

Public Document Pack

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 13th December, 2023 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 6 day of December 2023

James Ellis
Head of Legal and
Democratic Services

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

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

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chairman.

2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

4. Minutes - 18 October 2023 (Pages 5 - 48)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 October 2023.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

6. Petitions (Page 49)

To receive any petitions.

(A) Protect Bengo Field landscape and return it to Green Belt_(Page 50)

7. Public Questions (Pages 51 - 52)

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions (Pages 53 - 55)

To receive any Members' questions.

9. Executive Report - 28 November 2023 (Pages 56 - 59)

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

(A) Consideration of mandating card payment facilities in licensed vehicles_(Pages 60 - 79)

(B) Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan_(Pages 80 - 164)

(C) Ware Neighbourhood Plan_(Pages 165 - 287)

(D) Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplanning Framework_(Pages 288 - 314)

10. Political Balance and Committee Membership of the Council Update
(Pages 315 - 320)

11. Minor changes to the Constitution (Pages 321 - 329)

12. Car Park Fees - Bishop's Stortford (Pages 330 - 338)

13. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

(A) Proportional representation_(Pages 339 - 340)

(B) Hotels for Asylum Seekers_(Page 341)

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
- must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

Public Attendance

Audio/Visual Recording of meetings

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2023, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Horner (Chairman).
Councillors M Adams, R Buckmaster,
E Buckmaster, C Brittain, I Devonshire,
S Bull, V Burt, R Carter, N Clements,
M Connolly, S Copley, N Cox, B Crystall,
A Daar, B Deering, T Deffley, J Dumont,
J Dunlop, Y Estop, V Glover-Ward,
M Goldspink, C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon,
A Holt, S Hopewell, D Jacobs, S Marlow,
S Nicholls, A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern,
V Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston, J Thomas,
R Townsend, S Watson, G Williams,
G Williamson, C Wilson, F Woolf, J Wyllie
and D Woollcombe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Executive

177 ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Crystall that Councillor Horner be elected as Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the 2023/24 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Horner be elected as Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the 2023/24 Civic Year.

Councillor Horner made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

178 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Goldspink that Councillor Connolly be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the 2023/24 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Connolly be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the 2023/24 Civic Year.

Councillor Connolly made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

179 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Members for electing him as the Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the Civic Year. He said that he took on the role in times of great upheaval in the world and particularly, in the Middle East. He said that the violence in Israel and Gaza had deeply affected many residents in the district, especially those who had family and friends in the region. He said he recognised the impact that the terrible events had and the real threat that could lead to division and conflict within East Herts. He said he acknowledged the suffering of all communities and stood alongside those who worked for peace.

A minute's silence was held for all the victims of the attacks in Israel and Gaza.

180 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council gave a statement regarding the events in Israel and Gaza.

The Leader said that his heart went out to everyone who had been caught up in the dreadful events in Israel and Gaza and to those residents in East Herts with loved ones impacted by the appalling violence. He said he appreciated their fear for family and friends in the region and said he had relatives in Israel, no doubt like other people in the Chamber.

He said that the attacks by Hamas on civilians on the

7th October were horrific. The deaths during those attacks and the seizure of hostages, including women and children, was appalling. Such brutality had no justification and he called for the immediate release of all hostages.

The Leader said that the killing that was continuing across the region was also unacceptable and called for an immediate end to the violence. He said that the targeting of civilians, whoever they were, breached international law and should never be acceptable. He said that the Government must work with the international community to protect civilians and infrastructure from attack, to provide immediate humanitarian relief and to end the cycle of violence. He said that the world needed a meaningful political negotiation to bring peace.

The Leader said that he was deeply concerned that the escalating situation could impact community relationships in East Herts. He said that the district's communities were strong but as local leaders, they must do everything they could to reduce tension and division, avoid actions that could inflame the situation, and encourage communities to be united, whatever their cultures and faiths.

The Leader said that Councillor Martin Butcher had made a serious mistake posting inflammatory comments on social media while he was Chair of East Herts Council. He said he had stepped down from his position and has made a full apology for any offence

that he might have caused. The Green Leadership Team in East Herts had discussed a suspension and investigation, but by mutual agreement Councillor Butcher would be leaving the EHC Green group. He thanked Councillor Butcher for his hard work as Chair and as one of the Green group.

The Leader said that it was vitally important to remind councillors of their responsibilities as elected members. He said they were elected and at all times their responsibility was to their community. He said that as a Council, it would do everything it could to support residents whose families and friends had been caught up in the awful conflict. It was vital that councillors worked hard locally to reduce tension, and in a time of crisis that was more important than ever. He said that the Israel-Palestine conflict can spark intense emotions and the UK had already seen demonstrations and a rise in racism and prejudice. He hoped that the Council could agree to do its absolute best to prevent that from happening here.

The Leader said that the Council's role as leaders across East Herts was clear: they must stand together and encourage unity over division.

The Leader of the Council invited the Leaders of the other political groups to make their own statements.

Councillor Deering, Leader of the Conservative group, said that it was right the Council had observed a minute's silence at the start of the meeting. He

acknowledged the Leader's comments and said it was right that Councillor Butcher had stood down as Chairman of the Council and noted that he had left the Green group. He said that appalling acts of terrorism had occurred with the murder of innocent families and babies, taking children and the elderly hostage and was completely unacceptable and was terrorism of the worst kind. He said that his heart went out to everyone involved and hoped that peace and safety would return to the region. He said that he endorsed the Leader's comments about showing leadership to everyone in East Herts and said there was no place for prejudice against any community.

Councillor Goldspink, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group, endorsed the comments of Councillor Crystall and Councillor Deering. She said everyone had been horrified and dismayed by events in Israel and Gaza and the attacks on civilians by a terrorist organisation. She said the Liberal Democrat group unequivocally condemned all attacks on innocent civilians and as bystanders in the UK, their hearts went out to all those caught up and affected by the tragedy. She said her and the group's deepest sympathy and condolences went to all those who were mourning, suffering or sick with worry about friends and relatives and hoped and prayed that leaders of nations with influence could devise a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Councillor Jacobs, Leader of the Labour group, thanked the Leader of the Council for the opportunity to speak on the situation. He echoed many comments made by the other Members. He said that there were not the words to describe the horror of what was happening

and what might happen if the situation continued. He said that the UK government must continue to press for Hamas to release all the hostages and act in accordance with international law providing access to food, water and aid and safe humanitarian corridors. He said, however, that even in the darkest moments there was always hope and said he had seen the end of apartheid in South Africa, the fall of the Berlin Wall and peace in Northern Ireland. He said the world must not give up on the Middle East and hoped for an end to the conflict.

181 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Andrews, Boylan, Butcher, Hoskin, McAndrew and Willcocks.

182 MINUTES - 26 JULY 2023

Councillor Copley asked for an amendment to the minutes. She asked to insert the words "if that were true" on page 54 of the minutes.

Councillor Goldspink proposed, and Councillor Hopewell seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 with the amendment suggested by Councillor Copley be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 be approved as a correct

record and signed by the Chairman.

183 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Copley declared an interest in Item 13a. She worked in Bishop's Stortford town centre and was a member of the BID. She said she would be leaving the Chamber for the discussion and voting of the item.

184 PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

185 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Charlotte Lipscomb to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Member for Planning and Growth

The AMA festival took place at The Silver Leys Polo Club in Bury Green on Saturday 2nd September, having been granted a licence by East Herts Council at a hearing on 14th August. The festival left a trail of disruption in its wake, affecting all our local roads through Bury Green and our neighbouring hamlets and blocked the designated route for emergency vehicles. Local residents experienced not only gridlocked traffic which left us trapped in our homes but also indiscriminate parking on roads and verges, along with issues related to noise, litter, and anti-social behaviour.

Residents endured a weekend of mayhem. Examples

include an eighty four year old resident directing traffic in order to try and mitigate the gridlock, a 93 year old man terrified in his house and surrounded by festival goers trying to retrieve abandoned vehicles, an elderly and confused lady in her last weeks of life who was moved to residential care for 2 weeks in anticipation of the event and children aged 10 and 12 too terrified to pick blackberries on the green, even with adult supervision. Young and old were profoundly and adversely affected.

Can the Executive Member responsible for licensing please explain how the decision was made to allow the festival to take place, despite the strong objections from residents, the parish Council, our local councillor, the County Council Highways Dept and the police, all of whom were all able to accurately foresee the havoc the festival would create.

Response from Councillor Glover-Ward

I would like to thank Charlotte Lipscomb for raising this important question about the recent AMA Fest event.

First, I'd like to assure everyone that the council has followed the right process when considering the AMA Fest application. While I have responsibility for licensing policies, the national legislation and guidance does not allow me, as an Executive member, to be involved in decisions on individual applications. So, because there were representations *against* the application, a hearing led by a sub-committee of the council's Licensing Committee was convened. Please do not think I am trying to distance myself from the

sub-committee's decision to grant the licence; I am simply pointing out that if the council had failed to follow the processes set out in law, we could have been taken to court for incorrectly dealing with the application.

That said, I have spoken with my colleague, the Chair of the Licensing Committee, and I am very happy to explain the council's position.

The Licensing Act 2003 dictates the broad range of issues the council must take into account when deciding whether to issue a licence for an event. When looking at the AMA Fest application, just like the five local residents, the local parish council, the police and others who raised objections, East Herts Council had considerable concerns about the traffic and parking arrangements put forward.

The organisers gave assurances both in writing and verbally at the Licensing Sub-Committee hearing that adequate arrangements would be put in place but, of course, the council did not simply take the organiser's word at face value. So, the sub-committee stipulated that the event could only go ahead *if* the organisers demonstrated the robustness of their plans by gaining, at their own expense, a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (a TTRO) from the Highways team at Hertfordshire County Council.

The organisers made the application and, although the notice period for submitting this was far shorter than usual, Hertfordshire County Council felt able to issue the TTRO. To be absolutely clear, had the county council *not* issued the TTRO, the conditions placed on

the licence by East Herts Council would not have been met and so the East Herts Council would have been enabled to halt the festival before it had even begun; this action would have been taken irrespective of the number of tickets that had been sold and entertainment arranged.

Unfortunately, the day of the festival saw very considerable disruption on the roads just as Ms Lipscombe has described and East Herts Council immediately launched an investigation. This includes looking at what information the organisers provided in support of their TTRO application to the county council and how this compared with the actual traffic management arrangements they put in place. Until we have concluded the investigation we are unable to comment on the details as this might prejudice any potential action that the council may deem appropriate.

Please be assured, however, that East Herts Council is ready to take action against any event organiser that commits offences under the Licensing Act 2003 which may include not complying with the terms of a licence. Regarding AMA Fest, we have gathered information and data from various sources, all of which has now been reviewed but we agreed to a request from Little Hadham Parish Council to hold off completing our investigation until local residents had time to respond to a request for evidence published in the October edition of the parish council magazine. As we are striving to be a listening council and in the spirit of partnership we respect the parish council's wish to enable as many residents as possible to have their say.

Finally, just as we must follow the legal processes when considering granting a licence, we must do the same when considering taking action *after* an event. We will weigh all the evidence received, including the information that may come in as a result of the Parish Council appeal, against the Licensing Act 2003 and the public interest to determine the appropriate action to take in relation to AMA Fest and its organisers.

Supplementary question from Charlotte Lipscombe

The terms of the licence restricted the number of attendees to 5,000 and tickets were on sale long before the hearing in August. She asked the Executive Member if the council knew how many tickets were sold or how the number of attendees at the event was controlled.

Response from Councillor Glover-Ward

Councillor Glover-Ward said she could not comment on this specific point as it was part of the investigation.

186 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Cllr George Williams to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Given the protections for nesting birds under the wildlife and countryside act, do the council and its providers have a responsibility and the powers to

postpone or decline planning applications for non-urgent roofing works in known swift nesting sites?

Response from Councillor Glover-Ward

Thank you for the question as I am keen to protect swifts and have four swift boxes on my property. As such I am aware of the issues around swift nesting areas in roofs and I know that swifts tend to nest in the same place for life. As such I share the concerns raised by Cllr Williams.

Unfortunately, the planning system allows a great deal of building work to take place without the need for planning permission. This is referred to as 'Permitted Development' and there are currently no exemptions included in the General Permitted Development Order 2015 which relate to the presence of swifts.

Of course, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act disturbing nesting birds is an offence and so if there is evidence of nests in use when work is about to take place then no works should be undertaken.

I have already been approached by the Hertford Swift Group who have volunteered to draft a suggested swift policy for the Council's consideration. I understand that this will cover both existing nesting sites and to provide additional sites in new builds and refurbishments of properties. This will then be presented for inclusion in due course in the update of the District Plan, should this be approved in our motion later on this evening.

In the meantime, the Council will continue to encourage the inclusion of nest boxes in accordance with the Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document. Consideration will also be given to the production of a Swift Best Practice Advice Note.

I welcome the input from community organisations such as Hertford Swift Group, Herts North East Herts Swift Group and Ware Swift Group who are doing such incredibly important work to save this red listed species whose numbers have declined by over 50% in the last 20 years (RSPB figures) due to, amongst other things, habitat loss. The groups have been steadily increasing the number of installed swift boxes in existing properties and I hope this invaluable work will result in an increase in swift numbers as they start to recover locally.

There was no supplementary question.

Question 2

Cllr Diane Hollebon to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth confirm to me that she is aware that the proposed community centre in the St James's Park development, Bishop's Stortford South, is being offered on a 100-year lease hold basis when it's being funded by Section 106 funds and should therefore be a community asset in perpetuity. Who allowed this and why?

Response from Councillor Glover-Ward

I would like to thank Councillor Hollebon for her question.

Firstly, I would like to make it clear that there was never a requirement to build a community centre as part of this project; the requirement is to provide up to 200m² of community space within the Local Centre under the S106 agreement. This Community Space is required to be designed in accordance with the Community Space Management Strategy with the management and maintenance of same along with the management body details included in the 'Management Strategy'.

It is not uncommon for community space to be included in another building, as is the case here, and therefore a long leasehold agreement in this circumstance is not unreasonable. It's probably worth noting that there is no planning policy requirement that community space should be offered in perpetuity to any local council and I understand that currently it is anticipated that this space will be run by a non-council body although this may alter dependent on progress made by the developer to secure a lease agreement with an appropriate body.

I am sure that the Councillor will agree that the likely term of 100 years on the lease, which may also be extended or renewed at the end of the term as with any lease, does offer a substantial degree of permanence.

There is a working draft of the Community Space Management Strategy and Specification submitted to

EHDC planners for comment and we would anticipate that a more formal draft will be submitted subsequently where councillors and the public will be able to comment.

Supplementary question from Councillor Hollebon

Councillor Hollebon asked if the Executive Member could guarantee that relevant ward members were made aware and consulted on any agreement before Officers made a decision regarding the provision of community centres? She said that residents needed a community asset for their health and wellbeing.

Response from Councillor Glover-Ward

Councillor Glover-Ward said if the council were providing a community centre she would take that on board but the council was providing community space under this S106 decision and that was why it was leasehold, not freehold.

Question 3

Cllr Joe Thomas to ask Cllr Sarah Hopewell, the Executive Member for Wellbeing

What steps are East Herts District Council taking to mitigate the risk of injury from lightning strikes in our facilities and open spaces?

Response from Councillor Hopewell

I would like to thank Councillor Thomas for his

question.

In fact, my colleague Councillor Dumont has already raised a similar question with officers following the terrible recent lightning strike at Sele School in Hertford. In this case members may be aware that as we understand it, the tournament had been suspended at the school and the playing field was being cleared when the storm gathered pace and unfortunately the boy was struck.

Education is critical to mitigating injury. East Herts takes all reasonably practicable steps concerning weather events and activity management if reports of storm weather are received. Added to this, we already provide information on our website regarding coping with cold weather, heat waves and floods and so, in response, to the recent incident, and so we will be adding a link to the Met Office's guidance for staying safe in thunder and lightning which we will share with the various community groups and partners we work with.

Whilst it is difficult to plan for every eventually concerning natural phenomena, defibrillators can be vital if someone has a cardiac incident for whatever reason. Over recent years we have funded defibrillators at our own sites such as Wallfields and the Theatre in Hertford and Navigation House in Bishop's Stortford. All of these are registered on both The Circuit, a highly respected national database of defibrillator locations funded by the NHS, the British Heart Foundation, the Resuscitation Council UK and St John Ambulance, and the online National Defibrillator

Database, operated by the Community Heartbeat Trust charity.

In addition, there are defibrillators located at Hartham, Grange Paddocks, Leventhorpe, Ward Freman and Fanshawe leisure centres and swimming pools.

Of particular note, all schools in the district have been part of a roll out programme to ensure access to defibrillators. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England that do not have existing provision in place are eligible, with larger schools having been provided with two or more defibrillators so they can be strategically placed in areas where a cardiac arrest may be more likely, such as sports halls. Timely access to a defibrillator can greatly improve survival rates following a cardiac incident and members may wish to look at the National Defibrillator Database at www.nddb.uk as the searchable map shows the significant number of defibrillators across our district.

There was no supplementary question.

187 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 5 SEPTEMBER AND 3 OCTOBER 2023

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 5 September and 3 October 2023.

188 BIRCHALL GARDEN SUBURB MASTERPLAN

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan and said the report sought approval to adopt the

masterplan as a material planning consideration. She said that the East Herts District Plan was adopted in 2018 and it allocated a number of strategic sites for growth. Policy EWEL1 in the District Plan set out the strategy for co-ordinated development of Birchall Green through a joint masterplan with Welwyn Hatfield Council.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the masterplan was developed by East Herts and Welwyn Hatfield working with the landowner and other key stakeholders. She said that the landowner had submitted an outline application in June 2022, so the councils decided to lead on the plan process and jointly appointed an external partner. A steering group was established with representatives from both councils and met on four occasions and three engagement events were held for local members and residents.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that if it was adopted, it would become a material planning consideration for both councils and be a reference guide for Herts County Council with regards to transport, highways and education provision.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported.
Councillor Copley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Cox said that he appreciated that the document was a masterplan and not a planning application but said that if approved, it would be an out of town housing estate serving a town that had

huge amounts of brown belt land. He said that he felt the council should oppose the application.

Councillor Estop said that masterplans were an excellent policy and was pleased to hear that a steering group had helped officers work through the process. She said she felt that the masterplan process and document needed to be easier to understand so that the public felt they had joint ownership. She also said that the document started with aspirations for sustainable, high quality design which she said was an easy cliché and highly specific about high quality. She said that her overriding concern was that the landowner and developers were absent from the document yet they were the ones that needed to be ticking the box. She felt that a masterplan needed a statement from the landowner to demonstrate that they were committed to the process of the masterplan and its principles and there was not any information in the document about implementation.

Councillor Daar said she went to the resident engagement event with Councillor Glover-Ward and said she was impressed at the efforts being made on active travel within the development. She hoped that as the development came forward, active travels links would continue to Hertingfordbury and Sele and be promoted.

Councillor Hart said that the allocation for affordable housing within the document was on the low end. She said it was 40% for East Herts but said this was always normally watered down when development started. She said it was not financially or socially viable to build

large housing estates and not provide sufficient housing for workers on low incomes. She said that the district needed to have an adequate and sustainable allocation of affordable housing.

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 Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan for the strategic allocation known as EWEL1 Land East of Welwyn Garden City be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

189 REVIEW OF THE EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN 2018

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the Review of the East Herts District Plan recommendations. She said that the current District Plan was adopted in October 2018 and it was a requirement that it should be reviewed within five years of adoption. The planning department had carried out an assessment and concluded that it did need updating.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said the assessment looked at the consistency of the current plan with the National Planning Policy Framework and its engagement with the duty to co-operate. She said that a review was normally straightforward but that was currently not the case with significant uncertainty on proposed government reform of the planning systems, consultations on a

new plan making system continuing and changes being implemented as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill going through Parliament. She said that whilst the department waited for clarity from the government and based on the assumption that a strong evidence base would still be required, the team would use the 12 months to update its evidence base and other preparatory work including a call for sites.

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

Councillor E Buckmaster said that the call for sites process would be crucial as previous mistakes had been made which had angered residents. He said that some urban expansions had caused issues in areas where residents warned it would happen and were now complaining that were not listened too. He said the review would be an opportunity for Members to ensure that the right developments were built in the right place because as the process continued, the options for Members narrowed considerably after statutory and legal requirements were met. He said that the Council owed it to residents that they were listening to them and not just following a process and could avoid problems in the future if the sites were chosen carefully.

Councillor Stowe noted that there would be a call for sites in 2024 to achieve a 33% increase in housing numbers. However, he said that there were sites that were put forward in 2018 that had been put on hold. He asked if assurances could be given to residents that

current adopted sites would be progressed before other land was handed over. He requested that strategic sites were monitored in the future to preempt any issues.

Councillor Goldspink said she shared other Members concerns about an increased need for more houses and agreed that it was important to select sites carefully.

Councillor Glover-Ward said the 33% increase in housing numbers were calculated under different methodologies. The council's housing need was greater than 839 houses and referred to page 30 in the District Plan which showed that its housing need was almost the same as the housing requirement under the standard methodology.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that would put into question the call for sites and questioned whether residents would understand the methodology.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that when the District Plan was updated, it would be valid for 15 years and would go up to 2040.

Councillor Wilson questioned the evidence base for the District Plan in 2018 as it was clear that mitigation had previously not happened. He said that a review of the plan was welcome to make it fit for purpose for all residents.

Councillor Estop said she thought that the council should make great efforts to explain planning strategies to

residents as they emerge and explain the method of assessing how many new homes needed to be built. She said the council need to counter the anti-development attitude whilst demonstrating the benefits.

Councillor Clements asked about the reasoning behind the language in Appendix 2. He said that some said updated and some said retained.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that it was based on the assessment that Officers had made an assessment between the exact policy and changes made to planning law.

Councillor Deering said that he would like an answer to Councillor Stowe's question about the call for sites and sites that had already been earmarked for development. He also asked to see a 12 month work programme for the Development Management Committee as it was apparent that some of its committees were being cancelled and questioned how applications could be taken forward in the time frame.

Councillor Glover-Ward responded and said that a planning authority could not force a private developer to build on land. She said that the HERT2 development should have been in development several years ago. She said it was difficult to provide a 12 month work programme for the Development Management Committee but could provide a three month programme but highlighted that some applications may slip to the next meeting if information was not supplied by applicants.

The motion to support the recommendations having

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

RESOLVED – That (A) 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.

190 COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY AND PRIORITIES 2023/24

The Executive Member for Communities presented the Community Grants Policy and Priorities 2023/24 report and recommendations. She thanked Officers for their hard work on the report and for ensuring that the application process would allow the same forms used for other grants such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. She said that the amount of grant money available had been reduced compared to last year but another £40,000 was available from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. She said that if the policy was agreed, it would be launched on 1 November 2023.

Councillor Daar proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Wilson seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink said she supported the recommendation and was pleased to see the change that would allow small community groups apply for the grants if supported by their local councillor.

Councillor Clements thanked Councillor Daar and Officers for listening to the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and including in the policy.

Councillor Deering said that the Conservative group supported the recommendation.

Councillor Wilson echoed the comments from Councillor Clements and said that it showed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee process worked well.

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 be approved.

191 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2023 - REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the Independent Remuneration Panel's report on the Panel's behalf. He said that Council agreed, at its meeting on 1 March 2023, to extend the 2022/23 Members' Allowance Scheme until the scheduled Council meeting in October 2023. He said that this was done to allow new Members elected in May 2023 to input into the process and provide the Independent Remuneration Panel with their views on member allowances for the year ahead.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the Panel met three times on 6, 13 and 19 September 2023, meeting with Members from each of the political groups on the Council as set out at paragraph 2.4, and also conducted an online survey which all Members were encouraged to complete, with thirty-five Members doing so, representing 70% of the Council.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the Panel conducted its review of Members' allowances pursuant to the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003. The rationale applied by the Panel in formulating their recommendations can found at paragraphs 2.8 to 3.3 of the report, and the results of the Member survey are at Appendix C.

Councillor Brittain proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Adams seconded the proposal.

Councillor Brittain thanked the panel for their report and said that the overall increase in allowances worked out at 3% which he felt was fair.

Councillor Glover-Ward said she was pleased to see that the Dependents Carer Allowances had been increased so that no future candidates were put off from being a councillor.

Councillor Goldspink thanked the Panel for their work and supported their recommendations. She felt that there should be an allowance attached to the role of councillor to reflect the expenses that are incurred when fulfilling their duties. She said it was interesting to note that East Herts Council pay a lower allowance than six other councils within Hertfordshire.

Councillor Deering said the Conservative supported the work of the independent Panel and supported their recommendations.

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 recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved as follows:

i) To increase the Basic Allowance by £250 from £5,428.79 to £5,678.79 for 2023/24;

ii) To increase the Dependants' Carers Allowance from £25.00 per hour to up to £30.00 per hour;

iii) To increase the Childcare Allowance from £12.50 per hour to up to £15.00 per hour;

iv) To increase the electric car mileage from 4p per mile to 45p per mile in line with HMRC guidance; and

v) To make no changes to the Members' current Allowance Scheme other than those listed in the recommendations above.

192 REDUCED PARKING CHARGES FOR TOWN CENTRE WORKERS IN BISHOP'S STORTFORD

Councillor Wyllie presented his motion on notice about reduced parking charges for town centre workers in Bishop's Stortford.

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

Councillor Crystall responded to the motion and said he understood why Councillor Wyllie had submitted the motion. However, he felt it was ill judged. He said that town centre workers were vitally important but the administration thought that it could be done better. He said that the proposal had the potential to set a dangerous precedent to subsidise car parking in Bishop's Stortford and that other towns may push for the same treatment. He said that the proposal had unwelcome implications and Councillor Hoskin, the Executive Member, thought there was a better way of addressing the issue but to benefit a larger group of people. He said that car parking needed to be dealt with as a whole and to provide a similar service across the district. A new proposal could address traffic congestion and pollution by encouraging car parking use outside the town to encourage active travel.

Councillor Hill said that the Council should not be promoting car travel but investigate alternative ways to travel into town such as free bus passes. He said that town centre workers parking in the town's car parks all day restricted the spaces available for those shopping.

Councillor Wilson said that this was not a straightforward issue and could see the arguments on both sides. He said he wanted to see the town centre flourish and the work of the BID was invaluable. He said that there was far too much traffic in Bishop's Stortford and was a failure of the District Plan for

allowing development in and around the town. He said that the previous proposal promoted car travel and did not look at the bigger picture. He also added that the scheme was not means tested and the Council should look out for those on low wages in the most sustainable ways necessary with a considered decision on parking policy.

Councillor Goldspink said she understood the frustration of the opposition members but pleaded with them to listen to arguments for pausing and taking the opportunity for devising a better scheme that was fairer to a greater number of people. She said she would be voting against the motion.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that he had not heard a time frame for the process for the new scheme that the administration kept referring to. He asked for reassurance that if there was to be a pause, what the next steps were.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified that the Council were to discuss the motion presented.

Councillor Jacobs said that the administration were talking about a holistic approach to parking to improve the service for everyone. He asked what that scheme would look like and said the suggested scheme had been brought forward by the BID, not the previous administration. He said that he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Deering said that the original decision was published in July, two months after the election and

said it was difficult to see why it had not been thought through in that time. He noted the pause remark and said this was a developing trend from the administration.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt echoed the comments from supporters of the motion. He said that conflating workers with shoppers with a wide variety of transport options and times was misleading. He said it was disappointing that Councillor Wilson had said that those on low incomes could not afford to drive to work. He said that what was missing from the debate was the safety implications of driving to work early or late. He said he supported what Councillor Jacobs had said about unspoken wider benefits of a future scheme. He said without any alternative presented, he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Wilson raised a point of clarification and said he said many people on low wages could not afford a car, not all.

Councillor Swainston said she had attended the meeting with the BID alongside Councillor Hoskin. She said that the BID had presented a good argument but felt that it was right to review the parking and make appropriate for everyone.

Councillor Redfern said that adopting the proposed policy would not stop a review happening in the future so could not see why the scheme couldn't be implemented now and amended in the future if necessary.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that the proposed review of the decision would be district wide and not just concentrated in Bishop's Stortford. She said adopting the scheme could create a two tier system and the pause would allow the administration to carry out a holistic review of parking charges and how they work.

Councillor Devonshire listed some advantages of the scheme such as workers travelling into Bishop's Stortford from rural areas do not have access to good public transport and would address the vacant levels at Northgate End car park. He said that the scheme would also help staff recruitment and retention for town centre businesses.

Councillor Wyllie responded to the points raised in the debate as proposer of the motion. He referred to the Leader's comments about finding a better solution but he suggested there was nothing wrong with introducing this original scheme and implement changes later on. He said the Council had declared a climate emergency but the lack of parking in Jackson Square meant that people were going elsewhere to shop, increasing their carbon footprint. He said that if the town centre workers were directed to the Northgate End car park, this would free up space in other car parks for shoppers, thereby increasing the council's income and helping those on low incomes who work in the town. He urged Members to vote for the motion.

At least five Members of the Council requested a recorded vote on the motion under paragraph 3.24.5 of the Constitution. The result was as follows:

FOR (17)

E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster, Bull, Clements, Deering, Deffley, Devonshire, Estop, Hollebon, Holt, Jacobs, Parsad-Wyatt, Redfern, Stowe, Williamson, Woolf, Wyllie

AGAINST (24)

Adams, Brittain, Burt, Carter, Connolly, Cox, Crystall, Daar, Dumont, Dunlop, Glover-Ward, Goldspink, Hart, Hopewell, Marlow, Nicholls, Smith, Swainston, Thomas, Townsend, Watson, Williams, Wilson, Woollcombe

ABSTAINED (2)

Hill, Horner

The motion was declared LOST.

193 RAW SEWAGE IN RIVERS

Councillor Thomas presented his motion on notice. He said it was important to protect the local chalk streams from raw sewage and said that the Environment Agency had recently called the actions of Thames Water unacceptable. He said many had been shocked at the level of sewage being dumped in rivers and said that in 2022, there were 169 cases reported.

Councillor Thomas said that the Chief Executive of Thames Water had been awarded a £1.5 million pay package and said that this was not the right way to incentivise companies to not dump sewage. He said that the government were not setting a long term goal for sewage dumping but residents did not want to see

it reduced, they wanted to see it stopped. He urged Members to vote for the motion to be one step closer to cleaner waters.

