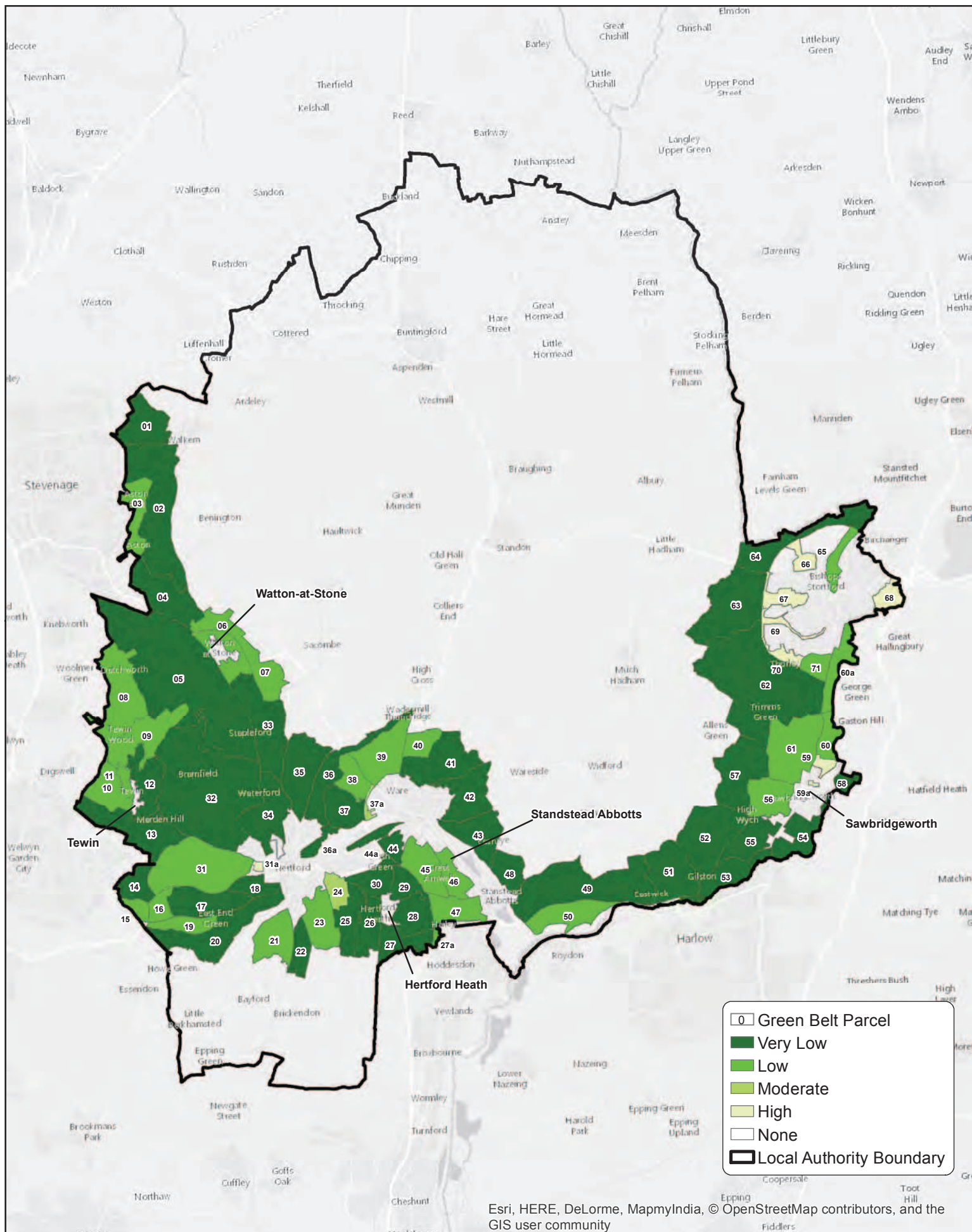
Purpose of Green Belt

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

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Figure Number	Appendix 4

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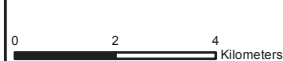


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East Herts Green Belt Review

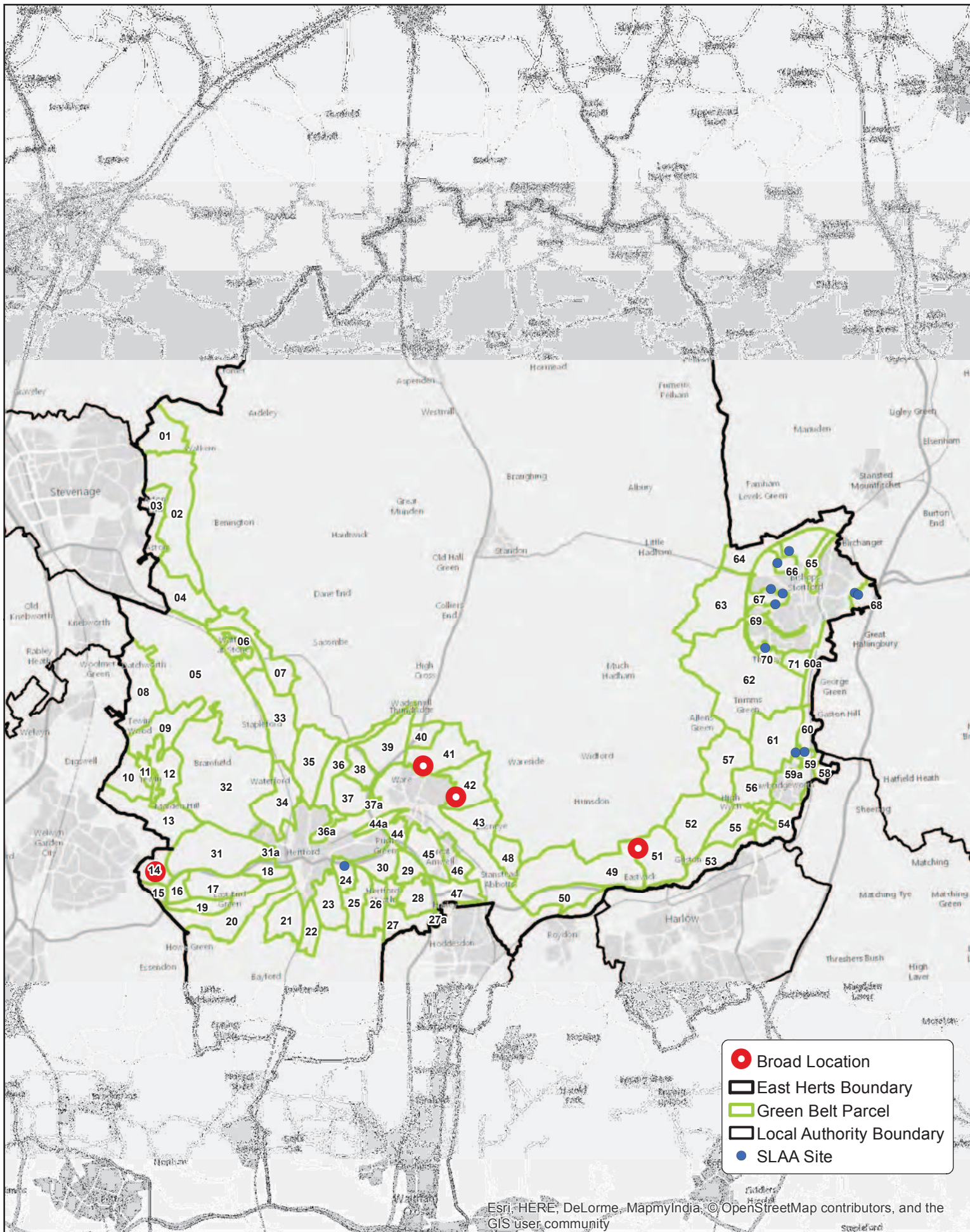
Overall Suitability as
Area of Search

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Figure Number	Appendix 4

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Appendix 5 Draft District Plan SLAA sites, Broad Locations and Parcels



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- Broad Location
- East Herts Boundary
- Green Belt Parcel
- Local Authority Boundary
- SLAA Site

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

THE VILLAGE HIERARCHY STUDY STAGE 1 AUGUST 2015

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents the outcome of the Village Hierarchy Study Stage 1.
- The report explains that a final village hierarchy will not be agreed until Stage 2 of the Study has been completed.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	the Village Hierarchy Study Stage 1 August 2015 be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 There is no specific guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on how to undertake a settlement hierarchy. The NPPF is, however, clear that development should be guided toward those settlements that are deemed the most sustainable. Settlements that can provide a range of local facilities and services, or provide reasonable accessibility to higher order settlements to easily access those services, should be considered the most sustainable.
- 1.2 In order to rank the villages of East Herts in terms of sustainability, the approach must focus on those facilities and services that a rural community value.

- 1.3 In the East Herts Draft District Plan Preferred Options Consultation document, villages are identified as Group 1, Group 2 or Group 3 villages. A number of representations were received objecting to the hierarchy set out in the draft Plan. This report presents Stage 1 of a Village Hierarchy Study, the purpose of which is to ensure a consistent approach to villages across the district.
- 1.4 This report presents the methodology used to identify and quantify the villages in terms of sustainability. The methodology, along with the individual village surveys, was sent to Ward Members and Town and Parish Councils in July 2015 for their comments. The report presents the methodology both before and after the consultation and notes where and why changes have been made.
- 1.5 This report presents Stage 1 of a two-stage approach to grouping the villages. Stage 1 simply seeks to identify the services and facilities available in the villages, together with an assessment of accessibility and public transport provision. Stage 2 will present a final hierarchy after considering unique issues such as policy constraints, environmental constraints and school capacity etc.
- 2.0 Report
- 2.1 The Village Hierarchy Study: Stage 1 August 2015 (contained in full at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**) consists of 6 sections. Section 1 introduces the purpose of the study; Section 2 places the study in the context of National Planning Policy.
- 2.2 Section 3 presents which villages are included within the assessment. The 34 villages that have been included are those that are identified as Group 1 or 2 villages in the Draft District Plan and the Category 1 and 2 villages in the 2007 Local Plan Second Review (where these differ). The number of villages within East Herts far exceeds the 34 villages within this study, however, the remaining villages were deemed of a size inappropriate and unsustainable for new development.
- 2.3 Section 4 presents the methodology that was sent to Ward Members and Parish Councils between July 6th and August 3rd. The methodology contains 2 elements:
1. Assessment of Services and Facilities
 2. Assessment of Accessibility and Public Transport Provision

- 2.4 The first element of the methodology (Assessment of Services and Facilities) sets out which services and facilities are awarded points (Table 1: Essential Reference Paper 'B') as well as the number of points each facility is given. Facilities are then categorised as either Primary or Secondary Facilities. Table 2 then applies a weighting to the points dependent on whether they are classified as Primary or Secondary. The weighting allows the methodology to place a greater emphasis on essential facilities that are used on a regular basis.
- 2.5 The second element of the methodology (Assessment of Accessibility and Public Transport Provision) sets out which accessibility and transport provisions are awarded points. Different points are awarded to different accessibility characteristics dependent upon their rural importance.
- 2.6 Section 5 presents the changes made to the methodology following the comments from the Ward Member and Parish Council consultation. Changes were made to one area of the Assessment of Services and Facilities element of the methodology. This is the removal of the "Mobile Library" criterion. The criterion was removed from the final methodology (Appendix 2: Post Consultation Final Methodology) due to the planned withdrawal in October 2015.
- 2.7 Changes were also made to two areas of the Assessment of Accessibility and Public Transport Provision. The level of points awarded for bus provision raised significant concern through the consultation. Two criterion in particular received a number of comments; "No. of different Bus Services" and "Access to Railway Station by Bus Service Suitable for Commute". Both these criteria have been removed from the final methodology (Appendix 2) as bus services are not deemed reliable enough to consistently fulfil these criteria. The level of bus points available is now refined to a lower overall total.
- 2.8 Section 6 concludes The Village Hierarchy Study: Stage 1 August 2015 and explains the next steps that will be undertaken towards the production of a final village hierarchy.
- 2.9 It is important to note at this stage that no decisions have been made on the final village hierarchy. Decisions will be made

following Stage 2 of the Study.

