

# 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 4th March, 2026 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 24 day of February 2026

James Ellis  
Director for Legal, Policy  
and Governance

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

### **AGENDA**

1. Chair's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chair.

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 - 10 December 2025 (Pages 6 - 14)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 December 2025.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

## 6. Petitions

To receive any petitions.

(A) Stop East Herts District Council splitting up Sawbridgeworth\_(Pages 15 - 16)

(B) Stop East Herts District Council splitting up Buntingford\_(Pages 17 - 18)

## 7. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

## 8. Members' Questions

To receive any Members' questions.

## 9. Executive Report - 13 January 2026 & 10 February 2026 (Pages 19 - 20)

(A) Treasury Management 2025/26 Mid-Year Review\_(Pages 21 - 34)

(B) Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Treasury Strategy 2026/27\_(Pages 35 - 73)

## 10. Budget 2026/27 & Medium Term Financial Plan 2026 -2031 (Pages 74 - 140)

## 11. Council Tax Setting 2026/27 (Pages 141 - 148)

## 12. Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 (Pages 149 - 161)

## 13. Stanstead Abbots and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 162 - 303)

## 14. Minor amendments to the Constitution (Pages 304 - 355)

## 15. Millstream Business Plan 2026/27 (Pages 356 - 380)

## 16. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

- (A) Motion to undertake new Community Governance Reviews in Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford\_(Pages 381 - 382)

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

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

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

### **Public Attendance**

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

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

Visit [Political Structure, Scrutiny and Constitution | East Herts District Council](#) for details.

### **Audio/Visual Recording of meetings**

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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 [Communications@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Communications@eastherts.gov.uk) ). 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.

### **Public Attendance**

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

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025, AT  
7.00 PM

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

263 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Council - 10 December, 2025](#)

The Chairman announced that Rebecca Cercelea, aged 10, was to be presented a certificate for outstanding achievement in sports in East Hertfordshire. Rebecca had been partaking in karate since she was 4 years old and received her black belt on Saturday 6 December 2025, making her one of the youngest black belts in the country.

The Chairman acknowledged the sad deaths of former Councillors and Honorary Aldermen Keith Barnes and Tony Dodd. A minute of silence was held and the Chairman invited Members to share words of remembrance.

Councillors Goldspink and Hollebon paid tribute to Keith Barnes.

Members recognised that Keith was an outstanding Town and District Councillor, who served on the district for 20 years, standing mostly as an Independent Member. He was Bishop's Stortford Town Mayor twice and represented the Central Ward and was well known for working tirelessly to help residents.

Councillors E Buckmaster and Goldspink paid tribute to Tony Dodd.

Members recognised that Tony was a District and County Councillor and had been Chairman of East Herts from 2010-2011. He served on the Town Council since the 1970's and was Sawbridgeworth Town Mayor three times. It was noted that he was very keen on town twinning and founded the town twinning with Bry-sur-Marne, France, which recently celebrated 50 years. In addition, his connection with the Hailey Day Centre was acknowledged, with contributions in his memory being used to support this charity.

Members sent their best wishes and condolences to Keith and Tony's families.

The Chairman announced that this would be the last meeting that Steven King would webcast due to leaving East Herts Council. Officers and Members expressed their gratitude for the support that Steven had provided to meetings for the past 8 years and wished him well in his new role.

264 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council thanked Members and officers for their hard work throughout 2025 and wished them a relaxing and peaceful festive period.

265 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Boylan, Marlow and McAndrew.

266 MINUTES - 22 OCTOBER 2025 AND 13 NOVEMBER 2025

The change to the minute style was highlighted, with a request to return to more detailed minutes recording individual Member contributions. Officers acknowledged the point raised and agreed to give the matter further consideration.

Councillor Carter proposed, and Councillor Goldspink seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025, 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.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Dumont seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held

on 13 November 2025, 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 meetings held on 22 October 2025 and 13 November 2025 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

267 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

268 PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

269 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Public Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

270 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Members' Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

271 EXECUTIVE REPORT – 18 NOVEMBER 2025

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on [18 November 2025](#).

271 PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report on the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. She advised that the Council had agreed to undertake a review of the district plan including an

update of the evidence documents needed to support the new District Plan.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025 replaced the previous playing pitch strategy, published in 2017. The report summarised the findings, provided a robust assessment of the supply and demand for outdoor sports facilities across East Herts and set out a framework for protecting, enhancing and providing new facilities to meet community needs up to 2043. The strategy had been developed in accordance with Sports England guidance.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth highlighted that since the Executive meeting, some minor factual errors had been corrected in the golf sections of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. Whilst the location of golf clubs within each sub-area were shown correctly in figure 12.1 of Appendix B, the accompanying table labelled the sub-areas of some of the facilities incorrectly. In addition, reference to Whitehill Golf Club driving range had been updated to clarify that the driving range was available on a pay and play basis and not for Members only. Consequently, these changes were also reflected in the assessment summaries within Appendix C, The Strategy and Action Plan. It was noted that these minor amendments to Appendix B and C did not affect the analysis of golf provision and had been corrected for clarity.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Wilson seconded the proposal.

Members welcomed the report, and the importance placed on sports and exercise.

Members acknowledged that although future growth had not been formally considered, the delivery of some

projects was likely to be dependent on future growth and planning obligations. It was confirmed that the strategy would inform development decisions for Section 106 funding. It was noted that whilst Sports England was no longer a statutory consultee on planning, their role would continue in an advisory capacity.

Following a public question, Members highlighted the request for spectator sports (including Speedway) to be included in the plan, despite them not being participatory. Members heard that there had not been any intention to update the strategy document to include them. It was however noted that if evidence was brought forward by the Speedway group as part of the district plan consultations, it would be considered for inclusion in the district plan.

In response to a Member question regarding alternative surfaces for 3G pitches, Members heard that Sports England were currently undertaking research in this area and that the Council would be guided by their advice.

Concerns were raised that the distinction between public facilities and private members' facilities had not been made clear enough. In addition, Members queried if there had been omissions, particularly under the heading "Other open space and sports facilities". It was noted that activities such as basketball, softball, BMX, motorsport, speedway and canoeing had not been covered, even though they formed part of sport and recreation. Members were informed that canoeing had been referenced on page 260 of the report, and it had included consultation with the British Canoe Union.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, attached as Appendix A, B and C was agreed as part of the evidence base

to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

(B) future updates of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Action Plan be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

## 271 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27. He explained that Council Tax Support schemes were devised annually by local authorities and had to be approved before 11 March. The proposal to move to a banded scheme, intended to reduce administration costs, had been worked on during the year, however due to the complexity of the proposed changes, significant work was required to ensure the scheme would remain broadly cost neutral compared to the current model, whilst also ensuring that individuals would not be materially worse off. As a result, there was insufficient time to finalise and consult on the scheme and it was proposed that the existing scheme remained unchanged for 2026/27.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that work on a banded scheme was to continue, with a consultation planned for early in the new financial year. Neither the County Council nor the police had raised any objection to the unchanged scheme for 2026/27.

Councillor Brittain, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal.

Members acknowledged that the scheme had been in place since 2013. It was recognised that whilst the

Council had considered changing the scheme a number of times, it had repeatedly concluded that it was best left as it was. Members expressed satisfaction that this remained the case at this stage.

Members supported continued work on the banded scheme was highlighting that it could make a significant difference. It was noted that it could simplify the tasks of the Revenues and Benefits team, potentially save money and reduce the need for claimants to repeatedly return for reassessment. Members shared from experience, that many claimants had fallen into debt because they had not realised changes until after reassessments were made, which had caused genuine distress and difficulties. It was noted that a cost-neutral scheme, which supported both claimants and the authority would be welcomed.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) there be no change to the local council tax support scheme for 2026/27.

## 272 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2026/27

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Base 2026/27. He advised that the Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority and the major precepting authorities, including the County Council and the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, in the calculation of their council tax requirements.

Members heard that the calculation of the Council Tax Base was governed by statutory regulation and that the Council had limited discretion. Details of the calculation method were shown in the sections 2.1 to 2.4 of the report. The outcome of the calculation was that the 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the district be set at

£65,819.15. The breakdown by parish was shown in table 2 of the report. The figure for 2024/25 had been £65,314.04, representing an increase of £505.11 in the last year.

Councillor Brittain proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

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

**RESOLVED** – (A) The 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the district is set as 65,819.15 as calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012.

273 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no Motions on Notice.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

# Agenda Item 6a

## **PETITION: STOP EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL SPLITTING UP SAWBRIDGEWORTH**

We the undersigned residents of Sawbridgeworth call on East Herts District Council to abandon its current plans to impose wards on our town, and instead conduct a new Community Governance Review (CGR) that properly consults with local residents and reflects the views, identities, and interests of our community.

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### **What has happened?**

East Herts District Council recently conducted a Community Governance Review (CGR) which recommended introducing wards in Sawbridgeworth for future local elections. This means dividing the town into smaller areas where residents could only vote for councillors standing in their specific ward, rather than across the whole town.

Our Town Council opposed this change. Local councillors spoke out against it. Many residents are unaware of it altogether.

### **What's the problem?**

East Herts claims it consulted the public by delivering a leaflet to every household. Yet nobody we've spoken to remembers receiving it. Even if it was delivered, the leaflet included no clear explanation of warding, no call to action, and no obvious way for residents to respond. The process has been rushed, poorly communicated, and has ignored the views of our community.

This isn't about politics – our Town Council is made up of a mix of political parties and independents. It's about doing what's right for our community.

Under the current system, you can vote for any candidate across the town. Under the new system, your choice will be restricted. You may not be able to vote for your preferred councillor if they live in a different ward to you.

### **What we want to happen now**

We are calling on East Herts District Council to scrap the current proposals and conduct a new CGR – one that listens to residents, follows proper process, and respects community identity. This petition will be submitted formally to the Council to show the strength of public feeling and request that they reconsider their flawed decision.

The Petition was started in September 2025. As of 18 February 2026, 1051 people (681 on the electoral roll) had signed the petition.

# Agenda Item 6b

## **PETITION – STOP EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL SPLITTING UP BUNTINGFORD**

We the undersigned residents of Buntingford call on East Herts District Council to abandon its current plans to impose wards on our town, and instead conduct a new Community Governance Review (CGR) that properly consults with local residents and reflects the views, identities, and interests of our community.

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### **What has happened?**

East Herts District Council recently conducted a Community Governance Review (CGR) which recommended introducing wards in Buntingford for future local elections. This means dividing the town into smaller areas where residents could only vote for councillors standing in their specific ward, rather than across the whole town.

Our Town Council opposed this change. Local councillors spoke out against it. Many residents are unaware of it altogether.

### **What's the problem?**

East Herts claims it consulted the public by delivering a leaflet to every household. Yet nobody we've spoken to remembers receiving it. Even if it was delivered, the leaflet included no clear explanation of warding, no call to action, and no obvious way for residents to respond. The process has been rushed, poorly communicated, and has ignored the views of our community.

This isn't about politics – our Town Council is made up of a mix of political parties and independents. It's about doing what's right for our community.

Under the current system, you can vote for any candidate across the town. Under the new system, your choice will be restricted. You may not be able to vote for your preferred councillor – or vote out someone you disagree with – if they live in a different ward.

### **What we want to happen now**

We are calling on East Herts District Council to scrap the current proposals and conduct a new CGR – one that listens to residents, follows proper process, and respects community identity.

This petition will be submitted formally to the Council to show the strength of public feeling and request that they reconsider their flawed decision.

The Petition was started in September 2025. As of 18 February 2026, 815 people (681 on the electoral roll) had signed the petition.

# Agenda Item 9

## EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT

### COUNCIL

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR BEN CRYSTALL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT TITLE: EXECUTIVE REPORT – 13 JANUARY 2026 AND 10 FEBRUARY 2026**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

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### Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 13 January 2026 and 10 February 2026.

#### **1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council**

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 13 January 2026 and 10 February 2026. At these meeting the Executive considered and supported recommendations for Council on the following items:

1.1.1 Treasury Management 2025/26 Mid-Year Review

1.1.2 Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

1.2 This report sets out the recommendations 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. The Budget 2026/27 report and subsequent reports are featured later in the agenda.

#### **2.0 Treasury Management 2025/26 Mid-Year Review**

2.1 The Executive was asked to examine and comment on the Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators for

2025/26.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

**(a) That Council approve the Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators for 2025/26.**

3.0 Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

3.1 The Executive was asked to review the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, and Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27. The documents had also been reviewed by the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

**(a) That Council approves the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27, including the Prudential Indicators contained within the reports.**

4.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

4.1 [Executive Minutes – 13 January 2026](#)

4.2 [Executive Minutes – 10 February 2026](#)

**Contact Member**

Councillor Ben Crystall – Leader of the Council

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**Contact Officer**

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**Report Author**

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# Agenda Item 9a

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CARL BRITTAIN – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**REPORT TITLE: TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2025/26 MID-YEAR REVIEW**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

**Summary** – The report contains the Council’s Mid-Year Treasury Management Review for 2025-26.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:**

- a) That Council approve the Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators for 2025/26.

#### **1.0 Proposal**

- 1.1 That Members examine and comment on the Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 (Appendix A).

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Treasury management is defined as: ‘The management of the Council’s investments and cash flows, its banking arrangements, money market and capital transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with these activities; and the pursuit of optimum returns consistent with the Council’s risk management policy for treasury management.
- 2.2 This activity was supported by the council’s appointed independent advisors – Arlingclose.
- 2.3 This report has been written in accordance with the

requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021).

- 2.4 This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

### **3.0 Reason**

- 3.1 This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce a mid-year treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2025/26.

### **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 Members can suggest amendments or additions to the Mid-Year Treasury Management Review 2025/26.

### **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Risk management is embedded in treasury management operations through the adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. Credit ratings, other market intelligence and counterparty limits assist to assess and mitigate risk.

### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

No.

#### **Community Safety**

No

#### **Data Protection**

No

**Equalities**

No

**Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

Yes

The costs of treasury operations, debt management expenses and investment income are included in the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

No

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

Yes

The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations requires the Council to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Council also has to 'have regard' to the MHCLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments effective for financial periods commencing on or after 1 April 2018, and to CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Guidance Notes for Local Authorities.

**Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 Appendix A – Mid Year Treasury Management Review 2025-26.

### **Contact Member**

Councillor Carl Brittain, Executive Member for  
Financial Sustainability

[Carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk)

### **Contact Officer**

Brian Moldon, Director for Finance, Risk and  
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### **Report Author**

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# Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2025/26

## Introduction

In March 2021 the Authority adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management mid-year and annual outturn reports.

The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2025/26 was approved at Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

## External Context

**Economic background:** The first quarter was dominated by the fallout from the US trade tariffs and their impact on equity and bond markets. The second quarter, still rife with uncertainty, saw equity markets making gains and a divergence in US and UK government bond yields, which had been moving relatively closely together.

From late June, amid a UK backdrop of economic uncertainty, concerns around the government's fiscal position and speculation around the autumn Budget, yields on medium and longer term gilts pushed higher, including the 30-year which hit its highest level for almost 30 years.

UK headline annual consumer price inflation (CPI) increased over the period, rising from 2.6% in March to 3.8% in August with no change in September, still well above the Bank of England's 2% target.

The UK economy expanded by 0.7% in the first quarter of the calendar year and by 0.3% in the second quarter. In the final version of the Q2 2025 GDP report, annual growth was revised upwards to 1.4% year on year. However, monthly figures showed zero growth in July, in line with expectations, indicating a sluggish start to Q3.

The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate from 4.5% to 4.25% in May and to 4.0% in August. In September, seven MPC members voted to hold rates while two preferred a 25bps cut. The Committee's views still differ on whether the upside risks from inflation expectations and wage setting outweigh downside risks from weaker demand and growth.

The August BoE Monetary Policy Report highlighted that after peaking in Q3 2025, inflation is projected to fall back to target by mid-2027, helped by increasing spare capacity in the economy and the ongoing effects from past tighter policy rates. GDP is expected to remain weak in the near-term while over the medium term outlook will be influenced by domestic and global developments.

Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would be cut further as the BoE focused on weak GDP growth more than higher inflation. One more cut is currently expected during 2025/26, taking Bank Rate to 3.75%. The risks to the forecast are balanced in the near-term but weighted to the downside further out as weak consumer sentiment and business confidence and investment continue to constrain growth. There is also considerable uncertainty around the autumn Budget and the impact this will have on the outlook.

**Financial markets:** After the sharp declines seen early in the period, sentiment in financial markets improved, but risky assets have generally remained volatile. Early in the period bond yields fell, but ongoing uncertainty, particularly in the UK, has seen medium and longer yields rise with bond

investors requiring an increasingly higher return against the perceived elevated risk of UK plc. Since the sell-off in April, equity markets have gained back the previous declines, with investors continuing to remain bullish in the face of ongoing uncertainty.

Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.65% and ended at 4.70%. However, these six months saw significant volatility with the 10-year yield hitting a low of 4.45% and a high of 4.82%. It was a broadly similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.39% with a low and high of 5.10% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.19% over the six months to 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on the majority of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.

Early in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank’s long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. While Moody’s downgraded the long term rating on the United States sovereign to Aa1 in May and also affirmed OP Corporate’s rating at Aa3.

Then in the second quarter, Fitch upgraded Clydesdale Bank and also HSBC, downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers while Moody’s upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland and Toronto-Dominion Bank.

After spiking in early April following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap prices have since generally trended downwards and ended the period at levels broadly in line with those in the first quarter of the calendar year and throughout most of 2024.

Overall, at the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose’s counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority’s counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

### Local Context

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the Authority had net borrowing of £48.5m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.25 Actual £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	61.8	68.5
Less: *Other debt liabilities	-	-
External borrowing**	64.5	66.5
<b>Internal / (over) borrowing</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>	<b>2.0</b>
Less: Balance sheet resources	<b>(34.1)</b>	<b>(18.0)</b>
<b>Net Borrowing (External borrowing - Balance sheet resources)</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>48.5</b>

\* leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt  
 \*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The treasury management position at 30<sup>th</sup> September and the change over the six months is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Treasury Management Summary**

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.25 Balance £m	30.9.25 Ave. Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
- PWLB	1.5	-	1.5	8.875
- LOBOs	-	-	-	-
- Other	-	-	-	-
Short-term borrowing	63.0	(3.0)	60.0	4.57
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>61.5</b>	
Long-term investments *	(9.9)	9.9	-	-
Short-term investments **	(2.9)	0.3	(2.6)	-
Cash and cash equivalents	(21.3)	(5.5)	(26.8)	3.97
<b>Total investments ***</b>	<b>(34.1)</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>(29.4)</b>	
<b>Net borrowing</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>32.1</b>	

\* Reduction in long-term investments is due to the return of property funds & reclassification to short term investments.

\*\* Short term investments relate to Lothbury Property Fund, moved from long term investments due to the fund being wound down.

\*\*\* Although property funds have been returned, investment levels, as at 30.09.25 have still reduced due to large expenditure items e.g. waste vehicles and bins, parish precepts.

### **Borrowing Strategy and Activity**

As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriate risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 central banks have now begun to reduce their policy rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields however have increased over the first of this year amid concerns about inflation, the UK government's fiscal position and general economic uncertainty.

The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.53% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity certainty rate was 5.17% and the highest was 5.62%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.30% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 6.14%. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to Base Rate during the period at 4.0% to 4.5%.

CIPFA’s 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

**Loans Portfolio:** At 30<sup>th</sup> September the Authority held £61.5m of loans, a decrease of £3m from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years’ capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 30<sup>th</sup> September are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.25 Balance £m	30.9.25 Rate %	30.9.25 Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	1.5	-	1.5	8.875	30 yrs
Public Works Loan Board	25.0	-	25.0	4.840	<1 yr
Public Works Loan Board	25.0	-	25.0	4.860	<1 yr
Local authorities (short-term)	10.0	-	10.0	4.150	<1 yr
Local authorities (short-term)	3.0	(3.0)	-	-	
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>61.5</b>		

The Authority is still opting to keep most borrowing short term, waiting for the longer term PWLB certainty rate to reduce.

There remains a strong argument for diversifying funding sources, particularly if rates can be achieved on alternatives which are below gilt yields + 0.80%. The Authority will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities with its advisor Arlingclose.

**Loans restructuring:** The continuing rise in gilt yields since early 2022 resulted in some local authority PWLB loans being in or close to a discount position if repaid early. Unfortunately, due to the high-interest rate East Herts is locked into we are not yet in a discounted but are constantly reviewing this position with our advisors Arlingclose.

**Other Debt Activity**

None.

**Treasury Investment Activity**

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Authority’s cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the half year, the Authority’s investment

balances ranged between £35 and £26 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.25 Balance £m	30.9.25 Income Return %	30.9.25 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	9.5	(0.2)	9.3	3.77	Call
Government	-	10.2	10.2	3.96	20 Days
Local authorities and other govt entities	7.0	(7.0)	-	-	-
Money Market Funds	4.8	2.5	7.3	4.18	Call
Property Funds	12.8	(10.2)	2.6	-	N/A
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>(4.7)</b>	<b>29.4</b>		

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different asset classes and boost investment income.

Bank Rate reduced from 4.50% to 4.25% in May 2025, followed by a further reduction to 4.00% in August 2025. Short term interest rates have largely followed these levels. The rates on DMADF deposits ranged between 4.45% and 3.95% and money market rates between 4.5% and 3.9%.

**Externally Managed Pooled Funds:** The Authority held two property funds at the beginning of the financial year, both of which were being wound down. One fund has now been returned, the other is still being wound down but likely to complete by the end of the financial year.

Most asset classes achieved positive performance over the first half of the 2025/26 financial year, although conditions remained volatile and heavily influenced by political and macroeconomic developments.

The most notable market shock came early in the period when US President Trump announced his 'Liberation Day' tariffs on 2 April, triggering sharp falls in global equity and bond markets. Sentiment improved once the US administration softened its stance and markets recovered relatively swiftly, although uncertainty lingered.

Global trade tensions easing, resilient profits, optimism on artificial intelligence, interest rate cuts, rising gold prices, and other factors contributed to equity markets generally performing strongly across the half year despite economic uncertainties. The likes of the S&P 500 in the US and FTSE 100 in the UK hit all-time highs during the period.

Fixed income (bond) markets remained volatile as investors weighed political risks alongside concerns over fiscal sustainability. While not matching the strength of equities, corporate bonds generally achieved positive returns. However major longer-dated government bonds saw a rise in yields over the period (meaning prices fell), particularly in the UK where concerns over fiscal issues and sticky inflation saw 30-year gilt yields reaching highs not seen since the late 1990s.

The gradual improvement in UK commercial property continued. Capital values recorded marginal gains, while total returns were driven largely by rental income.

**Statutory override:** Further to consultations in April 2023 and December 2024 MHCLG wrote to finance directors in England in February 2025 regarding the statutory override on accounting for gains and losses in pooled investment funds. On the assumption that when published regulations follow this policy announcement, the statutory override will be extended up until the 1 April 2029 for investments already in place before 1 April 2024. The override will not apply to any new investments taken out on or after 1 April 2024. The Authority is using its interest equalisation reserve to mitigate any losses on principal value, from the two property funds, that we held. One fund has already been returned, and the last fund is almost completely wound down, with the last few asset sales expected to complete by year end. Therefore, we should be unaffected by the statutory override as we have no plans to invest in pooled funds in the future.

#### **Non-Treasury Investments**

The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).

Investment Guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

The Authority also held £5.156m of such investments in

- shareholding in subsidiaries £1.656m
- loans to subsidiaries £3.5m

Which represents the Authorities loans to and shareholding in Millstream Property Investments Ltd.

## Compliance

The Director for Finance, Risk and Performance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the half year complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Investment Limits

	2025/26 Maximum	30.9.25 Actual	2025/26 Time Limit	Complied
The UK Government	Unlimited	£10.2m	50 years	Yes
Local authorities & other government entities	£20m	-	3 years	Yes
Secured investments *	£20m	-	3 years	Yes
Banks (unsecured) *	£20m	£9.3m	13 months	Yes
Building societies (unsecured) *	£20m	-	13 months	Yes
Registered providers (unsecured) *	£5m	-	3 years	Yes
Money market funds *	£20m	£7.3m	n/a	Yes
Strategic pooled funds	£20m	£2.6m	n/a	Yes
Real estate investment trusts	£20m	-	n/a	Yes
Other investments *	£1m	-	3 years	Yes

Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	30.9.25 Actual	2025/26 Operational Boundary	2025/26 Authorised Limit	Complied?
Borrowing	£61.5m	£75m	£100m	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	-	N/A	N/A	Yes
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>£61.5m</b>	-	-	-

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

### 1. Liability Benchmark:

This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £5m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.25 Actual	31.3.26 Forecast
CFR	61.8	68.5
Less: Balance sheet resources	(36.6)	(20.0)
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>48.5</b>
Plus: Liquidity allowance	5.0	5.0
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>53.5</b>
<b>Existing borrowing</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>68.0</b>

Whilst borrowing may be above the liability benchmark, strategies involving borrowing which is significantly above the liability benchmark carry higher risk.

2. Maturity Structure of Borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30.9.25 Actual	Complied ?
Under 12 months	100%	0%	97.6%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	75%	0%	2.4%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

3. Long-term Treasury Management Investments: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m	£10m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m	£0m
Complied	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

For information, the changes in interest rates during the half year were:

	<u>01/04/25</u>	<u>30/09/25</u>
Bank Rate	4.50%	4.00%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.82%	4.58%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.94%	4.95%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.38%	5.53%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.88%	6.14%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.63%	5.98%

# Agenda Item 9b

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CARL BRITTAIN, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**REPORT TITLE: CAPITAL STRATEGY, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026/27**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**Summary** – The report contains the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement and Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 for recommendation to Full Council to approve following consultation with the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:**

- a) That Council approves the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27, including the Prudential Indicators contained within the reports.

### **1. Proposal**

1.1. This report sets out the Executive's recommended Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, and Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27. These documents were reviewed by Joint Scrutiny, which offered no comments for consideration, and are now presented for Executive to recommend to Council for formal approval.

### **2. Background and Reasons**

#### Capital Strategy

2.1. The East Herts Council Capital Strategy (as detailed at Appendix A) provides an essential opportunity for engagement with Full Council to ensure that the overall approach to capital investment, risk appetite,

and governance arrangements is fully understood by all Members and stakeholders. It sets the framework within which decisions on capital expenditure are made.

- 2.2. The Strategy is a corporate document that both influences and is influenced by wider policy and decision-making. It ensures that capital investment aligns with the Council's priorities and statutory responsibilities.
- 2.3. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated annually to remain responsive to changing circumstances, including external pressures, financial constraints, and the implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This annual refresh is necessary to maintain compliance with statutory guidance and to provide transparency on the Council's capital position.
- 2.4. Given the Council's very limited financial resources, the Capital Strategy for 2026/27 to 2028/29 will focus exclusively on schemes that are health and safety critical or essential to maintaining core business continuity. There is no scope for discretionary or aspirational projects within this period.
- 2.5. The Council will continue to deliver and monitor its capital programme within the context of its Climate Change commitments, including the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. A carbon assessment will remain an integral part of the business case for any new proposals.
- 2.6. The capital programme reflects the Council's compliance with statutory guidance that debt should remain below the Capital Financing Requirement. While the Council is currently compliant, there is no capacity for additional borrowing beyond the levels already proposed.

#### Treasury Management Strategy

- 2.7. The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, meaning that cash raised during the year broadly meets cash expenditure.

Treasury management Strategy 2026/27 (as detailed at Appendix B) ensures that cash flow is planned effectively so that funds are available when needed. Surplus cash is invested only with low-risk counterparties and instruments, consistent with the Council's low risk appetite, prioritising security and liquidity before considering investment return.

- 2.8. A second core function of treasury management is funding the Council's capital plans. These plans guide the Council's borrowing requirements and support longer-term cash flow planning to meet capital spending obligations. This may involve arranging short- or long-term loans or utilising longer-term cash surpluses. Where prudent and cost-effective, existing debt may be restructured to manage risk or reduce cost.
- 2.9. Treasury management makes a critical contribution to the Council's financial resilience. Balancing debt and investment operations ensures liquidity for day-to-day revenue commitments and major capital projects. Interest costs on borrowing and investment income from cash deposits directly affect the budget. As cash balances largely derive from reserves, maintaining the security of invested sums is paramount, as any loss of principal would impact the General Fund.
- 2.10. This Strategy complies with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, ensuring that statutory requirements and best practice principles are met.
- 2.11. The Council's treasury activities are supported by its appointed independent advisors, Arlingclose Limited, who provide specialist guidance on borrowing, investment, and risk management.

#### Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy

- 2.12. Local authorities are required by statute to make a prudent provision for the repayment of borrowing undertaken to finance capital expenditure. This provision, known as the Minimum Revenue

Provision (MRP) (and detailed at Appendix C), ensures that the cost of capital investment is spread over the life of the asset and that borrowing is repaid in a sustainable manner.

- 2.13. The Council must approve an annual MRP Policy before the start of each financial year. This policy sets out the method by which the Council will calculate and charge MRP to its revenue account. Agreeing the policy provides transparency and assurance that the Council is complying with statutory requirements and the CIPFA Prudential Code, and that its approach remains prudent, affordable, and sustainable.
- 2.14. For 2026/27, the proposed policy continues to apply the principles adopted in previous years, ensuring that borrowing for capital purposes is repaid over an appropriate period, reflecting the useful life of the assets funded. This approach supports sound financial management and protects the Council's long-term financial resilience.

### **3. Options**

- 3.1. The Executive may endorse the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Treasury Management Strategy as presented, agree amendments it considers necessary, or request further revisions. Whichever option is chosen; the Executive must ensure that final versions of these three documents are prepared for submission to Full Council for approval as part of the statutory budget-setting process.

### **4. Risks**

- 4.1. Risks are set out in detail within the Capital Strategy, including the ongoing uncertainty around future funding and the Council's limited capacity for additional borrowing.
- 4.2. Compliance with tighter regulations on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requires the Council to calculate its Capital Financing

Requirement accurately to ensure there is no underpayment of MRP and that borrowing remains affordable. Non-compliance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended, would be unlawful.

- 4.3. Treasury risk management continues to operate within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (2021 Edition). The Code requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

## **5. Implications / Consultations**

- 5.1. The proposed report was presented to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 28 January 2026, where it was reviewed and considered. The Committee endorsed the report with no changes.

### **Community Safety**

Building and refurbishment schemes design out crime and safety issues and public realm works are required to ensure that the community feel safe.

### **Data Protection**

All investment in IT systems is required to check where data is held and that systems comply with data protection legislation.

### **Equalities**

All capital schemes meet the necessary legislation and are subject to access audits. Design also considers dementia friendly design elements particularly around colour.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The council has established a carbon assessment tool that it is beginning to apply to existing capital projects. In the future, a carbon assessment of proposed capital projects will be included within the

overall business case so as to inform decision-making. To date, individual schemes have sustainability features designed into them and may include, for example: meeting BREEAM ratings for buildings and refurbishments; flood resilience and sustainable underground drainage systems; opportunities for renewable energy generation; and carbon reduction such as replacement of the council's internal combustion engine vehicles with battery electric vehicles.

### **Financial**

The strategy guides the capital programme and detailed financial implications are included with that in the budget report.

### **Health and Safety**

All contractors are required to have compliant health and safety policies. Where a health and safety issue require capital expenditure it will be fast tracked to deal with the issue.

### **Human Resources**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Legal**

A Capital Strategy is required under the CIPFA Prudential Code, which the Council must follow in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003. The Act also requires local authorities to have regard to the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year.

In addition, the Council is legally obliged to make a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the repayment of borrowing undertaken to finance capital expenditure. This requirement is set out in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, and supported by statutory guidance issued by the Government. Failure to comply with these regulations would be unlawful.

The approval of an annual MRP Policy by Full Council ensures compliance with these statutory provisions and demonstrates that the Council's approach to debt repayment is prudent, affordable, and sustainable.

**Specific Wards**

None

**6. Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

6.1. Appendix A – East Herts District Council Capital Strategy 2026/27

6.2. Appendix B – Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

6.3. Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Statement 2026/27

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# Capital Strategy

2026/27

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes technical areas.
- 1.2. Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

## 2. Capital Expenditure and Financing

- 2.1. Capital expenditure is where the Authority spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.
- 2.2. In 2026/27, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £0.670 million as summarised below. In addition, there is currently a forecast carry forward of £1.114 million into 2026/27, which will be finalised as part of the 2025/26 outturn report:

*Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions*

£Millions	2025/26 forecast	Forecast C/Fwd into 2026/27	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget	2028/29 budget
General Fund services	9.380	1.114	0.670	1.900	0.0

- 2.3. Due to the limited capital receipts available and the Council's decision not to fund capital expenditure through borrowing, the capital programme for 2026/27 has significantly reduced. The main spends in 2026/27 will be Rolling Programmes (ICT), and URC Church Hall. However, as and when assets are sold and receipts become available, the Council will review its prioritised list of proposed programmes and bring forward recommendations to Members for approval during the year.
- 2.4. The delivery of the public square at Old River Lane has been deferred by at least one year. This is due to the recent submission of a planning application and the need to align the associated budget with the revised project timetable. The timing will be reviewed next year to determine whether delivery should take place in 2027/28 or be further deferred to 2028/29.

### 3. Governance

3.1. Service managers bid annually to include projects in the Authority’s capital programme. Bids are collated by Finance, who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The Leadership Team appraises all bids based on a comparison of strategic priorities against financing costs and maintains a prioritised list of proposed programmes. However, due to the limited capital receipts currently available and the decision not to fund capital expenditure through borrowing, there is no immediate capacity to progress additional projects. As and when new receipts are received from asset sales, the Council will review this prioritised list and bring forward recommendations to Members for approval during the year.

Figure 1 Business Planning Process



#### Process for Developing Capital Investment Proposals

- 3.2. New proposals are drafted by Project Managers and approved at service level by the Head of Service. They are then reviewed by the Corporate Assets Group and Leadership Team before progressing for consideration and approval as part of the annual budget cycle.
- 3.3. Project and Service Managers should explore a range of options and prepare a business case using the standardised capital project bid form. This form must include estimated capital costs, revenue implications, funding sources, and demonstrate how the proposal aligns with Council plans and any relevant external strategies. It should also identify risks, outline mitigating actions, and set out timescales. Bid forms must be maintained throughout the project lifecycle to ensure accurate information and lessons learned are captured in closure reports.

#### Prioritising capital investment

3.4. Given the absence of immediate capital receipts and the Council’s decision not to fund capital expenditure through borrowing, it is essential to prioritise investment proposals. The standardised capital project bid forms will be assessed through a consistent evaluation process, supported by a scoring mechanism, to create a prioritised capital investment programme. This approach ensures that, as and when new receipts become available from asset sales, the Council can review its prioritised list and bring forward proposals for Member approval. With ongoing financial challenges and a greatly reduced capital programme

compared to previous years, this process is critical to targeting resources effectively and aligning investment with strategic priorities.

## 4. Financing

- 4.1. All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Authority's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

*Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions*

£Millions	2025/26 forecast	Forecast C/Fwd into 2026/27	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget	2028/29 budget
External sources	0.762	0.314			
Capital receipts	0.749	0.741	0.670	1.900	
Debt	7.869	0.059			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.380</b>	<b>1.114</b>	<b>0.670</b>	<b>1.900</b>	<b>0.0</b>

- 4.2. Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

*Table 3: Replacement of prior years' debt finance*

	2025/26 forecast £'000	2026/27 budget £'000	2027/28 budget £'000	2028/29 budget £'000
Minimum revenue provision (MRP)	1,431	1,399	1,399	1,425
Capital receipts	0	6,563	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>7,962</b>	<b>1,399</b>	<b>1,425</b>

- 4.3. The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase during 2026/27. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Authority's estimated CFR is as follows:

*Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement*

	2025/26 forecast £m	2026/27 budget £m	2027/28 budget £m	2028/29 budget £m
<b>TOTAL CFR</b>	<b>66.937</b>	<b>59.150</b>	<b>57.751</b>	<b>56.326</b>

## 5. Asset Management

5.1. To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Authority has an asset management strategy in place. The council's assets are being regularly reviewed to identify assets for disposal to repay borrowing.

### Asset Disposals

5.2. When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or used to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Authority plans to receive £6.9 million of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows. However, this forecast takes into account a risk factor for potential delays in receiving these receipts or for the actual amounts being lower than anticipated. This uncertainty reinforces the need for a prioritised approach to capital investment, ensuring that projects are only brought forward for approval when funding is confirmed:

*Table 5: Capital receipts receivable*

	2025/26 forecast £m	2026/27 budget £m	2027/28 budget £m	2028/29 budget £m
Asset sales	5.757	5.541	0.162	0.499
Loans etc repaid	0.175	1.400	1.400	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.932</b>	<b>6.941</b>	<b>1.562</b>	<b>0.499</b>

## 6. Treasury Management

6.1. Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

6.2. Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority currently has £1.5 million long term borrowing at a rate of 8.875% and £60 million in short term borrowing at an average interest rate of 4.58% and £34 million treasury investments at an average rate of 3.5%.

## Borrowing Strategy

- 6.3. The Authority's main objectives when borrowing, are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Authority therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher.
- 6.4. The Authority does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.
- 6.5. Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, leases and transferred debt) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

*Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement*

	31.3.2025 actual £m	31.3.2026 forecast £m	31.3.2027 budget £m	31.3.2028 budget £m	31.3.2029 budget £m
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	64.5	59.0	56.5	56.5	54.9
Capital Financing Requirement	61.8	66.9	59.2	57.8	56.3

- 6.6. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Authority expects to comply with this in the medium term. The council was £2.7 million over borrowed as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, to avoid risks to cashflow liquidity at year end. This position was only short term.

## Liability Benchmark

- 6.7. To compare the Authority's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £5 million.

*Table 7: Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark in £ millions*

	31.3.2025 actual £m	31.3.2026 forecast £m	31.3.2027 budget £m	31.3.2028 budget £m	31.3.2029 budget £m
Existing borrowing	64.5	59.0	56.5	56.5	54.5
Liability benchmark	32.7	46.1	40.1	39.4	38.0

- 6.8. The actual forecast borrowing is higher than the liability benchmark primarily to protect the Council's liquidity position and ensure resilience. Anticipated cash flows are expected to reduce significantly over the coming periods, which could create pressure on day-to-day operations and capital commitments. By borrowing earlier and maintaining a liquidity buffer,

the Council mitigates the risk of having to secure funds at short notice, which could result in higher costs and unfavourable market conditions. This proactive approach ensures that the Council can meet its obligations and deliver its capital programme without resorting to last-minute borrowing at potentially elevated interest rates.

#### Affordable borrowing limit

- 6.9. The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

*Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit & operational boundary for external debt*

	2025/26 limit £m	2026/27 limit £m	2027/28 limit £m	2028/29 limit £m
Authorised limit - total external debt	100	100	100	100
Operational boundary - total external debt	75	75	75	75

#### Investment Strategy

- 6.10. Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

- 6.11. The Authority’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

*Table 9: Treasury management investments*

	31.3.2025 actual £m	31.3.2026 forecast £m	31.3.2027 budget £m	31.3.2028 budget £m	31.3.2029 budget £m
Near-term investments	21.3	7.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Longer-term investments*	12.8	10.8	5.9	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>15.0</b>

\* Long-term investments includes balance of property fund not yet being wound down, shareholding in Millstream Property Company and long term loans to Herts Building Control and Millstream Property Company.

## Risk Management

6.12. The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

6.13. Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director for Finance, Risk & Performance and finance staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by council. Half yearly reports on treasury management activity are presented to council. The audit and governance committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

## **7. Revenue Budget Implications**

7.1. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP is charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

*Table 10: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream*

	2024/25 actual	2025/26 forecast	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget	2028/29 budget
Financing costs (£m)	3.120	4.903	3.961	3.763	3.669
Proportion of net revenue stream	13.7%	23.1%	18.6%	17.5%	16.5%

## Sustainability

7.2. Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to [50] years into the future. The Director for Finance, Risk & Performance is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable because it has been reduced to a level where the borrowing remains affordable.

## Knowledge and Skills

7.3. The Authority employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director for Finance, Risk & Performance is a qualified accountant with 26

years' post experience. The Authority pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, AAT etc.

7.4. Where Authority staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Authority currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Authority has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

# Treasury Management Strategy **2026/27**

## Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

## External Context

**Economic background:** The most significant impacts on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2026/27 are expected to include: the influence of the government's 2025 Autumn Budget, lower short-term interest rates alongside higher medium- and longer-term rates, slower economic growth, together with ongoing uncertainties around the global economy, stock market sentiment, and geopolitical issues.

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, as expected. The vote to cut was 5-4, with the minority instead favouring holding rates at 4.0%. Those members wanting a cut judged that disinflation was established while those preferring to hold Bank Rate argued that inflation risks remained sufficiently material to leave rates untouched at this stage.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in the third quarter of the calendar year, this was unrevised from the initial estimate. The most recent Monetary Policy Report (November) projected modest economic growth, with GDP expected to rise by 0.2% in the final calendar quarter of 2025. Annual growth is forecast to ease from 1.4% before improving again later, reflecting the delayed effects of lower interest rates, looser monetary conditions, stronger global activity, and higher consumer spending. The view of modest economic growth going forward was echoed by the Office for Budget Responsibility in its Economic and fiscal outlook published in line with the Autumn Statement which revised down its estimate of annual real GDP to around 1.5% on average between 2025 and 2030.

CPI inflation was 3.2% in November 2025, down from 3.6% in the previous month and below the 3.5% expected. Core CPI eased to 3.2% from 3.4%, contrary to forecasts of remaining at 3.6%. Looking forward, the MPC continues to expect inflation to fall, to around 3% in calendar Q1 2026, before steadily returning to the 2% target by late 2026 or early 2027.

The labour market continues to ease with rising unemployment, falling vacancies and flat inactivity. In the three months to October 2025, the unemployment rate increased to 5.1%, higher than the level previously expected by the BoE, while the employment rate slipped to 74.9%. Pay growth for the same period eased modestly, with total earnings (including bonuses) growth at 4.7% and while regular pay was 4.6%.

## **Credit Outlook**

While lower interest rates may weigh on banks' profitability, strong capital positions, easing inflation, steady economic growth, low unemployment, and reduced borrowing costs for households and businesses all support a favourable outlook for the creditworthiness of institutions on (the authority's treasury management advisor) Arlingclose's counterparty list. Arlingclose's advice on approved counterparties and recommended investment durations is kept under continuous review and will continue to reflect prevailing economic and credit conditions.

**Interest rate forecast 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025:** Arlingclose, the Authority's treasury management adviser, currently forecasts that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will continue to reduce Bank Rate in 2026, reaching around 3.25%. This forecast reflects amendments made following the Autumn Budget and an assessment of the fiscal measures and their market implications, and following the BoE MPC meeting held on 18th December.

Long-term gilt yields, and therefore interest rates payable on long-term borrowing, are expected to remain broadly stable on average, though with continued volatility, and to end the forecast period marginally lower than current levels. Yields are likely to stay higher than in the pre-quantitative tightening era, reflecting ongoing balance sheet reduction and elevated bond issuance. Short-term fluctuations are expected to persist in response to economic data releases and geopolitical developments.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is in Appendix Bi.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate/yield of 3.5%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 4.5%.

## Local Context

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, the Authority held £61m of borrowing and £34m of treasury investments. This is set out in further detail at *Appendix Bii*. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

*Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast*

	31.3.25 Actual £m	31.3.26 Estimate £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m	31.3.28 Forecast £m	31.3.29 Forecast £m
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	61.8	66.9	59.2	57.8	56.3
Less: Other debt liabilities *	-	-	-	-	-
Less: External borrowing **	64.5	59.0	56.5	56.5	54.5
<b>Internal / (over) borrowing</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Less: Balance sheet resources	(34.1)	(25.8)	(24.1)	(23.4)	(23.3)
<b>Treasury investments</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>25.1</b>

\* leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's total debt

\*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying sums available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2026/27.