Councillor Swainston seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Cox thanked Councillor Thomas for the presentation of his motion.

Councillor Daar said she was taking part in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy led by Hertfordshire County Council and said that chalk streams were quintessential to the area and said the Council should be doing all they could to make sure their quality was preserved. She thanked Councillor Thomas for bringing the motion forward.

Councillor Smith said the Council needed to protect the public who use the district's rivers for recreational activities. She said it was a sad situation that she had to remind her children not to open their mouths if they were in the river due to the water quality. She said that it was important to take action to protect natural facilities and thanked Councillor Thomas for bringing it forward.

Councillor Devonshire said he was happy to support the motion and had a chalk stream in his ward. He said another issue was over extraction of water causing the beds to dry up.

Councillor E Buckmaster said he was happy to support the motion and said that in his role as a County

Councillor, he was involved in starting up the Local Nature Recovery Partnership which had Members on different steering groups and representatives from the Environment Agency and from each Council. He said he also chaired the Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership and said there was a lot of work ongoing in this area.

Councillor Burt thanked Councillor Thomas for his motion and asked for the reasoning behind the stated 50% reduction by 2030.

Councillor Woollcombe said he supported the motion and said there should be an accountability mechanism for fining guilty parties. He said fines were built into companies' business models and suggested a strengthening of language to include incarceration.

Councillor Deering said that the Conservative group supported the motion and said the district's chalk streams were precious.

Councillor Crystall said he was delighted to support the motion and said he would raise it with the MP so she could lend her support to the cause.

Councillor Swainston said she supported the motion. She said that the BBC had recently done an investigation into dry spillage. They asked all 9 water companies and only 3 responded because the other 6 were currently being investigated for breaches. She said the issue was not being acted on quick enough and Thames Water discharged sewage in a dry spell over 110 hours last year.

Councillor Thomas responded to the points raised in the debate as proposer of the motion. He thanked Members for their contributions to the debate. He responded to Councillor Burt's question about the 50% figure and said it was a good starting point and felt like a reasonable target to achieve.

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

RESOLVED – that East Herts District Council notes that, despite repeated calls to put a stop to the dumping of raw sewage into our precious rivers and chalk streams, the latest annual assessment (published this July) by the Environment Agency showed “totally unacceptable” performance on pollution for most of England's water and sewage companies. Thames Water was given just 2 stars for performance for 2022, meaning that they require significant improvement.

The Environment Agency reported that in 2022 there were 169 discharges of raw sewage into our rivers in East Hertfordshire. East Herts is home to seven of only 210 rare chalk streams in the world. 169 discharges for a combined 1,799 hours equate to nearly 75 days of discharging.

The Council also notes that the Office for Environmental Protection has recently stated that the Government, the Environment Agency

and Ofwat may be allowing raw sewage discharges more frequently than the law permits because there are differing interpretations of the law. It also notes that many of the annual audits of the operations of the Water Companies have not been carried out during the last 6-8 years.

The Council further notes that the Environment Agency has called on Thames Water and all the other Water Companies together to invest £56Billion to upgrade their sewage treatment plants and storm overflows, but it is allowing them 25 years in which to do this.

Therefore, East Herts District Council calls on the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment to strengthen the legislation on the discharging of raw sewage into our rivers and coastal waters by:

- 1) Tightening and clarifying the regulations and law on the circumstances in which discharge of sewage might be permitted.
- 2) Requiring prompt prosecution and fining of all offending companies,
- 3) Requiring the Environment Agency to audit the Water and sewerage companies regularly, every year, to ensure that they are reporting their operations accurately.
- 4) The Council also requests the Government

to bring forward the date by which Water Companies are required to reduce their discharges by 50% -to bring it forward from 2048 to 2030.

- 5) This Council authorises the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment to make these 4 requests.

194 LGA SAVE LOCAL SERVICES CAMPAIGN

Councillor Jacobs presented his motion on notice and said he was removing item 3c from the motion.

Councillor Jacobs said that he knew there were huge funding pressures on local government which could not be met alone through making savings or raising council tax. He said that the motion called for adequate funding for councils in line with inflation and there needed to be a long-term plan for local government funding from the government as inflation would not come down overnight, reserves could only be spent once and services could not be cut twice. He hoped that by joining the Local Government Association's campaign, the collective voice of councils would be greater, and he wanted to raise the issue on behalf of residents.

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

Councillor E Buckmaster said he was happy to support the motion. He gave some context around a review of capital projects and identifying any savings. He said that the projects currently being delivered were conceived in 2014 and an ageing leisure service meant it would have been more expensive to maintain and they were investments intended to pay their way.

Councillor Goldspink said she was happy to support the motion and said she had found it very frustrating as a councillor to want to do good but not have enough money.

Councillor Dumont said that according to the National Audit Office since 2010, Council Tax revenue has had a 20% increase, grant funding had reduced by 60% and spending power had reduced by 30%. He said this had to change and it was depressing as councillors to want to do good but instead were being asked what we could stop doing.

Councillor Brittain thanked Councillor Jacobs for his motion and said he agreed wholeheartedly. He said his only concern was that he was not convinced the government would listen.

Councillor Hart said there could be a point where the Council could not discharge its statutory duties and said the Council could not function if the funding was not sufficient.

Councillor Deering said the Conservative group were completely aware of the pressures faced having set

four budgets in the previous administration. He said it was very challenging to run a local authority at the moment and he supported the motion.

Councillor Williams queried the title of the motion which stated 'Labour motion'. He said other motions did not have party headings.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that it was just to indicate who had brought the motion. He said if the motion was passed then it would be a motion of the Council, not the Labour Group.

Councillor Crystall said he was happy to support the motion and said this had been raised at the LGA Independent Group and had been supported there.

Councillor Clements said it was no secret that the Council faced tough financial decisions but a large part of the decisions were made by the government. He said Councils of all colours were struggling and said he was pleased to see all Members supporting this and using their influence to pressure the government.

The motion to support the motion, including the removal of point 3c, having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Council notes the Save Local Services campaign by the Local Government Association (LGA) which calls on the Government to ensure councils have adequate resources to meet ongoing cost and demand

pressures, protect local services from cutbacks and invest in improving the services our communities rely on.

LGA analysis¹ revealed that Councils in England face a funding gap of almost £3 billion over the next two years just to maintain services at current levels. Over the last decade, Councils have seen significant cuts in core funding from the government. More recently, inflation has increased costs on core services and pushed up interest rates on existing borrowing. Councils led by parties across the political spectrum have had to issue section 114 notices announcing that they are unable to meet spending commitments.

In East Herts these pressures mean that savings of over £6m are needed by the end of the 2026-27 financial year to balance revenue and expenditure². Residents' finances are already under huge pressure due to the cost-of-living crisis and any decisions made to balance the budget must prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable people in East Herts.

Council believes that the LGA is right to warn that the financial sustainability of councils and local services are at risk. The impact of inflation in the economy, cuts to funding and increasing demand pressures cannot alone be met by further reducing costs, making efficiencies, or

raising council tax. Reserves held by Councils can only be spent once and are not a solution to the long-term financial pressures faced. Local government needs adequate funding to provide the services our communities rely on.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Conduct its budget setting operation for 2024/25 with the above principles in mind, considering the need to protect core services and to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable in East Herts;
2. Review all of its capital projects with the intention of identifying possible savings;
3. Support the Save Local Services campaign and call on government to:
 - a. Put local government finances on a sustainable footing.
 - b. Provide adequate, long-term funding, in line with inflation and demand for services, giving Councils certainty to plan their budgets and minimise service disruption.
4. Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to government, local MPs and the LGA to communicate council's views on this issue.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Chairman
Date

Petition - Protect Bengo Field landscape and return it to Green Belt

We the undersigned petition the Council to protect Bengo Field from further housing development and return this beautiful landscape to Green Belt. We request that any planning decisions are put on hold and the full consultation on reinstating the Green Belt takes place.

Bengo Field spreads alongside Wadesmill Road and Sacombe Road just on the edge of Hertford and is much loved and utilised by local residents. There is very strong local objection to further development in Bengo Field and we are asking EHDC Councillors and planners to take into account our concerns.

This land was designated as green belt. It was removed from green belt protection on the assumption that, after minerals had been extracted, the landscape quality would have deteriorated and this reduced quality would then make it acceptable for residential development.

The minerals plan enquiry, approved by the Secretary of State, determined that the landscape of Bengo Field was of exceptionally high value and was the primary grounds for rejection of the minerals extraction application.

This was not fully taken into account in the Local Plan inspection when the green belt designation was changed without any specific public consultation. We request that any planning decisions are put on hold and the full consultation on reinstating the Green Belt takes place.

This ePetition ran from 16/09/2023 to 19/11/2023 and has now finished.

305 people signed this ePetition.

[ePetition - Protect Bengo Field landscape and return it to Green Belt - East Herts District Council](#)

Agenda Item 6a

Petition - Protect Bengoe Field landscape and return it to Green Belt

We the undersigned petition the Council to protect Bengoe Field from further housing development and return this beautiful landscape to Green Belt. We request that any planning decisions are put on hold and the full consultation on reinstating the Green Belt takes place.

Bengoe Field spreads alongside Wadesmill Road and Sacombe Road just on the edge of Hertford and is much loved and utilised by local residents. There is very strong local objection to further development in Bengoe Field and we are asking EHDC Councillors and planners to take into account our concerns.

This land was designated as green belt. It was removed from green belt protection on the assumption that, after minerals had been extracted, the landscape quality would have deteriorated and this reduced quality would then make it acceptable for residential development.

The minerals plan enquiry, approved by the Secretary of State, determined that the landscape of Bengoe Field was of exceptionally high value and was the primary grounds for rejection of the minerals extraction application.

This was not fully taken into account in the Local Plan inspection when the green belt designation was changed without any specific public consultation. We request that any planning decisions are put on hold and the full consultation on reinstating the Green Belt takes place.

This ePetition ran from 16/09/2023 to 19/11/2023 and has now finished.

305 people signed this ePetition.

[ePetition - Protect Bengoe Field landscape and return it to Green Belt - East Herts District Council](#)

COUNCIL – 13 DECEMBER 2023

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

<p>Question 1</p>	<p>Colin Woodward to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, the Leader of the Council</p>
<p>In September 2022 EHDC formally recognised the Water Lane Hall to be an Asset of Community Value, yet the perception in Bishop’s Stortford is that the Council is still intent on proceeding with the proposal to dispose of the Hall along with its other assets on the Old River Lane site by transferring them to Cityheart for development of the site for a paltry sum or, possibly at nil cost in the case of the Hall, compared with the cost to the Council of their purchase. In the meantime there has twice been an extension of the lease of the hall to the URC church, demonstrating its ongoing utility and value to the community, though without any reasoned reply to alternative bids such as that of 17 March 2023 submitted by Community Initiative (BS) and Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation setting out several ownership and operating scenarios to preserve this asset.</p> <p>Given that the Water Lane Hall was designated by EHC an Asset of Community Value, what process is EHDC now following to allow the community the option to retain the building for community use, noting its (EHCs) own policies including CFLR8, before it takes an irrevocable decision to hand it over to Cityheart, potentially for demolition?</p>	
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>Jill Goldsmith to ask Cllr Carl Brittain, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability</p>
<p>It is now 4 months since my last question on EHDC’s accounts and hence the audited values of assets on the ORL site. As of 5/12/23</p>	

the Council website still is not disclosing the accounts from 2020-21 which were completed months ago and the inspection period has not commenced for the 2021-22 unaudited accounts. The 2022-23 accounts have also missed the statutory deadline.

It is my understanding that as yet, no contract exists with Cityheart, but that the terms of the potential contract (Development Management Agreement) could go back to values set when Cityheart was selected as preferred development partner. That is nearly 5 years ago now, so the values then may or may not reflect best value now. The answer to me in July 2023 was that *“The Council would not enter in an agreement with a developer whereby we are not getting best value”*. The FAQs on the Council's website say that *“An updated Section 123 report, with independent valuations, will be produced and agreed before the development agreement is signed”*.

This is such an important scheme for the town and for the Council's finances that residents need to be able to see how the Council is justifying the transfer of our assets before the Development Agreement is signed.

Has the Council now obtained independent valuations for the ORL site; and will it make this information and related 123 explanations transparent, before the Development Management Agreement is signed?

COUNCIL – 13 DECEMBER 2023

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

<p>Question 1</p>	<p>Cllr Ian Devonshire to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth</p>
<p>Please could you let us know why there have been so few Development Management Committees since the election in May of this year. Up to the end of November 2023, there has only been two DMC meetings in seven months.</p> <p>It was reported last year that this Authority was the ninth busiest planning authority in the country. Therefore, it is worrying that we are having so few DMC meetings.</p> <p>The Development Management Committee is, obviously, very important to demonstrate transparency in the planning process, so please could the Executive Member explain why applications are not coming to DMC.</p>	
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>Cllr Eric Buckmaster to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth</p>
<p>Following the disappointing news that this Council is closing Ward Freman Swimming Pool, concerns have been raised yet again by a number of residents about the current condition and future status of the two other joint-use pools in the District, including Leventhorpe Leisure Centre in Sawbridgeworth, which is in desperate need of refurbishment.</p> <p>In August, an unnamed spokesperson for this Council was quoted</p>	

in the Bishop's Stortford Independent stating that 50% of the allocated £122,760 of Section 106 money from the SAWB2 and SAWB3 housing developments - which was ring-fenced in the S106 agreement for 'Grange Paddocks and/or Leventhorpe Leisure Centre' - remains unassigned.

As Grange Paddocks is now complete, open and operational, could the Executive Member for Planning and Growth confirm that this unassigned £60,000 will be spent on refurbishing Leventhorpe Leisure Centre, which will help to attract additional users and therefore ensure its continued operation for the benefit of all residents in Sawbridgeworth?

Question 3

Cllr Joseph Dumont to ask Cllr Sarah Hopewell, the Executive Member for Wellbeing

Local Councils, including this one, have responsibility for licensing dog breeders and ensuring puppies are bred in safe and healthy conditions.

Illegal puppy farms – in which large numbers of litters are bred in poor conditions without proper monitoring – continue to be used throughout the UK. It is estimated that 400,000 farmed puppies are purchased each year.

Does the Executive Member have any intelligence on the scale of this issue in East Herts and what steps is the Council taking to make sure the public is aware of the importance of acquiring puppies from licensed breeders?

Question 4

Cllr John Wyllie to ask Cllr Tim Hoskin, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

Some Bishop's Stortford high street businesses struggle with staff recruitment and retention due to the proximity of Stansted Airport,

where many employees get free parking. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability published a scheme in July, which would allow some Bishop's Stortford Town Centre workers to benefit from reduced parking charges. This scheme was supported by the Bishop's Stortford BID, the Executive Member then promptly withdrew his own scheme.

At the Full Council meeting on the 18th October the Leader of the Council said that the scheme was withdrawn so that an alternative scheme could be introduced.

Can the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability tell me what the proposed new scheme is and when it will be launched?

Agenda Item 9

Council

Date of Meeting: 13 December 2023

Report by: Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Report title: Executive Report – 28 November 2023

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 28 November 2023.

1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 28 November 2023. At these meetings the Executive considered and supported a number of recommendations for Council on the following items:

- 1.1.1 Mandating card payment facilities in licensed vehicles
- 1.1.2 Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan
- 1.1.3 Ware Neighbourhood Plan
- 1.1.4 Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplanning Framework

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

1.3 This report excludes items also considered by the Executive

where those reports are separate agenda items on the Council agenda.

2.0 Mandating card payment facilities in licensed vehicles

2.1 The Executive was asked to consider a proposal to require vehicles proprietors to provide facilities to take card payments in licensed vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) To approve the policy to introduce a requirement to provide card payment facilities in all vehicles licensed by East Herts Council.**

3.0 Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 The Executive was asked to consider the adoption of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan following a referendum held on 12 October 2023.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) To adopt the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Area Plan 2017-2033**

4.0 Ware Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 The Executive was asked to consider the adoption of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan following a referendum held on 28 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) To adopt the Ware Neighbourhood Area Plan 2021-2033**

5.0 Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplanning Framework

5.1 The Executive were asked to consider the Masterplan Framework Document for Land at Walkern Road; site allocation Policy WAS3 in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- (a) To agree the Land at Walkern Road Masterplan Framework Document, for the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan site allocation known as WAS3 as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.**

6.0 Executive Decisions

6.1 Other matters determined by the Executive are detailed in the Minutes of the meeting.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 Executive minutes – 28 November 2023
- 7.2 Policy for mandating card payments in licensed vehicles
- 7.3 Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan
- 7.4 Ware Neighbourhood Plan
- 7.5 Land at Walkern Road (WAS3) Masterplan Framework Document

Contact Member

Councillor Ben Crystall – Leader of the Council

ben.crystall@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

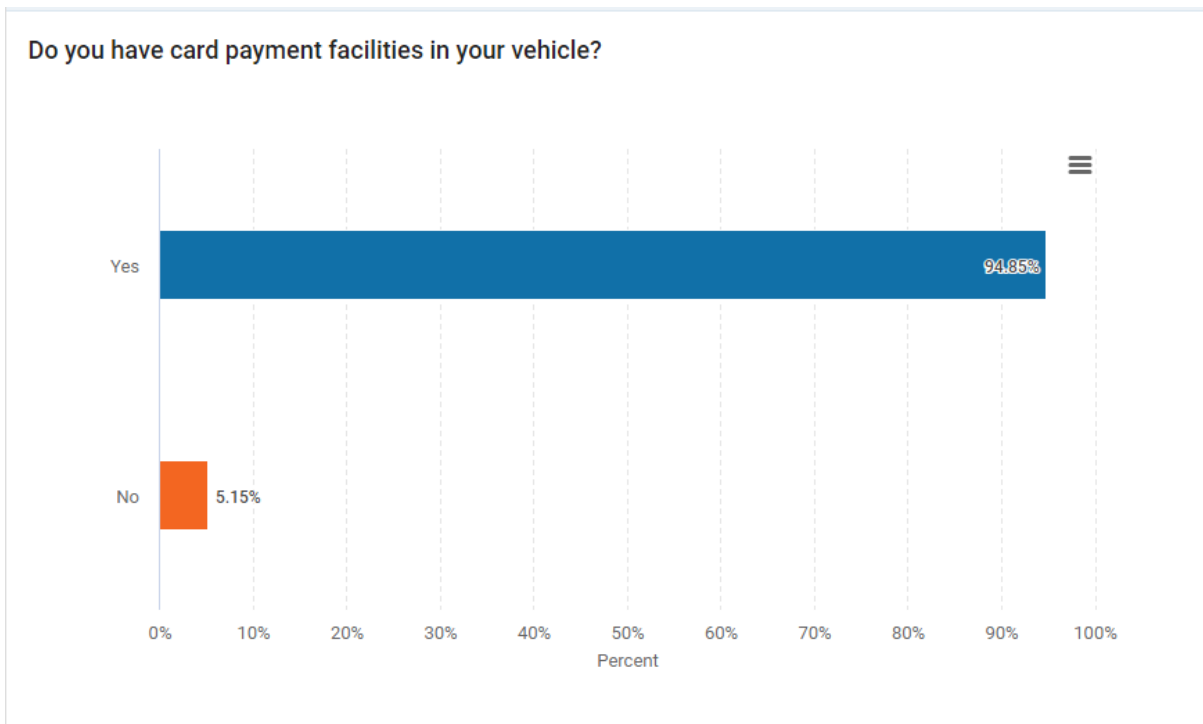
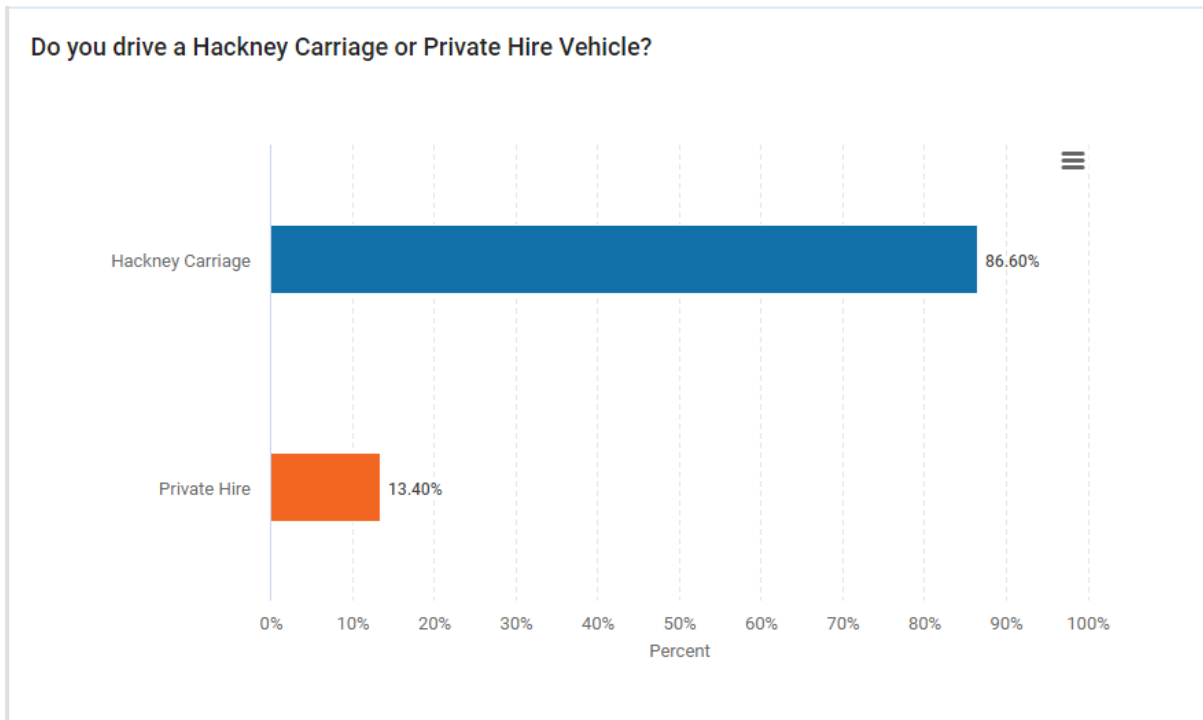
James Ellis – Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 01279 502170. james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

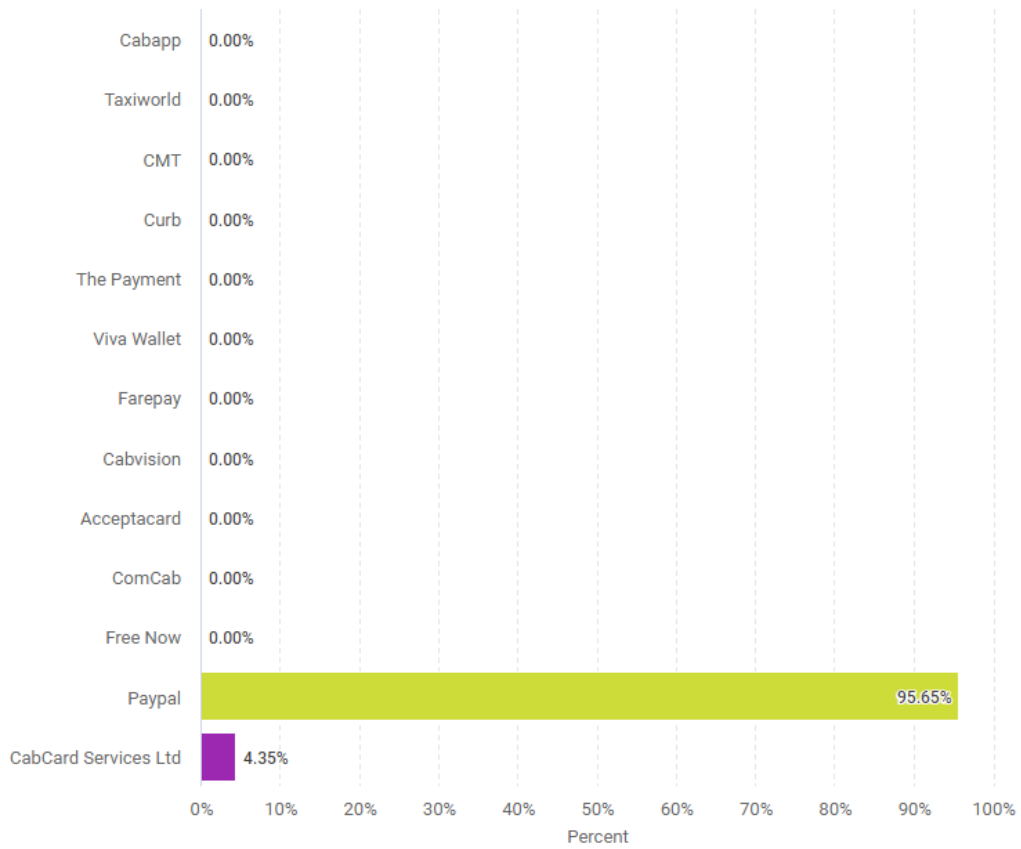
Katie Mogan – Democratic Services Manager

Tel: 01279 502441. Katie.mogan@eastherts.gov.uk

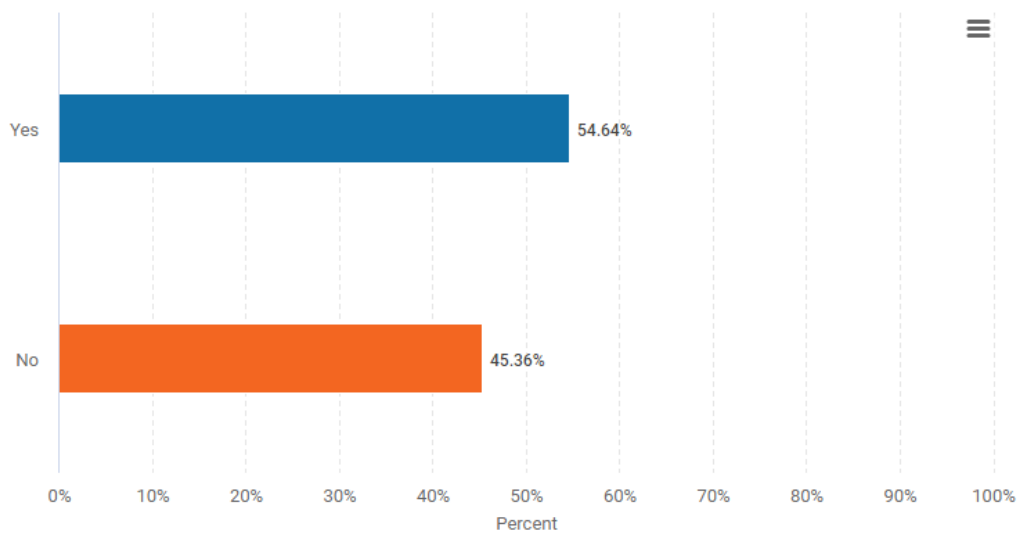
Licensed vehicle card payments



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.

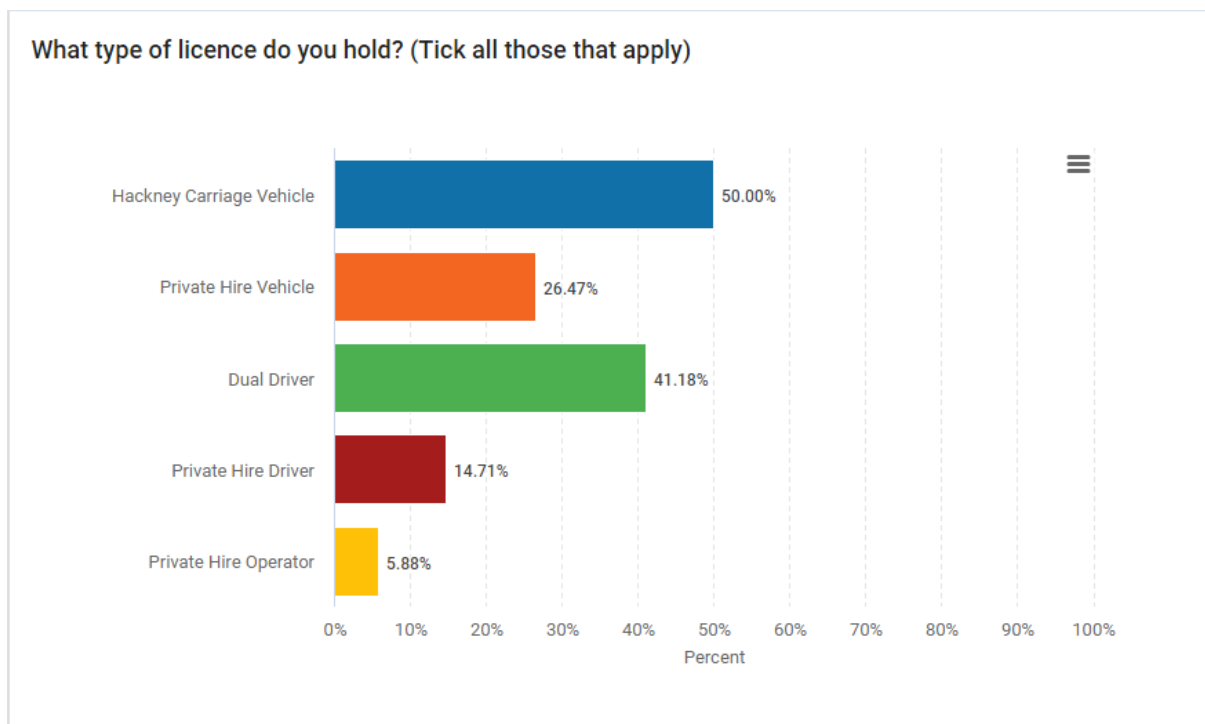
(Note: Taking into account the decision making process the implementation date is likely to be 26th October 2023 at the earliest).

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.

