



James Ellis

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

MEETING : EXECUTIVE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2023
TIME : 7.00 PM

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Councillor Ben Crystall	- Leader of the Council
Councillor Carl Brittain	- Executive Member for Financial Sustainability
Councillor Alex Daar	- Executive Member for Communities
Councillor Joseph Dumont	- Executive Member for Corporate Services
Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward	- Executive Member for Planning and Growth
Councillor Mione H Goldspink	- Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Sarah Hopewell	- Executive Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Tim Hoskin	- Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability
Councillor Chris Wilson	- Executive Member for Resident Engagement

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- 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;
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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

3. Minutes - 3 October 2023 (Pages 6 - 17)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member(s) declaration(s) of interest.

5. Consideration of mandating card payment facilities in licensed vehicles (Pages 18 - 49)

6. Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 50 - 142)

7. Ware Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 143 - 273)

8. Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplanning Framework (Pages 274 - 314)

9. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - Joint Committee (Pages 315 - 392)

10. A Listening Council (Pages 393 - 412)

11. Community Forums and Development Management Forums (Pages 413 - 431)
12. Health and Safety – Ward Freman Pool (Pages 432 - 437)
13. Urgent Business

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

Agenda Item 3

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor B Crystall (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors C Brittain, A Daar,
V Glover-Ward, M Goldspink, S Hopewell
and T Hoskin.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Boylan, N Clements,
B Deering, C Redfern and T Stowe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer
Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven King	- Finance Management Trainee
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
George Pavey	- Principal Planning Officer

Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Claire Sime	- Service Manager (Planning Policy, Design and Conservation)
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive

169 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Dumont and Wilson.

170 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reminded Members that the meeting was being streamed to YouTube and Members should remember to use the microphones.

171 MINUTES - 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

Councillor Goldspink proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the 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 5 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

172 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

173 COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY AND PRIORITIES 2023/24

The Executive Member for Communities submitted a report that set out the updated priorities for 2023/24, with Members having the opportunity to review the community grants policy on an annual basis.

The Executive Member for Communities said that this policy had been to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive were being asked to recommend to Council that the updates be accepted and approved on 18 October 2023. She thanked Officers for their hard work in making sure that the policy aligned with the current priorities and reflected the updating of existing priorities so that the amount for community groups to apply for was maximised.

The Executive Member for Communities drew the Executive's attention to the items that were detailed in the report and what had been changed. She said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had stated that individuals as well as constituted groups should have the opportunity to apply for funds.

The Executive Member for Communities said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also concerned about the amounts that could be applied for. Members felt that it was important that smaller amounts could be applied for by individuals and

smaller groups. She said that the figure had been changed to £300 at the lower end of the scale for grants.

The Executive Member for Communities explained that changes had also been made to the wording to make it clear that there were options for people to apply for funding relating to priorities around physical and mental health.

Councillor Daar proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Hopewell seconded the proposal.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods welcomed the changes and said that she was very pleased that policy had been made clearer and simpler. She welcomed the idea that small community groups would be eligible to apply for grants even if they were not officially charities or statutory bodies. She hoped that the changes would be publicised.

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 revised Community Grants Policy including the priorities for 2023/24, incorporating amendments agreed by the Executive Member for Communities following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be recommended to Council for approval.

174 REVIEW OF THE EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN 2018

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report that assessed whether the East Herts District Plan 2018 needed updating and where there were any necessary actions arising from that assessment.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the East Herts District Plan was adopted in October 2018. She said that it's a legal requirement for a Local Plan to be reviewed within five years of adoption to consider whether it needed to be updated.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the planning department had undertaken the assessment of the current District Plan and the report had concluded that the District Plan did need updating. She said that Officers had reached this conclusion by assessing the consistency of the District Plan with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the PAS local plan route mapping toolkit and engagement with duty to cooperate bodies.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that there was significant uncertainty around the government's proposed reforms of the planning system. She referred to consultation regarding the NPPF and the government was also consulting on the implementation of a new plan making system due to start in Autumn 2024.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that given this uncertainty, it was being recommended

that a further report on the detailed scope of the update and the timetable be prepared once the implications of the new NPPF are better understood. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has received royal assent and the statutory framework required to implement the reforms has been approved.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that it was clear that under the new plan making system, a strong evidence based would still be expected. She said that the next 12 months would best be used by updating the council's evidence base and carrying out other preparatory work needed to support an update to the District Plan, and this would include a Call for Sites. She said the report recommended that the District Planning Executive Panel be reconvened and that an engagement strategy was prepared to set out the council's approach to engaging with the community and stakeholders.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Hopewell seconded the proposal.

Councillor Redfern referred to affordable housing and councils falling short of building enough social housing. She said that she would like this matter is given significant weight and consideration. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the review was merely to find out if the District Plan needed to be updated. She said that this matter could be taken forward when the updating process commenced if the recommendations were approved.

She stated that the updating process was due to commence in Autumn 2024.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods said that she hoped that further consultation with the Environment Agency would continue in respect of sufficient water supply. The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability asked about the calculations of housing requirements using household projections from 2014 and whether this would be updated anytime in the future.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the standard method currently uses the 2014 projections. He said that in the near future this would continue to be the case, but there are discussions happening in central government and generally so there is a likelihood that this could change in the future. Members were advised that there was an adjustment for affordability, and this changed year on year.

The Executive Member for Communities asked about opportunities to look at conservation areas as part of the review and opportunities to install solar panels on housing as she had asked about this recently by residents. The Service Manager (Planning Policy, Design and Conservation) said that this could be looked at as part of the scope for the update of the District Plan.

Councillor Boylan said that the review should be broader than conservation areas as there were a huge number of listed buildings in East Herts and they had all been affected by how properties were being made

sustainable and energy efficient. He commented on the rural nature of the district and how different the villages now looked and asked for some focus on the village chapter in the plan.

The Service Manager (Planning Policy, Design and Conservation) said that some initial work had already started in respect of the village hierarchy study and there would be engagement with parish councils as this work progressed.

Councillor Clements asked for and was given some clarity in respect of the make-up of the District Planning Executive Panel.

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 following be recommended to Council for approval:

(A) Having assessed the East Herts District Plan 2018 in accordance with regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, it is agreed that, in order that the Council can continue to fulfil its statutory duties, the District Plan needs updating;

(B) Work commences during 2023/24 on updating the technical studies needed to provide a robust evidence base to inform an

update of the District Plan;

(C) A 'Call for Sites' is undertaken during 2023/24;

(D) The District Planning Executive Panel is reconvened with membership drawn from the Executive in accordance with paragraph 8.5.2 of the Constitution;

(E) An engagement strategy is prepared which sets out the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community and stakeholders;

(F) A further report on the detailed scope of the update and the timetable for its preparation is prepared at the earliest opportunity once the implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are better understood, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill has received Royal Assent, and the statutory framework required to implement the reforms has been approved.

175 HERTFORD CASTLE GROUNDS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - NLHF AWARD

The Executive Member for Wellbeing submitted a report that summarised a project to make improvements to Castle Grounds, Hertford, which had resulted in the successful award of a grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The report outlined the work that had already been carried and

how the project would now progress in partnership with the Town Council.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that the report explained the necessary commitment of resources and funds by the Council, which were implied by acceptance of the grant. She said that the report related to a successful joint bid following a period of consultation. She referred to the exciting opportunity to improve accessibility to the castle grounds and increase the habitat aspect.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that the bid was two stages, and the initial stage included the scoping aspect of the work. She said that the second application stage could potentially mean being successfully awarded around £2.5m to carry out the work.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that the council's contribution would be £20,517 in addition to the funding from Hertford Town Council. She said that this money, along with the grant of around £342,000, would be used to carry out extensive surveys, reviews and community engagement.

Members were advised that the approval of this report did not commit the Council to stage two of what would be a competitive process. The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that the approval from the Executive of this report would enable the opportunity to continue to stage two. She referred to the covering of costs being incurred in respect of improving accessibility to the site and moving the playground way from the

A414, in terms of concerns that had been raised in respect of air quality.

Councillor Hopewell proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported.
Councillor Hoskin seconded the proposal.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods welcomed the proposals as an excellent opportunity which could secure access to funds that the councils would not be able to raise by themselves.

Councillor Deering said that the Hertford Castle Grounds Improvement Project had been approved under the previous Conservative administrations of both Hertford Town Council and East Herts Council. The Leader thanked Councillor Deering for this reminder for Members.

Councillor Clements asked a question in respect of risk mitigation in terms of the financial risks. The Executive Member for Wellbeing commented on discussions that might need to take place in respect of which areas of the project that would need to be prioritised were costs to continue to rise. She referred to the cost of building materials.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth commented on potential sources of funding including Section 106 funding. 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.

RESOVLED - that (A) the terms and conditions of the grant be accepted; and

(B) the proposals to fund the initial development phase of the project with a £20,517 contribution submitted in the Council’s Capital Programme for 2023/24, be approved.

176 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm

Chairman

Date

Agenda Item 5

East Herts Council Report

Executive Report

Date of meeting: Tuesday 7 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Consideration of mandating card payment facilities in licensed vehicles

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary

This report outlines a proposal to require vehicle proprietors to provide facilities to take card payments in licensed vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive:

- a) To review the proposed Policy to introduce a requirement to provide card payment facilities in all vehicles licensed by East Herts Council and make a recommendation to Council for approval.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 That the report is received by the members of the Executive and the consultation responses, comments made by Licensing Committee and draft Policy are scrutinised before a recommendation is made to Council for approval at the Council meeting on 13th December 2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 East Herts Council is an authority that grants licenses for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators.
- 2.2 The key purpose of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regimes is to ensure public safety. This proposed change will allow people more flexibility to pay for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle and thus get to their destination.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the ability to take electronic payments is made mandatory due to the swift changes in how we all make payments. Work with the local licensing trade indicates that only 5%-6% of taxi licence holders do not already have facilities to take card payments: see Section 3 of this report. The pandemic accelerated an already growing trend towards electronic payments, with fewer people carrying cash. We need to ensure that our licensed vehicles are accessible to all, as they form a vital and safe form of transport for members of the public.
- 2.4 Non-payment is an ever-present risk for drivers; adding another method of payment helps to mitigate this risk. Under the proposal in this report, drivers would still be able to accept other forms of payment, including cash, but they would have to be able to take card payments if the passenger wished to pay in this way.
- 2.5 The statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) has a section which covers 'Changing licensing policy and requirements'. This section suggests that a pragmatic approach should be taken to the time scales for implementing changes in policy.
- 2.6 Given this view, it is proposed to give existing licence holders a period of three months from the decision being taken to implement the Policy for them being required to evidence compliance. This is considered more than adequate for the 5-

6% of the trade that don't already have card payment facilities.

- 2.7 Scrutiny by the Licensing Committee was sought with the consultation responses and proposed Policy wording being considered at a meeting on 25th October 2023. The comments and suggestions made by Licensing Committee are covered at paragraph 3.11. This scrutiny has resulted in the Executive Member for Planning and Growth making two amendments to the proposed Policy wording.
- 2.8 Should the Policy be implemented, then changes will be made to East Herts Council's webpages to inform customers of the changes and remind them of their responsibility to be able to pay for a journey regardless of the means used. Officers will also update the webpages to inform prospective licence applicants of the change and provide them with links to an updated handbook with the new Policy wording included.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 In March 2023, a short four question survey was sent to the whole East Herts licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade to gain some information regarding the use of card payment facilities in licensed vehicles. In total, 97 responses were received which equated to approximately a third of all licence holders at that time. The results of this survey are contained in **Appendix 'A'**.
- 3.2 The results showed that nearly 95% of the respondents already had card payment facilities in their vehicle and that nearly 55% thought it should be mandatory to have card payment facilities.
- 3.3 In early May 2023, all of the East Herts licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade were contacted and told that the formal consultation on mandating facilities to take card payments was open until 31st May 2023. The consultation letter, which went out via email or hardcopy, included the proposed wording for the Policy for consideration. There was

a link to an online survey that also had the full wording of the proposed Policy and details of which parts of the existing Policy would be amended if the change was implemented.

3.4 By 24th May 2023, only five responses had been received so all the licensed trade were contacted again to remind them that they only had seven days left in which to make their views known.

3.5 When the survey closed, a total of 34 responses had been received. Twenty-five responses were from the hackney carriage trade with the remaining nine being from the private hire trade. As part of Question 3, 'Do you agree with the proposal to make card payment facilities mandatory in all vehicles licensed by East Herts Council?', respondents were required to explain why they had given a particular answer. The consultation wording and survey results are contained in **Appendix 'B'**.

3.6 There were several issues raised in the respondents' explanations that are addressed below:

- *Network coverage:*
This is an existing issue that drivers are aware of, as highlighted in the driver's response. It is likely that if a passenger asks to go to a destination where reception is poor then the driver will be aware of the issue and can raise this at the start of the journey. Whilst the Policy would mandate having card payment facilities available, all other forms of payment would still be accepted.
- *72-hour time period to get card facilities fixed or replaced:*
This is brought up as a concern by several respondents so officers suggested that '72 hours' be replaced by 'one week' in the final wording of the Policy.
- *Will help to stop drivers picking and choosing jobs off taxi ranks:*
Anecdotally the Licensing Team have been told that drivers have refused short journeys due to not having card

payment facilities. The Policy should help to address this and drivers that claim that their card payment facilities are not working to avoid short journeys could face enforcement action.

- *What if a customer doesn't have enough money in his or her account:* Regardless of the chosen form of payment, it is always the passenger's responsibility to ensure that they have the ability to pay for their journey. Where a passenger cannot, or refuses to, pay for a journey, there is a variety of options open to the driver from simply driving the person to a cash point through to reporting the matter to the Police. This Policy does not change these options or create an excuse for customers not to ensure they can pay their fare.
- *There is a cost in obtaining the equipment and there are also fees. A while ago the regulations regarding card payment fees meant drivers cannot pass on this cost to customers:*
From both surveys it appears that 90-95% of the licensed trade have already invested in card payment facilities so there will be no additional cost to those individuals. If this was not economically viable then the take up would have been much smaller among the trade so far. Those that must invest in card facilities because of the Policy change should see the same benefits as those that have already made the change. The respondent is correct that a hackney carriage cannot charge an additional amount for accepting a card payment as they can only charge the meter fare.
- *I believe it's down to the individual to decide whether they want to take card payments, I don't think it should be a contributing factor as to whether you get relicensed. There is still a great need for cash, for the times when card readers aren't working either to having no signal in the area you're dropping off of if the system is down:*
This Policy does not mean that drivers will no longer be able to take cash. The intention is to increase the available

payment options not to move to *only* allowing card payments.

- *Drivers should be allowed to take a fee of £0.50 per transaction:*

Private hire vehicles and hackney carriages doing private hire work or taking a journey ending outside East Herts can set their own prices for a journey so the cost of taking a card payment can be included. As detailed above for journeys on the meter, the metered fare is the maximum that can be charged.

- *I do not believe that it should be mandatory, it should be an individual's choice, it should be up to each individual how they wish to run their business. This is not a health and safety issue, there are many taxis in the town that have that facility if you are worried about choice, should we mandate every taxi has a charging cable for every phone for convenience, should every taxi have a fridge in the boot for convenience. At what point do we draw the line, convenience leads to apathy, with the current climate of heading towards CBDC [sic] many people are concerned for the push for cashless society that will lead to the exclusion of swaves of society who for reasons out of their control can not get bank accounts much less debit cards. I am firmly against mandates on how one should run their business:*

The respondent does not believe that this is addressing a 'Health & Safety' issue, but officers contend that it is a public safety issue. Even in the other responses, drivers themselves have identified that people have been refused journeys due to a lack of card payment facilities. This is about giving every member of the public a better opportunity to get home safely in an East Herts licensed vehicle. It avoids the need to drive passengers to a cash point at their expense and giving those that wish to run off without paying an additional opportunity. Phone charging facilities and making a fridge available were raised but

neither is relevant to this Policy. The Policy does not stop people from paying a fare with cash or even push them towards card payments, it merely adds another option to the remaining 5-10% of vehicles that currently don't provide this. The Policy is inclusive and will not exclude people without cards or bank accounts from using licensed vehicles. Whilst the respondent believes the Policy is mandating how he runs his business, it is in fact being proposed to promote public safety and other than requiring him to offer a facility to his customers does not fetter his discretion to run his business how he wishes.

- *This shouldn't be made mandatory for Private Hire. I can understand it might be wise to make it mandatory for Hackney Carriage as they can be flagged down and passengers may only have cards on them. With Private Hire we are pre-booked. I explain to my customers at the time of booking that I take either cash or BACS payments which my customers are happy to do and all is arranged in advance, I have had no issue with not having card payment facilities. I feel it therefore shouldn't be made mandatory but up to the individual companies to implement this if they feel it necessary. Also its another monthly expense to have the facility for card payments. This business is hard enough without another expense!!!!:*

The respondent details the way in which his business operates successfully without card payment facilities and that his customers are happy to pay by cash or BACS. Whilst this might be the case with his particular business, the Policy will apply to all private hire businesses ensuring a consistent service to customers across the district. The cost of acquiring card payment facilities is addressed above and whilst it is an additional expense 90-95% of the licensed trade find it economically viable and it may encourage more customers to use this particular business in the long run.

3.7 The consultation responses show that 76% of respondents

were supportive of the proposed Policy and 94% already have card payment facilities.

3.8 In addition to the online survey, one Dual Driver licence holder and one Private Hire Driver licence holder emailed some additional comments to the Licensing Team. These are **Appendix 'C'**.

3.9 The Dual Driver raised four points which were:

1. cost to the trade: Card Payment facilities will cost drivers at the time of initial purchase and there is a fee for each transaction
2. network coverage: There are locations in East Herts where you get no signal and card payment facilities may not work
3. smartphones used for payment. Inability to pay fare at the end of a journey
4. it should be the passenger's responsibility to ensure they are able to pay the fare.

3.10 These are all points that were considered prior to the informal and formal consultations. They have been addressed in the points above raised by the respondents to the online survey.

3.11 During the Licensing Committee meeting held on 25th October 2023 the draft Policy wording and consultation responses were scrutinised. **Appendix 'D'** contains the comments from Licensing Committee and the Executive Member for Planning and Growth's responses to those points , including any subsequent amendments made to the Policy wording.

3.12 The final wording of the Policy to be recommended to Council for approval is contained within **Appendix 'E'**.

4.0 Options

4.1 There are several options that Licensing Committee can put to the Executive Member for consideration.

- 4.2 **Option 1** – Leave the current Policy unchanged (Not recommended). Having identified that the Policy will have a positive impact on public safety, which is the core purpose of the licensing regime, and on the licensed trade, this option is not considered appropriate. Whilst eight respondents said that card payment facilities should not be made mandatory the author of this report believes that those points have been addressed in this report such that they do not outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
- 4.3 **Option 2** – Endorse the amended Policy wording presented at Appendix E (Recommended). The Policy wording incorporates the Executive Member’s consideration and response to the Licensing Committee’s comments – as discussed in full in Appendix D. It is believed that the Policy as worded will promote public safety and have positive benefits for the licensed trade in East Herts.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Having identified that the Policy change would support public safety, failing to take appropriate action, could fail to promote public safety.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 Trade consultation was carried out twice:
- Informally in March 2023; and
 - Formally in May 2023.

Community Safety

Ensuring that passengers have as many ways to pay a fare as possible promotes public safety. By ensuring that all vehicles have card payment facilities in a society where carrying cash is becoming less common means that the public should always be able to get to their destination safely.

Conflict between drivers and passengers for non-payment should be less likely as there will be more ways to pay.

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Increasing the range of payment options is considered to have a positive impact on the travelling public, as discussed in this report. The proposed Policy will *not* oblige passengers to pay by card nor enable taxi drivers to refuse cash payments. This is vitally important as, although local information is not available, a report by the Bank of England published in October 2022¹ found that, payment by cash remains a valued form of payment for older people and those on lower incomes. Furthermore, the same study referenced a 2020 survey by the Financial Conduct Authority that found that 46% of the digitally excluded, 31% of those with no educational qualifications and 26% of those in poor health rely on cash to a 'great or very great extent'. Furthermore, some people with physical and cognitive disabilities report difficulties with card payments as, for example, some people's health or mental health render it difficult to remember a PIN.

Thus, the retention of cash payments alongside card payments will overcome any potential discrimination against people from groups with protected characteristics.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

¹ Knocked down during lockdown: the return of cash. Bank of England, 14th October 2022
<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/quarterly-bulletin/2022/2022-q3/knocked-down-during-lockdown-the-return-of-cash>

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Failure to implement any Policy in the correct way would leave the authority open to legal challenge.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 Department for Transport, Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards (25/22/2022):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>
- 7.2 Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 25th October 2023:
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=120&MIId=4245&Ver=4&J=2>
- 7.3 **Appendix A** – Licensed trade responses to informal consultation.
- 7.4 **Appendix B** – Licensed trade responses to formal consultation.
- 7.5 **Appendix C** – Other trade responses.
- 7.6 **Appendix D** – Consideration of comments from Licensing Committee.
- 7.7 **Appendix E** – Final proposed Policy wording.

Contact Member

Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward (Executive
Member for Planning and Growth)

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Contact Officer

Jonathan Geall (Head of Housing & Health)

Contact Tel No 01992 531594

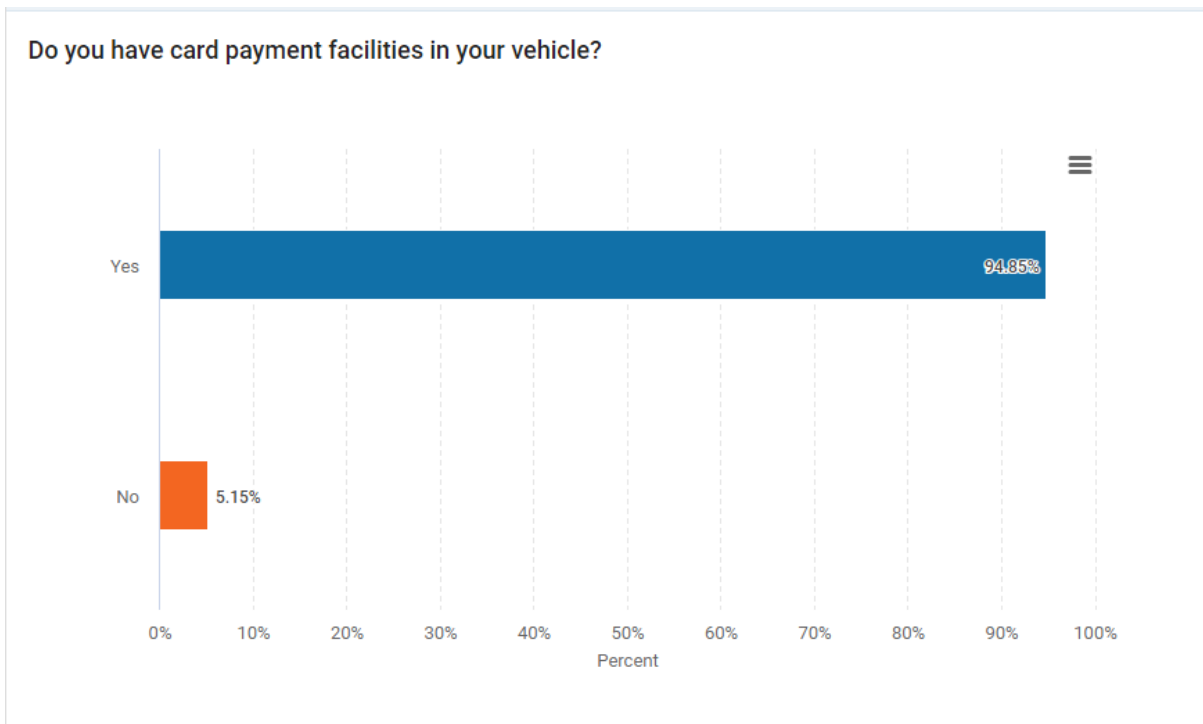
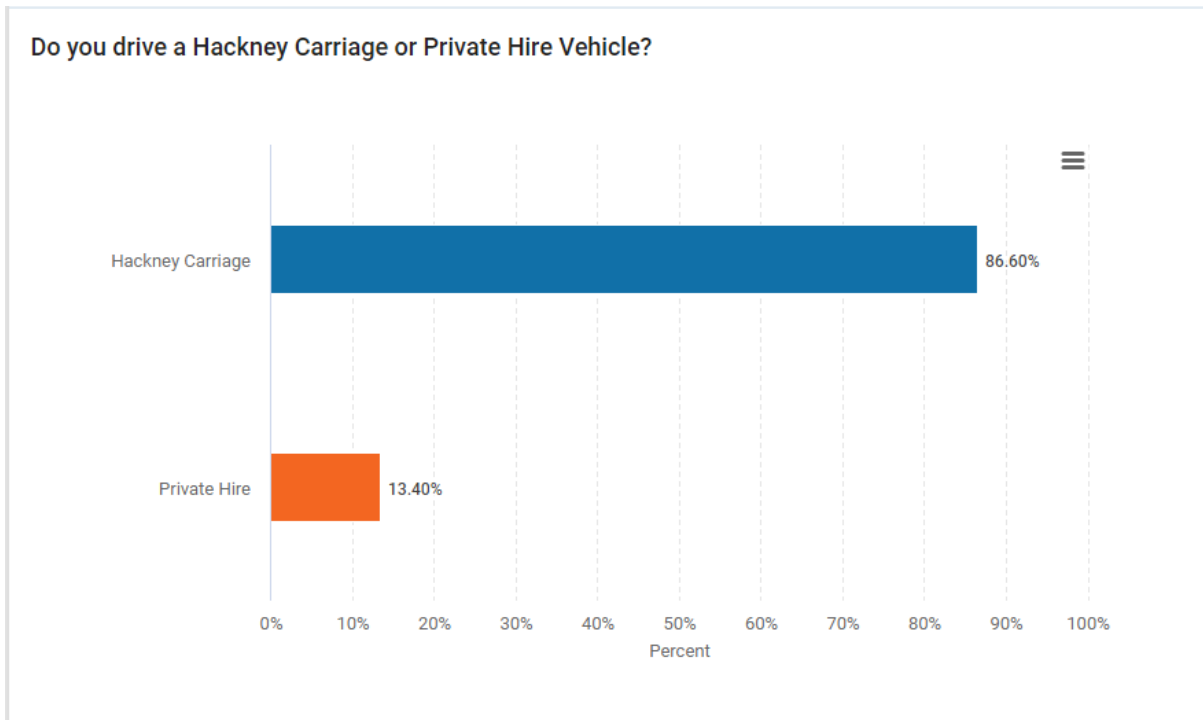
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Report Author

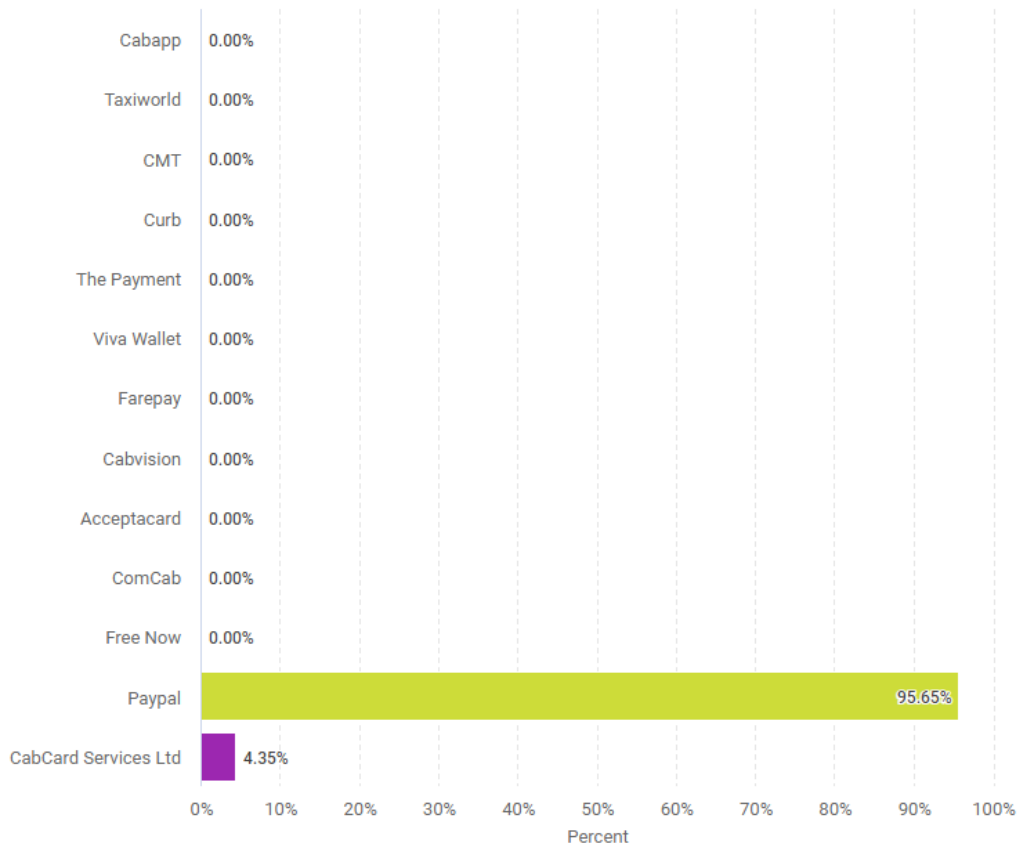
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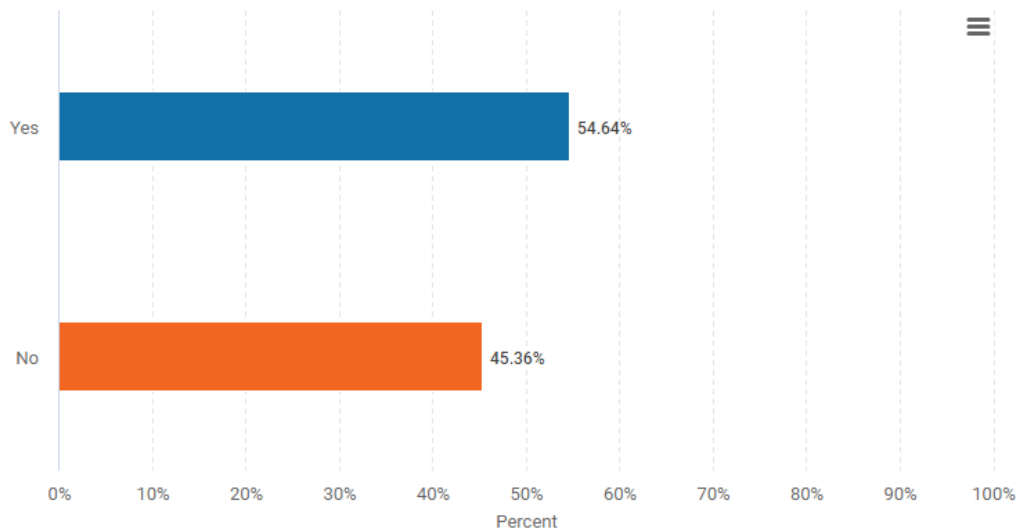
Licensed vehicle card payments



If you do have card payment facilities which do you use? Please select all those that apply



Do you think it should be mandatory for all licensed vehicles to provide facilities to take card payments?



Consultation on making card payment facilities mandatory in East Herts licensed vehicles

Dear Licence Holder

East Herts is considering making it mandatory for all licensed vehicles to have facilities to take card payments as well as cash. This proposal is based on the risk to public safety posed to individuals that may not be able to get a licensed vehicle due to not having the cash to pay for it.

The consultation is open from 1st May 2023 until 31st May 2023 (midnight).

The details of the proposed changes are:

- By (date to be determined), all licensed Hackney Carriages vehicles, must always have available, an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. The driver must ask the passenger if they require a receipt. If the passenger requires a receipt, the driver must provide one which accurately states the time and date of the journey, driver number and fare.
- By (date to be determined) all licensed Private Hire vehicles, must always ensure, they can provide a means for passengers to pay for fares by card or as a contactless payment. This can be, but is not limited to, electronic card payment devices or operator websites and apps.

Insert into Appendix E, the Licensing Record Points Scheme, the following which will apply to the vehicle proprietor:

Offence / Breach of condition - Failure to provide operational card payment facilities

No of points - 1st offence 3, 2nd offence 6, 3rd offence 9.

Insert into Appendix B, Vehicle and Trailer Specifications and Conditions, the following:

All licensed Hackney Carriages vehicles, must have available at all times, an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. A receipt which accurately states the time and date of the journey, driver number and fare, must be provided if requested by a passenger.

All licensed Private Hire vehicles, must ensure at all times, they can provide a means for passengers to pay for fares by card or as a contactless payment. This can be, but is not limited to, electronic card payment devices or operator websites and apps.

All card payment devices must:

- a) comply with the requirements of the current UK banking industry standards as stipulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).*
- b) be checked regularly and maintained to operational standards, including repairs after any damage. Any damage preventing the device from functioning must be notified to the Licensing Team and be repaired within 72 hours. If the device cannot be repaired, it must be replaced in 72 hours. Failure to do so will lead to Licensing Record Points being issued or the vehicle licence being suspended. If the vehicle is suspended it will be until such a time as a functional device is in operation.*
- c) meet all requirements and standards as stipulated by the card scheme companies in terms of connections to a host such as GPRS, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth or other connection methods to complete payment transactions.*
- d) provide the functionality to protect the confidentiality of critical data (in particular PINs) whilst the card transaction is being processed.*
- e) payments through apps are permitted, if a passenger has access to the app via their own phone or device. Drivers must not enter card details into their own phone or device to process a payment.*

Licence holders are reminded, they are legally obliged to comply with the requirements of data protection legislation in respect of all transaction processes, data management and storage. This includes the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent data protection legislation. You can find out more about your obligations from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This is relevant when handling personal information such as names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. All such processing must comply with the requirements of data protection legislation. Breaches of data protection legislation may impact on the ability to hold a licence with the Council.

Proposed implementation process and time scale: Vehicle proprietors will have 3 months in which to ensure that card payment facilities are operational within their vehicle. The 3 month period will start from the date the decision is made.

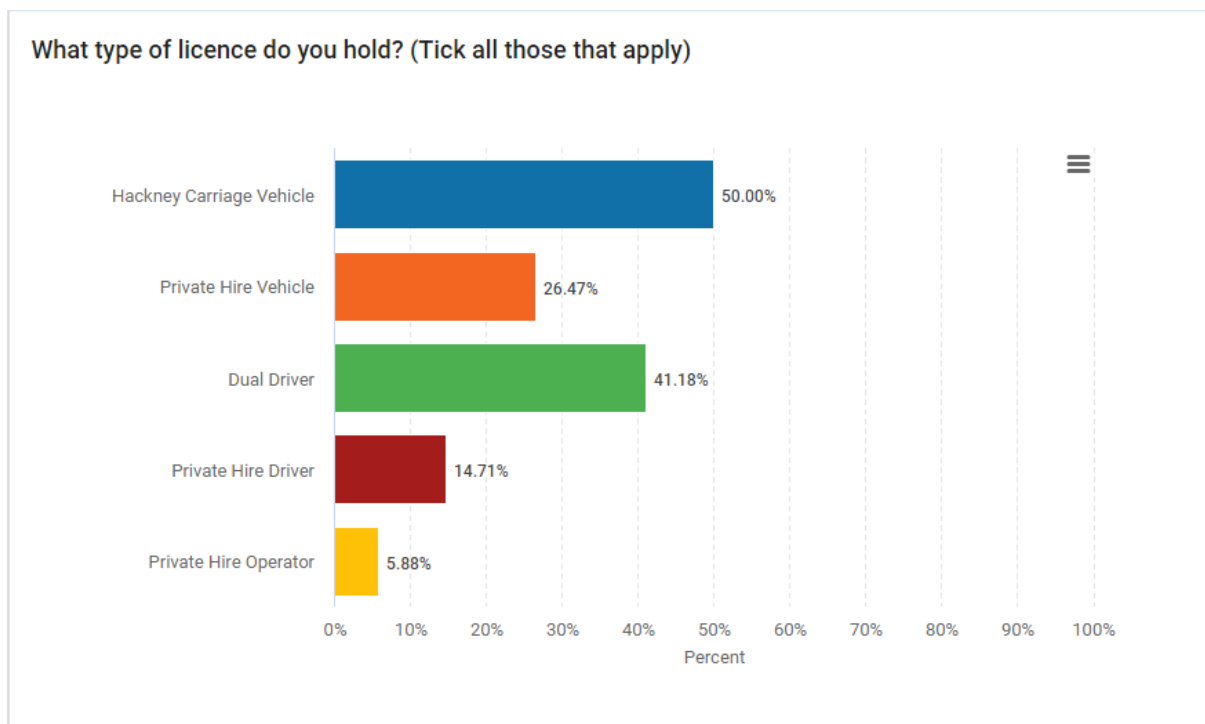
(Note: Taking into account the decision making process the implementation date is likely to be 26th October 2023 at the earliest).

Compliance checks: The requirement for card payment facilities will be added to the vehicle condition certificate (VCC). Additional checks by officers will also be carried out randomly and following any complaints.

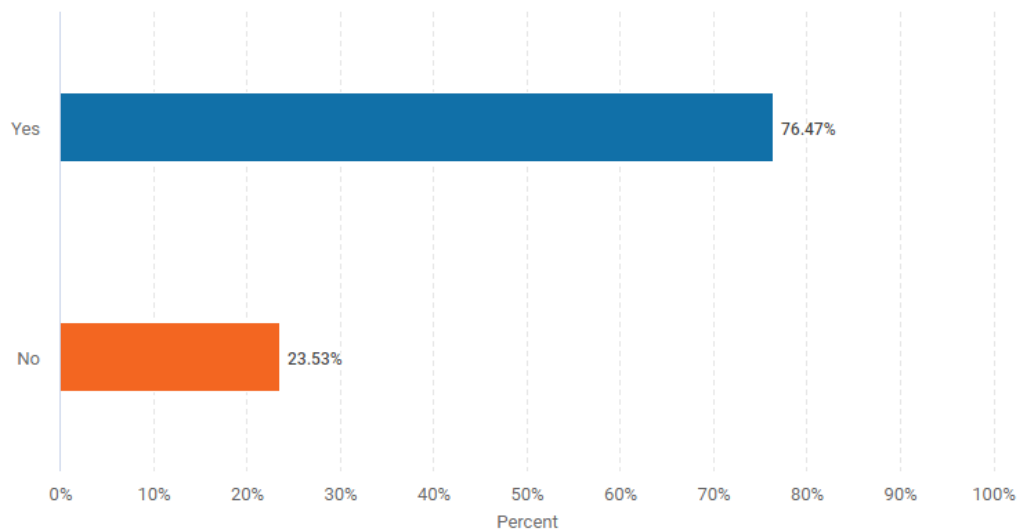
As a member of the licensed trade we would value your opinions. If you have any questions then please email them to licensing.taxis@eastherts.gov.uk or attend one of the trade meetings and ask us in person.

Regards

Licensing Team



Do you agree with the proposal to make card payment facilities mandatory in all vehicles licensed by East Herts Council?



Explanations for answers to question 3 of the consultation:

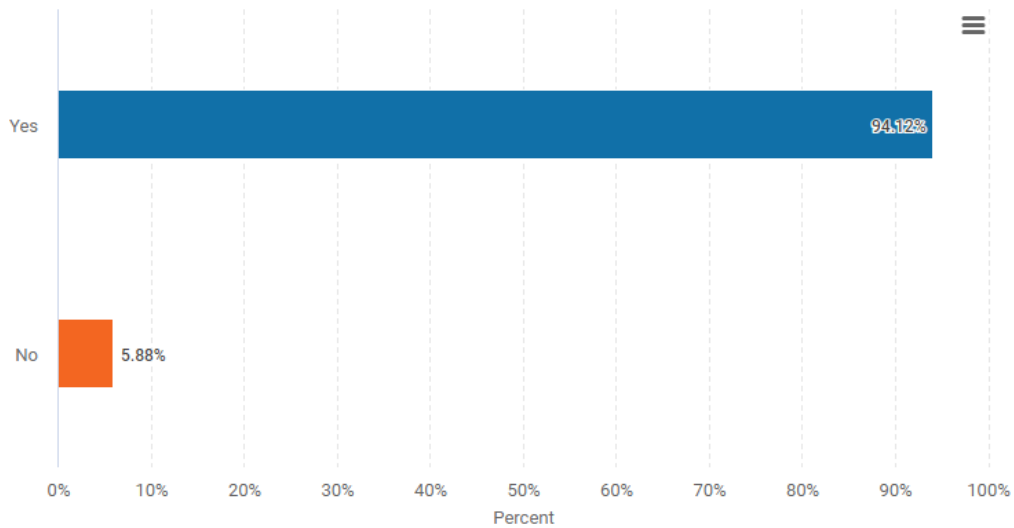
1. I already have card payments available it's easier
2. It's convenient and safe for customers and drivers as well.
3. Everyone has there own preference of payment and how they want to be paid.
4. As I mentioned below I do operate with a card reader but there are many places in the UK where the reception is very bad regardless of your phone or network operator. Many times you have to drop off passengers where the reception is to bad and you don't have signal (for example sometimes it happens even close to an airport, or if they live at some hidden places) so there are some circumstances when you can't use the card reader. Also sometimes it takes more than 72 hours to order and receive a new card reader in case you have to change it.
5. I've taken card payments since 2003 Also all corporate cards are only services only Also it provides a safe way to take out of area payments . It provides the consumer with a alternative payment method.
6. It makes sense to me and its better for the customer and no cash in the car.
7. Easier for customers to pay as everything is electronic
8. Easy facilities to take payments.

9. Many people don't carry cash and do not feel comfortable having it around them ..I believe that all retailers and services should make paying by card possible.
10. Majority of drivers offer card payments because it is customer's preferred payment method. 72 hours for replacement is too short period considering the card machine can't be just fixed, but sent to provide. If the card machine breaks on Friday it's unlikely I receive replacement on Monday. The card machine may not have the option to put license number on the receipt. Usually only name and address of the business is possible to add on the receipt.
11. Passenger convenience
12. Not all customers carry cash and these days it seems to be more convenient to pay by card.
13. Will make taxi more attractive to young people, who normally don't carry cash.
14. It makes it a lot easier for customers and drivers to process payments.
15. It's easy to take payment and the nowadays many people are asking for the card facilities.
16. I've had credit card facilities for over 15 years It's a service that the consumer will use Since c19 the ratio is now 75% card payments We're before c19 it was probably around 25% It's also a good security item you are carrying less Cash or if you have payment concerns you can take payment in advance.
17. For customers convenience and to stop drivers picking and choosing jobs off taxi ranks.
18. Making it easier for youngsters who generally use apple pay or card payments.
19. It easy than dealing with money.
20. Same time the costumer didn't have enough money on his account.
21. Keeping up with technology.
22. I had my credit card machine at least ten years. I was the first one down at Bishop's Stortford Stn, after that it court on. Some people don't to cash, they want to card. 2/3 per pay by card now.
23. I have a card reader, but I don't believe it fair to make it mandatory for all drivers. There is always a cost in obtaining the equipment, and then there are also fees. A while ago the regulations regarding card payment fees meant drivers cannot pass on this cost to customers. I would suggest that almost everyone who has a payment card can make direct transfer, and most drivers that work with a taxi company have this facility in the office.

- A lot of people still expect to pay cash, and irrespective of this there are still plenty of cash points about.
24. The general public are using cash less and less In everyday life .why should taxi /private hire fares be any different. In my experience especially after the pandemic most people expect to be able to use card / Apple Pay /Apple Watch etc to pay for their journey .
 25. I agree as a lot of customers prefer to use card machines to pay for taxi fares.
 26. I believe it's down to the individual to decide whether they want to take care payments, I don't think it should be a contributing factor as to whether you get re licensed. There is still a great need for cash, for the times when card readers aren't working either to having no signal in the area your dropping off of if the system is down.
 27. It's a fast-moving trade. If we were to compete with ride sharing companies (Uber, Bolt etc) we have to adapt to the new trends. In generally people don't carry cash anymore, so I support the motion, but the drivers should be allowed to take a fee of £0.50 per transaction.
 28. It's better to keep earnings amount of money.
 29. It's giving more business opportunity.
 30. Yes I agree.
 31. I do not believe that it should be Mandatory, it should be an individual's choice, it should be up to each individual how they wish to run their business. This is not a health and safety issue, there are many taxis in the town that have that facility if you are worried about choice, should we mandate every taxi has a charging cable for every phone for convenience, should every taxi have a fridge in the boot for convenience. At what point do we draw the line, convenience leads to apathy, with the current climate of heading towards CBDC many people are concerned for the push for cashless society that will lead to the exclusion of swaves of society who for reasons out of their control can not get bank accounts much less debit cards. I am firmly against mandates on how one should run their business.
 32. To ensure consistency in that all passengers will know they can pay by card. I can't see how a minicab driver can work successfully without a card reader as most passengers pay this way anyway.
 33. To make it more convenient for customers to give them options in payment options.
 34. This shouldn't be made mandatory for Private Hire. I can understand it might be wise to make it mandatory for Hackney Carriage as they can be

flagged down and passengers may only have cards on them. With Private Hire we are pre-booked. I explain to my customers at the time of booking that I take either cash or BACS payments which my customers are happy to do and all is arranged in advance, I have had no issue with not having card payment facilities. I feel it therefore shouldn't be made mandatory but up to the individual companies to implement this if they feel it necessary. Also its another monthly expense to have the facility for card payments. This business is hard enough without another expense!!!!

Do you already have facilities to take card payments?



Dual Driver response 1:

Dear sirs

I have read your letter about the proposal to make all drivers have card payment facilities .

Like most drivers I have taken card payments for many years now and many customers like this payment method option.

However if EHC is going to make it mandatory for drivers to accept card payments I have two comments on this

1). My card sum UP facility cost me about £35 for the payment machine
Every transaction costs me 1.69% of the fare. So to cover the cost of this mandatory requirement
Taxi Fares should rise by approx 2%

2). There are some locations in East Herts where it not possible to get a signal so taking card payments is not possible for all locations
The responsibility to pay the fare MUST lie with the passenger in cash if there is no signal at the destination
eg Much Hadham and Manuden.

Regards

Licensing Team response:

Dear Mr REDACTED

Thank you for taking the time to email.

We completely agree that it is the passengers responsibility to ensure they have a means of payment (card, cash, charged phone, etc.) before commencing a journey.

Regards

Dual Driver response 2:

Dear Taxi Licensing

I have read your letter of 24th May 2023

Thank you acknowledging the point about the difficulties of card payments in areas where there is no reception.

Another problem which also arises with electronic payments is when passengers carry neither card nor cash but rely on their smartphones to pay by apple pay or similar and then their battery has died

It cannot be the drivers responsibility to have charging facilities on board to lend to the passengers at the end of the journey ?

These days many passengers do not carry any cash as a back up

So I can only repeat my concerns that in making it mandatory for drivers to have card payment facilities, the responsibility to carry cash as a back up means of payment must remain with passengers

Regards

Private Hire Drivers response:

Hi

Please note I never received this survey request previously, which may explain the low number of responses you received, as perhaps others also didn't receive it.

I have now completed the survey.

Regards

Appendix D: Consideration of comments from the Licensing Committee

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
<p>Could we legislate that fares could still be paid in cash?</p>	<p>A move to only allowing card payments would possibly exclude some individuals from using licensed vehicles.</p>	<p>The Policy does not to oblige passengers to make card payment nor enable taxi drivers to refuse cash payments thus it is not considered necessary to, in effect, mandate the continued ability for passengers to make cash payments.</p>	<p>No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.</p>
<p>Should the Policy wording include cash as a method of payment?</p>	<p>Do we need to mandate that cash must be accepted as a form of payment to ensure those without payment cards can use licensed vehicles?</p>	<p>Cash is a widely used form of payment and the proposed Policy does not change this. Please see the response to the point above.</p>	<p>No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.</p>
<p>Will a working card payment machine be included in vehicle checks?</p>	<p>How will the authority ensure compliance with the Policy?</p>	<p>As with any requirement placed on a vehicle it will be checked when it is first licensed, at renewal, when the vehicle requires a Vehicle Condition Certificate (VCC),</p>	<p>No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.</p>

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		<p>following complaint or during any ad hoc inspection. If it becomes known to the council between licence renewals that card payments are not available in a vehicle, say, following a complaint or information received, the council's Licensing team would deal with this as it currently does when one of the council's taxi related regulations is breached.</p>	
<p>How will faults be reported and what time scales will be given for repair or replacement of a faulty machine?</p>	<p>If there is a problem with a card machine do drivers have to report it? How long can they work for with a faulty machine?</p>	<p>The proposed Policy places an obligation on drivers to report any damage identified with card payment facilities that mean they are inoperable. Members of the travelling public can also report issues</p>	<p>Amended the wording from <i>'Any damage preventing the device from functioning'</i> to <i>'Any damage or fault preventing the device from functioning'</i>.</p>

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		<p>with card payments which would then be investigated.</p> <p>The Policy states that drivers have one week to repair or replace a device.</p> <p>The wording should be amended to give greater clarity to the trade regarding their obligations. It should cover issues other than 'damage' and give a time scale for reporting.</p> <p>The proposed Policy before Licensing Committee stated that failure to replace or repair a device in one week would result in Licensing Record Points being issued or the vehicle licence being suspended. This wording fetters the discretion of the authority to choose the most</p>	<p>Amend the wording from <i>'must be notified to the Licensing Team and be repaired within one week'</i> to <i>'must be notified to the Licensing Team within 24 hours of being identified and be repaired within one week'</i>.</p> <p>Amend the wording from <i>'Failure to do so will lead to Licensing'</i> to <i>'Failure to do so may lead to Licensing'</i>.</p>

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		appropriate action having considered the merits of an individual case.	
What is the time frame for implementation?	Will the parts of the licensed trade that currently do not provide card payment facilities have a reasonable time in which to comply with the Policy?	Guidance suggests that we should give the licensed trade suitable time to fulfil new requirements. As the consultation responses indicate 94-95% of the trade already have card payment facilities a period of three months is considered reasonable for the remaining vehicles to be equipped with card payment facilities. If Council approves the Policy on 13th December 2023, with an implementation date of 1st January 2024, the trade will have until 1st April 2024 to comply.	No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
Who would report any card payment facility faults or failures?	How will the authority know if there is a fault with a machine so that compliance with the Policy can be maintained?	The Policy places an obligation on licence holders to report faults with card payment facilities, but members of the public could also do this online or over the telephone. Complaints would be investigated in the same way other complaints are. As stated above checking that there is a working card payment facility will be part of the normal compliance checks.	No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.
Does the Licensing Team have the resources to deal with any complaints regarding card payment facilities?	Can the authority ensure that the Policy is meaningful by offering adequate compliance checks and complaint investigation?	We do not expect an increase in complaints given that 94-95% of the trade already have card payment facilities in operation and we have had no complaints regarding this in the past.	No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.

<p>Should vehicles with faulty card machines put signs in the window to advise passengers?</p>	<p>Passengers need to know if the facility isn't working in a vehicle before commencing a journey so that they can ensure they have another form of payment if necessary. It would potentially cause conflict if a passenger only found out at the end of a journey.</p>	<p>Drivers of Hackney Carriages want to be paid for their work and avoid confrontation so it is expected that they would inform passengers that they are unable to take card payments before commencing a journey. The customer could then choose to take another vehicle if they wished. As Private Hire vehicles must be prebooked customers can be informed of the acceptable forms of payment at the time of booking.</p> <p>Should the use of signs be added to the Policy then the wording, size, and location they should be displayed in the vehicle would all need to be considered and stipulated in the Policy. It is likely that signs would need to be provided by the Authority so this would incur officer time and expense. This could be recovered from the licensed trade but should only</p>	<p>No amendments to the draft Policy are proposed.</p>
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Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		be introduced if it is considered that the provision of these signs would have a positive impact on public safety.	

The proposal is that:

- *By 1st April 2024, all licensed Hackney Carriages vehicles must always have available an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. The driver must ask the passenger if they require a receipt. If the passenger requires a receipt, the driver must provide one which accurately states the time and date of the journey, driver number and fare.*
- *By 1st April 2024, all licensed Private Hire vehicles must always have available an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. This can be, but is not limited to, electronic card payment devices or operator websites and apps.*

Licence holders are reminded, they are legally obliged to comply with the requirements of data protection legislation in respect of all transaction processes, data management and storage. This includes the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent data protection legislation. You can find out more about your obligations from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). This is relevant when handling personal information such as names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. All such processing must comply with the requirements of data protection legislation. Breaches of data protection legislation may impact on the ability to hold a licence with the Council.

Insert into Appendix E, the Licensing Record Points Scheme, the following which will apply to the vehicle proprietor:

Offence / Breach of condition	No of points
<i>Failure to provide card payment facilities</i>	<i>1st offence 3 2nd offence 6 3rd offence 9</i>

Insert into Appendix B of the ‘Taxi & Private Hire Handbook’, Vehicle and Trailer Specifications and Conditions, the following:

- *By (date to be determined), all licensed Hackney Carriages vehicles must have available at all times an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. The driver must ask the passenger if they require a receipt. If the passenger requires a receipt, the driver must provide one which accurately states the time and date of the journey, driver number and fare.*
- *By (date to be determined), all licensed Private Hire vehicles must have available at all times an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. This can be, but is not limited to, electronic card payment devices or operator websites and apps.*

All card payment devices must:

- a) *comply with the requirements of the current UK banking industry standards as stipulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)*
- b) *be checked regularly and maintained to operational standards, including repairs after any damage or fault. Any damage or fault preventing the device from functioning must be notified to the Licensing Team within 24 hours of being identified and be repaired within one week. If the device cannot be repaired, it must be replaced in one week. Failure to do so may lead to Licensing Record Points being issued or the vehicle licence being suspended. If the vehicle is suspended it will be until such a time as a functional device is in operation*
- c) *meet all requirements and standards as stipulated by the card scheme companies in terms of connections to a host such as GPRS, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth or other connection methods to complete payment transactions*
- d) *provide the functionality to protect the confidentiality of critical data (in particular PINs) whilst the card transaction is being processed.*

Payments through apps are permitted, if a passenger has access to the app via their own phone or device. Drivers must not enter card details into their own phone or device to process a payment.

Agenda Item 6

East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan- Adoption

Ward(s) affected: Watton-at-Stone;

Summary – A referendum on Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan took place on the 12 October 2023. A majority voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan and as such the Council now has the opportunity to formally make (adopt) the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive to recommend to Council that:

- a) Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area Plan 2017-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally made (adopted).**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 Following the successful referendum on 12 October 2023, the Council are now able to make (adopt) the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan became part of the statutory development plan for the district once it was approved at referendum and will be used by development management in the determination of planning applications submitted in the neighbourhood area. Unless a neighbourhood plan breaches human rights or EU obligations, the local planning authority is required to formally make the neighbourhood plan.

2.0 Background

2.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Government under the Localism Act in 2011. Neighbourhood planning provides an opportunity for local communities to produce a planning document that shapes and influences future development within their local area.

2.2 The Town and Country Planning England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) came into force on the 6 April 2012 and prescribe both the process, and role of the local planning authority in supporting neighbourhood planning. In East Herts, parish or town councils are qualifying bodies able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

2.3 Watton-at-Stone Parish Council applied for designation as a Neighbourhood Area in February 2016; the Neighbourhood Area was then designated on the 5 April 2016.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Group carried out early community engagement between 2016 and 2020 and then undertook a Pre-Submission Consultation between the 17 January and the 6

March 2022 under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations. The Neighbourhood Plan was then submitted to East Herts Council on the 29 September 2022 and a six-week consultation on the submission plan was undertaken from the 8 November to the 20 December 2022, under Regulation 16.

2.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan has a strong vision for delivering sustainable development and this has been translated into a set of objectives and policies. It seeks to protect character and heritage, whilst delivering new development and infrastructure to meet local needs. There is particular focus on the following areas:

- Delivering new development with significant community benefits for the village.
- Promotion of high quality design, including a design code;
- Protection of heritage assets and local character;
- Enhancing green and blue infrastructure and the natural environment, including the designation of new local green spaces;
- Supporting a vibrant economy;
- Improving access to services and facilities and identifying protected recreational areas;
- Ensuring connectivity through improvements to sustainable transport, particularly new pedestrian and cycle links.

2.6 District Plan Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages, requires Watton-at-Stone to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock between 2017 and 2033, which amounts to 92 dwellings. The

policy accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, to accommodate growth. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through neighbourhood plans.

2.7 In accordance with the District Plan, the opportunity was taken during the preparation of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan to exceed the required 10% growth in return for significant community benefits, including a circular walk for the village, new football pitches and a wetland meadow. The Neighbourhood Plan (Policy WAS1) proposes 144 homes in the plan period, including two strategic sites (for 60 dwellings each) on the edge of the village, that require changes to the Green Belt boundary. As the first Neighbourhood Plan to amend Green Belt boundaries to deliver housing growth and other community benefits, the proactive approach taken by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council is welcomed.

2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan was assessed by an Independent Examiner between June and July 2023. The Examiner commended the Neighbourhood Plan for being well researched, well-evidenced and clearly laid out. He praised the high quality of the plan and recommended that it proceed, subject to recommended modifications, to referendum. On 29 August 2023, the Council made the decision, via the non-key decision process, to proceed to a referendum.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The Referendum took place on Thursday 12 October 2023 with a 32.1% turnout. There was an overall 'yes' vote of 609 votes

(95.3%), against 30 (4.7%) who voted 'no'. As outlined within Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017) the Council is able to make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the area. The residents within the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area voted on the following question:

"Do you want East Hertfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

- 3.2 With an overall successful 'yes' vote, the Council are now able to formally 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the East Herts Development Plan.

Adoption

- 3.3 Following a successful referendum, the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan already forms part of the development plan. As such any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.
- 3.4 There are narrow circumstances where the local planning authority is not required to make the neighbourhood plan. These are where it considers that the making of the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act as amended). The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the aforementioned obligations.

- 3.5 It is considered that the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan positively contributes to the East Herts Development Management process providing a strong community vision that seeks to contribute to sustainable development and as such the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to be formally made.
- 3.6 The final version of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan can be found in Appendix A.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Council is permitted, in narrow circumstances only, to not make a neighbourhood plan, when it is in breach or incompatible with any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E (8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as Amended). However, the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan does not breach these obligations.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 If the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to be formally made, then the Council would not be fulfilling its duties as Local Planning Authority and there is the risk of legal challenge.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to multiple rounds of public consultation and a referendum.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes. The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Plan also contains policies that aim to protect the environment.

Financial

It is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to cover examination and referendum costs. Government grants are available when a Plan has a formal referendum date.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

The designated neighbourhood area is Watton-at-Stone Parish, part of Watton-at-Stone ward.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A: Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan: 2017-2033

Contact Member

Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward

Executive Member for Planning and Growth

vicky.glover-ward@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders

Head of Planning and Building Control,

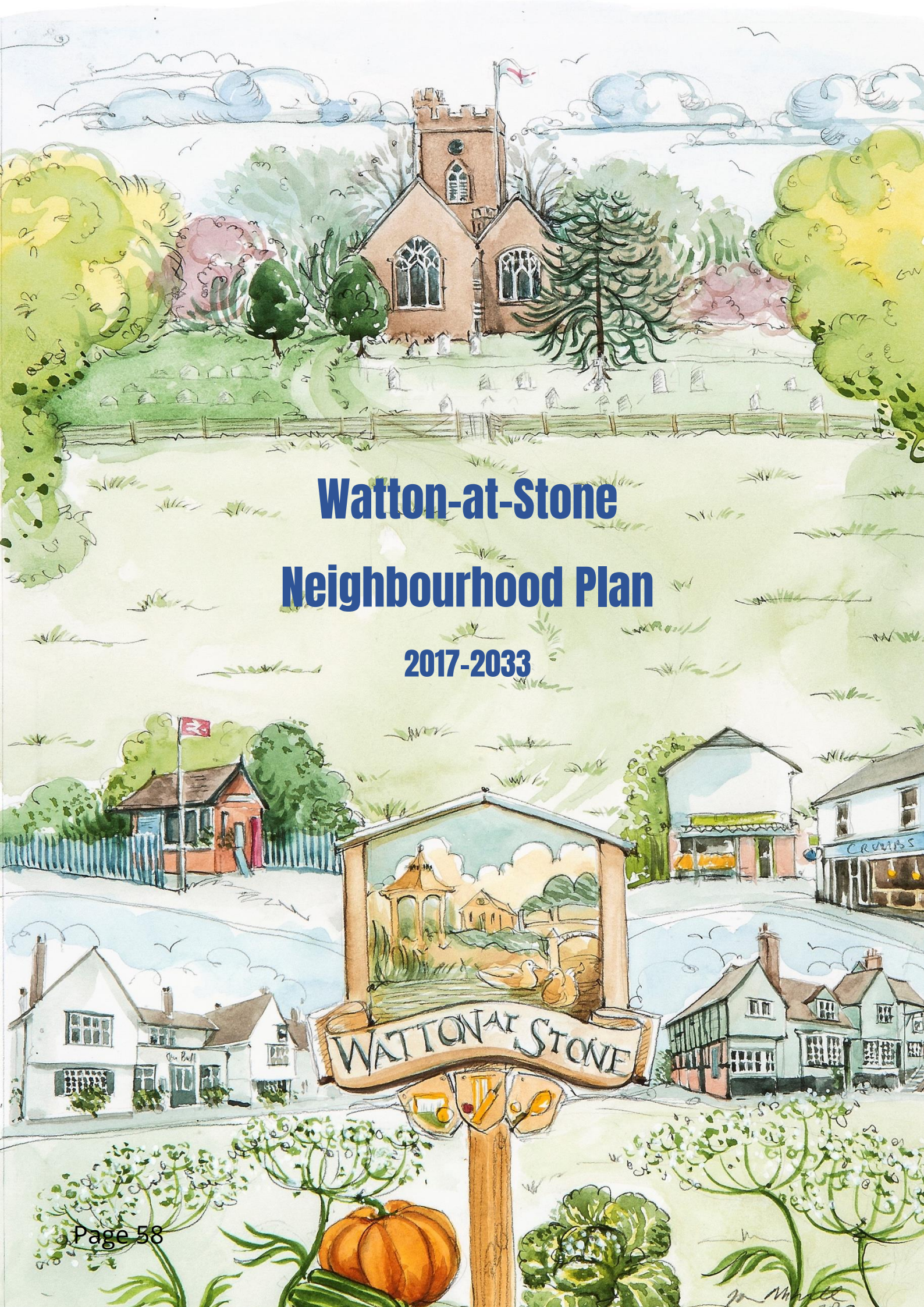
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Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan

2017-2033

Front cover: Thanks to Jane Abbott for her beautiful bespoke illustration

Inside: Thanks to all contributors who have provided photographs and illustrations

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Foreword

Ten years ago, the pioneering concept of “Localism” was introduced into the vocabulary of planning and local politics. What would that mean in practice? We now have the answer and it is:

The Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone

Because Watton-at-Stone is surrounded by Green Belt and swathes of open countryside, we could have been forgiven for thinking that we would be exempt from further development. However, our quality of life, range of facilities, services and connectivity not only make Watton-at-Stone a very attractive place to live but have also resulted in us becoming a focus for future development in the East Herts District. Of course, we have to remind ourselves that the village is what it is because of development and therefore we should not shy away from sharing what we have with new households and should delight in welcoming new blood. And we never know what a new resident might aspire to. After all, the first Lord Mayor of London, Henry fitz Ailwin, was a resident (circa 1200), as was Sir Nigel Gresley, designer of the Flying Scotsman which broke the first authenticated 100 mph barrier for a steam locomotive. His Mallard locomotive set the world speed record of 126 mph in 1936, which stands to this day.

We encourage you to look closely at this document because it details what we want to achieve for our village, and it influences future developments. District Plans are overarching, whereas our Neighbourhood Plan drills down into the details which can only come from local knowledge and desires. For example, it can control minimum parking places, garden space, layout and design codes, integral green space and extended footpaths, and it can protect views and green space external to developments. Also, if there are to be any benefits accruing from developments, these can be allocated to the village and not disappear into local authority pots.

Bringing this plan to the Referendum stage was a long, complicated process against a background of shifting powers and changing policy. But resilience, perseverance and tenacity have won the day.

Our thanks and those of the whole Parish Council go to the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group; their dedication has seen out a Coalition, a number of Prime Ministers.

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

1. Introduction

The Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan) will, once adopted, be part of the statutory Development Plan which is formed of the Local Plan (The East Herts District Plan), the Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Hertfordshire, and any adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The Neighbourhood Plan will guide the direction of future development in the Designated Area up to 2033.

1.2 The Localism Act 2011, with effect from April 2012, sets out the provision for communities to produce plans that have statutory weight. Taking part in this plan-making process is an opportunity for communities to have a say about the future growth in their area. The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will be used in determining planning applications, will provide guidance for developers and will inspire local residents to enjoy and improve their area.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the statutory Development Plan and in accordance with the strategic policies of the East Herts Local Plan, prepared by East Herts District Council (EHDC). The East Herts District Plan was adopted on 23 October 2018 and will be in force until 2033. The current planning documents that make up the statutory Development Plan can be found on EHDC website and HCC website.

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021 and current Planning Practice Guidance. According to paragraph 29 of the NPPF the Neighbourhood Plan cannot propose less development than set out in strategic policies.

1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision for the future, objectives, planning policies and a set of actions, which aim to ensure that Watton-at-Stone will grow sustainably and thrive over time. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan provides for new housing and prevents development that would have a negative impact on the area, while seeking to protect the environment and to provide facilities that will support and enhance cater for the wellbeing of the community.

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan will have effect for the period 2017-2033. The start date coincides with the requirements of East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1, and the end date ties in with the end of the District Plan period.

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.7 This Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Community Steering Group by thoroughly researching the topics of interest and issues raised by the community and consultation with residents and other stakeholders in Watton-at-Stone.

1.8 The qualifying body for the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan is Watton-at-Stone Parish Council. On 25 February 2016, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council applied to the local planning authority, East Herts District Council, for the designation of the Watton-at-Stone Parish (the Parish) as a Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is represented in [Figure 1](#) below. East Herts District Council approved the area designation on 5 April 2016. An aerial view is also provided in [Figure 2](#) to show the unique position of the village between the railway line and the A602.

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033

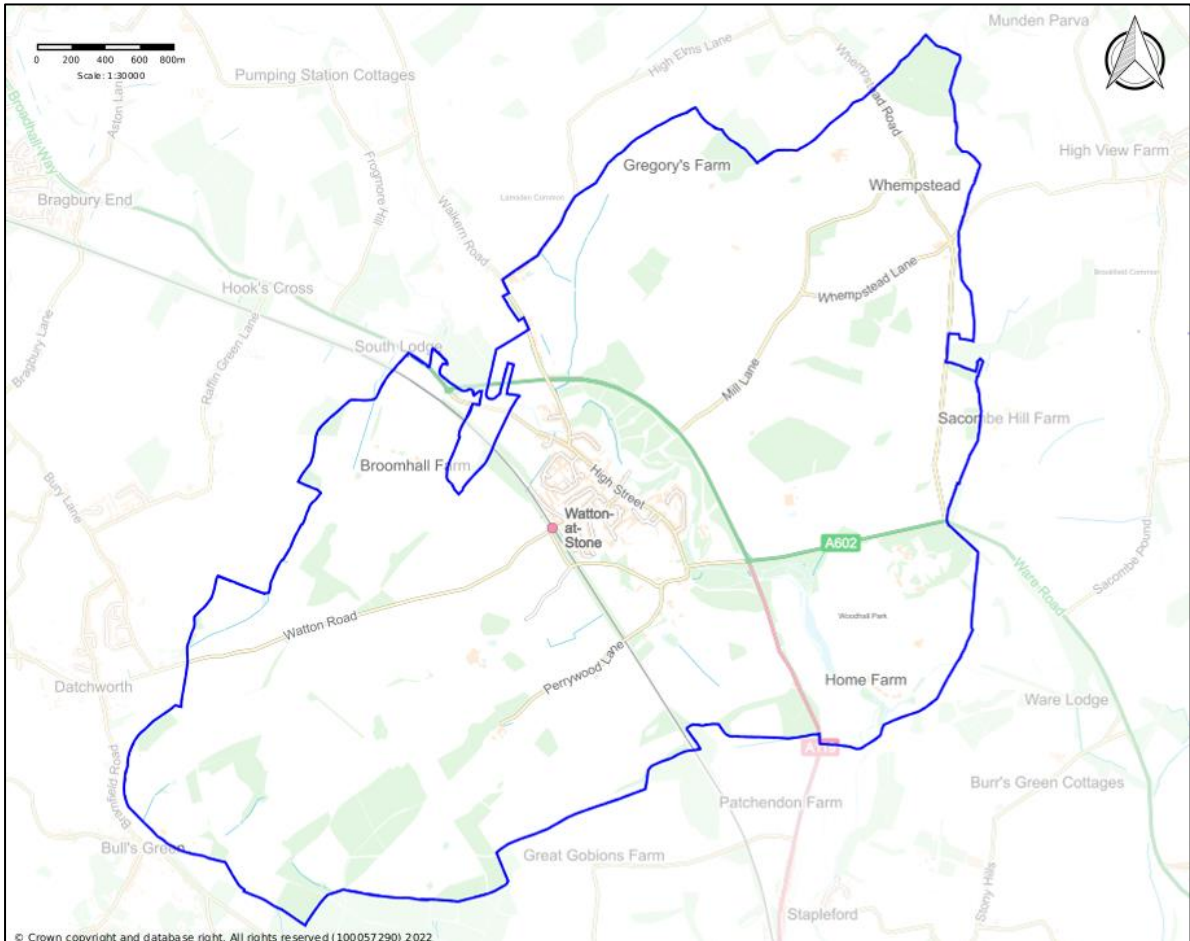


Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



Figure 2 – Aerial view of Watton-at-Stone circa 2011

Legislation

1.9 While reflecting the aspirations of local communities, Neighbourhood Plans must comply with other local and national and European policies, as required in the Localism Act. Specifically, a Neighbourhood Plan must meet four criteria, named “Basic Conditions” and set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), as referred to by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004):

- (a) The Plan must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the NPPF;
- (b) The Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- (c) The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority, in this case East Herts District Plan; and
- (d) The Plan must abide by the relevant EU regulations (or UK equivalent).

1.10 A separate document has been prepared to demonstrate how the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan meets these Basic Conditions.

1.11 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening determination from EHDC concluded that there were likely to be significant environmental effects from implementing the Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, an Environmental Report on the Plan was produced by AECOM. The report identifies, describes and evaluates both the effects of the Plan and reasonable alternatives. Three growth scenarios were assessed by AECOM. Scenario 3 was found to be the best performing with the most positives and no major negatives. The full Environmental Report is available on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

Process of Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

1.12 The decision to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone Parish was taken at a village meeting in November 2015. A meeting of the Parish Council and people who had expressed an interest was held in January 2016, during which the Steering Group was chosen to lead and co-ordinate development of the plan, on behalf of the Parish Council. The group is formed of volunteers who are all residents in the Watton-at-Stone Parish and includes two elected members of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council who ensure liaison with the Parish Council.

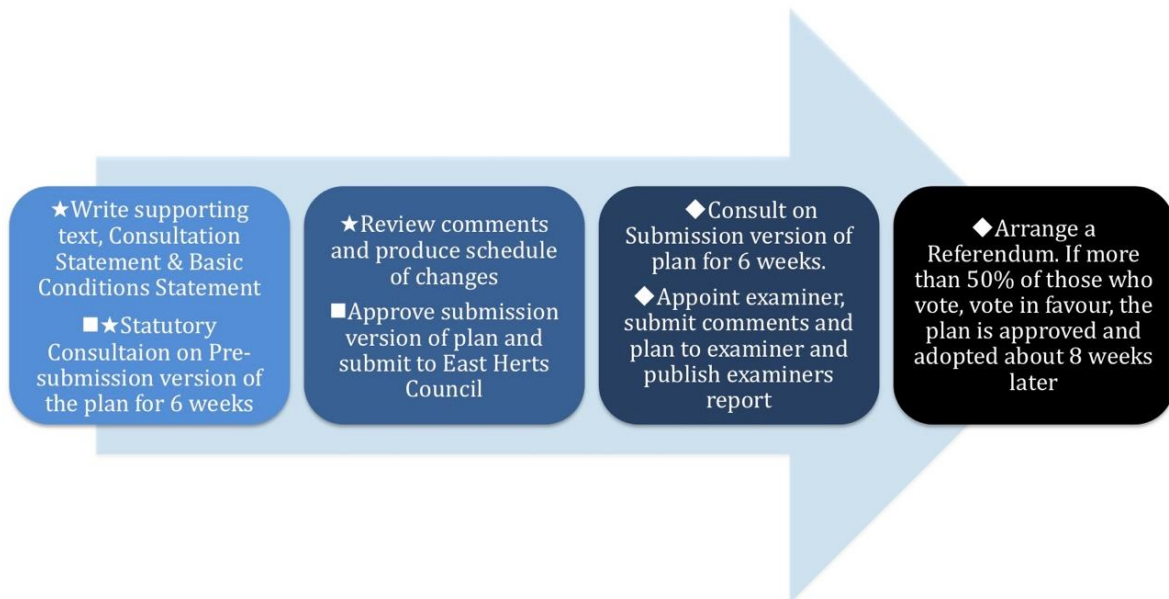
1.13 Starting with a blank sheet of paper, the Steering Group collected existing evidence about the Parish, and ideas from people living and working in the Parish about issues relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Open Day on Saturday, 23rd April 2016 was the start of the broad consultation process. The exhibition boards from the Open Day were available on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

1.14 The Open Day was followed by six weeks of active consulting by the Steering Group, Parish Council and a wider group of volunteers, going from door-to-door to ask questions, speaking to landowners, local businesses and other employers, and anyone else interested in the future development of the Parish's residential housing, commercial properties and wider amenities.

1.15 Following the consultation and evidence-gathering processes, the Steering Group pulled together the emerging themes and policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. There was a further round of consultation about these developing concepts, which began on 26 November 2016 and concluded in April 2017. A final consultation was undertaken in January 2020 by means of a public exhibition and the collection of questionnaires from the attendees. The

exhibition attracted 270 visitors and 145 questionnaires were completed. The results of the consultations are available in the [Consultation Statement](#).

1.16 The process chart below shows the later stages of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Key: ★ Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee
 ■ Watton-at-Stone Parish Council
 ◆ East Herts District Council

Figure 3 – Final stages of Neighbourhood Plan Process

Community Engagement Summary

1.17 The content of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan has been compiled from a continuous process of gathering the views of local people in the Parish using a variety of consultation approaches, including:

- An initial Parish-wide survey (more than 115 questionnaires were returned);
- Three consultation events and exhibitions;
- A public meeting (attended by over 200 people);
- A stall at the Church Fete;
- Numerous Steering Group evening meetings; and
- Meetings with local businesses, landowners and interest groups.

1.18 A separate document called the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement explains the work of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, describes the engagement techniques used, events held and the results of the public consultations. It also contains a list of consultees.

Monitoring and Review

1.19 The Neighbourhood Plan policies may be amended at intervals to remain in line with the East Herts District Plan. Any such review or update will be carried out in accordance with the required processes and procedures in place at that time.

2. Watton-at-Stone

Location, Main Features and Basic Statistics

2.1 Watton-at-Stone is a rural parish located in East Hertfordshire halfway between Hertford and Stevenage. It covers an area of about 1416.4 hectares. The Parish is nestled in the rolling countryside of the River Beane, with the village of Watton-at-Stone at its centre. The village has a bypass on its eastern side and a railway line on its western boundary. The boundary of the Parish extends well beyond the village of Watton-at-Stone itself and also includes the hamlet of Whempstead. working farms and large areas of associated farmland.

2.2 Watton-at-Stone is mostly a residential area and is well served by local amenities. As well as local shops and pubs there is a primary school, children’s centre, dentist and doctor’s surgery.

2.3 Resident population: Census data shows that in 2011 about 2,340 people lived in Watton-at-Stone and that there were approximately 970 households. In terms of age, 29.4% of residents were under 24 years old and 15.4 % are over 65 years old.



Figure 4 – Census 2011 (table KS102EW)

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E05004745>

2.4 Dwelling types: In 2011, 25.6% of the dwellings in the Parish were detached houses, 32.6% were semi-detached houses, 24.6 % were terraced houses, 15% were purpose-built blocks of flats.

2.5 Tenure: In 2011, 67.6% of Parish dwellings were owner-occupied, 0.9% were shared ownership, 15% were social-rented and 15.3% were private-rented.

2.6 Car ownership: At the 2011 Census car ownership statistics were recorded representing a total of more than 1520 vehicles, which equated to 1.5 vehicles per household. Of the 970 households making a return, 77% had either one or two cars.

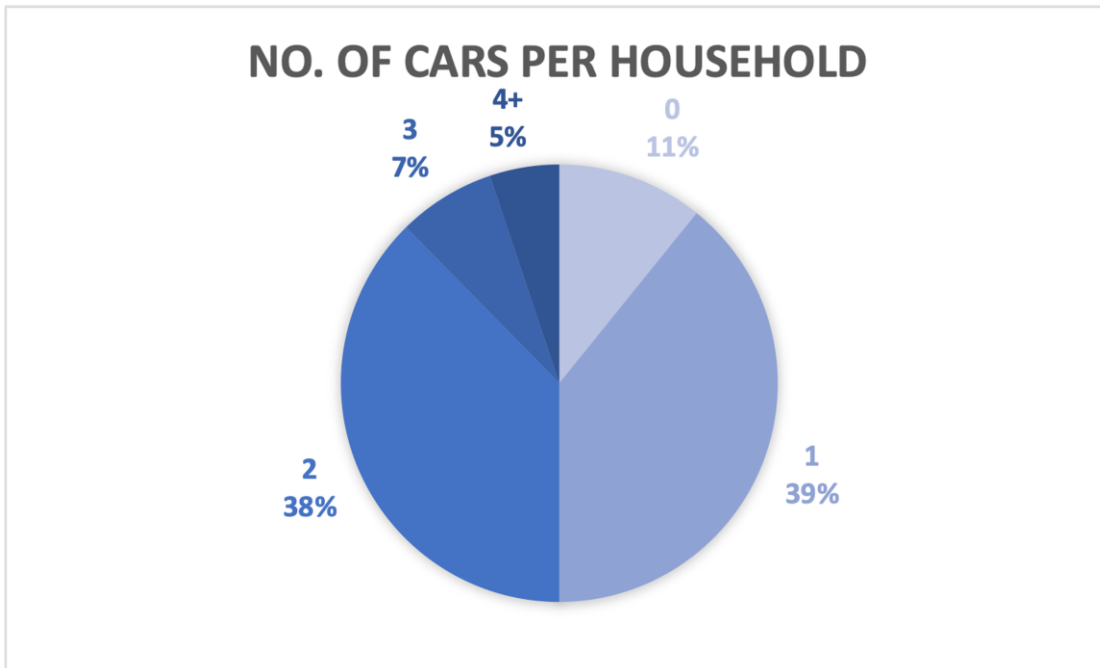


Figure 5 – Number of cars per household at 2011 Census

2.7 Employment: In 2011, 69.1% of those residents between 16 and 64 were in employment while 3.2% of the population were unemployed. 25.3% of the population was economically inactive, including retired people who made up 14.7% of the total population.

2.8 Industry: People were working in a range of industries according to the 2011 Census, with 15% of those residents in employment working in the wholesale and retail sector, 9.3% of residents working in construction, 11.7% in education, 9% in the manufacturing sector, and 8.1 % in the human health and social work activities sector.

History and Heritage

2.9 This history includes information and quotes from the Village Guide published by the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society (first published in 1988 and subsequently updated in 2002) and also the pamphlet entitled “High Streets and Hedgerows, Watton at Stone” published by Hertford Museum in 2015.

2.10 The name Watton was first recorded in an 11th century publication of the 10th century Anglo-Saxon Wills as Wattun, and in the Domesday Book as both Wodtune and Watone. The “Stone” appeared for the first time in about 1300 (Watton atte Stone, 1311) and is presumed to refer to a prehistoric or Roman mark stone, a lump of Hertfordshire puddingstone, which can be seen at the roadside at the north end of the village, outside the private residence which was formerly the Wagon and Horses public house. The Domesday Book in 1086 records that the Parish was owned by the Crown and split into four different manors – Watton, Crowborough, Watkins Hall and Woodhall. These names still have significance in the village today.

2.11 The site of the original village was probably on the higher ground by Watton Green, close to the church, and a moat still to be seen by Watton Green marks the site of the old Crowborough manor house. Indeed, even as late as the 1950s, four cottages were still occupied on land adjacent to the Green. In the 12th or 13th century, with the decreasing importance of the cross-country Roman road and the increasing importance of the old north-south route between the market town of Hertford and the Great North Road coaching stop of Stevenage, the inns and houses of the village migrated downhill and established the village along the new highway now known as the High Street.

2.12 The most important building in the Parish, although outside the settlement itself, is Woodhall Park (now Heath Mount School). It is a Grade 1 Listed building built between 1777 and 1782.

2.13 A significant section of the village settlement has been identified as a conservation area which was adopted by East Herts District Council in 2014. This area extends from Watton Green along the High Street including land either side, from the Walkern Road at the northern end to where the old road to Hertford joins the A119. Conservation Area status effectively gives all the trees and buildings within the area certain basic protection which it will be important to retain.

2.14 There are 25 Grade II Listed Buildings in the conservation area. Most of these originate from the 16th and 17th centuries with the 15th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries also being represented.

2.15 Of the other buildings in the village, one of the most important is Watton Place. The house is Grade II* Listed and dates from the 15th century with later alterations up to the 19th Century. It is believed that it was originally a two-bay open hall. It retains some fine twisted brick chimney stacks which were restored in 1991 when the building was converted for use as a medical centre — the Watton Place Clinic. The adjoining flint wall is also listed.

2.16 The farmhouses within the Parish represent a number of different architectural periods and Broom Hall dates from the late-16th century, retaining some attractive brickwork. A schedule of listed buildings within the Parish may be found on [Historic England's website](#).

2.17 The village has been subject to its greatest number of developments since the end of the Second World War. These have been largely piecemeal with little thought being given to their relationship to each other or the older parts of the village. It is one of the objectives of this Neighbourhood Plan that in the future any developments permitted are considered to be in line with its coherent strategy and are of benefit to the village rather than a detraction from it.

2.18 These post-war developments include Beane Road (1946), Glebe Close (1948), Rectory Lane (1948), Hockerill (1956), Lammas Road (1960) north end of High Street (1960), Great Innings (1964, 1977 and 2000), Rivershill (1966 and 1986), and Hazeldell (1970) as well as several individual houses and in-fills.