Conclusion

2.10 The Village Hierarchy Study: Stage 1 August 2015 is the first stage of two in providing important evidence to determine the rural strategy in the East Herts District Plan. This paper seeks to provide a sound evidence base which Stage 2 of The Village Hierarchy can build upon.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council
linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Kevin Steptoe, Head of Planning and Building Control – Ext 1407
kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: George Pavey, Planning Officer
george.pavey@eastherts.gov.uk

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p><i>People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute</i></p> <p>This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p><i>Place – Safe and Clean</i></p> <p>This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p><i>Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities</i></p> <p>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.</p>
Consultation:	The draft methodology was subject to a period of consultation by Ward Members and Town and Parish councils.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None other than Planning Policy Team resource.
Risk Management:	None
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The emerging East Herts District Plan in general will have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through a range of policy approaches that seek to create sustainable communities.

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The Village Hierarchy Study:

Stage 1

1. Introduction

The Council is currently preparing its District Plan to help shape a sustainable future for East Herts. This will replace the current 2007 Local Plan Second Review and sets out the spatial planning strategy and policy framework for the District up to 2031.

The council is developing an evidence base to support and inform the preparation of the District Plan. The Village Hierarchy Study will ensure that new development in the rural area is directed towards the most sustainable villages in the district.

The Village Hierarchy Study updates previous work undertaken (Village Audit 2008, Parish Plans, Chapter 4 of the District Plan Supporting Document 2012) and now presents a further comprehensive review, informed through village surveys and engagement with parish councils. The Village Hierarchy Study provides a snapshot in time of both facilities and accessibility to services within the different villages of East Herts to establish their overall level of sustainability.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, new development should be located close to services and facilities with good public transport provision. The District Plan development strategy will help to achieve the government's overall objective of sustainable communities by locating housing, jobs and services close together in order to reduce the need to travel. Housing growth should be guided towards those villages that already have a range of services and employment opportunities, and restricted in those that do not.

Growth will be directed mainly, but not solely by the aforementioned process. Stage 1 does not however present the final hierarchy. Following *Stage 1* of The Village Hierarchy Study will be a *Stage 2*; this next stage will inspect and evaluate strategic policy direction, suitability of sites and outstanding development constraints (flooding etc.) alongside individual characteristics of the villages that could affect development. Stage 2 will include the final Village Hierarchy.

This paper briefly reviews the Policy Context for undertaking the Village Hierarchy Study (Section 2). Section 3 presents which villages are being considered within the Hierarchy Study. The methodology used to rank the basic sustainability of each village is presented in Section 4. A period of consultation with Ward Members and Parish Councils was undertaken in July. As a result of the consultation there have been some changes made to the methodology and these are outlined in Section 5. The last chapter highlights the Stage 1 study conclusions and outlines the next stage of the Village Hierarchy Study. Within the Appendix a matrix of the individual village totals can be found, alongside a detailed description of all the services considered within the methodology.

2. Planning Policy Context: National Planning Policy Framework

There is no specific guidance on how to undertake a Village Hierarchy Study. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does however provide some key issues that need to be addressed and in paragraph 158 the NPPF states that:

“Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Local planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals.”

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that:

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances...”

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF states that:

“To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

3. Villages Considered for Study

The villages considered within this study are those identified as Group 1 and 2 villages in the Draft District Plan¹ and Category 1 and 2 villages from the East Herts Local Plan Second Review² (where these differ). East Herts is a rural district, consisting of five market towns and over 100 villages. It would not be appropriate to assess all settlements within the District.

The remaining settlements within the District are considered to be of a size that makes them unsustainable locations for potential new development, they are therefore not assessed within this study.

The 34 villages included in the assessment were:

Aston	High Wych
Bayford	Hunsdon
Benington	Letty Green
Birch Green	Little Hadham
Braughing	Much Hadham
Brickendon	Spellbrook
Cole Green	Standon and Puckeridge
Colliers End	Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets
Cottered	Stapleford
Dane End	Tewin
Datchworth	Thundridge
Furneux Pelham	Tonwell
Great Amwell	Wadesmill
Hadham Ford	Walkern
Hertford Heath	Watton-at-Stone
Hertingfordbury	Westmill
High Cross	Widford

¹ Draft District Plan Villages: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=29084> – See Chapter 10 ‘Villages’,

² Local Plan Second Review: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=24645> – See Chapter 17 ‘Other Settlements - The Villages’

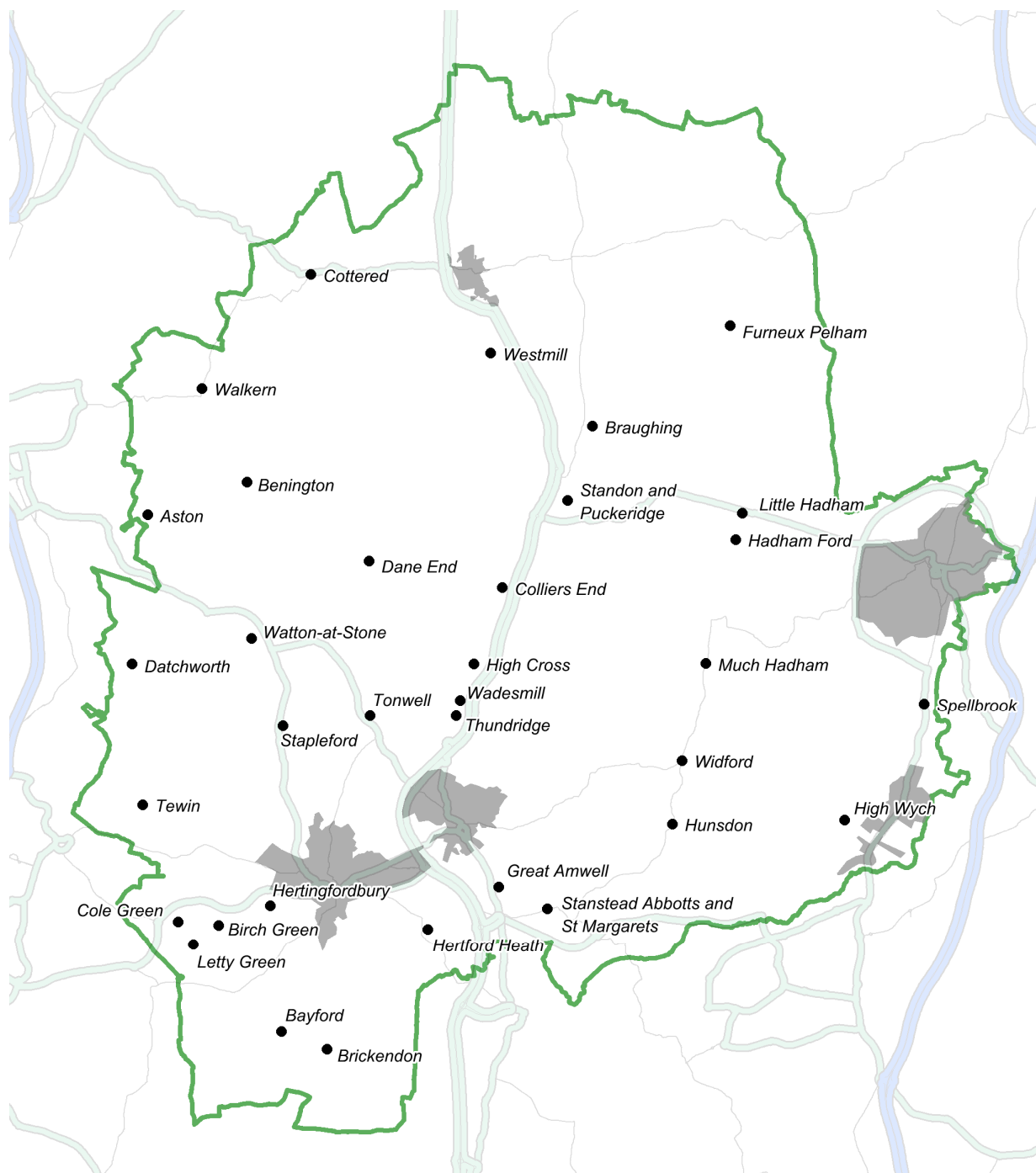


Figure 1: The geographical location of villages in East Herts considered for this study

4. Methodology

A scoring system has been formulated which will be used to rank the villages with regard to their overall sustainability. There are two elements to this part of the study. The first is an assessment of the range of services and facilities that a village contains, and the second is an assessment of the village's accessibility to higher order settlements, and the level of public transport provision available. The methodology within this section is identical to the consultation methodology sent to Ward Members and Parish Councils in July.

1. Assessment of Services and Facilities

The services and facilities that have been identified in Table 1 below have been categorised into Primary and Secondary Services and Facilities. Those categorised as Primary Services and Facilities are deemed to be essential for day-to-day requirements, and therefore the scoring criteria has been weighted (Table 2 below) to reflect their importance. Focusing on the importance of services and facilities, and not just on the quantity, ensures a more accurate measure of sustainability.

In order for a service or facility to count towards a village's total, it must be within a 750m radius of the built-up area; this represents a short 5-10 minute walking distance. A point (or more where applicable) is awarded for each service, e.g. if there were 4 A1 shops within a village, 4 points would be awarded etc. Appendix 1 contains a description of each facility and service included within the study.

Table 1: Facilities

Facility Type	Service/Facility	Number of Points for each Service (all within settlement)
Primary Facilities	Post Office Facility	1pt – Part-time
	Doctor's Surgery Facility	2pts – Full-time
	Primary School	2 pts
	Community Building	1pt each
	Convenience Shop	
	Children's Play Area	
	Public Playing Field	
Secondary Facilities	Dentist	1pt – Part-time 2pts – Full-time
	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	1pt each
	Place of Worship	
	Public House	
	Other A1 Shop	
	Pre-school/Nursery	
	Pharmacy/Chemist	
	Mobile Library Service	
	Private Recreational Facilities	
	Allotments	
	Petrol Station	

Table 2: Facility Weighting

Facility Type	Additional Weighting (basic number multiplied by)
All Primary	x3
All Secondary	Remains the same

2. Assessment of Accessibility and Public Transport Provision

The accessibility of villages within East Herts is affected by the levels of public transport provision available to residents. Those villages that are best served by public transport can be considered to be more accessible, and hence more sustainable, than more isolated villages. Table 3 displays the accessibility and public transport provision scoring criteria. The table is split into 3 categories; general accessibility, bus provision and railway provision. Higher scores are awarded to railway service provision as railways are fixed transport infrastructure, which makes service provision less subject to service level fluctuations and economic circumstances. Higher scores are also awarded to bus service provision which offers peak hour services on Monday-Friday, enabling a day long visit to be made to a higher order settlement for work or educational purposes. Appendix 2 contains further description of each transport and accessibility type.