## Liability benchmark:

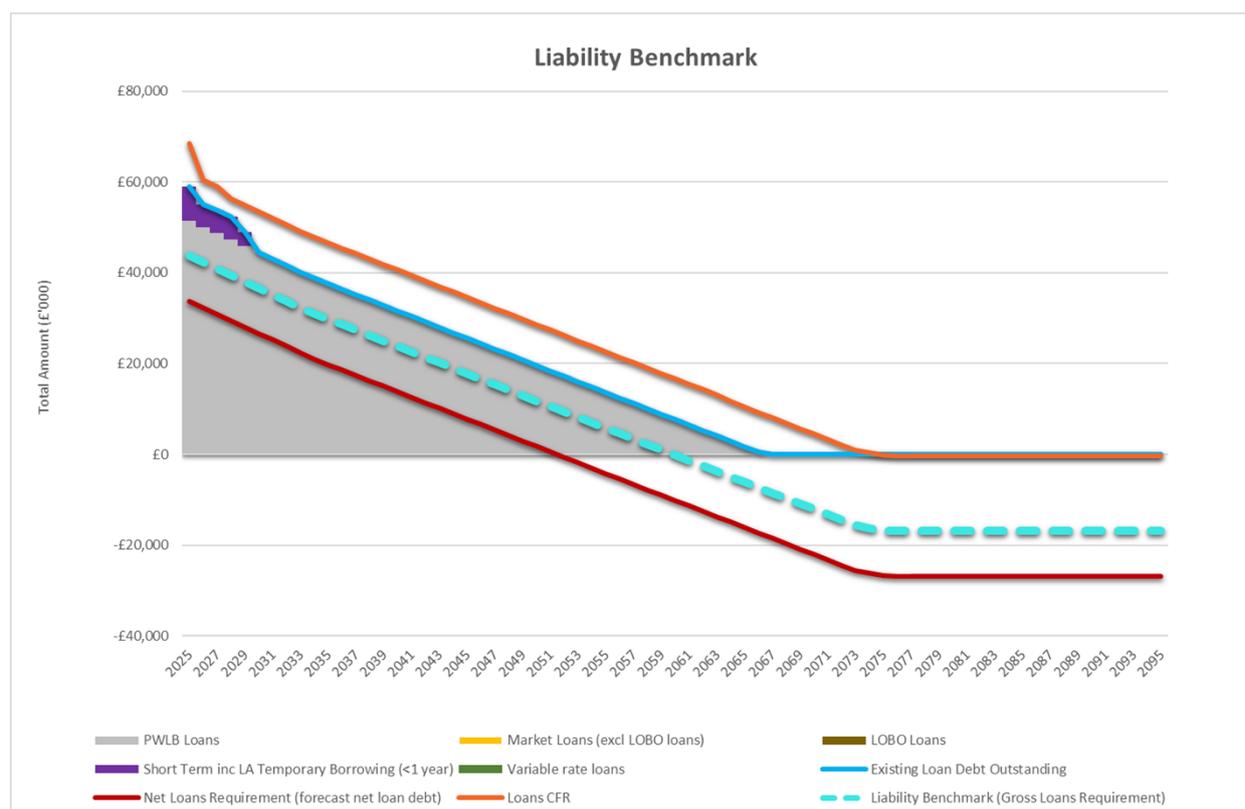
To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £5m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 2: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	31.3.25 Actual £m	31.3.26 Estimate £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m	31.3.28 Forecast £m	31.3.29 Forecast £m
Loans CFR	61.8	66.9	59.2	57.8	56.3
Less: Balance sheet resources	34.1	25.8	24.1	23.4	23.3
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	27.7	41.1	35.1	34.4	33.0
Plus: Liquidity allowance	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>38.0</b>

Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of a maximum £59m a year, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 30 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2% a year. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority’s existing borrowing:



## Borrowing Strategy

The Authority currently holds £61 million of loans, a decrease of £3 million on the previous year. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority expects to borrow up to £59m in 2026/27. The Authority may also borrow additional sums to

pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £100 million.

**Objectives:** The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

**Strategy:** Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Short-term interest rates have fallen over the past year, and are expected to fall a little further, and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead. The risks of this approach will be managed by keeping the Authority's interest rate exposure within the limit set in the treasury management prudential indicators, see below.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of short term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2026/27 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Authority has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Authority intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans.

Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Authority may borrow further short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

**Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury’s PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
- National Wealth Fund Ltd (formerly UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd)
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Hertfordshire Local Government Pension Scheme)

**Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback
- similar asset based finance

**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

**Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The recent rise in interest rates means that more favourable debt rescheduling opportunities should arise than in previous years.

## **Treasury Investment Strategy**

The Authority holds currently significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority’s treasury investment balance has ranged between £27m and £42m, and similar levels are expected to be maintained in the forthcoming year.

**Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The

Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

**Strategy:** As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments will therefore be made primarily to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments.

The CIPFA Code does not permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Authority may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest rate risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value rises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.

**ESG policy:** Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors’ decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority’s ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Authority will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

**Business models:** Under the IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority’s “business model” for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

**Approved counterparties:** The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the limits shown.

*Table 3: Treasury investment counterparties and limits*

Sector	Time limit †	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	3 years	£10m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	3 years	£10m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£10m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£10m	25%
Registered providers (unsecured) *	3 years	£5m	10%
Money market funds *	n/a	£10m	Unlimited

Sector	Time limit †	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£10m	25%
Other investments *	3 years	£1m	10%

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

**\* Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account. For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £500,000 per counterparty as part of a diversified pool e.g. via a peer-to-peer platform.

**† Time limits:** These start on the earlier of date that the Authority is committed to make the investment and the date that cash is transferred to the counterparty.

**UK Government:** Sterling-denominated investments with or explicitly guaranteed by the UK Government, including the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility, treasury bills and gilts. These are deemed to be zero credit risk due to the government's ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Local authorities and other government entities:** Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, other national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk.

The counterparty limit for loans to local authorities will be increased to an unlimited amount where (a) the government has announced that this authority will merge with the borrowing authority and (b) the loan is scheduled to be repaid after the expected date of the merger.

**Secured investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds, secured deposits and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments. A higher limit applies for investments fully secured on UK or other government collateral.

**Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

**Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

**Money market funds:** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

**Strategic pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds, including exchange traded funds, that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but can be either withdrawn after a notice period or sold on an exchange, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and unsecured loans to companies and universities. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Authority's investment at risk.

**Operational bank accounts:** The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £10m per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices

document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as “negative watch”) so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

**Other information on the security of investments:** The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

**Reputational aspects:** The Authority is aware that investment with certain counterparties, while considered secure from a purely financial perspective, may leave it open to criticism, valid or otherwise, that may affect its public reputation, and this risk will therefore be taken into account when making investment decisions.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government or other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

**Investment limits:** The Authority’s revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £19 million on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and £18 million on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027. In order that no more than 60% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent unsecured to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £10 million. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £100,000 in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits.

Limits are also placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts and foreign countries as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

*Table 4: Additional investment limits*

	Cash limit
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£10m per manager
Investments held in a broker's nominee account	£10m per broker
Foreign countries	£10m per country

**Liquidity management:** The Authority uses cash flow spreadsheets to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least two providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds), of which at least one will be UK domiciled, to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

**Security:** The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average [credit rating / credit score] of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit	6.0

**Liquidity:** The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£10m

**Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority’s exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£490,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£490,000

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

**Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority’s exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%
10 years and above	90%	0%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

**Long-term treasury management investments:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority’s exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

Price risk indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m	£10m

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds and real estate investment trusts but exclude money market funds and bank accounts as these are considered short-term.

## **Related Matters**

The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

**Financial derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

**Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The Authority has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Director of Finance, performance and Risk believes this to be the most appropriate status.

## **Financial Implications**

The budget for investment income in 2026/27 is £0.6 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £17 million at an interest rate of 3.5%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2026/27 is £2.5 million, based on an average debt portfolio of £55 million at an average interest rate of 4.5%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecasts, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

## Other Options Considered

The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Director for Finance, Risk and Performance, having consulted the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain



Arlingclose Ltd:  
Independent treasury management services

# Economic and Interest Rate Forecast

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

# Economic and Interest Rate Forecast

## 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

- The Bank of England duly delivered on expectations for a December rate cut, but, despite softer economic data over the past two weeks, the minutes highlighted increased caution surrounding both the inflation outlook and the speed of future easing. With a close vote of 5-4 in favour of a rate reduction, this suggests that the bar for further monetary easing may be higher than previously thought despite the possibility of the CPI rate falling to target in 2026.
- Budget policies and base effects will mechanically reduce the CPI rate in 2026, on top of the downward pressure arising from soft economic growth and the looser labour market. However, many policymakers appear concerned that household and business inflation and pricing expectations are proving sticky following recent bouts of high price and wage growth, which may allow underlying inflationary pressure to remain elevated. While, the Bank's measure of household expectations ticked lower in December, it remains above levels consistent with the 2% target at 3.5%.
- While policymakers hold valid concerns, these appear somewhat out of line with current conditions; CPI inflation fell to 3.2% in November, private sector wage growth continued to ease amid the highest unemployment rate since the pandemic, and the economy contracted in October after barely growing in Q3. Business surveys pointed to marginally stronger activity and pricing intentions in December but also suggested that the pre-Budget malaise was not temporary. These data are the latest in a trend suggesting challenging economic conditions are feeding into price and wage setting.
- Risks to the growth and inflation outlook lie to the downside, which may ultimately deliver lower Bank Rate than our central case. However, the minutes suggest that the bar to further rate cuts beyond 3.25% is higher and the near-term upside risks to our Bank Rate forecast have increased. Having said that, we believe inflation expectations will naturally decline alongside headline inflation rates.
- Investors appear to have given the UK government some breathing space following the Budget, with long-term yields continuing to trade at slightly lower levels than in late summer/early autumn. Even so, sustained heavy borrowing across advanced economies, the DMO's move towards issuing more short-dated gilts and lingering doubts about the government's fiscal plans will keep short to medium yields above the levels implied by interest rate expectations alone.

	Current	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
<b>3-month money market rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	3.82	3.55	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.35	3.35	3.35
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
<b>5yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	3.96	3.85	3.80	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.80	3.80	3.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
<b>10yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.52	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.35	4.35	4.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
<b>20yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	5.16	5.00	4.95	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.95	4.95	4.95
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
<b>50yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.74	4.65	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.65	4.65	4.65
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85

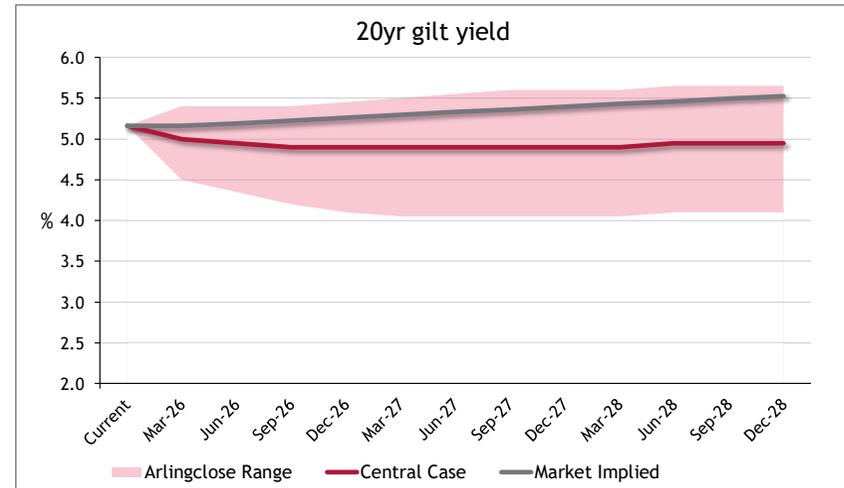
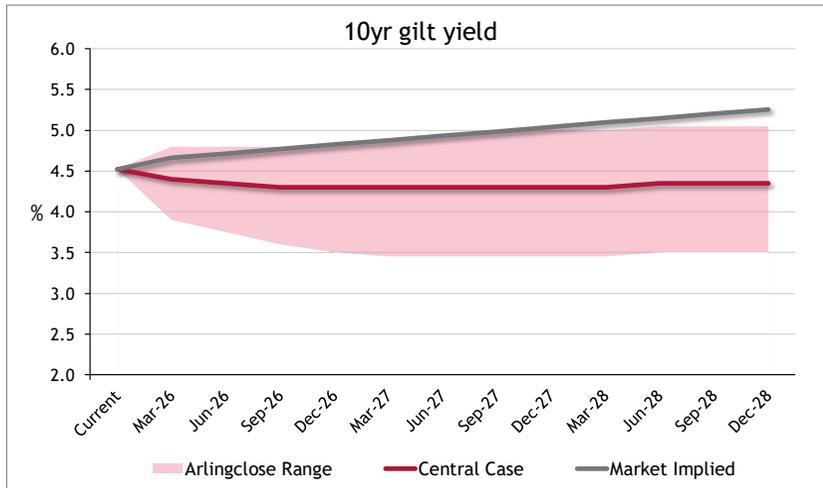
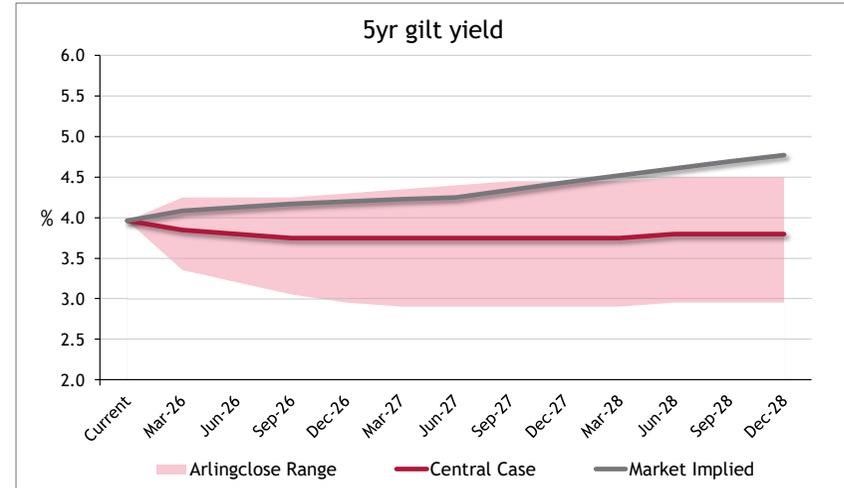
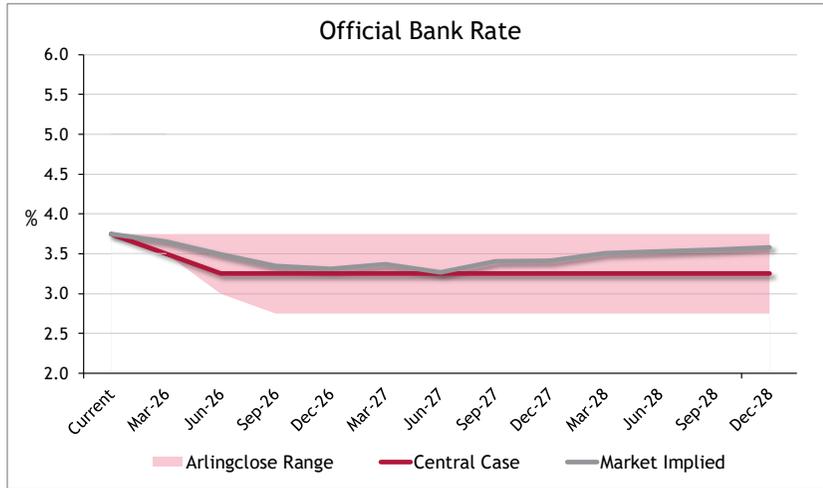
PWLB Standard Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 1.00%; PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.80%  
 PWLB HRA Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.40%; National Wealth Fund Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.40%

- In line with our long-held forecast, Bank Rate was cut to 3.75% in December.
- Continuing disinflation, rising unemployment, softening wage growth and low confidence suggests that monetary policy will continue to be loosened.
- Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to be cut to 3.25% by middle of 2026. However, near-term upside risks to the forecast have increased.
- Medium and long-term gilt yields continue to incorporate premia for UK government credibility, global uncertainty and significant issuance. These issues may not be resolved quickly and we expect yields to remain higher than would normally be consistent with Bank Rate expectations.

# Arlingclose and Market Projections

Charts show the Arlingclose central case along with upside and downside risks:

Arlingclose judges the risk around its Bank Rate and gilt yield forecasts to be weighted to the downside in the medium term.



**Arlingclose forecast: 22<sup>nd</sup> December - versus - Market forward curves: 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Economic and Interest Rate Forecast  
Confidential - not for disclosure to third parties

**Appendix Bii - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position**

	31/12/2025 Actual portfolio £m	31/12/2025 Average rate %
<b>External borrowing:</b>		
Public Works Loan Board (Long-term)	1.5	8.875
Public Works Loan Board (Short-term)	50.0	4.85
Local authorities	10.0	4.05
Other loans	-	-
<b>Total external borrowing</b>	<b>61.5</b>	
<b>Total long-term liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total gross external debt</b>	<b>61.5</b>	
<b>Treasury investments:</b>		
The UK Government	1.3	3.76
Local authorities	20.0	4.15
Banks (unsecured)	5.2	3.51
Building societies (unsecured)	-	-
Registered providers (unsecured)	-	-
Money market funds	7.8	4.01
Property funds	0.2	-
Other investments	-	-
<b>Total treasury investments</b>	<b>34.5</b>	
<b>Net debt</b>	<b>27.0</b>	

## Appendix C

### Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2026/27

1. Where the Authority funds capital expenditure with debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The *Local Government Act 2003* requires the Authority to have regard to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in April 2024.
2. The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is aligned with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits
3. The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and provides a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP but does not preclude the use of other appropriate methods. The following statement only incorporates options recommended in the Guidance.
4. MRP is calculated by reference to the capital financing requirement (CFR) which is the total amount of past capital expenditure that has yet to be permanently financed, noting that debt must be repaid and therefore can only be a temporary form of funding. The CFR is calculated from the Authority's balance sheet in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Prudential Code for Capital Expenditure in Local Authorities*, 2021 edition.
5. For capital expenditure, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset in equal instalments (on the straight-line method), starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. In line with the useful economic life (UEL) of the asset, up to a maximum of 50 years.
6. The useful life of assets for individual assets will be set by the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance with advice from the Council's surveyor for property and from guidance from manufacturers or other specialists in relation to vehicles, plant, and equipment. The UEL for individual assets will not exceed the outlines below.
  - a. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years.
  - b. MRP on Buildings will be charged over the anticipated UEL up to a maximum of 50 years

- c. Computer equipment and Intangibles are anticipated to be charged between 3 and 10 years.
- d. MRP on Vehicles including refuse, recycling and street cleansing vehicles will be payable over the UEL of the individual vehicle (ranging from 3 – 12 years).
- e. MRP on Infrastructure will be charged over the estimated UEL up to a max of 50 years.
- f. For assets acquired by leases MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
  - i. Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet due to the adoption of the IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the overall charge for MRP over the life of the lease reflects the value of the right-of-use asset recognised on transition rather than the liability.
- g. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets, which have been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over a period up to 25 years.

### **Capital loans**

- 7. For capital expenditure loans to Millstream Property Investment Limited (which is wholly owned by the council), no MRP will be set aside, unless an expected credit loss is identified or increased in-year. Instead, capital receipts arising from principal repayments will reduce the capital financing requirement. Sufficient MRP will be charged to ensure that the outstanding capital financing requirement (CFR) on the loan is no higher than the principal amount outstanding less the expected credit loss.
  - a. This option was proposed by the government in its recent MRP consultation and in the council's, view is consistent with the current regulations.
  - b. The council further believes this is prudent as the loans were financed by a reduction in the negative CFR, which arose from the large-scale voluntary transfer of council housing in 2001, and therefore was financed in full at the time the money was lent to the company.
  - c. The loans are secured by a charge over domestic property assets of the company and the loans were on average 60% of the property purchase price.
    - i. Given that there is a 40%+ share of equity in excess of the loans and domestic property, the council believes there is sufficient equity in each

domestic property to fully repay the loans to the company in most foreseeable downside risk events.

8. The Council may make additional payments over and above MRP to reduce the CFR and these payments are known as Voluntary Payments.
  - a. The council intends to utilise receipts from planned disposal as voluntary Payments. These additional voluntary payments will enable the council to reduce MRP charges to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES) in future years
9. Capital expenditure incurred during 2026/27 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2027/28 for completed projects or later for any Assets Under Construction.
10. Based on the Authority's latest estimate of its CFR on 31st March 2026, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	31.03.2026 Estimated CFR £m	2026/27 Estimated MRP £m
Opening CFR	61.805	66.937
Capital expenditure	6.563	0.175
MRP charged in Year	(-)1.431	(-)1.399
Forecast Capital Receipts - to reduce MRP charge	0	(-)6.563
<b>Capital Expenditure to which MRP applies</b>	<b>66.937</b>	<b>59.150</b>
MRP Charge in Year	1.431	1.399
VRP (Voluntary MRP - asset disposals)	0	6.563
<b>Total Reduction in CFR - due to MRP and VRP</b>	<b>1.431</b>	<b>7.962</b>

11. The council intends to dispose of assets and to apply the capital receipts to reduce the CFR. As the use of the capital receipts constitutes a Voluntary Payment the following table summarises planned VRP that will reduce the CFR.

Planned Voluntary Payments	£m
Planned payment 2026/27	6.563
<b>Total Planned VRP</b>	<b>6.563</b>

## Capital receipts

12. Proceeds from the sale of capital assets are classed as capital receipts and are typically used to finance new capital expenditure. Where the Authority decides instead to use capital receipts to repay debt and hence reduce the CFR, the calculation of MRP will be adjusted as follows:
- a. Capital receipts arising on the repayment of principal on capital loans to third parties will be used to lower the MRP charge in respect of the same loans in the year of receipt, if any.
  - b. Capital receipts arising on the repayment of principal on finance lease receivables will be used to lower the MRP charge in respect of the acquisition of the asset subject to the lease in the year of receipt, if any.
  - c. Capital receipts arising from other assets which form an identified part of the Authority's MRP calculations will be used to reduce the MRP charge in respect of the same assets over their remaining useful lives, starting in the year after the receipt is applied.
  - d. Any other capital receipts applied to repay debt will be used to reduce MRP in 10 equal instalments starting in the year after receipt is applied.

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CARL BRITTAIN – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**REPORT TITLE: FINAL BUDGET 2026/27 & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2031**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All Wards**

**Summary** – This report provides members with an updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31, building on the version presented to Executive in October 2025 and January 2026. It reflects the implications of the February 2026 finance settlement and incorporates a range of other adjustments, including revised forecasts, updated assumptions, and budgetary refinements. The report also sets out how the funding gap identified in the October 2025 Executive MTFP has been addressed, detailing the savings and changes that have enabled a balanced position to be achieved for 2026/27. It also includes the fees and charges to be agreed. Finally, it presents the final budget proposed for recommendation to Council, following consultation at the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 28 January 2026, for Members' consideration.

The report sets out the proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2028/29, detailing the planned capital expenditure over this period and the associated financing requirements. It outlines how the programme will be funded through a combination of capital receipts, borrowing, and other available resources, ensuring that the Council's investment plans remain both affordable and sustainable within the overall financial framework.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:**

That Council is requested to approve the following recommendations:

- a) That the final General Fund Budget for 2026/27, including a Band D Council Tax of £207.03 (reflecting a 2.99% increase), be approved.
- b) That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as set out in Appendix A, be noted.
- c) That the proposed fees and charges for 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix B, be approved.
- d) That the minimum level of General Fund balance of £3.649 million, based on the 2026/27 risk assessment of balances in paragraph 6.3, be approved.
- e) That the budget pressures identified in Section 4 of the report be noted.
- f) That the savings proposals identified in Section 5 of the report be noted.
- g) That the Section 25 Statement on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves, as set out in Appendix D, be noted.
- h) That the Capital Programme for 2026 to 2029, as set out in Appendix E, be approved.
- i) That the minutes and comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committee from 28 January 2026, as set out in Appendix F and paragraph 11.1, be noted.

## **1. Purpose**

1.1. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that was approved in March 2025 was updated to reflect the evolving financial landscape and key developments since its adoption. The latest (October 2025) refresh incorporated several significant changes:

- The confirmed pay award for 2025/26 was 3.2% slightly above the 3% assumptions in the original MTFP, adding pressure to the staffing budget.
- In-year pressure reported at Quarter 1 highlighted the impact of the recent revaluation of business rates on the council's assets.
- The review of the savings programme over the medium-term resulted in the removal of over £0.5Million of savings from future years that are no longer considered achievable.

- Two new growth bids been incorporated – one for an additional HR Officer to support organisational resilience, and another reflecting a reduction in the projected BEAM surplus, reverting to the 2025/26 position.
- 1.2. These updates reflect the Council’s commitment to maintaining a realistic and deliverable financial strategy amid ongoing inflationary pressures and constrained funding.
  - 1.3. This work takes place against a backdrop of prolonged financial uncertainty, driven by one-year settlements that have limited strategic planning and hindered preparation for major structural changes, including Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The recent announcement of a multi-year settlement through to 2028/29 is therefore a welcome development, providing stability and enabling Members to take a longer-term view in shaping priorities and preparing for governance transition.
  - 1.4. The finalisation of the Fair Funding Review (FFR 2.0) also marks a significant milestone in funding distribution. While East Herts faces a reduction in allocation, the impact is less severe than projected in October 2025, allowing for more measured planning.
  - 1.5. The Council’s financial planning continues to be underpinned by the Corporate Plan and its LEAF priorities, ensuring decisions on spending and savings remain aligned with strategic objectives.

## **2. Economic Outlook and Policy Framework**

- 2.1. The Autumn Budget 2025, delivered by the Chancellor on 26 November 2025, was set against a backdrop of persistent fiscal pressures, subdued economic growth, and historically high public debt. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts GDP growth of 1.3% for 2025/26, with growth stabilising at 1.5% per year through to 2029/30. Inflation, while easing, is expected to remain above the Bank of England’s 2% target in the near term, at 3.5% for

2025/26, before returning to target levels by 2027/28. Interest rates remain elevated, increasing borrowing costs across the economy.

- 2.2. To maintain the Government's fiscal rules, the Chancellor announced a further round of tax-raising measures worth £26 billion, following last year's £36 billion. Taxation as a share of GDP is set to reach an all-time high of 38% by 2029/30, while public spending remains elevated at around 44–45% of GDP. Despite these measures, the OBR suggests the government would have met its fiscal targets without further action, but the Chancellor opted to increase the fiscal headroom to £22 billion (0.6% of GDP) to provide greater resilience against economic shocks. The Budget's main focus was on restoring fiscal stability while maintaining investment in priority areas such as housing, energy transition, and public services.

#### Local Government Impact

- 2.3. For district councils, the Autumn Budget 2025 introduces a new High Value Council Tax Surcharge on properties over £2 million from April 2028, which will be collected by local authorities but ultimately benefit central government, with no increase in local spending power. Business rates reforms include reduced multipliers for retail, hospitality, and leisure properties, funded by a higher rate for high-value properties, alongside transitional reliefs and some extended retention pilots.
- 2.4. While the Budget also references a visitor levy for mayoral authorities and a transfer of SEND funding responsibilities to central government, these measures have little direct effect on district councils. Overall, the Budget offers limited new resources for districts and does not address the sector's core funding challenges.

#### Local Government Finance Settlement Policy Statement 2026/27 to 2028/29

- 2.5. On 20 November 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution published the policy statement for the 2026/27 to 2028/29 local government finance settlement. It sets out a new needs-based funding system following the Fair Funding Review 2.0, a multi-year settlement for greater certainty, and significant simplification of funding streams. The statement also confirms a full reset of the business rates retention system in 2026/27 and maintains existing council tax referendum principles, allowing shire districts to increase council tax by up to 3% or £5 (whichever is higher) per year without triggering a referendum.
- 2.6. For district councils, the Policy Statement is expected to result in a relative reduction in funding for most authorities, as updated needs formulas and changes to the tier split shift resources towards counties and metropolitan areas. While transitional protections will ensure that funding reductions are phased in over three years—typically with a 95% funding floor—many districts will still face a gradual decrease in their allocations.
- 2.7. Additionally, grants such as the Homelessness Prevention Grant will be rolled into new consolidated funding streams, though the precise allocations for each district remain unknown until the provisional settlement is published. Overall, there remains significant uncertainty for district councils until the detailed figures are released.

### **3. Local Government Finance Settlement and Funding Allocation**

- 3.1. On 17 December 2025, the Government published the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27, accompanied by indicative figures for 2027/28 and 2028/29. This marks the most significant redistribution of funding within the sector for at least 25 years, following the implementation of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and a full reset of the Business Rates Retention System. The key headlines being:

- **Fair Funding Review 2.0:** Major changes to the funding formula now place greater weight on deprivation and population, with less emphasis on remoteness.
- **Grant Simplification:** Multiple grants have been consolidated into four main streams, aiming to simplify funding.
- **Business Rates Reset:** All accumulated business rates growth has been reset, redistributing resources based on the new formula.
- **Council Tax:** The settlement assumes councils will apply the maximum permitted increases, making council tax a larger share of local funding.
- **Transitional Protection:** New funding floors and phased arrangements will cushion the impact of changes.
- **Recovery Grant:** The Recovery Grant continues for three years.

3.2. The 2026/27 settlement provides a three-year funding framework, but only the first year is statutory, with subsequent years remaining indicative and subject to change. This means that while there is some increased certainty for medium-term planning, authorities must remain cautious, as future allocations could still be revised.

3.3. There is significant redistribution between authorities as a result of the new funding formula and business rates reset. More deprived and urban areas generally see larger increases in funding, while many shire districts and rural councils face below-average increases or even reductions in cash terms. This shift reflects the government's intention to target resources towards areas of greatest need, but it also creates challenges for councils that may experience a relative loss of funding.

3.4. The complexity and late timing of the settlement announcement have made budget-setting for 2026/27 particularly challenging. Authorities have had limited time to analyse the detailed figures and assess the impact of rolled-in grants, the business rates reset, and transitional protection arrangements. This ongoing uncertainty makes it difficult to plan with confidence, especially for services that

rely on multi-year investment or where funding streams have been consolidated or reallocated.

### Core Spending Power (CSP)

3.5. Core Spending Power (CSP) is the Government’s headline measure of the total resources available to a local authority each year. It brings together the main sources of council funding—such as government grants, retained business rates, and council tax—into a single figure, providing a consistent way to compare overall funding levels year-on-year.

3.6. East Herts’ CSP is forecast to increase modestly over the next four years, rising from £20.60m in 2024/25 to £21.8m by 2028/29—a total increase of 5.8%. However, when council tax is excluded, CSP falls from £7.9m to £6.8m, a reduction of 14%. This reflects the growing reliance on council tax to maintain overall funding levels, as government grant and baseline funding continue to decline.

Year	CSP £M	CSP % change	Excl. CT £M	Excl. CT % change
2024/25	20.6		7.9	
2025/26	21.1	+2.2%	7.9	-0.2%
2026/27	21.5	+2.3%	7.8	-1.2%
2027/28	21.7	+0.7%	7.4	-5.8%
2028/29	21.8	+0.5%	6.8	-7.3%
Average 24/25 to 28/29		+5.85%		-14.0%

### Baseline Funding Level

3.7. The Baseline Funding Level (BFL) is a key component of CSP. It represents the share of funding that a council receives through the Business Rates Retention System and is one of the main

government grants included in the CSP calculation alongside council tax and other grants. The BFL is intended to reflect each authority's share of national business rates income, adjusted for local circumstances.

- 3.8. For 2026/27, East Herts' BFL within the settlement is £2.657 million. Because East Herts' assessed business rates capacity is higher than its assessed needs, this funding is paired with a significant tariff payment back to Government. The table below shows the settlement determination for East Herts.
- 3.9. It is important to note that these figures are provisional because, following the reset of the business rates system, the Government has had to make a number of assumptions about each authority's business rates position for 2026/27. Until the actual data is received—through the NNDR1 return in January 2026 and a bespoke data collection in summer 2026—the settlement figures are based on estimates. Once the true position is known, the Baseline Funding Level and tariff will be adjusted accordingly to ensure the final settlement accurately reflects East Herts' actual business rates income for the year. Any changes will be incorporated into the 2027/28 settlement and members will be updated as necessary.

	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>
Gross Rates Payable	74,537
Appeals and Bad Debt Provision	(3,242)
Cost of Collection	(204)
Renewables deduction	(91)
Business Rates Baseline (@ 40%)	<b>28,400</b>
Baseline Funding Level determined by Government	2,657
Tariff to be paid	<b>25,743</b>

### Revenue Support Grant

- 3.10. Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is a general, non-ringfenced grant from central government and forms a key part of CSP. It helps fund

local services and is allocated using a national formula based on each council's needs and resources.

- 3.11. For 2026/27, East Herts' RSG allocation is £4.27 million, as set out in the provisional multi-year settlement. This grant, together with the Baseline Funding Level (BFL) from business rates, makes up the Fair Funding Allocation within CSP.

£ Million	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
RSG	4.274	3.672	3.041

- 3.12. It is important to note that the multi-year settlement sets out a planned reduction in RSG year-on-year, with funding levels decreasing to reflect the government's Fair Funding Review and the move towards the final Fair Funding position by 2028/29. This means that, over the settlement period, RSG will form a progressively smaller share of the council's total resources, increasing the reliance on council tax and other local income streams.

#### Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse

- 3.13. From 2026/27, the Government is consolidating major homelessness and rough sleeping grants into a single ring-fenced grant, supporting a shift from crisis response to prevention and holistic support. The grant is designed to give councils flexibility to address local needs, with funding certainty over three years. Temporary accommodation funding is now rolled into RSG, so the figures below focus on prevention, relief, staffing, and support for rough sleeping and domestic abuse. The allocation for East Herts is shown in the table below.

£'000	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Total Grant	901	987	1,022
Of which: Homelessness & Rough Sleeping	864	949	984
Domestic Abuse	37	38	38

## Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27

3.14. Following the publication of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement on 9 February, the only change to the provisional figures relates to the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant, which has increased in all three years of the settlement period. The table below shows the original draft (provisional) finance settlement allocations by grant, together with the additional funding now confirmed through the Final Settlement. This provides the updated position for each year and highlights the movement between the provisional and final allocations. This increase will be fully offset by a corresponding adjustment within the Housing Directorate, resulting in no impact on the Council's overall financial position or bottom line.

<b>£ Million</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
Baseline Funding	2.657	2.718	2.773
Revenue Support Grant	4.274	3.672	3.041
Fair Funding Allocation	<b>6.931</b>	<b>6.390</b>	<b>5.814</b>
Council Tax	13.716	14.328	14.967
Draft Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse	0.901	0.987	1.022
<b>Draft Total CSP</b>	<b>21.548</b>	<b>21.705</b>	<b>21.803</b>
Additional Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse	0.109	0.060	0.031
<b>Final Total CSP</b>	<b>21.657</b>	<b>21.765</b>	<b>21.834</b>

### **Council Tax Base**

3.15. The Council Tax Base for 2026/27 has now been formally calculated and set at **65,819.15 Band D equivalents** for the district. This figure reflects the latest estimates of new properties coming into use, adjusted for discounts, exemptions, and the anticipated impact of the Council Tax Support Scheme.

3.16. In the MTFP presented in October, the baseline assumption for tax base growth from 2026/27 onwards was set at an annual increase

of 500 Band D equivalent properties under the medium growth scenario.

- 3.17. This has resulted in the tax base being 5 band D equivalent properties higher against the MTFP and will generate an additional £1,000.
- 3.18. The policy statement confirms that the council tax referendum limit will remain at 2.99% for 2026/27, in line with the assumptions within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This results in a Band D council tax of £207.03 for 2026/27.
- 3.19. Based on the updated council tax base, the agreed council tax support scheme, and a proposed 2.99% increase in the East Hertfordshire precept for 2026/27, the total projected income from council tax will be £13.627 million. This is lower than the level assumed by the Government in its provisional finance settlement for 2026/27.

#### 4. New Budget Pressures

- 4.1. As part of the ongoing budget review process, several emerging pressures have been identified and have now been incorporated into the latest iteration of the MTFP and the 2026/27 budget. These pressures reflect a combination of external factors, and local demand trends. The following tables shows the proposed new and existing pressures (within 2025/26 and on-going).

New Pressures	Cause of Pressure	Amount £
Members Allowance	Revised scheme was approved by Council in October 2025 following Independent Remuneration Panel review; changes effective April 2026	11,000

<b>New Pressures</b>	<b>Cause of Pressure</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Cloud 9 App	A new mobile app that connects residents to the Council's waste service for bin collections and recycling, while also offering additional features such as reporting issues and accessing local information.	20,000
Interest charges	Borrowing costs expected to rise further; advisors recommend increasing projected average interest rate by 0.5% to reflect market conditions.	140,000
Broxbourne – Performance Support	A new growth pressure has arisen to fund Broxbourne Council's support for performance monitoring at East Herts, reflecting the need for dedicated resource to coordinate and report on key performance indicators and progress against the Corporate Plan.	15,000
Increase projected pay award budget	The pay award projection for 2026/27 has been increased from 3% to 4% to reflect the "higher for longer" position on inflation, ensuring the Council's budget remains resilient against ongoing wage pressures.	170,000
	<b>Total New Pressures</b>	<b>356,000</b>

<b>Existing Pressures</b>	<b>Cause of Pressure</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Rapier House Income	No rental income is expected to continue due to the lack of prospective tenants. Consequently, the income budget will be removed, and a business case will be developed to explore alternative uses for the property.	115,000

Existing Pressures	Cause of Pressure	Amount £
Sale of Lime Kiln (Northgate End)	Upon completion of the sale of Lime Kiln, the council will no longer receive income from Launchpad, this will be offset by the costs we currently incur in operating the building.	64,000
IT Licences	With the continual reported pressure during 2025/26, a review of IT licences has been undertaken, and the resulting budget increase reflects the rising costs of essential software.	75,000
Contribution from Other Authorities	As income from other councils has ceased due to the service no longer being provided, the income budget will be removed within Licensing and Improvement & Insight services.	77,000
Repayment of Grant	Following a review of the budget, no further grants were expected to be repaid therefore budget being deleted.	19,000
	<b>Total Existing Pressures</b>	<b>350,000</b>

4.2. The total of new pressures (£356,000) and existing pressures (£350,000) amounts to £706,000 before consideration of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) costs. This £706,000 has been built into the MTFP under the cost of services. In addition, further provisions will be considered to address LGR-related costs as outlined in subsequent sections.

4.3. Following the submission of East Hertfordshire's proposal to government regarding options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), councils within Hertfordshire are now reviewing and determining the level of funding each authority will require for 2026/27 up to vesting day. It is anticipated that there will be further one-off costs associated with the implementation of LGR, including pension strain. The proposal is to provide an initial £1 million of

funding over two years (2026/27 and 2027/28) for these LGR-related costs, with £250,000 per year from revenue and £250,000 per year from earmarked reserves.

4.4. In addition to the LGR-related funding, over the next two years £318,000 will be placed in a reserve each year—resulting in a total of £636,000—to help smooth out any future increases in pension costs arising from the next Triennial review, or to support any redundancy costs that may fall on the Council as a result of LGR.

4.5. Furthermore, a contingency of £203,000 is proposed for 2026/27 to address any additional pressures that may arise—such as those relating to the BEAM service—until a new business plan is implemented.

## **5. Funding the Gap: Addressing Existing and Emerging Pressures**

5.1. To address the current budget gap (from the October MTFP) of £531,000 for 2026/27, the Leadership Team has worked closely with services to identify a range of proposed savings and income generation initiatives. These proposals protect frontline services while ensuring financial sustainability. Members are asked to consider and approve these measures as part of the budget-setting process, and to consider how the further pressures identified above (in section 4) will be funded. The proposals include:

- **Income Generation:** increased income from rental of assets, and additional government funding through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- **Fees and Charges Review:** aligning charges with market rates and inflation.
- **Service Efficiency Reviews:** savings through partnership working.
- **Pension Fund Outcome:** incorporating the financial impact of the latest triennial valuation of the pension fund.

### Income Generation

- 5.2. The Council has entered into two new arrangements to support income generation: leasing out the top floor of Northgate End Car Park and permitting the installation of lockers in several of the Council's car parks. These initiatives have generated an additional £66,000 per year in income for the Council.
- 5.3. The Council has received confirmation of its Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Grant for packaging grant allocation for 2026/27 and can increase the budget back to the 2025/26 level.
- 5.4. The latest MTFP had prudently assumed a 10% reduction in the EPR grant each year, reflecting the expectation that funding would decrease over time as producers improve their packaging and reduce waste. As a result of the confirmed allocation, an additional £143,000 has been included in the 2026/27 budget, compared to previous projections.

### Fees and Charges

- 5.5. Fees and charges are set in accordance with key principles to ensure financial sustainability, transparency, and fairness. Charges are reviewed annually to reflect inflation and cost recovery, with an emphasis on simplicity, clarity, and alignment. Where full cost recovery is not applied, this is supported by a clear policy rationale. For 2026/27, fees and charges are presented in three distinct areas: garden waste, parking (including tariffs and Traffic Regulation Orders), and other service fees income. This approach ensures that each area is considered on its own merits, with adjustments made to support both the Council's financial objectives and the needs of residents and service users.
- 5.6. Garden Waste - In line with the Council's principles for setting fees and charges—cost recovery, inflation alignment, and transparency—the garden waste subscription fee is proposed to increase from £59 in 2025/26 to £61 in 2026/27, a 3.4% rise. This is below the inflation rate (September CPI being 3.8%) for 2026/27, reflecting a measured approach given anticipated cost pressure.

- 5.7. The MTFP had already assumed an additional £31K from this increase. The proposed change will generate a further £31K of new income for the 2026/27 budget and future years.
- 5.8. Parking - The Council's parking strategy, as approved in February 2025, set out a series of proposed changes to parking tariffs and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for 2026/27. The underlying principles included applying an average inflationary increase of 3.8% across parking tariffs and introducing specific changes to parking arrangements in line with the Council's broader strategy to manage demand, support local economies, and ensure fair access across all areas.
- 5.9. During the public consultation on these proposals, the Council received a significant volume of responses from residents and businesses. Many expressed concerns about the potential impact of increased charges on high street trade, accessibility for vulnerable groups, and congestion in residential areas. There was particularly strong feedback that rural towns, with limited public transport and distinct local economies, should not be treated in the same way as larger urban centres. For more detail on the consultation process and feedback, please refer to the parking strategy report included on this agenda for the Executive.
- 5.10. In response to this feedback, the Council has amended its approach for 2026/27. While the average 3.8% increase will apply to most parking tariffs, rural car parks in Stanstead Abbots, Buntingford, and Sawbridgeworth will see weekday charges remain unchanged, and Sunday charges will be maintained at current levels (£1.50 per day). Weekend charges will still be introduced in Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth, with Saturday charges matching weekday rates. These changes are intended to support local businesses, maintain accessibility, and address the specific needs of rural communities.

- 5.11. Changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and parking tariffs (as detailed in Appendix Bi) are expected to generate an additional £277K of income, which will be built into the 2026/27 budget and across the MTFP.
- 5.12. Other Services Fees Income - This category covers all other fees and charges levied by Council services to residents and businesses for the provision of specific services. The Council maintains a strong focus on cost recovery, ensuring that charges reflect the true cost of service delivery wherever possible. While some fees are subject to Government restrictions on the level of increase permitted, others are set locally by the Council. The principles outlined above, particularly around cost recovery, inflation alignment, and transparency have heavily influenced the proposed changes to individual charges for 2026/27.
- 5.13. A full listing of these charges is provided in Appendix Bii. The MTFP had projected an increase in income from these charges of £50,000. However, following a detailed review and in light of higher inflationary pressures on service provision, a further £79,000 will be generated within these fees and charges. In addition, some budget realignments have been undertaken within the overall financial position for these fees to ensure that budgets are achievable for 2026/27.