2.19 In 1986 there was a spate of planning applications: 28 dwellings now known as Motts Close, and 14 dwellings on the site of the Beanside Service Station, now called The Beanside. In 1993, 4 dwellings (Aylotts Court) were built behind the buildings known as Porch Cottages in the High Street, and an outline planning application was approved for 70 dwellings on land adjacent to the railway station, part of which had been used as an oil storage depot. Some 76 dwellings were eventually built as Moorymead Close together with a parking area for the station.

2.20 Conversion of the former Holden du Cros factory and barn into several dwellings known as Newmans Court was completed in 1994. In 1998, the old bakery behind the grocery shop in the High Street was developed to provide an enlarged shopping area and three flats. During 2001, 12 houses on the Watton Service Station site in the High Street were completed and named Long Meadow.

2.21 In 2012, 111 houses were built on the last remaining field between the western edge of the village envelope and the railway line on a field formerly owned by HCC now named Gatekeepers Meadow.

2.22 There are now some 1080 homes in the village, many of which have been built since 1980. As mentioned, many of these developments have been made with little regard to previous ones and with little investment in improving the village infrastructure. It is therefore vitally important that, before the proposals for the developments envisaged in policies WAS 3 and WAS 4 are approved, it is confirmed that all the major services are capable of coping

with the increased demand. This includes but is not limited to water, sewage, drainage, electricity, gas and telephone services including high speed broadband. The impact on soft services such as increased demand on the GP medical practice and the village's primary school should also be examined and expanded as necessary.

2.23 Since 1980, the village has seen two significant events which were designed to improve village services. These are the re-opening of the train station in 1982 and the opening of the A602 bypass in 1984. These projects have been of benefit to the village but have been contributory factors in Watton-at-Stone being selected by East Herts District Council as a Group 1 village for further development. Some residents responding to the consultation events has considered them to have been a "double-edged sword".

2.24 The opening of the station has meant that Watton-at-Stone has attracted residents who commute into London but also non-residents who drive to the station and who park in the surrounding roads as there is insufficient parking at the station. One of the objectives in designing the circular walk is to promote walking and cycling from the new developments in WAS 3 and WAS 4 to both the station and the school thus not increasing use of cars by residents.

2.25 Whilst the bypass has improved north/south traffic there has been no improvement to east/west traffic which has increased considerably in this time. Therefore, the impact of greater numbers of vehicles using the western entry/exit to the village and the High Street needs further consideration. The bypass also created a new boundary to the village which is being exploited in this planning period. This Neighbourhood Plan has recognised the effect of this boundary and it has been one of the contributory factors in deciding to permit development of a greater number of houses than demanded by the East Herts District Plan. However, it is expected that the design of the revised Green Belt boundary will protect the village from any future development.

2.26 Few of the people living within the village now work in the village since, apart from the village shops and pubs, there are few opportunities for employment (there were previously some small industrial units in Mill Lane, but they are now derelict). Watton-at-Stone is now, therefore, 'commuter land' and its residents travel to Stevenage, Hoddesdon, Hertford and other areas for employment, including also central London (by train at a 2020 season ticket cost of £3344 per annum). Since the Covid-19 pandemic many more residents of the village have been working from home, a practice which may continue in the future. Greater consideration should therefore be given to the load on the village infrastructure to provide the appropriate support.

2.27 There are several shops in the village which are well used and much valued by both villagers and people who live nearby.

3. Vision and Objectives

Our Vision

3.1 Our vision statement is:

Watton-at-Stone will continue to be a thriving village hub, with a strong and diverse community. It will be well served by green spaces, local amenities, good physical and digital infrastructure, and will support local enterprise. The Parish will protect all aspects of its heritage, including the character of its dwellings, its natural environment and rural setting. At the same time, the village will welcome new residents and accept thoughtful, well designed, sustainable development, in line with the needs of existing and future residents and balanced by appropriate additional infrastructure and amenities for the expanded community.

Overarching Objectives

3.2 In accordance with the NPPF, all plans should promote sustainable development, achieving this through the three overarching and interdependent objectives:

- Economic sustainability
- Social sustainability
- Environmental sustainability

3.3 Sustainable development should be pursued in a positive way with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of every plan, but taking into account and reflecting the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan adopts an outlook that incorporates the aspiration for higher quality housing development, better transport provision, a wider range of public amenities, access to quality green spaces and a healthier local economy.

3.5 From the information obtained during the consultation it became clear that most of the respondents were generally happy with the facilities and amenities currently available. However, there were consistent requests to improve the sports facilities particularly for football (especially youth football) and for improvements to the village environment. This can be evidenced by the responses to the spending priorities identified during the consultation process and detailed in the Consultation Statement.

3.6 Based on the collected responses to questions about what people both liked and disliked about the village, it has been possible to develop a series of objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan which will enhance and improve life in the village in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the residents. The policies described in this document are designed to deliver those objectives.

Planning Objectives

3.7 Extensive consultation with residents has enabled the distillation of comments and suggestion into the following objectives. These were presented to the community at the January 2020 exhibition. Support was expressed in 148 written responses. Table 1 below lists the objective numbers relating to each section in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Obj. No.	Housing Development Strategy
1	Deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Watton-at-Stone to 2033.
2	Ensure that brownfield sites are used for new housing developments where possible.
3	Ensure new housing is in keeping with the surrounding area, lying low in the Beane Valley
4	Promote high-quality design with a mix of house types suitable for the future needs of the village
5	Ensure housing density balances the sensitive semi-rural setting with the efficient use of land and preservation of high-quality agricultural land
6	Ensure accessibility by sustainable modes to bus stops, the station, the school, and village facilities, promoting safe public streets and spaces
7	Reduce traffic impacts of new development, ensure appropriate parking solutions for it, and provide infrastructure for sustainable modes of transport
8	Seek on-going improvements to utility infrastructure and digital connectivity
9	Ensure that development proposals supported in this plan, on the edge of the village, create a new clearly defined Green Belt boundary
Obj. No.	Sustainable, affordable, accessible transport
10	Encourage the use of, and lobby for better, sustainable transport networks including public transport, cycle routes, footways and public rights of way
Obj. No.	Community facilities and amenities
11	Support the village's key community services and facilities
12	Ensure adequate provision for Parish children to attend the local school
13	Facilitate the development of new football facilities and encourage appropriate use of Green Belt land for sensitively designed outdoor leisure
Obj. No.	Natural and historic environment
14	Make the most of Watton-at-Stone's rural aspect and landscape setting, protecting key views
15	Maintain and enhance nature conservation, wildlife and biodiversity
16	Protect the historic fabric, character, and rural identity of the village and Parish of Watton-at-Stone, including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and the Conservation Area and its setting
Obj. No.	Support for business
17	Support appropriate development for local businesses and employment opportunities, including home working

Table 1 Objectives relating to each section in the Neighbourhood Plan

4. Policies Map

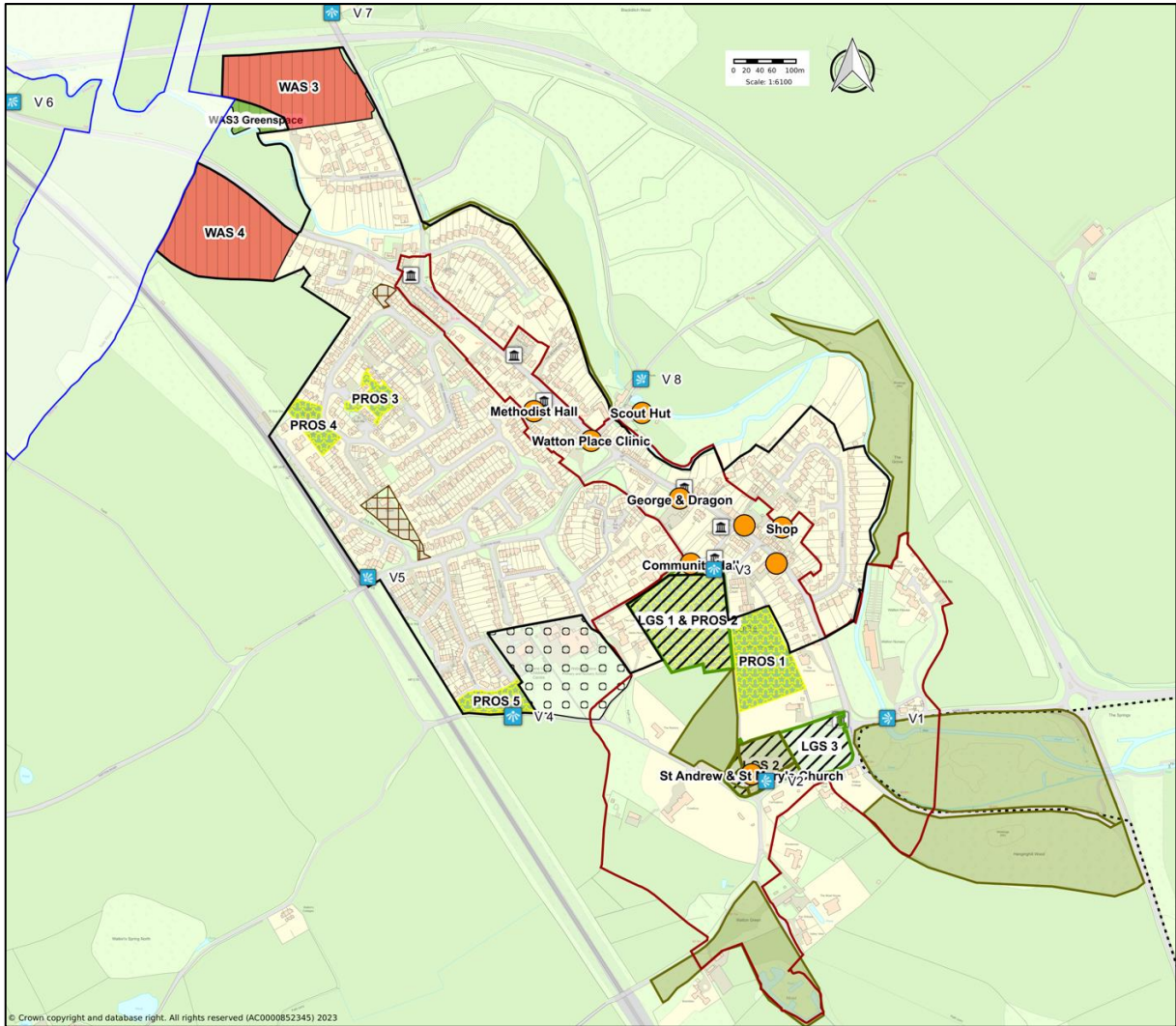


Figure 6 – Policies Map

Note: An A1 size version of this Policies Map with key can be found on [East Herts Council website page for Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan](#).

Watton-at-Stone Policies Map Key















<p>Neighbourhood Plan Area</p> 	<p>Village Boundary</p> 
<p>Housing Development Sites</p> 	<p>WAS3 Greenspace</p> 
<p>Historic Park & Garden (Woodhall Park)</p> 	<p>Local Wildlife Sites</p> 
<p>Conservation Area</p> 	<p>Local Green Spaces</p> 
<p>Brownfield Land</p>  WAS 5	<p>Protected Recreational Open Space</p> 
<p>Non-designated Heritage Assets</p> 	<p>Community Assets</p> 
<p>Primary and Nursery School</p> 	<p>Protected Views</p> 

Figure 7 – Policies Map Key

5. Development Strategy Masterplan and Design Codes

Development Strategy Masterplan

5.1 Through the initial stages of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and the responses made by the residents to the consultation events, it was felt necessary to develop an overall vision for the village in the form of a masterplan. This is represented in an artist's impression (see Figure 8). This emerged from gaining an understanding of the village, its assets, its needs, heritage and consideration of the thoughts and aspirations obtained through the engagement with the community. This masterplan creates a framework which provides form and purpose to the different areas, connectivity and plots of land.

5.2 The factors affecting the physical containment of the village are the bypass to the north and east, the railway line to the west and Church Lane to the south. These have been used to plan the future shape of the village. Through the centre of this area runs the High Street which has a strong heritage value with a number of key buildings and amenities. Running parallel to the High Street in a sinuous route is the River Beane, a chalk stream of ecological importance. The Beane also creates the setting for extensive open woodland, public green areas and an accompanying flood zone.

5.3 Engagement with the community has identified the need for a number of new amenities. These have been carefully integrated into the overall vision both complementing the existing and embracing new development. These include improved provision of youth sports, completion of circular paths and enhancement of the natural environment.

5.4 Within the built area of the village there exist a number of brownfield sites which are ideal for new housing development. These are seen as a priority. There are also two open-field sites which lie within the physical containment mentioned above, which have been deemed suitable for future housing developments and, subsequently, release from the current Green Belt boundary.

5.5 These sites present the opportunity for new sustainable housing to serve the growing needs of the village and to support the existing amenities, services, businesses and shops. The vision aspires to introduce a variety and mix of housing types which are within well-designed developments both in keeping with the existing village vernacular as well as being innovative and appropriate for today's society.

5.6 The new physical connections through and between these new developments and onto adjoining existing paths is seen as a fundamental step in ensuring a well-connected village, where everyone is encouraged to walk and cycle.

5.7 This approach of creating an overall vision, along with the accompanying policies and design code, establishes a long-term vision for Watton-at-Stone, supporting the village to grow within its limits and providing an attractive place for all ages of people to live and for the community to prosper.

5.8 The master plan in Figure 8 shows an aerial view of the village from the north-east. The two new developments envisaged in the masterplan (Policies WAS 3 and WAS 4) are illustrated in the foreground, along with part of the circular walk that will ensure connectivity and integration of the extended village with existing facilities and transport services.



Figure 8 – Artists Impression of overall vision for the village

Design Code

Introduction

5.9 The ambition of the community is for Watton-at-Stone to be a well-designed place considering character, community and climate. The design of previous new housing developments within the village have fallen short of the aspirations of the Parish Council and the community. A descriptive Design Code, based on the National Design Guide issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, has been written into the Neighbourhood Plan in order to address the ambitions for future housing proposals. Criteria in the policies in this plan comes above the Design Code in order of importance, particularly for specific sites.

5.10 The process of producing a neighbourhood plan for Watton-at-Stone has raised many questions on the appetite for additional homes within the village. In order to build significantly more housing, it was necessary to release Green Belt land. Two sites came forward as logical extensions to the village boundary. A number of meetings were held with the landowners and their development teams to discuss the nature of developments on these sites. The Design Code will be instrumental in achieving good design on these two sites as well as on the brownfield sites identified in this Neighbourhood Plan and other sites that will come forward in the future.

5.11 Good design has an impact on all aspects of the built and natural environment, be it a simple extension to an existing house or a large residential or commercial development. This design guide has been produced to provide guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice relative to Watton-at-Stone. [Policy WAS 6](#), instructs that the Watton-at-Stone Design Code is relevant to all developments in Watton-at-Stone. The Code forms a statutory part of the Neighbourhood Plan and should be used to prepare applications for planning permission in the Parish.

5.12 Good design translates into more than the appearance of buildings. It is important in both small residential extensions and large-scale developments where form and materials are introduced, and new streets and spaces are created. Functionality and practicality are

embedded in the design and are as important as the visual quality of a building, village or rural intervention.

5.13 On-street parking in residential areas is seen as undesirable. Infrastructure should be provided for sustainable travel along with the provision of adequate off-street parking in new residential areas for its village location, which leads to more attractive streets. Garages which are often later converted to additional residential accommodation can exacerbate parking problems so flexible and appropriate provision for off street parking provision should be provided in accordance with the Design Code.

5.14 Perhaps the greatest benefits of good design are felt in our own homes and the spaces around them. Well-designed neighbourhoods help to build communities, give residents a sense of belonging, make residents feel safe, and ensure new developments are accepted by the wider community. Often this can be through simple approaches such as natural surveillance, an easy technique created when new streets and public open spaces are overlooked by windows and doors.

5.15 Good design in all developments must be inclusive and accessible for everyone, have a positive impact on the environment, be integrated into its immediate and wider surroundings, provide flexibility for future change, be easily maintained and deliver a return on investment.

5.16 Listed below are some of the key objectives that set the scene for design quality. Throughout the design process they should remain the focus of the creative thinking, with some being more important than others depending on the project. These objectives follow the "ten characteristics" in the National Design Guide: Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

Context

5.17 An understanding of the existing site and its surroundings is key to any development. A detailed site appraisal should be submitted with any planning application for major residential development proposals. It is necessary to consider the physical aspects of the site and this should include topography, existing drainage, natural features, ecology, access points, views and vistas and relation to existing development. The understanding of these components will identify the key constraints and opportunities that may impact on future development.

Design Principles to enhance the surroundings:

- Adjacent building lines of adjoining properties and the size, height, vernacular and materials of any adjacent buildings should be considered when assessing proposals.
- The relationship of the site to the wider street scene and the settlement as a whole including views of the site from open countryside, should be considered when assessing proposals.
- The character and significance of any existing buildings, walls and other structures already on the site should be noted. Their potential for reuse as part of the new development should be fully investigated.
- The contribution made by trees or other planting, landscape and biodiversity features within or adjoining the site should be optimised.
- The appearance of the development must respond to its surroundings, reflect the scale and character of the local area and help to strengthen the character of the village as a whole.
- Where appropriate, new development should be influenced by local history, culture and heritage. Adjacent heritage buildings or features should ultimately be preserved or enhanced by new development and their value used to maximum benefit in maintaining and creating character.

- Existing topography is a key factor within Watton-at-Stone and new development should respond to the contours and be nestled into lower levels to preserve views and the horizon line of the village (the existing line formed by the heights of existing buildings).
- The site's orientation should be assessed and used, where appropriate, to influence the design of climatically efficient housing in response to climate change, both in the overall positioning of the house and internal room layout.
- Development should be well integrated into the village and consideration given to links, paths and other features outside the boundary of the development plot.
- The local vernacular should be assessed, and the design should respond positively towards it. There is also an opportunity for new contemporary and complementary developments within the village, along with a variety of styles, as these will be valued as tomorrow's heritage.
- New development should enhance and encourage existing flora and fauna in the environs of the site.

Identity

5.18 All new developments must be attractive from both outside and from within, they must have character and be distinctive, creating a true sense of place. All design proposals should be informed through contextual analysis of the built, natural, and historic environment and respond to the scale, height, density, urban grain, settlement pattern and layout, massing, type, materials, vernacular styles of construction and landscape details of the surrounding area.

Design Principles to achieve attractiveness and distinctiveness:

- Both the buildings and the landscape need to be visually attractive and somewhere both future and existing residents wish to live.
- The scale, building proportions, street proportions and density need to be carefully studied to develop a comfortable and inclusive environment with regards to height, scale, massing and relationship between buildings.
- The roofscape linked to views from outside the development needs to be studied to ensure the existing village horizon line (the existing line formed by the heights of existing buildings) is not altered and that the new development considers and maximises the backdrop.
- Any development within the village should ensure that a vision of the development is established which brings buildings and open spaces together with their surroundings.
- Development layouts should be easily understood and navigable.
- New developments need to be integrated and accessible extensions of the existing village for both existing residents to be able to pass through and for those living there to feel part of the wider community.
- New places should be memorable and make use of variation, features, views and special parts of the site.

Built Form

5.19 The design of individual buildings, groups of buildings and their relation to streets and open spaces is important in ensuring a successful development within the village. This should consider variation within the plots that follows the evolution, character and urban growth of the established village to ensure that new contemporary and complementary developments are seen and valued as tomorrow's heritage.

Design principles for a coherent pattern of development:

Layout

- The scheme should relate to the scale, character and pattern of surrounding buildings.
- Existing features and amenities should be retained, made accessible and integrated in such a way as to promote physical activity.
- Key views, focal points or landmarks should be identified and considered as part of the development.
- Land should be used efficiently whilst respecting the existing landscape character and green infrastructure. A density of 30 units per hectare should be achieved within any development. This will ensure the efficient use of land, while avoiding over-dense development which is not in keeping with the village character.
- Private amenity space for homes should be regular in shape allowing a good well-proportioned garden. Rear gardens should be a minimum of 10 metres in length and should be generally flat and usable.
- Residential houses should be set back off the road by a minimum of 5 metres if parking is to be allowed on the front garden. Alternatively, the development could include a restrictive condition removing the right to park on front gardens, reducing the minimum set back to be 3 metres. Garages should be a minimum of 6 metres from the back of footpath to allow the opening of the front garage door and a car's length on the driveway. This approach allows the provision of 2 car spaces per property.
- Front gardens should be green and landscaped to provide a soft street scene and improve biodiversity on the site.
- Buildings should be attractive and respond to the street, have active frontages and provide natural surveillance.
- There should be a clear distinction between public and private spaces and spaces between buildings. Left over spaces which have no value must be avoided.
- New development should be sustainable and resilient to climate change by taking into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscape to minimise energy consumption and mitigate water run-off and flood risks.

Building design

- An architectural approach with variation should be established which is contemporary and complementary to the existing range of building types in the village. This needs to extend through to the choice of materials and individual detailing of the facades.
- The heights of buildings should be a maximum of 2 storeys except where topography allows additional height (for example, an additional half storey), and retains the proportions relative to the street context and character of the village. Any buildings on higher ground need to be lower in height and demonstrate that they fit in to the context through sections and visualisations.
- The design of the buildings should relate to the form, height and proportions of existing buildings in the village.
- Building elevations should relate to and take cues from existing well-designed buildings in the village. The arrangement of windows and openings is simple and aligned.
- Corner-turning buildings can provide activity and natural surveillance for streets and spaces that are overlooked by ground floor windows on both facades facing the street and/or space. These should be encouraged and blank gable-ends at corners are to be avoided.

- Where garages and carports have been integrated within the frontage of the building, they must not create blank frontages to streets and spaces.
- Integrated external storage for bins (including recycling facilities) must be considered as part of the architectural and landscape design.

Landscape Design

- Open space must be integrated within the heart of the development and create a positive, attractive and usable amenity space. It must be designed in a location which is easily accessible for residents of the scheme and of the wider village.
- Planting should be used to soften the mass of the built form and enhance the overall development. The choice of planting should add character and biodiversity to the development.
- Trees should be carefully designed into the public domain to enhance streets and spaces with consideration to their mature size.
- Open amenity spaces should provide for all members of the community and be designed to be inclusive. Where appropriate, spaces should be multifunctional to get the best value out of the external spaces.
- An in-perpetuity maintenance plan must be put in place to ensure the natural development of planting and trees as part of the value and character of the development.
- Pedestrian and cycle paths need to be integrated within the development, across and outside its boundary to ensure adjoining links to surrounding streets, spaces and access to sustainable transport.
- Paths should be accessible for all with a maximum gradient of 1 in 20, wherever possible. Their widths should be relative to their use and significance.
- The paving and surfacing materials proposed for footpaths, cycleways and vehicle highways are robust and durable for the street type proposed.
- Lighting should be considered on main linking paths to encourage use and enhance the perception of safety.
- Fence lines at key development entrances and abutting open recreation space should be avoided - these should be dealt with through appropriate layout of the buildings, green infrastructure and structural landscape. The length of any such fencing must be minimised.
- Edges abutting the open countryside should be designed to create an integrated soft edge.

Movement

5.20 All new developments must promote healthy lifestyles by linking to destinations outside the development by walking and cycling. This should be achieved through the creation of connecting paths and the new village circular path. The layout must be pedestrian-friendly, comfortable and attractive for people to leave their houses and choose to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than using their car for movements within the confines of the village.

Design principles for accessibility and ease of moving around:

- The scheme should have a network of streets, cycleways and footpaths which connect to each other and to neighbouring land. All routes should connect, be appropriate in width and provide direct pedestrian and cycle links to local amenities within the village, such as the school, bus stops and train station.
- New streets should have a logical order and a street hierarchy which are expressed by their width, built enclosure, frontage, parking arrangements, materials and street

planting. Footpath widths should also respond to anticipated movement patterns and general usage. This can include shared space where appropriate.

- The design and character of the streets should promote low vehicular speeds by introducing shared surfaces in cul de sacs and integrated natural methods of traffic calming, where appropriate.
- Streets and spaces should be convenient, safe and easy for all to use, including wheelchair users. The amount of street furniture should be kept to a minimum.
- Access should be provided to local services, facilities and open spaces. The design of these links should promote social interaction and contribute to health and wellbeing.
- A sufficient level of well-integrated and imaginative solutions for car and bicycle parking should be integrated into the design both on and off the street, considering the use of green infrastructure.
- Each property must have its own off-street parking. Garages and car ports should be carefully integrated within building frontages so as not to break up the enclosure or the definition of the street.
- Parking should not be a dominant visual element. It should not take the place of front gardens. Extensive areas of hard standing and car-dominated frontage should be avoided.
- All parking areas should be located to enable surveillance from adjoining properties. Rear parking courts should only be considered when all on-street options have been exhausted, ensuring they are small in scale, and avoid a large expanse of hard landscaping.
- Parallel parking should not be located at the front of a development as it detracts from the overall visual character and creates an abundance of hardstanding.
- Adequate visitor parking spaces must be located throughout the development and should be easy to recognise.

Nature

5.21 Watton-at-Stone village is set within the Hertfordshire countryside and within the Green Belt. Any new development must enhance the natural setting, improve biodiversity through a considered environmental design which considers ecosystems, the way people live and green and blue infrastructure.

Design principles for enhancing and optimising biodiversity:

- Biodiversity should preferably be enhanced by a minimum of 10% with reference to the [Environment Act 2021](#). Schemes should be delivered that lead to no net loss of habitat, as required by [A Green Future](#) (the government's 25 year environment plan.)
- The physical features and topography of the site should be used to their best advantage and the development should be integrated with the local landscape character.
- The development should strengthen and retain existing features of biodiversity and ecological value such as hedgerows, ditches and watercourses and their species.
- A joined-up network of open spaces should be located where existing and new residents are able to have easy access to promote physical activity in addition to creating new habitats to increase biodiversity value.
- Green and wildlife corridors, including provision for hedgehog highways, should be designed to extend through the development.
- The scheme should incorporate sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the development in an imaginative way with any attenuation areas integrated into the layout, doubling as amenity space and not segregated. This could include open swales, rain gardens (see [Appendix I – Glossary of Terms](#)) and rainwater

harvesting. SuDS features should be located so as not to reduce useable designated public open space.

- Trees and soft landscaping should be incorporated into the design that reflect the layout and character of the street. Species selected for the scheme should be appropriate to the environment and to their location, both at the time of planting and once mature.
- Climate change measures should be considered as part of the overall scheme and with individual interventions.
- Where appropriate, the landscape and material design should consider measures to reduce air pollution.
- An optimum balance between nature and people needs to be determined, based on the assets of the site and the way in which it is envisaged that people will interact within it. This includes areas for play and recreation promoting health, wellbeing and access to nature.
- An appropriate maintenance and management regime should be put in place which considers nature and biodiversity.
- Each house should have integrated rainwater butts to capture rainwater for gardening purposes.

Public Spaces

5.22 The quality of open space and the way in which new streets and spaces are designed has a direct effect on how people feel about a place. The whole community benefits from a commitment to usable green space. Access to open space is also shown to have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of those able to take advantage of it.

Design principles for safe, social and inclusive public spaces:

- A clear and permeable (accessible) hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces should be provided, to create safe and convenient ease of movement by all users. This should include and link to a well-defined network of green spaces and access to areas outside of the development area.
- Streets and spaces should be overlooked, creating a positive relationship between fronts and backs of buildings, with clearly defined public and private space.
- The location of open spaces within new development, needs to be integrated, to ensure they are well used, passed through and a focal point for the community. Open space on the perimeter of development plots should be avoided.
- Attractive outdoor spaces should be created that are suitable for all ages, to promote interaction, inclusivity, that provide social spaces for the community to rest, gather and meet and that support facilities for physical activity, including seating and cycle parking. This should include consideration for outdoor working and studying areas.
- A high-quality public realm should be established, with well-managed and maintained public areas including the site's natural features and topography.
- A range of street typologies should be developed with different scales and characters, and with strategically positioned open spaces where people can meet, play and socialise.
- Open space must be of an appropriate size, shape and layout to meet the needs of the scheme's residents.
- Amenity spaces must not be compromised by the location of parking areas, garages and refuse storage areas.
- Elements such as light columns, sign poles and seating should be designed, appropriate and kept to a minimum to avoid clutter.

- Street furniture positions should be coordinated so they align within one another within public spaces and streets.
- Lighting should be used to create safe, inviting routes and spaces but excessive lighting should be avoided.
- All parking solutions and space to accommodate street trees must be thoroughly considered early in the design process.
- Cycle stands for public use should be provided at the edges of key open spaces and playgrounds.

Uses

5.23 The development areas offer an opportunity for high quality innovative designs which both respond to the village context as well as providing diversity, variety, choice and a wide range of house types and tenures.

Design principles for mixed and integrated design:

- Each development should be of mixed tenure with different housing types interspersed rather than segregated. This will ensure inclusivity and richness in the design.
- The currently proposed development sites within the village are suitable for residential development. Any other proposed uses will need to ensure they are viable and do not detract for the current amenities, services, businesses and shops.
- A mix of property sizes and types with 1-4 bedrooms, starter homes and bungalows are deemed appropriate. Blocks of flats are not considered appropriate so any proposed flats will need to be of exceptional design and in character within the village, especially on the current suggested development plots on the edge of the Green Belt.
- The needs of all users must be taken into account when designing access to and from dwellings, open spaces and other landscape features.
- Different house types should be considered, including those for different ages, families, multi generation living, home-working and opportunities for self-build and custom-build. Standard house types need to be developed and reimagined to respond to changes in living style, accentuated due to Covid 19, including the need for home-working space and facilities for extended family groups.
- Opportunities for special forms or buildings, responding to their intended uses, should be considered as part of the masterplan and design process to help with corner units and specific plot conditions.
- Individual dwellings must be designed to be flexible, capable of adaptation to meet the changing needs of residents in the future – such as needing to adapt a home to reflect a loss of mobility, adapting a home to allow home-working or caring for others.
- The quality of affordable housing should be as good as that of open-market housing, including how it looks aesthetically, to encourage social inclusion and community cohesion.

Homes and buildings

5.24 New housing must be both attractive and functional and all aspects of providing a good living environment should be considered in the overall internal and external layout.

Design principles for functional, healthy and sustainable places:

- Places should be safe, secure and welcoming for all, including the elderly and disabled.
- The needs of all potential users of the development should be understood and addressed to ensure inclusive design.

- Safe communities should be created, reducing the likelihood of crime and antisocial behaviour by utilising Secured by Design (SBD) guidance and seeking accreditation to SBD by contacting the local [Crime Prevention Design Advisor](#).
- Integrated refuse and recycling bins should be provided. This will also help to create a sense of order and reduce litter and vandalism.
- Collection facilities for dog waste refuse should be provided, located in appropriate locations adjacent to public open spaces.
- Living spaces within houses should look out onto streets and spaces, increasing natural surveillance and creating a relationship with the external environment.
- There should be a clear demarcation between public and private land. Residential buildings should be adequately set back from footpaths ensuring the creation of defensible space.
- All buildings should be fronted by main entrances/front doors which provide direct access to the street or space, helping to activate the public realm.
- All residential units must have adequate outdoor amenity. Target garden size should be a minimum of 100 square metres for individual houses, with minimum garden length of 10 metres, and should be well laid out for maximum use, optimising orientation and sunlight. Other types of gardens such as communal gardens can be considered for different forms of residential development.
- Where new development backs on to the rear gardens of existing housing, the back to back distances of the windows of the proposed dwelling to the windows of the existing dwellings should be a minimum of 25 metres, wherever possible.
- Boundary treatments for secure and private amenity space must be considered as part of the design and plot layout. Long elevations of fences along streets must be avoided. Gable walls and long fence lines should be avoided along key movement paths and corridors.
- New Green Belt boundaries should be clearly defined and, as appropriate, enable views and connections to the countryside. Density should be used to create enclosure and define open spaces, responding to the nature of the site and its immediate context.
- Sufficient space and accessibility must be provided for bins and refuse as part of the design of each house. These storage areas need to be convenient for residents and attractive where they can be seen from streets and spaces. Consideration should be given to collective refuse methods for specific items of recycling.
- Utilities and their required infrastructure need to be designed into the built form of each house rather than a bolt-on afterwards.
- Utility boxes, cable runs, manholes and maintenance access points should be integrated positively into the overall scheme and should not conflict with landscape features, tree planting and/or the design of the public realm.
- All new developments must include the installation and provision of superfast fibre broadband to each housing unit.
- Cycle storage must be integral to the design of the scheme and individual houses to ensure bikes are easily accessible and secure, to encourage cycling.
- The internal layout of buildings should be designed, where possible, so that habitable rooms and amenity space do not face noise sources, such as roads or railway lines.
- External activities such as play areas should be located close to the properties they serve, but far enough away to avoid noise disturbance.

Resources

5.25 The opportunity should be taken to develop new homes that are truly sustainable, which are accessible by sustainable modes, conserve natural resources and are economic to live in for the inhabitants.

5.26 Developments should mitigate climate change by working towards zero carbon, adapting to climate change and meeting targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This may be through measures including:

- Adherence to high standards of energy efficiency including optimal levels of thermal insulation, passive ventilation and cooling and passive solar design;
- The use of renewable and low-carbon energy supply systems, and connection to low carbon heat networks;
- The efficient use of natural resources in new buildings; and
- Forms of development which encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport instead of journeys by private car.

5.27 Developments should achieve the following:

- Developments should meet and seek to exceed current national and local policy in relation to sustainability and carbon reduction. A 31% carbon reduction improvement upon the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document Part L 2013 or any higher standard required under subsequent national planning policy or Building Regulations is recommended;
- A minimum provision of 50% on-site renewables (where this would equate to at least 50% of new homes having either ground or air source heat pumps or Photovoltaic panels (PV) installed as part of the roof construction) (see also guidance in [East Herts District Plan Sustainability SPD March 2021](#));
- Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) and overheating risk performance should be calculated for proposed new dwellings and a recognised quality protocol implemented which ensures that the 'as built' performance of the homes matches this calculation (e.g., current Building Regulations);
- All proposed residential units should achieve a water efficiency standard of no more than 110 litres per person per day as calculated using the methodology in Building Regulations Approved Document G, in accordance with District Plan Policy WAT4 or achieve any higher standard than this that is required under subsequent national planning policy or Building Regulations.

5.28 All proposed developments should demonstrate through Sustainability Statements how they will contribute to mitigating climate change, adapt to its impacts and contribute to meeting targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by means of the above measures.

5.29 The Neighbourhood Plan Area falls within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in HCC's Adopted Minerals Local Plan. It contains the most concentrated deposits of sand and gravel in Hertfordshire and is identified as a Mineral Safeguarding Area. Proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan Area may not be determined by EHDC until HCC has been given the opportunity to comment on whether the proposals would unacceptably sterilise mineral resources.

Design principles for sustainable development:

- All schemes must adopt sustainable development principles including:
 - Reducing energy use and the need for energy supply;
 - Using renewable energy sources;
 - Choosing 'low impact' and local building materials from sustainable sources which are high quality, built to last and have recycled content where possible;

- Minimising levels of waste arising from development; and
- Prioritising the use of brownfield land.
- Thought should be given to the impacts and requirements of the Building Regulations, in particular Fire Safety (Part B), Conservation of Fuel and Power (Part L), and Access to and Use of Buildings (Part M).
- The scheme layout should consider passive solar design through good orientation, good insulation and natural ventilation.
- All developments should be designed not to use natural gas to comply with current Government proposals for 2025.
- A construction management plan is recommended as a useful way of demonstrating the process of building the development and any impacts on adjacent housing and adjacent natural resources – e.g. habitats, ecology and the River Beane.
- The following environmental issues should all be considered as part of the design:
 - Air quality;
 - Water consumption and quality;
 - Drainage, attenuation and rainwater harvesting;
 - Sewerage;
 - Noise;
 - Light pollution;
 - Waste;
 - Digital signals; and
 - Contamination.

Lifespan

5.30 These design code principles are key to the sustainable future of Watton-at-Stone village, ensuring that all developments are well built and last the test of time.

Design principles made to last:

- Long term stewardship by landowners, communities and local authorities should be promoted.
- Buildings and landscapes should be robust and easy to maintain.
- New and emerging technologies should be used.
- Designs should allow multi generation living.
- Designs should anticipate the need for changes in buildings and outdoor spaces.
- Places should be designed that function well today, last for the future and are easy to adapt to changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances at any time.
- Buildings should be constructed that are flexible, to accommodate changing needs.
- Buildings and spaces should be designed and materials should be used that can be maintained over time and that will not deteriorate with age.
- Account should be taken of possible future development in the local area.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Note on Linked References:

Linked references to Policies in this Neighbourhood Plan are highlighted bold, blue, and underlined. References to policies in other plans are not highlighted.

Links to Appendices in this Neighbourhood Plan are highlighted bold and blue.

Housing Development Strategy

Sustainable housing

6.1 Watton-at-Stone Parish Council is committed to meeting the housing requirement as set out in Policy VILL1 of the East Herts District Plan. Under this policy, Watton-at-Stone is categorised as a Group 1 village and needs to increase its housing stock by 10% during the sixteen-year period between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033. The requirement figure quoted in the District Plan for Watton-at-Stone is at least 92 homes.

6.2 Watton-at-Stone is one of three Group 1 villages in East Hertfordshire which are inset from the Green Belt. These villages have been encouraged by East Herts District Council to consider accommodating additional development above the 10% requirement in their Neighbourhood Plans, especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits. In the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the opportunity has been taken to provide for the future growth of the village by exceeding the prescribed 10%, in return for significant community benefits for the village.

6.3 East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 (III.) accepts that there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, in order to accommodate an extension of the village to achieve the housing target required in the policy. National policy (the NPPF) has since confirmed that where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies (in this case, East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1), detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.

6.4 Paragraph 140 of the NPPF advises that, in order to conclude that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, all other reasonable options for meeting housing need should have been examined fully. This includes making sure that as much use as possible has been made of suitable brownfield sites and under-utilised land and that density of development has been optimised. Both requirements were an integral part of the site assessment process carried out during the preparation of the Plan.

6.5 A number of sites were identified within the village boundary where development was likely to occur. Some of those sites have gained planning permission during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and some of those proposed developments have completed and been occupied since 1st April 2017. Other brownfield sites where development is supported are also identified. All of these contribute towards the 10% growth target and are set out in [Policy WAS 1](#).

6.6 At the first village meeting held in 2016, despite a preference for development to be only on brownfield sites, it was accepted by a majority of those villagers attending that it would be necessary to consider further development in Watton-at-Stone. This decision would necessitate an encroachment into the Green Belt that surrounds the village. The question of where this development should be has been the most time-consuming and difficult part of preparing the Plan.

6.7 To inform the work, there were two significant documents in the public domain. Firstly, the EHDC Strategic Land Availability Report published in March 2017 and secondly the East Herts Green Belt Review undertaken by Peter Brett Associates in September 2015. From

these documents, the Steering Group identified a number of potential sites for development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and decided it would be preferable to obtain an independent evaluation of their suitability for development. The Group applied for, and successfully obtained, a technical support package from Locality who commissioned the review from AECOM. Their Site Assessment report was delivered in March 2018.

6.8 The AECOM report confirmed that of the 21 possible places identified by the Steering Group for development, two sites could be released from the Green Belt which, if restrictions were imposed on them, would be suitable for the required development. The report, which can be downloaded from the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#) concluded that it could not determine a preference for one site over the other.

6.9 These sites were discussed with the potential developers at a series of meetings and the results contributed to the design of an overall master plan which is described in Section 5 Development Strategy Masterplan and Design Codes. An outline of the Neighbourhood Plan was first proposed at a public meeting held in May 2019 and then further developed and presented at the final Exhibition held in January 2020.

6.10 The thinking behind the masterplan is that the southern boundary of the village is protected by the Conservation Area, the western boundary is formed by the railway line and no development should be allowed beyond it. The northern and eastern boundaries are less well defined at present and can be improved as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. Small extensions to the Village Development Boundary are made in the Neighbourhood Plan and the extended Village Development Boundary will follow the amended Green Belt boundary as detailed in WAS 2 Amendment to Village Development Boundary/Green Belt Boundary.

6.11 The eastern approach from Walkern Road looks along an important view across the bypass and the River Beane and enters the village abruptly with houses of a modern design from a side view. The open field alongside the end house (25 Walkern Road) is of limited agricultural value and is constrained by the bypass. This has led to the selection of WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road as a site suitable for development of up to 60 homes. The view across the valley needs to be protected by limiting height of development to no more than 2.5 storeys.

6.12 Development on the northern approach to the village on the Stevenage Road is presently rather stark and can be improved by a well-designed development on site allocation WAS4. The field on the eastern side of the road, Rush Meads, meets the River Beane and is a flood plain. It is an area that would benefit from better management. That part of the field on the western side of the Stevenage Road (known as Malting House Field) which is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and below the 65 metre contour line, is identified for development in [Policy WAS 4](#). Except for a small parcel of land, the site boundary follows the 65 metre contour line across Malting House Field, to ensure that inappropriate development will not occur on the brow of the hill which should continue to appear rural in the valued views on the entrance to the village from Stevenage and across the river valley. A requirement of the development of WAS 4 would be to incorporate and deliver natural planting to identify the village boundary and to soften the approach from that side. The planting scheme should, moreover, ensure a new and improved gateway into the village, taking the southern entrance to the village as inspiration.

6.13 There should be a defined green space as a focal point for WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road. Through paths and green corridors should connect to existing woodland. Connectivity should flow to the village and up to the station.

6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Event held at the end of November 2016 revealed that most respondents wanted to see new development at an average housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare (DPH) which is comparable to Hazeldell, Great Innings and Motts Close and indicated that the higher density of the Gatekeepers development (50 DPH) should not be repeated. There was a clear view that any new housing development should be in character with the existing village properties, be of traditional brick construction

and have high energy efficiency. The majority of respondents wanted to see a mix of property types (2 to 4 bedrooms, starter homes and bungalows) with a clear preference for a maximum of 2 storeys. Gardens should be provided which would be big enough for families with appropriate landscaping and screening between properties.

WAS 1 Sustainable Housing

I. Sites to accommodate at least 92 homes have been identified, within or adjacent to the village development boundary, to enable the delivery of a sustainable housing strategy in accordance with the East Herts District Plan and manage housing growth tailored to the needs and context of the parish. These homes may be built between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033. The target will be achieved through a combination of the following:

- **Completion of 4 dwellings since 1st April 2017 (3/13/1503/FP, 3/15/0719/FUL and 3/16/1227/FUL);**
- **Construction of 3 dwellings with planning permission:**
 - **3/19/2417/FUL 37 Station Road - Erection of 2 dwellings to include, 4 car parking spaces, 2 garden/cycle stores and associated accesses**
 - **3/19/2222/FUL Land adjacent to BT exchange, High Street - Erection of 1, 3 bedroomed dwelling with garage and parking;**
- **Two sites capable of accommodating up to 60 homes each, see the two housing site allocation Policies WAS 3 Walkern Road and WAS 4 Stevenage Road;**
- **Development of Brownfield Sites within the village boundary, identified in Policy WAS 5 para I. (WAS 5a and WAS 5b) will accommodate 17 homes.**

II. The two site allocations WAS 3 and WAS 4 provide for a greater number of homes than required in the District Plan given the encouragement in East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1, to accommodate additional development, especially where it contributes to the delivery of community benefits. These benefits will be sought according to Policy WAS 26 Spending Priorities and may be:

- **in kind;**
- **as a consequence of providing additional footfall;**
- **through Section 106 Agreements or other negotiated benefits.**

Amendment to the village development boundary/Green Belt boundary

6.15 The Amendment to the village development boundary to accommodate the two proposed development sites will follow the amended Green Belt boundary see map showing the boundary amendments and the two development sites is provided in Figure 9. The new boundary reflects existing physical features, where possible, such as roads, the river and the railway line. The western boundary of site WAS 3 will be created with appropriate planting of native species, to form a clearly recognisable and permanent new boundary. The western boundary of site WAS 4 is mapped to align with the parish boundary between Watton-at-Stone and Aston. In both cases, there is currently no physical boundary on the ground. These boundaries will be marked by landscaping, including field boundary trees as a condition of development on both sites.

WAS 2 Amendment to Village Development Boundary/Green Belt Boundary

I. The designated Watton-at-Stone Village Development Boundary separates the village from the Green Belt. East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 allows a Group 1 village preparing a neighbourhood plan to redraw its boundaries to accommodate additional housing development. Paragraph 140 of the NPPF allows neighbourhood plans to make changes to the Green Belt Boundary established in the strategic policies, where needed. The Green Belt Boundary is amended in order to extend the Village Development Boundary to include the two housing site allocations WAS 3 Walkern Road and WAS 4 Stevenage Road and as detailed on the Policies Map (see [Figure 6](#)).

II. The Village Development Boundary will follow the Green Belt Boundary.



Figure 9 – Village Development Boundary Amendment

6.16 Two sites of similar sizes are identified in the following two policies, to accommodate up to 120 homes. The policies identify specific requirements. Further details are provided in the Design Code in Section 5.

6.17 The two large site allocations, together with homes recently constructed or completed and the brownfield sites that are identified in [Policy WAS 5](#), comprise the preferred growth strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan which was assessed in the Environmental Report prepared by AECOM (2021). The report concluded that significant positive effects are anticipated in relation to population and housing as the growth strategy will meet and exceed strategic growth targets set out in the East Herts District Plan, whilst both large sites remain within walking distance of the High Street. This will help to improve choice and potential affordability of new homes in the village and provide community benefits.

Walkern Road site

6.18 [Policy WAS 3](#) allows for a design of a maximum of 60 houses. In line with the housing needs of the Parish, only the area indicated on the Policies Map as 'Housing

Development Site' should be released from the Green Belt. An area providing public amenity greenspace indicated on the Policies Map as 'WAS3 Greenspace' will remain in the Green Belt providing a buffer between the housing development and the river. This policy provides specific criteria for the development of the site. Criteria in the policies come above the Design Code in order of importance for specific sites.

6.19 The new Green Belt boundary extends the village north up Walkern Road to the A602 and westwards towards the Aston Parish boundary. The new Green Belt boundary then cuts south to the tree belt along the River Beane and south eastwards back toward the village boundary in East Herts District Plan 2011-2033, enclosing the housing on Beane Road.

6.20 Through paths and green corridors are to be provided. Connectivity should flow both to the village centre and up to the station. A new pedestrian/cycle bridge will be required to connect this site to the High Street/Stevenage Road, via a pedestrian/cycle path across the River Beane and the neighbouring field, and from there through Site WAS 4 towards the railway station, contributing to both a circular village footway (see [Policy WAS 10](#)) and the connectivity of Site WAS 3 with sustainable local transport. This feature of the scheme will contribute positive mitigation to the potential increase in traffic resulting from housing growth (AECOM 2021). The development of Site WAS 3 will be linked to the provision of this bridge and path by way of negative condition(s) and/or Section 106 obligation(s).

6.21 The development should be set back from Walkern Road in line with existing buildings. Buildings should be no more than 2 storeys or by exception 2.5 storeys where this aligns with the Design Code (Building Design Section) and be designed and built in accordance with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Design Code.

6.22 In accordance with the risk-based approach to flood risk in paragraphs 162-167 of the NPPF, any planning application for the site will need to be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment.



Figure 10 – Masterplan Extract for Walkern Road Site WAS 3



Figure 11 – Walkern Road Site WAS 3

WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road

Development of this site will be supported, provided that it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code, and other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and meets all the following specific criteria:

- a) Given the site area and the target of 30 units per hectare, this site is suitable for 60 homes.
- b) A physical boundary for the village and Green Belt should be created to form the western edge of the site with appropriate planting of native species, including field boundary trees, to create a clearly recognisable and permanent new boundary.
- c) The frontage and set-back of the development along Walkern Road should follow the line of existing housing to the south. The space between Walkern Road and the housing must be landscaped and not be dominated by parking.
- d) At the entrance of the site on Walkern Road, a scheme to reduce traffic speed is essential. A pedestrian/cyclist crossing point, as part of the circular path, to link to the opposite open green space and a new linking footpath along Walkern Road towards the village centre are also required.
- e) Buildings should not be over 2 storeys in height or 2.5 storeys where this aligns with the Design Code exceptions.
- f) The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 7, see [Policy WAS 18](#)) means that the design must ensure that the new buildings do not break the horizon line (the line formed by the heights of existing buildings) of the village and also that the buildings and landscape add interest in the foreground of the view.
- g) The site lies in an area of Archaeological Significance where District Plan Policy HA3 applies.
- h) A mix of house types should be included, and consideration given to ensuring positive facades are achieved overlooking public and communal space and that the development as a whole is welcoming with a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- i) An efficient, effective and well-maintained SuDs system should be designed and implemented to ensure no polluting run-off flows into the River Beane and to provide a multi-functional recreational space, with high ecological value, overlooked by the new homes.
- j) The public spaces should have well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting which provide structure, interest and character. Paths and green corridors will connect to existing green areas beyond the development site.
- k) The development must include a connecting footpath that links from the entrance of the site to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Beane, as part of the wider circular path around the village (see [Policy WAS 10](#)).
- l) In accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 III. the Neighbourhood Plan is accommodating additional development to the policy requirement, which will deliver community benefits. Specifically, this development will be linked (by way of negative conditions and/or Section 106 obligations) to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Beane, across the field to the Stevenage Road to connect with the pedestrian access to Moorymead Close and the railway station provided through site WAS 4 Stevenage Road (see [Policy WAS 10](#)). The new pedestrian/cycle bridge must be designed and constructed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.

WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road continued

- m) The Environment Agency's approval of the bridge design must be secured before any development takes place on this site and a management plan to ensure the upkeep for the bridge and pedestrian/cycle path must be agreed before any part of the development is first occupied.
- n) The provision of public amenity greenspace (which will remain in the Green Belt) will provide a buffer between the housing development and the River Beane. The greenspace will include public pedestrian/cycle access over the footbridge that will cross the river and link to the new circular path (see criterion l). The space could also be combined with SuDs to make the best use of land.

Stevenage Road site

6.23 [Policy WAS 4](#) allows for a design of a maximum of 60 houses. In line with the housing needs of the Parish, only the area indicated on the plan should be released from the Green Belt. This policy provides specific criteria for the development of the site. Criteria in the policies come above the Design Code in order of importance for specific sites.

6.24 The new Green Belt boundary extends northwest from the existing village boundary along Stevenage Road until it meets the boundary with Aston Parish. The site allocation cannot go beyond the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area. At this point there is no definition on the ground of the Green Belt boundary. The new boundary turns southwest and follows a straight line almost to the corner of the tree belt along the railway line and intersects the 65 metre contour at which point it goes east to the most southerly point of no. 12 Stevenage Road where it meets the old village boundary. Large sections of this new boundary will require a landscaping scheme to create the permanent new village and Green Belt boundary.

6.25 A new pedestrian/cycle path will be required, linking with the path from Site WAS 3 at one end and providing connectivity into Moorymead Close and, from there, to the station. The development of Site WAS 4 will be linked to the provision of this path by way of negative condition(s) and/or Section 106 obligation(s). This path will form part of the new circular village path (see [Policy WAS 10](#)). Houses should front onto the road, in continuity with existing development on the adjoining land.

6.26 In accordance with the risk-based approach to flood risk in paragraphs 162-167 of the NPPF, any planning application for the site will need to be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment.

6.27 No development should be permitted above the 65 metre contour line except for a small deviation to line up with the existing boundary at the back of Motts Close. This restraint is based on a thorough understanding of the topography of the village, important views and ensuring that the new development is nestled into the village. It will also help to maintain the openness of the countryside. The southern part of this land is on steeply sloping ground, which is very visible (see [Policy WAS 18](#) Protected Views 6 and 7) as the village is entered from the north, from Stevenage or from Walkern. Buildings should be no more than two storeys and be designed and built in accordance with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Design Code. In addition, a landscape and visual impact study will be required to inform the design of the development, having regard to the impact of development on the character of the village and the openness of the countryside, as identified in the Watton-at-Stone Site Assessment Report (AECOM 2018).



Figure 12 – Masterplan Extract of Stevenage Road Site WAS 4



Figure 13 – Stevenage Road Site WAS 4

WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road

Development of this site will be supported, provided that it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code and other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and meets all the following specific criteria:

- a) Given the site area and the target of 30 units per hectare, this site is suitable for 60 homes.
- b) A new physical boundary for the village and Green Belt boundary should be created to form the western edge of the site along the Aston parish boundary and continue until the site boundary meets the village boundary in East Herts District Plan 2011-2033. Appropriate planting of native species to soften the edge of the development should include field boundary trees to create a clearly recognisable new permanent boundary.
- c) The frontage and set-back of the development along Stevenage Road should follow the line of existing housing to the west. The space between Stevenage Road and the housing must be landscaped and not be dominated by parking.
- d) At the entrance of the site on Stevenage Road, a scheme to reduce traffic speed is essential. A pedestrian/cyclist crossing point and a linking footpath along Stevenage Road towards the village centre are also required.
- e) Buildings should not be over two storeys in height and should be built on the flat ground within the site boundary as marked on the Policies Map.
- f) The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 6 and 7, see [Policy WAS 18](#)) means the design must ensure that the new buildings do not break the horizon line of the village (the line formed by the heights of existing buildings) and also the buildings and landscape add interest in the foreground of the view.

WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road continued

- g) A landscape and visual impact study will be required to inform the design of the development, having regard to the impact of development on the character of the village and the openness of the countryside.
- h) The site lies in an area of Archaeological Significance where District Plan Policy HA3 applies.
- i) A mix of house types should be included and consideration given to ensuring positive facades are achieved overlooking public and communal space and that the development as a whole is welcoming, with a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- j) An efficient, effective and well-maintained SuDs system should be designed and implemented to ensure no polluting run-off flows into the River Beane and to provide a multi-functional recreational space, with high ecological value, overlooked by the new homes.
- k) The public spaces should have well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting which provide structure, interest and character.
- l) Green corridors should be created through the site to allow access for wildlife.
- m) The development must be linked (by way of negative condition(s) and/or Section 106 obligation(s)) to the provision of a connecting footpath and central communal green space that links from the crossing point on the Stevenage Road (towards the new pedestrian/cycle bridge to be provided under [Policy WAS 3](#)), up to the southernmost part linking to Moorymead Close and from the train station, as part of the wider circular path around the village (see [Policy WAS 10](#)).
- n) The main open space should be combined with SuDs to make the best use of land; link to the new circular path; and be as central to the development as possible.
- o) In accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 III. the Neighbourhood Plan is accommodating additional development to the policy requirement, which will deliver community benefits. This development will be linked (by way of negative condition(s) and/or Section 106 obligation(s)) to the provision of land for additional football provision preferably on land on Mill Lane in the same ownership (see [Policy WAS 15](#)) or on a suitably located alternative site.

Development on Brownfield Sites

6.28 Brownfield sites were selected as the most popular option for housing development at each stage of consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. Although the Neighbourhood Plan cannot meet its strategic housing requirement just on brownfield sites, the priority in defining the growth strategy was to maximise brownfield development. The former Highways Depot on Station Road and the old Doctors Surgery in Great Innings North are identified as brownfield sites in [Policy WAS 5 I](#). A former haulage yard on Perrywood Lane and the former business unit in Mill Lane were described by residents as dilapidated or eyesores which needed redevelopment. These are identified in [Policy WAS 5 II](#).

6.29 **The Station Road depot:** This brownfield plot is appropriate for up to 15 dwellings, to be designed as an infill development to enhance and complement Moorymead Close. Dwellings should be no more than two storeys. A central green space should be included to act as a focal point for the new dwellings and to enhance connection of the plot to the existing dwellings opposite in Moorymead Close.

6.30 **Mill Lane derelict building:** Development of this viable piece of previously developed land in accordance with the design principles of this Plan is supported and

encouraged as the current building is in a state of poor repair. Flexible use of the building would be supported, such as business or community use on the ground floor. Given the history of the plot with a tall mill, and the location of the plot adjacent to the common land area of the Lammas, this could be of a building of exceptional design which would be unique within the village.



Figure 14 – Previously Developed Land (left) and Brownfield site (right)

WAS 5 Brownfield Sites and Previously Developed Land

I. Development of brownfield sites within the village development boundary will be supported, subject to other policies in this plan, as shown on the Policies Map (Figure 6) as follows:

- WAS 5a: Station Road, former Hertfordshire County Council Depot, to accommodate up to 15 homes
- WAS 5b: Great Innings car park to provide up to two homes in addition to improving the remaining part of the overflow car park for Great Innings residents. A parking management plan to improve the safety and parking on street in this location will be required in accordance with the Benefits Project Plan. This will be achieved through a legal agreement to improve visibility at the junction, preventing parking through a carefully designed landscape scheme. The site could also accommodate a communal electric car charging facility.

II. Two other sites on previously developed land within the Green Belt have been identified as suitable for development in accordance with paragraph 149(g) of the NPPF, where the redevelopment of buildings (excluding temporary buildings) will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings or not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt where that development would contribute to an identified local affordable housing need. These sites are:

- The Mill, on Mill Lane, for mixed use, including employment, which could include a building of exceptional design in this sensitive location adjacent to The Lammas. This site has been abandoned for some time and a creative response for a prominent building with a potential mix of uses and consideration of the improvement of Mill Lane would be supported.
- Perrywood Lane, former haulage yard, for housing. This site could support up to 2 new homes and offers the potential to be contemporary, sustainable and of architectural value given its location on the edge of the village.

Design

6.31 Through extensive consultation, a summary of what the community wishes to ensure for all future development has emerged, as follows:

- any new housing is in keeping with the surrounding area, presenting favourable vistas, enriching the area, lying low in the Beane Valley and protecting the village's historic character and rural identity;
- development is of high-quality design with a mix of house types suitable for the future needs of the village; and
- new development has a density that balances the sensitive semi-rural setting with the efficient use of land and preservation of high-quality agricultural land.

6.32 Reflecting these desires, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code (see Section 5) aims to provide guidance and set expectations for the design of developments in the village. It is based on the "ten characteristics" of the National Design Guide: Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan. Throughout the design process these principles, as expressed in the Design Code, should remain the focus of the creative thinking, as discussed in detail in Section 5 above.

WAS 6 Design Code

The design of all development proposals shall be assessed against the Watton-at-Stone Design Code. The Code forms a statutory part of the Neighbourhood Plan and should be used to prepare applications for planning permission in the Parish (see Section 5 [Development Strategy Masterplan and Design Codes](#)).

Local Housing Need

Housing mix

6.33 There have been two influences on identifying local housing need: the responses from the local community through consultation exercises, and information provided on housing need by EHDC's Housing team. Residents expressed a need for homes with 2 to 4 bedrooms, including starter homes and bungalows. However, local knowledge confirms that 1 bed homes, in particular small houses, are also in demand for downsizing.

6.34 The Steering Group was not able to commission a Housing Needs Survey. However, the following information was supplied by EHDC on 10 January 2019. "Currently, there are 20 households on the Housing Needs Register from the village. The Housing Needs Register has the following information for Watton-at-Stone":

All Applicants who have indicated Watton-at-Stone as a preferred location:

- 1 bed – 191
- 2 bed – 126
- 3 bed – 44
- 4 bed – 13

Applicants who have 75+ points on the Housing Needs Register and indicated Watton-at-Stone as a preferred location:

- 1 bed – 75
- 2 bed – 76
- 3 bed – 31
- 4 bed – 11

WAS 7 Housing Mix

I. Housing mix, as regards tenure, types and sizes, should be in accordance with current and future local housing need and housing market assessments. The priority for smaller Affordable Housing for those in housing need, one and two-bedroomed, should be recognised in the housing mix.

II. Affordable housing for sale or First Homes should be provided in accordance with current government guidance or the local policy position set by East Herts Council.

Rural affordable housing

6.35 There is no statutory definition of affordable housing, but Annex 2 of the NPPF defines it as being housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market and which complies with a provided list of defined tenures.

6.36 The aim of affordable housing is to provide homes for people on modest incomes, who cannot afford to buy or rent a home on the open market. Affordable housing tenures are typically defined as either social rented, affordable rent (approximately 80% of market rent for an area) or intermediate tenures such as intermediate rent and shared ownership. The tenure of the affordable homes will largely reflect the identified needs of the community. New affordable homes help sustain communities by offering local families, couples and single people the chance to stay living in the place where they have strong connections.

6.37 East Herts District Plan Policy HOU4 allows for rural affordable housing on Rural Exception sites. An exception site is defined as one that would not normally gain planning permission for housing, for example, an agricultural farmstead outside the Village Development Boundary of Watton-at-Stone. Development on such sites should be evidenced by the housing needs in Watton-at-Stone Parish and should remain 'affordable' in perpetuity. Planning applications for rural housing which does not comply with East Herts District Plan Policy HOU4 requirements for a rural exception affordable housing scheme or with [Policy WAS 8](#) in this Neighbourhood Plan will not be supported.

6.38 In order to ensure that rural housing is affordable and specific to the local community, [Policy WAS 8](#) describes who these new homes should be provided for.

WAS 8 Rural Affordable Housing

I. For the purposes of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, Local Needs Affordable Housing on rural exception sites will be allocated to persons who:

- (a) have been resident in the Parish of Watton-at-Stone for the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for the affordable housing unit or who have at any time previously resided in the Parish for at least five years, or;**
- (b) have a strong local connection with the Parish of Watton-at-Stone through a close family connection or being employed within the Parish.**

II. If no applicant qualifies under the above criteria, those who are resident in, or have a strong local connection with neighbouring rural parishes will be eligible. In the event that there are no nominations from the rural parishes, then nominations from those in greatest need from any location within the District will be acceptable.

Sustainable, affordable, accessible transport

6.39 It is recognised that the East Herts District Plan and the Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan already have a number of relevant strategic policies which will not be repeated in this Plan. HCC also have a Planning Obligations Toolkit (2021) which provides guidance on introducing sustainable transport into a development. Policies WAS 9 Sustainable Transport Provision and WAS 10 Proposed New Footpath/Cycle Connections are designed to complement those strategic policies and provide policies relevant to the development strategy in the Neighbourhood Plan and the local issues raised in consultation.

6.40 The Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Event held at the end of November 2016 revealed that the traffic implications of additional development were of concern and should be addressed at the planning stage with improvements to the highway provision, bus and rail services and cycle links to the neighbouring area.

6.41 Concern about mitigating the transport impact of new development has been addressed through the location and design of the future development sites, the provision of a sustainable connectivity strategy and specifying off-site works and services to be delivered as part of the development, either directly or through negative conditions or planning obligations. The connectivity element of the development strategy goes a long way to providing relevant provision for walking and cycling facilities to ensure that the new development is properly integrated into the village and reduces the need to travel by car locally.

6.42 Efforts should be made to work with the local authorities to secure improvements at existing bus stops in the village. If the built-up area of the village extends significantly in length along the direction of an existing or future bus route, a new bus stop should be added for new and existing residents of that part of the village. Any new development should have hard-surface shared pedestrian/cycling paths connecting it to the existing and future network of footpaths through the village, including connection to the train station.

6.43 The Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Event held at the end of November 2016 revealed that parking was by far the biggest issue in the village, and many were concerned that the existing parking and traffic issues had not been solved. Adequate off-street parking was seen as essential.

6.44 The following comments are examples of the responses received:

Village parking: "The village halls should be encouraged to open up access to their car parks for public use whenever they are not needed by renters of that hall in question".

Old Doctor's surgery car park in Great Innings: "This brownfield site is currently used as an overflow car park for residents of Great Innings. Given its limited scope for residential development, the current use should be formalised."

6.45 Vehicle parking problems at the station were also highlighted. Yellow lines were introduced on Station Road, which have gone some way to improving the situation. Due to commuting changes during the pandemic, it is currently unclear what the capacity of the car park will need to be in the long term. Further work should be done to encourage the TOC (Train Operating Company) or Network Rail to investigate how additional capacity can be achieved.

WAS 9 Sustainable Transport Provision

I. Maintaining and developing high quality bus and community transport services should be integral to all new developments and should complement the provision of safe walking and cycling routes. These include well-designed and well-located stopping places for existing residents and to serve the new housing developments, and better facilities at bus stops such as real time information and raised kerbing.

II. Projects for such developments e.g. extending the provision of bus services to new housing, could be funded through Section 106 contributions or other funding mechanisms.

III. All new dwellings shall have charging points for electric vehicles or appropriate electricity infrastructure to facilitate installation of a charging point.



Figure 15 – Public Transport in Watton-at-Stone

WAS 10 Proposed New Footpath/Cycle Connections

The following three route connections for pedestrians/cyclists have been identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and would improve connectivity throughout the village. Proposals that would facilitate the delivery of these links will be considered favourably, subject to other policies in this plan. The implementation of these connecting routes could be funded through Section 106 contributions or other funding mechanisms:

- Pedestrian/cycle route to/from the railway station connecting Moorymead Close/Great Innings to Stevenage Road crossing the high part of Malting House Field above WAS 4, through WAS 4, crossing Rush Meads, across the river by a bridge, and through WAS 3 connecting to existing rights of way east of Walkern Road. Where appropriate, this route should be lit for pedestrians and cyclists in a manner that is sensitive to the requirements of nocturnal wildlife.
- Route through the Children's Centre car park to provide a permanent link, available at all times, from Gatekeepers Meadow to Rectory Close linking to the existing public footpath to School Lane
- Link from Gatekeepers Meadow to Church Lane.

Provision of amenities

Consultation feedback

6.46 The responses gathered from the consultation events held in May 2016, November 2016 and January 2020 revealed that respondents were very positive about the range of amenities in the village and acknowledged the strong community spirit that exists.

6.47 A wide range of recreational activities are available within the village and are listed on the [Parish Council website](#). Many of these activities are held at the three halls in the village which are also available for private hire. These include The Nigel Poulton Community Hall, the Memorial Hall and the Methodist Church Hall.

6.48 Eating and drinking services are provided by two local pubs and the Crumbs coffee shop and bakery located at the southern end of the High Street.

6.49 Nevertheless, it was recognised by respondents that there was room for further improvement in sports and play facilities (particularly youth football), medical facilities and school provision.

6.50 Following feedback from the first consultation event, a number of proposals for improved amenities were presented at the consultation event held at the end of November 2016. Many respondents endorsed the proposals and there was a general desire for improved facilities for all age groups. In particular there was agreement that there should be provision for football pitches primarily located on the outskirts of the village. Provision should include specific facilities for youth football and a 3G (Third Generation synthetic surface) playing surface which would reduce the overall number of pitches required but also provide a much-needed training facility.

6.51 In addition, there was very strong support for making improvements to the Scout hut on its existing site. The Scouts' own programme of improvements is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan. Finding ways to improve access to the river and developing a riverside walk was a frequent response.

6.52 A sketch showing a proposal for youth football and the Scout hut is shown below (noting that the ideas represented in the shown in the sketch remain subject to agreement with landowners, planning permission etc).



Figure 16 – Sketch scheme of possible community benefits on Mill Lane

6.53 Further details of the proposals that were consulted on in November 2016 can be seen in the [Consultation Statement](#).

Community Facilities and Amenities

6.54 In accordance with the East Herts District Plan, any release of Green Belt land for development should generate countervailing community benefits. Priority should be given to supporting and enhancing community activities, maintaining and enhancing recreational and other community assets, and supporting local enterprise. Any Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies generated by a development should be allocated to the fullest extent possible to projects either physically located within the Parish or which will directly benefit Parish residents of all ages.

6.55 **The Meadow:** The Meadow is a community asset and should not be built on, although a redesign of the land to enable more efficient use of the space to enlarge the car parking area and/or to redesign the play area would be acceptable. These projects would be well suited for Section 106/CIL monies to be spent on.

6.56 **The Scout hut field:** The land on which the Scout hut (and planned replacement building) is located is a community asset and should not be used for any other purpose although activities complementary to its use by the Scout Association would be acceptable.

6.57 **Youth football:** Suitable sites should be identified to provide for youth football facilities for the village. Consideration should be given to identifying a suitable site further from the centre of the village for adult football to move to from its current location on the Meadow. These projects would be well suited for funding by means of either Section 106/CIL monies or specific funding.

6.58 **The Allotments:** The allotments are a community asset and should not be built on, although an extension of Glebe Court for further elderly residential supported living would be supported, provided the requirements of East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR1 VI can be met.

WAS 11 Valued Community Facilities

I. Existing facilities valued by the community are identified on the Policies Map ([Figure 6](#)) and listed below:

1. George and Dragon public house
2. Budgens supermarket and Post Office
3. Scout hut and land at Mill Lane
4. The Nigel Poulton Community Hall
5. The Memorial Hall (High Street)
6. The Methodist Church
7. Watton Place Clinic
8. The Bull public house
9. St Andrew and St Mary's Church

Each facility and the reason why they are valued is set out in Appendix C – Valued Community Facilities.

II. Permission for a change of use of these facilities would need to be supported by evidence that the facilities were no-longer used with no likelihood that re-use was possible or desirable, or that their active use was to be replaced elsewhere and would still benefit village residents, in accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR8. Alternative provision should be provided within walking or cycling distance of the existing facility.



Figure 17 – From left, the George and Dragon, Londis (now Budgens) and the Scout hut

6.59 The village is fortunate to have a doctor's surgery and with the increase of housing expected in the village, it should become more viable. The current building has access issues and so alternative premises with wheelchair access would be welcomed.

WAS 12 Enhanced Community Facilities

Proposals to improve or enhance community facilities will be supported when they improve the range, quality, suitability and accessibility of facilities for residents, and when the benefits of development outweigh any disadvantages. Contributions towards enhanced youth facilities, football facilities and accessible GP services, collected pursuant to East Herts District Plan Policies CFLR1 and CFLR7, will be welcomed to address any shortfall in the existing provision within the Neighbourhood Plan Area which would be exacerbated as a result of the development.

WAS 13 Maintaining and Improving Health Services

The existing doctors' surgery currently operating from Watton Place Clinic, 60 High Street, also provides an enhanced offer which includes a pharmacist and a private dentist. Proposals which secure the retention or enhancement of these health services will be supported. Proposals that result in the loss of the existing facility will not be supported unless it has been clearly shown that the facility is no longer needed in its current form; the loss would be replaced by new provision in a suitable location; or the proposal is for an alternative community facility, the need for which outweighs the loss.

6.60 The school would be an ideal location for the siting of a 3D artificial pitch which could be used by both the school children and, outside of school hours, the youth football teams.

WAS 14 School Site

The school site identified on the Policies Map (Figure 6) will be reserved for any required school expansion, for outdoor activities or additional buildings related to the school or dual use school/community facilities.

6.61 The school provides important services to the village in addition to the education of its children. The school's admission age has been reduced to age 2 to provide both pre-school and nursery classes. In addition, it runs Breakfast, After School and Holiday clubs and therefore has a working day from 7.30 am to 6 pm for 52 weeks of the year. However, it has no option but to use the existing school buildings for these enhanced services, which are not always suitable. The users of these services would benefit from improved sports facilities

including a 3G pitch which would also contribute to improvements to the children's health. A dedicated building, separated from the main school building with suitable facilities, would also enable the sports facilities to be used by the Youth Football club in the evenings and at weekends.

WAS 15 Sports Facilities

Provision of new or improved facilities for football will be supported in accordance with other policies in this plan. One area of the village where it is proposed these facilities, particularly for young people, could be concentrated is the open space adjacent to Mill Lane. An indicative drawing showing how the site could be arranged is shown in [Figure 16](#). Suitably located alternative sites will also be considered.

6.62 It is recognised that sport is a significant factor in the health and wellbeing of the population. The village is fortunate in having popular sports clubs for a number of disciplines which contribute to a healthier population and a greater community spirit. Any development to the village should not detract from these facilities and every opportunity should be used for their enhancement. The village has dedicated tennis courts, cricket and football pitches which are to be protected and improved or extended upon by any developments.

WAS 16 Protected Recreational Open Space

I. The following sites, shown on the Policies Map ([Figure 6](#)) are allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space:

- **PROS1: The Allotments (off School Lane)**
- **PROS2: The Meadow (School Lane)**
- **PROS3: Great Innings Green Space**
- **PROS4: Great Innings Recreation Area**
- **PROS5: Gatekeepers Green Space**

II. Development that would result in the loss of all or part of these spaces will not be permitted unless they are replaced with better facilities which are as accessible to the local community as the current recreational open spaces.



Figure 18 – Example of Protected Recreational Open Space – The Meadow

Natural Environment

Local Green Space Designations

6.63 Watton-at-Stone is a large village set in the Beane Valley. It is surrounded by agricultural land and its boundary includes several green areas. These are of significant value both to residents and visitors who use these areas for recreation, and as a haven for wildlife. They greatly contribute to the village's distinctive character and are fundamental to its rural setting.

6.63 Local Green Spaces are areas which are considered special and are offered protection similar to Green Belt status under the umbrella of the Neighbourhood Plan. The sites must meet the specified criteria laid out in paragraph 102 of the NPPF. The main criteria for determining a Local Green Space are that it should be:

- “a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character (not an extensive tract of land).”

6.64 Several sites in the Parish are already protected as common land or special ecology sites, as detailed in the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping (see [Appendix B – Ecological Network Mapping](#)) and were therefore not proposed as Local Green Spaces. The assessment of land for Local Green Space status is provided in the Watton-at-Stone Assessment spreadsheet (see [Appendix D – Local Green Space \(LGS\) Spreadsheet](#)). For further details of those sites that are designated as LGS, see [Appendix E – Local Green Space \(LGS\) Descriptions](#). These documents are also available on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

WAS 17 Local Green Space

I. Three areas within the Parish, shown on the Policies Map ([Figure 6](#)), have been designated as Local Green Space. These are:

- LGS 1 The Meadow (School Lane)
- LGS 2 Churchyard (St Andrew and St Mary)
- LGS 3 Church Balk (field between churchyard and roundabout)

II. New development will only be allowed in designated Local Green Spaces where it is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR2.



Figure 19 – Example of Local Green Space (LGS3)

Protected Views

6.65 Both the natural and historic landscape contribute to the special character of Watton-at-Stone. The protection of special views will help to maintain the aesthetic appeal of the village and its surroundings.

6.66 Protected Views listed in [Policy WAS 18](#) must not be affected by new development. They include all entrances to the village, i.e. Walkern Road, Stevenage Road, from the Hertford roundabout looking up to the church, from the Church Balk roundabout up the High Street, from Datchworth Road into the village, and views from all surrounding high ground across the village. Views also include sightlines within the existing built-up area of the village, particularly within the conservation area (e.g. along the High Street) and across green spaces within the village (e.g. across the Meadow to the Church).

6.67 Detailed descriptions explaining why each Protected View is special, photographs of each Protected View, and a map showing the approximate width and depth of the views can be found in [Appendix F – Protected Views](#).

WAS 18 Protected Views

I. Eight important views and vistas are identified on the Policies Map ([Figure 6](#)) and listed below:

- V1: From Road Bridge to St Andrew and St Mary Church (south eastern approach)
- V2: From church of St Andrew and St Mary (eastward)
- V3: From Nigel Poulton Community Hall to church of St Andrew and St Mary (southward)
- V4: From Church Lane before the railway bridge (southward)
- V5: From Watton Road railway bridge (north eastward)
- V6: From entrance to village on Stevenage Road (south eastward)
- V7: From far side of Walkern Road bridge (southward)
- V8: From Mill Lane to The Lammas (northward)

II. Development proposals in the Parish that are identified as having an impact on the identified important views should include an assessment of the impact of the development on the key views and vistas, where appropriate.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

6.68 Watton-at-Stone is rich in natural history. Although there are no formally designated statutory sites (for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), Ancient Woodland, which is irreplaceable habitat, is plentiful and the database of the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) identifies a large number of sites within the Parish. There are also a large number of locally designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) both close to the village, between the railway line and the A602 and further afield, throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Those LWS that are close to the village, and perhaps more vulnerable to human intervention, are shown on the Policies Map ([Figure 6](#)).

6.69 The current [Biodiversity Metric](#) is referenced in [Policy WAS 19](#). The Biodiversity Metric is subject to change, particularly in the light of the [Environment Act 2021](#). The Act recommends a net gain in biodiversity of 10%.

6.70 The Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan by the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (see [Appendix B – Ecological Network Mapping](#)) gives a unique insight into existing and potential habitat networks. This habitat

inventory helps to provide a strategic approach to ensure efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity where most benefit can be gained.

WAS 19 Wildlife Sites and Habitat Enhancements

I. Development should conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek to deliver net biodiversity gains of a minimum of 10%, in line with requirements set out in national legislation and guidance (as quantified by the most recent Defra Biodiversity Impact Calculator). Biodiversity mitigation or compensation can be situated onsite or offsite. Offsite compensation should be located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area whenever possible.

Mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures must be definitively stated. All new buildings bordering open space or beneficial habitat should incorporate integrated bat and bird boxes.

II. The nature conservation value of wildlife sites, and other significant habitats including the River Beane, will be protected from any harmful impacts of development, in accordance with their status.

III. In particular, the 36 designated Local Wildlife Sites will be protected and managed. In addition, the fourteen areas of Ancient Woodland identified in the Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre (HERC) database, will be protected from any harmful impacts of development.

IV. Other areas of the Parish, coloured green on the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping, contain habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, as specified in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Development, which would cause significant harm to these areas, should either be refused, or the mitigation hierarchy applied. If permission is granted for development, conditions or planning obligations that secure appropriate management regimes will be sought. The existing Local Wildlife Sites and habitats listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act within the village envelope are listed on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

V. Developments located in areas coloured purple on the HERC Ecological Network Mapping for the Neighbourhood Plan Area must deliver net biodiversity gains and contribute towards enhancing ecological connectivity. A list of the existing habitats coloured purple within the village envelope is available on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

VI. Proposals to create new natural areas and wildlife habitats, or to expand or enhance existing provision, will be strongly supported. Proposals to remove unprotected trees during development should be accompanied by a tree survey. Removed trees will be replaced with native species, in suitable locations.

VII. Proposals for a new nature area where biodiversity can be improved, between the River Beane and the High Street/Stevenage Road to the north west of the village (Rush Meads) may be funded by Section 106 contributions from housing development in the village.

6.71 The River Beane runs into the village from the north west, between the two housing site allocations, along the eastern side of the village, and then out into Woodhall Park. The river is closest to WAS 3 and a bridge and cycle/footpath is proposed, from WAS 3 through Rush Meads, through WAS 4 and the high part of Malting House Field above WAS4 to Watton-at-Stone railway station, as part of the circular path (see [Policy WAS 10](#)).

6.72 The river is an important feature in the village and the River Beane Restoration Association assisted with the wording of [Policy WAS 20](#) Green Corridors and the River

Beane. The policy seeks to address over-abstraction locally, ensure public access to the river and protect the river's ecological value. Access to the river to ensure food defence maintenance is also protected.

WAS 20 Green Corridors and the River Beane

I. Green corridors should provide permeability for wildlife and access for people. In accordance with the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan, the green corridors in the Parish, which provide networks of biodiversity and public access, will be protected from the impact of harmful development, managed and where appropriate, enhanced to create increased public access that is sympathetic to the biodiversity value of the green space.

II. The most significant green corridor is the River Beane corridor. Any development that negatively impacts public access to or the ecological value of the river will be refused. Any development scheme adjacent to the River Beane should be designed with a naturalised buffer zone of at least 10 metres from the top of the bank in order to protect and enhance the conservation value of the watercourse and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

III. All new developments should comply with water efficiency standards and development management policies which are essential to reduce the impact of slow river flows, caused by over-abstraction of the River Beane.



Figure 20 – River Beane at Watton-at-Stone

Historic Environment

6.73 The Neighbourhood Plan Area is rich in heritage assets and this Neighbourhood Plan is designed to protect this heritage by restricting development to the northern end of the village away from the Conservation Area. Policies WAS 21, WAS 22 and WAS 23 are specifically designed to protect those assets for the enjoyment of future generations of village residents. A brief history of elements of the village is given in the following section.

Architecture

6.74 The greater part of the village now dates from the 20th century although it retains a number of fine (and much under-estimated) examples of 18th and 19th century architecture, from the Almshouses, the Grey House, Watton House, Watton Cottage, Glebe House, Crowbury and The Chestnuts to the smaller cottages in the High Street and the red brick terrace opposite the Pump.

6.75 The Walkern Road Bridge over the River Beane is an interesting industrial monument to the 19th century, being constructed of large Caleb Hitch bricks, although it is now much repaired. The 20th century saw the building of the estates on Beane Road (1946), Glebe

Close (1948), Rectory Lane (1948), Hockerill (1956), Lammas Road and part of the High Street (1960), Great Innings (1964, 1977 and 2000), Rivershill (1966 and 1986), and Hazeldell (1970), as well as some individual houses and bungalows. In 1985, the site of the old school was redeveloped by renovating the old school buildings and adding additional houses in the orchard and playground (Old School Orchard). The Gatekeepers estate, opposite the train station, was developed in 2013.

Archaeology

6.76 Evidence for man's presence in the Parish has been dated by Palaeolithic finds within the village and at the Frogmore gravel pit, and there are traces of a Mesolithic (middle Stone Age) site near the roundabout at the northern end of the A602 by-pass. Roman sites are known in the grounds of Glebe House and in the north west corner of Woodhall Park, where Roman pottery was unearthed in large quantities in 1953 during the excavation of the outfall sewer. Well Wood is thought to have been the site of a fortified settlement, possibly Watton manor itself. In the late 1970s, Chapel Wood was found to be the location of a medieval chapel and hermitage, dating from the late-12th century and yielded a fragment of possibly the earliest example of stained-glass window in Europe.

6.77 A detailed Archaeological Report has kindly been developed specifically for this Neighbourhood Plan and is provided as **Appendix G – Archaeology**.

Churches

6.78 Certainly, since the 13th century and possibly much longer, there has been a church in Watton-at-Stone. The existence of a church in 1086 is recorded in the Domesday Book, but the present register commences in 1560. The current parish church is dedicated to St Andrew and St Mary. It stands on thirteenth century foundations and dates from the early-mid fifteenth century and is built in the Perpendicular style.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watton-at-Stone> - cite note-12 A chapel was added to the north side of the church in the late fifteenth century. The building is constructed from flint and is protected by a Grade II* heritage listing. The church was restored in 1851 at a cost of about £7000. The Methodist Church in the High Street was built in 1891.

Infrastructure

6.79 The Roman road from St Albans (via Welwyn and Puckeridge) to Colchester ran through the Parish and the present road between Watton-at-Stone and Datchworth still follows the old route for part of the distance.

6.80 The first plans for a railway line through Watton-at-Stone were made in 1890 as part of a Hitchin–Enfield line. Although this plan was never implemented, the proposed route for the section between Hertford and Stevenage was incorporated into the Enfield–Stevenage link that received parliamentary approval in 1898. This line, the first extension to the London suburban system for over 20 years, was then estimated to cost £1.25M.

6.81 Work actually started in 1906, on the Enfield–Cuffley section, and the first passenger train ran through Watton-at-Stone on 6 February 1920 after being diverted from the main line as a result of an accident at Welwyn.