Table 3: Transport and Accessibility

	Indicator	Scoring Criteria
General Accessibility	Proximity to nearest Service Town ³ (in miles)	0.0 – 2.0 = 8pts 2.1 – 3.0 = 6pts 3.1 – 4.0 = 4pts 4.1 + = 2pts
Bus Service Provision	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	0 – 4 = 2pts 5 – 9 = 4pts 10 – 14 = 6pts 15 – 19 = 8pts 20 + = 10pts
	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	0 – 4 = 1pt 5 – 9 = 2pts 10 – 14 = 3pts 15 – 19 = 4pts 20 + = 5pts
	Sunday Service (Any time/number)	2pts
	Bus Service suitable for commute ⁴	5pts
	No. of different Bus Services	2pts each
Railway Service Provision	Railway Station within Village	10pts
	Access to Railway Station by bus service suitable for commute ⁵	5pts

³ All distances measured in miles, from centre of village to centre of service town. Centre refers to centre of development/built up area in both cases; not perceived centre of village/town.

⁴ Bus service arriving in Service Town before 9am and departing after 5pm (includes the 5 market towns within East Herts in addition to Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City)

⁵ Bus service arriving at railway station before 7.30am and departing from railway station after 6.30pm.

5. Parish Council and Ward Member Consultation

Between the 6th July and 3rd August Parish Councils and Ward Members were consulted. Individual village profiles were sent out to be fact-checked to ensure that the information held regarding each of the 34 villages was correct. Corrections have been made where necessary regarding the individual village information. Secondly the draft methodology was also circulated for comment.

Feedback:

The draft methodology mainly received concerns in two areas:

1. A number of comments received raised concern about the provision of bus services in the rural area. It is agreed that this is a valid concern and therefore the following two criteria will be removed from Table 3:

“No. of Different Bus Services”:

- Although a higher number of services are often an indicator of a good bus service provision, this is not the case in a number of villages in East Herts. In September this criterion will have less relevance with the changes to HCC subsidised buses.

“Access to Railway Station by Bus Service Suitable for Commute”:

- Bus service not deemed reliable enough to constantly provide this sort of service.
- Car usage within the villages undermines the use of the buses in this way.

Removing these two criteria constrains the level of points available for buses as a whole and refines the approach toward the more important aspects of a bus service.

2. Concerns were also raised regarding the Mobile Library. Again, it is agreed that this is a valid concern and therefore the following criterion will be removed from Table 1:

“Mobile Library”

- The Mobile Library is to be withdrawn by the end of October across Hertfordshire therefore no longer offering any service.

6. Next Steps

After the consultation the changes described in Section 5 were made to the original methodology in Section 4. The changes have been made to the village point scores in Appendix 3 and an update of Tables 1 and 3 (Section 4) can be found in Appendix 2. Villages have also received updated point scores in regards to the bus changes that will take place in September. These points are based on draft bus timetables and so there may be potential for small-scale change when the timetables come into force in September.

Stage 1 of The Village Hierarchy Study has set out to establish a universal methodology that can establish the basic sustainability of the selected villages of East Herts. The study has provided a comprehensive audit of village facilities and accessibility to higher order services. With the help of Ward Members and Parish Councils the study has provided an important first stage in the evidence base to support the rural strategy.

The next step (Stage 2) will seek to build upon the evidence in this study. It will consider areas that could constrain development in the villages such as land capacity, school capacity and policy direction. It will go on to establish a final Village Hierarchy and will categorise villages into a number of group's dependant on their overall sustainability and ability to accommodate development.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Description of Services and Accessibility Criteria

Facility Type	Facility	Reason for Inclusion/Criteria
Primary Facilities	Post Office	<p>Post offices have traditionally provided a valuable service to rural areas allowing access to a wide range of services. Especially important to the elderly who may not be able to easily travel outside the settlement and/or may not have access to internet services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes independent Post Offices, part-time Post Offices and Post Offices within a shop.
	Doctor Surgery	<p>Access to a doctor is important to provide for the on-going health needs of residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both permanent surgeries and part-time surgeries.
	Primary School	<p>Reduces the need for children and parents to travel long distances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not include privately funded schools. - Or schools which only cater for a select type of student, (e.g. Students with learning difficulties) as this does not directly serve local need.
	Community Building	<p>Provides a location for community activities and events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indoor hall or larger building, most often used for community events but can also be privately hired.
	Convenience Shop	<p>A general convenience store with a range of food and general goods is seen as a basic requirement and important in determining the sustainability of a settlement. Convenience stores will provide a daily 'top-up' shop of essentials, thus reducing the need to travel.</p>
	Children's Play Area	<p>Designated area for children to play in. Might include climbing frames of varying materials and/or an area of softer flooring.</p>

	Public Playing Field ⁶	<p>Provides green space or recreational facilities for public use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing fields, nature reserves, equipped play areas, tennis courts, and sports pitches with changing rooms etc. - Facilities that can be accessed by the community, without having membership to a privately run organisation. - In some cases these facilities can be publically accessible but may require a charge. - Includes both indoor and outdoor facilities.
Secondary Facilities	Dentist	<p>Dentists are an important healthcare facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both permanent and part-time surgeries.
	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	<p>Provide residents with a choice of food outlets as well as providing employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In some cases Café/Restaurant is deemed to offer separate service despite being within same unit as shop/pub, therefore has been added to the assessment.
	Place of Worship	<p>Plays an important role in community cohesion.</p>
	Public House	<p>Can often be the heart of a local community. In smaller, more isolated settlements pubs may be able to diversify and provide other essential services.</p>
	Other A1 Shop	<p>A variety of shops and retail which again lower the need to travel outside of the village, they differ from other shops by providing comparison goods and some services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes any shop within the A1 use-class.

⁶ In some cases Public and Private Recreational Facilities overlap, every effort has been made to separate and count individually; however in some cases the provision of the facility may be large enough that it is counted both as a Public facility and as (below) a Private facility.

	Pre-school/Nursery	<p>Local childcare can be particularly important for working families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment includes both private childcare facilities as well as nurseries and Pre-school associated with schools.
	Pharmacy/Chemist	<p>Access to a dispensary prevents journeys outside that some may find difficult and is important to the on-going health needs of the residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both pharmacy and dispensary.
	Private Recreational Facilities	<p>Provides access for club members to facilities such as a bowling green, cricket pitches, football pitches, tennis courts, changing rooms etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities either not normally accessible to the public or where a membership fee is required.
	Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a timeless service that still remains very popular in villages within East-Herts.
	Petrol Station/Garage	<p>Can offer a valuable choice to residents and provide local employment opportunities. Petrol stations will typically provide a range of comparison and convenience goods as well.</p>

Accessibility/Transport Type	Accessibility Criteria	Reason for Inclusion/Criteria
General Accessibility	Proximity to nearest Service Town ⁷	Being within close proximity to a service town enhances the sustainability of a location. It shortens the travel time to employment, schooling and services that a rural community may not be able to provide.
Bus	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	Where a settlement has a more frequent bus service, it can be considered more sustainable as they provide residents with a higher level of accessibility to urban areas.
	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	For residents working during weekdays, a frequent Saturday bus service can provide residents with access to urban areas on the weekends, outside of working hours.
	Sunday Service (Anytime/Number)	An additional service, often symbolic of a more substantial bus service throughout the week.
	Bus Service suitable for commute	A bus service that runs from Monday to Friday and arrives within a town before 9am and has a return service from the town after 5pm provides opportunity to commute to work, this is more sustainable than driving.
Train	Train Station within Village	Faster alternative to bus service also provides access to a broader transport network. As with all train lines in East Herts the service feeds into London, an important commuter service.

⁷ In this case, the term *service town* refers to the 5 towns within East Herts (Bishops Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware) as well as the towns of Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn G.C. outside of East Herts.

APPENDIX 2: Post-Consultation Final Methodology

Facility Type	Facility	Number of Points for each Facility (all within settlement)
Primary Facilities	Post Office Facility	1pt – Part-time
	Doctor's Surgery Facility	2pts – Full-time
	Primary School	2 pts
	Community Building	1pt each
	Convenience Shop	
	Children's Play Area	
	Public Playing Field	
Secondary Facilities	Dentist	1pt – Part-time 2pts –Full-time
	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	1pt each
	Place of Worship	
	Public House	
	Other A1 Shop	
	Pre-school/Nursery	
	Pharmacy/Chemist	
	Private Recreational Facilities	
	Allotments	
	Petrol Station	

Facility Type	Additional Weighting (basic number multiplied by)
All Primary	x3
All Secondary	Remains the same

Transport Type	Indicator	Scoring Criteria
General Accessibility	Proximity to nearest Service Town ⁸ (in miles)	0.0 – 2.0 = 8pts 2.1 – 3.0 = 6pts 3.1 – 4.0 = 4pts 4.1 + = 2pts
Bus Service Provision	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	0 – 4 = 2pts 5 – 9 = 4pts 10 – 14 = 6pts 15 – 19 = 8pts 20 + = 10pts
	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	0 – 4 = 1pt 5 – 9 = 2pts 10 – 14 = 3pts 15 – 19 = 4pts 20 + = 5pts
	Sunday Service (Any time/number)	2pts
	Bus Service suitable for commute ⁹	5pts
Railway Service Provision	Railway Station within Village	10pts

⁸ All distances measured in miles, from centre of village to centre of service town. Centre refers to centre of development/built up area in both cases; not perceived centre of village/town.