#### Service Efficiency Reviews

- 5.14. As part of the Council's ongoing service efficiency reviews, a saving of £14,000 has been identified within the Corporate Support Hub for 2026/27. This saving arises from a minor restructure, following a detailed review of task allocation between the Corporate Support Hub and the Licensing team.

#### Pension Fund Triennial Valuation

- 5.15. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) requires all participating employers to undergo a formal actuarial valuation every three years (triennially). The purpose of this valuation is to

review the financial position of the pension fund and to set appropriate employer contribution rates for the following three-year period, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the scheme and compliance with statutory requirements.

5.16. The most recent triennial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2025 for the Hertfordshire Pension Fund, of which East Hertfordshire District Council is a part. This valuation provides a snapshot of the Council's funding position and determines the employer contribution rates for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. The key outcomes of the valuation are:

- **Funding Position:** As at 31 March 2025, East Herts District Council had a funding level of 107.3%. This is an improvement from the previous valuation in 2022, which showed a funding level of 101.6%.
- **Employer Contribution Rates:** The employer contribution rate for the next three years (from 1 April 2026) is 17.1% of pay, with no additional secondary rate required, reflecting the improved funding position.

5.17. The outcome of the 2025 triennial valuation has a significant positive impact on the Council's financial position for 2026/27 and across the MTFP. The reduction in the primary employer contribution rate from 19.8% in 2025/26 to 17.1% from 2026/27 onwards—translates into a saving of £348,000 in 2026/27, with similar savings projected for subsequent years. In addition, the cessation of the secondary rate provides a further ongoing saving of £637,000 from 2026/27.

5.18. The results of the above savings are summarised in the table below:

<b>Savings Area</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
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	<b>£'000</b>
Income generation	209
Fees and Charges:	
• Garden Waste	32
• Parking	277
• Other	79
Service Efficiency Review	14
Pension Fund Triennial Valuation:	
• Primary Rate	348
• Secondary Rate	637
<b>Total Savings found</b>	<b>1,596</b>

5.19. Bringing together the final finance settlement, planned savings, and new pressures—including funding for LGR, redundancy contingency, and general contingencies—the MTFP currently forecasts a surplus of £250,000 for each of the next two years. This surplus will be transferred into a new reserve, providing the Council with flexibility to respond to emerging priorities and pressures. The reserve will be available for Executive drawdown as and when proposals are brought forward and agreed in line with the Council's priorities. The table below summarises the overall financial position from 2026/27.

<b>£'000</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>2029/30</b>	<b>2030/31</b>
Net Cost of Services	18,125	19,252	20,321	21,370	22,525
Corporate Budget	3,311	3,063	2,919	2,665	2,615
Pressures	771	549	0	0	0
Savings	(890)	(1,538)	(1,748)	(1,748)	(1,748)
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>21,317</b>	<b>21,326</b>	<b>21,492</b>	<b>22,287</b>	<b>23,392</b>
Settlement Funding	(7,940)	(7,437)	(6,867)	(6,867)	(6,867)
Council Tax Demand	(13,627)	(14,139)	(14,670)	(15,220)	(15,790)
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>735</b>

## 6. General Fund Balances and Reserves

6.1. The Council's General Fund reserves are classified as either general or earmarked for specific purposes. The General Fund balance serves as a financial buffer to absorb the impact of unexpected events, emergencies, or fluctuations in cash flow.

6.2. The projected General Fund balance within the MTFP remains unchanged at £3.854 million on the basis that the delivery of funding gap across the MTFP is achieved. Maintaining level of reserves is essential to support financial resilience and ensure the Council can respond to unforeseen pressures.

6.3. In determining the appropriate level of general fund balances, the Chief Finance Officer has based their advice on a range of risk factors, as summarised in the table below. This assessment currently indicates a minimum requirement of £3.649 million.

<b>General Fund balances Minimum Level of Assessment</b>	<b>2026/27 £million</b>
Annual Gross Revenue Expenditure (at 4%)	2.393
Annual Gross Capital Expenditure (at 3%)	1.256
<b>Minimum General Fund Balance</b>	<b>3.649</b>

6.4. A detailed review of the Council’s earmarked reserves has been completed to ensure that resources are aligned with strategic priorities and financial resilience. This review examined the purpose of each reserve, confirmed amounts already committed for specific projects and obligations over the next two years, and incorporated these commitments into the MTFP. Earmarked reserves are essential for managing future risks, funding planned initiatives, and providing flexibility to respond to unforeseen pressures without impacting core services. Following this review, the projected balance of earmarked reserves is estimated to be £14.997 million by the end of March 2026 and £14.342 million by the end of March 2027, reflecting planned utilisation for approved commitments.

6.5. The table below summarises the forecast General Fund and Earmarked Reserves across the MTFP period, with a detailed list of reserves provided in Appendix C.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
<b>£'000</b>	<b>Actual balance</b>	<b>Forecast balance</b>	<b>Forecast balance</b>	<b>Forecast balance</b>
Earmarked	17,297	14,997	14,342	13,688

General	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854
<b>Total Usable</b>	<b>21,151</b>	<b>18,851</b>	<b>18,196</b>	<b>17,542</b>

## Section 25 Statement: Reserves Perspective

6.6. The Section 25 Statement of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is a statutory report that accompanies the annual budget for East Herts Council. It provides Members with an independent assessment of the robustness of the Council's budget estimates and the adequacy of its reserves, ensuring that financial decisions are made with a clear understanding of the risks, assumptions, and the Council's overall financial resilience. The report outlines the economic context, the rigorous budget-setting process, key financial assumptions, risk management, and the Council's approach to maintaining sufficient reserves. Further detail can be found in Appendix D.

6.7. In summary, the CFO concludes that the 2026/27 budget is both realistic and sustainable, with reserves considered adequate to manage foreseeable risks and support the Council's medium-term strategy. Members are therefore recommended to approve the budget and reserves strategy, note the underlying risks and assumptions, and support the ongoing delivery of savings.

## **7. Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2028/29**

7.1. The 2026/27 to 2028/29 capital programme and funding is shown at Appendix E and a summary in table below.

Financial Year	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£'000	Revised Estimate	Forecast C/Fwd	Budget	Budget	Budget
Land & Building	413	532	170	1,500	0
Infrastructure	33	0	0	0	0
Vehicles & Equipment	8,180	18	300	300	0
Community Assets	754	314	0	0	0
Contingency	0	250	200	100	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,380</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>0</b>
Borrowing	7,869	59	0	0	0

Capital Receipts	749	741	670	1,900	0
Grants & Contributions	762	314	0	0	0
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>9,380</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>0</b>

7.2. Limited capital receipts mean the 2026/27 programme is restricted to priority schemes or schemes already approved. Further projects will be considered as receipts from asset disposals become available. The old River Lane public square has been deferred by at least one year, with timing to be reviewed in 2026/27 to align with updated project timetable.

## **8. Reasons**

8.1. The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to estimate revenue expenditure and income for the forthcoming year from all sources, together with contributions from reserves, in order to determine a net budget requirement to be met by government grant, business rates and council tax.

## **9. Options**

9.1. The MTFP currently shows a surplus for the first three years, with significant growth already built into the budget. However, it remains essential to sustain this position by continuing to increase council tax, fees, and charges in line with rising costs from pay awards and inflation. Any decision to reduce council tax, limit growth, or hold back on increases to fees and charges would create additional financial pressures in later years of the MTFP or result in increased budget monitoring challenges for 2026/27 and beyond.

9.2. If the Executive were to propose a lower rate of council tax, this would move the Council further away from the government's assumptions and expectations for local funding. Such a decision could be interpreted by government as evidence that there are no funding issues for district councils, despite the fact that core funding

is projected to reduce by 14% up to 2028/29, as set out earlier in this report. It would also result in a permanent loss of revenue, increasing financial pressure in future years.

- 9.3. It is therefore important that the Council continues to review and adjust fees and charges across all services to ensure income keeps pace with rising costs. Any alternative approach—such as reducing fees and charges, limiting growth, or holding council tax below government expectations—would increase financial risk and could compromise the Council’s ability to deliver services sustainably in future years.

## **10. Risks**

- 10.1. Significant uncertainty continues to shape the financial environment in which the Council operates. While the confirmation of a multi-year financial settlement provides a welcome degree of stability and planning certainty, a number of material risks remain that could impact the Council’s ability to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget over the medium term.
- 10.2. Inflationary pressures remain a key concern, particularly in relation to energy, contract inflation and pay awards. Although inflation has moderated from recent peaks, volatility in global markets and domestic economic policy could result in renewed cost pressures. These risks are compounded by the potential for interest rate fluctuations, which may affect borrowing costs and investment returns.
- 10.3. Recruitment and retention difficulties persist, especially in areas where there are national shortages of professionally qualified staff. The Council continues to explore workforce strategies to reduce reliance on agency staffing and ensure service continuity. However, the competitive labour market and rising salary expectations present ongoing financial and operational risks.

10.4. The ongoing process of Local Government Reorganisation introduces structural and transitional risks, including potential changes to service delivery models, governance arrangements and funding allocations. These changes may have both short-term financial implications and longer-term strategic impacts that are not yet fully understood.

## **11. Implications/Consultations**

### **Consultation**

11.1. The draft budget and Medium Term Financial Plan were presented to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 28 January 2026 for review and comment. Members considered the proposals in detail, including the updated forecasts, underlying assumptions, and the approach taken to closing the 2026/27 funding gap. The Committee's feedback will help inform the final budget recommended to Council.

11.2. In discussing the proposals, Members raised several points relating to fees and charges, the financial implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and the allocation and use of reserves. Key issues included the impact of not increasing car parking charges—particularly in relation to the £277K forecast income—the potential effect of parking changes on Buntingford's High Street, and the anticipated costs and adequacy of the £1 million provision for LGR. Members also sought clarity on how the proposed £250K Executive Reserve would be used and whether it could be made available for wider Member priorities.

11.3. A full record of comments, officer responses, and recommended actions is provided in Appendix F.

### **Community Safety**

The budget underpins delivery of the Council's policies and priorities in relation to community safety.

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

The Council has a duty under the Equalities Act, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, to advance equality of opportunity, to foster good relations and to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share protected characteristics. Compliance with these duties in the Equalities Act does permit the Council to treat some persons more favourably than others, but only to the extent that such conduct is not otherwise prohibited. In setting the budget, decisions on some matters may be particularly relevant to the discharges of this duty, particularly fees and charges concessions and an equalities impact assessment will be undertaken to assess and ensure compliance with this duty.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The budget underpins delivery of the council's policies and priorities in relation to the environmental and sustainability areas.

### **Financial**

All financial implications are contained within the report.

### **Health and Safety**

None directly arising from this report.

### **Human Resources**

The budget provides provision of a pay award for up to 3% in 2026/27. The actual award is subject to national NJC negotiations.

### **Human Rights**

None directly arising from this report.

### **Legal**

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires the Council to estimate revenue expenditure and income for the

forthcoming year from all sources, together with government grant and contributions from reserves, in order to determine a basic Council Tax Requirement.

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves to the council when it is considering the budget.

### **Specific Wards**

No

## **12. Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

12.1. Budget 2025/26 & Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2035 – Council 26 February 2025.

12.2. Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-2031 – Executive 7 October 2025

12.3. Appendices:

- Appendix A MTFP 2026-2031
- Appendix B Fees and Charges 2026/27
- Appendix C Earmarked Reserves
- Appendix D Section 25 Report
- Appendix E Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2028/29
- Appendix F Minutes and comments of Joint Scrutiny Committee on 28 January 2026

**Contact Member**            Councillor Carl Brittain  
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**Report Author**             Brian Moldon

## Director for Finance, Risk and Performance



**General Fund Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan  
2026/27 to 2030/31**

2025/26 £000	Cost of Services	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
305	Chief Executive's Office	313	323	333	343	353
1,855	Communications, Strategy & Policy	1,850	1,907	1,965	2,025	2,087
2,073	Housing and Health	3,590	3,715	3,810	3,903	4,001
700	Operations	1,203	1,622	1,887	2,155	2,420
(200)	Hertford Theatre	(200)	(375)	(350)	(324)	(304)
2,285	Planning & Building Control	2,373	2,471	2,572	2,677	2,784
844	Shared Revenues & Benefits Service	618	692	769	849	978
2,971	IT Shared Service	2,959	3,061	3,167	3,277	3,392
1,436	Legal & Democratic Services	1,527	1,579	1,632	1,687	1,728
519	Human Resources & Org Development	656	671	688	704	721
2,528	Strategic Finance & Property	2,319	2,647	2,876	3,101	3,393
705	Centrally Managed Costs	937	939	941	943	943
(150)	Revenue Costs Capitalised	(70)	(50)	(20)	(20)	(20)
50	Capital Expenditure Charged to a Revenue Account	50	50	50	50	50
15,921	<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	18,125	19,252	20,321	21,370	22,525

2025/26 £000	Corporate Budgets	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
(100)	Fees and Charges Annual Review	(50)	(100)	(150)	(200)	(250)
1,634	Minimum Revenue Provision	1,453	1,453	1,479	1,479	1,479
3,269	Interest Payable on Loans	2,508	2,310	2,190	1,986	1,986
(1,000)	Investment Income	(600)	(600)	(600)	(600)	(600)
637	Pension Fund Deficit Contribution					
4,440	<b>Total Corporate Budgets</b>	3,311	3,063	2,919	2,665	2,615

(63)	Savings identified 2026/27	(436)	(436)	(436)	(436)	(436)
	Savings identified 2027/28		(648)	(648)	(648)	(648)
	Savings identified 2028/29			(210)	(210)	(210)
	Savings proposed 2026/27 Pressures	(454)	(454)	(454)	(454)	(454)
	Savings to be found	771	549	0	0	0
	<b>Total Savings &amp; Pressures</b>	(119)	(989)	(1,748)	(1,748)	(1,748)

<b>20,298</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>21,317</b>	<b>21,326</b>	<b>21,492</b>	<b>22,287</b>	<b>23,392</b>
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2025/26 £000	Government Funding & Council Tax	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
(5,092)	Retained Business Rates - Business Rates	(2,657)	(2,718)	(2,773)	(2,773)	(2,773)
(1,193)	New Homes Bonus Grant	0	0	0	0	0
(141)	Revenue Support Grant	(4,274)	(3,672)	(3,041)	(3,041)	(3,041)
(403)	General Government Grants	0	0	0	0	0
(179)	NI grant					
	Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse	(1,009)	(1,047)	(1,053)	(1,053)	(1,053)
(13,131)	Council Tax Demand on the Collection Fund	(13,627)	(14,139)	(14,670)	(15,220)	(15,790)
	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit					
(20,139)	Total Government Funding & Council Tax	(21,567)	(21,576)	(21,537)	(22,087)	(22,657)

<b>159 Net Budget before Reserves movements</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>735</b>
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2025/26 £000	Contributions to/(from) Reserves	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
0	Contributions to Earmarked Reserves	250	250	0	0	0
(164)	Contributions (from) Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
	Contributions to General Fund					
	Contributions (from) General Fund					
(164)	Total Contributions to/(from) Reserves	250	250	0	0	0

<b>(5) Net Budget Position</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>735</b>
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## Parking Fees

	Tariff 01 April 2025	Tariff 01 April 2026 Inclusive of VAT
<b>CAR PARK - LOCATION - CHARGEABLE HOURS</b>		
<b>Jackson Square - Bishop's Stortford</b>		
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 6.30pm)</b>		
Up to 1 hour	£1.20	NO FREE £1.25
Up to 2 hours	£2.40	£2.50
Up to 3 hours	£3.60	£3.70
Up to 4 hours	£4.80	£5.00
Up to 5 hours	£6.00	£6.20
Public Holidays except Christmas Day Up to 11 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
Sunday Up to 11 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
<b>Link Road - Bishop's Stortford:</b>		
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)</b>		
Up to 1 hour	£1.20	NO FREE £1.25
Up to 2 hours	£2.40	£2.50
Up to 3 hours	£3.60	£3.70
Up to 4 hours	£4.80	£5.00
Up to 5 hours	£6.00	£6.20
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
Public Holidays except Christmas Day to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
<b>Northgate End MSCP - Bishop's Stortford</b>		
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)</b>		
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	NO FREE £1.05
Up to 2 hours	£2.00	£2.10
Up to 3 hours	£2.60	£2.70
Up to 4 hours	£3.20	£3.30
Up to 5 hours	£3.70	£3.80
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£4.20	£4.40
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.60	£1.70
Public Holidays except Christmas Day 12.5 hours (All Day)	£1.60	£1.70
<b>Apton Road, Basbow Lane, - Bishop's Stortford</b>		
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)</b>		
Up to 30 mins (Free)	£0.00	£0.00
Up to 1 hour	£1.20	£1.25
Up to 2 hours	£2.40	£2.50
Up to 3 hours	£3.60	£3.70
Up to 4 hours	£4.80	£5.00
Up to 5 hours	£6.00	£6.20
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£7.80	£8.10
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
<b>Crown Terrace A - Bishop's Stortford</b>		
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)</b>		
Up to 30 mins (Free)	£0.00	£0.00
Up to 1 hour	£1.20	£1.25
Up to 2 hours	£2.40	£2.50
Up to 3 hours	£3.60	£3.70
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	£2.00	£2.10

Tariff
01 April 2025

Tariff
01 April 2026
Inclusive of VAT

**CAR PARK - LOCATION - CHARGEABLE HOURS**

<b>Crown Terrace B - Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Mon – Fri (8.30am – 8.00pm)	
Up to 30 mins (Free)	
Up to 5 hours	
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Sat (8.30am – 8.00pm)	
Up to 30 mins (Free)	
Up to 1 hour	
Up to 2 hours	
Up to 3 hours	
Up to 4 hours	
Up to 5 hours	
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	

£0.00
£6.00
£7.20
£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£7.20
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£6.20
£7.50
£0.00
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£7.50
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Elm Road - Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)	
Up to 30 mins (Free)	
Up to 5 hours	
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	

£0.00
£4.00
£5.00
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£4.20
£5.20
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Grange Paddocks A - Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Mon – Sat (9.00am – 8.00pm)	
Up to 2.5 hours	
Up to 11 hours (All Day)	
Sunday Up to 11 hours (All Day)	
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 11 hours (All Day)	

£2.00
£3.50
£2.00
£2.00

NO FREE
£2.10
£3.60
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Grange Paddocks B - Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Mon – Sat (9.00am – 8pm)	
Up to 2.5 hours (Free)	
Up to 5 hours	
Sunday Up to 8 hours (All Day)	
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 8 hours (All Day)	

£0.00
£3.50
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£3.60
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Grange Paddocks C- Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Mon – Sun (9.00am – 8pm)	
Up to 2.5 hours (Free)	

£0.00
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£0.00
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<b>Gascoyne Way Multi Storey: Level A - Hertford</b>	
Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)	
Up to 30 mins (Free)	
Up to 1 hour	
Up to 2 hours	
Up to 3 hours	
Up to 4 hours	
Up to 5 hours	
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)	

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£2.00
£2.00

New Standard Tariff Structure
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£2.10
£2.10

Tariff
01 April 2025

Tariff
01 April 2026
Inclusive of VAT

<b>CAR PARK - LOCATION - CHARGEABLE HOURS</b>
---

<b>St Andrew Street - Hertford</b>
Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Gascoyne Way Multi Storey - Levels B,C,D; Hartham Lane; Hartham Common; Port Vale - Hertford</b>
Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£7.20
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£7.50
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Old London Road - Hertford</b>
Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Commercial Vehicles
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£6.00
£7.20
£16.00
£2.00
£2.00

<b>New Standard Tariff Structure</b>
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£7.50
£17.00
£2.10
£2.10

<b>Wallfields - Hertford</b>
Mon – Fri (9.00am – 5.00pm)
Up to 2 hours (Free)
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Sat (9.00am – 5.00pm)
Up to 2 hours (Free)
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 8 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 8 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 8 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£7.20
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£7.50
£2.10
£2.10

Tariff
01 April 2025

Tariff
01 April 2026
Inclusive of VAT

CAR PARK - LOCATION - CHARGEABLE HOURS
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Kibes Lane - Ware
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Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£2.00
£2.00

New Standard Tariff Structure
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£2.10
£2.10

Amwell End - Ware
-------------------

Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£7.80
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£8.10
£2.10
£2.10

Baldock Street, Priory Street - Ware
--------------------------------------

Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£4.80
£6.00
£7.20
£2.00
£2.00

£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£5.00
£6.20
£7.50
£2.10
£2.10

Burgage Lane - Ware
---------------------

Mon – Sat (7.30am – 8.00pm)
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Sunday Up to 12.5 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 12.5 hours (All Day)

£1.20
£2.40
£3.60
£2.00
£2.00

New Standard Tariff Structure
£0.00
£1.25
£2.50
£3.70
£2.10
£2.10

Bowling Green Lane - Buntingford
----------------------------------

<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 6.30pm)</b>
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 11 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 11 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day Up to 11 hours (All Day)

2025-2026
£0.00
£2.10
£4.20
£2.00

New Standard Tariff Structure
£0.00
£0.70
£1.40
£2.10
£2.80
£3.50
£4.20
£1.50
£1.50

<b>Tariff</b>
<b>01 April 2025</b>

<b>Tariff</b>
<b>01 April 2026</b>
<b>Inclusive of VAT</b>

<b>CAR PARK - LOCATION - CHARGEABLE HOURS</b>
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<b>Bell Street - Sawbridgeworth</b>
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 6.30pm)</b>
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 11 hours (All Day)
<b>Sunday Up to 11 hours (All Day)</b>
Public Holidays except Christmas Day up to 9.5 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£0.70
£1.40
£2.10
£2.80
£3.50
£4.20
£2.00

<b>New Standard Tariff Structure</b>
£0.00
£0.70
£1.40
£2.10
£2.80
£3.50
£4.20
£1.50
£1.50

<b>High Street - Stanstead Abbots</b>
<b>Mon – Sat (7.30am – 6.30pm)</b>
Up to 30 mins (Free)
Up to 1 hour
Up to 2 hours
Up to 3 hours
Up to 4 hours
Up to 5 hours
Up to 11 hours (All Day)
Sunday Up to 11 hours (All Day)
Public Holidays except Christmas Day Up to 11 hours (All Day)

£0.00
£0.70
£1.40
£2.10
£2.80
£3.50
£4.20
£1.50
£1.50

<b>New Standard Tariff Structure</b>
£0.00
£0.70
£1.40
£2.10
£2.80
£3.50
£4.20
£1.50
£1.50

<b>CAR PARKS TIMES &amp; HOURS</b>
Market Trader Tariff - Apton Road & Link Road - Bishop's Stortford
Commercial vehicles Tariff - Old London Road - Hertford

<b>Tarrif</b>
£4.80
£16.00

£5.00
£17.00



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Environmental Health Charges

Animal licences - Grant or renewal cost of one licensable activity	Cost Recovery	Every 1 to 3 years	532.00	554.00	OS
Animal licences - Grant or renewal cost per additional licensable activity	Cost Recovery	Every 1 to 3 years	280.00	292.00	OS
Animal licences - Hiring of horses annual inspection fee (plus hiring of horses additional charge below) (invoiced after each annual inspection)	Cost Recovery	Every 1 to 3 years	255.00	265.00	OS
Animal Licences - Hiring of horses additional charge per horse	Cost Recovery	Every 1 to 3 years	15.00	17.00	OS
Animal licences - Minor variation of a current licence (no site visit)	Cost Recovery	per variation	127.00	132.00	OS
Animal licences - Variation of a current licence (involving site visit) (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per variation	288.00	300.00	OS
Animal licences - Re-evaluation of a licenced premises star rating (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per inspection	394.00	410.00	OS
Animal Licences - 'arrangers fee' for one licensable activity	Cost Recovery	Every 1 to 3 years	558.00	580.00	OS
Zoos - New Licence (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per 4 year registration	2,912.00	3,030.00	OS
Zoos - Year 3 periodical inspection (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per inspection	2,646.00	2,790.00	OS
Zoos - Year 6 renewal licence inspection (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per 6 years	2,682.00	2,790.00	OS
Zoos - Transfer of Licence (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per transfer	1,055.00	1,100.00	OS
Dangerous Wild Animals (plus vet fees)	Cost Recovery	per 2 years	442.00	460.00	OS
Registration for Skin Piercing (Premises)	Cost Recovery	per business	265.00	276.00	OS
Registration for Skin Piercing (Person) - when registered at the time of premises registration	Cost Recovery	per person	15.00	16.00	OS
Registration for Skin Piercing (Person) - when registered after/independently of premises registration	Cost Recovery	per person or premises	191.00	200.00	OS
Registration for Peripatetic Skin Piercing	Cost Recovery	per business	277.00	290.00	OS
Update to an existing Skin Piercing registration (minor update not needing site visit). If visit needed see registration of premises and/or person cost	Cost Recovery	per update	92.00	96.00	OS
Replacement of any environmental health licence, FHRS sticker or registration certificate	Cost Recovery	per licence	30.00	32.00	OS
Mobile homes sites - fit and proper person checks ( exc DBS costs)	Cost Recovery	Per check	198.00	210.00	OS
	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	89.00	93.00	OS

### Food Hygiene & Safety

Issue of certificate following surrender of food - first hour (plus disposal costs)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	89.00	93.00	OS
Issue of certificate following surrender of food - additional hours (plus disposal costs)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	59.00	62.00	OS
Food export health certificate (first hour)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	91.00	95.00	OS
Food export health certificate (additional hours)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	59.00	62.00	OS
Letter confirming food premises registration	Cost Recovery	per certificate	35.00	37.00	OS
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Rescoring Visit	Cost Recovery	per visit	214.00	223.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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#### Miscellaneous Fees & Charges

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Contaminated Land/ additional land charge enquiry (simple land search)	Cost Recovery	per enquiry	87.00	91.00	OS
Contaminated Land/ additional land charge enquiry (detailed land search)	Cost Recovery	per enquiry	230.00	240.00	OS
Statement of fact for civil cases (first hour)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	93.00	97.00	S
Statement of fact for civil cases (additional hour)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	59.00	62.00	S
Processing Section 61 notice application	Cost Recovery	per enquiry	91.00	95.00	OS
Attendance at Exhumations (first hour)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	93.00	97.00	OS
Attendance at Exhumations (additional hours)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	59.00	62.00	OS
Public health burials (first hour)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	91.00	95.00	OS
Public health burials (additional hour)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	59.00	62.00	OS

#### Private Water Supplies

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Risk Assessment (first hour) (plus costs incurred by specialist inspector)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	89.00	93.00	S
Risk Assessment (additional hour) (plus costs incurred by specialist inspector)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	52.00	55.00	S
Risk Assessment (Desktop) - first hour	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	89.00	93.00	S
Risk Assessment (Desktop) - additional hours	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	52.00	55.00	S
Sampling Visit - first hour (plus analysis costs)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	82.00	86.00	S
Sampling Visit - additional hours (plus analysis costs)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	52.00	55.00	S
Sampling - Desktop review of results (first hour)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	82.00	86.00	OS
Sampling - Desktop review of results (additional hours)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	52.00	55.00	OS
Investigation - first hour (plus analysis costs)	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	82.00	86.00	OS
Investigation - additional hours (plus analysis costs)	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	52.00	55.00	OS
Granting of Authorisation -first hour	Cost Recovery	First hour or part	121.00	126.00	OS
Granting of Authorisation - additional hours	Cost Recovery	per hour or part	67.00	70.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Private Sector Housing

Standards inspection for immigration	Cost Recovery	per inspection	201.00	210.00	S
Housing Notices (excluding any costs incurred for additional reports required to support notice service eg EICR, Structural Engineering Report, Damp Survey which will be charged separately)	Cost Recovery	fixed charge	450.00	470.00	OS
Housing Notices Recovery of cost to arrange for professional reports (plus professional costs)	Cost Recovery	per professional report	85.00	89.00	OS
Fixed penalty for failure to belong to an approved redress scheme	Cost Recovery	fixed charge	5,000.00	5,000.00	OS
Licence for a HMO with no more than 5 bedrooms - full fee upon application	Cost Recovery	per licence	1,377.00	1,432.00	OS
Licence for a HMO with no more than 5 bedrooms - Part 1 Fee	Cost Recovery	per licence	1,112.00	1,157.00	OS
Licence for an HMO - Part 2 Fee	Cost Recovery	per licence - final before issuing licence	293.00	305.00	OS
Additional bedrooms	Cost Recovery	each	29.00	31.00	OS
Renewal of HMO Licence - Full fee upfront.	Cost Recovery	per licence	1,145.00	1,191.00	OS
Renewal of HMO Licence - Two-part fee - Part 1	Cost Recovery	per licence - initial at application	880.00	916.00	OS
Renewal of HMO Licence - Two-part fee - Part 2	Cost Recovery	per licence - final before issuing licence	293.00	305.00	OS
HMO Confirmation Letters for licensable HMOs after application has been received	Cost Recovery	per letter	35.00	37.00	OS
Housing Advice Visit	Cost Recovery	per visit	388.00	404.00	S

### Other Licenses

Sex Establishments		per annum	3,760.00	3,910.00	OS
Sex Establishments		per renewal	3,330.00	3,460.00	OS
Sex Establishments		transfer	108.00	112.00	OS
Hypnotism Act 1952 - Occasional licensed premises			217.00	226.00	OS
Hypnotism Act 1952 - Occasional unlicensed premises			835.00	870.00	OS
Scrap Metal Site Licence		per licence granted	353.00	370.00	OS
Scrap Metal Site Licence		per licence renewed	263.00	275.00	OS
Scrap Metal Site Licence - Variation, Name Change, Change of Site		per change	63.00	65.00	OS
Scrap Metal Collectors Licence		per licence granted	320.00	332.00	OS
Scrap Metal Collectors Licence		per licence renewed	229.00	240.00	OS
Scrap Metal Collectors Licence - Variation, Name Change		per change	63.00	65.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge
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2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £
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2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Taxi Licensing

	Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Private Hire vehicle (new) - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per new licence	308.00	308.00	OS
Private Hire vehicle (renewal) - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per renewal	287.00	287.00	OS
Vehicle - either Hackney Carriage or Private Hire (new) HC only - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per new licence	400.00	400.00	OS
Vehicle - either Hackney Carriage or Private Hire (renewal) HC only - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per renewal	318.00	318.00	OS
Dual Driver or Private Hire Driver (new) - 3 year	Cost Recovery	per new licence	394.00	394.00	OS
Dual Driver or Private Hire Driver (renewal) - 3 year	Cost Recovery	per renewal	284.00	284.00	OS
Dual Driver or Private Hire Driver (new) - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per new licence	343.00	343.00	OS
Dual Driver or Private Hire Driver (renewal) - 1 year	Cost Recovery	per renewal	234.00	243.00	OS
Private Hire Operator - 5 year (new)	Cost Recovery	per new licence	302.00	302.00	OS
Private Hire Operator - 5 year (renewal)	Cost Recovery	per renewal	296.00	296.00	OS
Private Hire Operator - 1 year (new)	Cost Recovery	per new licence	267.00	267.00	OS
Private Hire Operator - 1 year (renewal)	Cost Recovery	per renewal	267.00	267.00	OS
Change of vehicle (new vehicle on old plate number)	Cost Recovery	Per vehicle	62.00	65.00	OS
Change of vehicle (courtesy car)	Cost Recovery	Per vehicle	96.00	100.00	OS
Vehicle Inspection (5 year check)	Cost Recovery	Per vehicle	38.00	40.00	OS
Private Hire Driver converted to Dual Driver	Cost Recovery	Per driver	32.00	33.00	OS
Private Hire Driver converted to Hackney Carriage vehicle	Cost Recovery	Per driver	113.00	118.00	OS
Change of vehicle proprietor	Cost Recovery	Per vehicle	43.00	45.00	OS
Change of DVLA details (registration number etc.)	Cost Recovery	Per vehicle	64.00	67.00	OS
Change of Drivers address	Cost Recovery	Per driver	13.00	14.00	OS
Knowledge test and training day (all new applicants)	Cost Recovery	Per driver	103.00	108.00	OS
Resit of both routes and rules & regulations tests	Cost Recovery	Per driver	55.00	57.00	OS
Resit of routes test only	Cost Recovery	Per driver	36.00	38.00	OS
Update training for existing drivers	Cost Recovery	Per driver	65.00	68.00	OS
Enhanced DBS Online	Cost Recovery	Per person	99.00	103.00	OS
English Competency testing (in our offices)	Cost Recovery	Per person	102.00	106.00	OS
English Competency testing (remote)	Cost Recovery	Per person	82.00	85.00	OS
Roof light (complete)	Cost Recovery	per light	68.00	71.00	S
Roof light (top cover only)	Cost Recovery	per light	47.00	49.00	S
Roof Light (base)	Cost Recovery	per light	32.00	33.00	S
Replacement drivers badges	Cost Recovery	Each	20.00	21.00	S
Hackney Carriage Replacement plate (or additional for a trailer)	Cost Recovery	Each	21.00	22.00	S
Private Hire Vehicle replacement plate	Cost Recovery	Each	23.00	24.00	S
Roof light bulbs	Cost Recovery	Each	3.00	3.00	S
Magnets (sold as a pair)	Cost Recovery	Per pair	19.00	20.00	S
Executive Disc (private hire vehicles only)	Cost Recovery	Each	14.00	15.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Premises Licences

Application for premises, club premises certificate, variations (excluding change of name and address or designated premises supervisor) conversion/variation - Band A - rateable value £0-£4,300	Statutory Fee	per band A premises	100.00	100.00	OS
Application for premises, club premises certificate, variations (excluding change of name and address or designated premises supervisor) conversion/variation - Band B - rateable value £4,301-33,000	Statutory Fee	per band B premises	190.00	190.00	OS
Application for premises, club premises certificate, variations (excluding change of name and address or designated premises supervisor) conversion/variation - Band C - rateable value £33,001-£87,000	Statutory Fee	per band C premises	315.00	315.00	OS
Application for premises, club premises certificate, variations (excluding change of name and address or designated premises supervisor) conversion/variation - Band D - rateable value £87,001-£125,000	Statutory Fee	per band D premises	450.00	450.00	OS
Application for premises, club premises certificate, variations (excluding change of name and address or designated premises supervisor) conversion/variation - Band E - rateable value £125,000 and over	Statutory Fee	per band E premises	635.00	635.00	OS
PREMISES LICENCES (Holders of premises licences and club premises certificate) - Band A - rateable value £0-£4,300	Statutory Fee	per band A premises per	70.00	70.00	OS
PREMISES LICENCES (Holders of premises licences and club premises certificate) - Band B - rateable value £4,301-33,000	Statutory Fee	per band B premises per	180.00	180.00	OS
PREMISES LICENCES (Holders of premises licences and club premises certificate) - Band C - rateable value £33,001-£87,000	Statutory Fee	per band C premises per	295.00	295.00	OS
PREMISES LICENCES (Holders of premises licences and club premises certificate) - Band D - rateable value £87,001-£125,000	Statutory Fee	per band D premises per	320.00	320.00	OS
PREMISES LICENCES (Holders of premises licences and club premises certificate) - Band E - rateable value £125,000 and over	Statutory Fee	per band E premises per	350.00	350.00	OS
PERSONAL LICENCE	Statutory Fee	per licence	37.00	37.00	OS
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per black & white A4 sheet	0.16	0.17	S
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per black & white A3 sheet	0.32	0.33	S
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per black & white A0 sheet	2.10	2.18	S
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per colour A4 sheet	0.32	0.33	S
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per colour A3 sheet	0.63	0.66	S
Supply of copies of information contained in register		per colour A0 sheet	2.42	2.52	S
Application for copy of licence or summary on theft, loss etc. of premises licence	Statutory Fee	per application	10.50	10.50	OS
Notification of change of name or address (holder of premises licence)	Statutory Fee	per change	10.50	10.50	OS
Application to vary or to specify individual as premises supervisor	Statutory Fee	per application	23.00	23.00	OS
Application to transfer premises licence	Statutory Fee	per application	23.00	23.00	OS
Interim authority notice	Statutory Fee	per notice	23.00	23.00	OS
Application for making of a provisional statement	Statutory Fee	per statement	315.00	315.00	OS
Application for copy of certificate or summary on theft, loss etc. of certificate or	Statutory Fee	per copy	10.50	10.50	OS
Notification of change of name or alteration of club rules	Statutory Fee	per change	10.50	10.50	OS
Change of relevant registration address of club	Statutory Fee	per change	10.50	10.50	OS

Temporary event notice	Statutory Fee	per notice	21.00	21.00	OS
Application of copy of notice on theft, loss etc. of temporary event notice	Statutory Fee	per copy	10.50	10.50	OS
Application of copy of licence on theft, loss etc. of personal licence	Statutory Fee	per copy	10.50	10.50	OS
Notification of change of name or address (personal licence)	Statutory Fee	per change	10.50	10.50	OS
Notice of interest in any premises	Statutory Fee	per notice	21.00	21.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Gambling Act

Bingo Premises		per licence	3,421.00	3,500.00	OS
Bingo Premises		per variation	1,711.00	1,750.00	OS
Bingo Premises		per transfer	1,173.00	1,200.00	OS
Bingo Premises		Annual Fee	978.00	1,000.00	OS
Adult Gaming Centre Premises		per licence	1,977.00	2,000.00	OS
Adult Gaming Centre Premises		per variation	978.00	1,000.00	OS
Adult Gaming Centre Premises		per transfer	1,150.00	1,200.00	OS
Adult Gaming Centre Premises		Annual Fee	978.00	1,000.00	OS
Betting Premises (Track)		per licence	2,444.00	2,500.00	OS
Betting Premises (Track)		per variation	1,223.00	1,250.00	OS
Betting Premises (Track)		per transfer	929.00	950.00	OS
Betting Premises (Track)		Annual Fee	978.00	1,000.00	OS
Betting Premises (Other)		per licence	2,939.00	3,000.00	OS
Betting Premises (Other)		per variation	1,467.00	1,500.00	OS
Betting Premises (Other)		per transfer	1,173.00	1,200.00	OS
Betting Premises (Other)		Annual Fee	383.00	400.00	OS
Family Entertainment Centre Premises		per licence	1,955.00	2,000.00	OS
Family Entertainment Centre Premises		per variation	978.00	1,000.00	OS
Family Entertainment Centre Premises		per transfer	929.00	950.00	OS
Family Entertainment Centre Premises		Annual Fee	733.00	750.00	OS
Temporary Use Notices		per notice	525.00	525.00	OS
Temporary Use Notices		per copy	26.00	26.00	OS
Gaming Machine Permit 10 years (Up to 2 machines)	Statutory Fee	per permit	150.00	150.00	OS
Gaming Machine Permit 10 years (Up to 2 machines)	Statutory Fee	per variation	100.00	100.00	OS
Gaming Machine Permit 10 years (Up to 2 machines)	Statutory Fee	per transfer	25.00	25.00	OS
Notification 2 gaming machines	Statutory Fee	per notice	50.00	50.00	OS
Club Gaming Machine Permit 5 years (Up to 3 machines)	Statutory Fee	per permit	100.00	100.00	OS
Club Gaming Machine Permit	Statutory Fee	Annual Fee	50.00	50.00	OS
Small Lotteries	Statutory Fee	per setup	40.00	40.00	OS
Small Lotteries	Statutory Fee	per renewal	20.00	20.00	OS

### Business & Planning Act 2024

Pavement License New ( 2 Years)		2 years	500.00	500.00	OS
Pavement License Renewal ( 2 years)		2 Years	350.00	350.00	OS
Removal of unauthorised Furniture		Per notice	210.00	210.00	OS
Storage per week		Per notice	175.00	175.00	OS
Disposal of furniture		per notice	295.00	295.00	OS
Distribution of free literature - 1 year		Per license	34.00	36.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge
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2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £
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2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Street Trading

	Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Street Trading: Occasional Registered Charity (up to one month)	Cost Recovery	per month	88.00	92.00	OS
Street Trading: Occasional (up to one month)	Cost Recovery	per month	172.00	180.00	OS
Street Trading: Peripatatic (e.g. ice cream van)	Cost Recovery	per annum	497.00	517.00	OS
Street Trading: Static (e.g. burger van)	Cost Recovery	per annum	505.00	526.00	OS
Transfer of street trading consent	Cost Recovery	per transfer	69.00	72.00	OS
Variation of street trading consent	Cost Recovery	Per variation	69.00	72.00	OS
Street trading consent refund - greater than 6 months left on consent	Cost Recovery	per consent	25% of fee paid	-	OS
Street trading consent refund - between 3 and 6 months left on consent	Cost Recovery	per consent	10% of fee paid	-	OS

### Markets

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Hertford commercial (Friday or Saturday)		Annual	-	460.00	OS
Hertford commercial (Friday or Saturday)		6 Months	-	240.00	OS
Hertford commercial (Friday or Saturday)		Quarterly	-	150.00	OS
Ware commercial (Friday or Saturday)		Annual	-	460.00	OS
Ware commercial (Friday or Saturday)		6 Months	-	240.00	OS
Ware commercial (Friday or Saturday)		Quarterly	-	150.00	OS
Commercial Markets (Any two) <b>note 1</b>		Annual	-	880.00	OS
Commercial Markets (Any two)		6 Months	-	460.00	OS
Commercial Markets (Any two)		Quarterly	-	275.00	OS
Commercial Markets (All three) <b>note 2</b>		Annual	-	1,260.00	OS
Commercial Markets (All three)		6 Months	-	660.00	OS
Commercial Markets (All three)		Quarterly	-	400.00	OS
Hertford Farmers Market <b>note 3</b>		Annual	-	360.00	OS
Hertford Farmers Market		6 Months	-	190.00	OS
Hertford Farmers Market		Quarterly	-	100.00	OS
Hertford Farmers Market (additional stall)		Daily	-	11.00	OS
Electricity ( lights & till only)		Per day	4.50	4.50	S
Electricity ( lights & till & cooking)		Per day	7.50	7.50	S
Comercial Market Incentive Discount		Annual	-	26.00	
Comercial Market Incentive Discount		6 Months	-	13.00	
Comercial Market Incentive Discount		Quarterly	-	6.50	

Note 1 - Can be any two from Hertford Commercial Saturday, Hertford Commercial Friday and Ware Commercial

Note 2 - Hertford Commercial Saturday, Hertford Commercial Friday and Ware Commercial.

Note 3 - One market per month but includes stall and table.