6.82 After World War II the British Railways Board considered reopening the station in March 1967, but it was not until 1981 that any action was taken. The 06.23 train from Watton-at-Stone to Moorgate on 17 May 1982 was the first train to use Watton-at-Stone station for almost 43 years. The official opening of Watton-at-Stone station took place on Tuesday, 15 June 1982.

6.83 The cost of reopening the station totalled £120,000, but only about £30,000 of this was paid by British Rail. Local authority funds provided £80,000 and the village contributed £8,000: £4,000 by way of a donation from Watton-at-Stone Parish Council funds and £4,000 raised by an appeal to the village and neighbouring parishes.

Manors of Watton-at-Stone

6.84 Parts of Watton-at-Stone, including its chief manor (Watton manor), were held by King Edgar, who ruled England from 959 to 975. He subsequently made Watton manor over to the Abbey of Westminster. Despite the later fragmentation of this land, it is recorded in the Domesday Book that the Abbot himself still held one of the five hides making up this land. The Domesday Book also implies Saxon occupation of the Parish, but the only local evidence of Saxon occupation is a 9th century strap end which was found near Bardolph's Farm. By the year 1200, Watton manor had been inherited by Henry fitz Ailwin, the first Lord Mayor of London.

6.85 Watton-at-Stone's other three manors were Crowborough, Watkins Hall (or Watton Hall) and Woodhall. Only the last of these still exists today as an estate although the names of all the old manors have been preserved in Watkins Hall Farm, Woodhall House, and a private house near the church, named Crowbury in 1898 in honour of the old manor.

WAS 21 Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area and Heritage Assets

I. In accordance with policies at district level and the guidance in the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014 and subsequent updates, the character or appearance of the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area and its setting will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

II. Proposals for development which have an impact on designated heritage assets in the Parish, should take account of the historic fabric of the asset, its significance and the contribution of its setting to that significance. Proposals should conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the asset or its setting.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

6.86 The Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014 notes that the Conservation Area is of a particularly high environmental quality and notes the significant number of high-quality unlisted buildings that it contains, particularly in the High Street. The War Memorial at the junction of Church Lane and Ware Road is mentioned in the appraisal as a possible candidate for listing, despite its relocation to its current position.

6.87 Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, a number of such assets have been identified. These are listed in [Policy WAS 22](#) and photographs of each asset can be found in [Appendix H – Non-designated Heritage Assets](#).

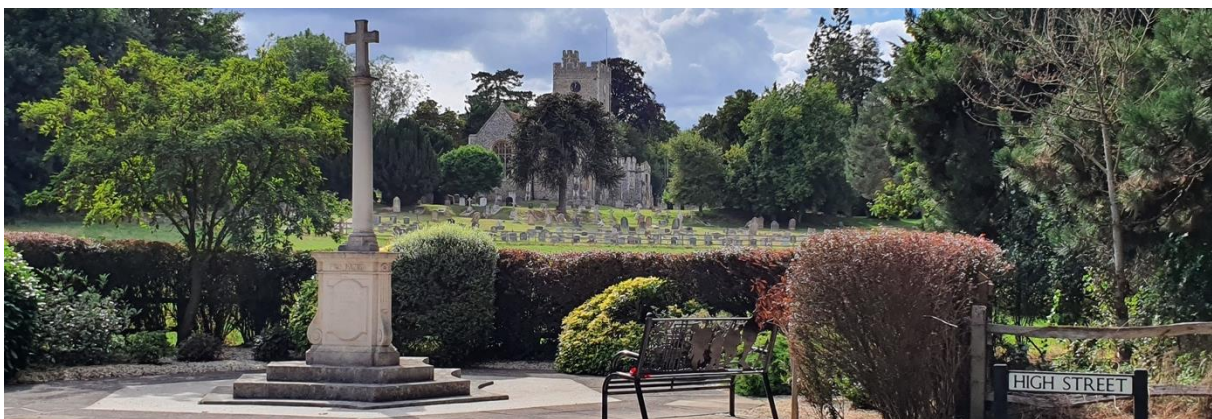


Figure 21 - War Memorial

WAS 22 Non-designated Buildings and Structures

I. Seven non-designated buildings and structures have been identified as having local historic or architectural importance:

- 87/89 High Street (Opposite the George and Dragon)
- 96 High Street (Opposite the Bull)
- Club House, School Lane
- 33, 35, 37 and 39 High Street
- War Memorial at junction of High Street/Church Lane/Ware Road
- Methodist Church and Hall, High Street
- Puddingstone at the front of 1 High Street

II. Development proposals which affect these, and other non-designated heritage assets, including all those unlisted buildings and structures identified as being worthy of protection from demolition, in the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal 2014 and subsequent updates, will take into account the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance, to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.88 The archaeological report kindly provided by Sophie Bell (see [Appendix G – Archaeology](#)) shows substantial evidence that the Parish has been inhabited for thousands of years. The village assumed significant importance as a Roman road crossed the River Beane at the south end of the village. It later became an important landmark on the Hertford to Stevenage Road.

6.89 The report notes archaeological finds in the Parish from the early Prehistoric period, through the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods to the Post Medieval (1485 – 1799AD) period. A number of listed buildings along the High Street date from the latter period. There are also specific sections of the report relating to the two main housing site allocations [Policy WAS 3](#) Walkern Road and [Policy WAS 4](#) Stevenage Road. The Walkern Road site is considered to have a high potential for finds or features dating to the Bronze Age. The Stevenage Road site has only moderate potential for finds or features throughout history. Further archaeological investigations will be required for both sites.

6.90 Extensive finds within the village and in the surrounding countryside including the Aston Mirror and the concentration of Roman material near Broomhall Farm indicate a rich archaeological past which should be at least recorded and at best preserved *in situ*.

WAS 23 Archaeology

Development proposals which have the potential to impact on heritage assets of archaeological significance, particularly in the vicinity of the Aston Mirror and Broomhall Farm, or proposals which are located in the areas of known archaeological significance should include an evaluation to determine whether conservation is required (for example, preservation *in situ* or redesign) and if further site surveys are necessary. Such important archaeological evidence should at least be recorded and at best be preserved *in situ*.

Support for Businesses

6.91 Watton-at-Stone benefits from a range of shops and services mainly located in the High Street. These include a B Store incorporating a Post Office, a local farming family-owned butchers' shop, a hairdressers and a barbers, a café and artisan bakery, and a plant

nursery. In addition to a Chinese take-away restaurant, both public houses provide both in-house and take-away meals. All of these facilities provide important and well-used services to the community, as well as employment opportunities for its residents.

WAS 24 Preserving Local Employment Opportunities

Proposals to support the retention of existing shops and businesses will be considered favourably provided that they do not conflict with other policies in this plan. Such proposals may include the provision of off-street parking for customers, covered and secure cycle parking facilities for employees and sustainable energy schemes.

6.92 The recent Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened the need to ensure that any development to the village must provide facilities to support and enhance the ability for residents to work from their home environment. Therefore, high-speed broadband capability should be provided to every home.

WAS 25 Encouraging Home Working

Where planning permission is required, proposals which enable homeworking, such as improved digital connectivity, will be supported subject to there being no unacceptable impact on local or residential amenities.

Implementation

6.93 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to identify and inform development of the village of Watton-at-Stone as required by the East Herts District Plan for 2018 to 2033. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented primarily by EHDC through determination of planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

6.94 The success of that implementation and a review of the effectiveness of the planning policies will be carried out by the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council. A review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered at such time as legislative changes or other changes in the village impact its effectiveness, or East Herts Council review the District Plan.

6.95 During the consultation process which accompanied the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, benefits were identified by residents which they wanted to see happen as a result of its approval. These benefits include schemes which cover more than one of the sites chosen for development and will require planning and funding from and across all major developments. Funding required may also fall outside statutory Section 106 contributions.

6.96 The development strategy in the Neighbourhood Plan provides for more housing than is required by the District Plan. When releasing land in the Green Belt for new homes, in excess of the District Plan requirements, community benefits clearly identified as priorities are vital to ensure support for the Neighbourhood Plan. These benefits are related to the proposed development and where they cannot be provided on site, will be provided in the village. This will ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan fulfils its aims as a plan for Watton-at-Stone. This should not be considered as an extra tax on the developer and should be taken into account in any discussions on Section 106 requirements by East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council and/or reflected in appropriate conditions in planning approvals. These are effective mechanisms for ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan is sustainable at the village scale (See [Policy WAS 26](#) below).

6.97 While generally satisfied with the amenities provided by the village, the residents have expressed clear preference for several specific projects which will significantly contribute to the wellbeing of the residents, including the younger children. One resident made a specific comment about football pitches: "There is significant support for pitches and

facilities for youth football in the village as the existing club has to use a number of locations outside the village. A home for our football is desperately needed and priority should be given for land for a clubhouse and pitches.”

6.98 The projects listed below were identified during the initial consultations conducted in 2016 and 2017. They were subsequently tested as part of the consultation run in January 2020 where the residents of the village were asked to express their opinion. Since the total number of responses received for each spending priority is broadly similar, the percentage of respondents who agreed is a useful comparator and indicators relative priority.

Priority	Agree	Disagree	% Agree	Rank
Circular walk	124	8	93.9	1
Wetland meadow	119	8	93.7	2
Football pitches and facilities	110	17	86.6	3
Out-of-hours school building	101	18	84.9	4
Community Hall Car Park Extension	88	41	68.2	5
Pavement along School Lane	84	41	67.2	6

Table 2 Priority Projects and their support at consultation

6.99 The Community Hall Car Park Extension was refused planning permission and is unlikely to proceed in its current form. In addition, there were many who disagreed with installing a pavement along School Lane.

WAS 26 Spending Priorities

I. In line with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 to deliver community benefits especially where the Neighbourhood Plan accommodates additional development, a number of spending priorities have been identified by the community, through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, to improve the lives of people living and working in the Parish. More details of the projects, their relative priorities, and any maintenance requirements are set out in Appendix L – Benefit Project Plan) and available on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#).

These include:

- Circular walk
- Wetland meadow (Rush Meads)
- Football pitches and facilities
- Out-of-hours school building

II. The Parish Council will request that these priorities are reflected in Section 106 agreements, where appropriate, and will direct funding received from any New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding streams, towards projects which fall within these priorities.

III. Benefits in kind may also be accrued through negotiation, as a consequence of new development proposals, in accordance with the priorities identified by the community. Community benefits will be sought from the development of housing site allocations WAS 3 and WAS 4 and any future housing development where housing provision exceeds the requirements of the East Herts District Plan. This should be taken into account in any discussions on Section 106 requirements by East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

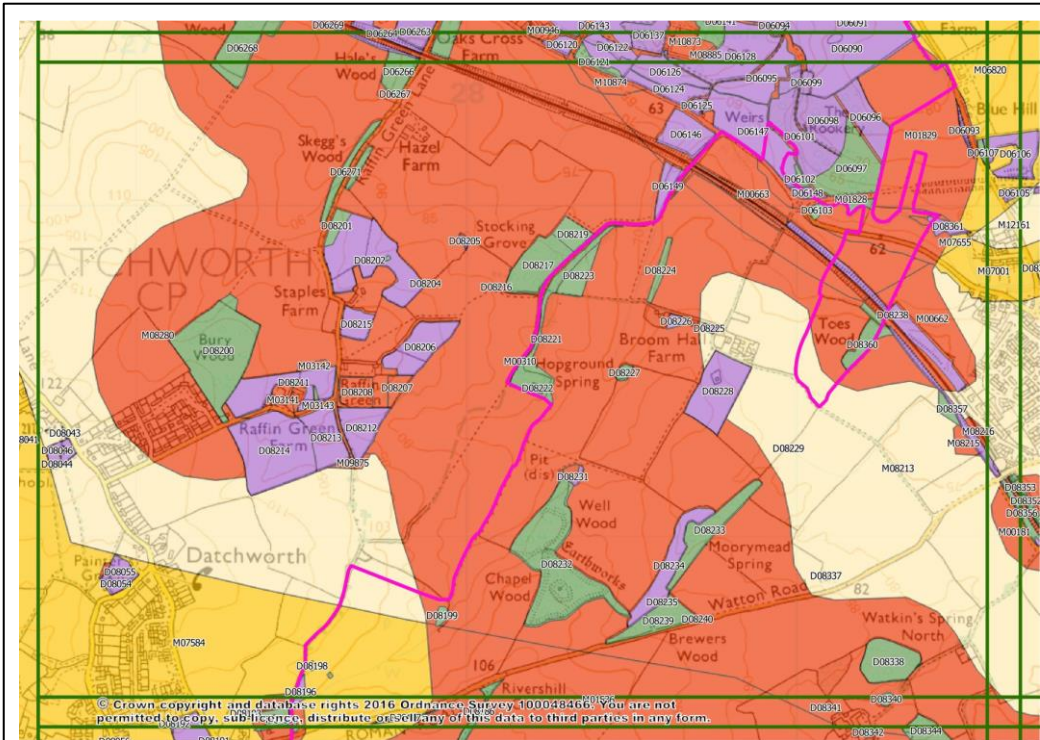
Appendices

Appendix A – Policy Process Map

Obj. no.	Housing Development Strategy	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
1	Deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Watton-at-Stone to 2033.	WAS 1, WAS 2, WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 5, WAS 6, WAS 7, WAS 8
2	Ensure that brownfield sites are used for new housing developments where possible.	WAS 5
3	Ensure new housing is in keeping with the surrounding area, lying low in the Beane Valley	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6, and WAS 12 to WAS 23 inclusive
4	Promote high-quality design with a mix of house types suitable for the future needs of the village	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 5, WAS 6, WAS 7, WAS 8
5	Ensure housing density balances the sensitive semi-rural setting with the efficient use of land and preservation of high-quality agricultural land	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 5, WAS 6
6	Ensure accessibility to bus stops, the school, and village facilities, promoting safe, accessible public streets and spaces	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6, WAS 9, WAS 10
7	Seek to reduce traffic impacts of new development and ensure appropriate parking solutions for it	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6, WAS 9
8	Seek on-going improvements to utility infrastructure and digital connectivity	WAS 6, WAS 9, WAS 25, WAS 26
9	Ensure that development proposals supported in this plan, on the edge of the village, create a new clearly defined Green Belt boundary.	WAS 2, WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6
Obj. no.	Sustainable affordable accessible transport	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
10	Encourage the use of, and lobby for better sustainable transport networks including cycle routes, footways and public footpaths	WAS 3, WAS 4, WAS 6, WAS 9, WAS 10, WAS 26
Obj. no.	Community facilities and amenities	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
11	Support the village's key community services and facilities	WAS 11, WAS 12, WAS 13, WAS 14, WAS 15, WAS 24
12	Ensure adequate provision for Parish children to attend the local school	WAS 14, WAS 26
13	Facilitate the development of new football facilities and encourage appropriate use of Green Belt land for sensitively designed outdoor leisure	WAS 4, WAS 15, WAS 16, WAS 26
Obj. no.	Natural and historic environment	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
14	Make the most of Watton-at-Stone's rural aspect and landscape setting, protecting key views	WAS 17, WAS 18
15	Maintain and enhance nature conservation, wildlife and biodiversity	WAS 19, WAS 20
16	Protect the historic fabric, character and rural identity of the village and Parish of Watton-at-Stone, including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and the Conservation Area and its setting	WAS 21, WAS 22, WAS 23
Obj. no.	Support for business	Neighbourhood Plan Policies
17	Support appropriate development for local businesses and employment opportunities, including home working	WAS 24, WAS 25

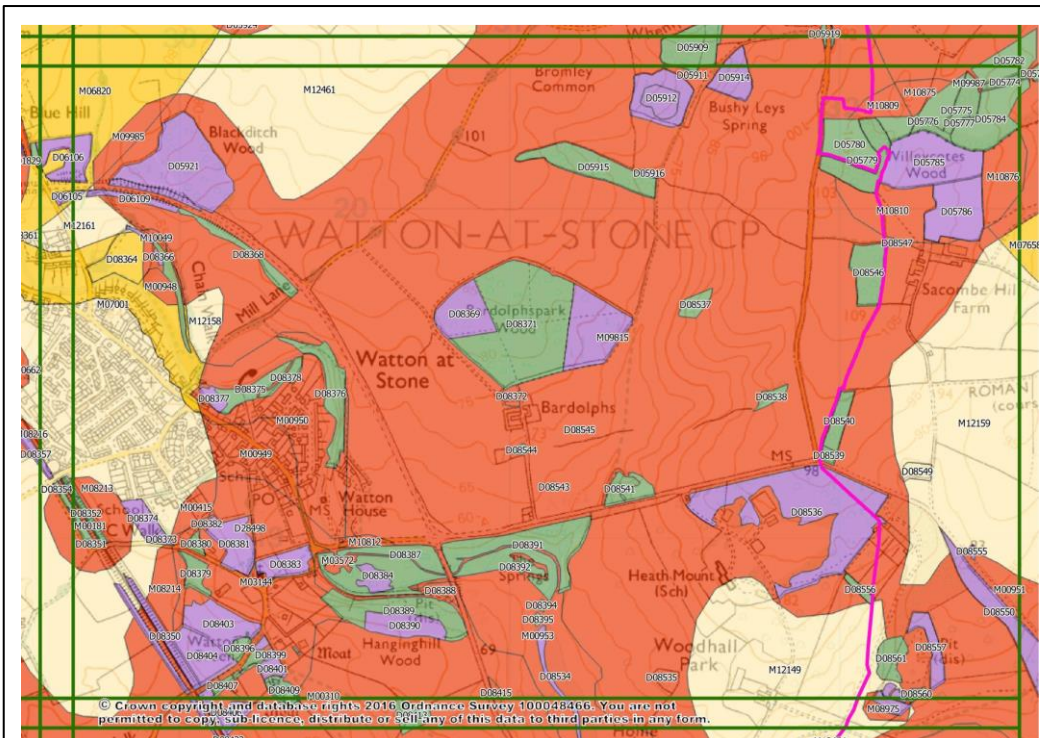
Table 3 Table showing which Neighbourhood Plan Policies achieve the objectives

Appendix B – Ecological Network Mapping



HERC
Herts Environmental
Records Centre

Map 3



HERC
Herts Environmental
Records Centre

Map 4

Appendix C – Valued Community Facilities

WAS 11 Valued Community Facilities

A number of buildings and services have been identified as being of value to the community as they contribute to the health and wellbeing of the villagers. It is important that these are protected in order to ensure their continued availability.

1. George and Dragon Public House

The George and Dragon is known to have existed as a licensed premise since at least 1619 and is formed by an amalgamation of 15th century buildings. The building is an important landmark in a prominent location in the historic High Street and is a major feature of the Conservation Area.

There is a beer garden attached to the pub which is used by families and is particularly popular in the summer. The garden includes a petanque court used by village teams in a local league. It is also adjacent to the village sports field known as The Meadow and provides refreshment facilities for visiting supporters and teams as well as additional parking.

2. Budgens Supermarket

This grocery shop and Post Office is an integral part of the village, providing vital services to all age groups of villagers. The shop is open 7 days per week and provides a wide range of essential products as well as excellent ranges of healthy and good quality local produce. It amply demonstrated its value to the village during the recent pandemic providing all the basic necessities for people who were less able to manage otherwise. During this time, the owners extended the products available and implemented a complimentary delivery service for villagers who could not get to the shop due to shielding.

The Post Office offers banking services and is a collection point for a number of delivery service providers which are particularly useful facilities for villagers who are unable to travel to larger conurbations.

3. Scout Hut and Land at Mill Lane

The children of the village are well served by the active Scout and Guide Group which runs activities for all different age groups supporting Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides and Explorers. The headquarters building is in an ideal central village location and is surrounded by open land alongside the River Beane, which enables the Group to provide a range of well-supported activities for the young people. These are vital for the health and wellbeing of the children of the village who otherwise lack suitable services. The building is available for use by other organisations who also provide youth activities and is an ideal venue for larger parties with music.

4. Nigel Poulton Community Hall

This building is located in a central part of the village overlooking the well-used open recreational area known as The Meadow. The building itself comprises a sports hall which is used for such activities as badminton, indoor bowls etc. It has changing rooms and showers for people using the cricket pitch, football pitch and tennis courts. It also has a pavilion area and kitchen, which has been used to hold regular Youth Club sessions and meetings of other local clubs, and also can be hired out for private celebrations. The various sports facilities are in constant use both during the week and at weekends, supporting a variety of village sports clubs and also commercial users which pay hiring charges. The hall is subsidised by the Parish Council.

In addition, the building has a secure meeting room which is used to host the community lending library currently open one day each week and for meetings of various groups including the Parish Council.

5. Village Memorial Hall

This building was built in 1910 by the late Colonel Henry Abel Smith, owner of Woodhall estate at that time. In 1949, Thomas Abel Smith gave the building and freehold ownership of the site to the Trustees of a charity formed specifically to maintain and operate the property for the benefit of the villagers. There are four appointed trustees of the charity, who must be residents of the village. The purpose of the charity is to provide a facility which is to be used “for the purposes of physical and mental training and recreation and social moral and intellectual development ... for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Watton at Stone”. It represents a permanent memorial of the services of the men and women of Watton-at-Stone in the 1939-45 war and, as such, is an important asset to the village.

The hall contains the largest single meeting room in the village and is used extensively by a variety of groups with many regular bookings including evenings but excluding Sundays which are reserved for ad hoc hires. Examples of regular users are the village dramatic society for their rehearsals and performances, the Parochial Church Council use it for their regular meetings and fund-raising events and various sporting and keep fit organisations.

6. The Methodist Church

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in the High Street was built in 1891 but since has been extended to provide two vestries and additional meeting rooms which are available for hire by the public. The building itself is of interest as it is particularly representative of its type and period and should be considered for becoming formally listed.

The Church holds a service every Sunday. A number of groups use the hall during the week including a Lunch Club for older residents, Card Companions, Knit & Knatter and a Craft Club.

The hall and Church are available for hire for day groups of up to 50 people to run self-led, retreats, quiet days and meetings. In addition, the hall can be hired for children's parties.

7. Watton Place Clinic

This medical centre comprises a General Practitioners surgery, a dental practice and dispensing pharmacy. There are additional treatment rooms used for physiotherapy, osteopathy and chiropodist services. All are much in demand and are well used by the local community.

The GP practice area includes Watton-at-Stone itself together with Benington, Whempstead and Aston. The nearest alternative medical facilities are in the major townships of Hertford, Stevenage and Knebworth. Owing to the limited local transport services, the availability of medical services for the local residents is a vital necessity for both families and older people.

The building itself is one of the oldest in the village dating from the 15th century and it, and an adjoining flint wall, are Grade II* listed.

8. The Bull Public House

Like the George and Dragon, this public house and restaurant is situated in a prominent part of the historic High Street and is a well-known feature and meeting place. It has other interesting buildings on either side and opposite. The earliest part of the building dates back to about 1400 with the majority added later in the 16th Century.

The pub has a well-maintained garden. Although in an older building it is readily accessible for disabled users. The current landlord runs an annual 3-day beer festival over the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend which features craft beers from both local and national micro-breweries. This event coincides with the annual church fete which is held on a nearby field creating a major and popular event for the whole community. In the summer it occasionally runs live music events featuring local bands.

In addition, outside pub-opening hours, its car park provides additional parking for visitors to the Londis supermarket and other recreational areas.

9. St Andrew's and St Mary's Church

This Anglican church was built early in the 16th Century, and it is known that the North Chapel was added in 1570. It is likely that a church existed on the same site before that time. The presence of a church in the village is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 although the actual site is not known. It is known that Roundhead soldiers used the church building to house their Royalist prisoners during the English Civil War. The church contains a number of interesting historic memorials to various families who have owned the Grade 1 listed building, Woodhall Park.

The church is a central part of the village and is well used for weddings and baptisms. Especially well attended are the annual services such as the Christmas Carol services, Remembrance Day and special services around Easter. Links are maintained with the local primary school, with special services held at Christmas and in the summer term for Year 6 Leavers. It also supports a Sunday School for younger children.

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033

Appendix D – Local Green Space (LGS) Spreadsheet

LOCAL GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENT																						
New #	Site description	NP X-ref	Site Information						Critical Criteria				Evidence									
			Potential development or right of way	National designation or village green	Common land	Private garden	Owner known	Insufficient evidence	Extant planning permission	Local in character	Extensive tract	Demonstratively special	Reasonably close	Beauty	Intrinsic local character	Historical significance	Recreational	Natural wildlife	Tranquility	Other information	Landowner	
1	Watton Green	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Open aspect and protects the view across to the church	Feels like the centre of the village and acts as the village green - downtown Watton	Within conservation area and identified as an 'important open space to be protected'. Designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS).	Existing use for cricket and football, tennis courts used as a gathering place for picnics and children's play area. School presentations yearly - prizes to children. Dog walking.	Wildlife site	Kites and mature Oak trees	Feels peaceful	Public access	
2	Meadow	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Managed for grass species	?	As above	No	Designated as a Local Wildlife Site 45/088 (Pasture N.W. of Church)	No public access	No public access		
3	Cemetery (St Andrew and St Mary)	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Attractive space veteran tree	Views across it - classic view in Watton at Stone	As above	Is used to walk through - accessible to dog walkers	Designated as a Local Wildlife Site 45/084 (Churchyard)	Very tranquil with little road noise	Public access		
4	Field between cemetery and Poundabout 0.77 Ha - Tithe name Church Bank	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Gently sloping up towards the church (leads the eye towards the church)	Views across it - classic view in Watton at Stone	As above. Memorial service - walk down from the church through the field.	Village fete annually, horses graze on it. Used as an overflow car park for the church. Footpath to the church.	Hedgerows, Nematodes	Peaceful	Public access		
5	Field between cemetery and Poundabout 0.77 Ha - Tithe name Church Bank	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Ok	Has been only an allotment since 1960's	In conservation area. AAS.	Growing food	Hedgerow, hedgehogs, reptiles, newts	Yes	Possible alternative use/CFIR1		
6	Allotments 1.26 Ha - Tithe name North Field	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Wide swathes of grass and new woodland planting, existing woodland too.	Leads out into the countryside beyond the by-pass. By-pass invisible at this point. Rural nature.	Adjacent to conservation area and AAS.	Well used by walkers, children paddle in the river	Lots of wildlife ... birds, butterflies, dragonflies - to be discussed with Woodhall 23/10/2019	Despite being beside the by-pass there is little road noise across most of the site			
7	Field between bypass and Watton House 5.7 Ha - Part of Parks on tithe map, now Rye Field	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Includes part of millenium wood.		Bombed in blitz - used to be two cottages on the site, not rebuilt because residents died. AAS.	Great for sledging in the winter and well used by walkers. Includes the scout hut and grounds.	Existing S41 NERC Act habitats D08375 & D08378. Includes a pond.	Is this the same as Jubilee Wood?			
8	South of Mill Lane. Millennium Wood? Needs a new name! Coneyford Hill? on Tithe map	N*	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Pleasant		AAS	Well use by walkers and part of circular walk around the village	Tree plantation includes existing S41 NERC Act habitat along boundary with by pass	Some road noise			
9	North of Mill Lane Field between Mill Lane and Lammas. Mill Close on Tithe map - no Badbox Mead	N*	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y					Opportunity to influence the River Beane Channel				
10	The Lammas	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y									
13	Development site on Walkern Rd - part of Haydon Common on tithe map	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y									
15	South of Stevenage Road. High point of Stevenage Rd site - Malting House Field? on tithe map	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Highest point in the village, adjacent to the railway and very visible	Forms important entrance to the village - rolls up from the river valley forming the valley side.		Well used for walking	Badger sett within railway embankment. Wildlife corridor to rear of existing properties - To be discussed with Woodhall 23/10/2019	Yes			
14	North of Stevenage Road. Ryan field, Stevenage Rd - Rush Meads on tithe map	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Potential for improvement	Important entrance to village and improvement would balance development south side of Stevenage Road			Existing floodplain with potential to become wildflower/wetland site. Western extremity includes existing S41 NERC Act habitat D06103	Quite peaceful	No public access - split by the Aston Parish boundary		
12	Field in corner between Walkern Rd and bypass 2.44 Ha - Great Rolls Mead on tithe map	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Partly wooded. Rises up from the village towards the bypass		Northern section in AAS.	Used by walkers and runners	Site has biodiversity value	Some road noise by peaceful			
11	Field along Beane, between Lammas and Walkern Rd - Dear Loves Mead on Tithe map	N*	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Young woodland			Used for walking	Cricket Bat Willow plantation with associated wildlife tbc	Yes	No public access		
16	Development site on Stevenage Rd - Gravel Pit Field on Tithe Map	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y									
17	Aston portion of field on Stevenage Rd site	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y									Not in Parish

Key Already protected outside NP Meets criteria for Local Green Space Potentially meets criteria Doesn't meet LGS criteria or doesn't need designation

* Indicates where together the spaces = an extensive

Note: Some sites were removed during the Examination. Designated sites are detailed in [Appendix E – Local Green Space \(LGS\) Descriptions](#)

Appendix E – Local Green Space (LGS) Descriptions

LGS 1 The Meadow (School Lane)



The Meadow (in the foreground, see also Figure 18 and V3 in [Appendix F – Protected Views](#)) is the heart of the village. It is centrally located and is within the conservation area. From the Nigel Poulton Community Hall, there are sweeping and picturesque views towards the church and allotments. There are several mature oak trees on The Meadow. While the Meadow is a well-used recreational space which provides a meeting place for sport, picnics and play, it is a peaceful and beautiful part of the village. There is a children’s playground on this site, tennis courts, as well as football and cricket pitches. It has an adjacent small car park.

LGS 2 Churchyard (St Andrew and St Mary)



The churchyard forms a key part of the setting of the village. Part of the conservation area, it is a tranquil space with historical significance and many old memorial stones. It is the green space within which St Andrew and St Mary’s church, a Grade I listed building, is set. It is on a hill and has open views out over the countryside and out over the historic bridge over the River Beane. It is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

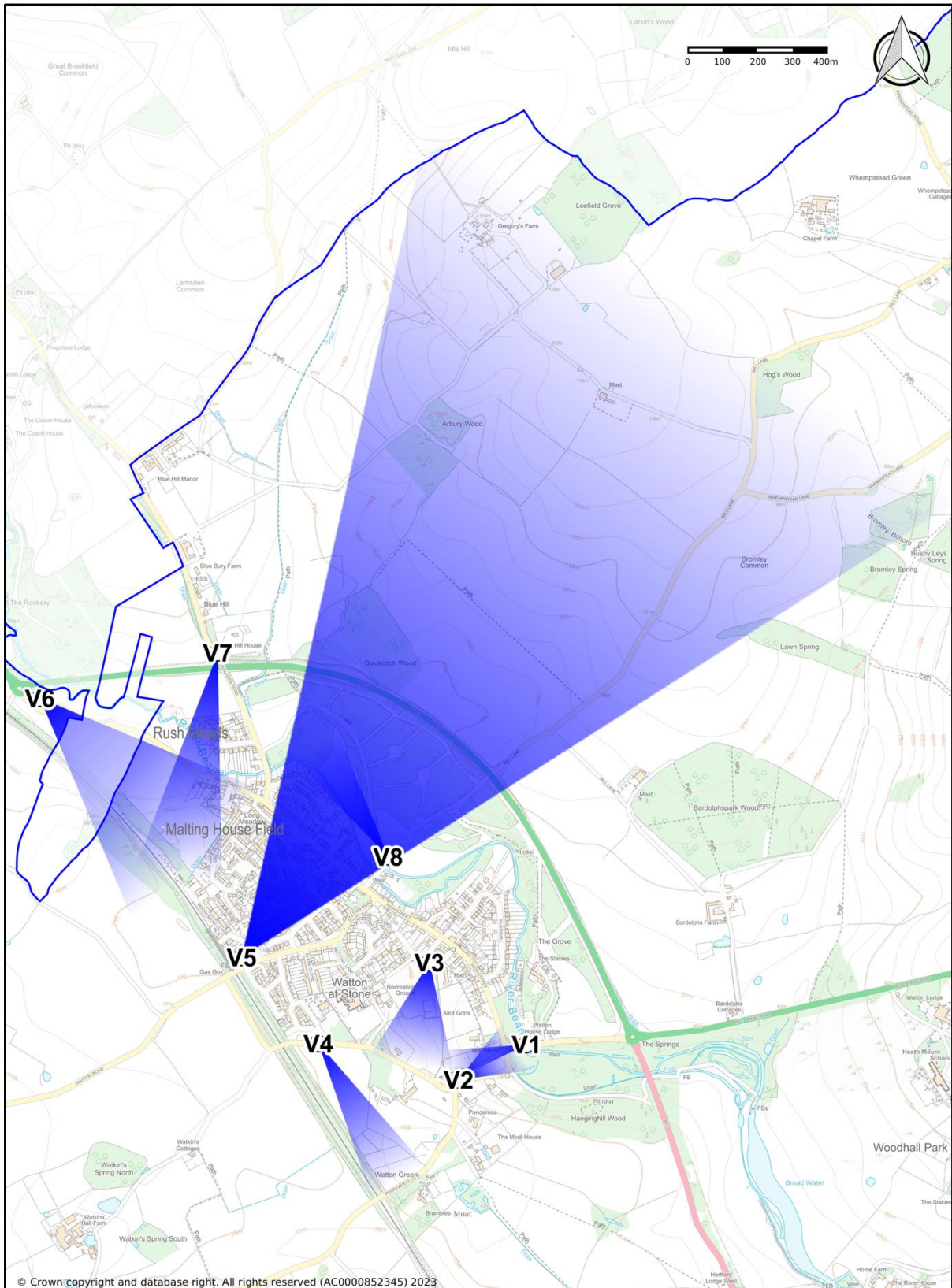
LGS 3 Church Balk (field between churchyard and roundabout)



Looking across this green space is a key view for Watton-at-Stone. The gently sloping site frames the village church and churchyard on the land above it, and the war memorial in one corner of the lower part, in their rural setting. It provides a scenic gateway to the village from the eastern approach and is an important part of the conservation area. It is peaceful, usually grazed by horses and crossed by popular footpaths used by local and visiting walkers. There is an annual fete on this site and churchgoers walk down to the war memorial via Church Balk on Remembrance Day.

Appendix F – Protected Views

The map below shows gives an approximation of the width and depth of each view.



V1 From Road Bridge to St Andrew and St Mary Church (south eastern approach)



This shows the entry to the village from the southern end. It provides a view across the open field (LGS 3) and the churchyard (LGS 2) to the dominant church tower. This historically important building dates from the 15th century, although a church may have stood on the same site before that. The above view is taken from open space opposite the protected area known as Watton Springs and includes the War Memorial.

V2 From St Andrew and St Mary Church east



The reverse of V1 taken from a high point in the churchyard (LGS 2) showing the slope away from the church across the open field (LGS 3) to the approach road to the village (Ware Road) and the attractive old road bridge across the River Beane. The wooded area to the right of the Ware Road is known as Watton Springs and is a Designated Wildlife Site.

V3 From the Nigel Poulton Community Hall to church of St Andrew and St Mary



This recreational area known as The Meadow (LGS 1) is an important open space in the conservation area. The view was taken from a memorial bench alongside the Nigel Poulton Community Hall. It looks across the recreational field space to St Andrew and St Mary Church and the original rectory building now known as Crowbury which built in the mid-19th century. The cricket square situated in the middle of this field has been in the same position for at least 100 years.

V4 From Church Lane on east side of Church Lane railway bridge looking south



This view is taken from the lane which is part of the original roman Road linking Braughing and Welwyn. This arable field was originally diocesan land but is now part of the Woodhall Estate. It is the sole remaining green space and the only safe wildlife corridor in the southern part of the village between the railway and the village buildings. It provides an unobstructed view towards Watton Green, a notable village landmark as it was the medieval site of the village.

V5 From Watton Road railway bridge north eastwards (western approach)



This view is taken from the railway bridge on the only approach road to the village from the west (Datchworth Road, becoming Station Road). It is the highest point on that side of the village and provides a clear view across the Beane Valley to the Whempstead Lane ridge.

V6 From entrance to the village on the Stevenage Road (north western approach)



This view is taken from the side of Stevenage Road and looks towards the northern boundary of Watton-at-Stone, across the open field to the highest point in the village on the high part of Malting House Field above WAS 4. The wooded area to the right is a valuable wildlife corridor which runs alongside the railway line. A well designed development on site allocation WAS 4 can complement the view. Only the part of the view within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary can be protected through this Neighbourhood Plan (being the land in the immediate foreground, the further part of the midground and the rising land in the distance); the nearer part of the mid-ground lying behind the field boundary is in Aston parish.

V7 From entrance to the village on the Walkern road (northern approach)



This view is taken from the side of Walkern Road by the entrance to a dwelling. It is the highest point on the north side of the Beane valley and looks across the north end of the village to the highest point on the other side. It is notable because the houses at that end of the village are concealed by the river valley.

V8 From Mill Lane across Lammas Field looking north



This view is taken from alongside the Mill site on the bridle path known as Mill Lane. This view looks along a public right of way across an important green space in the centre of the village known as the Lammas. The area is of historic and amenity value and is denoted as Common Land under the management of the Parish Council.

Appendix G – Archaeology

The Archaeology of Watton-at-Stone

This report has been researched and prepared by Sophie Bell, an Associate of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology. It will summarise important finds and features recorded in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Following on from this, this report will summarise the archaeological potential for the two sites recommended by the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Early Prehistoric – Palaeolithic (900,000 – 12,000 BC) and Mesolithic (12,000 BC – 4,000 BC)

The Palaeolithic period marks the beginning of hominin activity in Britain. During this time, humans subsisted as hunter-gatherers and travelled around the country in search of food. This, coupled with the small population at the time, results in very little surviving archaeological evidence dating to this period.

No finds dating to this period have been recovered from Watton-at-Stone, but hand axes have been recovered in surrounding areas. Those closest to the village comprise a hand axe recovered 1.03 km north of the Watton-at-Stone bypass (HER Ref: MHT374), a hand axe recovered just to the east of Datchworth (PAS Ref: BH-DCBA63) and a hand axe recovered in Stevenage (PAS Ref: BH-CDDDB13).

In the Mesolithic period, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle prevailed. One flint tranchet adze dating to this period has been recovered just to the south of Broomhall Farm (PAS Ref: BH-C91368).

Generally, the evidence suggests a low level of activity in this area during these periods.

Later Prehistoric – Neolithic (4,000 – 2,500 BC), Bronze Age (2,500 – 800 BC) and Iron Age (800 BC – 43 AD)

In the Neolithic period, the introduction of farming resulted in the end of the nomadic lifestyle and the beginning of permanent settlement.

In Watton-at-Stone, evidence dating to the Neolithic period tends to be concentrated to the south of the village. Most notably, an excavation prior to the construction of the Gatekeeper Meadow estate identified forty substantial pits. Some of these pits contained Neolithic pottery and struck flints. A group of eight postholes associated with a curvilinear cut were also identified. One of these pits was dated to the Neolithic period, the others and the postholes have been broadly dated to the later prehistoric period, though it is likely many of them were Iron Age in date (HER ref: MHT30746). Other evidence dating to this period include a flint recovered from Watton-at-Stone allotments (HER ref: MHT9489) and few flint blade cores and an axe recovered in the field south of the north bypass roundabout (HER ref: MHT6374).

At least thirteen potential barrows, probably dating to the Bronze Age, are visible as ring ditch cropmarks all around Watton-at-Stone (HER Refs: MHT4125, MHT4270, MHT6591, MHT7583, MHT7584, MHT7588, MHT7589, MHT7654, MHT7663, MHT7667, MHT7671, MHT16433 and one currently unrecorded on the HER). A Bronze Age copper-alloy awl has been recovered close to Broomhall Farm (PAS ref: BH-1C3697).

Iron Age activity seems predominantly concentrated to the west of the village. Most notably, a cremation burial associated with the Aston Mirror, now on display in the British Museum, was identified close to Raffin Green (HER Ref: MHT6280, MHT6313). At the time, local press suggested the remains represented "a princess buried with her treasures". The burial and mirror probably dates to the 1st century BC. Nearby, a substantial ditch containing Iron Age material in its lowest fill has also been identified (HER Ref: MHT6309), and two coins are

recorded as being found nearby by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (HER ref: MHT9983, PAS refs: BH-C94852 and BH-E11516). Closer to Broomhall Farm, Late Iron Age to Early Roman ditches have been identified, containing Late Iron Age pottery. A harness fitting has also been found close to Broomhill Farm (PAS ref: BH-DE1662).

Though evidence dating to the Iron Age seems largely concentrated to the west of the village, evidence has also been recovered from other locations within the village. Close to Bardolphs Farm, to the east of the village, cropmarks reveal the presence of a potential occupation site featuring a polygonal enclosure, a smaller internal enclosure and a possible roundhouse, though no below-ground investigation of this feature has taken place so it is not possible to date these features with certainty. Evidence of Iron Age activity was also identified during the construction of the Gatekeeper Meadow estate, as discussed above (HER ref: MHT6374). A copper alloy penannular brooch has also been recovered from Church Lane (PAS ref: DENO-DC9FD4).

Roman (42 – 410 AD)

A large number of finds and features dating to the Roman period have been identified in Watton-at-Stone and the surrounding area. During this period, a Roman Road connecting Verulamium (St Albans) to Camulodunum (Colchester) ran through the village (HER Refs: MHT4615, MHT7664, MHT7665, MHT 10000). Generally, settlement and other activity can be identified close to the route of Roman Roads, and this is the case for Watton-at-Stone. Whilst finds and features have been identified in other locations within the village and the surrounding area, the bulk of evidence dating to this period remains concentrated around the route of the Roman Road, which enters the village just to the south of the Gatekeeper Meadow estate and continues in a straight line through the school grounds, the tennis courts and the allotments before exiting the village to the east of Watton House.

The most significant site dating to this period, 'Roman Site 440yds E of Backlane Wood', is located 1.7km west of the railway line, and c. 700m south of the route of the Roman Road and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument because of its archaeological significance. Debris recovered from the ploughsoil in this area implies that at least two substantial Roman buildings are present in this area. Four test pits and five evaluation trenches were dug in 1977, and no structural evidence was found aside from a possible packed chalk and cob floor, but this does not rule out the possibility of structures nearby. The finds included late Iron Age pottery, Roman pottery from the 1st to 4th century, quernstones, tile, coins, fragments of copper alloy, animal bones and other debris. Just outside of the Scheduled area, a Roman tile kiln has also been identified.

Broomhall Farm and Raffin Green are located c. 600-700m north of the suspected route of the Roman Road. Between Broomhall Farm and Raffin Green, a cremation cemetery was identified and contained twenty urns dating to the first century AD (HER Refs: MHT4724, MHT6590). Closer to Raffin Green, a ditch containing nine late third to early fourth century infant skeletons were identified. Directly below these remains, a coin dating to 273 AD was recovered (HER Ref: MHT6309). A second century Bronze cockerel was recovered from a ditch close to these inhumations (HER Ref: MHT6503). The Portable Antiquities Scheme records 213 finds dating the Roman period which have been recovered in the area surrounding Raffin Green and Broomhall Farm. These include 180 coins, five brooches, five steelyard weights, three furniture fittings, three locks, three mounts, two bracelets, two keys, one bill hook, a bridle bit, a plate, a stud, a weight, a spatula, tweezers, a vessel, a coin blank and one unidentified object. Whilst it is possible that the coins and brooches may be related to other inhumations within the area, some of the other objects suggest that there may also be areas of occupation in the area.

Other finds and features identified close to the Roman Road include a Roman building discovered in the garden of Glebe House (HER Ref: MHT1552), Roman pottery and tiles found near the church roundabout, (HER Ref: MHT1551), Roman tesserae discovered at Bardolphs

Farm (HER Ref: MHT2068), Roman tegula discovered at the Church of St Andrew and St Mary (HER Ref: MHT4360), a floor, post hole and kiln discovered just to the east of Watton House (HER Ref: MHT6554), pottery and coins discovered in a garden at Rivershill (HER Ref: MHT9982), a ditch and a hearth discovered in Watton-at-Stone recreation ground (HER Ref: MHT15573), a possible Roman barrow located half way between Watton-at-Stone and Datchworth immediately north of the Roman Road (HER Ref: MHT13552), and ditches at Gatekeeper Meadow (HER Ref: MHT30747). Further from the Roman Road, a quern has been identified on Walkern Road (HER Ref: MHT1550), and a Roman bath house has been identified at Hooks Cross (HER Ref: MHT9998).

Anglo-Saxon (410 – 1066 AD) and Medieval (1066 – 1485 AD)

Very few finds and features of Anglo-Saxon date have been identified in Watton-at-Stone. On the site of the Gatekeeper Meadow estate, a curvilinear ditch was identified in 2011. This ditch contained five artefact-rich and burnt deposits containing large sherds of early-mid Saxon pottery, which dated to the sixth to eighth centuries AD. Six probable cremation burials were identified nearby.

A number of charters purporting to date from the tenth to eleventh centuries record the granting of Watton-at-Stone to Westminster Abbey by Kings Edgar and Edward, though these are all later forgeries. The Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, records the population of Watton-at-Stone as 35 households, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday. Of particular interest, it mentions three mills and a priest, indicating that there was probably a church here at this time, though its location is unknown.

"Moat Enclosures, Well Wood and Chapel Wood" is located 1.2km west of the village and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument because of its archaeological significance. The chapel was endowed and built by Henry fitz Ailwin, the first Lord Mayor of London, before his death in 1212. An excavation took place here in the 1970s, and fragments of stained glass and moulded window stones were found in the debris. Well Wood is located to the north of Chapel Wood and is scheduled because of a large ditch or moat which has been cut into the chalk. Finds recovered from this site include 13th-15th century pottery and a 12th-13th century Caen stone mortar. Another possible moat has been identified in the wood just to the east of Chapel Wood but is not part of the scheduled monument and has not been investigated for its archaeological potential (HER Ref: MHT2738).

In the Medieval period, the centre of the village would have been focused around the church in the southern end of the village. Though the present church of St Andrew and St Mary dates to the fifteenth century, it is likely that at least one earlier church was located either on the same site or in the immediate vicinity. Moats have been identified nearby on Perrywood Lane (HER Ref: MHT1989), and at Watton Green (HER Ref: MHT1990), and one of these may be the site of the Medieval manor of Crowborough. A moat has also been identified at Watkins Farm (HER Ref: MHT1986). Other Medieval finds and features discovered in the village include pottery (HER Refs: MHT6374, MHT30749 and MHT31129) and cropmarks of probable ridge and furrow (HER Refs: MHT7660 and MHT13466).

Post Medieval (1485 – 1799 AD) and Modern (1800 – Present)

A number of Listed Buildings along the High Street date to the Post Medieval period, including (but not limited to) the Bull Public House, the George and Dragon Public House and the former Waggon and Horses Public House. During this period, occupation in the village would have been centred along the High Street.

The village grew gradually in the Post Medieval and Modern periods until the second half of the twentieth century when widespread development began to take place in the village. This began with Beane Road, Glebe Close and Rectory Lane in the 1940s and Hockerill in the 1950s. Lammas Road, Glebe Court, Rivershill, and the first part of Great Innings were constructed in the 1960s, and Hazeldell and an extension to Great Innings took place in the

1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s, the construction of smaller estates such as Motts Close, The Beaneside, and Moorymead Close took place, and the final phase of the Great Innings development started. Since 2000, development in the village has slowed down considerably, but Long Meadow was built on the site of Watton Service Station in 2001 and Gatekeeper Meadow housing development started opposite the railway station in 2012.

Walkern Road Site (WAS 3)

The Walkern Road Site (see [Policy WAS 3](#)) is located to the north of the village of Watton-at-Stone. It is bounded to the south by residential development, to the west by the River Beane and agricultural land, to the north by the Watton-at-Stone bypass, and to the east by Walkern Road.

The site is considered to have a low archaeological potential for finds or features dating to the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, although stray finds could conceivably be present.

Two HER records are identified within the site. A circular enclosure approximately 24m in diameter is located in the centre of the site and represents the ploughed down remains of a round barrow, probably dating to the Bronze Age (MHT7654). An undated linear ditch, approximately 100m long, is partly superimposed on the ring ditch (MHT7655). Due to the presence of a Bronze Age feature within the site, the site is considered to have a high potential for finds or features dating to the Bronze Age. A low archaeological potential has been identified for evidence dating to the Iron Age.

Whilst no finds or features dating to the Roman period have been identified in close proximity to the site, a high volume of Roman archaeological evidence has been found elsewhere in the village. A low to moderate archaeological potential has been identified for finds or features dating to this period, but in this location it is most likely to comprise evidence associated with agricultural activity. Evidence of occupation is considered unlikely on this site.

A low to moderate archaeological potential has been identified for finds or features relating to Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and Post Medieval agricultural activity. Aside from the construction of the Watton-at-Stone bypass in the late twentieth century, no significant changes took place on or in the immediate vicinity of the site in the Modern period.

It is anticipated that further archaeological investigations will be required on this site.

Stevenage Road Site (WAS 4)

The Stevenage Road site (see [Policy WAS 4](#)) is located to the north west of the village of Watton-at-Stone. It is bounded to the south by the Watton-at-Stone–Stevenage railway line, to the west by agricultural land, to the north by the High Street, and to the east by residential development.

The site has a low archaeological potential for finds or features dating to the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, although stray finds could conceivably be present. The site has a low to moderate archaeological potential for finds or features dating to the Bronze Age and Iron age, most likely comprising of evidence of agricultural activity.

This site is considered likely to have a moderate archaeological potential for finds or features dating to the Roman period. Whilst this is most likely to comprise evidence of land division and drainage associated with agricultural activity, due to the site's proximity to known Roman remains at Broomhall Farm, evidence of occupational or funerary activity could also conceivably be present. The site is considered to have a moderate archaeological potential for evidence relating to agricultural activity and a low potential for evidence of occupation in the Anglo-Saxon, Medieval periods and Post Medieval periods.

Analysis of the historical maps for this site indicate that the site was in agricultural use from the late nineteenth century until the present day. Aside from the construction of the railway line to the south of the site in the early twentieth century, no significant changes have taken place on the site or in its immediate vicinity. A vaguely rectangular enclosure measuring 100m x 45m is recorded within the site (HER Ref: MHT10294). Though the HER records it as an undatable feature, the 1837 Watton-at-Stone Parish Tithe Map shows that there was a gravel pit of the same shape in this location in the early Modern period.

It is anticipated that further archaeological investigations will be required on this site.

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Appendix H – Non-designated Heritage Assets

87/89 High Street (opposite the George and Dragon)



This is an old timber-framed building which used to be a Hall House. It was built before 1583. It was used at one time as the village police station and the former lock-up is still standing.

96 High Street (opposite the Bull)



This building was once the old Bake House. The ovens are still in place.

Club House School Lane (opposite the Community Hall)



The first school set up in the village was established in 1662 as a free school for up to 20 children. This building, which dates from 1816, was used as the infants' school until 1980 when the site was sold for development. The old school building was renovated and converted to residential use, with additional homes built in the orchard.

33, 35, 37, 39 High Street (opposite the Butcher and Hairdresser shops)



These dwellings are now known as Porch Cottages but were originally known as Railway Cottages. It is thought that these cottages were occupied by railway workers when the railway, station and goods yard were being built.

Methodist Church and Hall, High Street



The Methodist Church in the High Street was built in 1891. It has since been extended to provide two vestries and additional meeting rooms.

Puddingstone (at the front of 1 High Street)



The stone located beside the street name sign at the corner of the former Waggon and Horses public house, now 1 High Street, is believed to be a lump of Hertfordshire puddingstone, a form of natural rock conglomerate. This stone is believed to be the "stone" referred to in the village's name.

War Memorial



The War Memorial commemorates 14 local people who gave their lives in the Great War. It is simple but finely detailed and graceful. Constructed of white Portland stone, the cross is mounted on a graceful tapering column supported by a decorative triangular three step plinth, with the whole structure reaching a height of 4.6m. For details of the commemorative text, see the [Imperial War Museum Memorials](#) register. It is in good condition with all inscriptions legible. The Memorial was recognised as a possible candidate for listing in paragraph 6.38 of the adopted Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2104.

The setting of the War Memorial contributes to its special historic character.

Appendix I – Glossary of Terms

CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
Blue Infrastructure	Rivers, streams, canals and other water bodies (sometimes included as in Green Infrastructure)
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Designated Area	The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan i.e. the Parish of Watton-at-Stone
DPH	Dwellings Per Hectare
EHDC	East Hertfordshire District Council
Footway	The pedestrian element of a road, commonly called a pavement
Green Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green space and other green features
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HER	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
HERC	Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
Local Plan	East Herts District Plan
Locality	Locality is a national membership network supporting local community organisations See www.locality.org.uk
Neighbourhood Plan	Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework July 2021
Rain gardens	Rain gardens are designed in a small depression to benefit from run-off clean rain water.
SBD	Secured by Design, following advice on crime, disorder, fear of crime in the built environment including public open space. Climate change cost of dealing with crime at design stage can reduce the carbon footprint of new homes.
Section 106	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appendix J – Acknowledgements

For the beautiful cover illustration – Jane Abbott

For many photographs of the village and surrounding area – Watton Photographic Society and all other contributors from photographers both amateur and professional

For the Neighbourhood Plan logo – Gill Cox for organising the logo competition at Watton-at-Stone Nursery and Primary School and producing the final logo, and Alfie Aston who won the competition

For important information and contributions about the history of Watton-at-Stone – Sophie Bell, Hertford Museum, HER and Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society

For information about wildlife and the village environment – Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust & HERC

For answering many questions and providing advice –the Planning Department, East Herts District Council

For attending many meetings and answering emails and other correspondence – Fairview Estates (Housing) Ltd and Woodhall Estate Management Ltd

For much hard work, invaluable professional insight and expert advice in putting this plan together – Jacqueline Veater, Govresources Ltd.

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Appendix L – Benefit Project Plan

Note: Benefit Project Plan updates can be found on the [Neighbourhood Plan page of the Parish Council website](#)

Benefit Project	Objective	Timetable	Section 106 Trigger	Delivery	Funding
Football Pitches	To improve the provision for Junior football by providing pitches and limited facilities .	Start works early 2023 (subject to planning permission/ landowner agreement) Completion late 2023	As soon as possible but must be pre-commencement of site WAS 4	Delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with the Stevenage Road development (Policy WAS 4). Dependent on lease of site being agreed	Youth football Sport England
Out-of-hours School building	Building to provide affordable childcare before and after school hours and during holidays.	On hold as facility may not be required	To be decided	Dependent on agreement with HCC and planning permission	In kind or cash provision from developers and other agencies
Community Hall car park and play area	To improve the economic sustainability of the hall by providing 7 additional designated car park spaces and provide improved, updated, safer play area.	On hold as planning permission refused	n/a	Unknown	Parish Council funds external grants or other funding
Conservation area Rush Meads	To extend riverside wildlife area making it accessible with a range of habitats, in partnership with other agencies.	Ongoing	n/a	Landowner declined to liaise with the Parish Council to progress wildlife site	Unknown
Circular walk	To complete a circular walk/cycle path by connecting Moorymead Close/Great Innings to	Bridge installation commencement 2023 (subject to	Prior to occupation of 30 th house of each related site	Delivered by Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with developments on sites WAS 3 and WAS 4, with enhanced	Designated Section 106 agreement providing a

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033

	Stevenage Road crossing the high part of Malting House Field above WAS 4, through WAS 4, crossing Rush Meads, across the river by a bridge, and through WAS 3 connecting to existing rights of way east of Walkern Road.	planning permission). Complete Footway/ cycleway works Late 2024.	(WAS 3 and WAS 4)	maintenance plan and part adoption by HCC Highways.	multiuse path of an agreed standard including habitat sensitive lighting.
Provision of new Scout hut	To replace existing Hut to accommodate expanding Scout movement.	To be decided	n/a	Coordinated by Scouts subject to planning consent. Courtesy of the Woodhall Estate.	Parish Council, The Scout Movement, local donations
Footpath	To formalise footpath from Clappers Lane east to Church Lane via Green Space.	On adoption of Neighbourhood Plan 2023	n/a	In agreement with East Herts Council (Landowners)	Section 106
Footpath	To create permanent footpath from Clappers Lane to Glebe Close via HCC Early Learning Centre.	Proposed 2023	Concurrent with Development	In agreement with Hertfordshire County Council (Landowner)	Section 106

Watton at Stone



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

[Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan page on Parish Council Website](#)

East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting:	Tuesday 28 November 2023
Report by:	Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward– Executive Member for Planning and Growth
Report title:	Ware Neighbourhood Plan- Adoption
Ward(s) affected:	Ware Priory; Ware St. Mary's; Ware Trinity;

Summary – A referendum on Ware Neighbourhood Plan took place on the 28 September 2023. A majority voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan and as such the Council now has the opportunity to formally make (adopt) the Ware Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive to recommend to Council that:

- a) The Ware Neighbourhood Area Plan 2021-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally made (adopted).**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 Following the successful referendum on 28 September 2023, the Council are now able to make (adopt) the Ware Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Ware Neighbourhood Plan became part of the statutory development plan for the district once it was approved at referendum and will be used by development management in the determination of planning applications submitted in the neighbourhood area. Unless a neighbourhood plan breaches human rights or EU obligations, the local planning authority is required to formally make the neighbourhood plan.

2.0 Background

2.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Government under the Localism Act in 2011. Neighbourhood planning provides an opportunity for local communities to produce a planning document that shapes and influences future development within their local area.

2.2 The Town and Country Planning England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) came into force on the 6 April 2012 and prescribe both the process, and role of the local planning authority in supporting neighbourhood planning. In East Herts, parish or town councils are qualifying bodies able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

2.3 Ware Town Council applied for designation as a Neighbourhood Area in May 2018; the Neighbourhood Area was then designated on 11 September 2018. The designated area excludes the land included in District Plan Policy WARE2 North and East Ware Site Allocation, because this is the focus of a separate masterplan.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Group carried out early community engagement in 2019 and 2020 and undertook a Pre-Submission Consultation between the 19 April and the 24 June 2022 under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations. The Neighbourhood

Plan was then submitted to East Herts Council on the 31 October 2022 and a six-week consultation on the submission plan was undertaken from the 1 December 2022 to the 26 January 2023 under Regulation 16.

2.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The Ware Neighbourhood Plan is complementary to the existing development plan and addresses a range of topics. It seeks to provide opportunities for new development within a context in which the neighbourhood area can maintain its historic character and appearance. The Plan's vision has been translated into a set of objectives and policies, with particular focus on the following areas:

- Promotion of high quality design and protection of heritage assets and local character;
- Enhancing green and blue infrastructure and the natural environment, including the designation of new local green spaces;
- Supporting a vibrant economy;
- Retaining and enhancing the vitality of the town centre;
- Improving access to services and facilities;
- Ensuring connectivity through improvements to sustainable transport routes.

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for development. Whilst the District Plan allocation WARE2 is referenced in the supporting text, given its implications and significance for the town, it is not specifically addressed by this

Neighbourhood Plan because it is located outside of the neighbourhood area.

- 2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan was assessed by an Independent Examiner between April and July 2023. The Examiner commended the Neighbourhood Plan for being informative and well-presented. He concluded that it would bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area and recommended that the plan proceed, subject to recommended modifications, to referendum. On 14th August 2023, the Council made the decision, via the non-key decision process, to proceed to a referendum.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The Referendum took place on Thursday 28 September 2023 with a 16.6% turnout. There was an overall 'yes' vote of 2,221 votes (90.8%), against 225 (9.2%) who voted 'no'. As outlined within Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017) the Council is able to make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the area. The residents within the Ware Neighbourhood Area voted on the following question:

"Do you want East Hertfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ware Neighbourhood Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

- 3.2 With an overall successful 'yes' vote, the Council are now able to formally 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the East Herts Development Plan.

Adoption

- 3.3 Following a successful referendum, the Ware Neighbourhood Plan already forms part of the development plan. As such any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.
- 3.4 There are narrow circumstances where the local planning authority is not required to make the neighbourhood plan. These are where it considers that the making of the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act as amended). The Ware Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the aforementioned obligations.
- 3.5 It is considered that the Ware Neighbourhood Plan positively contributes to the East Herts Development Management process providing a strong community vision that seeks to contribute to sustainable development and as such the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to be formally made.
- 3.6 The final version of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan can be found in Appendix A.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Council is permitted, in narrow circumstances only, to not make a neighbourhood plan, when it is in breach or incompatible with any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E (8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as Amended). However, the Ware Neighbourhood Plan does not breach these obligations.

5.0 Risks

5.1 If the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to be formally made, then the Council would not be fulfilling its duties as Local Planning Authority and there is the risk of legal challenge.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to multiple rounds of public consultation and a referendum.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes. The Ware Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required, the report concluded that the Plan is not likely to have any significant environmental effects and as such neither were required. The Plan also contains policies that aim to protect the environment.

Financial

Yes. It is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to cover examination and referendum costs. Government grants are available when a Plan has a formal referendum date.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

Ware St Marys, Ware Priory part of Ware Trinity. The neighbourhood area was designated in 2018, in accordance with Ware Town Council boundaries. These boundaries are due to be reviewed as part of the Community Governance Review agreed by Council on 26 July 2023, to take account of development of District Plan site WARE2, to the north and east of the town. The Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation will however remain in place until such time that a further review or update of the Neighbourhood Plan/s is undertaken.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A: Ware Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2033

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Ware Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2033



Foreword

Ware is a thriving market town where people value the rural feel, the wealth of amenities and being part of a community that is inclusive and diverse. The Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for local people to have control over the future of the town, by actively planning for new sympathetic development and protecting those parts of the town that are important to its character and function.

The Neighbourhood Plan represents the vision and aspirations of the community. It has been produced by the Ware Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, supported by Ware Town Council, using the views and ideas of those living and working in the town and other stakeholders with an interest in the community.

The Steering Group carried out extensive and inclusive community engagement to listen and consult on a wide range of issues in order to achieve a plan that details how we see our community developing. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views contained in this document reflect those of the majority of Ware.

Ware presents a unique set of planning challenges. It has taken time and careful consideration to craft a set of local planning policies that will safeguard everything we regard as special, whilst allowing the area to change and develop in response to the needs and demands of modern life.

The Neighbourhood Plan has taken many hours of hard work. I wish to pay tribute to the residents and councillors who have given their time freely. Our sincere thanks to Alison Eardley, who has provided invaluable advice, guidance and produced many drafts and to Terry Philpott, the Town Clerk, who has coordinated our meetings.

I hope the investment of time by the community in preparing this Plan will result in a flourishing and sustainable future for Ware.

Jan Stock

Chair of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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Appendix B - Venues currently offering shared space in Ware

Appendix C - Definition of accessible toilets

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Ware Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). It sets out planning and land-use policy for the neighbourhood area, over the period 2021 to 2033, sitting alongside and in compliance with the East Herts District Plan 2018. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.2 East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), as the local planning authority, designated the neighbourhood area (Figure 1.1) on 11 September 2018. The neighbourhood area shares much of its boundary with that of the Town Council, excluding the North and East Ware Site Allocation, as this is the focus of a separate masterplan.
- 1.3 The document sets out planning policies only. Issues relating to highways fall beyond this scope, as they are dealt with by the Highways Authority (Hertfordshire County Council), although related projects are captured in Section 12 of this document (Non-Policy Actions). A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, comprising local councillors and volunteers from the community, was established by the Town Council to prepare the Plan. In consultation with the community and local businesses, it has established a vision and framework for the future of the designated area and sets out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the plan period 2021 to 2033.
- 1.4 The Plan provides guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the designated area. It also sets out how land should be considered, in planning terms, locally, and is a material planning consideration in the determination of applications.
- 1.5 The process of producing the plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance in Ware. Within each section there is a summary of what each policy seeks to achieve and a justification, providing the necessary understanding of the policy and how it should be applied. The policies themselves are presented in the **blue** boxes and these will be used to assist in the determination of planning applications. It is advisable that, to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text and evidence documents. These can be found on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#). Beneath each policy is a conformity reference, listing the policies in the EHDC District Plan and paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that the policy conforms to. The Plan identifies projects that are not met through the planning system, but which are important to the well-being of the community. It is proposed that these projects will be met through community action supported by a range of organisations. The Plan also sets out the Community Infrastructure Priorities and a framework for monitoring and implementation.

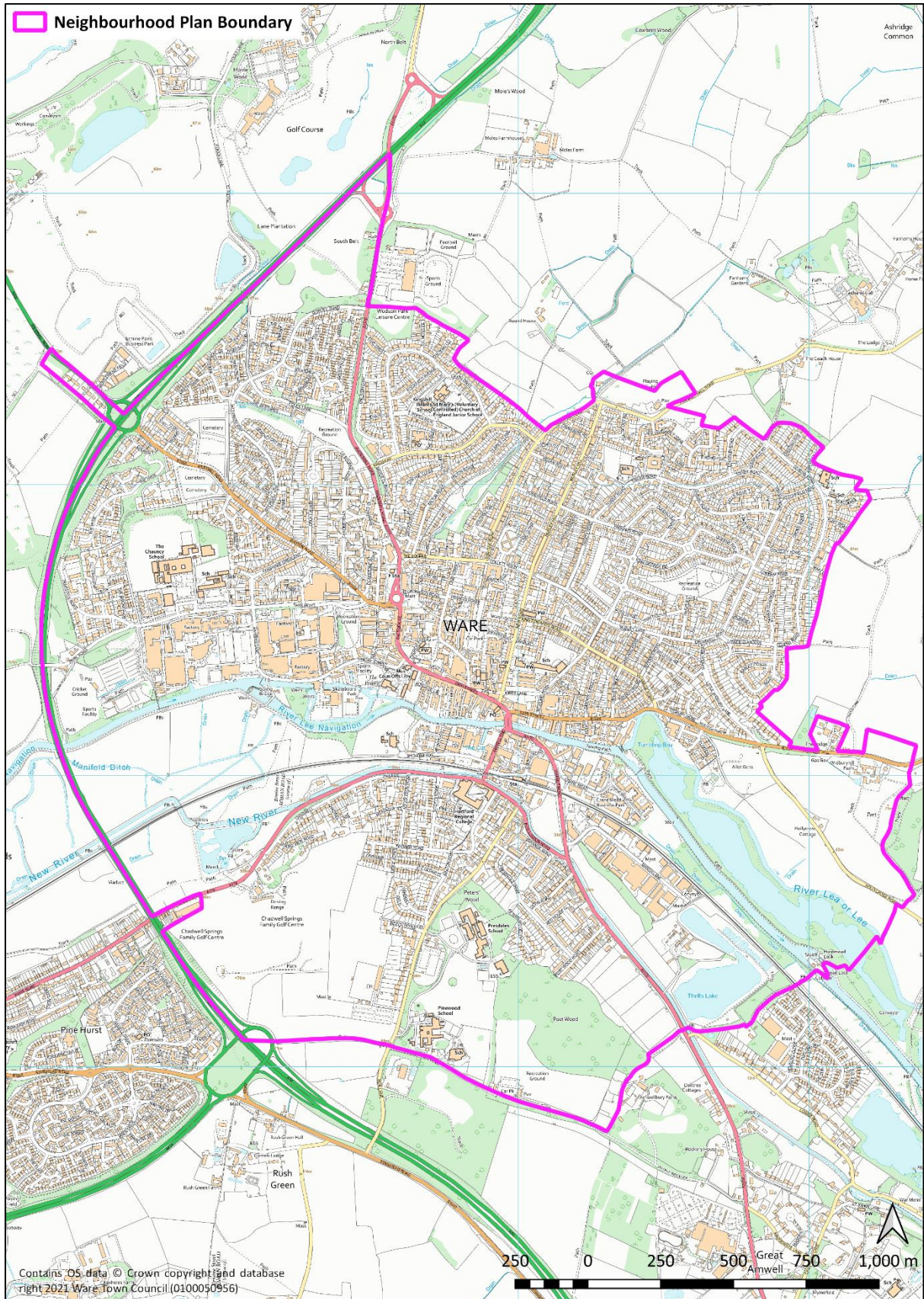


Figure 1.1: The Ware Neighbourhood Plan designated area

The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

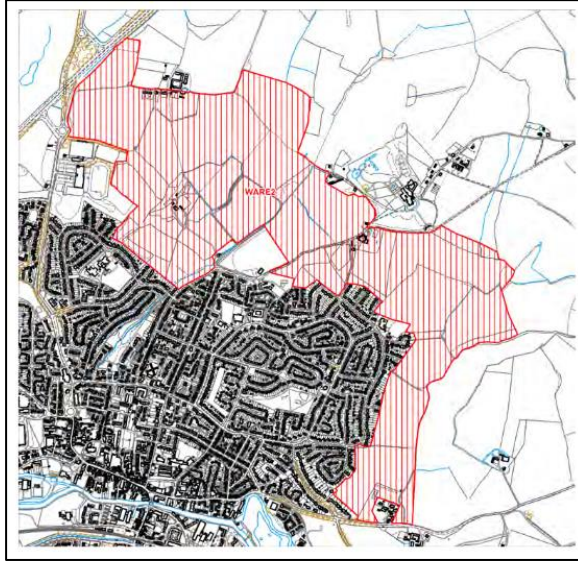
- 1.6 The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the revised NPPF published in July 2021, which states at paragraphs 29 and 30:

*‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. **Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies** (Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area).*

*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, **the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.***

Local Planning Policy

- 1.7 The WNP policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the East Herts District Plan which, alongside the Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Hertfordshire, makes up the Local Development Plan.
- 1.8 The East Herts District Plan was adopted in 2018 and sets out the planning framework for the district covering the period from 2011 to 2033. It establishes a need for 18,458 new homes by 2033, which equates to 839 new homes per year, across the district. In addition, it supports the provision of 10,800 new jobs and provides for 19-20 hectares of new employment land: 3,000m² of Class E Commercial, Business and Service (formerly B1 employment floorspace) to be provided specifically at Mead Lane, Hertford; and an additional 7,100m² space relating to Convenience (food) retail; and a further 5,700m² of Comparison (non-food) retail.
- 1.9 The District Plan categorises Ware as a Minor Town centre and identifies it as the location for an urban extension to be developed to the north and east of the town. The strategy for Ware (both the existing town and taking into account the extension), will provide:
- 1,000 new homes, with a further 500 if adequate highways mitigation can be demonstrated;
 - a proportion of the overall residential windfall allowance for the District;
 - 600m² retail floorspace; and
 - 3ha commercial employment space



Strategic site allocation north and east of Ware

- 1.10 This strategic allocation will be subject to a masterplan encompassing Garden City principles and will deliver amongst others a range of new facilities including a new neighbourhood centre, primary and secondary school provision, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a care home and a site for Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.11 The neighbourhood plan area does not encompass the strategic site, however, the development of that site has been carefully considered in terms of its potential impact on the existing settlement, the local community and facilities.

Community engagement



Images show examples of community engagement activities throughout the process

- 1.12 Work on the WNP has been guided by the need to engage as widely as possible with the different communities served by Ware. Efforts have been made to reach those people who are often more difficult to involve in formal consultations. This has included a series of exhibitions, presentations, and surveys. These will be more fully set out in the Consultation Statement to be submitted alongside the Submission Version Plan at Regulation 16. A timeline of activity is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2018	Ware Town Council decides to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Area is designated • Steering Group established
2019 2020	Evidence collation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Groups set up • Dedicated website established • Attendance at Masterplan meetings (for the strategic site N&E Ware) • Initial consultation days held • Community consultation to determine key issues facing Ware
2021	Informal Plan developed Regulation 14 Plan finalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation events on the informal draft Plan • Pre-Submission Version Plan finalised • SEA/ HRA Screening
2022 to 2023	Plan finalised and made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation • Plan amended appropriately into Submission Version and submitted, with supporting documents to EHDC • Regulation 16 consultation run by EHDC • Plan independently examined • Plan finalised for Referendum • Plan 'made' and forming part of the strategic development plan

Figure 1.2: Engagement activity timeline

1.14 Discussions with EHDC have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the Plan. In addition, communication with local groups and neighbouring parishes has taken place.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.15 The WNP has been screened to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The screening Determination Statement has concluded that the WNP is *unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require an SEA or an HRA*.

1.16 A copy of the Screening Determination letter and statement is included within the evidence base, accompanying the WNP.

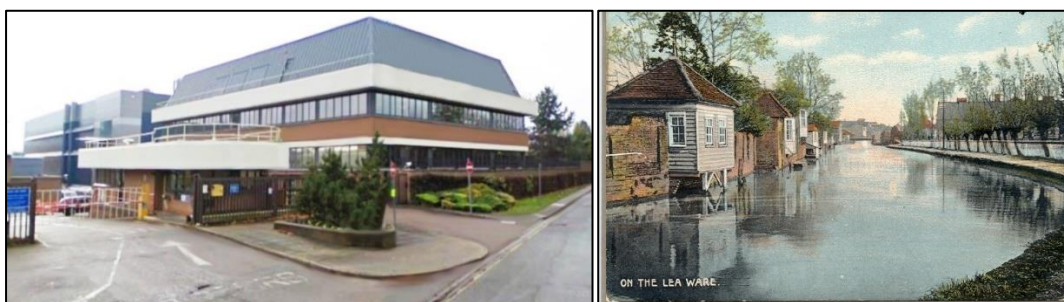
2 ABOUT WARE

- 2.1 Ware is an ancient historic Hertfordshire market town of circa 18,800 people (based on the census 2011. This will have increased due to additional housing being built since this time), located close to the county town of Hertford. The Prime Meridian passes to the east of Ware. The River Lea (known by the terms 'Lea' and 'Lee'; this document refers to it as the River Lea) runs through the centre of Ware, providing a 'green lung' for walkers and cyclists, and an inland navigational connection with neighbouring Hertford connecting the town with London and the national canal network and neighbouring Hertford. In the early 20th century, there were more than 70 public houses in the town, most of which have become private homes, leaving only approximately 19 to 20 operating currently.
- 2.2 Archaeology has shown that Ware has been occupied since at least the Mesolithic period (which ended about 4000 BC). Thus, it has been said that Ware is one of the oldest continuously occupied sites within Europe. During the pre-Roman Iron-Age, the River Lea was a convenient trade route from the Continent. With the river crossing allowing further access, the Iron-Age settlement became an important trading centre. Following the Roman invasion of AD 43, the area continued to develop, and a Roman town grew up either side of the road known as Ermine Street. The river crossing was the centre for the Saxon town. The Norman overlords developed Ware along the river, creating the High Street and the bridge, which superseded the Ermine Street and ford crossing. The Town's modern name probably dates from the 9th century, when weirs were built on the River Lea to prevent Danish Viking long ships escaping after a battle with Alfred the Great near Ware.
- 2.3 Ware has numerous locally and nationally listed assets, including four Grade I, fifteen Grade II* and 181 Grade II. The Grade I assets comprise the remains of the 14th century Friary, one of the few friary buildings to have survived the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. It became known as The Priory and is currently used as the Town Council's offices. Place House Hall is a manor house dating to the 13th/ early 14th century and is one of the most important early medieval timber-framed structures in the county. Scott's Grotto, built in the 1760's by local poet John Scott, is Grade I listed complex of rooms and tunnels, clad in a variety of shells, fossils and other materials. The tunnels extend over 20 metres into the chalk hillside with the deepest chamber being some 10 metres below the hilltop. Finally, St. Mary's Church is regarded as a fine example of 14th and 15th century architecture and contains many items of historic interest, including its stained-glass windows and organ.
- 2.4 Ware was considered the 'premier malting town in England'; with more than 100 malthouses in the early 20th century, sending most of its production to the London breweries via the River Lea.



Images show: Scott's Grotto; the River Lea; Ware Priory; and Place House

- 2.5 Ware is probably best known for the 'Great Bed of Ware', which was mentioned by Shakespeare in Twelfth Night and is on display in London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Other literary references to the Bed include plays of Ben Johnson, Thomas Decker, John Webster, Richard Brone, John Wilson and George Farquhar in the 17th century. It also appears in a poem by Lord Byron in the 18th century and in one of Dickens Christmas stories in the 19th century.
- 2.6 The north bank of the river behind the High Street has several 'Gazebos', originally known as 'Dutch Houses', the oldest of which date to the reign of King William of Orange in the 1690s. They were a peaceful retreat for the owners of the High Street Inns and their guests and restored at the instigation of the Ware Society in the 1980's.



Images show: GSK offices and gazebos on the River Lea

- 2.7 Today, Ware's largest employer is GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). Their large pharmaceutical research and production sites are located adjacent to the River Lea, to the west of the Town centre.
- 2.8 Ware's current educational provision includes: several preschools and nurseries; seven primary schools; two secondary schools; two schools for students with special needs; and Ware Campus of the Hertford Regional College (HRC) - including the college's

‘Creative Art & Enterprise,’ ‘Hair and Beauty,’ ‘Business and Computing’ and ‘Inclusive Learning’ Departments.

2.9 Ware has good local road traffic links to the M25 / London and Cambridge via the adjacent A10. Easy access to the A1(M) is provided via local A10 junctions, i.e., with the A602 (via Stevenage), and the A414 (via Hertford and Hatfield). Easy access to the M11 and Stansted Airport is provided via the local A10 / A120 junction. The town has moderately reasonable local public transport provision:

- Ware Rail station is on the London Liverpool Street - Hertford East Branch Line operated by Abellio Greater Anglia, and offers a half hourly rail service to/from London and Hertford.
- Daytime bus services operate within the town and connect Ware to local villages and nearby towns including Stevenage, Harlow, Waltham Cross, Hertford and Hatfield.

Challenges facing Ware

2.10 The WNP seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community. In summary these challenges are:

- Meeting the demands of an ageing population in terms of ensuring housing, services and facilities are accessible and suited to their needs.
- Ensuring that new homes are of the type and affordability to enable young people who grew up in and around Ware the chance to live locally rather than be forced to move away.
- Encouraging younger people and families to locate to the town.
- Managing the integration of the prospective strategic mixed-use development on land allocated immediately to the north and east of the town.
- Supporting the ongoing viability and vitality of the town centre and encouraging the continued presence of major employers in the town.
- Supporting employment that exists in the town, including opportunities for those wishing to work from home or more flexibly.
- Safeguarding the valued green spaces and wider natural setting, including the River Lea, of the town.
- Continuing to provide a range of community facilities that are accessible to everyone. This is particularly important given the number of historic buildings which are often restricted in terms of access.
- Conserving the town’s historic assets, and encouraging aesthetically pleasing design in new developments, that contributes to and enhances the existing identity and character of the town.

- Improving accessibility to services within and near the town - through the provision of a network of footpaths, cycle paths, and public transport - to support active travel and help to reduce over-reliance on car use.
- Building on the strong sense of community and active voluntary sector in the town.
- Encouraging high quality development that contributes to the mitigation of climate change.

3 A VISION FOR WARE

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1. In consultation with the community, the vision for Ware to 2033 is:

Ware should be kept as an identifiable attractive town community, which enjoys the peace associated with being part of the countryside, while still contributing to the wider geographical community.

The character of Ware must be maintained, in order that it remains an attractive and accessible place in which to live, work and visit.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2. The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Objective 1: a thriving modern market town, underpinned by its heritage and promoting beauty;

Objective 2: an attractive place to live, where the natural environment is valued and safeguarded;

Objective 3: a place where people can work in rewarding jobs supporting a vibrant economy;

Objective 4: a caring community, supporting residents of all ages and social groups through health, education, employment, and enjoyment of cultural and leisure facilities;

Objective 5: an attractive Town centre which retains its human scale, and where people want to access services, meet and shop; and

Objective 6: a place that fosters mobility and healthy living, with a sustainable transport network for walkers, cyclists and those who use public transport.

4 HOUSING

Policy W1: Meeting the housing needs of Ware's population

Purpose

- 4.1. This policy seeks to ensure that there is a range of general housing that is designed to be capable of meeting the needs of people in Ware, including as they age and their requirements change.
- 4.2. It is important to note that the WNP does not seek to allocate sites for housing development. The East Herts District Plan 2018 does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the Ware Neighbourhood Plan, and it is considered that housing supply has been addressed adequately at the strategic level, including through the strategic allocation of land North and East of Ware. Any additional development would come forward within the settlement boundary and would be treated as windfall. Therefore the focus of the WNP is to ensure that the right sort of housing is developed to meet Ware's needs.

Justification

- 4.3. Housing delivered in Ware should be capable of meeting the needs of local people. Policy HOU1 of the East Herts District Plan addresses this by requiring a mix of housing in terms of size, tenure and type, as evidenced in the latest West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Policy W1 of this Neighbourhood Plan adds additional detail to this by recognising the significant proportion of Ware's population that is of retirement age and ensuring that new housing is capable not only of meeting the needs of younger people, but also adaptable to suit needs as people progress through life. In 2018, over 18% of residents were aged 65+. This is similar to other Hertfordshire towns of an equivalent size and mirrors a wider national trend - see Figure 4.1.

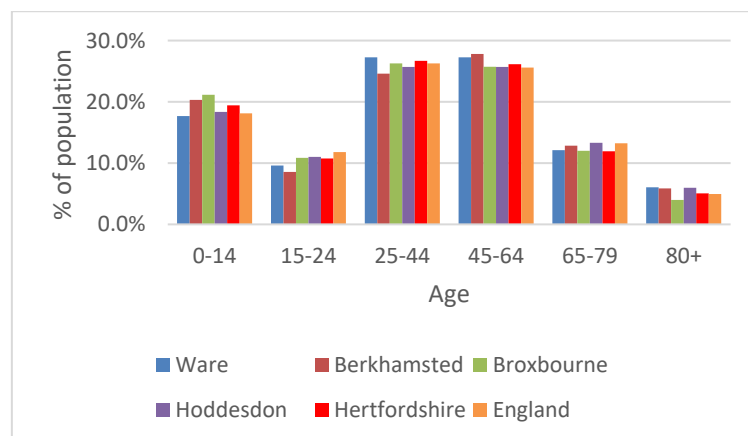


Figure 4.1: Age profile of population, 2018 (Source: Herts Insight, mid-year population estimates)

- 4.4. Over the period between 2011 and 2018 Ware has seen a significant increase in the proportion of its population aged between 45 and 64, i.e., those who will be at or approaching retirement over the plan period, and between 65 and 79 (see Figure 4.2).