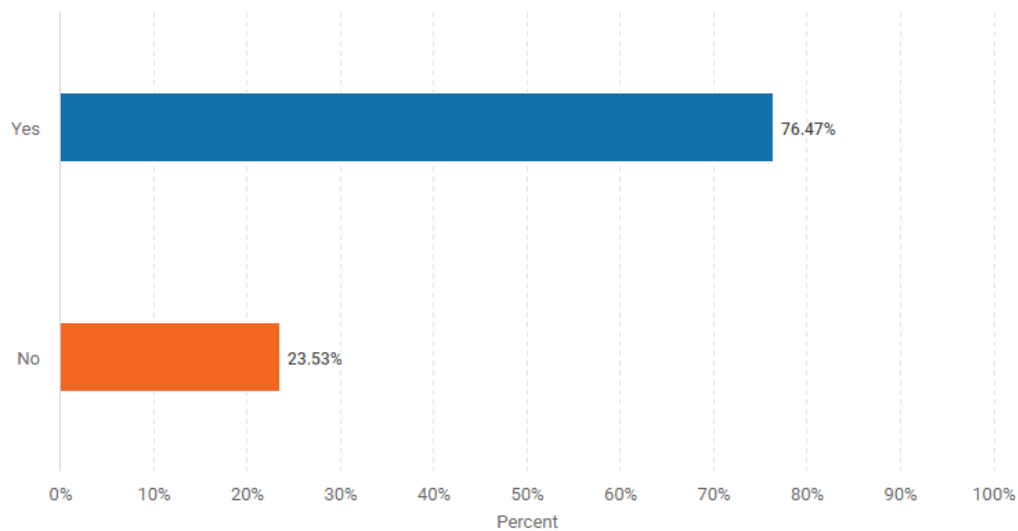
As a member of the licensed trade we would value your opinions. If you have any questions then please email them to licensing.taxis@eastherts.gov.uk or attend one of the trade meetings and ask us in person.

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:

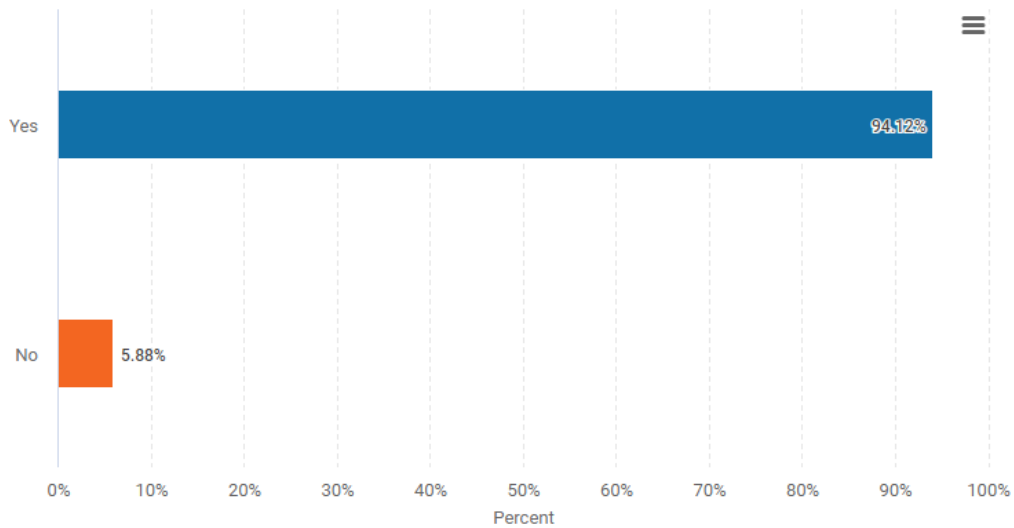
1. I already have card payments available it's easier
2. It's convenient and safe for customers and drivers as well.
3. Everyone has there own preference of payment and how they want to be paid.
4. As I mentioned below I do operate with a card reader but there are many places in the UK where the reception 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>
--	--	---	--

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>

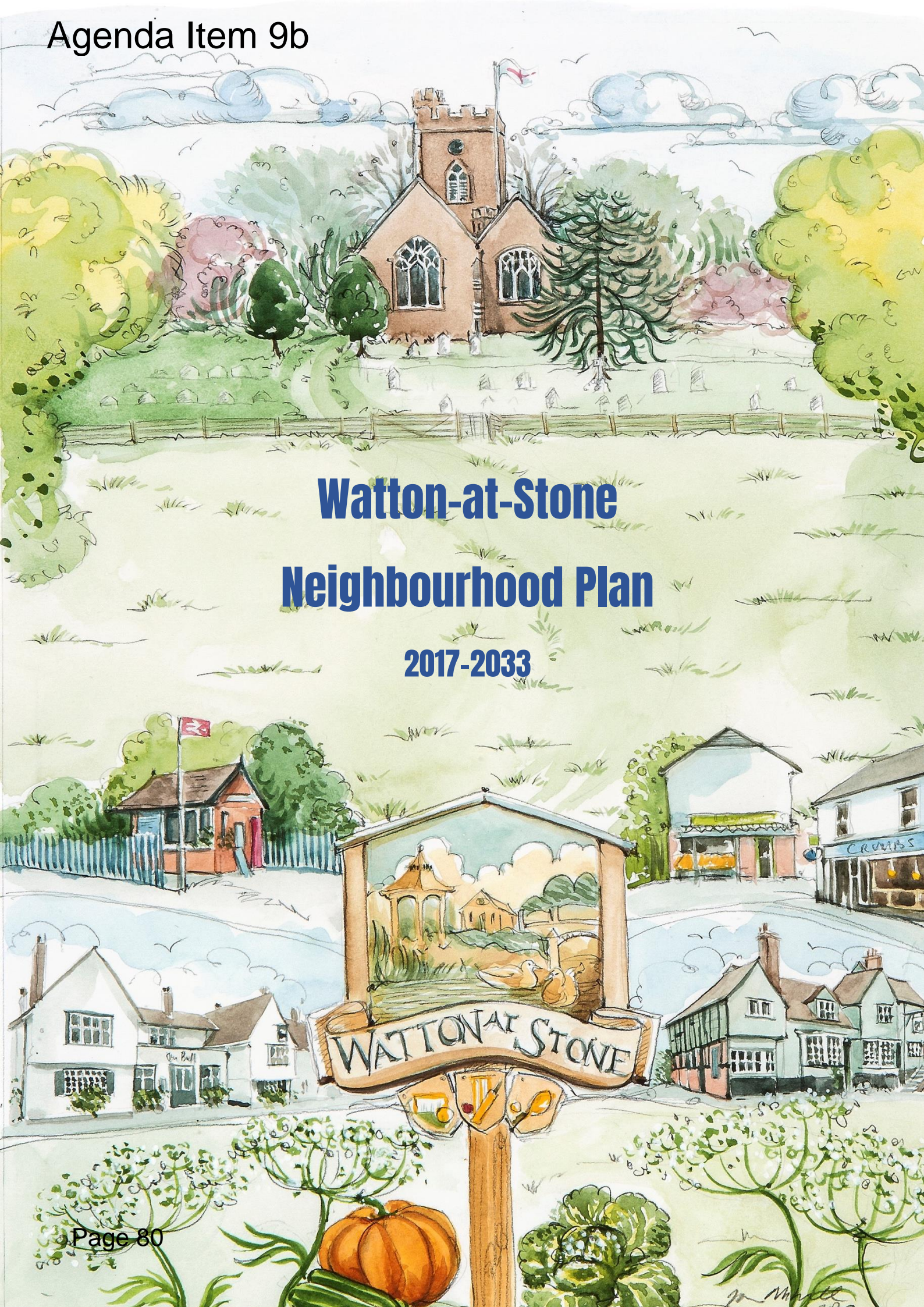
Insert into Appendix B of the ‘Taxi & Private Hire Handbook’, Vehicle and Trailer Specifications and Conditions, the following:

- *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.



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

Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
The Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan	6
Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area	6
Legislation.....	8
Process of Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.....	8
Community Engagement Summary	9
Monitoring and Review	9
2. Watton-at-Stone	10
Location, Main Features and Basic Statistics	10
History and Heritage	11
3. Vision and Objectives	14
Our Vision.....	14
Overarching Objectives	14
Planning Objectives	14
4. Policies Map.....	16
5. Development Strategy Masterplan and Design Codes.....	18
Development Strategy Masterplan.....	18
Design Code.....	19
6. Neighbourhood Plan Policies.....	30
Note on Linked References:	30
Housing Development Strategy	30
WAS 1 Sustainable Housing.....	32
WAS 2 Amendment to Village Development Boundary/Green Belt Boundary.....	33
WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road	35
WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road continued	36
WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road	37
WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road continued	38
Development on Brownfield Sites	38
WAS 5 Brownfield Sites and Previously Developed Land.....	39
Design	40
WAS 6 Design Code.....	40
Local Housing Need	40
WAS 7 Housing Mix.....	41
WAS 8 Rural Affordable Housing.....	41
Sustainable, affordable, accessible transport	42

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033

WAS 9 Sustainable Transport Provision	43
WAS 10 Proposed New Footpath/Cycle Connections.....	43
Provision of amenities.....	44
WAS 11 Valued Community Facilities	45
WAS 12 Enhanced Community Facilities.....	46
WAS 13 Maintaining and Improving Health Services	46
WAS 14 School Site	46
WAS 15 Sports Facilities	47
WAS 16 Protected Recreational Open Space.....	47
Natural Environment.....	48
WAS 17 Local Green Space.....	48
WAS 18 Protected Views.....	49
WAS 19 Wildlife Sites and Habitat Enhancements	50
WAS 20 Green Corridors and the River Beane.....	51
Historic Environment.....	51
WAS 21 Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area and Heritage Assets	53
WAS 22 Non-designated Buildings and Structures	54
WAS 23 Archaeology	54
Support for Businesses.....	54
WAS 24 Preserving Local Employment Opportunities	55
WAS 25 Encouraging Home Working	55
Implementation	55
WAS 26 Spending Priorities	56
Appendices.....	57
Appendix A – Policy Process Map	57
Appendix B – Ecological Network Mapping.....	58
Appendix C – Valued Community Facilities	59
Appendix D – Local Green Space (LGS) Spreadsheet	62
Appendix E – Local Green Space (LGS) Descriptions.....	63
Appendix F – Protected Views	65
Appendix G – Archaeology	70
Appendix H – Non-designated Heritage Assets	76
Appendix I – Glossary of Terms.....	80
Appendix J – Acknowledgements.....	81
Appendix K – Bibliography	82
Appendix L – Benefit Project Plan	83



Table of Figures

Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area	7
Figure 2 – Aerial view of Watton-at-Stone circa 2011	7
Figure 3 – Final stages of Neighbourhood Plan Process	9
Figure 4 – Census 2011 (table KS102EW).....	10
Figure 5 – Number of cars per household at 2011 Census	11
Figure 6 – Policies Map.....	16
Figure 7 – Policies Map Key.....	17
Figure 8 – Artists Impression of overall vision for the village	19
Figure 9 – Village Development Boundary Amendment	33
Figure 10 – Masterplan Extract for Walkern Road Site WAS 3.....	34
Figure 11 – Walkern Road Site WAS 3	34
Figure 12 – Masterplan Extract of Stevenage Road Site WAS 4	37
Figure 13 – Stevenage Road Site WAS 4	37
Figure 14 – Previously Developed Land (left) and Brownfield site (right).....	39
Figure 15 – Public Transport in Watton-at-Stone.....	43
Figure 16 – Sketch scheme of possible community benefits on Mill Lane	44
Figure 17 – From left, the George and Dragon, Londis (now Budgens) and the Scout hut ...	46
Figure 18 – Example of Protected Recreational Open Space – The Meadow	47
Figure 19 – Example of Local Green Space (LGS3)	48
Figure 20 – River Beane at Watton-at-Stone.....	51
Figure 21 - War Memorial	53
Table 1 Objectives relating to each section in the Neighbourhood Plan	15
Table 2 Priority Projects and their support at consultation.....	56
Table 3 Table showing which Neighbourhood Plan Policies achieve the objectives	57

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

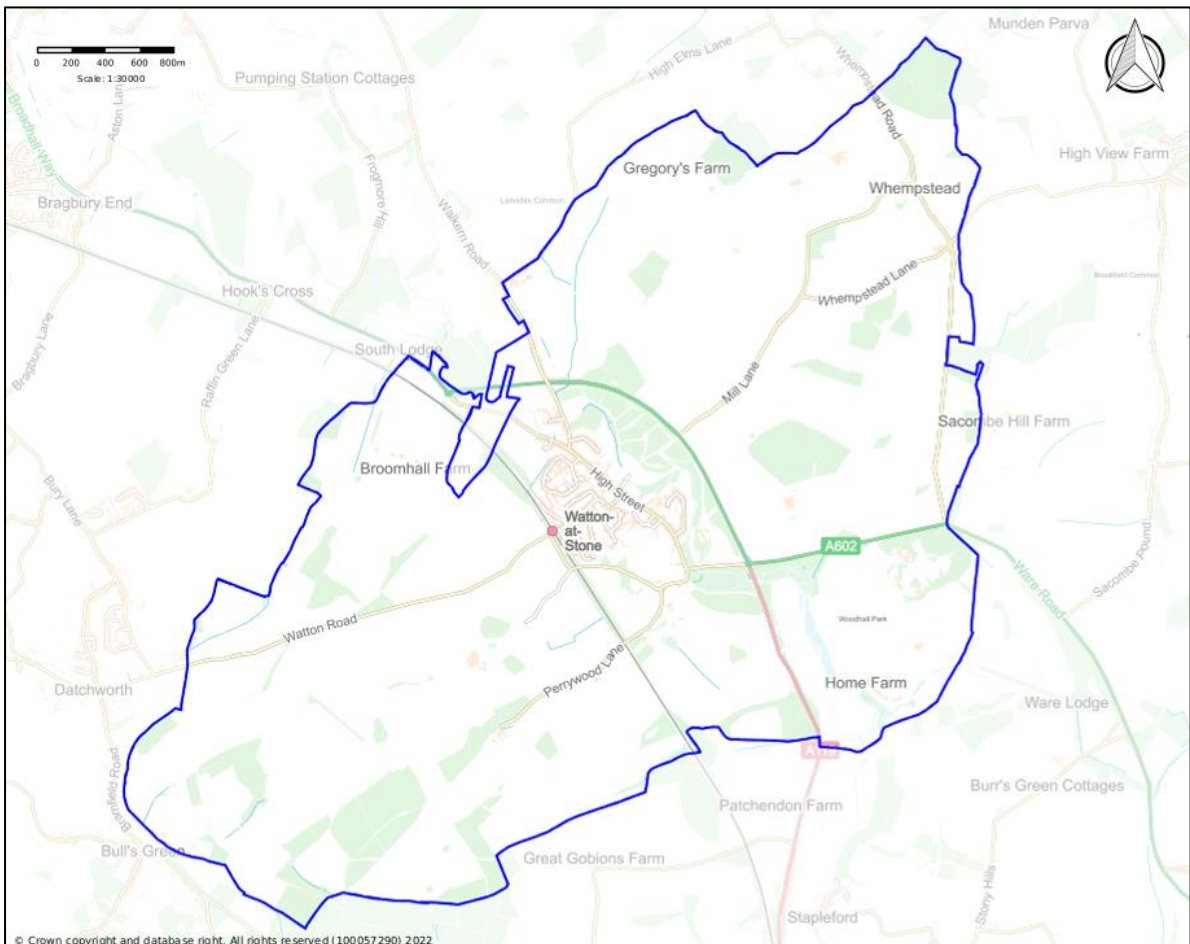


Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



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.

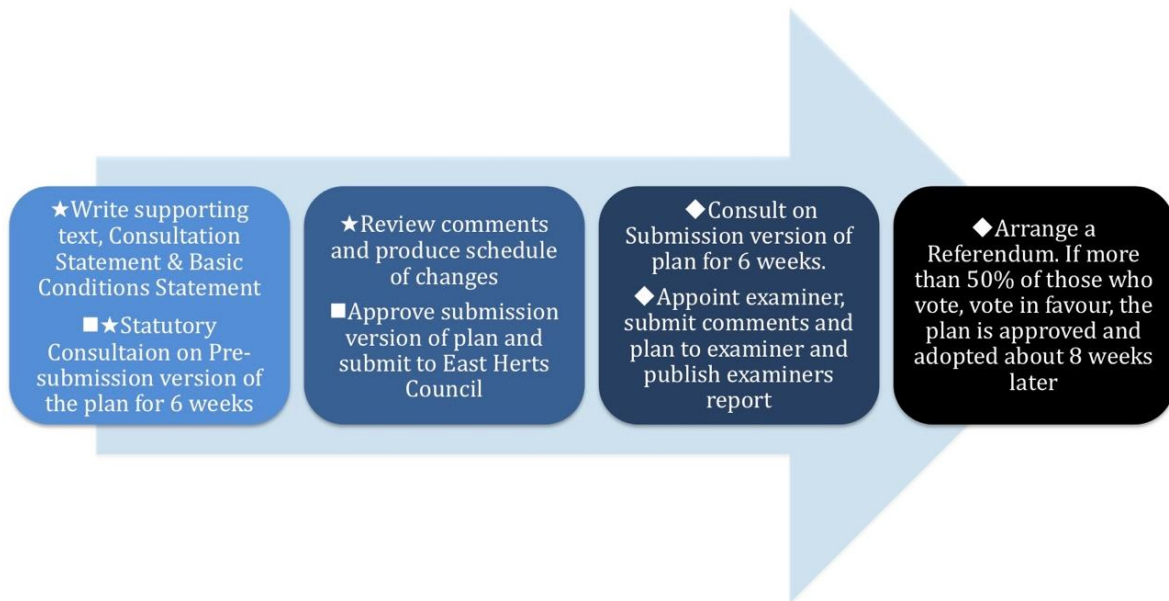
1.13 Starting with a blank sheet of paper, the Steering Group collected existing evidence about the Parish, and ideas from people living and working in the Parish about issues relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Open Day on Saturday, 23rd April 2016 was the start of the broad consultation process.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

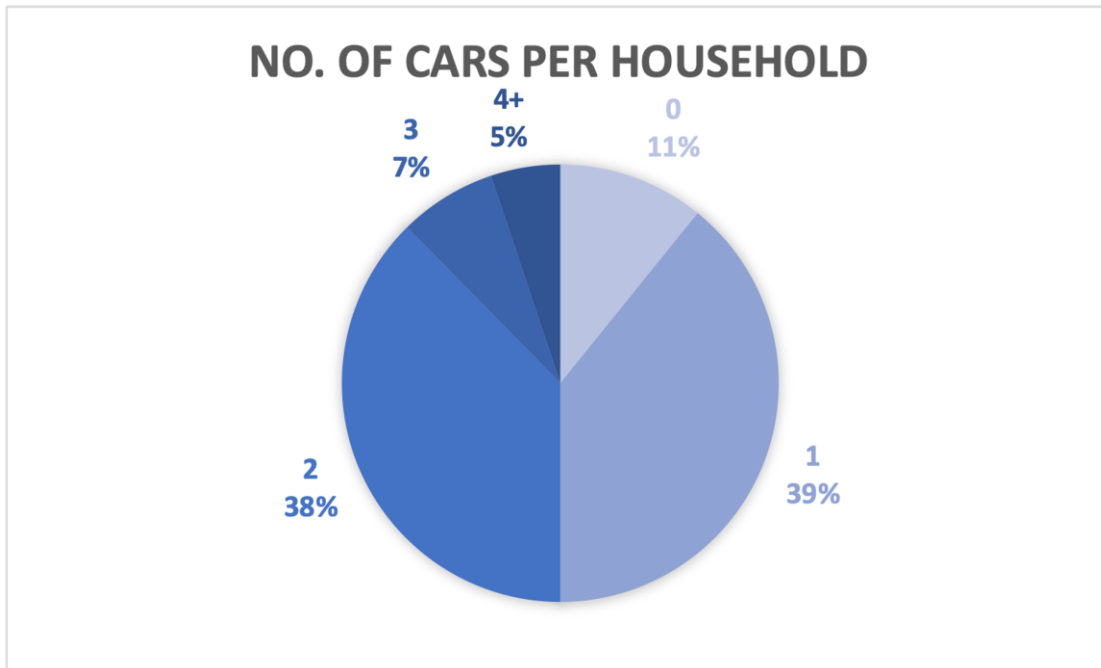


Figure 5 – Number of cars per household at 2011 Census

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

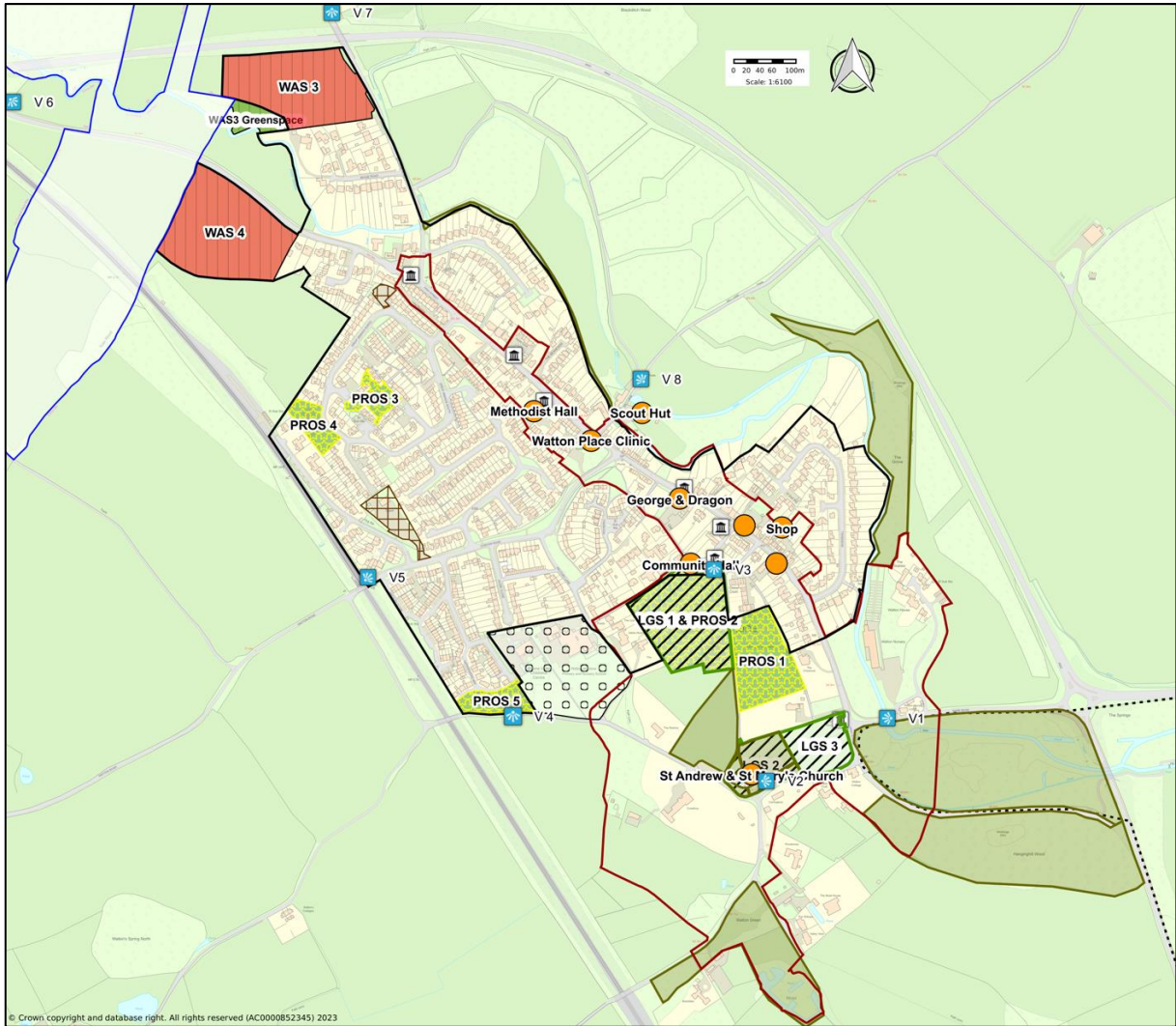


Figure 6 – Policies Map

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 Baulk 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](#).

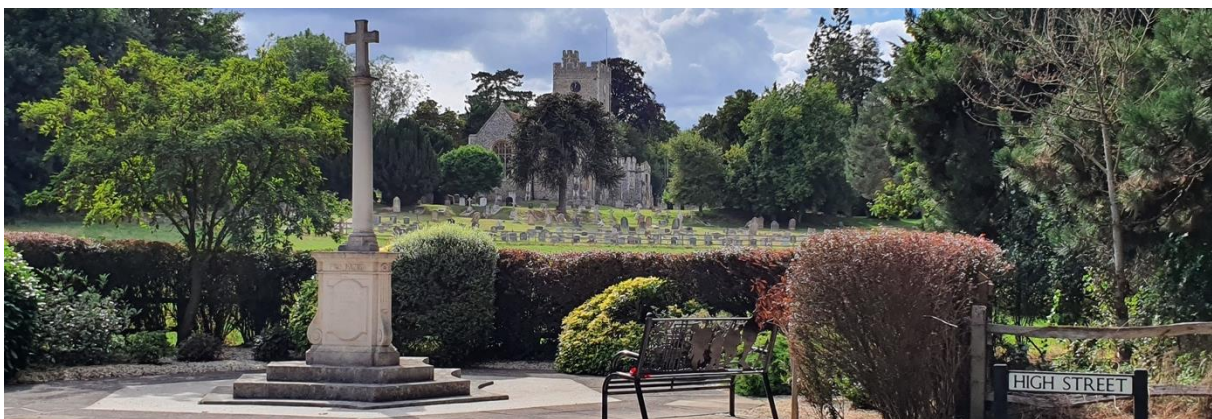


Figure 21 - War Memorial

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.

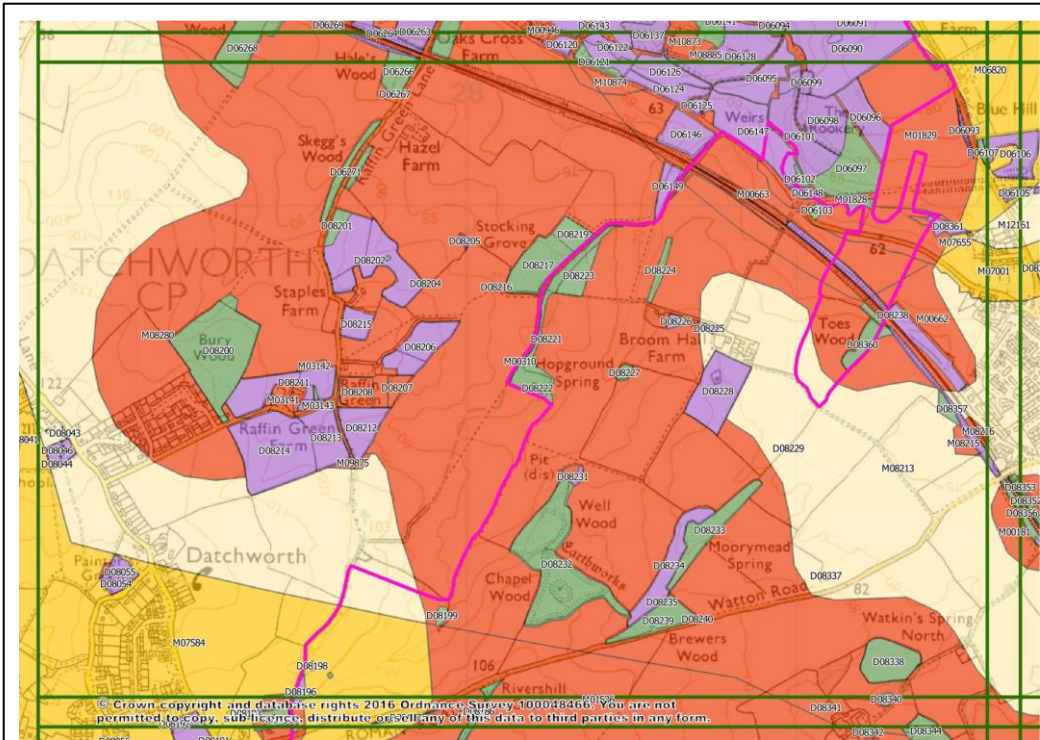
Appendices

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

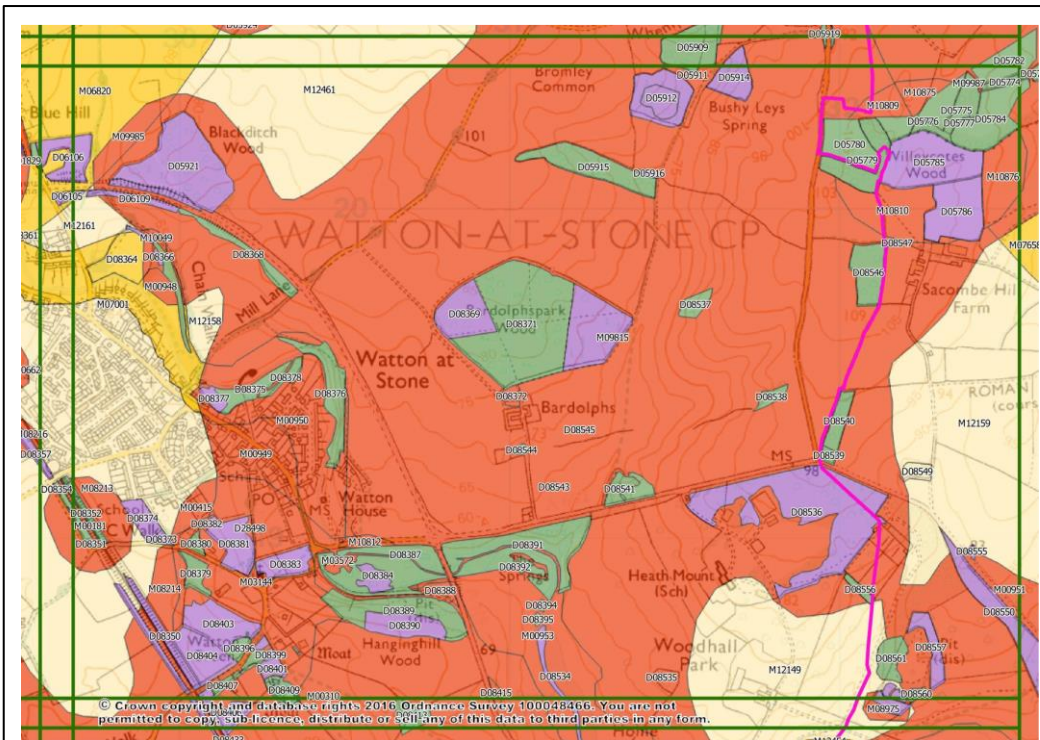
Table 3 Table showing which Neighbourhood Plan Policies achieve the objectives

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 or criteria	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 Foundabout 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	Allotments 1.26 Ha - Tithe name North Field	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, neuts	Yes	Possible alternative use/CFIR1			
6	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	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	Adjacent to Local Wildlife Site 45/038 (The Grove)	Despite being beside the by-pass there is little road noise across most of the site			
7	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	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	North of Mill Lane Field between Mill Lane and Lammas. Mill Close on Tithe map - no Badbox Mead	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	The Lammas	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y					Opportunity to influence the River Beane Channel					
10	Development site on Walkern Rd - part of Haydon Common on tithe map	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y										
13	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				
15	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			
14	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				
12	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			
11	Development site on Stevenage Rd - Gravel Pit Field on Tithe Map	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y										
16	Aston portion of field on Stevenage Rd site	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y										Not in Parish
17		N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y										

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.