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Hostels

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Rectory & Hillcrest Hostels Single room (exc. Service charges)		per week	250.00	260.00	Z
Rectory & Hillcrest Hostels Double room (exc. Service charges)		per week	330.00	343.00	Z
Rectory & Hillcrest Hostels Family room (exc. Service charges)		per week	375.00	390.00	Z
Cedar Cottage Support Hostel Self Contained Unit		per week	377.00	392.00	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person		per week	129.33	134.50	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person		per day	15.80	16.43	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person and one child		per week	146.40	152.26	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person and one child		per day	20.90	21.74	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person and two children		per week	159.00	165.36	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Single person and two children		per day	22.80	23.71	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple		per week	146.40	152.26	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple		per day	20.90	21.74	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple and one child		per week	171.80	178.67	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple and one child		per day	24.50	25.48	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple and two children		per week	181.10	188.34	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Couple and two children		per day	26.60	27.66	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Additional children up to 16		per week	15.10	15.70	Z
Bed & Breakfast - Additional children up to 16		per day	2.10	2.18	Z

### Landcharges

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Registration of a charge in Part II of the register	Statutory Fee	per charge	67.00	67.00	OS
Filing a definite certificate of the Lands Tribunal under rule 10 (3)	Statutory Fee	per certificate	2.50	2.50	OS
Filing a judgement or order, or written request for the variation or cancellation of any entry in Part 11 of the register	Statutory Fee	per item	7.00	7.00	OS
Inspection of documents filed in the register under rule 10, in respect of each parcel of land	Statutory Fee	per parcel of land	2.50	2.50	OS
Office copy of any plan or other document filed pursuant to the rules	Statutory Fee	per copy			OS
Standard search fee ( CON29) VAT inclusive price	Cost Recovery	Per search	140.00	117.50	S
Extra parcel fee with standard search (CON29)	Cost Recovery	Per search	20.50	11.00	S
Standard search including all CON29O questions	Cost Recovery	Per search	305.25	287.40	S
CON29	Cost Recovery	Per search	105.00	117.50	S
Con29O Qu.4 -21	Cost Recovery	Per search	7.00	7.25	S
Con29o Qu.22	Cost Recovery	Per search	39.25	39.40	S
Extra parcel fee (Con29)	Cost Recovery	Per search	10.25	11.00	S
Expedited search fee	Cost Recovery	Per search	40.00	41.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Legal Charges

External legal advice (Non Public Law Partnership member)	Discretionary	Per hour	255.00	265.00	S
Authorised Guarantee Agreement	Discretionary	Fixed	628.00	653.00	S
Commercial lease assignment	Discretionary	Fixed	850.00	884.00	S
Leases	Discretionary	Fixed	981.00	1,020.00	S
Licences	Discretionary	Fixed	459.00	477.00	S
Deed of covenants	Discretionary	Fixed	511.66	532.00	S
Landlord licence	Discretionary	Fixed	717.00	746.00	S
Deed of variation (complex)	Discretionary	Fixed	1,307.00	1,359.00	S
Easements	Discretionary	Fixed	1,307.00	1,359.00	S
Drafting Rent Reviews	Discretionary	Fixed	327.00	340.00	S
s.106 TCPA 1990 – simple	Discretionary	Fixed	255.00	265.00	S
s.106 TCPA – complex	Discretionary	Per Hour	255.00	265.00	S

### Legal Charges continued

Deed of Surrender	Discretionary	Fixed	784.00	815.00	S
Transfer of Open Space	Discretionary	Fixed	1,046.00	1,088.00	S
Licence of alterations	Discretionary	Fixed	915.00	952.00	S
Licence to assign leasehold premises	Discretionary	Fixed	915.00	952.00	S
Notice of Assignment	Discretionary	Fixed	107.00	111.00	S
Nomination Agreement	Discretionary	Fixed	826.00	859.00	S
Leasehold Enquiry Forms	Discretionary	Fixed	193.00	201.00	S
Letter and Consent	Discretionary	Fixed	39.00	41.00	S
Residential Lease Extension	Discretionary	Fixed	551.00	573.00	S
Notice of charge	Discretionary	Fixed	130.00	135.00	S
Postponement of Charge	Discretionary	Fixed	130.00	135.00	S
Sale of land	Discretionary	Fixed	1,190.00	1,238.00	S
Footpath/Bridleway Creation or Diversion Agreement	Discretionary	Fixed	2,368.00	2,463.00	S

### Street Name & Numbering

Change of house name or adding alias name	Discretionary	Per address	100.00	104.00	Z
Registering 1 plot	Discretionary	Per address	100.00	104.00	Z
Registering 2-24 plots	Discretionary	Per address	75.00	78.00	Z
Registering 25-49 plots	Discretionary	Per address	65.00	68.00	Z
Registering 50-74 plots	Discretionary	Per address	55.00	57.00	Z
Registering 75-99 plots	Discretionary	Per address	45.00	47.00	Z
Registering 100+ Plots	Discretionary	Per address	35.00	36.00	Z
Naming a new street/block where the Council Chooses a Name	Discretionary	Per road name	300.00	310.00	Z
Naming a new street/block where the developer chooses a name (Three names to be submitted with local connection and must conform to policy)	Discretionary	Per road name	400.00	425.00	Z
Renaming of street where requested by residents and/or the Town/Parish Council	Discretionary	Per address	100.00	104.00	Z
Change to new addresses due to development changing after the schedule has been issued (applies to all amended plots)	Discretionary	Per address	100.00	104.00	Z



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Electoral Registration Fees

Fee for sale of the full register and notices of alteration	Statutory Fee	per sale provided electronically	20.00	20.80	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	1.50	1.56	Z
Fee for sale of the full register and notices of alteration	Statutory Fee	per sale printed	10.00	10.40	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	5.00	5.20	Z
Fee for sale of the open Register	Statutory Fee	per sale provided electronically	20.00	20.80	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	1.50	1.56	Z
Fee for sale of the open Register	Statutory Fee	per sale printed	10.00	10.40	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	5.00	5.20	Z
Fee for sale of the list of overseas electors	Statutory Fee	per sale provided electronically	20.00	20.80	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per hundred or part hundred entries	1.50	1.56	Z
Fee for sale of the list of overseas electors	Statutory Fee	per sale printed	10.00	10.40	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per hundred or part hundred entries	5.00	5.20	Z
Fee for sale of the marked document (register or absent voters list)	Statutory Fee	per sale provided electronically	10.00	10.40	Z



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge
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2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £
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2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Electoral Registration Fees - continued

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	1.00	1.04	Z
Fee for sale of the marked document (register or absent voters list)	Statutory Fee	per sale printed	10.00	10.40	Z
and an additional	Statutory Fee	per thousand or part thousand entries	2.00	2.08	Z
Photocopies of Election expense returns	Statutory Fee	Per side copied	0.20	0.21	Z
Certificate of Registration	Discretionary	per elector per year	22.00	22.88	Z
Voter Authority Certificate	Statutory Fee	per elector per year	Free		Z

### Animal Control

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Stray dog with ID chip (unless first offence and dog is collected the same day)		per dog	35.00	36.40	n/a
Stray dog without ID chip	Statutory Fee		60.00	60.00	n/a
Stray dog collected			25.00	26.00	n/a
Kennel Charges		per night	27.50	28.60	n/a
Assistance to third party organisations		per hour	Price on application	-	S
Provision of dog waste bag		per box of 5000	68.50	71.00	S
Dog Fouling Sign		per sign	Price on application	-	S

### Pest Control

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Concessionary fee for residents in receipt of income related benefit - waived in cases of hardship at the discretion of the Head of Environmental Services		per job	25.00	26.00	S

### Outdoor Exercise Group Activities

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Organisations - per site		per site	1,995.00	2,075.00	S
Personal Trainers - per trainer		per trainer	745.00	775.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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## Waste Service Fees

### Garden Waste - residential

Garden Waste Bin		Per bin per year	59.00	61.00	OS
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### Trade Refuse - Commercial Customers

120 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	7.35	7.64	OS
240 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	11.91	12.39	OS
360 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	13.24	13.77	OS
660 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	22.43	23.33	OS
1100 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	28.16	29.29	OS
EH Sacks - per 50 sacks	Commercial charge	Per 50 sacks	158.05	164.37	OS

### Trade Refuse - Charities

240 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	10.47	10.90	OS
360 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	11.58	12.00	OS
660 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	18.67	19.40	OS
1100 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	22.93	23.80	OS
EH Sacks - per 50 sacks	Commercial charge	Per 50 sacks	146.44	152.00	OS

### TRADE REFUSE - SCHOOLS

140 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	7.31	7.60	OS
240 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	8.64	9.00	OS
360 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	10.86	11.30	OS
660 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	15.84	16.50	OS
1100 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	19.61	20.40	OS
EH Sacks - per 50 sacks	Commercial charge	Per 50 sacks	146.44	152.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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#### TRADE RECYCLING - CO-MINGLED RECYCLING

	Commercial charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Box	Commercial charge	Per box per year	3.15	3.30	OS
140 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	3.15	3.30	OS
240 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	4.50	4.70	OS
360 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	6.19	6.50	OS
660 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	9.91	10.30	OS
1100 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	12.38	12.90	OS

#### TRADE RECYCLING - PAPER RECYCLING

	Commercial charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Box	Commercial charge	Per box per year	3.15	3.30	OS
140 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	3.15	3.30	OS
240 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	4.50	4.70	OS
360 litre bin	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	6.19	6.50	OS

#### TRADE CLINICAL WASTE

	Commercial charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Site visit	Commercial charge	Per box per year	21.32	22.17	OS
Sharps container	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	13.63	14.18	OS
Clinical Waste Sacks - infectious	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	8.42	8.76	OS
Clinical Waste Sacks - offensive	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	5.10	5.30	OS
Extra sacks delivery	Commercial charge	Per bin per year	37.44	38.94	OS

#### BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

	Cost Recovery	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Basic collection of 1 - 6 items	Cost Recovery	Per collection of 1 - 6 items	58.90	61.20	OS
Additional items - non electrical	Cost Recovery	Per item	16.30	17.00	OS
Additional items - electrical	Cost Recovery	Per item	54.30	56.50	OS
Additional items - Persistent Organic Pollutants	Cost Recovery	Per item	58.60	61.00	OS
Cancellation fee	Cost Recovery	Per cancellation	14.40	15.00	OS



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge
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2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £
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2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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## Planning Fees

### MISC DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT CHARGES

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Copies of any documents		per black & white A4 side	0.16	0.17	n/a
Copies of any documents		per colour A4 side	0.33	0.34	n/a
Copies of any documents		per black & white A3 side	0.33	0.34	n/a
Copies of any documents		per colour A3 side	0.66	0.69	n/a
Copies of documents provided on an electronic disc		per disc provided	19.95	20.75	n/a
Historical Research (where records available)		per hour (or part)	100.80	104.83	n/a
Legal obligation agreements - confirmation of compliance by third parties or where the monitoring		per hour (or part of) after first hour	98.70	102.65	n/a
Retrieval of externally stored microfilmed records		per microfilmed record	45.00 per hour	47.00 per hour	n/a

### MINOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

			2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
Householder proposals (written advice only)		Per request	218.75	227.50	S
Heritage advice only (minor scheme where site is within curtilage of Listed Building)		Per request	450.00	468.00	S
Small Commercial (written advice only)		Per request	454.80	478.00	S
Small Commercial (written advice and meeting)		Per request	-	728.00	S
Medium commercial (written advice only)		Per request	909.59	955.00	S
Medium commercial (written advice and meeting)		Per request	-	1,205.00	S
Other commercial or simple change of use (written advice only)		Per request	272.88	287.00	S
Other commercial or simple change of use (written advice, with meeting)		Per request	-	537.00	
Simple Adverts (written advice only)		Per request	181.92	191.00	S
Simple Adverts (written advice with meeting)		Per request	-	441.00	
10 or more adverts (written advice only)		Per request	636.71	669.00	S
11 or more adverts (written advice with meeting)		Per request	-	919.00	
Other non-residential not covered by the above (written advice only)		Per request	272.88	287.00	S
Other non-residential not covered by the above (written advice and meeting)		Per request	-	537.00	
Creation of new residential unit (written advice only)		Per request	481.25	505.00	S
Creation of new residential unit (written advice and meeting)		Per request	-	755.00	
2-5 new residential units (includes meeting)		Per request	960.49	1,009.00	S
6-9 new residential units (written advice only)		Per request	1,152.59	1,210.00	S
6-9 new residential units (written advice and meeting)		Per request	-	1,610.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge	2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £	2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### MAJOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Residential 10-24 units		Per request	3,605.39	3,786.00	S
Residential 25-49 units		Per request	5,408.09	5,678.00	S
Residential 50 - 99 units		Per request	8,112.13	8,518.00	S
Residential 100-200 units		Per request	13,520.22	14,196.00	S
Residential 200 units +		Per request	price on application	price on application	S
Small major commercial scheme		Per request	5,250.00	5,513.00	S
Medium major commercial scheme		Per request	7,875.00	8,269.00	S
Large major commercial scheme		Per request	10,500.00	11,025.00	S
Commercial chang of use		Per request	2,100.00	2,205.00	S
Other non-residential advice on major applications not covered by the above		Per request	4,375.00	4,594.00	S
Other non-residential advice on major applications not covered by the above (no floor area)		Per request	525.00	551.00	S

### Planning Miscellaneous

High Hedges (Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003)		Per request	700.00	735.00	S
Withdrawal of notice from Enforcement Register		Per request	450.00	473.00	S
Discretionary Meeting		Per request	200.00	210.00	S
Handling Fee for long-term invalid applications		Per request	62.00	65.00	S
Discussion of provision of habitat bank for Biodiversity Net Gain		Per request	-	2,500.00	S
Chargeable amendments to applications under consideration		Per request	-	204.17	S

### SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING REGISTER

Entry onto Part 1 of the Register (Individuals)		per officer rate	150.00	25.00	S
Entry onto Part 2 of the Register (Individuals)		per officer rate	150.00	25.00	S
Entry onto Part 1 of the Register (Groups and Associations)		per officer rate	150.00 + 75.00 per individual	25.00	S
Entry onto Part 2 of the Register (Groups and Associations)		per officer rate	150.00 + 75.00 per individual	25.00	S

### Surrendering Vehicle for scrapping

Motorcycle - no storage	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	59.50	S
Vehicle less than 3.5 tonnes - no storage	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	59.50	S
Touring Caravan - no storage	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	259.50	S
Motorcycle - storage 7 days	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	161.00	S
Vehicle less than 3.5 tonnes - storage 7 days	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	231.00	S
Touring Caravan - storage 7 days	Cost Recovery	per vehicle	-	466.00	S



Basis of Charge	Unit of Charge
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2025/26 Charge Ex. VAT £
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2026/27 Charge Ex. VAT £	VAT
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### Parking permits

Off Street Resident Season Ticket - Port Vale			341.71	354.17	S
Off Street Resident Season Ticket - Crown Terrace			1,536.00	1,597.50	S
Off Street Resident Season Ticket - Baldock Street - Ware			1,201.01	1,250.00	S
On Street Resident Season Ticket - 1st Permit			75.00	75.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - 2nd Permit			150.00	150.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - 3rd Permit (only available where possible in B1 (Stansted Rd, BS), B2 (Dunmow Rd, BS), B3 (Windhill BS), B7 Chantry BS), W2 (Coronation Rd Ware))			156.25	150.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Motorcycle permit			27.00	28.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Contractor permit		per week	26.00	27.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Business permit		per annum	424.00	441.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Carers/ Special permits (discretionary)			45.00	47.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Charge for Temporary Dispensation from Parking Restrictions			26.00	27.00	OS
On Street Residents Parking Permits - Folly Island - 2nd Permit			75.00	75.00	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		per hour	0.17	0.18	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		per hour pensioners	0.08	0.08	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		Per Day	1.60	1.66	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		Per day pensioners	0.80	0.83	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		Per Week	3.40	3.54	OS
On Street Resident Season Ticket - Visitors Vouchers		Per week pensioners	1.70	1.77	OS
Parking Northgate House		Per space per annum	1,050.00	1,092.00	OS
Bishop's Stortford market traders' tariff - Link Road		per Thursday or Saturday	4.80	5.00	S
Bishop's Stortford market traders' tariff - Apton Road		per Thursday or Saturday	4.80	5.00	S
Old London Road - Hertford - Coach / Lorry tariff		per visit	16.00	16.67	S
Fast chargers (up to 22 kWh)			0.44	0.44	I

PROJECTED BALANCES ON RESERVES

Appendix C

	2025/26 Balance 31 Mar '26 £000	2026/27 Balance 31 Mar '27 £000	2027/28 Balance 31 Mar '28 £000	2028/29 Balance 31 Mar '29 £000	2029/30 Balance 31 Mar '30 £000	2030/31 Balance 31 Mar '31 £000
<b>General Fund</b>	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854
<b>Other Earmarked Reserves</b>						
<b>Corporate</b>						
General Reserve	481	481	481	481	481	481
Local Government Reorganisation	0	500	0	0	0	0
Provision for future whole Council elections	380	380	380	380	380	380
New Homes Bonus Priority Spend	4,006	3,006	3,006	3,006	3,006	3,006
<b>Total Corporate</b>	<b>4,866</b>	<b>4,366</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>3,866</b>
<b>Risk</b>						
Interest Equalisation Reserve	1,647	1,647	1,647	1,647	1,647	1,647
Insurance Fund	714	714	714	714	714	714
Emergency Planning Reserve	36	36	36	36	36	36
HB Subsidy Volatility	100	100	100	100	100	100
Waste recycling income volatility reserve	171	171	171	171	171	171
Sinking Fund - Leisure utilities / pension	228	228	228	228	228	228
Collection Fund Reserve	5,063	5,063	5,063	5,063	5,063	5,063
<b>Total Risk</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>7,959</b>
<b>Service Specific</b>						
Local Plan Reserve	387	232	77	0	0	0
Housing Condition Survey	90	90	90	40	40	40
Performance reward grant	0	0	0	0	0	0
Footbridge over the River Stort	150	150	150	150	150	150
Finance Systems	326	326	326	326	326	326
Neighbourhood Planning Grant	176	176	176	176	176	176
Flexible Homelessness Grant	354	354	354	354	354	354
Preventing Homelessness New Burdens	31	31	31	31	31	31
Land Charges New Burdens	30	30	30	30	30	30
Parks & Open spaces	306	306	306	306	306	306
Revenues & Benefits New Burdens	321	321	321	321	321	321
<b>Total Service Specific</b>	<b>2,172</b>	<b>2,017</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,735</b>
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>14,997</b>	<b>14,342</b>	<b>13,688</b>	<b>13,560</b>	<b>13,560</b>	<b>13,560</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>18,851</b>	<b>18,196</b>	<b>17,542</b>	<b>17,414</b>	<b>17,414</b>	<b>17,414</b>

### **Section 25 Statement of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) – East Herts Council 2026/27**

#### **1. Introduction and Wider Economic Environment**

The 2026/27 budget for East Herts Council has been prepared in the context of ongoing uncertainty in the wider economic environment, including persistent inflationary pressures, fluctuating interest rates, and continued volatility in staffing and other costs. The national and local economic climate continues to impact both the Council's income streams and expenditure, requiring prudent financial management and robust governance.

East Herts Council has a strong track record of sound financial management, compliance with statutory codes, and effective delivery of strategic objectives. The Council's financial planning is underpinned by regular review and challenge, ensuring that the budget is both realistic and sustainable.

#### **2. Robustness of Estimates**

##### **Budget Process and Governance**

The Council's budget-setting process is rigorous and collaborative, involving:

- **Enhanced challenge and scrutiny** by the CFO and Deputy CFO, who work closely with business partners, service managers, the Leadership Team, and the Executive to ensure all budget proposals are robust and evidence based.
- **Quarterly budget monitoring** and regular review of outturn positions, enabling early identification and management of variances.
- **Active engagement** of Members through the Scrutiny Committees, ensuring transparency and accountability.

##### **Key Assumptions and Risks**

- **Inflation and Pay:** The 2026/27 estimates incorporate prudent assumptions on inflation, pay awards, and contract costs, reflecting the latest forecasts and local intelligence.
- **Income and Grants:** Income projections are based on realistic assessments of demand and economic conditions. The budget includes the impact of Fair Funding 2.0.
- **Savings and Efficiencies:** The Council continues to deliver savings through efficiency programmes. The budget includes a significant asset disposal programme, notably the disposal of all properties within the Millstream company. These receipts are critical to reducing the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and interest costs.
- **Capital Programme:** The capital estimates have been reviewed for deliverability and risk. The Council's capital strategy is closely aligned with its asset management and treasury strategies, with clear governance arrangements in place.
- **Risk Management:** The Council has identified and mitigated key financial risks, including those associated with commercial income, asset disposals, and market volatility. Sensitivity analysis and scenario planning are embedded in the budget process.

### **Financial Controls**

- The Council's Financial Regulations require all budget holders to manage within approved budgets, with clear procedures for virements and supplementary estimates.
- Where budget pressures arise, these are reported promptly to Members, with action plans developed to address significant variances.

### **3. Adequacy of Reserves**

#### **General and Earmarked Reserves**

- The Council maintains a clear distinction between general, earmarked, and unusable reserves. The adequacy of reserves is reviewed annually, taking into account service risks, transformation commitments, and the need for financial resilience.

- **Breakdown of Earmarked Reserves:** Work is completed on which reserves are committed and which may be available for future use. A breakdown of reserves is provided as an appendix to the final budget report.
- The Council's reserves are regularly reviewed to ensure that balances remain above the minimum risk-assessed level, providing a buffer against unforeseen events and timing differences between expenditure and income.

#### **4. Statement of Accounts and Audit**

- East Herts Council has caught up on all outstanding statements of accounts up to and including 2024/25. While these accounts are currently disclaimed, work is progressing with auditors to gain further assurance and move towards unqualified opinions.
- The Council's financial management and reporting arrangements remain robust, providing Members and the public with confidence in the integrity of the Council's finances.

#### **5. Capital Programme**

- The Council has a minimal capital programme, including a heavy asset disposal strategy. The disposal of Millstream company properties is a key element, with receipts earmarked to support reductions in MRP and interest costs.
- The capital programme is subject to rigorous review and governance, with risks and dependencies clearly identified and managed.

#### **6. Conclusion and CFO Opinion**

In my opinion as Chief Financial Officer, the budget estimates for 2026/27 are robust, and the level of reserves is adequate to support the Council's financial position and medium-term strategy. The latest MTFP has taken account of a greater proportion of the ongoing financial pressures anticipated to persist into future years, which should help to reduce the budgetary challenges projected for 2026/27 and beyond.

Members are recommended to:

- Approve the budget and reserves strategy as set out,

- Note the risks and assumptions underpinning the estimates,
- Support the ongoing delivery of savings, transformation, and asset disposal plans,
- Note the Council's compliance with statutory and professional codes of practice.

## EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 TO 2028/29

APPROVED SCHEMES	2025/26 Revised Estimate £'000	Projected Carry Forward into 2026/27 £'000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000	2028/29 Estimate £000	Scheme Total from 2026/27 £000
<b>Land and Buildings</b>						
Investment in operational assets		392				392
Depot Upgrades	327					-
Hertford Theatre	19	81				81
Old River Lane	59	59				59
Town Centre Regeneration - Public Square				1,500		1,500
URC Church Hall			170			170
Buntingford Public WC - UKSPF						-
Pinehurst Community Hall	8					-
<b>Total Land and Buildings</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,202</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>						
Bridge	33					-
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Vehicles and Equipment</b>						
ICT Rolling programme	124		300	300		600
BEAM Website	51					-
Sports Equipment - Pool Cover - UKSPF						-
Air Quality Website - UKSPF						-
Refuse & Recycling - Cleansing vehicles	6,130					-
Refuse & Recycling - containers	1,680					-
Transformation Programme	195	18				18
<b>Total Vehicles and Equipment</b>	<b>8,180</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Community Assets</b>						
Replacement play equipment across the district						-
Bishops Stortford Castle Park - HLF & UKSPF						-

<b>APPROVED SCHEMES</b>	<b>2025/26 Revised Estimate £'000</b>	<b>Projected Carry Forward into 2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2027/28 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2028/29 Estimate £000</b>	<b>Scheme Total from 2026/27 £000</b>
BEAM Solar Panel (UKSPF)		60				60
Hartham Decarbonisation (UKSPF)		50				50
Hertford Castle Grounds - Development Phase - HLF	270					-
Parks & Open Spaces		79				79
Warmer Homes	319					-
Tree Planting (UKSPF)						-
UKSPF - various	165	125				125
<b>Total Community Assets</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>314</b>
Capitalisation of Interest						-
Year End Adjustment						-
Contingency	-	250	200	100		550
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>9,380</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,684</b>
<b>FUNDED BY:</b>						
Borrowing (Internal)	(7,810)					-
Borrowing (External)	(59)	(59)	-			-59
Capital Receipts	(749)	(741)	(670)	(1,900)		-3,311
Capital Grants Applied	(754)	(235)	-			-235
S106	(8)	(79)	-			-79
Reserve funded						-
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(9,380)</b>	<b>(1,114)</b>	<b>(670)</b>	<b>(1,900)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(3,684)</b>

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEES HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2026, AT 7.00  
PM

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PRESENT: Councillor Martin Adams (Chair)  
Councillors D Andrews, P Boylan, B Deering,  
J Dunlop, R Carter, N Clements, C Hart,  
C Horner, D Jacobs, S Nicholls, T Smith,  
M Swainston, G Williams, G Williamson,  
J Wyllie and Mr N Sharman

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors C Brittain, B Crystall and  
D Hollebon

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Peter Mannings	- Committee Support Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was moved by Councillor Jacobs and seconded by Councillor Horner that Councillor Adams be appointed Chair of the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees. After

being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Adams be appointed Chair of the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees.

2 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors E Buckmaster, Cox and Willcocks. There was also an apology from an Independent Person – Mark Poppy.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded all participants to use their microphones when speaking.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed here [Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees - 28 January 2026](#).

The Chair reminded Members that their comments would be captured within the minutes of the meeting and by officers, who would feed these back to the Executive. He added that the minutes and any comments would be included as appendices to the Executive report.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2031

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability introduced the report which set out an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to 2030/31, which reflected the provisional Government settlement and several emerging financial pressures.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said

that although the Fair Funding review outcome was more favourable than expected, Government support will still decline, leaving Council Tax growth as the main driver of a modest rise in core spending power - one that remains below inflation. He said that additional pressures included £706k in new budget demands, anticipated Local Government Reorganisation costs, and slower-than-expected BEAM income - all requiring prudent contingencies.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that savings from the Hertfordshire Pension Fund valuation - nearly £1 million annually, would enable a balanced budget and the creation of new reserves to strengthen resilience. He said that the plan emphasised continued efficiency, increased income from fees and charges, and careful reserve management to maintain financial sustainability amid ongoing uncertainty.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability for his report.

Members raised questions and concerns in relation to the decision to not raise Sunday car parking charges (citing this as a potential lost avenue for raising revenue for the Council), versus the adverse reactions from residents which the agreed increases had received. It was clarified that the Sunday charge would be increased in all but the rural carparks within the district, and that the increases did provide a significant figure towards the Council being able to produce a balanced budget. Members heard that should the increases not occur in the current year the Council would fall behind, leading to higher than inflation increases being made in future years. It was also acknowledged that the regime needed to be equal and fair, and although the district's High Streets (with Buntingford being cited by ward Members) were under pressure, this was due to several factors such as the cost of Business Rates and the rise of online shopping.

Members debated the Council's reserves, as shown at

Appendix C of the report and it was confirmed that the presentation of the reserves earmarked for LGR over the next 2 years (as on page 53) would be amended from £500,000 for 2026/27 to show £250,000 for both 2026/27 and 2027/28. Discussion was had as to if the reserves earmarked for the costs of LGR were adequate, and Members heard that uncertainties/unknowns surrounding the reorganisation made an answer currently impossible.

Members agreed that LGR was both unwanted and a huge expense, which gave little benefit. They heard that the biggest LGR expenses would relate to officer resource, staff changes (including possible redundancies) and the harmonising of IT, all of which were advance costs, required to be in place from day 1. It was further explained that each of the proposed modules for LGR were expected to take somewhere between 3 – 6 years to yield savings or ‘break even’

Discussion around LGR continued, noting that there were currently 132 unitary local authorities in England – covering 71% of the population, with all authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland unitary. It was heard that research on LGR had provided a mixed picture, with success reliant on implementation. It was also noted that previous unification was undertaken in less challenging times, with better Government funding, and when Councils had spare finances.

Clarification was sought as to the difference between the Government and the Council’s figures relating to Council Tax revenue. Members heard that this was due to the Government’s method of estimation, with the Council using their own, more specific and up to date data within the budget.

Members discussed the risks associated with having disclaimed accounts and were given assurance that this was managed as much as possible. Acknowledgement was given that the valuation of assets was a potential related area of risk, however this was mitigated by

reserves.

Members highlighted the Executive drawdown reserve and sought expansion on how this £250,000 would be used, ensuring that it be spent fairly across the whole district. Members heard that only initial discussions had been had, with the Executive welcoming Member's suggestions for consideration. Suggestion was made that this should be for collective membership (instead of the Executive) to decide how this reserve be used.

Members gave comments and asked questions relating to asset sales and heard that these were important to the budget. It was confirmed that the Council had approximately £15 million of assets to sell, and confidence was high that these would come to fruition. Members heard that Old River Lane made up more than half of this value, with progress with the developer ongoing. It was explained that as each Millstream tenancy expired the property would go to market - with 1 such property sold, 1 in the process of being sold and another actively on the market. This staggered approach also allowed the property team to manage the process with the resources available to them.

Members heard that multi-year settlements from the Fair Funding Review (FFR) were useful in the respect that they gave more clarity, allowing a balanced budget to be set, albeit they were monetarily less each year.

Members debated service efficiencies, with focus given to partnership working and minor restructure. Members heard that £14,000 of such savings were inbuilt into the budget, but Leadership Team were constantly looking for opportunities for efficiencies, with the recent recruitment of a shared Lead Human Resources Officer with Broxbourne Council and options surrounding the replacement of the outgoing Director of Legal, Policy and Governance cited as examples. It was explained that the Transformation Team was being disbanded - with monies being used instead on technology implementation.

Members discussed BEAM, and although recognised it as being a huge community asset expressed concerns regarding its ongoing losses and optimistic business plan in a climate where the arts were struggling. Members heard that although BEAM would show a loss this year, it was forecast to become self-sufficient, with improvements happening all the time under its new Director. They were told that year on year comparisons were now available for the venue and that a new business plan would also shortly come before Members. Members also heard that Hertford Theatre (as BEAM was before redevelopment) was subsidised by £300,000 per year, but it was felt that BEAM was a superior offering.

It was moved by Councillor Nicholls and seconded by Councillor Swainston, that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. It was noted that Councillors T Smith and Andrews abstained from the vote. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Members examine and comment on the Draft Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026-2031 contained within the reports.

6 CAPITAL STRATEGY, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026/27

The Director for Finance, Performance and Risk introduced the report which presented the Council's Capital Strategy, MRP Statement, and Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27. The report set out the framework for how capital investment is planned, financed, and governed.

The Director for Finance, Performance and Risk said that with resources being extremely limited, the capital programme focused solely on essential health and safety

and business critical works, with future investment dependent on asset disposals. He said that the Treasury Strategy maintained a low-risk approach to managing cash, borrowing, and investments in line with CIPFA requirements, while the MRP Statement continued the prudent policy of repaying borrowing over the life of assets to ensure long-term affordability and sustainability.

The Chair thanked the Director for Finance, Performance and Risk for his report.

Members sought assurance that the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy remained up to date. They heard that this was the case, and that the Policy was Treasury Advisor aligned.

It was moved by Councillor Dunlop and seconded by Councillor Nicholls, that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. It was noted that Councillor Jacobs abstained from the vote. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Members examine and comment on the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 including the Prudential Indicators contained within the reports.

7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (IF REQUIRED)

There was no Part II business.

8 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 8.21 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

## Appendix F

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
If the car park charges were not increased (generating £277k) what impact would this have on the balanced budget	Feedback from residents	To not increase in line with inflation would erode the base budget and result in pressures in future years	Take no action
Impact on Buntingford town of increasing parking charges by 10%	High street is struggling, closure of businesses	All high streets are struggling, multitude of reasons for this (NNDR, high rents, online shopping). Buntingford charges inline with parking policy, charges reflect the situation of the town. Exception has been made for Buntingford, following consultation, which increases not being proposed	Action already taken (pay and display charges not increased)
Cost of LGR, what is the £1m anticipated to be used to fund.	Significant amount of expenditure to fund a change imposed by the government.	IT costs are the most significant, project management costs for implementation and costs relating to staffing	Keep under review, no action at present

## Appendix F

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
		(employment of extra staff and pressure of redundancies).	
Is £1m enough to fund LGR	Impact on Council's reserves	Amounts unknown at present, will be determined by the configuration of the new authorities, following decisions from government	Keep under review, no action at present
Executive £250k reserve	How will the Executive ensure that this is spent fairly across the district	Process is still being worked on, as only became a possibility in the last month. Intention to make as fair as possible	Executive to review
Executive £250k reserve	Should this be designated for wider member use rather than just Executive.	Still open to ideas and suggestions	Executive to review

# Agenda Item 11

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CARL BRITTAIN – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**REPORT TITLE: COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2026/27**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS**

**Summary** – This report set proposals to set the Council Tax for 2026/27.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:**

- a) That the Council Tax resolution, as submitted at Appendix A, be approved.
- b) That the local precepts as set out at Appendix A be noted.
- c) That the Hertfordshire County Council and Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire precepts be noted.

#### **1. Proposal**

- 1.1. The council tax resolution is set out at Appendix A.
- 1.2. The calculations set out in the resolution are prescribed in the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended. The Localism Act 2011 made minor amendments to the required calculation. The Council has no discretion in undertaking these calculations beyond determining any special expenses within the Council's own budget applicable to part of its area. The Council has not determined any special expenses.

#### **The Required Calculation**

- 1.3. Section 1; This confirms that this Council's previously agreed Tax Base is used in the calculation.
- 1.4. Section 2; this sets out the Council's council tax requirement for its own purposes (excluding parish precepts) for 2026/27.
- 1.5. Section 3:
  - (a) The Council's gross expenditure plus transfers to reserves plus the total of parish precepts
  - (b) The Council's gross income including grants plus transfer from reserves
  - (c) Is a-b
  - (d) Is c divided by the tax base
  - (e) Is the total of the parish precepts
  - (f) Is this Council's band D council tax rate

- (g) Is this Council's band D plus Parish rate
- (h) This is the same as (g) but showing the council tax by each valuation band

1.6. Section 4; this is the equivalent amounts to those at 3(h) for the County and Police & Crime Commissioner precepts.

1.7. Section 5; this is the total council tax for each valuation band for each parish

## **2. Background**

2.1. East Hertfordshire District Council is the council tax billing and collection authority within its area.

2.2. The Council tax calculation sets the tax in respect of this Council and the aggregate council tax inclusive of the County Council and Police & Crime Commissioner precepts and of each town and parish council's precept.

2.3. Hertfordshire County Council's Finance Director has advised that the County Council precept for 2026/27 as they affect East Hertfordshire District Council tax payers is £122,304,579.25. This gives band D equivalent of £1,858.19.

2.4. The Chief Finance Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has advised that the PCC precept for 2026/27 as they affect the East Hertfordshire District Council tax payers is £18,429,362.00. This gives a band D equivalent of £280.00.

2.5. The total of the parish precepts is £7,211,384.40, as detailed in Appendix A.

2.6. East Hertfordshire total council tax requirement is £13,626,538.62. This gives a band D equivalent of £207.03.

## **3. Reason(s)**

3.1. The Council has a statutory responsibility to set the council tax for each part of its area no later than 11 March prior to the start of the year in respect of which the tax is set.

## **4. Options**

4.1. Statutory responsibility, no alternative options.

## **5. Risks**

5.1. All risks were considered in setting the Council's budget.

## **6. Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

**Data Protection**

No

**Equalities**

No

**Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

Yes, as set out in report

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

No

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

The Council is required to set the Council Tax by 11 March in the preceding year under section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Section 106 of the Local Government Act 1992 requires Members who are two or more in arrears on their Council Tax payments to disclose this to the meeting and not vote on any resolution to setting the Council Tax. Failure to do so is a criminal offence leading to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standards scale.

**Specific Wards**

No

**7. Background papers, appendices and other relevant material****7.1. Appendix A – Formal Council Tax Resolution****Contact Member**

Councillor Carl Brittain  
Executive Member for Financial Sustainability  
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**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION**

**RECOMMENDED**

1 That it be noted that at its meeting on 10 December 2025 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base 2026/27

- a) for the whole Council area as 65,819.15 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
- b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as shown below.

Parish/Town Council of:-	2026/27 Tax Base	For information only	
		Precept £	Parish Band D £
Albury	288.96	15,000.00	51.91
Anstey	177.06	7,000.00	39.53
Ardeley	220.43	10,000.00	45.37
Aspenden	120.73	13,000.00	107.68
Aston	517.72	19,635.00	37.93
Bayford	237.84	4,981.00	20.94
Bengeo Rural	277.13	25,000.00	90.21
Benington	417.16	22,663.00	54.33
Bishop's Stortford	17,801.52	1,222,786.00	68.69
Bramfield	109.32	2,500.00	22.87
Braughing	693.88	44,325.00	63.88
Brent Pelham/Meesden	152.18	4,800.00	31.54
Brickendon	361.43	32,500.00	89.92
Buckland	113.39	12,070.00	106.45
Buntingford	3,232.66	356,804.00	110.37
Cottered	324.32	17,000.00	52.42
Datchworth	748.97	55,000.00	73.43
Eastwick and Gilston	437.24	10,000.00	22.87
Furneux Pelham	278.21	6,500.00	23.36
Great Amwell	974.24	23,035.00	23.64
Great Munden	142.66	7,476.00	52.40
Hertford	12,828.09	1,880,271.00	146.57
Hertford Heath	982.36	110,975.40	112.97
Hertingfordbury	337.27	28,430.00	84.29
High Wych	354.90	20,690.00	58.30
Hormead	375.63	27,820.00	74.06
Hunsdon	524.91	29,260.00	55.74
Little Berkhamsted	280.68	34,000.00	121.13
Little Hadham	547.94	23,335.00	42.59
Little Munden	418.32	11,430.00	27.32
Much Hadham	1,001.08	60,000.00	59.94
Sacombe	90.60	0.00	0.00
Sawbridgeworth	4,150.45	504,660.00	121.59
Standon	2,044.12	100,000.00	48.92
Stanstead Abbots	738.35	82,000.00	111.06
Stanstead St Margarets	699.90	29,000.00	41.43
Stapleford	266.35	7,500.00	28.16
Stocking Pelham	84.49	5,500.00	65.10
Tewin	849.24	48,500.00	57.11
Thorley	631.24	5,018.00	7.95
Thundridge	725.60	37,348.00	51.47
Walkern	726.81	33,000.00	45.40
Ware	7,617.36	2,121,219.00	278.47
Wareside	312.76	20,274.00	64.82
Watton at Stone	1,068.50	54,704.00	51.20
Westmill	161.06	6,000.00	37.25
Widford	297.21	18,375.00	61.82
Wyddial	76.88	0.00	0.00
	<b>65,819.15</b>	<b>7,211,384.40</b>	

- 2 Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2026/27 (excluding Parish precepts ) is  
£ 13,626,538.62
- 3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
- a) £ 97,567,331.05 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act taking into account all the precepts issued to it by Parish Councils
  - b) £ 76,729,408.03 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act
  - c) £ 20,837,923.02 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act)
  - d) £ 316.59 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31 B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (including Parish Precepts)
  - e) £ 7,211,384.40 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, as detailed above.
  - f) **£ 207.03** being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates

The Council is also required to determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB and 52ZY Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Section 4ZA Local Government Finance Act 1992: Referendums relating to Council Tax Increases.