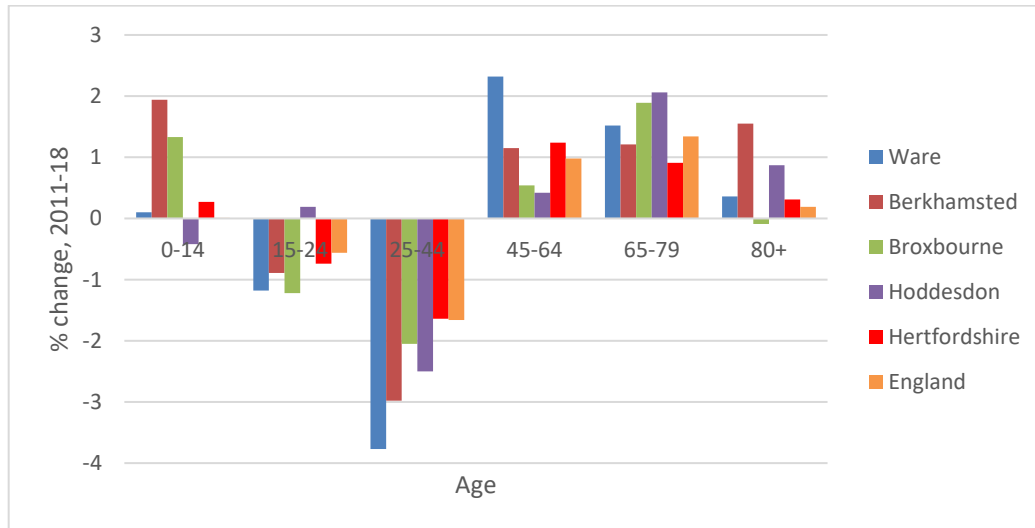


Figure 4.2: Population change, 2011-2018 (Source: Herts Insight, mid-year population estimates)

- 4.5. It is therefore important that a good proportion of the new housing stock in Ware can meet the needs of people as they age. Whilst bungalows are often considered popular among the older age group (Inside Housing - News - More than half of older people 'would consider living in bungalows'), to provide flexibility in the housing stock, the issue should not be addressed solely by building bungalows. General housing is capable of being designed with the needs of people in mind as they age. The focus should be on smaller housing (suitable and more manageable for older 'downsizers') that is close to shops and services (principally in Ware town centre).
- 4.6. Policy HOU1 in the East Herts District Plan requires the provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings to meet the changing needs of occupants over their lifetime. Policy HOU7 requires sites of 11 or more dwellings to meet the higher Building Regulations requirements relating to wheelchair use. However, these policies do not say what types of features are important as part of such a development to make them attractive to older people.
- 4.7. The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) (*HAPPI - Design - Topics - Resources - Housing LIN*) has, since 2009, promoted a series of principles for good design of housing. Many are recognisable from good design generally - good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage - but they have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons' housing which needs to offer both an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs. Access to social space, for

instance, encourages social interaction and can help to reduce isolation. Of the ten key design criteria, the most relevant ones that reflect what the community of Ware has said is needed (e) are:

- Space and flexibility
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Storage for belongings and bicycles

4.8. Good design to deliver these criteria is particularly important for smaller dwellings such as flats. Ware has a high proportion of flats (over 31% of all dwellings in the town - source: 2011 Census) and many of the development opportunities in the town in recent years have delivered apartment living. This must ensure that it is aimed at meeting the needs of older people as well as the younger working population.

POLICY W1: HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE

Residential development that could reasonably be expected to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it has reflected the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles, particularly:

- i. Space and flexibility;**
- ii. Balconies and outdoor space;**
- iii. Adaptability and 'care ready' design;**
- iv. Positive use of circulation space;**
- v. Shared facilities and 'hubs'; and**
- vi. Storage for belongings and bicycles.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 4; EHDP (2018): HOU1, HOU7; NPPF: 62

4.9. The WNP does recognise that there are other issues relating to housing in Ware, not least its affordability for younger people on average incomes. These are matters which in planning policy terms are addressed at the strategic level, i.e., through the East Herts District Plan. However, it is acknowledged that this has been a long-term problem of considerable significance that needs to be addressed, be it through district or national policy.

5 CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND DESIGN

Policy W2: Reflecting the character of Ware through high quality design

Purpose

- 5.1. This policy seeks to ensure that new development is well-designed and contributes to, and where possible enhances, the distinctive market town character of Ware. The policy and its supporting text add greater detail to the strategic District Plan policies on this topic, by defining what is meant by ‘local character’ in the context of Ware. This will help to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area.



Archaeological excavation at Ware Priory

Justification

- 5.2. Past generations of people and development have created the features that give Ware its identity today. This process has been gradual, taking place over many centuries, and the streetscapes that exist today have a distinctiveness that derives from variety. They contain heritage assets of all kinds, including characterful buildings, historic landmarks and archaeological features, both exposed and still beneath the ground. Much of Ware is recorded as an Area of Archaeological Significance and there are over 200 individual and clusters of nationally listed buildings across the town. The town is also home to two Scheduled Monuments: Ware Priory (the Scheduled Monument is officially recorded as ‘Ware Friary’, however locally it is referred to as Ware Priory) and a Section of Ermine Street, north of the Hertford Branch Railway.
- 5.3. This built heritage is important because it helps to create a sense of place and belonging for those living in Ware. It is also attractive to visitors to the town and therefore has an economic value in supporting regeneration and the visitor economy. The historic assets that contribute to Ware’s character are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved for future generations to enjoy.
- 5.4. Much of the centre of Ware is designated as a Conservation Area, for which an [Appraisal and Management Plan](#) was adopted by EHDC in 2016. It defines the essential qualities

that comprise this historic core, provides guidance for development proposals, measures for enhancing the area, and policies for its preservation. The Conservation Area is subdivided into four Identity Areas, although these are not mapped in the Area. Work on the WNP has enabled fuller descriptions, which can assist in guiding any future development proposals. The areas are mapped in Figure 5.1.

- 5.5. **Identity Area 1: the central historic core, essentially consisting of the High Street south to the River Lea, Church Street, part Baldock Street, south part of Crib Street, West Street, East Street and Kibes Lane.**
- 5.6. This area has a particularly large concentration of listed buildings, over 60% of which date from the 16th and 17th centuries and earlier. This is considerably higher than the national figure of buildings of this age, which Historic England advises is 34%. This core of the town, which forms the focus of the original settlement, is recognisable for its narrow streets, burgage plots and yards, many of which would have supported the malting heritage of the town. Original cobbled road surfacing still exists in parts.
- 5.7. The river is significant, having been the focal point of the original settlement. It follows therefore that there is a close relationship between the historic buildings, the River Lea and New River, where waterside structures - including the Gazebos - contribute greatly to the character of the area.
- 5.8. There are examples of more modern designs that complement the existing streetscape, for instance Christopher Court and Swan Mews.



Images show: 17th century nurses' cottages for Bluecoat School and Christopher Court picks up on built elements (materials, colours, architecture) from the surrounding context

- 5.9. Future development considerations are as follows:
- Reinforce the relationship between the historic core and the rivers.
 - Development proposals to pick up on elements from surrounding historic buildings - materials, colours, architectural features, layouts.
 - Support/ encourage features along the riverside.

- Retaining remaining features of the malting industry
- Retention of original paving or, where necessary, mirroring this using traditional materials (stone) and patterning.
- Retaining prominent historic architectural features in redevelopments or retrofitting of buildings.
- Restoration of features to original form.
- Encouraging more sympathetic fascias and shop front design, coordinated to complement historic buildings.
- Work with partners (EHDC, Historic England) to identify proposals to restore heritage assets considered to be at risk.
- Retain trees and hedgerows (notably along the riverside and in St Mary's Churchyard) and seek opportunities for additional planting.
- Reducing or repurposing unnecessary street clutter.

5.10. Identity Area 2: principally being south of the River Lea consisting of Amwell End, Broadmeads, Station Road and London Road/Hertford Road, including New River and bounded in the east by Viaduct Road.

5.11. Much of this area is designated as being of archaeological significance. There are numerous listed buildings here, many originally commercial in nature given the proximity of both the railway line, which crosses east-west, as well as the river.

5.12. Viaduct Road was constructed in 1843 for the Turnpike Company by the Eastern Railway as a condition of the latter's Parliamentary Bill because the level crossing in Amwell End would intermittently obstruct the Turnpike Road. The former Goods Shed has been attractively redeveloped as apartments adjacent to the station. This along with the Railway Station buildings and the former Station Hotel opposite are all Grade II listed. In Amwell End, twelve of the properties on the east side are Grade II listed, notably the Neelakash Restaurant at No. 3 (former shop frontage elements conserved), the Drill Hall with its partially tiled frontage, and the Spread Eagle public house.



The former Goods Shed has been redeveloped

5.13. Along London Road / Hertford Road, The Royal Oak public house and the railings of the New River are listed Grade II and Amwell House (recently restored and redeveloped as apartments) is Grade II*. The riverside gazebos are visible from the towpath along the northern edge of the area. There is an extensive car parking area at Broadmeads and a large open unkempt low-lying field, known as Gilpins Field, at the junction of London Road and Viaduct Road. The latter is considered an important gateway to the Conservation Area and perhaps more generally to the town; as such its openness should be protected. The field is owned by Thames Water and discussions are in place to explore options for creating a nature reserve here. Further detail on this is provided in Policy W12 (Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain) of this Neighbourhood Plan.



Images show: Important open spaces along the River Lea; London Road / Viaduct Road junction: an important gateway to Ware

5.14. This Identity Area is possibly the weakest one from an aesthetics perspective, having seen significant redevelopment. There is a need to ensure that any further development is beautiful, characterful and of a locally sympathetic design, rather than bland generic architecture that might be found anywhere. There are many features which contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area and many opportunities to initiate further improvements.

5.15. Future development considerations:

- Shop fronts and fascias should complement the historic environment.
- Cast-iron railings contribute to the local character, but some are in a state of disrepair.
- Repair or reinstating of buildings in poor repair and other features, for instance traditional paving materials and designs.
- Mirroring features, materials and colours from historic buildings.
- Improving the 'gateways' to the town and Conservation Area, including the safeguarding of the openness of Gilpins Field.
- Maintain and improve open spaces along the river.
- Retain trees and hedgerows (notably Conifer) and seek opportunities for additional planting.
- Removal of unnecessary street clutter.
- Improving interpretation boards and signage.

5.16. Identity Area 3 principally being Collett Road, Musley Hill, High Oak Road, part of Baldock Street, northern part of Crib Street and New Road.

5.17. There is only a scattering of listed buildings within this northern part of the Conservation Area, the most notable of which is the former Ware Union Workhouse off Collett Road.

5.18. A large central part of Identity Area 3 comprises neutral 20th century buildings of limited architectural or historic interest; these would previously have been the sites of 19th century Maltings, now lost. Elsewhere, however, there are concentrations of later non-listed buildings of considerable architectural and historic interest dating from the late 19th / early 20th century. Such concentrations are located along New Road, the south part of Milton Road and Coronation Road areas.



Former maltings converted to housing

5.19. Future development considerations:

- Repair or reinstating of buildings in poor repair and other features, including original boundary walls and road surfacing.
- Protecting late 19th / early 20th century buildings, some of which may not be listed, from demolition.
- Retaining original features of developments and reflected these in new proposals.
- Recognising the role that chimney pots play in contributing to local character.
- Retaining and improving open spaces, verges and communal seating areas and seeking opportunities to plant additional native street trees.
- Improving the gateways to the town: the roundabout at Watton Road / Baldock Street is a key entrance point to the historic town.
- Reducing on-street clutter, such as redundant utility cabinets.
- Large area of neutral development around Crib Street in the north of the Conservation Area where opportunities to create an improved environment should be explored.

5.20. Identity Area 4 principally being centred on Priory Street and Buryfield Recreation Ground, parts of Watton Road and Gladstone Road and bounded by the River Lea in the south and including the western edge of Baldock Street.

5.21. Most of this area is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance. There is a concentration of nationally listed properties along Baldock Street which principally date from the 16 / 17th centuries; also former Maltings to the east of Buryfield Recreation Ground and a scattering along Priory Street including the grade I Priory.



Images show: Trees add character to the riverside; an example of an early street sign

5.22. There are numerous non-listed properties, most of which are worthy of retention, dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries. In respect of the latter, the converted Mill buildings along Priory Street are particularly fine. The southern part of Area 4 is dominated by the River Lea and the open area (Lock keepers Island) enclosed by its arms. Open space and gardens around The Priory and Buryfield Recreation Ground play important visual, communal and land use roles.

5.23. Future development considerations:

- Retaining remaining features of the malting industry.
- Retaining and restoring historic street signs.
- Repairing historic railings, for instance alongside the River Lea.
- Improving public seating areas.
- Safeguarding trees and hedgerows.
- Rationalisation of street furniture on small sitting area on Watton Road to west of Gladstone Road.

5.24. The River Lea Navigation Character Corridor

5.25. In addition to the four Identity Areas, the River Lea Navigation itself should be recognised as a continuous entity extending beyond the Conservation Area. Much of the significant historic townscape can be publicly appreciated from both the water and the towing path. The waterway corridor acts as a receptor, in terms of townscape and amenity and natural and historic environment. The gazebos, with their statutory listing, visual prominence,

distinctive vernacular and recognition within local conservation discourse / agendas, are an important feature of the River Lea's character in Ware. Equally the non-designated weir-keeper's cottage at Tumbling Bay, just 200m downstream of the conservation area, makes a positive contribution to the historic setting of the River Lee Navigation, and is recognised in Policy W3 (Conserving Heritage Assets) as a non-designated heritage asset to support the long-term protection of this vulnerable heritage asset.

5.26. The Canal and Rivers Trust recommend a number of guiding principles for waterside developments and individual waterways and water spaces need to be viewed as an integral part of a wider network, and not in isolation.

5.27. Future development considerations:

- Water should not be treated as just a setting or backdrop for development but as a space and leisure and commercial resource in its own right. Waterways themselves should be the starting point for consideration of any development and use of the water and waterside land - look from the water outwards, as well as from the land to the water. The Trust would also require any development at the river frontage to not adversely affect the integrity of the waterway structure.
- A waterway's towing path and its environs should form an integral part of the public realm in terms of both design and management. It is important that the siting, configuration and orientation of buildings optimise views of the water, generate natural surveillance of water space, and encourage and improve access to, along and from the water. It should be recognised that appropriate boundary treatment and access issues are often different for the towing path side and the offside.
- Future proposals must aim to avoid creating direct views of the developments 'back of house' from the waterway's outward perspective which heavily degrades the rivers credentials as a green corridor, tranquil retreat and its use as a treasured public amenity. Back of house elements might include car parks, service areas, bin stores, delivery areas, sub stations etc.
- Any development with a river frontage is also likely to include visually exposed parking arrangements in areas due to the intrinsic nature of a river fronting layout. It must however be recognised that vehicles can be visually buffered from the river's outward views through clever design and use of landscaping. This might include well placed linear hedgerows to visually buffer parked vehicles from the river's outward views, parking bays set between plots or within buildings, again to hide from view. Staggered bays with surrounding planting can also work to soften visual impacts.

Potential developers are encouraged to undertake pre-application discussions with the Canal and Rivers Trust.

5.28. The town has continued to develop by way of numerous individual estates from the early 1900s onwards, as shown in Figure 5.2. Whilst not within the Conservation Area, it is considered that in the future, these areas will have become sufficiently embedded to contribute demonstrably the story of Ware and its character. Planning in these areas is less controlled but those submitting proposals for development are strongly encouraged to consider how the proposal will contribute positively to the wider context, bearing in mind layout, height, massing and features typical of the surrounding area. Equally, opportunities to safeguard and add to natural features are encouraged - including trees, wide verges and communal green spaces and seating areas. Improvements and enhancements include, where appropriate, additional native tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green space, the reduction / consolidation of road signs, the retention of historic features including walks and railings, and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being necessary. Contributions from appropriate major development in the neighbourhood area will be used to enable this, collected through Section 106 Agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism, if and when adopted.

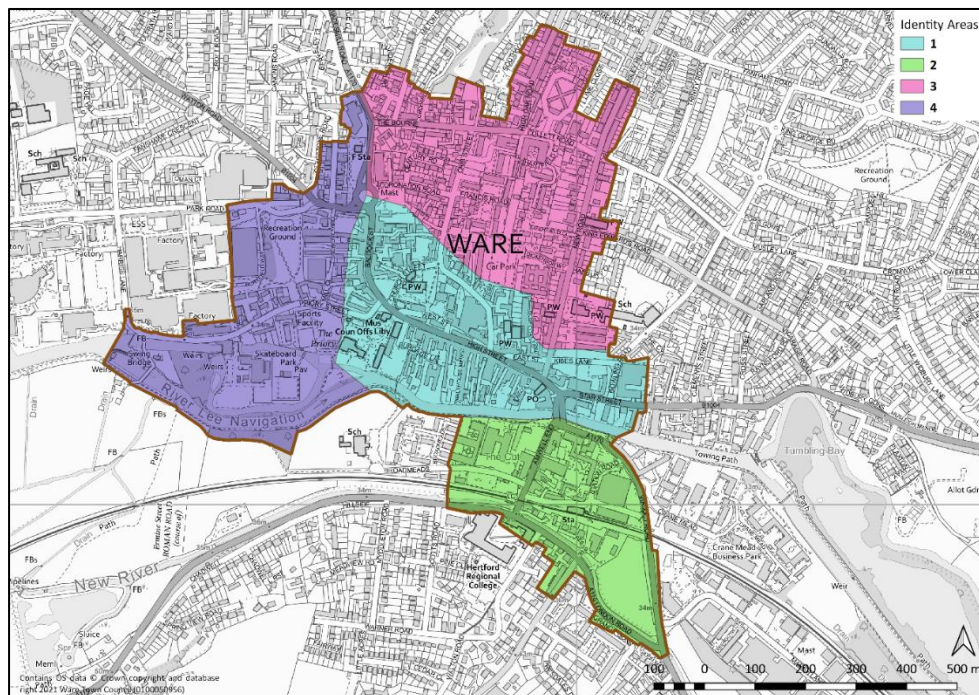


Figure 5.1: Ware Conservation Identity Areas

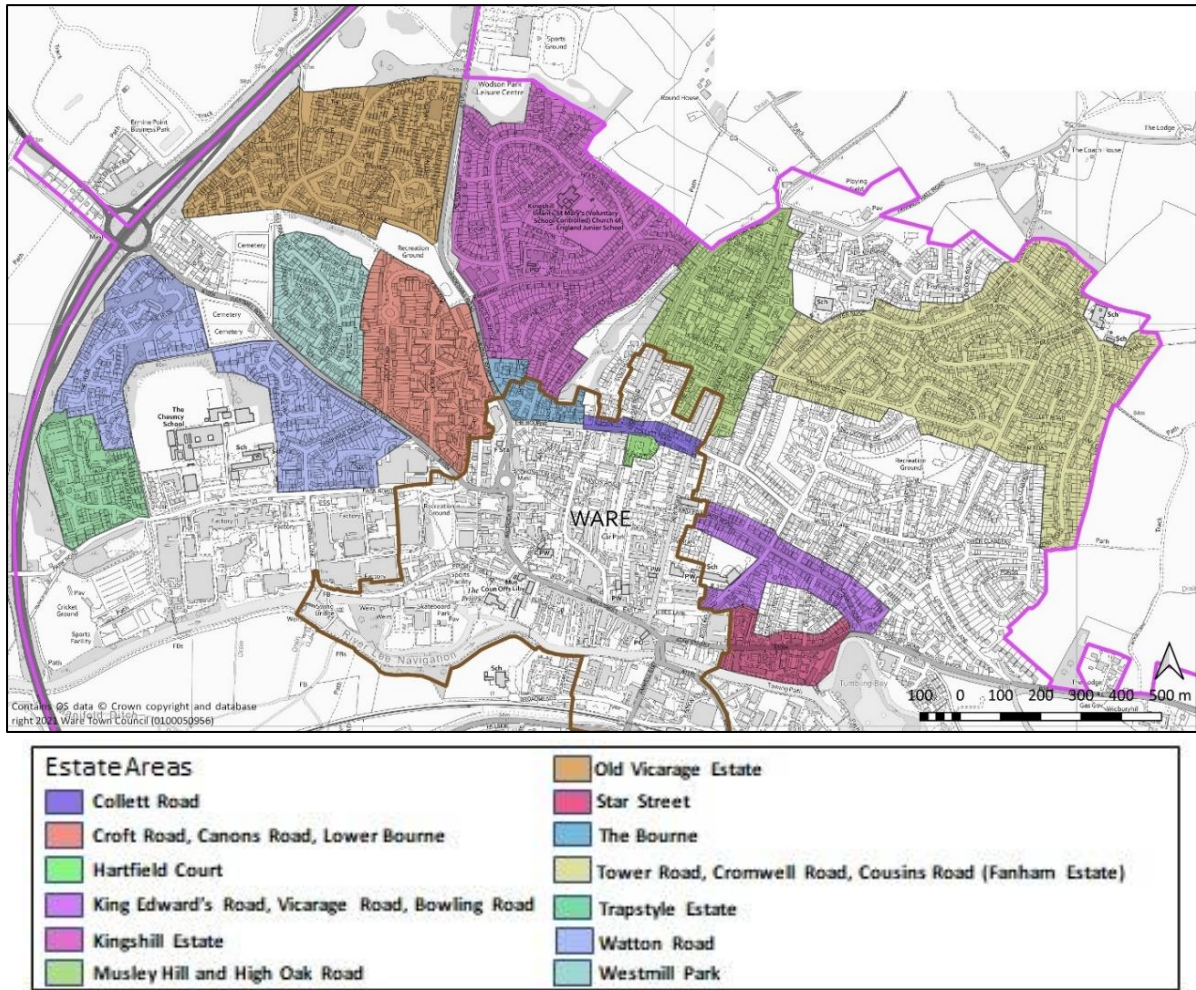


Figure 5.2: Newer estates developed since the 1900s

POLICY W2: REFLECTING THE CHARACTER OF WARE THROUGH HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- A. Development should, where practical, enhance the local character and vernacular of the town. Proposals should draw on architectural variety found locally, including materials, layouts and colours, with a focus on delivering beautiful design that enhances the quality of the built form.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they have addressed the following:**
- i. the guidance contained within the [Ware Conservation Area Appraisal](#), conserving those features identified as contributing to the particular Identity Areas and the River Lea Character Navigation character corridor;**
 - ii. ensuring that the development contributes to the relationship between the built townscape and the River Lea and New River, for instance retaining and enhancing green space along the river;**
 - iii. retain and, where possible, restore built historical features including: original malting industry features and cowlings, street signs, iron railings, boundary walls and other features, such as windows and chimneys;**
 - iv. retain existing trees and hedgerows and plant new ones to enhance the street scene, in accordance with Policy W12;**
 - v. reduce or repurpose unnecessary street clutter, such as unused phone boxes, utility cabinets;**
 - vi. ensure that shops fronts and fascias contribute positively to the historic street scene, in accordance with Policy W3;**
 - vii. maintain, improve, and create open spaces, green verges and communal seating areas; and**
 - viii. make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main highway and river approaches into the town, which are:**
 - a. Gilpins Field, as an open space, at the junction of London Road and Viaduct Road;**
 - b. boundary wall and trees at junction of London Road and Grange Gardens;**
 - c. roundabout at Watton Road / Baldock Street;**
 - d. New Road and Musley Hill;**
 - e. Ware Railway Station; and**
 - f. Common Wharf.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1, 2, 5; EHDP (2018): DES2, DES3, DES6, HA1, HA2, HA4, HA5, HA6, HA9; NPPF: 20, 126 to 131

Policy W3: Conserving heritage assets

Purpose

- 5.29. This policy recognises the important contribution that heritage assets - designated and non-designated - make to the local character and distinctiveness of Ware, both individually and collectively. Where possible, they should be conserved, well-maintained, enhanced and celebrated.

Justification

- 5.30. The first signs of settlement in Ware can be dated back to 4000BC; consequently, the area is rich in archaeology, and this is recognised by the broad Area of Archaeological Importance that stretches across much of the town. There are two Scheduled Monuments: Ware Priory and a Section of Ermine Street, north of the Hertford Branch Railway. The town has over 200 individual and clusters of nationally listed buildings and structures, including the Grade I listed Church of St. Mary, Place House, The Priory, and Scott's Grotto. Many of these are concentrated in the historic core of the Conservation Area, with its layout established in the 12th century, the buildings dating from the 16th and 17th century onwards, and often reminiscent of the commercial activities of the town's history.
- 5.31. There are many heritage assets, however, that whilst contributing to the historic local context, are not nationally important enough to be included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Government. These have been identified within the Ware Conservation Appraisal as '*unlisted buildings to be protected from demolition*' and are shown in Figure 5.3. Further descriptions of them, including why they are important, are contained in the Ware Conservation Area Appraisal. There is also a range of published literature relating to Ware's heritage and references are included in Section 15 of this document.
- 5.32. Development proposals affecting heritage assets - including non-designated heritage assets - either directly or indirectly, should enhance the significance and setting of the asset. This includes as yet undiscovered or poorly understood heritage assets. Enhancements could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard given to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. Proposals are expected to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement.
- 5.33. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not

lost. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above ground) a Heritage Statement should be prepared in support of planning applications.

- 5.34. A proactive stance will be taken to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back into optimum viable use. Particular care should be taken in the Conservation Area to ensure that alterations and new buildings contribute to the enhancement of the historic environment, in accordance with the guidance set out in the Ware Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 5.35. Policy W3 identifies these buildings and structures as non-designated heritage assets, recognising their value to the local character and history of the town.
- 5.36. In parallel with this policy, it is proposed that these assets are considered by EHDC for inclusion on any Local List for the district. However, the inclusion of any building or structure on such a register is not necessary for the application of this policy.



Images show: Place House (inside); The Church of St. Mary

Local Heritage at Risk

- 5.37. Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside of London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. EHDC produces a Register to cover those Grade II assets, most recently updated in 2021. The Register will be updated periodically by EHDC and can be found here: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/heritage-risk>.
- 5.38. Opportunities should be taken to restore these assets where possible.

POLICY W3: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS

A. The following are identified as non-designated heritage assets for the purpose of implementing Policy HA2 of the East Herts District Plan:

- i. **buildings and structures (not already listed) within Ware contained in the [Historic Environment Record](#); and**
- ii. **unlisted buildings to be protected from demolition, as identified in the [Ware Conservation Area Appraisal](#); and**
- iii. **the weir-keeper's cottage at Tumbling Bay.**

The effect of a development proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect the non-designated heritage assets identified in this policy, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1; EHDP (2018): HA2, HA3, HA4; NPPF: 189, 190, 203

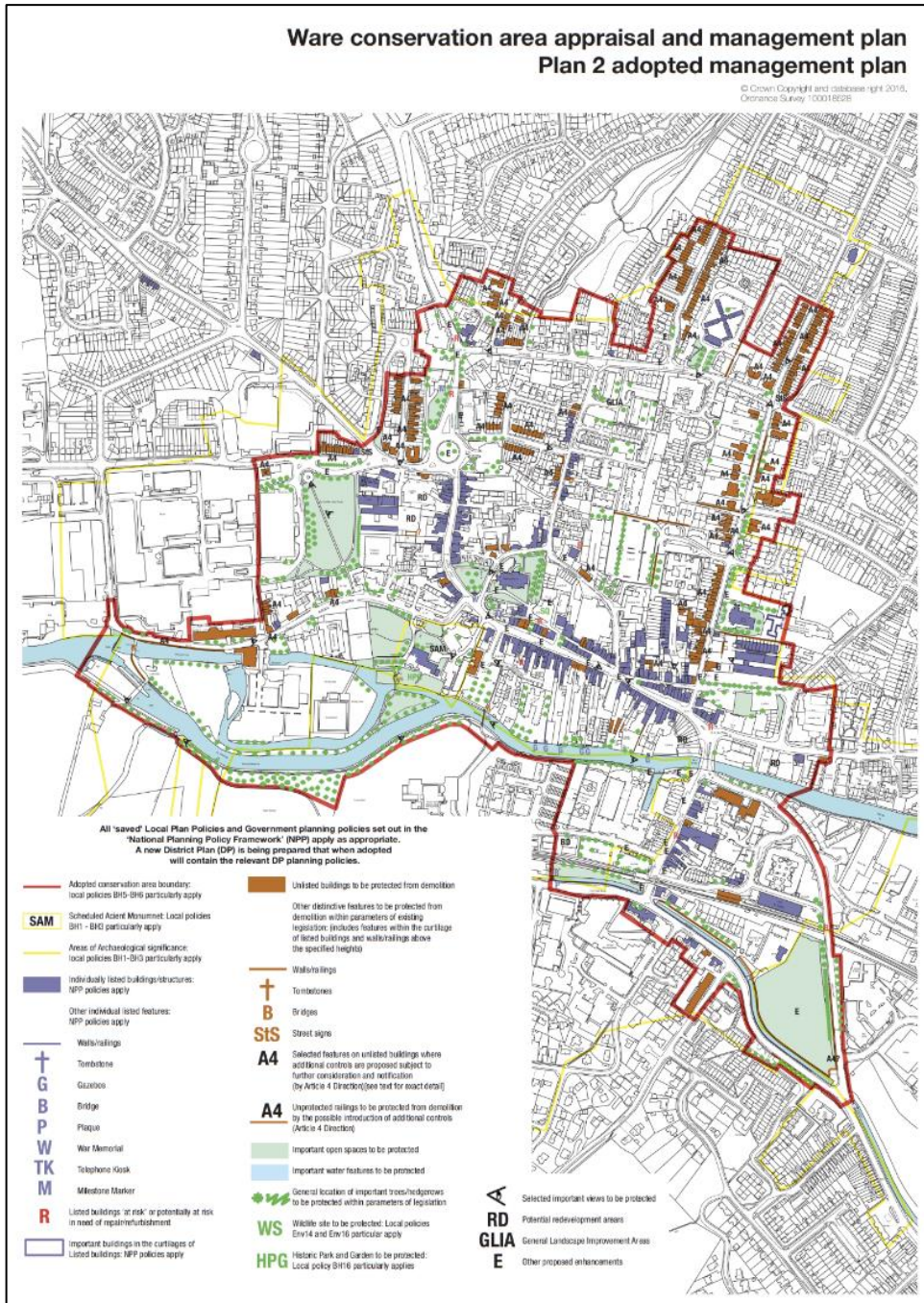


Figure 5.3: Map showing 'unlisted buildings to be protected from demolition' (source: Ware Conservation Area Appraisal)

Policy W4: Design of shopfront signage

Purpose

5.39. This policy seeks to ensure that shop fronts and signage are in keeping with and contribute positively to the character of Ware. This is important given that the main retail and commercial areas of Ware are located within the Conservation Area and individual properties are often listed buildings.

Justification

5.40. In addition to the guidance contained in the Ware Conservation Area Appraisal, the [East Herts Retail Frontages: Design & Signage SPD](#), published in 2019, contains comprehensive information about the types of commercial signage that are considered appropriate within the historic towns across the district.

5.41. There are also particular nuances in design that are considered to contribute positively to the overall character and individual identity of Ware specifically. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, in partnership with the Ware Society, undertook an audit of the key features of commercial signage in Ware (contained in the Evidence Base supporting the WNP) that are considered to illustrate both good, well-integrated design, in the Ware context, as well as that which should be avoided.



Example of sympathetic shop front and sign writing

5.42. If the historic nature and character of the town is to be preserved, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Signage must consider how it complements, and where possible, enhances the character of the building and surrounding area, and any historic features of the building;
- Sign writing on older buildings is considered to contribute positively to the historic look and feel of the town, where it is of a proportionate size and colour;

- The use of applied lettering, including plastic lettering, should only be employed in exceptional circumstances; where used, the colours should be muted and appropriate materials used to harmonise with surrounding buildings;
- Where corporate image is important to the retailer then the form of signage should be agreed, and the use of company standard formats must be avoided where these are unsuitable;
- Blocked signs and electronic signs applied internally to windows must be discouraged because of the overbearing effect on the townscape.
- External decoration, particularly colour choice, should be carefully considered in the context of the surrounding environment.
- The use of internally illuminated signage and box signage must be avoided.

5.43. An associated action, detailed in Section 12 of this Plan, will be to work in partnership with EHDC to ensure that signage guidance is adequately enforced.

POLICY W4: DESIGN OF SHOPFRONT SIGNAGE

A. Proposals for new or replacement shop fronts in Ware should be designed in accordance with Policy DES6 of the East Herts District Plan, and the guidance contained in both the East Herts Retail Frontages: Design & Signage SPD and the Ware Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

B. Development proposals should respond positively to the following design features:

- i. the protection of original architectural detail and, where appropriate, its restoration;**
- ii. the use of high quality signage from sustainable materials, such as timber, with the use of plastic or aluminium signage being strongly resisted;**
- iii. the use of sign writing on older buildings;**
- iv. applied lettering should utilise muted colours and be of appropriate high quality materials to harmonise with surrounding buildings;**
- v. the incorporation of any corporate image in a way which will contribute to local character;**
- vi. the avoidance of illuminated / neon-type displays which fill the shops window and which have an overbearing effect on the townscape; and**
- vii. choice of colour that blends well with the surroundings.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1, 2, 5; EHDP (2018): HA5, HA6, DES6; NPPF: 128, 129, 130

Policy W5: Meeting the highest environmental standards

Purpose

5.44. This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change.

Justification

5.45. On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. This is a demanding target, which will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. As part of this, the government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

5.46. Being '2050 ready' means that new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions over the year. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must confirm to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. The WNP can however strongly encourage the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.



Examples of discreet solar panels (source: Historic England)

5.47. The efficient use of water is also to be considered. In 2019, Affinity Water, which supplies the area, warned that within the next 25 years and beyond, there may not be enough water in this part of the country due to climate change, population growth and increases in demand. It suggests that local and neighbourhood plans in severely water stressed areas should include targets limiting domestic water consumption. For this reason, the WNP strongly supports Policy DES4 of the District Plan, for achieving total mains water consumption of no more than 110 litres per person per day. This target is equivalent to that proposed as an optional requirement of the Housing Standards Review which corresponds with Code Level 4 in relation to water efficiency.

- 5.48. The potential to use the River Lea Navigation for heating and cooling and the document could also contribute to low carbon technologies. The use of on-site Low and Zero Carbon (LZC) energy generation would encourage development to be as energy efficient as possible.
- 5.49. In summary, there are opportunities to improve and promote sustainability in the neighbourhood area which would help to deliver the government's climate change targets by: following basic passive environmental design including use of efficient and insulative materials; integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings; reducing water consumption including through grey water systems; and promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists.

POLICY W5: MEETING THE HIGHEST ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

- A. Development proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and climate effects will be supported. Proposals which incorporate the following energy design principles as appropriate to their scale and nature will be particularly supported:**
- i. siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.**
 - ii. the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.**
 - iii. installation of energy efficiency measures e.g. loft and wall insulation and double glazing.**
 - iv. incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground, water and air source heat pumps.**
 - v. reducing water consumption through the use of water re-use measures including rain water harvesting, surface water harvesting and / or grey water recycling systems.**
 - vi. providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.**
 - vii. providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each development, where new parking provision is expected to be made, in accordance with [Hertfordshire County Council's Electric Charging Strategy](#).**
 - viii. alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards.**
- B. The retrofitting of historic buildings to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate will be supported where such proposals provide appropriate preservation of the character and integrity of the building concerned.**
- C. Proposals for individual and community scale energy, for instance from hydro-electricity, solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digestions and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:**
- i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and**
 - ii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and**
 - iii. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1, 6; EHDP (2018): DES4, CC2, CC3, WAT4; NPPF: 153, 154, 155

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WARE TOWN CENTRE

Policy W6: Retaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Ware town centre

Purpose

- 6.1 This policy seeks to help position Ware as a thriving 21st century market town centre by supporting a sustainable mix of uses, which will encourage footfall throughout the day and into the evening. The Town Council is preparing a separate five year town centre strategy and the policies in this section will help to underpin the activities proposed.



Ware Town centre

Justification

- 6.2 Ware is an attractive and historic market town. As noted previously, the town centre falls fully within the Conservation Area and contains many fine buildings of historic importance, a good number linked to the town's malting heritage. Many of the buildings are nationally listed, with others identified in Policy W3 as non-designated heritage assets, reflecting their local importance. The waterside setting provides an attractive backdrop.
- 6.3 The East Herts District Plan 2018 categorises Ware as a Minor Town centre, catering for a mixture of shopping and other service needs, both for its own residents and those of surrounding settlements. The footprint is defined in Figure 6.1 and comprises predominantly high quality, smaller independent stores, as opposed to larger units and is also known for its higher-than-average food and drink offer. There is limited scope for expansion of the existing town centre, hence existing units - both retail and hospitality related - should, where possible, be retained. It is also anticipated that some retail will be provided as part of the urban extension to the north and east of the town. It is vital that such facilities should complement what exists already; it should be of a local nature with enough provision to ensure a sustainable community, without diverting trade from the town centre, where the retail offer will continue to be safeguarded, along with the other mix of uses.
- 6.4 Like many town centres, over the last few decades Ware has been impacted by a variety of issues including competition from neighbouring towns, out-of-town stores and online

shopping. This has been exacerbated by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this, however, the number of vacant units remains fairly low: [just 15 units were recorded as available in March 2021](#).

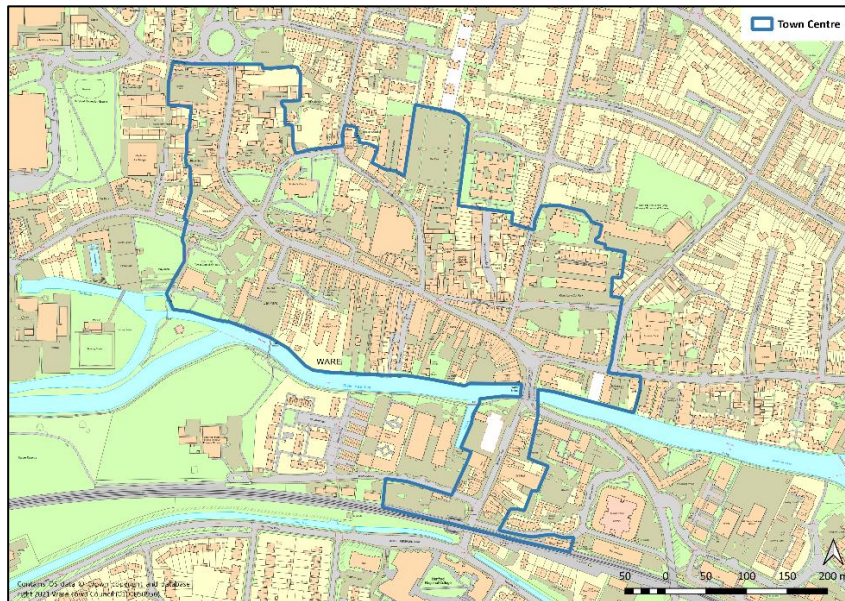


Figure 6.1: Ware town centre footprint

What are local agents telling us?

Local agents report that independent retail operators comprise approximately 86% of the retail market in Ware. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the fastest growing retail sectors were hair dressing salons / barbers, beauty salons, cafés and nail salons.

Retail types which are in decline include estate agents, bookmakers, pubs, domestic appliance shops, and travel agents. There has been a tendency for many retail leases to get shorter, and tenants are requesting more frequent break intervals within a lease. It is anticipated the recent changes to the Use Classes Order may encourage many businesses to explore their options, working with landlords to open restrictive user clauses, in existing leases. Many retail chains are on the verge of collapse, and therefore the opening of restrictions on the Use Classes Order will be good news for some.

- 6.5 Whilst the ongoing provision of retail is clearly important, the opportunity exists to host other services and facilities - beyond retail - to enhance the overall 'product' on offer. This could include identifying cultural and arts uses, providing shared spaces playing host to different activities depending on the time of day, and temporary 'pop-up' uses, supported by promotional activities to encourage footfall, such as events and markets.
- 6.6 The conversion of units to residential - particularly those on the upper floors - could provide a useful source of footfall, while meeting housing needs. It should be noted that permitted development rights were extended in August 2021 to enable non-listed Class E

(commercial, business and service) premises of up to 1,500m² of floorspace and which have been vacant for at least three continuous months, to convert to residential without the need to apply for planning permission. This could have an impact the retail and commercial offering within Ware Town centre, as a consequence of reduced footfall. Whilst it will not apply to listed buildings, where it does apply, it will be important that proposals clearly demonstrate, prior to approval, that the impact of the loss of the ground floor Commercial Business and Service use is not detrimental to local character, as required within Conservation Areas.

POLICY W6: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF WARE TOWN CENTRE

Mixed use development proposals for main town centre uses - including employment, office, retail, community, cultural, tourism and residential uses - will be supported, subject to other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. Such proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to one or more of the following aspirations:

- i. they help to maintain a strong and vibrant retail presence within the town centre area, enabling the continued presence of a varied range of small independent shops (where government's definition of small is <280 sq m), in accordance with Policy W8;**
- ii. they enhance the provision of leisure activities for both residents and tourists. This could include cultural, arts and community venues, additional overnight accommodation and food or drink establishments;**
- iii. they provide safe, easy, and inclusive access for all people regardless of disability, age or gender. This should include access to, into and within the building and its facilities, as well as appropriate car parking and access to public transport provision.**
- iv. they encourage footfall into the evening, where this does not compromise local amenity;**
- v. they provide opportunities for office-based and shared-space employment, which complement and support the town centre's vitality and viability;**
- vi. they offer opportunities for housing on otherwise underused upper floors, in particular, and both where separate access can be achieved and where these are shown to be no longer suitable for commercial use; and**

The temporary change of use of vacant premises to enable pop-up shops, community advertising displays and activities will be supported, where they contribute positively to the area.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1, 3, 5; EHDP (2018): WARE1, RTC1-3, CLFR7, HA5, HA6; NPPF: 86

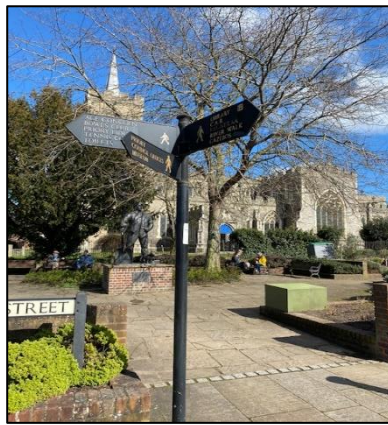
Policy W7: A safe, attractive, and welcoming public realm

Purpose

- 6.7 This policy seeks to ensure that development contributes to a safe, accessible and attractive public realm within the town centre.

Justification

- 6.8 Maintaining and, where possible, improving the public realm environment will help to sustain Ware's local character and distinctiveness, which in turn will help to maintain its appeal as a destination for residents, businesses and visitors alike. Engagement undertaken for the WNP revealed numerous areas where the public realm could be improved:



Example of attractive way-signage

- 6.9 Improved linkages between the town centre and residential areas: including to connect to the new urban extension and neighbouring settlements. This would enable greater choice of movement, particularly by foot and cycle, which will help to mitigate against pollution, promote healthier lifestyles and reduce the amount of traffic making and associated congestion. This should be supported by improved wayfinding and signage.
- 6.10 Enhancing the entry points into to the town centre: to enable more attractive entryways for visitors, as set out in Policy W2.
- 6.11 Providing attractive, safe spaces that are accessible to all: There are several small pockets of existing green space, often with seating areas, that should be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. For instance, the Malt Makers Garden and the sitting area in Watton Road. The use of native planting, such as street trees and wildflowers (the town has an active Ware in Bloom group), would provide shade, an attractive setting and help to screen against noise and pollution.
- 6.12 One notable public space is Tudor Square, centrally located off West Street. It was upgraded in 2018 / 2019 to provide a welcoming space, incorporating circular paved areas with trees, plants and benches. There is an aspiration to further enhance the space as a focal point for the town and encourage its use by visitors, businesses, and the community.

This could include, for instance, a performance area with staggered steps and extra seating, which would open the area up for family-friendly events and entertainment as well as being of use as a place to stop and sit in the middle of town.



Tudor Square as a focal point for community events and activities

- 6.13 Encouraging events and activities that celebrate local heritage and bring footfall to the area: The use of events to increase footfall has been considered as an ongoing solution to town centres generally.
- 6.14 Proposals that enable and enhance Ware's existing calendar of events should be supported. For instance, the use of temporary lighting or gazebo-type structures at locations including the Priory and in Tudor Square would enable attractive and vibrant environments for public activities. The installation of locally relevant art can also assist in celebrating local history.



Images show: Ware Festival and Rock in the Park at The Priory

- 6.15 Tackling unsightly waste bins: the historic and narrow nature of Ware's streets, combined with the size of the bins, leads to cluttered, blocked pavements and unpleasant street scenes, regardless of whether it is bin collection day. Often bins are left open. This has several negative consequences on the area:
- Pedestrian mobility is affected as this reduces space for movement. The problem is more acute in Identity Area 1 of the Conservation Area, where roads and pavements

are very narrow. Pedestrians with buggies, seniors and those with mobility impairments are potentially the most impacted by the situation. Furthermore, pedestrians have to zigzag between bins because they are not grouped properly and some are left in the middle of the pavement.

- The quality of the public realm is reduced, as bins give a dirty and messy impression. This may have a negative impact on the town centre's commercial footfall. Many studies draw a link between quality of the environment and a town centre's economic vitality.



Examples of large bins located to the back of properties, but facing the front of others

- 6.16 Potential solutions, aside from greater enforcement, include requesting businesses with high waste (for instance food businesses) to prepare a waste management plan alongside any planning applications and screening bins, by building more attractive structures around them, in keeping with the local environment. Daily night-time collections may also provide a solution, although outside the planning system.



Example of practical and more attractive bin storage

- 6.17 *Reducing street clutter*: unnecessary street furniture, advertising board and other items should be reduced where possible to enable active travel. Further guidance is available at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/a-boards.aspx>.

POLICY W7: A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING PUBLIC REALM

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate public realm improvements where it is practicable to do so. In particular, development proposals should look to incorporate opportunities to:**
- i. reinforce the distinctive character of the area, as set out in Policy W2 (Character of Development) including through the use of planting, seating, and installation of public art, celebrating the heritage and history of the area.**
 - ii. provide for pedestrian and cycle movement as a priority, including making provision for those with mobility requirements, making appropriate connections to existing footpaths, cycle paths and rights of way, in accordance with the movement routes identified in Policy W15 (Encouraging Sustainable Movement) to improve connectivity and movement within the town.**
 - iii. improve and provide new safe, open (In terms of availability of space) public spaces that are accessible, including to those with physical or mental disabilities, and which are suitable for a range of civic, cultural, recreational and leisure activities, including open air markets.**
 - iv. provide adequate off-street car parking, in accordance with the [Vehicle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2008, or as amended), where required for workers, residents and visitors, which responds appropriately to the local context.**
 - v. contribute to improved wayfinding and signage for the town centre, provided that they can be satisfactorily integrated within their surroundings.**
 - vi. Integrate waste facilities into the design of buildings and allow for the separate storage and collection of recyclable materials, including compostable material are encouraged. In order to protect visual amenity, such facilities should be suitably screened and in keeping with the local environment. Odour should also be mitigated.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 2, 5; EHDP (2018): DES4, DES5; NPPF: 92, 93, 126

Policy W8: Small business and shared space support

Purpose

6.18 This policy encourages the provision of smaller units (where government's definition of small (<280 sq m) to attract independent retailers and other uses. It also supports the idea of shared uses for properties, where this can enable both the ongoing viability of the unit, while providing a range of facilities in line with Policy W6, which supports mixed uses in the town centre.

Justification

- 6.19 There are approximately 200 units within Ware town centre (Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone data, March 2021), the majority of which are smaller, locally owned, independent businesses. This is perhaps unsurprising given the historic nature of the town. Indeed, The [Retail and Town centres Study Update](#), 2013, identified limited opportunities for expansion and little need for larger stores, a situation which has not changed in the interim years.
- 6.20 Despite facing a series of challenges, many of these businesses have continued to flourish and contribute greatly to the character and vitality of the town.



The historic nature of the town lends itself to smaller units

- 6.21 Policy W8 seeks to support the ongoing provision of such units.
- 6.22 In addition, a concern that has emerged over recent years is the closure of key facilities, where some providers nationally are scaling back on physical operations. A particular example of this in Ware is the banking sector; all six of Ware's high street banks (HSBC, NatWest, Lloyds, Santander, Barclays and TSB) have now ceased trading, two as a result of the lockdown during 2020. The [Rural Services Network reported](#) that since 1988, more than 14,000 bank branches have closed in the UK, and by 2021, there would be just 5,772 left. This has obvious repercussions, particularly for older people, who are more likely to have greater mobility issues and extra needs; they are disadvantaged by not being able to perform their banking needs face to face. Equally those on low / lower incomes or without

access to private transport are also impacted negatively. The main alternative to physical branches is online / smartphone apps, however the technology cannot provide all the required services, in particular access to money. Whilst money is available from the post office or via cash back (in supermarkets for instance) these only meet some of the demand, and ATMs in particular are being phased out in areas.

- 6.23 Solutions sought by other towns across the country affected by this issue include the introduction of shared banking hubs. Such schemes could also address shortages of other important facilities - for instance postal services - bringing together hubs of like-minded services or shared complementary uses which could, for instance, change depending on the time of day.



Example of a shared banking hub

- 6.24 The policy therefore also supports the reuse of vacant, including historic, buildings to provide spaces that could offer shared community services and facilities.

POLICY W8: SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

- A. Development proposals that foster small, local business activity in the town centre will be supported. Proposals for the significant enlargement of units or the merging of multiple units will not be supported within the secondary shop frontage areas of Ware Town centre.**
- B. The reuse of buildings, including historic buildings, within Ware Town centre for activities that will enhance the vitality and viability of the town will be particularly supported. This could include community uses, retail or business. Any associated physical alterations should be sympathetic to the historic and architectural significance and character of the building concerned.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 3, 5; EHDP (2018): ED4; NPPF: 86, 92, 93

Policy W9: Supporting commercial premises and land

Purpose

- 6.25 This policy supports commercial employment opportunities by safeguarding existing designated employment sites and, importantly, identifying additional areas that are considered important commercial and industrial employment sites within Ware. Additional opportunities for employment sites are supported.



GlaxoSmithKline plc

Justification

- 6.26 Ware benefits from a diverse mix of employment land and buildings. Over the years, however, the town has lost much of its employment space - notably some of the former working maltings - to permitted residential development and this has affected the dynamics of the town. The protection of local employment opportunities will not only provide greater prospects for local people to access jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate.
- 6.27 Discussions with local commercial agents reveal that there is a shortage in the availability of good quality small unit warehousing, especially units with parking / loading facilities. Initiatives such as subdividing industrial buildings to provide smaller 'easy in, easy out' units offered on flexible terms are very popular. These allow occupiers to expand or retract as necessary. There is also a need to protect existing employment sites from being lost to other uses.
- 6.28 The East Herts District Plan already designates several sites within Ware as Employment Areas. In addition, the WNP engagement process has identified some additional Important Employment Areas and Out of Town centre retail, that are considered to contribute significantly to the commercial offering of the town. These are shown in Figure 6.2.

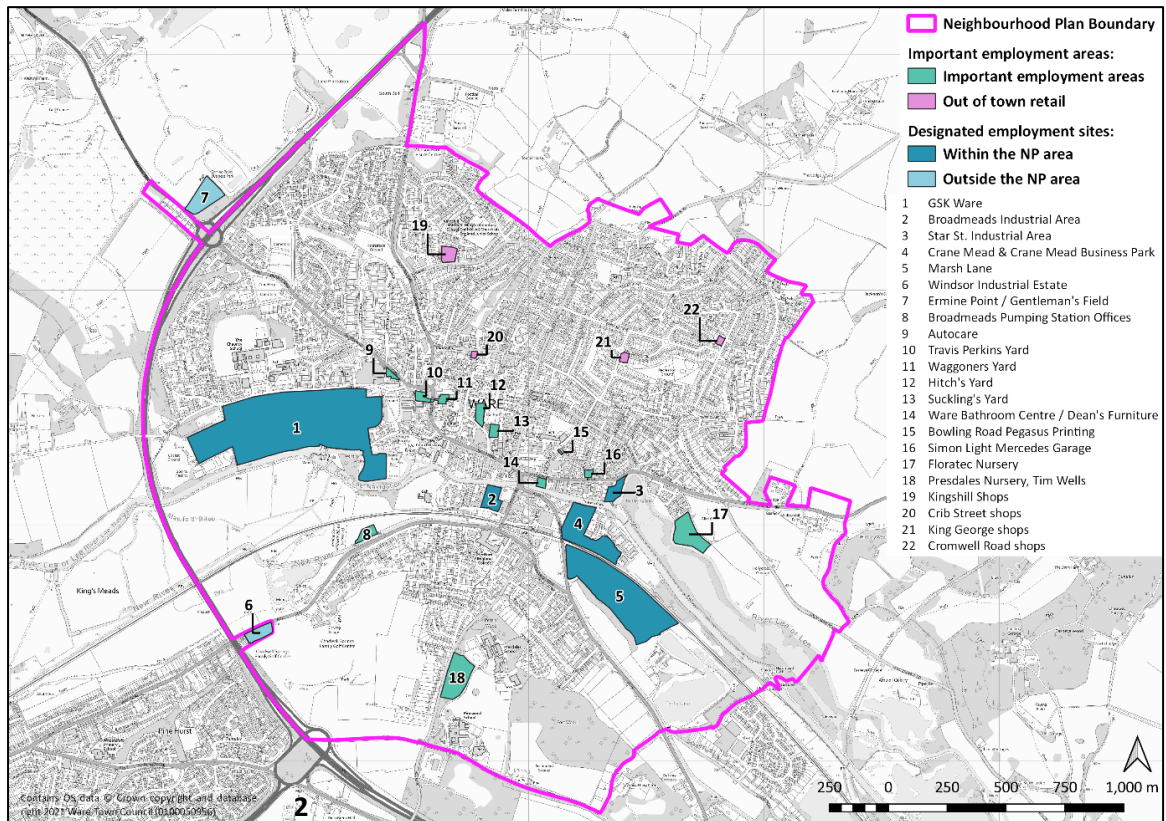


Figure 6.2: Designated Employment Areas and Important Employment Areas in Ware

6.29 Policy W9 seeks to protect existing employment land while also encouraging new businesses.

POLICY W9: SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A. The Important Employment Areas, as shown on Figure 6.2, are considered to be important employment sites, in addition to those designated in the East Herts District Plan. Applications for B2, B8 and E(g) uses will be supported in these areas subject to the following criteria:

- i. the proposal, including any associated premises, would not have unacceptable impacts on the local environment;
- ii. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution; and
- iii. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts upon the local road network.

B. Retail uses in these areas will be supported if they have trade links with employment uses, such as tyre and exhaust centres, car showrooms and trade counters. Other uses which do not provide direct, on-going local employment opportunities (for instance Use Class C) will not be supported at these sites.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 4; EHDP (2018): WARE3, ED1; NPPF: 81

Policy W10: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups, and homeworking

Purpose

- 6.30 This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and small-to-medium sized businesses to Ware and seeks to encourage opportunities for them, including by supporting the provision of start-up and move-on business units. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally. Homeworking too has become necessary for many in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Justification

- 6.31 A balanced work economy requires a sufficiently large base to ensure the retention of core business support activities, as well as the provision of local amenity and good communications. In this respect Ware, as a traditional market town, has a key role in supporting the rural hinterland. It also has an opportunity to redevelop as a modern market town by providing more space for early-stage businesses and start-ups. This could include incubator space and enhancing the market offer, by an indoor market for example.
- 6.32 Evidence prepared for the neighbourhood plan (Ware Town centre – A Network of Business and Remote Working Hubs: <https://www.wareneighbourhoodplan.com/>) explored the potential for new ways of working in Ware. A top objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is to re-inject activity into the Town centre and increase footfall for the benefit of businesses, both new and old. The changing pattern of retail creates a real and present challenge for all town and city centres, large and small. One way of increasing activity in the town is to create more opportunities for people to work remotely in broadband community hubs. The Launchpad (co-working space) at Ware Priory is an example of such a hub.
- 6.33 Homeworking too provides an opportunity: the population of Ware is 18,800 - the ONS records that 48% of the UK population are in employment, which equates to 9,024 of the population of Ware in employment. Of those, 15% are self-employed, leaving 7,670 working for an employer. A survey of employers by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development shows that 22% are expected to work from home all the time, with another 15% expected to work from home some of the time. These figures are about double the experience pre-Covid and seem to be in line with the KPMG study (The Future of Towns and Cities post Covid-19, January 2021).
- 6.34 For Ware that translates to 1,687 people expected to work from home all the time, and a further 1,150 expected to work from home some of the time. There is therefore a very substantial potential demand for remote working to be anticipated in Ware. The existing remote working facilities in the business centre hubs identified probably amount to only 150 places available in Ware for remote workers, so there is plenty of opportunity for expansion.

What are local agents saying?

Many tenants are looking to downsize their office spaces and achieve cost savings. At least half of the companies expect a 30% decline in office attendance, whether a result of working from home or redundancies. As a result of this a scenario is anticipated where there is a 20% - 30% fall in rents for offices. Larger companies are looking to move to their own self-contained space, where they can control their own environment. Flexible leases are therefore high on the agenda, and there is a move away from co-working and serviced offices.

- 6.35 To provide flexible start-up space, it is necessary to encourage appropriate buildings that can be rented out at sufficiently low rents to attract their use by business start-ups and existing home workers. A potential source of such space is vacant units in the commercial areas or within the Town centre, which could either be converted on a permanent basis if they are no longer viable for retail use or on a temporary basis.

POLICY W10: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING

A. Proposals to provide workspaces that encourage homeworking and creative small industries, for instance through incubator / start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through:

- i. the provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings, including historic buildings within Ware town centre;
- ii. enabling extensions and appropriately-sized garden offices to facilitate home-working;
- iii. enabling microbusinesses (10 or fewer employees); and
- iv. the provision of start-up businesses by enabling low-cost facilities in cooperative clusters.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals for new workspaces should demonstrate the way in which they can be incorporated within their immediate locality without generating any unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties and on the capacity and safety of the local highways network.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 3; EHDP (2018): ED4; NPPF: 81, 83

Policy W11: Ware as a sustainable visitor destination

Purpose

6.36 This policy recognises the important contribution that tourism makes to Ware. It supports the provision of facilities and associated infrastructure that will enable and support a sustainable visitor economy.

Justification

6.37 By 2025, [VisitBritain estimates](#) that the UK will have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion - just under 10% of UK GDP and supporting almost 3.8 million jobs, which is around 11% of the total UK number.

6.38 The tourism industry plays a vital role in the East Herts economy, creating jobs and contributing to the maintenance of facilities. Tourism in East Herts benefits from the high-quality environment of its countryside and historic market towns, along with its road and rail links and proximity to Stansted Airport.

6.39 Ware itself, with its rich history and varied heritage, has a lot to offer visitors:

- The River Lea and the New River provide walking and cycling opportunities, as do the Rivers Ash and Rib. The towpath of the River Lea gives access to nature reserves on both sides of the town - the Meads between Ware and Hertford and the Amwell Nature Reserve which attracts birdwatchers nationwide. The gazebos too form an important part of the heritage landscape.
- The town is steeped in industrial heritage, notably the malting industry, having been the largest malting town in England. Unusual historical assets including Scott's Grotto, commissioned by John Scott, the 18th century poet.
- Leisure facilities include the lido, which is a very popular local attraction dating to the 1930s. Ware sits at the northern end of the Lee Valley Regional Park, which also offers a range of activities, both on water and land. Wodson Park Sports and Lesure Centre, whilst just beyond the neighbourhood area boundary, is a community-based charity offering a range of recreational opportunities and is very popular with local residents.
- A range of festivals and events, including the Rock in the Priory, the Ware Festival, the Dickensian evening and Heritage Open Days.

6.40 The town is very accessible, less than an hour's drive from London and Cambridge and 30 minutes from Stanstead Airport. It is also accessible in more sustainable ways: the railway station, with a direct train service to London, is located at the entrance to the town centre, and at the start of the heritage trail. There are regular bus services to nearby towns including Hertford and Harlow. Furthermore, the river itself provides a point of entry to Ware, with a regular waterbus between Ware and Hertford and moorings available to those arriving by canal boat.



Images show: The towpath is used extensively for walking and cycling; Narrow boats on the River Lea

- 6.41 There have been few studies into the value of tourism to Ware. The East of England Tourist Board, in 2004, produced the most comprehensive report on tourism in Ware, attributing a value of £24,313k to the visitor economy locally (report available at <https://www.wareneighbourhoodplan.com/>). To put this in context, based on the latest ONS statistics for the UK's GDP, which is £28k / head of population, and a 'notional GDP' for Ware of £526k, tourism in Ware is 4.5% of economic activity based on the 2004 total (the current UK wide figure is 9%).
- 6.42 Given the historic attractiveness of Ware - the museum records between 7,000 to 8,000 visitors per year - and with its central and accessible location, it is considered that tourism could provide a growth opportunity, in particular attracting the 'visiting friends and relatives' (VFR) market, day trippers and those basing themselves for at least one night in Ware to visit the town and surrounding areas. Making this happen will require local partners to work together to create a Ware brand that can be marketed effectively to the types of audiences that are likely to be attracted to the area. It will also be important that the provision of facilities which cater for the needs of visitors do not detract or harm the very environment that attracts them.
- 6.43 To support this, the following issues and opportunities have been identified, some of which are being pursued through the Ware Town centre Strategy, a project funded by Ware Town Council to provide a strategy for improving the town centre:
- Supporting proposals for additional visitor accommodation - the town has only a limited number of B&Bs in addition to the Premier Inn. If the short-stay market is to be attracted, which offers greater returns for the economy, this would need to be addressed.
 - Providing coach parking bays - coach tourism is a lucrative market, [contributing over £7bn a year to the UK economy](#). Ware could capitalise on this, particularly given its proximity to tourism centres such as Cambridge. There are currently no parking spaces for coaches. This could be addressed, for instance, through dedicated provision or as part of a redevelopment.
 - Enabling an evening economy - Over the last few years, there has been a considerable amount of development in the town, which has facilitated additional

entertainment options. Fletchers Lea and the Southern Maltings now offer a wide range of events, including live theatre, music and film options. The Drill Hall provides a venue for live music. New bars, such as The Mixer, offers a 'club' type environment with a DJ and a late licence. While pubs like The Punch House and The Bull offer live music at weekends.

- Optimising the tourism value of the River Lea and New River - the river provides an attractive backdrop to the town. There is scope, however, for additional river access points, for instance at The Priory, where this can be achieved sensitively.
- Enhancing and adding to the town heritage trail - to celebrate the history and heritage of the town - this is explored further in the movement section of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Encouraging nature tourism - alongside its attractive river setting, Ware is surrounded by attractive countryside, including some important nature reserves. There is scope to enhance these natural spaces for biodiversity, something explored more fully in section 7 of this Plan, including public access, where this can be achieved sustainably.

POLICY W11: WARE AS A SUSTAINABLE VISITOR DESTINATION

The development and expansion of tourism facilities accommodation, entertainment, visitor attractions and activities connected with day-trippers and staying visitors, and extending the night-time economy, will be supported where the following criteria can be met:

- i. **there are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals; and**
- ii. **the proposal provides links to sustainable forms of transport and is accessible by foot, bicycle and mobility transport; and**
- iii. **there is no unacceptable detrimental impact (e.g. noise, traffic) on the existing community; and**
- iv. **dedicated parking provision should be consistent with the adopted [Vehicle Parking Standards](#); and**
- v. **the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area and the design and materials are in keeping with the local style and reinforce local distinctiveness and provide a strong sense of place.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 3,4; EHDP (2018): ED5; NPPF: 81, 84, 93

7 ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE

Policy W12: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain

Purpose

- 7.1 This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of Ware's green and blue spaces - including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution - are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.

Justification

- 7.2 The NPPF states that plans should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including by identifying and mapping habitats and networks. The [Environment Act 2021](#) includes a provision for a mandatory requirement for new major developments to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (further information on smaller-scale developments is anticipated to be published by government). Figure 7.1 maps the green stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken green corridors within the area, as well as the water corridors. These are important spaces for the local community for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area, threading through the town itself. They also provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes, such as for bats, to prevent species becoming isolated.

The [Defra biodiversity metric](#) has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of at least 10%. Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity - code of practise for planning and development.

- 7.3 They should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible - this would help to address the poor provision of accessible natural greenspace that has been identified in the [East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan](#) (p.10). Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community.
- 7.4 If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. As established in Policy NE3 of the District Plan, planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as

veteran trees and trees of a high conservation value, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered. This is addressed in Policy W12 (Part A).

- 7.5 Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10% in line with requirements set out in national legislation and guidance. The appraisal should demonstrate that where significant harm cannot be avoided, proposed development and other changes should adequately mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the harm. The appraisal must demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain of 10% by utilising the Defra biodiversity metric (or as amended). Where this is not demonstrated, permission for planning or for change should be refused.
- 7.6 Measures to achieve biodiversity net gain, mitigation or compensation involving the creation of habitat and / or relocation of species, must be agreed by the Local Planning Authority and include sufficient funding to support at least 30 years of post-development habitat management or land use change.

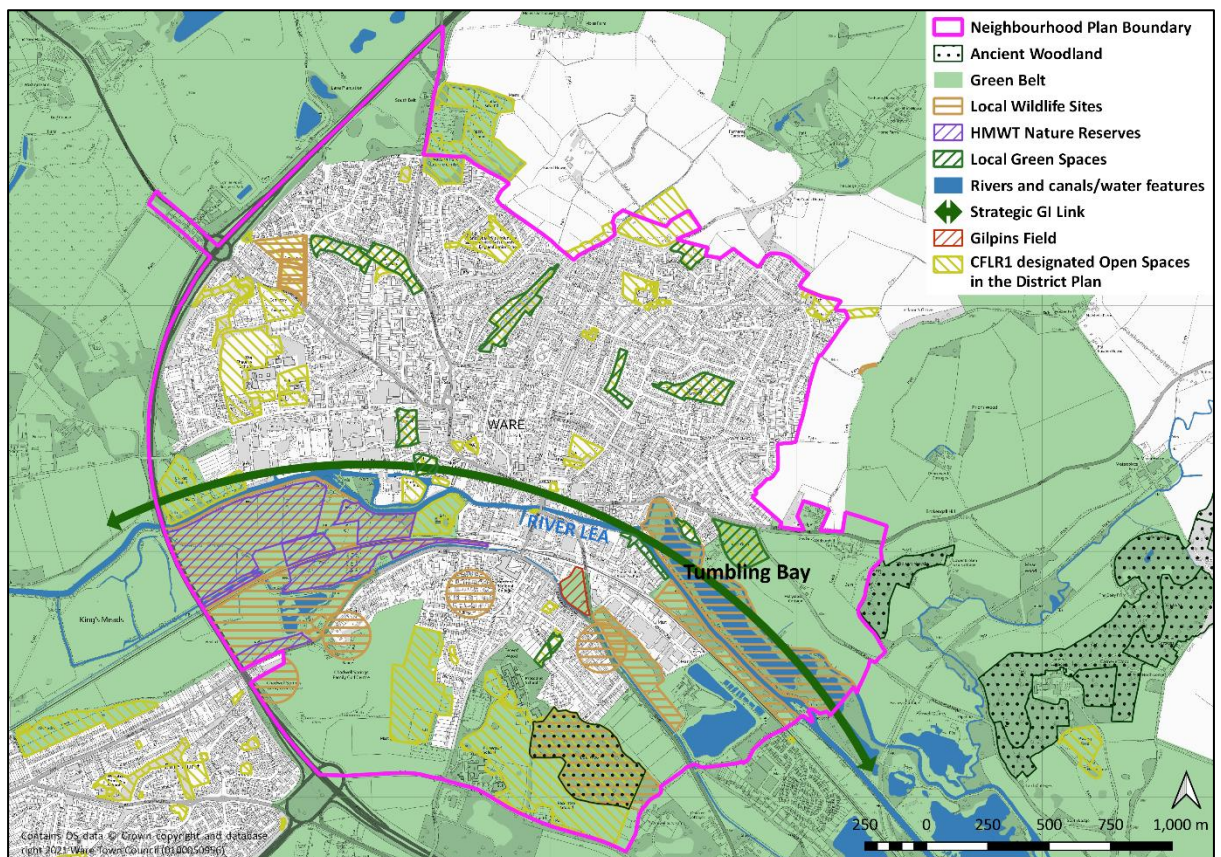
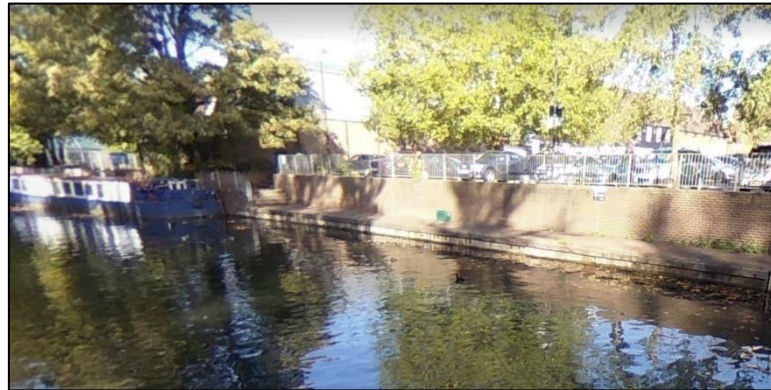


Figure 7.1: The Green and Blue infrastructure within Ware (including CFLR1 designated open spaces in the District Plan)

The River Lea Corridor

- 7.7 The corridor along the River Lea and Lee Navigation provides a strategic east-west route through and beyond Ware. It is an attractive and important backdrop to the historic core of Ware, the town having developed originally around the river's crossing point. The River Lea and Lee Navigation has, since medieval times, enabled boats to access the river between Hertford, Bishops Stortford and London. As such, it is popular and well-travelled.



River Lea boat moorings near to The Priory

- 7.8 From an environmental perspective, the [East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan](#) identifies the river corridor as a priority for wetland enhancements, including increased greening, to create enhanced 'space for water' and improving biodiversity in the area.
- 7.9 Equally, feedback from the Plan process, supported by the District Plan, recognises the value of the river corridor for recreation, including walking and cycling. Further information about this aspect is set out in Policy W15 (Improving Walking and Cycling).
- 7.10 There has also been a call for new and / or enhanced access points for boats wishing to stop off at Ware, such as at The Priory.
- 7.11 The WNP supports such initiatives, where it can be achieved sympathetically - from a natural and historic landscape perspective - and where it maintains the highest water efficiency standard, does not contribute to net loss of water from the waterway and is conducive to the maintenance of the river. Recreational uses should be considered in conjunction with the Canal & Rivers Trust as Navigation Authority, which owns and manages the navigation, as well as Defra, where appropriate. This will ensure there is no detrimental impact on other recreational users of the waterway or towpath.

Gilpins Field

- 7.12 Gilpins Field, shown on Figure 7.1 is a triangle of Green Belt situated at the southern end of the town, just south of the railway line. Owned and managed by Thames Water, the space comprises an unkempt wilderness, providing a habitat to a series of species. It has been identified within the Ware Conservation Area Appraisal as an important natural and green open gateway to the historic area and wider town.
- 7.13 Discussions are in place between the Town Council, Thames Water and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to explore opportunities to enhance biodiversity on-site by creating a nature reserve to incorporate features, for instance: a pondscape, wet woodland, a community orchard and a tiny forest. This is in line with the District Plan (Paragraph 20.3.10), which supports the creation of orchards, wildflower grasslands and nature reserves, to support biodiversity, and as such, the site is considered to be a biodiversity opportunity area.

Tumbling Bay

- 7.14 The Tumbling Bay local wildlife site on the north side of the Lee Navigation at the east side of Ware, is an attractive green space. It is designated as Green Belt land apart from one small corner by the Tumbling Bay weir-keeper's cottage. The centre is largely taken up by a lake, which was once gravel workings, although these are no longer visible. It is a peaceful and attractive spot, regularly accessed by many townspeople, although public access is on a completely unofficial basis.



One of the bridges leading to Tumbling Bay

- 7.15 There are three footbridges connecting to the 'island' - Tumbling Bay weir, Crane Mead, and Plaxton Way - of which the first is in poor repair but the second has recently been refurbished. All are joined by paths of varying widths, and which are quite muddy in winter. The footpath via Tumbling Way weir bridge is the shortest route to Ware town centre, but this bridge is narrow and the path runs through the Dockyard (Widbury Hill) trading estate. Where bridges are in the ownership of the Canal and Rivers Trust, proposals for these crossings must be discussed with the Trust, to discuss and agree details on design, layout, future ownership, maintenance and technical approval.
- 7.16 The lake and surrounding land provide important habitats for flora and fauna; the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) has identified a population of smew duck, for instance, which are fairly uncommon as they are shy and easily disturbed. The existing Green Belt space here, comprising the lake and surrounding strip of land, should be preserved for its important biodiversity value. As with Gilpins Field, there may be potential for biodiversity enhancement, which could attract funding from development sites in the district that cannot demonstrate biodiversity gain on site.
- 7.17 In addition, there is a local aspiration to enable greater public access to the site, where this can be done sustainably. This would help to tackle the shortfall of such access to natural green space in Ware and could include:
- Regularising public access to the green space so that people can continue to enjoy it permanently. Either permissive or public footpaths are highly desirable, at least to connect the three footbridges and these paths should be improved to give all-weather surfaces to make them accessible;
 - Introducing a cycleway from the Crane Mead bridge to the Plaxton Way bridge, with a full-width all-weather surface. Access to the Crane Mead bridge could be improved by providing ramps at either end in addition to the current steps. The Plaxton Way bridge is already suitable for cycles, although conditions of access through the estate road beyond are not fully clear;
 - Providing a direct cycleway leading into Star Street but bypassing the Dockyard trading estate, as the route via Tumbling Way weir bridge and the Dockyard trading estate is clearly unsuitable as a cycleway. This could be achieved either via a new bridge at the north end of the island or by widening the Tumbling Bay weir bridge and building a new cycle path behind the trading estate by the River Lea (backwater). This would give a much more direct and useful cycling route than currently available.
- 7.18 Proposals for new or amended bridge crossings should be required to make an assessment of the visual impacts, taking into consideration any existing features / crossings. Any works, including ramps etc, will also need to ensure that there are no adverse impacts to the safe navigation of the waterway, stability of the waterway or existing infrastructure such as culverts or access along the towpath, including horse drawn boats or operational

activities such as dredging. Works will likely require separate consent from Defra and proposals should also be clearly set out how any improvements would be funded / maintained.

POLICY W12: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- A. Development proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, with the aim of delivering a measurable net environmental benefit¹ for local people and wildlife. Subject to their scale, nature and location, proposals for development should be supported by a biodiversity appraisal, which should demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised and biodiversity net gain achieved.**
- B. Proposals which would improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be supported where they would enhance the green infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. Development proposals which would unacceptably detract from connectivity with wildlife areas and green spaces will not be supported.**
- C. Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the planting of additional native species trees and/or continuous hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors and as a habitat for wildlife will be supported, especially where they would be alongside the public right of way network. Wherever practicable indigenous or native species should be used for such proposals.**

The River Lea Corridor

- D. Proposals for short-term visitors' moorings and opportunities for non-motorised (licenced) pleasure craft and kayaks to enter and egress the water will be supported where they:

 - i. incorporate design and landscaping which protects the setting of the watercourses, conserving their heritage value and reflecting the character of the surrounding context. This should be demonstrated through an environmental impact statement, taking into account, for example, geological, ecological, landscape, species, habitats and sustainability criteria and in consultation with the Canal & River Trust, as the Navigation Authority; and**
 - ii. avoid views onto 'back of development', such as car parks, service areas, bin stores, delivery areas, sub stations and associated car parking, using natural buffering where possible; and**
 - iii. conserve and where practicable enhance the biodiversity, landscape and recreational value of the River, its tributaries and its corridor through the area; and****

¹ Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10% in line with requirements set out in national legislation and guidance.

iv. include a long-term landscape and ecological management plan for the greening of the river and enhancement / expansion of the wetland environment, in consultation with the Environment Agency; and

v. enable the retrofitting of SuDS where possible and ensure permeable paving is used.

E. Other types of development that either adjoin or are within the river corridor of the River Lea or its tributaries, as shown on the Policies Map, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances.

Gilpins Field

F. Development proposals should protect the open aspect and biodiversity of Gilpins Field. Development proposals which would increase the biodiversity of the Field will be strongly supported.

Tumbling Bay

G. Development proposals that enhance the site as a wildlife habitat will be supported.

H. Proposals that enable sustainable community access and use of the site for recreational and educational purposes will be supported, where they would not have unacceptable impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents, the local environment or the River Lea Corridor.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 2; EHDP (2018): NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4; NPPF: 174, 175, 179, 180

Policy W13: Local Green Spaces

Purpose

7.19 The policy designates Local Green Spaces within Ware, that are demonstrably special to the local community.

Justification

7.20 Under the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

7.21 A survey of green spaces in Ware was undertaken. The Steering Group reviewed the green spaces to ascertain whether they might be suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. Many are already adequately protected, for instance where they are already located within the Green Belt or have an existing protective designation attributed to them. The following areas are considered to fulfil the criteria of the NPPF:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Lady Margaret Gardens
(playground area and open space) | 8. Buryfields |
| 2. The Bourne | 9. Widbury Hill Allotments |
| 3. King George Fields | 10. Plaxton Way |
| 4. Lower Bourne Gardens | 11. King George Road Allotments |
| 5. The Pastures | 12. Land between Crane Mead houses and River Lee Navigation |
| 6. Priory Playgrounds | |
| 7. Presdales Drive Playground
(and Land) | |

7.22 Figure 7.2 shows the location of each of the Local Green Spaces. Detailed maps and descriptions of the spaces, including how they meet the NPPF criteria, are included in Appendix A.

POLICY W13: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The 12 green spaces listed below and shown in Figure 7.2 and on the Policies Map, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- 1. Lady Margaret Gardens (playground area and open space)**
- 2. The Bourne**
- 3. King George Fields**
- 4. Lower Bourne Gardens**
- 5. The Pastures**
- 6. Priory Playgrounds**
- 7. Presdales Drive Playground (and Land)**
- 8. Buryfields**
- 9. Widbury Hill Allotments**
- 10. Plaxton Way**
- 11. King George Road Allotments**
- 12. Land between Crane Mead houses and River Lee Navigation**

Development proposals within the designated local green space will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 2; EHDP (2018): CFLR2; NPPF: 101, 102, 103, 137, 147 to 151

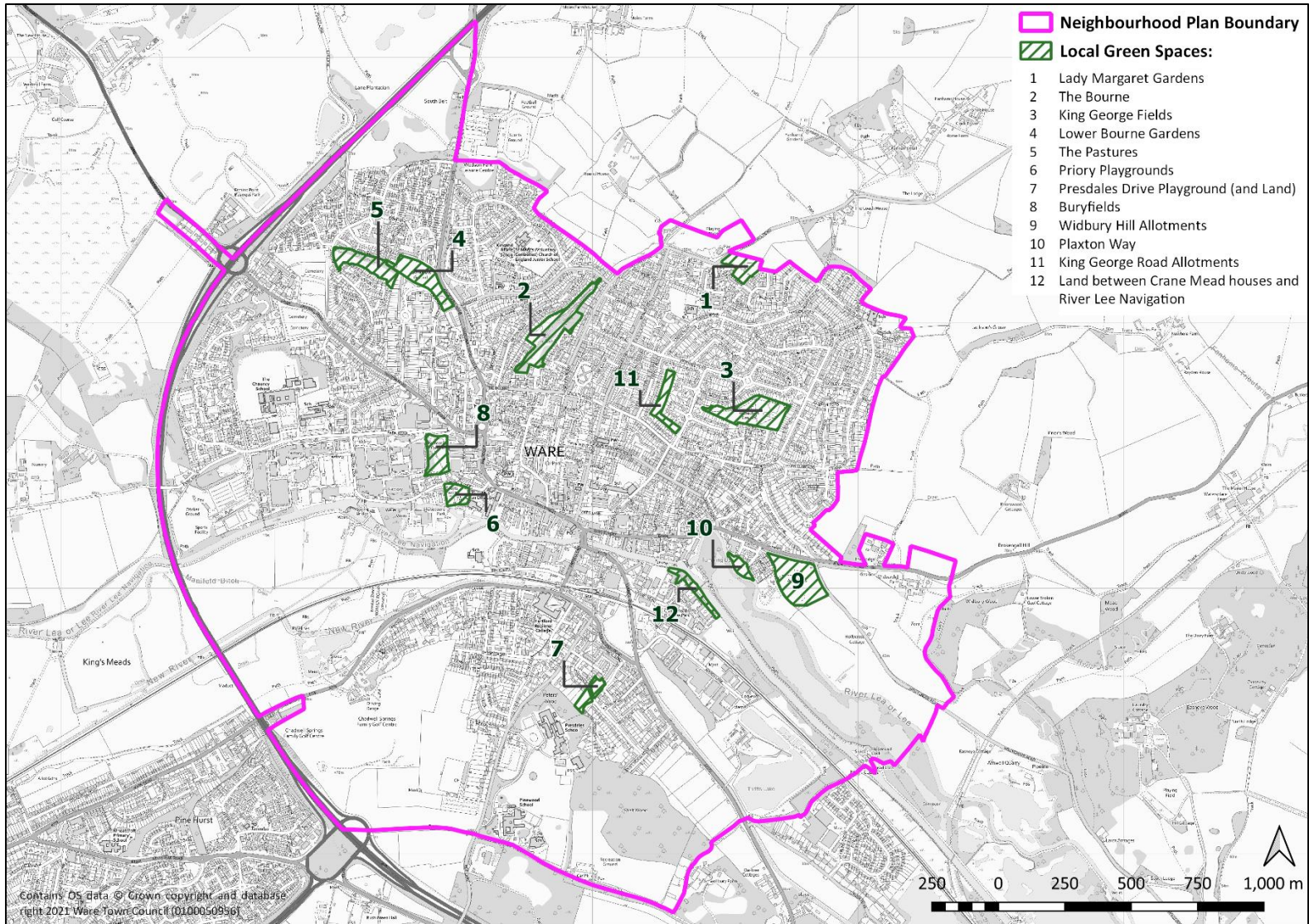


Figure 7.2: Map showing the Local Green Space designations

Policy W14: Managing the environmental impact of development

Purpose

7.23 This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals have considered how they can enhance the natural environment - both flora and fauna - including the features of it that are particularly distinctive to Ware. It also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space.