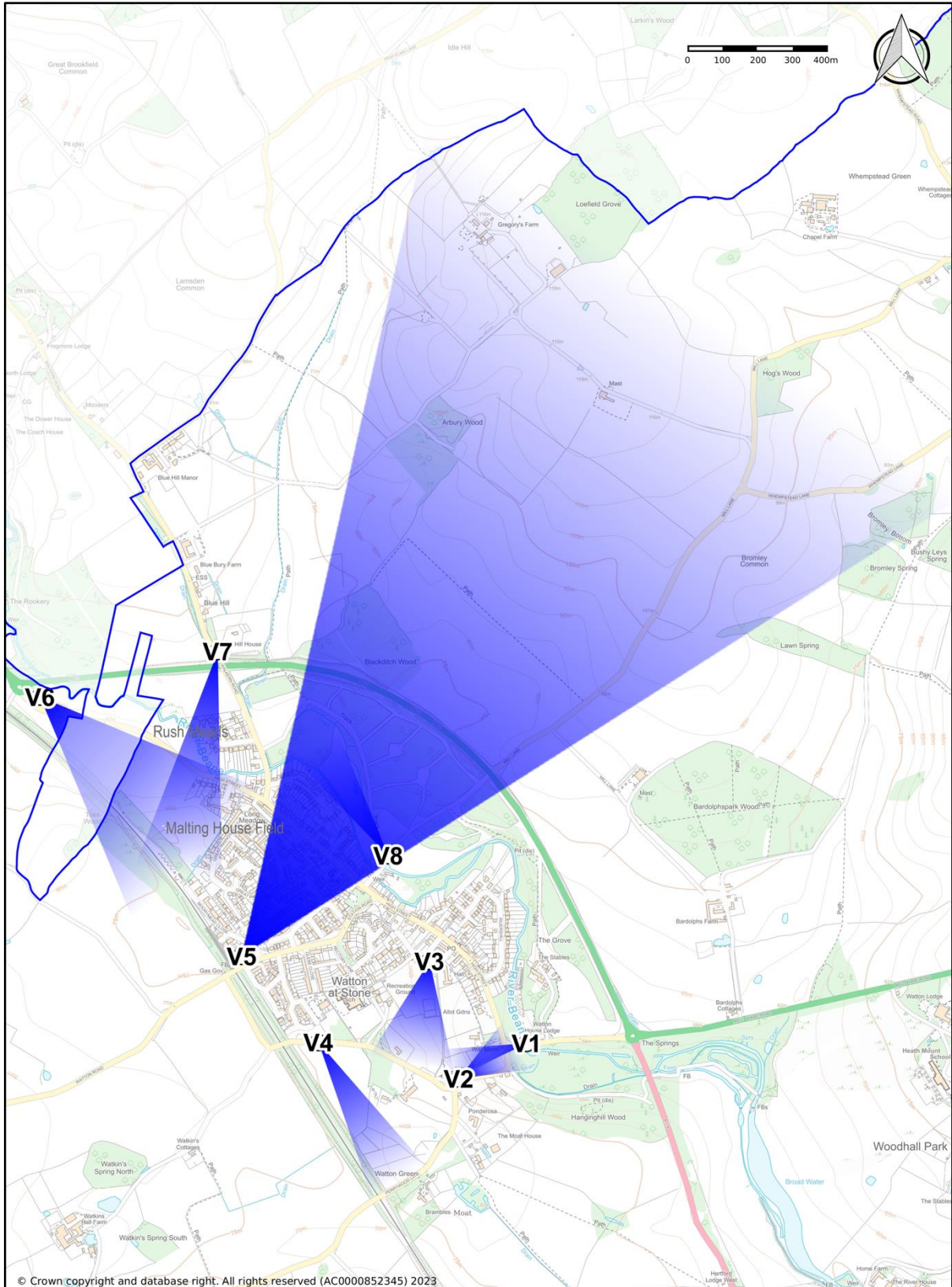
LGS 3 Church Balk (field between churchyard and roundabout)



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.

Sources

Britain From Above (<https://britainfromabove.org.uk/>, accessed December 2020)

The Electronic Sawyer (<https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/>)

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record

I. D. Margary, Roman Roads in Britain Volume 1 (Phoenix House Ltd, 1955)

J. Morris (eds), Domesday Book: Hertfordshire, (Phillimore, 1976)

Old Maps Online (<https://www.oldmapsonline.org/>, accessed January 2021)

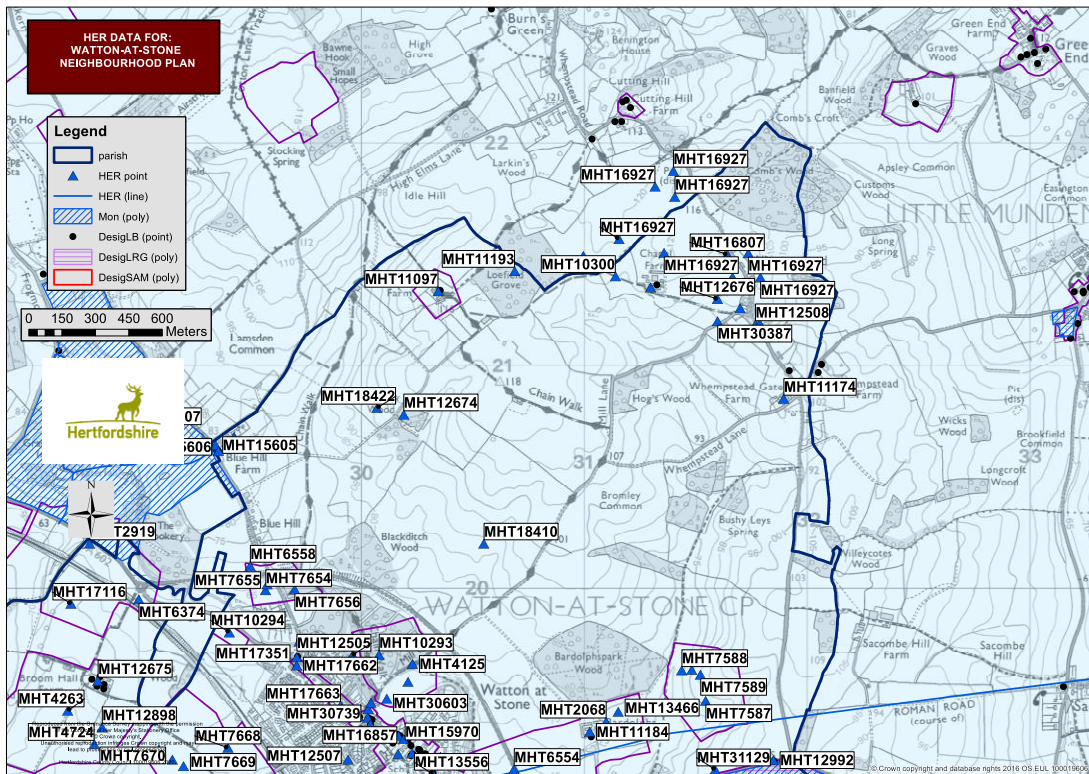
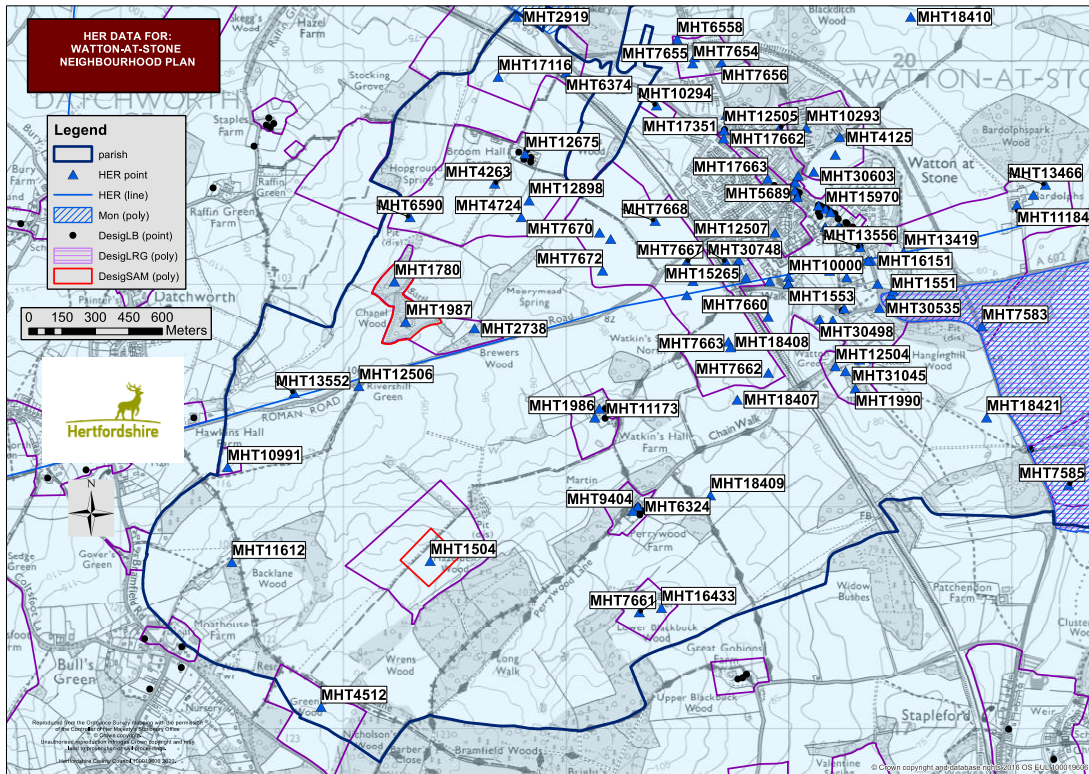
Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk/database, accessed November 2020)

The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England (PASE) (<http://www.pase.ac.uk>, accessed November 2020)

M. Allen et al, The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain: An Online Resource (<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/romangl/map.html>, accessed December 2020)

National Library of Scotland Map Library (<https://maps.nls.uk>, accessed January 2021)

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033



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.

Appendix K – Bibliography

- AECOM (2021) [Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\) for Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, Environmental Report](#)
- AECOM (2018) [Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment](#)
- East Herts Council (2019) [Extract from Housing Needs Register for Watton-at-Stone](#)
- East Herts Council (2018) [East Herts District Plan](#)
- East Herts Council (2017) [Strategic Land Availability Assessment](#)
- East Herts District Council (2014) [Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#)
- East Herts District Council (March 2021) [East Herts District Plan Sustainability SPD March 2021](#)
- Hertford Museum (2015) High Streets and Hedgerows Watton-at-Stone
- Hertfordshire County Council (2018) [Local Transport Plan 4 2018 – 2031](#)
- Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (2019) *Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping*
- Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) (2020)
- HM Government (2018) [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)
- HM Government (2021) [The Environment Act 2021](#)
- MHCLG (2019) [National Design Guide](#)
- MHCLG (July 2021) [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)
- Natural England (2019) [The Biodiversity Metric 3.1](#)
- Office for National Statistics (2011) [Census 2011](#)
- Peter Brett Associates (2015) [East Herts Green Belt Review](#)
- [Police Crime Prevention Initiatives \(website\) Secured by Design \(SBD\)](#)
- Watton-at-Stone Conservation Society (200) [Watton-at-Stone Village Guide](#)

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](#)



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

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	4
	The Planning Policy Context	6
	Community engagement	7
	Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan.....	8
2	ABOUT WARE.....	9
	Challenges facing Ware	11
3	A VISION FOR WARE	13
	Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan	13
	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	13
4	HOUSING	14
	Policy W1: Meeting the housing needs of Ware’s population	14
5	CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND DESIGN	17
	Policy W2: Reflecting the character of Ware through high quality design	17
	Policy W3: Conserving heritage assets	27
	Policy W4: Design of shopfront signage	31
	Policy W5: Meeting the highest environmental standards	33
6	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WARE TOWN CENTRE	36
	Policy W6: Retaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Ware town centre	36
	Policy W7: A safe, attractive, and welcoming public realm	39
	Policy W8: Small business and shared space support	43
	Policy W9: Supporting commercial premises and land	45
	Policy W10: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups, and homeworking	47
	Policy W11: Ware as a sustainable visitor destination.....	49
7	ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE	52
	Policy W12: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain	52
	Policy W13: Local Green Spaces	59
	Policy W14: Managing the environmental impact of development	62
8	TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT	65

Policy W15: Improving walking and cycling..... 65

Policy W16: Mitigating vehicular impacts at junctions 74

Policy W17: Maximising the potential for children to walk safely to school 77

Policy W18: Electric vehicle charging 78

9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES 79

Policy W19: Improving provision of community facilities, including accessible toilet facilities, and promoting shared, flexible spaces..... 79

Policy W20: Allotments and community growing spaces 81

10 IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW 83

11 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION 85

12 NON POLICY ACTIONS 88

13 POLICIES MAPS..... 91

14 GLOSSARY 97

15 LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS 100

Appendix A - Local Green Space details

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.

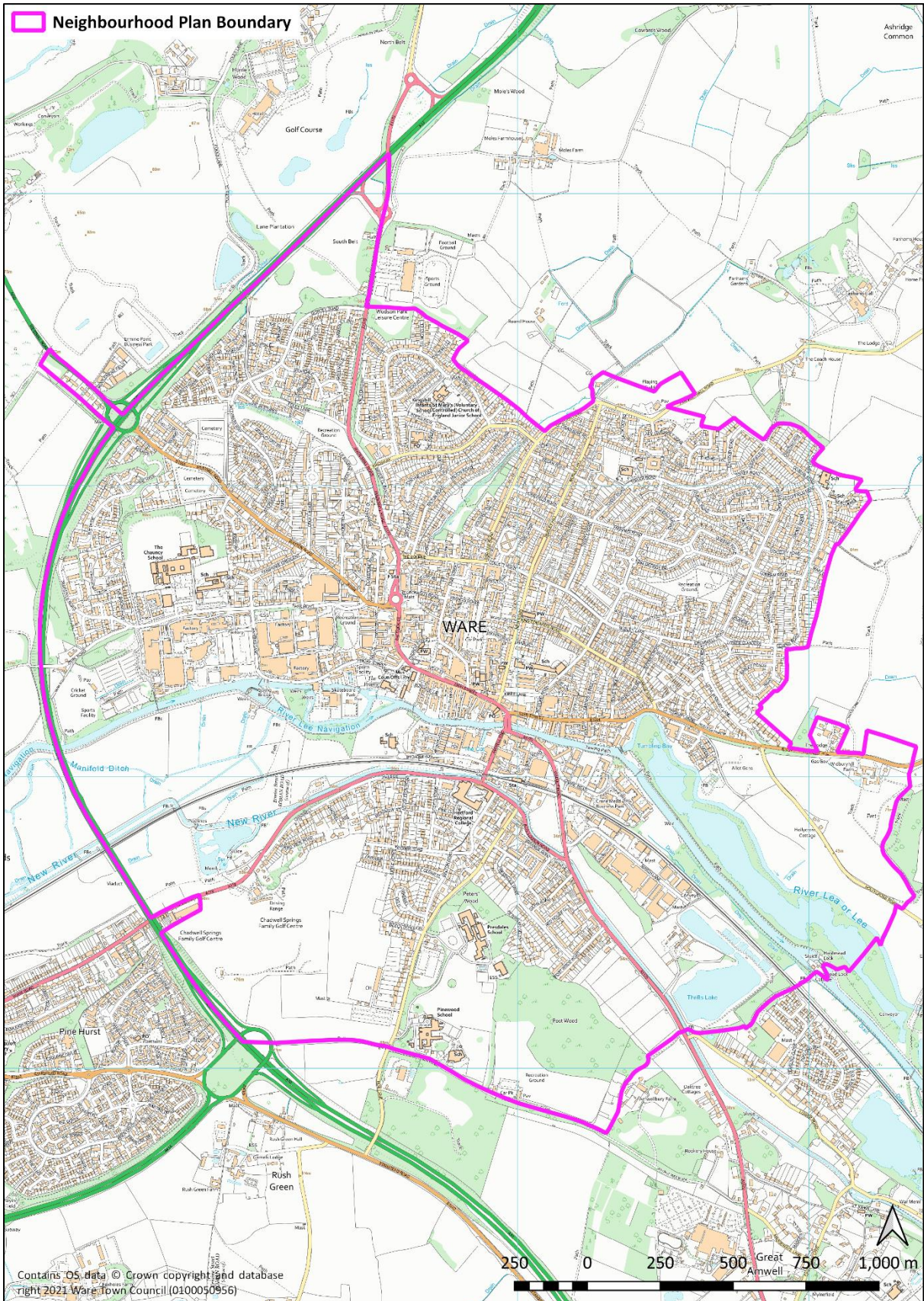


Figure 1.1: The Ware Neighbourhood Plan designated area

The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

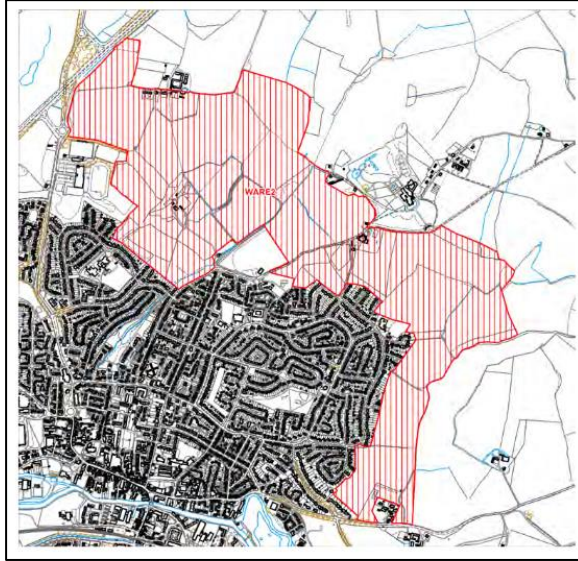
- 1.6 The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the revised NPPF published in July 2021, which states at paragraphs 29 and 30:

*‘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.

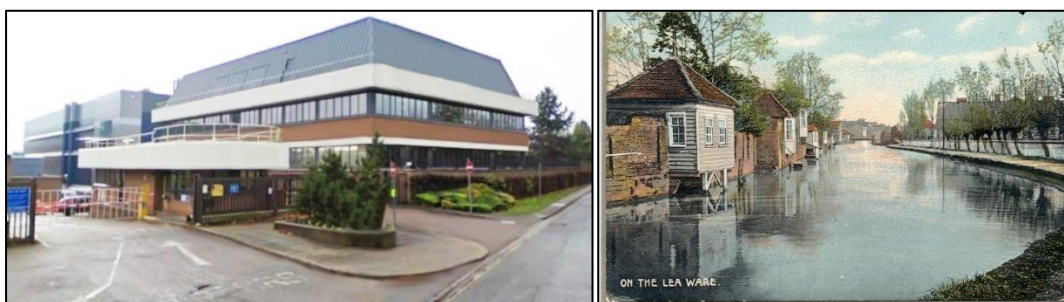
2 ABOUT WARE

- 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.

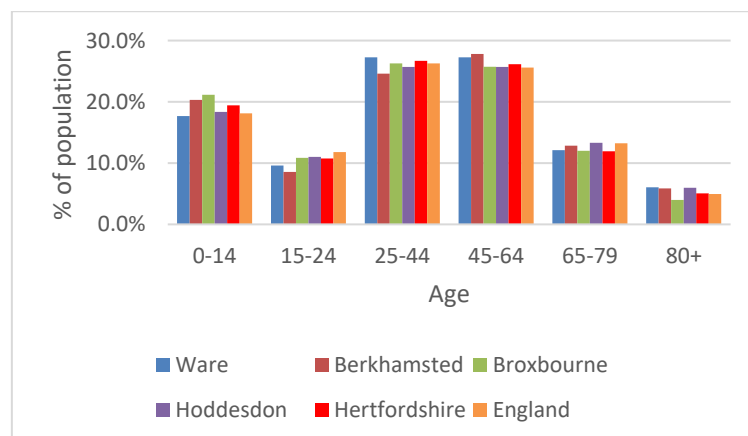


Figure 4.1: Age profile of population, 2018 (Source: Herts Insight, mid-year population estimates)

- 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).

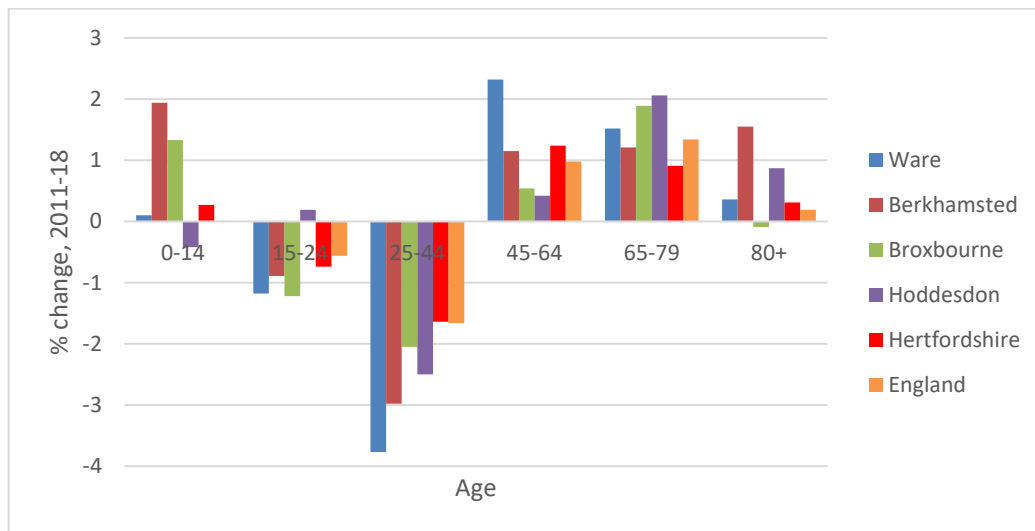


Figure 4.2: Population change, 2011-2018 (Source: Herts Insight, mid-year population estimates)

- 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.

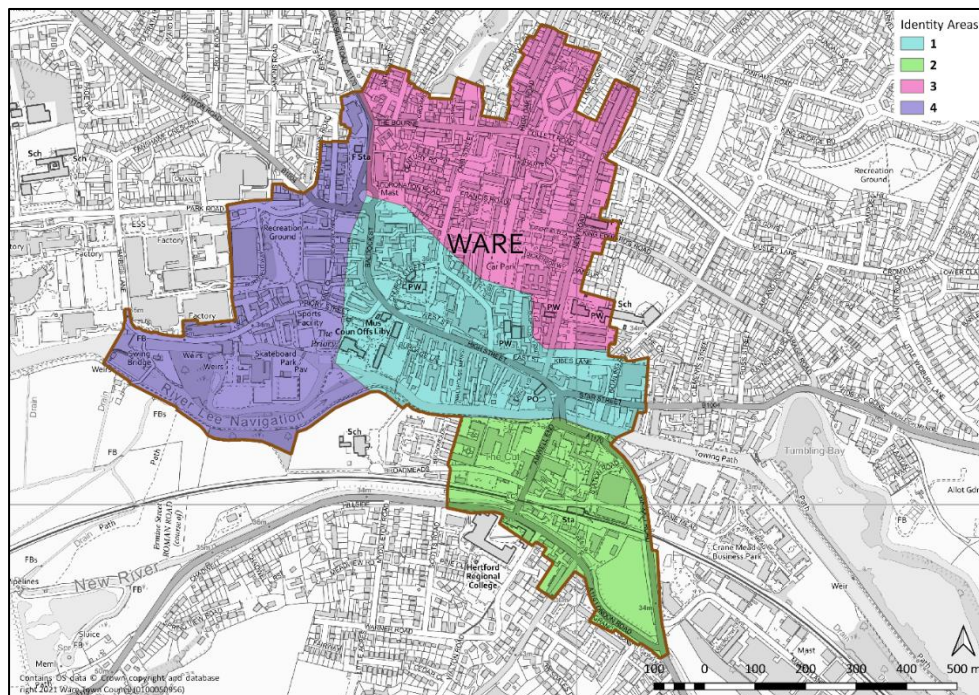


Figure 5.1: Ware Conservation Identity Areas

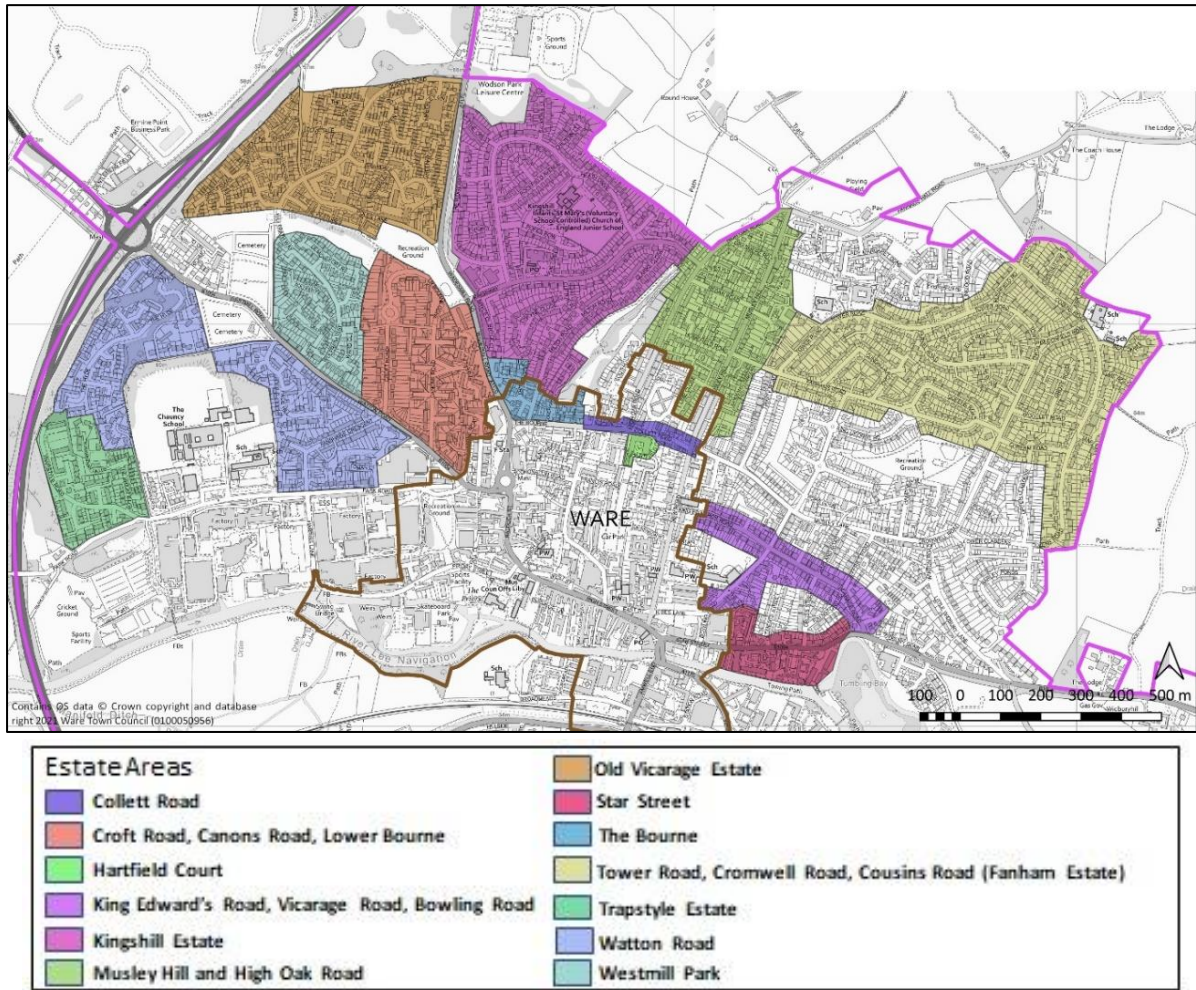


Figure 5.2: Newer estates developed since the 1900s

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

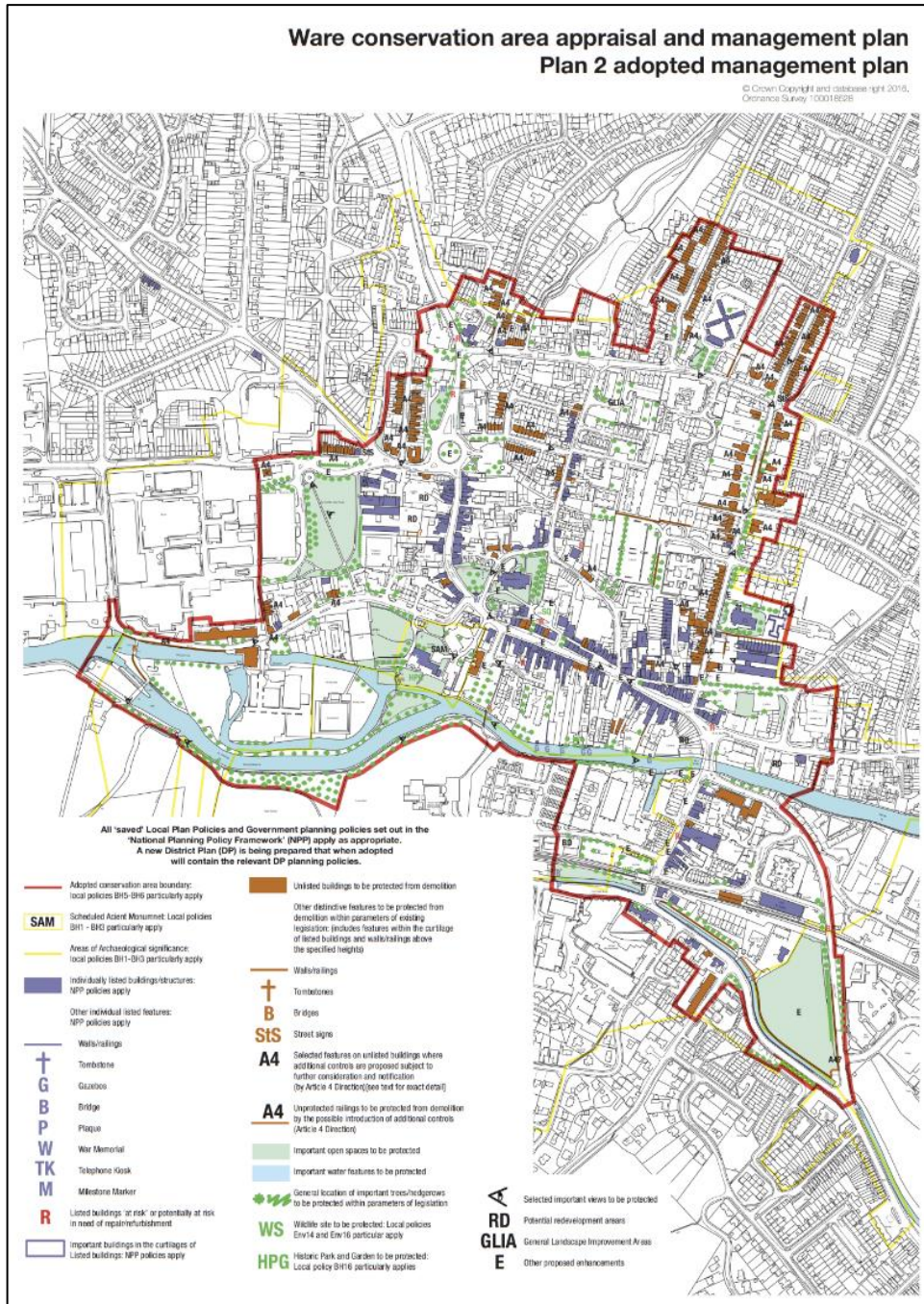


Figure 5.3: Map showing 'unlisted buildings to be protected from demolition' (source: Ware Conservation Area Appraisal)

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](#).