For 2026/27 the level deemed to be excessive, as determined by the Government in its Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) Report (England) 2026/27, is an increase of 3% or more, or £5 per dwelling whichever is the greater. As such, the Council can determine, for its portion of the Council Tax that the level of Council Tax increase for 2026/27 is not excessive or requiring a local referendum.

g) Parts of the Council's Area

	<b>Band D</b>
	<b>District plus Parish</b>
<b>Parish/Town Council of:-</b>	<b>£</b>
Albury	258.94
Anstey	246.56
Ardeley	252.40
Aspenden	314.71
Aston	244.96
Bayford	227.97
Bengeo Rural	297.24
Benington	261.36
Bishop's Stortford	275.72
Bramfield	229.90
Braughing	270.91
Brent Pelham/Meesden	238.57
Brickendon Liberty	296.95
Buckland	313.48
Buntingford	317.40
Cottered	259.45
Datchworth	280.46
Eastwick and Gilston	229.90
Furneux Pelham	230.39
Great Amwell	230.67
Great Munden	259.43
Hertford	353.60
Hertford Heath	320.00
Hertingfordbury	291.32
High Wych	265.33
Hormead	281.09
Hunsdon	262.77
Little Berkhamsted	328.16
Little Hadham	249.62
Little Munden	234.35
Much Hadham	266.97
Sacombe	207.03
Sawbridgeworth	328.62
Standon	255.95
Stanstead Abbots	318.09
Stanstead St Margarets	248.46
Stapleford	235.19
Stocking Pelham	272.13
Tewin	264.14
Thorley	214.98
Thundridge	258.50
Walkern	252.43
Ware	485.50
Wareside	271.85
Watton at Stone	258.23
Westmill	244.28
Widford	268.85
Wyddial	207.03

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount in 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

## h) Parts of the Council's Area

Parish/Town Councils of:-	COUNCIL TAX VALUATION BANDS							
	DISTRICT plus PARISH							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Albury	172.63	201.40	230.17	258.94	316.48	374.02	431.57	517.88
Anstey	164.37	191.77	219.16	246.56	301.35	356.14	410.93	493.12
Ardeley	168.27	196.31	224.36	252.40	308.49	364.58	420.67	504.80
Aspenden	209.81	244.77	279.74	314.71	384.65	454.58	524.52	629.42
Aston	163.31	190.52	217.74	244.96	299.40	353.83	408.27	489.92
Bayford	151.98	177.31	202.64	227.97	278.63	329.29	379.95	455.94
Bengeo	198.16	231.19	264.21	297.24	363.29	429.35	495.40	594.48
Benington	174.24	203.28	232.32	261.36	319.44	377.52	435.60	522.72
Bishops Stortford	183.81	214.45	245.08	275.72	336.99	398.26	459.53	551.44
Bramfield	153.27	178.81	204.36	229.90	280.99	332.08	383.17	459.80
Braughing	180.61	210.71	240.81	270.91	331.11	391.31	451.52	541.82
Brent Pelham/Meesden	159.05	185.55	212.06	238.57	291.59	344.60	397.62	477.14
Brickendon Liberty	197.97	230.96	263.96	296.95	362.94	428.93	494.92	593.90
Buckland	208.99	243.82	278.65	313.48	383.14	452.80	522.47	626.96
Buntingford	211.60	246.87	282.13	317.40	387.93	458.47	529.00	634.80
Cottered	172.97	201.79	230.62	259.45	317.11	374.76	432.42	518.90
Datchworth	186.97	218.14	249.30	280.46	342.78	405.11	467.43	560.92
Eastwick & Gilston	153.27	178.81	204.36	229.90	280.99	332.08	383.17	459.80
Furneux Pelham	153.59	179.19	204.79	230.39	281.59	332.79	383.98	460.78
Great Amwell	153.78	179.41	205.04	230.67	281.93	333.19	384.45	461.34
Great Munden	172.95	201.78	230.60	259.43	317.08	374.73	432.38	518.86
Hertford	235.73	275.02	314.31	353.60	432.18	510.76	589.33	707.20
Hertford Heath	213.33	248.89	284.44	320.00	391.11	462.22	533.33	640.00
Hertingfordbury	194.21	226.58	258.95	291.32	356.06	420.80	485.53	582.64
High Wych	176.89	206.37	235.85	265.33	324.29	383.25	442.22	530.66
Hormead	187.39	218.63	249.86	281.09	343.55	406.02	468.48	562.18
Hunsdon	175.18	204.38	233.57	262.77	321.16	379.56	437.95	525.54
Little Berkhamsted	218.77	255.24	291.70	328.16	401.08	474.01	546.93	656.32
Little Hadham	166.41	194.15	221.88	249.62	305.09	360.56	416.03	499.24
Little Munden	156.23	182.27	208.31	234.35	286.43	338.51	390.58	468.70
Much Hadham	177.98	207.64	237.31	266.97	326.30	385.62	444.95	533.94
Sacombe	138.02	161.02	184.03	207.03	253.04	299.04	345.05	414.06
Sawbridgeworth	219.08	255.59	292.11	328.62	401.65	474.67	547.70	657.24
Standon	170.63	199.07	227.51	255.95	312.83	369.71	426.58	511.90
Stanstead Abbots	212.06	247.40	282.75	318.09	388.78	459.46	530.15	636.18
Stanstead St Margarets	165.64	193.25	220.85	248.46	303.67	358.89	414.10	496.92
Stapleford	156.79	182.93	209.06	235.19	287.45	339.72	391.98	470.38
Stocking Pelham	181.42	211.66	241.89	272.13	332.60	393.08	453.55	544.26
Tewin	176.09	205.44	234.79	264.14	322.84	381.54	440.23	528.28
Thorley	143.32	167.21	191.09	214.98	262.75	310.53	358.30	429.96
Thundridge	172.33	201.06	229.78	258.50	315.94	373.39	430.83	517.00
Walkern	168.29	196.33	224.38	252.43	308.53	364.62	420.72	504.86
Ware	323.67	377.61	431.56	485.50	593.39	701.28	809.17	971.00
Wareside	181.23	211.44	241.64	271.85	332.26	392.67	453.08	543.70
Watton at Stone	172.15	200.85	229.54	258.23	315.61	373.00	430.38	516.46
Westmill	162.85	190.00	217.14	244.28	298.56	352.85	407.13	488.56
Widford	179.23	209.11	238.98	268.85	328.59	388.34	448.08	537.70
Wyddial	138.02	161.02	184.03	207.03	253.04	299.04	345.05	414.06

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in the proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4 That it be noted that for the year 2026/27 Hertfordshire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Precepting Authority	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Hertfordshire County Council	1,238.79	1,445.26	1,651.73	1,858.19	2,271.12	2,684.05	3,096.98	3,716.38
Police & Crime Commissioner	186.67	217.78	248.89	280.00	342.22	404.44	466.67	560.00

5 That the Council, in accordance with sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

Parish/Town Council of:-	COUNCIL TAX VALUATION BANDS							
	COUNTY COUNCIL plus POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER plus DISTRICT plus PARISH							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Albury	1,598.09	1,864.44	2,130.79	2,397.13	2,929.82	3,462.51	3,995.22	4,794.26
Anstey	1,589.83	1,854.81	2,119.78	2,384.75	2,914.69	3,444.63	3,974.58	4,769.50
Ardeley	1,593.73	1,859.35	2,124.98	2,390.59	2,921.83	3,453.07	3,984.32	4,781.18
Aspenden	1,635.27	1,907.81	2,180.36	2,452.90	2,997.99	3,543.07	4,088.17	4,905.80
Aston	1,588.77	1,853.56	2,118.36	2,383.15	2,912.74	3,442.32	3,971.92	4,766.30
Bayford	1,577.44	1,840.35	2,103.26	2,366.16	2,891.97	3,417.78	3,943.60	4,732.32
Bengeo	1,623.62	1,894.23	2,164.83	2,435.43	2,976.63	3,517.84	4,059.05	4,870.86
Benington	1,599.70	1,866.32	2,132.94	2,399.55	2,932.78	3,466.01	3,999.25	4,799.10
Bishops Stortford	1,609.27	1,877.49	2,145.70	2,413.91	2,950.33	3,486.75	4,023.18	4,827.82
Bramfield	1,578.73	1,841.85	2,104.98	2,368.09	2,894.33	3,420.57	3,946.82	4,736.18
Braughing	1,606.07	1,873.75	2,141.43	2,409.10	2,944.45	3,479.80	4,015.17	4,818.20
Brent Pelham/Meesden	1,584.51	1,848.59	2,112.68	2,376.76	2,904.93	3,433.09	3,961.27	4,753.52
Brickendon Liberty	1,623.43	1,894.00	2,164.58	2,435.14	2,976.28	3,517.42	4,058.57	4,870.28
Buckland	1,634.45	1,906.86	2,179.27	2,451.67	2,996.48	3,541.29	4,086.12	4,903.34
Buntingford	1,637.06	1,909.91	2,182.75	2,455.59	3,001.27	3,546.96	4,092.65	4,911.18
Cottered	1,598.43	1,864.83	2,131.24	2,397.64	2,930.45	3,463.25	3,996.07	4,795.28
Datchworth	1,612.43	1,881.18	2,149.92	2,418.65	2,956.12	3,493.60	4,031.08	4,837.30
Eastwick & Gilston	1,578.73	1,841.85	2,104.98	2,368.09	2,894.33	3,420.57	3,946.82	4,736.18
Furneux Pelham	1,579.05	1,842.23	2,105.41	2,368.58	2,894.93	3,421.28	3,947.63	4,737.16
Great Amwell	1,579.24	1,842.45	2,105.66	2,368.86	2,895.27	3,421.68	3,948.10	4,737.72
Great Munden	1,598.41	1,864.82	2,131.22	2,397.62	2,930.42	3,463.22	3,996.03	4,795.24
Hertford	1,661.19	1,938.06	2,214.93	2,491.79	3,045.52	3,599.25	4,152.98	4,983.58
Hertford Heath	1,638.79	1,911.93	2,185.06	2,458.19	3,004.45	3,550.71	4,096.98	4,916.38
Hertingfordbury	1,619.67	1,889.62	2,159.57	2,429.51	2,969.40	3,509.29	4,049.18	4,859.02
High Wych	1,602.35	1,869.41	2,136.47	2,403.52	2,937.63	3,471.74	4,005.87	4,807.04
Hornead	1,612.85	1,881.67	2,150.48	2,419.28	2,956.89	3,494.51	4,032.13	4,838.56
Hunsdon	1,600.64	1,867.42	2,134.19	2,400.96	2,934.50	3,468.05	4,001.60	4,801.92
Little Berkhamsted	1,644.23	1,918.28	2,192.32	2,466.35	3,014.42	3,562.50	4,110.58	4,932.70
Little Hadham	1,591.87	1,857.19	2,122.50	2,387.81	2,918.43	3,449.05	3,979.68	4,775.62
Little Munden	1,581.69	1,845.31	2,108.93	2,372.54	2,899.77	3,427.00	3,954.23	4,745.08
Much Hadham	1,603.44	1,870.68	2,137.93	2,405.16	2,939.64	3,474.11	4,008.60	4,810.32
Sacombe	1,563.48	1,824.06	2,084.65	2,345.22	2,866.38	3,387.53	3,908.70	4,690.44
Sawbridgeworth	1,644.54	1,918.63	2,192.73	2,466.81	3,014.99	3,563.16	4,111.35	4,933.62
Standon	1,596.09	1,862.11	2,128.13	2,394.14	2,926.17	3,458.20	3,990.23	4,788.28
Stanstead Abbots	1,637.52	1,910.44	2,183.37	2,456.28	3,002.12	3,547.95	4,093.80	4,912.56
Stanstead St Margarets	1,591.10	1,856.29	2,121.47	2,386.65	2,917.01	3,447.38	3,977.75	4,773.30
Stapleford	1,582.25	1,845.97	2,109.68	2,373.38	2,900.79	3,428.21	3,955.63	4,746.76
Stocking Pelham	1,606.88	1,874.70	2,142.51	2,410.32	2,945.94	3,481.57	4,017.20	4,820.64
Tewin	1,601.55	1,868.48	2,135.41	2,402.33	2,936.18	3,470.03	4,003.88	4,804.66
Thorley	1,568.78	1,830.25	2,091.71	2,353.17	2,876.09	3,399.02	3,921.95	4,706.34
Thundridge	1,597.79	1,864.10	2,130.40	2,396.69	2,929.28	3,461.88	3,994.48	4,793.38
Walkern	1,593.75	1,859.37	2,125.00	2,390.62	2,921.87	3,453.11	3,984.37	4,781.24
Ware	1,749.13	2,040.65	2,332.18	2,623.69	3,206.73	3,789.77	4,372.82	5,247.38
Wareside	1,606.69	1,874.48	2,142.26	2,410.04	2,945.60	3,481.16	4,016.73	4,820.08
Watton at Stone	1,597.61	1,863.89	2,130.16	2,396.42	2,928.95	3,461.49	3,994.03	4,792.84
Westmill	1,588.31	1,853.04	2,117.76	2,382.47	2,911.90	3,441.34	3,970.78	4,764.94
Widford	1,604.69	1,872.15	2,139.60	2,407.04	2,941.93	3,476.83	4,011.73	4,814.08
Wyddial	1,563.48	1,824.06	2,084.65	2,345.22	2,866.38	3,387.53	3,908.70	4,690.44

# Agenda Item 12

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: SHARED SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER**

**REPORT TITLE: PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: N/A**

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL:**

**a) That the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 be approved.**

#### **1.0 Proposal**

1.1 It is proposed that the council's existing Pay Policy Statement, which was last reviewed by Human Resources Committee (HRC) and approved by full council in February 2025, be revised and updated.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 A pay policy statement is required to be produced annually under sections 38 of the Localism Act. Regard is to be had to guidance section 40 from the Secretary of State in producing this statement.

2.2 A pay policy statement for a financial year must set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of chief officers
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
- the relationship between chief officers remuneration and that of other officers

2.3 "Remuneration" for the purposes of this statement includes three elements:

- basic salary
- pension
- all other allowances arising from employment

- 2.4 The objectives of the report are to:
- a) ensure a capable and high performing workforce;
  - b) ensure simplicity, clarity and fairness between employees and between the council and the community;
  - c) differentiate between remuneration and other employee related expenses.

### **3.0 Report**

3.1 The Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 can be found at Appendix A.

3.2 The Pay Policy Statement framework for East Herts Council has not yet been updated in line with the pay award for 26/27 in terms of reference to salary scales, salary levels and multipliers (as this has not yet been negotiated and agreed).

3.3 No significant changes to the overall framework it supports have been made.

### **4.0 Options**

4.1 N/A - publishing the Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis is a statutory requirement. The statement will be published on the Council Website once it is approved and will be formatted into an accessible document before publication.

### **5.0 Risks**

5.1 N/A

### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

#### **Community Safety**

No

#### **Data Protection**

No

#### **Equalities**

No

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

Yes – The Pay Policy Statement has been shared with the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance, and budgets set have been based on the pay changes agreed.

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

Yes – Policy Statement produced by Shared Senior HR Business Partner

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

Yes – The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance has confirmed that statutory requirements have been met.

**Specific Wards**

No

**7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 Appendix A – Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

**Contact Officer/ Report Author**

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**Executive Member for Corporate Services**

Cllr Joseph Dumont - Portfolio Holder for HR & OD

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## **Pay Policy Statement 2026/2027**

### **February 2026**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 A pay policy statement is required to be produced annually under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. Guidance from the Secretary of State has been considered when producing this statement.

1.2 Any decision under powers delegated in the council's Constitution with regard to remuneration from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 will be bound by and must comply with this statement.

1.3 This statement supports the requirements under the Local Government Transparency Code to publish data on Senior Salaries and Pay Multiple.

1.4 The Chief Executive must be consulted prior to any decision impacting remuneration to ensure compliance with this pay policy statement.

#### **2.0 Scope**

2.1 This statement sets out the council's policy with regards to:

The remuneration of Chief Officers

The remuneration of the lowest paid employees

The relationship between Chief Officers' remuneration and that of other officers

"Remuneration" for the purposes of this statement includes three elements:

Basic salary

Pension

All other allowances arising from employment.

2.2 The council's constitution regards the following as its "Chief Officers".

Chief Executive

Director of Place

Director of Finance, Risk and Performance

Director of Communities

Director of Legal, Policy & Governance

Director of Commercial, Customer & Regeneration.

2.3 The council, also has Statutory officer roles (Head of Paid Service; S151 Officer; Monitoring Officer, Data Protection Officer).

In this policy statement the term “Chief Officers” refers to the Chief Executive and Directors in that where there are any differences in terms of the policy it is between this group and all other employees.

2.4 This policy statement applies to all Council employees, but not to other workers such as casuals, agency workers, etc.

2.5 This pay statement does not include the Returning Officer payment. The fees payable to the Returning Officer are set by statute for national elections and are paid by central government. Fees are, also, payable to the Councils’ Returning Officer for local elections. These fees are payable as required and can be made to any senior officer appointed to fulfil the statutory duties of this role. The Returning Officer is an officer of the Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the Council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from his/her duties as an employee of the Council. As Returning Officer, he/she is paid a separate fee, which includes expenses, for each election for which he/she is responsible. Regulations govern which election fee is pensionable and, if opted in, a separate pension will accrue in the Local Government Pension Scheme for each election type.

### **3.0 Objectives**

3.1 East Herts Council recognises the importance of having a clear written policy statement on pay in order to ensure that employees are fairly rewarded and there is proper public accountability.

3.2 In respect of Chief Officers and all other employees the council’s policy is to set remuneration sufficient to attract and retain adequately experienced, trained and qualified individuals to deliver the council’s priorities.

3.3 The council aims to be transparent on pay to its employees, prospective employees and the wider community and uses and maintains an effective job evaluation system and procedures to provide equity and consistency in pay, whilst adhering to the basic principles of the national Local government Single Status pay agreement.

### **4.0 Remuneration subject to national and local determination**

4.1 The council is a member of the Local Government Employers’ Association for national collective bargaining in respect of Chief Officers and other employees.

4.2 Changes from national negotiations generally take effect from 1 April each year and are retrospective to 1 April if agreements are finalised after 1 April. It is the council’s policy to implement national agreements.

4.3 The Chief Executive and Directors are under the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers (JNC) conditions of service including pay. All other employees are under the National Joint Council (NJC) national agreement on pay and conditions of service.

4.4 The national pay award (the NJC national agreement) for 2026-2027 has not yet been considered following delays in previous years. Currently the employers' side are awaiting the Trade Union Claim and regional pay consultation rounds are due to begin in February 2026. This Pay Policy Statement will therefore provide that the National Award will be implemented for both NJC and JNC once agreement is confirmed. East Herts will implement increments for applicable staff from the 1 April 2026, but the national pay award is not expected (due to the delay in negotiations/agreement) to be implemented in this (April) payroll and will instead be processed as a backdated payment once the award is agreed.

#### 4.5 Previous Award 2025-26

The 2025/2026 award was agreed in August 2025 after negotiations and a ballot of its members by unions:

All staff received their increase in pay with backdated salary in August 2025

Pay negotiations for 2026/2027 have commenced and the Council will ensure that it timely implements the agreed increases.

## **5.0 General Pay Policy**

5.1 All employees other than Chief Officers have their basic pay determined by a job evaluation scheme to ensure that different jobs which have the same value are paid on the same grade. Grades have between 4-7 spinal column points (increments) within them.

5.2 The Chief Executive is paid a fixed spot salary with no set incremental progression. Performance review is facilitated through the East of England Local Government Association.

5.3 The Directors' progression through the pay range (incremental points) is based on performance (measured through the LT 360° performance review process) rather than by annual time served increments and this can lead to a drop of one increment if poor performance has been established.

5.4 The Directors are paid on incremental scale points between a pay range of £90,457 to £96,649 base pay (as of February 2026), with set incremental progression also based on performance.

5.5 These senior staff are not paid additional remuneration in respect of overtime, flexitime, bank holiday working, stand-by payments, emergency call rota, etc., as

they are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns without additional payment.

5.6 Basic pay is calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees.

5.7 All employees (except chief officers) receive local weighting which is called an outer fringe payment which is determined by the NJC, for 2024-2025 this was £706pa for a full-time employee and was raised to £729 as part of the 2025-2026 pay award.

5.8 Setting Salaries

For the posts of

Chief Executive

Directors

The council will use robust recruitment processes when making an appointment to these roles, ensuring the best candidate for the role is appointed. In determining the appropriate salary, market testing and bench marking from peer authorities will be considered.

5.9 Pay ceilings.

For 2026/27 the basic pay ceiling for Chief Executive post will be £137,706 per annum (excluding an additional payment of £10,000 for Head of Paid Service) plus the percentage or award agreed by the JNC.

As noted above national agreed pay settlements from the JNC will be applied to the Chief Officer posts with effect from 1 April 2026 once agreed.

5.10 Pay floor.

The pay floor is the remuneration of the lowest paid employees. "Lowest paid" is defined as the average pay of employees paid on grade 2. SCP8 in grade 2 are the lowest grades paid by the council. This year the figure is 0.33% (1 part-time employee) of the council's FTE employees. Where any employee is less than full time their pay is multiplied up to full time salary and the aggregate full time equivalent pay is determined.

At the time of writing this report this figure is £26,824 per annum (full time).

The council will not pay basic pay less than the amount applicable to the bottom point of the national pay scales as agreed from time to time by the Local Government Employers (apprenticeships are excluded). Employees in this group will be entitled to all other benefits – local weighting/fringe, pension, redundancy as all other employees.

5.11 Pay multiples.

The council does not explicitly set the remuneration of any individual or group of posts by reference to a simple multiple of another post or group of posts.

In terms of overall remuneration packages, the council's policy is to differentiate by setting different levels of basic pay to reflect differences in responsibilities. This is done using a job evaluation process that is nationally approved.

The council would not expect the remuneration of its highest paid employee to exceed 10 times that of the lowest group of employees. In the case of East Herts Council, the pay of the Chief Executive is 5.13 times the value of the lowest paid employee (calculated using salaries as of 1st January 2026 that include the agreed uplifts for 1 April 2025 pay award).

CEO salary plus statutory post holder allowance = £137,706 divided by average of lowest paid employees: £26,824 = 5.13 This is a reduction in the 5.29 times in 2024/25.

5.12 Grade	Minimum £	Maximum £	Number of employees in the grade (FTE) *
2	£25,185	£26,824	0.27
3	£27,254	£29,064	8.43
4	£29,064	£31,022	33.26
5	£31,022	£34,434	63.58
6	£34,434	£37,280	22.01
7	£37,280	£40,777	45.01
8	£40,777	£44,075	23.99
9	£44,075	£47,181	22.92
10	£49,282	£53,460	15.97
11	£53,460	£59,818	19.16
12	£59,818	£68,919	10.00
13	£74,264	£86,329	0.61
14 (JNC)	£90,457	£96,649	5.00

Total: 270.21

## **6.0 Additional payments and Variations**

### **6.1 Additional Payments**

The council's general policy is not to pay any form of "signing on" fee or incentive payment when recruiting. Exceptions may occasionally be agreed for hard to recruit posts.

The statutory posts designated as the council's S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service will receive a payment of £10,000 per year. No officer will receive more than one additional statutory post payment. An additional Payment is also made for the Deputy Chief Executive responsibilities.

### **6.2 Acting up and Honorarium payments.**

The council will ensure that acting up and honorarium payments are paid in a fair and consistent manner across the council.

Acting up payments can be made when an employee undertakes either some or all of the duties of a senior post, for a continuous period of four weeks or more (payment will then be backdated to the beginning of the cover).

Acting up payments do not apply for periods of less than four weeks or when an employee is providing cover for another employee's annual leave.

Honorarium payments (Responsibility Allowances) can be made where an employee is required to complete an important project or produce major work output to a high standard that is significantly above and beyond the scope of their normal duties or responsibilities, or for significant additional duties or responsibilities not commensurate with the employee's current job description/grade or for work which is exceptionally onerous (e.g. difficult and/or demanding situations or working to extremely tight timescales).

Where an Honorarium payment is determined to be appropriate for additional work, any additional work time spent on the additional duties/responsibilities for which the honorarium is being awarded should not be accounted for on the flexi-time sheet.

Permanent changes to job roles should be dealt with through the job evaluation process.

The Director in consultation with the Shared Senior HR Business Partner have the responsibility for implementing and monitoring these arrangements.

### **6.3 Professional fees and subscriptions**

The council will meet the cost of a legal practicing certificate for all those employees where it is a requirement of their employment. No other professional fee or subscription is paid although consideration may be given to extending this to support recruitment and retention efforts.

### **7.0 Market Supplements**

Market supplements are only paid in exceptional circumstances where several attempts have been made to recruit, and usual recruitment processes have not resulted in an appointment. Market rate will be established by reference to soft market testing, external advice and dialogue with peer authorities.

### **8.0 Pension**

Pension provision is an important part of the remuneration package.

All employees (except those employees over the age of 75) may join the local government pension scheme. The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from the employee and from the employer.

All employees will automatically be enrolled into the LGPS pension scheme unless the contract of employment is less than 3 months' duration, although the employee does have the option to 'opt in'.

For more comprehensive details of the local government pension scheme see: <https://lgpsmember.org>

Neither the scheme nor the council adopt different policies with regard to benefits of employees, the same terms apply to the Chief Officers and other employees (although higher paid staff are required to pay a higher contribution in terms of the percentage of pay deducted as a pension contribution).

East Herts Council as an employer is under a legal duty to prepare and publish a written statement of its policy relating to certain discretionary powers under the Regulations which apply to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("the LGPS"). The scheme provides for the exercise of discretion that allow for retirement benefits to be enhanced. The council will consider each case on its merits but has determined that its usual policy is not to enhance benefits for any of its employees. The Policy on Exercise of Employer Discretions reaffirms this in respect of Chief Officers and other employees.

The pension scheme provides for flexible retirement. In applying the flexible retirement provision no distinction is made between the Chief Officers and other employees. The scheme requires that a minimum permanent reduction in

working hours of 25% is made and/or there is a reduction in grade and that any consequential payments to the pension fund are recoverable in three years with the discretion to extend the three years in exceptional circumstances. The council's Human Resources Committee will consider requests from a Chief Officer and Leadership Team will consider requests from other employees where there is a cost to the council, if there are no costs the Director can approve in consultation with the Senior Shared HR Business Partner and OD.

## 9.0 **Annual Leave**

Annual leave entitlement is related to both an individual employee's spinal column points and length of continuous service in local government.

The council awards five days additional annual leave for employees that reach five years' local government service.

Spinal Column Point (SCP)	Annual leave entitlement	Annual leave entitlement after 5 years in continuous local government service
4-22	26 days	31 days
23-25	27 days	32 days
26-28	28 days	33 days
29-59	29 days	34 days
Chief Officers	30 days	35 days

Annual leave entitlement is calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees.

## 10.0 **Occupational Sick Pay**

Entitlement to sick pay is related to continuous service, measured in complete months or years at the start of the period of absence. Any previous absences in the twelve months before the start of any absence are deducted from the entitlement.

Entitlement to sick pay is in accordance with the provisions of the NJC for Local Authorities, as follows:

During 1st Year	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2nd Year	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3rd Year	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4th and 5th Year	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 Years	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

## 11.0 **Expenses**

11.1 The council will meet or reimburse authorised travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for attendance at approved business meetings and training events in accordance with the council's Expenses policy. The council does not regard such costs as remuneration but as non-pay operational costs. This policy is applied consistently to Chief Officers and other employees.

11.2 The council pays car mileage in accordance with HMRC approved rates which are the same for Chief Officers and other employees. The current rates are:

<b>Mileage</b>	<b>HMRC Rates</b>
Car/van (petrol or diesel) (first 10,000 business miles per annum)	45p per business mile
Car/van (after 10,000 business miles per annum)	25p per business mile
Car/van (electric)	45p per business mile
Car/van electric (after 10,000 business miles per annum)	25p per business mile
Motorcycle	24p per business mile

Bicycle	20p per business mile
Passenger (employee/member)	5p per passenger per mile

## **12.0 Redundancy payments and payments on termination**

- 12.1 The council has a single redundancy scheme which applies to all employees without differentiation. The council does not provide any further payment to employees leaving the council's employment other than in respect of accrued leave which by agreement is untaken at the date of leaving.
- 12.2 The redundancy payment is based on the length of continuous local government service as set out in the employee contract, the council follows the statutory process in terms of age multipliers and a maximum of 20 years' service, however, no statutory cap is applied to weekly pay and actual weekly pay is used in all cases and the council then further enhances the redundancy payment by applying a multiplier of 2. Details of the full scheme can be found in the council's Redundancy Policy.

## **13.0 Future appointments**

In the event of a vacancy to either a Chief Officer or other employee post the arrangements set out above in regard to pay will apply in respect of permanent appointments.

## **14.0 Publication and access to information**

The publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of Chief Officers' is set out in this document and published on the council's website.

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR VICKY GLOVER-WARD– EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND GROWTH**

**REPORT TITLE: STANSTEAD ABBOTTS AND ST MARGARETS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - ADOPTION**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: GREAT AMWELL AND STANSTEADS**

**Summary** – A referendum on the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan took place on 29 January 2026. A majority voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan and as such the Council now has the opportunity to formally make (adopt) the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL**

**a) That the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Area Plan 2017-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally made.**

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 Following the successful referendum on 29 January 2026, the Council are now able to make (adopt) the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan became part of the statutory development plan once it was approved at referendum and will be used by development management in the determination of planning applications submitted in the neighbourhood area. Unless a neighbourhood plan breaches human rights or EU obligations, the local planning authority is required to formally make the neighbourhood plan.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Government under the Localism Act in 2011. The Town and Country Planning England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) came into force on the 6 April 2012 and prescribe both the process, and role of the local planning authority in supporting neighbourhood planning. In East Herts, Parish or Town Councils are qualifying bodies able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 The three parish councils of Stanstead Abbots, Stanstead St Margarets and Great Amwell have worked together to prepare this Neighbourhood Plan. Stanstead Abbots Parish Council, as the lead Parish Council, is the qualifying body and submitted an application to East Herts Council for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area in June 2018. The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Area was then designated on the 11 September 2018. It includes the entirety of Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Parishes, together with the area of Great Amwell, known as the Folly.
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Group carried out early community engagement between 2017 and 2021 and then undertook a Pre-Submission Consultation from 6 February to the 2 April 2023 under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations. The Neighbourhood Plan was then submitted to East Herts Council on the 13 December 2024 and a six-week consultation on the submission plan was undertaken from the 30 January to the 14 March 2025, under Regulation 16.
- 2.4 A Neighbourhood Plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan has a strong vision for delivering sustainable development and this has been translated into a set of objectives and policies. It seeks to protect character, heritage and the local environment, whilst delivering new development and infrastructure to meet local needs. There is particular focus on the following areas:
- Delivering sustainable development and ensuring suitable sites are delivered within the plan period.
  - Delivering well-designed, mixed and affordable housing, including a 6-home scheme of community-led housing.

- Enhancing the river’s unique contribution to the village.
  - Protection of non-designated heritage assets.
  - Protection and enhancement of the natural environment, landscape, and local character, including the designation of 16 new local green spaces.
  - Supporting a vibrant economy, protecting employment areas and enhancing the High Street.
  - Promoting safe and sustainable transport links.
- 2.5 District Plan (2018) Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages, requires Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock between 2017 and 2033, which amounts to 94 dwellings. The policy accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, to accommodate growth. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through neighbourhood plans.
- 2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with East Herts District Plan. So, to meet the policy requirement, the Neighbourhood Plan (Policy SASM HA2) proposes 98 new homes in the plan period, including a strategic site of 60 dwellings on the edge of the village. As the housing requirement could not be accommodated within the existing settlement boundary, the allocation of the strategic site SASM H3 (a mixed-use site on previously developed and green field land) requires changes to the Green Belt boundary.
- 2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan was assessed by an Independent Examiner between May and October 2025. It is assessed against the December 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (not the 2024 version) because it was submitted in December 2024, so transitional arrangements apply. In the final report, the Examiner commended the Neighbourhood Plan for being well presented and for seeking to achieve sustainable development. The report states the Neighbourhood Plan is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area, to designate a series of local green spaces and to support residential development to meet the strategic requirement for the neighbourhood area identified in the District Plan.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 The Referendum took place on Thursday 29 January 2026 with an 18% turnout. There was an overall 'yes' vote of 500 votes (79.7%), against 127 (20.3%) who voted 'no'. As outlined within Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017), the Council is able to make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the area. The residents within the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Area voted on the following question:  
*"Do you want East Hertfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"*

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

#### *Adoption*

3.3 Following a successful referendum, the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan already forms part of the development plan. As such, any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.

3.4 There are narrow circumstances where the local planning authority is not required to make the neighbourhood plan. These are where it considers that the making of the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act as amended). The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan does not breach these obligations.

3.5 It is considered that the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan positively contributes to the East Herts Development Management process providing a strong community vision that seeks to contribute to sustainable development and as such the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to be formally made.

3.6 The final version of the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan can be found in **Appendix A**.

#### **4.0 Options**

4.1 The Council is permitted, in narrow circumstances only, to not make a neighbourhood plan, when it is in breach or incompatible with any EU or human rights obligations (see section 61E (8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as Amended). However, it is considered that the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan does not breach these obligations. The Examiner considered these matters in his report and concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with EU and human rights obligations.

#### **5.0 Risks**

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

#### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

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

#### **Community Safety**

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

#### **Data Protection**

There are no data protection implications arising from this report.

#### **Equalities**

The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan seeks to advance equality of opportunity by encouraging inclusive design, promoting well-planned, accessible places and promoting healthier communities. The Plan has been subject to multiple rounds of public consultation during its development providing opportunities for extensive community engagement.

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The Plan also contains policies that aim to protect the environment.

### **Financial**

It is the responsibility of the LPA to cover examination and referendum costs. Government grants are available when a formal decision has been made to proceed to referendum.

### **Health and Safety**

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

### **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

### **Human Rights**

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

### **Legal**

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the Local Planning Authority to make the Neighbourhood Plan within 8 weeks of the referendum.

### **Specific Wards**

Part of Great Amwell and Stansteads Ward.

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

### **7.1 Appendix A: Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033**

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*Stanstead Abbots  
& St Margarets*

Neighbourhood Plan  
2017-2033





## *Foreword*

**D**uring consultations on the East Herts Local Plan 2018-2033, there was much discussion amongst Parish Councils about preparing neighbourhood plans. There were mixed views about the advisability of spending the time and money that this would involve. Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council began to recognise that this would be a way of protecting most of the village from unwanted development and to have a say on where necessary development should take place. The Green Belt and the Conservation areas certainly offer protection but with the publication of the new planning guidelines (NPPF) there were concerns that these might not be sufficient barriers to unwanted change.

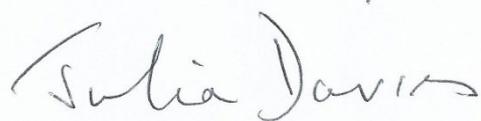
East Herts Council advised that the whole of Stanstead Abbotts, St Margarets, and part of Great Amwell (mainly the Folly Estate) constituted one settlement for strategic planning purposes. This strategic position has dictated the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Local Plan stipulates that there must be a 10% increase in

dwellings in the settlement area. At a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at Wallfields we were advised to work on a Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that we could select suitable sites ourselves for at least 94 homes. Without a Neighbourhood Plan the area would be at risk of planning applications for more than 94 homes which could be allowed on appeal.

This very clear directive prompted immediate action from Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council. Meetings began and volunteers came forward – fortunately exceptionally talented and committed people.

The process has revealed enormously strong feelings of attachment to and appreciation of the village. Highly valued is its position within reach of London, while also providing access to the countryside. The preparation of the Plan has prompted much creative thinking and writing about the many aspects of this settlement area in the past, present and future that are covered in this project.




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## 1. Introduction

### *Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan*

- 1.1 The Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan ('the Neighbourhood Plan' or 'the Plan') has been prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (as amended). The Parish Councils of St Margarets and Stanstead Abbotts initiated talks with Great Amwell Parish Council to prepare a neighbourhood plan to cover the so-called 'Settlement Area' or village of Stanstead Abbotts, as defined in the East Herts District Plan 2018. Part of the village is within Great Amwell Parish. This Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement and The Evidence Base. These documents provide more detailed supporting information explaining and evidencing the policies in the Plan.
- 1.2 Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council, as the lead Parish Council, is the "qualifying body" for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is a community-led framework for the future development and growth of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. It has been compiled on behalf of the three Parish Councils by a community Steering Group, which was set up on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017, for the purpose of managing the process and drafting the document.
- 1.3 After some months of discussion between the Parish Councils and East Herts District Council, Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council submitted an application for the Designated Area (the entire parishes of Stanstead St Margarets - known as St Margarets - and Stanstead Abbotts and the South East section of Great Amwell Parish within the village settlement). The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in **Figure 1**. This was formally designated by East Herts Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The Plan period is 2017 to 2033.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to the policies of the East Herts District Plan, adopted in October 2018. The Plan has also been checked against government planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) and the on-line Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Within both the national and local frameworks, the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned with the development and use of land in the designated area in the period to 2033. In accordance with national policy, the Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and embraces a range of social, economic, and environmental issues.
- 1.5 A vision for the designated area is coupled to a list of objectives, which will be achieved through planning policies, and proposals in **Appendix J: Action Plan**. The Neighbourhood Plan consists of a written statement and a policies map, which is depicted on an Ordnance Survey base. The adopted Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan, with East Herts District Plan and together they will form the basis on which planning applications will be determined, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

*The Designated Area*

# Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Area

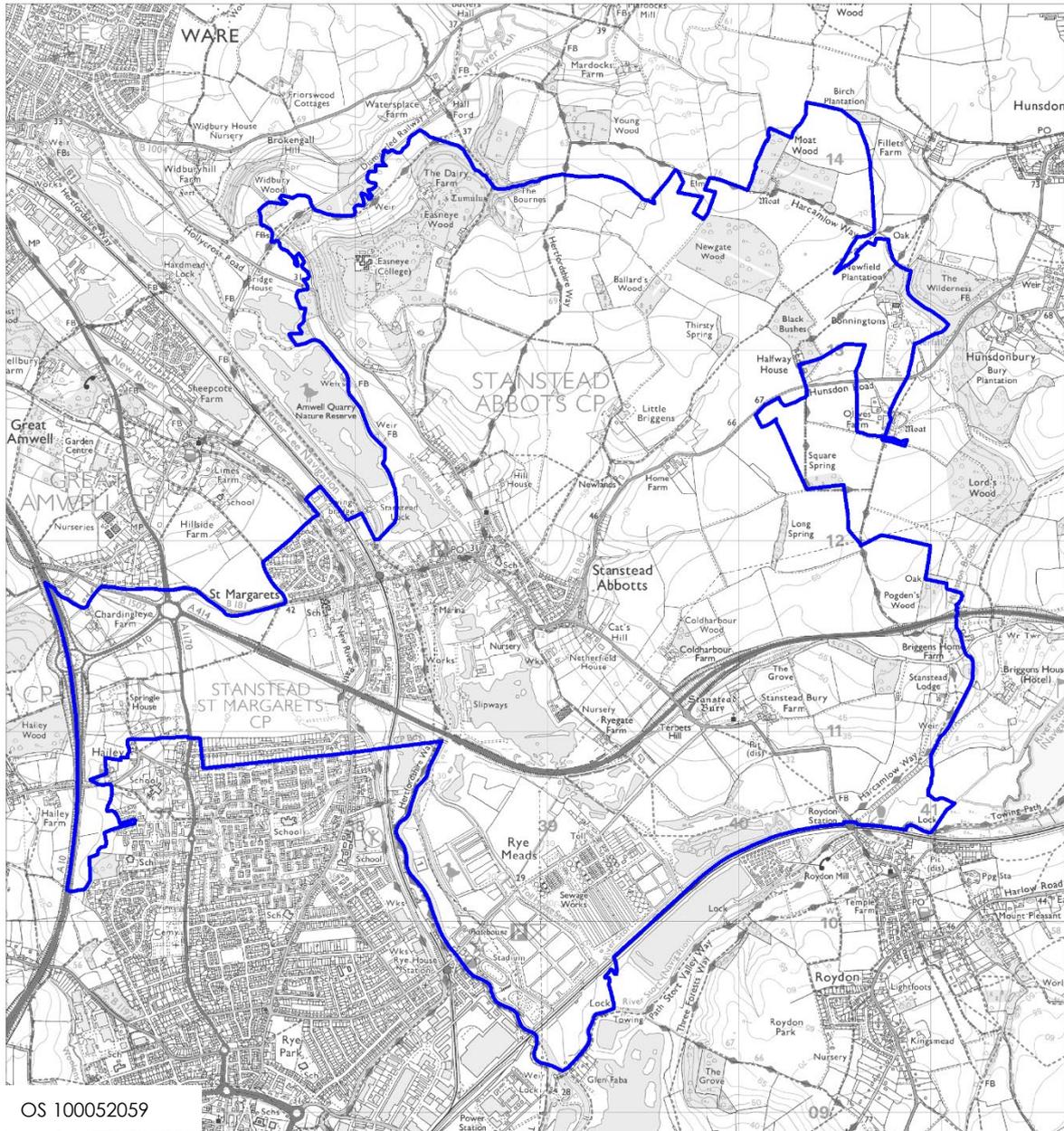


FIGURE 1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGNATED AREA MAP



### *The Basic Conditions*

- 1.6 There is a separate document available to read alongside this summary entitled Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions. The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with other local, national and European (or UK equivalent) policies, as required in the Localism Act. Specifically, it is required to meet four criteria called 'Basic Conditions' as set out in paragraph 8(s) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as referred to by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended):
- (i) The Plan must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the NPPF;(updated December 2023)
  - (ii) The Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - (iii) 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, the East Herts District Plan as well as the draft Minerals & Waste Plan 2040; and
  - (iv) The Plan must abide by the relevant EU regulations (or UK equivalent).

Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared to demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Plan meets these Basic Conditions.

### *Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan*

- 1.7 Discussions at the Stanstead Abbots Parish Council Public Meeting in the Parish Hall in Spring 2017 led to the establishment of a Steering Group of approximately 20 enthusiastic volunteers from across the whole of the designated area and from each of the three parishes. The project progressed thanks to the core team that has worked on it for four years and to the work of the planning consultant, Jacqueline Veater.
- 1.8 Starting with information about possible sites in the East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment, possible sites were identified for housing, along with green spaces for protection and the most significant scenic vistas.
- 1.9 There were several restrictions on the choices of sites: Flood Zone 3 was not going to be acceptable. Brownfield sites would be prioritised, green field sites and those within the Green Belt would only be considered if there was insufficient land elsewhere. New homes had to be adjacent to, or, better still, within the settlement area.
- 1.10 Of great importance was to find out what people in the village wanted in the way of new housing, what need had been identified by EHDC and information from local estate agents on the size and type of property that was in demand.

### *Community Engagement*

- 1.11 The Communications Sub-group (a sub-group of the NP Steering Group) has ensured there have been many threads of engagement with the public. After an initial awareness raising survey, a website and Facebook page were set up and frequently updated. The existing Community Facebook Page, has had a number of threads relating to the NP proposals. Regular contributions were made to what used to be a monthly Parish Magazine delivered throughout the designated area. The Steering Group delivered a very detailed survey to every home which was thoroughly analysed, and the results reported back via the Parish Magazine. Following the delivery of the surveys there were open days with further data collection, a design workshop, a drop-in session and more recently a webinar.
- 1.12 Further details of the consultation that was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Consultation Statement. This describes the engagement techniques used, events held and the results of each consultation. It also contains a list of consultees.

### *Location and Topography of the Area*

- 1.13 Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets straddle the Greenwich Meridian Line on the very southern edge of East Herts District adjacent to the boundary with the Borough of Broxbourne. The Eastern edge is partially alongside the boundaries of Epping Forest District and partially of Harlow Town in Essex.
- 1.14 There are four rivers in the area: the River Lea, (and the River Lea Navigation) the Stort, the Ash and the Mill Stream flowing into the Lea. There is also a section of the man-made New River. The main river valley is a paleo-channel of the pre-Ice Age River Thames before it changed to its current course. This has given the area its London clay and gravel deposits.
- 1.15 Much of the village is low-lying. There has been considerable extraction of sand and gravel which has resulted in there being several lakes within the three parishes and bird and wildlife reserves. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) supports the development activities of Tarmac on the Briggens Estate on the east side of Stanstead Abbots and is keen to bring the site forward as a sand and gravel quarry. There is much opposition to this from residents because of the impact on the landscape and the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.16 The higher (farmed) land on the edges of the village plays a major role in the local economy and provides very attractive vistas while the many and varied, mainly deciduous, trees and shrubs provide habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna – many of the trees form well-loved landmarks within the village and often help to demarcate the popular footpaths and bridlepaths.
- 1.17 St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots are on either side of the River Lea Navigation and the railway line parallel to it. Great Amwell Parish lies to the north of Station Road and the main settlement is to the west of the River Lea. The designated Neighbourhood Plan Area includes parts of Great Amwell Parish, notably the 1950s built estate known as The Folly and the 1980s development which replaced an old



maltings, known as Riversmead, and some additional dwellings including a development on an old timber yard.

### *The Designated Area*

- 1.18 The boundary of the designated area was discussed by councillors from each parish and members of the Steering Group. The discussions followed the lead of East Herts Council who provided a map of the settlement area in the Local Development Plan. This included the whole of St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots. Two members of the Steering Group spoke at a meeting of Great Amwell Parish Council who were clear that they did not wish to be included in their entirety. However they agreed that the parts of the parish referred to in paragraph 1.17 were adjacent to the village settlement area, close to the station and looked towards Stanstead Abbots for their shops and some services. The Steering Group agreed that the other parts of Great Amwell are very much a Category 2 village and should not need to expand under the EHC Development Plan criteria.

## **2. *Planning Policy and Spatial Context***

### *National Planning Policy*

- 2.1 The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan (SAMS) has been prepared in conformity with the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** updated December 2023 which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Paragraphs 13, 21 and 29 and 145 set out:
- 2.2 *'Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.*
- 2.3 *Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.*
- 2.4 *Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and 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.'*

### *Local Planning Policy*

- 2.5 The **East Herts District Plan** was adopted in 2018 and sets out the planning framework for the District from 2011 to 2033 with an overall requirement to deliver 18,458 homes during the plan period. Within the Plan, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is identified as a Group 1 Village consisting of 938 householders (based on the 2011 census) with a 10% growth target of 94 homes projected from 2017 to 2033. Where a need for changes to the Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.
- 2.6 The **Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2040** (draft July 2022) sets out the requirements to plan for future minerals supply for the county. The draft plan identifies the Briggens Estate (Site MASO1), a 175 ha. site to the east of Stanstead Abbots as a location for sand and gravel extraction within the latter half of the plan period. This site is located less than 500m to the west of Harlow Gilston Garden Town villages (HGGT). The Minerals and Waste plans of HCC have been delayed and there is still uncertainty about the plans for the Briggens Estate however it is very likely that there will be a quarry on the estate resulting in continuous extraction of sand and gravel for a period of 25 years. The entrance to the quarry would be on the B181 between the edge of Stanstead Abbots and the link road – Easterly direction – on to the A414. This leads to concern regarding the routing of the sand and gravel lorries away from the site as there is no west bound slip road onto the A414.
- 2.7 Planning policy supporting the development of **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town** is set out with the East Herts District Plan, with specific policies within GA1 to shape delivery of an anticipated 10,000 homes along with supporting infrastructure to be built across seven new villages. Village 7 is located further to the east of the SASM plan, set within the Stort Valley and along the boundary are Hunsdon Brook and Lord's Wood to the west/north west, the A414 to the South, Hunsdon House to the north and close to the proposed site of village 6 to the east.

The **Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework Area 8 Proposals** (April 2019) cover the northern most section of the Regional Park, stretching from Rye House and the RSPB Rye Meads Nature Reserve in the south to the edge of Ware in the north alongside the River Lee Navigation. Stanstead Abbots Parish Council was informed of various proposals from the LVRP to increase use of the park in the parish of Stanstead Abbots. They have updated the signage and notice boards but plans to have cycles for hire and the river bus being accessible in Stanstead Abbots have not yet come to fruition.