Justification

7.24 The NPPF stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment including requiring net gain in biodiversity. Protected natural assets in the neighbourhood area, shown in Figure 7.3, include:

- the Green Belt, surrounding and, in parts, extending into the town; and
- Ancient woodland at Post Wood - an oak-hornbeam Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland which supports a variety of wildlife
- 11 Local Wildlife Sites
- Part of the Lee Valley Park
- Historic Parks and Gardens

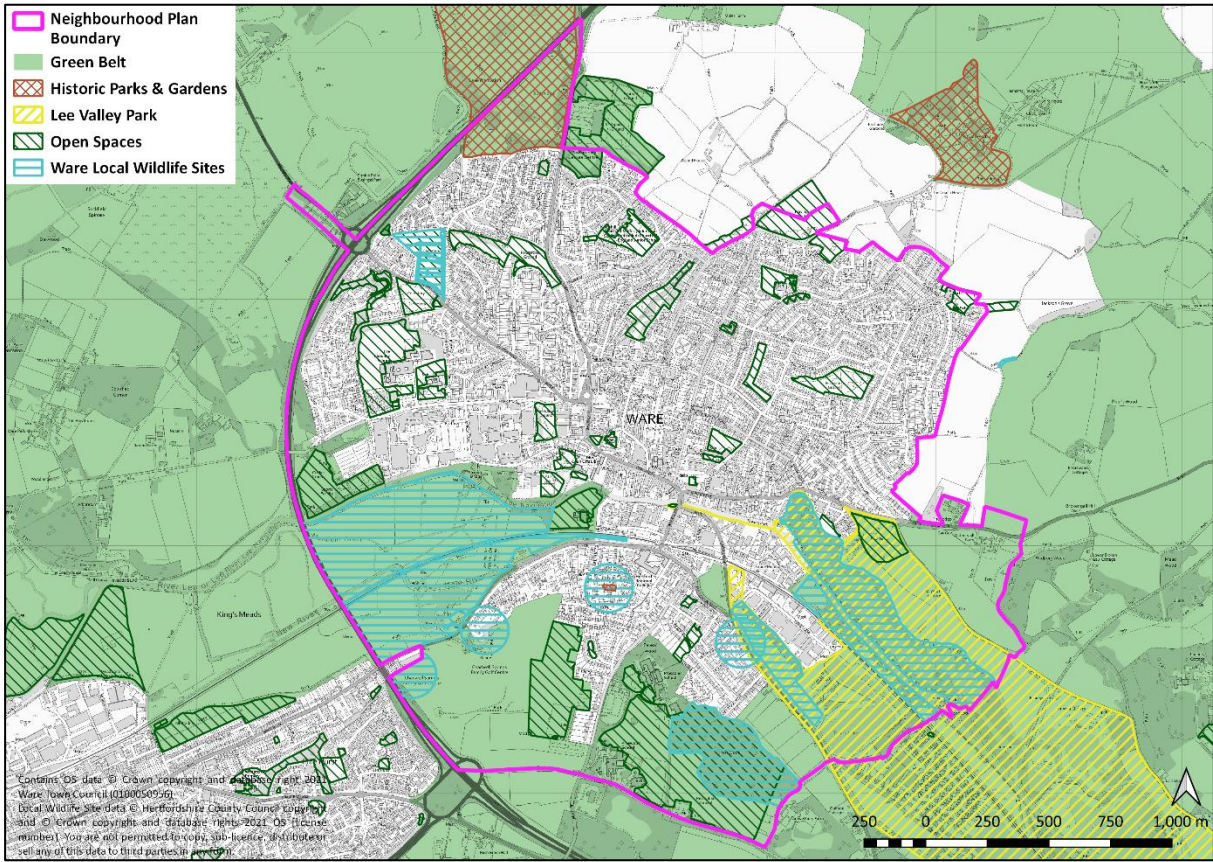


Figure 7.3: Habitats and natural sites in the neighbourhood area

7.25 Other distinctive features particular to Ware that are not protected, yet provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, include veteran and mature trees and established woodland, mature planted gardens, the wide green verges alongside roads and the banks of the rivers. Such features form vital corridors for many animals and birds, especially those migrating, to safely navigate around their domains.



Street trees are an important feature in Ware (Kibes Lane pictured)

7.26 Development proposals are expected to retain, protect, and enhance these habitats where possible and, where appropriate, include a landscape and ecological management plan, with a list of trees and shrubs to be planted to optimise the greenness of the town. New trees should be native to the UK and selected based on the [Woodland Trust Urban Air Quality Report](#) (2012), which provides guidance for street trees based on Urban Tree Air Quality Score (UTAQS) to ensure the best effect is achieved for air quality, to optimise their cooling effect and to protect from disease (see Figure 7.4). Colour of foliage will also be considered as this can enhance the overall appearance of the town throughout the year. Resistance to drought, in light of climate change, will also be an important factor to consider.

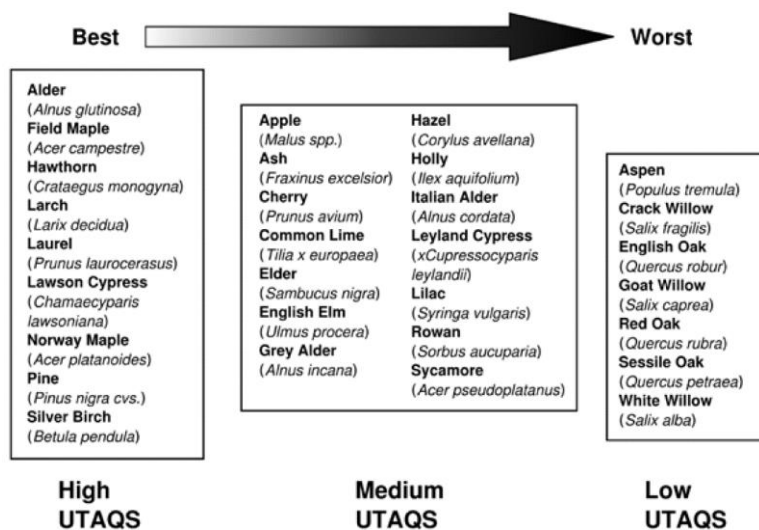


Figure 7.4: Classification of 30 of the most common UK urban tree species using UTAQS

POLICY W14: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals should maintain and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape features and the rural character and setting of the neighbourhood area.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:

Trees and woodlands:

- i. there is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees, woodlands during, or as a result of, development. If veteran or notable trees (As defined by [The Woodland Trust](#)) must be removed, they should be replaced with trees of a similar potential size and native species elsewhere on the site, unless this is clearly not possible.
- ii. new tree planting will be encouraged. Where new trees are planted or existing trees replaced, indigenous or native species should be favoured, as well as locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife. The Urban Tree Air Quality Score and colour of foliage should be taken into account.
- iii. all priority habitats and mature trees must have a minimum buffer of complimentary habitat of 10m, and more if required (for instance ancient woodland or veteran trees require a minimum buffer of 15m).

Fauna:

- iv. the provision of hedgehog holes in new residential fencing will be supported.
- v. development proposals which provide wildlife-friendly features, such as bird and bat nesting boxes, swift bricks and bee bricks, will be supported.
- vi. the provision of wildlife friendly communal 'green spaces' within new major developments will be supported.

Incorporate open space that is:

- vii. in usable parcels of land and not fragmented.
- viii. safe, easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier.
- ix. is accessible to the general public.
- x. creates a safe environment considering lighting and layout.
- xi. complemented by high quality landscaping schemes.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 2; EHDP (2018): DES2, DES3, NE3; NPPF: 92, 131, 174, 179, 180

8 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Policy W15: Improving walking and cycling

Purpose

8.1 Many people rely on their car for a variety of reasons - they may have limited mobility, they may be transporting young children, carrying larger loads, or simply be short of time to reach their destination. Noting those concerns, this policy seeks to promote walking and cycling along the routes which are most likely to enable a shift away from the private car for short journeys in and around Ware. This will assist in reducing congestion and air pollution, whilst freeing the roads for those who are less able to give up their cars for the reasons stated.

Justification

- 8.2 Ware is a local centre for surrounding villages as well as those living in the town itself. As a result, there is substantial car traffic to and from the town centre and also the Tesco car park in Dickenson Way, accessed via New Road which is thus an important two-way route. People frequently combine supermarket shopping with visiting other town centre shops, helping to keep the High Street vibrant. The Asda store in Watton Road also receives significant traffic.
- 8.3 The High Street is currently the main route for east-west traffic across the town and into the central area. However, there is no viable alternative route. This was illustrated during the pandemic when one-way systems in the High Street diverted traffic on to narrow residential roads and seriously inhibited sustainable transport modes such as buses and cycles, although one-way westbound was less disruptive than one-way eastbound. However, the 20-mph speed limit has been beneficial. Other measures such as an HGV ban, loading / unloading restrictions at peak work / school travel hours and a 'shared space' approach as used in some Continental cities should be beneficial. Many of these highways issues fall outside the remit of the neighbourhood plan, but nevertheless have been captured in Section 12 of this document, as Non policy actions.

Supporting sustainable modes of transport

8.4 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot prevent people from using their cars, encouraging walking and cycling, particularly for shorter journeys within the town and to nearby settlements - including the urban extension - will be important. Promoting active travel is beneficial in many ways: to promote healthy lifestyles, to encourage social interaction, to reduce traffic congestion, and to help to alleviate air pollution. This latter point is particularly relevant in Ware: Whilst no part of the town has significant enough air pollution for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) classification to be declared, parts of the town are facing increasing air pollution (Figure 8.1) and this is an issue that should be explored further with the relevant monitoring authorities.

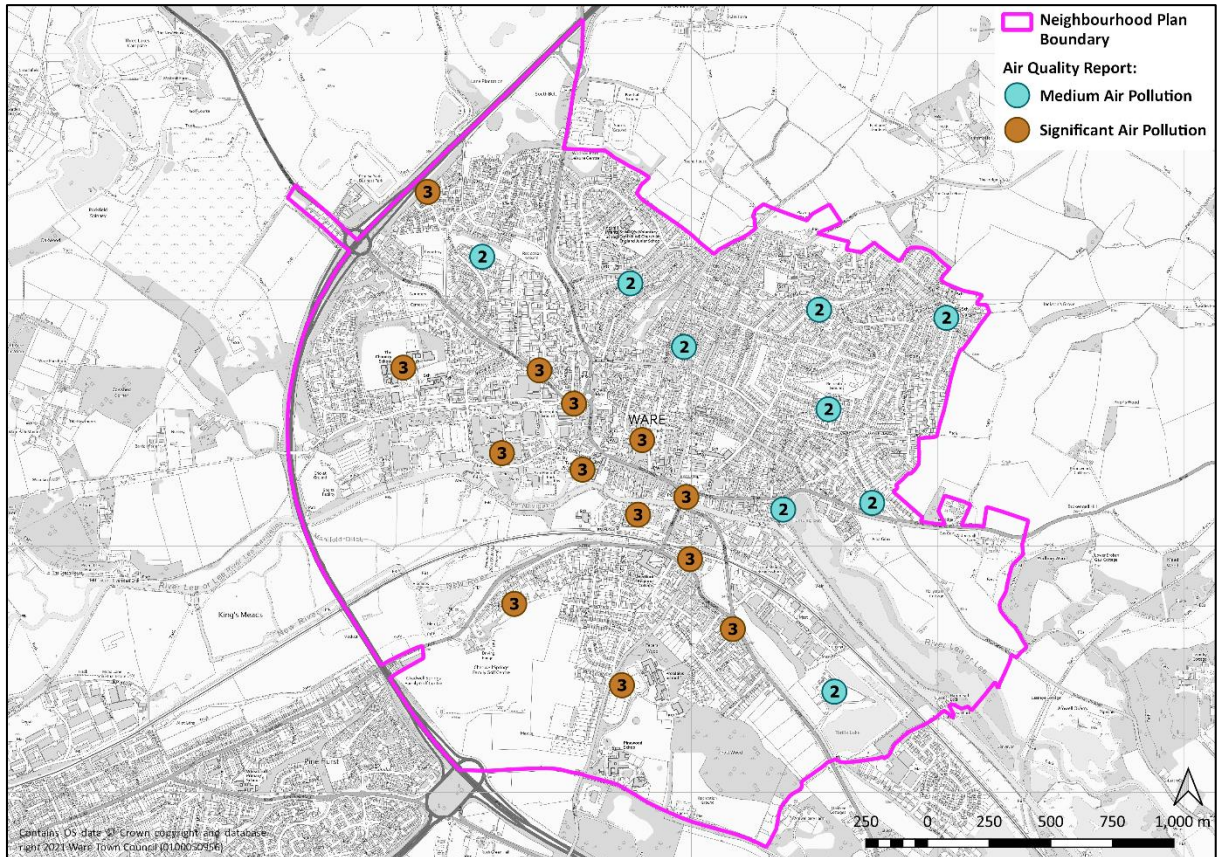


Figure 8.1: Air pollution in Ware (based on the Central Office of Public Interest Air Quality data available at addresspollution.org in partnership with Imperial College London)

8.5 Enabling active travel in Ware should be possible as Ware is a highly walkable and cyclable town. The whole of the town is accessible within 15 minutes by bicycle and Figure 8.2 shows that a significant proportion of the community is within a 15-minute walk of the railway station close to the centre of the town.

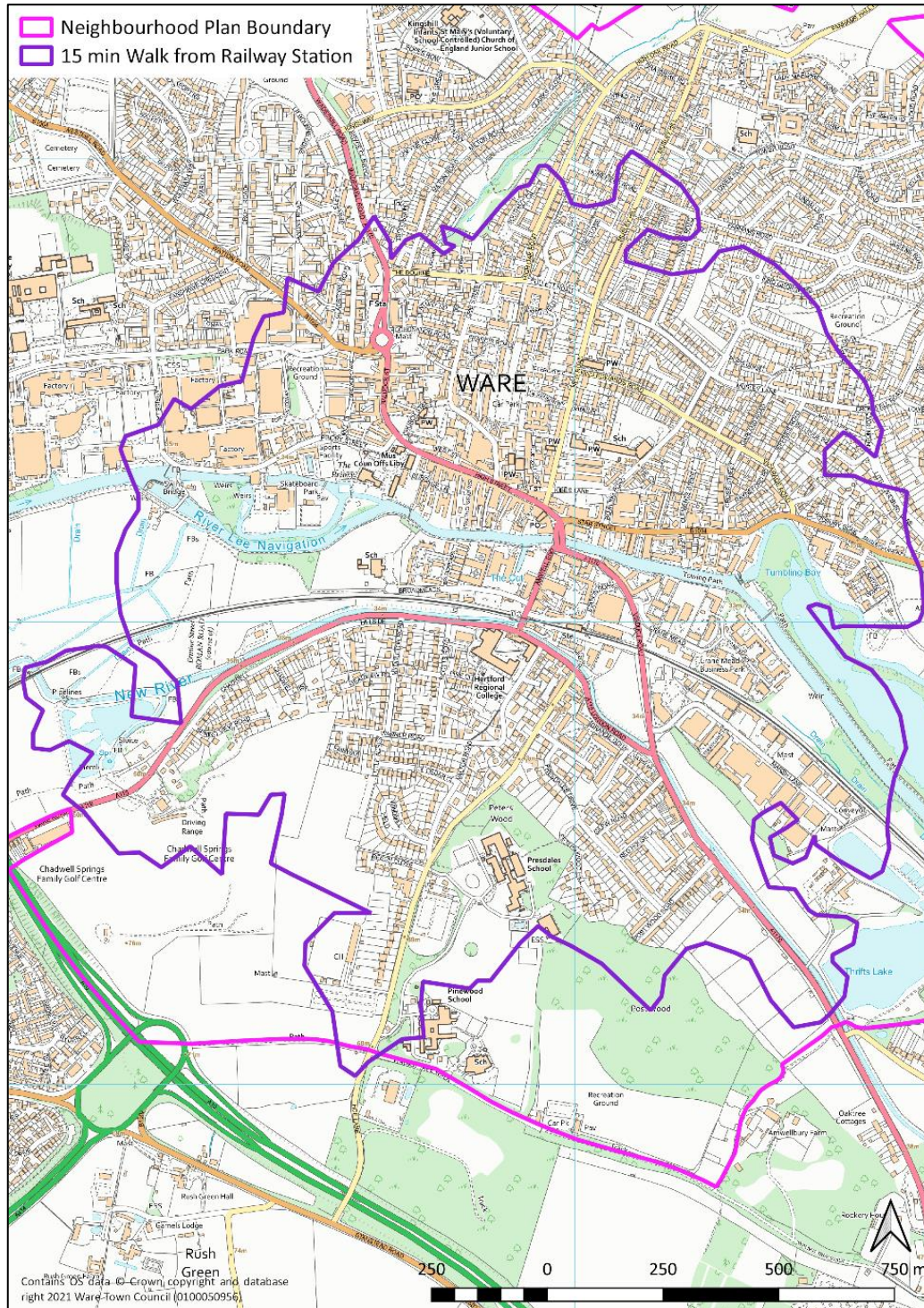


Figure 8.2: 15-minute walk time from Ware railway station

8.6 There are numerous destinations that Ware residents - including those who will be living in the strategic allocation at north-east Ware - will commonly look to access. These include the town centre, the schools, the main employment areas and the railway station. Improving walking and cycling routes so that they are safe and attractive to users will create the best opportunity to get more people to walk and cycle for their short journeys 'within town'. This will help to reduce congestion on secondary routes.

Walking in and around Ware

- 8.7 The most direct routes to reach the key facilities on foot from residential areas tend to coincide with the main road network. These have pavements and are, on the whole, well-lit and accessible, as shown in Figure 8.3.

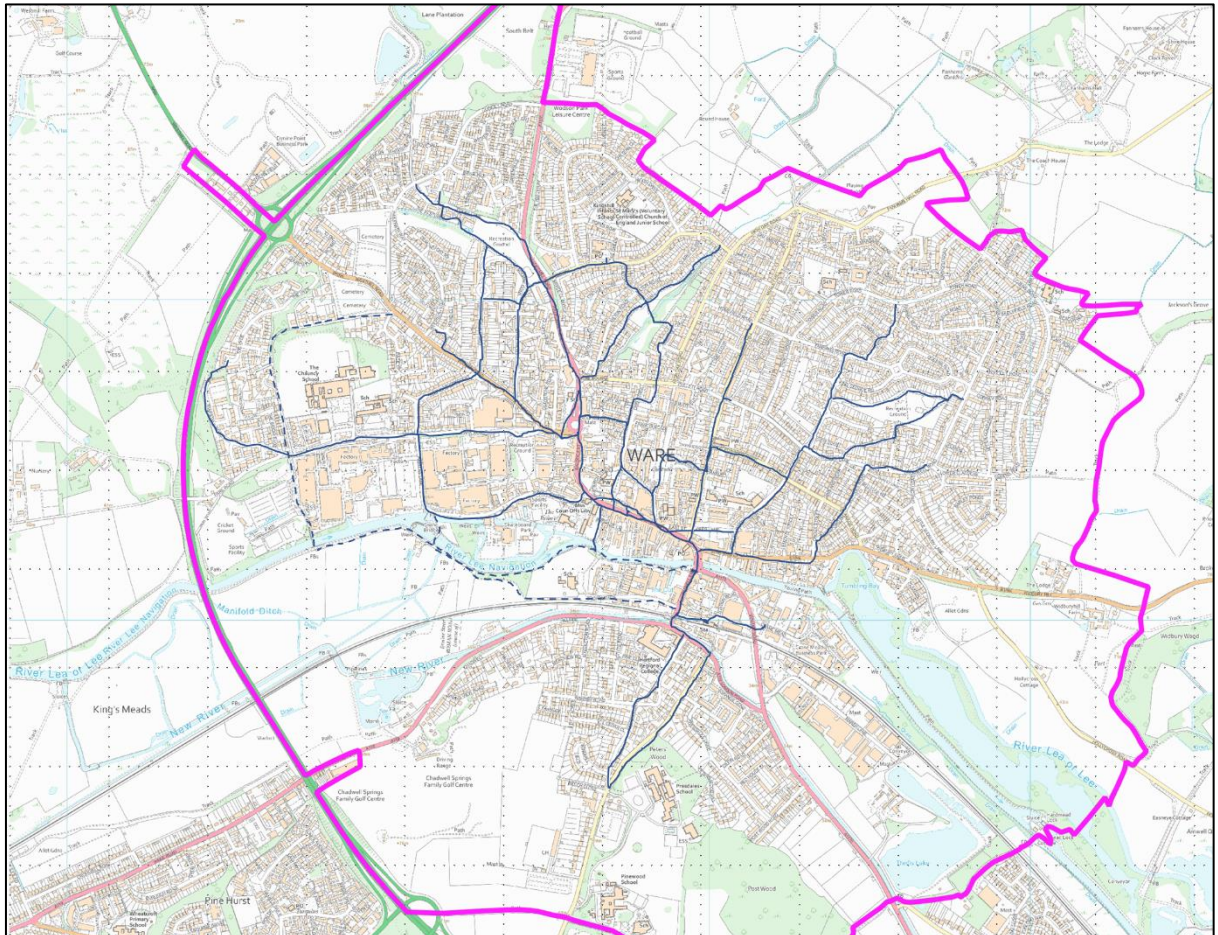


Figure 8.3: Map showing the most frequently used pedestrian routes in Ware (dotted lines tend to be summer-only use)

- 8.8 To support Policy W11 (Ware as a sustainable visitor destination), the WNP supports the recreational heritage trail (prepared by The Ware Society), showcasing the town's heritage, that should be well-maintained for the use of those visiting the town. Shown in Figure 8.4, proposals that enable this route to be well-signposted and fully accessible to users will be supported. The provision of information boards at key destinations along the route will contribute to the celebration and enhancement of Ware's distinctive heritage. Such boards are already provided by the Ware Society at the railway station, the lido, outside the Museum by Kibes Lane car park, and by the river concerning the gazebos.

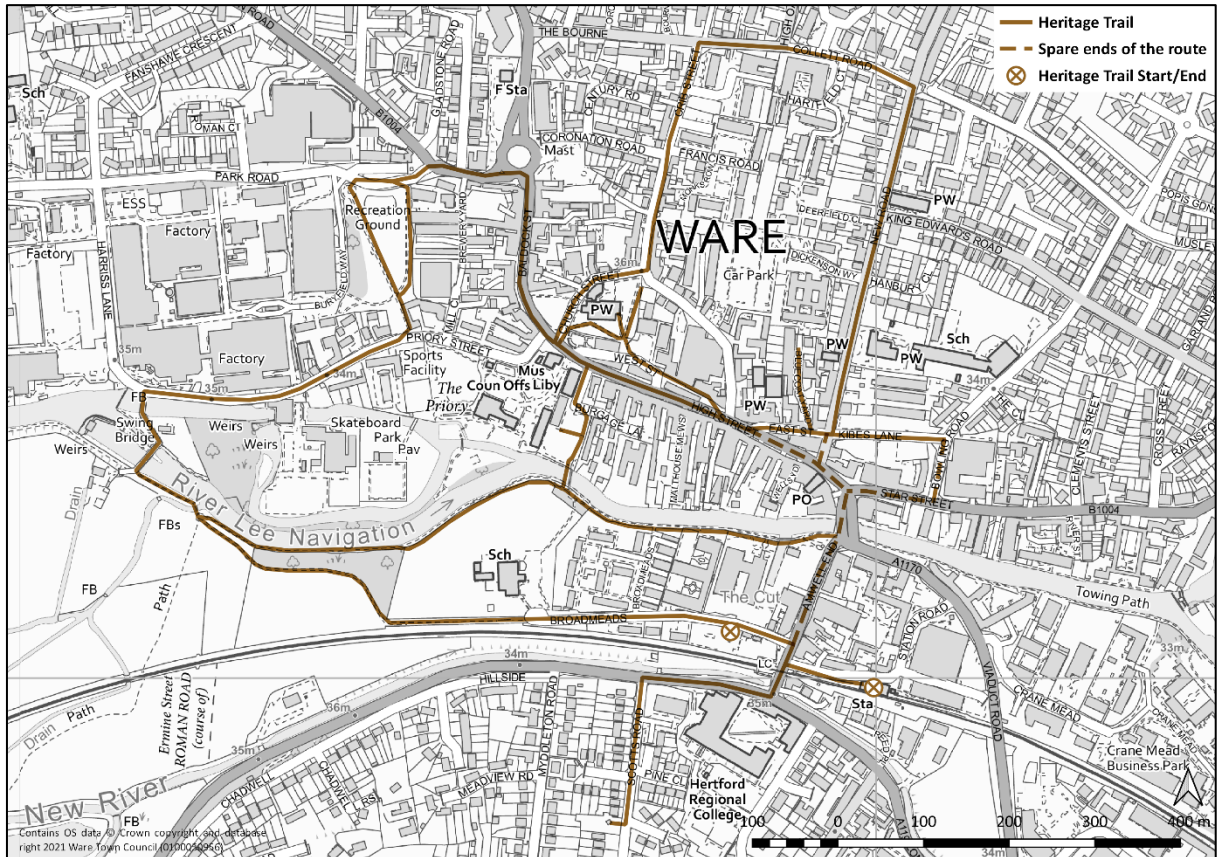


Figure 8.4: Recreational Heritage Trail

Cycling routes in and around Ware

8.9 Seven important cycling corridors through Ware have been identified and are shown as CC1-CC7 in Figure 8.5. They are described in more detail in the supporting document ‘Cycling routes in Ware’, available from the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

8.10 Routes CC3 and CC5 along the River Lea are described in Paragraph 8.11 and Route CC4 across Tumbling Bay is covered in Paragraph 7.15.

8.11 Routes CC1 and CC1A are essential to achieve the aim of the North and East Ware development to provide safe cycle routes into town and require construction of a short section of new cycleway for which three feasible alternative routes have been identified (it should be noted that because Route CC1A is outside the Neighbourhood Area, the requirements of Policy W15 do not apply. Routes CC1 and CC2 also reach areas of North Ware outside the 15-minute walking range.

8.12 Likewise, Route CC6 gives routes into West Ware beyond the 15-minute walking range; the key item is upgrading of Poles Lane. Route CC7 is a shorter and safer route from Presdales School to South Hertford (Kingsmead), with the section outside the Neighbourhood Area in Kingsmead parish appearing in the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan - its plan policies relevant to that section of the route will therefore apply.

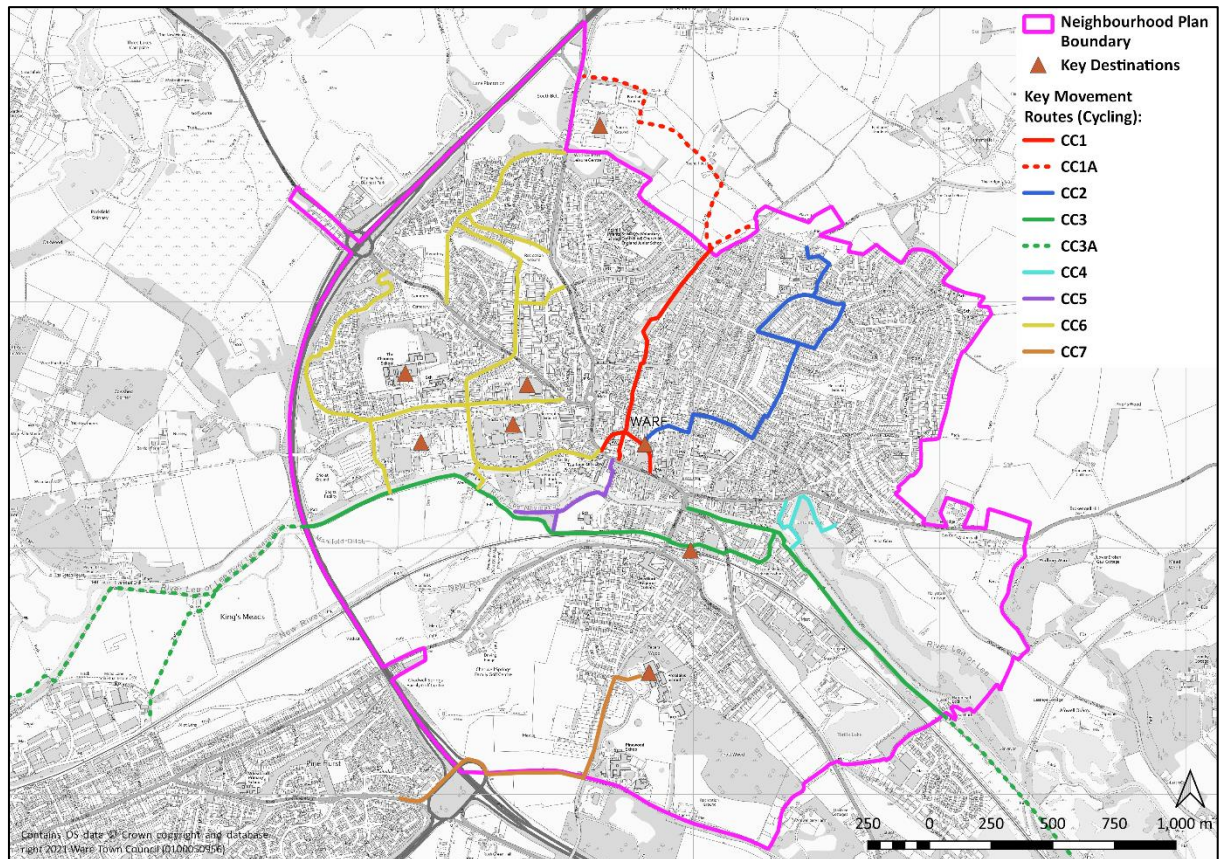


Figure 8.5: Important cycling corridors through Ware (noting that where routes extend outside the NP area these are not directly controlled by Policy W15 and are purely indicative)

The River Lea corridor for walking and cycling

- 8.13 There is a continuous towpath running along the entire length of the south side of the river, from Hertford through Ware to Stanstead Abbots and down the Lee Valley. There are no actual blockages on this path, but some key improvements are desirable. The north bank of the river is broken up into separate roads and footpaths. Some specific improvements can be made and more circular routes would be possible.
- 8.14 There are bridges across the river at Park Road / Wengeo Lane / GSK, Ware Lock, Burgage Lane, Town Bridge and Tumbling Bay / Crane Mead. All are public rights of way except the last, but only the Town Bridge carries motorised vehicular traffic.
- 8.15 Potential improvements could include:
- **Improved surfacing of the towpath:** The existing surface of the south side towpath is often poor, and several sections are too narrow for cyclists and pedestrians to pass safely. Drainage is also poor and there is often standing water and mud, even after a light shower. The central section through Ware is tarmacked but narrow and has been distorted by tree roots. The sections outside Ware are stone-based surfaces and cyclists have complained that these are too rough, particularly between Ware Lock and the entrance to the New River west of the town. Sustrans cycle route 61 runs along the

towpath for a considerable distance and potentially provides a good Hertford-Ware-Stanstead Abbots route.

Where cyclists and pedestrians share the towpath, there should be segregation between them wherever possible, and a smooth all-weather surface. Much of the towpath outside central Ware is wide enough to allow separate cycle and foot sections, or could be widened.

- Better mode segregation in the central Ware section:** The towpath between the Town Bridge and Burgage Lane is too narrow for cyclists and pedestrians to share comfortably, but it is the most heavily used section by pedestrians both as a key route (between the town centre and the west of Ware and the railway station) and as a leisure and tourist route (to view the riverside gazebos which are Ware's most unique and distinctive feature). The section east of Town Bridge is also narrow. The Sustrans cycle route 61 avoids these sections, going via Broadmeads and Ware Station, and by means of an underpass also avoids a level crossing of the busy A1170. Therefore, the Burgage Lane - Town Bridge section of the towpath should be made pedestrian only, with cyclists allowed only if dismounted and giving way to pedestrians.
- New cycle route from Burgage Lane bridge to Broadmeads:** If the towpath section above is banned to cyclists, a convenient alternative cycling route is needed from the town centre to Ware station. To achieve this, a link is needed around the west side of Sacred Heart school by upgrading and surfacing a current unofficial footpath (marked in purple on Figure 8.6). The route would be permissive (like Sustrans 61 in this location) and the landowner's permission would need to be sought. Surfacing improvements may be required, alongside the formalisation of the access via the unofficial footpath. The route and associated works should be developed in collaboration with the Canal and Rivers Trust.

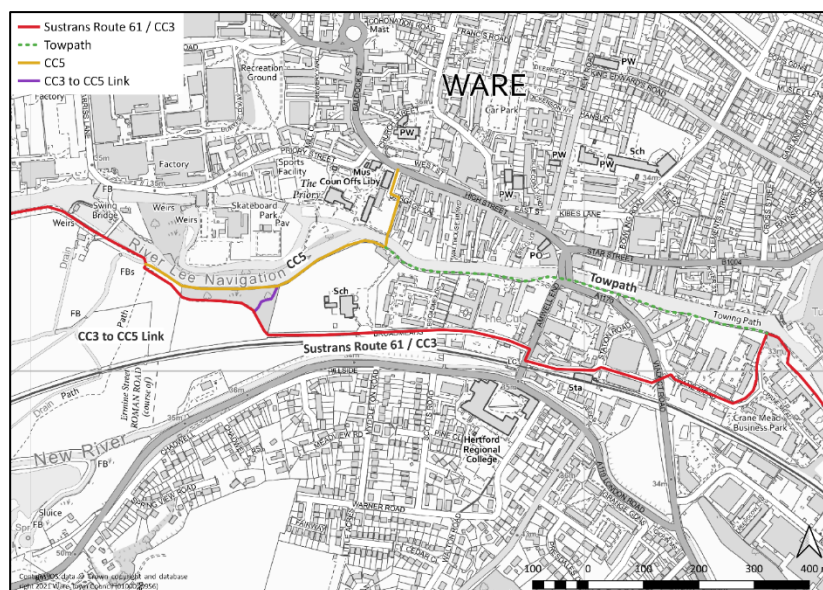


Figure 8.6: Potential new connection between CC3 and CC5

- **Better signposting:** Both the pedestrian and cycle routes are inadequately signposted at present. Where Sustrans 61 leaves the river, this is not clearly indicated and many cyclists unwittingly carry on along the narrow towpath. The very useful underpass crossing the A1170 is not signposted, so clear signage is needed at the Station Road / Stewards Way junction and in Crane Mead.
- **Lighting:** The towpath is currently unlit. Discreet ground-level lighting, subject to Policy EQ3 (Light Pollution) of the District Plan, could encourage its safe use by cyclists and pedestrians. The section from Town Bridge to Burgage Lane, and possibly on to Ware Lock with the associated cycleway, are priorities.

It should be noted, however, that the Canal and Rivers Trust advise that waterside lighting affects how the waterway corridor is perceived, particularly when viewed from the water, the towpath and neighbouring land, for example waterside lighting can lead to unnecessary glare and light pollution if it is not carefully designed. Lighting can also adversely impact on bats and other nocturnal species who utilise our waterways as dark corridors for foraging and migration. Notwithstanding the ecological concerns, the Trust is not usually able to provide lighting on towpaths, as there is no power supply, and it is unable to take on extensive maintenance liability.

Therefore any proposals for lighting schemes, if provided by a lighting authority, would need to avoid impact on biodiversity and on the amenity of boaters. Personal safety is not automatically conferred by lighting; however, reflectors or very low-level lighting could reduce the risk of riding off the path into water. The Trust should be consulted on all proposals.

Public transport

8.16 Ware's public transport links are largely concentrated at the south end of the town, with the railway station and east-west services along the A119 London Road. These are a significant walking distance from the majority of residential areas. There are direct bus links to Hertford from the town centre at a reasonable frequency. For the rest of the town and for inter-urban journeys, services are infrequent, slow and often unreliable. For example, the route to Stevenage runs every two hours, takes over an hour and travels via all the intervening villages, whereas the direct road route along the A602 is 10 miles and takes 20 minutes by car, also giving door-to-door transport. Hence the vast majority of travel to and from Ware is by car except along the Hertford-Ware-Broxbourne-London corridor. Section 12 (Non Policy Actions) includes recommendations to enhance local bus services.

POLICY W15: KEY WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

- A. Development which provides new transport infrastructure or improves existing transport infrastructure should be designed to maximise use by pedestrians, those with mobility impairments and cyclists.**
- B. Specific proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access will be supported. In particular, such proposals should focus on improving access between residential areas of Ware, including new development at North and East Ware, and important local facilities, including schools, the railway station and public transport nodes, community facilities, important employment areas and the town centre.**
- C. Improvements to the walking and cycling opportunities along the River Lea corridor - surfacing, shared paths, route extension, signposting and lighting - as described in Paragraph 8.15, will be supported where this can be achieved without unacceptable impact to biodiversity and water quality, in accordance with Policy W12 (Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain).**
- D. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, new developments should seek to ensure safe access to link up with existing footways and cycle routes, wherever practicable.**
- E. Proposals to enhance the cycle routes identified on Figure 8.5 and the Policies Map will be supported. Development that is immediately adjacent to these cycle routes should:

 - i. ensure the retention and where possible the enhancement of the cycle route; and**
 - ii. be designed so it does not have a detrimental impact on the cycle route and ensure the safety and flow of pedestrians and cyclists.****
- F. The provision of dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably covered and secure, will be supported.**
- G. The Recreational Heritage Trail route (Figure 8.4) should be protected from development that would impede access to pedestrians.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 5, 6; EHDP (2018): WARE2, TRA1; NPPF: 100, 104, 105, 106

Policy W16: Mitigating vehicular impacts at junctions

Purpose

8.17 This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals fully assess both their potential impact and their cumulative impact on the key junctions in Ware that already experience congestion problems and actively seek ways to mitigate this.

Justification

8.18 The strategic allocation north and east of Ware is required to deliver a link road connecting the site with the A10 junction with the A1170 under Policy WARE2 of the District Plan. This requirement forms part of the submitted planning application. In addition, the East Herts Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the need for contributions towards improvements at the Rush Green roundabout, specifically, an additional lane on the northern slip road approaching the roundabout. The final scope of these improvements will be determined by the Highways Authority and, where justified to mitigate the impact of identified development in the District, proportionate contributions may be sought from such developments by the Highways Authority.

8.19 It is considered that while these mitigation measures may help to accommodate the proposed growth, they will have limited impact on existing problems associated with congestion in Ware. The town has several road junctions and routes that experience regular congestion, particularly at peak periods. This not only delays journeys but increases emissions and associated air pollution. A particular issue is the large volumes of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, that travel through the town centre. The following areas were identified through the neighbourhood plan process as being problematic and are shown in Figure 8.7:

8.20 Junctions:

- Star Street roundabout and High Street / New Road junctions - these are located very close to each other and handle much of the traffic coming into the town from the south and east;
- Baldock Street roundabout - this is heavily used, and congestion can be daunting for cyclists, some of whom have requested a marked cycle lane;
- A10 / A1170 Ware North junction - the slip roads are too short, causing concern to users. It is considered that the junction needs improvement given that it will be the junction for the spine road for the N&E Ware development with the associated construction traffic and large vehicles for Travelling Showpeople; and
- Widbury Hill / Hollycross Road - the entry point from the south and east of the town.

8.21 Secondary school pickup areas:

- Chauncy School, Park Road; and
- Presdales School, Hoe Lane.

8.22 Congested roads (the identification of congested roads has been collated by the Steering Group based on visual evidence, local knowledge and feedback from the community events):

- Ware High Street;
- Star Street;
- New Road and southern part of Musley Hill;
- Park Road and Fanshawe Crescent at school opening / closing times;
- Hoe Lane at school opening / closing times;
- High Oak Road;
- Homefield Road;
- Bowling Road;
- King Edward Road;
- Vicarage Road; and
- Collett Road.

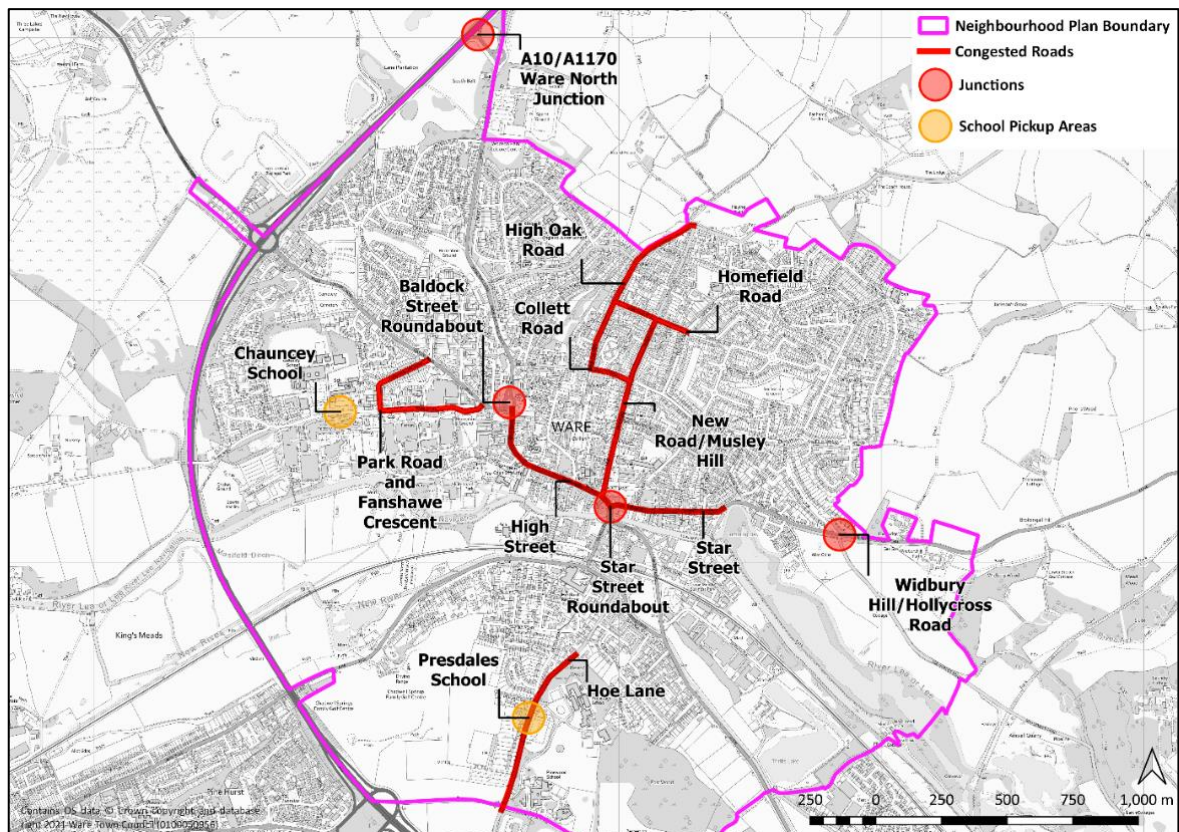


Figure 8.7: Areas of the road network which are considered to be under stress

8.23 Where necessary development proposals should be accompanied by Transport Assessments (for larger sites) or Transport Statements (for smaller sites) ('larger' and smaller' site size defined in the NPPF) and address to the satisfaction of the highway authority the direct and cumulative transport impact on road junctions. The policy adds local detail to Policy TRA2 (Safe and Suitable Highway Access Arrangements and Mitigation) of the East Herts District Plan.

POLICY W16: MITIGATING VEHICULAR IMPACTS AT JUNCTIONS AND PINCHPOINTS

A. Development proposals should ensure that they have no unacceptable direct or cumulative impact on the following junctions:

- i. Star Street roundabout and High Street / New Road junctions**
- ii. Baldock Street roundabout**
- iii. A10 / A1170 Ware North junction**
- iv. Widbury Hill / Hollycross Road**

B. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Movement Routes, as shown on Figures 8.3 and 8.5, will be supported. Major development proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the safety and accessibility of Key Movement Routes. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the pinch points as shown on Figure 8.7, and on the safety and flow of pedestrian and cycle access on the identified Key Movement Routes.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 6; EHDP (2018): TRA1, TRA2; NPPF: 104, 110, 111, 113

Policy W17: Maximising the potential for children to walk safely to school

Purpose

- 8.24 This policy seeks to ensure that new development in the immediate vicinity of a school protects and, where possible, enhances the safety of pedestrians.

Justification

- 8.25 One of the key groups whose mobility is commonly compromised by road safety is children. The most well-used routes that approach the schools in Ware area heavily trafficked. If more children are to walk or cycle to school then improvements need to be made, starting with areas closest to the schools. Figure 8.6 shows the areas that have been identified as problematic, notably around Chauncy School (Park Road and Fanshawe Crescent) and Presdales (Hoe Lane, which is extremely narrow).

POLICY W17: MAXIMISING SAFETY OF ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Proposals for major development on the 'school pick-up/drop-off streets' identified on Figure 8.7 and the Policies Map should demonstrate how pedestrian safety will be maximised and the impacts of queuing cars minimised.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 6; EHDP (2018): TRA2; NPPF: 104, 110, 111

Policy W18: Electric vehicle charging

Purpose

- 8.26 This policy seeks to ensure that adequate provision is made for electric vehicle charging, which will assist in effecting a shift toward less polluting vehicles.

Justification

- 8.27 East Herts District Plan Policy TRA3 (Vehicle Parking Provision) requires residential development to make provision for charging points for low and zero carbon vehicles. However, it is important that this is supplemented by charging points at suitable publicly accessible locations around Ware. This will benefit not only residents but also those visiting the town for leisure and work.
- 8.28 Currently there is only one location in Ware (Asda) that offers publicly accessible charging points (<https://www.zap-map.com/live/>).
- 8.29 Locations within the town centre, at the car parks, key visitor attractions and community facilities are considered good locations for charging points as people can charge their vehicles whilst they are in town. In particular Baldock Street, The Priory grounds, Library Car Park and Tesco Car Park were mentioned as part of the engagement. Provision should be consistent with HCC's emerging Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.

POLICY W18: PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Proposals to provide publicly available vehicle charging points in Ware will be strongly supported.

Such charging facilities should provide parking spaces with future-proofed four hour or faster electric vehicle charging points (or wireless charging facilities) that are reliable and provide open access.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 6; EHDP (2018): TRA3; NPPF: 112

- 8.30 The WNP does not address matters such as parking because these are already addressed by the East Herts District Plan. In particular this requires new development to provide certain levels of off-street car-parking. It is particularly important, if Ware's streets are to be safe for pedestrians and cyclists, that these parking standards are adhered to by new development.

9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy W19: Improving provision of community facilities, including accessible toilet facilities, and promoting shared, flexible spaces

Purpose

- 9.1 This policy supports the upgrading and expansion of community facilities, in particular where this enables the provision of flexible, shared community spaces. It sets out three criteria with which any such proposals should comply. Furthermore, the policy supports the provision of accessible toilet facilities, which are currently unavailable in central Ware.

Justification

- 9.2 The town is fairly well served for community, recreational and sporting facilities. It is also fortunate in having over 150 local groups and societies offering a range of activities and facilities to residents of all ages and varied interests. Whilst some of these have dedicated venues, many rely on identifying spaces that are shared with others. The shared use of spaces can be helpful in that it enables different user groups to access facilities at different times of the day, depending on the demands of the groups hiring. This optimises the use of space. Appendix B contains details of the venues currently available across the town; whilst there are many, there are groups still seeking suitable space, for instance the Guides and the boxing club. The latter is currently renting the hall at Leaside but like all clubs / organisations renting they must put all the equipment away and reassemble it. There is a need for more facilities where equipment can be left out and therefore used more often.
- 9.3 The Priory Play Area, situated in seven-acre grounds within Ware Town centre, provides play equipment for children and an opportunity for relaxation and leisure as part of the visitor experience. It has recently updated with the support of community group fundraising. Equally, there are examples of other existing facilities that need upgrading.



Priory Play Area

- 9.4 Wodson Park is a marvellous sports and community facility and the Southern Malting redevelopment is looking to provide an equivalent venue for the arts. Policy W19 would be supportive of proposals to enable this. Other projects will be able to add to the community facilities in the town. The new library has already secured planning

permission. This includes the provision of accessible toilets, which are unavailable in central Ware. The new library will also be capable of delivering a wider range of community events, activities, and performance spaces as well as traditional library services. In addition, the provision of an arts venue as part of the Southern Maltings redevelopment are potential projects.

- 9.5 Finally, a recurrent problem in the town centre is the lack of available and hospitable toilets for all visitors, with a particular need identified amongst elderly people, disabled people, carers and parents with children. Currently several businesses are signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme, whereby facilities are available for use for free. This includes Tesco, Café Frappe and toilets at The Priory, however the remainder are within public houses, which some users may find less inviting than facilities in public areas. The scheme is also being phased out. Therefore, the provision public toilet facilities, preferably to include a Changing Places (see Appendix C for definition) facility, could address this.

POLICY W19: IMPROVING PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INCLUDING ACCESSIBLE TOILET FACILITIES, AND PROMOTING SHARED, FLEXIBLE SPACES

- A. Proposals that enable the upgrade, diversification, shared and flexible use of community facilities through extension and upgrading of such buildings and sites will be supported subject to the following criteria:**
- i. the proposal must provide safe, easy, and inclusive access for all people regardless of disability, age or gender. This should include access to, into and within the building and its facilities, as well as appropriate car parking and access to public transport provision.**
 - ii. the proposal would not have unacceptable harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
 - iii. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts upon the local road network; and**
 - iv. the proposal would respect the historic importance and integrity of the building as appropriate.**
- B. Proposals which deliver publicly accessible toilet facilities within the town centre, where possible including a Changing Places facility, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, will be strongly supported.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 4; EHDP (2018): CFLR1, CFLR7; NPPF: 92, 93

Policy W20: Allotments and community growing spaces

Purpose

- 9.6 This policy seeks to safeguard existing allotment space and, where possible, encourage new space to be provided.

Justification

- 9.7 Many people wish to grow their own food, which has many benefits, including providing exercise, social contact, reducing food miles and helping to mitigate climate change.
- 9.8 Within the last 20 years the allotment area between Trinity Road, Musley Lane, Musley Hill and Fanhams Road was lost when the Sandeman Gardens development was created. A bit further back, what is now Popis Gardens was also an allotment area. A repeat of this style of development will not be supported.



King George Road allotments (also known as Crosspath Field)

- 9.9 The two remaining allotments in Ware are managed by Ware Town Council. They have been in their current position for many decades and consequently, the soils are rich in minerals and generations of local people have bonded socially. Their loss would be felt and therefore they should be safeguarded against loss to alternative uses. Equally, proposals to move them elsewhere would also not be supported, recognising the long-term soil improvement that would be needed to match the current investment in the existing environment. As such, both allotments are designated as Local Green Spaces, in the context of their social and wildlife value.
- 9.10 The Cowfields / Fireworks Field allotment site is an important local resource but lies outside the Ware town boundary and therefore just outside the official area of the Neighbourhood Plan. It has, however, been stated in the [Approved Masterplanning Framework for the North and East Ware development](#) that it should be retained as green space.
- 9.11 The five-year waiting list (currently closed due to high demand, at July 2021) for an allotment site demonstrates the demand for additional plots. In a densely developed area such as Ware, however, identifying land for new traditional allotments can be difficult.
- 9.12 An alternative solution is community growing spaces which can be designed into new developments, meaning they are close to residents' homes and involve collective growing

by residents that helps to ensure that what is grown is of the right quantity for those residents. They can also help to provide screening from noise and fumes in built up areas, as well as contributing to the street scene.



Examples of community growing spaces

POLICY W20: ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES

- A. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of the following existing allotment spaces will not be supported:**
- i. Widbury Hill allotments (also known as Warehouse Field)**
 - ii. King George Road allotments (also known as Crosspath Field)**
- B. The provision of new community growing spaces of a size appropriate to residential developments and which would have an attractive screening function will be supported where appropriate service access is provided.**

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 2, 4; EHDP (2018): CLFR1, CC1; NPPF: 92, 93

10 IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

10.1. Ware Town Council is the official qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.

10.2. Once the Plan has been 'made', there will be a series of actions that need to be undertaken to ensure that the policies within the WNP are being interpreted and used in the way intended. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan's policies. Finally, any non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified will need to be prioritised for delivery, in partnership with other organisations.

10.3. Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:

- Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy-based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the Plan - these are set out in Section 12, divided into priorities towards which developer contributions may be directed and broader, community projects, which have been collated throughout the process, but which sit beyond planning policy. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects and there will be a need for a coordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to understand the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as the Big Lottery Fund.
- Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area - the Town Council has a role in ensuring that the WNP policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the neighbourhood area. A meeting between local councillors, planning committee members and the supporting planning officers at EHDC would be a useful step in ensuring that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties. This will assist in ensuring that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.
- Monitoring the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications - there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which this is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Town Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which Neighbourhood Plan policies have informed the Town Council response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Maintaining a dialogue with East Herts District Council regarding the timing and content of any future District Plan - it will be important to consider the policies in any

emerging document and how these may impact the WNP policies. The adoption of a new District Plan may trigger a light-touch review of the WNP.

- Maintaining a dialogue with East Herts District Council and the promoter / developers of the North and East Ware development.
- Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape - changes at the national level may impact on the policies contained in the Local Plan and also the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as this could also provide a trigger to undertake a light-touch review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary projects.
- Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the plan implementation - ensuring that all records of how the plan has been used should be made public. It is also recommended that a regular update - for instance at the Annual Town Meeting - is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursuing of the projects.
- Considering gaps in the Neighbourhood Plan - local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the Plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

10.4. Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be because of any of the points noted above. A light-touch review will enable the Town Council to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. In this context, it could consider a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the new Local Plan. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

10.5. The Town Council will consider how best to progress these actions.

11 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

11.1 The Town Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of their powers under national legislation and planning guidance.

11.2 There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

- A section 106 agreement is a mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 whereby contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of new development taking place.
- A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), if adopted by EHDC, would be a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site, and levied by the District Council. Different charge rates would apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community would benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from the neighbourhood area.

11.3 Table 11.1 provides details of the projects identified during the WNP process, which are supported by the Town Council alongside its wider programme of activities and towards which any developer contributions should be made. The Town Council intends to regularly review its spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Town Council website and in relevant literature.

Table 11.1: Projects identified during the WNP process

Project ID	NP Chapter	Topic Area	Scale	Project
1.1	Character, Heritage and Design	Interpretation boards	Medium	Improved signage, including places of interest
1.2	Character, Heritage and Design	Street furniture	Medium	Reducing street clutter
1.3	Character, Heritage and Design	'Gateways' into the town	Medium	Enhance the visual impact of entry points into the town and conservation area
2.1	Economic development and Town centre	Unsightly waste bins	Medium	Provision of bin storage
2.2	Economic development and Town centre	Access to banking facilities	High	Shared space community hub to house vital community services such as community banking facilities, CAB, Food Bank etc.
3.1	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Resurfacing of the towpath
3.2	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Repairs to the footbridge at Tumbling Bay
3.3	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Improvements to existing cycleways
3.4	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Development of through cycle route from North Ware to town centre (CC1), including off-road section along Upper Bourne and construction of new link path through to The Bourne / Collett Road
3.5	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Improvement to Poles Lane (CC6) to create marked cycle and pedestrian paths
3.6	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	New cycle route (CC5) from Burgage Lane bridge along upgraded towpath and new path to join CC3 west of Broadmeads
3.7	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	New cycle route across Tumbling Bay (CC4) with improved path and bridging facilities at north-western end (Tumbling Bay Weir to Star Street) and ramps on Crane Mead bridge
3.8	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	New cycle path (CC7) from Presdales School to Rush Green roundabout and safer crossing points at the roundabout

Project ID	NP Chapter	Topic Area	Scale	Project
3.9	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Improved signposting on cycle routes throughout Ware, including on-road cycle routes such as CC2.
3.10	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Electric car charging points in the town centre car parks
3.11	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Electric vehicle charging points for flats and shared car parks
3.12	Transport and Movement	Improved access	High	Improved lighting
4.1	Community Facilities	Improved provision	High	Portacabin with electricity and water facilities in King George playing field
4.2	Community Facilities	Improved provision	High	Repairs to the roof at Wodson Park
4.3	Community Facilities	Improved provision	High	Workshop type facility for 'Men in Sheds' project
4.4	Community Facilities	Improved provision	High	Provision of an arts venue as part of the Southern Malting redevelopment
5.1	Green Infrastructure	Enhancement	Medium	Plant a community orchard
5.2	Green Infrastructure	Enhancement	High	Improvements to Gilpins Field

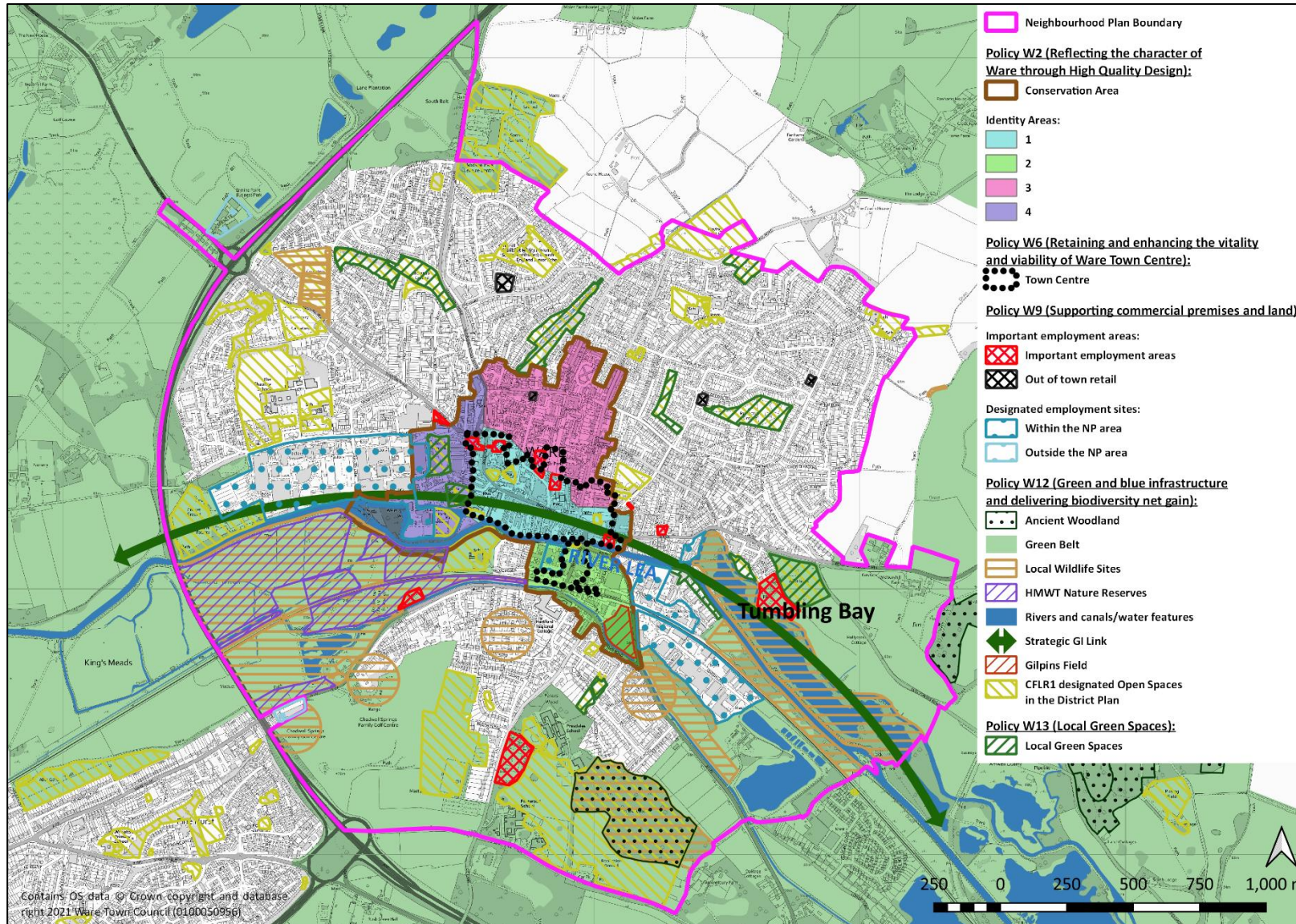
12 NON POLICY ACTIONS

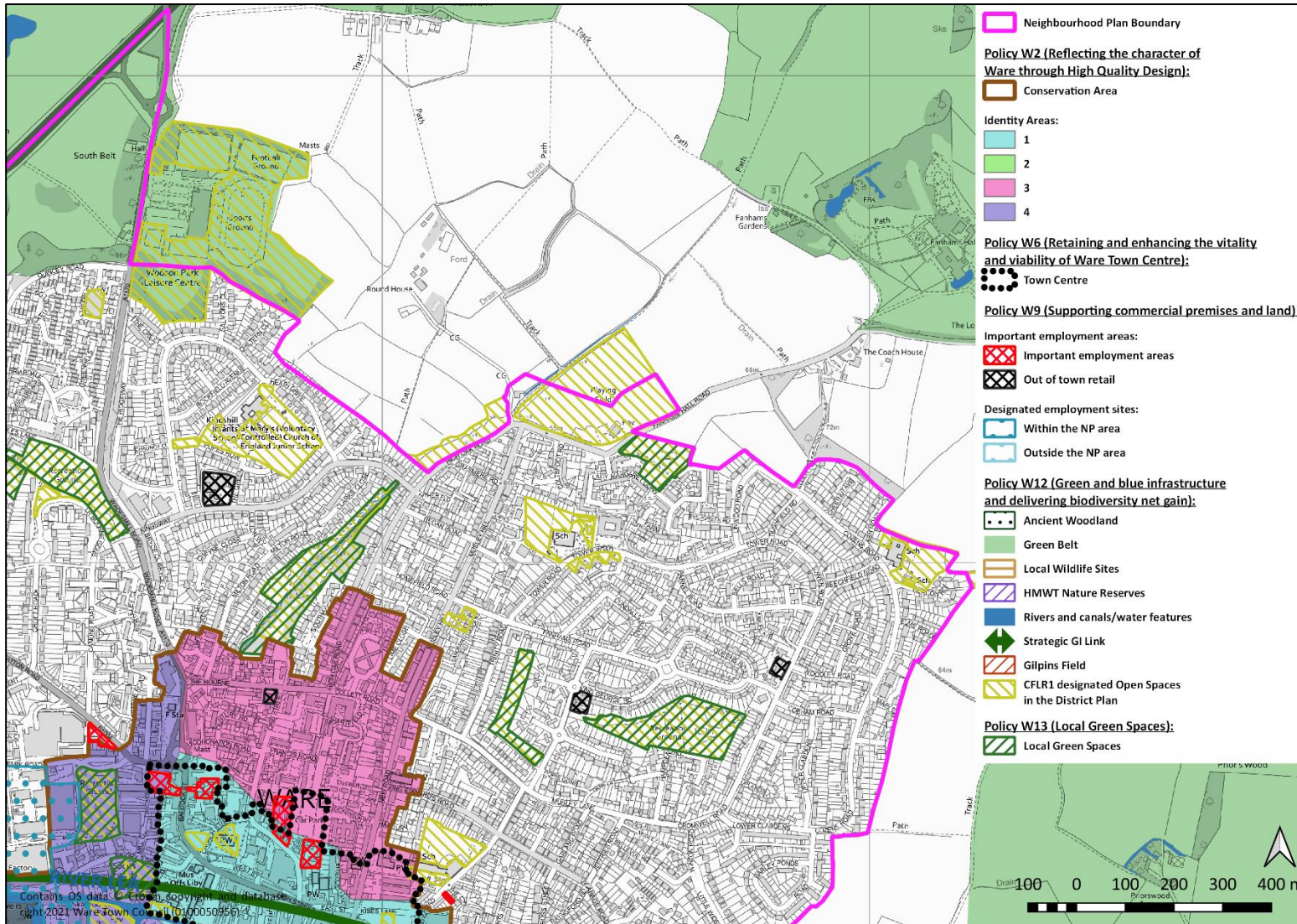
Ref.	Issue	Possible Actions	Key partners involved
1.	Understanding Ware's local housing needs	Consider undertaking semi-regular assessment of local housing needs to inform future housing policy.	WTC, EHDC
2.	Shopfront signage should adhere to guidelines	Monitor the use of signage to identify where guidelines are not being followed and to follow this up with EHDC and the owners	WTC, EHDC, The Ware Society, private owners
3.	Celebrating local history and heritage	Install additional interpretation boards at locations in the town, including: along the High Street's north pavement, near to the surviving maltings, and by the Baldock roundabout (concerning the removal of Ware Hall House to Wells-next-the-Sea)	WTC, The Ware Society
4.	Supporting a 21 st century town centre	Prepare a town centre strategy to set out projects that will improve the vitality and viability of the centre. As part of this, provide a baseline of performance data against which the relative success of projects can be measured.	WTC, local businesses
5.	Supporting the local economy	Undertake a regular review of the town centre economic performance, for instance through a Town centre health check	WTC, local businesses
6.	Seek solutions to unsightly bins in public areas	Explore daily night-time collections to reduce amount of litter. Consider introducing waste containers that blend into the surroundings.	WTC, HCC, businesses
7.	Understanding the visitor economy	Review the contribution of tourism to the local economy.	WTC, Visit Herts, local businesses
8.	Biodiversity enhancements	Consider locations and projects for improvements, including tree planting, encouraging greater access (where this can be achieved sustainably).	Wildlife Trust, landowners
9.	Improve the A10 / A1170 Ware North junction	Lengthening the current short slip roads; the need is further increased by the construction and residential traffic for the Ware North and East development.	HCC, National Highways, EHDC, North and East Ware developers/promoters
10.	Speeding traffic	Confirm the current 20mph speed limit along the High Street and extend it to selected other roads in the town, particularly main walking / cycling routes.	WTC, EHDC, HCC

11.	Improving the High Street for all users	Investigate ways to make the High Street a 'shared space' and more pedestrian-friendly (noting however that the one-way systems introduced during the pandemic were disruptive and diverted traffic on to residential roads).	WTC, HCC, EHDC, local businesses
12.	Improvements to the towpath	Consider surfacing improvements and bank reinforcement.	WTC, CRT
13.	HGVs along the High Street and other residential areas of the town	<p>Ban HGVs from the High Street between the Baldock Street roundabout and the Star Street roundabout, except for access.</p> <p>Ban lorries from loading and unloading in the High Street during peak work and school travel hours.</p> <p>Downgrade the A1170 through Ware to a 'B' road to discourage drivers and satnavs from using it as a through route, particularly for HGVs.</p>	HCC
14.	Easing traffic flow	Consider whether improvements are needed to the A414 / A1170 / B1502 roundabout south of Ware (e.g. traffic lights) to cover current and future traffic flows.	HCC
15.	Community Rail	Support and encourage the Community Rail Partnership initiative for the New River Line (Broxbourne-Rye House, St Margarets, Ware-Hertford East)	WTC, Rail companies, HCC
16.	Roll out of the Hertfordshire and Essex Rapid Transit	Engage with the long-term plans for a HERT (Hertfordshire and Essex Rapid Transit) mass transit system, ensuring that this includes routes that serve the whole of the town, rather than simply running along the A119 at the southern boundary as with most present bus services.	WTC, HCC
17.	Improvements to bus services	Improve the speed, frequency and reliability of bus services particularly on inter-urban routes such as to Stevenage and	HCC, private operators, LYNX trial operators

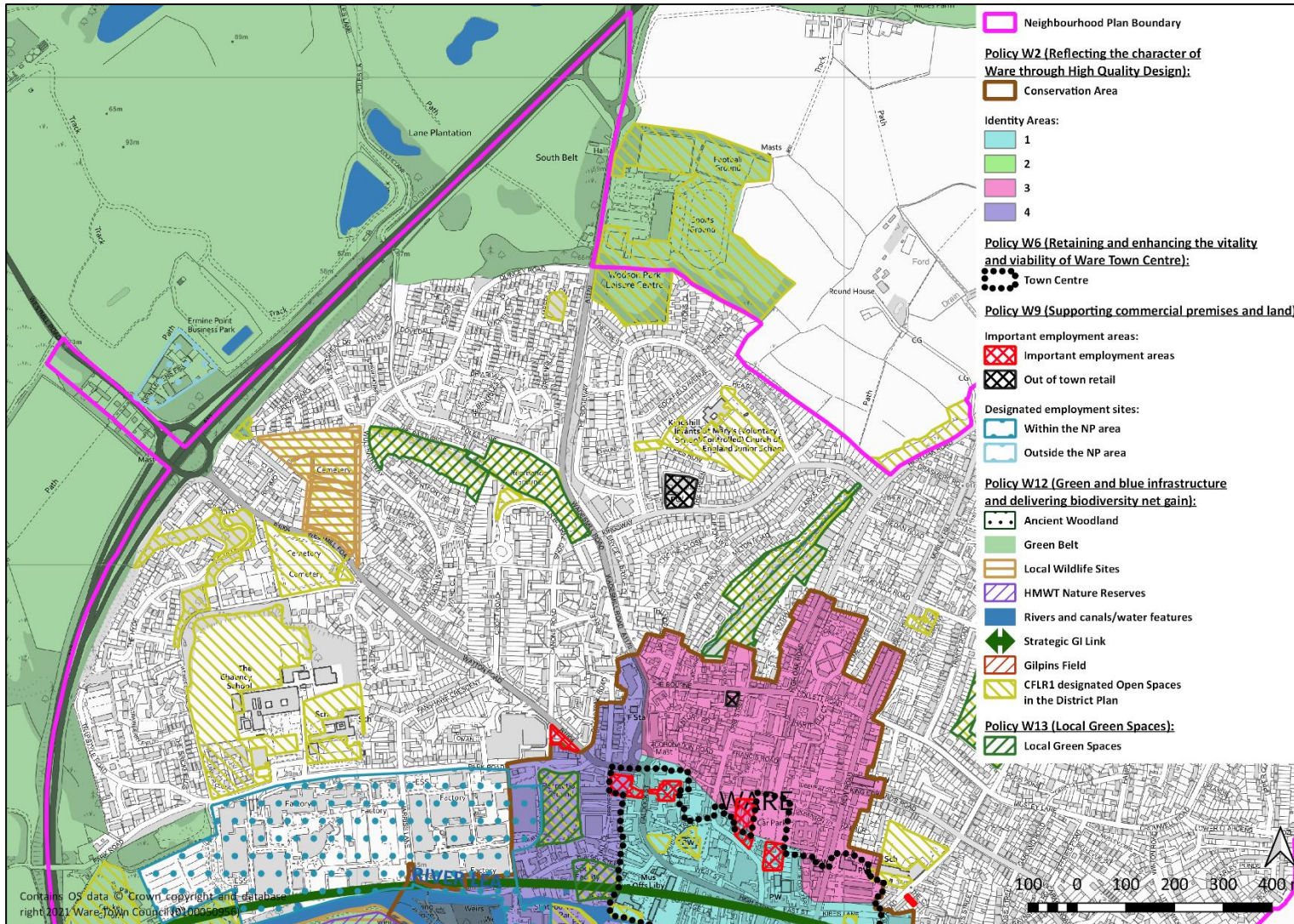
		<p>Harlow, as current service levels from the majority of the town do not present a practicable alternative to the private car.</p> <p>Evaluate whether the HertsLynx journey-on-demand system currently under trial in North Hertfordshire could provide a convenient and cost-effective public transport alternative, within Ware as well as outlying villages.</p> <p>Consider whether rapid commuter buses from Buntingford, Puckeridge / Standon and North Ware to Broxbourne railway station would provide an attractive alternative that discourages people from parking in Ware residential streets and travelling from Ware.</p>	
18.	Walking and cycling infrastructure plan	Explore, with partners, the potential to develop a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan for the town.	WTC, EHDC, HCC, Sustrans

13 POLICIES MAPS

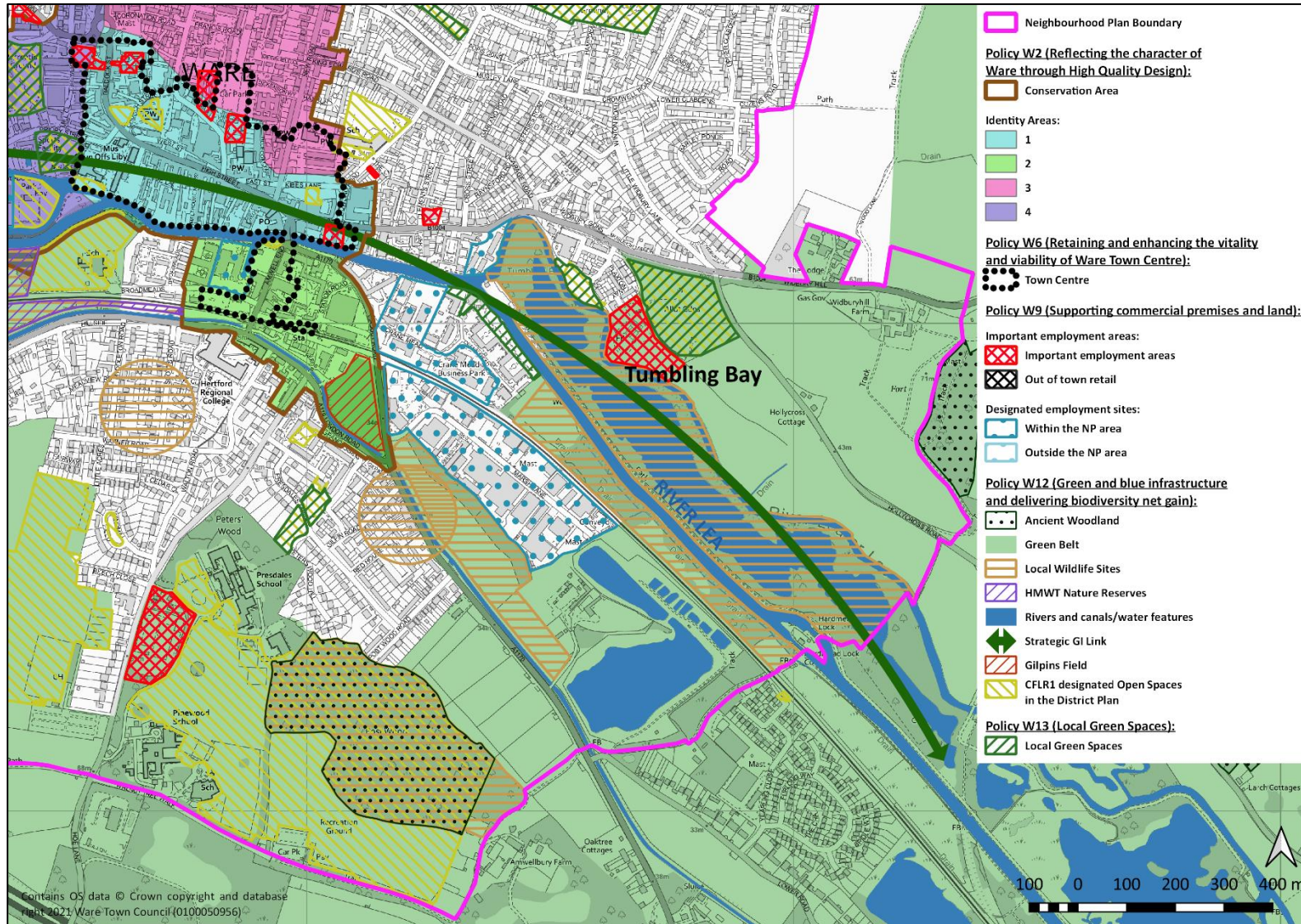




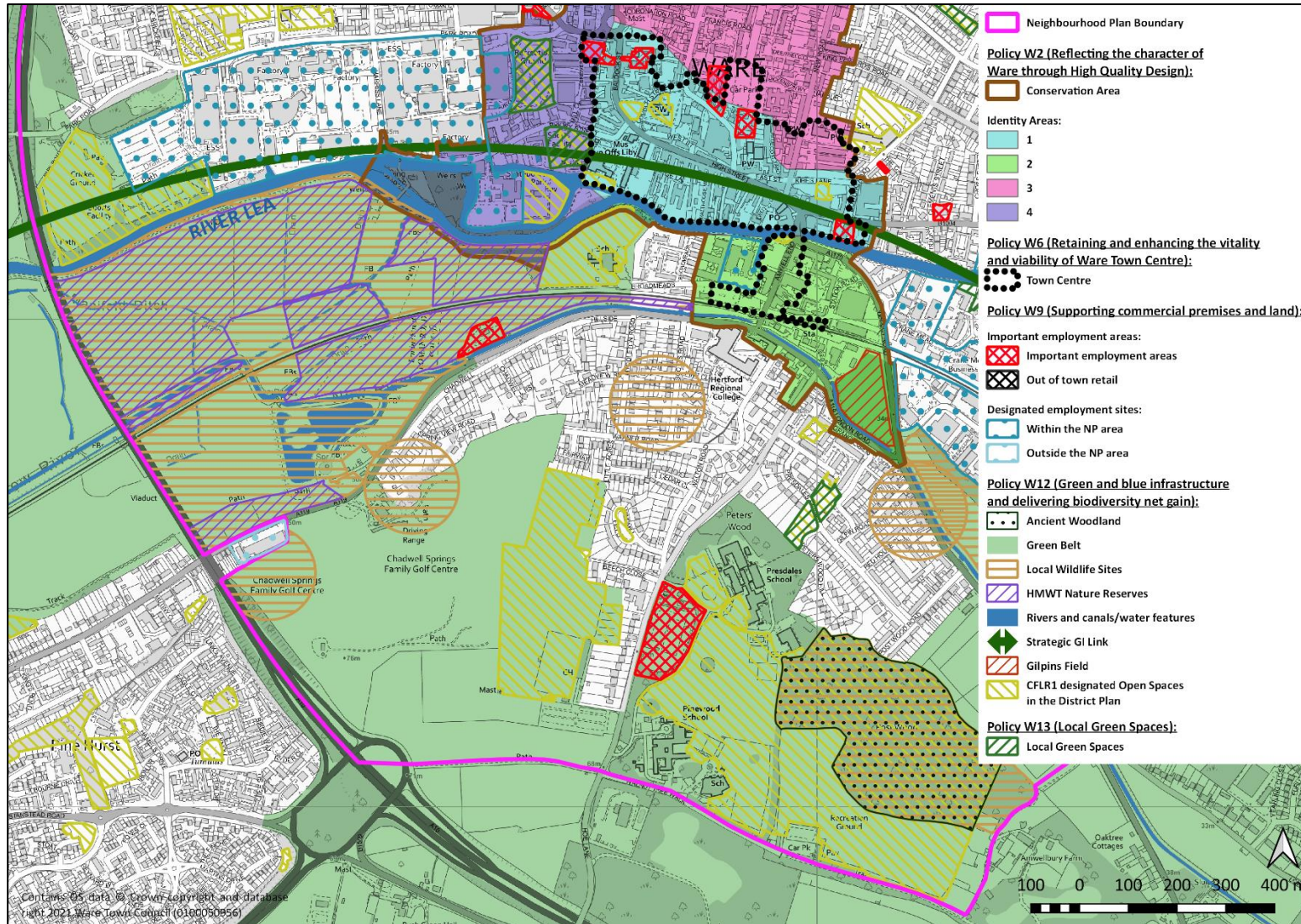
Policies Map (North-East part of the neighbourhood area)



Policies Map (North-West part of the neighbourhood area)



Policies Map (South-East part of the neighbourhood area)



Policies Map (South-West part of the neighbourhood area)

14 GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
- **Ancient or veteran tree / tree of arboricultural value:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Change of Use:** A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a 'use class'.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and would be set, once adopted, by EHDC.
- **Conservation area:** an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
- **Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation
- **Disability:** There is no single definition for 'disability'. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- **District Plan:** The adopted District Plan 20182 sets out the planning framework for the District for the period of 2011-2033 and will deliver sustainable development. The plan will aim to provide new homes, new jobs, new facilities and infrastructure across the District. It also contains Development Management policies that will be used to determine planning applications.
- **Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Hertfordshire County Council:** The county-wide authority has responsibility for strategic matters including waste and minerals planning, public rights of way / roads, education, and libraries.
- **Local housing need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.
- **Local Plan:** Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure - as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding

² <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/east-herts-district-plan-2018>

decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any Neighbourhood Development Plans that have been made) are the starting-point for considering whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to put an up to date Local Plan in place to positively guide development decisions.

- **Major Development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Nature Recovery Network:** An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.
- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
- **Permitted development:** Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Most houses have permitted development rights, but flats and maisonettes do not, so planning permission is required. A further example is the conversion of many offices, for instance to flats, without the need for planning permission.
- **Pop-up shop:** A pop-up shop is a short-term, temporary retail space where brands—usually ones without a physical presence—can interact in person with current customers and communicate their message to potential new ones. It can also accommodate seasonal businesses.
- **Previously developed land / brownfield land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
- **Retail Frontage:** A street frontage containing retail shops and services. Primary Retail Frontage is found in the town / village centre and includes a high proportion of retail uses. Secondary Retail Frontage contains a greater diversity of uses and may also be found outside of the town centre.
- **Section 106 agreement:** A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 whereby contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of new development taking place.
- **Settlement Boundaries:** These identify the areas of primarily built form, rather than countryside.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to

policies contained in a Development Plan Document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.

- **Use Classes Order:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005, 2013 and 2020) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

15 LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

All links are correct at 10 January 2022. Evidence documents are also available on the Ware Neighbourhood Plan website: <https://www.wareneighbourhoodplan.com/>

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
AddressPollution.org	Imperial College London	2021
A History of Place House Ware	Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust	2008
A New History of Ware its people and its buildings	David Perman	2010
A Walk Through Ware	The Ware Society	2008
Affinity Water warns of water shortages unless government acts now	Affinity Water	2019
Ancient tree guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest?	Woodland Trust	2008
At the Sign of the Plough	Geoffrey Tweedale	1990
Audit of Ware Signage	Ware Society	2021
Available commercial properties in Ware	Ware Town Council	2021
Biodiversity metric	Defra	2021
Britain's Visitor Economy stats	VisitBritain	2013
Census	Office for National Statistics	2011
Climate Change Act 2008	HM Government	2008
Cycling Routes in Ware	WNP Steering Group	2021
East Herts District Plan 2018	EHDC	2018
East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan - Final Report	Land Use Consultants	2011
East Herts Retail and Town centres Study Update	Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd	2013
East Herts Retail Frontages: Design & Signage SPD	EHDC	2019
Economic Impact of Tourism - Ware 2004	East of England Tourist Board	2004
Environment Act 2021	HM Government	2021
Franciscan Architecture in England. (pp. 137-142)	A.R. Martin	1937
The Future of Town and Cities post Covid-19	KPMG	2021
Heritage at Risk Register	Historic England	ongoing
Hertfordshire County Council's Electric Charging Strategy	HCC	2022
Herts Insight	HCC	ongoing
Historic Environment Record	Historic England in partnership with ALGAO and IHBC	ongoing
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)	Housing LIN	2012
Housing Standards Review	HM Government	2012 (and amended)
How covid-19 'killed' the high street bank	Rural Services Network	2021

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Land North and East of Ware. A sustainable urban extension. Masterplanning Framework Document	EHDC	2019
Localism Act 2011	HM Government	2011
The Malthouses of Ware	David Perman	2017
Minerals Local Plan	HCC	2007
More than half of older people 'would consider living in bungalows', Inside Housing	Gavriel Hollander	2018
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Historic England	ongoing
National Planning Policy Framework (amended July 2021)	HM Government	Amended 2021
Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)	HM Government	2012
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	HM Government	2004
Tourist businesses worth billions may close because they are excluded from tourism and leisure rate relief scheme	Coach Tourism Association	2020
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	HM Government	1990
Urban Air Quality	Woodland Trust	2012
Use Classes	Planning Portal	2021
Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development	EHDC	2008
Ware and Hertford. The Story of Two Towns From Birth to Middle Age	Robert Kiln, & Clive Partridge	1995
Ware Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	EHDC	2016
Waste Local Plan	Hertfordshire County Council	adopted November 2012/ July 2014
Zap Map , showing publicly available electric vehicle charging points	Zap-Map	2022

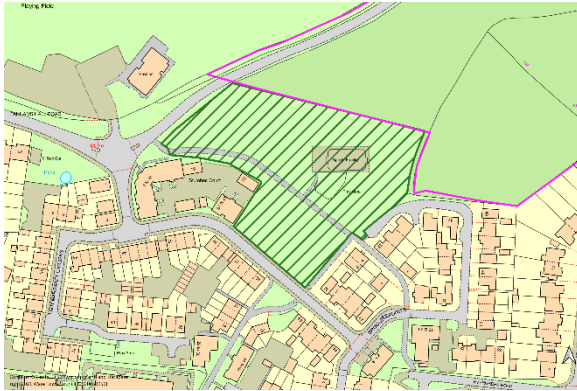
APPENDIX A LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Details of how the 11 spaces designated as Local Green Space meet the criteria is provided below.