⁹ Bus service arriving in Service Town before 9am and departing after 5pm (includes the 5 market towns within East Herts in addition to Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City)

APPENDIX 3: Village Points Matrix

	Facilities																	Facility Total	Accessibility									Accessibility Total	Overall Total
	Primary Facilities							Secondary Facilities											Proximity to Nearest Service Town	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	Sunday Service (anytime/number)	Bus Service Suitable for Commute	No. of Different Bus Services	Railway Station within Village	Access to railway Station by Bus Service Suitable for Commute			
	Post Office Facility	Doctor's Surgery Facility	Primary School	Community Building	Convenience Shop	Children's Play Area	Public Recreation Area	Dentist	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	Place of Worship	Public House	Other A1 Shop	Pre-school/Nursery	Pharmacy/Chemist	Private Recreational Facilities	Allotments	Petrol Station												
Aston	0	0	6	9	0	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	31	4	2	1	0	0		0		7	38	
Bayford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	19	4	2	1	0	0		0		7	26	
Benington	0	0	6	3	3	0	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	20	2	4	2	0	5		0		13	33	
Birch Green	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	17	4	4	1	0	5		0		14	31	
Braughing	6	0	6	9	3	3	3	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	38	4	6	2	0	5		0		17	55	
Brickendon	0	0	0	3	0	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	15	4	2	1	0	0		0		7	22	
Cole Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	4	1	0	5		0		14	16	
Colliers End	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	6	2	0	5		0		15	20	
Cottered	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	6	4	1	0	0		0		11	19	
Dane End	6	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	28	2	4	1	0	5		0		12	40	
Datchworth	3	0	6	6	3	9	6	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	41	2	2	0	0	0		0		4	45	
Furneux Pelham	3	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	2	4	1	0	0		0		7	22	
Great Amwell	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	14	8	10	5	2	5		0		30	44	
Hadham Ford	3	3	0	3	0	6	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	4	4	1	0	5		0		14	33	
Hertford Heath	0	0	6	3	6	3	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	28	8	6	3	0	5		0		22	50	
Hertingfordbury	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	8	4	1	0	5		0		18	27	
High Cross	0	0	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	16	6	8	2	0	5		0		21	37	
High Wych	3	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	27	8	2	1	0	0		0		11	38	
Hunsdon	6	3	6	3	3	3	6	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	36	2	10	5	0	5		0		22	58	
Letty Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0		0		4	5	
Little Hadham	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	8	2	0	5		0		19	26	
Much Hadham	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	43	2	4	2	0	5		0		13	56	
Spellbrook	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	8	10	5	2	5		0		30	38	
Standon and Puckeridge	6	6	12	6	9	3	3	0	2	3	4	2	3	1	0	1	1	62	2	8	3	0	5		0		18	80	

Stanstead Abbotts and St Margarets	6	6	6	12	12	12	3	2	5	2	3	12	4	1	3	1	0	90	6	10	5	0	5		10		36	126
Stapleford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	19	4	6	2	0	5		0		17	36
Tewin	3	0	6	9	3	3	3	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	1	0	36	6	2	1	0	0		0		9	45
Thundridge	0	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	23	6	6	2	0	5		0		19	42
Tonwell	0	0	6	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	6	4	2	0	5		0		17	31
Wadesmill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	6	2	0	5		0		19	21
Walkern	6	3	6	3	3	3	3	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	38	2	4	2	0	5		0		13	51
Watton-at-Stone	6	6	6	12	6	6	3	2	1	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	0	63	2	6	2	0	5		10		25	88
Westmill	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	14	8	4	1	0	5		0		18	32
Widford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	20	2	4	2	0	5		0		13	33

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE UPDATE REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents the notes of the latest Member-level meetings with adjoining local authorities

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	the notes of the Member-level meetings held with neighbouring local authorities be noted.

1.0 Background

1.1 A report to the District Planning Executive Panel on 28th November 2012 (see Background Papers) explained the background to the Duty to Co-Operate and its implications for the East Herts District Plan. The report explained that the duty required the Council, as Local Planning Authority, to engage constructively with a range of bodies throughout the plan-making process in order to address strategic cross boundary issues.

1.2 It was agreed that the notes of all Member-level meetings would be reported to District Planning Executive Panel. All previously agreed minutes have been published online at www.eastherts.gov.uk/DutytoCooperate.

2.0 Report

2.1 This report presents the minutes of the following bilateral Duty to Co-operate meetings:

- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, March 2015;
- Stevenage Borough Council, March 2015;
- Uttlesford District Council, April 2015; and
- North Hertfordshire District Council, July 2015.

2.2 In addition, the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board (known as the Co-op Board) was established in 2014 in order to facilitate strategic level co-operation between the following authorities: East Herts, Broxbourne, Harlow, Epping Forest, Uttlesford, Chelmsford, Redbridge, Enfield, Waltham Forest and Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils. The Terms of Reference for this group were presented to Panel on 8th December 2014. To date, there have been three 'Co-op Board' meetings.

2.3 The minutes from all of the meetings identified above are presented within **Essential Reference Paper B**. Notes of any further meetings will be presented to future Panel meetings as required.

2.4 As work on the District Plan continues to progress, it is expected that a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU's) will be agreed with neighbouring local authorities, and other bodies where considered appropriate. The MoU's will identify how strategic cross boundary issues have been addressed. A number of authorities across the country have had their Local Plans found 'unsound' at Examination in recent months on the basis that they have not adequately demonstrated that they have met the requirements of the duty. The MoU's referred to above will therefore form a key piece of evidence in support of the District Plan moving forward to Examination.

2.5 There will be a series of further Duty to Co-operate meetings as work on the District Plan progresses.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

- Duty to Co-Operate Update Report (District Planning Executive Panel, 8th December 2014)
- Duty to Co-Operate Update Report (District Planning Executive Panel, 22nd October 2014)
- Duty to Co-Operate Update Report (District Planning Executive Panel, 16 January 2014)
- Duty to Co-Operate Update Report (District Planning Executive Panel, 3rd December 2013)
- Duty to Co-Operate Update Report (District Planning Executive Panel, 25th July 2013)
- 'The Duty to Co-Operate' and East Herts District Plan (District Planning Executive Panel, 28th November 2012)

All reports may be accessed at:

<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=151>

Contact Member: Cllr Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council
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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute</p> <p>This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place – Safe and Clean</p> <p>This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities</p> <p>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.</p>
Consultation:	Ongoing in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate
Legal:	None identified
Financial:	None identified
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	Failure to comply with the Duty to Co-Operate could mean that the Council would not be able to submit the District Plan for Examination in Public.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The Duty to Co-Operate applies to Clinical Commissioning Groups and National Health Service Commissioning Boards.

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Essential Reference Paper 'B'

East Herts District Council – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Meeting Notes

Date: 16th March 2015

Venue: East Herts Council Offices, Hertford

Attendees:

East Herts District Council

Cllr Mike Carver – Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport
Cllr Linda Haysey – Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support
Jenny Pierce – Senior Planning Officer
Chris Butcher – Senior Planning Officer

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Cllr Roger Trigg – Executive Member for Planning, Housing, and Community
Colin Haigh – Head of Planning
Sue Tiley – Planning Policy and Implementation Manager

Meeting Notes

Approach to land East of Welwyn Garden City

1. MC indicated that East Herts Council (EHC) remains supportive of development in this location, subject to the findings of forthcoming technical studies. CH suggested that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) is also broadly supportive and would like to explore the possibility of undertaking a cross boundary masterplanning exercise. MC agreed that this would be a sensible approach.
2. CH commented that one approach to consider was to establish a joint committee. MC indicated that this process might take too long to establish. EHC is currently assessing options around phasing and delivery for this site as part of ongoing work on the District Plan.
3. ST suggested that it might be helpful for the two authorities to sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding in order to establish the way in which they will work together through the preparation of a masterplan. MC agreed and indicated that an MoU would help to demonstrate ongoing co-operation at Examination stage. ST also suggested that the two authorities could also agree suitable policy wording for inclusion within their respective local plans. This

approach would look to deal with the principles and objectives for development to the east of Welwyn Garden City. The details of development would be resolved through a jointly prepared masterplan. ST suggested that the period for preparing a masterplan would extend beyond the Local Plan preparation process.

4. CH indicated that WHBC would also be supportive of preparing a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) which would give a detailed timeline for working towards future planning applications. MC indicated that EHC would be supportive of this approach. It was suggested that it would also be prudent to share costs for procuring advice on issues such as landscaping and design.
5. There was some discussion with regards to how housing completion figures for the site should be divided between the two authorities. The simplest approach might be for each authority to count the respective completions within their administrative areas towards their own respective housing target. ST indicated that as the site lies within the Welwyn Hatfield Housing Market Area the figures would contribute to meeting the OAN for that area. Welwyn Hatfield's housing target would be based upon what could be delivered within its administrative area.

Local Plan Preparation

6. MC indicated that EHC will be looking to undertake a Pre-Submission consultation in September 2015 although the timetable is partly dependent on finalising several key technical studies. Of particular importance is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which is currently being prepared on behalf of East Herts, Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils.
7. ST suggested that there had been a strong level of response to the local plan consultation. WHBC are hoping to undertake a Pre-Submission consultation by the end of the year. WHBC have identified an objectively assessed housing need figure of 12,500 dwellings. Sites that are considered to be 'more favourable' have a total capacity of 10,100 dwellings. Ongoing transport modelling work, which is assessing potential impacts of growth on Junctions 3 and 4 of the A1(M), may impact on the deliverability of sites in Hatfield. The Council will continue to review the deliverability of sites as part of the review of the responses to the consultation and any new evidence.

Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

8. MC commented that making adequate provision for gypsy and travellers and travelling showpeople is a key issue for EHC which needs to be addressed

through the plan making process. There are particular concerns with regards to ensuring that the need within the first five years of the plan period is met.

9. ST explained that WHBC have identified an urgent need for 25 gypsy and traveller pitches and a further need for 46 pitches. Only 3 permanent pitches have been provided within the plan period and, whilst some sites have been promoted, there are not enough to meet this level of need. Therefore there is a need to look at making provision within the strategic locations and that this would need to be considered as part of the ongoing work on land East of Welwyn Garden City. Further discussions will be needed in due course on a complimentary approach to this issue.

Employment

10. MC indicated that EHC's overall approach to employment is unlikely to change and that there would be a continued reliance on neighbouring areas such as Harlow and Stevenage in order to meet the employment needs of East Herts residents. However, a key objective of the District Plan is to maintain the existing offer while providing new employment space in suitable locations. There was a discussion regarding the feasibility of locating new employment space on land East of Welwyn Garden City. ST suggested that this probably wasn't a suitable location for uses such as warehousing or offices and that consideration should be given to the fact that some employment generating uses, such as retail, education and health facilities, would be located within the new development.

Evidence Base

11. JP mentioned that a Green Belt Review is being undertaken and that this will be considered by East Herts Members in due course. ST requested that WHBC be consulted on the findings of the Green Belt Review. EHC is also in the process of preparing a Delivery Study which will be a key part of the evidence base for the District Plan and, among other things, will advise on the overall viability of the broad locations for growth.
12. There was a discussion over other evidence matters that will be necessary to progress the masterplan. ST explained that they have been advised by the Environment Agency that they have a significant delay in responding to requests for advice on the former landfill use in this area and its potential impact on developable land.
13. JP advised that there will be a need to assess a range of scenarios for mineral extraction and land restoration on the part of the site within EHC. A meeting will be established with interested parties to discuss this issue and agree next steps. JP advised that EHC has an agreement with Hertfordshire Ecology to

undertake assessments of environmental assets with funding being sought by the relevant landowners. This process can be extended to cover the necessary areas. Highways, passenger transport, health and education are key social issues that will need to be incorporated in the masterplanning process.

East Herts District Council – Stevenage Borough Council

Meeting Notes

Date/time: Tuesday 24th March 2015, 10am

Venue: East Herts Council Offices, Wallfields, Hertford

Attendees:

East Herts District Council

Cllr Mike Carver (MC) Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport

Martin Paine (MP) Senior Planning Officer

Jenny Pierce (JP) Senior Planning Officer

Chris Butcher (CB) Senior Planning Officer

Stevenage Council

Cllr. John Gardiner (JG) Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration

Richard Javes (RJ) Planning Policy Manager

Caroline Danby (CD) Principal Planning Officer

Meeting Notes:

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

1. MP indicated that East Herts Council (EHC) is in the process of undertaking a SHMA for its housing market area which also comprises Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest Councils. MC indicated that the initial findings from the draft SHMA suggest that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure is not significantly different from the figure of 750 dwellings per annum that formed the basis of the District Plan Preferred Options document. Meeting housing need in the first five years will be a significant challenge, particularly when the short fall from 2011-2016 is factored in, alongside the requirement to include a suitable buffer. MP indicated that EHC also needs to consider cross boundary issues with neighbouring authorities on the western side of the District, including Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield Councils.
2. RJ indicated that Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) is also in the process of undertaking a SHMA with North Herts and Central Bedfordshire Councils. It is currently expected that the SHMA will be finalised in the next couple of months. The initial findings suggest that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need Figure will increase significantly compared to previous projections. SBC have also had cross boundary discussions with Luton Borough Council although they are not part of the A1(M) housing market area.