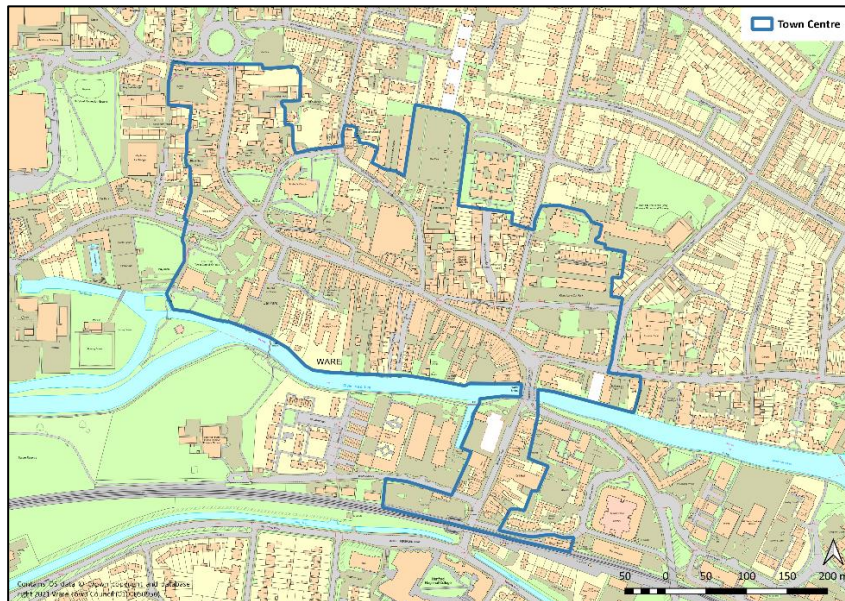


Figure 6.1: Ware town centre footprint

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

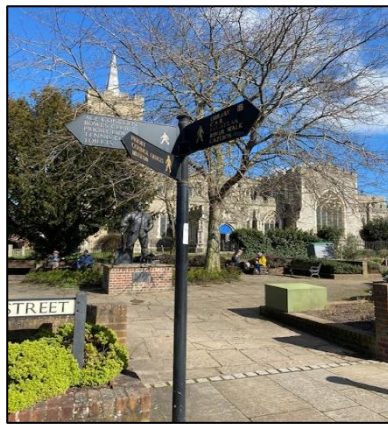
Policy W7: A safe, attractive, and welcoming public realm

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.

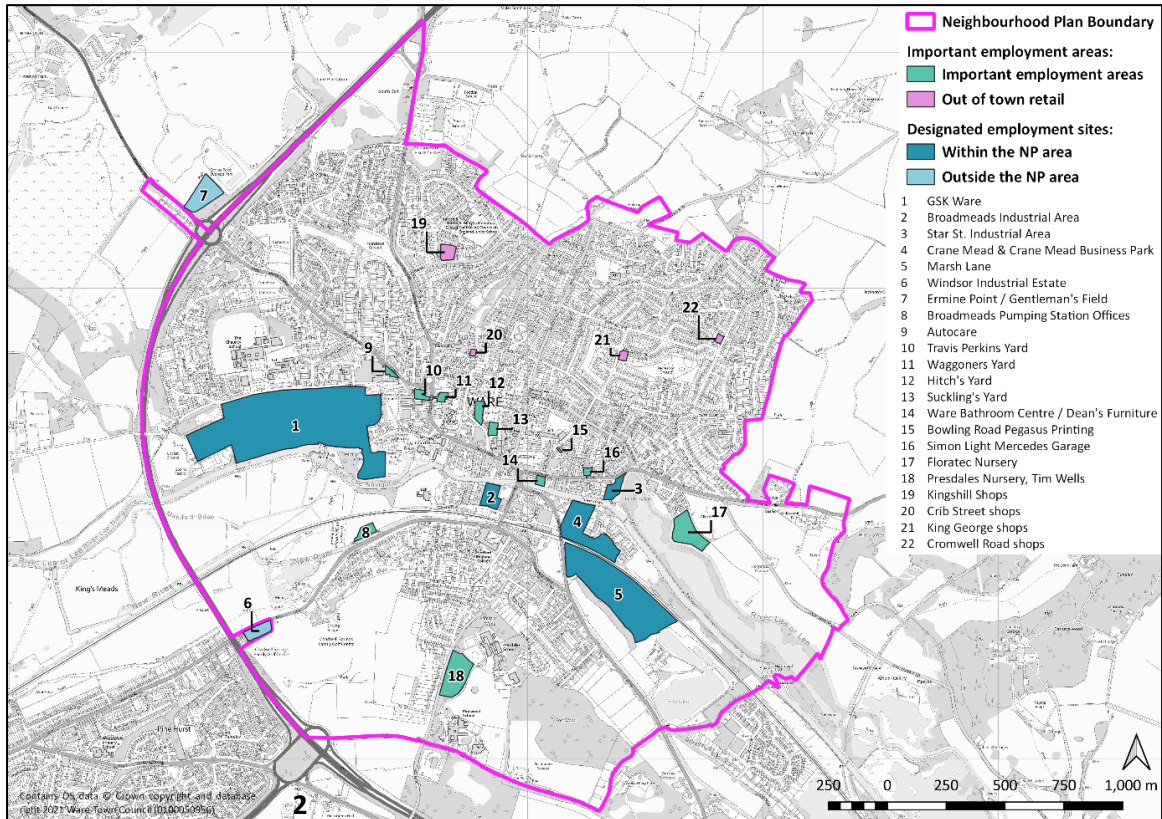


Figure 6.2: Designated Employment Areas and Important Employment Areas in Ware

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 homeworking;
- 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 Leisure 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.

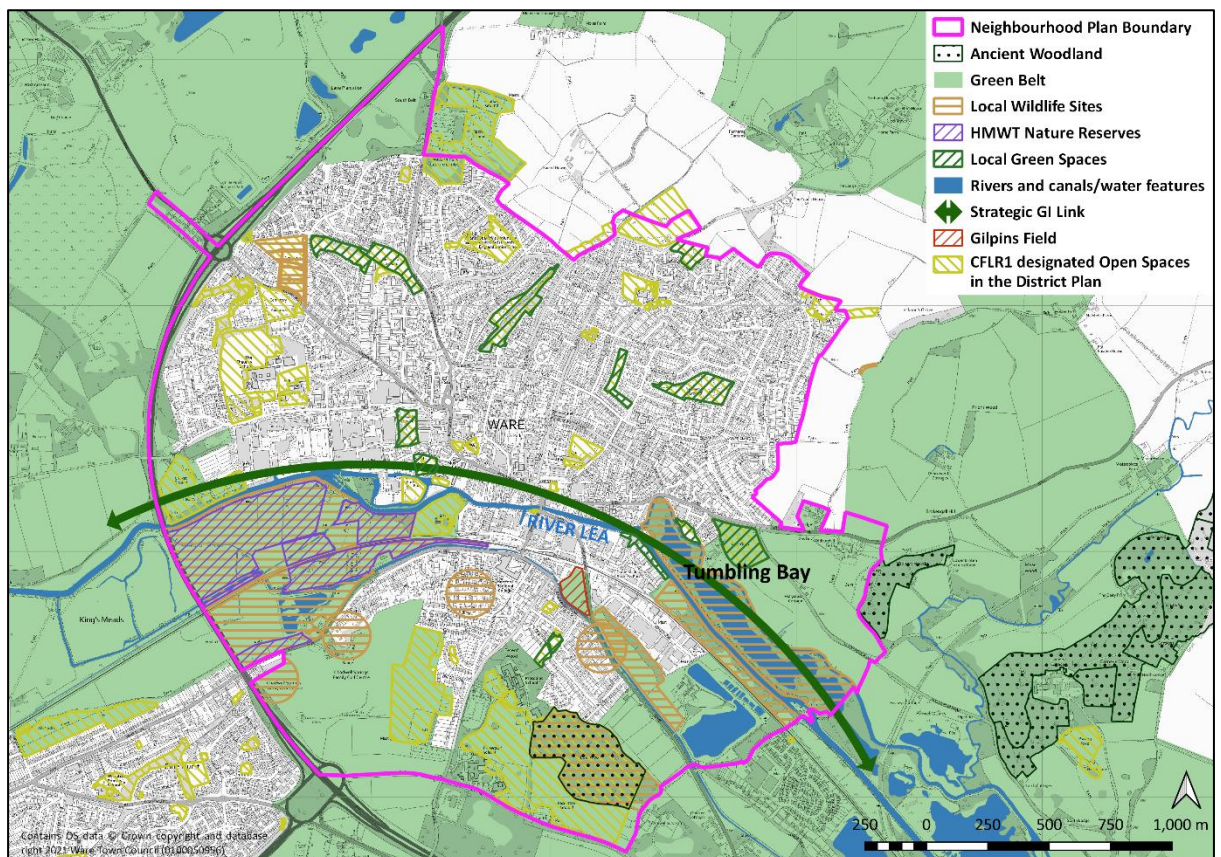


Figure 7.1: The Green and Blue infrastructure within Ware (including CFLR1 designated open spaces in the District Plan)

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

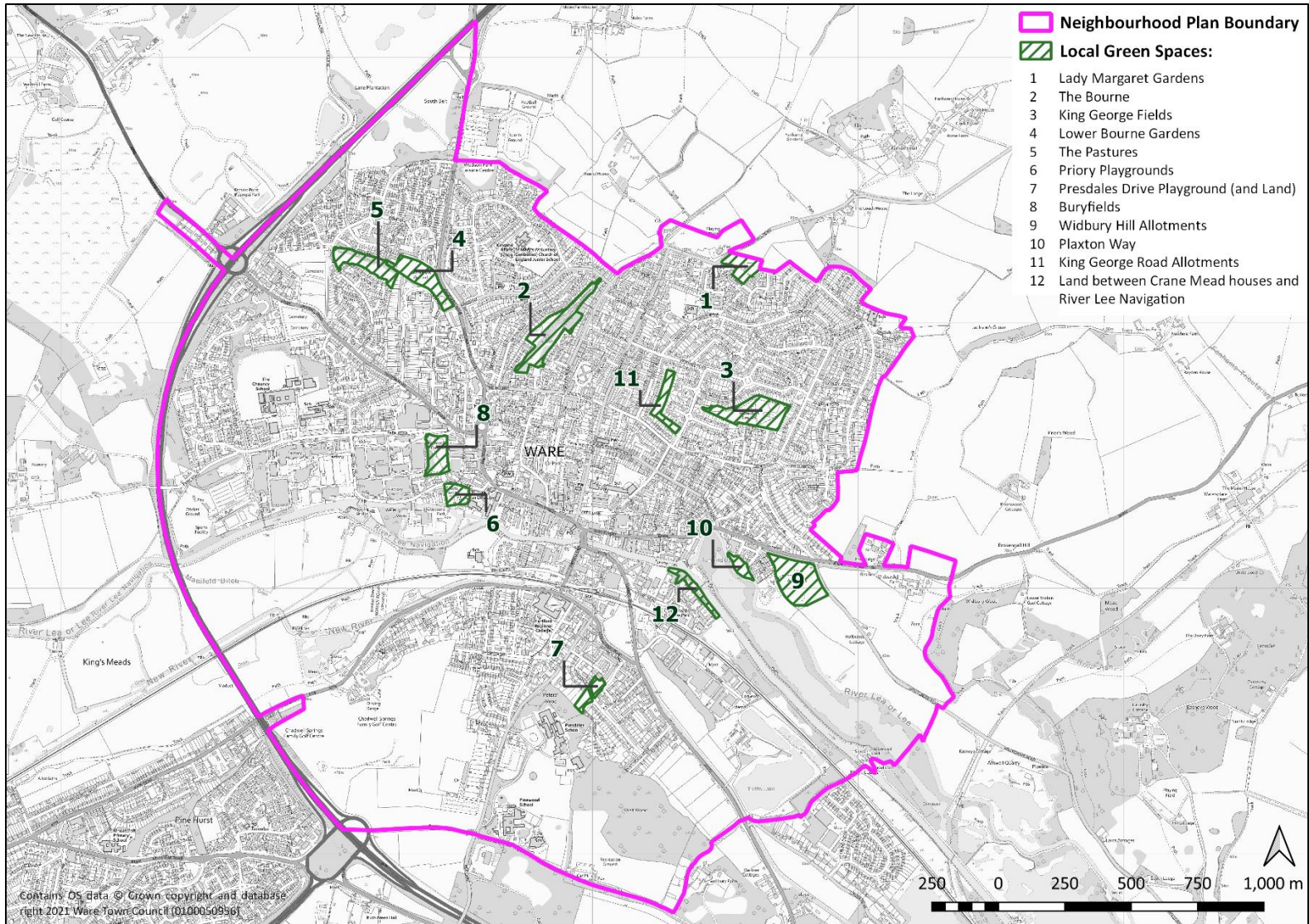


Figure 7.2: Map showing the Local Green Space designations

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

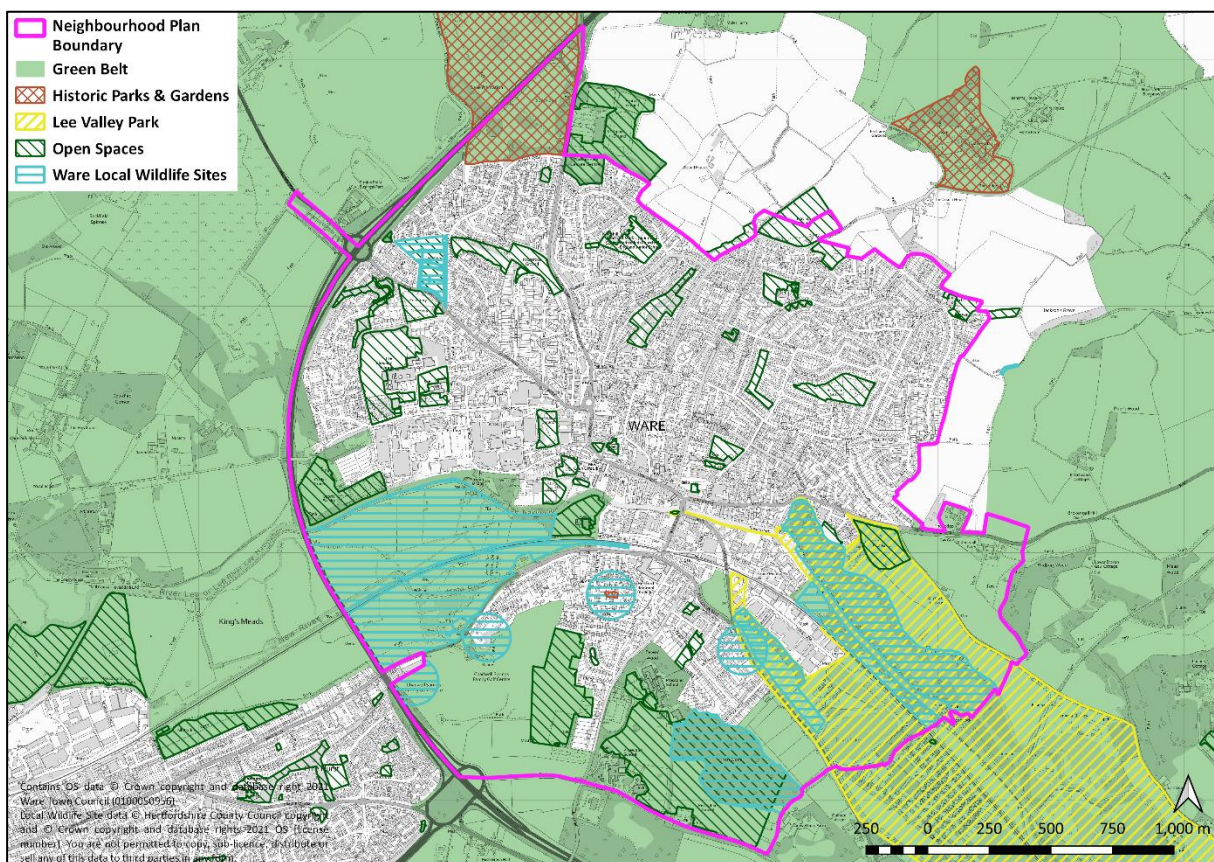


Figure 7.3: Habitats and natural sites in the neighbourhood area

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.

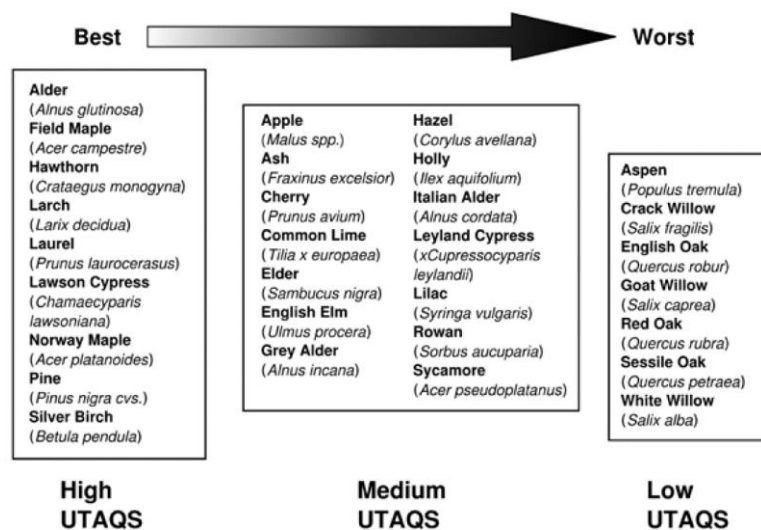


Figure 7.4: Classification of 30 of the most common UK urban tree species using UTAQS

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.

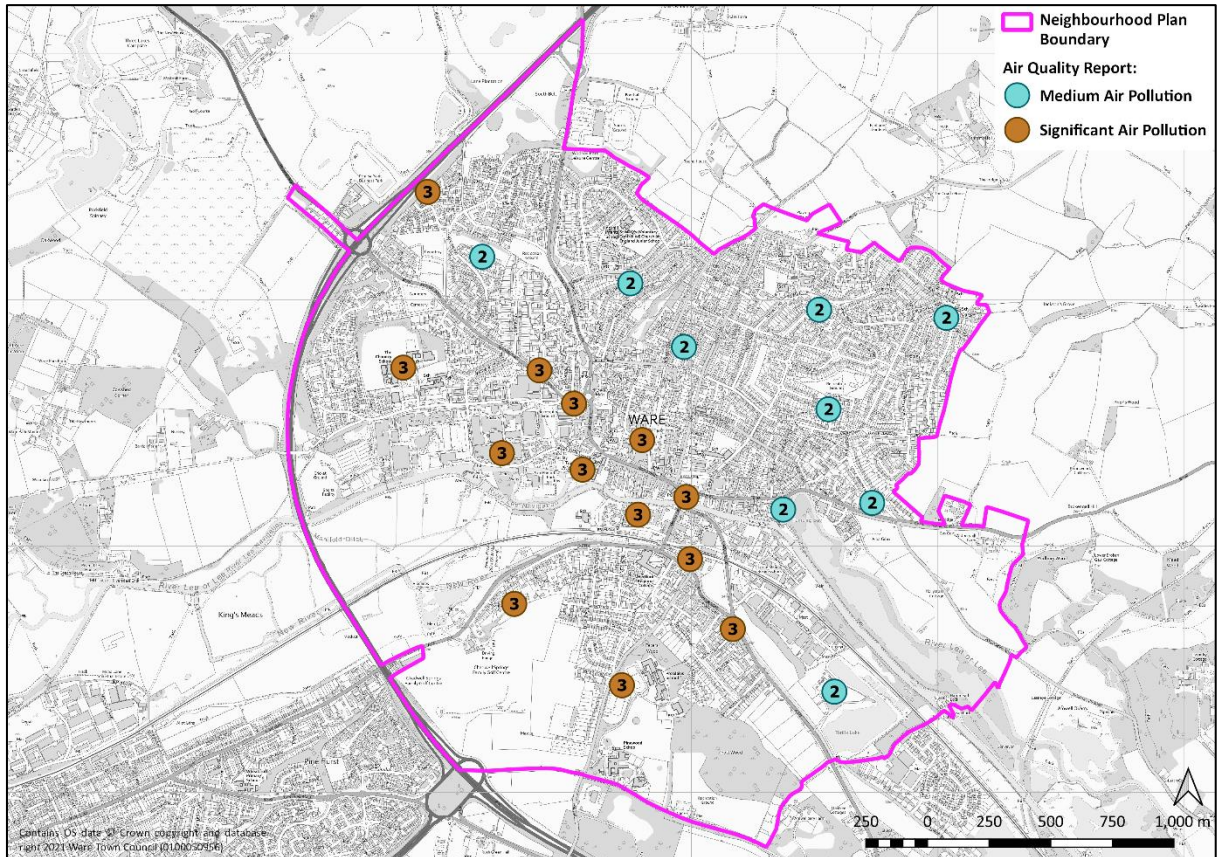


Figure 8.1: Air pollution in Ware (based on the Central Office of Public Interest Air Quality data available at addresspollution.org in partnership with Imperial College London)

- 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.

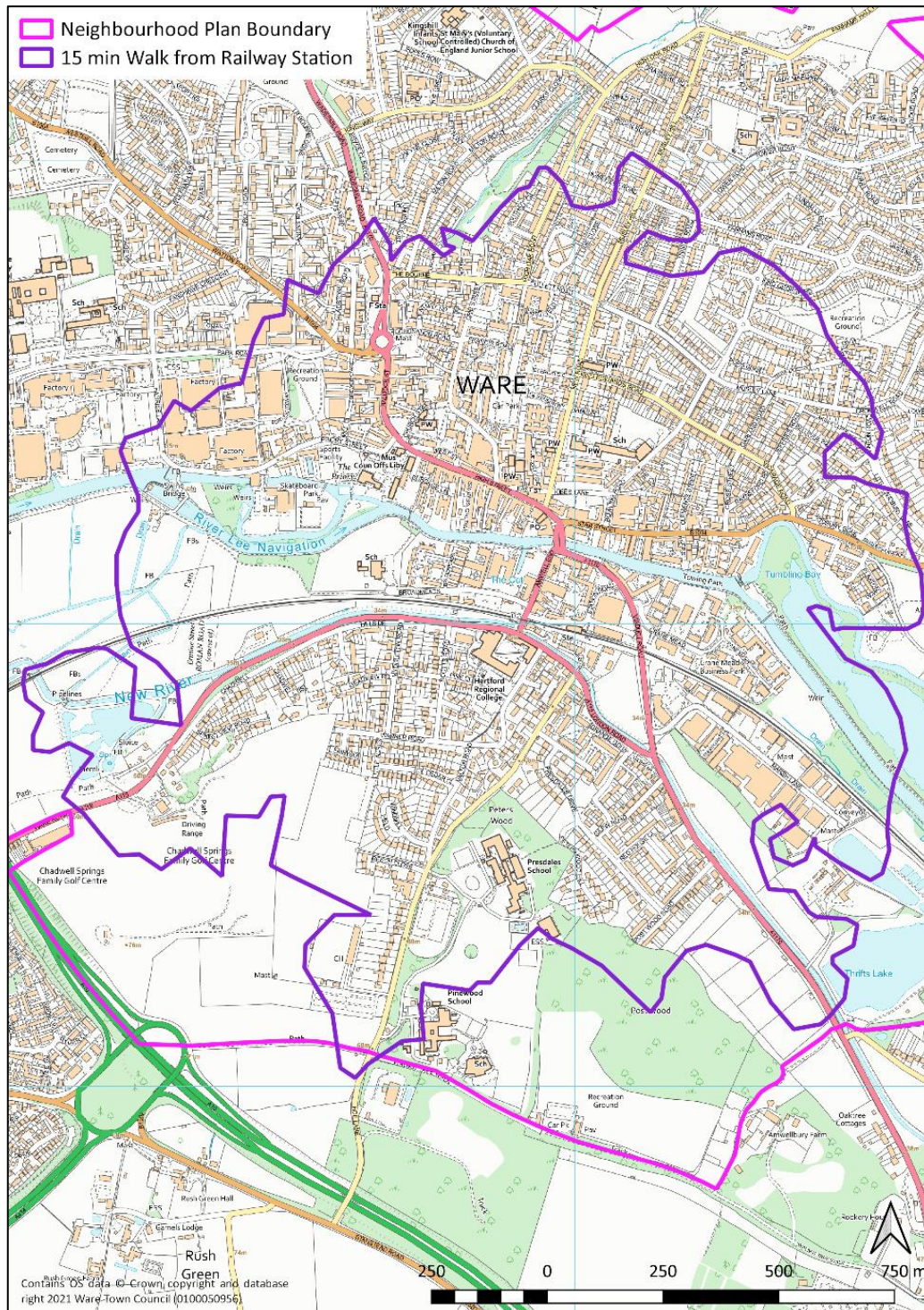


Figure 8.2: 15-minute walk time from Ware railway station

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.

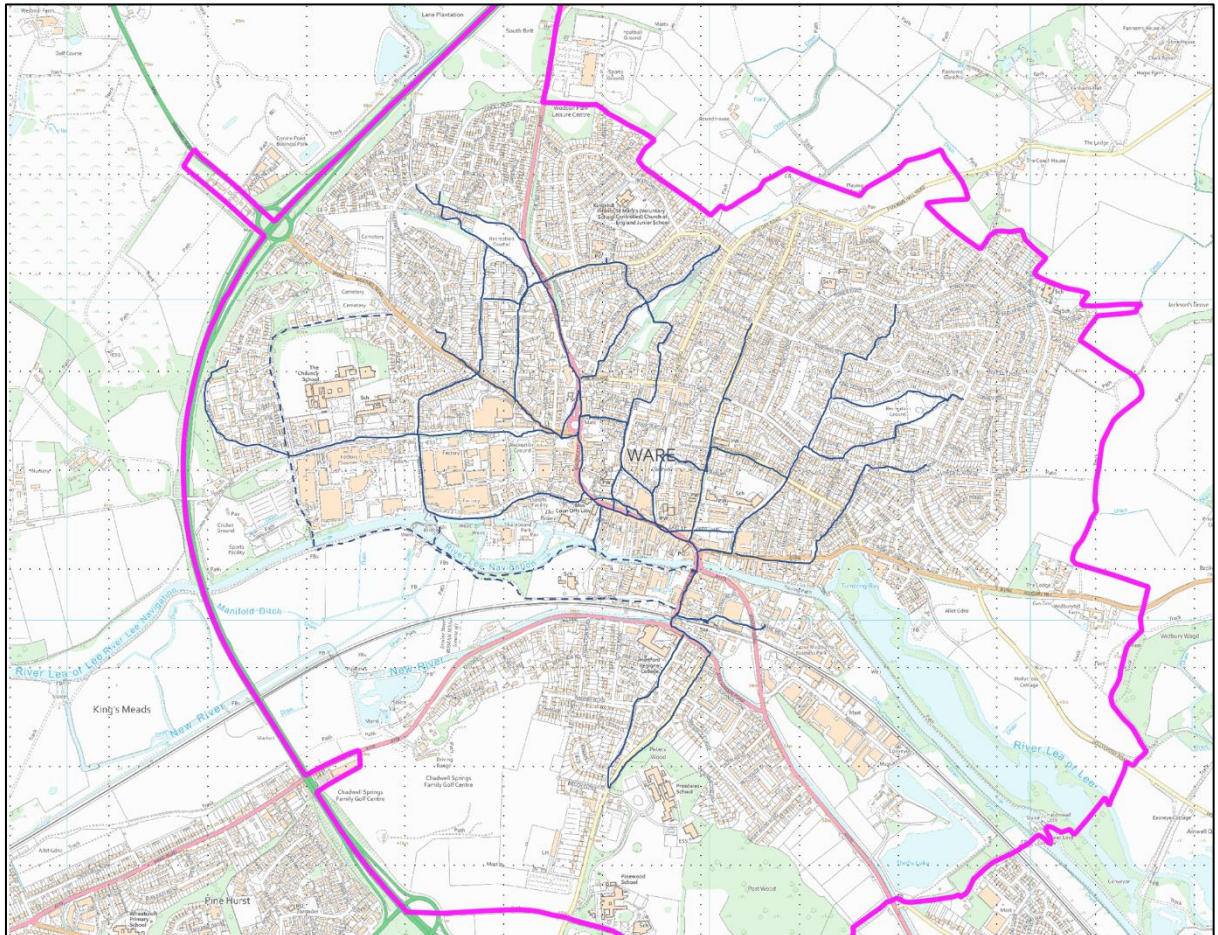


Figure 8.3: Map showing the most frequently used pedestrian routes in Ware (dotted lines tend to be summer-only use)

- 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.