1. Lady Margaret Gardens (playground area and open space)

This green space is located to the north-east of Ware, bounded by Fanhams Hall Road, Lady Margaret Gardens, Brocket Meadows and the hedgerows on to open fields that may become part of Ware N&E development. It contains a small coppice, open grass, newly planted trees and junior & senior playgrounds.

LGS1 - Lady Margaret Gardens



The space is owned and managed by Hertfordshire County Council. Management-wise, some of the area is badly drained. The north-west exit needs a short stretch of pavement by the Fanhams Hall Road.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is located adjacent to housing and will also be located near to the Ware N&E development, providing a green space for those future residents.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: This area provides an informal recreational space for dog-walkers, children, and young people. It houses a children's playground as well as playing field space.

Wildlife: It also represents a green buffer / wildlife corridor between the existing housing development and future Ware N&E development.

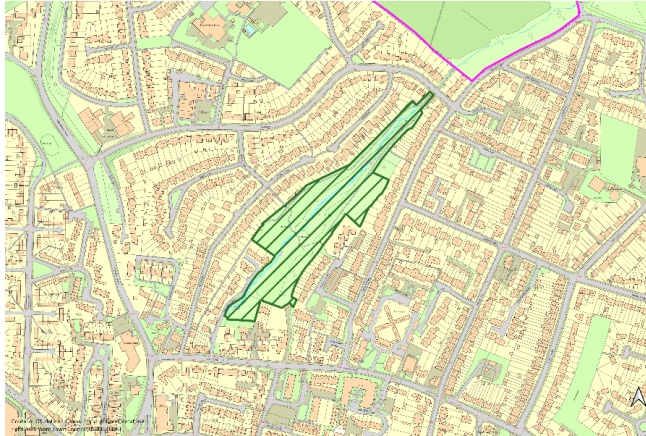
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

2. The Bourne

The Bourne is a linear park following the path of the Bourne (stream) from Kingsway to Orchard Close. The boundary is Kingsway, High Oak Road, Southall Close, Bourne Close, Orchard Close, Milton Road, Clarks Close.

LGS2 - The Bourne



It is owned and managed by East Herts District Council.

The Bourne could provide a good off-road route for cyclists, however, none of the entrances are good for cycles or very accessible. Several possible routes to enhance this would run through private grounds or private roads. The paths have been enhanced recently but can still be muddy in winter.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is surrounded by housing and as such is very accessible and well-used. There are entrances at Kingsway, steps at Southall Close, Clifton Way and a narrow footpath off Milton Road.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: There is a children’s playground, a jungle gym, and an informal football pitch - popular with children and teenagers. The park is used extensively for walking (including dog-walking), and other informal recreation.

Wildlife: The whole area is an important wildlife sanctuary in the middle of town, which is otherwise urban in nature. There are numerous mature trees on site.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

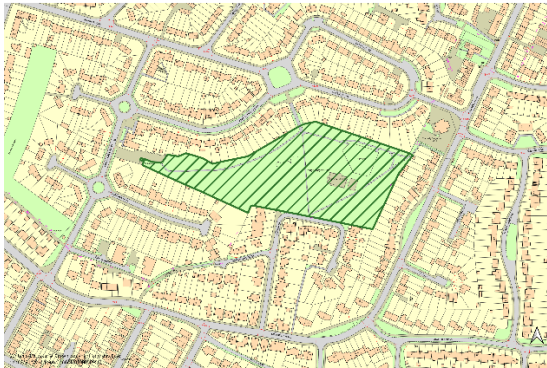
The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

3. King George V Playing Fields (King George Fields)

This is a recreation ground located in the heart of Ware. It is one of the largest public open green spaces within the Town and lies between King George Road, Queens Road, Cromwell Road and Hampden Hill. There is a large field for informal recreation as well as playgrounds and equipment including swings, a balance beam, trampoline and stepping boulders.

The field is listed as a Field in Trust, for its historic significance as a ‘King George Field’, a public open space dedicated to the memory of King George V.

LG53 - King George Fields



The site is owned and managed by East Hert District Council. Management-wise, the N, W and S entrances have large kissing gates which are not ideal for cyclists or accessibility. The NE entrance is unpaved, narrow and can be muddy.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

It sits very close to the King George housing estate, surrounded by housing and as such is very accessible and well-used. There are four entrances: N, NE, S and W.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: As well as the wide-open recreational space, the site contains two playgrounds and exercise equipment.

Historic: This is a King George V field.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

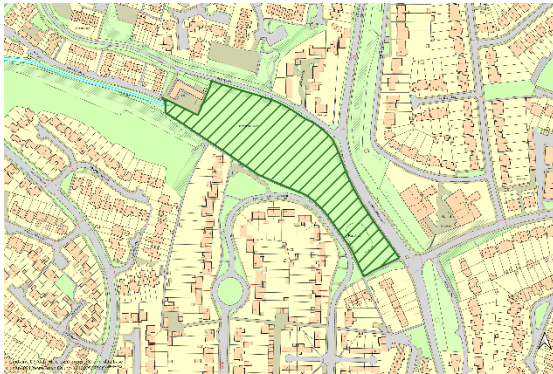
The space (2.27 ha) is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

4. Lower Bourne Gardens

Lower Bourne Gardens park sits between the A1170, Lower Bourne Gardens, Poles Lane and the end of The Pastures. The Pastures park (designated as LGS5) is connected from the Lower Bourne Gardens via a stairway and runs through to Wulfrath Way. The northern edge is also bounded by The Pastures and a footpath and the Bourne.

Lower Bourne Gardens park has a children’s playground, cycle path from Kingsway, informal football field and scout huts. The hedge at the northern edge is an important nature highway along Poles Lane. It sits close to the Bourne Gardens and Ridgeway Estates.

LGS4 - Lower Bourne Gardens



The site is owned and managed by East Hert District Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is surrounded by housing and as such is very accessible and well-used.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The park is used extensively for dog-walking, recreation including outdoor gyms and fitness and the children’s playground. It is used by organised groups, for instance the scouts, for recreational activities.

Wildlife: The hedge at the northern edge is an important nature highway along Poles Lane. It sits close to the Bourne Gardens and Ridgeway Estates.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

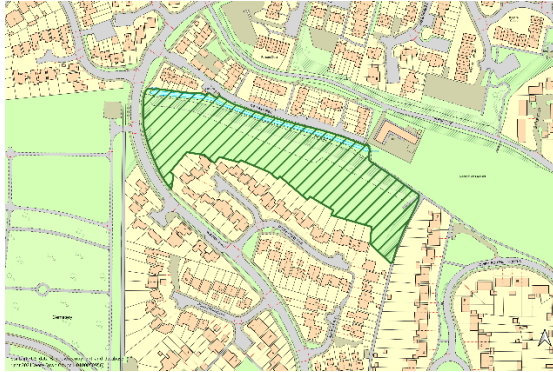
The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

5. The Pastures

The Pastures park is an open grassed area with an important nature highway along its northern edge. There are no specific ‘built’ facilities, but it is widely used for general informal recreation,

such as ball-games, walking and picnics.

LGSS - The Pastures



The site is owned and managed by East Hert District Council. The footpath along The Bourne can get overgrown and needs yearly maintenance. The surface is rough and muddy. The steep banked corner of the open space at Quincey Rd could be enhanced with some steps.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is surrounded by housing and as such is very accessible and well-used.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The space is well-used by the local community for a variety of informal recreation activities.

Wildlife: The Pastures park is an open grassed area with an important nature highway along its northern edge.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

6. Priory Playgrounds

Priory Playground park is located centrally between The Priory and the Lido.

It houses a children’s playground, a skateboard area, courts, and outdoor gym equipment. Being in the centre of town and close to Asda and a play-centre, they get extensive recreational use.



The site is owned and managed by Ware Town Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is located in the centre of Ware, close to housing and local facilities. As such it is very accessible and well-used.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The entire site is very well-used by a range of age groups for both informal recreation and using the facilities on offer.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

7. Presdales Drive Playground (and Land)

This is the only children’s playground in the southern part of Ware. It lies between Grange Gardens and Presdales Drive. It sits in the middle of the Gilpin Estate. The space consists of two parts: the first is ‘Presdales Drive Playground’, which is north of Presdales Drive and bounded by Grange Gardens, while the second part lies south of Presdales Drive, bounded by Peters Wood Hill.



The site is owned and managed by East Hertfordshire District Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is located within the Gilpin Estate and is well-used by the community here.

Demonstrably special to the local community

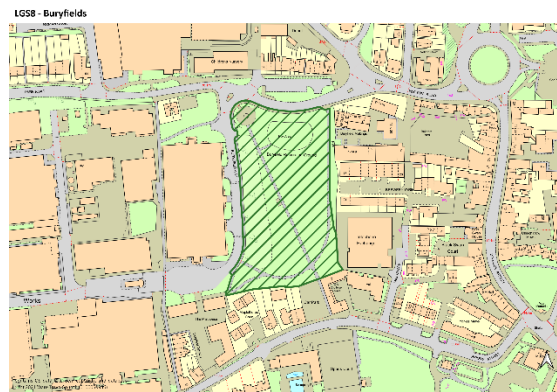
Recreation: The playground is popular among local children.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

8. Buryfields

Buryfields Green is located next to the Glaxo works and between Park Road and Priory Street. It is an area of open space laid to grass with trees and planting. There is an outdoor playground here for children.



The site is owned and managed by East Herts District Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space is located in the centre of town and well-used by a cross-section of the community.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The playground is popular among local children. The open space surrounding it provides an important resource for a variety of informal recreational activity.

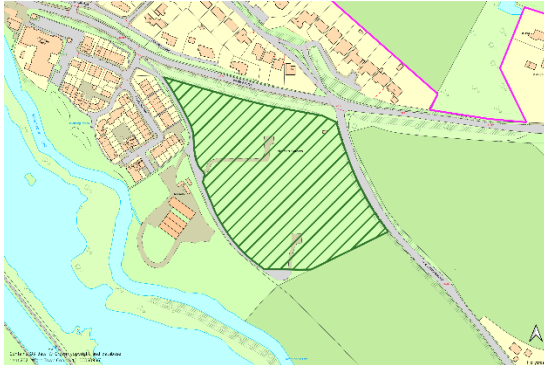
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

9. Widbury Hill Allotments (also known as Warehouse Field)

The allotments have been in this location for many decades and are extremely well-used, to the extent that there is a five year waiting list for sites.

LG59 - Widbury Hill Allotments



The site is owned and managed by Ware Town Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

There are two main entry points to the allotments, which are located within an otherwise urban area. A car parking area is located to the north-east of the site, at the Widbury Hill / Hollycross Road junction. There is an unpaved lane to the south-west from Widbury Hill and Plaxton Way.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The allotment has been in this location for many decades and is a well-used area for local people wishing to grow their own food. As such, it has social and health (including mental health) benefits.

Wildlife: Its rich soils have been developed over this time and the range of planting also attracts a variety of wildlife. This is considered important as an oasis within the built-up town.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

10. Plaxton Way

The area between Plaxton Way and the Old River Lea is a community space provided as part of the planning permission requirements for the Plaxton Way development. It includes a path to a new footbridge provided via Sec 106. The footbridge is an important link to the Tumbling Way nature area.

There are two Sustainable Urban Drainage areas with shallow depressions to provide some water management and flood relief.



The site is owned by Taylor Wimpey. The area could be enhanced with some park furniture. The path is accessible and wheelchair friendly on the lake side but the link to the road and pavements is a little awkward.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space was provided when the neighbouring housing was built. As well as this housing estate, the space is also located next to the Riverside Place care home.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The space is used for informal recreation by local residents. It was provided for this very purpose when the housing was built and therefore it is considered that it should remain an open space.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

11. King George Road Allotments (also known as Crosspath Field)

The allotments have been in this location for many decades and are extremely well-used, to the extent that there is a five year waiting list for sites.



The site is owned and managed by Ware Town Council.

There are no site allocations or planning permissions pending on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The site is surrounded by housing in a built-up part of the town. This area has two points of access: a driveway off King George Road opposite Popis gardens; and a gate at the end of the north-west cul-de-sac off King George Road.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Recreation: The allotment has been in this location for many decades and is a well-used area for local people wishing to grow their own food. As such, it has social and health (including mental health) benefits.

Wildlife: Its rich soils have been developed over this time and the range of planting also attracts a variety of wildlife. This is considered important as an oasis within the built-up town.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

12. Land between Crane Mead houses and River Lee Navigation

This is an area of grassland, trees and gardens between the north-eastern frontages of housing in Crane Mead and the Lee Navigation, including the open green space between Loxley Court and the river. A footpath runs along the west side of the latter space. A further footpath runs between the towpath and the Crane Mead houses. The overall space is bounded on the north-eastern side by the river towpath and on the south-western side by the line of the frontages of the houses and flats. The west end is the boundary between Loxley Court car park and the Mill Studio Business Centre, and the east end is the boundary between Crane Mead and the riverside meadow to the south, the latter being designated green belt land.

Most of this area is privately owned and used by the inhabitants of the houses; however, it is not fenced and makes a vital contribution to the open vista along the Lea Valley between the Town

Bridge and Hardmead Lock. The housing in Crane Mead and Loxley Court has been carefully set back from the river in a continuous line to create and maintain this vista.

The green space also blends with the gardens of the housing in Crane Mead and the open area east of Loxley Court.



The site is in multiple ownership.

A planning application was submitted to East Herts District Council (3/22/0181/FUL) to build a three-storey block of flats on the land east of Loxley Court, which would impinge on this space, inhibit the views and break up the continuous line of the building frontages. The application was withdrawn in April 2022.

National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space criteria

Close to the community

The space borders directly on housing to the south-west and the Lee Navigation towpath to the north-east, which is extensively used by pedestrians and also carries Sustrans Route 61. The footpath from Crane Mead / Loxley Court to the river also crosses it.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Beauty: The green space with grassland, low hedging and small trees and shrubs is essential to maintain the uninterrupted view along the Lea Valley and the character of the river corridor. Any development or building in this area would seriously damage these aspects, especially if it was of significant height.

Recreation: The gardens are used by residents of the houses and flats in Crane Mead and Loxley Court and the paths are also used by other residents of the town.

Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

The space is closely delineated, with a length of about 300 metres and a width varying from 10 to 30 metres.

How the spaces were determined:

In order to determine the spaces to designate as Local Green Space, an initial list of green spaces was taken from the EHDC District Plan Open Spaces (2018) policy map. There are approximately 50 of these open spaces within Ware.

The spaces were categorised into different types, in order to assess them further:

Green Belt: Green Belt defined in the 2018 District Plan is secure for the life of the plan. The following sites are within Green Belt:

1. Wodson Park complex (just beyond neighbourhood plan boundary)
2. Wood between A10, Greyfriars and Richmond Close
3. Glaxo Playing Fields
4. Sacred Heart Primary School spaces
5. Widbury Allotments
6. Football Field W of Beech Cl, SW of Little Acres, S of Fairway
7. Presdales School spaces
8. Post Wood
9. Post Wood playing fields
10. Gilpin Field, Viaduct Road Triangle
11. Post Wood Fields. Between Post Wood and A1170
12. New River Fields. Between A1170, New River and Marsh Lane.
13. Kings Meads East. Between Sacred Heart School, Ware Lock and railway footpath crossing
14. Kings Meads West. Between A10 Viaduct and railway footpath crossing.
15. Nun's Triangle, Old Hanbury Manor parkland opp Wodson.
16. Beyond Crane Mead between Lee Navigation and railway, opp Tumbling Bay
17. Tumbling Bay between Lee Navigation and Old River Lea
18. Fields between Old River Lea and Hollycross Rd, beyond allotments
19. Fields between Widbury Hill Farm and Hollycross Road
20. Trapstyle Woods, between Trapstyle Road and the A10

Whilst Widbury Allotments (5) are located within Green Belt, they are considered to be particularly valued for both their recreational and biodiversity value. Therefore, these have been designated as a local green space.

Schools: In the last 5 years, Chauncy has converted unused playing ground into a housing development. In the last 30 years, Trinity School was completely replaced with a care home and a housing development. It cannot therefore be assumed that school grounds are protected from

development or, if developed, that they would be retained as open space. That said, caution should also be taken when considering applying additional designations that could, for instance, restrict or hinder an extension or reconfiguration of the school.

Priors Wood school is scheduled for expansion as part of Ware N&E. New provision is to meet new planned development and not to absorb any of the existing schools.

1. St Marys Junior School
2. Priors Wood School. Due for expansion as part of Ware NE
3. Larkspur Primary Academy
4. Fives Court Nursery. The Sandeman development put this at risk. It survived and was refurbished, but if it doesn't look viable it could easily be lost again.
5. Chauncy School
6. St Catherine's School
7. Christ Church School

Religious or Memorial: These are not considered to require additional protection:

1. Ware Cemetery North
2. Ware Cemetery South
3. War Memorial Park
4. St Mary Churchyard
5. Quaker Graveyard (the burial ground), Kibes Lane
6. Christ Church Buildings

Low Risk of Development: These sites are mostly small patches of ground that are unsuitable for designation as Local Green Space. Some of them are already protected as they are part of Ware Town Council grounds:

1. Amberley Green, off Quincey Rd.
2. Area in front of the housing blocks Between 68 Tower Road and Tower Road
3. The Pastures fields (it is also covered by a CFLR1 designation in the District Plan and therefore has protection from inappropriate development)
4. Rough Ground below Church Field and The Hyde
5. Rough Ground between The Hyde and Wengeo lane
6. Priory Gardens
7. Priory Bowling green
8. Amwell End, River Lee corner
9. Windmill Field
10. Beacon Road Garden

High Risk of Development: These are considered to be at higher risk of loss as a result of development, due to recent development on very similar-sized areas. However they are unsuitable for LGS protection as they are not considered to meet the criteria for being demonstrably special:

1. Green Between Pope Row and Heath Drive
2. King George Rd Allotments (this space is covered by a CFLR1 designation in the District Plan and therefore has protection from inappropriate development)
3. Presdales Court Green

4. The two Greens by 3 Presdales Drive
5. Peters Wood Hill Green

Unclassified: The privately owned Ware Youth FC grounds is located partially in Ware Town and Wareside council areas. As such it is partially outside the Ware Neighbourhood Plan area and also the Ware N&E development area. Ware Youth grounds are owned by HCC (as previously detailed) and this land is also covered by a CFLR1 designation in the District Plan and therefore has protection from inappropriate development

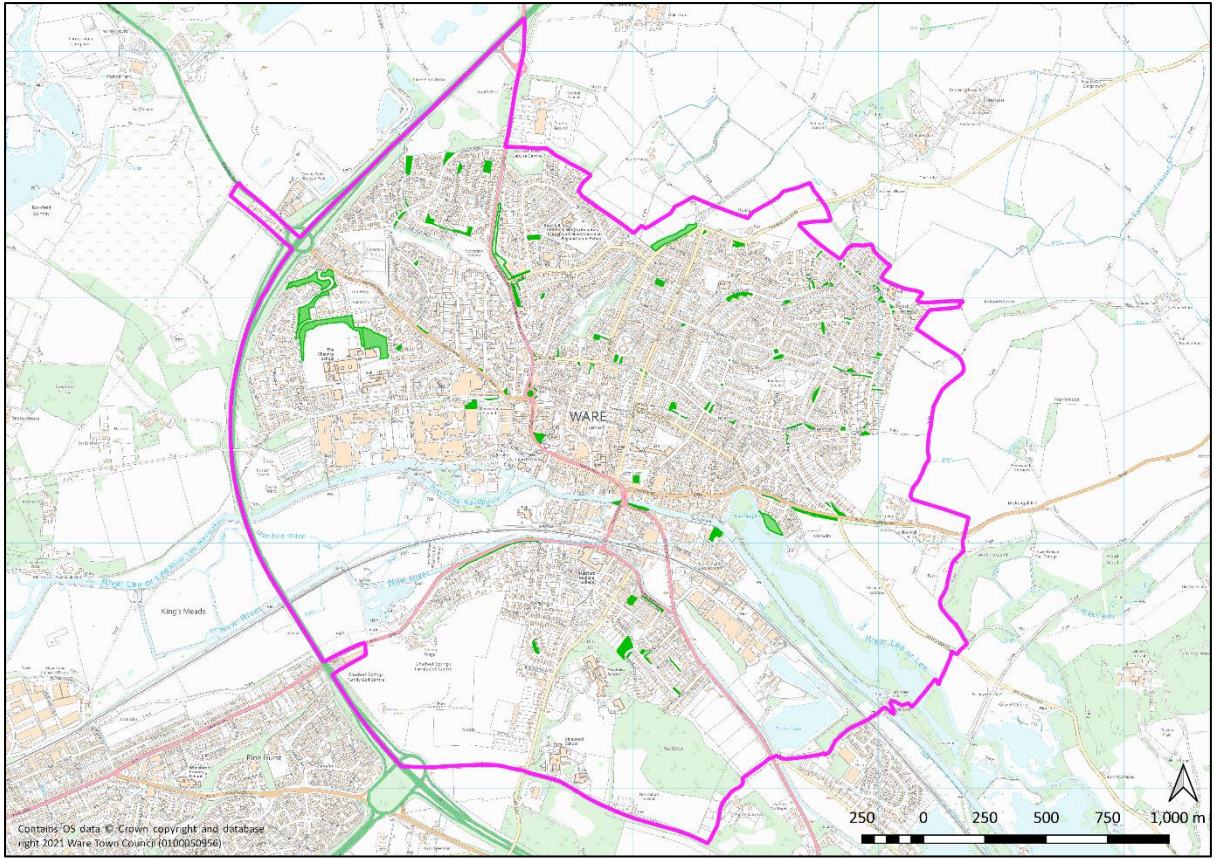
Playgrounds & Community Spaces suitable for LGS: The remaining areas are considered to be suitable for LGS protection as they meet the criteria as set out in the NPPF.

1. Lady Margaret Gardens (playground area and open space)
2. The Bourne
3. King George Fields
4. Lower Bourne Gardens
5. The Pastures
6. Priory Playgrounds
7. Presdales Drive Playground (and Land)
8. Buryfields
9. Widbury Hill Allotments
10. Plaxton Way
11. King George Road Allotments

Additional green space in the town

There are numerous small patches of green space around the town. An example is the corner of Upper and Lower Clabdens. These are too small for specific LGS protection. However any development or infill should be resisted. The local community should be encouraged to take responsibility for improving them, for instance as small gardens, wild flower meadow or community growing spaces.

The Baldock Street roundabout area is a fine example of this where the 'Ware In Bloom' group maintain garden displays in the middle of the roundabout and surroundings beds and verges.



APPENDIX B VENUES OFFERING SHARED SPACE IN WARE

Community Buildings

Many of the below are used on a regular basis by local Scout and Guiding groups and pre school organisations:

Venue	Type	Commentary
936 (Hertford and Ware) Air Training Corp Broadmeads	Uniformed organisation	
Riverside Hall Priory Street	Community Centre	Hall and rooms for hire.
Allenbury's Sports and Social Club Harris Lane	GSK Sports Centre	Halls and rooms for hire for various events.
Broadmeads Scout HQ 3 rd Ware	Uniformed Organisation	Used by Guiding as well. Hall may be hired for meetings / events / weddings etc.
Christ Church New Road	Community Centre	Church Hall may be hired for meetings /events
Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus & St Joseph (RC) King Edward Road.	Community Centre	Church Hall may be hired for meetings /events
Great Amwell Scout HQ. London Road.	Uniformed Organisation	Used by Guiding as well. Hall may be hired for meetings / events / weddings etc.
Church of St Mary the Virgin Church Street	Community Centre	Church Hall may be hired for meetings / events.
Leaside Methodist & United Reformed Church & Community Centre East Street	Community Centre	Church Hall may be hired for meetings / events. Pre school uses premises.
Hale Rugby Club Hoe Lane	Community Centre	Rooms may be hired for meetings / events, weddings and sports such as squash
Place House East street	Community Centre	Rooms may be hired for meetings and events.
Poles Lane Scout HQ 2 nd Ware Scouts Poles Lane	Uniformed Organisation	Used by Guiding as well. Hall may be hired for meetings / events / weddings etc.
Royal British Legion	Community Centre	May be hired for meetings / events
Southern Maltings Community Centre Kibes Lane	Community Centre	Arts and crafts, Hire facilities for weddings and parties etc
Springs Christian Fellowship New Road	Community Centre	

The Priory	Town Council premises	Rooms may be hired for weddings / meetings / events
Ware Bowls Club	Community Centre	
Ware Christadelphians Church Street	Community Centre	
Ware Drill Hall Amwell End	Community Centre	Hire facilities for sport activities, dog training, weddings and parties
Ware Library	Community Centre	Small room for hire
Ware Museum High Street	Community Centre	Culture
Wodson Park Wadesmill Road	Sports Centre	Hire facilities for meetings, weddings and parties

Public Houses

There are approximately 20 public Houses in Ware some of which rent out rooms for meetings or for bed and breakfast:

Jacoby's (Mexican) Tudor Sq	Upstairs room for meetings
The Angel Star Street	Room available for meetings / events
The Brewery Tap	Downstairs room for meetings
The Mixer Baldock Street	Upstairs rooms for meetings / events
The Old Bulls Head Baldock Street	Allows part of the ground floor to be used for meetings.
The Rifle Volunteer New Road	Bed and breakfast
The Saracen's Head Bridge Street	Basement room for meetings / events

Schools

Chauncy School Park Road	Mixed Secondary School	Chauncy School is primarily an educational facility. It does, however, host many community uses outside of school hours.
Christ Church Primary School Bowling Road.	Primary School	Hall and rooms for hire.
Kings Hill Infant School Heath Drive	Infant School	
Larkspur Primary School Tower Road.	Primary School	Hall and rooms for hire.

Middleton School	Primary Special Needs School	
Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery Homefield Road	Pre school	
Pinewood School Hoe Lane	Special Needs School	
Presdales School	Secondary Girls School	Hall and rooms for hire.
Priors Wood School Cozens Road	Primary School	Hall and rooms for hire.
St Mary's C of E Primary School Heath Drive	Junior School	Hall and rooms for hire.
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Broadmeads	Primary School	Hall and rooms for hire.
St Catherine's, Park Road	Primary School	

APPENDIX C DEFINITIONS OF ACCESSIBLE TOILETS

Definitions taken from: <https://www.independentliving.co.uk>

Changing Places are designed so that they are completely accessible and provide sufficient space and equipment for people who are not able to use the toilet independently. They must be an extra facility, in addition to the accessible toilets for independent use.

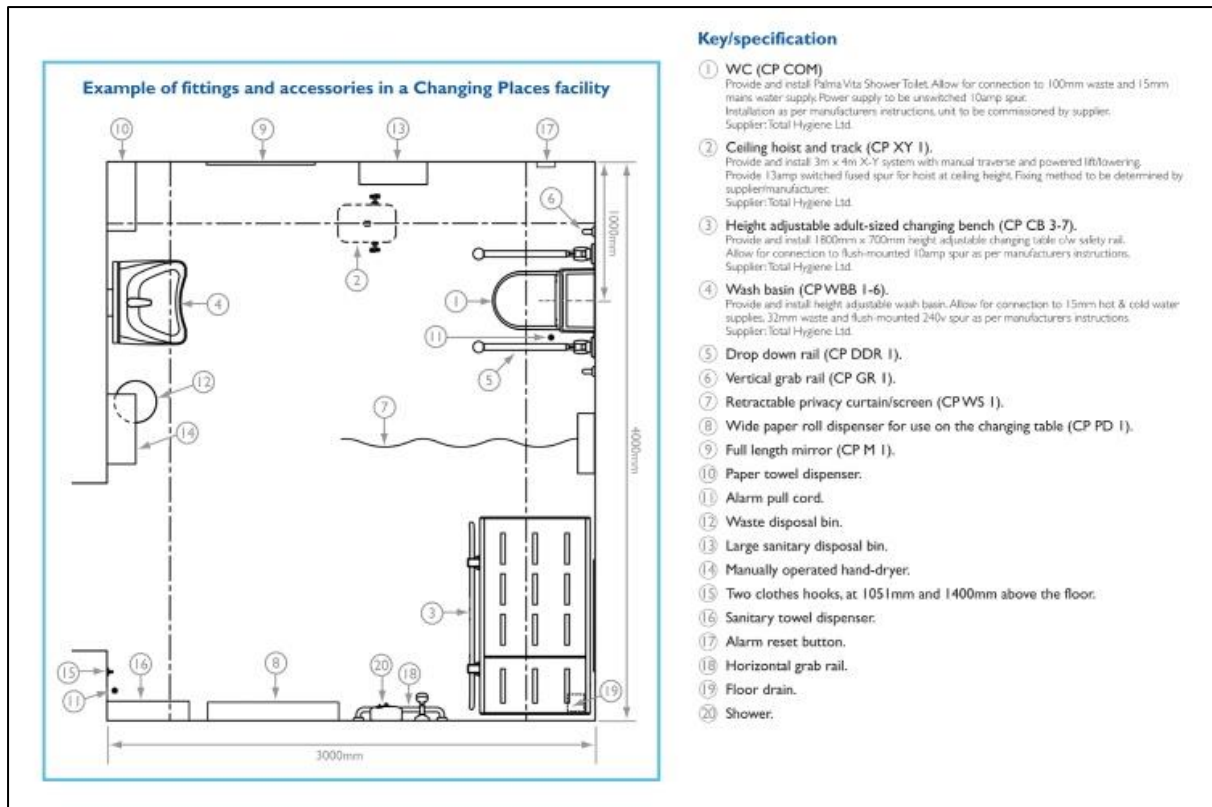
To start, there must be adequate space in a Changing Places: three metres by four metres is the recommended minimum, with a ceiling height of at least 2.4 metres.

Equipment that should be included:

- **Changing bench**, adult sized (minimum 1800 mm long by 800 mm wide). This should be height adjustable, and can either be freestanding or wall-mounted.
- **Hoist** providing access between changing bench, basin and toilet. Ideally, ceiling or wall mounted, but a mobile hoist is acceptable if a track-mounted lifter is not possible. Hoist should comply with BS EN ISO 10535.
- **Toilet** must be a peninsular installation, with at least one metre of clear space on each side. It can be an automatic wash and dry toilet or a standard manual one, and in either case, the seat height should be 480 mm.
- **Washbasin**, which can be a standard model, or height adjustable. If it can't be adjusted in height, it should be fitted at between 720 and 740 mm from the floor.
- **Curtain or screen** to provide privacy for the user and carer(s)
- **Non-slip flooring**
- Wide tear-off **paper roll** in a dispenser close to the changing bench
- Large **waste bin** for disposing of pads, etc

These features are to be included with those of a standard accessible toilet:

- **Grab rails** where appropriate to provide necessary support
- **Emergency alarm** to summon help if necessary. Make sure that the red cord always hangs loose so that it can be used immediately.



Relevant British Standard for Changing Places

Update July 2020: [Changing Places to be compulsory, rather than simply desirable](#)

Building Regs and British standards updated at the beginning of 2018

A Changing Places toilet is 'desirable' under Building Regulations Approved Document M and BS8300:2009 for all new build and refurbishment projects involving buildings to which numbers of the public have access.

A new clause has been added to the guidance, concerning the types of buildings that should include these facilities. This specifies visitor attractions, such as theme parks, monitored beaches and parks. Faith centres have been added, and the retail clause has been extended to include large commercial retail premises.

The standards say that 'Changing Places toilets should be provided in larger buildings and complexes, such as:

- a. major transport termini or interchanges, e.g. large railway stations and airports
- b. motorway services
- c. sport and leisure facilities, including large hotels
- d. cultural centres, such as museums, concert halls and art galleries and faith centres
- e. stadia and large auditoria
- f. large commercial retail premises and shopping centres
- g. key buildings within town centres, e.g. town halls, civic centres and main public libraries
- h. educational establishments

- i. health facilities, such as hospitals, health centres and community practices
- j. other visitor attractions, such as theme parks, monitored beaches and parks’.

The Changing Places Standard is based on the BS8300:2009. The requirements listed above should not be regarded as a substitute for the comprehensive information included in the British Standard.

Information on standard features needed in an accessible toilet is published in Approved Document M (England), Document T (Scotland), Document R (Northern Ireland) of the Building Regulations.

Agenda Item 8

East Herts Council Report

Executive pre-meeting

Date of meeting: Tuesday 14 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplanning Framework

Ward(s) affected: Watton-at-Stone;

Summary – To enable Executive Members to consider the Masterplan Framework Document for Land at Walkern Road; site allocation Policy WAS3 in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive to recommend to Council that:

a) The Land at Walkern Road Masterplan Framework Document, for the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan site allocation known as WAS3, as detailed in Appendix A to this report, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 In accordance with District Plan Policy DES1, a masterplan framework has been produced for the Neighbourhood Plan site allocation known as Land at Walkern Road (WAS3), in collaboration with the Shaping Watton-at-Stone Steering Group.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The District Plan was adopted in October 2018 and sets out the Council's strategy for delivering growth in East Herts over the Plan period up to 2033. As part of this growth strategy, Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages, requires the eight largest and most sustainable villages in the district to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock between 2017 and 2033. In Watton-at-Stone this amounts to at least 92 dwellings. The policy accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, to accommodate growth. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through neighbourhood plans.
- 2.2 The East Herts Approach to Masterplanning was first presented to the District Planning Executive Panel in September 2017 (and agreed by Council on the 18 October 2017). The report set out a series of steps that describe the various stages involved and processes expected for all 'significant' development sites. Whilst not a one-size-fits-all approach, the process is based upon a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving issues, creating a vision for what the site aspires to achieve, testing design options and consulting upon preferred solutions.
- 2.3 In order to embed the Masterplanning process, District Plan Policy DES1: Masterplanning requires all 'significant' development proposals to prepare a Masterplan. The significance of development is measured not only on its scale, but on the potential impact on the community and local

character. However, paragraph 17.4.1 of the District Plan supporting text suggests that generally a threshold of fifty dwellings or more will apply.

- 2.4 The masterplan should set out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets and other relevant matters. Furthermore, the Masterplan should be collaboratively prepared and informed by public participation. Finally, Policy DES1 states that in order to ensure sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.
- 2.5 The Masterplanning document should therefore provide sufficient information to inform the preparation of detailed aspects of the site at the planning application stage. The level of detail required for the Masterplanning document will depend upon the likely form of delivery of the site. For example, where delivery is expected by one party who has been involved throughout the Plan-making stages, a Masterplanning Document may be prepared, which provides key parameters and aspirations which form the basis of detailed design determined through a planning application process at a later stage.
- 2.6 Steering groups have been established in the district to help inform the development of strategic sites allocated in the adopted District Plan and other significant sites that come

forward for development. These are comprised of East Herts councillors, town and parish councillors, representatives of the local community and other interested groups, where appropriate. The Steering Group is a sounding board for key issues and, depending upon specific circumstances, for discussing detailed design elements whilst preparing the planning application through to when construction is underway.

2.7 At 60 dwellings, land at Walkern Road (WAS3) is the first site to undertake the masterplanning process in Watton-at-Stone. In addition, it is the first neighbourhood plan allocation in East Herts to meet the District Plan threshold for producing a masterplan document. Over the last eight years, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council have worked collaboratively with the local community, to develop a neighbourhood plan, which includes the strategic site allocation WAS3. There is strong vision and aspiration for the site locally, which has informed the scope and the direction of this masterplanning process.

2.8 The Shaping Watton-at-Stone Steering Group was established in July 2023 and has been used to progress the Masterplan Framework Document.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 This masterplanning process is based upon a collaborative approach, which is shaped by the local context. The output is this masterplanning document which is presented to members for consideration at Appendix A.

Policy context

- 3.2 The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area was designated on the 5 April 2016. Subsequently, the Parish Council has developed the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, informed by early community engagement between 2016 and 2020 and two statutory public consultations in 2022.
- 3.3 Following an examination by an Independent Examiner, the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a local referendum on 12 October 2023. In total, 95% (609) of voters were in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan being used to help decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. As outlined within Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017) this means the referendum was successful because more than half of those voting in the referendum voted in favour of the plan. Therefore, Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the development plan and any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.
- 3.4 There are only narrow circumstances when a Council does not make (adopt) a neighbourhood plan, when it is in breach or incompatible with any EU or human rights obligations. However, the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan does not breach these aforementioned obligations. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted at the Council meeting on 13th December 2023.

Neighbourhood Plan site allocation

- 3.5 In accordance with the District Plan, the opportunity was taken during the preparation of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan to exceed the required 10% growth in return for significant community benefits, including a circular walk for the village, new football pitches and a wetland meadow. The Neighbourhood Plan development strategy (Policy WAS1) proposes 144 homes in the plan period, including two strategic sites on the edge of the village, that require changes to the Green Belt boundary. One of these strategic sites, WAS3; Site Allocation at Walkern Road, is the focus of this Masterplan Document, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 3.6 Policy WAS3 sets out criteria to guide the development of 60 dwellings on the site, with particular focus on connectivity to the village and wider countryside, high quality design, provision of open space, protection of views and delivery of a bridge over the River Beane as part of a village circular path. The allocation includes public amenity green space, which will remain within the Green Belt, to provide a buffer between the housing development and the River Beane (an important chalk stream) and enable pedestrian and cycle access to the river and delivery of the new bridge. In addition, policy WAS6 requires development proposals to be assessed against the neighbourhood plan design code. The design code is based on the principles of good design and is not overly prescriptive, but it does include details relating to layout and design that need to be considered by the masterplan document.

Masterplan Framework Document

- 3.7 The Masterplan Framework Document has been developed collaboratively. Building on the relationship Watton-at-Stone

Parish Council developed with Fairview Homes during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan over a number of years, the steering group has worked with Fairview over the last three months to ensure that the masterplan will create a high-quality and landscape led scheme that relates well to adjoining development, the River Beane and the wider village. To help facilitate the delivery of the circular path (a key vision in the Neighbourhood Plan) the site boundary identified in the masterplan extends south of the allocated green space area, to include the field known as Rush Meads. Within Fairview's ownership, it is south of the river and north of the High Street. It will remain in the Green Belt and is also identified in the masterplan as an area for biodiversity net gain to improve the ecological value of the land adjacent to the River Beane.

- 3.8 The design framework for the site responds to the policy requirements in both the District Plan and Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan; and seeks to deliver the aspirations of the local community and some of the identified community benefits. The design parameters established are as a result of this policy context and local engagement, alongside an analysis of constraints and opportunities and discussions with East Herts Council's officers, the Shaping Watton-at-Stone Steering Group and other stakeholders.
- 3.9 The Masterplan Framework Document, as presented in **Appendix A**, sets out a vision for the site supported by a series of principles to deliver 60 homes alongside landscaping and amenity space to provide an attractive landscape-led development on the northern edge of the village. The development will promote high quality, sustainable, low carbon

development, incorporating 40% affordable housing and a mix of new dwellings. Walking and cycling connectivity to the village centre and the surrounding countryside is a key objective, including improvements to pedestrian access along Walkern Road. A new pedestrian and cycle path across the site is a key principle, connecting green infrastructure to the east with the central open space and green infrastructure to the south-west. Proposals include provision of a new bridge over the River Beane, providing a future connection to the adjacent housing allocation site WAS4 and the village circular walk identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.10 Other key design principles within the site include; provision of open space (including an amenity area to the east, with play provision and a more natural area for biodiversity net gain to the south-west); sustainable drainage (SuDs); visual and landscape corridors creating a rural character with strong links to the surrounding countryside and the River Beane; the use of gardens and landscaping to separate the new built form from existing properties to the south; the identification of active frontages in the built form to ensure public space is overlooked and new landscaping to create defensible new Green Belt boundaries as appropriate. Biodiversity improvements are proposed to the land south of the developable area to preserve and enhance the ecology of the Beane Valley.

3.11 In addition to on-site delivery, the proposal will contribute towards other local provision through S.106 agreement/s in due course as part of the planning application process.

Engagement

3.12 Engagement provides the best opportunity to ensure a collaborative approach aiming to achieve the most successful design for the development. The development of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan over recent years has meant that stakeholders and the community have been significantly involved in shaping the vision and design of this site. Pages 8 and 9 of the Masterplan detail and timeline this engagement, including five consultations and also specific engagement with key stakeholders. Some of the key points raised by the community include:

- Concern about the traffic impact on Walkern Road and the need for improved pedestrian access.
- Importance of development being designed in character with the rest of the village.
- Preference for a maximum of 2 storeys.
- Need for sustainable development and energy efficient dwellings.
- Integration of green space within the site and need to ensure the built form is set back from the road
- Concern about impact on existing properties to the south.

3.13 The final Masterplan addresses these issues, although those relating to more detailed design or S106 matters will be addressed at the planning application stage.

3.14 Throughout the neighbourhood planning and masterplanning process, stakeholders have advised on a number of key site issues including transport, ecology, archaeology, flooding, design and the new green belt boundaries. Fairview have had numerous meetings with Watton-at-Stone Parish Council to deliver the vision and aspirations for the site in the

Neighbourhood Plan. They have also liaised directly with other relevant stakeholders on a number of issues such as access, pedestrian improvements, layout and the design of the bridge over the River Beane. As part of the masterplan process there has also been on-going engagement between officers and Fairview Homes.

3.15 Building on this engagement, two meetings with the Shaping Watton-at-Stone Steering Group have taken place to discuss the development of the masterplan and for the open debate of issues. It was agreed with Watton-at-Stone Parish Council that given the extensive work already undertaken via the Neighbourhood Plan, that this would be an appropriate programme of Steering Group meetings. The steering group comprises of Watton-at-Stone Parish Council, members of the Neighbourhood Plan group, district councillors and officers from East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council. Suggestions relating to both the content and presentation of the masterplan have influenced the scope and detail of the document. Discussions about detailed design and s106 will be addressed at the planning applications stage.

3.16 The developers engaged with the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel on 5 October 2023. The draft Masterplan Framework Document was positively received in many areas, with the panel making suggestions and a number of comments on potential improvements. These included; the need for more analysis and context in relation to SuDs, local street patterns and noise from the A602; the importance of incorporating connected streets and making strong pedestrian and cycle connections beyond the site; the need for structural

landscaping and architectural design to help mitigate any impact on the protected view; and encouragement to emphasise sustainability and climate change resilience. Many of these issues will require further thought at the planning application stage, when the detailed design is being considered.

Conclusion

3.17 With the adopted District Plan in place, it is important that the Council can demonstrate delivery of its housing strategy, including sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plans. It is therefore important that, while maintaining flexibility, the Masterplanning Framework should provide sufficient breadth of information to guide both future developers and, importantly, decision-makers. An agreed Masterplan Framework Document will be a material consideration in the decision-making process and is key to ensuring that any planning application should meet the Council's aspirations.

3.18 It is the view of Officers that this Masterplan Framework Document provides a good basis upon which to move forward to preparing a detailed application. It provides a suitable framework for the main issues of significance in relation to the proposal, whilst providing enough flexibility that further detail can be agreed at appropriate stages as application proposals are worked up, as necessary. Officers will continue to work with Fairview and other stakeholders to ensure that the best possible quality design is achieved on this site.

3.19 It is therefore recommended that the Masterplan Framework Document, as detailed at **Appendix A**, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

4.0 Options

4.1 The Council could choose not to approve the Masterplan Framework Document. However this would be contrary to District Plan Policy DES1. It would also mean that when determining the application, the Council would not be able to take account of the design framework agreed in collaboration with the steering group. This is likely to have a detrimental impact on design quality and community engagement.

5.0 Risks

5.1 If the scheme progresses to the planning application stage without a masterplan, it will be contrary to the District Plan.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to multiple rounds of public engagement and the masterplanning process includes steering group meetings with Members and local representatives. This is explained above in more detail.

Community Safety

The Masterplan Framework Document includes provision for the built form to overlook public spaces, helping to promote safer spaces.

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

The Masterplan Framework Document incorporates design principles that address environmental sustainability.

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

Watton-at-Stone

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A: Land at Walkern Road Masterplan Framework Document

Contact Member

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walkern road, watton-at-stone



Masterplan Framework Document
November 2023



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the site

... to identify, understand and respond to the opportunities and the constraints

... for the development to make the most of the site's green and blue assets, topography, views and connections

The site is presently a mown field, enclosed by a mature landscaped embankment to the A602 to the north, a fairly recent hedgerow to Walkern Road to the east, dwellings on Beane Road to the south, and an open boundary to the west where the mown field continues.



our vision

This Masterplan document has been collaboratively developed with East Herts Council, Watton at Stone Parish Council, Ward Councillors, Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable development at Walkern Road.

By setting out a vision and key design principles, this document aims to ensure the delivery of a high-quality sustainable development that will enhance the local area and provide a beautiful place to live, in accordance with the National Planning Framework, Policy DES1 (Masterplanning) of the East Herts District Plan and policy WAS3 of Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan. This document also provides a framework to guide and inform the detailed design and layout of any future proposed development on the site.

This vision is founded on six key objectives:

1. Providing an attractive development which sits comfortably within the existing context of the village and the River Beane.
2. Provide a mix of new dwellings to accommodate the range of needs within the village.
3. Creation of a sustainable development with opportunities for renewable energy technologies, a fabric first approach which locks in carbon-savings, electric vehicle charging points and water efficient measures.
4. Provide pedestrian and cycle links to the existing green infrastructure and wider village centre.
5. Create defensible new village boundaries.
6. The creation of a new pedestrian bridge across the River Beane in agreement with the Environment Agency.



background & context

ref.2: The Site

The site is being brought forward as a housing opportunity through the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan process. The designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area was originally requested in February 2016 by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council with the designation agreed by East Herts in April 2016. From then, the Parish Council and Steering Committee has undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise with the local community (detailed on page 8) which has resulted in the submission of the Plan for Examination in June 2023.

As early as the second consultation held in November 2016, Walkern Road was identified as the most popular site for green belt development and development of the site has continued to be supported through subsequent consultations.

In October 2018, East Herts District Plan was formally adopted by the Council. District Plan Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages, requires Watton-at-Stone to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock between 2017 and 2033. The policy encourages parish councils to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate development and accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, to accommodate growth. Subsequently, amendments to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 140, enabled non-strategic policies, including Neighbourhood Plans, to amend Green Belt boundaries if the need for these changes was established in strategic policy. Therefore, Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan took the opportunity to amend their Green Belt boundary and allocate Walkern Road for residential development.

The Neighbourhood Plan is part of the development plan and any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.

District Plan Policy DES1 requires all significant developments to prepare a masterplan. When endorsed by East Herts Council this will be a material consideration in the planning decision-making process. This masterplan framework document will help shape any subsequent planning application for the site.



planning policy context

The following planning policy context has been considered in the design process:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Relevant national planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was first published in March 2012, and most recently updated in September 2023. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with emphasis on three key objectives: social, economic and environmental sustainability. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in Paragraph 11.

Paragraph 73 identifies the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for large scale development such as extensions to existing villages. Strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way and “set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained” by ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes.

Section 12 of the NPPF addresses design matters, with Paragraph 126 explaining that “the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”. It also highlights that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”. Paragraph 130 further details design objective that new development is expected to meet:

1. Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development;
2. Visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
3. Sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
4. Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
5. Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount of mix of development, and
6. Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing.

Paragraph 140 permits Green Belt boundaries to “only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”. It continues to state “where a need for change to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies including Neighbourhood Plans.”

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East Herts District Plan (October 2018)

Watton-at-Stone is identified as Group 1 Village according to Policy VILL1. In Group 1 Villages, development for housing, employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted subject to complying with the Local Plan. These villages are encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate, through the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan, to accommodate additional development especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits. Parish Councils are encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate land for development.

Policy GBR1 identifies the site as forming part of the Green Belt. However, the allocation and amendment of the Green Belt boundary is set out within the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, the site will no longer be Green Belt once the Neighbourhood Plan has been formally adopted in accordance with Paragraph 140 of the NPPF and Policy VILL1.

Policy DES1 (Masterplanning) introduces a requirement to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils, other relevant key stakeholders and public participation.

Policy HOU1 requires new housing development to provide an appropriate mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to create a mixed and balanced community appropriate to local character and taking account of the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and additional up-to-date evidence. Affordable Housing is also required on all sites proposing new dwellings, with a target of up to 40% affordable housing for sites proposing 15 or more additional dwellings as per Policy HOU3, subject to viability.

The development of the masterplan site should conform with these policies and other policies within the East Herts District Plan.



Policy DES1 Masterplanning

I. All ‘significant’ development proposals will be required to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters.

II. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.

III. In order to ensure that sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.

ref.3: Extract from East Herts District Plan 2018

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, 2023

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan sets out the requirements for the site, playing a key role in shaping the type of scheme brought forward. Policy WAS2 amends the Village's Development Boundary to accommodate additional housing development and includes two housing site allocations (of which one is Walkern Road) within the revised development boundary. Policy WAS3 allocates the site for housing development and supports the development of the site provided it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code, and other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

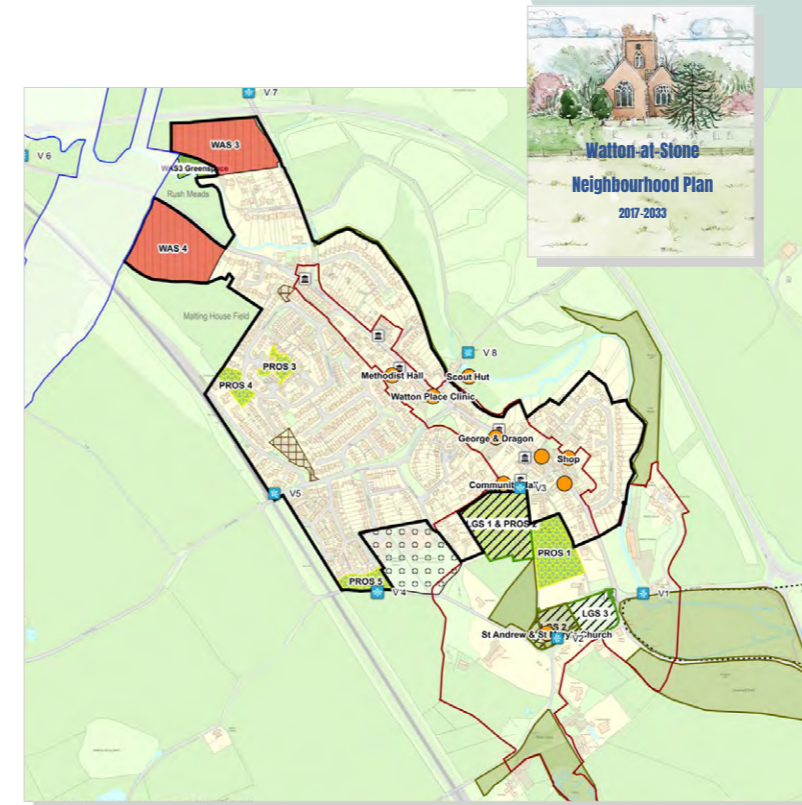
Additionally, the site is expected to meet the following criteria:

- ☐ Achieve 30 units per hectare or 60 homes.
- ☐ Create a physical boundary for the village and Green Belt with appropriate planting.
- ☐ Following the existing frontage and set-back of development along Walkern Road.
- ☐ Reduce traffic speed at the site entrance on Walkern Road.
- ☐ Building should not be over 2 storeys in height or 2.5 storeys where this aligns with the Design Code.
- ☐ The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 7) means that the design must ensure that new buildings must not break the horizon line of the village, and buildings and landscaping enhance the view in the foreground from Viewpoint 7.
- ☐ A mix of house types should be included with positive facades where overlooking public and communal spaces and the development as a whole should have a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- ☐ Include efficient, effective and well-maintained SUDs system.
- ☐ Include public spaces with well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting.
- ☐ Connect to the existing green areas beyond the development site.
- ☐ Include a connecting footpath that links from the entrance of the site to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Beane.
- ☐ Provide community benefits in the form of a new bridge over the River Beane and a path, across the field to Stevenage Road to connect the development with the pedestrian access to Moorymead Close and the railway station, through Site WAS4. The provision of the pedestrian/ cycle access and new bridge should be secured by way of a Planning Condition or Section 106 Obligation.
 - ☐ The new bridge must also be designed and constructed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.
- ☐ Provide public amenity greenspace within the south western corner of the site which will create a buffer between the development and the River Beane. This greenspace will include public access over the footbridge which crosses the river and link to the new circular path. SuDs could also be provided within this space.

Furthermore, Policy WAS6 requires all development proposals to be assessed against the Watton-at-Stone Design Code.



ref.4: Image showing evolving proposals for the riverside greenspace and dwellings



ref.5: Policy map extracted from Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, 2023

design code

A descriptive Design Code based on the National Design Guide issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been written into the Neighbourhood Plan in order to address the ambitions for future housing proposals within the Parish.

The design principles relate to the following aspects:

- Design Principles to enhance the surroundings.
- Design Principles to achieve attractiveness and distinctiveness.
- Design principles for a coherent pattern of development.
- Design principles for accessibility and ease of moving around.
- Design principles for enhancing and optimising biodiversity.
- Design principles for safe, social and inclusive public spaces.
- Design principles for mixed and integrated design, and,
- Design principles for functional, healthy and sustainable places.

The detailed design will need to demonstrate that it complies where relevant with these principles.



ref.6: Image of evolving proposals for the riverside greenspace

The site's allocation as part of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan has led to a significant amount of community engagement in relation to its development has been undertaken. Full details of the consultation process undertaken by the Watton-at-Stone Steering Group is provided in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement (September 2022). A summary of the consultation process and the residents' responses in relation to allocation the Walkern Road allocation is outlined below:

The Second Consultation

The second consultation was held in November 2016 and involved a two-day exhibition and questionnaire. This was the first consultation which considered the release of Green Belt with more than 80% of respondents accepting that some development was going to require a limited release of green belt land. The most popular green belt site for development was the masterplan site as it was seen as contained and largely hidden from the village. There was however concern about the impact of additional traffic on the bridge on Walkern Road.

Consideration was also given to the design of new developments with a clear indication that any new housing developments should be in character with the existing village properties, constructed in traditional brick and have high energy efficiency. There was also a clear preference for a maximum of 2 storeys. Limited support was provided for flats and should these be built, they should be maximum of three storeys with underground parking. Most respondents indicated that gardens should be big enough for families and that houses should be set back from the road. Green spaces within developments were also stressed by a few respondents. Adequate off-street parking was seen as essential but not necessarily provided as garaging.

First Consultation

The first consultation started on the 14th May 2016 and involved an exhibition and questionnaires. The responses to the questionnaires identified several possible development sites with the Walkern Road site being one of the more suitable sites considered for development.

2020

The Third Consultation

The third consultation was held in January 2020 involving an exhibition and questionnaire which focused on the draft policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy WAS2 sought to amend the village boundary and was supported by 86.4% of the residents who responded. Policy WAS3 proposed the housing allocation of Walkern Road and was supported by 76.7% of respondents. Despite this support, a key area of concern in relation to the allocation was the proposed traffic implications from development and the safety of the proposed access onto Walkern Road. Concerns were also raised regarding safety issues of Walkern Road between the site access and the High Street, in particular the adequacy of the one way bridge over the River Beane to accommodate the additional traffic, lack of adequate footpath facilities and enforcement of the speed limit.

Concerns were also raised regarding the scale of the development, both in terms of the number and house design, to reduce the impact on the existing properties along Beane Road and to be more consistent with the local design and limit the opportunity for further development in the area.

Comments were also provided on policies WAS6 Design. Respondents considered it was important for the buildings to be in keeping of the village and for sustainability to play a key role in the design.

2023

The Design Panel Review

The Panel met on Thursday 5th October 2023 to review the emerging proposals for land at Watton-at-Stone. The Panel has a number of comments and suggestions and considered the following matters should be addressed:

- Analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the surface water drainage, acoustics, and ecology of the site.
- Analysis of settlement character and notable buildings.
- new pedestrian and cycle connection to the wider area, views of the countryside, and a new bridge over the river should be integrated into the residents day-to-day experience.
- Sustainability and climate change resilience must have influence over the proposals and elements such as alternative modes of transport and integrating SuDs should be included.

While some of these issues relate to detailed design considerations which will be addressed as part of a planning application, the following elements have been considered in the masterplan strategy: urban grain analysis, inclusion of SuDs, pedestrian and cycle connections to the wider village, and new bridge, views to the wider countryside and potential for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation

The Regulation 14 consultation was held from January 2022 to March 2022 with summary brochures distributed to all households and a letter/email sent to statutory consultees, adjacent authorities, local businesses and organisations which might have an interest in the Plan. The principle of housing development on the site was supported with following comments provided:

- To optimise the site and achieve an appropriate density, open space will need to be provided in two areas of the site.
- The site is in an area of archaeological significance and reference to this should be included within the site allocation.
- New planting should be required on the northwestern boundary with the green belt to provide a physical barrier and demonstrate compliance with the NPPF.

2022

Regulation 16 Consultation

On the 29th September 2022, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council submitted the Neighbourhood Plan to East Herts District Council under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 with East Herts District Council holding a 6-week consultation from November 2022 to December 2022.

Overall, the responses to public consultation were positive with many of the consultees stating their support for the Neighbourhood Plan and how the plan has been very thoroughly researched and the time which had gone into producing the plan to address the needs of Village.

Specifically, in relation to the WAS3 allocation, responses highlighted the importance of providing the pedestrian footbridge over the River Beane and highlighted the benefits that this would provide to the local community. The EA originally objected to the bridge as part of their consultation. However, following further discussion and the submission of additional information later withdrew their objection at examination.

key stakeholder meetings

In addition to the public engagement which has taken place for the Neighbourhood Plan, a significant amount of engagement has been undertaken with Key Stakeholders including meetings with East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council Highways, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council and Steering Committee and the Environmental Agency. A summary of these discussions is provided below:



Regular meetings and on-going discussions with officers since 2015.

Formal Pre-application meetings held in 2018, 2022 and in April and June, 2023.

The focus of these meetings was the detailed design of the site in accordance with adopted policy including layout, height, relationships between properties, street scenes and the site's relation to Walkern Road.



Numerous schemes and presentations have been held with the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee since 2016.

In October 2020, a detailed scheme for the site was presented to members for comments and feedback.

Members had concerns regarding the proposed access and whether it could be moved to the A602 bypass or High Street, the impact the proposed height of the development would have on key views, alternatives greener provisions to gas boilers, sufficient car parking and the affordable housing provision.

Additionally, the Council sought mature tree planting along the southern boundary with the neighbouring properties on Beane Road.



Formal pre-application meetings have been held with Hertfordshire County Council's Highways team regarding the access to site, improvements to the footway and the potential to reduce the speed limit along Walkern Road.

An agreement has been reached in principle regarding the proposed access arrangements as well as the design of the traffic calming features and pedestrian crossing points along Walkern Road to the north and south of the proposed access.



Several meeting's and on-going discussions have been held with the EA regarding the pedestrian bridge over the river.



ref.10: Image of the evolving proposals for the Walkern Road Frontage



ref.8: Image of the evolving roofscape proposals



ref.11: Image of the evolving proposals for the Walkern Road Frontage



ref.7: Image of evolving proposals for the informal lanes



ref.9: Image showing inspiration for the proposed riverside landscaping



ref.12: Image showing inspiration for the proposed pedestrian bridge over the river Beane

Watton-at-stone & the wider context

The rural Parish of Watton-at-Stone comprises an area of approximately 3500 acres and nestles in the rolling countryside of the River Beane Valley in Hertfordshire approximately halfway between Hertford (our county town) and the larger town of Stevenage:

... A Sustainable Location

- Part of an established village and a wider network of larger towns.

... With Public Transport & Accessibility

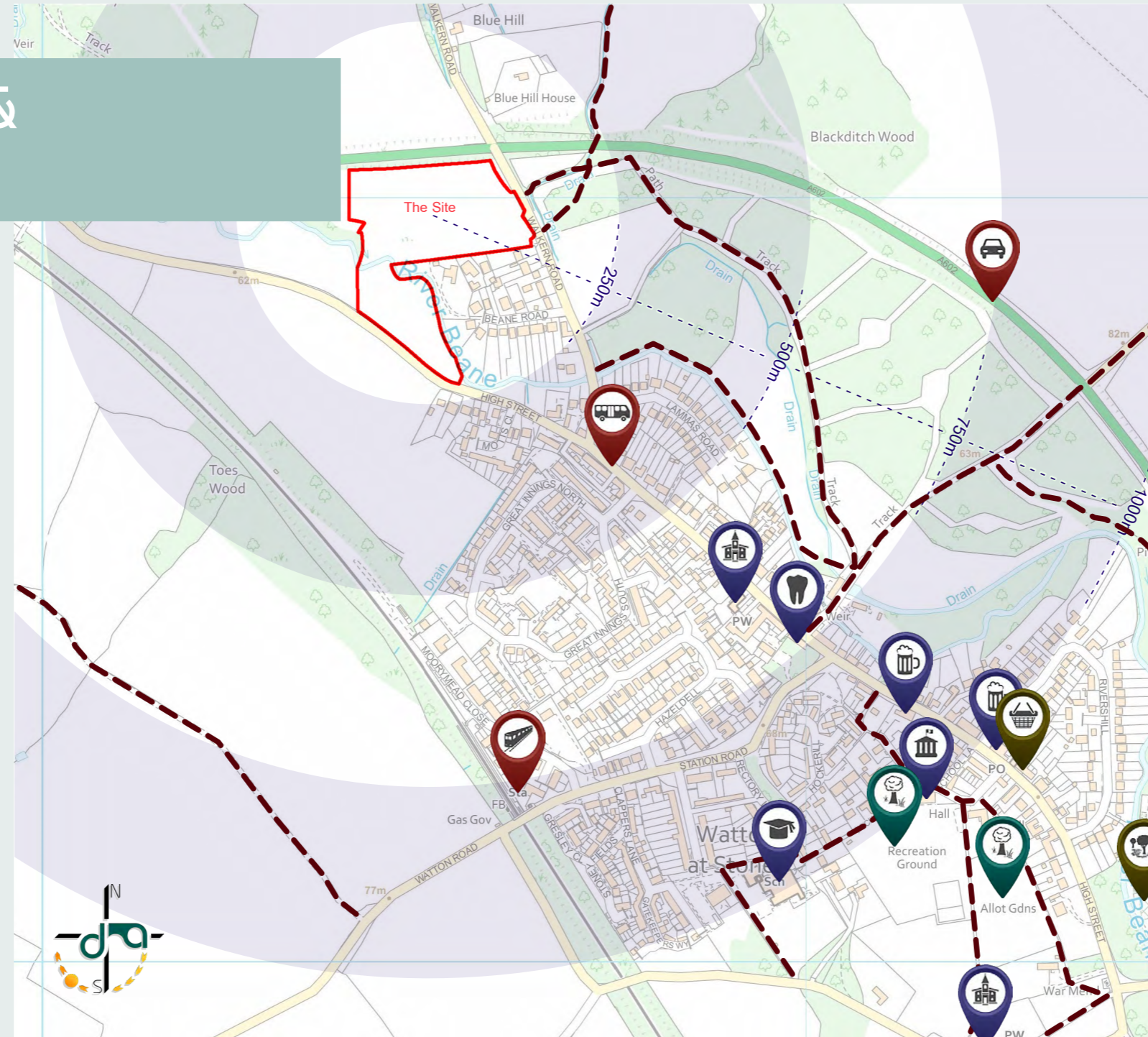
- 390 bus on a route from Hertford to Stevenage with departures approx. every hour from the High Street.
- Trains serve Moorgate on Mondays to Fridays until 22:00 and London King's Cross after 22:00 on Mondays to Fridays and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Journey time – approx. 1h.

... With Education Facilities

- For younger children in the village, and for older children in nearby towns.

... With Green Recreation Space

- Surrounding and running through the village, with an extensive network of recreational footpaths.



ref.6: The wider context of Watton-at-Stone showing the application site in relation to local facilities and services

The proposed development will seek to dovetail with the transport infrastructure which is in place in the neighbourhood - so that short trips in and around the village can be easily made on foot or by bicycle, helping to improve public health and air quality, whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions

The development of this site will take the opportunity to dovetail with existing public transport facilities including the rail and bus services.








local transport links



Since the opening of the railway station, Watton-at-Stone has attracted more commuters. By providing improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network, it is hoped to reduce the reliance on cars from residents.

In accordance with WAS9 Sustainable Transport Provision, from the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033, the site will connect well into the local public transport network, providing walking and cycling routes that connect to the wider local area, creating key linkages through the site to the local bus

-  Railway station
-  Bus stop
-  203 Centrebus route
-  Trainline between Stevenage and Moorgate
-  390 / 383 Intalink Bus route

pedestrian connectivity

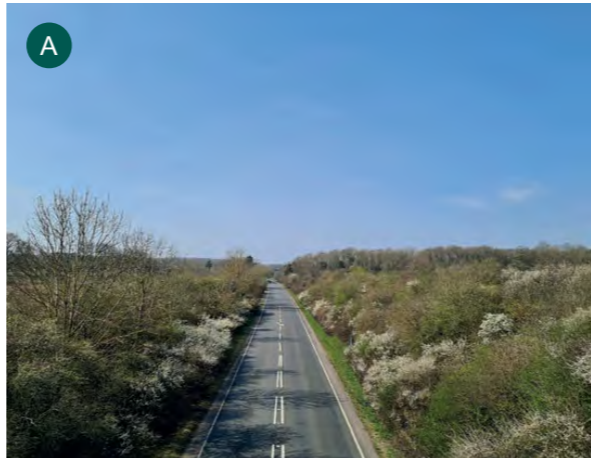


93.9% of residents in the village agreed with the formation of a circular walk connecting up Watton-at-Stone in the January 2020, Neighbourhood Plan consultation. As demonstrated on the left, north east of the village is poorly connected into the wider local area.

WAS10 from the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, provides further information on the proposed new footpath/ cycle connections, with the site forming a key connection through linking the existing rights of way east of Walkern Road through WAS3 across the proposed river crossing, allowing residents to connect seamlessly back to the station, and wider local network.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Railway station |  | Place of worship |
|  | Primary & nursery school |  | Dentist |
|  | Bus stops |  | Public house |
|  | Local shops |  | Playing Fields |
|  | Proposed pedestrian/cycle route |  | Wider pedestrian network |

the site & its setting



the wider context

The historic core of the village, particularly along the High Street, has a more connected continuous townscape, and includes some unique buildings and features - including "Victorian Gothic" steep gables and porches, as well as a common brown/buff brick with red brick detailing.



village grain



1. Typical postwar period village edge expansion



2. Very recent development - following the grain of the historic village



3. The historic village core - more compact and intimate character



4. Typical 1970s-era village expansion - very wide streets and generic houses



5. Modern development of terraces and townhouses

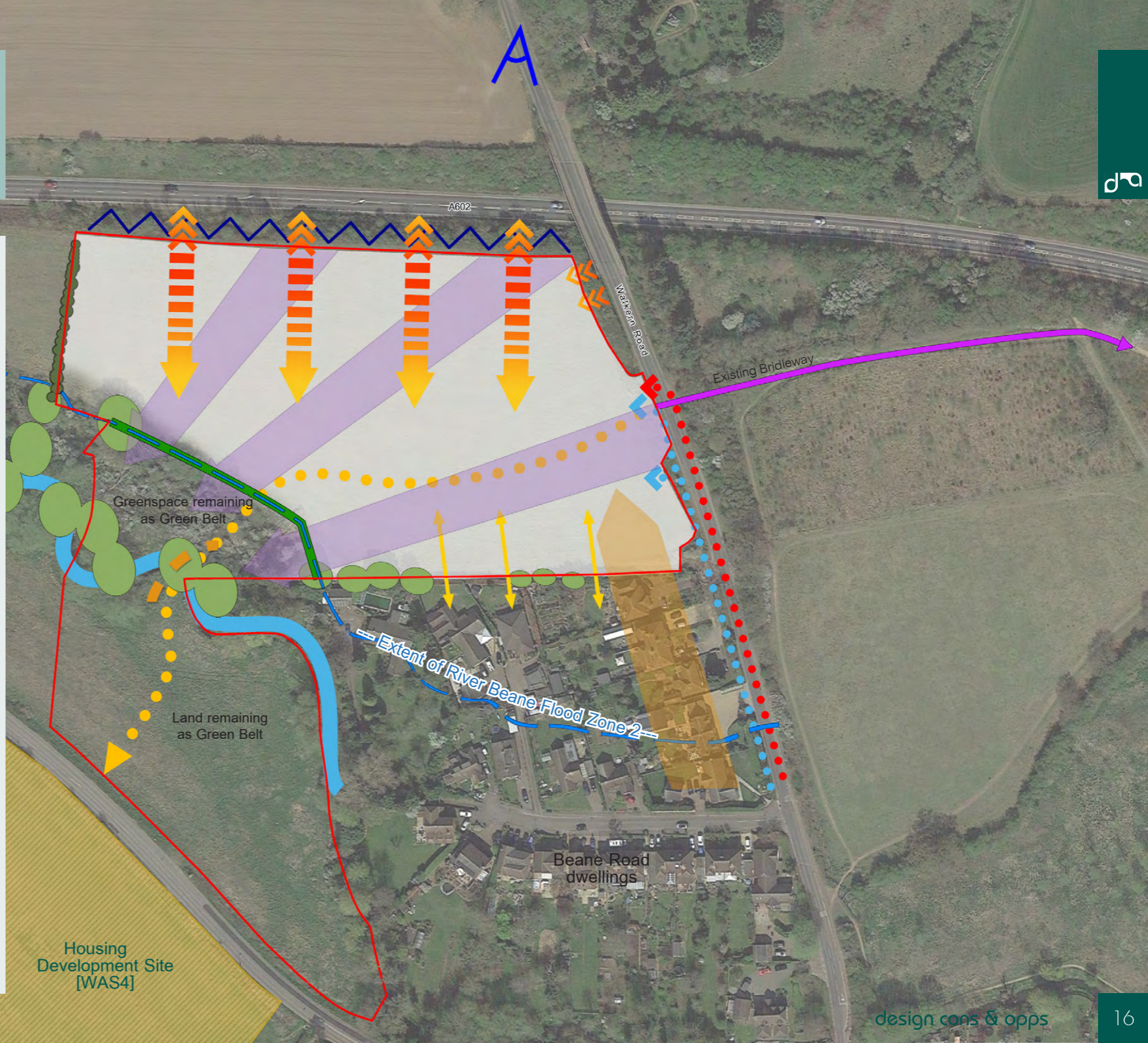


6. 1970s-era development alongside more historic buildings



- Visual connections between the site and the wider northern countryside
- Visual connections into the site from Walkern road
- Existing trees to be incorporated into the new development as features within a green space setting
- Existing riverside landscape character to be incorporated into the character of the new public green space
- Consideration for the privacy and amenity of neighbouring homes - minimum 25m back-to-back relationships
- Pedestrian connection along Walkern Road towards the village centre
- Vehicular connection along Walkern Road towards the village centre
- Key pedestrian and cycle connection- interconnecting the existing brideway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path

- Adjacent new Housing Development Site WAS4 - established by the Neighbourhood Plan
- Green belt boundary
- Pedestrian bridge crossing the River Beane
- Potential noise from the A602
- Opportunity to reinforce the village's built relationship with Walkern Road
- Consideration for Protected Viewpoint 7 in accordance with Policy WAS18
- Green belt boundary planting along western edge of site in accordance with WAS3
- Site slopes NE to SW



visual connections & corridors

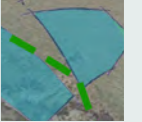


Greenspace remaining as Green Belt

Land remaining as Green Belt

Housing Development Site [WAS4]

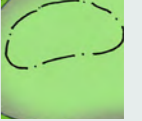
Green swathe creating a visual & landscape corridor - interconnecting the eastern Local Green Space and bridleway, through the body of the site, with the western Local Green Space



Green swathe creating a visual and landscape corridor through and beyond the development to the northern countryside beyond



Central landscaped green space including publicly accessible play space within the core of the site



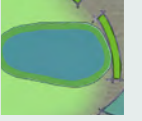
Landscape buffer along the northern boundary with the A602 and countryside beyond



Green belt boundary planting along western edge of site in accordance with Policy WAS3



SuD in central green space and towards site entrance



Green belt boundary



how the design takes this context into account



Landscaping buffer enhanced to reduce potential noise from the A602

The layout allows for visual connections to extend from within the site, out to the countryside and beyond

The dashed line represents the green belt boundary

Tree survey carried out, trees to be retained subject to review at detailed planning application stage

Pedestrian bridge over the River Beane providing future connection to the adjacent housing allocation site WAS4 and circular path

Connection to the existing footpath along the High Street made via a S278 application

Lower density development edge along Walkern road

Key pedestrian and cycle connection-interconnecting the existing bridleway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path around the village in addition to connecting the proposed development to the wider village

Gardens and additional landscaping along the southern boundary to provide buffer between existing and proposed houses

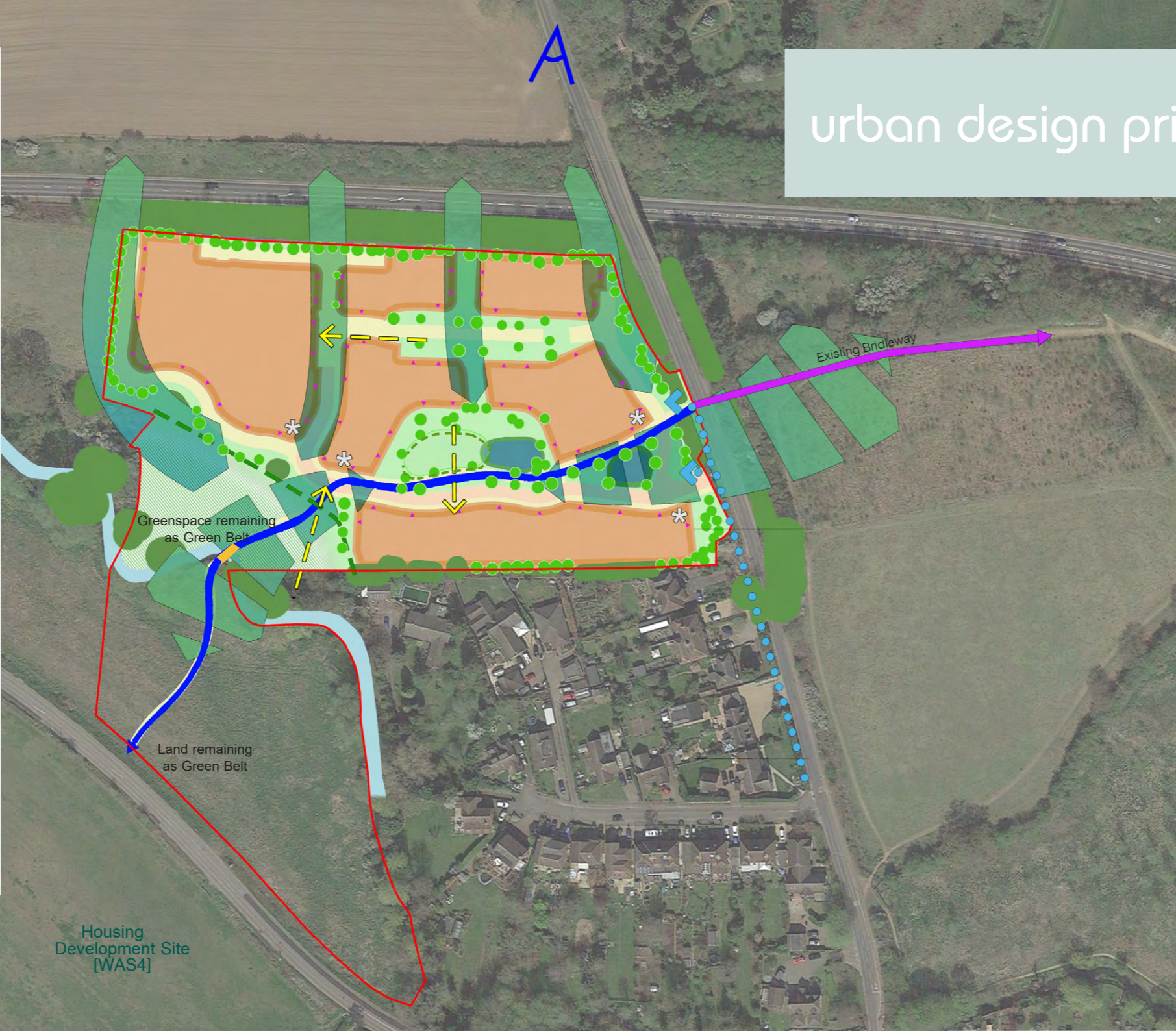
Establishing Development Parameters & Formulating the Design Approach

Housing Development Site [WAS4]



urban design principles

- SuDs integrated within the central green space and towards the site entrance in line with the Design Panels advice
- Protected Viewpoint 7
- Key pedestrian and cycle connection-interconnecting the existing brideway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path
- Proposed road network within the site with active frontages overlooking to ensure streets are passively policed
- Pedestrian bridge
- Existing trees retained
- Proposed trees
- Vistas and keynotes as landmarks
- Green belt boundary



- Green swathe creating a visual & landscape corridor - interconnecting the eastern green space and brideway, through the body of the site, with the western green space
- Green swathe creating a visual and landscape corridor through and beyond the development to the countryside beyond
- Landscape buffer along the northern boundary with the A602 and countryside beyond
- Areas for landscaped public open space incorporating existing mature trees and riverside landscaping
- Areas for residential development (2 to 2.5 storeys with gardens. No residential development to be within Green Belt)
- Flanking relationship of built form with the northern countryside - avoiding any continuous frontage along this boundary and creating long open visual garden and street gaps between buildings
- Proposed extension of the footpath along Walkern road to create a safe pedestrian access
- Central mews courtyard in the development core with publicly accessible play space

Biodiversity net gain

The proposed development will comply with national targets and Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Policy WAS19, with any development required to achieve a minimum biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10%.

The plan shows how this could potentially be achieved with the introduction of urban landscaping and planting within the allocation developable area and the maintenance and enhancement of the rest of the site.

The River Beane intersects the site, to the south of the developable area. As an important chalk stream, it is essential that proposed development preserves and enhances the river. Detailed proposals at the planning application stage will be supported by ecological surveys and BNG information to protect and improve the habitats on site (including removal of invasive species), which will need to be agreed by ecologists working for the council.

The future management of the area around the river and to the south of the development site will have its own management strategy which will be implemented either by the future management company of the site or another party.



Introduction of urban trees and residential gardens

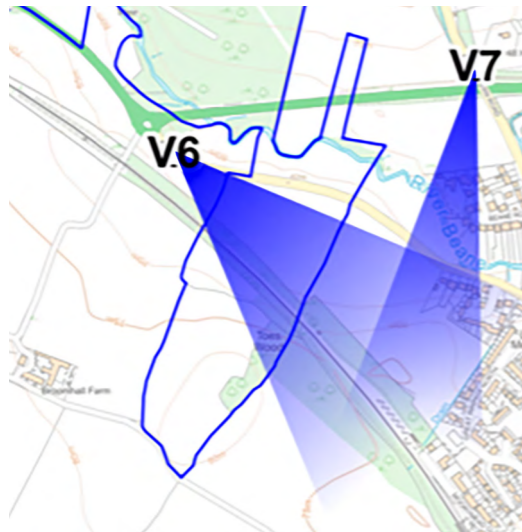
Appropriate management to retain and maintain the existing grassland and other species. Including the removal of invasive species if required

Additional planting to improve the biodiversity

protected view: v7

WAS18 Protected Views

Policy WAS18 within the Watton Neighbourhood Plan, 2023 sets out to protect eight important views and vistas in the village. Under this policy, Viewpoint 7: From the far side of Walkern Road bridge (southward) is identified as an important view. The width and depth of the protected view onto the site is demonstrated in the map below. The subsequent image shows Viewpoint 7 from entrance to the village on Walkern Road (northern approach) prior to development taking place on the site.



ref.11: The map above shows an approximation of the width and depth of the view



ref.12: V7 from entrance to the village on the Walkern road (northern approach)



ref.13: Indicative view from protected view 7. The image does not include a landscaping buffer or other types of potential mitigation. A detailed assessment of the impact on Protected View 7 will need to be provided as part of the Planning Application.

The view from Ref.13 shows indicative 2-storey buildings with pitched roofs. As demonstrated, the proposed building does not break the horizon line of the village from the viewpoint as required by Policy WAS3. This is therefore considered to have an acceptable level of impact on the viewpoint, agreed in principle by Hertfordshire Design Panel, a similar level of impact should be tolerated by an application.

Through the combination of measures as outlines below, this site at Watton at Stone aims to achieve a 97% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site and 67% improvement over Part L 2021.

Working with a leading Energy and Sustainability Specialist:

- Focus on wider sustainability.
- Energy efficiency priority.
- Balance improvements in their ongoing use.
- Operational / maintenance requirements.

Most sustainability advanced Fairview New Homes development utilising sustainable measures such as:

Heat Pumps

Fairview has committed to fit Air Source Heat Pumps for the houses, and Hot Water Heat Pump Water Cylinder and direct electric panel heaters in flats.

- ✓ Air Source Heat Pumps are a highly efficient way of providing heat using electricity, with manufacturers reporting efficiencies from 250%.
- ✓ Hot Water Heat Pumps installed in flats produce very low noise levels and are compact solution in same footprint as hot water cylinder.

Future Management

Following the completion of the development, public amenity space, open spaces and play space will be maintained by an independent Management Company/Agency on behalf of the residents.

It will be responsibility of the Management Company to maintain and repair any damage in these areas.

Passive Design

- ✓ Passive design utilises daylight, solar energy and shading to illuminate, heat and shade where necessary and ventilate/cool the buildings, thus requiring less (mechanical) energy to achieve the performance standards for the health and wellbeing of the occupants.
- ✓ The proposed glazed areas have been designed to maximise daylight and optimise solar gains. This is enhanced by the linear southeast facing front elevations of the dwellings.
- ✓ One EV charging point for each units.

