

Public Document Pack

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 14th December, 2022 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 7 day of December 2022

James Ellis
Head of Legal and
Democratic Services

Note: Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chairman.

2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

4. Minutes - 16 November 2022 (Pages 6 - 52)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 November 2022.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

6. Petitions

To receive any petitions.

7. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions (Page 53)

To receive any Members' questions.

9. Executive Report - 25 October and 22 November 2022 (Pages 54 - 66)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A) Council Tax Support Scheme

(B) North of Hertford - Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengo (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework_(Pages 67 - 84)

(C) Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update for East Herts (Pages 85 - 91)

(D) First Homes – Adoption of a Technical Guidance Note_(Pages 92 - 97)

10. Council Tax Base (Pages 98 - 104)

11. Member Non-Attendance Waiver and Extension to Six-Month Time Limit (Pages 105 - 109)

12. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

(A) Debate Not Hate_(Page 110)

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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.

Public Attendance

East Herts Council welcomes public attendance at its meetings and meetings will continue to be live streamed and webcasted. For further information, please email democraticservices@eastherts.gov.uk or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35542/Political-Structure> for details.

Audio/Visual Recording of meetings

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Agenda Item 4

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor I Devonshire (Chairman).
Councillors A Alder, T Beckett, S Bell,
R Buckmaster, R Bolton, P Boylan, M Brady,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, J Burmicz, K Crofton,
B Crystall, A Curtis, G Cutting, H Drake,
J Dumont, R Fernando, M Goldspink,
J Goodeve, L Haysey, J Jones, J Kaye,
I Kemp, G McAndrew, S Newton, T Page,
M Pope, C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles,
S Rutland-Barsby, D Snowdon,
M Stevenson, T Stowe, N Symonds,
R Townsend, G Williamson, C Wilson and
J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager

222 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman ran through the events he had attended since the last Council meeting in July:

- He attended events over a two-week period after the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the proclamation of King Charles III. He said it was the greatest honour of his life to be involved in these events and he had received a card from the King thanking the Council for their kind condolences.
- The charity race night raised £1,250 for his charity.
- He and the Vice Chairman had attended Remembrance Sunday events across the four main towns.
- He announced a further fundraising event on 15 April 2023 which would be an afternoon tea/BBQ event with a brass band. Invites would be sent to all county, district and town/parish councillors.
- He said that he would be joining an initiative with the Mayor of Hertford to demonstrate how to cook cheap and easy meals to help families with the cost of living crisis and promote the reuse of food.

The Chairman announced that the Bishop's Stortford BID had been re-elected for another five-year term and the Economic Development Team had won an award from the Federation of Small Businesses for their role in administering the covid grant schemes.

223 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council said she was proud that the Council had played such an important role in the sad events following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the celebrations following the accession of King Charles III. She said it was a sad but historic event.

224 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Frecknall, Hollebon, Huggins, McMullen and Ward-Booth.

225 MINUTES - 27 JULY 2022

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

226 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Haysey, Williamson, E Buckmaster and Snowdon declared an interest in Item 9c – Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document as they were members of the Old River Lane Delivery Board. They declared that they would take no part in the discussion

or voting of the item.

Councillor Beckett and Townsend declared an interest in Item 11 – Private Bill – Bishop’s Stortford Town Council Cemetery as they were members of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council. They declared that they would take no part in the discussion or voting of the item.

227 SAVE BENGEO FIELD LANDSCAPE

Veronica Fraser presented the following petition to the Council which had received 573 signatures online.

“We the undersigned petition the Council to protect the unique and outstanding landscape of the area north of Bengoe, known locally as Bengoe Field, for the whole community of Bengoe and Hertford. We ask that the East Herts District Council reject any further residential development, which would also place further stress on the local infrastructure with regards to highways, wastewater drainage, local health services, and schools.”

“We believe Bengoe Field needs to be protected from further development to prevent the destruction of a beautiful landscape that is much loved and utilised by the community. This area provides a much valued amenity thanks to the highly popular Byway 1. The pathway through Bengoe Field, which passes by the Lonely Oak, is extremely popular and surveys provide evidence that increasing numbers of people use it for a variety of activities. The unique views it offers to walkers across Rib Valley makes it imperative that we

preserve this locally important landscape, which was described as having exceptional value by the Landscape Officer of Hertfordshire County Council. The landscape was also found to be of outstanding value by the Planning Inspector at the Planning Inquiry which rejected minerals extraction: "These landscapes are especially important as a foil to urban settlements [...] I consider that the appeal site is a landscape resource and visual amenity of considerable importance because of its proximity to the urban area. It seems contrary to that finding to allow residential development to destroy the same landscape."

The Chairman said that the local Ward Members for Hertford Bengoe were members of the Development Management Committee (DMC) and had chosen to remain neutral on the petition so not to pre-determine any potential future application that might come before the committee. He said if any of the local Ward Members felt strongly either way about the petition, they would be able to speak but would need to bear in mind that this may exclude them for determining an application at DMC.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth replied to the petition. She said that as a strategic site allocation, which formed part of the Council's overall approach to meeting its evidenced housing needs by 2033, the HERT4 site was removed from the Green Belt in its entirety on adoption of the District Plan in 2018. The principle of development in this location has therefore already been established, subject to the detailed criteria in Policy HERT4 being met. Any future planning application would be assessed against the

contents of this policy and all other relevant policies in the Plan.

228 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

David Royle, on behalf of the Sustainable Sawbridgeworth community group to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

“Sawbridgeworth Town Council produced its own Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) in August 2018, over four years ago. It has not yet been implemented.

We note that in North Hertfordshire there has just been a consultation on the proposed walking and cycling improvements in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Royston and Knebworth, as part of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

Can we please ask how the East Herts LCWIP work is progressing, has it actually started, what stage is it at, when and how can local groups feed into it and when is it due for completion?”

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

“An LCWIP to cover the district is being jointly prepared in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), the lead authority on this project. While East Herts Council is ready to commence work on the LCWIP at the earliest opportunity, a change in HCC staff has meant that this Council has been awaiting confirmation on the timeline for the next steps to progress this work.

HCC has recently advised that a new member of staff is due to start shortly and also that a Project Manager has been identified at the consultancy who will be supporting the project, so it is therefore expected that initial work will commence in coming weeks.

Public consultation is a key element of LCWIPs and this will certainly occur as part of the East Herts project, the expected timeline for which will be finalised when the full programme is confirmed in due course."

There was no supplementary question.

James Dean to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

"What are the council intending to do to mitigate the impact of the new parking proposal on residents who have no option but to park in public car parks?

The only parking we have near our house is a public car park, Crown Terrace in Bishop's Stortford. My partner works Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, leaving before 8.30am and returning around 6.30pm, parking overnight, and then paying for Fridays. The introduction of the new proposals will mean we have to pay for half a day (£3.60 - the car park opposite our house only does half and full day during the week) just to cover the additional 6.30pm to 8.30pm charging period, for an additional 5 days a week. Plus also £1.50 for Sundays. That means an additional £78 a month on top of what we already pay for parking to cover various eventualities here and there. We understand the need for the council to raise more money, and your

proposals as stated are targeting commuters and shoppers who have at least one alternative option (bus, cycling, walking etc). But we have no other options. We have a 2 year old son as well, so can't just park miles away."

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew

"I understand and appreciate that a small number of residents make use of the council's car parks overnight due to limited parking options on street. The council has decided to make better use of its car parks by ensuring that the user pay for the service. It is therefore important that we seek to balance the needs of car park customers, and also local residents, against the council's responsibility to ensure a fair return on its investment that delivers value for money for the taxpayer. When evening car park charges are introduced, there are options that we can consider including implementing a permit type arrangement with eligible residents who have no on street parking options available to them.

I note that Crown Terrace itself is controlled by a single yellow line waiting restriction that stops at 6.30pm. Residents may therefore legitimately park on-street from 6.30pm until 8.30am in the morning, should they wish to."

Supplementary question from James Dean

"We would like to put forward the idea of residents having a permit that allows them to not to have to pay for the additional charge time of 6.30pm to 8.30pm on weekdays. It's not us asking to not pay at all. Just to not have to pay for that additional charge time which

would cause increased financial and logistical pressure.”

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew

“Officers will investigate this option and will be in contact.”

229 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor David Snowdon to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Could the Executive Member please make a statement about the future of Launchpad once the Old River Lane works commence?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“We are aware that Launchpad is a popular and well used facility in the town and many businesses there are getting nervous about its future within the ORL development. We are actively seeking a new venue and have identified two possible options, one of which is quite advanced in terms of negotiations. We hope to have resolved the issue before Christmas and be in a new venue from 1 April 2023. Chris Smith, our award winning Economic Development Manager, is liaising closely with the businesses in the Launchpad about the options and I know several of them have committed to stay with us if and when we do move.”

There was no supplementary question.

Councillor Ben Crystall to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

In May this year the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ruled that all Grade II listed and most Grade II* listed properties can install solar panels without seeking listed building consent. In an order applying the change, the council said solar panels "would appear as an honest and clearly modern intervention, and normally read as part of the equipment necessary to service the uses conducted within the building", similar to water tanks, television aerials and other equipment.

Will East Herts Council introduce a similar change?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

"The permission for solar panels on Listed Buildings referred to is as a result of a Local Listed Building Consent Order. These were introduced by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 but have not been widely used as of yet. If introduced, they can grant blanket consent for "works of any description for the alteration or extension of listed buildings" and means that the owners of those listed buildings specified in the Order will not have to make individual applications, but will be able to proceed with the works, provided they comply with any conditions that may be attached to the Order.

East Herts has around 4000 listed buildings (comprised of around 3100 listings), a similar total number to Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but the

context is very different. We could not serve any sort of blanket order in the same way due to the variety of our building stock and the many vernacular buildings with features such as thatched roofs that would not be suitable for the introduction of solar panels. In many instances in predominantly rural areas like East Herts, solar panels are best placed within the grounds of a building or on outbuildings, rather than on the main roof of a Listed Building, where they could result in avoidable harm to the character and special interest of the Listed Building. There are many instances whereby solar panels can be installed on Listed Buildings without harming their character and special interest, such as where there are parapets that hide view of the roof from street level. The example in given in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is of predominantly urban terraces of listed buildings, with roofs that are not prominent within the street scene.

In order to put in place a similar Local Listed Building Consent Order in East Herts we would need to survey all 4000 listed buildings within our district to ascertain which would be suitable for inclusion within the order. This would be a sizeable task and resources would need to be put in place in order to undertake both the survey work and the serving of the order.

It should be noted that if East Herts were to grant such an order, if in the future it was to be revoked, compensation would be payable for the withdrawal of consent. There are therefore financial implications for the Council which would have to be carefully considered, and specialist legal advice would need to be obtained on this point."

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

I recently asked a question at a previous full council meeting about the lack of progress of the cycle route through the Meads and Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford and was told this was a County Council project and that therefore there was no information that could be given to me by East Herts. However, it is the case that this route is not an official cycleway, and so not necessarily wholly within the remit of the County Council. It is also a route that goes partly through East Herts Council-owned land, and is, at least theoretically, partly funded through Section 106 money from an East Herts development, In light of this, I again ask, what role has East Herts had in the delay to this cycle route and what are our plans with respect to the part of it that goes through East Herts-owned land? What negotiations have been done with the department of the County Council that are dealing with this proposed route?"

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

"The Rye Street – Grange Paddocks cycle route is a concept which is supported in principle by all interested Local Authority parties. Our Parks and Open Spaces team have recently been working with HCC's Countryside and Rights of Way service to confirm a preferred route and establish delivery costs. Currently Section 106 contributions from the Bishop's Stortford North development held by East Herts Council make up approximately 40% of projected delivery costs. Work to establish a mechanism to

secure further funding, as well as delivery, adoption and ongoing maintenance responsibility is ongoing.”

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Eric Buckmaster, the Executive Member for Wellbeing

“The recent Castle Park redevelopment in Bishop’s Stortford, while mainly successful, has included a failure with respect to the contractors who were employed to construct the new skate park. My understanding is that these contractors failed to complete their assignment and honour their contract and are due to be replaced. They have, however, pocketed public money in the process to the tune of more than £100,000. While I am aware that it was Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) that ran this project, East Herts are partners in this exercise and our money and our resources have been used to help fund the redevelopment. Can I therefore ask if the council has asked BSTC if they performed due diligence and for an explanation as to why such funds have been misspent?”

Response from Councillor Eric Buckmaster

“The Castle Park project is a joint project with Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) led by East Herts District Council (EHDC) and therefore it was EHDC that let the contract to construct the skate park development. A tender process was carried out to commission the company which included financial checks and the normal due diligence you would expect i.e. insurance, references etc. Following an assessment of works completed we can confirm the company only received funds for works carried out and therefore funds were

not misspent.”

There was no supplementary question.