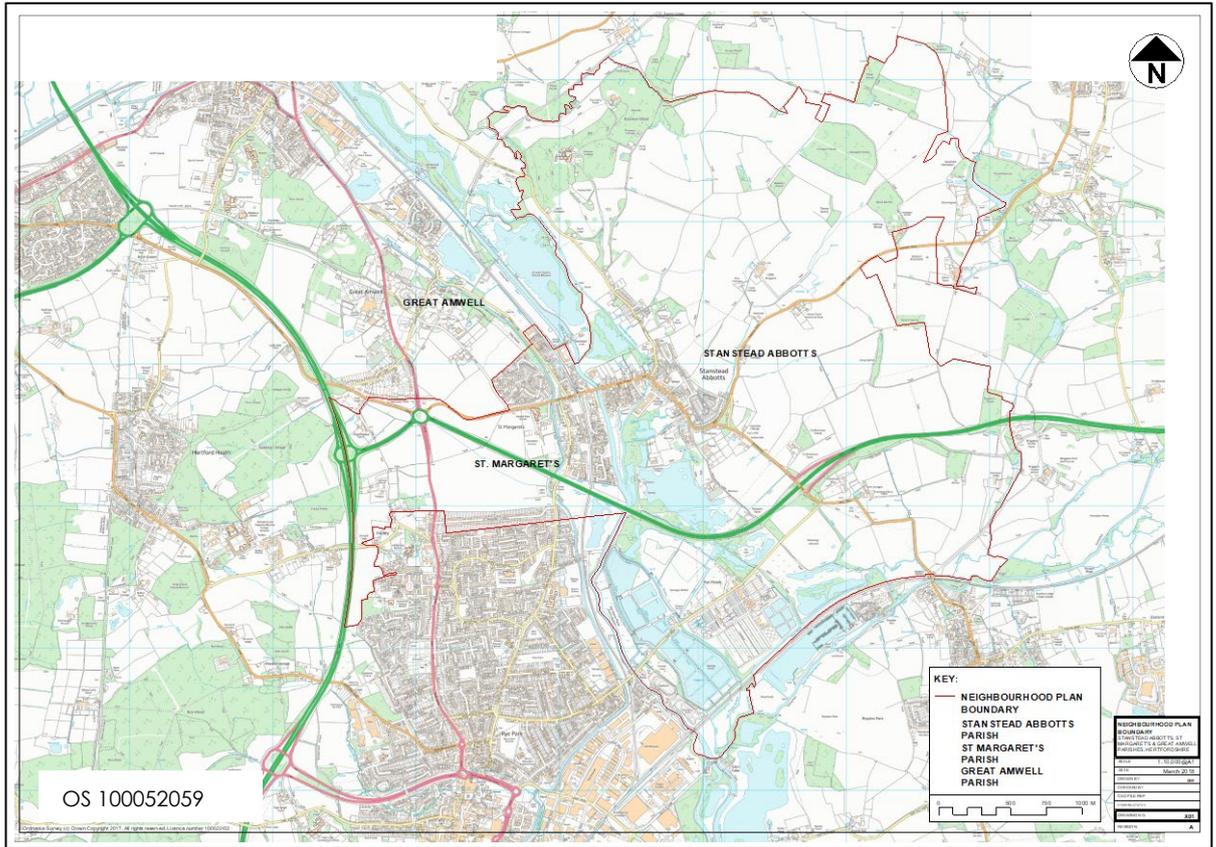


FIGURE 2 THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

### *Historical Context*

- 2.8 The earliest signs of habitation in the area date back to the Mesolithic age. Signs of a Mesolithic encampment were found at the base of Cat Hill along with evidence of tools from around 5000 BCE. Bronze Age settlers of 4-5,000 years ago have left evidence of a henge monument to the south-west of the settlement. An Iron Age gold torc, Roman remains and Medieval moats confirm the area's ancient ancestry with bones from the deposition of wild boar dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> century being found near Cat Hill.
- 2.9 Historically there were two separate villages: Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets. The settlement of Stanstead Abbots is now small in comparison to the surrounding towns of Ware and Hertford. But in pre-Norman times 'Stane Stead' was one of the five most established towns in Hertfordshire. The first mention of Stanstead Abbots is in an early charter of King Swaefred of Essex dating to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century when the area was known as Stanhemstead. There is archaeological evidence of a Market at the head of the High Street near the Mill Stream as far back as the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. It is likely that the very earliest settlement lay on the hill above the High Street in the area of Chapel Fields.
- 2.10 The forming of an Island between the River Lea to the West and its tributary, now called the Mill Stream to the East in this rich clay and gravel valley, created the right conditions for the settlement to grow. Referred to in the Domesday Book of

1080, the village was so important that it had a Mill, 7 Burgesses (protected trades), and a priest. This was surprising for such a small community of only 30 households.

- 2.11 In the early days there was large-scale charcoal production using the plentiful supply of trees. Good agricultural soil produced high quality barley and led to the growth of maltings. There were many taverns and inns to support the trades - beer being far healthier to drink than the unclean water.
- 2.12 The river and its tributaries attracted Henry VIII who lived and fished in the area and much later it was a favourite spot for the noted fisherman, author and social observer, Izaak Walton who is claimed as an early member of a prestigious local fishing club. There were no less than three visits by Elizabeth 1 to nearby Stanstead Bury ensuring that the village was well known in the region.
- 2.13 The River Lea had not only been important for transport and fishing; London was relying on it for water. As the river level was dropping due to the great use made of it in East Hertfordshire, Edmund Colthurst began the construction of the 46-mile New River, starting originally from Emma's Well at Great Amwell and ending at Sadlers Wells, London. Hugh Myddleton completed it in 1613 with finance from King James I.
- 2.14 The River Lea and the Mill Stream were improved in the 1700's and for the next hundred years answered the demand for efficient transport to London: tons of malt and goods took three days to get there by barge – far quicker than packhorses. Horse manure formed return loads and was spread on the agricultural land (one area is still called 'Dung Field' to this day) and the villages became richer in soil as well as from business.
- 2.15 In 1843 the railway came, and from St Margarets Station it was possible to catch a northbound train to Hertford, or alternatively to Buntingford, or to travel south into London. Travel could consequently be measured in hours rather than days and produce was delivered fresh rather than stale. Houses were constructed in South Street for railway workers.
- 2.16 The Buntingford line lasted for over one hundred years but today there is simply the link to Hertford via Ware and south via Rye House and Broxbourne to Liverpool Street. Whilst there are frequent buses going north and south it is less easy to travel east and west without a car. There are still many boats on the river some of which are lived in, but the majority are for recreation. The village lies on the flight path for Stansted Airport which is about a 45 minute drive.

### 3. *Vision and Objectives*

#### *Vision*

- 3.1 The Vision Statement sets out what the Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve up to 2033. This Vision Statement was composed during a Workshop held at the Nigel Copping Centre and run by the Consultant working with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. There had been discussions previously in informal meetings which



had included non-members of the Steering Group. The final Vision developed from the basic feelings of attachment to a village which in itself provides all of the basic necessities for its residents as well as access to the rural environment and a train service into the heart of London.

- 3.2 Our vision is for Stanstead Abbots, St Margarets and The Folly to thrive as a diverse and inclusive rural village that supports varied livelihoods and promotes community cohesion and well-being. We will provide and promote locally accessible and sustainable development that provides affordable housing whilst protecting the heritage of our area. Sustainable means that the present needs for housing and employment are met without there being any compromise in the ability of future generations to meet their needs also. Our vision includes enhancing our green spaces for wildlife and community use, improving natural flood defences, and further establishing our place in the wider Lea Valley corridor.
- 3.3 The Objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan link to the Vision Statement and provide the basis for the planning policies. The main topics within the Neighbourhood Plan have specific objectives relating to them.
- 3.4 The Objectives set out below are in conformity with the East Herts District Council Local Plan as well as the other documents listed in the draft Basic Conditions statement.

### *Objectives*

#### *Housing & Design*

**Objective A:** To promote sustainable development that provides for the current and future needs of our community.

**Objective B:** To ensure suitable sites for development over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan and assess all proposed building against criteria that ensures our need for inclusive, accessible, and adaptable housing is met.

**Objective C:** To balance the market by providing new housing of a suitable size and type to meet those needs in acceptable locations.

**Objective D:** To improve access to well-designed and locally affordable housing, which complements the variety of our existing settlement.

#### *Riverside*

**Objective E:** To celebrate the rivers' unique contribution to the village by increasing opportunities for people to enjoy and directly interact with the rivers.

#### *Heritage*

**Objective F:** To deliver accessible guidance and information to inform residents about heritage requirements and assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

**Objective G:** To identify specific designated and non-designated heritage assets and provide for their protection.

#### *Natural Environment*

**Objective H:** To protect the Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets countryside setting, landscape, and character, for the benefit of the village itself as well as the wider community.

**Objective I:** To improve protection of assets such as woodland spaces and water networks that are vital for wildlife and ensure existing and new developments are resilient to flooding.

**Objective J:** To maintain irreplaceable species, promote ecosystem diversity and ensure that development results in a net gain in biodiversity.

#### *Leisure & Community Facilities*

**Objective K:** To protect open spaces that have recreation, leisure and amenity value and/or are of importance to the local community.

**Objective L:** To improve existing community, leisure and recreation facilities, and make these facilities accessible to everyone.

**Objective M:** To ensure appropriate community, leisure and recreation facilities are provided as part of major developments.

#### *Business and Employment*

**Objective N:** To ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities, including family-owned businesses and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.

**Objective O:** To encourage new businesses to prosper whilst protecting and maintaining the character of the village.

**Objective P:** To support creative and social enterprise, tourism, and community services.

#### *Transport*

**Objective Q:** To implement traffic calming measures, where possible, that will protect the High Street and surrounding roads as well as ensuring safe and sustainable travel options to local schools/nurseries and places of work.

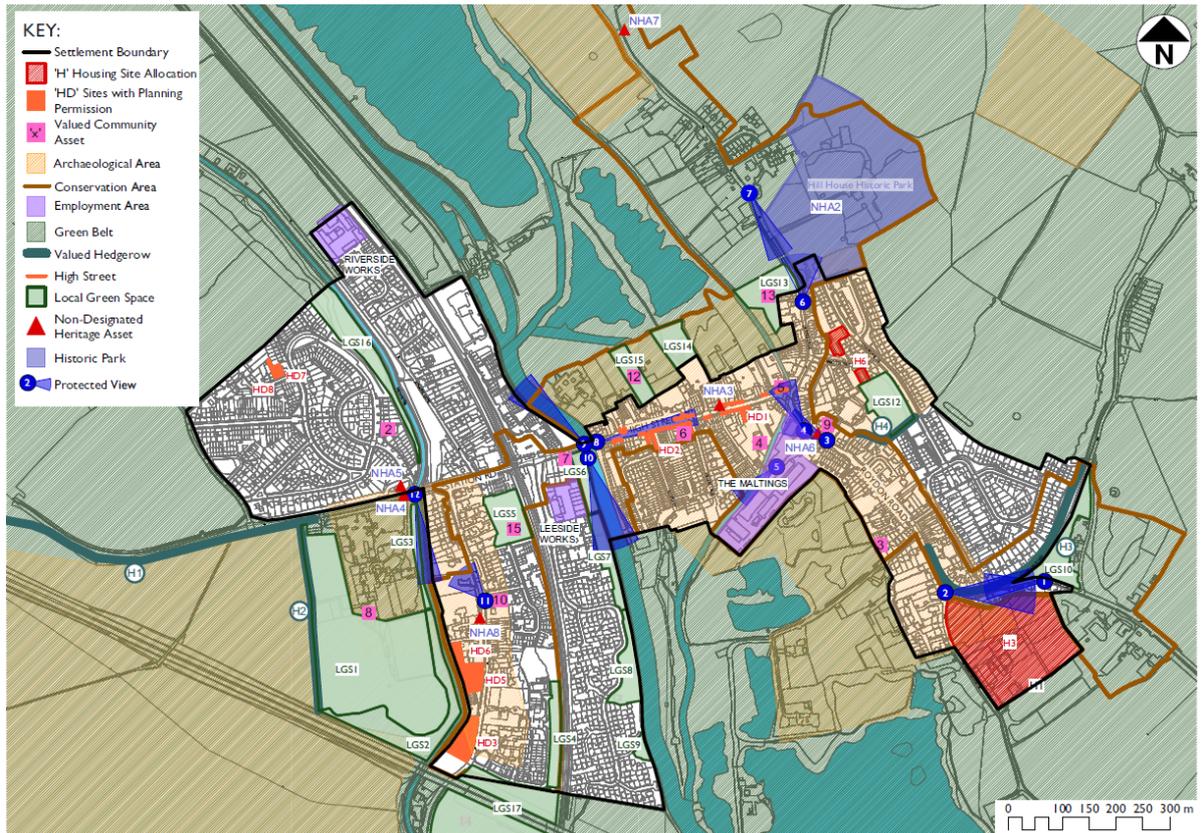
**Objective R:** To promote parking provision in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.

#### *Neighbourhood Plan Policies*

- 3.5 The following chapters contain the Neighbourhood Plan Policies. As the policies aim to achieve the objectives, the following chapter headings replicate the named sections of objectives.
- 3.6 The policies should be read in conjunction with the Policies Map (see **Figure 3 Policies Map**)



*Policies Map*



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FIGURE 3 POLICIES MAP (INSET)

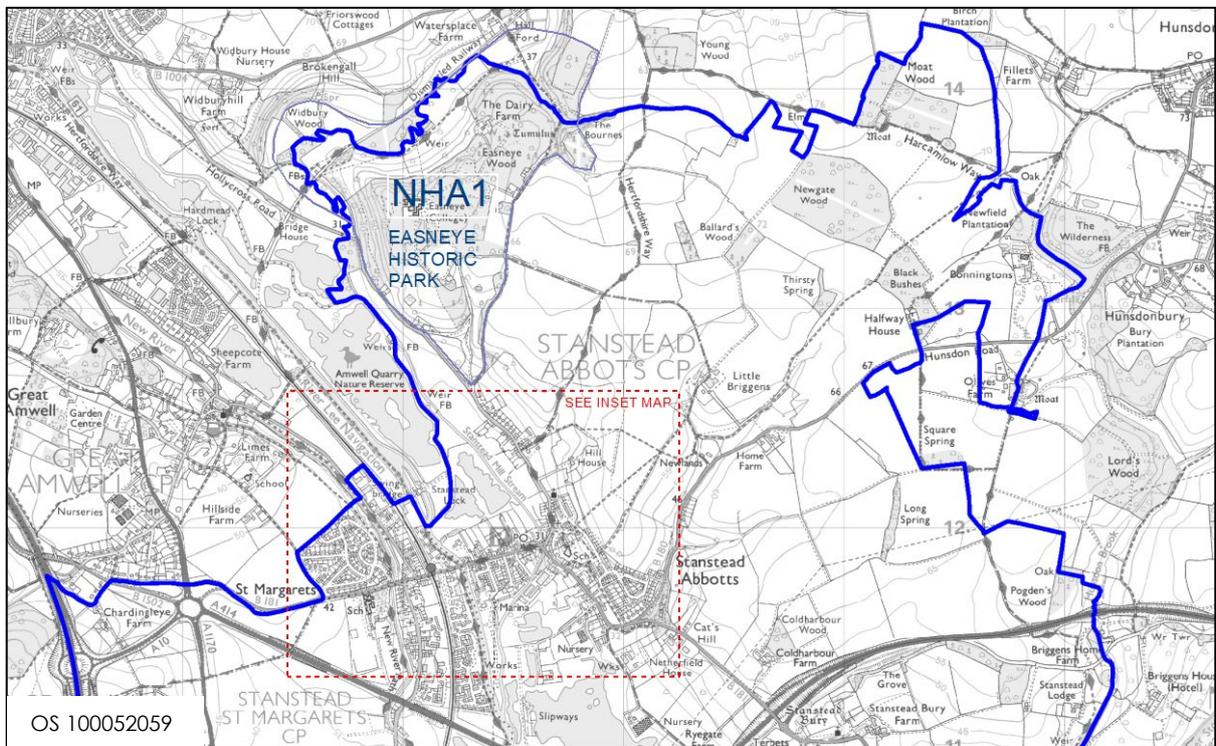


FIGURE 4 POLICIES MAP (SHOWING POLICY NHA1)

## 4. *Housing*

### *Introduction*

- 4.1 Stanstead Abbots is a popular and attractive village, with a range of primary facilities including a dentists' surgery and shops, and good transport links to London and Hertford. These links mean that the village has to some extent been impacted by the "London effect", with house prices above the average for the surrounding area. There is high demand for properties, and houses, particularly family-sized ones, sell quickly. While this is positive for those already adequately housed or selling their homes, for those trying to move into or stay within the village, it is less so. Residents have voiced their concerns about the lack of affordable housing in the area, particularly considering the negative impact on their own children's ability to buy or rent in the village.
- 4.2 Some of the characteristics identified above have contributed to the categorisation of Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets as a Group 1 village in East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1. The contribution of Group 1 villages towards East Herts housing supply between 2011 and 2033 was set at 500 homes in Policy DPS3. This figure will be met by the growth of Group 1 villages by at least 10%, based on the village population in 2011. The number of houses in 2011 is recorded as 940. 10% increase in size was considered to be sustainable - in order for this Neighbourhood Plan to conform to the Local Plan, the Steering Group has therefore sought to accommodate 94 potential homes to be built by the end of the Plan period.
- 4.3 The criteria which was used by the housing sub-group for the site selection may be viewed in Appendix C of this NP.
- 4.4 The search for potential sites for development took place over a lengthy period and the site selection and allocation process underwent several iterations. AECOM were commissioned to review and critique the site selection process and their report made recommendations which led to changes to the process though not to the result.
- 4.5 Site selection was complicated by the uniquely constrained nature of the village settlement area. Stanstead Abbots is surrounded by Green Belt, some of which is high grade agricultural land. It is close to nature reserves, a RAMSAR site, and sites of archaeological interest. Space for homes is also limited by the extent of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in and around the village. Within the village settlement area, there is little spare land, apart from highly valued green spaces.
- 4.6 Surveys and public consultations showed that residents much preferred that building take place on small brownfield sites within the village settlement area and opposed building on the Green Belt. The initial search for sites therefore concentrated on the village settlement area itself, but it rapidly became clear that this would not furnish sufficient opportunity to meet the District Plan's VILL1 Policy target.



4.7 As any land outside the village is Green Belt, an amendment to the Green Belt boundary, to extend the village boundary to accommodate land for housing, meant that any land released from the Green Belt had to be adjacent to the village boundary. The focus shifted, to selecting one site that would meet most of the housing target and provide for the housing needs of the village, in addition to a few smaller sites within the village boundary. The overall aim of the site selection process was to identify sites that could achieve a little more than the housing target of at least 94 homes, to future proof the Plan.

4.8 The following policies in this section aim to achieve the following objectives:

**Objective A:** To promote sustainable development that provides for the current and future needs of our community.

**Objective B:** To ensure suitable sites for development over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan and assess all proposed building against criteria that ensures our need for inclusive, accessible, and adaptable housing is met.

### *Green Belt*

4.9 District Plan Policy VILL1 (iii) accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt Boundary, to accommodate an extension of the village to achieve the housing target. The designated Stanstead Abbots Village Development Boundary separates the village from the Green Belt. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF (DLUHC, 2023) sets out that where a need for changes to the Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans. In this case Policy Vill 1 and DPS3, where needed. This aim in the NPPF is very much in line with the views expressed by residents in our consultations who were concerned about intrusions into the Green Belt.

4.10 Paragraph 146 NPPF (DLUHC, 2023) advises that 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 underutilised land and optimises the density of development. Both requirements were an integral part of the site assessment process carried out in the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Several small sites were identified within the village boundary on brownfield land.

4.11 Consideration of the sensitivity of the Green Belt around Stanstead Abbots was of concern to residents surveyed in the general residents' survey (See Consultation Statement). Most residents also preferred to utilise brownfield sites first and to "pepper-pot" small sites around the village; however, they also strongly preferred sites which would provide a significant amount of affordable housing. Given that under planning policy only sites of 10 or more dwellings are obligated to provide a percentage of affordable housing in the mix, this means that larger sites had to be considered and these were only to be found outside the village settlement

boundary. Therefore, the only sites under consideration, in the Green Belt, were adjacent to the village settlement boundary.

4.12 With only very few small achievable sites identified within the boundary, it was necessary to explore the possibility of amending the Green Belt to accommodate a site large enough to provide the remainder of the allocation for the Neighbourhood Plan. The site needed to be in a location that enabled the drawing of a new, strong and defensible boundary between the village and the Green Belt. An explanation of how the housing numbers have been achieved in this Neighbourhood Plan is laid out below. The single Green Belt site is identified in Policy SASM H3 and lies off Netherfield Lane/Roydon Road).

**SASM H1 Village and Green Belt Boundary**

I. The Plan defines a village settlement boundary to include the Housing Site Allocation SASM H3 Netherfield Lane/Roydon Road. Development proposals within the village settlement boundary will be supported where they comply with other development plan policies.

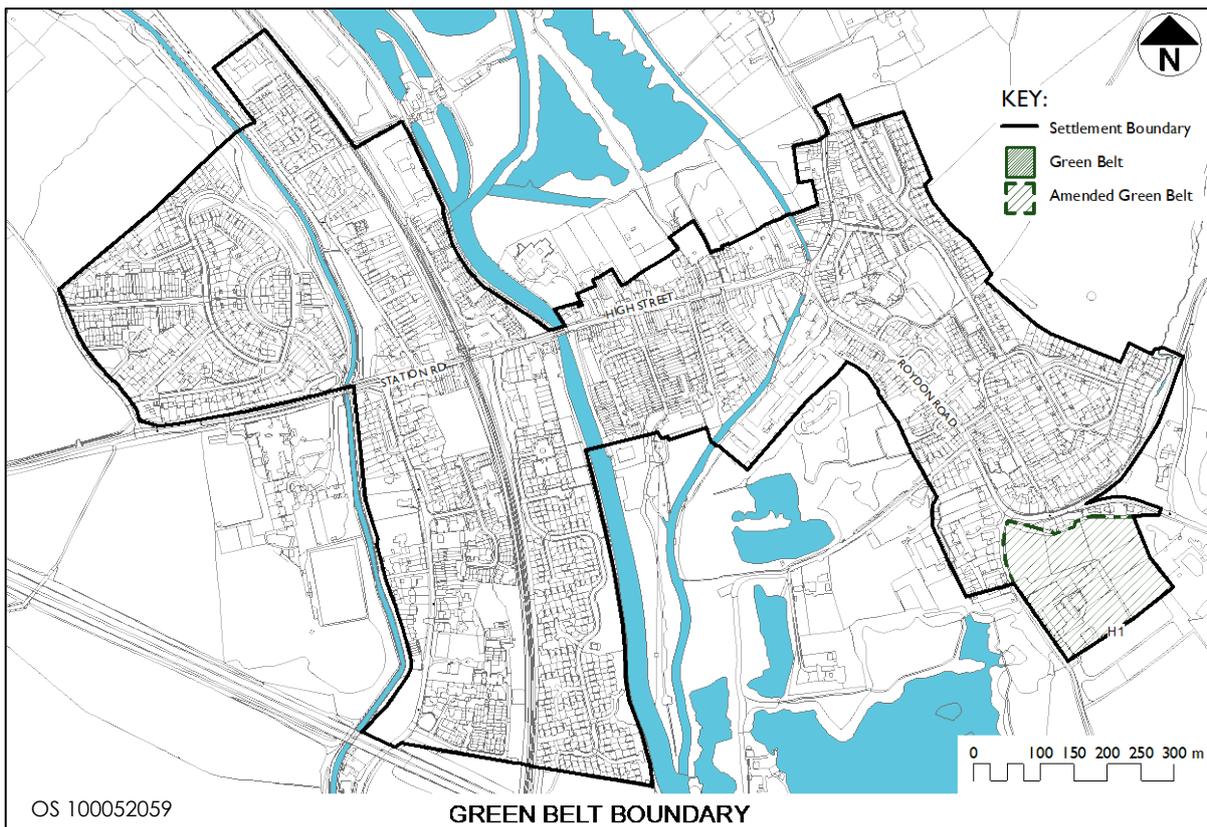


FIGURE 5 AMENDMENT TO GREEN BELT BOUNDARY TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING SITE



### *Flood Zones and the impact on housing sites*

- 4.13 We had initially considered sites that were in Flood Zone 3 but identified as benefiting from flood defences. Following new regulations from the Environment Agency and the removal of flood defenses as a reason to allow development this has reduced further the number of sites available.
- 4.14 Stanstead Abbots has suffered from flooding in the past. The flood defences put in place have significantly reduced the amount of water collected in the High Street and the number of homes impacted. Some residents have unfortunately experienced flood water entering their homes within the last couple of years. It is vital that any new development does not lead to further issues and the Steering Group has been mindful of the District's policy on Sequential Testing (Policy WAT 1 IV).

### *Housing Numbers*

- 4.15 The 2017 East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment identified only 2 sites within or immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundary as suitable for development; one of those (known as the Wilderness) had already received planning permission.
- 4.16 A Call for Sites was undertaken. Several responses were received from individuals as well as others from companies promoting larger sites.
- 4.17 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group systematically surveyed the village noting every potential housing site however small. All possible sites were considered for their suitability and a description of the site assessment can be read in **Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process**.
- 4.18 The following sites are included within the plan, which have been developed or have received planning permission since April 2017, and will provide 25 homes (overall net dwellings):
- |                          |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|-----|
| 8 High Street, SG12 8AB  | 1 | HD1 |
| 60 High Street SG12 8AG  | 2 | HD2 |
| Wilderness Grove         | 8 | HD3 |
| Pump House Lane          | 4 | HD4 |
| The Spinney A            | 6 | HD5 |
| The Spinney B            | 2 | HD6 |
| 6 Frenchs Close SG12 8BB | 1 | HD7 |
| 4 Frenchs Close SG12 8BB | 1 | HD8 |
- 4.19 A site allocation for 60 homes on Land East Netherfield Lane/South of Roydon Road, and garage sites on Abbots Way for 7 homes brings the total to 92 homes.

- 4.20 An additional 6 homes within the village boundary on windfall sites brings the total within this plan to 98 homes.
- 4.21 Paragraph 70 (d) NPPF (2023) supports a windfall allowance to be included to meet the housing target. "A windfall allowance anticipates future development that is currently unidentified. It is necessary to include a windfall allowance in this Plan because there are not enough acceptable sites made available by landowners for development within or adjacent to the village development boundary. To support a windfall allowance, there must be evidence that such developments are likely to come forward within the village development boundary."
- 4.22 Over the past 10 years 32 dwellings have been completed within the village boundary (see details in appendix L Pre-approved sites (nb see note below in SASM2 I)). Specific examples of these sites include demolition of single dwellings and erection of 2 x new dwellings (6 Frenchs Close ref 3/15/1456/FUL), 4 Frenchs Close (ref 3/18/2413/FUL), Adjacent to 353 Hoddesdon Road (ref 3/16/1407/FUL) conversions of High Street premises to include residential dwellings, 8 High Street (ref 3/10/0069/FUL), 6 High Street (3/15/1897/FUL), and development of vacant commercial premises, Land to the rear of 45-49 Hoddesdon Road (ref3/16/1407/FUL). It is anticipated that further windfall locations in areas such as Station Road, and the High Street, where conversions of upper floors to residential dwellings or demolition of single dwellings and erection of additional dwellings as well as conversion of single houses into multiple flats are likely to be forthcoming within the plan period. Other areas that could come forward include non-designated employment areas, should there be no identified demand for suitable alternative employment uses.
- 4.23 Whilst it is expected that at least 98 homes will be built in the village over the plan period given the evidence above, in all cases developments are expected to be compliant with this neighbourhood plan and to contribute to the objective of sustainable development. The parish councils consider that it will be extremely likely that the existing sites with planning permission will all be completed for occupation before 31st March 2033.





FIGURE 6 HOUSING SITE POLICY SASM H3 (PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED PART OF SITE)



FIGURE 7 HOUSING SITE POLICY SASM H3 (UN-DEVELOPED PART OF SITE)

### *SASM H2 Housing Numbers*

- I. In accordance with the housing strategy laid out in the District Plan to deliver sustainable development, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets will accommodate a minimum of 98 new homes between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033. These will be achieved through a combination of the following sites and shown on the Policies Map. A detailed breakdown of the allocated housing sites that make up the 98 homes required can be found in **Appendix L**:
  - a) Site Allocation Policy SASM H3 Land east Netherfield Lane/south of Roydon Road for 60 homes (sites K and L).
  - b) Site Allocation Policy SASM H4: Site H6, two garage sites on Abbots Way for approximately 7 homes (sites 32 and 33).
  - c) 25 homes which have been built and occupied since April 2017 (sites 28, 29, 30a, 30b, 36, 37 and 38).
  - d) Windfall sites of which we expect 6.

### *Site Allocations*

- 4.24 Each Housing Site Allocation has its own policy with an extract from the Policies Map to show the site area, a list of basic facts about the site, and policy criteria for site development. It is preceded by information about the site.

#### *Land East of Netherfield Lane/south of Roydon Road*

- 4.25 This site on Netherfield Lane is a combined greenfield and brownfield site within the Lee Valley Regional Park boundary. The brownfield part of the site is a redundant factory; planning permission was originally sought some years ago for redevelopment to residential use but refused as it was not believed that the landowners had made sufficient effort to relet the factory units. Subsequent attempts to re-let having failed, the landowner obtained outline planning permission for a change to residential use (3/20/0502/OUT) for 20 homes and employment use. Due to the substantial amount of remediation that will be necessary to decontaminate the site, planning permission has been granted without the requirement for affordable housing. It is essential that the overall site should be developed in a consistent and structured way. The second part of the policy advises that the allocated site should deliver a coordinated approach to the delivery of its brownfield and greenfield components and accommodate approximately 60 homes, including affordable housing and a 6-home scheme of community led housing.



- 4.26 It was proposed to the landowner that they combine this original site with the unused field next to it. The combined site would accommodate 60 homes, thus enabling the Neighbourhood Plan to reach the housing allocation target. Some further land take surrounding the site has been agreed to enable more extensive landscaping and in particular a “green barrier” between the site and the houses on Netherfield Lane, as well as retaining and enhancing existing hedgerow and tree line, to mitigate any adverse impact from development on the surrounding Lee Valley Park landscape as set out within the LVRPA Park Development Framework (2011), and its proximity to Stanstead Innings as set out in Area 8 Proposals “The Upper Lee Valley – Rye Meads to Ware. The existing woodland and other vegetation along the boundaries should be retained and strengthened; there should be ecological enhancement and connectivity through the site for wildlife. A 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity will be essential. All planting should be native species.
- 4.27 A further feature of the site would be a small complementary development of community-led homes laid out in a courtyard design behind the existing grade II\* listed Baesh Almshouses, which would be available to rent at a truly affordable price. This land will be donated to the Baesh Trust [The Baesh Almshouse Trust has existed since 1638 and a large percentage of the Trustees are appointed by Stanstead Abbots and Great Amwell Parish Councils] to provide affordable homes in addition to the requirement for 40% affordable housing on the part of the site which excludes the land with outline planning consent (3/20/0502/OUT).
- 4.28 The site is suitable for family homes. Figures from EHDC indicate that the greatest demand is for 2 and 3 bed homes and slightly less demand for 1 bed homes. The demand according to local estate agents for purchase is for 3 and 4 bed homes.
- 4.29 The overall pattern of development should respond positively to the the site's immediate surroundings. The second part of the policy and some of the criteria in the fourth part provide guidance on house types and sizes. Given the nature of the existing junction of Netherfield Lane with Roydon Road, new access points into the site will be required. This is addressed in criterion f) in the fourth part of the policy. The scale and nature of the access points should be informed by a transport impact assessment. A lighting plan should be prepared to ensure dark corridors can be maintained along the site boundaries, both during construction and once occupied.
- 4.30 The whole site is within the Green Belt (the factory site being brownfield within the green Belt); justification for release from the Green Belt is given in **Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process**. The green field site is already contained on three sides by existing development and has not been used for agricultural purposes other than for occasional grazing a number of years ago. The need to provide a defensible new Green Belt boundary as detailed in Policy SASM H1 can be met.

### *SASM H3 Land East of Netherfield Lane/South of Roydon Road*

- I. Site H3 is allocated for mixed use development of Class C3 (Residential), Class E (Business).
- II. The site should deliver a coordinated approach to the delivery of its brownfield and greenfield components supported by a masterplan, and accommodate approximately 60 homes, including affordable housing and a 6-home scheme of community-led housing.
- III. Built development should occupy the minimum amount of the greenfield land that is required to deliver 60 homes on the overall site, consistent with good design and layout. The remaining parts of the greenfield area of the site should provide high quality, accessible, green infrastructure including a permanent, defensible, and landscaped boundary to contain the settlement edge and define the new green belt boundary.
- IV. In addition to the design guidelines in Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and design guidelines (AECOM, 2021), development proposals should respond positively to the following site specific criteria:
  - a) Housing mix should reflect local need, with predominantly 3/4-bed homes for open market sale and smaller 1, 2 and 3 bed affordable homes.
  - b) 40% affordable housing should be delivered on the site, and a 6-unit housing scheme to be made available to the Baesh Trust.
  - c) Green space should provide areas for communal recreation, good quality play space and contribute to visual amenity.
  - d) Parking provision should be integral or on plot, and be sympathetically designed to minimise impact on the street scape. Parking for any flats delivered on the site should be provided in a landscaped courtyard.
  - e) Layout should accommodate the retention of all existing trees and hedgerows (see also Policy NE3) to minimise the impact of loss of countryside and achieve a net gain in biodiversity and enhance connectivity to habitats at Stanstead Innings.
  - f) The delivery of a vehicular access to Netherfield Lane and pedestrian and cycle access to Netherfield Lane and/or Roydon Road.
  - g) The development of the site should showcase sustainable design and use an innovative layout to maximise daylight, attractive outlooks, sensitive lighting and ensure appropriate privacy and amenity for occupants.
  - h) The design and layout of the site should respond positively to the listed Baeshalmshouses to the immediate north of the site and provide sufficient distance between new buildings and the almshouses to safeguard their setting.
  - i) Within the context of criterion h), a vehicular access should be provided to the rear of the almshouses for general access and for emergency vehicles.
  - j) Development proposals should improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as retaining bridleway access for horse riders along Netherfield Lane.



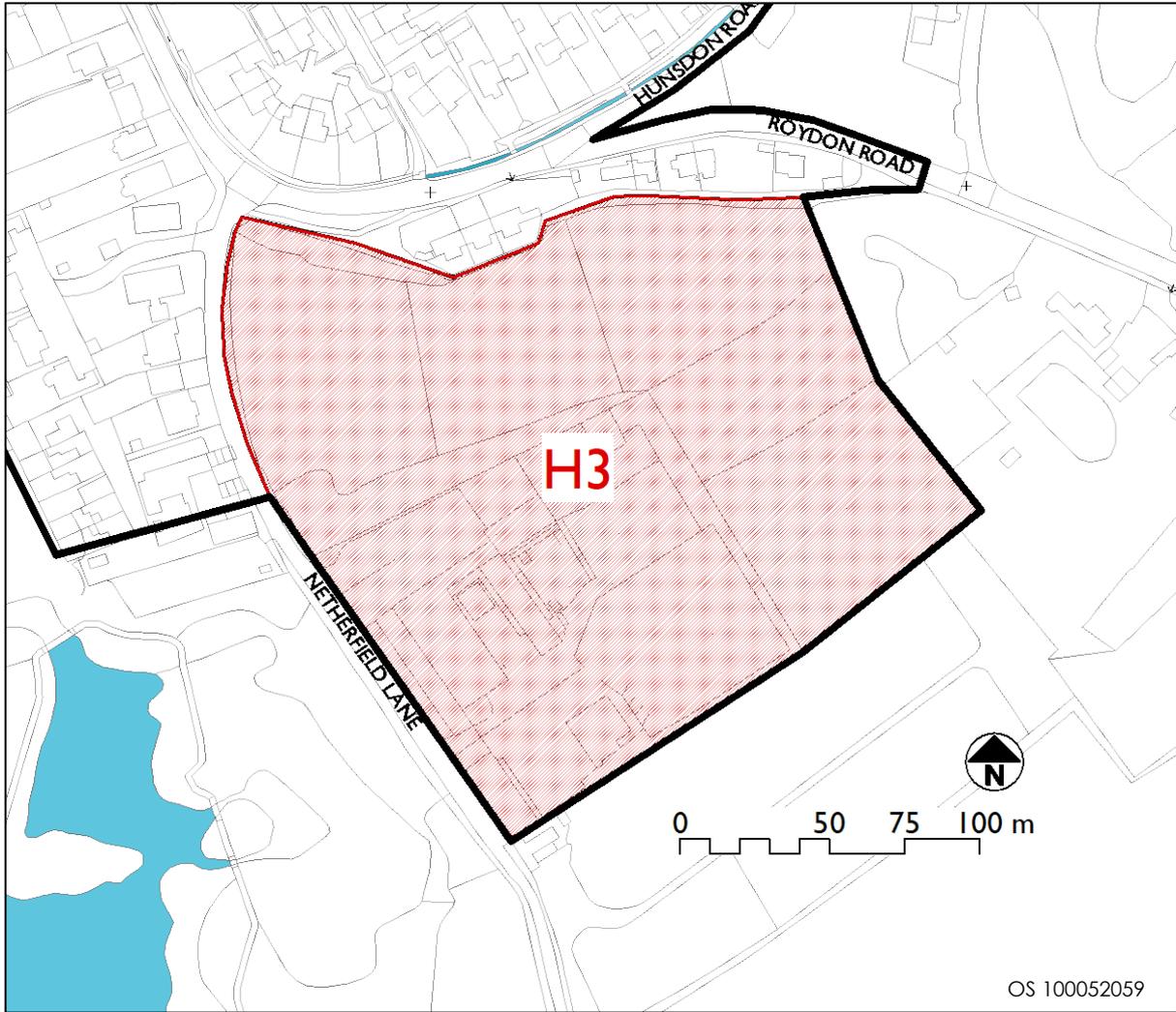


FIGURE 8 HOUSING SITE H3 DETAILED MAP

<b>Address</b>	Land to the east of Netherfield Lane, Stanstead Abbots, SG12 8HE
<b>Ownership</b>	Webster Estates Ltd
<b>Approximate size of site</b>	Up to 3.2 hectares
<b>Current / previous use</b>	B1 (a), B2, B8
<b>How site was identified</b>	Call for Sites
<b>Planning History</b>	Dismissal of Planning Appeal APP/J1915W/17/3185259 / East Herts Council reference 3/16/2296/OUT for proposed redevelopment for 30 dwellings. A subsequent application for 20 homes and 745 sq. m of office space ref 3/20/0502/OUT was granted outline permission with conditions on 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2023.
<b>Estimated timescale</b>	First 5 years of the Plan
<b>Estimated capacity</b>	60 units

### *Chapelfields and Abbotts Way Garages*

4.31 This is a small brownfield site within the village settlement area. It is currently owned by Network Homes, a housing association which took much of the housing stock in Stanstead Abbots under a stock transfer from East Herts District Council in 2002. It consists of two sites adjacent to one another, which currently are occupied by garage blocks. Network Homes submitted 2 planning applications to redevelop the garages for residential use and have consulted locally on their plans. One of these applications has been approved to date. The stated intention is to build 7 homes - 2 houses and a block of 5 flats, all to be affordable housing; currently the proposal is for these to all be for sale, however, Network Homes has indicated that they are prepared to be flexible on this, given the high need for rented accommodation in the area.



FIGURE 9 HOUSING SITE ALLOCATION POLICY SASM H6

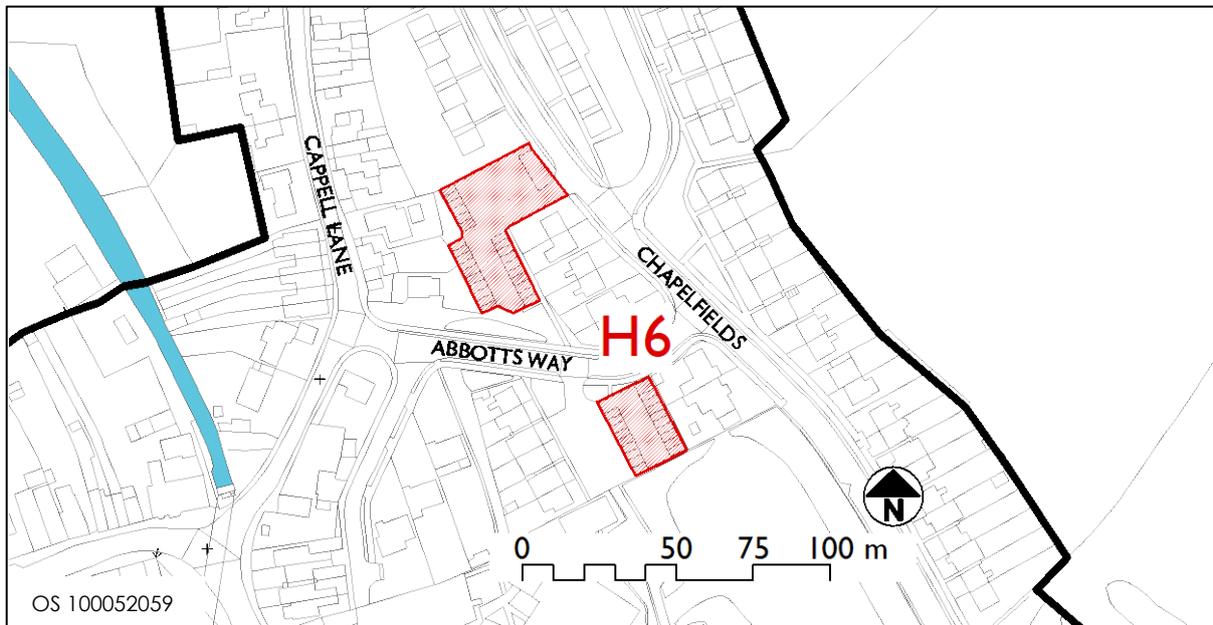


FIGURE 10 HOUSING SITE H6 DETAILED MAP



<b>Address</b>	Chapelfields and Abbots Way, Stanstead Abbots, Sg12 8HZ/HT
<b>Ownership</b>	Network Homes
<b>Approximate size of site</b>	Up to 0.18 hectares
<b>Current / previous use</b>	Garages sites
<b>How site was identified</b>	NP Plan Steering Group
<b>Planning History</b>	None found
<b>Estimated timescale</b>	First 5 years of the Plan
<b>Estimated capacity</b>	7 units

*SASM H4: Site H6 Chapelfields and Abbots Way Garages*

- I. Site H6 is allocated for Residential (Class C3). 7 dwellings.
- II. The design and layout of the development should relate sympathetically to the topography.
- III. Development proposals for the two sites should incorporate soft and hard landscaping, including creating usable connected green spaces.
- IV. Development proposals should meet the following site-specific criteria based on the site constraints and additional design guidelines set out in Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM 2021):
  - a) The incorporation of a mix of semi-detached or terraced homes and flats.
  - b) New buildings should be a maximum of 2 and a half storeys to reflect the height of neighbouring residential buildings and be designed with reference to views across the valley from the sites.
  - c) Parking should be on plot and carefully integrated into the overall design.
  - d) Existing trees should be retained with new planting and re-designed green space incorporated.
  - e) Design and material should reflect local vernacular including the proximity of several listed buildings.
  - f) PROW 006 runs east-west between the two garage sites and should be integrated into the development and enhanced.

### *Sites with Planning Permission*

- 4.32 There are currently no sites under construction. The Wilderness Site (site 28), and the Spinney have been recently completed and are now occupied. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) very much regrets the significant loss of trees on the Wilderness Site, An initial application was rejected by East Herts Council but a subsequent revised application was approved.



FIGURE 11 HOUSING SITES COMPLETED (LEFT THE WILDERNESS AND RIGHT THE SPINNEY)

### *Brownfield Land and Windfall sites*

- 4.33 Additional homes will come forward on Brownfield Land within the village. A recent example is the conversion of a home into two flats in the High Street.