PV was considered as part of the sustainability strategy but, as a result of providing highly insulated buildings through fabric enhancement, it was not required. Despite this, the majority of buildings have been orientated with south facing roofs which will allow residents to install these at a later date.

Affordable Housing

- ✓ The development should provide policy compliant affordable housing provision.

Proposed Fabric Specification

Design to follow the principles of the LETI (London Energy Transformation Initiative) Climate Emergency Design Guide:

- Element U- Value Proposed Design (W/m2.k)
 - Ground Floor 0.10
 - External Wall 0.15
 - Roof 0.10
 - Door 1.60
 - High efficiency Glazing
- High efficiency ASHP (SCOP over 4.0)
- Mechanical Ventilation



ref.13: Image showing home Electric Vehicle Charging



ref.14: Image showing Air Source Heat Pumps

biodiversity & ecology strategy



Well-designed landscape environments contribute to the creation of sustainable and ecologically-rich infrastructure. Incorporating ecological interventions with residential environments provides habitat opportunities for a variety of flora and fauna.

The palette shown opposite highlights potential enhancements and interventions that could be included throughout the site.

Interventions include:

- ☞ Bat roosts for crevice dwelling Pipistrelles and Myotis species.
- ☞ Bird boxes for nesting species.
 - ☞ Bird boxes/bricks for nesting species on existing trees and/or properties depending on Ecologist recommendation.
- ☞ Beetle loggery at ground level.
- ☞ Invertebrate hotel at ground level.
- ☞ Nectar-rich flowering plants for butterflies and bees.

The proposal for Walkern Road creates linkages to existing green corridors and river habitats. Ecological interventions included around the development will provide habitat for critters, bird life and invertebrates alongside human residents and visitors.

Protection of the River Beane is an important aspiration for the site and the green area north of the river serves as a buffer from the residential development. Details of the biodiversity improvements on the land south of the developable area will be provided at the planning application stage, to enhance ecology on the site.

A safe, well-vegetated landscape which encourages social exchange and a sense of community

A series of external community spaces for residents to enjoy



Open lawn space for games and gatherings



Easily maintained planting with ecological interventions



Playspace for younger residents



Parking and vehicles within a green network

landscape mood board



CLIMBING PLAY



DEFINED PATHS + PLANTING



NATURALISTIC PLAY



SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE



PERMEABLE PARKING



LAWN OPEN SPACE



DEFENSIBLE RESIDENTIAL BUFFERS



ECOLOGICAL PLANTING





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East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Ben Crystall– Leader of the Council

Report title: Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - Joint Committee

Ward(s) affected: Hunsdon; Sawbridgeworth; Great Amwell and Stansteads; Much Hadham

Summary – this report sets out details of the proposals for a Joint Committee (JC) in relation to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT). If agreed, the proposed JC would have a range of strategic and local policy making decision powers. Decisions on planning applications and statutory plan making responsibilities would remain with the constituent partner Local Planning Authorities and highways powers with the relevant Highway Authority. It is recommended that East Herts Council enter into the proposed Joint Committee arrangements because of the benefits it enables in relation to decision making and delivery of the Garden Town, including the Gilston Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) The proposal for the establishment of a Joint Committee (JC) in respect of matters pertaining to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town be supported.**

- b) Subject to all Garden Town partner authorities approving the Agreement, the arrangements set out in the Inter Authority Agreement at Appendix 1 to this report be endorsed and agreed.**

- c) Authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader, to make any necessary, nonconsequential and minor amendments and refer to the HGGT Chair and Director.**

- d) Authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make consequential amendments to the Council's constitution to facilitate the establishment of the Joint Committee on the basis of the Terms of Reference set out in Schedule 10 of the Inter Authority Agreement once all constituent Council's have confirmed their approval of the Agreement.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 It is recommended that the establishment of a Joint Committee, with the authority to make a range of decisions in relation to HGGT matters, be agreed by East Herts District Council. The details of the operation of the proposed Joint Committee (JC), its functions and decision making to be as set out in this report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 To date, the HGGT partnership has been operating on the basis of enhanced 'duty to cooperate' decision making. Whilst an HGGT Board is in place, consisting of a representative of each of the five Garden Town partners, it operates on an informal basis and has no decision making powers. That means that, in relation to each matter it considers, it can only make

recommendations back to the individual Garden Town partners to agree a position or endorse a policy/ guidance.

- 2.2 This means that the decision-making process is not agile. It can take between two and six months for a recommendation of the Board to be considered and endorsed by all of the Garden Town partners.
- 2.3 In addition, the Garden Town partners are not equitably sharing support requirements, with the accountable body exposed to an inequitable level of risk. For a project that seeks to build landowner and investor confidence in securing regeneration and development in and around the town of Harlow, the decision-making arrangements are considered to be complex and opaque.
- 2.4 Garden Town partner Members and Lead Officers have been considering these issues over the last year or so and a number of potential alternative arrangements for future governance and decision making have been considered. The culmination of this has been the development of the proposals for the JC, which were considered by the HGGT Board, at its meeting of 17 July 2023. The HGGT Board agreed the proposals and that the agreement of each of the partner Councils, to enter into the JC, should be sought.

3.0 Proposed Joint Committee Details

- 3.1 The full details of the operation and decision-making scope of the proposed JC are set out in a proposed Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). The proposed IAA is attached to this report as

Appendix 1. The IAA includes the Terms of Reference for the JC. The Terms of Reference are set out in Schedule 10 of the IAA.

- 3.2 The proposal is for the JC to be in place until at least 2033, but there are early exit provisions, see later.
- 3.3 The JC will comprise five (5) voting members, being one representative from each of the partner Councils. A substitute representative may also be appointed. The JC will appoint a Chair and a Vice-Chair. The quorum of the meeting will be all five members.
- 3.4 Meetings of the JC will be open to the public in the normal way in relation to Council committee meetings. This is considered to be an important transparency and accountability improvement. Currently, the HGGT Board meetings are held confidentially. There may be some instances where agenda items are to be dealt with confidentially, but such occasions will be subject to the regulations that apply to all committee meetings in relation to confidentiality.
- 3.5 The geographical area in relation to which the JC will have responsibility is shown in the Plan at Appendix 1 to Schedule 10 of the IAA. In addition to the Gilston Area, as designated in the East Herts District Plan, to ensure continuity with the Garden Town area within Harlow, the JC will have jurisdiction over the land between the Gilston Area and the boundary of the District along the course of the River Stort. The JC area boundary has been drawn to include the extent of transport links between the Gilston Area and Harlow. In the east, this includes the line of the proposed Eastern Stort Crossing (development granted planning permission through application 3/19/1051/FUL). To the west it seeks to include the potential routes of a foot and

cycle link to be created between Gilston Village 7 and Roydon station.

- 3.6 The matters which are intended to comprise the business of the JC are set out in Appendix 2 of Schedule 10 of the IAA. These will primarily comprise decision making in relation to strategy and guidance documents. For clarity, no development management or statutory plan making responsibilities will be vested in the JC. So, decisions on planning applications will continue to be made by each of the Garden Town partner LPAs, as appropriate. Decisions on planning applications in East Herts will continue to be made by the East Herts Development Management Committee. The JC will also have no jurisdiction in relation to Highway Authority matters, these remaining the responsibility of Herts CC and Essex CC as appropriate.
- 3.7 Members will note that there is a reference to 'Reserved Decisions' in this section of the IAA. This is because, on agreement to enter into the JC arrangement, it will be necessary for each of the partner Councils to amend their Constitutions to recognise the JC and to delegate functions to it. Whilst the general scope of the decisions of the JC is as to matters set out in Schedule 2 of the JC Terms of Reference, if, regardless, any of the partner Councils constitutions continue to require a decision to be made by the 'parent' Council, then that matter will comprise a Reserved Decision.
- 3.8 In relation to this, if East Herts is in agreement to enter into the JC, it will be necessary for amendments to be made to the Councils Constitution. Officers are scoping the extent of such amendments at this time. Delegated authority is sought from the Executive for Officers to continue to resolve this area of

detail. Full details will be set out in a subsequent report to Council.

3.9 Finally, the functions of the JC are set out in Appendix 3 to the Terms of Reference. These can be seen as the work programme for the committee.

3.10 In relation to exit provisions, these are set out at para 5.3 of the Terms of Reference. The requirement is for any partner to give advance notice of a period of 12 months of the intention to leave the JC arrangement. The partners would then work cooperatively together to address and resolve any implications of this.

4.0 Options

4.1 The option of proceeding without a JC, on the same basis as currently, is an option. However, it is considered that this would undermine the Garden Town partner Councils ability to develop a joint approach to facilitate the development of the HGGT in a co-ordinated and transparent manner. As the delivery phase of the partnership begins, a number of overarching risks around financial administration, corporate management and inability or delay in delivery of key infrastructure to enable the planned growth are becoming more evident. The lack of a formal governance structure creates risk for all partners.

4.2 Not proceeding with the JC would mean continuing with the same decision making arrangements, which lack agility. This would indicate a lack of confidence in the project to external partners which may undermine the ability to secure positive support in financial and other terms.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 East Herts Council has confirmed its commitment to the delivery of the Garden Town and that part of it in East Herts, the Gilston Area, through the adoption of its District Plan and the subsequent decisions in relation to planning applications. The Council is already working with the Garden Town partners in a collaborative way to address and resolve any areas of difference between the partners in relation to the more detailed aspects of delivery.
- 5.2 Entry into the proposed JC arrangement binds the Council more strongly into those collaborative working arrangements. Each of the Garden Town partners has equal voting rights in relation to the JC. The working approach to be adopted, as set out in the JC Terms of Reference, is that Officers and Member reps will work together to resolve any potential matters of difference between the partners, before formal decision making is put in front of the committee. This is not dissimilar to the current working arrangements.
- 5.3 Given that, and the ability to exit the arrangement if it is considered ultimately to be unfavourable for East Herts, the view of Officers is that the positive outcomes in relation to stronger and more aligned delivery of Garden Town objectives, far outweigh any potential risks.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The implications of these proposals are primarily considered to result in positive outcomes.

Community Safety

Yes – in a positive way in that the Garden Town partners will be working together to create new places where good community safety outcomes are secured.

Data Protection

Yes – positively. The IAA includes a data sharing protocol (Schedule 8) strengthening the current arrangements in place between the partners.

Equalities

Yes – positively. One of the agreed objectives of the Garden Town development is that there should be equality of opportunity in creating and experiencing the new places to be created. The JC again strengthens the joint ability of the partners to secure these outcomes.

Environmental Sustainability

Yes – positively. The partners are already working together to ensure protection and ecological improvements through the Garden Town developments. The JC strengthens the ability to do so.

Financial

Yes – but limited. Currently the 'hosting' authority, Epping Forest DC provides services such as HR, budgeting and IT at nil cost to the partnership. The IAA will recognise those costs and share them across the partners. All partners will continue to manage costs closely. There is the potential that stronger joint arrangements will place the partners in a stronger position in relation to the ability to bid for external support and funding packages.

Health and Safety

None

Human Resources

None, the hosting authority will continue to employ the core Garden Town team of officers. The 'in kind' resource from East Herts (Lead Officer) and Gilston Team planning officers continue to be employed by EHDC.

Human Rights

None – impacts of any decisions made by the JC will continue to be assessed fully before decisions are made.

Legal

Yes – the IAA and JC arrangements comprise a binding agreement between the partners, with the exit and termination provisions referred to above. In addition, as above, there will be a requirement for amendments to the Councils constitution to be made if it is in agreement to enter into the proposed arrangements.

Specific Wards

Yes – the Plan of the area within which the JC would have jurisdiction includes land within the following wards: Hunsdon, Great Amwell and Stansteads, Sawbridgeworth and Much Hadham. The significant majority of the area is located within Hunsdon ward. Much smaller areas of land from the other wards are included and primarily away from the current settlement areas within those wards.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 None

Contact Member

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Dated

2023

East Hertfordshire District Council

Epping Forest District Council

Harlow District Council

Essex County Council

Hertfordshire County Council

Inter-Authority Agreement

for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee

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THIS DEED is made on

2023

BETWEEN:

- 1 East Hertfordshire District Council of Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ (“**EHDC**”)
- 2 Epping Forest District Council of Civic Offices, 323 High Street, Epping CM16 4BZ (“**EFDC**”)
- 3 Harlow District Council of Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, College Square, Harlow CM20 1WG (“**HDC**”)
- 4 Essex County Council of County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford CM1 1QH (“**ECC**”); and
- 5 Hertfordshire County Council of County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DQ (“**HCC**”),

each a “**Partner Authority**” and together the “**Partner Authorities**”.

BACKGROUND

- A. The Partner Authorities are local authorities for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972 and best value authorities for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1999.
- B. Under sections 101(5) and 102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Regulations 10 and 11 of The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) England Regulations 2012, local authorities may arrange for the discharge of their functions by a Joint Committee comprising members of their authorities.
- C. All of the Partner Authorities have introduced Executive Arrangements under section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000.
- D. Each of the Partner Authorities has agreed to establish a Joint Committee for the purposes of section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be known as the Joint Committee for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (the “**Joint Committee**”) to co-ordinate and facilitate the delivery of 16,000 homes in the HGGT by 2033, and 7,000 homes in the years after that along with associated infrastructure.
- E. Epping Forest District Council will act as the Accountable Body.
- F. The Accountable Body will provide the Services and employ the HGGT Delivery Team on the terms set out in this Agreement and in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government Act 1972.
- G. This Agreement sets out the services that the Accountable Body will deliver to the Joint Committee and the respective roles, responsibilities and behaviours of the Partner Authorities in respect of associated matters related to the Joint Committee and the delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

- H. The Parties have also agreed the Joint Committee Terms of Reference which is incorporated into this Agreement.

1 AGREED TERMS

- 1.1 In this Agreement, the definitions set out in Schedule 1 (Definitions) shall apply.
- 1.2 Clauses, schedule and paragraph headings shall not affect the interpretation of this Agreement.
- 1.3 A **person** includes a natural person, corporate or unincorporated body (whether or not having separate legal personality).
- 1.4 The schedules form part of this Agreement and shall have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Agreement and any reference to this Agreement includes the schedules.
- 1.5 A reference to a **company** shall include any company, corporation or other body corporate, wherever and however incorporated or established.
- 1.6 A reference to a statute or a provision of a statute is a reference to it as it is in force for the time being, taking account of any amendment, extension, or re-enactment and includes any subordinate legislation for the time being in force made under it.
- 1.7 Words in their singular shall include the plural and vice versa (unless the context otherwise requires).
- 1.8 A reference to **writing** or **written** excludes a reference to electronic communications, facsimile transmissions or comparable means of communication.
- 1.9 Any obligation in this Agreement on a person not to do something includes an obligation not to agree or allow that thing to be done.
- 1.10 References to clauses and schedules are to the clauses and schedules of this Agreement; references to paragraphs are to paragraphs of the relevant schedule.
- 1.11 Where there is any conflict or inconsistency between the provision of the agreement, such conflict or inconsistency shall be resolved according to the following order of priority:
- 1.11.1 the clauses of the Agreement;
- 1.11.2 Schedule 1 to this Agreement;
- 1.11.3 the remaining schedules to this Agreement.

2 Governance

- 2.1 The Partner Authorities agree to adhere to the overarching governance structure set out in the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Partner Authorities will work together acting in their capacities as Accountable Body and Partner Authorities.

- 2.3 The Partner Authorities agree that the following principles underpin their collaborative working: mutual co-operation; accountability; transparency and mutual benefits.
- 2.4 The Partner Authorities agree that they will work together with mutual trust, good faith and in an open, co-operative and collaborative manner and will respond in a timely manner
- 2.5 A structure chart depicting the governance arrangements applicable to the Joint Committee as at the date of this Agreement is included at Schedule 11. The parties acknowledge that the chart is included for information only. In the event of any conflict between the chart and any other provision of this Agreement, the other provision shall prevail.

3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Accountable Body

- 3.1 The Accountable Body shall operate administrative functions to ensure the partnership operates legally and has the back office support services required. In this context it is not a political function. The political leadership comes from the five partners in the joint committee.
- 3.2 Subject to clause 3.3, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement the Accountable Body shall:
- 3.2.1 be the employing authority of the HGGT Director and HGGT Delivery Team on behalf of the Partner Authorities, who will be employed on the Accountable Body's terms and conditions of employment and subject to the employment policies of the Accountable Body;
- 3.2.2 ensure that line management is provided to the HGGT Director and the HGGT Delivery Team in consultation with the Chair, where necessary, in order to ensure that the HGGT Director and Delivery Team are effectively performing their roles;
- 3.2.3 establish and maintain a financial system to hold and account for all Project Funding and Recoverable Cost Funding received and disbursed on behalf of the Joint Committee;
- 3.2.4 receive the Project Funding and Recoverable Cost Funding on behalf of the Joint Committee and be responsible for its proper administration;
- 3.2.5 comply with all instructions of the Joint Committee and any sub-committee except where the instruction is:
- (i) inconsistent with the principles of probity or sound financial practice;
 - (ii) in breach of applicable funding terms
 - (iii) inconsistent with public law principles;
 - (iv) against the public interest
 - (v) likely to bring the Accountable Body or the Joint Committee into disrepute; or

- (vi) illegal;
- 3.2.6 ensure, through the S151 Officer, that Project Funding and Recoverable Cost Funding is used appropriately in accordance with the law, good financial management and any applicable grant conditions;
- 3.2.7 ensure the decisions and activities of the Joint Committee conform with legal requirements;
- 3.2.8 ensure that the Accountable Body's decisions conform with legal requirements;
- 3.2.9 issue offer letters and enter into agreements for Recoverable Cost Funding with the Partner Authorities as authorised by the Joint Committee;
- 3.2.10 provide the Services;
- 3.2.11 provide the necessary data and other information in timely manner to enable the HGGT Director to monitor the progress of scheme delivery and spend of Project Funding;
- 3.2.12 ensure all required information on expenditure, activities, outputs and outcomes are properly recorded and provided in due time for reporting to the Joint Committee upon the Joint Committee's request;
- 3.2.13 only spend the Project Funding and Recoverable Cost Funding on the Services, the Recoverable Costs, and any other costs or expenditure agreed by the Joint Committee;
- 3.2.14 obtain and keep in place sufficient insurance cover in respect of its liabilities under this Agreement and supply to the Joint Committee, on request, evidence that insurance cover or self-insuring arrangements are in place;
- 3.2.15 unless directed otherwise by the Joint Committee, maintain ownership of the Assets and use them only for the purposes of the Joint Committee and any sub-committee; and
- 3.2.16 unless directed otherwise by the Joint Committee, administer the Contracts and manage them only for the purposes of the Joint Committee.
- 3.3 The Accountable Body shall not have responsibility for the RIF pursuant to this Agreement. The parties acknowledge that the accountable body for the RIF shall be decided by the Partner Authorities pursuant to clause 4.6.5.
- 3.4 In addition to acting as Accountable Body, EFDC (or any successor Partner Authority) shall ensure that where it has a role as recipient of Project Sponsor Funding, there is a clear separation of such functions from its role as Accountable Body and all decisions to release Project Funding shall remain subject to the Joint Committee's approval.
- 3.5 The Accountable Body shall provide the Services or procure that they are provided:

- 3.5.1 with all reasonable skill, care and attention in accordance with the best industry practice within the timescales appropriate to the service in question;
 - 3.5.2 in accordance with the Assurance Framework and the terms of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference;
 - 3.5.3 in accordance with relevant accounting standards including but not limited to guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles);
 - 3.5.4 in all respects in accordance with the Accountable Body and Joint Committee's policies; and
 - 3.5.5 in accordance with all applicable Law.
- 3.6 In the event that the Accountable Body is unable or unwilling to deliver the Services, the Accountable Body must provide the other Partner Authorities with at least twelve (12) months' notice (or such shorter period as the parties may agree) of its intention to cease to act as Accountable Body. The Accountable Body reserves the right to transfer the Accountable Body role and responsibilities under this Agreement to a different Partner Authority as agreed with the other Partner Authorities by providing the other Partner Authorities with written notice of such change. The new Accountable Body shall assume all responsibilities and obligations relating to this Agreement from the effective date of transfer and the Partner Authorities shall co-operate fully with the new Accountable Body to ensure a seamless transition. The retiring Accountable Body shall take all steps necessary to transfer to the new Accountable Body any Assets and Staff, and to novate any Contracts.

4 Roles and Responsibilities of the Partner Authorities

- 4.1 Each Partner Authority shall comply with the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement, including this clause 4, and the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
- 4.2 The Partner Authorities shall co-operate to achieve the Garden Town Purpose.
- 4.3 The Partner Authorities shall ensure that an executive officer is appointed to and participates as a member of the Executive Officer Group in accordance with paragraph 7 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
- 4.4 The Partner Authorities shall provide a Lead Officer(s).
- 4.5 The CEOs of the Partner Authorities, or the CEOs nominated deputies, will meet at least quarterly and in advance of the formal joint committee meetings to consider the papers and provide strategic advice.
- 4.6 The Partner Authorities shall work to achieve the RIF Purpose, including:
 - 4.6.1 co-operating to enable HCC to draw down the HIG Funding in accordance with the terms of the Grant Determination Agreement;
 - 4.6.2 committing to maximising recovery of the HIG Funding for inclusion in the RIF;
 - 4.6.3 maximising the contributions from the strategic sites to put into the RIF;

- 4.6.4 using reasonable endeavours to secure additional grant or revenue funding for the delivery of the STC Network and, where appropriate, to allocate such funding to the RIF, subject always to any terms and conditions attaching to such funding;
 - 4.6.5 cooperating to develop, agree, and implement the RIF strategy described in paragraph 6.4 of the Memorandum of Understanding at which point the parties agree that the Memorandum of Understanding shall terminate;
 - 4.6.6 paying the Accountable Body the Partner Authority Contribution;
 - 4.6.7 making appropriate in-kind resources available as required and agreed by the Joint Committee.
- 4.7 The Partner Authorities shall (so far as the law permits) comply with the terms of the Exit Schedule.
- 4.8 For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Agreement shall fetter the statutory rights, powers, duties and obligations of the Partner Authorities in the exercise of their role as a local authority.

5 HGGT Delivery Team

- 5.1 The Accountable Body shall employ the HGGT Delivery Team and the HGGT Director and they will be subject to the employment policies of the Accountable Body.
- 5.2 The Accountable Body will ensure that line management is provided to the HGGT Delivery Team and the HGGT Director in consultation with the Chair of the Joint Committee, where necessary, in order to ensure that the HGGT Delivery Team is effectively performing its role.
- 5.3 The HGGT Delivery Team shall have its primary place of work at HDC. HDC shall provide office space, access, and employee welfare facilities to the HGGT Delivery Team which is sufficient to allow the HGGT Delivery Team to support the delivery of the Garden Town Purpose and the RIF Purpose.
- 5.4 The role of the HGGT Delivery Team is to:
- 5.4.1 support the Joint Committee to carry out the programme of coordinating and enabling work required for the delivery of the Joint Committee's primary aims as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference;
 - 5.4.2 support the allocation of Project Funding;
 - 5.4.3 manage the expenditure and recovery of Project Funding;
 - 5.4.4 monitor and report on delivery against the HGGT Budget;
 - 5.4.5 report to the Joint Committee about issues affecting the development of the HGGT.
- 5.5 The role of the HGGT Director shall be to:

- 5.5.1 lead the HGGT Partnership and deliver the objectives of the HGGT Joint Committee including leadership and management of the HGGT Delivery Team;
- 5.5.2 be the budget holder of the Recoverable Cost Funding and Project Funding in accordance with the Accountable Body's constitution and financial regulations;
- 5.5.3 prepare and maintain a three (3) year Business Plan to the Joint Committee (a Proposed Budget) setting out:
 - (i) the proposed level of Partner Authority Contributions;
 - (ii) the Recoverable Cost Funding required and how the Recoverable Cost Funding is to be allocated with respect to those three (3) Financial Years;
 - (iii) the allocation of project funding; and
 - (iv) The annual programme of enabling work to be carried out by the HGGT Delivery Team with objective for years 2 & 3.
- 5.5.4 prepare the Proposed Budget; and
- 5.5.5 chair meetings of the HGGT Delivery Team and the Executive Officer Group.

6 Not Used

7 Charges and Payment

- 7.1 The Partner Authorities agree that the Partner Authority Contribution shall be set at a level sufficient to cover the Recoverable Costs.
- 7.2 The Charges for the Services provided by the Accountable Body shall be funded by the Recoverable Cost Funding and shall be calculated in accordance with Schedule 4 (Charges).
- 7.3 Before the start of each Financial Year, the HGGT Director in consultation with the Partner Authorities will bring a report to the Joint Committee with proposals for the three (3) year business plan (a "**Proposed Budget**") as set out in clause 5.5.3.
- 7.4 Subject to approval by Joint Committee, the Accountable Body shall be entitled as part of the annual budget setting process by written notice, to vary Charges upwards or downwards, to reflect any change in its underlying cost base in the provision of the Services (or changes in the underlying cost base and margin of the Accountable Body). In making any such changes, Accountable Body shall act reasonably at all times.
- 7.5 The Accountable Body shall pay any Recoverable Costs from the cost centre held for such purpose within the Accountable Body's accounting records.

8 Change Request

- 8.1 If the outcome of a review pursuant to clause 6 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference results in a change to the nature, volume or execution of all or any of the

Services, the Partner Authorities shall submit details of the requested change in writing to the Accountable Body. Following the submission or receipt of a change request, the Accountable Body shall, within a reasonable time, provide a written estimate to the Partner Authorities of:

- 8.1.1 the time required to implement the change;
 - 8.1.2 any proposed variations to the Charges arising from the requested change;
 - 8.1.3 any other impact of the requested change on the Services or the terms of this Agreement.
- 8.2 The Accountable Body shall consider the request in good faith in accordance with its responsibilities under clause 3 but the Accountable Body shall (acting reasonably) be under no obligation to accept any requested change to the Services. The Accountable Body shall give its formal response within two (2) weeks of receipt of the change request. If the Partner Authorities cannot agree on the appropriate variation to the fees within four (4) weeks of agreeing the requested change, the matter shall be referred to the Chair of the Joint Committee and a nominated officer of the Accountable Body who shall attempt in good faith to resolve it.
- 8.3 The Accountable Body may, from time to time and without prior notice, change the Services in order to comply with any applicable regulatory or statutory requirements. Where practicable, it will give not less than three (3) months' written notice of any change (including any required variation to the Charges), but in any event, it will give notice of any such change within one (1) month of it taking effect.

9 Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

- 9.1 The Partner Authorities recognise that they are subject to legal duties which may require the release of information under the FOIA or any other applicable legislation governing access to information, and that they may be under an obligation to provide information to third parties on request. Such information may include matters relating to or arising out of this Agreement.
- 9.2 Each Partner Authority will assist the other to enable it to comply with its obligations and will ensure that any third parties acting on its behalf will also comply with the requirements of this clause 9. In the event that any Partner Authority receives a request for information under the FOIA or any other applicable legislation governing access to information and subject of such request or otherwise, the relevant Partner Authority will respond to any such request for assistance at its own cost and promptly, and in any event within five (5) days.
- 9.3 The Accountable Body, when in receipt of an FOIA addressed to or concerning the Joint Committee or Accountable Body, will consider the representations made by the relevant Partner Authorities. The Partner Authorities understand and acknowledge that, in such a case and as the recipient of the FOIA, the Accountable Body shall have the final determination of the response and disclosure required and the Partner Authorities agree to abide by that determination.

10 Intellectual Property

- 10.1 All Intellectual Property created by the Joint Committee, or by any of the Partner Authorities for the purposes of the Joint Committee or this Agreement, shall vest in

the Accountable Body on creation. The Accountable Body shall grant to the Partner Authorities a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive licence to use the Joint Committee Intellectual Property.

- 10.2 The Accountable Body shall grant, subject to the remainder of this clause 10 and for so long as the Accountable Body remains the Accountable Body, a non-exclusive licence to use such Accountable Body Intellectual Property as is necessary to allow the Joint Committee to enjoy the benefit of the Services provided by the Accountable Body. The Joint Committee and the Partner Authorities shall at all times maintain standards of quality equivalent to those used by the Accountable Body in relation to its Intellectual Property and shall comply with such reasonable instructions as may be notified to it by the Accountable Body in connection with the use of such Intellectual Property from time to time.
- 10.3 The Partner Authorities acknowledge that where the Accountable Body does not own the Intellectual Property, use by the Partner Authorities of rights in the Accountable Body's Intellectual Property is conditional on the Accountable Body obtaining a written licence (or sub-licence) from the relevant licensor or licensors on such terms as will entitle the Accountable Body to license such rights to the Partner Authorities.
- 10.4 Where the circumstances set out in clause 10.3 arise, the Accountable Body agrees to use its reasonable endeavours to enable the Partner Authorities to use the Intellectual Property required to enable them to enjoy the benefit of the Services.

11 Termination

- 11.1 This Agreement shall terminate on the date that the Joint Committee Terms of Reference terminate or expire.
- 11.2 This Agreement shall terminate on the date that the Partner Authority that is acting as Accountable Body ceases to be the Accountable Body pursuant to clause 3.6 for any reason, unless another Partner Authority is appointed to undertake the responsibilities of the Accountable Body.
- 11.3 In the event that a Partner Authority leaves the Joint Committee pursuant to paragraph 5.3 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference, that Partner Authority shall be deemed also to withdraw simultaneously from this Agreement. In such circumstances the withdrawing Partner Authority shall (to the extent that the law permits) comply with the Exit Provisions.

12 Consequences of Termination

- 12.1 Upon the termination of this Agreement or part thereof for any reason, the provisions of Schedule 6 (Consequences of Termination) shall apply.

13 Force Majeure

- 13.1 In the event that any Partner Authority is affected by any circumstances beyond its reasonable control ("an event of Force Majeure") the affected Partner Authority shall promptly notify the other Partner Authorities of the nature and extent of the circumstances in question.
- 13.2 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, no Partner Authority shall be deemed to be in breach of this Agreement or otherwise liable to the other for any delay in performance or the non-performance of any of its obligations under this

Agreement to the extent that the delay or non-performance is due to the occurrence of an event of Force Majeure of which it has notified the other Partner Authorities, and the time for performance of that obligation shall be extended accordingly.

14 Entire Agreement, Inter-Authority Agreement Review and Variations

- 14.1 This Agreement (including the documents and Schedules referred to in this Agreement) represents the entire agreement between the Partner Authorities in relation to the subject matter hereof and supersedes and replaces all prior agreements, communications, representations, warranties and undertakings between the Parties, whether oral or written.
- 14.2 The Partner Authorities agree that they shall together review this Agreement from time to time and shall agree such amendments to this Agreement as are necessary to reflect any changes in the circumstances of the Partner Authorities or any changes in the levels of benefit derived from this Agreement by the Partner Authorities. This review shall take place:
- 14.2.1 at least every five (5) years;
- 14.2.2 whenever a Party Authority gives notice of withdrawal under Schedule 5;
or
- 14.2.3 at such times as a Partner Authority may request on reasonable notice.
- 14.3 Subject to clause 14.4, amendments or variations to this Agreement shall only be effective if, and to the extent that, they are endorsed by the Joint Committee and approved by all Partner Authorities. Any amendments or variations shall be recorded in writing and signed by authorised representatives of each Partner Authority.
- 14.4 Variations in respect of Charges, including but not limited to the annual budget setting process, shall be recorded in writing and signed by authorised representatives of each Partner Authority.

15 Assignment

- 15.1 None of the Accountable Body or the Partner Authorities shall be entitled to assign or transfer any of its rights or obligations arising under this Agreement without the prior written consent of all other Partner Authorities.

16 Notices

- 16.1 A notice given to a party under or in connection with this Agreement shall be in writing and:
- 16.1.1 shall be delivered by hand, pre-paid first-class post, recorded delivery or special delivery in each case sent for the attention of the person, and to the postal address given in clause 16.2 (or such other address or person as the relevant party may notify to the other party); or
- 16.1.2 shall be sent by electronic mail to the email address given in clause 16.2 (or such other address or person as the relevant party may notify to the other party).
- 16.2 The addresses for service of notices are:

Accountable Body

Address: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ

Email: asmall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

For the attention of: Andrew Small

Partner Authorities

(1) Address: East Hertfordshire District Council of Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

Email: sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

For the attention of: Sara Saunders - Head of Planning

(2) Address: Harlow District Council of Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, College Square, Harlow CM20 1WG

Email: simon.hill@harlow.gov.uk

For the attention of: Simon Hill

(3) Address: Essex County Council of County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

Email: mark.doran@essex.gov.uk

For the attention of: Mark Doran, Director – Sustainable Growth

(4) Address: Hertfordshire County Council of County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DQ

Email: quentin.baker@hertfordshire.gov.uk

For the attention of: Quentin Baker, Monitoring Officer

16.3 Delivery of a notice is deemed to have taken place:

16.3.1 if delivered by hand, at the time the notice is left at the address or if sent by post on the second Business Day after posting, unless such deemed receipt would occur outside business hours, in which case deemed receipt will occur at 9.00 am on the next working day;

16.3.2 if sent by electronic mail, at the time actually received provided that any notice sent by electronic mail outside business hours shall be deemed to have been given at 9:00 am on the next working day.

For the purposes of this clause 16.3, business hours means 9.00 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday on each day that is not a public holiday.

16.4 This clause 16 does not apply to the service of any proceedings or other documents in any legal action.

17 Data Protection

- 17.1 The Parties shall comply with their obligations under the Data Protection Legislation and the Data Sharing Schedule in the performance of their obligations under this Agreement.

18 Disputes

- 18.1 If a dispute arises out of or in connection with this Agreement or the performance validity or enforcement of if (a “Dispute”) then the Partner Authorities shall follow the procedure set out in this clause:

18.1.1 either Partner Authority shall give to the other written notice of the Dispute, setting out its nature and full particulars (Dispute Notice), together with relevant supporting documents. On service of the Dispute Notice, the Heads of Finance of the Partner Authorities shall attempt in good faith to resolve the Dispute;

18.1.2 if the Heads of Finance of the Partner Authorities are for any reason unable to resolve the Dispute within fourteen (14) days of service of the Dispute Notice, the Dispute shall be referred to the Directors of Finance of the Partner Authorities who shall attempt in good faith to resolve it; and

18.1.3 if the Directors of Finance of the Partner Authorities are for any reason unable to resolve the Dispute within fourteen (14) days of it being referred to them, the Dispute shall be referred to the Chief Executives of the Partner Authorities; and

18.1.4 if the Chief Executives of the Partner Authorities are for any reason unable to resolve the Dispute within fourteen (14) days of it being referred to them, the parties will attempt to settle it by mediation in accordance with the CEDR Model Mediation Procedure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the mediator shall be nominated by CEDR Solve. To initiate the mediation, a party must serve notice in writing (ADR notice) to the other party to the Dispute, requesting a mediation. A copy of the ADR notice should be sent to CEDR Solve. The mediation will start not later than twenty eight (28) days after the date of the ADR notice.

- 18.2** The commencement of mediation shall not prevent the parties commencing or continuing court proceedings in relation to the Dispute under clause 20.2 which shall apply at all times.

- 18.3** If the Dispute is not resolved within fourteen (14) days after service of the ADR notice, or either party fails to participate or to continue to participate in the mediation before the expiration of the said period of fourteen (14) days, or the mediation terminates before the expiration of the said period of fourteen (14) days, the Dispute shall be finally resolved by the courts of England and Wales in accordance with clause 20.2.

19 General

- 19.1 A waiver of any right or remedy by a Partner Authority under this Agreement shall only be effective if given in writing and shall not be considered to be a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or any other provision.

19.2 In the event that any provision of this Agreement is held by a competent authority to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, the validity of the remainder of the provision in question and the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

19.3 Third parties shall not have any rights whatsoever to take any action under or in relation to this Agreement and, accordingly, all rights that are or may be conferred on such third parties pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 are hereby expressly excluded.

20 Governing law and Jurisdiction

20.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

20.2 Each party irrevocably agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales over any claim or matter arising under or in connection with this Agreement (including any non-contractual dispute or claim).

21 Counterparts

21.1 This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts and by the several parties to it on separate counterparts, each of which when so executed shall constitute an original of this Agreement, but all counterparts together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

This agreement has been entered into as a deed on the date stated at the beginning of it.

The common seal of
EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Was affixed in the presence of:

Authorised signatory

The common seal of
EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
was affixed in the presence of:

Attesting Officer

The common seal of
HARLOW DISTRICT COUNCIL
was affixed in the presence of:

Duly Authorised Officer

The common seal of
ESSEX COUNTY AUTHORITY
was affixed in the presence of:

Attesting Officer
Date

The common seal of
HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
was affixed in the presence of:

Authorised Signatory



SCHEDULE 1

DEFINITIONS

In this Agreement the words and expressions set out below shall have the meanings set out below (unless the context requires otherwise):

Accountable Body means EFDC, or such other Partner Authority as may be appointed pursuant to this Agreement, which has responsibility under this Agreement for holding the Project Funding and the Recoverable Cost Funding and providing the Services including ensuring that expenditure is spent in accordance with all legal requirements.

Agreement means this agreement that sets out the services to be delivered by the Accountable Body and the respective roles, responsibilities and behaviours of the Partner Authorities.

Assets means any assets held by the Accountable Body on behalf of the Joint Committee from time to time, being at the date of this Agreement four (4) cargo bikes.

Assurance Framework means the Financial Regulations of the Accountable Body, which shall be applied to manage the Project Funding until such time as alternative arrangements shall be adopted and incorporated into this Agreement.

Charges means the charges (including Recoverable Costs) which become due and payable by the Partner Authorities to the Accountable Body in respect of the Services provided under this Agreement, as such charges are set out in Schedule 4 (Charges).

Contracts means any contracts entered into by the Accountable Body on behalf of the Joint Committee from time to time.

Data Sharing Schedule means the obligations of the Parties as set out in Schedule 8 (Data Sharing Schedule).

Data Protection Legislation means: (a) the GDPR, the LED and any applicable national implementing Laws as amended from time to time; (b) the DPA to the extent that it relates to processing of personal data and privacy; and (c) all applicable Law about the processing of personal data and privacy.

DPA means the Data Protection Act 2018;

Executive Officer Group means an officer group established by the Partner Authorities made up of one (1) senior officer from each Partner Authority and which is chaired by the HGGT Director.

Exit Provisions means the exit plan and provisions set out at Schedule 5 (Exit Provisions) which shall be used in the event of termination of this Agreement for any reason in whole or in part.

Financial Year means during the continuance of the Agreement any period commencing on 1 April and ending on the following 31 March.

FOIA means the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and any subordinate legislation made under the Act from time to time, together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant government department in relation to such legislation.

Garden Town Purpose means providing the leadership required to deliver the spatial growth and infrastructure proposals set out in the Local Plans of HDC, EHDC and EFDC, supported by ECC and HCC to align and maximise the opportunities for new residents and the existing residents and communities in Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire.

GDPR means the General Data Protection Regulations 2016, Regulation (EU) 2016/679 as implemented in UK law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and any United Kingdom Act or European Union Regulation recognised in UK law substantially replacing the same.

HGGT means the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town located to the north of London in the district council areas of Harlow, East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest and in the counties of Hertfordshire and Essex which will co-ordinate and enable new homes, modal shift and associated infrastructure in and around Harlow with four new strategic sites being Gilston, East Harlow, Latton Priory and Water Lane which shall be connected via the STC Network.

HGGT Area means the area of the HGGT as delineated in red on the map at Schedule 2 (HGGT Area).

HGGT Budget means the agreed budget for the Recoverable Cost Funding and the Project Funding once agreed by the Joint Committee.

HGGT Delivery Team means the employees employed by the Accountable Body on behalf of the Partner Authorities for the purposes of supporting the Joint Committee and carrying out the programme of enabling work required for the delivery of the objectives set out in this Agreement and which shall include the Independent Facilitator and the HGGT Director.

HGGT Director means an officer employed by the Accountable Body on behalf of the Partner Authorities for the purposes of leading the HGGT Partnership of 5 partner authorities and delivering the objectives of the HGGT Joint Committee including leadership and management of the HGGT Delivery Team and chairing the Executive Officer Group

HIG Funding means the funding made available or to be made available by Homes England to HCC under the terms of a Grant Determination Agreement dated 31 March 2021 for the purposes of application towards the expenditure of delivering or procuring the delivery of infrastructure works and dwellings in the HGGT.

Independent Facilitator means a person appointed by the Joint Committee in accordance with paragraph 10.4 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.

Intellectual Property means all patents, rights to inventions, copyright and related rights, database rights, rights in designs, trademarks, know-how, trade secrets and other similar or equivalent rights or forms of protection (whether registered or unregistered) and all applications (or rights to apply) for, and for renewals and extensions of such rights as may now or in the future exist anywhere in the world.

Joint Committee means the joint committee constituted through the Joint Committee Terms of Reference between the Partner Authorities.

Joint Committee Intellectual Property means any and all Intellectual Property created through the work of, or as directed by, the Joint Committee.

Joint Committee Terms of Reference means the terms of reference in relation to the HGGT agreed between the Partner Authorities and Joint Committee and set out in Schedule 10, which sets out the duties and obligations, roles and responsibilities of the Partner Authorities in relation to delivery of Joint Committee's objectives.

Law means any law, statute, subordinate legislation within the meaning of section 21(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978, bye-law, enforceable right within the meaning of section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972, regulation, order, mandatory guidance or code of practice, judgment of a relevant court of law, or directives or requirements of any regulatory body with which Accountable Body is bound to comply.

LED means Law Enforcement Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/680).

Lead Officer means an officer employed by each Partner Authority to work to progress the work of the HGGT.

Memorandum of Understanding means the memorandum of understanding between the Partner Authorities set out in Schedule 9 to this Agreement, signed by each of the Partner Authorities on different dates in February and March 2022. In interpreting the Memorandum of Understanding, the definitions set out in that Schedule shall apply.

Partner Authority Contribution in each Financial Year means a financial contribution which a Partner Authority has agreed to make to the Recoverable Cost Funding.

Partner Authority means each party or the parties (as the case may be) to this Agreement.

Project Funding means Developer Contributions and any other funding contributions which are to be used for the delivery of the HGGT schemes and work programme as agreed by the Joint Committee.

Project Sponsor Funding means a payment of Project Funding to a Partner Authority for the purposes of delivering an element of the HGGT.

Proposed Budget has the meaning given to it in clause 7.3.

Recoverable Costs means costs incurred by the Accountable Body in the provision of the Services which shall include:

- a) the cost of the Services, the cost of insurance, the cost of the HGGT Delivery Team, the cost of the HGGT Director, and such other funding as is required to cover the agreed programme of work; and
- b) third party costs incurred by the Accountable Body to which no value is added by the Accountable Body, including, but not limited to, any costs, fees, or charges paid pursuant to the Contracts.

Recoverable Cost Funding means the funding needed to cover the Recoverable Costs.

RIF means the rolling infrastructure fund which shall comprise, as a minimum, the HIG Repayment Funding and the Developer Contributions, principally for the purposes of forward funding and completing the STC Network, which shall be held on behalf of the Joint Committee by the accountable body appointed by the Partner Authorities pursuant to clause 3.3 and clause 4.6.5.

RIF Purpose means work to further develop the principles and processes set out in the Memorandum of Understanding at:

- a) Clause 2 (Establishment of the Rolling Infrastructure Fund)
- b) Clause 3 (Rolling Infrastructure Fund Governance)
- c) Clause 4 (Initial Projects – Forward Funding)
- d) Clause 5 (Initial Projects – Recovery of Contributions)
- e) Clause 6 (Subsequent Projects)
- f) Clause 7 (Fund Holders’ Obligations)
- g) Clause 9 (Review and Development of the RIF).

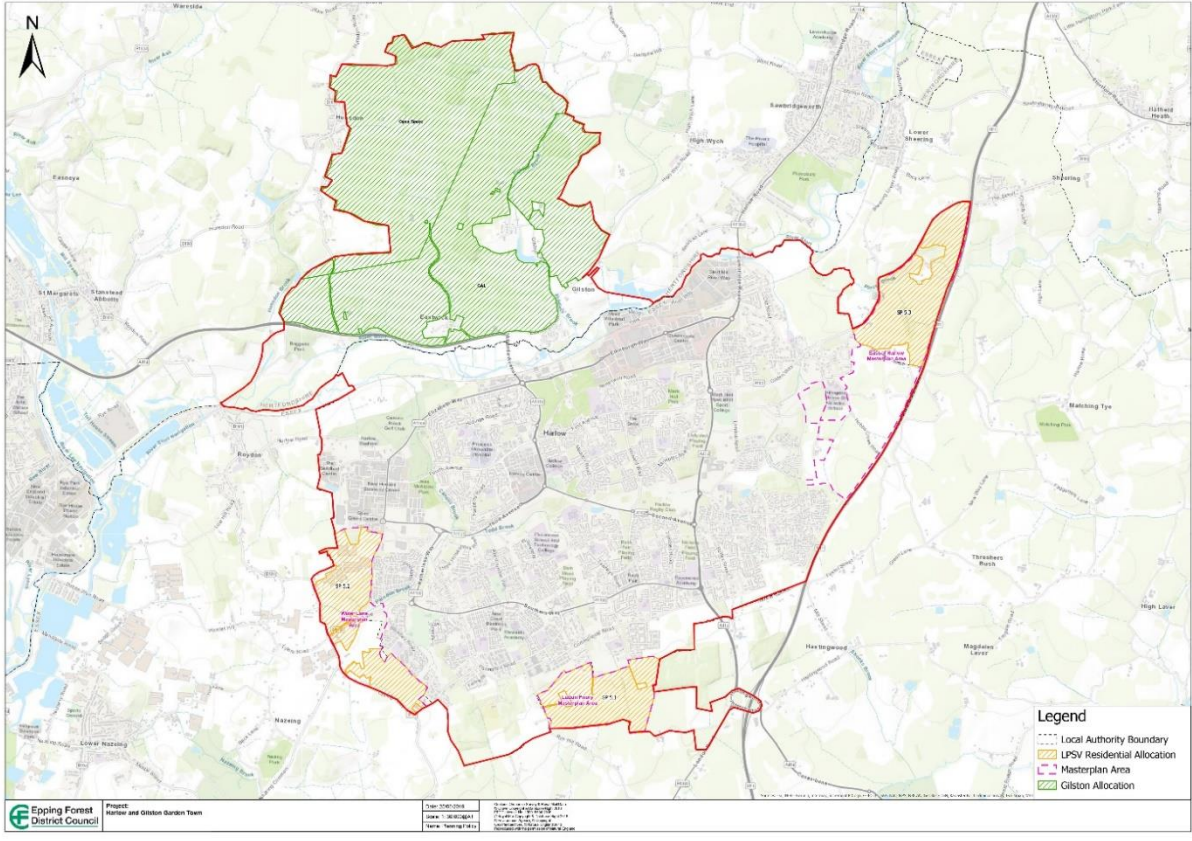
S151 Officer means the officer appointed by the Accountable Body for the proper administration of its financial affairs under s151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Services means the services to be provided by the Accountable Body as set out in Schedule 3 (Services).

STC Network means the sustainable transport corridors and other specific highway improvements which will connect the four strategic sites forming the HGGT and support the delivery of sustainable residential development as detailed in the Adopted Local Plans of EHDC and HDC and the draft local plan of EFDC.

SCHEDULE 2

HGGT Area



SCHEDULE 3

SERVICES

Core on-going Services required to ensure that the Accountable Body can provide the required due diligence in providing financial and legal oversight to the Partnership

Democratic Services

Publishing Agendas and minutes

Legal Services

Support on all matters relating to contracting, report comment and supporting meetings of the Joint Committee as required including Joint Committee specific advice to the Accountable Body

People Services

Support on all HR matter relating to recruitment and management of the HGGT Delivery Team and the HGGT Director

Support for Learning & Development and retention of the HGGT Delivery Team and the HGGT Director

Technology Services

Core Service including annual licences for Microsoft, Oracle plus a data consumption allowance

Provision of Laptop, mobile phone (if required as agreed by HGGT Director) licences and set up of new users

Service support as part of Core Service

Finance Services

Budget Holder Support, including support for in-year forecasting and budget preparation
Preparation of budget and forecast summaries to support reporting to the Board on a quarterly basis

Preparation of the annual accounts of the partnership and support the Audit of the Accounts

Financial advice to the Partnership; Review and comment on the Board papers; provide briefings for the Section 151 officer and the Accountable Body representative

Treasury Management

Internal Audit

Annual Audit of Governance and Funding arrangements of the Partnership

External Audit

Audit of the Partnership Accounts if required

Insurance

No specific insurance required but HGGT employees covered under Accountable Body arrangements

SCHEDULE 4

ANNUAL CHARGES

Costs based on typical on-going service requirements set out above

Service	Primary Role	Cost	Comments
Democratic Services	Democratic Services Manager	£652	Support for publishing Agendas & minutes and attending four (4) meetings in person per year
Legal Services	Supervising Associate	£1 538	Support for four meetings per annum
People Services	People Business Partner	£954	Support for quarterly meetings per annum
Technology Services	Technology Services	£1 361	Excludes costs of licences
Finance Services	Finance Business Partner with oversight from Senior Finance Business Partner as required	£7 224	Support for monthly meetings with HGGT Director and adhoc advice
Internal Audit Services	Senior Auditor	£ 560	
External Audit Services	External procurement	tba	To be agreed when/if required for capital fund monitoring
Insurance	Accountable Body existing arrangements will cover	Nil	
TOTAL		£12,289	

SCHEDULE 5

EXIT PROVISIONS

1. In the event of any one or more Partner Authority giving notice to withdraw from the Joint Committee pursuant to paragraph 5.3 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference then:
 - a. the Joint Committee shall (unless an earlier date is agreed) meet within one month of the service of any such notice of withdrawal for the purpose of preparing an implementation plan for the withdrawal;
 - b. the Partner Authorities shall each act reasonably in co-operating with each other and facilitate the disaggregation of the Joint Committee in such a manner (including entering into any transitional arrangements) so as to:
 - i. cause the least disruption;
 - ii. agree arrangements for the transfer of staff and avoid redundancies wherever possible;
 - iii. facilitate the transfer of data and records; and
 - iv. mitigate costs so far as practicable.
2. Save as mentioned in paragraph 3:
 - a. the Partner Authority giving notice of withdrawal from the Joint Committee (or if there is more than one such Partner Authority then each of them in equal shares) shall bear all costs arising out of or in connection with such withdrawal and shall indemnify the remaining Partner Authorities against all costs and expenses incurred or to be incurred by them arising out of or in connection with that withdrawal including (without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing):
 - i. costs of redundancy or re-deployment of any staff;
 - ii. termination of any lease or licence for the occupation of any premises or use of any equipment including ICT hardware or software agreements (all such matters to be at the discretion of the Partner Authorities other than those that have given notice to withdraw from the Joint Committee);
 - iii. procurement of any alternative accommodation or relocation of any services or staff; procurement implementation or reconfiguration of any equipment, ICT hardware or software reasonably required for the provision of the on-going shared service by the remaining Partner Authorities;
 - iv. preparation, disaggregation and transfer of any data and records;
 - v. staff costs and administrative overheads in connection with any of the above.

- b. The Partner Authority giving notice of withdrawal (or if there is more than one such Partner Authority then each of them) shall be liable for the costs set out in paragraph 2(a) as if they had not given notice of termination until the later of three years after the date of its withdrawal from the Joint Committee.
 - c. If the Accountable Body ceases to be Accountable Body but remains a Partner Authority, then the provisions paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b) shall not apply unless and until that party withdraws as a Partner Authority.
3. In the event that:
- a. all the Partner Authorities agree to discontinue the Joint Committee; or
 - b. one or more Partner Authorities have given notice of withdrawal pursuant to paragraph 5.3 of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference and there are not at least two Partner Authorities wishing to continue with the provision of the Joint Committee,
- then the Partner Authorities shall cooperate to close the Joint Committee and:
- c. all costs as mentioned in paragraph 2 above shall be deemed to be costs of the Joint Committee and apportioned equally amongst all the Partner Authorities; and
 - d. the Partner Authorities shall seek to agree how any Assets held by the Accountable Body at the date of termination of this Agreement should be distributed between them.

SCHEDULE 6

CONSEQUENCES OF TERMINATION

Upon termination of this Agreement howsoever caused and for whatever reason:

1. All amounts due under this Agreement to the Accountable Body (in its role as Accountable Body) including amounts which have accrued but have not yet been invoiced by the Accountable Body shall become immediately due and payable by the relevant Partner Authorities.
2. The Accountable Body shall repay to the relevant Partner Authorities any Charges paid by such Partner Authorities in respect of Services not received at the date of termination.
3. The Partner Authorities shall have no claim against Accountable Body for compensation for loss of profit, loss of goodwill or any similar loss.
4. Any access to a Partner Authority's IT systems by any other Partner Authority shall cease immediately and each Partner Authority shall return any equipment, materials or property belonging to any other Partner Authority as soon as practically possible and in any event within one month from the date of termination unless the parties agree otherwise.
5. Any right or licence by the Accountable Body to the Joint Committee or the Partner Authorities to use the Accountable Body's Intellectual Property shall cease to have effect unless the parties agree otherwise.
6. Each Partner Authority shall return any Accountable Body equipment within a reasonable time, and in any event within one month from the date of termination, unless the parties agree otherwise.
7. Subject as otherwise provided in this Agreement and to any rights or obligations which have accrued prior to termination, no Partner Authority shall have any further obligation to the other Partner Authorities under this Agreement.

SCHEDULE 7

NOT USED



SCHEDULE 8

DATA SHARING SCHEDULE

(1) Background

The Partner Authorities have determined that they are Joint Controllers in relation to the Shared Personal Data and accordingly this Data Sharing Schedule sets out the arrangements between them for the purposes of the Data Protection Legislation. The parties agree to share and use Personal Data with each other within the UK for the Agreed Purposes on the terms set out in the Agreement and this Data Sharing Schedule.

(2) Agreed terms

1 INTERPRETATION

The following definitions and rules of interpretation apply in this Data Sharing Schedule.

“Agreed Purposes”	has the meaning given to it in paragraph 2 of this Data Sharing Schedule.
"Business Day"	a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday in England when banks are open for business.
"Commencement Date"	has the meaning given at the beginning of the Agreement.
"Criminal Offence Data"	means Personal Data relating to criminal convictions and offences or related security measures to be read in accordance with section 11(2) of the DPA 2018.
"Data Protection Legislation"	all applicable data protection and privacy legislation in force from time to time in the UK including the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any successor legislation.
“EIR”	the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, as amended from time to time.
“GDPR/UK GDPR”	has the meaning given to it in section 3(10) (as supplemented by section 205(4)) of the Data Protection Act.

2018.

“FOIA”	the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as amended from time to time.
“ICO”	means the Information Commissioner’s Office or any replacement or successor supervisory body within the United Kingdom.
“Personal Data Breach”	a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to the Shared Personal Data.
“Public Authority”	shall have the meaning as set out in section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2018.
“Shared Personal Data”	the Personal Data to be shared between the parties under paragraph 3 of this Data Sharing Schedule.
“Special Category Personal Data”	the categories of Personal Data set out in Article 9(1) of the UK GDPR.
“Subject Access Request”	the exercise by a data subject of his or her rights under Article 15 of the UK GDPR and the DPA 2018.
“Term”	the timeframe from the Commencement Date up until the Agreed Purposes have been fulfilled.

- 1.1 Controller, Joint Controllers, Processor, Data Subject, Personal Data, Processing, and appropriate technical and organisational measures shall have the meanings given to them in the Data Protection Legislation.
- 1.2 Paragraph headings shall not affect the interpretation of this Data Sharing Schedule.
- 1.3 Unless the context otherwise requires, words in the singular shall include the plural and in the plural shall include the singular and a reference to one gender shall include a reference to the other genders. A reference to a company shall include any company, corporation or other body corporate, wherever and however incorporated or established.
- 1.4 A reference to a statute or statutory provision shall include all subordinate legislation made from time to time under that statute or statutory provision.

1.5 A reference to writing or written includes email but not fax.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 This Data Sharing Schedule sets out the framework for the sharing of Personal Data when a Partner Authority (the “**Data Discloser**”) discloses Personal Data to the other Joint Controllers (the “**Data Receiver(s)**”). It defines the principles and procedures that the parties shall adhere to and the responsibilities the parties owe to each other.
- 2.2 Each Partner Authority is a Public Authority and considers this data sharing initiative necessary to progress the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Project which will benefit the local population of East Hertfordshire through the creation of new accommodation, schools, employment as well as improved infrastructure and town centre enhancement and regeneration.
- 2.3 The Partner Authorities agree to only process Shared Personal Data, for the following purposes and by the following means:
- 2.3.1 To facilitate public and organisational consultations and newsletters / updates / HGGT Communications. To allow FOI requests relevant to HGGT to be enacted. To allow data collected on behalf of HGGT to be enacted. To facilitate public and organisational consultations and newsletters / updates / HGGT Communications. To allow FOI requests relevant to HGGT to be enacted. To allow data collected on behalf of HGGT to be accessed and used by all Partner Authorities. To allow Health and Safety obligations to staff working on the HGGT project to be met.
- 2.3.2 Sharing data would be electronic, via emails with spreadsheets, Word documents and databases via phone calls or in person / via hard copy. Shared electronic filing systems may also be developed.

The Partner Authorities shall not process Shared Personal Data in a way that is incompatible with the purposes described in this paragraph.

- 2.4 Notwithstanding paragraph 2.3, if and to the extent that the Partner Authorities determine in respect of any Processing of Personal Data that the relationship between them is not one of Joint Controllers because it is between Controllers, or between Controllers and Processors, then they will cooperate in agreeing and documenting appropriate arrangements for that other relationship or those other relationships

3 SHARED PERSONAL DATA

- 3.1 The following types of Personal Data will be shared between the Partner Authorities during the Term of the Agreement:
- 3.1.1 employee contact details from each of the parties;
- 3.1.2 complainants and other individuals in relation to a complaint or query;

- 3.1.3 job applicants and their current and former staff and volunteers; and referee contact details
- 3.1.4 contractors and other professionals appointed to assist with the Agreed Purposes; and
- 3.1.5 visitors to their websites.
- 3.1.6 Consultation responses with the public carried out by or relating to the HGGT project including surveys of individuals or businesses or monitoring of services
- 3.2 Special Category Personal Data and Criminal Offence Data will not be shared between the Partner Authorities for the Agreed Purposes.
- 3.3 The Shared Personal Data must not be irrelevant or excessive with regard to the Agreed Purposes.

4 LAWFUL, FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSING; JOINT CONTROLLER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Each Partner Authority shall ensure that it processes the Shared Personal Data fairly and lawfully in accordance with paragraph 4.3 during the Term of the Agreement.
- 4.2 Each Partner Authority shall comply with all the obligations imposed on a controller under the Data Protection Legislation, and any material breach of the Data Protection Legislation by one Partner Authority shall, if not remedied within 30 days of written notice from one or more Partner Authorities, give grounds to that Partner Authority to terminate its participation in this Data Sharing Schedule with immediate effect.
- 4.3 Each Partner Authority shall ensure that it has legitimate grounds under the Data Protection Legislation for the processing of Shared Personal Data.
- 4.4 The Data Discloser shall, in respect of Shared Personal Data, ensure that it provides clear and sufficient information to the Data Subjects, in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, of the purposes for which it will process their Personal Data, the legal basis for such purposes and such other information as is required by Article 13 of the GDPR including if Shared Personal Data will be transferred to a third party, that fact and sufficient information about such transfer and the purpose of such transfer to enable the data subject to understand the purpose and risks of such transfer
- 4.5 The Data Receivers undertake to inform the Data Subjects, in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, of the purposes for which it will process their Personal Data, the legal basis for such purposes and such other information as is required by Article 14 of the GDPR including if Shared Personal Data will be transferred to a third party, that fact and sufficient information about such transfer and the purpose of such transfer to enable the Data Subject to understand the purpose and risks of such transfer.
- 4.6 Each Partner Authority shall comply with its obligations under Article 26 of the GDPR and shall make available to Data Subjects the essence of the arrangements

contemplated by this Data Sharing Schedule, acknowledge that Data Subjects may exercise their rights under the GDPR in respect of and against each and agree to provide to each other party such cooperation as may reasonably be required to assist that other party in compliance with its obligations under Article 26 of the GDPR.

5 DATA SUBJECTS' RIGHTS

- 5.1 The Partner Authorities each agree to provide such assistance as is reasonably required to enable the other parties to comply with requests from Data Subjects to exercise their rights under the Data Protection Legislation within the time limits imposed by the Data Protection Legislation.
- 5.2 Each Partner Authority is responsible for maintaining a record of individual requests for information, the decisions made and any information that was exchanged. Records must include copies of the request for information, details of the data accessed and shared and where relevant, notes of any meeting, correspondence or phone calls relating to the request.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding the foregoing, each Partner Authority acknowledges and accepts that each other party is subject to the requirements of the FOIA and EIR and shall assist and cooperate with the other Partner Authorities to facilitate any required disclosure under the FOIA and EIR and UK GDPR.

6 DATA RETENTION AND DELETION

- 6.1 The Data Receivers shall not retain or process Shared Personal Data for longer than is necessary to carry out the Agreed Purposes.
- 6.2 Notwithstanding paragraph 6.1, the Partner Authorities shall continue to retain Shared Personal Data in accordance with any statutory or professional retention periods applicable to local authorities.
- 6.3 The Data Receiver shall ensure that any Shared Personal Data are returned to the Data Discloser or destroyed on termination or expiry of the Agreement, termination of the Data Discloser's participation in the provision of this Data Sharing Schedule, or once processing of the Shared Personal Data is no longer necessary for the Agreed Purposes.
- 6.4 Following the deletion of Shared Personal Data in accordance with paragraph 6.3, the Data Receivers shall notify the Data Discloser that the Shared Personal Data in question has been deleted.

7 INTERNATIONAL DATA TRANSFERS

The Partner Authorities shall not make a transfer of Personal Data outside the EEA.

8 SECURITY AND TRAINING

- 8.1 The Partner Authorities shall only provide the Shared Personal Data to the other Partner Authorities by methods that afford the proper protection and privacy to the Shared Personal Data.
- 8.2 The Partner Authorities each undertake to have in place (and to regularly review and update) throughout the Term appropriate technical and organisational security measures, taking into account the cost of implementation and the state of the technological development, to:
- 8.2.1 prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of the Shared Personal Data and the accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, the Shared Personal Data; and
- 8.2.2 ensure a level of security appropriate to the harm that might result from such unauthorised or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage; and the nature of the Shared Personal Data to be protected.
- 8.3 Each Partner Authority shall ensure that its staff members are appropriately trained to handle and process the Shared Personal Data in accordance with this paragraph and any other applicable data protection laws.

9 PERSONAL DATA BREACHES AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

- 9.1 Each Partner Authority shall comply with its obligation to report a Personal Data Breach to the ICO and (where applicable) data subjects under Article 33 of the GDPR and shall each inform the other parties of any Personal Data Breach irrespective of whether there is a requirement to notify the ICO or data subject(s).
- 9.2 The Partner Authorities each agree to provide reasonable assistance as is necessary to each other to facilitate the handling of any Personal Data Breach in an expeditious and compliant manner.

10 REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF DATA SHARING SCHEDULE

- 10.1 The Partner Authorities shall review the effectiveness of this Data Sharing Schedule regularly and on the addition and removal of a party, having consideration to the aims and purposes set out in paragraph 2. The Partner Authorities shall continue, amend or terminate the Data Sharing Schedule depending on the outcome of this review.
- 10.2 Each Partner Authority reserves its rights to inspect any other Partner Authority's arrangements for the processing of Shared Personal Data and to terminate the Partner Authority's participation in the Data Sharing Schedule where it considers that another Partner Authority is not processing the Shared Personal Data in accordance with this Data Sharing Schedule.
- 10.3 In the event that any Partner Authority terminates its participation, or has its participation terminated, in this Data Sharing Schedule, its obligations under the Agreement (with the exception of this Schedule 8) shall continue unaffected.

11 RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES WITH DATA SUBJECTS OR THE ICO

- 11.1 In the event of a dispute or claim brought by a data subject or the ICO concerning the processing of Shared Personal Data against any or all of the Partner Authorities, the Partner Authorities will inform each other about any such disputes or claims, and will cooperate with a view to settling them amicably in a timely fashion.
- 11.2 The Partner Authorities agree to respond to any generally available non-binding mediation procedure initiated by a data subject or by the ICO. If they do participate in the proceedings, the Partner Authorities may elect to do so remotely (such as by telephone or other electronic means). The Partner Authorities also agree to consider participating in any other arbitration, mediation or other dispute resolution proceedings developed for data protection disputes.
- 11.3 Each Partner Authority shall abide by a decision of a competent court of the Data Discloser's country of establishment or of the ICO.

12 WARRANTIES

- 12.1 Each Partner Authority warrants and undertakes that it will:
- 12.1.1 Process the Shared Personal Data in compliance with all applicable laws, enactments, regulations, orders, standards and other similar instruments that apply to its personal data processing operations;
 - 12.1.2 make available on request to the Data Subjects who are third party beneficiaries a copy of this Data Sharing Schedule, unless the Data Sharing Schedule contains confidential information;
 - 12.1.3 respond within five (5) working days and as far as reasonably possible to enquiries from the ICO in relation to the Shared Personal Data;
 - 12.1.4 respond to Subject Access Requests in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation;
 - 12.1.5 where applicable, maintain registration and/or pay the appropriate fees with all ICO to process all Shared Personal Data for and by the Agreed Purpose; and
 - 12.1.6 take all appropriate steps to ensure compliance with the security measures set out in paragraph 8 above.
- 12.2 The Partner Authorities warrant and undertake that it (when acting as a Data Discloser) is entitled to provide the Shared Personal Data to the Data Receivers and it will ensure that the Shared Personal Data is accurate and will continually monitor and update the Shared Personal Data where necessary.
- 12.3 Except as expressly stated in this Data Sharing Schedule, all warranties, conditions and terms, whether express or implied by statute, common law or otherwise are hereby excluded to the extent permitted by law.

13 INDEMNITY

Each Partner Authority shall indemnify the others (to the extent and proportion that each indemnified party is not at fault) against all liabilities, costs, expenses, damages and losses (including but not limited to any direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect or consequential losses, and all interest, penalties and legal costs and all other reasonable and properly professional costs and expenses) suffered or incurred by the indemnified party arising out of the breach of the Data Protection Legislation or this Data Sharing Schedule by the indemnifying party, its employees or agents, provided that the indemnified party gives to the indemnifier prompt notice of such claim, full information about the circumstances giving rise to it, reasonable assistance in dealing with the claim and sole authority to manage, defend and/or settle it.

SCHEDULE 9

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

relating to

THE HARLOW & GILSTON GARDEN TOWN ROLLING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

PARTIES

- (1) EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
- (2) EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
- (3) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
- (4) HARLOW DISTRICT COUNCIL
- (5) HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

each a “**Council**”, and together “**the Councils**”.

INTRODUCTION

- A The Councils are collaborating to facilitate the delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (“**Garden Town**”).
- B HCC, on behalf of all the Councils, successfully submitted a bid to the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (acting through Homes England) for approximately £171 million funding of the Housing Investment Grant to forward fund infrastructure in the Garden Town area. HCC subsequently entered into the Grant Determination Agreement in respect of the funding.
- C In the Grant Determination Agreement, HCC committed to the establishment of a Rolling Infrastructure Fund (“**RIF**”), through which the HIG Funding would be recovered from developers and made available for forward funding of and completing the wider Garden Town sustainable transport corridor network and

other infrastructure in the Garden Town area; where possible that funding would also be recycled, creating a rolling basis for infrastructure investment.

- D The Councils are entering into this Memorandum of Understanding (“**Memorandum**”) to record and set out the basis on which they will collaborate with each other to establish and operate the RIF.
- E The Councils acknowledge that the arrangements described in this Memorandum will require development over time, to reflect both changing circumstances and the further detail the parties will need to agree in due course in respect of operation and governance of the RIF. Any such development will be subject to agreement of all the Councils.

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Memorandum, the following terms shall have the meanings given below:

“Agreed Proportions”	has the meaning given in paragraph 5.2
“CIL”	means a community infrastructure levy or similar
“District Councils”	means, together, East Hertfordshire District Council, Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council (and “District Council” means each of them)
“Garden Town Board”	means the board established by the Councils, and including a representative from each Council, to promote and facilitate cooperative working to oversee delivery of the Garden Town
“Garden Town Development”	means a development or proposed development within the area of the Garden Town for which a planning application is (or has been) submitted
“Grant Determination Agreement”	means the agreement dated 31 March 2021 and entered into between HCC and Homes England relating to provision of the HIG Funding
“HCC”	means Hertfordshire County Council
“HIG Bid”	means the bid for the HIG Funding, as referred to in paragraph B of the Introduction to this Memorandum
“HIG Funding”	means the funding made available or to be made available to HCC by Homes England under the Grant Determination Agreement secured by the Councils from the Housing Investment Grant towards the Initial Projects, which as at the date of this Memorandum is expected to be in the region of £171 million

“Infrastructure Delivery Plan”	means the infrastructure delivery plan developed jointly by the Councils in relation to Garden Town infrastructure, as updated from time to time
“Initial Projects”	has the meaning given in paragraph 4.1
“Section 106 Obligations”	means planning obligations imposed by a Council under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
“STC”	means the Sustainable Transport Corridor network intended to be created at the Garden Town

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROLLING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

- 2.1 Each Council agrees to the establishment of the RIF.
- 2.2 Each Council agrees that the RIF will be built from payments secured by the Councils from developers of Garden Town Developments in contribution to the cost of the STC and other Garden Town infrastructure, in accordance with this Memorandum. The first such payments will arise in respect of the Initial Projects, which will be unlocked by the HIG Funding.
- 2.3 For practical reasons, the RIF will not initially be held by a single entity. Each Council that receives relevant payments from developers will hold those sums as a separately-identifiable interest-bearing fund. The aggregate of all such funds will constitute the RIF.
- 2.4 The Councils acknowledge that they will seek, over time, to put governance arrangements in place that will allow these disparate funds to be brought together and held and managed by a single entity for the benefit of and on behalf of the Councils. Development of such arrangements will form part of the ongoing review of the RIF to which paragraph 9 refers. This Memorandum does not commit any Council to this arrangement which shall be subject to a separate decision.

3. ROLLING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 If any decision is required in relation to the RIF (in particular in relation to expenditure from the RIF) which impacts a Council, such Council shall follow its own decision making process to determine the decision to be taken. The Garden Town Board may make a non-binding recommendation to such Council(s). Such Council(s) shall consult with the remaining parties to this Memorandum prior to taking such decision to the extent that such decision impacts on the recovery of the HIG Funding.
- 3.2 Any amendment to the terms of this Memorandum will require the unanimous approval of all five Councils.
- 3.3 Any decisions taken in respect of the RIF shall take due account of any relevant provisions of the Grant Determination Agreement and the Delivery Agreements.

4. INITIAL PROJECTS – FORWARD FUNDING

4.1 In accordance with the Grant Determination Agreement and subsequent discussions, the HIG Funding will be used to fund delivery of the following projects:

4.1.1 the expansion of Central Crossing (5th Avenue) to extend the STC between the Gilston Area and Harlow Town Railway Station and Burnt Mill Roundabout;

4.1.2 the Eastern Stort River Crossing, comprising:

(a) realignment of the Eastwick Road and new junction allowing access to Terlings Park and Pye Corner;

(b) Pye Corner bypass including junction between north-south section and east-west section;

(c) remainder of Eastern Crossing including River Way Bridge;

(Note: It is proposed that funding is provided for the Eastern Stort Crossing both directly and indirectly, through being made available to the relevant developer to fund on-site works within the Gilston Area thereby allowing the developer to prioritise development cash flow for the completion of delivery of the Crossing works. This has been agreed due to the time constraints of the HIG funding availability)

4.1.3 the extension of the STC from Burnt Mill Roundabout through to the Town Centre; and

4.1.4 the new Cambridge Road/River Way junction,

(together, the “Initial Projects”).

4.2 The Councils acknowledge that HCC has entered into the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England and that HCC is the contracting body in respect of the HIG Funding.

4.3 The Councils further acknowledge that, in order to secure delivery of the Initial Projects, HCC has entered into delivery agreements with:

4.3.1 Places for People, pursuant to which Places for People will be obliged to deliver the projects referred to in paragraphs **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**; and

4.3.2 Essex County Council, pursuant to which Essex County Council will be obliged to deliver the projects referred to in paragraphs **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**,

(each a “Delivery Agreement”).

4.4 HCC hereby confirms its intention to draw down the HIG Funding in accordance with the Grant Determination Agreement, to pay such funding to the relevant counterparty in accordance with each Delivery Agreement, and to enforce its rights under each Delivery Agreement to secure delivery of the relevant infrastructure.

4.5 In the event of any conflict between this Memorandum and either the Grant Determination Agreement or any of the Delivery Agreements, the Grant Determination Agreement or Delivery Agreement (as relevant) shall take precedence.

5. INITIAL PROJECTS – RECOVERY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1 The Councils acknowledge that it is their collective intention:

5.1.1 to seek to recover 100% of the HIG Funding, for inclusion in the RIF;

5.1.2 that such amounts will be recovered from developers promoting relevant Garden Town Developments, pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and

5.1.3 that such amounts will be recovered from developers in the Agreed Proportions.

5.2 The “**Agreed Proportions**” are (as applicable):

5.2.1 those set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or other associated evidence (as updated from time to time);

5.2.2 those set out in any “Developer Contribution Guidance” or related policy applicable to the Garden Town that is developed and agreed by the Councils; or

5.2.3 (if relevant) the proportions required by the relevant District Council’s planning policy.

5.3 In respect of Section 106 Obligations (whether by way of bilateral agreement or unilateral undertaking) relating to a planning application for a relevant Garden Town Development, each District Council will:

5.3.1 use its reasonable endeavours to ensure that the Section 106 Obligations require the relevant developer to make financial contributions towards the cost of the Initial Projects in the Agreed Proportions (either directly or by reference to a separate agreement under which the developer is obliged to repay the applicable portion of the Initial HIG Funding over time);

5.3.2 use its reasonable endeavours to enforce the terms of such Section 106 Obligations in order to recover monies due from the developer in respect of the Initial Projects; and

- 5.3.3 retain the contributions received from developers pursuant to Section 106 Obligations (or related agreements) which form part of the RIF as separately-identifiable funds.
- 5.4 Each District Council agrees to work with the other Councils and the Garden Town legal advisers to develop standard clauses for use within section 106 agreements and undertakings in respect of the payment of contributions. To the extent such clauses are developed and agreed, each District Council agrees to use reasonable endeavours to ensure the clauses are included in relevant section 106 agreements /undertakings.
- 5.5 If a District Council, in negotiating Section 106 Obligations, considers that it would be appropriate to agree with a developer an amount lower than the Agreed Proportions (such that there would be a shortfall in payments back to the RIF), that Council shall consult with the other partner Councils and have due regard to their representations before coming to a decision. The Councils acknowledge that this should be avoided wherever possible and that the recovery of contributions for the RIF should be treated in accordance with the importance set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 5.6 The Councils recognise that adoption by a District Council of a CIL could affect the value of contributions sought from development and the process for agreeing how collected CIL monies are allocated and spent for the funding of infrastructure and other projects. Any Council that considers the adoption of a CIL will consult with the other partner Councils and have due regard to their representations before coming to a decision regarding the adoption of a CIL charging schedule and how collected CIL monies are allocated to the Initial Projects and subsequent projects.
- 5.7 If the existing Planning Bill introduces new Infrastructure Levy arrangements, the District Councils will work cooperatively with the other Councils to put measures in place which ensure that contributions continue to be made to the RIF in line with the principles set out in this Memorandum.
- 5.8 Without prejudice to the preceding provisions of this paragraph 5, in the event of any conflict between this Memorandum and any agreement entered into by a Council pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the section 106 agreement shall take precedence.

6. SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS

- 6.1 The Councils acknowledge that, at the present time, the following projects (listed in no particular order of timing or priority) have been identified in the HIG Bid as priorities for future RIF funding as set out in Schedule 1:
- 6.1.1 replacement of Central Crossing Rail Bridge (excluding such works included within the widening and subject to outcome of structural assessment indicating it as necessary and according to the timescale of that necessity);

- 6.1.2 Eastern STC between Town Centre, Enterprise Zone and East Harlow Garden Community;
 - 6.1.3 Western STC between Town Centre, National Institute for Health Protection/Pinnacles and Water Lane Garden Community;
 - 6.1.4 Southern STC between Town Centre and Latton Priory Garden Community; and
 - 6.1.5 to the extent not covered by paragraphs 6.1.2 to 6.1.4, the Town Centre STC and any associated interchange and hub.
- 6.2 The Councils acknowledge that the STC network, where located outside of the allocated new garden community sites, is treated in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a single item of infrastructure (as represented by the schemes referred to in paragraph 4.1.3 and parts of those referred to in paragraphs 6.1.2 – 6.1.5). The total cost of this off-site STC infrastructure will exceed the total of the contribution provided by HIG for the STC and the amount recovered into the RIF. The Councils each agree to cooperate in an effort to close this funding gap including using reasonable endeavours to secure developer contributions for this purpose (including by way of section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy contribution from Garden Town Developments both referred to and those not referred to in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan). The Councils agree that such Developer Contributions will be allocated to the RIF and will seek to act in accordance with paragraphs 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 in respect of the same.
- 6.3 The Councils agree to use reasonable endeavours to secure additional grant or revenue funding for the delivery of the STC network and, where appropriate, to allocate such funding to the RIF, subject always to any terms and conditions attaching to such funding.
- 6.4 The Councils commit to work together to develop an investment strategy to guide future decisions about which projects should benefit from RIF funding beyond the Initial Projects including but not necessarily exclusive to those set out in paragraphs 6.1.1 to 6.1.5. The Councils acknowledge that the projects funded by the RIF may vary from those listed in paragraphs 6.1.1 to 6.1.5.
- 6.5 The Garden Town Board will be responsible for recommending to the Councils infrastructure schemes for funding from the RIF in future. In making any recommendation the Garden Town Board will principally seek to use the RIF for measures to achieve the active and sustainable mode share targets of the Garden Town and to unlock the provision of further new homes, and will have regard to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (as updated from time to time) and other associated evidence, the investment strategy agreed by the Councils and the amounts available in the RIF.
- 6.6 Unless otherwise agreed by all the partner Councils in any particular case, RIF funding will only be allocated to projects if arrangements are put in place for the recovery of the funding from developer contributions (or other sources)

over time, in line with the principles in paragraph 5, with the aim of ensuring that the RIF is continually replenished.

- 6.7 Any proposal for expenditure from the RIF beyond the Initial Projects will require the unanimous approval of all partner Councils (unless otherwise agreed by the Councils).

7. FUND HOLDERS' OBLIGATIONS

- 7.1 As noted in paragraph 2.3, initially the RIF will not be held by a single entity. Each Council that receives relevant payments from developers will hold those sums as a separately-identifiable fund. The aggregate of all such funds will constitute the RIF.

- 7.2 Specifically:

7.2.1 in respect of the infrastructure referred to in paragraphs 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, HCC will receive and hold the payments made by the Gilston Area Villages 1-6 landowners (Places for People and/or any successors) pursuant to HIG recovery payments secured through s.106 obligations assumed by those parties associated with relevant planning consents;

7.2.2 each of the District Councils and/or County Councils may receive and hold payments made in respect of section 106 obligations (or, if relevant, the Community Infrastructure Levy) in relation to the infrastructure referred to in paragraphs **Error! Reference source not found.** and 4.1.2 and the STC network, which includes the infrastructure referred to in paragraphs 4.1.3 and **Error! Reference source not found.**, and that referred to in paragraphs 6.1.2 to 6.1.5; and

7.2.3 any of the Councils may receive and hold payments made in respect of section 106 obligations (or, if relevant, the Community Infrastructure Levy) in relation to subsequent infrastructure projects funded by the RIF.

- 7.3 Each Council that receives payments from developers in relation to the Initial Projects or any subsequent projects funded by the RIF will:

7.3.1 retain such payments as a separately-identifiable interest-bearing fund, acknowledging that relevant funds form part of the RIF and can be used only in accordance with this Memorandum and the purpose for which they were provided;

7.3.2 provide to the other Councils full transparency of all such amounts received, and all amounts held as part of the RIF at any particular time; and

7.3.3 not permit any RIF monies to be expended other than in accordance with this Memorandum and the purpose for which they were provided (and if money is paid out in breach of this commitment, the relevant

Council shall replenish the RIF as soon as practicable upon becoming aware of the same).

- 7.4 Any interest earned in relation to RIF monies held by any Council shall itself be considered part of the RIF and each Council shall add any such interest to the RIF monies it is holding from time to time.
- 7.5 As Contracting Authority, HCC will seek to ensure that all costs to administer the HIG programme will be met within the £171m funding envelope. In the event that HCC incurs reasonable and evidenced costs and expenses in respect of its role as contracting body to the HIG Funding beyond the contracted completion date of 31 March 2025, HCC will in the first instance seek additional funding for administrative costs required to maintain a scaled down functional service until the Infrastructure Works as set out in Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Grant Determination Agreement have been completed. If such costs and expenses cannot be recovered via the Grant Determination Agreement (and/or the connected back-to-back agreements) HCC shall be entitled to retain an appropriate portion of any monies it receives from developers in accordance with this paragraph 7 as reimbursement for the costs and expenses it incurs as contracting body to the HIG Funding. Following an assessment of the current administrative requirements, it is anticipated that as the Works referred to above relate specifically to activities after the funded programme which ceases on 31 March 2025, they will be evaluated over a financial year and be no greater than £80,000 per annum. All requests will be fair and reasonable and supported with appropriate evidence.
- 7.6 HCC shall produce all evidence as is reasonably required by the other Councils to demonstrate the quantum and appropriateness of such retention as detailed in clause 7.5. HCC shall provide the evidence at the request of the other Councils but provided that HCC shall not be obliged to provide such evidence more than twice in any calendar year. Any evidence supplied by HCC shall be presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards and practice
- 7.7 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Memorandum, HCC will not be entitled to recover costs or make a claim to recover its costs from the RIF to the extent that it has already recovered them pursuant to any other sources, agreements (including but not limited to Homes England and/or the GDA) or has received or is able to apply for funding in relation to them. HCC will recover its costs from Homes England or alternative sources before seeking to recover them from the RIF; it is acknowledged and agreed that alternative sources do not include HCC's own funding.
- 7.8 In the event that any of the Councils objects to the quantum of the retention made pursuant to paragraph 7.5, such dispute shall be resolved in accordance with paragraph 12.

8. DURATION

- 8.1 This Memorandum shall remain in place until such time as:



8.1.1 the Councils agree that it should be superseded by an alternative agreement or arrangement which sets out the manner in which the RIF will be operated by the Councils; or

8.1.2 this Memorandum is terminated pursuant to paragraph 8.2.