3. MP noted that ORS has been commissioned to undertake both SHMA's which should help ensure a consistent approach to identifying Objectively Assessed Housing Need across the wider sub-region.

East of Stevenage

4. MP indicated that, as part of the assessment of growth options across the District, a potential development of around 5,000 dwellings located to the East of Stevenage had been assessed. This option had been rejected, largely on the basis of the impact on the Beane Valley and the fact that the development would be on the wrong side of Stevenage in terms of accessing employment opportunities and the A1(M).
5. It was noted that SBC had previously suggested, through its response to the East Herts District Plan Preferred Options consultation, that a smaller proposal of around 500 – 750 dwellings should also be assessed. MP stated that testing a smaller scale development would assist in satisfying an Inspector at Examination that all reasonable alternatives had been assessed in accordance with national guidance. A significant amount of evidence will need to be gathered in order to assess this option. As part of this process, EHC will be working with the County Council to undertake some modelling in order to understand the transport impacts of development in this location.
6. RJ suggested that SBC would support development East of Stevenage as it could contribute to the Borough's housing requirement. MC re-iterated that EHC has a significant challenge in meeting its housing needs in the first five years following adoption of the District Plan, and that any potential development in this location would be required to help meet this requirement. RJ indicated that EHC could take the bulk of the housing numbers and that this issue could be addressed at a later stage once EHC has gathered the necessary evidence and undertaken a full assessment of the site.
7. RJ stated that there is likely to be sufficient secondary education capacity in the town to cater for development East of Stevenage. MP suggested that a new primary school may be required on site if the yield was around 750 dwellings. RJ indicated that providing a suitable method for pedestrians to cross Gresley Way would be a key issue to address. There is a proposal to turn Gresley Way into the A602 in order to divert traffic from the town centre. This would likely increase the amount of traffic using Gresley Way.

West of Stevenage

8. RJ explained that North Herts District Council had identified land West of Stevenage as a location for growth within their draft Local Plan. SBC's response requested amended wording to allow for development to be brought forward earlier in the plan period if necessary. A significant amount of land in that area is owned by the HCA and SBC including land that would be required to access the site. In the view of SBC, development in this location could be brought forward before 2021 subject to agreement with development partners.

9. RJ suggested that approximately 1,500 dwellings could be provided within the Borough boundary in this location. In order to provide more than this figure, land in North Herts would be required. Development beyond 1,500 dwellings would also require significant investment in transport infrastructure, including the construction of a new road which would pass under the existing route of the A1(M). RJ advised that while tunnelling under the A1(M) would be expensive, creating a bridge would not be viable due to the existing height of the A1(M) which is routed on an embankment in this location.
10. MP suggested that west of Stevenage could be brought forward sooner if the evidence is there to support it. RJ indicated that while SBC could bring forward 1,500 dwellings within their boundary, a more favourable approach would be to secure cross boundary co-operation with NHDC to provide a larger, more comprehensive development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

11. RJ indicated that SBC has commissioned a whole plan viability study, one of the outputs of which is to recommend whether or not CIL should be pursued or not. Similarly, MP confirmed that EHC have also commissioned consultants to assess the potential for CIL through the Delivery Study. MC suggested that it might be beneficial for the eleven Hertfordshire authorities to get legal some legal advice on CIL, particularly with regards to pooling restrictions on S106 contributions.

Employment

12. MC indicated that EHC intend to continue with the existing employment strategy in terms of protecting existing sites while recognising that the District will remain reliant on neighbouring authorities, as well as London, to meet the majority of its employment needs. MP noted that in recent Examinations a number of Inspectors have raised the importance of reconciling the relationship between housing and employment forecasts. EHC is working with Housing Market Area partners to the east (Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils) in order to address this issue.
13. RJ suggested that SBC is currently looking at the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) with NHDC and Central Bedfordshire Council. Political agreement will be required between the authorities in order to decide where new employment land should go. Gunners Wood in Stevenage currently has an exception for the use of prior approvals to convert office space to residential, although there is a concern that this exception could be removed by Government in future. Should this occur, the regeneration of the town centre could be undermined.

Waste Water Infrastructure

14. RJ indicated that most of Stevenage falls under the remit of Thames Water which drains to Rye Mead STW. A small area on the north western part of the town falls within the Anglian region. While Thames Water is largely dependent on Rye Meads, Anglian use a larger number of smaller facilities which generally makes it easier to find solutions. MP stated that he had spoken to Richard Reeves from Thames Water who suggested that Rye Meads should have sufficient capacity for 22,000 additional homes up to 2031. RJ noted that the companies have a statutory duty to deal with waste

water treatment but that it is a question of timing the phasing of development to fit in with their investment strategies.

AOB

MP indicated that work on the EHC District Plan had been slightly delayed due to the need to wait for the completion of a number of key evidence studies. It is hoped that a Pre-Submission consultation will be undertaken by the end of the year. RJ suggested that a 4 week consultation on a strategic housing strategy will be undertaken on the SBC Local Plan in summer, while the Pre-Submission stage plan should be agreed by Executive in autumn.

East Herts District Council – Uttlesford District Council

Meeting Notes

Date/time: Wednesday 22nd April 2015, 14:00

Venue: East Herts Council Offices, Charringtons House, Bishop's Stortford

Attendees:

East Herts District Council

Cllr Mike Carver (MC) Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport

Cllr Linda Haysey (LH), Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support

Chris Butcher (CB) Senior Planning Officer, Planning Policy

Uttlesford District Council

Cllr Susan Barker (SB) Executive Member for Environment

Roger Harborough (RH) Director of Public Services

Andrew Taylor (AT) Assistant Director Planning and Building Control

Meeting Notes:

East Herts Timetable and Housing Issues

1. East Herts are currently seeking to undertake a Pre-Submission consultation on the draft District Plan by the end of the year although the exact timetable is dependent on the completion of various technical studies. The Preferred Options version of the Plan identified three Broad Locations which would contribute significantly to meeting the objectively assessed housing need figure. Given that it is unlikely that the Broad Locations would be able to deliver housing in the early part of the Plan period, meeting the needs in the first five years will be a significant challenge.

Uttlesford Timetable

2. Following the withdrawal of the Local Plan, Uttlesford District Council is now undertaking a Call for Sites process which will run until 1st June. It is currently the intention to undertake an Issues and Options consultation on a revised Plan in Autumn 2015, which will be followed by a Preferred Options consultation in Spring 2016.

3. As part of the work on appraising options, the Council is currently assessing all constraints to identify any preferred locations. The funding of improvements to Junction 8 of the M11 remains an unresolved issue at present.

Employment

4. The employment strategy for East Herts is to maintain existing sites where possible while providing some new employment space in appropriate areas. The Preferred Options District Plan sought new employment space as part of new developments to the north and south of the town. Unfortunately development to the north will not deliver new employment space beyond that associated with a new district centre. CB suggested that one potential alternative would be to provide some employment space to the north of Birchanger Wood, within the route of the A120. The land lies within the Uttlesford Green Belt. AT advised that Uttlesford currently is unlikely to undertake a Green Belt Review as the housing and employment needs of the District can be met in non Green Belt areas.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5. East Herts does not have a significant need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showperson plots. However, finding sufficient sites to meet the need within the first five years (7 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 1 Travelling Showperson plot) is a particular challenge.
6. AT advised that Uttlesford should be able to meet its need to provide 9 pitches in the first five years. However, due to a lack of suitable sites Uttlesford will not be able to assist in accommodating any of the need arising in East Herts.

Transport Issues

7. The impact of additional development on the M11 remains a key issue. Essex County Council is leading on work to produce transport modelling which should be available in the near future.
8. One option to alleviate congestion in Bishop's Stortford would be a southern bypass running from the roundabout that links St James' Way to the A1184, to Junction 8 of the M11. However, East Herts has concluded that such a scheme is very likely to be unviable and would have significant environment impacts which would be difficult to mitigate. AT and SB agreed and noted that there may also be technical issues in terms of linking a new bypass with Junction 8.

Open Space Provision

9. CB stated that Bishop's Stortford Community Football Club had been looking for a new site for some time as their existing site suffers from flooding issues. In addition, the Herts and Essex High School maybe looking for a site to provide additional playing fields. One potential solution would be to provide for the needs of both the Community Football Club and the High School on land south of Beldams Lane, within the Uttlesford Green Belt. A scheme of this nature would be compatible with Green Belt uses and therefore would not require a review of the Green Belt or an allocation in the Uttlesford Local Plan.

10. AT suggested that Uttlesford Council would need to see a comprehensive appraisal of the options before coming to a view on the scheme. It would also be expected that any scheme of this nature would be available for wider community use.

Evidence Base

11. Both East Herts and Uttlesford are waiting on the completion of joint evidence studies, notably the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and transport modelling. East Herts has also commissioned consultants to undertake a Green Belt Review and a Delivery Study. East Herts has provisionally organised a meeting of its District Plan Executive Panel in July where a number of evidence studies will be presented to Members.
12. AT indicated that Uttlesford are currently undertaking a constraints sieving exercise which forms part of the site assessment process. When complete this work will inform the forthcoming Issues and Options consultation document.

AOB

13. It was noted that Manchester Airport Group (MAG) is seeking to remove the existing cap of 35 million passengers per annum (mppa) at Stansted Airport and that a planning application to this effect is expected soon. Latest figures show that the current use is approximately 21 mppa.

East Herts and North Herts Duty to Cooperate Meeting

NHDC Offices, Letchworth: 21/07/2015

Cllr Linda Haysey (LH)	Leader, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Chris Butcher (CB)	Principal Planning Officer, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Isabelle Haddow (IH)	Senior Planning Officer, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Cllr David Levett (DL)	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enterprise, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Richard Kelly (RK)	Principal Strategic Planning Officer, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Chris Carter (CC),	Senior Planning Officer, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Louise Symes (LS)	Strategic Planning and Projects Manager, North Herts District Council (NHDC)

Introductions

District/Local Plan Issues

NHDC Timeline:

1. NHDC held a consultation on a Preferred Options Local Plan earlier this year and are currently in the process of analysing the responses received. It is anticipated that a further consultation will take place later this year, although it is uncertain what form this will take at this stage. The updated SHMA for North Herts and Stevenage identifies an objectively assessed housing need figure for North Herts District of 14,400 dwellings for the period up to 2031.
2. RK explained that the draft Local Plan included a site to the East of Luton which would provide 2,100 dwellings towards Luton's unmet housing need. NHDC will be monitoring the implications of a Growth Study which is being undertaken by Central Bedfordshire and Luton.
3. CB asked where the NHDC strategic sites are. RK outlined that apart from the site to the East of Luton, there are proposals for strategic scale development to the north and south of Baldock as well as to the north of Stevenage. RK clarified that the site to the west of Stevenage is being saved for future housing needs outside of this plan period.