#### *SASM H5: Brownfield Land and Windfall sites*

- I. New housing development will be focused on those sites identified within this plan or on previously developed brownfield sites within the village development boundary. Any other proposals for appropriate infilling within the village development boundary that respond positively to the design policies in the development plan (including Policy D1 of this Plan) will also be supported.
- II. Suitable windfall sites may include:
  - a) Conversions of upper floors to residential dwellings:
  - b) Demolition of single dwellings and erection of additional dwellings:
  - c) Conversion of large single houses into multiple flats.

### *Housing Type and Mix*

- 4.34 Housing need in the village is concentrated in the lower end of property sizes; most of those households on the Housing Register needing one, two or three bed homes. This is in line with the need identified across East Herts and with the District Council's recently published Housing Strategy noting that "there has been a



general increase in the number of households requiring affordable housing." At the end of March 2021 there were 2,168 households on the East Herts Housing Register, 95% of which required homes of three bedrooms or less.

### *SASM H6: Type and Mix of Housing*

- I. Proposals should demonstrate how the mix of dwellings and tenures meet local needs and are appropriate to the location. New housing should be safe, accessible, environmentally sustainable, and spacious enough to accommodate the changing needs of occupants throughout their lifetimes in accordance with EHDC Housing Need Assessment
- II. The provision of one and two-bedroom flats will be supported, particularly in locations close to public transport routes.

## 5. *Design*

### *Introduction*

- 5.1 Paragraph 3.6 of the Basic Conditions Statement sets out the intention to foster 'a well designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces. Design is a golden thread running through the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is more than just about aesthetics as buildings and environments need to be functional as well as durable; support occupant well-being, comfort, and physical health, respond to the surrounding environment, as well as minimising anything detrimental to the environment.
- 5.2 The design policies cover the standards of design that will be expected of developments in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the density of new residential development, the basic amenity of natural light that should be afforded to all homes, and how residential amenity space can be provided. These are supplemented by the Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM, 2021) on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#), written specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan.

### *Design of Development*

- 5.3 The importance of good design in the built environment is widely established. Good design is contextual and should respond to the environment, surrounding areas and circumstances and the context should influence architectural style, form, building material selection, scale, massing, and site layout. The NPPF says the neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of their area and how this can be reflected in new development. Our objective is for high quality developments that consider all the factors of context and making places better for people to contribute to overall quality of life.
- 5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has identified six areas in the village with distinct characters derived from the setting, topography, or architectural style. This



is captured in the document Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM, 2021) which seeks to ensure future development considers local character and enhances local distinctiveness. Good quality developments can be created using the set of specific principles relating to the six character areas, that can be applied to any development.

- 5.5 Space is a crucial element in promoting good quality health and wellbeing outcomes. Everyone has the right to own a spacious, quality home. Space is valued for different reasons but protecting liveable space through minimum standards will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the occupants.
- 5.6 The Vision Statement for this Neighbourhood Plan refers to community cohesion and well-being – this lies behind the insistence on adequate amounts of space. A fabric first approach involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building envelope to minimise the need for heating and cooling. The building envelope separates the interior from the exterior. By carefully considering the design and construction of the building envelope, you can minimise the energy required, reduce operational costs, and reduce carbon emissions. To achieve the best results with a fabric first, approach important factors are high-quality insulation, increased air tightness, avoiding thermal bridging (where there is a break in the insulation skin of a building causing condensation and heat loss), maximising solar gain without overheating, and natural ventilation. These details will ensure that the requirement set out in our Vision Statement for sustainable development is fulfilled.
- 5.7 When houses and other habitable structures are built close to neighbours, privacy between the neighbouring properties is an important issue as is the level of privacy in relation to the street or public spaces. The building arrangement of new developments should ensure privacy for residents and neighbours within the home. The privacy of private open space is also important. Maintaining views from principal rooms without compromising privacy of private open space should be maximised. The position and aspect of habitable rooms should avoid directly facing windows, gardens and balconies in dwellings that stand opposite one another. Orientating and angling buildings so they do not face one another can be effective as can the use of screening devices, fences, and planting.
- 5.8 The public realm and the relationship between it and the adjacent buildings is an important consideration to achieve high amenity, community safety and visual interest. To maximise these qualities, it is important for buildings to have an 'active frontage' to the public realm. Active frontage refers to street frontages of a building where there is visual engagement between those on the street and the ground and upper floors. Ensuring natural surveillance and human presence on streets are key in building in safety within our environment. This can be achieved by making buildings front on to the public realm with frequent windows and doors, articulation of facades with projections, and minimising exposed blank facades.



- 5.9 A well-designed approach can enhance the safety of users as well as creating a welcoming entrance. The front boundary of a property should be clearly defined between public and private areas, with dwelling frontage open to view, with walls, hedges and fencing kept low. Dwellings should be positioned to face each other to allow neighbours to easily view their surroundings. This gives increased opportunity for natural surveillance, community interaction, engagement, and participation. Clear signage of properties is essential to assist residents, postal and delivery workers, and the attendance of emergency services. The provision of external lighting for safety should be balanced with ecological considerations.
- 5.10 When designing streets that are to be attractive, safe and friendly, parking will have a strong influence on the degree of success. A careful balance needs to be struck between expectations of car owners to park near their houses with the need to maintain the character and setting. Vehicles should not be allowed to dominate the space, or inconvenience pedestrians and cyclists. Consideration should be given to green parking initiatives, for example locally sourced materials which reflect local geodiversity. As well as providing an appropriate level of car parking, the layout, landscaping and lighting of parking areas must be well designed, and where appropriate take into account lighting guidance for bats. As well as providing an appropriate level of car parking, the layout, landscaping and lighting of parking areas must be well designed. Layouts must accommodate the safe passage of emergency, delivery, and refuse collection vehicles. Objective R states the intention to provide parking in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.
- 5.11 Hertfordshire County Council is particularly active in promoting [Secured by Design](#) (PCPI, 2022) through its [Building Futures Toolkit](#) (Hertfordshire County Council, 2022). The Secured by Design Initiative offers in-depth advice and standards on environmental design and physical protection which should be used to create safe developments. Measures to design out crime should be considered at an early stage of the design process. These should include maximising opportunities for natural surveillance and ensuring a clear definition of public and private spaces. Safety and the other matters described in the preceding paragraphs are necessary to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity and where crime and disorder do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience in accordance with the NPPF, para 135 f) (DLUHC, 2023)
- 5.12 Traditionally homes have been separated from workplaces with a clear distinction between the two, except for trades such as farming. Recent years have seen an increase in working from home but the response to Covid-19 has accelerated this and new homes need to adapt and should be designed to accommodate working from home. Space for working from home has been part of the London Housing Design Guide, which sets the standard for residential development in London, and previously in the Code for Sustainable Homes that required space and services to enable a room to be used effectively as a home office.

- 5.13 Servicing of developments is an important consideration and there is a need to balance the efficient use of land, maintaining capacity of transport networks and not undermining the amenity of adjoining occupiers. All new development must be designed to accommodate the waste and recycling regime within East Herts, providing space for the full range of waste and recycling bins to encourage use. Bins should not be visible from the public realm and communal bins should be in robust materials that will withstand vandalism.
- 5.14 Cycling is increasingly recognised for the contribution it can make as a sustainable and healthy form of transport. To support this, there need to be measures in place to make sure the choice to cycle is a convenient one. Cycle parking needs to be designed early in a development to ensure it is good quality. Cycle parking needs to be conveniently located so it is as close as possible to the main entrance/exit to encourage cycling as first choice for short trips. Parking should be easy to use, safe and secure with good lighting and natural surveillance. Ideally parking should be covered, and cycle racks should provide good support, allowing the cycle frame and wheel to be secured. Cycle parking should be in keeping with the surroundings, and where possible include Green Infrastructure benefits such as green roofs, bird boxes or bee hotels.
- 5.15 Designs should take account of the Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) and accompanying Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide to ensure development responds to the 'building blocks' of green infrastructure, for example through use of SUDS, green and blue roofs, green walls, rain gardens and features for species such as nest and roost boxes.



### *SASM D1 Design of Development*

- I. Development proposals should be of a high standard of design and layout. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate the following criteria:
  - a) Design should respond to the local character taking into account the specific characteristic of the character area as defined in the AECOM document '[Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines](#)' particularly in relation to existing building lines, rhythm of the existing street, height and scale.
  - b) Designs should respond to Green Infrastructure opportunities as set out in the Green Infrastructure Framework (NE, 2023) designed to improve environmental sustainability and protect nature.
  - c) Proposals for housing should be able to demonstrate they meet the requirements and minimum sizes as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and that they have considered how homeworking can be accommodated.
  - d) Developments should be designed with a fabric first approach to reduce energy requirements and designed for maximum energy efficiency. Development that contributes to low or zero carbon objectives will be looked upon favourably.
  - e) Active frontages should be maximised and inactive frontages that form the ground floor of buildings facing publicly accessible space should be minimised, to provide natural surveillance and activity. Developments should allow space for deliveries, emergency access, and maintenance. Where possible, space should be provided off the main highway, with particular emphasis on sites located on the approach to the level crossing.
  - f) All forms of parking should be carefully integrated with the design of landscape and buildings to avoid spaces that are dominated by cars.
  - g) The arrangement of new development should ensure privacy and not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
  - h) Developments should provide adequate refuse and recycling storage space in the curtilage of the development. Within dwellings, built-in storage space for recycling, food waste and waste storage should be included as standard. Consideration should be given to relevant Natural England requirements (e.g. the Green Infrastructure Framework).
  - i) Cycle storage should be secure, adequately lit, easy to use and conveniently located.

### *Housing Density*

- 5.16 Appropriate density should be arrived at through a design-led approach, taking account of the site context and infrastructure capacity. Developments should make efficient use of land, taking into account a range of contextual factors. The efficient use of land requires optimisation of density. Increasing density is a key way of delivering more homes where land supply is constrained. There are several definitions of density and the methods by which it can be measured but the main objective to providing a minimum density for sites is for housing growth to minimise the extent of land required for development and impose less pressure on the Green Belt that surrounds the village.
- 5.17 The existing village context was examined in terms of average density, as a reflection of total number of homes in an area divided by the total residential land (in hectares) where the homes exist, in dwellings per hectare (dph). Lower density areas in the region of 22dph were largely 3-4 bedroom semi-detached or detached two storey dwellings, rising to 68 dph in developments where there are several 1-2 bedroom flats alongside large, terraced units with buildings up to three storeys in height.
- 5.18 Comparisons can be made with Edwardian/Victorian terraces in Hertfordshire at 80dph or new town higher density low-rise in Hertfordshire at 64dph. The report "Better Neighbourhoods: Making higher densities work" (CABE, 2004) is still relevant. However, a design led approach would also consider context, on the edge of the village, The NPPF para 135 (DLUHC, 2023), lists a number of factors that should be taken into account when making the most efficient use of land.

#### *SASM D2 Housing Density*

- I. The density of new residential development should secure the best use of the land and be optimised in locations with good transport and community facilities, subject to achieving quality design (in accordance with Policy SASM D1) and the provision of communal public green space. Furthermore, the density of new residential development should respond positively to the context and character of the immediate area.

### *Amenity*

- 5.19 Access to daylight and sunlight is a vital part of a healthy environment. Sensitive design should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to new buildings while not obstructing light to existing buildings nearby. All new developments should be designed to minimise overshadowing of neighbouring properties. Several factors should be considered such as height, distance to boundaries, size of plot, orientation, and topography.
- 5.20 Good sunlight and daylight should be achieved both within buildings and in the open spaces between them. This would equate to safeguarding daylight and sunlight within existing buildings near new development and protecting daylight for adjoining land, private gardens, and amenity areas.



### *SASM D3 Amenity*

- I. The design and layout of building should enable good standards of daylight and sunlight to be achieved in new development and in existing properties affected by new development. Wherever practicable, all new homes should have a dual aspect, and single aspect dwellings should be avoided particularly where they would be north-facing, exposed to noise or contain three or more bedrooms. All homes should be designed and arranged to allow direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day.

### *Residential Amenity Space*

- 5.21 The design of outdoor space is important, and the arrangement and quality of the spaces can have a significant impact on residents and neighbours and should be provided for all dwellings. Outdoor space can mitigate the effects of living in smaller dwellings and improves the overall liveability of a dwelling. Outdoor space may be public, communal, or private and should incorporate wider biodiversity benefits as set out in the Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide (2023) during design and operational phases. Communal outdoor spaces should be overlooked by adjacent dwellings, easy to maintain and have well defined boundaries. All dwellings should have private usable outdoor open space.
- 5.22 The design of outdoor spaces should be carefully planned as it can have a significant impact on residents and neighbours. Balconies and terraces contribute to the safety and liveliness of the street by creating opportunities for natural surveillance. Wintergardens would also be acceptable as a form of private or communal open space. These can be provided on balconies, roofs or atriums and can contain evergreen shrubbery and winter flowering plants which can be enjoyed year-round.

### *SASM D4 Residential Amenity Space*

- I. All new dwellings should be provided with private open space such as a garden, balcony, terrace or wintergarden. Where communal space is provided, proposals should demonstrate the space is overlooked, accessible, designed for sunlight and will be maintained.

## 6. Riverside

- 6.1 The policies in this section provide guidance on how to achieve appropriate sustainable development along the riverside whilst protecting its special ecology. The Lee Valley Regional Park, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB should be encouraged to continue their excellent work in protecting the safety of wildlife as well as visitors and educating residents and visitors about the natural environment around the rivers. The riverside defines Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and is an intrinsic part of its character. These aims are in accordance with Objective E:
- 6.2 **Objective E:** To celebrate the rivers' unique contribution to the village by increasing opportunities for people to enjoy and directly interact with the rivers.
- 6.3 Life in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is very much focused around water. The now very old New River has provided London with water pumped from Chadwell Springs just North of Great Amwell in Ware for hundreds of years and one of the prettiest sections of it passes through Great Amwell (adjacent to the Folly) and St Margarets. Most residents live within sight of either the New River, the River Lea Navigation, Mill Stream or the original River Lea itself. The houses flanking the Lee Valley Park are close to one or other of the many lakes created from former gravel pits which makes them attractive but being low-lying they are vulnerable to flooding.
- 6.4 Any development adjacent to the riverside would need to complement access to the tow paths, ensure the resilience of the river banks and take into account the access to boats on permanent or temporary moorings. Any built or floating structure should allow visual and physical access to the river banks and not obscure the river views from existing buildings. Light pollution should be avoided and the enjoyment of wildlife by visitors to the riverside and to other water bodies in the area should be encouraged.
- 6.5 Boating has become very popular during the last few years with ever increasing numbers of narrow boats and motor- boats sharing the river space and utilising the facilities at the Stanstead Abbots Marina and Chandlery and the sailing club near Stanstead Abbots Lock. Dinghies are sailed on Abbots Lake and a large number are kept there under the auspices of a club. There are several fishing clubs and private fisheries in the designated area which bring many visitors to the village. It is another activity which attracts people to the area whether as residents or visitors.
- 6.6 More people seeking alternative types of housing accommodation are finding living on a canal boat a viable option ([The Waterways Trust](#)). Boats can also provide great holiday accommodation. The leisure moorings in Stanstead Abbots are close to Amwell Nature Reserve and have access to walking, cycling and running routes along the Lea Valley ([Lea Valley Narrowboats](#)). Using the river for these purposes should not detract from the amenities that the river provides.





FIGURE 12 RESIDENTIAL FLOATING STRUCTURES POLICY SASM R1

### *SASM R1 Riverside Development*

- I. Development proposals alongside and adjacent to the river should contribute to improvements and enhancements of the river environment and should ensure that homes establish a sensitive relationship with the river. Development proposals should maximise the benefits of the river setting in terms of views and vistas, while generating natural surveillance of the water space, create public spaces as focal points, and incorporate uses that enable the local community and public to enjoy the riverside, especially at ground level in buildings fronting the river and along the waterway's towing paths.

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals alongside or adjacent to the river should:

- a) Enhance existing public access to the riverside where improvements are feasible; or
- b) Provide new public access to the riverside where possible and maintain existing points of access to the foreshore. All major development proposals adjacent to the river shall provide public access; and
- c) Provide suitable parking, refuse and recycling facilities and utilities infrastructure where additional moorings are proposed; and
- d) Respond positively to the integrity of the waterway structure, navigational safety, safety of all waterway users, ecology, and the biodiversity of the waterway.

### *SASM R2 Floating Structures*

- I. Proposals for moorings and floating structures should:
  - a) respond positively to the character or integrity of the river;
  - b) respect recreation and commercial use of the river; and
  - c) provide a parking space, refuse and recycling facilities, and utilities infrastructure for any permanent mooring.



FIGURE 13 FOOTPATH ACCESS AND INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SASM R2

## 7. *Heritage Assets*

### *Introduction*

- 7.1 Heritage can make a valuable contribution to the well-being of the community and the economy. Heritage assets may be designated or undesignated, visible or below ground. As a resource they are irreplaceable, therefore any development that adversely affects such assets must be carried out with the greatest sensitivity, both to preserve and where this is not possible, to ensure that all information that could be retrieved is received and analysed. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are in line with East Herts District Plan Policies HA1 to HA8.
- 7.2 Through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, awareness of the richness of heritage assets in the area has been raised, particularly archaeology. Guided walks have been produced and events where residents can get involved in heritage preservation have been organised, including archaeological investigations on the Housing Site in Netherfield Lane ([Policy SASM H3](#)). A Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Report has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as an additional evidence document and can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 7.3 Interpretation of heritage raising awareness of special heritage assets already exists in the form of information boards and plaques, and the war-time history of the area is evident from the war memorials in Stanstead Abbots (outside St Andrews Church) and at Great Amwell (beside the river).
- 7.4 The aims of the policies in this section are in accordance with the following objectives:
- Objective F:** To deliver accessible guidance and information to inform residents about Heritage requirements and assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- Objective G:** To identify specific designated and non-designated heritage assets and provide for their protection.



- 7.5 A large part of the settlement area is covered by [Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(CAA\)](#), adopted by East Herts District Council in April 2014. The Conservation Area is made up of areas of different character. The NPPF (DLUHC,2023) paras 196-8 set out a range of positive factors requirements of the local authorities to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. Only the Folly Estate and the Lawrence Avenue estate lie entirely outside the Conservation Area (see Policies Map).
- 7.6 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the Neighbourhood Plan considers the likely impact on the historic environment from housing growth of the settlement. Sites both within and surrounding the settlement are constrained by designated heritage assets. The housing sites allocated in the Plan are adjacent to but not within the Conservation Area. The largest site at Netherfield Lane ([Policy H3](#)) has the greatest potential to impact heritage, in particular the Baesh Almshouses which are Grade II\* listed. However, the design concepts for the site and the capacity of the site to hold more homes than the number proposed will provide essential green space to respect the heritage setting of the site.
- 7.7 The Housing and the Design Policies, along with the Design Guidance, and the Heritage Policies below will ensure that heritage is protected in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### *Designated Heritage Assets*

#### *Conservation Area*

- 7.8 The Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area is irregularly shaped and covers most of the High Street and Station Road plus Roydon Road, Cats Hill, Hunsdon Road and Hoddesdon Road. The Conservation Area Appraisal identified 58 Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area with a similar number outside the Conservation Area but within the Neighbourhood Plan Area; 48 Listed Buildings are within the settlement boundary. Grade I, II\* and II Heritage Assets can be found on [Historic England's website](#). There are also two Scheduled Monuments within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Rye House and Bowl Barrow (see Policies Map), the Grade II\* designated Stanstead Bury and a small part of the Grade II designated Briggens Historic Park and Garden.

### *SASM HA1: Designated Heritage Assets*

- I. Development proposals should pay special attention to the desirability of conserving the significance of designated heritage assets within the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area in accordance with the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2014 and its successors.

### *Non-designated Heritage Assets*

- 7.9 Historic England's publication [Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment Advice Note 11 \(Second Edition, 2022\)](#) identifies the importance of neighbourhood plans including a policy for non-designated heritage assets and identifying those assets which might be included on a local heritage list.
- 7.10 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies many non-designated assets including buildings, walls, and decorative features. Some of these are reviewed in the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Report. Each should be considered worthy of inclusion in a local heritage list. However, for the purpose of this Neighbourhood Plan, [Policy HA2](#) below identifies Non-designated Heritage Assets.
- 7.11 There are several obelisks marking the Meridian Line through the village. The New River Meridian marker is located on the south side of Station Road close to the New River. An article in [Stanstead Abbots Local History Society Publication Issue 6](#) provides more information on Meridian Line markers.
- 7.12 Two Non-designated Heritage Assets are historic parks and gardens of local interest (Easneye and Hill House, Cappell Lane) identified by East Herts in their Historic Parks and Gardens Supplementary Planning Document (2007). Further information on these two locally listed parks and gardens has kindly been provided by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and can be read in the Evidence Base Reports document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 7.13 Details of the Non-designated Heritage Assets can be found in [\*\*Appendix D: Non-Designated Heritage Assets\*\*](#).



*SASM HA2: Non-designated Heritage Assets (NHA)*

- I. The Plan identifies the following Non-designated Heritage Assets
  - NHA1 Easneye Historic Park, Cappell Lane
  - NHA2 Hill House Historic Park, Cappell Lane
  - NHA3 K6 Telephone Box (now defibrillator station), High Street
  - NHA4 Greenwich Meridian Marker, Station Road
  - NHA5 Home Guard defence position opposite Meridian Marker, High Street
  - NHA6 Drinking Fountain, at front of Parish Hall, Roydon Road
  - NHA7 Edward VII Letter Box, Cappell Lane
  - NHA8 George VI Letter Box, opposite 42 Hoddesdon Road
- II. Development proposals which affect the identified non-designated heritage assets should take into account the significance of the heritage asset 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.

7.14 Much of the Conservation Area is also defined as an Area of Archaeological Significance. Hertfordshire Historic Environment Records have been consulted. The HER highlighted the importance of the land to the south/south-west of the village settlement where a Henge monument has been identified from aerial photography (one of only three in Hertfordshire). The Neighbourhood Plan recommends that until such time as field investigation is undertaken, land to the southwest of the village should be protected from development.

7.15 Land at the interface between the flood zone and higher ground within the villages may help with the identification of early medieval settlement. Along the High Street further archaeological investigation may help to offer a date for the earliest occupation within the flood zone. Any development proposals at the interface between the flood zone and higher ground may provide the opportunity to help with identification of the boundary of an early medieval settlement. Development proposals on the High Street may reveal information about the earliest occupation of the area. The Parish Council will press the District Council to add an informative note to any planning consent to work with Hertfordshire County Council and Historic England to monitor the development process and allow retrieval or recording of information.

### *SASM HA3: Archaeology*

- I. Within the AAS to the southwest of the settlement boundary, where aerial photography has revealed a henge and other monuments to be below ground, Development proposals will not be supported without extensive appropriate investigation of those assets and the incorporation of any appropriate mitigation measures.

### *Protected Views and Landscape Character*

- 7.16 The rural nature of the villages is shown in the East Hertfordshire Landscape

Character Assessment, adopted by the District Council in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>1</sup>. It details two landscape character areas which border the settlement: Area No. 78 – Great Amwell Ridge and Slopes, and Area No. 79 - the Amwell Floodplain. Because the villages are surrounded by a combination of farmland, wildlife habitats and woodland, it is important that any development is sympathetic to this landscape character.

- 7.17 Protecting locally valued views and vistas from inappropriate development,

particularly in rural areas, helps to preserve landscape character. The views protected in [Policy HA4](#) are a mix of urban (within the villages) and rural. Views also contribute to and help to preserve the setting of heritage assets. This was specifically mentioned in the Strategic Environmental Assessment in terms of Heritage Assets. Photographs of favourite village scenes are frequently posted on the Community Facebook page to much acclaim. The 12 views selected which are listed below have been fully described in appendix 14. They reflect the requests of residents including the Steering Group and also confirm the importance of the historic sites to the village. The village is a destination for walkers and fishers, runners and boaters, bird-watchers and historians – due to its distinctive character and the appeal of its combination of rural and industrial history.

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<sup>1</sup> East Herts Landscape Character Assessment SPD:  
[https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/30333/Landscape-Character-Assessment-SPD/PDF/Landscape Character Assessment SPD.pdf](https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/30333/Landscape-Character-Assessment-SPD/PDF/Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20SPD.pdf)



### *SASM HA4: Protected Views*

- I. Twelve Protected Views were identified either from the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area and Management Plan July 2014 or identified after the report was produced. Please see appendix E These are:
  - View 1: Down Cat Hill from the Almshouses
  - View 2: East up Cat Hill towards the Almshouses
  - View 3: East to the Maltings adjacent to Abbots Rise Roydon Road
  - View 4: North to the Red Lion PH
  - View 5: South along the Mill Stream from footbridge in Maltings Car Park
  - View 6: Northeast to St Andrews Church from Cappel Lane
  - View 7: South along Cappel Lane from Warrax Park
  - View 8: East along High Street from River Lea bridge
  - View 9: Along the River Lea from the bridge upstream
  - View 10: Along the River Lea from the bridge downstream
  - View 11: St Mary's church in St Margarets Parish on Hoddesdon Road
  - View 12: South along the New River from the bridge on Station Road
- II. The scale, orientation and massing of development proposals should respond positively to the protected views. Where necessary, development proposals should be supported by a Landscape Visual Assessment.



FIGURE 14 CAT HILL WITH ALMS HOUSES

## 8. *Natural Environment*

### *Introduction*

- 8.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area will be improved both for the benefit of residents and for the wider Lea Valley and its associated communities and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan endorses the 15 minute neighbourhood concept; promoting easy access for all residents to good quality natural green space within a 15 minute walk from their homes. Conserving and enhancing natural assets which form a key part of the village character will enrich the quality of life for residents.
- 8.2 Green and woodland spaces, water networks and rights of access will be protected as they contribute not only to landscape, setting and character, but provide open space to enhance well-being for residents. Appreciation of the variety of green spaces and walks available to residents was felt more strongly during Covid 19 lockdowns. Maintaining the irreplaceable and varied species that rely on the village's stewardship of the open and wooded areas surrounding the village is crucial for wildlife and people.
- 8.3 Nature conservation and the appreciation of nature contributes to framing our everyday lives and reflects the relationship between people and place. This includes the interaction between both natural and cultural components. Cultural components include the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions (Tudor, 2014). Natural components include the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna.
- 8.4 Climate change has to be addressed as a matter of urgency and in implementing this Plan, every effort will be made to increase the number of trees and to replace any lost trees; to add to biodiversity; to decrease pollution; and to reduce the over-use of natural resources.
- 8.5 The policies in this section provide guidance on how to achieve appropriate sustainable development whilst respecting the natural environment. These aims are in accordance with the following objectives:
- 8.6 **Objective H:** To protect the Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets countryside setting, landscape, and character, for the benefit of the village itself as well as the wider community.
- 8.7 **Objective I:** To improve protection of assets such as woodland spaces and water networks that are vital for wildlife, but also to the quality of life for residents.
- 8.8 **Objective J:** To maintain irreplaceable species, promote ecosystem diversity and ensure that development results in a net gain in biodiversity.

### *Green infrastructure*

- 8.9 The aim of Natural England to have every resident living within a fifteen minute walk of Local Green Spaces is absolutely in line with the recognition by the Steering Group that Local Green Spaces (LGS) are cherished assets. Designating the most important green spaces as Local Green Space (LGS) can protect these assets for



current and future generations. NPGS recognises that the list of designated Local Green Spaces (LGS) forms a cherished asset which was compiled with almost no dissent. Designating the green spaces identified through the consultation process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan include Green Belt land, meadows and open-access land, towpaths and river courses, rural footpaths, bridleways and allotments.

- 8.10 Local Green Spaces can be designated in neighbourhood plans under paragraph 105 of the NPPF, (DLUHC, 2023) of the NPPF December 2023. As we have set out in our Basic Conditions and in the objectives for this plan the protection of the Natural Environment and recognition of social needs have informed the selection of Local Green Spaces. The criteria used are contained in Paragraph 106 of the NPPF. Policy SASM NE1 identifies existing green spaces that require continuing protection (by location, type, statutory designation, condition and value to the community. Where green spaces already have protection they have not been included – those that are included were assessed against the following criteria: proximity to the community and local significance (ie visual impact, historical significance, recreational value and richness in bio-diversity) See **Appendix G: Local Green Space** Assessment.
- 8.11 One method used for selecting which green spaces meant most to local residents was to ask them at our series of open days at venues around the designated area and including Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall, to identify them on the map with stickers. This basic list was then followed up by a sub-group of the Steering Group. In the Regulation 14 survey a further site (a field adjacent to Housing Site H3) was suggested by a resident which was carefully considered. In the end it was felt it already had sufficient protection to remain a green field in the Green Belt and as it is not accessible to the public it did not meet the criteria.
- 8.12 LGS1 is a recreation ground which includes Football, cricket and tennis clubs which share some of the facilities but have each developed their own membership and ways of working. The field is open to the public and dog-walkers are free to come and go except during matches while young people are able to visit for kickabouts. The site is very well used and is very well maintained by volunteers.
- 8.13 LGS2 The Wilderness and Woodlands alongside the New River are particularly attractive settings for the residents and visiting walkers. The deciduous trees provide an attractive and atmospheric walkway enhanced by the reflections in the New River whilst the flora and fauna are especially appreciated. There was great sadness expressed at the loss of the part of the Wilderness on the eastern side of the New River adding to the determination on the part of residents to protect the remaining area.
- 8.14 LGS3 The splendid trees on the remainder of the historic St Margaretsbury Estate next to the New River Path greet anyone walking South from the bridge on Station Road. Again, there are fauna and flora which are very pleasing as they dominate according to the time of year. There is an abundance of birds here which fly up and down the New River and sightings of kingfishers are often noted.

- 8.15 LGS4 The field between the Granary and Sanville Gardens has been left derelict – the residents would like it to be cleared and made attractive with a footpath/cycleway linking the two estates as the original plans intended.
- 8.16 LGS5 The field to the North of Sanville Gardens is the remainder of what was a nursery owned by a local family for two generations and which has been developed over the last 15 years. The owner has given his name to the local community centre -the Nigel Copping Hall - having also donated the land on which it was built. LGS5 has been planted as an orchard through the offices of the St Margarets Parish Council and the community has demonstrated its approval on the local Facebook page and in feedback to the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.
- 8.17 LGS 6 Was identified by many consultees in 2018 and comprises a large riverside space which is popular with dog-walkers and children. In the summer the adjacent pub – the MacMullen-owned Jolly Fisherman – sets out picnic tables and the area is packed with dozens of customers consuming their meals and drinks in very pleasant and quite sheltered surroundings. Whilst already benefitting from protection through LVRP designation, protecting this site fulfils our objective to maintain the character of the village for residents and the wider community.
- 8.18 LGS7,8 and 9 are all areas of grassland with one playground which have been well maintained by the district council during the lifetime of the Lawrence Avenue estate constructed in the late 80s/early 90s. Currently the district council is in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council trialling meadow creation in the Rush Close section. Bee orchids have previously been found on LGS9. These grassed areas greatly add to the attractiveness of this riverside estate allowing excellent views of the boats on the river whilst providing the children with play spaces. It is also reassuring for residents that should the river burst its banks there is space for the water to collect before it could reach the majority of the homes. This space exemplifies Objective I which calls for improvements to the quality of life for residents.
- 8.19 First identified in the 2018 survey, LGS10 is a clearly defined area, lying at the fork of the B180 and the B181 at the eastern edge of the village. The site is uncultivated much valued wild-life area which provides an interesting alternative outlook to residents at Chapelfields, on Kitten Lane and on Roydon Road. It lends a strong sense of the village's character to those leaving the village by road.
- 8.20 LGS12 is the playing field on Chapelfields at St Andrew's Church of England Primary School. The school buildings are on Roydon Road and Mill Race and the playing field – including a sustainable garden – stretches up the hill. The field provides a highly valued open area which offers those living in the fairly densely built-up area of Chapelfields a sense of space and wonderful views right across the



Lea Valley. It is essential to the opportunities for the school population to enjoy sports in the open air.

- 8.21 LGS 13 and LGS15 are two areas of allotments that are enthusiastically cultivated by many village residents. There is a waiting list which is partly owing to the obvious success of those who are growing much of what they eat and are able to share with family and friends. The open spaces which they provide to the village are greatly appreciated offering uninterrupted views of the river valley from the church, for example, and they make good use of low-lying parts of the village.
- 8.22 LGS 14 has been adopted by Stanstead Abbots Parish Council and much thought and planning has gone into the playground which has equipment for all ages, and the Meadow which includes an outdoor gym. Recently picnic tables have been added and many residents and visitors enjoy spending leisure time here just relaxing in the pleasant environment with its trees, shrubs and planters. Occasionally it has been the site of village events as it is so central.
- 8.23 LGS16 is an attractive area of trees and shrubs which has a very natural feel to it with trees overhanging the B181. It provides a very pleasing approach to the village – interesting as there is access from the bridge across the New River. It is also close to the junction with Hoddesdon Road and it acts to help slow down the traffic as it approaches that junction where there is frequently a queue of traffic awaiting a train to cross the level crossing a little further on. Residents of the Folly in particular enjoy walking their dogs through the trees which can also be enjoyed by those walking along the New River path.
- 8.24 LGS 17 At the turn of the new millennium the Community Wood was planted and it really helps to detract from the unattractive site of the A414 fly-over across Hoddesdon Road. The trees are becoming well established and runners, walkers and cyclists can all include it on their circuits around the village – this was first identified by respondents to the 2018 which is in the Consultation Statement.

### *SASM NE1 Local Green Space (LGS)*

- I. The areas identified as Local Green Space are listed below, are shown on the Policies Map and on the individual maps below this policy:
  - LGS1: St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground
  - LGS2: Wilderness woodlands by New River Path and south of St Margaretsbury
  - LGS3: St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path
  - LGS4: Field between Sanville Gardens and the Granary
  - LGS5: Treed area north of Sanville Gardens
  - LGS6: Green beside The Jolly Fisherman, Station Road, beside towpath
  - LGS7: Field at end of Rush Close, beside towpath
  - LGS8: Field adjacent to Lawrence Avenue by River Lea Navigation
  - LGS9: Field adjacent to Heron Drive, beside towpath
  - LGS10: Land between Kitten Lane and Hunsdon Road and Roydon Road
  - LGS12: St Andrews' School Field off Abbots Way
  - LGS13: Allotments off Cappell Lane (Grid Ref TL3861012129)
  - LGS14: Village Meadow and playground north of High Street
  - LGS15: Allotments north of High Street (Grid ref TL3834811972)
  - LGS16: Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River
  - LGS17: Community woodland south of the Granary
  
- II. Development proposals within the designatged local green spaces will only be supported where in very special circumstances.

**LGS 11** was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in national policy.

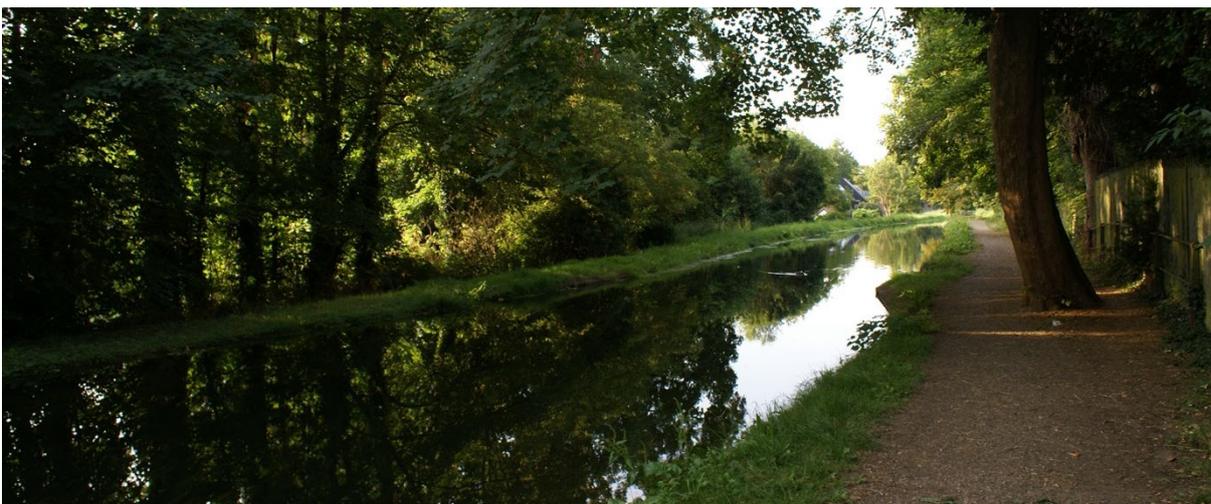


FIGURE 15 LGS 3 ST MARGARETSBURY ESTATE BY NEW RIVER PATH



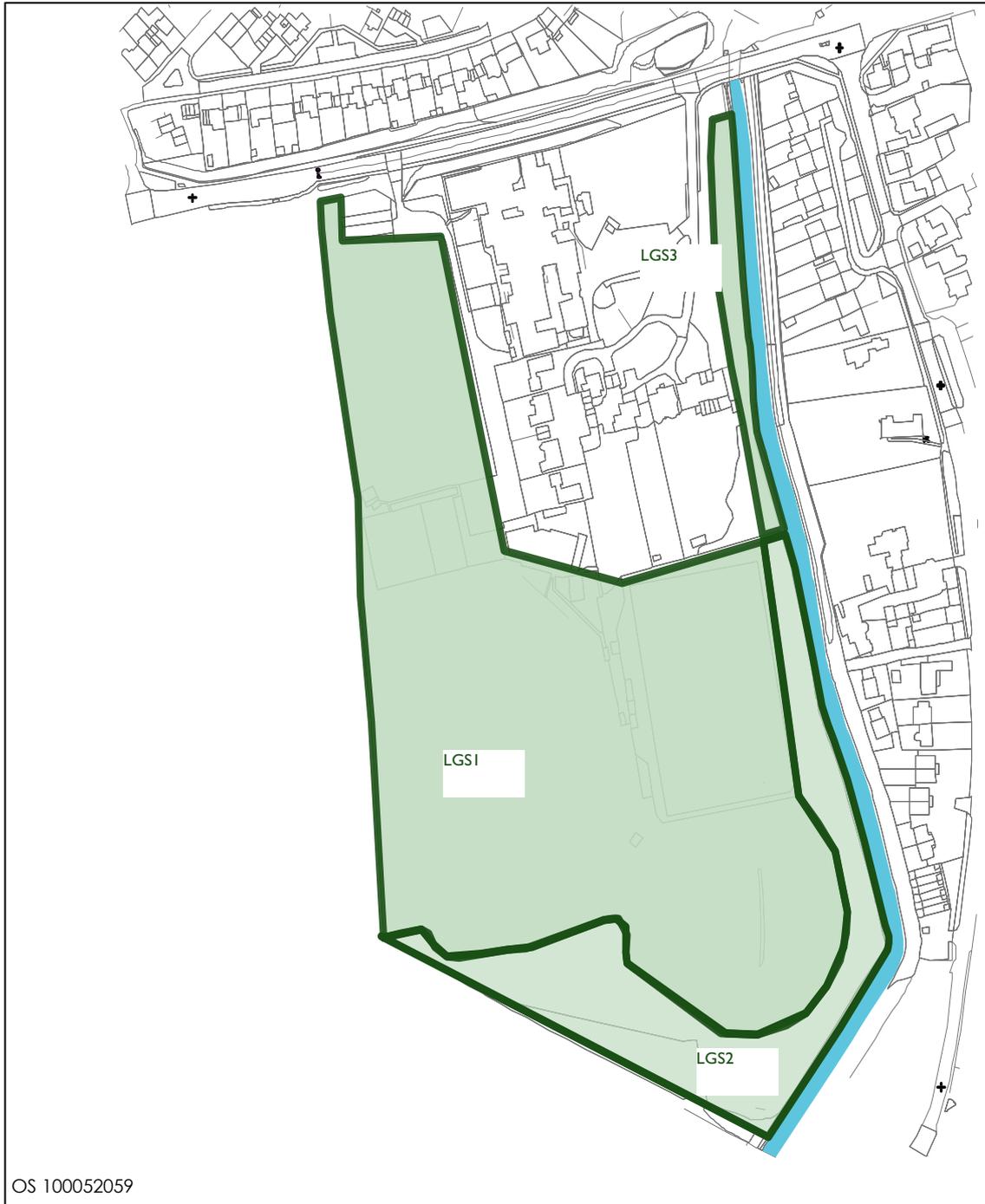


FIGURE 16 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS1 – LGS3)

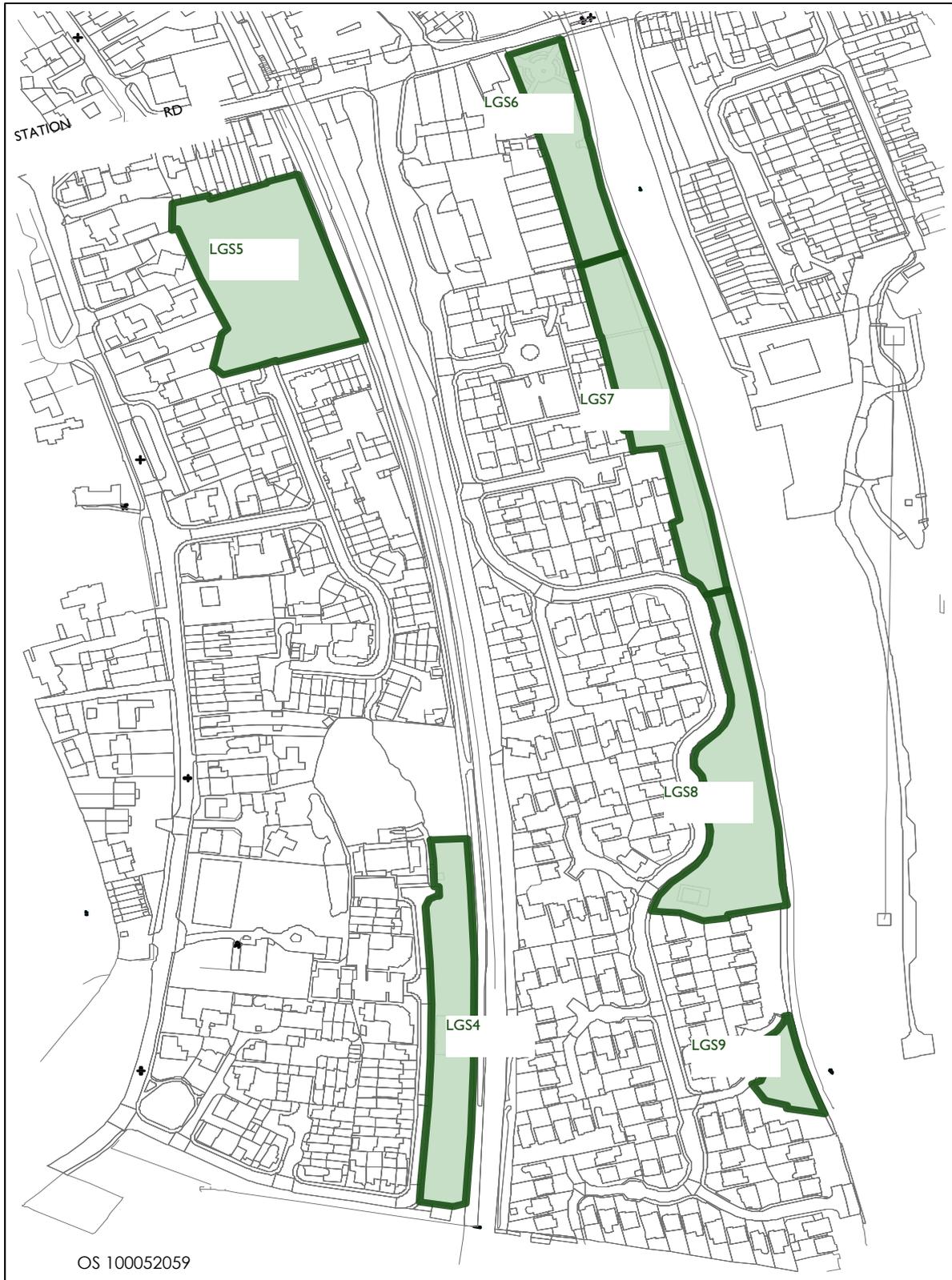


FIGURE 17 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS4 – LGS9)



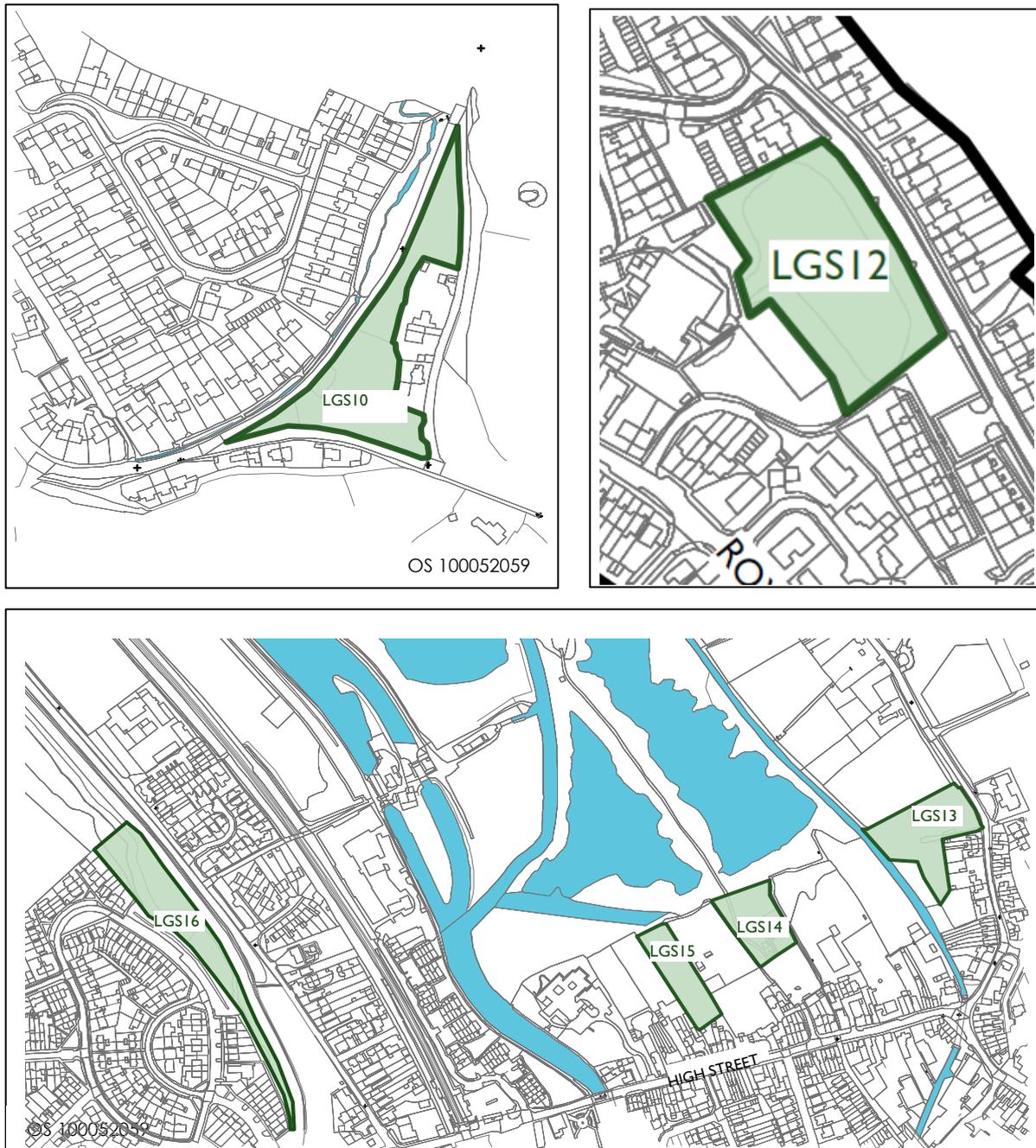


FIGURE 18 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS10 – LGS16)

### *Soil and Agriculture*

- 8.25 Soil and Agriculture is an important asset in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets – from the character and setting of its surrounding marshland to the quality of agricultural land. Housing Policies in this Plan seek to make the most effective use of our land as a resource.
- 8.26 The village landscape is determined by geology and soil. The underlying solid geology is London clay formed in deep seas circa. 50 million years ago, with areas of Thanet sands and undifferentiated sedimentary rocks. Above this is a complex

geology of chalky till, sands and gravels, silts and clays deposited by meltwater c. 2 million years ago under ice age conditions

- 8.27 Some sites also comprise older, pre-glacial sands and gravels, which were deposited in river and estuary levees c. 3 million years ago. Despite the development pressures affecting rural areas in Hertfordshire, farming remains the area's principal land use.
- 8.28 There has been much gravel extraction within the three parishes which has transformed the landscape into one with a number of lakes. There is very likely to be a new quarry for sand and gravel extraction on the edge of the designated area at Briggens Estate.
- 8.29 The available Agricultural Land Classifications (ALC) recorded for individual sites grades agricultural land quality as Grade 3. This is divided into subgrades 3a and 3b which indicates moderate to good quality land with some limitations that affect the choice of crop, timing and type of cultivation or level of yield.
- 8.30 Wherever possible, agricultural land should be protected from development in the interests of the local farming infrastructure and its future viability (NPPF paragraph 180 (DLUHC, 2023))
- 8.31 Information gathered during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process shows that residents are opposed to the large-scale loss of good agricultural land (particularly Grade 3a).