8.2 This Memorandum may be terminated only by unanimous agreement of all five Councils. Any such agreement must specify how funds remaining in the RIF at the relevant time are to be allocated between the Councils. Such funds must be spent in accordance with the Grant Determination Agreement and section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on infrastructure to unlock housing developments.

9. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIF

9.1 The Councils will request the Garden Town Board to review the terms of this Memorandum and the operation of the RIF on a six-monthly basis (or at such other frequency as the Councils may agree), and to report its findings and any recommendations to the Councils.

9.2 The Councils acknowledge that there is potential to develop the manner in which the RIF is governed and operated in order to improve its effectiveness as a vehicle to enable the forward funding of infrastructure delivery in the Garden Town. The Councils will work together in good faith to explore ways in which this might be achieved, including consideration of the ability to forward fund infrastructure in reliance on future developer contributions.

10. NO FETTER

Nothing in this Memorandum shall fetter the discretion of any Council in the exercise of any of its statutory rights, powers, duties, discretions or functions, including in particular its role as local planning, highway or education authority.

11. STATUS

11.1 This Memorandum is not intended to be legally binding and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Councils as a result of this Memorandum. Each Council enters into this Memorandum intending to honour all of its commitments but shall not be bound by them.

11.2 No legal partnership is created or intended to be created by the terms of this Memorandum.

12. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

12.1 Any dispute arising in relation to the quantum of the retention made pursuant to clause 7.5 ("Dispute") shall be resolved in accordance with this paragraph 12.

12.2 If a Dispute cannot be resolved by the Councils within 10 working days of the dispute arising, any Council can, by written notice to the other Councils, require the Dispute to be escalated. In such circumstances the Dispute will be

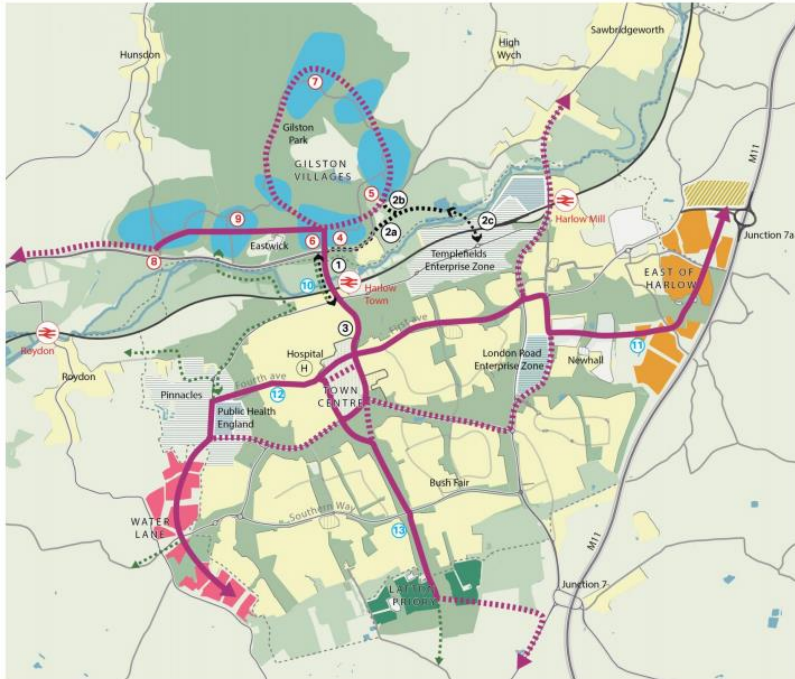
referred to the respective Chief Executives of the Councils who shall consult in good faith in an attempt to come to an agreement in relation to the disputed matter.

- 12.3 If the Dispute is not resolved by consultation under paragraph 12.2 within 10 working days of the Dispute being escalated, any Council may invite the others to attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation. The other Councils shall act reasonably in deciding whether or not to accept such invitation. A mediator will be selected by agreement of the Councils.
- 12.4 If:
- 12.4.1 the consultation required by paragraph 12.2 has taken place and the dispute remains unresolved;
 - 12.4.2 the Councils are unable to reach agreement to proceed with mediation; or
 - 12.4.3 following such mediation the dispute remains unresolved,
- any Council may refer the matter for expert determination.
- 12.5 An expert (“Expert”) is a person appointed in accordance with paragraph 12.6 to resolve a dispute arising in relation to the quantum of the retention made pursuant to paragraph 7.5.
- 12.6 The Councils shall agree on the appointment of an independent Expert and shall agree with the Expert the terms of their appointment.
- 12.7 If the Councils are unable to agree on the identity of the Expert or the terms of their appointment within seven days of a Council serving details of a suggested expert on the others, any Council shall be entitled to request the President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators to appoint an Expert with experience in determining the quantum of costs.
- 12.8 The Councils are entitled to make submissions to the Expert and will provide (or procure that the other Councils provide) the Expert with such assistance and documents as the Expert reasonably requires for the purpose of reaching a decision.
- 12.9 The Expert shall act as an expert and not as an arbitrator. The Expert shall provide to all the Councils his written decision on the dispute, within 28 days of appointment (or such other period as the Councils may agree). The Expert’s written decision on the matters referred to them shall be final and binding on the Councils in the absence of manifest error or fraud
- 12.10 Each Council shall bear its own costs relating to the reference of the Dispute to the Expert. The Expert’s fees and any costs properly incurred by them in arriving at their determination (including any fees and costs of any advisers appointed by the Expert) shall be borne by the Councils equally or in such other proportions as the Expert shall direct.

12.11 The Councils shall continue to comply with, observe and perform all their obligations hereunder regardless of the nature of the Dispute and notwithstanding the referral of the Dispute under this paragraph 12 and shall give effect forthwith to every decision of the Expert.



SCHEDULE 1 – Extract from HIG Bid - Plan indicating the infrastructure to be funded by the HIG, Developer and the RIF



1. Expansion of Central Crossing to extend Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) between Gilston Area and Railway Station and Burnt Mill Roundabout.
2. Eastern Stort River Crossing (comprising Items 2a, 2b and 2c below)
 - 2a. Realignment of the Eastwick Road and new junction allowing access to Terlings Park and Pye Corner.
 - 2b. Pye Corner bypass including junction between north-south section and east-west section
 - 2c. Remainder of Eastern Crossing including River Way Bridge
3. Extension of STC from Burnt Mill Roundabout through the Town Centre.
4. Enhanced sustainable transport hub in Village 1.
5. Access to Gilston Area Village 2.
6. Access to Gilston Area Village 1 (north of Eastwick junction) and creation of STC link within Village 1.
7. Gilston Area STC "inner loop" connection to Villages 3, 4, 5
8. Access to Village 7.
9. Gilston Area STC "inner connection" opening up sustainable access and highway between Village 7 and Village 1.
10. Replacement of Central Crossing Rail Bridge.
11. Eastern STC between Town Centre, Enterprise Zones and Harlow East Garden Community.
12. Western STC between Town Centre, PHE/Pinnacles and Water Lane Garden Community.
13. Southern STC between Town Centre and Lutton Priory Garden Community.

- Funded by the HIF
- Funded by the Developers
- Funded by rolling infrastructure fund

SCHEDULE 10

JOINT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Partner Authorities:

- (1) East Hertfordshire District Council (“EHDC”)
- (2) Epping Forest District Council (“EFDC”)
- (3) Harlow District Council (“HDC”)
- (4) Essex County Council (“ECC”)
- (5) Hertfordshire County Council (“HCC”)

2. Status:

- 2.1. The Partner Authorities are local authorities for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972 and best value authorities for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1999.
- 2.2. Under section 102 (1) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Regulations 10 and 11 of The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) England Regulations 2012, local authorities may arrange for the discharge of their functions by a Joint Committee comprising members of their authorities.
- 2.3. All of the Partner Authorities have introduced Executive Arrangements under section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 2.4. The Executives of each of the Partner Authorities have agreed to establish a Joint Committee for the purposes of section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be known as the Joint Committee for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (the “Joint Committee”).
- 2.5. The Partner Authorities have agreed to form a Joint Committee to co-ordinate and facilitate the delivery of 16,000 homes in the HGGT by 2033, and 7,000 homes in the years after that along with associated infrastructure.
- 2.6. The Joint Committee and its proceedings are bound by the provisions of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 but shall be expected to operate in accordance with the local arrangements set out in these Terms of Reference.
- 2.7. The only functions exercisable by the Joint Committee are those set out in Appendix 3 to these Terms of Reference.
- 2.8. The Accountable Body will act as the ‘accountable body’ for the Joint Committee and any sub-committee. The Accountable Body will provide secretariat support and accountable body services to the Joint Committee and any sub-committee as set out in an Inter-Authority Agreement dated on or about the date of this Agreement.

3. Definitions

Functions means the functions exercised by the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix 3 to these Terms of Reference.

Independent Facilitator means a member of the HGGT Delivery team employed or contracted for the purposes of supporting the Chair and facilitating meetings of the Joint Committee.

Inter-Authority Agreement means this Agreement to which these Terms of Reference are a schedule to that sets out the services which the Accountable Body will deliver to the Joint Committee and the respective role and responsibilities of the Partner Authorities in respect of associated matters related to the application and allocation of the Project Funding and Recoverable Cost Funding.

Local Plans means the adopted local plans prepared by a local planning authority in consultation with its community and which form part of the statutory development plan.

Reserved Decisions has the meaning given to it in paragraph 4.6.

4. Joint Committee

4.1. This Agreement sets out how the Joint Committee shall operate in seeking to deliver the overarching purpose, the functions it holds, and how decisions are made and procedures are followed to ensure that the Joint Committee operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.

4.2. The remit of the Joint Committee is to jointly discharge the functions (“Functions”) set out in Appendix 3 to these Terms of Reference in relation to the HGGT, the exercise of which have been delegated to the Joint Committee by the Partner Authorities subject to the limitation set out in paragraph 4.6.

4.3. The purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide the unified leadership required to deliver the ambitious spatial growth proposals set out in the Local Plans of HDC, EHDC and EFDC, supported by ECC and HCC to align and maximise the opportunities for new residents and the existing residents and communities in Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire.

4.4. The Joint Committee will oversee the vision for the HGGT in order to maximise the opportunities for new residents in the HGGT and existing residents in the surrounding area recognising that, through a collaborative approach, the Partner Authorities will be best placed to deliver their vision for the HGGT promoting healthy and sustainable growth with ambitious net zero targets.

4.5. The primary aims of the Joint Committee will be to:

- 4.5.1. develop, approve and maintain a vision for the HGGT;
- 4.5.2. develop and maintain an overview of the delivery of the vision for the HGGT;
- 4.5.3. monitor and report to the Partner Authorities on progress against the master programme of delivery;

- 4.5.4. receive information on a quarterly basis regarding programme delivery;
 - 4.5.5. have an overall view on milestones and dependencies;
 - 4.5.6. maintain oversight of the strategic risks of delivery and develop mitigations as necessary;
 - 4.5.7. develop a strategy for the RIF including monitoring the spend of payments from the RIF; and
 - 4.5.8. receive updates and reports from the Partner Authorities in respect of (but not exclusively) the areas below which are deemed critical to the success of the HGGT:
 - Modal Shift, Transport Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport Corridors
 - RIF
 - Planning Policy, Infrastructure & Developer Contributions
 - Economy & Jobs
 - Town Centre Regeneration
 - Housing
 - Communication and Community Engagement
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - Stewardship
 - Programme Management.
- 4.6. Decisions which a Partner Authority is required to make in accordance with its own constitution are “Reserved Decisions” and must be referred back to the Partner Authorities for decision within such timescales as the Joint Committee may by written resolution determine or, in the absence of the same, within twelve (12) weeks. The Partner Authorities acknowledge that:
- 4.6.1. any decisions which are inconsistent with any Partner Authority’s budget and/or policy frameworks (without limitation) are Reserved Decisions;
 - 4.6.2. any decisions that result in the delegation of the transport and highways powers vested in ECC and HCC as highways authorities are Reserved Decisions;
 - 4.6.3. agreement to the strategy for the RIF is a Reserved Decision; and
 - 4.6.4. agreement by a Partner Authority to the Partner Authority Contribution is a Reserved Decision.
- 4.7. Any decision of the Joint Committee in relation to a Reserved Decision will not take effect or be deemed to take effect at any time unless and until it has been approved and ratified by all the Partner Authorities.

5. Term

- 5.1. The Joint Committee shall come into effect from the date upon which the Inter-Authority Agreement is signed on behalf of all Partner Authorities.
- 5.2. The Partner Authorities intend for the Joint Committee to be in place until at least 2033.
- 5.3. Subject to paragraph 5.4 an individual Partner Authority must give notice of at least twelve (12) months (or such shorter period as the parties may agree) of its intention to leave the Joint Committee and exit the terms of the Inter-Authority Agreement.

5.4. In the event that the Chair exercises his or her casting vote in a way that an individual Partner Authority disagrees with then such Partner Authority shall have the right to leave the Joint Committee and exit the terms of the Inter-Authority Agreement within three (3) months of providing notice of the same to the Chair.

6. Review of these Terms of Reference

6.1. The Joint Committee is required to undertake a review of these Terms of Reference:

6.1.1. at least every five (5) years;

6.1.2. whenever a Partner Authority gives notice of withdrawal under paragraph 5.3 or paragraph 5.4; or

6.1.3. at such times as a Partner Authority may request on reasonable notice.

7. Executive Officer Group

7.1. The Executive Officer Group will be chaired by the HGGT Director (or, in exceptional circumstances, the HGGT Director's deputy).

7.2. The Executive Officer Group will consist of a senior officer representative from each Partner Authority (or, in exceptional circumstances, such senior officer's deputy).

7.3. The Executive Officer Group will prepare all papers going before the Joint Committee.

7.4. The Executive Officer Group will be delivery focussed providing coordination and enabling services to the Joint Committee.

7.5. The Executive Officer Group will provide annual reports on activity to the Joint Committee.

8. Membership

8.1. The Joint Committee shall consist of one elected councillor appointed by each Partner Authority in accordance with that Partner Authority's constitution. To be eligible for membership of the Joint Committee, a councillor must either be: (i) a member of the Cabinet of his/her appointing authority; or (ii) a relevant Portfolio Holder within his/her appointing authority; or (iii) an appointed deputy to either the Leader or a member of the Cabinet with relevant portfolio of his/her appointing authority.

8.2. Each Partner Authority may appoint a substitute. The substitute may attend any meeting of the Joint Committee or any of its sub-committees and may vote in place of that Partner Authority's principal member if notice that the substitute will attend and vote is given to the Secretary of the Joint Committee by the Partner Authority concerned in advance of such meeting.

- 8.3. Where a substitution notice is in effect with respect to a particular member at a particular meeting, the substitute shall be a full member of the Joint Committee for the duration of the meeting in place of the principal member.
- 8.4. Each Partner Authority may remove its appointed member and appoint a different member by giving written notice to the Secretary to the Joint Committee.
- 8.5. Each appointed member shall be entitled to remain on the Joint Committee for so long as the appointing Partner Authority so wishes.
- 8.6. Any casual vacancies will be filled as soon as reasonably practicable by the Partner Authority from which such vacancy arises giving written notice to the Secretary to the Joint Committee.

9. Co-Opted Members

- 9.1. The Joint Committee may co-opt any other person whom it thinks fit to be a non-voting member of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee may from time to time make rules as to:
 - 9.1.1. registration and declaration of interests by co-opted members; and
 - 9.1.2. standards of behaviour required to be observed by co-opted members when acting as such.

10. Chair, Vice-Chair and Independent Facilitator

- 10.1. The Chair of the Joint Committee will be appointed by the members of the Joint Committee at its first meeting. The Chair of the Joint Committee shall hold that office until another member is appointed. The appointment of the Chair shall take place annually by the Joint Committee, beginning with the first annual meeting with subsequent appointments falling not later than twelve (12) months after the first annual meeting of the Joint Committee in the relevant years.
- 10.2. The Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee will be appointed from time to time by the members of the Joint Committee. The Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee shall hold that office until another member is appointed. The appointment of the Vice-Chair shall take place annually, beginning with the first annual meeting.
- 10.3. The Vice-Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair. If there is a quorum of members present but neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair is present at a meeting of the Joint Committee, the other members of the Joint Committee shall choose one of the members of the Joint Committee to preside at the meeting.
- 10.4. An independent facilitator may be appointed by the Joint Committee and co-opted to the Board on a three (3) year term. The Independent Facilitator will not have voting rights. The Independent Facilitator will assist in the facilitation of meetings by reviewing the draft agenda, facilitating the meetings, monitoring progress of the outcomes of the Joint Committee and working closely with the members of the Joint Committee to ensure the outcomes of the Joint Committee are met.

11. Secretarial

11.1. The Accountable Body shall nominate a person to undertake the role of the Secretary of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee shall be provided with the following secretariat support:

11.1.1. putting together of the agendas for meetings;

11.1.2. gathering of reports from the report writers;

11.1.3. publishing of the agenda(s) with the reports through the ModGov portal of the Accountable Body;

11.1.4. notifying the Democratic Services Manager of the other Partner Authorities of the link to the Joint Committee papers;

11.1.5. attendance at four (4) Joint Committee board meetings per year in person;

11.1.6. providing constitutional advice and guidance to the Joint Committee at those meetings;

11.1.7. production of actions, decisions and minutes from the Joint Committee; and

11.1.8. publication of actions, decisions and minutes from the Joint Committee on the ModGov portal of the Accountable Body.

12. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

12.1. The Joint Committee may appoint such sub-committees from among its membership as it thinks will help it to enable it to fulfil its remit. The Joint Committee may delegate its responsibilities to such sub-committees. Sub-Committees may co-opt non-voting members.

12.2. The Joint Committee may set up working groups to advise it on matters within its remit. Such working groups may be formed of members or officers of the constituent Partner Authority or any other third party as the Joint Committee sees fit. Such working groups are advisory only and the Joint Committee may not delegate its responsibilities to such working groups.

13. Code of Conduct

13.1. Each member of the Joint Committee and any Sub-Committee shall comply with any relevant code of conduct of their Partner Authority when acting as a member of the Joint Committee.

14. Notice of Business

14.1. The Chair may direct the Secretary to the Joint Committee to call a meeting and may require any item of business to be included in the summons.

14.2. Any four (4) members of the Joint Committee may by notice in writing require the Chair to call a meeting to consider a particular item of business and if the Chair fails to do so within 20 working days of receipt of the notice then those four (4) members

may direct the Secretary to the Joint Committee to call a meeting to consider that business.

15. Time and Place of Meetings

- 15.1. All meetings of the Joint Committee will take place on a date and time that the Joint Committee shall determine. It is the expectation of the Partner Authorities that most meetings will be held in the evenings.
- 15.2. All meetings of the Joint Committee will take place at the offices of Harlow District Council unless otherwise agreed by the Joint Committee.
- 15.3. The Joint Committee may, if the law permits, arrange for attendance at meetings via video conferencing. Any such attendance shall be in accordance with the law and any other requirements imposed by the Joint Committee from time to time.
- 15.4. Any Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer is entitled to attend all parts of all meetings of the Joint Committee or of any sub-committee appointed by the Joint Committee.

16. Frequency of Meetings

- 16.1. The Joint Committee will meet at least four (4) times per year including the annual meeting.

17. Notice of and Summons to Meetings

- 17.1. The Secretary to the Joint Committee will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972. At least five (5) clear days before a meeting, the Secretary to the Joint Committee will send a summons by email and, if a member of the Joint Committee so requests, by post to every member at their last known address. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

18. Quorum

- 18.1. The quorum of a meeting will be the 5 members who are entitled to attend and vote.
- 18.2. If there is no quorum present at the start of the meeting, the meeting may not commence. If after one (1) hour from the time specified for the start of the meeting no quorum is present, then the meeting shall stand adjourned to another time and date determined by the Secretary to the Joint Committee.

19. Voting

- 19.1. Each elected member shall have one vote.

- 19.2. Co-opted members and the Independent Facilitator will not have a vote.
- 19.3. Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members of the Partner Authorities represented in the room at the time the question is put. In the event of equality of votes the person presiding at the meeting will be entitled to a casting vote under sections 39(1) and 44 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 19.4. The members will agree a way of working protocol with the aim of ensuring that decisions should only be put to the vote if such decision is likely to result in at least four votes in favour. In the event of any conflict between this paragraph and paragraph 19.3 above, paragraph 19.3 will take precedence.
- 19.5. The member appointed as a substitute shall have the same voting rights as the member for whom he or she is substituting. Where notice of substitution has been given for a particular meeting, the principal member may not vote unless the notice of substitution is withdrawn before the start of the meeting.
- 19.6. The Chair will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.
- 19.7. The minutes of the meeting shall record how a member of the Committee voted on a particular question if, at the time that the vote is taken or immediately thereafter, that member asks the Secretary to the Joint Committee or his or her representative at the meeting to record his vote.

20. Minutes

- 20.1. The Secretary to the Joint Committee shall arrange for written minutes to be taken at each meeting of the Joint Committee and shall present them to the Joint Committee at its next meeting for approval as a correct record. At the next meeting of the Joint Committee, the Chair shall move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. If this is agreed, the Chair of the Joint Committee shall sign the minutes.
- 20.2. Draft minutes or a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting and a note of the actions arising shall be circulated to the Joint Committee and to each Partner Authority by email no later than seven (7) working days after the date of the meeting.
- 20.3. Minutes of the meeting shall be published by the Accountable Body to the extent required by Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972.

21. Access for Elected Members of the Partner Authorities

- 21.1. Any elected member of the Partner Authorities who is not a member of the Joint Committee may speak at a meeting of the Joint Committee if the Chair of the Joint Committee invites him or her to do so but an elected member of the Partner Authorities who is not a member of the Joint Committee shall not be entitled to vote at a meeting of the Joint Committee.

22. Public Access



- 22.1. Meetings of the Joint Committee shall be open for members of the public to attend unless the Joint Committee determines that it is necessary to exclude members of the public in accordance with Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Joint Committee determines that it is necessary to close the meeting to the public because of a disturbance.
- 22.2. Copies of the agenda for meetings of the Joint Committee and any reports for its meetings shall be open to inspection by members of the public at the offices of the Partner Authorities with the exception of any report which the Secretary to the Joint Committee determines relates to items which in his or her opinion are likely to be considered at a time when the meeting is not to be open to the public.
- 22.3. If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If that person continues to interrupt, the Chair will arrange for that person to be removed from the meeting room and will suspend the meeting until the member of the public has left or been removed.
- 22.4. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair may call for that part to be cleared.

23. Communications

The Joint Committee may agree a protocol for communications.

24. Overview and Scrutiny

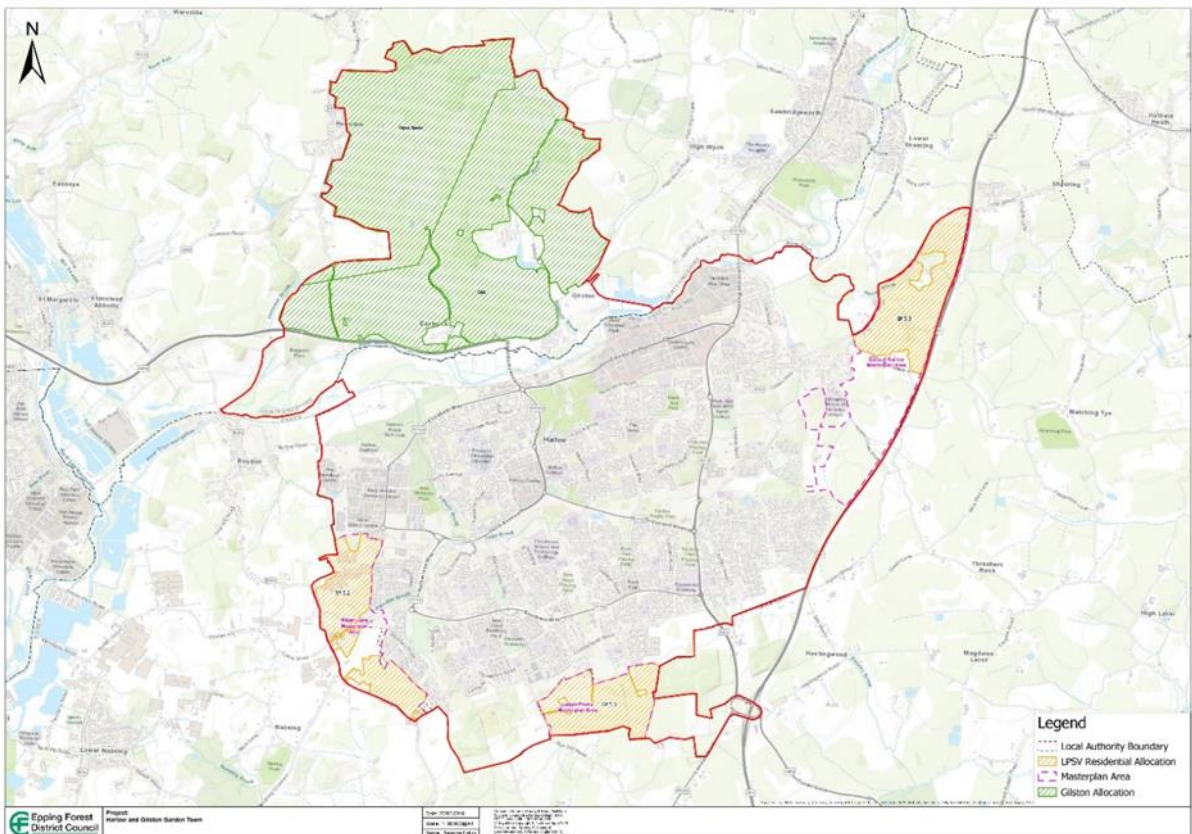
- 24.1. Each Partner Authority has overview and scrutiny committees which have the right to scrutinise the operation of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee and the Accountable Body will co-operate with reasonable requests for information from any of the Partner Authorities' overview and scrutiny committees.
- 24.2. The Partner Authorities acknowledge that decisions of the Joint Committee shall be subject to call-in to comply with the Partner Authorities' legal duty to enable scrutiny of decisions.
- 24.3. The Partner Authorities agree that if an overview and scrutiny committee of any Partner Authority wishes to call-in a decision of the Joint Committee, it can do so subject to the normal procedures of that Partner Authority.
- 24.4. If any decision of the Joint Committee is subject to call-in by any Partner Authority:
- 24.4.1. the relevant Partner Authority shall notify the Secretary of the call-in as soon as reasonably possible;
 - 24.4.2. the Secretary shall notify all other Partner Authorities of the call-in as soon as reasonably possible; and
 - 24.4.3. the relevant Partner Authority shall notify the Secretary and each of the other Partner Authorities of the outcome of the call-in (and shall provide a copy of any report produced by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee to the Secretary and the other Partner Authorities) as soon as reasonably possible.

- 24.5. At the request of the HGGT Director, each Partner Authority and the Accountable Body shall ensure that appropriate officers attend any meeting of an overview and scrutiny committee which is considering matters falling within the remit of these Terms of Reference, regardless of which Partner Authority's overview and scrutiny committee has called-in the decision.
- 24.6. The Joint Committee will receive and consider any report or recommendations of any overview and scrutiny committee at a special meeting to be called as soon as reasonably possible after receipt of the same.
- 24.7. If the Joint Committee considers that a decision it has taken should be deemed urgent and in need of immediate implementation, the Joint Committee may recommend that each Partner Authority waive application of its call-in procedure in relation to that decision. Whether or not such a waiver is granted by a Partner Authority will be determined by the applicable rules of that Partner Authority.
- 24.8. The Joint Committee acknowledges that the Partner Authorities' audit teams and external auditors shall be entitled to access all relevant documents and records for conducting audits related to the operation of the Joint Committee.

25. Regulation of Business

- 25.1. Any ruling given by the Chair as to the interpretation of these Terms of Reference with respect to the regulation of proceedings at a meeting shall be final.
- 25.2. Subject to the law, the provisions of these Terms of Reference and the Inter-Authority Agreement and the terms of any contract, the Joint Committee may decide how it discharges its business.

Appendix 1 HGGT Area



Appendix 2

Except to the extent that such adoption is a Reserved Decision, the Joint Committee will on behalf of all Partner Authorities adopt key strategies and policies relating to the Garden Town including but not exclusively:

1. HGGT Vision
2. Economic Growth Strategy
3. Transport Strategy
4. Housing Strategy
5. Stewardship Strategy
6. Parking Strategy
7. Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
8. Rolling Infrastructure Fund
9. Design Guide
10. Sustainability
11. IDP refresh (bi-annual)
12. Land Assembly Strategy
13. Master plans (input and or design) for endorsement

Appendix 3 Functions of the Joint Committee

General Principles

Each Partner Authority will transfer the functions listed below, whether they are currently exercised by the executive or cabinet, individual members of the executive or officers within the Partner Authorities. This will include the authority to make key decisions in respect of these functions.

The functions of the Board are set out below and fall into the following categories:

“Approve / Approval” meaning that the Joint Committee has delegated authority from the Partner Authorities to make a decision on the matter before the Joint Committee, such decision to bind the Partner Authorities without further recourse to the Partner Authorities individually except where such matter is a Reserved Decision.

“Recommend / Recommendation” meaning that the Joint Committee has the remit to scrutinise, comment and make representations in relation to the matter before the Joint Committee, such as recommendations to be made to any or all of the Partner Authorities. Each Partner Authority will make its own decision as to whether to adopt such recommendation.

“Overview and Awareness” meaning the Joint Committee has the remit to review and consider matters, and for relevant information to be supplied in order for the Joint Committee to inform an overall Master Programme for the HGGT, identify interdependencies and risks, and make recommendations to any or all of the Partner Authorities.

“Consultation” meaning the Partner Authorities are added to consultation lists where other proposals, policies or plans affect the HGGT Area and that the Joint Committee consults with other Partner Authorities on HGGT matters that may affect them. Where the Joint Committee is able to be consulted and submit representations to local strategies, it might be necessary for the Partner Authorities that has prepared that document to remove their name from the response.

In accordance with the above, the Joint Committee has delegated authority to exercise the following functions:

HGGT Vision and Area

1. To approve the HGGT Vision and any changes to the HGGT Vision.
2. To make recommendations to the Partner Authorities to amend the HGGT Area, being the red line boundary as set out in Appendix 1 to these Terms of Reference and to have the ability to revise it as necessary as the HGGT project progresses.

Funding

3. To recommend the level of Partner Authority Contribution requested from each Partner Authority as a member of the Joint Committee to support its work.

Programme Management

4. To approve, develop and maintain the Master Programme for delivery of the HGGT which sets out the overarching programme plan of key activities required to deliver the HGGT Vision, in particular housing and infrastructure.
5. To identify interdependencies and risks to the Master Programme along with mitigating actions to make recommendations to Partner Authorities as appropriate.
6. To make recommendations to Partner Authorities to maintain progress against the Master Programme.
7. To approve, develop and maintain a Forward Plan for all key decisions. Key decisions are any decisions of the Joint Committee which;
 - a. result in total expenditure or savings of £200,000 revenue funding or £2,000,000 capital funding;
 - b. significantly affect residents of more than 1 ward of the partner authorities.
8. No key decision will be made unless 28 days' notice of the making of the decision has been published in the forward plan unless:
 - a. the proper officer considers that giving 28 days' notice is not possible, has given notification to the chairs of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee of each of the Partner Authorities and published a notice of the intention to make the decision 5 days prior to the decision being made; or
 - b. if it is impracticable to comply with (a) above the proper officer has obtained the agreement of all five (5) Chairs of the relevant overview and scrutiny committees or, in their absence the Mayor or Chairmen of the five Partner Authorities.

In either case the proper officer must publish a notice of the reasons for the decision being made without giving 28 days' notice in the forward plan

Rolling Infrastructure Fund (RIF)

9. Not used.
10. To develop and approve a strategy for the establishment and management of the RIF (the "RIF Strategy") including identification of the accountable body, monitoring receipts, agreeing spend, exploring commercial and investment options, and a process to forward fund infrastructure through borrowing in advance of contributions.
11. To manage and oversee the expenditure and activity from the RIF.
12. Not used
13. To allocate RIF funding to the Partner Authorities and approve the terms of such funding.
14. To implement the RIF Strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area.
15. To ensure appropriate public expenditure controls and governance is in place to manage and control the RIF.

Modal Shift, Transport Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport Corridors

16. To develop, approve and update the transport strategy relating exclusively to the HGGT Area (the “Transport Strategy”).
17. To oversee the implementation of the Transport Strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area.
18. To be consulted on relevant strategies and policies and initiatives of the Partner Authorities in relation to transport where it affects the HGGT Area.
19. To develop and recommend an operating model for public transport that can work across Partner Authorities administrative boundaries to provide a coherent system for customers and residents.
20. To make recommendations to any or all Partner Authorities concerning any transport matters exclusively or significantly impacting the HGGT including but not limited to strategies, plans, programmes, policies or projects.
21. To develop and maintain an overarching programme plan of key activities required to deliver modal shift, including the transport infrastructure identified for the HGGT Area such as the Sustainable Transport Corridors, and making recommendations to any or all of the Partner Authorities on strategic alignment and delivery progress.
22. For clarification, nothing in the Joint Committee’s remit is intended to nor will be interpreted as overriding or amounting to a delegation of the transport, highways or flood risk powers vested in ECC and HCC as local transport authorities, highway authorities or lead local flood authorities.

External Funding Applications

23. To identify and recommend to any or all of the Partner Authorities that an application be made for external funding (including grant funding) where such funding could, in the opinion of the Joint Committee, be used to support the HGGT noting that such Partner Authorities will be obliged to comply with the terms associated with such funding and take its own decision as to whether to apply for and accept such funding.

Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

24. To develop, approve and maintain:
 - planning strategies, plans and programmes exclusively impacting the HGGT as set out in Appendix 2 (excluding masterplans which shall be endorsed by the Joint Committee)
 - design guides
 - sustainability guidance
 - infrastructure development plans including refresh
 - S106 planning obligations guidance
 - economic growth strategies
 - housing strategies
 - excluding:
 - development plan documents
 - Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Plans

- Housing Strategies adopted by Local Housing Authorities

provided that the documents, guides, strategies and guidance listed in this paragraph 22 shall not override any other documents, guides, strategies and guidance issued by any of the Partner Authorities which shall remain material considerations for each Partner Authority when exercising its planning functions.

25. To make recommendations in respect of any spatial development plan being prepared by any Partner Authorities individually.

Economy and Jobs

26. To develop and approve an economic growth strategy for the HGGT Area to create inclusive and sustainable economic growth for the HGGT that focuses on economic regeneration, renewal and growth and skills in Harlow and its hinterland (the “Economic Growth Strategy”).
27. To oversee the implementation the Economic Growth Strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area, working in partnership with the wider functional economic area as necessary to achieve the aims.
28. To be consulted on relevant strategies and policies and initiatives of the Partner Authorities in relations to economic development where it affects the HGGT Area.

Harlow Town Centre Regeneration

29. To be consulted on masterplans, design briefs, development briefs, funding bids and planning applications relating to major developments in Harlow Town Centre.
30. To make recommendations to HDC in relation to the above in connection with interdependencies with the HGGT Programme.
31. To receive regular reports and not less than twice a year on the progress of the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre and provide comment on this to HDC.

Housing

32. To consider and make recommendations to the Local Housing Authorities on their respective Housing Strategies.
33. To identify ways in which the development of the HGGT strategic sites can contribute to the renewal of existing neighbourhoods in Harlow and satisfy the housing need of the whole HGGT Area.

Green & Blue Infrastructure

34. To develop and approve a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the HGGT Area.
35. To implement the Green and Blue Strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area.

36. To be consulted on relevant strategies and policies and initiatives of the Partner Authorities in relations to Green and Blue Infrastructure where it affects the HGGT Area.

Stewardship

37. To develop and approve a stewardship strategy for the HGGT Area to create legacy arrangements for the management of infrastructure for those communities within the HGGT (the “Stewardship Strategy”).
38. To implement the Stewardship Strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area.
39. To be consulted on relevant strategies and policies and initiatives of the Partner Authorities in relations to stewardship where it affects the HGGT Area.

Community Engagement & Communications

40. To develop, approve and maintain a Communication and Engagement Strategy for the HGGT initiative.
41. To implement the communication and engagement strategy providing leadership across the HGGT Area.
42. To receive reports on Quality of Life indicators in Harlow and the new neighbourhoods on a regular basis.

HGGT Vision Assurance and Role of Independent Quality Review Panel

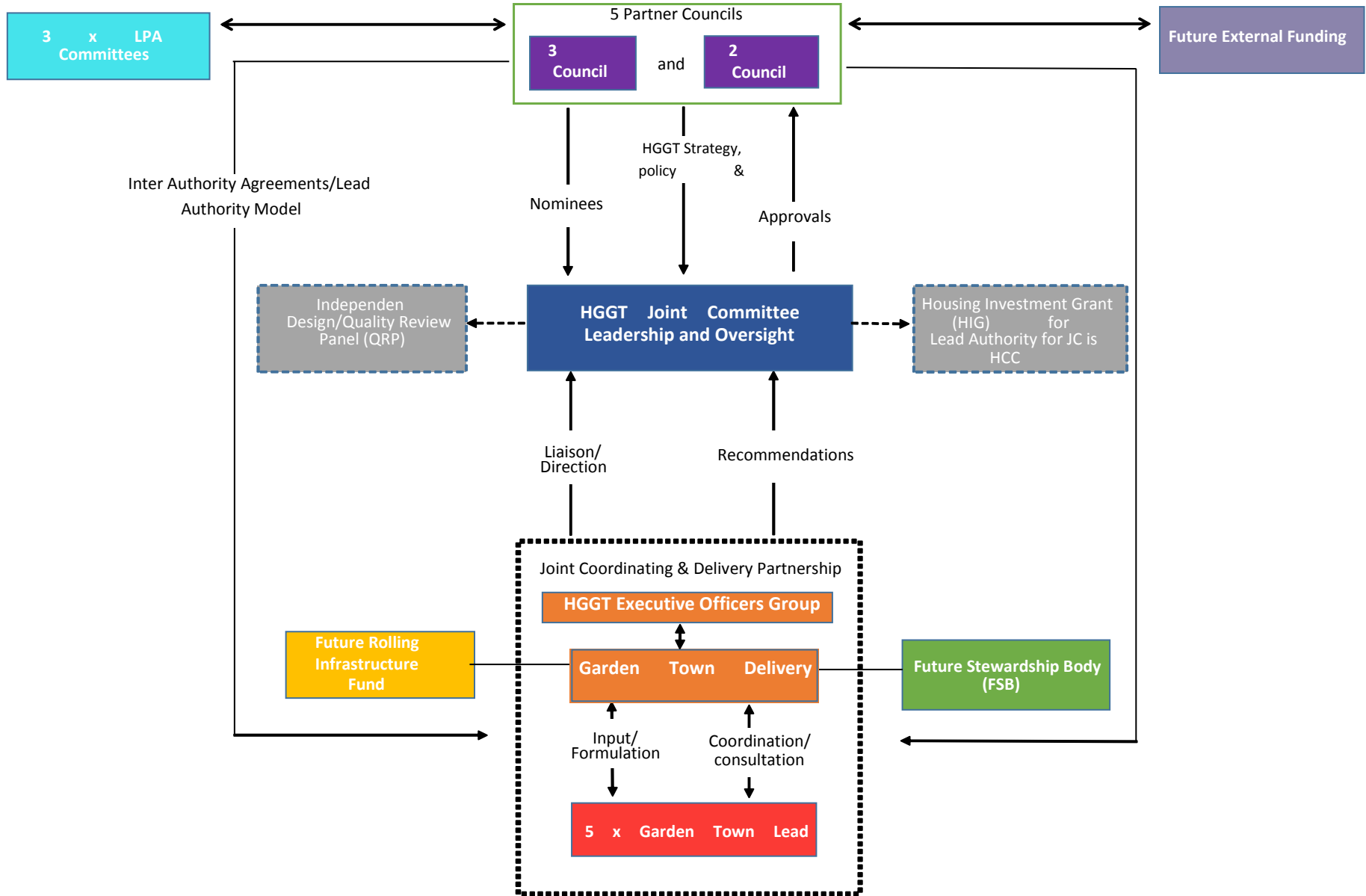
43. To establish and approve a Quality Review Panel (“QRP”) to provide independent, objective, expert advice on master planning and planning applications for development proposals across the HGGT on the agreed terms of reference which can be found via the following link: [2022 Frame Harlow-and-Gilston-QRP ToR.pdf](https://www.hggt.co.uk/2022-Frame-Harlow-and-Gilston-QRP-ToR.pdf) ([hggt.co.uk](https://www.hggt.co.uk)).
44. To oversee the effectiveness of the QRP.
45. To receive regular updates reports on the commissioning, remit, performance and outputs of the QRP.

Oversight Process for Strategic Masterplans and Planning Applications in the HGGT

46. To make recommendations to provide effective vision assurance and ensure the consistent application of the HGGT Vision, Garden Town Principles, and oversight of emerging masterplans for sites forming part of the HGGT during early formative stages.
47. The Joint Committee will:
 - a. receive and consider regular update reports as to progress and / or completion of current strategic master-planning work;

- b. receive briefings on any masterplan for the HGGT prior to any decision by the relevant Local Planning Authority that the strategic master plan can be endorsed for consultation or approved;
- c. comment and make representations to the relevant Local Planning Authority in relation to any master plans;
- d. make recommendations in respect of planning applications for strategic sites within the HGGT. The Joint Committee will be consulted by the Local Planning Authority and will provide a response to ensure that the relevant Garden Town Principles, the HGGT Vision, and any other relevant guidance are considered by the Local Planning Authority.

SCHEDULE 11 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: 28th November 2023

Report by: Councillor Chris Wilson, Executive Member for Resident Engagement

Report title: Draft 'A Listening Council: East Herts Council's principles for information giving, engagement and consultation' document

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – This report presents the proposed 'A Listening Council' set of principles governing how the council will inform, engage and consult residents, businesses and stakeholders. The principles have been set out in a simple, draft document and have been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the Executive Member for Resident Engagement making changes accordingly. The Executive is now invited to consider the draft document and endorse it for public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR the Executive:

- a) to endorse the draft 'A Listening Council' set of principles for informing, engaging and consulting residents, businesses and stakeholders for public consultation.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Executive Member for Resident Engagement has reflected on the council's approach to involving residents, businesses and stakeholders in the council's decisions which affect them. While the Executive Member recognises there have been examples of excellent practice across the council in recent years, he now wishes to propose that the council enshrines open and transparent information giving, engagement and consultation at the heart of its way of working. To this end, a document has been drafted that lays out in as simple and straightforward a way as

possible, the principles the council will follow when seeking to inform, engage and consult residents, businesses and stakeholders. It is anticipated that the 'Listening Council' principles will be reflected in the upcoming review of the council's corporate plan.

2.0 Reason(s)

- 2.1 East Herts Council provides a significant number of services for local people and businesses alike. In addition, within a three tier government environment – county, district and parish – the district provides many of the services that have a considerable impact on individuals and communities, for example, though certainly not limited to:
- a) planning policy and decisions on developments both large and small
 - b) waste collection
 - c) custodianship of parks and open spaces
 - d) efforts to tackle the climate emergency
 - e) housing, especially if a household is facing homelessness
 - f) regulation of pubs, nightclubs, taxis, premises selling food, animal welfare establishments and the like
 - g) provision of leisure facilities.
- 2.2 In many ways, the council itself can be considered a 'partner' to East Herts residents regarding their wellbeing and day-to-day enjoyment of their surroundings. Thus, it is incumbent on the council to make every effort to work with and listen to residents, as well as businesses and stakeholders, not least of which because this helps the council make better decisions.
- 2.3 With the pressures facing the council, residents, businesses and stakeholders alike, it can be a struggle to focus on meaningful engagement. That said, there are undoubtedly pockets of good practice within the council such as:
- a) involvement of local groups in identifying potential priorities for use of UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources

- b) the well-established East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum and
- c) the council's work with local people through the Hertford Playground Alliance to codesign a new children's play facilities at Hartham Common, a joint approach that saw the council shortlisted for the Municipal Journal's 'Delivering Better Outcomes' Award in 2022.

2.4 At the same time, however, the council does not have a clear, published set of principles governing how it will inform, engage and consult. The draft proposed 'A Listening Council' document at Appendix A aims to address this gap.

2.5 'A Listening Council' sets out what the council believes are the building blocks for effective information giving, engagement and consultation facilitated by the council, these being:

- transparency
- straightforward, jargon-free messaging
- involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic
- a genuine desire to listen
- multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods
- reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard
- allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer
- a central, active role for all elected members
- listening to feedback.

2.6 It is recognised that residents, businesses and other stakeholders across the district will have a variety of different views and opinions and so, while it is vital to listen to and hear these views, it is an unavoidable conclusion that listening to someone will not always lead to agreement. Given the remit of the council, it is inevitable that the council will sometimes need to balance competing views when reaching a decision.

2.7 Seeking to involve and listen to as wide a range of insights and opinions as possible is integral to the council's approach to promoting equality and celebrating diversity. Furthermore, the council's approach to safeguarding is predicated on maximising the ways in which everyone can raise

concerns. The 'A Listening Council' document, by helping establish a greater range of consultative mechanisms, should assist in this.

- 2.8 Put simply, when the council talks to the people who live and work in the district, it can learn about problems, generate ideas for dealing with shared and often thorny issues and, hopefully, engender mutual understanding and 'buy in' even if sometimes a decision reached by the council doesn't find universal favour.
- 2.9 The draft document makes clear that the building blocks are not just theory; it is proposed that the council will use them to guide information giving, engagement and consultation exercises.

Consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th November

- 2.10 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft 'A Listening Council' document in some detail at its meeting of 7th November. Several points and possible amendments or additions were raised for the Executive Member for Resident Engagement's consideration. Some points were addressed by the Executive Member at the meeting while he also committed to reflect on the committee's suggestions before presenting the document to the Executive on 28th November for the Executive to decide on endorsing it for public consultation. The outcome for the Executive Member's consideration is given in Appendix B. In summary, in response to the committee's discussion, the Executive Member has:
- amended the draft document to explicitly refer to (a) members' ability to raise residents' and others' concerns through the established Overview and Scrutiny process and (b) the important role for members in facilitating dialogue and joint working between all three tiers of local government in East Herts
 - listened to members' concerns that the document will only have an impact if it is put into practice. The Executive Member concurs and will work with senior officers to ensure the necessary training, development and guidance is put in place to ensure the principles, if ultimately approved by Council, are implemented
 - carefully considered whether the emphasis of the document should be on aspiring and committing to hearing residents, businesses and partners rather than listening to them. The Executive Member's conclusion is that *hearing* could be construed somewhat narrowly as simply one of the five

senses, while the use of the term *listening* more accurately describes the *proactive* effort and skill to listen to and understand what people are saying. Thus, while there are already references in the document to wishing to hear people, particularly those whose voices often go unheard, the emphasis remains on *listening*

- understood that members of the committee are concerned that constraints on the council's budgets may act against implementation. The Executive Member has been assured by officers that as putting the principles into practice will rely of 'doing thing differently' rather than 'doing additional things' there will not be an appreciable extra call of the council's budgets.

Next steps

- 2.11 Should the Executive agree the recommendation in this report, the 'A Listening Council' document will be put out to public consultation. Once this consultation has been concluded, the Executive Member for Resident Engagement will work with Head of Housing and Health to consider the comments made and amend the document accordingly. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be able to, should they wish, consider the post-consultation draft before it returns to the Executive.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 Continue to carry out information giving, engagement and consultation on a case-by-case basis without a published set of principles – NOT RECOMMENDED as this can lead to problems such as inconsistency, perceived tokenism and a missed opportunity to learn from involvement exercises on an ongoing basis.
- 3.2 Endorse the document, which incorporates amendments following suggestions by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for public consultation – RECOMMENDED.

4.0 Risks

- 4.1 There is a possible reputational risk that should Council ultimately adopt 'A Listening Council' it may be unable, due to capacity and/or financial resources, to conduct all its involvement exercises in line with the principles and thus invite criticism. This risk can be minimised by

developing best practice guidance for officers and members and continually learning from different exercises on how best to involve people in a meaningful way within the resources available to the council.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

5.1 Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

5.2 Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

5.3 Equalities

The 'A Listening Council' document explicitly includes 'Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard' among its underlying principles. It is to be expected that some groups with protected characteristics may go unheard by the council. Prior to finalisation of the document and its presentation to members for adoption, a full equalities impact assessment will be conducted to ensure any issues are recognised and addressed.

5.4 Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

5.5 Financial

Any training or development to support implementation of the 'A Listening Council' principles can be accommodated within the council's existing training budgets. There are no other financial implications arising directly from this report as, ultimately, any exercises to inform, engage or consult will be carried out within existing budgets or with additional funding, whether from internal or external sources, approved by members on a case-by-case basis.

5.6 Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

5.7 Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

5.8 Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

5.9 Legal

Some of the council's work requires, by statute and/or government guidance, consultation to be conducted via prescribed means and/or over a set period of time. This applies, for example, to consultation on revisions to the District Plan and changes to the council's various licensing policies. Ultimate adoption of the 'A Listening Council' principles would not in any way over-ride or fetter the council's adherence to externally determined consultation requirements.

5.10 Specific Wards

No.

6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

6.1 Background Information: None.

6.2 Appendices

a) Appendix A – draft proposed 'A Listening Consultation: East Herts Council's principles for information giving, engagement and consultation'.

b) Appendix B – consideration of comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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A Listening Council

East Herts Council's principles for
information giving, engagement and consultation

A Listening Council

At East Herts Council, we are committed to fostering open and inclusive dialogue with our residents, businesses and partners. We believe that meaningful and transparent conversations are essential for informed decision-making and the development of effective solutions. Our principles for information giving, engagement and consultation will guide us in creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued so that, we truly believe, collaboration will lead to better outcomes.

Understanding the different approaches

There are lots of ways the council can and does work with and involve residents, businesses and other partners on the things we do. The main ways are as follows.

1) Information giving

- This is a one-way form of communication where we provide people with details about what we are doing or planning to do but are not seeking input into those things.
- Sometimes we will simply give information not because we don't want to hear from people but because we are just telling people about something we have already consulted or updating or reminding them about our day-to-day services.
- Examples of ways in which will give information include social media posts, newsletters and press releases to local media.

2) Engagement

- Engagement is a more interactive approach where we involve people and ask for their input, opinions and feedback.
- Engagement can be ongoing and tends to focus on ongoing matters rather than being specifically linked to a single decision or issue. The aim is that through longer term engagement, people can help the council develop its overall priorities and how to address ongoing issues.
- Examples of the council enabling engagement include ongoing forums, community meetings and online discussion groups.

3) Consultation

- Consultation is a form of engagement whereby the council actively seeks the views, suggestions and preferences of people on a specific matter.
- The goal of consultation is to give people a meaningful role in shaping new policies and a genuine opportunity to influence specific decisions facing the council.
- Examples of ways of consulting include surveys, interviews, expert panels and meetings convened to address a specific proposed policy or decision that needs to be taken.

Building blocks of effective information giving, engagement and consultation

Here are the building blocks for effective information giving, engagement and consultation facilitated by the council:

- transparency
- straightforward, jargon-free messaging
- involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic
- a genuine desire to listen
- multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods
- reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard
- allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer
- a central, active role for all elected members
- listening to feedback.

Putting theory into practice

Our building blocks are not just theory, we will use them to ensure we are a **Listening Council** in the following ways.

1) Transparency

- We believe in clear and open communication.
- We will provide simple explanations of any involvement exercise's purpose, scope and potential impact, ensuring participants can see the context and importance of their contributions.

2) Straightforward, jargon-free messaging

- Our goal is to make sure as many people as possible understand what we are trying to say because we know that not everyone will be familiar with how the council works.
- We will share our ideas and information without special jargon or technical language that could be confusing.
- We believe that by using everyday language, what we want to say can be most easily grasped by a diverse audience.

3) Involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic

- We will seek the views of wards members and other local stakeholders on how best to reach local communities.
- We will use local printed media with the greatest readership in the locality where we are working with people.
- Whenever possible, we will use local examples and references in our consultation and engagement material to bring the issues to life for any particular community.

4) A genuine desire to listen

- We want to hear our residents', businesses' and other stakeholders' views.
- We will encourage thoughtful contributions, allowing participants to share their expertise, concerns and hopes.
- We will provide opportunities for in-depth discussions and encourage participants to provide well-informed feedback.
- We will treat everyone with respect and empathy, fostering an environment where diverse opinions are heard and valued. Above all, we want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts.

5) Multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods

- We are dedicated to making our involvement processes accessible to all participants.

- We recognise that each exercise we run is unique and so we will tailor our approaches to suit the specific context and preferences of participants, adapting our methods to the circumstances.
- We will provide multiple channels for involvement, including, for example, online communication, public meetings, surveys and other methods to better match people's preferences and needs.

6) Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard

- We see inclusivity and diversity as essential to high quality, meaningful involvement with the council.
- We will embrace a wide range of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds.
- We will actively seek input from individuals and groups representing different demographics, cultures and viewpoints to ensure we have as full an understanding of the issues at hand as possible.

7) Allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer

- We want to engage early and often.
- By involving people early and maintaining ongoing communication, we believe we can help make sure their insights shape the outcome.
- As much as we possibly can, we will involve people at different stages of a project or decision-making process, from when we have our first ideas, to the time to decide whether to put the idea into action and to evaluation of the project.
- For any given issue on which we are seeking views, we will aim to produce (a) a clear, concise summary, (b) a more detailed document and (c) a detailed document with more in-depth background information.

8) A central, active role for all elected members

- As part of the day-to-day contact with the public and specifically during any engagement or consultation exercise, all elected members have the opportunity and indeed responsibility to hear and relay the interests, opinions and feedback of the residents they represent whether through the established Overview and Scrutiny process or in response to specific involvement exercises.

- In any exercise, elected members play a crucial role in ensuring that accurate and relevant information about the issues is communicated to the public.
- Elected members can help facilitate meaningful and productive dialogue and joint working between the community and decision-makers within all three tiers of local government in East Herts, that is Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and the Town and Parish Councils.
- Given their insight into their local communities, elected members can raise important issues, propose amendments or suggest alternatives based on what they've picked up from the people, businesses and others in their area.
- We recognise that elected members may facilitate discussions aimed at finding common ground and achieving consensus.

9) Listening to feedback

- We will take responsibility for acting on what we've learned from our engagement and consultation.
- We will provide feedback to participants on how their input has influenced decisions and outcomes, thus helping to demonstrate transparency in our actions.
- We will always try to improve our information giving, engagement and consultation processes based on feedback and lessons learned.

Version: draft for consideration by the Executive, following consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th November 2023

Appendix B: Consideration of comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
<p>The document makes no reference to members role in raising the public's concern through the Overview and Scrutiny process</p>	<p>Members' role in voicing the views of residents appears solely linked to engagement and consultation exercises when there is also a legitimate route to do this via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>The aim of the document is to fully recognise the role of all members in facilitating as much meaningful dialogue between the council and the public as possible so this point is accepted</p>	<p>The first bullet point under the heading 'A central, active role for all elected membered' has been amended to read as follows (additional text in bold italics to show the changes)</p> <p><i>As part of the day-to-day contact with the public and specifically during any engagement or consultation exercise, all elected members have the opportunity and indeed responsibility to hear and relay the interests, opinions and feedback of the residents they represent whether through the established Overview and Scrutiny process or in response to specific involvement exercises.</i></p>

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
<p>East Herts Council operates within a three tier public sector environment and should not seek duplicate others' efforts</p>	<p>There were concerns that unnecessary duplication would be a waste of public money and could lead to 'consultation fatigue' among residents</p>	<p>This is a good point as strengthening dialogue and joint working between the three tiers, without duplication of effort, is to be welcomed</p>	<p>The third bullet point under the heading 'A central, active role for all elected membered' has been amended to read as follows (additional text in bold italics to show the changes) Elected members can help facilitate meaningful <i>and productive</i> dialogue <i>and joint working</i> between the community and decision-makers <i>within all three tiers of local government in East Herts, that is Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and the Town and Parish Councils.</i></p>
<p>Different involvement methods are likely to be needed when seeking the views of children and young</p>	<p>The council needs to be as inclusive as possible</p>	<p>It is accepted that a variety of methods will need to be used to maximise the reach of any involvement exercise. It is felt that this is covered by the</p>	<p>No changes proposed</p>

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
people, as opposed to adults		<p>principle of 'Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard' and the bullet points under this heading. There are, arguably, many different groups requiring specific communication channels as is recognised in the document; singling out children/young people may simply beg the question, why aren't other harder-to-reach groups explicitly mentioned? Listing different groups would lengthen the document and run the risk of inadvertently missing some groups</p>	

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
The document should include more 'how to involve' examples	There was a concern that the document may not be put into practice	The document is explicitly a high level set of principles for officers and members to refer to when devising specific involvement exercises. It is the intention that over time best practice and 'how to' toolkits will be developed to ensure the principles are put into practice. Therefore, giving examples in the principles document is not considered appropriate	No changes proposed
There is no mention of the cultural change required to implement the principles	There were concerns that the principles will remain theory without the behaviour change required to put them into practice	It is recognised that there is already a great deal of good practice across the council although behaviour change is always a necessary element of doing things differently. It is officers' view that existing	No changes proposed

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		training and development programmes can be crafted to enable the necessary behaviour change, for example, as part of the Transforming East Herts programme	
The document stresses being a listening council when it might be better to be a hearing council	There were concerns that the document should commit the council to hearing residents, businesses and partners rather than simply listening to them as hearing may imply a more active approach by the council	It is accepted that the wording and tone of the document is crucially important. It is, however, considered moot as to whether the council should aspire and commit to listening or hearing local people, businesses and partners. While opinions will differ, it is felt that listening denotes actively paying attention to what is said, that is, what is heard, and in doing so making a conscious effort to absorb the meaning of what is being said. Proactively listening is	The document already makes several references to wanting to hear people, businesses and partners, particularly those who often go unheard. It is thus not proposed to make any changes

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		arguably at the very core of the 'A Listening Council' document	

DRAFT

East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Listening Council: Community Forums and the Development Management Forum

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

This report outlines the proposal to set up Community Forums for Strategic Sites across the district and the proposal to establish a Development Management Forum. The outline for Community Forums is set out in **Appendix A** and the outline for the Development Management Forum is set out in **Appendix B**.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:

- (A) To agree the proposal for setting up Community Forums for Strategic Sites as outlined in Appendix A; and**
- (B) To agree the proposal for establishing a Development Management Forum as outlined in Appendix B.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 This report sets out the following proposals:

- A) To establish Community Forums for large strategic sites being developed across the district to provide an

opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups¹, elected members and council officers to engage with each other, raise issues of interest or concern for existing and new communities with a view to enhancing the quality of community life and communication; and

- B) To establish a Development Management Forum for planning applications which meet certain criteria. Generally, these would be complex/sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes. If the criteria are met then a Development Management Forum can be held early in the planning application process to allow residents to share planning concerns with Members, Officers and Applicants in an open and transparent way.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council wants people and communities to actively engage in the planning process and have an influence over the future development of their areas. We also know that people want to be involved in the decisions that shape the places they live, work and play.
- 2.2 Effective community engagement can lead to better plans, better decisions and more satisfactory outcomes, and it can help to avoid delays in the planning process too; however most importantly, it also improves confidence in the fairness of the planning system. Engagement needs to be meaningful and to occur from the earliest stages in the planning process to enable community views to be reflected in development plans and individual development proposals.

¹ To include but not be limited to parish councils, local residents associations, chambers of commerce and/or neighbourhood plan groups,

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 There are already opportunities built into the planning system to ensure people can get involved and have their say, including when local planning authorities are preparing their development plans and then during the development management processes when decisions are being made about proposed developments.
- 3.2 Local councils are required by the government to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The role of the SCI is to outline standards for community involvement in the planning process and to identify ways to achieve these standards. The Council's current SCI was adopted on the 23 October 2019 and is available to view online: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/statement-community-involvement-sci>.
- 3.3 The SCI 2019 describes how the public, businesses and interest groups within East Herts can get involved in the creation of local planning policy and the planning application process. This is essential to help improve understanding and openness of the planning process.
- 3.4 The Council wishes to involve all sectors of the community in the planning process and is committed to always meeting or exceeding the minimum legal requirements for consultation set out in the Planning Regulations.
- 3.5 A key area where community engagement ensures that stakeholder voices are incorporated into the planning process is through the Council's masterplanning process. The Council has a policy in its District Plan (Policy DES1) which requires that all 'significant' applications undertake a masterplanning

process². The policy sets out that the masterplan will be collaboratively prepared involving the Council, site promoters, landowners, town and parish councils and other relevant stakeholders. The masterplan will be further informed by public participation. Further information on the Council's masterplanning approach is available to view online: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/masterplans>

- 3.6 The Council has already established a series of 'Steering Groups' across the district. These were set up to consider, review and critically assess emerging masterplans for the strategic site allocations in the District Plan. These groups have been very successful in allowing communities and other stakeholders to engage much earlier in the planning process.
- 3.7 Involving communities in proposals prior to formal planning processes provides an opportunity to contribute, share views and improve understanding of proposals, thereby reducing the risk of objections at a later stage.
- 3.8 The Council's approach to masterplanning and involvement of key stakeholders as part the masterplanning steering groups has provided a valuable contribution at an early stage of the planning process. Furthermore, engagement with existing and new residents is recognised as being vital as development starts happening on the ground. This is supported by recent experience at Bishop's Stortford North where poor communications from the housebuilders has meant that there has been little information about the development as it progresses and how issues on the ground are being managed as they arise.

² The significance of a development will be measured not only on its scale, but on the potential impact on the community and local character of the place into which it is to be introduced. Generally, a threshold of fifty homes or more will apply. However, in some cases, a smaller scale of development may be considered to have a significant effect.

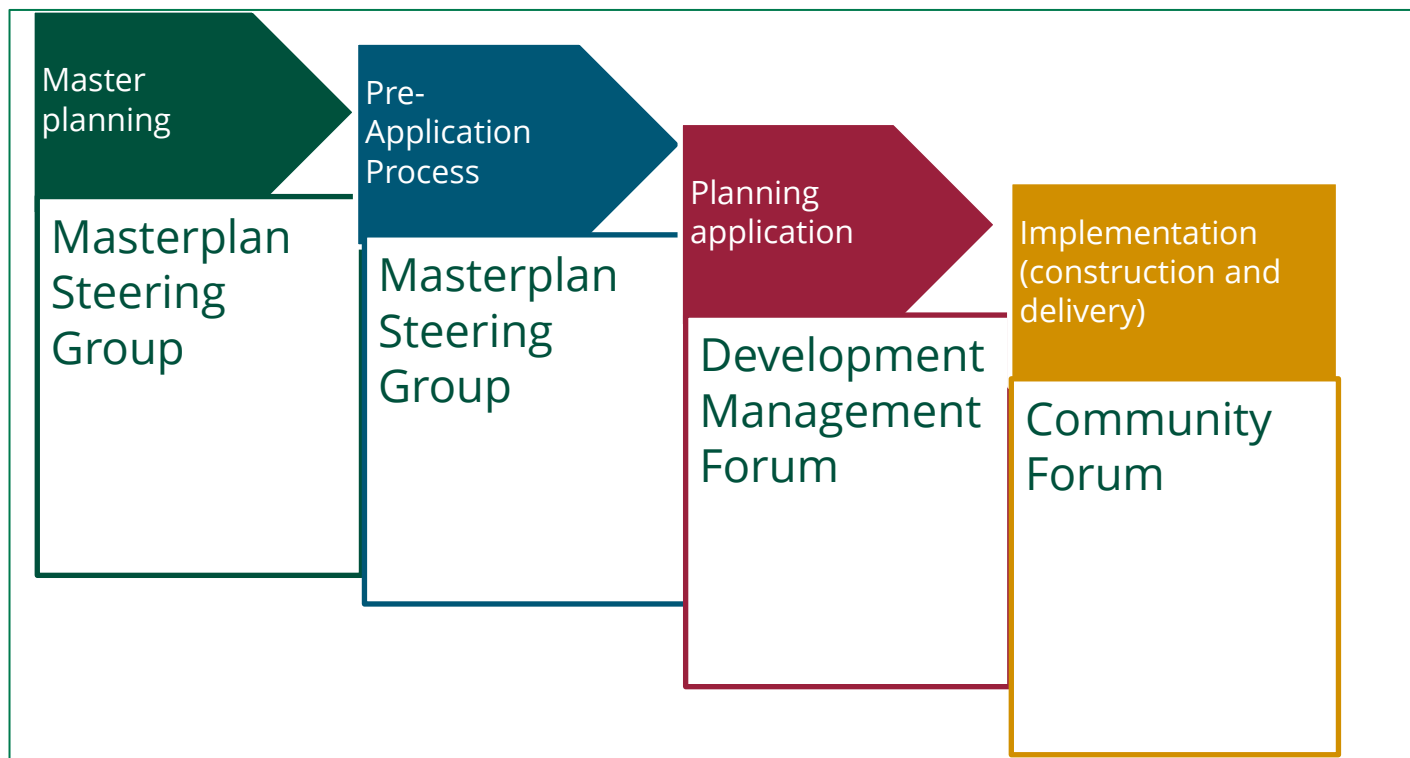
- 3.9 In recognition of this and building on the success of the Masterplanning Steering Group approach, the Council proposes to set up Community Forums for large strategic sites being developed across the district to provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups (including but not limited to Town and Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning Groups and Resident Associations), elected members and council officers to engage with each other over the lifetime of the development. The Forums will offer an opportunity for existing and new communities to raise issues of interest and concern, with a view to enhancing the quality of community life and communication.
- 3.10 **Appendix A** sets out the terms of reference for the Community Forums and initially it is proposed that the following Community Forums are established immediately:
- Stortford Fields (Part of Bishop's Stortford North)
 - Gilston Area
- 3.11 In addition to this, it is anticipated that Community Forums will be required in the near future for:
- East of Stevenage
 - Hert3
- 3.12 The lists included in 3.10 and 3.11 are not exhaustive lists and will be kept under review depending on the timing of other strategic sites coming forward. For example, Community Forums for Ware 2 and Birchall Garden Suburb will also be appropriate depending on the outcome of the outline planning applications. Equally, the Community Forum proposed for Stortfields Fields may only be short term whilst the Community Trust is being established, and for some areas such as Bishop's Stortford South, a successful developer led

community forum has been in operation for a couple of years, and therefore there is no need to duplicate

- 3.13 Community Forums will be scheduled for the year ahead and dates and venues will be made available on the Council's website. It is likely that the Community Forum for the Gilston area will occur every couple of months given the scale and complexity of development proposals.
- 3.14 In addition to setting up Community Forums for certain large strategic sites, the Council is also proposing to establish a Development Management Forum for planning applications which meet certain criteria. Generally, these would be complex/sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes. If all the criteria are met then a Development Management Forum can be held early in the planning application process to facilitate the sharing of residents planning concerns and opportunities to enhance proposals with Members, Officers and Applicants in an open and transparent way.
- 3.15 A Development Management Forum is a meeting where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application. It is an informal meeting and the forum will not determine the application. The decision on planning applications will still be determined by the Council's Development Management Committee or through delegation to officers.
- 3.16 **Appendix B** sets out the detail of how the Development Management Forum would operate. The aim of the Forum is to allow early, constructive discussion of the planning issues raised by residents, to explore the scope for building consensus and resolving concerns while allowing

enhancements informed by local knowledge to be considered into a proactive manner.

- 3.17 A number of Local Authorities operate successful Development Management Forums with Cambridge City Council being one of the first to develop the approach. Some Local Authorities have Forums at the pre application stage and others have them at the application stage. Given the Council's approach to masterplanning at the pre application stage for strategic sites, it was considered appropriate to set up a Development Management Forum at the application stage and then follow with a Community Forums as appropriate at the implementation stage. This approach at the application stage will also help facilitate discussions relating to sensitive speculative planning applications where there is significant local interest and concern.
- 3.18 The diagram below shows how Steering Groups, Community Forums and the Development Management Forum sit in the planning application process. A short description of each is outlined below the diagram.



Group or Forum	Description	Stage in the Planning Process
Masterplanning Steering Group	To provide an opportunity to consider, review and critically assess emerging masterplans for the strategic site allocations in the District Plan.	Pre Application
Development Management Forum	To provide an opportunity where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application. It is an informal meeting and the forum will not determine the application.	Planning Application
Community Forums	To provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups (including but not limited to town and parish councils,	Implementation (Construction & Delivery)

	<p>neighbourhood planning groups and resident associations), elected members and council officers to engage with each other over the lifetime of the development. The Forums will offer an opportunity for existing and new communities to raise issues of interest and concern.</p>	
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3.17 In terms of resources, the Forums can be supported using current resources and do not require any additional financial support beyond existing budgets. The implementation of the Community Forums will be taken forward by the Council’s Community Engagement and Stewardship Officer who sits within the Planning Service. This is a specific post that is part the Gilston Area team and the remit of the role is flexible enough to cover this area of community engagement. In the main, the Community Forums will be chaired by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Growth but a Deputy Chair will also be identified for each forum as this may vary depending on the location.

3.18 The Development Management Forum will be taken forward by the Development Management Team with support from the Council’s Democratic Services Team.

3.19 The proposals outlined in this report were considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 November 2023. In terms of feedback, the proposals were well received especially the proposal for Community Forums. The main areas of discussion included:

- That the Development Management Forums would be helpful in the event of sensitive speculative planning applications;

- Concern was expressed about whether the Council had appropriate resources to support the Forums including the chairing of Forums;
- Recognition that the Forums would be open to all including town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups;
- Examples from elsewhere; and
- Reporting back on the success of the Forums to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after 1-2 years of operation with appropriate data and information.

4.0 Options

4.1 The Council could continue with the current practice and arrange meetings with residents as appropriate. However, given the scale of development and issues that can arise on the ground, this would be a missed opportunity. Instead, both proposals would allow the Council to act as a facilitator in bringing relevant parties together to discuss planning matters in an open and transparent way. It also opens out Forums to all residents, should they be interested in the matters for discussion. This allows proactive resolution of issues on the ground and the combination of local knowledge and public and private sector know how to optimise design and implementation.

5.0 Risks

5.1 If the Council were to continue meeting on an ad hoc basis with residents or leaving it solely to developers/applicants, there is a possible reputational risk. Whilst it is not always within the Council's control to resolve potential issues, it can facilitate a discussion with the applicants and concerned residents proactively avoiding complaints and over reliance on planning enforcement resources.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

None arising directly from this report. It is important that the Council reaches out to all residents and provide opportunities to listen to concerns. The Forums will be open to all, and compliment the approach outlined in the Councils Statement of Community Involvement.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

Financial

None arising directly from this report. This is on the basis that the proposals can be implemented using current resources and do not require any additional financial support beyond existing budgets.

Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out the relevant legislation and regulations relating to consultation

requirements for plan making and planning applications. The proposed forums do not affect these requirements.

Specific Wards

None.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A: Community Forums – Implementation of Strategic Sites

Appendix B: Development Management Forum for East Herts

Contact Member

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Appendix A: Community Forums

Implementation of Strategic Sites

Scope & Purpose

- To provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups (including but not limited to Town and Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning Groups and Resident Associations), elected members and council officers to engage with each other.
- To offer an opportunity for residents to raise issues of interest or concern for existing and new communities with a view to enhancing the quality of community life.
- For council officers and elected members to share issues raised by residents with relevant parties and report back responses and / or that appropriate action has been taken.
- To provide regular, accurate and timely information to residents regarding relevant developments. This may involve planning related information as well as other issues related to growth pertaining to the developments covered by the forum including education, transport, community facilities and community development, where possible.

Structure, Management and Format

- The forum will be chaired by the Executive Member Planning and Growth.
- There will be two to three 'open to all' formal meetings a year, where appropriate, and other forms of engagement where necessary.
- Meeting dates will be set, wherever possible, on a rolling basis a year in advance.
- A range of methods will be used to deliver the forum. The most appropriate format will be chosen for the meeting in consultation with attendees and in accordance with the circumstances at the time. This could be in person meetings or virtual meetings.
- For in person meetings, appropriate venues related to the new development will be used to allow all residents to have an opportunity to attend.
- The format and agendas of individual meetings will be determined by the Chair and Head of Planning and Building Control based on the progress of each specific development. Suggestions for agenda items will be welcomed. The agenda for each Forum will include a standard item on suggested items for future sessions.
- The Code of Conduct set out below will assist in the running and management of the meeting so anyone present at the meeting is treated with respect and people act in a fair and responsible way. All attendees will be expected to abide by this.

Communication and Publicity

A range of measures will be used to communicate with residents about the forums, including local advertising via flyers, web page, existing parish publications, email and social media.

- Presentations and notes will be published online.
- A distribution list will be developed and maintained based on registered forum attendees and any others wishing to be kept informed. Forums will be open to all. There will also be a registration form available to complete. Surveys and feedback mechanisms will be employed from time to time to ensure forums are meeting residents' needs and to facilitate continuous improvement.
- Agendas will be published no later than 7 days prior to the meeting.

Code of Conduct

All people attending Forum events must undertake to act in a fair and responsible manner, treat all people with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude anyone. This is a collective responsibility of all present.

All people coming to Forum events agree by their presence that they will:

- Observe the authority of the Chair or facilitator at all times.
- Listen quietly to and respect the views and experiences of other people contributing.
- Allow others to have equal opportunity and time to share their opinions.
- Not use inflammatory language or aggressive behaviour of any kind.
- Focus their comments on the issues at hand.

While the expectation is that all participating will act within the code of conduct, if any of the above values are not met during a meeting or event, the Chair, facilitator or nominated officer may take one or more of the following steps with the objective of restoring order.

- a) Remind any person not abiding by the code of conduct that should they continue their behaviour will not be tolerated and the following action may be taken.
- b) Any person making offensive, insulting, threatening, provocative, slanderous or obscene remarks, or who becomes boisterous, or who threatens or harasses any person or property while at a Forum event, will cause the event to be suspended for the shortest period required to allow order to be restored.
- c) Any person or people causing an event to be interrupted by reason of behaviours identified above, who does so more than once, can be asked to leave the event by the Chair or staff at the event. This can be for a specific length of time to allow the person or people to cool off or for the rest of the meeting or event, depending on the judgement of the Chair or staff present.

Important Note: The forum does not have decision-making powers and cannot be held accountable for growth and related issues.

Appendix B: Development Management Forum for East Herts

What is a Development Management Forum?

A development management forum is a meeting where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application.

What is the aim of a Development Management Forum?

The aim of the forum is to allow early, constructive discussion of the planning issues raised by residents and to explore the scope for building consensus and resolving concerns.

Is it a formal decision making meeting?

It is an informal meeting and the forum does not determine the application. The decision on planning applications is determined by the Council's Development Management Committee or through delegation to officers.

What types of applications fall within the Development Management Forum?

Generally, complex and sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes.

There may be cases where the significance of development may not be measured solely on scale (e.g. 50 or more homes) but on the potential impact on the community and local character of the place into which it is to be introduced, and the ability to bring forward benefits to the community. This approach is consistent with the approach to masterplanning in the District Plan and any such requests will be considered at the time. Any such requests should be submitted (via email) to the Head of Planning and Building Control who will review with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Growth.

How is a Development Management Forum requested?

A Development Management Forum can be called if all of the following requirements are met:

- Complex and sensitive major planning applications for 50 homes or more;
- The provision of at least 25 signatures and addresses of East Herts residents impacted by the proposals;
- The request has to be received within the initial 21 day consultation period;
- In support but only if there is a qualifying request of objection to be considered; and
- That solely relates to comments on an eligible planning application that is under consideration.

Requests must clearly state the planning concerns related to the application. Requests are also encouraged to say what changes might be made to the development to overcome concerns.

It will be expected that residents explain what changes are being sought at the Forum.

Timescales are set for the receipt of requests because the Council has to determine applications within timescales set by the Government.

What will the Development Management Forum not consider?

A Development Management Forum request will not be considered for the following applications:

- to alter, extend or carry out other works to a house and its surroundings (householder applications)
- to create a new single house or other single residential unit
- for a change of use of an existing building(s)
- for works or alterations to existing buildings or other structures creating no additional floorspace
- for new commercial development of less than 200 square metres (gross) additional floorspace
- for advertisements
- to determine whether a use of land or building needs planning permission - ie a lawful development certificate
- for works or alterations to listed buildings
- to demolish a building in a conservation area
- by telecommunications operators asking whether the local authority's 'prior approval' is needed for the siting and appearance of works that would otherwise be 'permitted development' not requiring planning permission.

The Forum will not consider requests expressing an in-principle outright objection to the application with no suggestions for a compromise solution or a request not received within the correct timescales.

A Forum will not normally be held for a request relating to a current application amendment, or where a Forum has already been held on the current application.

How to submit a request for a Development Management Forum

If the requirements for a request are all met, a submission can be made to the Head of Planning and Building Control via email planning@eastherts.gov.uk

Applicants and residents will be expected to meet the next available Forum date because of the timescales and deadlines associated with planning applications.

How does the Development Management Forum work?

Dates and times of the Development Management Forums will be made available on the Council's website.

The Development Management Forum will be attended by:

- up to three resident representatives. You can ask your local councillor to present your petition if you wish
- up to three representatives of the applicant
- members of the relevant committee that will determine the application
- ward councillors
- the planning officer dealing with the application
- other relevant officers, including a senior officer who chairs the meeting
- the press and public can attend as observers

What is the format of the Development Management Forum?

- Introduction by chair and declaration of councillor interests
- presentation of the application by the applicant/agent
- presentation of the views of the those against the application (up to three representatives)
- presentation of the views of the those in support of the application (up to three representatives) where applicable
- member questions and issues arising – applicants to respond to questions.

In exceptional circumstances, the order of proceedings may be changed at the discretion of officers and the chair.

The planning officer will take the outcome of the meeting into account in further negotiations on the application and report to committee. The notes of the Forum will be attached to the committee report for information as an appendix.

The role of Members at Development Management Forum meetings?

All members can attend Development Management Forum meetings.

The particular role that members can play at the meetings is dependent on whether or not they are likely to sit on the Committee which will have a formal role in determining the planning application.

All members can:

- use the meeting to understand the development, the issues important to local people and to the applicants, and how the relevant policies are being applied by asking questions;
- seek advice from officers as to the process to be followed, issues being reviewed and the likely policy position.

Members should not use the Forum to undertake negotiations or appear to put undue pressure on the officers in relation to any future decision on the scheme. Members are however entitled to robustly question developers and officers to fully understand issues presented at the Forum.

Local Members who are not on the Development Management Committee can greatly assist this process by taking an active part in the Forum meeting and asking questions. It is important to avoid creating any confusion in the minds of developers or local people about who speaks for the Council in negotiations or about the Council's negotiating position.

Agenda Item 12

East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Report by: Councillor Sarah Hopewell – Executive Member for Wellbeing

Report title: Health and Safety – Ward Freman Pool

Ward(s) affected: Buntingford;

Summary – East Herts Council has recently been made aware of health and safety issues at Ward Freman Pool in Buntingford. As a result of these, the pool will need to close at the end of the school term in December 2023 while potential solutions to the concerns can be further investigated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:

- a) To close the pool at the end of the school term in December while further investigations can be undertaken as to potential solutions to remedy the health and safety concerns.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 To close the Ward Freman pool at the end of the school term in December and continue discussions with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), and the community, as to a suitable way forward for the pool.

- 1.2 Officers will continue to work with HCC, and the community, and bring a report back to the Executive in Spring 2024 with detailed information as to the options available for the future of the Ward Freman pool before the end of March 24.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 HCC currently leases the building from Ward Freman College while East Herts Council (EHC) have responsibility for the provision of services. EHC currently contracts these out to Everyone Active
- 2.2 It has been established that the facilities require significant modernising and repair. Recently, this has resulted in operators, Everyone Active, formally raising their concerns as to the health and safety of the pool. Everyone Active have stated that they do not believe the pool is safe to run beyond the end of the school term in December 2023.
- 2.3 Everyone Active are currently implementing a short-term solution to mitigate the known health and safety risks. These include regular microbiological testing due to the risk of cryptosporidium and placing coverings on raised tiles that have the potential to injure swimmers.
- 2.4 The minimum improvement works that have been identified to bring the pool up to a safe standard include pool filtration and pool tank works. It is estimated these works will take approximately 20-22 weeks to complete, costing in the region of £543,550

- 2.5 HCC has been informed of the concerns and need to close the pool in December 2023.
- 2.6 Freman College have advised that Ward Freman Pool has nothing to do with the College. When the college changed to Foundation status in 2009 the pool remained in the ownership of the Local Authority (HCC) and is only used on occasions by the College
- 2.7 An EHC Officer will remain in discussion with the schools using the pool and HCC to establish options available in relation to the future of Ward Freman pool.
- 2.8 EHC will work with the community to establish if there any community-led, sustainable options for the future operation of the Ward Freman pool that could be implemented. This could include an existing organisation or one formed specifically to support the pool (such as a "Friends Of" group) taking responsibility for the facility.
- 2.9 Once a full evaluation of options has been undertaken and discussed, EHC Officers will report to the Executive outlining options available. This report is expected to be completed in Spring 2024.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The Ward Freman pool requires significant repair works to be undertaken to ensure it remains safe to use. Operators, Everyone Active, have informed EHC that the pool will need to close at the end of the school term in December 23 until the works can be completed for health and safety reasons.

3.2 Further time is required to establish potential options with regards to the future of the Ward Freman pool. EHC will continue to explore options and present a full report to the Executive in Spring 2024.

4.0 Options

4.1 Temporarily close Ward Freman pool at the end of the school term in December 2023 and continue to work to establish future options for the facility. EHC Officers will present a full report of options identified to the Executive in Spring 2024.

5.0 Risks

Do Nothing

5.1 The pool will be forced to close indefinitely on health and safety grounds. Due to the reactive nature of this approach, EHC may be seen as being unwilling to support the local community or address the ongoing concerns around health and safety of the users of the facility. It can be expected that this would draw criticism from pool users and the local community, particularly given the impact on site users and children learning to swim.

Close the pool temporarily

5.2 EHC may draw criticism from the public who may see the Council as responsible for having allowed the facility to reach a point where it is having to close on health and safety grounds. Taking the decision to close the pool while further options can be explored, however, demonstrates the Council's commitment to exploring all options for the future operation of the Ward Freman pool.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 – officers have discussed options with HCC Officers

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

Yes – EHC responsible for 60% of costs at Ward Freman pool with HCC responsible for the remaining 40%

Health and Safety

Yes – Operators, Everyone Active, have formally raised their concerns as to the future health and safety of the Ward Freman pool. Short-term health and safety solutions are currently in place but the facility is not considered safe to continue operating beyond the end of the school term in December 2023, until the minimum improvement works have be carried out

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes – Current joint use agreement between EHC and HCC in place until 2037

Specific Wards

Yes - Buntingford

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

N/A

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