EHDC timeline:

4. EHDC is currently anticipating a consultation on a Pre-Submission draft in early 2016. HCC has recently indicated that the capacity of the A414 corridor may be highly constrained, particularly as it passes through Hertford. This could impact on the deliverability of various proposed sites within the A414 corridor. HCC has indicated that the impact of proposed development could be 'severe' on the basis that it may result in queuing on the A10 to get onto the A414, as well as increased

congestion and air quality issues in Hertford. EHDC is awaiting further clarification from HCC with regards to how much development could be catered for without a strategic intervention such as a Hertford bypass.

5. CB explained that identifying a sufficient number of sites to deliver housing in the first five years of the Plan period is proving particularly challenging. For these reasons, EHDC is continuing to assess different options, including the potential for some development to the East of Stevenage.
6. **Other sites:** EHDC and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council are working jointly on proposals for development to the East of Welwyn Garden City. The draft District Plan included provision for 1,700 dwellings within East Herts District in this location. It is currently anticipated that the entire 1,700 dwellings would count towards the East Herts housing target.
7. CB and IH outlined that two applications in Buntingford will be determined by the Secretary of State later in the year. There is also one remaining planning application to the south-west of Buntingford that is yet to be determined. EHDC has commissioned a Transport Model to assess the cumulative impact of development on the town, and to identify any appropriate mitigation measures. It is currently expected that the report will be published in September. RK noted the relationship between Buntingford and Royston, particularly in terms of the implications for Buntingford's growth on health services and the A10.

Stevenage Housing Numbers Consultation

8. EHDC has responded to Stevenage's consultation in support of the higher housing figure and CB provided a hard copy to NHDC officers. NHDC will be responding to the consultation shortly.

Evidence Base

SHMA

9. Consultants are currently preparing a SHMA covering East Herts, Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest. It is hoped that this will be presented to Members in September or October.

Green Belt Review

10. Peter Brett Associates have been commissioned to undertake a Green Belt Review for EHDC. It is currently anticipated that the report will be presented to the September District Plan Panel meeting.
11. NHDC completed an in-house Green Belt review which was published alongside the Local Plan consultation.

Infrastructure

12. CC explained that NHDC is updating their Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect current needs. CC expressed some concern regarding future NHS England contacts and communication with other NHS bodies.
13. NHDC explained that as part of the evidence for the draft consultation, transport models were run using the SHUM transport model. HCC has indicated that further work may need to be completed and extended. However, NHDC is uncertain whether further patch testing will suffice for HCC.
14. It was agreed that the update from Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works gave enough certainty for the Districts that there is sufficient capacity to cater for expected growth across the wider area.
15. CB explained that EHDC has commissioned a Delivery Study to assess the overall deliverability and viability of the draft District Plan. Given the delays experienced with transport modelling work, it is likely that the Delivery Study will need to be updated prior to Examination of the District Plan.

AOB

16. Gypsy and Travellers – LH raised this as a discussion point. RK explained that they have completed an assessment which has identified a need of 6-8 pitches over the Plan period with no Travelling Showpeople needs. There is a site that is considered to be able to accommodate NHDC's Gypsy and Traveller needs, however there are enforcement issues on this site that are being worked through currently.
17. EHDC's level of need is 12 pitches over the Plan period, with a need of 7 pitches to be accommodated in the first five years. EHDC also needs to provide 7 Travelling Showpeople pitches, one of which needs to be identified in the first five years. EHDC is struggling to accommodate their need within the first five years.

Neighbourhood Plans

18. NHDC explained that there are a few neighbourhood plans going on across the District, however no towns have approached the Council to undertake a neighbourhood plan. This may partly be because the towns are not parished.
19. EHDC has a number of on-going neighbourhood plans. The Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Wards NP has recently been adopted with other neighbourhood plans taking place across the District at varying stages. IH explained that within the draft District Plan, Category 1 villages are being encouraged to produce neighbourhood plans to identify a minimum of 10% growth within the plan period.

Close of meeting.

Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board

Held at Epping Forest District Council, Monday 20th October 2014

Present:

Cllr Susan Barker (Chairman)
Cllr Phil Baker
Cllr Jim Metcalf
Cllr Mike Carver
Cllr Richard Bassett
Cllr Gary Waller
Cllr Helen Kane
Cllr Chris Whitbread
Cllr David Stallan
Cllr Jon Clempner
Cllr Anthony Durkan
Cllr Helen Coomb
Cllr Julie Redfern

Uttlesford DC
Brentwood BC
Broxbourne BC
East Herts DC
EFDC
EFDC
EFDC
EFDC
EFDC
Harlow BC
Harlow BC
LB Redbridge
Uttlesford DC

Phil Drane
Gordon Glenday
Claire Sime
Laura Pattison
Derek Macnab
Alison Blom-Cooper
Anna Cronin
Zhanine Oates
David Sprunt
Paul McBride
Graeme Bloomer
Paul Donovan
David Hughes
Andrew Taylor

Brentwood BC
Brentwood BC
East Herts DC
East Herts DC
EFDC
EFDC (consultant)
EFDC
Essex CC
Essex CC
Harlow BC
Harlow BC
Herts CC
LB Redbridge
Uttlesford DC

Apologies:

Cllr R Hurst
Cllr R Thake

Essex CC
Herts CC

Strategic Housing Market Update

ORS gave a presentation on the work in progress on updating the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Harlow/Uttlesford/East Herts/Epping area.

Members had a number of questions on the emerging findings. Representatives of EFDC were concerned to understand what lay behind the figures for EFDC, which appeared to have increased considerably on the previous SHMA.

There was some discussion of how best to address these questions before finalisation and publication of the SHMA. ORS agreed to look into the inputs and assumptions and discuss with Edge Analytics. It was agreed that the SHMA officer steering group would then consider the issues.

Junction 7a of M11

David Sprunt of Essex CC gave a presentation on the need for a new junction on the M11 north of existing junction 7 in order to accommodate existing and projected growth in the wider area around Harlow.

He explained that while some modelling had been carried out, a new model was being constructed to support consideration of the issue. Public consultation on a preferred design was expected to take place in 2015 and, if approved, construction would take place from 2018 to 2020.

It was important that local plans in the area referred to Junction 7a but it was also important that councils in the area signed up to generally support the new junction prior to completing their plans, as this would help in making the case for the junction. This Group provided a suitable forum for discussion and generating such commitment.

David Sprunt indicated his willingness to return to the Group early in 2015 and explain the findings of the new modelling.

The Group indicated its general support in principle for the new junction.

Notes of Members' Event 15th September

The notes of the meeting facilitated by the Planning Advisory Service at Harlow on 15th September 2014 were agreed.

Chair and Future Support

Consideration was given to a note which had been tabled on possible models for future chairmanship and officer support for the Group.

The Chairman for the meeting, Cllr Barker, suggested that a chairman should be agreed to cover the remaining portion of the municipal year, and this was agreed.

She indicated her willingness to continue in this role for the remainder of the year, supported by Uttlesford officers, and this was agreed, there being no other nominations.

Members agreed that officers should discuss amongst themselves the issue of whether a small financial contribution from member councils was necessary and appropriate to cover support for the Group.

Terms of Reference

The Interim Terms of Reference were agreed with the following amendments.

It was agreed that Brentwood BC and Chelmsford CC should be included as core members (para 2.2). Member councils should identify a lead member from each council.

Regarding para 3.1 it was agreed that notes of meetings should be jointly agreed before being made public.

It was also agreed to amend this paragraph to indicate that the Board would meet “regularly” rather than on any particular timescale.

Meetings would circulate around Harlow, EFDC and E Herts as the most accessible locations for all.

AOB/Date of Next Meeting

It was suggested that the next meeting should include a wider presentation and discussion around public transport generally, including such issues as the Central Line, plans for four tracking the West Anglia main train lines, and Crossrail.

The date and location of the next meeting would be discussed by officer Group in the light of the amended Terms of Reference.

Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board

Held at Harlow Council, Tuesday 27 January 2015

Present:

Cllr Susan Barker (Chairman)
Cllr Phil Baker
Cllr Mike Carver
Cllr Linda Haysey
Cllr Richard Bassett
Cllr John Philip
Cllr Chris Whitbread
Cllr Kay Twitchen
Cllr Jon Clempner
Cllr Anthony Durcan
Cllr R Thanke
Cllr Helen Coomb

Uttlesford DC
Brentwood BC
East Herts DC
East Herts DC
EFDC
EFDC
EFDC
Essex CC
Harlow BC
Harlow BC
Hertfordshire CC
LB Redbridge

Claire Sime
Derek Macnab
Ken Bean
Zhanine Oates
David Sprunt
Diane Cooper
Paul McBride
Graeme Bloomer
Paul Chappel
David Hughes
Andrew Taylor
John McGill

East Herts DC
EFDC
EFDC
Essex CC
Essex CC
Harlow BC
Harlow BC
Harlow BC
Herts CC
LB Redbridge
Uttlesford DC
LSCC

Apologies:

Cllr Jim Metcalf
Vicky Forgione
Phil Drane

Broxbourne BC
Broxbourne BC
Brentwood BC

Note of Meeting October 2014

The note of the meeting was agreed. It was noted that while not being routinely published the notes of the meetings would be publically available.

Chelmsford City Council

The correspondence from Chelmsford City Council, which stated that while they would not routinely attend the Board meetings they wished to keep the communication open, was noted.

Greater London Authority/FALP

The Board noted the update on the outcome of the Further Alterations to the London Plan and agreed that it was important to keep abreast of developments but that this was outside the remit of the group.

The work to develop a new London Plan will take a considerable amount of time and engagement throughout this process by individual councils would be necessary. It was agreed that the Board would receive further updates on progress and adopt a common response/approach if possible.

The Board noted the Regional meeting on 19 March 2015 and commented that all Councils should send a representative if possible.

Junction 7a of M11

David Sprunt of Essex CC provided a written update on various M11 junctions.

Due to various issues the Public consultation on a preferred design was now not expected to take place until 2016. The Board expressed general concern about this delay and it was requested that ECC needed to resolve matters quickly.

A bid to the greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP for funding towards improvements at junction 8 of the M11 had been partially successful as £1m of the £5m had been awarded.

West Anglia Routes, Crossrail and Central Line

The Board received a written paper and presentation from John McGill, Director of the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC).

The Draft Anglia Routes Study has been published for consultation. This provided for longer trains and platforms but no significant investment is planned. A number of passenger counts has been carried out and this demonstrated that the data used was not reliable and underestimated the levels of passengers. In addition the potential growth of housing and business within the corridor was not being correctly factored in.

Local MPs had been successful in achieving an Adjournment Debate in the house of Commons regarding the line and its adequacy. As a result a meeting with the Minister had been held and various commitments to further work had been given.

The consultation on the preferred Crossrail 2 alignment had just closed with the regional route preferred by the Board. However, four tracking is required to deliver this alignment and this fits in well with the other strategic priorities for this area.

The Central Line updating and upgrading is referenced in the London Infrastructure Plan with full automation planned for 2029. This is an important investment and it is important that the line remains on the Infrastructure Priority List.