Councillor Tim Page to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth please explain to the Council, and specifically Stortford Fields residents, the reasons for the delay in establishing a working Community Management Trust that meets the Council’s planning conditions and can demonstrate that it is both accountable to the Council, and fit for purpose?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“The Legal Agreement that was secured as part of the original planning permission for Stortford Fields requires the developer consortium to establish a Community Trust in accordance with the provisions within the agreement. To clarify, whilst the Trust needs to be set up in accordance with the provisions in Section 106 agreement, it won’t be accountable to the Council. It will however, manage and maintain the community buildings and community infrastructure within Stortford Fields such parks and landscaping and will include representatives from the council and the residents of Stortford Fields as well as the consortium of housebuilders, who collectively will be party to decision making and finance governance associated with the activities of the Trust.

Over time the housebuilders involvement in the Trust will diminish in favour of greater resident control.

We are aware that the developer consortium has set up the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company (SFEMC) which has taken on responsibility of the community assets delivered to date.

The Council acknowledges that progress on the establishment of the Community Trust has been slow and it has been a bigger task than anticipated. It is recognised that this needs to be addressed as a priority and officers are starting to make good progress.

We are currently working closely with the consortium to understand the workings of the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company in more detail and to ensure that a Community Trust is established over time that fully meets the provisions of the legal agreement. This will take some time but remains a key priority for us going forward and we will ensure that residents are kept informed when there are updates to share.

Meetings between Council officers and representatives for the consortium have recently taken place in order to ensure that the shadow board is up and running over the next couple of months. The Council is also bringing in specialist support to advise of detailed matters."

Supplementary question from Councillor Tim Page

The Executive Member suggests that a Community Trust will be set up in the next few months. Councillor Page asked if Councillor Goodeve could give a more

precise target.

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

Councillor Goodeve said some arrangements would be in place before Christmas.

230 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 SEPTEMBER AND 25 OCTOBER 2022

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 6 September and 25 October 2022.

230 MUCH HADHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - ADOPTION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 September 2022, regarding the Adoption of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported.
Councillor McAndrew seconded the proposal.

The Chairman, as the local ward member, thanked the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and its Chairman Ian Hunt who had put in a great deal of work over many years.

Councillor Goldspink referred to the Executive minutes included in the agenda and wished to ask a question on the Parking item.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the Council were not being asked to agree the minutes from the Executive meeting and they had been included in the agenda for information.

Councillor Goldspink wanted to ask when the car parking charges were being brought in.

Councillor Haysey said that the Council were being asked to make the decisions presented in the Executive report. She said the minutes would be agreed at the next Executive meeting.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

230 HUNSDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ADOPTION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 25 October 2022, regarding the Adoption of the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor E Buckmaster seconded the proposal.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that this was another great Neighbourhood Plan for the ward and thanked

all those involved for their hard work in producing it.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

230 OLD RIVER LANE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendations, which were referred to in the Executive report of 25 October 2022, regarding the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Goodeve said that Old River Lane was a development site allocated in the East Herts District Plan 2018 (Policy BISH8) which formed a key opportunity for sustainable redevelopment in the heart of Bishop's Stortford and an opportunity to complement the retail, community, and leisure provision in the town centre. The Old River Lane sets out a clear vision and development objectives, establishing placemaking and design principles, and by setting out a strategic master planning framework to bring forward appropriate redevelopment at Old River Lane.

Councillor Goodeve said that when adopted, the SPD would become a material consideration in assessing the quality of proposals on the site and in decision

making on planning applications. She said that a draft version of the Old River Lane SPD was published for public consultation for four-weeks between 5 July and 2 August 2022. The consultation received over 400 comments from nearly 100 individual consultees.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Wyllie seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink said that she welcomed the report and supported its objectives. She was pleased to see reference had been made to the number of new dwellings remaining at around 100. She felt it was a little vague in some respects but felt it was a good report overall and was happy to support it.

Councillor Curtis referred to the tracked changes document which he felt did not reflect the number of consultation responses. He questioned if the council had got the balance right from the consultation and asked if the loan had been taken out yet to develop the cinema.

Councillor Goodeve said that the council could only take loans when it was required.

Councillor Wyllie said he supported the report but did have some concerns about over development. He said that he was concerned about any future developers trying to get out of any agreement and wanted to make sure that this agreement was watertight to ensure that Bishop's Stortford got what it needed and

not what future developers wanted.

Councillor Goodeve reminded the Council that the report was about the Supplementary Planning Document and not about a future planning application or any negotiations around a Section 106 agreement.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) the responses to the consultation be noted and the officer responses and proposed changes to the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be supported;

(B) the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), be agreed for adoption; and

(C) In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects beyond the District Plan policies.

230 WASTE SERVICE CONTRACT DESIGN

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 25 October

2022, regarding the Waste Service Contract Design.

Councillor McAndrew said that the Executive were asked to give authority to proceed with a competitive dialogue for the waste and street cleansing contract. He said that there were 21 recommendations for Executive with one needing agreement by Council. He said that the Council were being asked to approve the capital and estimated revenue spend in relation to the new contract. He thanked Officers who had spent a considerable amount of time on the project.

Councillor McAndrew proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Drake seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink said she was delighted to see that there would be weekly food waste collections and was happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Burmicz said that he had previously lived in Germany where they had food waste collections and there were massive problems with maggots and flies in the summer months. He said that he did not feel it was a good move.

Councillor McAndrew said that food waste collections would be weekly.

Councillor Townsend sought clarification on the 23 litre caddies and how they would be transported, as 23 litres roughly translated to 23 kilograms and could therefore be quite heavy to carry.

Councillor McAndrew said they were used across the country and would almost never be full.

Councillor Curtis referred to paragraph 3.16 of the report and asked if the Executive Member would commit to having two separate options for the contract; have three weekly collections or remain at existing frequency. He said the council needed to make changes to its waste collection but wanted to make sure it had been thought through.

Councillor McAndrew said that the contract would be for a three weekly residual collection and weekly food waste.

Councillor E Buckmaster said there would be an educational element around the project. He said that a bin composition analysis had been undertaken across the county and it had found that 25-30% of waste in residual bins was food related. He said if the public disposed of waste correctly, it would mean less would be going into the black bins. He said that he was comfortable this was the correct route to go down.

Councillor Kemp said many other local authorities currently collect food waste separately and the results had been good.

Councillor Beckett said he supported the comments in favour of a separate food waste collection. He asked if the council would be providing bin liners to residents.

Councillor McAndrew said he would ask Officers to look into that.

Councillor Haysey said that we should all be looking at what waste we were producing. She said that the council needed to note that the government would be bringing in legislation that food waste should be collected separately.

Councillor Kaye said that within East Herts, 43% of waste in the residual bins should not be in there and this project would encourage residents to think differently about their waste.

Councillor Snowdon said it was his understanding that those with special needs or medical needs would have access to more frequent collections.

Councillor McAndrew said that there were mitigating circumstances and they would be dealt with on an individual basis.

Councillor Boylan asked if bins would be replaced with the smaller ones as and when required.

Councillor McAndrew said there would be communication on how the bins would be distributed. He said that all new developments would get the 180L bins and the existing bins would not be replaced overnight.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Capital and estimated

revenue spend in relation to the introduction of a new weekly separate food waste collection service in 23L caddies for houses and in wheeled bins for flats in East Hertfordshire from 2025.

231 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EAST HERTS - OUTCOME AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Leader of the Council presented the Electoral Review of East Herts report. She said that the Local Government Boundary Commission had completed its Electoral Review of East Herts and published its final recommendations in August 2022. In summary, she said that the Commission had agreed to leave the number of councillors representing East Herts at 50, however from May 2023, the District will be split into 26 wards instead of 30.

Councillor Haysey said that the report sets out a number of actions necessary including a Polling District and Polling Place review which will be undertaken between now and January 2023. She said that Members were encouraged to contribute to the review especially if they were aware of any local premises suitable to be used as a polling station. She said the register would be republished in February 2023 to incorporate these changes.

Councillor Haysey said that there were a couple of areas where the council may wish to carry out a Community Governance Review on certain parish boundaries. A list of suggested changes had been provided by Ware Town Council however, it was not

possible to conclude all the statutory stages in time to implement before the May 2023 elections so it was proposed that Officers report to Council after the elections with the proposed terms of reference for the reviews.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Snowdon seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Curtis referred to the Community Governance Review in Ware. He said that not all suggested changes were included in the report and asked for clarification that all recommendations would be considered.

Councillor Haysey confirmed that they would.

Councillor Dumont said he was not convinced by the name of the new ward Great Amwell and Stansted but he said the new ward represents both areas better.

Councillor Crystall asked what the process was for letting Members know the results of the polling district review.

Councillor Haysey said that it was still under discussion about how to communicate to Members.

Councillor Kemp said he appreciated the prompt response to Ware Town Council's request for a Community Governance Review.

Councillor Snowdon said that the ward names were decided by the Local Government Boundary Commission and were based on submissions from the public. He said that East Herts Council could change the name of the wards but would have to wait a minimum of five years from the completion of the boundary review to do so.

The motion to support the recommendations having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) the outcome of the Electoral Review of East Herts and the final recommendations of the review made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be noted;

(B) Subject to approval by Parliament, to implement the revised warding arrangements for East Herts recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as set out at Appendix A to this report, together with consequential changes to the electoral arrangements of certain parish and town councils with effect from the local and parish/town council elections on 4 May 2023;

(C) That consequent on the changes to ward boundaries, the Council undertake between November 2022 and January 2023 a review of polling districts and polling places for the whole district, and that authority to agree the outcome of the review of polling districts and polling

places be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council;

(D) The Electoral Registration Officer publish a revised electoral register for East Herts on 15 February 2023, incorporating the changes to wards and polling districts resulting from the Electoral Review and the review of polling districts; and

(E) The Council agree in principle to undertake community governance reviews of (i) Ware town and certain neighbouring parishes and (ii) the Rush Green area as described at paragraphs 2.22 to 2.27 of this report, with a view to considering any changes to parish or parish/town ward boundaries that may be desirable in those areas.

(F) The community governance reviews proposed at e) above take place after the May 2023 local elections and that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to bring forward as soon as practicable after those elections draft terms of reference for the reviews for consideration by the Council.

232 PRIVATE BILL - BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the Bishop's Stortford Town Council Cemeteries Private Bill report as the local Ward Member. He said that the report set out the case for a

promotion of a Private Bill to enable the reuse of burial space in two cemeteries, either side of Cemetery Road, in Bishop's Stortford. He explained that the promotion of the Bill would be on behalf of the Bishop's Stortford Town Council at their request as opposed to an initiative of this Council.

Councillor Cutting said that the reasons why the Town Council have asked this Council to promote the Bill on its behalf is set out in detail in the 'Background' section of the report but in summary: there is only sufficient burial space to last until approximately 2036, the only practical way to resolve this is to seek additional powers through a private Bill and there was no other suitable alternative land available to use for burials.

Councillor Cutting said that a public consultation was carried out by this Council, in addition to a previous consultation by the Town Council. There were seven responses to the consultation (six against and one in favour) and they have been summarised in paragraph 6.3 as well as the Council's assessment of the responses, contained in paragraph 6.4. He added that there were no financial implications to this Council as all costs are being met by the Town Council.

Councillor Cutting proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported.
Councillor Snowdon seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wyllie said he supported the report as the Leader of Bishop's Stortford Town Council but questioned why the consultation was reported in the Herts Mercury and not in a Bishop's Stortford

newspaper.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that it was advertised in two Bishop's Stortford newspapers.

The motion to support the recommendations having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) the Council authorises the promotion and deposit of the private Bill on behalf of the Bishop's Stortford Town Council to authorise the reuse of certain graves with two cemeteries in its area subject to appropriate protections substantially in accordance with the attached draft Bill;

(B) The Council authorises the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Services, to address procedural matters which may arise in relation to the promotion of the Bill and to enter into undertakings or commitments in relation to it; and

(C) The Council authorises the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to agree to the making of any necessary amendments to the Bill that may arise during the course of the promotion of the Bill.

233 REPORT OF URGENT NON-KEY DECISION TAKEN ON 12 AUGUST 2022

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report asking the Council to note the urgent non-key decision taken on 12 August 2022.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported.
Councillor Bolton seconded the proposal.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the urgent non-key decision taken by the Executive Member for Planning and Growth on 12 August 2022 be noted.