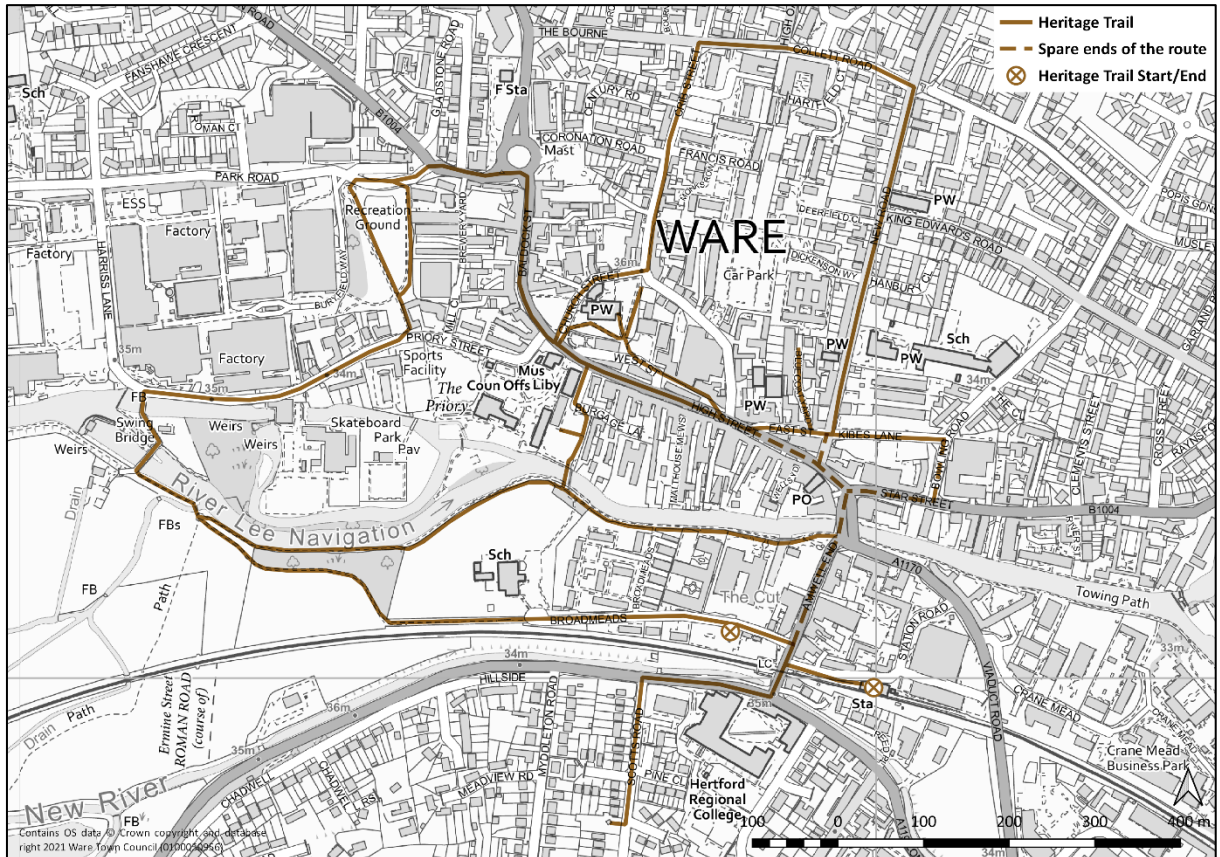


Figure 8.4: Recreational Heritage Trail

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.

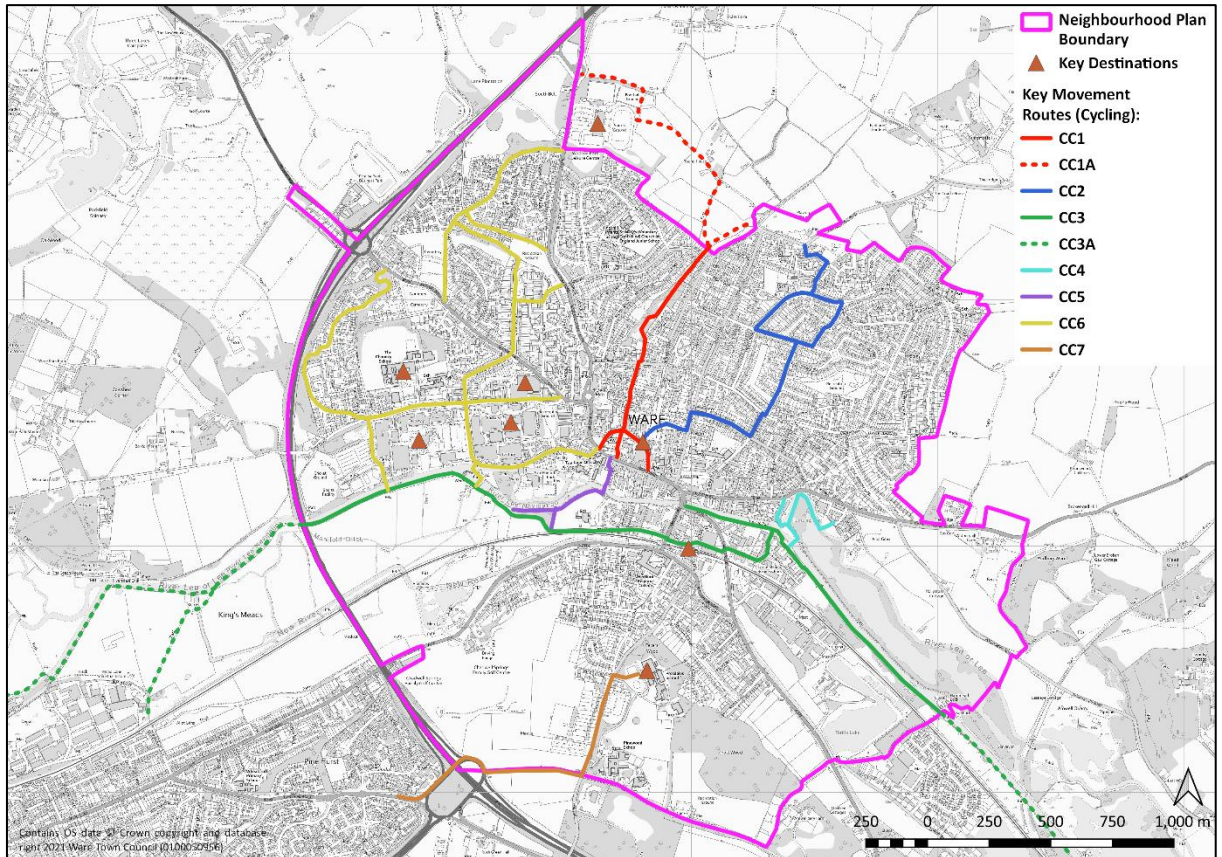


Figure 8.5: Important cycling corridors through Ware (noting that where routes extend outside the NP area these are not directly controlled by Policy W15 and are purely indicative)

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.

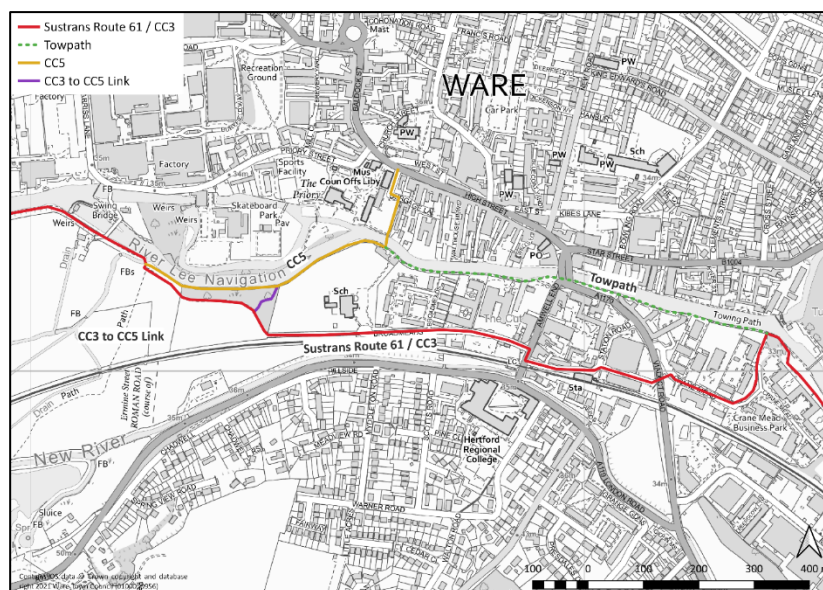


Figure 8.6: Potential new connection between CC3 and CC5

- **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.

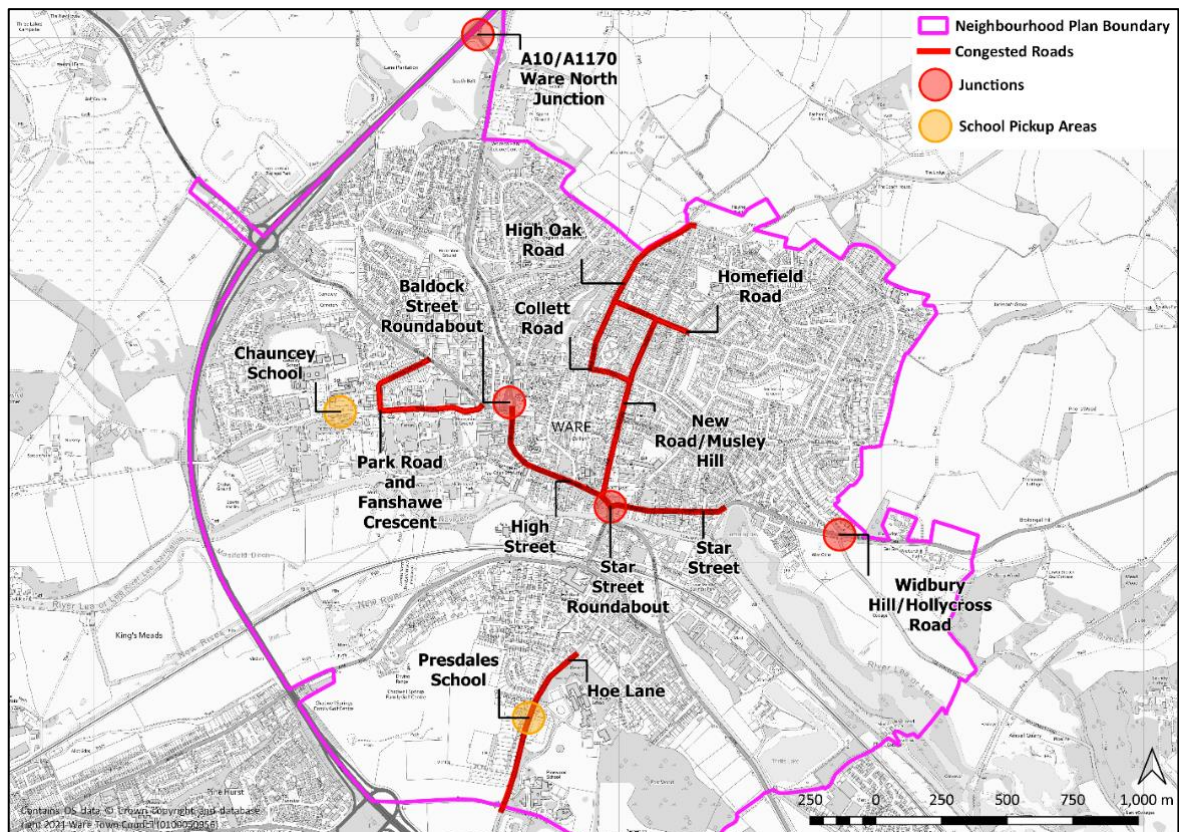


Figure 8.7: Areas of the road network which are considered to be under stress

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

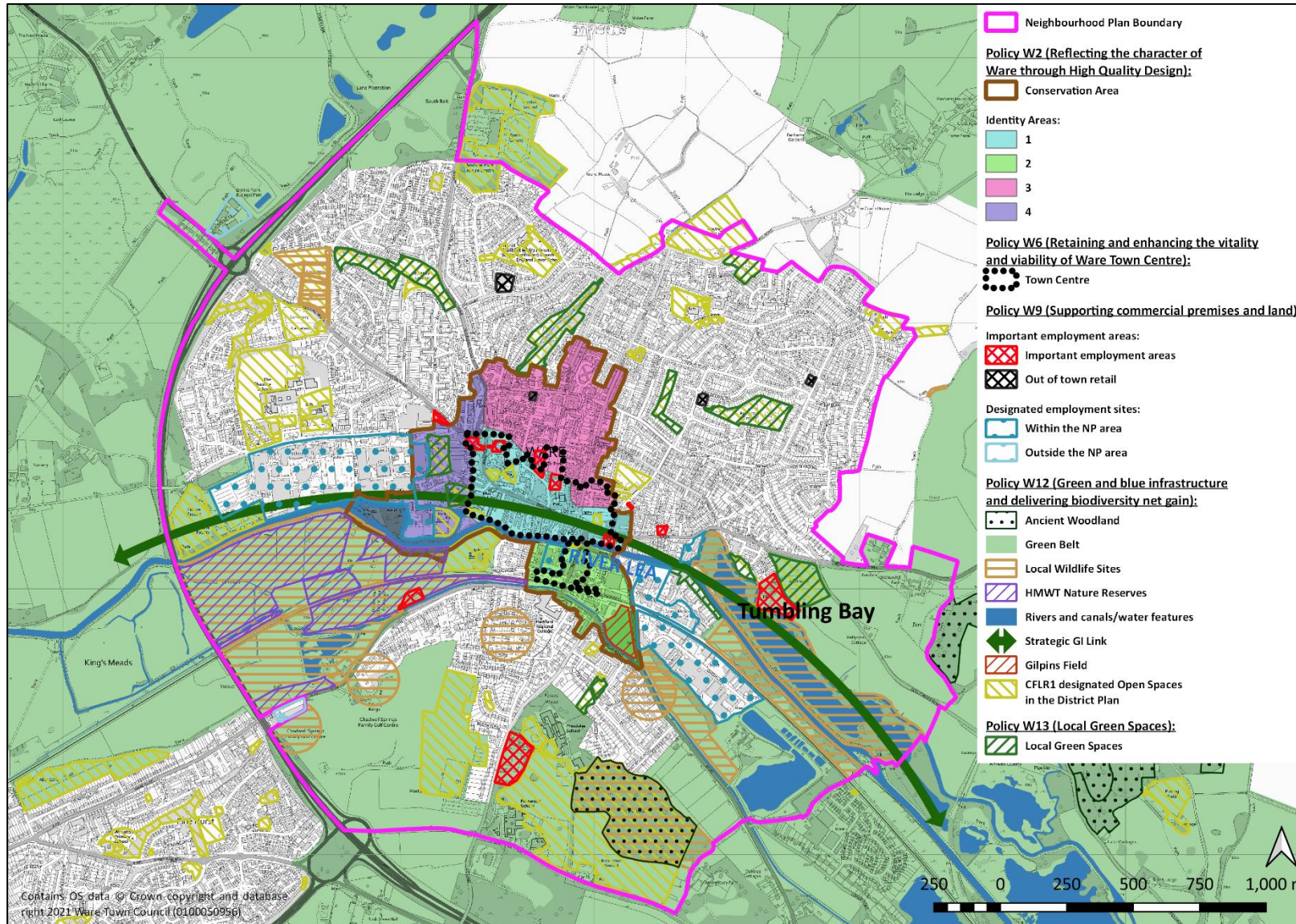
12 NON POLICY ACTIONS

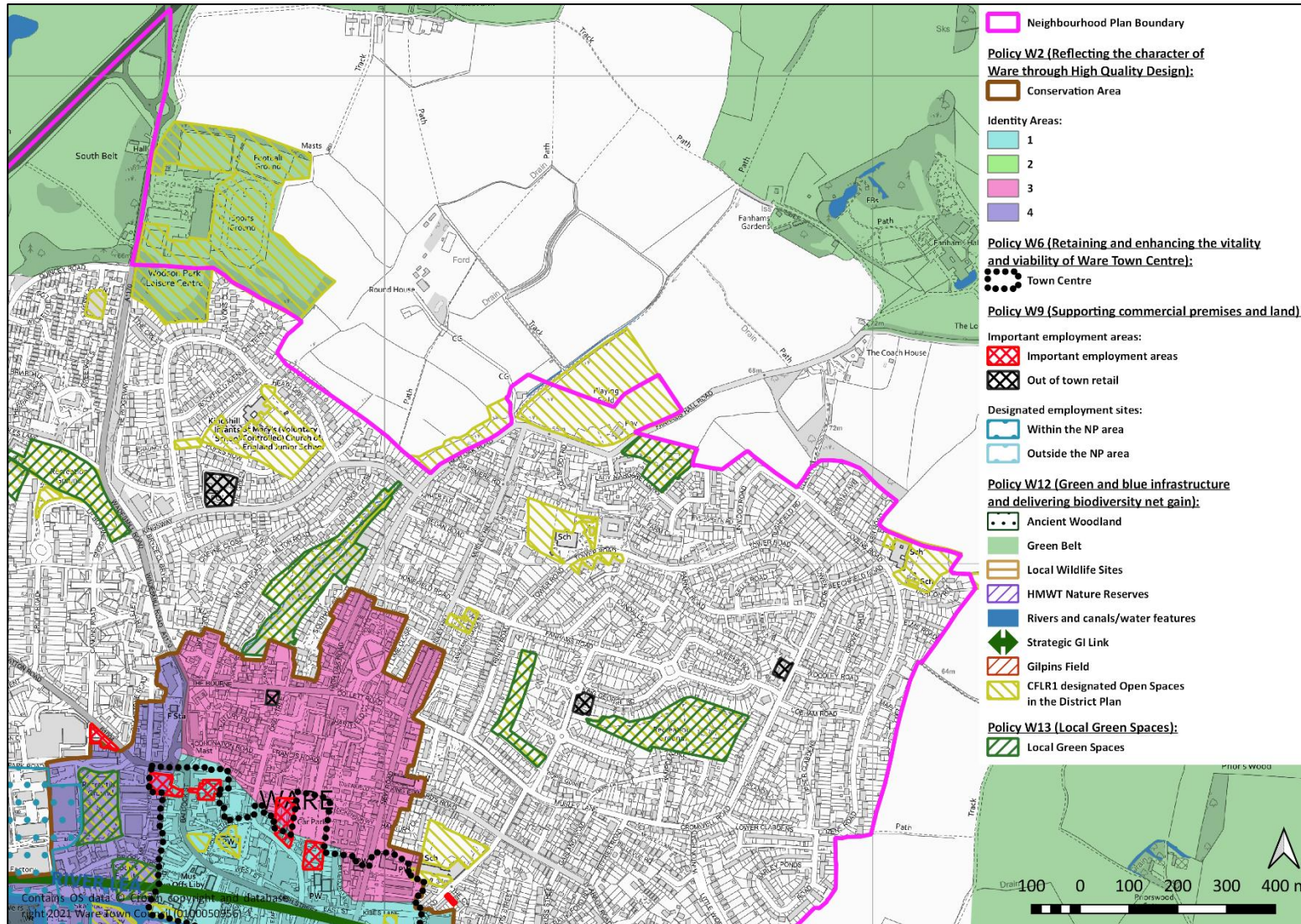
Ref.	Issue	Possible Actions	Key partners involved
1.	Understanding Ware's local housing needs	Consider undertaking semi-regular assessment of local housing needs to inform future housing policy.	WTC, EHDC
2.	Shopfront signage should adhere to guidelines	Monitor the use of signage to identify where guidelines 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

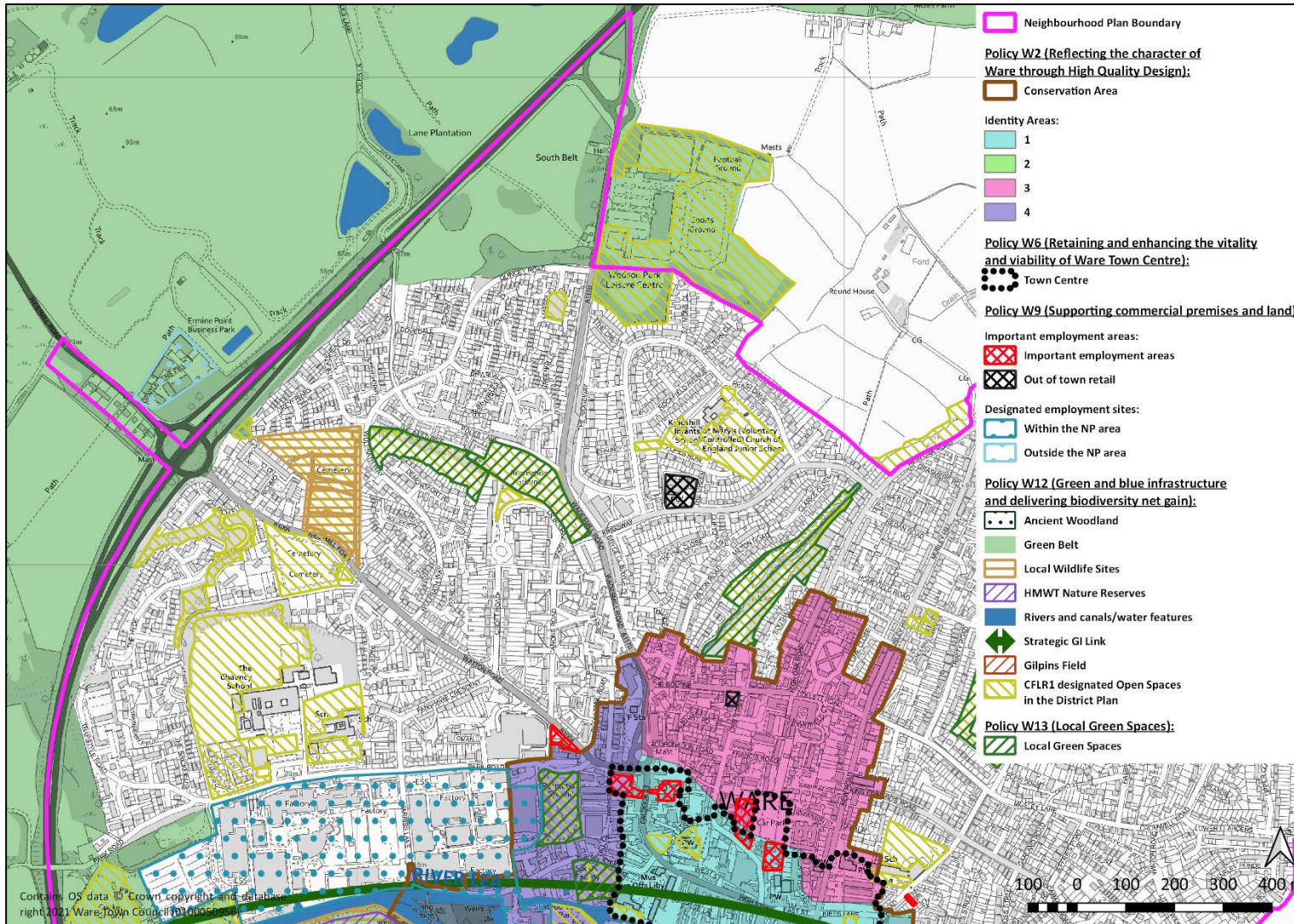
		<p>Harlow, as current service levels from the majority of the town do not present a practicable alternative to the private car.</p> <p>Evaluate whether the HertsLynx journey-on-demand system currently under trial in North Hertfordshire could provide a convenient and cost-effective public transport alternative, 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

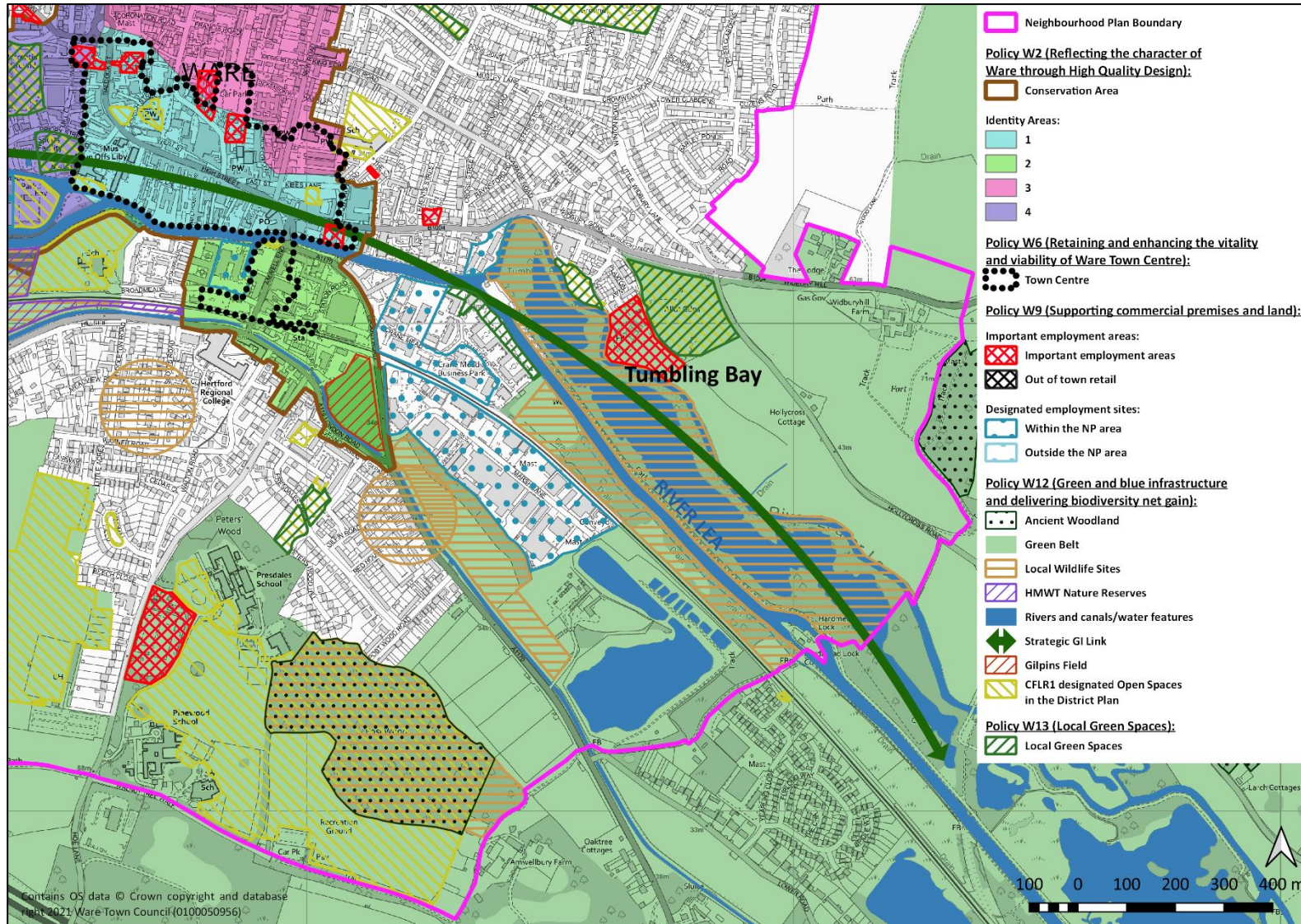




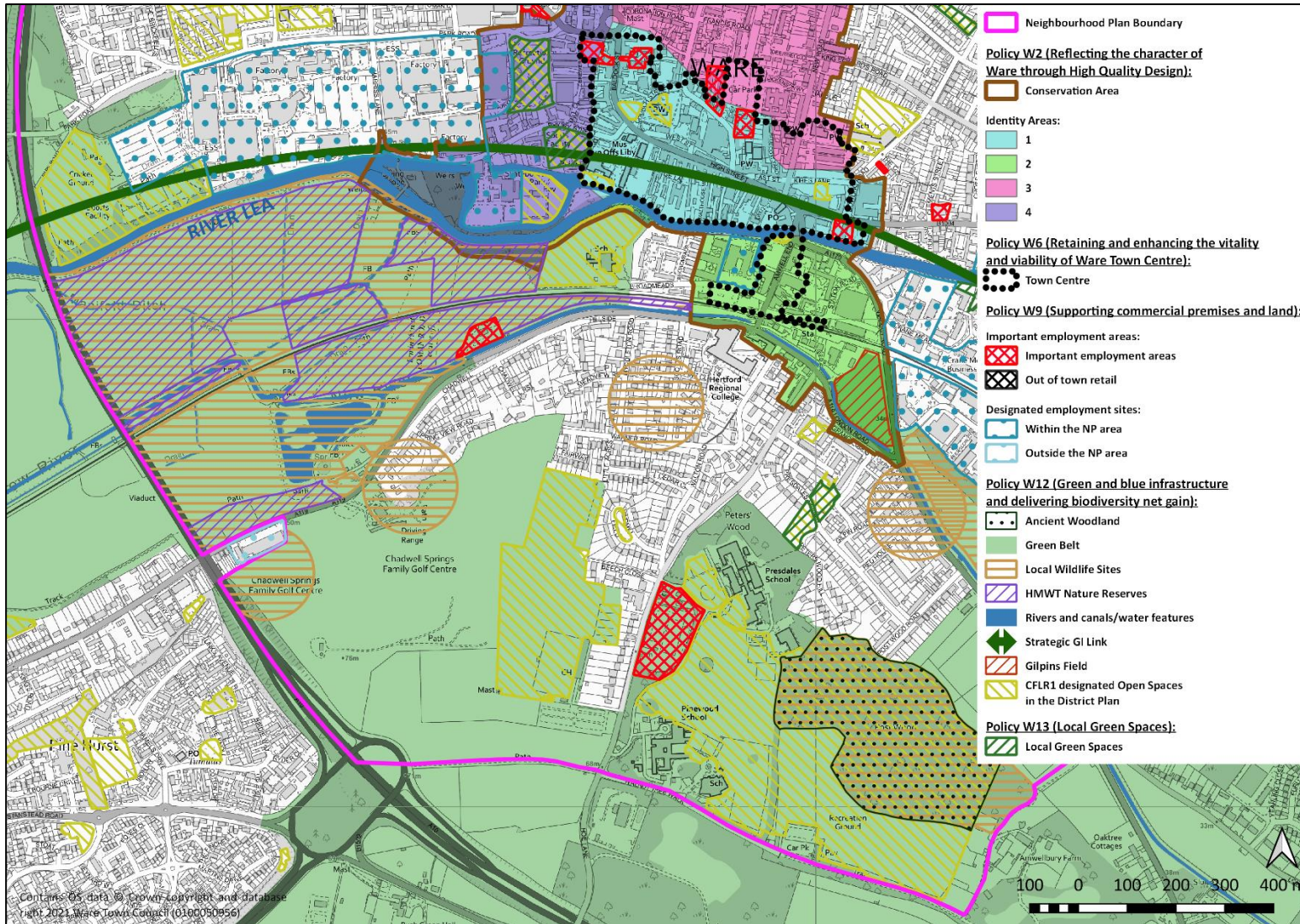
Policies Map (North-East part of the neighbourhood area)



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 Malshouses 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

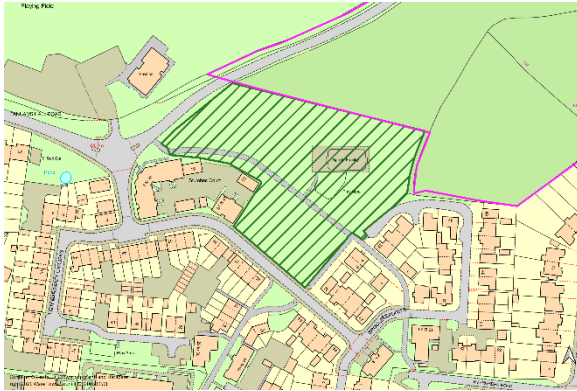
APPENDIX A LOCAL GREEN SPACES

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.