Strategic Housing Market Update

A brief update on the SHMA work was provided. Officers had met with ORS following the last meeting and ORS had completed additional demographic and economic work.

The draft report is expected to be received in time for an officers meeting on 2 March and presented to the next board on 16 March.

The Board agreed that officers should continue discussions throughout the election period to ensure that discussions were at an appropriate point for a future Board meeting in early June.

Ongoing technical work

The Board had a short discussion on the on-going need for new and updating technical evidence. Building on the success of the SHMA work it was agreed that, where practical, technical evidence should be jointly commissioned. This would not only assist in ensuring that the evidence was comparable over the area but would have the hoped for added benefit of reducing the overall costs for participating authorities.

Next Meeting: 16 March 2015 Epping Forest District Council

Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board

Held at Epping Forest District Council, 16 March 2015

Present:

Cllr Susan Barker (Chairman)	Uttlesford DC
Cllr Jim Metcalf	Broxbourne BC
Cllr Mike Carver	East Herts DC
Cllr Linda Haysey	East Herts DC
Cllr Richard Bassett	EFDC
Cllr Chris Whitbread	EFDC
Cllr Helen Coomb	LB Redbridge

Vicky Forgione	Broxbourne BC
Claire Sime	East Herts DC
Laura Pattison	East Herts DC
Alison Blom-Cooper	Epping Forest DC
Zhanine Oates	Essex CC
David Sprunt	Essex CC
Diane Cooper	Harlow BC
Paul McBride	Harlow BC
Paul Donovan	Herts CC
David Hughes	LB Redbridge
Andrew Taylor	Uttlesford DC
Jonathan Lee	ORS

Apologies:

Cllr Phil Baker	Brentwood BC
Cllr Barry Aspinell	Brentwood BC
Cllr Phil Mynott	Brentwood BC
Cllr Kay Twitchen	Essex CC
Cllr Jon Clempner	Harlow BC
Cllr Anthony Durcan	Harlow BC
Cllr R Thake	Hertfordshire CC

Note of Meeting January 2015

The note of the meeting was agreed.

SHMA update presentation

Jonathan Lee on behalf of ORS provided a presentation on the SHMA work. The presentation is attached as an appendix to these notes. The current work had taken into account the most recent 2012 household figures produced and published by Government. These are the most recent projections and the National Planning Policy Guidance has been updated by Government to say that these should act as the starting point when undertaking an assessment of objectively assessed housing need.

Those present at the Board were able to ask questions of detail and clarification as part of the presentation.

The Board agreed that officers should comment on the draft report, assess the economic projections, seek overview by Counsel, sense check with their own members and agree a final report. Board

agreed to meet in late April to receive the report so that each individual Council can adopt into their evidence base in the new municipal year.

Wider South East Summit

The Board noted the meeting on 19 March 2015 and the briefing document that had been circulated.

Next Meeting: 9am Thursday 30 April 2015

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BUNTINGFORD TRANSPORT MODEL REPORT AUGUST 2015

WARD(S) AFFECTED: BUNTINGFORD, MUNDENS AND COTTERED

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents the findings of the Buntingford Transport Model Report which comprises a Local Model Validation Report and a Future Scenarios Testing Report.
- The report seeks agreement to use the Report as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the District Plan and for Development Management purposes.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE</u>	
<u>PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	the Buntingford Transport Model Report 2015 be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan;
(B)	the Buntingford Transport Model Report 2015 be approved to inform Development Management decisions; and
(C)	the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make non-material amendments to the final Buntingford Transport Model Report 2015, prior to publication.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In March 2015, the Council commissioned Steer Davies Gleave consultants to undertake a transport model for the town of Buntingford to inform the Plan-making process of the District Plan and to inform the consideration of applications for development

around the town.

- 1.2 The work involved the creation of a VISSIM micro-simulation model of the existing operation of the road network in and around Buntingford. This is reported in the first of two reports – Local Model Validation Report. The second stage of the work was to use the model to test the effects of various development scenarios and to determine any mitigation measures if required in the second report – Future Scenarios Testing Report. The second report was extended to undertake further model runs of two mitigation options and to provide indicative scheme design layouts for these two alternative options.
- 1.3 Hertfordshire County Council officers have been consulted and involved in the project throughout and have endorsed the two reports, the Non-Technical Summary of which is presented as **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’**.

2.0 Report

Local Model Validation Report

- 2.1 The Local Model Validation Report is the more technical of the two reports, establishing the baseline data used to inform the scenario testing undertaken in the second report. The report comprises 8 chapters which explain each process used to compile the necessary data.
- 2.2 The VISSIM micro-simulation model is the key model used for the study, testing the am and pm peak periods on key junctions throughout the town. Primary data was collected through road-side traffic counts taken over several days in February, which included junction movements, queue length surveys, origin and destination data and journey time surveys collected through in-car Bluetooth data. This data was supported by journey to work data from the 2011 Census. All data collected was checked and calibrated through various methods with a high degree of accuracy achieved. Initial model runs were compared to CCTV footage of key junctions as a form of validation. The base model was then validated by Hertfordshire County Council.

Future Scenarios Testing Report

- 2.3 The Future Scenarios Testing Report forms the second stage of the model process. The report comprises seven chapters, with chapters one and two introducing the report and detailing the

seven scenarios tested through the mode. The table below provides more detail than that presented in the report. Bold text indicates the difference between each scenario:

No.	Scenario	Description	Developments Added	Access to Network
0	Base 2015	Existing situation	3/08/0840/OP 3/09/1061/FP	- Greenways (50 homes) - London Road (149 homes)
1	Do Minimum 2021	Background growth + development under construction	3/12/1000/FP 3/13/0737/RP 3/13/0118/OP	- Hare Street Road (north) (160 homes) - Longmead (26 homes) - Snells Mead (Area 1)(100 homes)
2	Do Committed 2021	Background growth + development under construction + committed development	3/13/1375/OP 3/13/1925/OP	- A10 and Ermine Street (plus new link road) (180 homes) - London Road (2 access points) (316 homes)
3	Do at Appeal 2021	Background growth + development under construction + committed development + development at appeal	3/14/0531/OP 3/14/0528/OP 3/13/1399/OP	- Hare Street Road (Area 3) (80 homes) - Snells Mead (Area 2) (100 homes) - Aspenden Road (56 homes)
4	Do Something	Background growth + development under construction + committed development + development at appeal + west Buntingford phase one only	3/14/2304/OP Phase 1	- Luynes Rise (108 homes)
5	Do Maximum	Background growth + development under construction + committed development + development at appeal + west Buntingford all phases	3/14/2304/OP All phases	- A10 (new roundabout) (400 homes)
5A	Do Maximum Alternative	Background growth + development under construction + committed development + development at appeal + west Buntingford all phases	3/14/2304/OP All phases	- Luynes Rise (i.e. without new roundabout on A10) (400 homes)

- 2.4 Chapter three sets out how proposed changes to the highway network are considered in the model. These include a mini-roundabout at the Hare Street Road and High Street junction, a new link road through the Buntingford north site connecting Ermine Street to the A10 and a new roundabout on the A10 to provide access to the west Buntingford application site.
- 2.5 Chapters four and five contain the more technical elements of the report, detailing how the model considers future flow demand of vehicles on the network as a result of development based upon the scenarios above. These chapters also detail maximum queue length, journey times experienced and general network capacity. The model indicates that although there will be an increase in queue lengths, the A10/Baldock Road roundabout is predicted to operate satisfactorily. The longest queue arises in the am peak period from vehicles heading southbound towards the roundabout. The roundabout has the capacity to accommodate all forecast development traffic to the year 2021.
- 2.6 The more considerable issue however, is the A10/London Road roundabout at both am and pm peak periods. The queue lengths on both the southbound A10 and London Road approaches see considerable queue lengths during the am peak, with traffic queueing up London Road reaching the High Street. The northbound approach sees considerable queue lengths during the pm peak. The town centre highway network will also see increased traffic movements, but there is little that can be done to improve junctions due to the surrounding streetscape. However, the High Street/Baldock Road and the Station Road/Hare Street Road junctions were still operating at capacity within each peak period.
- 2.7 The model indicates that these issues arise from Scenario 2 onwards i.e. background growth, 26 homes at Longmead, the two sites approved at appeal for 160 homes at Hare Street Road north and 100 homes off Snells Mead, plus the two sites included in the Draft Preferred Options District Plan for 180 homes to the north of Buntingford (Pigeon land) and 316 homes on the former Sainsbury's depot. The report makes it clear that the level of operation at this roundabout is not considered acceptable at this scenario and mitigation will be necessary.
- 2.8 Chapter 6 of the report details the mitigation tests undertaken. These tests take the model and apply them to new road layouts or junction improvements such as traffic lights. At most junctions queue increases are modest but significant queues and delays

are experienced at the A10/London Road junction. As such, two possible mitigation measures were designed and tested using the model.

- 2.9 Mitigation Measure 1 tested the effects of widening of the southbound approach of the A10 and the widening of the southbound exit (for 100 metres) to facilitate two lanes of traffic before merging to single lane. This has the effect of allowing free flowing vehicle movement from both the western arm of the A10 and the London Road approach. However, there would still be significant queues on the northbound approach in the pm peak period. Therefore, the report also recommends that the western arm of the A10 (northbound) exit from the roundabout also be widened to two lanes for 100 metres to facilitate the full use of both lanes at the roundabout during the pm peak.
- 2.10 The second mitigation measure considered the effects of a part time signal control (am peak only). This is a lower cost solution which provides improvement in a southbound direction from London Road but there would still be some (albeit reduced) queueing on the western arm of the A10. However, the queue generated from the stop line which allows southbound movement would adversely affect the operation of the roundabout with queueing vehicles blocking both northbound and circulatory flows. This is a potential road safety issue and therefore the report concludes that only mitigation measure 1 be carried forward as a solution, ideally before the development presented in Scenario three occurs.
- 2.11 The model further shows that the volumes of traffic on the A10 south of the London Road roundabout are significantly higher than further north and it is therefore likely that at some point in the future this section of the A10 may reach link capacity. The improvement of the roundabout may not be the key constraint in the network after the preferred mitigation option. Within the single lane section of the A10 southbound carriageway, where there are a number of side roads, the lack of right turning bays can cause queues from vehicles waiting to cross the opposing traffic stream. In addition, during peak periods exit from these side roads onto the A10 will be increasingly difficult as volumes on the A10 increase through the development scenarios considered.
- 2.12 The report considers that the dual carriageway section of the A10 should be extended up to the London Road junction in the future to prevent slow moving queues developing in this section. Furthermore, the report also recommends that should Scenario 5

(all development options) come to fruition, the proposed new roundabout on the A10 to access the west of Buntingford development site would be required in order to prevent adverse effects of traffic passing through the town centre.

- 2.13 The next stage of the process is to undertake a feasibility appraisal of the preferred mitigation measure to ascertain the potential cost of implementation. This will provide the basis for informed negotiation on the determination of future planning applications in and around Buntingford.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

- Buntingford Transport Modelling Assessment Part 1 – Local Model Validation Report
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/buntingfordtransportmodel>
- Buntingford Transport Modelling Assessment Part 2 – Future Scenarios Testing Report
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/buntingfordtransportmodel>

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute</p> <p>This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place – Safe and Clean</p> <p>This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities</p> <p>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.</p>
Consultation:	None
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None other than Planning Policy Team resource.
Risk Management:	None
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The emerging East Herts District Plan in general will have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through a range of policy approaches that seek to create sustainable communities.