234 GREEN BELT LAND

Councillor Snowdon proposed the following motion on notice:

“This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop’s Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street
- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted

Neighbourhood Plan

- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
- The sale of Green Belt and rural land in this manner is a problem across East Hertfordshire and beyond, with similar examples in Much Hadham, Braughing and Tewin
- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land Rye Street from development
- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
- On 10th October 2022, Bishop's Stortford Town Council passed a motion substantially the same as this motion, and it received cross-party support

This Council believes:

- Green Belt land should be protected from being sold off in small plots
- Some prospective buyers of small plots of Green Belt land do not fully understand the planning challenges associated with trying to develop this land

This Council resolves:

- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
 - Express the Town Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
 - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land
 - Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion"

Councillor Snowdon said there was significant public concern about the sale of green belt land in Bishop's Stortford and other areas. He said the motion was carefully worded based upon a similar motion passed at Bishop's Stortford Town Council recently although that motion went further because it was not a planning authority. He understood that some Members wanted the motion to go further but he thought it was the best motion the Council could pass.

Councillor Wyllie seconded the motion and reserved his

right to speak.

Councillor Bell said she supported the motion and said it was important to protect green belt land from being developed. She said that there was an error on the first bullet point under 'This Council resolves' where it refers to the Town Council. She proposed an amendment to the motion to change this to the District Council.

The amendment having been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Curtis was put to the meeting and was declared CARRIED. The amended motion then became the substantive motion as follows:

"This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop's Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street
- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
- The sale of Green Belt and rural land in this manner is a problem across East Hertfordshire and beyond, with similar examples in Much Hadham, Braughing and Tewin
- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land

Rye Street from development

- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
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This Council resolves:

- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
 - Express the District Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
 - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land

- Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion.

Councillor Goldspink said she firmly supported the motion and it was very important to protect green open spaces. She believed the motion could be strengthened.

Councillor Wilson proposed the following amendment to be added under 'This Council notes':

- Council expresses regret at the amount of former Green Belt land that has been built on or is due to be built on throughout the District as a result of the plans developed in the District Plan of 2018
- Council deplores the fact that the national government forced every local planning authority to construct a fixed amount of housing, meaning building on Green Belt was inevitable
- It is accepted that siting developments in Bishop's Stortford North has caused intolerable strain on the infrastructure in the town whilst the prospect of a distribution centre in Bishop's Stortford South represents an even greater difficulty.
- It is regrettable that developments have been and will be built on former Green Belt land and admits that

the consequent loss of green spaces is not in accord with residents' needs or wishes

- This council will do all it can to alleviate the inevitable strain on infrastructure that the development of Gilston will bring.
- This council accepts errors were made in the local plan and that less developments should have been sited around the same pieces of infrastructure, specifically the north-south "corridor" from Bishop Stortford southwards towards Harlow, More brownfield sites should have been sought if at all possible.

Councillor Townsend seconded the motion.

Councillor Wilson proposed to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes under paragraph 3.21 of the Constitution to allow the Council to consider the amendment. Councillor Snowdon seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the meeting be adjourned for ten minutes.

The meeting reconvened.

The Chairman asked if the amendment was allowed under the Council Procedure Rules.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred to paragraph 3.22.6 of the Constitution which said

amendments were allowed as long as the effect was not to negate the motion or substantially rewrite the motion. He said he believed the amendment as proposed moved into other issues around planning and the District Plan, whereas the original motion was purposely and narrowly focussed on the sale of green belt land. He said the amendment would negate the motion and would therefore not be accepted.

The Chairman said that Members could now debate the substantive motion.

Councillor Crofton said he supported the motion and had experienced the selling off of land parcels in his ward. He said these sites had no chance of gaining planning permission but were being sold as development sites. He said the District Council needed to be strong in their planning and control of unauthorised use of land.

Councillor Stowe said that in his ward, plot lands had sheds, polytunnels and even people living in caravans on them. He said the enforcement team were aware but agents were telling buyers that they could do this to get future planning permission on the site.

Councillor McAndrew supported the motion.

Councillor Boylan expressed support for the motion. He said that a large field in Braughing had been sold by the farmer and was now divided into 60 housing plots which had different owners on the land registry. Councillor Boylan said that because of the number of different owners there was no ownership of the field and it did not get maintained.

Councillor Curtis said that selling of plots of green belt land was outrageous and asked what was meant by the motion asking to strengthen the rules.

Councillor Devonshire said that selling agents were giving false information to buyers about the potential of the plots.

Councillor Crystall said he agreed with the essence of the motion but asked how a 'small plot' was defined.

Councillor Snowdon replied to the points raised in the debate. He said the term 'small plot' was a well known one in the planning industry. He said the council had a District Plan and places where development was and was not allowed. He said that Members had spoken quite strongly on problems in their own wards and it was a hard problem to solve but just because it was hard, should not mean that the council should not try to solve it. He said this was a motion about policy and not about legislation implementation.

Having been proposed and seconded, the substantive motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That:

"This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop's Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two

recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street

- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
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- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land Rye Street from development
- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
- On 10th October 2022, Bishop's Stortford Town Council passed a motion substantially the same as this motion, and it received cross-party support

This Council believes:

- Green Belt land should be protected from being sold

off in small plots

- Some prospective buyers of small plots of Green Belt land do not fully understand the planning challenges associated with trying to develop this land

This Council resolves:

- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
 - Express the District Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
 - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land
 - Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion.

235 COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Under paragraph 3.22.7 of the Constitution, Councillor Goldspink provided the meeting with an altered

motion from the one she had submitted on notice. Copies of the altered motion were distributed to the meeting.

Councillor Goldspink proposed the following motion:

“We are all living in the midst of a serious Cost of Living Crisis and Emergency. Council does note the Government’s Decision, taken in June 2022, to impose a Windfall Tax on the super profits of the oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment to many households. Though this Windfall Tax is welcome, and the payments are helpful, not everyone is out of difficulty. Council believes that it does not go nearly far enough, and that the Government should be doing much more to support the people of East Herts through this Cost-of-Living Crisis. East Herts Council therefore acknowledges that we are in a “Cost of Living Emergency”.

Councillors on East Herts Council believe the primary objective of the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement tomorrow should be support for the most vulnerable in our communities.

We welcome the support we have received from the Department of Work and Pensions on the Household Support Fund which amounts to £60,000 for food support and £60,000 for energy support. This money administered by the Community Alliance in East Herts went into supporting food banks and fuel poverty. The fuel support funding is in collaboration with housing associations.

We also welcome the £150 rebate in council tax earlier

this year and the £326 followed by £324 for those on Universal Credit or indeed, other benefits. The £400 we shall all receive towards our energy costs has already started to take effect with £66 off our bills last month and more to come this winter.

With the proposed rise in National Insurance now cancelled and older people receiving between £500 and £600 in winter fuel allowance, we believe this is a good start to creating more stability in the economy to help fight inflation despite the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

East Herts Council will be working with Hertfordshire County Council's Cost of Living Taskforce to monitor any problems our residents face in the coming months.

We await the outcome of the Autumn Statement to hear what further support may be provided to our vulnerable residents. In the meantime we will continue to work with our District and County colleagues to provide the very best support we can.

We call upon the government to ensure that measures be taken to alleviate poverty and help those most in need. The Council asks the Leader of the Council to write on behalf of East Herts District Council to lobby the government to take further steps to help those most in need, including the elderly, the disabled, those on low wages and those on benefits.

This Council resolves to consider the measures to be announced in the Autumn Statement and will continue to lobby government through the District Councils Network and the LGA for financial support and will

continue to work with all councils and agencies across county to ensure the best possible resources are in place for all our residents.”

Councillor Dumont seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Snowdon said he was in favour of the motion. He said that those struggling were not necessarily on benefits and with rising heating bills, residents need all the support offered to them. He said a key group that was overlooked was those that were in work but on low wages. He said that there were indications from the government that the minimum wage would be increased.

Councillor Haysey said she welcomed the altered motion, and she was happy to support it. She said it was important for the District Council to show unity and to improve the quality of life for the residents of East Herts. She said she was happy to write the necessary letters and invited the other Group Leaders to join her.

Councillor Redfern said that she was disappointed that the altered motion had been watered down and would have preferred to have seen the restoration of the Universal Credit supplement included. She did not feel there was enough strength to the current motion.

Councillor Wilson said that residents’ mortgages were high and struggling even if they earned a decent salary. He said he would also like to see Universal Credit increased.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that the Council were united and agreed that more could be done. He said that the council should be working across the political spectrum and across the other 10 councillors in Hertfordshire. He referred to the 'Here for you' campaign and said a booklet was delivered to all residents. He said the motion should not be too specific and would need to wait and see what the whole package was from the government in the Autumn Statement.

Councillor Kaye said he supported the comments from his colleagues. He said that there was speculation that Universal Credit and benefits would get a full inflation rise which could be more than the twenty pound that was withdrawn.

Councillor Symonds said that she worked closely with the Bishop's Stortford Food Banks and said the team always work with those collecting food to make sure there are not any underlying issues that could be addressed. She wanted to pay tribute to the benefits department who have been doing an excellent job.

Councillor Dumont said that it was good to hear the Council come together and support the motion. He said the impacts of Brexit and the Mini Budget had contributed to the issue. He hoped that the Government would correct its previous mistakes in the Autumn Statement.

Councillor Goldspink thanked members across the Chamber for their support. She hoped that they could

continue to lobby the government to do more to help the most vulnerable in East Herts.

Having been proposed and seconded, the substantive motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That:

We are all living in the midst of a serious Cost of Living Crisis and Emergency. Council does note the Government’s Decision, taken in June 2022, to impose a Windfall Tax on the super profits of the oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment to many households. Though this Windfall Tax is welcome, and the payments are helpful, not everyone is out of difficulty. Council believes that it does not go nearly far enough, and that the Government should be doing much more to support the people of East Herts through this Cost-of-Living Crisis. East Herts Council therefore acknowledges that we are in a “Cost of Living Emergency”.

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energy support. This money administered by the Community Alliance in East Herts went into supporting food banks and fuel poverty. The fuel support funding is in collaboration with housing associations.

We also welcome the £150 rebate in council tax earlier this year and the £326 followed by £324 for those on Universal Credit or indeed, other benefits. The £400 we shall all receive towards our energy costs has already started to take effect with £66 off our bills last month and more to come this winter.

With the proposed rise in National Insurance now cancelled and older people receiving between £500 and £600 in winter fuel allowance, we believe this is a good start to creating more stability in the economy to help fight inflation despite the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

East Herts Council will be working with Hertfordshire County Council's Cost of Living Taskforce to monitor any problems our residents face in the coming months.

We await the outcome of the Autumn Statement to hear what further support may be provided to our vulnerable residents. In the meantime we will continue to work with our District and County colleagues to provide the very best support we can.

We call upon the government to ensure that measures be taken to alleviate poverty and help those most in need. The Council asks the Leader of the Council to write on behalf of East Herts District Council to lobby the government to take further steps to help those most in need, including the elderly, the disabled, those on low wages and those on benefits.

This Council resolves to consider the measures to be announced in the Autumn Statement and will continue to lobby government through the District Councils Network and the LGA for financial support and will continue to work with all councils and agencies across county to ensure the best possible resources are in place for all our residents.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman
Date

COUNCIL – 14 DECEMBER 2022

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1	Cllr Norma Symonds to ask Cllr Peter Boylan the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Our council agreed a five-year housing plan in May this year. Six months has now gone, and I would like to ask the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods for an update on what has happened so far, especially with social housing.	
Question 2	Cllr Stephen Reed to ask Cllr Peter Boylan the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Due to the previous death in Rochdale due to damp and mould, could the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explain if any measures have been taken to avoid East Herts repeating what happened.	

Agenda Item 9

Council

Date of Meeting: 14 December 2022

Report by: Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

Report title: Executive Report – 25 October and 22 November 2022

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 25 October and 22 November 2022.

1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 22 November 2022. One recommendation from the meeting on 25 October 2022 is for consideration at this Council meeting. At these meetings the Executive considered and supported a number of recommendations for Council on the following items:

- 1.1.1 Council Tax Support
- 1.1.2 North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengo (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework
- 1.1.3 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update
- 1.1.4 First Homes Technical Advice Note

1.2 This report sets out the recommendation for the above items. The full report, including the Appendix, may be viewed on the council's website.

- 1.3 The Minutes of the meeting are attached as **Appendix A**.
- 1.4 This report excludes items also considered by the Executive where those reports are separate agenda items on the Council agenda.

2.0 Council Tax Support

- 2.1 The Executive was asked to consider the latest available information around the current local Council Tax Support scheme and support the recommendation that no change is made for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) That no changes be made to the local Council Tax Support scheme for April 2023.**

3.0 North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework

- 3.1 The Executive was asked to consider the Masterplanning Framework Document for North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe (HERT4, Phase 2).