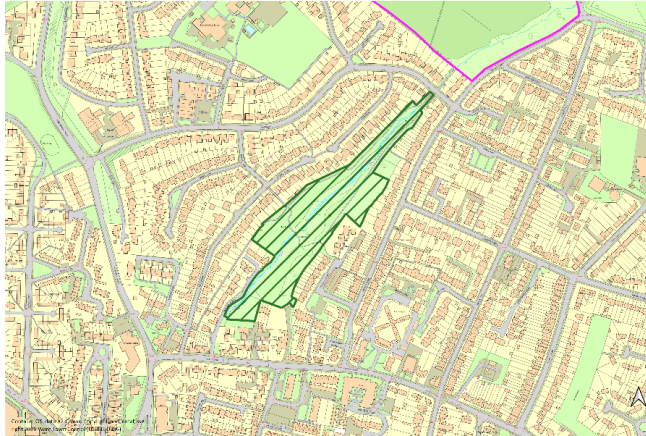
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

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

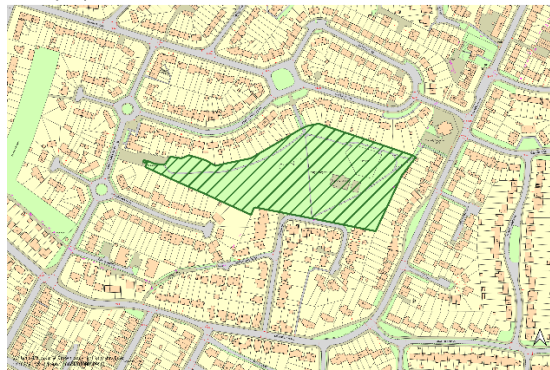
The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

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

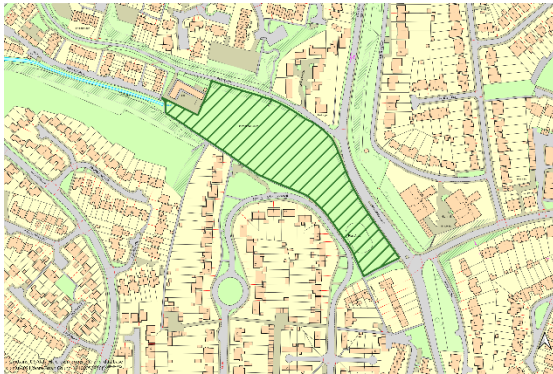
The space (2.27 ha) is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

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

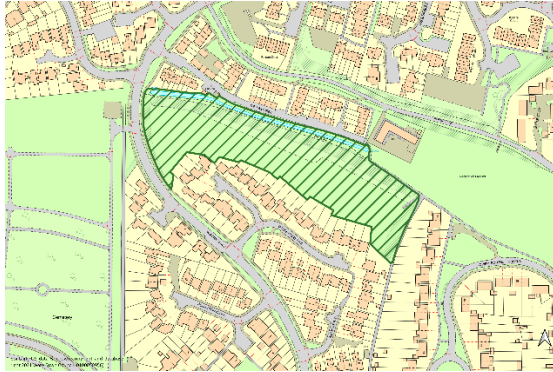
The space is not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

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

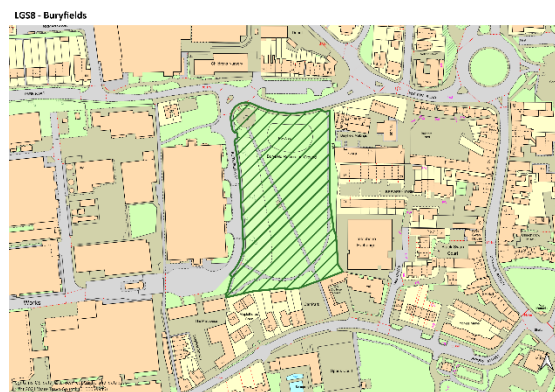
Recreation: The playground is popular among local children.

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.

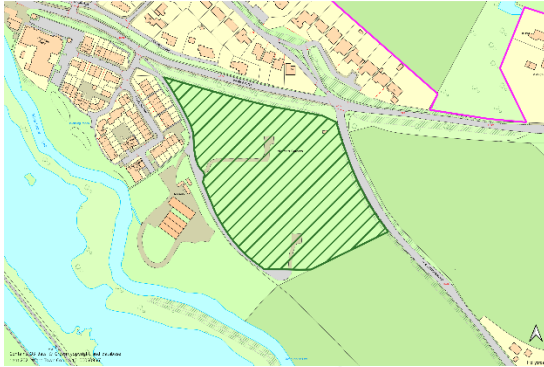
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

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.

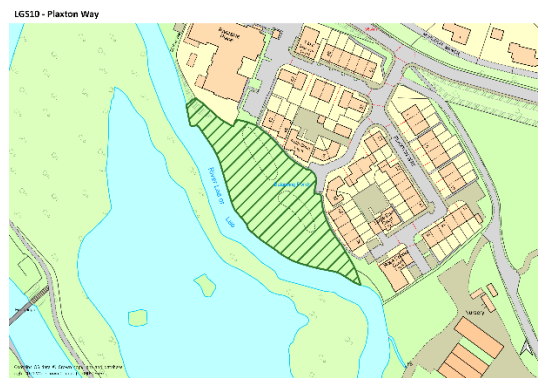
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

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.

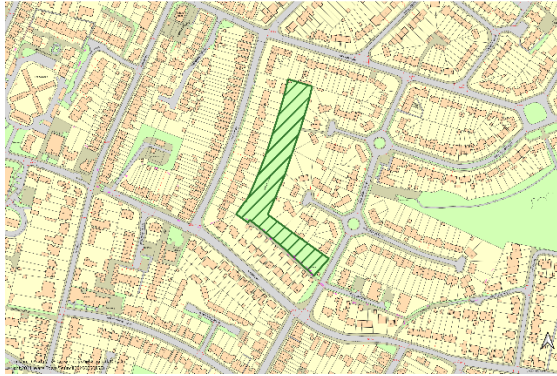
Local in Character / not extensive tract of land

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.

LG511 - King George Road 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

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.

<p>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.</p>
--

<p>Local in Character / not extensive tract of land</p>
--

<p>The space is closely delineated, with a length of about 300 metres and a width varying from 10 to 30 metres.</p>

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

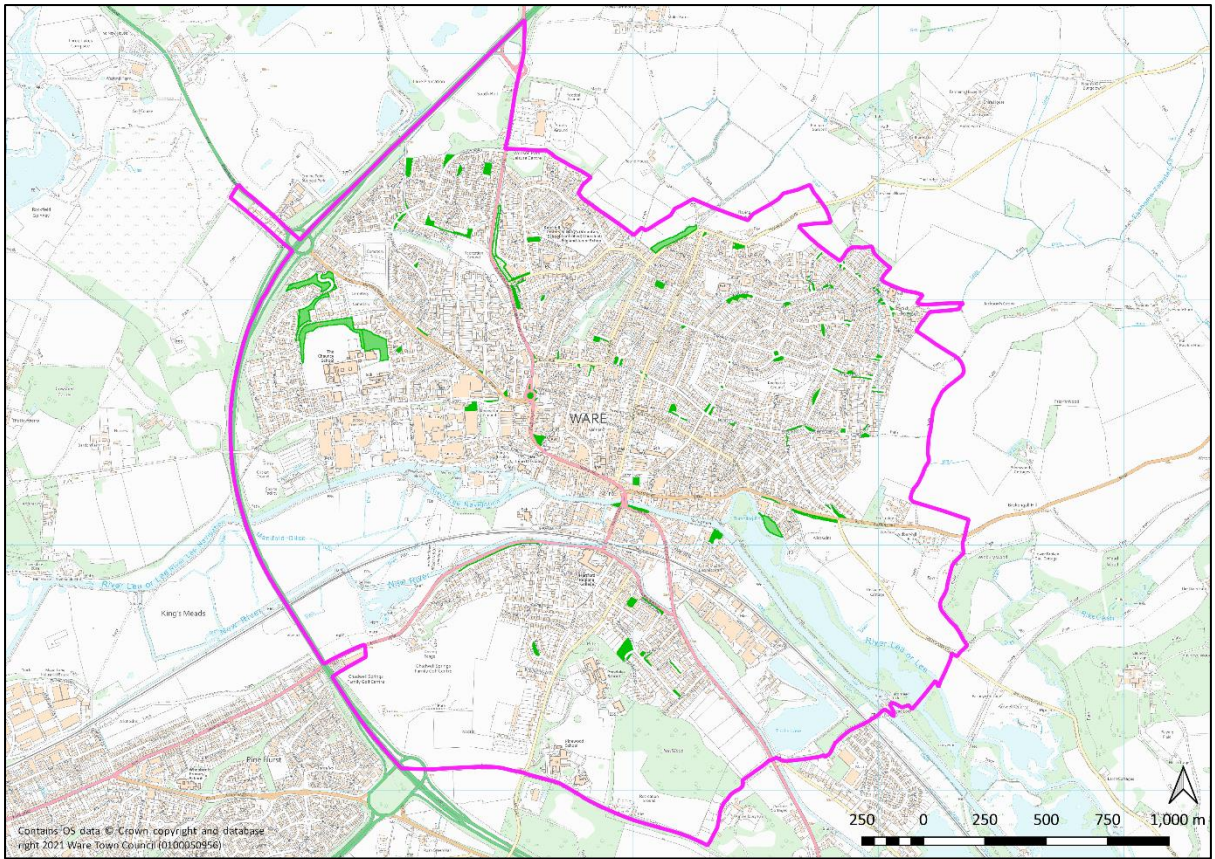
Playgrounds & Community Spaces suitable for LGS: The remaining areas are considered to be suitable for LGS protection as they meet the criteria as set out in the NPPF.

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.

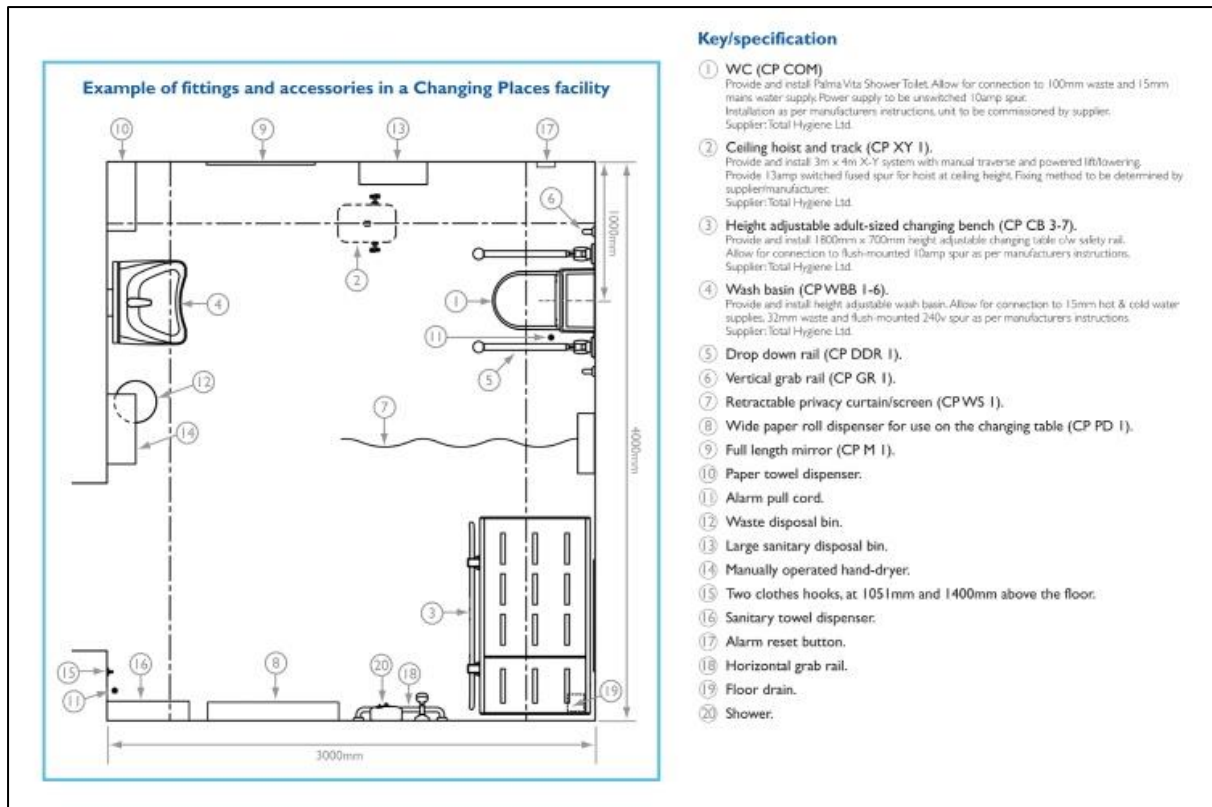
To start, there must be adequate space in a Changing Places: three metres by four metres is the recommended minimum, with a ceiling height of at least 2.4 metres.

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.

walkern road, watton-at-stone



Masterplan Framework Document
November 2023



contents

the site	2	design cons & opps	16
our vision	3	<i>visual connections & corridors</i>	17
background & context	4	<i>how the design takes this context into account</i>	18
<i>planning policy context</i>	5	<i>urban design principles</i>	19
design code	7	<i>biodiversity net gain</i>	20
engagement	8	<i>protected view: v7</i>	21
<i>key stakeholder meetings</i>	9	sustainability & future management	22
watton-at-stone & the wider context	10	biodiversity & ecology strategy	23
<i>local transport links</i>	11	landscape approach	24
<i>pedestrian connectivity</i>	12	<i>landscape mood board</i>	25
<i>the site & its setting</i>	13		
<i>the wider context</i>	14		
<i>village grain</i>	15		

Copyright © 2023 DHA Architecture Ltd. All rights reserved. Limited reproduction and distribution permitted for the sole purpose of the planning of this named development only.

Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100042157.

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.



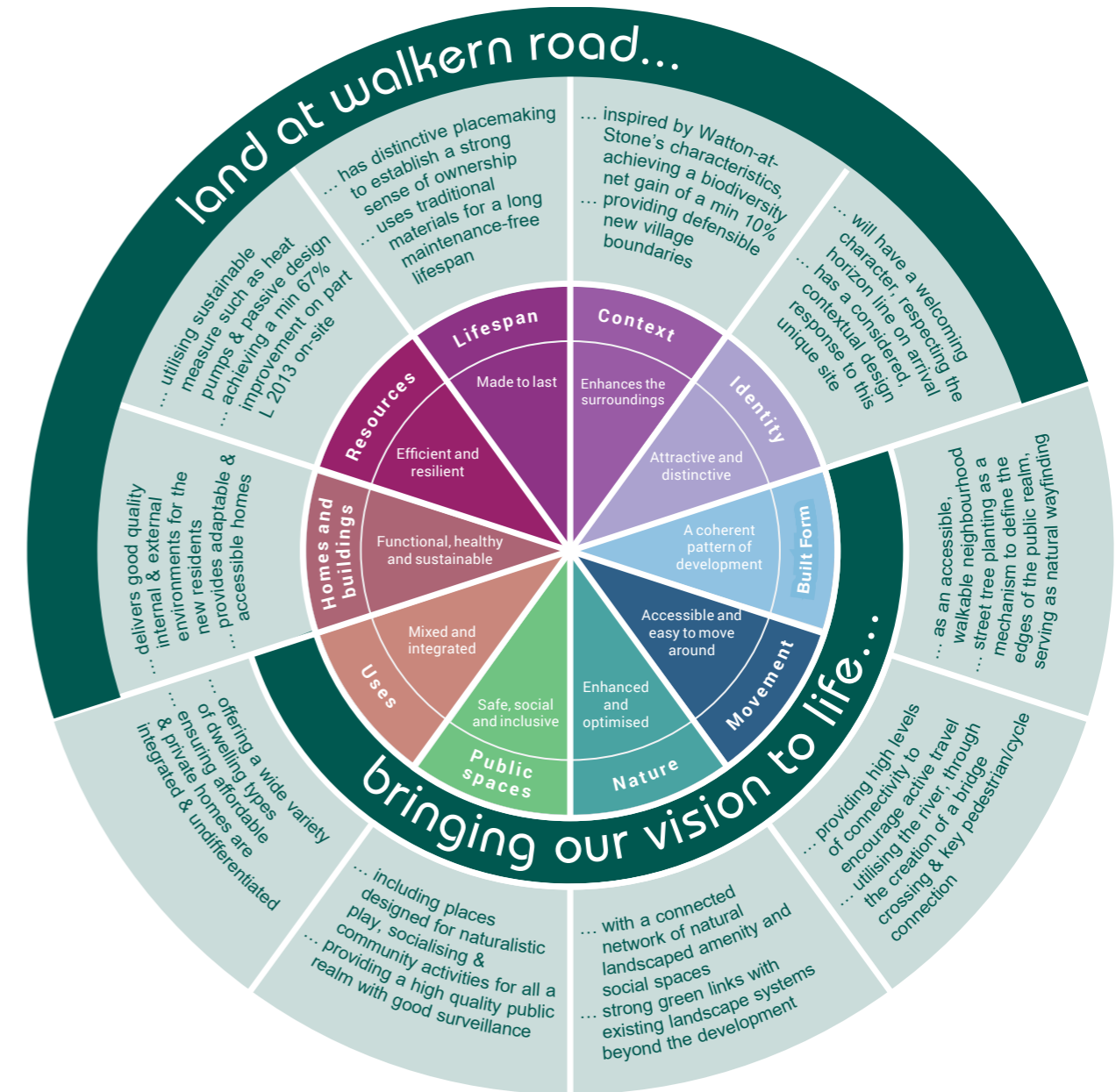
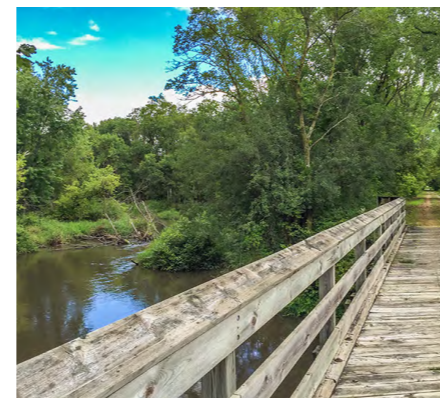
our vision

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.”

East Herts District Plan (October 2018)

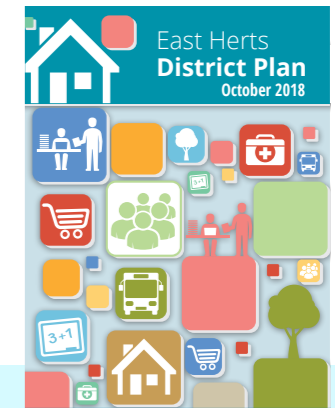
Watton-at-Stone is identified as Group 1 Village according to Policy VILL1. In Group 1 Villages, development for housing, employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted subject to complying with the Local Plan. These villages are encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate, 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.

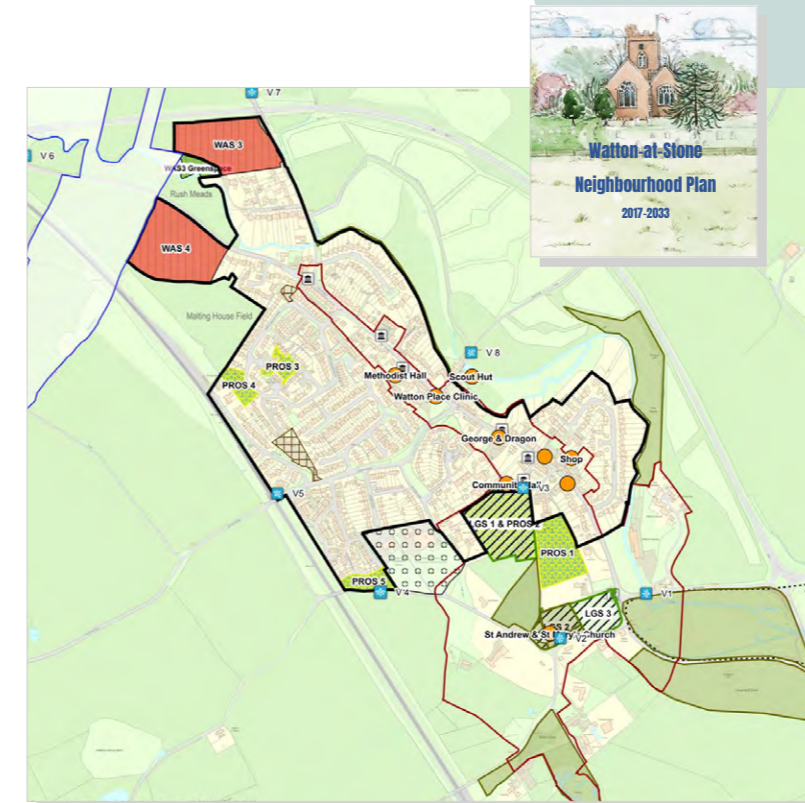
Additionally, the site is expected to meet the following criteria:

- ☑️ 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:

2016

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.

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.

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.

2022

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.

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

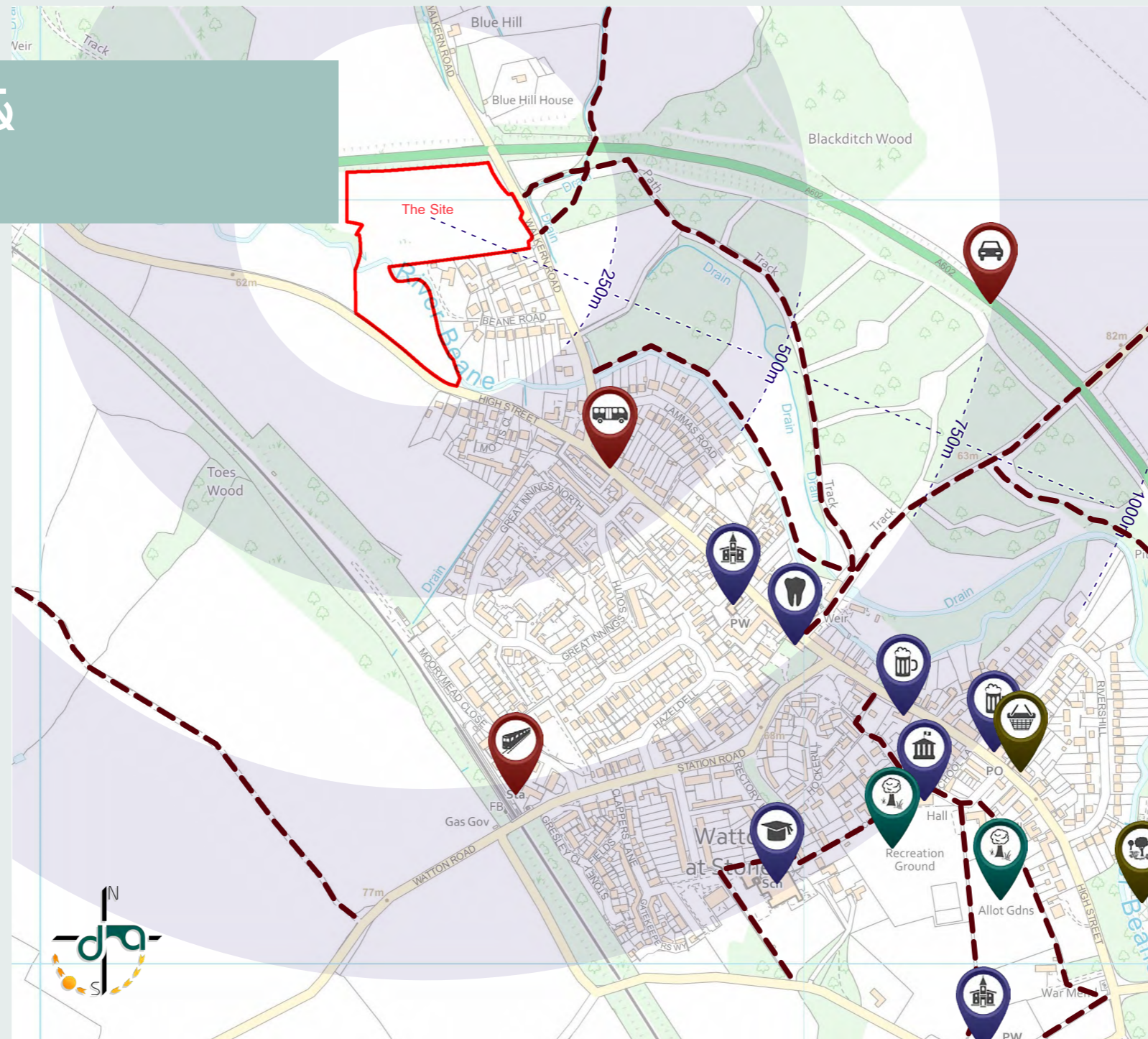
- 390 bus on a route from Hertford to Stevenage with departures approx. every hour from the High Street.
- Trains serve Moorgate on Mondays to Fridays until 22:00 and London King's Cross after 22:00 on Mondays to Fridays and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Journey time – approx. 1h.