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Buntingford Transport Modelling Assessment

Executive Summary Report
August 2015

East Hertfordshire Council

Our ref: 22787601
Client ref: EHC/1024/2014

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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Steer Davies Gleave has been appointed by East Hertfordshire Council, to provide traffic modelling work that will inform the Plan-making process of the District Plan. This work involves two main tasks:
- Creation of a VISSIM micro-simulation model of the existing operation of the road network in and around Buntingford
 - Use of the above model to test various development scenarios, and determine any mitigation measures (if required)
- 1.2 This Executive Summary report presents the key features and results of the traffic study. More information can be found in the following two reports:
- Steer Davies Report “Buntingford Transport Modelling Assessment – Local Model Validation Report – August 2015”
 - Steer Davies Report “Buntingford Transport Modelling Assessment – Future Scenarios Testing Report – August 2015”

2 Executive Summary

Base Model

2.1 A VISSIM micro-simulation traffic model of Buntingford has been developed to show the operation of the existing network in the weekday AM and PM peak periods.

2.2 A large data collection exercise was carried out in February 2015 in order to obtain sufficient traffic data to enable an accurate and robust traffic model of the town to be developed. Surveys included turning movement and queue length surveys at key junctions, Origin-Destination surveys to determine trip patterns, and travel time measurements on the key routes.

2.3 The base models have been developed, calibrated and validated for traffic flows, journey times and queue lengths based on Highways England Design Manual for Roads and Bridge (DMRB) criteria.

- 100% validation has been achieved for link flows in both peak periods
- 99% validation has been achieved for turning movements in both peak periods
- AM and PM peak modelled journey times are within the acceptable level
- Observed queue lengths are replicated well in the model in both peak periods

2.4 These results demonstrated the traffic models of the existing situation represented an accurate and reliable base for taking forward to look at option testing, for both the weekday AM peak and PM peak periods. The base model can therefore be utilised to test future development scenarios.



Future Scenarios

2.5 Following the development of the VISSIM base model of Buntingford, a number of future development Scenarios were defined in order to identify the impact of introducing a set of business and residential developments to the current network.

2.6 The Scenarios investigated were as below.

Scenario	Scenario Description	Developments added (cumulative)
1	"Do Minimum 2021"	3/13/1000/FP; 3/13/0118/OP; 3/13/0737/RP; 3/10/2040/OP
2	"Do Committed 2021"	3/13/1375/OP; 3/13/1925/OP
3	"Do At Appeal 2021"	3/14/05/31/OP; 3/14/0528/OP; 3/13/1399/OP
4	"Do Something 2021"	3/14/2304/OP Phase 1
5	"Do Maximum 2021"	3/14/2304/OP All Phases
5A	"Alternative Do Maximum 2021"	-

2.7 In all scenarios, background traffic growth was also applied to the base traffic levels to account for additional development trips in the wider area (i.e. not related to development within Buntingford).

2.8 In addition, network changes related to the various planning applications have also been included within the model, as below.

- Conversion of Hare Street Road / High Street junction to a mini-roundabout – Scenarios 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 5A
- New link road between A10 and Ermine Street to provide access to development plot 3/13/1375/OP – Scenarios 2, 3, 4, 5 and 5A
- New A10 roundabout between London Road and Baldock Road, to provide access to development plot 3/14/2304/OP – Scenario 5 only (Scenario 5A tests the addition of the same level of development traffic but without the new A10 roundabout)



2.9 The VISSIM model was then developed to test the impact of each Scenario on network operation, in both the weekday AM and PM peak period. The results of the Scenario testing indicated that, in the most part, the network can accommodate the new developments given the network changes that have already been planned.

2.10 However, operational issues were identified at the following locations:

- A10/London Road – southbound in the AM peak, and northbound in the PM peak
- High Street/Baldock Road – northbound, principally in the AM peak

- 2.11 In terms of the A10/London Road roundabout, two mitigation measures were tested. The results showed that local widening of the two A10 exit links at the roundabout (to provide a two-lane section before merging back to a single lane) provided a significant improvement in operation, particularly in the AM peak. This mitigation measure should be considered in the near future, ideally in line with developments within Scenario 3 coming on line.
- 2.12 However, there is an ongoing issue with the link capacity of the A10, between the London Road roundabout and the dual-carriageway section around 2km south of the town. Within the latter Scenarios 4, 5 and 5A, the traffic demand on this section of the A10 gets close to the link capacity, southbound in the weekday AM peak period and northbound in the weekday PM peak period. So whilst the mitigation measure proposed above for the A10/London Road roundabout does improve the operation at this location, there should be a longer term aspiration to extend the dual carriageway section up to this roundabout.
- 2.13 At the High Street/Baldock Road junction, operational issues were also identified, particularly in Scenario 5A when the link through from Luynes Rise to a new roundabout on the A10 was not included. For the local road network, the addition of this new roundabout on the A10 provides benefits in terms of reducing traffic levels within the town centre, without having a measureable disbenefits on A10 operation. Therefore, it is recommended that this new access point to the A10 be taken forward, linked to the consideration of development plot 3/14/2304/OP.

CONTROL INFORMATION

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – AMENDMENT TO POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To outline the recent changes in national planning policy relating to the provision of affordable housing;
- To explain the implications of this policy change for the Council's current Affordable Housing policy

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	the change in national planning policy through the removal of paragraphs in planning policy guidance related to affordable housing thresholds be noted;
(B)	the affordable housing thresholds as amended in 2012 under the 2007 Local Plan HSG3 Affordable Housing policy be re-introduced; and
(C)	the Starter Homes exemption policy, as introduced by Central Government in March 2015, be included as part of the amended 2012 HSG3 policy, as set out in this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In December 2012 Council agreed to introduce an amendment to the affordable housing policy HSG3 contained in the Local Plan 2007. This introduced a revised threshold to provide affordable housing and a percentage amount to be sought from development schemes, in Category 1 and 2 Villages. Affordable housing provision in the main settlements stayed the same as set out in the 2007 Local Plan policy HSG3 (II) (a).

- 1.2 The following thresholds in Category 1 and 2 Villages were therefore introduced:
- Developments of between 4 and 14 units or between 0.12 and 0.5ha would require up to 25% affordable housing;
 - Developments of 15 plus units or over 0.5ha would be required to provide up to 40% affordable housing;
- 1.3 In November 2014, the Government introduced new national planning policy on the use of Section 106 planning obligation agreements with immediate effect. The Government introduced this change of policy through a Ministerial Statement and the insertion of several new paragraphs into its Planning Practice Guidance (usually referred to as PPG), an online set of planning guidance notes which supplements the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 This set out thresholds whereby development contributions could not be sought from developments of 10-units or under and having a combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000 square metres. Exceptions were made to designated rural areas. Following this announcement, East Herts noted the changes and introduced these amendments in March 2015.
- 1.5 On the 31st July 2015 Central Government revoked the changes made to affordable housing provision as introduced in the PPGs in November 2014. This was following a high court decision which supported a quashing order in respect of the November 2014 affordable housing and social infrastructure contributions and the vacant building credit (R (on the application of West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government EWHC 2222 (Admin)).
- 1.6 As a result, LPAs are able to formulate their own affordable housing thresholds. This report therefore recommends that East Herts reverts to the 2012 affordable housing provision policy position.

2.0 Report

Results from the high court decision

- 2.1 West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council challenged the amendment to affordable housing provision in order to persuade the High Court to quash the paragraphs related to affordable housing thresholds set out in PPG. The two councils challenged the case based on the following grounds:
- The thresholds did not take into account the local context and evidence base that local planning authorities have in place;
 - It did not take into account the impact it would have upon affordable housing provision and how that shortfall would be delivered;
 - The lack of a transitional time period in which the LPA can introduce these policies in light of existing and emerging policy;
 - That the consultation process undertaken by the Secretary of State was unfair; and,
 - It failed to comply with Section 149 in the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 Having reviewed the evidence, the High Court ruled in favour of a quashing order. As a result of the high court decision, Central Government removed the paragraphs from the PPG setting out the thresholds. Consequently, LPAs are once again able to set their own thresholds for affordable housing provision.
- 2.3 The removal of the vacant building credit policy was also included as part of this decision.

Starter Home Exceptions Policy 2015

- 2.4 In March 2015, Central Government through a Ministerial Statement introduced a Starter Homes policy, which has been incorporated into the PPG. Starter Homes are aimed at supporting first time buyers entering the housing market as any house must be sold at a minimum of 20% below its open market value. To deliver the minimum 20% discount, LPAs cannot seek section 106 affordable housing and other tariff-based contributions for these sites. Starter Homes can be developed on under-used or unviable industrial and commercial land that has not been currently identified for housing. Sites that are actively being used for employment purposes are not contained within this definition, and any existing employment site must be able to demonstrate that

they have failed to attract any interest following a reasonable period of marketing.

Amendment to East Herts Affordable Housing Policy

- 2.5 It is proposed that following the recent removal from PPG of the relevant paragraphs on affordable housing thresholds, it would be pragmatic to revert back to the 2012 Affordable Housing thresholds with the inclusion of the Starter Homes exceptions policy. This policy was originally amended on 12 December 2012 and was anticipated to remain in force until replaced with a new policy in the forthcoming District Plan.
- 2.6 Consequently, the policy position would be as follows:

Temporary Policy HSG3

- (I) Affordable housing is defined as housing provided, with subsidy, both for rent and low cost market housing, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local private sector housing market because of the relationship between local housing costs and incomes
- (II) Affordable housing provision will be expected on sites:
 - (a) proposing 15 or more dwellings, or over 0.5 hectares, in the six main settlements; and
 - (b) proposing 4 or more dwellings, or over 0.12 hectares, in the category 1 and 2 Villages.
- (III) On suitable sites (in accordance with policy HSG4)
 - (a) in the main settlements the inclusion of up to 40% affordable homes will be sought as part of the proposed development of the site.
 - (b) in category 1 and 2 Villages the inclusion of up to 25% affordable homes will be sought for schemes which comprise between 4 and 14 units inclusive (or between 0.12ha and 0.5ha inclusive) as part of the proposed development of the site and up to 40% affordable homes will be sought for schemes which

comprise 15 or more units or over 0.5ha in size as part of the proposed development of the site.

- (IV) The time period for the commencement of development of any planning permissions that come forward as a result of this policy change shall be one year.
- (V) Planning applications for Starter Homes, as defined in the PPG, are exempt from the provisions outlined in (II) and (III).

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

- (R (on the application of West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government EWHC 2222 (Admin))
<http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2015/2222.html>
- Planning Practice Guidance 'Planning Obligations'
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/planning-obligations/planning-obligations-guidance/>
- Planning Practice Guidance 'Starter Homes'
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/starter-homes/starter-homes-guidance/>

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute</p> <p>This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place – Safe and Clean</p> <p>This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities</p> <p>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.</p>
Consultation:	Housing Development Officer, Development Control Manager
Legal:	Affordable Housing provision has an established legislative background within which the Council can establish its own policy.
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	None
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The provision of affordable housing has a positive impact on health and wellbeing through a range of policy approaches that seek to create sustainable, balanced communities.

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