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) That the North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework, October 2022, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.**

4.0 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update

- 4.1 The Executive was asked to consider the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update and asked the Executive to endorse the recommendation to Council so that the update could be used to inform future corporate strategies and any relevant supplementary planning documents.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) That the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update 2022 be endorsed and recommended to Council to form part of the evidence base to inform Development Management decisions and support the East Herts District Plan 2018 and any future reviews and revisions to it.**

5.0 First Homes Technical Advice Note

- 5.1 The Executive were asked to recommend to Council that the First Home Technical Advice Note be approved. Local authorities were obliged to produce a policy for the development of First Homes to be incorporated into future versions of the District Plan.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) That the First Homes Technical Advice Note be recommended to Council for approval.**

6.0 Executive Decisions

- 6.1 Other matters determined by the Executive are detailed in the Minutes of the meeting, at Appendix A to this report.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 Minutes of the Executive meeting 25 October 2022
- 7.2 Minutes of the Executive meeting 22 November 2022
- 7.3 HERT4 Masterplanning Framework Plan
- 7.4 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment – Summary of Main Findings
- 7.5 First Homes Policy Statement Technical Advice Note

Contact Member

Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council
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Report Author

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2022, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors P Boylan, E Buckmaster,
G Cutting, J Goodeve, J Kaye, G McAndrew
and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors B Crystall and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Kay Mead	- Principal Planning Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Tyron Suddes	- Information Governance and Data Protection Manager

236 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Haysey.

Councillor Williamson chaired the meeting in her absence.

237 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Leader welcomed Members, Officers and those watching on the Council's YouTube page to the meeting.

238 MINUTES - 25 OCTOBER 2022

Councillor Kaye proposed, and Councillor McAndrew seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meetings held on 25 October 2022 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Deputy Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

239 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

240 NORTH OF HERTFORD - LAND WEST OF WADESMILL ROAD, BENGEO (HERT4, PHASE 2) MASTERPLANNING

FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the Masterplanning Framework report for North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengo (HERT4, Phase 2). She said that in the District Plan, Policy DES1 Masterplanning requires all ‘significant’ development proposals to prepare a Masterplan. Masterplans should be collaboratively prepared and informed by community engagement. For the North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road site, Policy HERT4 also requires a Masterplan to be prepared.

Councillor Goodeve said that Policy DES1 states that in order to ensure that sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.

Councillor Goodeve said that since the agenda report was published, an anomaly on the plans within the Appendix A Masterplanning Framework regarding the depiction of the northern boundary of the strategic site allocation had been identified and corrected. An amended version had been uploaded to the website which superseded the previous document in the original agenda. She said that this required a slight amendment to the report recommendation to read “That the North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengo (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework, October 2022, as detailed in Appendix A to this report, as amended, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management

purposes.

Councillor Ruffles said that it was very important that the design framework was set out as the debate about the future of the land continued. He said that a petition was presented to the last Council meeting about the future of the site and he said he had been very involved in public discussions. She said that the clarity of the design framework was very important and it would make the sure the future of HERT4 was properly controlled and in accordance with the ideals of the masterplanning process.

Councillor Buckmaster said he had read through the proposals and felt they were really good and hoped that they would be carried forward to any future planning application.

Councillor Kaye said he had been involved with the masterplanning process for Ware North and East and had seen changes made due to the collaboration between interest parties.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that the North of Hertford – Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe (HERT4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework, October 2022, as detailed in Appendix A to this report, as amended, be agreed as a material consideration for

Development Management purposes.

241 DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the Data Protection Policy report. He said that the adoption of the policy would further enhance the Council's compliance with UK GDPR legislation.

Councillor Cutting proposed, and Councillor McAndrew seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That (A) The comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix B, be considered and endorse the recommended actions shown be endorsed;

(B) The Data Protection Policy be adopted; and

(C) The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager be authorised to make any minor amendments that may be required, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

242 SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES POLICY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the Surveillance Technologies Policy. He said that the policy would govern the council's use of overt surveillance technologies controlled by the council and utilised by employees with relevant roles.

He said the policy would include an asset register to record the location of cameras and their scope of surveillance.

Councillor Cutting proposed, and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) The Surveillance Technologies Policy be adopted; and

(B) The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager be authorised to make any minor amendments that may be required, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

243 AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE FOR EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update report. He said that the update was important in light of the Council's new Housing Strategy and its drive to increase affordable housing delivery. He said that the District Plan 2018 required housing developers to provide an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures.

Councillor Boylan said that the report would assist Officers with their efforts to negotiate the most suitable affordable housing mix in the towns and rural areas. He was pleased that the first new affordable

homes in a rural area for some time had recently been completed in Braughing. He said that having a robust evidence base meant that there was less room for developers to argue that the Council's Housing Strategy was unreasonable.

Councillor Buckmaster said it was useful to be provided with the figures by area. He said that East Herts compared fairly well to other authorities in delivering affordable housing despite viability issues from developers.

Councillor Boylan proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update 2022 be endorsed to form part of the evidence base to inform Development Management decisions and support the East Herts District Plan 2018 and any future reviews and revisions to it.

244 FIRST HOMES – ADOPTION OF A TECHNICAL GUIDANCE NOTE

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented the First Homes Technical Guidance Note report. He said that First Homes were a new affordable housing product where developers provided homes to buy at a discount. He said that the council's Housing Strategy

included a range of low cost home ownership options but Officer analysis had suggested that the First Homes product would be ill suited to the housing market in East Herts.

Councillor Boylan said that paragraph 3.4 in the report highlighted that shared ownership was more affordable to residents in East Herts than First Homes. He said that the proposed technical note recommended that First Homes were not used but as they were a nationally recognised scheme, the council could not prohibit their development.

Councillor Buckmaster said it was helpful to have the conditions in place should a developer approach the council to provide First Homes.

Councillor Boylan proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the First Homes Technical Advice Note be approved.

245 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chairman

Date

North of Hertford - Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe
(HERT 4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework
(NOVEMBER 2022)



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Introduction

Introduction

This Masterplan framework document has been prepared in response to East Herts Council’s commitment to ensure high quality design through a masterplanning process. The document builds on material previously submitted as part of the first phase of the HERT4 allocation at the Stiles. The masterplan document is submitted on behalf of Durkan and Anthony Ian Thompson and Daniel Robert Ugur (The Trustees) in support of proposals for the residential development of approximately 5.24 HA of developable land at Wadesmill Road, Hertford, SG14 3HG.

The Masterplan Framework will shape the form of the development and act as the basis of initial discussions with third party stakeholders, including the three tiers of local government at member and officer levels, other consultees, and the Shaping Hertford Steering Group. The Masterplan Framework has been prepared on a without prejudice basis in respect of HERT4 policy relating to previous mineral extraction on neighbouring land.

This Masterplan framework document is intended to demonstrate the core design principles underpinning the design concepts for a detailed planning application to deliver around 100 new dwellings anticipated to be submitted in the latter part of 2022.

The details included within this document follow a thorough examination and comprehensive assessment of the site and the wider surroundings and demonstrate the thought processes leading to the a proposed design that includes:

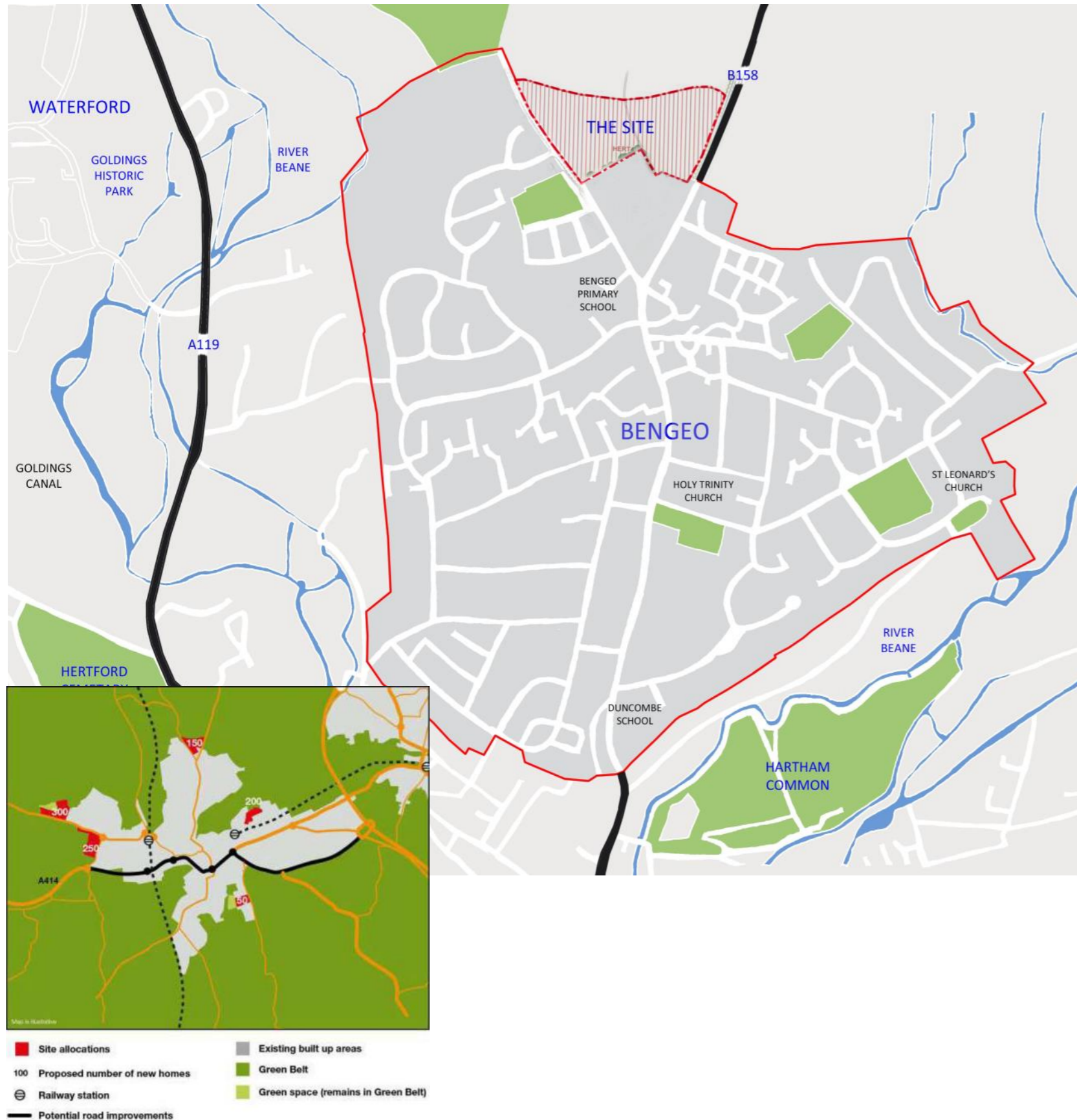
- A range and mix of around 100 dwellings including a 40% provision of affordable housing.
- The inclusion of integrated public open spaces incorporating children’s play facilities.
- A design that will respect and respond to the topography of the site.
- Sustainable Drainage strategies.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes running through the development forming important off-site connections to the neighbouring LEAP to the southwest and the byway running north-south through and beyond the site.
- The retention, strengthening and enhancement of existing landscaping features.
- New strategic landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- A carefully considered road hierarchy incorporating shared surfaces where appropriate.
- Safer by Design Principles.

Our Vision

Our vision is to deliver a well-designed, high quality, verdant development combining attractive new dwellings within carefully balanced landscaped settings including the improvement and enhancement of the existing landscape and ecology to create a high quality new addition to the existing community that is well integrated with the first phase of HERT4, the Stiles. Key elements include:

- Traditional housing forms within a landscape led design approach.
- Dwellings that frame and overlook the main streets providing active frontages.
- Key buildings at strategic locations.
- Double aspect built forms that ‘turn the corner’.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes that link the development to key areas off-site enhancing connectivity to the wider community.
- Passive natural surveillance to streets, parking areas and open spaces.
- On plot parking where possible to reduce car dominance.
- An integrated road hierarchy to help define character areas.
- An integrated landscaping design to help define character areas.
- Subtle design variation to help define character areas.
- Retention and reinforcement of mature trees and hedgerows around the site perimeter.
- Policy compliant car and cycle parking standards.
- Refuse strategies contained within private areas.
- Policy compliant garage designs.
- A fabric first approach to energy conservation along with the provision of air source heat pumps
- SuDs strategies.
- Sustainable strategies including the provision of charging points for low and zero carbon vehicles and covered secure storage for cycles.
- Private gardens.
- Reduced density at the fringes of the development.
- Open space to the periphery of the development.
- Wildflower Meadows.

Site Location & Planning Context



Planning Context

The site is allocated for residential development in the submitted version of the East Hertfordshire District Plan under reference HERT4.

The site has historically been located within the Metropolitan Green Belt where highly restrictive planning policies apply. Following the adoption of the new District Plan (Oct 2018), this site has been removed from the Green Belt and will form the second phase of an allocation to provide over 150 dwellings in total. HERT4 sets out an expectation for the site to deliver housing for this phase by 2027. This aligns with strategic policies DPS2, DPS3 and HERT1.

The allocation establishes the principle of residential development for the site in line with the Council’s aspirations.