... 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

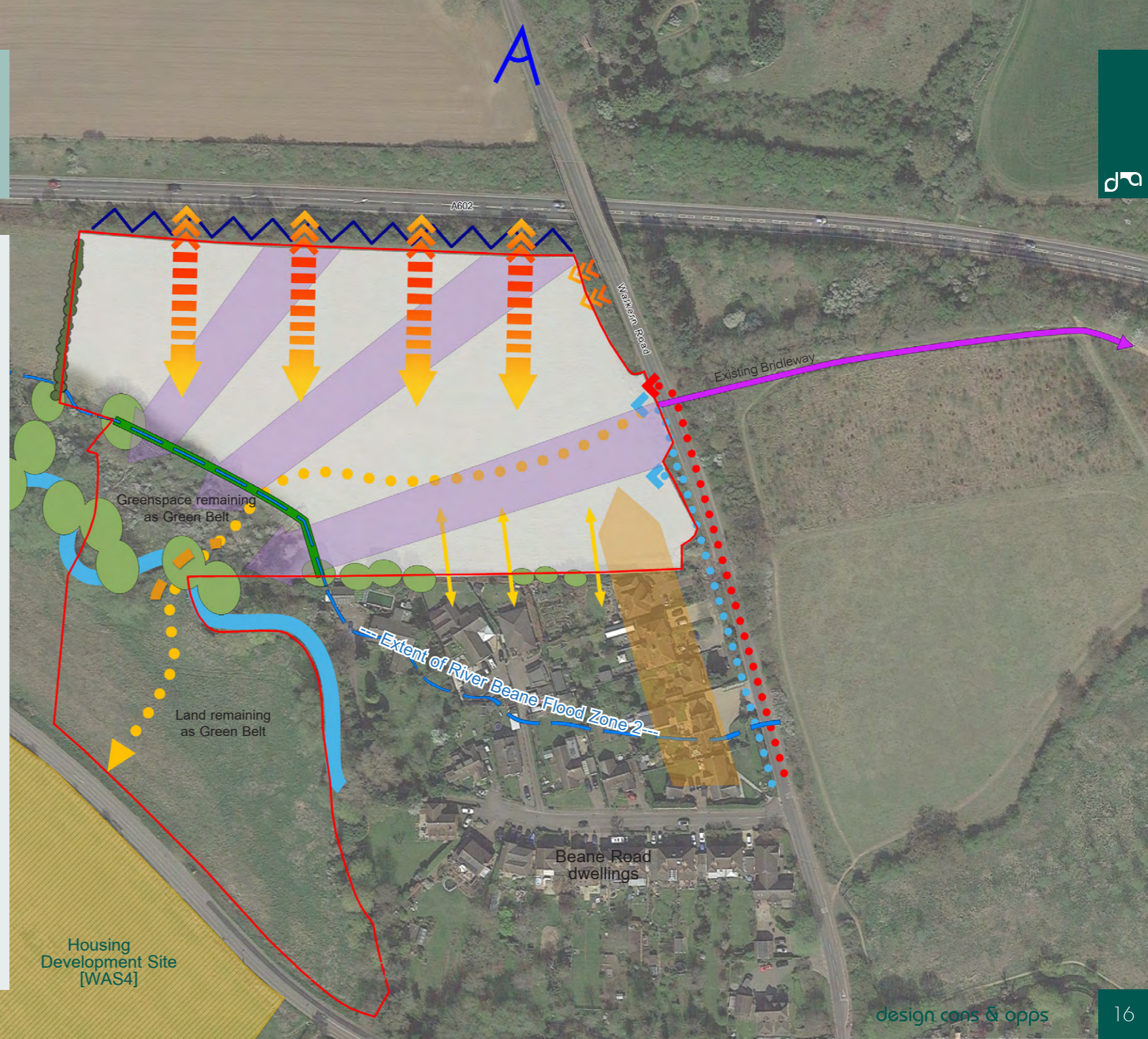


6. 1970s-era development alongside more historic buildings



- 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




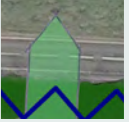
Greenspace remaining as Green Belt

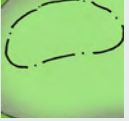
Land remaining as Green Belt

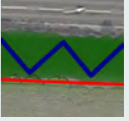
Housing Development Site [WAS4]


- 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

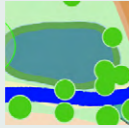
Establishing Development Parameters & Formulating the Design Approach



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



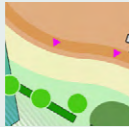
Protected Viewpoint 7



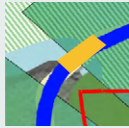
Key pedestrian and cycle connection-interconnecting the existing brideway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path



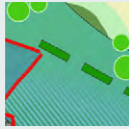
Proposed road network within the site with active frontages overlooking to ensure streets are passively policed



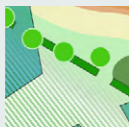
Pedestrian bridge



Existing trees retained



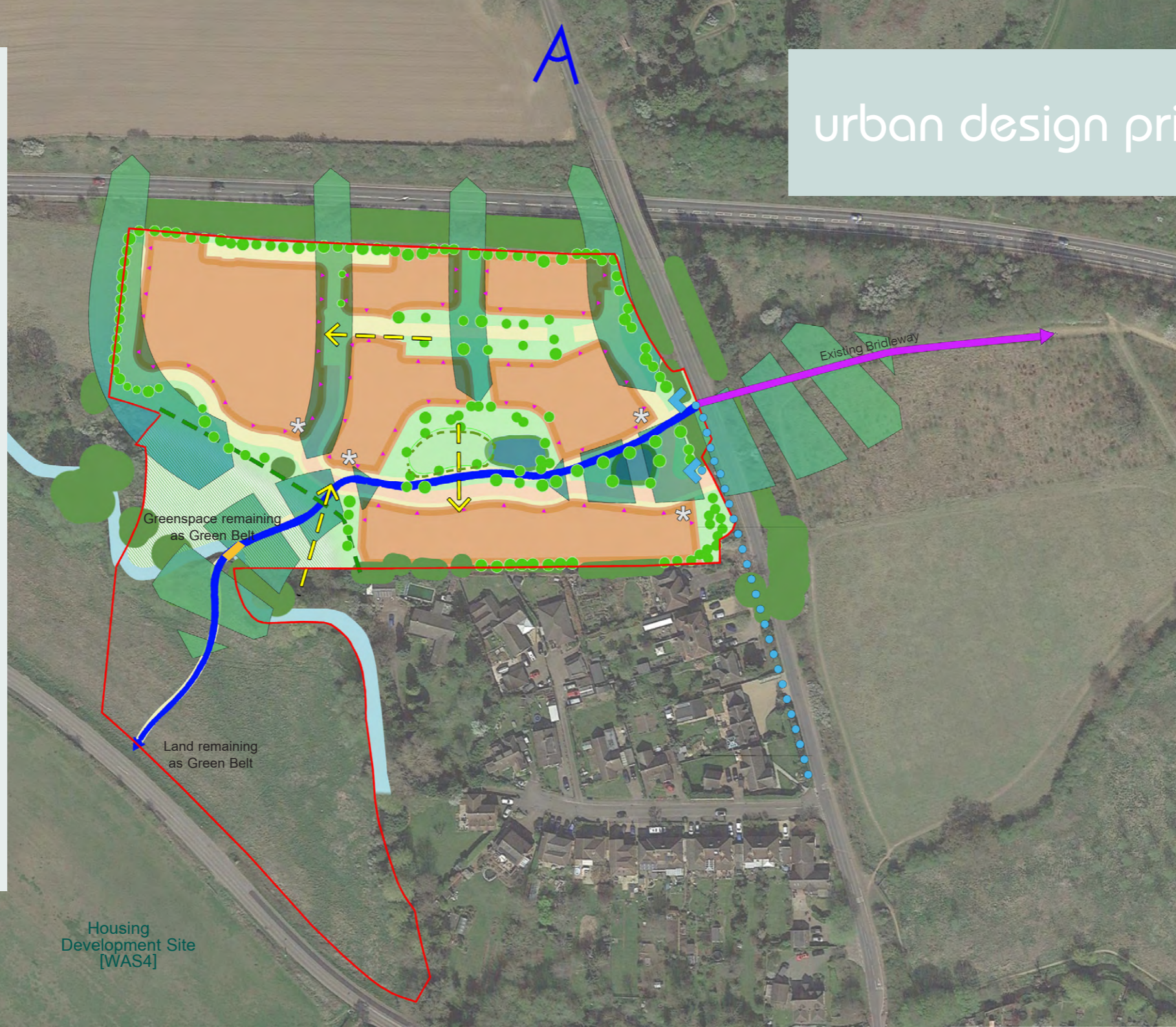
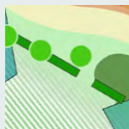
Proposed trees



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



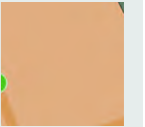
Landscape buffer along the northern boundary with the A602 and countryside beyond



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



Housing Development Site [WAS4]



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

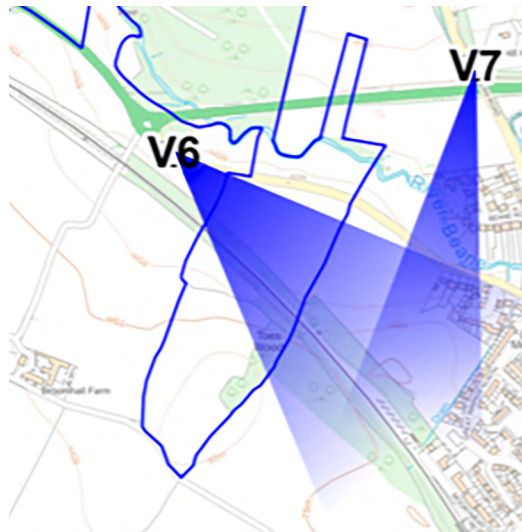
Appropriate management to retain and maintain the existing grassland and other species. Including the removal of invasive species if required

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 expected 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.

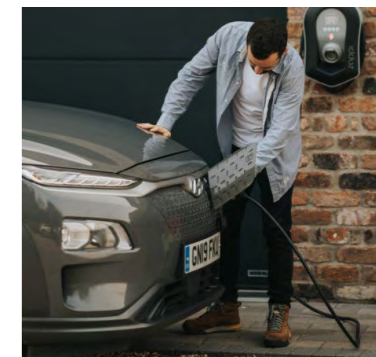
Affordable Housing

- ✓ 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





dha architecture ltd

tel 0118 934 9666
email surname@dhaarchitecture.co.uk
web www.dhaarchitecture.co.uk
snail Brooklands Farm Business Park
Bottle Lane
Binfield
Berkshire RG42 5QX

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: 13 December 2023

Report by: James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Report title: Political Balance and Committee Membership of the Council Update

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary – In line with paragraph 3.3(i) and (k) of the Constitution, Council is required to approve its political balance and allocation of seats. The political balance of the Council has changed since May 2023 as there have been changes to the number of councillors within the Green Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- a) That the revised political balance of the Council at paragraph 2.3 be agreed; and**
- b) That the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix B be agreed, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The political balance of the Council has changed since the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2023. Two Green councillors have left the Green group and become Independent Members.
- 1.2 This has impacted the number of seats allocated to the political groups and requires approval from the Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the authority is under a duty to review the allocation of seats to political groups as soon as practicable following a change to the membership of those groups.
- 2.2 The Monitoring Officer has received notification that two Green Councillors have decided to leave the Green Party group and sit on the Council as Independent Members. Councillor Butcher left the Green group in October 2023 and Councillor Hart left the Green group in December 2023.
- 2.3 The political groups within East Herts Council are entitled to an allocation of committee places in proportion to their representation on the Council. The political balance representation of each relevant group is set out below.

Group	Members	%	No of committee seats
Green	17	34	23
Conservative	16	32	22
Lib Dems	10	20	14
Labour	5	10	7
Independent	2	4	2
Total	50	100	68

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 A change in the political make-up of the Council has had an impact on the political balance of the Council and also, therefore, the number of committee seats each group is entitled to.

3.2 This report ensures that the Council complies with its statutory obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations.

4.0 Options

4.1 The Council must review its political balance and allocation of seats as soon as practicable following a change to political groups in accordance with the legislation.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

6.1 [Annual Council report](#) – 17 May 2023

Contact Officer

James Ellis

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Katie Mogan, Democratic Services Manager

katie.mogan@eastherts.gov.uk

Committee Membership 2023/24

*Councillor name in bold denotes Chairman nomination

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 14 Seats				
	Conservative (4)	Green (5)	Labour (2)	Liberal Democrats (3)
1	David Andrews	Rachel Carter	Thomas Clements	Calvin Horner
2	Peter Boylan	Nick Cox	Carolyn Redfern	Miriam Swainston
3	Eric Buckmaster	Sue Nicholls		Joseph Thomas
4	Graham McAndrew	George Williams		
5		David Woollcombe		
Substitutes (up to six per group)				
1	Aubrey Holt	Vicky Burt	David Jacobs	Simon Marlow
2	Geoff Williamson	Vicky Smith		Richard Townsend
3		Steven Watson		
4				
5				
6				

Development Management Committee - 12 Seats				
	Conservative (4)	Green (5)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrats (2)
1	Ruth Buckmaster	Vicky Burt	Yvonne Estop	Sarah Copley
2	Ian Devonshire	Rachel Carter		Simon Marlow
3	Aubrey Holt	John Dunlop		
4	Tony Stowe	Graeme Hill		
5		Steven Watson		
Substitutes (up to six per group)				
1	Stan Bull			Martin Adams
2	Tom Deffley	Sue Nicholls		
3		Vicky Smith		
4				
5				
6				

Licensing Committee - 12 Seats				
	Conservative (4)	Green (5)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrats (2)
1	Stan Bull	Maura Connolly	David Willcocks	Simon Marlow
2	Tom Deffley	Nick Cox		Richard Townsend
3	Frankie Woolf	John Dunlop		
4	John Wyllie	Graeme Hill		
5		Vicky Smith		
Substitutes (up to six per group)				
1	Ian Devonshire	George Williams	Carolyn Redfern	Martin Adams
2	Angus Parsad-Wyatt	David Woollcombe		
3				
4				
5				
6				

Audit and Governance Committee - 7 Seats					
	Conservative (2)	Green (2)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrats (1)	Independent (1)
1	Bob Deering	David Woollcombe	David Jacobs	Martin Adams	Chris Hart
2	Geoff Williamson	Sue Nicholls			
3					
4					
5					
Substitutes (up to three per group)					
1	John Wyllie	Maura Connolly	Yvonne Estop	Simon Marlow	
2		Nick Cox		Miriam Swainston	
3					

Standards Committee - 7 Seats				
	Conservative (2)	Green (3)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrats (1)
1	Angus Parsad-Wyatt	Vicky Burt	Thomas Clements	Richard Townsend
2	Tony Stowe	Rachel Carter		
3		Vicky Smith		
4				
5				
Substitutes (up to three per group)				
1		Nick Cox	Carolyn Redfern	Calvin Horner
2		Graeme Hill		
3				

Human Resources Committee - 7 Seats					
	Conservative (2)	Green (2)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrats (1)	Independent (1)
1	Tom Deffley	Rachel Carter	David Willcocks	Miriam Swainston	Martin Butcher
2	Diane Hollebon	Maura Connolly			
3					
4					
5					
Substitutes (up to three per group)					
1	Ruth Buckmaster	John Dunlop	David Jacobs	Simon Marlow	
2		Graeme Hill			
3					

Local Joint Panel - 4 Seats				
	Conservative (2)	Green (1)	Labour (0)	Liberal Democrats (1)
1	Eric Buckmaster	Alex Daar		Joseph Dumont
2	Diane Hollebon			
3				
4				
5				

Chief Officer Recruitment Committee - 5 Seats				
	Conservative (2)	Green (1)	Labour (0)	Liberal Democrats (2)
1	Eric Buckmaster	Ben Crystall		Mione Goldspink
2	Bob Deering			Joseph Dumont
3				
4				
5				

Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee - 3 Seats (Exec Members)		
1	Carl Brittain	
2	Alex Daar	
3	Chris Wilson	

CCTV Joint Executive Committee - 3 Seats (Exec Members)		
1	Alex Daar	
2	Chris Wilson	
3	Mione Goldspink	

Joint ICT Committee - 3 Seats (Exec Members)		
1	Ben Crystall	
2	Vicky Glover-Ward	
3	Joseph Dumont	

Council

Date of Meeting:	13 December 2023
Report by:	James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Report title:	Minor changes to the Constitution
Ward(s) affected:	All

Summary

In accordance with paragraph 2.6.5 of the Constitution any minor changes made to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer must be notified to Members at the next meeting of the Full Council. In accordance with paragraph 13.2.13 of the Constitution any changes made to the Policy Framework are reserved to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- (a) To note the minor change to the Constitution in Appendix A which is required to be made to put into effect the decision of the Executive dated 28th November 2023 which delegated authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make consequential amendments to the Constitution to facilitate the establishment of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee; and**
- (b) To amend the Policy Framework at paragraph 3.2.1 (n) set out in paragraph 2.7 of this report.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 As above.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Changes to the Constitution are dealt with under paragraph 2.6 of the Constitution.
- 2.2 Under paragraph 2.6.3 if in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer a change is required to be made so as to put into effect any decision of the Council or its Committees or the Executive then the Monitoring Officer may make such a change.
- 2.3 On the 28th November 2023 the Executive delegated authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution to facilitate the establishment of the Harlow and Gilston Town Joint Committee (HGGT) on the basis of the Terms of Reference set out in Schedule 10 of the Inter Authority Agreement once all the constituent Councils have confirmed their approval of the agreement.
- 2.4 In relation to any proposed changes to the Council's Policy Framework Section 13 – Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, paragraph 13.2.13 states that these are reserved to the Council.
- 2.5 The main changes are as follows:
- 2.6 To make provision for the creation of a new HGGT Joint Committee (Appendix A) in Section 8 – Other Committees in the Constitution to reflect the decision of the Executive on the 28th November 2023. The HGGT Inter Authority Agreement will be annexed to the Constitution.
- 2.7 To remove the words “(and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project)” from paragraph 3.2.1 (n) of the Policy Framework. It

should be noted that decisions on planning applications for HGGT would still remain with each constituent Local Planning Authority and decisions relating to the statutory plan making for the HGGT are would still come within paragraph (n) of the Policy Framework.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 To reflect the decision of the Executive on 28th November 2023.
- 3.2 Decisions should be taken at the lowest permissible level, having decisions related to the HGGT as part of the Policy Framework is going beyond what is required and causes unnecessary delay.
- 3.3 To comply with the requirements of paragraph 2.6.5 which ensures that minor changes made under paragraph 2.6.3 (b) are notified to all members at the next meeting of Full Council.
- 3.4 To comply with the requirement of paragraph 13.2.13 in relation to changes to the Policy Framework.
- 3.5 To ensure that the established HGGT Joint Committee is able to make strategic and local policy making decisions in relation to the HGGT.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Not to approve recommendation (b), this is not recommended. Not amending the Policy Framework as set out at paragraph 2.7 above would hinder the HGGT Joint Committee's ability to have a range of strategic and local policy making powers, as set out in the HGGT Inter Authority

Agreement, and place East Herts Council at odds with the other Partner Authorities.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Having East Herts Council be out of sync with the other partner authorities would mean that the HGGT Joint Committee would not be able to operate as intended.

- 5.2 If the Policy Framework is not amended in line with recommendation (b) it would mean that East Herts Council would not be able to form part of the HGGT Joint Committee and therefore would not be represented.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The establishment of the Joint Committee has been taken through the Executive on 28th November 2023

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

None

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes, as indicated above.

Specific Wards

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 The main changes to the Constitution listed in the report are shown at paragraph 32.6 and 2.7 and Appendices A.

Contact Officer

James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic
Services

james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Victoria Wilders, Legal Services
Manager/Deputy Monitoring Officer

victoria.wilders@eastherts.gov.uk

Appendix A “Additions”

The following additions be inserted to the Constitution: -

Constitution

22. Appendix 2 – Inter Authority Agreement for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 491

8.6 Joint Committee Arrangements

8.10 East Herts/Epping Forest District Council/Harlow District Council/Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee

Purpose

- 8.10.1 This is a Joint Committee of East Herts Council/Epping Forest District Council/Harlow District Council/Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council in relation to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT), under the provisions of section 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all regulations made thereunder.
- 8.10.2 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.
- 8.10.3 To have a range of strategic and local policy decision making powers.

Terms of Reference

- 8.10.4 The operation and scope of the decision making of this Joint Committee are set out in the Inter Authority Agreement ("IAA") which is attached to the Constitution as Appendix 2 "Inter Authority Agreement for the Harlow and Gilson Garden Town Joint Committee".
- 8.10.5 The IAA includes the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee in Schedule 10 which sets out the duties and obligations, roles and responsibilities of the Councils to in relation to the delivery of the Joint Committee's objectives.

Voting

- 8.10.6 The Joint Committee shall consist of five voting members. 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 Executive/Cabinet of their appointing authority; or (ii) a relevant Portfolio Holder within their appointing authority; or (iii) an appointed deputy to either the Leader or a member of the Executive/Cabinet with relevant portfolio of their appointing authority

Quorum

- 8.10.7 The quorum of the meeting will be five members.

Administration

- 8.10.8 The Access to Information Rules (as set out in the Constitutions of the constituent councils) to apply to all meetings.

Review period

8.10.9 The constituent councils will review the Joint Committee's terms of reference at least every five years.

Agenda Item 12

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: 13 December 2023

Report by: Councillor Tim Hoskin - Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

Report title: Car Park Fees - Bishop's Stortford

Wards affected: Bishop's Stortford All Saints, Bishop's Stortford Central, Bishop's Stortford North

Summary

The council wishes to use the tools at its disposal to address the priorities of its Climate Change Strategy and emerging Air Quality Action Plan as well as contribute to the goals of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4.

One such tool available to the council is car parking tariffs as it is argued that differential pricing can be used to encourage modal shift and more effective use of existing car parks which has the benefit of reducing unnecessary journeys, driving around, and idling within already full car parks.

The effects of charges could be cumulative with the impact of the installation of new Variable Messaging Signs (VMS) about parking space availability and other measures such as installing e-vehicle chargers in Northgate End car park, Bishop's Stortford, and other locations.

This report proposes amended charges to car parks in Bishop's Stortford as a first step to exploring the impact of tariffs on behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL:

- a) To work towards climate change and air quality aspirations by amending car parking tariffs in Bishop's Stortford to influence parking behaviour by implementing the amended**

charges as set out in Appendix A, which also incorporate inflation uplifts.

- b) To authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to publish a Notice of Variation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act to give effect to the introduction of the new tariff structure.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1 The council's Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2026 recognises the importance of supporting our residents to make behavioural changes to tackle climate change, such as adopting more active travel and modal shift. The council's emerging Air Quality Action Plan, while recognising that cars will still be a component of travel decisions in the districts, seeks to reduce the impact of congestion and car journeys on air pollution, notably in the Hockerill junction Air Quality Management Area in Bishop's Stortford. In the wider context, Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 supports reductions in car travel, with moves towards more sustainable transport.
- 1.2 The council is promoting many measures to promote less polluting car use, such as installing e-vehicle chargers in Northgate End car park, Bishop's Stortford and other locations. One of the tools that the council can use to influence behaviour is car parking tariffs. Differential pricing can be used to encourage modal shift and more effective use of existing car parks which has the benefit of reducing unnecessary journeys, driving around and idling within already full car parks.
- 1.3 Currently Bishop's Stortford's car parks are often full before 9.00 am with long-stay parkers, which means that shoppers arriving afterwards drive between car parks while searching to find a space. This generates unnecessary traffic movements, increases

congestion, adds to air pollution, and makes Bishop's Stortford town centre a less appealing place to visit.

- 1.4 For residents, poor air quality is detrimental to their health and can lead to respiratory illnesses and premature death. The NHS in Hertfordshire spends £100 million a year treating residents with the effects of poor air quality across the County.
- 1.5 It is argued that by implementing an amended tariff structure, the council can reduce the number of unnecessary journeys between car parks, relieve the need to circle round full car parks and, in doing so, promote long stay parking in Northgate End and free up spaces in the other car parks for shoppers and visitors.
- 1.6 Given the financial pressures on the council, it is important to ensure that the proposed tariff amendments lead to no loss of income. Modelling by officers indicates the council's revenue stream would be maintained.
- 1.7 The tariffs have been designed to incorporate the CPI uplift of 6.7% (the rate in September 2023).
- 1.8 The impact of the proposed new tariff structure on behaviour change will be kept under review.

2. Reasons

- 2.1 To reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality through encouraging long stay customers to use car parks positioned on the edge of town, reducing vehicle journeys, idling and space hunting in busy car parks, and congestion in the town centre roads.
- 2.2 At the same time, the proposals will help support:
 - residents with the cost of living by reducing the need to use fuel driving between car parks in slow moving congested traffic while trying to find a space.

- local businesses by ensuring customers can park close to the shops.
 - town centre workers by offering a cheaper all day parking option in Northgate End.
 - an increase in the usage of Northgate End car park as the pricing strategy should encourage an increase in occupancy.
- 2.3 Council is recommended to make this decision now in order that the tariff changes can be introduced on 1 April 2024. With the reprogramming of Pay and Display machines and the Pay by Phone parking application changes, there is a three month lead time before the changes can be implemented.
- 2.4 Should Council approve the tariff change, then the changes will be undertaken as part of the annual uplift reprogramming project, which will be more cost effective than a separate exercise later in the year.

3. Options

- 3.1 Maintain the existing structure and uplift in the normal manner by applying the inflation rate to individual tariffs. By not acting, the council cannot attempt to address the historic issues relating to congestion, idling, space hunting. **Not Recommended.**
- 3.2 Modify the tariff structure in accordance with the options outlined and implement the changes on 1 April 2024. **Recommended.**

4. Risks

- 4.1 There could be an argument that the proposed tariffs could lead to an increase in journeys which could result in the potential for congestion to increase, leading to increased journey times as people drive from the South Street side of town to Northgate

End, increasing pollution and creating negative impacts on air quality levels in this monitored area.

- 4.2 That said, the total number of journeys ought to be lower as fewer customers hunt for spaces. Long stay parking tends to commence from 7.00 am and it is likely that increased journeys will be outside the 8.00 am to 9.00 am peak congestion period; therefore, traffic should flow better with lower air pollution levels in the context of moving traffic when compared to stop start traffic.
- 4.3 There is a risk of the proposed £6.50 All Day tariff in Apton Road and Basbow Lane car park may be considered too high by the public and business community. Motorists may decide not to park in East Herts car parks. In this scenario the council may experience a drop off in car park users, which would reduce income.
- 4.4 Assuming a 10% reduction in All Day parking transactions in Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks, and no relocation to other East Herts car parks, this would result in a reduction of £22,650 in revenue against expectations. To mitigate this, officers will keep parking revenues under close review and report accordingly.

5. Implications/Consultations

The Bishop's Stortford BID (Business Improvement District) made several representations to East Herts Council requesting a review and reduction of the All Day tariff in Northgate End car park, to support town centre workers and local businesses. They felt that a lower tariff would aid staff recruitment and retention rates and generally support the business community.

East Herts Council has worked closely with the BID to understand the parking issues that their members have experienced in Bishop's Stortford town centre and to develop proposals to deliver workable solutions.

An increase in All Day tariffs in Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks is regarded as an appropriate way to effectively regulate the two prime town centre car parks. This approach will also enable the council to offer the lower tariff structure in Northgate End car park.

Data Protection

No issues.

Equalities

The initial Equality Impact Assessment screening indicates this proposal does not adversely affect groups with protected characteristics. Poor air quality and associated ill health disproportionately affects groups with protected characteristics and this policy is designed to reduce air pollution and so should benefit those groups positively.

Environmental Sustainability

The tariff structure is expected to move some long stay parking to Northgate End, which may lead to increased traffic movements in the mornings and evenings. Long stay parking tends to commence from 7.00 am and it is likely that journeys will be spread over a longer period than the 8.00 am to 9.00 am peak congestion period.

Traffic should continue to flow as a result and the total reduction in vehicle movements over the day ought to reduce congestion and therefore improve air quality.

The tariffs may encourage additional short stay parking. The average dwell times in Apton Road and Basbow Lane might drop from the current 5 hour average.

Financial

Based on like for like transactions in Northgate End car park, a reduction in the "All Day" and "5 Hour" tariffs from £5.20 to £4.20 and £4.30 to £3.70 will result in approximately £30,000 reduced revenues against forecast.

Assuming there are no changes to parking behaviours, the total increase in income is estimated at £170,250 annually. This includes an assumption of a £30,000 Northgate End debit, associated with the relatively lower long stay tariffs.

One hypothetical scenario is based on 10% of the current All Day tariff parking customers ceasing to use Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks, with no transference to other car parks. This would result in a £22,650 loss against estimates. In the context of Bishop's Stortford car park budget overall, this would translate into the forecast additional revenue reducing from £170,250 to £147,600.

The proposed £6.50 All Day tariff in Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks is more expensive than the "off peak" Bishop's Stortford railway car park (operated by NCP on behalf of Greater Anglia), where the All Day parking tariff is set at £6.00 from 10am onwards. This may attract customers away from East Herts car parks, with revenue impacts arising.

Health and Safety

There are no concerns.

Human Resources

N/A

Human Rights

N/A

Legal

Legal Services have been involved in discussions. The changes to the tariffs may be implemented by the advertising of a Notice of Variation 21 days prior to the date of implementation pursuant to section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).

6. Background papers and appendices

Appendix A - Differential Tariffs - Bishop's Stortford 2024

Contact Member

Councillor Tim Hoskin

Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

Tim.Hoskin@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Nick Phipps - Interim Head of Operations

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531 484

Nick.Phipps@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Dominique Kingsbury - Parking Services Manager

Contact Tel. No. 01279 502 036

Dominique.kingsbury@eastherts.gov.uk

Appendix A

**Council
13 December 2023**

Bishop's Stortford	Existing Tariff Structure *	Proposed Differential Tariff Structure	Percentage Change
Apton Road car park			
30 mins (Free)	£0.00	No Change	
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	10.00
Up to 2 hours	£2.00	£2.10	5.00
Up to 3 hours	£2.60	£2.80	7.69
Up to 4 hours	£3.50	£3.70	5.71
Up to 5 hours	£4.30	£4.60	6.98
12.5 hours (All Day)	£5.20	£6.50	25.00
Sunday & Public Holidays Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.50	£1.60	6.67
Basbow Lane car park			
30 mins (Free)	£0.00	No Change	
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	10.00
Up to 2 hours	£2.00	£2.10	5.00
Up to 3 hours	£2.60	£2.80	7.69
Up to 4 hours	£3.50	£3.70	5.71
Up to 5 hours	£4.30	£4.60	6.98
12.5 hours (All Day)	£5.20	£6.50	25.00
Sunday & Public Holidays Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.50	£1.60	6.67
Elm Road car park			
30 mins (Free)	£0.00	No Change	
Up to 5 hours	£2.40	£3.70	54.17
12.5 hours (All Day)	£3.60	£4.20	16.67
Sunday & Public Holidays Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.50	£1.60	6.67
Northgate End multi-storey car park			
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.00	0.00
Up to 2 hours	£2.00	£2.00	0.00
Up to 3 hours	£2.60	£2.60	0.00
Up to 4 hours	£3.50	£3.20	-8.57
Up to 5 hours	£4.30	£3.70	-13.95
12.5 hours (All Day)	£5.20	£4.20	-19.23
Sunday & Public Holidays Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.50	£1.60	6.67

* 2022/23 tariffs

Excludes Christmas Day

Motion on proportional representation

In Europe, only the UK and Belarus still use the archaic single-round First past the post (FPTP) for general elections. England also uses it for local elections. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to be more representative, more inclusive and greener.

PR ensures all votes count, have equal value and that seats won, match votes cast. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and characteristics of both local communities and of the nation.

PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a UK government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. In 2005 Labour was elected with 35.2% of the votes cast yet received a majority of the seats. PR would have prevented "wrong winner" elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.

Locally on East Herts District Council the Conservatives won all 50 seats in 2015 with only just half the votes cast. In 2019 they won 80% of the seats with 46% of the vote. In 2023 the Greens won more seats on East Herts District Council with 5% less of the vote than the Conservatives.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is also used for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland and is being introduced in Wales. Its use should now be extended to include Westminster and local elections in England.

Motion:

This Council therefore resolves to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections and local elections in England.

Motion proposed by Cllr Miriam Swainston and seconded by Cllr Simon Marlow

Motion on Hotels for Asylum Seekers

This Council notes with concern that the Government and the Home Office are now planning to close 50 of the hotels which are currently housing Asylum Seekers on the 1st January 2024. It is also requiring that Asylum seekers who are now accepted as refugees should leave their hotels almost immediately.

This Council also notes that the Local Government Association (LGA) has written to the Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, expressing its concerns about the challenges which those people who are having to leave the Hotels will face in finding long term affordable accommodation. Many of those who are now refugees will be at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.

The LGA's Letter called for a joint and funded approach, nationally and locally, to manage the transition from asylum accommodation to independent. It also asked for a pause in asylum support cessations over the Christmas week and during extreme cold weather to reduce the risk of street homelessness.

East Herts has many Ukrainian Refugees who are looking for accommodation, and their chances of finding homes could be seriously affected by this sudden rise in the number of new refugee homeless and rough sleepers.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, stating its full support for the letter which was sent by the LGA.

Motion proposed by Cllr Mione Goldspink and seconded by Cllr Richard Townsend.