Key policy HERT4 requires a masterplan to be collaboratively prepared involving a range of key stakeholders. This document will evolve through a process of pre-application engagement with East Herts Council and statutory and non statutory consultees and will include a public exhibition and presentations to the Shaping Hertford Steering Group.

Policy HERT4 sets out a series of requirements expected from the delivery of a development. These include a 40% allocation of affordable housing, an appropriate mix of housing, the delivery of green infrastructure, vehicular access from Wadesmill Road, off-site mitigation measures and wider pedestrian and cycle connectivity, all of which are included within these proposals.

The proposals must also be considered in relation to the previous phase design to allow for successful integration with phase 1.

In line with HCC LTP4 Policy 1 sustainable travel methods will be at the heart of the development through:

- The promotion of sustainable patterns of movement.
- The provision of cycle routes and linkages.
- Linkages and enhancements to local bus services.
- Prioritising pedestrian and cycle use over car use.
- Measures to encourage modal switching.

Site Analysis - Location & Site in Context



Location of the Site

The site area to be developed, measuring 5.24 Ha, is located in the Bengoe area of Hertford on the northern edge of the town. The site lies North of the former Bengoe Nursery now currently being developed to provide 52 new homes. The allocation proposes a vehicular access taken from the south eastern, tree lined boundary off Wadesmill Road. There is currently no physical boundary to the North of the site and it is a requirement of the scheme to provide landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, which responds to the existing landscape and complements the development as appropriate and provides a defined, recognisable boundary to the Green Belt. The eastern boundary is partly adjoined by an existing residential dwelling with agricultural fields extending to the north and north-east. Existing residential settlements including The Orchard and The Wick lie beyond Sacombe Road to the west. The recent settlement of Buckwells Field with it's associated play area is situated to the south-west and to the north-west lies the Waterford Heath Community Nature Park .

The site is easily accessible to services and facilities with direct footpath links along both Sacombe Road and Wadesmill Road.

The Site in Context

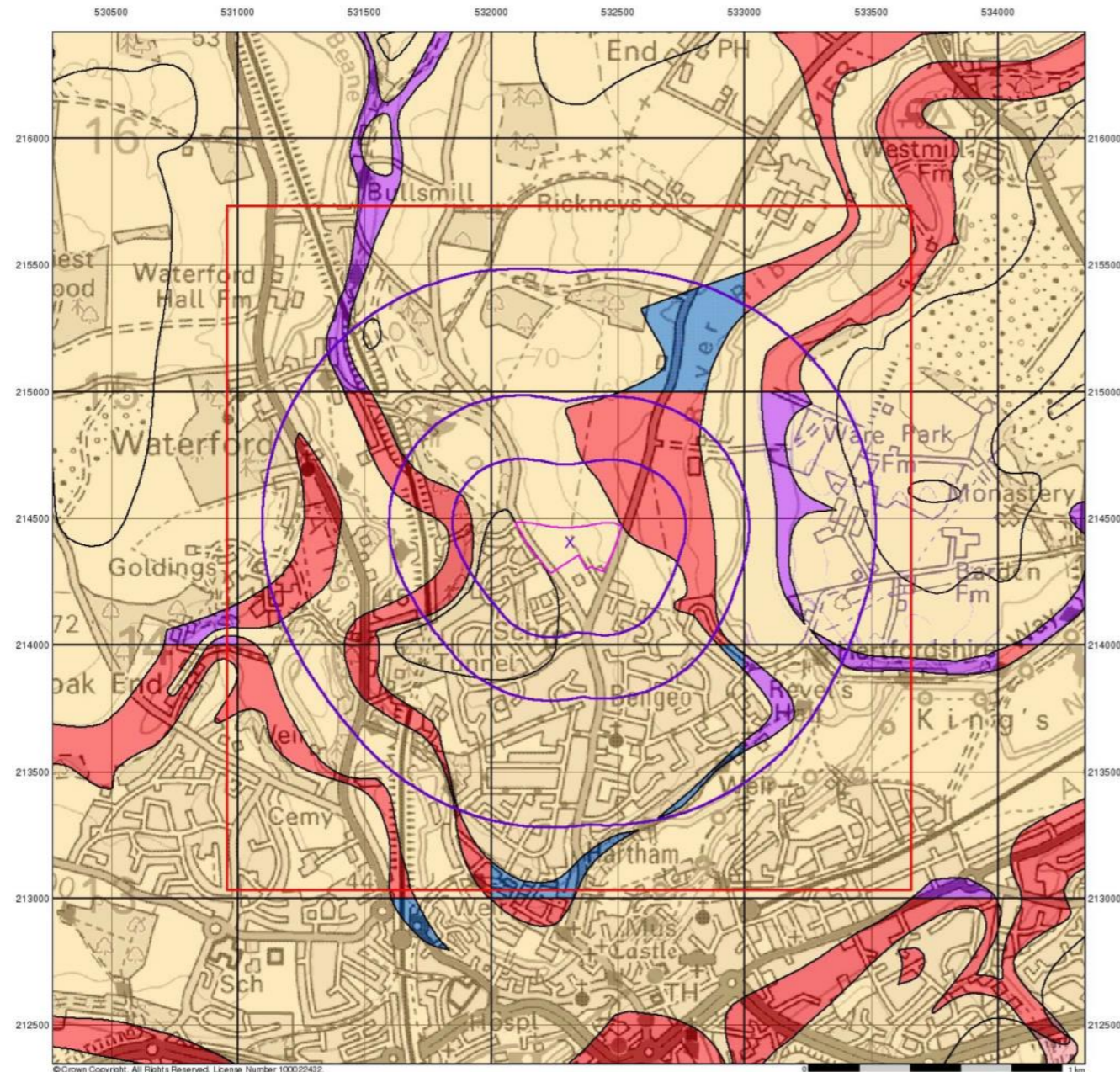
There are a range of local amenities, services and shops available within Bengoe which are within walking distance of the site, including a Post Office and a Cooperative Food Store.

The site is also located approximately 1.5km from the centre of Hertford and its associated shops and facilities including doctor's surgeries, supermarkets and leisure facilities.

Bengoe Primary School is located approximately 0.1km to the south-west of the site. Furthermore, Duncombe School, an independent school is located approximately 1km south of the site, providing school places between 2 and 11 years of age.

A bus service (bus route 333) currently runs via Bengoe Street / The Avenue and Cowper Crescent located an approximate 3-minute walk to the south of the site, with services running at least every 30 minutes into the centre of Hertford. Hertford also benefits from two railway stations, providing regular direct links into London.

Site Analysis - Site Investigation, Ecology & Built Heritage



Site Investigation

A detailed site investigation has been undertaken by GEOSPHERE ENVIRONMENTAL following a walkover survey carried out in November 2019 and the findings will accompany the formal planning application.

Ecology

An initial ecology appraisal is to be undertaken.

There is an opportunity to incorporate high quality landscaping, planting up existing hedgerows, protecting high quality trees and maximising the benefits of the SuDs features to create new habitats and improve biodiversity across the site and aim to achieve biodiversity net gain.

This approach aligns with Policies NE3 and NE4.

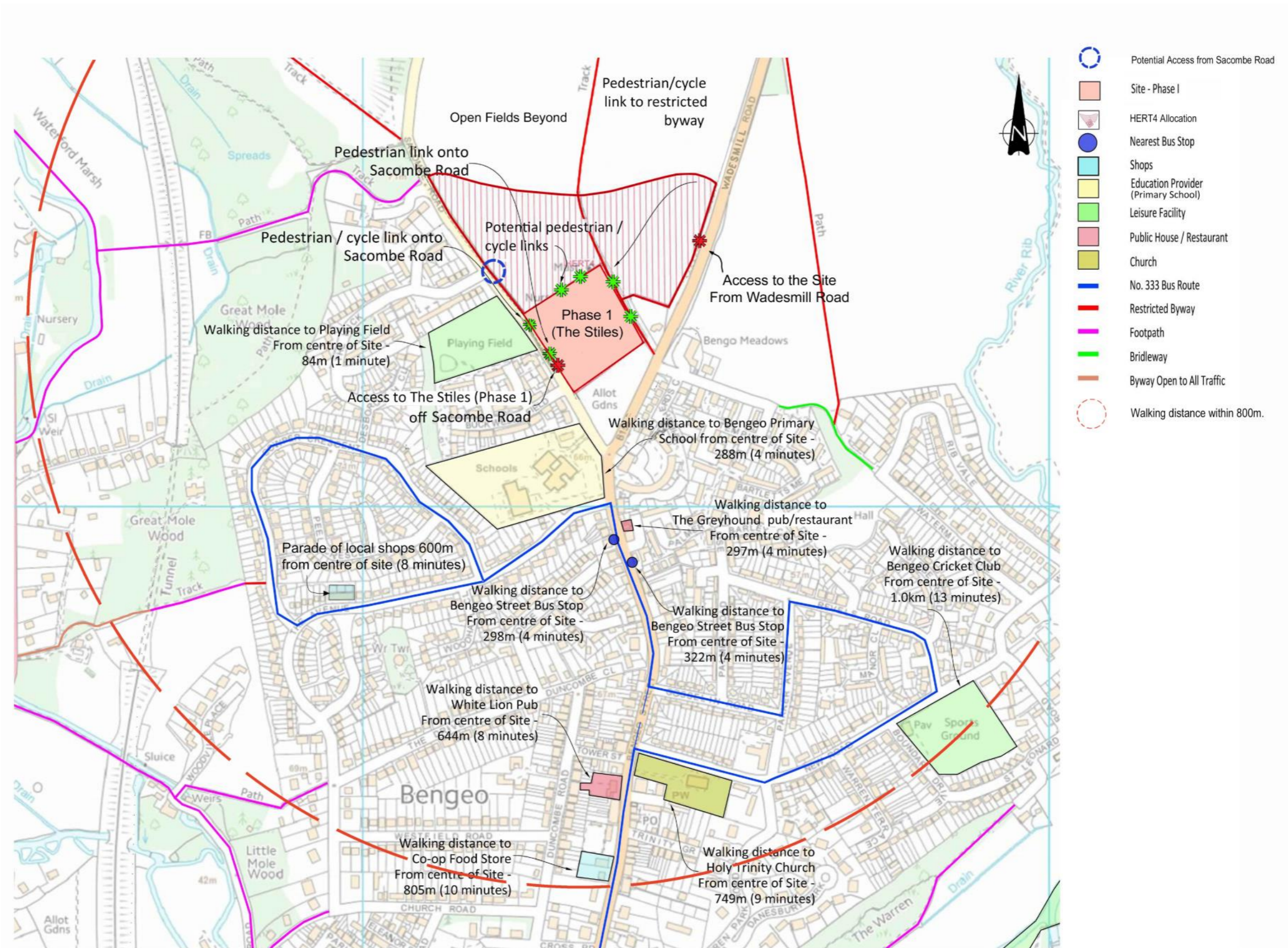
Tree Survey

A tree survey is to be undertaken to determine the constraints and the impact on the development proposals in relation to shading, tree route protection areas and tree category to BS5837. High quality trees will be retained and incorporated into a high-quality landscape scheme. The proposed development will seek to promote new tree planting where appropriate.

Topography



Existing Movement & Connections



Local Character

Local Context

The Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 2017) recognises the distinctive character of different areas. The development site is adjacent to Identity Area 2- North West Quadrant which includes the allotments to the south. The built form of the immediate locality is a mixture of historic terraced housing with additional later semi-detached and detached housing. There is a grouping of historic buildings along the linear route of Bengoe Street which is interspersed with modern housing and commercial premises reflecting the expansion of Hertford.

The pattern of development within Identity Area 2 creates views that are generally contained by the built form. Longer views are along highways where the interplay between building scale, materials and building line set backs from the carriageway complemented by mature trees and planting define the verdant character of the street scene.

There are a number of notable residences built in the 19th and early 20th century which are located within this area of Bengoe including Bengoe House and the Grade II listed Warren Park.



Red Brick with burnt headers: Flemish bond



London stocks: Flemish bond



White brick: Flemish bond



Weatherboarding



Pargetting



Stucco



Plain tiles



Pantiles (mainly in north and east Herts)

Image Location

1. The Stiles
2. The Stiles
3. Duncombe Road
4. Fanshawe Street
5. Fanshawe Street
6. The Drive
7. New Road
8. Bengoe Mews
9. Warren Street



1.



2.



3.



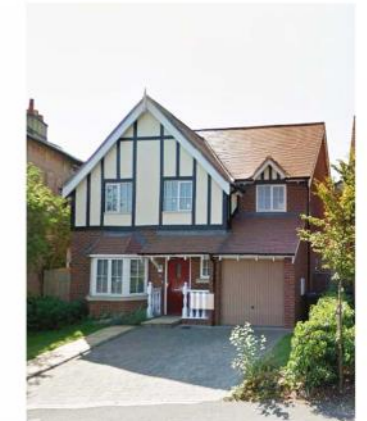
4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.

From Understanding Hertfordshire's Character by HCC.

Opportunities & Constraints



Landscaping Framework



Design Principles

Primary Elements of the Emerging Design

The underpinning design principles reflect the thought process undertaken to achieve a development with a clear sense of identity and of place that can successfully integrate into the existing community.

1. Points of Arrival - Focal buildings set within an attractive landscaped setting will frame the primary entrance.
2. A coherent movement strategy that promotes sustainable principles.
3. Internal Routes:
 - Primary Street - A verdant avenue combining dwellings set back from the carriageway with footpaths adjacent to tree lined grass verges. The primary streets lead to the verdant main thoroughfare connecting the existing byway running south to north through and beyond the development.
 - Secondary Streets - Connect to the lanes serving the fringes of the development.
 - Tertiary Streets - Designed as lanes serving less dense dwellings at the fringes of the development.
 - Cycle/footway links connecting important features outside of the development
4. Landscape and Ecology - The primary street will be designed as a verdant thoroughfare linking the main access to the interconnecting verdant thoroughfare leading to public open spaces.
5. The northern fringe will include public amenity greens with integrated play spaces and SuDs features and new planting strategies which will enhance and strengthen the existing landscaping features and provide increased ecological benefits.
6. The fringes of the development will combine existing tree and hedge planting with new tree, hedge and shrub planting to create a 'leafy green' character offsetting the new low density mainly detached housing.
7. Fully Integrated Landscape Strategy - Verdant primary routes will be designed to interconnect with the main thoroughfare leading to open spaces adjacent to development fringes at the north of the development. The open spaces will be versatile spaces where children can play safely overlooked by housing to create a secure environment where they can interact with their natural surroundings. The central space described as the 'heart of the development' will incorporate a linear pocket park with the byway running along its edge.
8. Layout - Dwellings will be designed to overlook roads, footpaths and public open spaces providing natural surveillance and active frontages to all public areas in the best practice of secure by design philosophy. The built form will include focal buildings in key locations and buildings designed to 'turn the corner'. Density will draw on the principles approved on phase 1 (The Stiles). Land to the east of the byway and at the fringes of the development will be lower density and will increase marginally towards the centre along the primary and secondary routes. A key aim will be to avoid a development dominated by cars by ensuring that parking can be accommodated on plot or within off-road parking courts.
9. Building Heights - The maximum storey height of buildings will be 2.5 storeys although there potentially may be an opportunity to provide a three storey landmark building at the very lowest point of the site along the eastern edge.
10. Frontages - Respond to their respective character areas. The emphasis will be on subtle variation to ensure that the development as a whole maintains a cohesive identity.

Design Principles - Character Areas

Character Areas

Character areas will play an important role within the design with areas defined by landscaped settings and by nuances in architectural expression and by their location within the development. The nature of the topography and the desire to make the existing byway route an integral part of the development creates the opportunity to consider the layout as three distinct areas, each with their own set of unique characteristics all of which need to successfully combine to help form a cohesive development.

1. The Western Side of the Development.

The western side of the development will feature similar characteristics and variations to those within the Stiles development. Housing facing Sacombe Road and the Stiles will be of similar forms with materials and landscaping selected to create the same leafy lane approach. Housing to the northern fringe will be softer in approach with materials and boundary treatments selected to reflect a semi-rural character. Housing framing streets will be slightly denser and more formal in character to help provide a sense of enclosure and scale and will face the streets to provide active frontages and promote security.

2. The Centre or Heart of the Development.

The centre of the development requires careful planning with a focus on the sensitive inclusion of the existing byway. Buildings will be designed to accentuate and complement the exiting route with architectural characteristics that will create visual interest for pedestrians and cyclists and frame an area of open space at the very centre of the development.

3. The Eastern Side of the Development

The eastern side of the development will be designed to accommodate the steeply sloping nature of this part of the site. Housing will be set out in rows following the contour lines and will rise in tiers towards the centre of the site. A focal building of status will mark the main point of arrival into the site from Wadesmill Road. For the purpose of this document a main point of arrival is defined as being located at the main vehicular entrance into the development with key points of arrival located at various locations within development. Housing plots will be less dense in this area to allow the existing topography to be successfully integrated into the design.

Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced around the site perimeter providing an attractive leafy outlook along lanes to the western fringe and combining with public open spaces to the north to create an attractive and harmonious setting.

A carefully considered tree and planting strategy will be integral to the main primary streets and north-south thoroughfare to create verdant, overlooked routes through the development leading to green links and public open spaces.

The internal street network will be privately managed and designed to adoptable standards.

Design Principles - Masterplanning Framework



* WHERE TREE LOSS MAY BE INCURRED ALONG WADESMILL ROAD (IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE HIGHWAYS SIGHTLINE REQUIREMENTS) REPLACEMENT TREES/HEDGEROW PLANTING WILL BE SECURED TO BE ALONGSIDE OR BEHIND VISIBILITY SPLAYS I.E. ALONG THE BOUNDARY OF THE SITE.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Sustainable Drainage Systems

The new development will explore and incorporate a variety of sustainable drainage systems to mitigate the potential threat of flooding and as part of a comprehensive landscaping strategy to enhance the sustainability of the site and will seek to promote water efficiency through innovative design.

The proposed SuDs strategy for the site is to have a combined hard and soft approach with the potential inclusion of swales, soakaways, permeable surfaces and below ground storage.

The site does not benefit from being located in the vicinity or close by to an accessible ditch to which surface water could discharge. The on-site infiltration testing demonstrated that the site could however benefit from the use of infiltration with a below-ground system, soakaways and use of porous driveways.

Underground storage areas will be located within open spaces and parking areas and in those areas identified by favourable infiltration testing results.

The combined hard/soft approach will mitigate the impact of surface water discharge from the development to decrease any risk of flooding.

The development will connect (subject to agreement with Thames Water) to the existing foul sewer and drainage network beneath Sacombe Road. Other utilities including electricity and communications are available locally for connection with minimal disruption and a small substation may be required within the development.

Thames Water have confirmed that a private foul pump station will be required. To minimise impact the station will be designed below ground with a small service kiosk above ground concealed within a landscaped setting.

Maintenance & Management

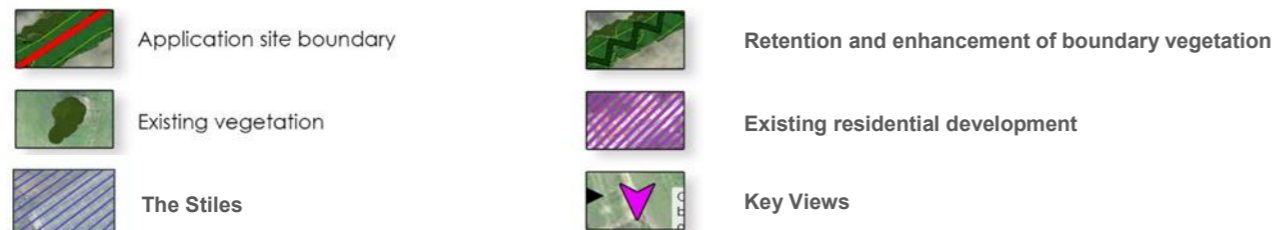
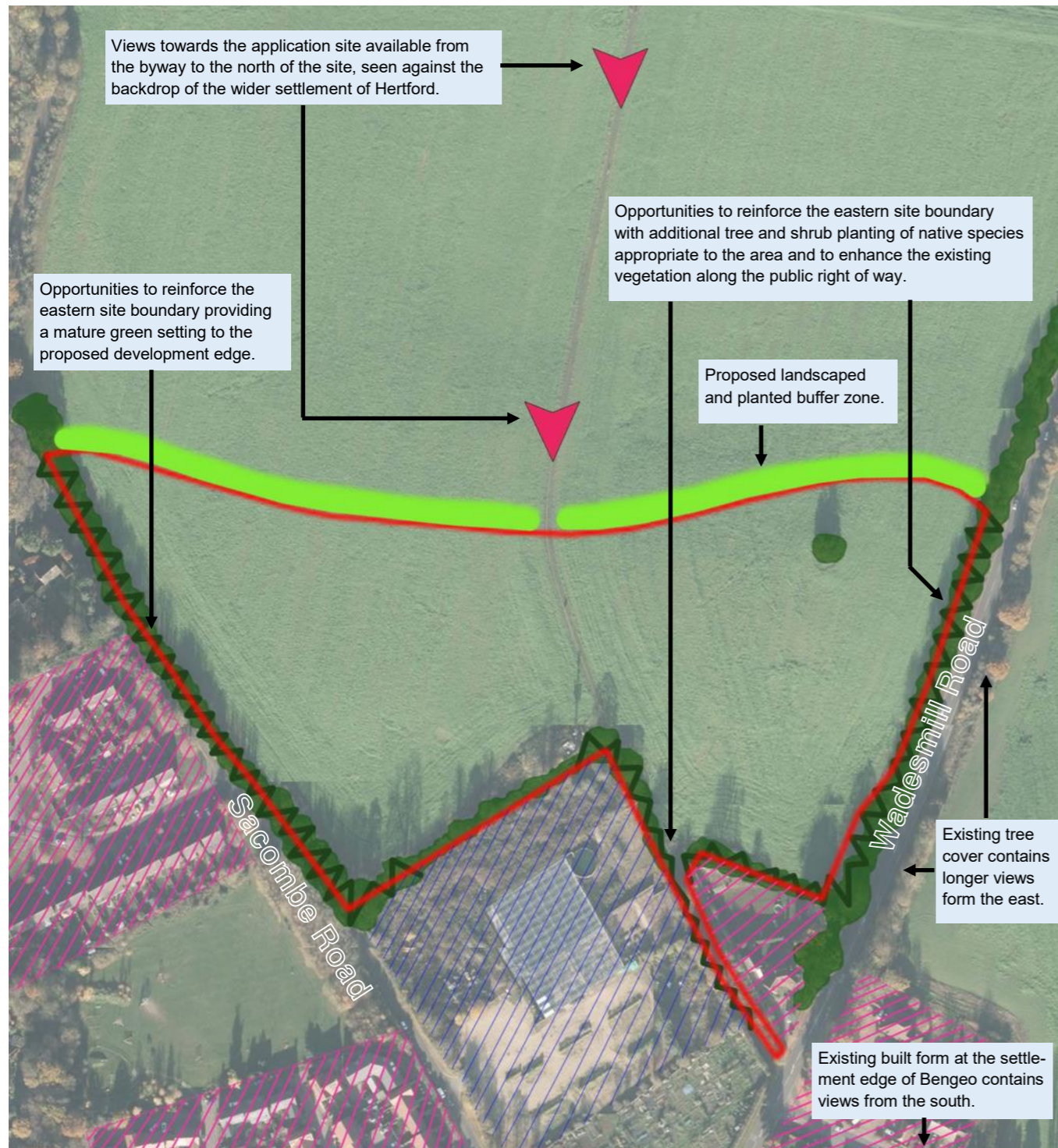
The purpose will be to set out the long term aims and objectives for all stakeholders involved and how components will be developed & maintained through timed operations in perpetuity.

These items will include all publicly assessable open space, SuDs & drainage features, lighting & boundary features, foul pump station and parking management for communal & visitors spaces. The site will be handed over to a resident led management company following practical completion of the site.

It is expected that an estate management company will be responsible for the maintenance and management of public areas and spaces. The estate management company will be established by the developer, and future residents will contribute towards the associated maintenance costs. Once fully established and the scheme is complete, the developer will transfer the land to the estate management company where residents will be encouraged to participate and decide how these areas are governed.



Landscape Strategy - Landscape



Landscape

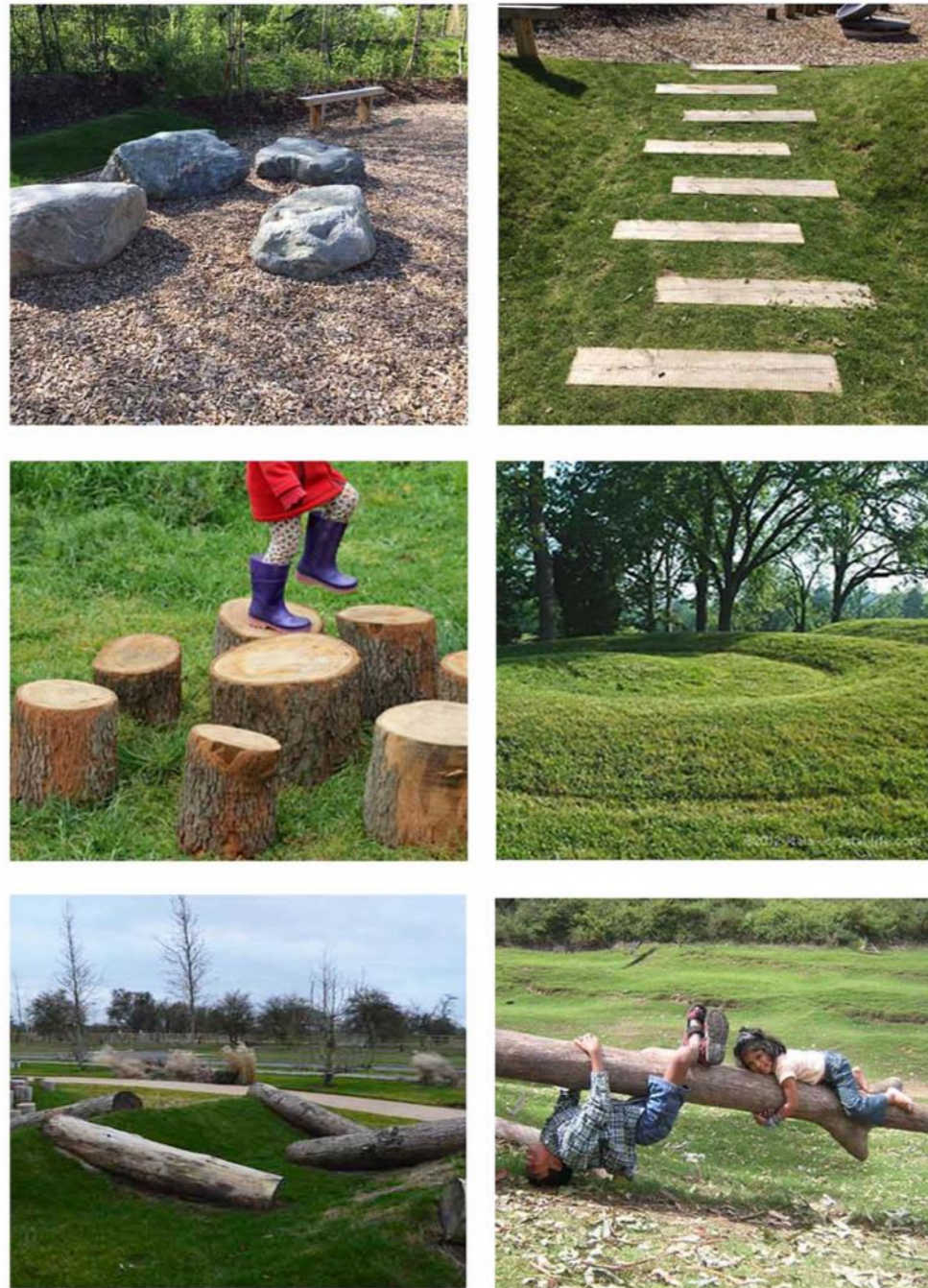
The development layout will seek to conserve the site’s existing perimeter hedges and trees. These landscape features will be reinforced by high quality landscaping and the introduction of new hedgerow and tree planting in and around the built form (Policy DES3). This strategy of proposed vegetation will assist in enhancing existing landscape features and help assimilate the new development into the wider landscape.

The landscape proposals include the following:

- Native tree and shrub planting to provide a buffer around the edge of the site, forming a transitional area between the development proposals and existing vegetation.
- A natural greenspace which forms the setting to a high quality, existing hornbeam tree, to ensure a suitable development off-set and ensure the soft landscaping feature is prominent within the public realm, forming a focal point within the development.
- All areas of greenspace will be well overlooked by properties to ensure that they are attractive and safe to use.
- The design of the publicly accessible open space will provide the following benefits:
 - Encourage biodiversity
 - Landscape and sustainability benefits;
 - Create amenity value
 - Enhance existing hedges and trees with additional landscape elements to provide a mix of habitats.

Views of the site are localised due to topography, built form and vegetation. There are a number of short and medium distance views of the site from the countryside to the north and across the existing allotments and enclosing hedging from the southern approach continuing east along Wadesmill Road. Due consideration will be given to design, scale, form, layout and landscaping which will minimise the visual impact of the development (Policy DES2).

Landscape Strategy - Images



Childrens play combined with landscaping

Strategic landscape proposals will be designed to improve the local environment and create spaces for relaxation, support wildlife and generate additional sensory experiences for residents and visitors.



Wildflower and SuDs areas

Boundary native tree and shrub planting



Street and feature trees and planting

Design Aspirations - Illustrative Images

Summary

Successful placemaking requires the creation of quality spaces that people want to live, work and play in forming connections that can be fully integrated into wider surroundings.

We aim to create a scheme that promotes attractive and sustainable place-making objectives, to produce an environment residents are proud to call home.

A new development to benefit the Bengo community to include:

- The delivery of around 100 new high quality dwellings within a landscaped setting.
- An attractive high quality development with a strong sense of identity.
- Well defined streets and spaces.
- A network of cycle and footpath links in and around the site to be provided on land within the control of the landowner of the application or on adopted highway.
- The reinforcement and enhancement of the existing natural environment.
- A landscape led approach through the provision of a high quality landscape framework.
- The delivery of open market and affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Fully accessible dwellings built to the highest standards.
- A comprehensive SuDs strategy.
- Children's play area within the landscaped setting.
- Policy compliant car parking and cycle storage.
- A highly legible road, cycle and footway network incorporating shared surfaces where appropriate.
- Creating new and strengthening existing vehicular, pedestrian, cycling and equestrian connections in and around the site and to the wider Bengo area.
- Design and construction methods developed from Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit.
- Air source heat pumps.
- High speed broadband through FTTP provision subject to existing infrastructure.



Traditional housing designs with high quality materials along a verdant street



Traditional housing designs at phase 1 The Stiles



Traditional palette of materials (phase 1 The Stiles)



Well proportioned detached housing (phase 1 The Stiles)



Simple but effective features and detailing



Organic children's play areas



Housing along a lane at phase 1 The Stiles

Appendix 1: Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update 2022 – Summary of Main Findings

1.0 Affordable housing needs at the district area level

1.1 In calculating the need for affordable housing between 2021 and 2033, ORS has taken account of, and produced estimates for, the following:

- the backlog of housing need, consisting of households currently living in unsuitable housing and unable to afford their own housing
- new households projected to form in East Herts each year, and the numbers within this category who will be unable to afford a home of their own
- new households migrating to the area who will be unable to afford their housing costs
- the Aspirational Home Ownership category for whom low cost home ownership would be a suitable housing affordable housing choice.

1.2 The research also takes account of the factors which can decrease the number of households who require affordable housing, including households no longer present following the death of members and households who have migrated away from the area.

1.3 Housing needs over the twelve year period 2021 to 2033 are calculated to be as follows.

Affordable homes required to 2033		
	Total number	Per year
Affordable housing for rent	3,076	256
Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership	709	59
Total	3,785	315

1.4 A total of 315 new affordable homes are estimated to be required each year between 2021 and 2033. This compares with the previous estimate of 224. The increase in the estimated number required is due to two factors:

- the period to address the backlog of housing need is now shorter. The total need for 2016 to 2033 was estimated to be 3,800 over a 17 year period (224 per year), whereas the total need for 2021 to 2033 is estimated to be 3,785 over a 12 year period (315 per year).
- the requirement to introduce an Aspirational Home Ownership category into the definition of those in housing need has added to the numbers requiring intermediate/low cost home ownership, including shared ownership.

1.5 In addition, the Assessment Update also calculates the numbers and percentages of affordable homes by size that is, number of bedrooms. The table below provides comparisons with the calculations made in 2017:

	Homes required							
	Affordable housing for rent				Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership			
	2016-2033		2021-2033		2016-2033		2021-2033	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bed	659	20.8%	614	20.0%	80	13.1%	248	35.0%
2 bed	1,290	40.7%	1,013	32.9%	250	41.0%	249	35.0%
3 bed	970	30.6%	1,148	37.3%	240	39.3%	166	23.5%
4+ bed	251	7.9%	301	9.8%	40	6.6%	46	6.5%
Total	3,170		3,076		610		709	

1.5 The Assessment Update produced by ORS has shown an increase in the demand for larger family-sized accommodation in East Herts. This is reflected in the higher percentage of three and four bedroom affordable homes for rent which are now required. Conversely, the research into needs among the aspirational home ownership group has taken account of more potential first-time buyers who usually consist of smaller households. This is manifested in the increased need for smaller homes for low cost home ownership.

2.0 **Affordable housing needs at the sub-district area level**

2.1 ORS were also asked to calculate housing need by tenure and property size on a sub-district area basis for 2021 to 2033. Their analysis was based on the housing development which has already taken place in each sub-area between 2011 and 2021. A range of sources were used to make these calculations, including development records, Council Tax records by dwelling size, local house prices and rent data, and data on benefit claimants.

2.2 The sub-district areas consists of the following wards:

- ***Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth*** – Bishop's Stortford All Saints, Bishop's Stortford Central, Bishop's Stortford Meads, Bishop's Stortford Silverleys, Bishop's Stortford South and Sawbridgeworth
- ***Buntingford*** – Buntingford
- ***Hertford and Ware*** – Great Amwell, Hertford Bengoe, Hertford Castle, Hertford Kingsmead, Hertford Sele, Ware St Mary, Ware Trinity, Ware Christchurch, Ware Chadwell and Stanstead Abbots
- ***Rural East*** – Braughing, Hunsdon, Little Hadham, Much Hadham, Puckeridge, Thundridge and Standon

- **Rural West** – Datchworth and Aston, Hertford Heath, Hertford Rural North, Hertford Rural South, Mundens and Cottered, Walkern and Watton-at-Stone.

2.3 The amount of affordable housing completed within each sub-district area between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2022 is given in the table below.

	Affordable homes delivered – 2017/18 to 2021/22					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth	236	39.3%	102	27.6%	338	34.8%
Buntingford	175	29.2%	64	17.3%	239	24.6%
Hertford and Ware	129	21.5%	177	47.8%	306	31.5%
Rural East	60	10.0%	23	6.2%	83	8.6%
Rural West	0	0%	4	1.1%	4	0.4%
Total	600		370		970	

2.4 ORS has estimated that the affordable housing required in each of the sub-district areas from now until 2033 will be as follows.

	Affordable homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth	1,425	46.3%	341	48.1%	1,766	46.7%
Buntingford	93	3.0%	37	5.2%	130	3.4%
Hertford and Ware	1,160	37.7%	244	34.4%	1,404	37.1%
Rural East	213	6.9%	40	5.6%	253	6.7%
Rural West	185	6.0%	47	6.6%	232	6.1%
Total	3,076		709		3,785	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1

2.5 The seemingly low level of affordable housing required in Buntingford to 2033, even taking account of its smaller size as a settlement, is reflective of the high level of affordable housing development in the area between 2017 and 2022.

2.6 The affordable housing property sizes by sub-district area level are calculated as follows.

	Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth: homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	295	20.7%	145	42.5%	1,441	25.0%
2 bedroom	452	31.7%	98	28.7%	550	31.1%
3 bedroom	511	35.9%	57	16.7%	568	32.2%
4+ bedroom	168	11.8%	41	12.0%	208	11.8%
Total	1,425		341		1,766	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1

	Buntingford: affordable homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	13	14.0%	11	29.7%	24	18.5%
2 bedroom	25	26.9%	9	24.3%	34	26.2%
3 bedroom	44	47.3%	12	32.4%	56	43.1%
4+ bedroom	10	10.8%	5	13.5%	15	11.5%
Total	93		37		130	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1

	Hertford and Ware: affordable homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	267	23.0%	53	21.7%	320	22.8%
2 bedroom	432	37.2%	122	50.0%	554	39.5%
3 bedroom	391	33.7%	69	28.3%	460	32.8%
4+ bedroom	70	6.0%	0	0%	70	5.0%
Total	1,160		244		1,404	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1

	Rural East: affordable homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	30	14.1%	17	42.5%	47	18.6%
2 bedroom	65	30.5%	10	25.0%	75	29.6%
3 bedroom	88	41.3%	13	32.5%	101	39.9%
4+ bedroom	30	14.1%	0	0%	30	11.9%
Total	213		40		253	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1

	Rural West: affordable homes required to 2033					
	Affordable housing for rent		Intermediate affordable housing and low cost home ownership, including shared ownership		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	27	14.6%	21	44.7%	48	20.7%
2 bedroom	47	25.4%	10	21.3%	57	24.6%
3 bedroom	86	46.5%	15	31.9%	101	43.5%
4+ bedroom	25	13.5%	0	0%	25	10.8%
Total	185		47		232	

Note: totals include rounding up/down within the underlying calculations so may vary from the summation of the figures in the rows above by +/- 1


First Homes Policy Statement


Technical Advice Note


Planning Policy/Housing Strategy

September 2022



 @Eastherts

 EastHertsDC

 easthertscouncil

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www.eastherts.gov.uk



First Homes Policy Statement

Technical Advice Note

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Government has introduced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that require East Herts Council to review its affordable housing policies. The new NPPF introduces requirements for the inclusion of First Homes as an affordable housing product.

2.0 What are First Homes?

2.1 The proposal for First Homes was introduced by the government in July 2020 as a new low cost home ownership product. First Homes are newly built homes which constitute a discounted market sale product. Under government guidance, they should be considered to meet the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes.

2.2 First Homes must:

- be sold at a discount of no less than 30% of market value and no more than 50%, with the actual percentage discount that should be applied to all First Homes in a district determined by the local authority.

- have their initial sale price capped at no more than the government-set maximum, regardless of the percentage discount. The cap is currently £250,000
- remain a First Home in perpetuity, with subsequent sales subject to the initial percentage discount. Note: local authorities are expected to keep track of subsequent sales through a mechanism yet to be defined by the government
- sold only (initially and subsequently) to those eligible for a First Home, these being primarily first time buyers.
- be offered exclusively within the first three months of availability to those with a local connection as defined by the local authority, with the local connection requirement falling away after the three months.

2.3 At present, there is no legislative requirement for local authorities to ensure the delivery of First Homes. Developers may, however, wish to include First Homes in their proposals. If a local authority were to provide an obstruction to this, developers could launch a legal challenge on the grounds that the local authority is failing to permit the development of a low cost home ownership product which is defined as Affordable Housing under the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.4 Although local authorities cannot preclude the development of First Homes in their district, it is reasonable to advise developers on their stance. This can then guide developers when considering the tenure mix most likely to meet local need.

3. The Affordability of First Homes in East Herts

3.1 Affordability assessments carried out by East Herts Council have compared the accessibility of the Shared Ownership product with First Homes within the lowest quartile of incomes in East Herts. Two factors have been considered:

- Could the household get the required mortgage with a 5% deposit?
- If the household were able to get the required mortgage, would their monthly housing costs be no more than 30% of the gross household earned income?

3.2 The affordability assessments have shown that Shared Ownership is a more affordable low cost home ownership product in East Herts for those on lower incomes than First Homes.

3.3 First Homes do not adequately address the needs of those on lower incomes in the district wishing to buy a home; shared ownership is better suited to meet these needs.

4. The Impact of First Homes upon the supply of other types of affordable housing

4.1 East Herts Council's District Plan seeks 25% of affordable homes as shared ownership and 75% as affordable housing for rent. Government guidance states, however, that where First Homes are provided in a development, they should make up a minimum of 25% of all affordable homes. The council could then apply its preferred tenure mix to the remaining affordable units.

4.2 This guidance would constrain the supply of much needed affordable homes for rent. If a quarter of the total were First Homes, affordable homes would make up 75% of the remaining 75% of affordable homes; that is, 56% of all affordable homes on the site.

4.3 The government's requirement that where a development contains First Homes the number of First Homes should constitute 25% of all affordable dwellings would reduce the supply of affordable homes for rent.

5. Technical Advice on First Homes:

5.1 East Herts Council's technical advice on First Homes is:

- i) East Herts Council does not consider First Homes to be a suitable form of affordable housing delivery in the district, given its limited role in meeting locally identified housing need.
- ii) East Herts Council will not seek the inclusion of First Homes in new developments.

iii) East Herts Council's preferred low cost home ownership product is shared ownership as this better addresses the needs of residents on lower incomes wishing to buy a home.

iv) Should a developer propose the inclusion of First Homes as part of a planning application, East Herts Council's policy will be to seek a tenure mix which maximises affordable housing for rent on the site.

v) Where developers propose to construct First Homes, the discount should be 30% of the full market price, subject to any government-specified price cap after the discount (currently £250,000).

vi) The local connection criteria should be consistent with the criteria applied for other low cost home ownership homes in East Hertfordshire, principally Shared Ownership.

Agenda Item 10

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of Meeting: 14 December 2022
Report by: Councillor Geoff Williamson - Deputy
Leader and Executive Member for
Financial sustainability
Report title: Council Tax Base 2023/24
Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

To recommend to Council the calculation of the council tax base for the whole district, and for each parish and town council, for 2023/24

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL

- (A) To approve the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole district, and for the parish areas, for 2023/24.
- (B) Note that, pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2023/24 shall be 63892.8 and for the parish areas listed below for 2023/24 shall be as follows: **Table 1**

Table 1:

ALBURY	287.47
ANSTEY	174.21
ARDELEY	210.00
ASPENDEN	124.61
ASTON	442.71
BAYFORD	225.90
BENGEO	281.91
BENNINGTON	411.84
BISHOP'S STORTFORD	17064.08
BRAMFIELD	109.73
BRAUGHING	665.18
BRENT PELHAM / MEESDEN	149.81
BRICKENDON	358.19
BUCKLAND	113.30
BUNTINGFORD	3342.84
COTTERED	326.90
DATCHWORTH	736.34
EASTWICK / GILSTON	440.94
FURNEUX PELHAM	269.29
GREAT AMWELL	970.42
GREAT MUNDEN	144.57
HERTFORD	12406.21
HERTFORD HEATH	973.62
HERTINGFORDBURY	334.05

HIGH WYCH	344.58
HORMEAD	368.16
HUNSDON	518.73
LITTLE BERKHAMPSTEAD	274.25
LITTLE HADHAM	549.18
LITTLE MUNDEN	422.27
MUCH HADHAM	981.05
SACOMBE	90.93
STANSTEAD ST. MARGARETS	710.36
SAWBRIDGEWORTH	4075.77
STANDON	2013.99
STANSTEAD ABBOTTS	704.78
STAPLEFORD	271.21
STOCKING PELHAM	84.85
TEWIN	866.03
THORLEY	153.27
THUNDRIDGE	707.95
WALKERN	720.16
WARESIDE	308.61
WARE TOWN	7565.32
WATTON - AT - STONE	1057.61
WESTMILL	169.34
WIDFORD	294.15
WYDDIAL	76.13

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Calculation of the council tax base is governed by statutory regulation and the Council has limited discretion.
- 1.2 As a billing authority the council must notify the County Council and the Police Authority of the tax base and must do this between 1 December and 31 January in the preceding the tax year. The Council must also tell a parish what their tax base is within 10 working days of any written request.
- 1.3 The tax base will be used by the Council when setting the rates of council tax at the March Council meeting.
- 1.4 The tax base calculations must be made by the Authority as a whole.
- 1.5 The regulations set out the following formula to be used to calculate the tax base:-

Tax base = A x B

(A is the total of the "relevant amounts")

(B is the estimated collection rate)

Item A, the total of "relevant amounts" is found by a second formula:-

$$\text{Item A} = (\text{H} - \text{Q} + \text{E} + \text{J}) - \text{Z} \times (\text{F} / \text{G})$$

where:

H is the estimated number of dwellings, which are shown in the valuation list at 12 September 2022, adjusted for exemptions.

- Q is a factor to take account of the discounts to which the amount of Council Tax payable was subject on the relevant day.
- E is a factor to take account of the premiums, if any, to which the amount of Council Tax payable was subject on the relevant day.
- J is the amount of any adjustment in respect of changes in the number of chargeable dwellings, discounts or premiums calculated by the authority.
- Z Is the total amount that the authority estimates will be applied pursuant to the authority's council tax reduction scheme in relation to the band, expressed as an equivalent number of chargeable dwellings in that band.
- E converts the number of dwellings in each valuation band to a
- G "Band D" equivalent.

Item A can be summarised as the effective number of equivalent Band D properties after taking the actual number in each valuation band and allowing for valuation changes, for errors and appeals, new properties, periods of exemption, reductions for disabled persons and discounts for single occupiers and unoccupied properties, and the Council Tax reduction scheme.

2.0 Report

2.1 The assumptions made are as follows:

Number of taxable properties

- 2.2 For 2023/24 it is assumed that there will be limited new completions with a net addition of 1273.68 new properties by 31 March 2024. These have been allocated to parish areas on the basis of development in hand and planning approvals. It is assumed that all new dwellings will be exempt for the first three months and that a proportion of discounts will apply thereafter. No valuation increases have been assumed for improvements and extensions as these do not take effect until properties are sold on.
- 2.3 It has been assumed that 228 properties will qualify for disabled persons reductions, based on experience in the current year.
- 2.4 A figure of 943 exemptions/voids is included in line with the current position. Further increases will have a negative impact on the tax base.
- 2.5 Provision has been made for an increase in Council Tax support claims due to the volatility of the current economic climate.

Collection Rate

- 2.6 Item B in the tax base formula is the estimate of the collection rate for 2023/24. For 2023/24 this will be 98.9%, which is the same as 2022/23.
- 2.7 This gives an overall tax base of 63892.80
- 2.8 Should any Member have detailed questions or comments on the assumptions it would be of great benefit to advise the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service or the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability well in advance of the meeting.

3.0 Risks

The current economic situation, including the high interest rates, could have a dampening impact on the number of new properties being built. This can also be affected by the availability of raw materials and energy costs. Any reduction in the number, or delay in completion of new properties will have a detrimental impact on the estimated growth of the taxbase.

Implications/Consultations

No

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Equality impact analysis was undertaken with the Equality and Diversity officer. As this work affects the entire district, and as discounts and disregards awarded on the basis of age, disability or marital status are determined by central government, there are no equality or diversity implications for this work.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

Only as referenced in the report

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

The Tax base must be calculated in accordance with legislation. The formula to be used for the calculation of the Council Tax Base is set out in the Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The content and timing of the supply of information from and to the Major Precepting Authorities and the Billing Authority is regulated by the Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Supply of Information) Regulations 1992.

Specific Wards

No

4.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Contact Member

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East Herts Council Report

Council

- Date of meeting:** Wednesday 14 December 2022
- Report by:** Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council
- Report title:** Member Non-Attendance Waiver and Extension to Six-Month Time Limit
- Ward(s) affected:** Puckeridge

Summary

The report seeks Council's agreement regarding a waiver of the six-month attendance rules for Councillor Tony Hall due to long-term sickness under section 85 of the Local Government act 1972, where a Member would otherwise become disqualified for reasons of non-attendance at qualifying meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- (a) That Councillor Tony Hall be granted a waiver of the six-month attendance rule, in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, and an extension of the time limit to the next scheduled Council meeting on 1 March 2023.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 That Council approve a dispensation for absence from meetings of the Council for Councillor Hall until 1 March 2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that if a Member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his or her last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he or she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of that authority.
- 2.2 It is considered good practice for the local authority to consider the circumstances of a Member's absence from attendance at meetings when the six-month period is approaching.
- 2.3 Democratic Services monitors Members' attendance at meetings and contacts the relevant Group Leader if a Member in their group is nearing a period of non-attendance of more than four months to remind them of their obligation under the Act.
- 2.4 The Democratic Services Manager contacted the Leader of the Council on 18 November 2022 to notify her that Councillor Hall last attended a meeting on 29 June 2022. Councillor Hall has advised that he has been suffering with a long-term health issue. The period of six months since his last attendance is due to expire on 29

December 2022.

- 2.5 Council is asked to extend the time-limit to the next scheduled Council meeting on 1 March 2023 to allow Councillor Hall additional time to recover and be well enough to begin attending meetings again. If he is still unable to attend meetings by 1 March 2023, the decision will be reviewed at that meeting.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 To avoid the vacation of office of Councillor Hall, in view of circumstances around his health

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Not to provide dispensation from attendance. This option is not recommended because the Member concerned confirmed that he would have attended meetings had he been well enough to do so.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 None

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The Leader and Member subject of the report were consulted.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

The request and recommendation as set out within this report are compliant with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Supporting members in being able to take extended absence due to periods of extended ill-health will have a positive impact on the general equality duty with regards to the protected characteristics under the Act.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes, as indicated above. Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows an authority to grant Members dispensation for absences providing the dispensation is granted before the 6 month period of absence has expired.

Specific Wards

Yes, the Ward of the Councillor referred to above.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 No background papers.

Contact Member

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Agenda Item 12a

MOTION ON NOTICE – Debate not Hate

This Council notes the Local Government Association are calling for support from organisations to sign the Debate Not Hate public statement, aiming to address the rise in abusive and intimidating behaviour directed at local politicians.

This Council acknowledges the findings of this report, principally that 88% of the locally elected representatives who responded to the LGA's survey have faced abuse and intimidation in the last 12 months. 73% said they have experienced it over social media where it seems to be becoming increasingly normalised and 64% said they have experienced it in person.

The Council understands this can have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our Members and their families and we should be taking steps to ensure elected representatives feel safe and secure in their own communities.

By signing up to the Debate Not Hate public statement, The Council will lend its support to the LGA's recommendations, one of which is that the relevant Government department should convene a working group, in partnership with the LGA, to bring together agencies to develop and implement an action plan to address the issue of abuse.

I invite Councillors to share any experiences they have had and lend their support to Debate Not Hate

Proposed by Councillor Linda Haysey

Seconded by Councillor Mione Goldspink