### *Air Pollution*

- 8.32 The quality of the environment in which we live is determined in great part by the quality of the air we breathe. Air Quality in the UK 2016 report says that a cleaner, healthier environment benefits people and the economy (DEFRA, 2017)
- 8.33 Protecting and improving the air quality as the village expands will be essential to protecting both quality of life, the wider eco-system and biodiversity and livelihoods that makes the village what it is. While East Herts Council records show some improvement in air quality over recent years (East Herts Council , 2020) as initiatives under the National Air Quality Framework take effect, there are pockets where illegal levels of nitrogen oxide have been recorded, including close to the village.
- 8.34 The East Herts District Plan contains specific policies on air quality (Policy EQ4). The Plan recognises the particular measures required to control air pollution in a District such as East Herts which is made up of dispersed towns, villages and hamlets with poor inter-connectivity by passenger transport. The relative affluence and mobility, and high car-ownership, contribute to higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions per person than neighbouring districts (East Herts Council, 2018).
- 8.35 While the District Plan makes specific reference to those areas with Air Quality Management action plans in place, the recommendations should be applied for St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots as part of preventative action to ensure against the further degradation of air quality. In the Neighbourhood Plan



engagement survey 71% of respondents indicated that they would welcome more measures to address air pollution caused by the levels of traffic. Such measures could include speed controls in the village centre and anti-idling controls outside shops, schools and at the level crossing.

- 8.36 All new development should be approached with the spirit of the East Herts Air Quality Action Plan at the heart, which emphasises making it easier for pedestrians, including pedestrian only areas, imposing traffic calming and anti-idling measures, improving traffic flows and encouraging electric vehicles. In bringing forward sites within the scheme, consideration should be given to Natural England's Climate Change Adaptation Manual – NE751.

### *Nature Conservation*

- 8.37 The East Herts District Plan recognises that nature conservation is an integral part of the planning process and identifies the most important areas via its Natural Environment (NE) Policies. It affords protection for international, national and locally designated nature conservation sites. The Neighbourhood Plan Area contains a site of international importance, the Lee Valley Park Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, including Rye Meads. This is a wetland habitat supporting a diverse range of wetland flora and fauna which is susceptible to recreational pressure, air quality reduction, water quality and changes in water levels. In addition, there is a second site of international importance just 3 km south west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Wormley-Hoddesdon park Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Rye Meads is also designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along with Amwell Quarry SSSI bordering the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 8.38 There are large areas of groundwater source protection zones under the SASM plan area. including source protection zone 1 (SPZ1) our most sensitive groundwater areas. The presence of these zones and the subsequent importance of protecting our controlled waters will need to be considered as part of any development proposals. Additionally, where watercourses are failing to reach good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive, any development within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality.
- 8.39 The importance of these sites, combined with the site allocations in this Plan triggered the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Habitats Regulations Assessments will continue as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The purpose of the HRA was to ascertain that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites of the proposals in the NP, or if there were predicted adverse impacts and there no alternatives to the proposals, then what compensation would be necessary.
- 8.40 A HRA was conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM (Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulation Assessment March 2022), prior to the Plan proceeding to Regulation 14. There were two stages to the process: screening and appropriate assessment. Only changes in water quality

were deemed to require assessment. Following assessment, it was concluded that with the implementation of District Plan Policy WAT6 Waste Water Infrastructure, and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the policy framework would ensure no adverse effects, either in isolation or in combination with other projects and plans.

- 8.41 Despite this, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought reassurance from Thames Water that they would be able to respond to the increase of new homes proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Their written response was that there were no plans to expand the capacity of the treatment works. An Appropriate Assessment was undertaken as part of the final HRA report by AECOM. This confirms that the allocated sites and specific housing numbers within the NP contains sufficient policy framework along with implementation of East Herts District Plan Policy WAT6 to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites either in isolation or in combination with other projects or plans,
- 8.42 During the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process, information on sites and species, including non-statutory sites (Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)) was compiled. This includes nature reserves, freshwater and wetlands, woodlands and trees, and wildlife species (i.e. plants, animals, birds and insects). A comprehensive inventory of sites and species is contained in the Natural Environment Evidence Base Report document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 8.43 Appropriate weight should be given to the importance of nature conservation sites and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks. Development 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.)
- 8.44 Biodiversity should be at least increased on any development site. The current Biodiversity Metric, which measures biodiversity, is now embedded in national legislation. 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% for relevant developments. Sensitive, informed and integrated approaches to any development will help to conserve, enhance and restore locally valued landscapes.
- 8.45 This will require development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits. It is anticipated that all development within the SASM Neighbourhood Plan should seek to achieve on-site BNG contributions wherever possible and an Action Plan will be developed to identify suitable locations for potential off-site benefits within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary should they be required. Further advice will be sought from the LPA as guidance affecting neighbourhood plan implementation becomes available. Measures to deliver Biodiversity net gains could include but are not limited to:



Establish "wildflower recovery areas" and provide habitats for pollinators.

Adopt "best Practice" management guidelines for road verge biodiversity.

Provide bat boxes to encourage bats into areas where there are few roosting sites.

Create new habitats by planting native trees, shrubs or plants of high value to wild birds.

### *SASM NE2 Nature Conservation*

- I. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals within or adjacent to watercourses should seek to improve water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

### *Valued Trees and Hedgerows*

- 8.46 In the East Herts District Plan, policy NE3 states that development which would result in the loss of, or significant change to, trees, hedgerows or ancient woodlands will not be permitted. There is one veteran tree in the village shown on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory. This is the large Horse Chestnut tree in the garden of Walford House, High Street, Stanstead Abbott, which is visible from the village car park. Many notable trees are identified in the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal which benefit from protection because of their location in the Conservation Area. Other notable trees mentioned in the Tree Report (in the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Reports) are a Horse Chestnut on the south west corner of the mini roundabout at Hoddesdon Road/Station Road (TL 38007 11740), an Ash on Station Road (TL 38094 11800), a Corkscrew Willow in Riverside (TL 38324 11781) and a Cedar opposite 90 Roydon.
- 8.47 Concern has been expressed about the loss of hedgerows in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Apart from the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets settlement, the remaining area is predominantly rural. Hedges form an important part of its landscape character as well as providing habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.

- 8.48 The Hedgerow Regulations aim to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of modification, where there is a presumption in favour of protecting and retaining important examples. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies several hedgerows of local significance which, while not covered by the Hedgerow Regulation, should be protected for wildlife and retention of landscape character. These are set out below in [Policy SASM NE3](#).
- 8.49 Hedgerows 1 and 2 are well established mixed hedges which contain ash, beech, field maple, hawthorn, hazel, holly, wild cherry and willow. Trees have girths ranging from 36" to 46" and even 60" . They are densely growing with flowering and fruiting shrubs thus providing a significant wildlife habitat that is visually distinctive separating the arable agricultural land from the main road.
- 8.50 Hedgerow 3 demarcates a footpath that is the only safe pedestrian route to the village from the North East. There are mature trees including oak, ash, lime, hazel and horse chestnut, blackthorn and elder. Woodland plants include cleavers, nettles, brambles, Jack by the Hedge, hogweed, mallow, cow parsley, many vetches and Lords and Ladies. The older Elder trees offer a habitat for numerous fungi including Jelly Ears. Sparrowhawks, tawny owls, nuthatches, crows, jays, magpies, woodpigeons, pheasants, blackbirds, great tits, blues tits, coal tits and long tailed tits use the full length of the boundary. Occasional visitors include bullfinches, green woodpeckers, treecreepers and blackcaps. Mammals include moles, shrews and voles, hedgehogs, foxes and occasional muntjac deer.
- 8.51 Hedgerow 4 is the school boundary hedge which consists of hawthorn and links with a very well-established historic boundary hedgerow rising uphill with native species including maple, holly, ivy and blackthorn.
- 8.52 The girths of the tree trunks ranged up to 36", 46" and even 60". It is a well established mixed hedgerow, densely growing, which includes flowering and fruiting shrubs so it is of ecological significance as wildlife habitat along the boundary between the arable field and road into the village. This is an important wildlife corridor and contributes to the rural landscape which is evident along each of the approach roads into the villages
- 8.53 Setting aside various exceptions, principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carryout works to trees in Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area has to be 'notified' to the District Council. Many individual trees and groups of trees within the Conservation Area are already subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The District Council may make a Tree Preservation Order to further protect the tree/s which might be at risk. The Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal Map diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make an important contribution to the Conservation Area, particularly when viewed from the public realm. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.



### *SASM NE3 Valued Hedgerows and Trees*

- I. The following valued hedgerows mark important boundaries, and provide both wildlife habitat and carbon capture along busy roads and are shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals should retain and incorporate these valued hedgerows wherever practicable:

**Hedge 1:** Continuous hedgerow on the southern side of the B181 Station Road from Amwell Roundabout to the village boundary at St. Margaretsbury.

**Hedge 2:** Hedgerow delineating the village boundary from the Green Belt which runs from the B181 Station Road southwards to the A414 along the western boundary of St. Margaretsbury.

**Hedge 3:** On the north side of Roydon Road; and

**Hedge 4:** Around St Andrew's School Field.

Where development proposals enhance or plant new hedgerows, the species used should be native and climate-resilient. Notable trees have been identified in the Tree Report. The proposed removal of unprotected trees, as part of development proposals, should be accompanied by a tree survey report. Trees that have a high biodiversity value should be retained as part of a development proposal. Where this is impracticable, the trees concerned should be replaced with native, climate resilient species in suitable locations.

### *Flooding*

- 8.54 St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots are set within the natural floodplain of the Lea Valley. While a well-managed water way, the natural flood defences need to be protected from degradation, and indeed enhanced as the community develops to ensure the village can withstand extreme events as climate change alters weather patterns, bringing with it both heavier rainfall and droughts. In addition to maintaining the natural flood defences offered by the Lea Valley flood plain, the village must also protect against flooding from surface water, with anecdotal evidence from the Neighbourhood Plan open days that over the years this has been much more a cause of flooding than rising river water due to poorly maintained drainage systems.
- 8.55 Policy SASM NE4 sets out measures to ensure that future development does not impinge on the village's natural flood defences and makes adequate provision for surface water drainage so that homes are safe from flooding. Defra recently announced the decision to make Sustainable Urban Drainage systems mandatory by 2024 in a review document of recommendations for the implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

- 8.56 Flood alleviation measures have been in place in Stanstead Abbots since the mid-1970s when the river was widened, riverbanks reinforced and flood channels were introduced, to reduce the risk of flooding to 1 in 100 years. Since this time, flooding of the village has been rare, but experienced as recently as the winter of 2014 with severe rain fall. For Flood Risk mapping for the settlement see [Appendix H: Flood Risk Map \(July 2022\)](#).
- 8.57 The major threat of flooding comes from poorly maintained and/or inadequate surface water drainage. It is the responsibility of the lead local flood authority to carry out flood risk assessments from surface water in the event of development.
- 8.58 Flooding also impacts the environment through pollution. Flooding washes chemicals and sewage into freshwater ecosystems as well as causing public health issues.
- 8.59 Freshwater ecosystems are rich in biodiversity and have huge recreational and aesthetic value. Increased surface water run-off causes erosion of soil and organic matter which ends up in water courses and damages ecosystems. This is evidenced in the British Ecological Society paper [Flooding in the UK: ecological impacts of an ecosystem approach](#), a government research report (March 2014) [The Ecological Impacts of Flooding – developing a methodology](#) and a Guardian news report (December 2020) titled [How Restoring Flood Plains Can Help Protect the Climate](#).

#### *SASM NE4 Environmental Impact of Flooding*

- I. Development proposals adjacent to water courses, should include an 8 metre undeveloped buffer from the tops of the banks to maximise the ecological benefits of waterways and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

## 9. *Leisure and Community Facilities*

### *Introduction*

- 9.1 The policies in this section seek to provide an appropriate range of community facilities which will promote the health, education, and physical, mental and spiritual development of all residents, particularly the young and older people. Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the provision and enhancement of leisure facilities for sport and recreation, public open space and green infrastructure will be sought. These aims are in accordance with the following objectives:

**Objective K:** To protect open spaces that have recreation, leisure and amenity value and/or are of importance to the local community.



**Objective L:** To improve existing community, leisure & recreation facilities, and make these facilities accessible to everyone.

**Objective M:** To ensure appropriate community, leisure and recreation facilities are provided as part of major developments.

- 9.2 Leisure facilities are those available for formal and informal sport, recreation, entertainment, play and cultural activities. Community facilities include a variety of buildings and land for the purposes such as schools, nurseries, childcare, health care facilities, hospitals, libraries, halls, meeting places, allotments, and places of worship.
- 9.3 Both St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots have village halls which owe their existence to local benefactors, the Buxtons in Stanstead Abbots and Nigel Copping in St Margarets. The Village Club was built by the owner of the Maltings and remains a popular evening social venue.
- 9.4 The most important open space is St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground which provides opportunities for dog-walking, informal kick-about and formal competitive sport, recreation and social mixing. It is much valued by the community. This open space marks the approach to the built-up parts of the village.
- 9.5 St James' Church is a Grade I listed designated heritage asset which draws visitors to the ancient church and Stanstead Abbots graveyard which surrounds it.
- 9.6 There are many walks available, including through the Briggens Grade II designated Historic Park and Garden and public footpaths that cross the locally important Easneye Historic Park and Garden with views to Canary Wharf. The Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line which now forms part of the Lea Valley Walking trail is also very popular.
- 9.7 These valued facilities will be protected through applications to East Herts Council as Assets of Community Value and through policies SASM CL1 and SASM CL2 below.

### *Community Facilities*

- 9.8 The existing community facilities that have been identified as valued by the community are mapped on the Policies Map, listed below, and described in

#### **Appendix F: Valued Community Facilities:**

- 1 Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line
- 2 The Community Centre, Folly View, SG12 8AY
- 3 The Scout Hut, Marsh Lane, SG12 8QT
- 4 The Village Club, 4-6 High St, SG12 8AB
- 5 The Red Lion, 1 High Street, SG12 8AA
- 6 The Oak, 36 High Street, SG12 8AG
- 7 The Jolly Fisherman, 8 Station Rd, SG12 8DH

- 8 St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground, SG12 8EH
- 9 Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall/Ashlea Rooms, Roydon Rd, SG12 8EZ
- 10 Nigel Copping Community Centre, 88 Sanville Gardens, SG12 8GA
- 11 St James' Church, Roydon Road, SG12 8JZ
- 12 Town Allotments, High Street
- 13 Church Allotments, Cappell Lane
- 14 St Margarets Community Wood
- 15 Sanville Gardens Orchard

### *SASM CL1 Existing Community Facilities*

- I. The extension or relocation of local community facilities will be supported, subject to the services provided being maintained or improved. When there is no longer an identified community need for existing community use or when it is relocated, primary consideration should be given to using and adapting the vacated premises for other community uses. Extensions and relocated facilities should be of a high-quality inclusive design providing access for all.

- 9.9 There is a Scout Group in the village which operates from the Scout Hut on Marsh Lane. There are also youth football and cricket teams, but there is no offer of informal activity or venue for young people in secondary education to meet socially. New opportunities for leisure facilities may be appropriate on the site of the existing Scout Hut or at St Margaretsbury.
- 9.10 Any new leisure facility should be inclusive and accessible to young people of all abilities. Additional play provision should be designed so that it can be used by all children. Public toilet provision related to such leisure facilities must also accommodate a cubicle large enough to accommodate an adult or carer with a child.

### *SASM CL2 New Leisure Facilities*

- I. New facilities for young people will be supported where they are in a public and safe and accessible area.
- II. New facilities that promote and/or enhance active use of the river and river paths will be supported, such as a quay to take on or disembark passengers from a river-bus.

- 9.11 The existing allotments are well used and further allotment provision in a suitable location would be supported.



- 9.12 There is some 'Air BnB' provision but very little else for visitors to the village. Two miles away Roydon has some hotel rooms and some self-catering accommodation at the marina.
- 9.13 There is currently no library in the village. The nearest libraries are in Ware and Hoddesdon. The waiting room at the railway station now has a community library, also the Amwell View charity shop in the high street has a good supply of well organised books for sale and there is also a collection of books available at the Maltings Café – thanks to donations from members of the community.
- 9.14 Public gallery space is non-existent. [The Community Rail Partnership art project](#), sponsored by [The Malting Business Centre](#), on [the old signal box at St Margarets Station](#) was unveiled in November 2021, breathing new life into this much loved building. The Parish Councils would support further initiatives for pop-up gallery space or/and a permanent community use for the signal box, including a permanent home for the [Stanstead Abbots Local History Society](#) archive which temporarily stored in the village hall.



FIGURE 19 ST MARGARETS STATION ART PROJECT

Photo courtesy of THE NEW RIVER LINE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP)

### *SASM CL3 New Facilities*

- I. The provision of the following facilities will be supported where they are in keeping with other development plan policies:
  - a) additional allotments, in suitable locations.
  - b) new tourist accommodation where it does not impact on residential amenity.
  - c) new cultural facilities such as art, library and creative spaces, will be supported in central locations that are accessible to all.

## *10. Business and Employment*

### *Introduction*

- 10.1 Stanstead Abbotts is a relatively affluent village, with low unemployment and almost 50% of residents employed in either Senior Management, Professional or Technical occupations (source *nomis, census 2011*).
- 10.2 Residents and businesses benefit from a village location with excellent public transport links into central London via the Greater Anglia line route into London Liverpool Street and which connects with the London underground at Tottenham Hale. Close proximity to excellent road networks (A10, A414, M11) enables residents to access wider job markets, and creates opportunity for businesses to provide goods and services to the wider Hertfordshire, Essex and north London economic sub-region.
- 10.3 The Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Area is home to a wide range of business and enterprise activities, which provide accessible local employment and business opportunities. Over 200 businesses support just under 1,100 jobs. Most businesses are located within the three designated employment areas, Leaside Works, Riverside Works, and The Maltings, as well as in the High Street. Within the wider area farmland supports a mix of agricultural activities and farm diversification with a variety of businesses and local enterprises.
- 10.4 Employment areas play a key role in providing accessible and affordable employment and business opportunities for local residents, including, Class E, light industrial (B2) and B8 uses. Stanstead Abbotts has a distinct industrial heritage in the form of French & Jupps malt roasting and the Maltings Business Centre has become a thriving business and enterprise location with a range of small business and start-up incubation units for micro and SME enterprise.
- 10.5 Stanstead Abbotts High Street consists of a local parade which includes a mix of shops, services and cafes which support the day to day needs of the local community, alongside opportunities for social interaction.



- 10.6 A mix of pubs, restaurants and community social clubs provides a thriving evening economy within easy walking distance for local residents. The village has benefitted from foresight, generosity, loyalty to the community and responsibility in particular from amongst its family-owned companies that have been a part of the village for more than one generation.
- 10.7 A Business Survey undertaken in March 2019 received six responses, the majority of which were from construction or manufacturing businesses. These identified a preference for retail, tourism, leisure and crafts, offices (including small businesses) and pubs, restaurants and cafes within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Around half would like to see food and drink production, community services and light industrial and manufacturing. The lowest responses identified social enterprise and financial and professional services. None of the respondents wanted to see an increase in transport, storage and distribution uses. Half of respondents wanted existing employment uses to remain, but the remainder would consider change of use if employment sites became vacant. Five respondents agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should include policies that promote working from home. Key issues identified which would encourage businesses to locate in the SASM area include availability of suitable accommodation, transport facilities, rental costs, access and parking.
- 10.8 Three respondents identified a need for additional space in the next five years, including one industrial/workshop and office space from 50-100sqm, two businesses are seeking industrial/workshop space from 100-200sqm with office space 100-200sqm. One business requires retail 200sqm or more, storage (covered/open) 200sqm or more and parking for staff 200sqm or more.
- 10.9 Three respondents wanted to see an extension of high street retail uses. Respondents expressed a desire to protect local jobs and to encourage local trade. It was acknowledged that if employment sites are used for housing, then new employment sites would need to be found to keep Stanstead Abbots as a working village. A copy of the survey is set out in the Consultation Statement.
- 10.10 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages new businesses to establish and prosper, to provide employment and services locally for the benefit of all, to maintain the character of the village, and to draw in visitors. In addition to the existing offer of light industrial, small business, food and beverage, and local retail, the Plan encourages creative enterprise, tourism, professional and community services and social enterprise to thrive.
- 10.11 The policies in this section will help to achieve the following Neighbourhood Plan objectives:
- Objective N:** To ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities, including family owned businesses and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.
- Objective O:** To encourage new business to prosper whilst protecting and maintaining the character of the village.

**Objective P:** To support creative and social enterprise, tourism, and community services.

10.12 The Business survey results are in the Consultation Statement. Further information to support the policies in this section can be found in the Business and Employment Evidence Base in the Evidence Base Reports document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

### *Local Employment Areas*

10.13 Local employment areas identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Area should continue to play a vital role in sustaining a thriving and sustainable village economy reducing the need to travel and promoting local spend. They play a key role in providing accessible and affordable employment and business opportunities for residents, including Class E, B2 light industrial, B8 storage and distribution, and a range of small business start-up/incubation units for micro and SME enterprise.

10.14 We support the continued designation of the following employment areas: Leaside Works, Riverside Works and the Maltings, which are seeing continuing demands for space and which have long-standing, highly beneficial and well-regarded status in the village. We also support the continued light industrial uses in Riverside Maltings, as a non-designated area. Websters in Netherfield Lane is a non-designated brownfield site within the Green Belt has been granted planning permission (9/5/2023) for at least 745 sq m of business space as part of their proposed development as well as 20 homes. Due to the residential nature of Netherfield Lane, large scale industrial or open storage uses (B2, B8) will be resisted.



FIGURE 20 THE MALTINGS



10.15 Policy SASMB1 seeks to ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.

#### *SASM B1 Local Employment Areas*

- I. Leaside Works, Riverside Works and The Maltings are designated Employment Areas where conversion or redevelopment of employment uses will be supported where they enhance the employment offer and continued viability of the designated Employment Areas.
- II. In designated Employment Areas proposals for non-business uses will not be supported unless:
  - a) the employment use of the premises is no longer needed or viable and
  - b) no improvements to those premises will make employment uses viable.

#### *The High Street*

10.16 Stanstead Abbots High Street should continue to contain a local parade which includes a mix of shops, services and cafes which support the day to day needs of the local community, alongside opportunities for social interaction. We value and will support the current mix of pubs, restaurants and a community social club which provide a thriving evening economy within easy walking distance for residents and with good public transport and car parking facilities to draw in visitors from the wider locality.

10.17 The existing retail, service and community offer in the High Street, will be protected as far as possible within the National policy context and applications converting retail to residential uses to maintain a strong ground floor offer will be resisted. Applications to convert first floor accommodation above shops will be supported as part of a healthy village centre mix.

10.18 Renovations to business premises within the designated conservation area should be carried out in line with the adopted Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Management Plan (2014).

10.19 Adjustments made by businesses in the High Street during the Covid pandemic have resulted in more outside eating areas. The Riverside area adjacent to the Jolly Fisherman public house has been particularly successful in providing informal outside space and is a good example of a local business working in partnership with the Lee Valley Park.

### *SASM B2 The High Street*

- I. To reflect changing retail requirements, proposals which create a mix of retail, commercial, leisure and community uses within the High Street will be supported.
- II. Development proposals should maintain active ground floor frontages within the designated commercial properties in the village core (as shown on the Policies Map) wherever practicable.

### *Design of Employment Premises*

10.20 We positively encourage flexible working practices, and the provision of flexible workspace as part of mixed-use development. Cafes and other community hubs will be encouraged to provide alternative areas for 'hot desking' and co-working opportunities.

10.21 The supply of super-fast broadband should be installed in employment areas to promote business sustainability and growth. As the numbers of self-employed and employed spending time working from home increase, new housing development will need to be connection-ready to allow for reliable and fast broadband.

### *SASM B3 Flexible Working*

- I. Wherever practicable, the provision of flexible working space should be incorporated within mixed-use developments for employment/community use.

### *Farm Diversification and Tourism Related Business*

10.22 Farming and agriculture form an important part of the rural heritage of the area, and includes arable and some grazed land, alongside land rented to other farmers for cattle and sheep. The availability of seasonal farm workers has declined over time due to a range of factors including automation, anti-migration policies and more recently the impact of Brexit and Covid-19. Local farmers advise that for many years they have had to diversify; including measures such as letting out farm buildings and renting fields for weddings and events, as there is insufficient income generation from farming alone.

10.23 As Stanstead Abbots forms part of the Lee Valley Regional Park, we strongly support development of leisure and tourism uses which boost the quality of life for local residents. We are particularly aware of the rural spaces attached to various businesses such as farms, and to encourage appropriate and successful uses of that space, including farm shops, education and leisure. Overnight accommodation such as hotel, guest house and/or B&Bs in suitable locations will be supported, in order to encourage visitors to enjoy our riverside and wildlife habitats.



### *SASM B4 Farm and Tourism Related Business*

- I. Proposals for the diversification of farm businesses will be supported provided:
  - a) the development supports the vitality of the existing farm holding; or
  - b) the development is ancillary to the agricultural business.
- II. Proposals for development of leisure and tourism uses that support delivery of the Lee Valley Park development framework for Area 8 will be supported including:
  - a) visitor and recreational moorings, boat repair and other boat related services at Stanstead Marina to support recreational use of the waterways; and
  - b) commercial opportunities for cycle hire, leisure boat and water taxi facilities, in partnership with the Canal and Rivers Trust.
- III. Proposals for overnight stay accommodation will be supported in association with leisure uses (see also Policy SASM CL4), and social and education functions.

10.24 All new business and enterprise space should reflect the diverse needs of the community and be designed in a way that enables people with protected characteristics to participate fully in business and employment opportunities.

10.25 Local employers will be encouraged to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities for residents. Local labour, training and apprenticeships should form part of s106 obligations for development in the village (See Implementation Policy).

## *11. Transport*

11.1 Stanstead Abbots lies to the East of the A10 and largely North of the A414 (Hertford lies to the west and Harlow to the east). From the junction of those two main roads, Station Road leads into the High Street, there is a T-junction with Hoddesdon Road and a level crossing allowing trains to travel on the branch railway from Broxbourne to Hertford East, stopping on their way at St Margarets Station. There is a landmark humped back bridge over the River Lea which marks the boundary of the two parishes. The B181 from Roydon links the village to two junctions on the A414 and at Great Amwell to the West with the A10. A transport audit correct at the time of publication of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Transport Audit in the Evidence Base Reports on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

11.2 The High Street is mainly brick laid, which is popular and helps to reduce speed and was the result of funding from the Herts. County Council after the A414 bypass was completed in 1987. However, it is at risk of serious deterioration because of the volume of traffic and the weight of some vehicles using the road. The semi-rural approach roads from the nearby towns of Ware and Hoddesdon are narrow, bendy, and tarmacked with limited passing places, due to on-street parking. The nature of these roads in the parish makes them unsuitable for significant increases in traffic within and through the village.

- 11.3 Transport is an emotive issue in Stanstead Abbots. People rely on the car to be able to get to work or school. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2019 indicated that 65% use cars and 42% trains for their work commute, leisure, shopping, medical visits and to get to schools. St Margarets train station is of great importance, being the main line into London Liverpool Street. It has become particularly well-used since the introduction of the Oyster facility and lack of parking restrictions in surrounding roads has led this to be a popular station. With development in Hertford and Ware the increased number of coaches on many of the trains has helped to relieve the problem of there being too few seats. There are fairly frequent bus services to Hoddesdon, Ware and Hertford and a small number which go to Harlow and Bishop's Stortford via the high Street on weekdays.
- 11.4 Residents of Stanstead Abbots are particularly concerned about speeding traffic and heavy goods lorries illegally driving through the village. 71% of residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey of 2019 would like speed limit reductions within the village. 67% support a traffic light system at the Amwell Roundabout to improve safety and traffic flow in and out of the village.
- 11.5 While there are weight restrictions on vehicles passing through the village, anecdotal evidence says that vehicle weight limits are poorly enforced. 87% of residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey were in support of better enforced weight restrictions through the High Street.
- 11.6 Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets are thriving villages, but with this comes high volumes of traffic, particularly during peak times as people travel to work and schools, but also throughout the day as people and heavy goods vehicles travel through to the A414, A10, Hertford and the surrounding area. The railway crossing also results in the build-up of traffic along the high street.
- 11.7 While the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan is not subject to Air Quality Management Plans currently, nitrogen dioxide levels are on the increase in places, as shown in the government's 2017 Air Quality in the UK 2016 report. Neighbouring Broxbourne has been identified as having one of the highest nitrogen dioxide levels in the country due to its proximity to the A414 and A10, which also run close to the designated area.
- 11.8 The Government Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants reported in March 2015 that there was consistent evidence that nitrogen dioxide, including from traffic related pollution, caused increased cardio morbidity and mortality, with increased hospital admission from respiratory related diseases.
- 11.9 All new developments should be approached with the spirit of the East Herts Air Quality Plan at the heart, which emphasises making it easier for pedestrians (including pedestrianised areas), imposing traffic calming and anti-idling measures, improving traffic flows and encouraging electric vehicles, for example, through provision of EV charging points in public spaces.
- 11.10 In Stanstead Abbots two cars per household is the typical level of car ownership. Increasingly, households have three or more vehicles, probably due to offspring remaining at home into their adult years. Without a good bus service, cars are a



lifeline to amenities and facilities outside the village particularly to work, school and shops. Policy SASM TR1 addresses this important matter. A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) must be submitted with planning applications for multiple homes which would have the potential to generate significant increases in traffic in and around the village.

- 11.11 On road parking is currently seen as a problem in some areas of the village. Throughout the consultation process respondents have expressed concerns about this. Car parking standards have, therefore been carefully considered and are included in the Neighbourhood Plan Policy to take into account the high levels of car ownership in the settlement area, the rural location and the limited availability of public transport. New developments should provide the required parking as set out in the Council's Vehicle Parking Provision Supplementary Planning (2008, or as amended) and can be viewed at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/vehicleparking](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/vehicleparking).
- 11.12 The 25 Public Rights of Way (PROWS) around the village are highly valued by residents and should be protected from the impact of any development. Details of these PROW can be found in the Natural Environment Evidence Base on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#) and an interactive map is available on [Hertfordshire County Council's website](#).
- 11.13 The following policies are set in the context of Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:
- Objective Q:** To implement traffic calming measures where possible that will protect the High Street and surrounding roads as well as ensuring safe and sustainable travel options to local school/nurseries and places of work; and
- Objective R:** To promote parking provision in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.

#### *SASM TR1 Safe and Sustainable Transport*

- I. Wherever practicable, residential and community development proposals should be designed and arranged in a way in which the amenities in the village can be readily and safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. Development proposals should also respect and where appropriate enhance public rights of way to allow pedestrians and cyclists to have access to amenities in the village.
- II. Development proposals which would result in the loss of Public Rights of Way or negatively impact the enjoyment of their uses should demonstrate how the right of way will be re-provided or how the impact of the proposed development will be mitigated.

11.14 Strategic transport policies in Hertfordshire are set out in the [Local Transport Plan \(LTP4\)](#).

11.15 The South East Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan has now been adopted. This is a new transport strategy to help direct and plan transport improvements and investment in Hertford, Ware, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Cheshunt and Waltham Cross, and to surrounding areas, which includes Stanstead Abbots.

11.16 Local initiatives, including the provision of public Electric Vehicle charging points, as referenced in the County Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, that have been identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Appendix J: Action Plan.



## 12. Implementation

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented primarily through the determination of planning applications by East Herts Council. The policies in the Plan will provide detailed criteria against which to judge planning applications and to protect assets such as Local Green Spaces and Heritage Assets.
- 12.2 The accompanying **Appendix J: Action Plan** includes projects that were put forward through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, by residents or businesses. Implementation of these projects will be through S106 funding, a future Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding schemes or activities of volunteers.
- 12.3 The Neighbourhood Plan's success in achieving the aims and objectives set out within it will be monitored along with any national or local planning policies changes that might necessitate a revision of the Plan. Such a review of the Plan will be carried out by the three parishes in accordance with current best practice. The new District Plan may have an impact on the strategic level of growth required in the neighbourhood area. In this context the parish councils will assess the need or otherwise of a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the New District Plan.

### *SASM IM1 Spending Priorities*

- I. In line with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 neighbourhood plans should deliver community benefits especially where the Neighbourhood Plan accommodates additional development over that required by the policy. 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 Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- II. Spending priorities are contained in the **Appendix J: Action Plan**. These priorities should be reflected in Section 106 agreements, where appropriate. The Parish Councils in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will direct funding received from any New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy, or other funding streams, towards projects which fall within these priorities.

## 13. Appendices

In addition to the Appendices attached below, additional evidence documents can be found in the Evidence Base Reports document along with independently produced reports on [Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

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### **Other references used in the compilation of this Neighbourhood Plan:**

[Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory](#)

[Herts Environmental Records Centre](#)

[Protected species: when applicants need a species survey](#)

[Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act: Section 41 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance \(2006\)](#)

[Wildlife Sites Inventory for East Herts \(2013\)](#)

[National Pollinator Strategy 2014 to 2024](#)

[Natural England Data](#)

[Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust](#)



*Appendix B: Acknowledgements*

<b>Members of the Steering Group</b>	<b>Subject areas and Responsibilities</b>
Rob Bennett	Heritage & Design
Sarah Chapman	Housing & Communications
Andrew Clayden	Business, Housing & Management Group
Julia Davies	Business, Communications, Community, Housing, Management Group & Chair
Mike Dormon	Business, Communications, Design, Finance, Housing, Management Group & Vice Chair
Tom Foy	Housing & Management Group
Robin Jewett	Transport
Rowan Lloyd	Ecology & Design
Clare Maynard	Business & Transport
Jan Reynolds	Community
Sharon Strutt	Business & Housing
Maria Tasker	Ecology, Heritage & Communications
Gini Trower	Ecology
Jacqueline Veater	Planning Consultant
Anne Washbourn	Community, Design & Housing
Christina Whellams	Admin & Management Group Secretary

Significant roles were previously undertaken by:

Beth Knight – Lead on Ecology

Vanessa Murphy – Lead on Communications

Leah Pybuss - Secretary



### *Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process*

This appendix provides an explanatory narrative to the Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process. Further information, evidence and the document produced by AECOM on site assessment can be found in the Evidence Base on [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

#### **Site Identification**

The task of identifying sites for possible development began early on in the neighbourhood planning process, not long after the Steering Group was set up in 2017.

Sites were identified through various means: village walkabouts by groups, open days, call for sites advertising, and surveys of residents. Some landowners were already aware of the existence of our Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and approached us direct; they were asked to make a formal application via the call for sites process. We also reviewed East Herts District Council's 2015 Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) for possible sites.

All stages of site identification were transparent and subject to challenge.

**Village Walkabouts** - A series of village "walkabouts" began in 2017 and continued into 2018, when a group of residents (some of whom formed the nucleus of the Neighbourhood plan Steering Group) undertook to search different parts of the settlement area for possible sites. Photographs of potential sites were taken and discussions held at subsequent meetings as to their availability and viability. From this, landowners were identified and approached to discover whether they were prepared to allow development.

**Open Days** – three open days were held in November 2018 in different parts of the settlement area: the community hall on the Folly Estate, the Nigel Copping Centre and the Parish Hall. Residents attending the open days were encouraged to identify possible sites by means of pinpointing their location on a map.

**Survey** – a question in the main survey carried out in 2018 asked residents to identify possible sites for development.

**Call for sites** – a formal call for sites process was followed, with an advert placed in the local press in March 2019. A number of landowners came forward with sites, all of which without exception were in the Green Belt surrounding the village.

Through these means we identified over 60 possible sites, mostly small sites within the settlement boundary, and some larger ones in the Green Belt adjacent to the village. Further down the line, around 13 of these were discounted without further detailed assessment as they were considered entirely unsuitable (most of these were simply larger than usual grass verges in already developed areas) or it was known that the landowner did not wish to develop.

Although our extensive and thorough site identification process resulted in over 60 sites being considered over time, the fact that so many of these sites proved unsuitable or unavailable, demonstrates the difficulty posed in site selection by the unique constraints under which our village labours. We are surrounded by Green Belt and RAMSAR sites,



much of the village is in a conservation area, and most is in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The settlement area is very heavily developed. All of this made identifying sites extremely difficult and has meant that any site of any significant size is located both outside the settlement area and in the Green Belt. Whilst development can take place in the Green Belt, it has to be agreed to be released – in our case, we would be expected to justify the release of Green Belt land in the Neighbourhood Plan. To do so, we would have to demonstrate that the site both met our criteria for preferment and that we could not reach our target allocation by developing other sites not in the Green Belt.

### **Site Assessment**

The site assessment criteria were developed over a period of time and underwent a number of iterations.

These were initially based on criteria developed by other similar villages, amended to reflect our own particular issues. The aim was to produce a set of criteria which were objective, fair and factual, and which would stand up to challenge. We had to be able to demonstrate that the criteria we chose were justified, that they were in line with the East Herts District Plan and that they reflected the vision and the priorities of the village as expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. All criteria were subject to robust discussion and consensus reached within the Housing Subgroup of the Steering Group; it was essential that they were not retrospectively skewed to eliminate or promote sites on which members of the group had already formed some opinion – we were of course already aware of several contentious sites.

We were also forced to juggle sometimes conflicting priorities when developing the criteria. An example being the desire of most who have expressed a preference to produce the necessary units via a number of small infill sites on brownfield land, with the simultaneous wish for more affordable housing which can generally only be delivered as part of larger developments, since East Herts policy of 40% affordable only applies on sites of 10 or more dwellings. We faced the possibility of delivering the 94 dwellings required without a single affordable house amongst them unless we opted for some larger sites, all of which were by necessity (as above) situated more or less in the Green Belt. Another major concern was to avoid sprawl; reconciling this with the need to use sites outside the village settlement area has led to some difficulties.

### **Rationale for amending the Green belt boundary for site SASM H3**

East Herts DC's 2015 review of the Green Belt assessed parcels of land in the district for possible future development against four criteria based on those for including land within the Green Belt.

These criteria were as follows:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- To preserve the setting and spatial character of historic towns (not considered relevant to Stanstead Abbots)

The parcels of land assessed are characterized as **Very Low/ Low/ Moderate/High** suitability for development. Assessment was carried out against each criterion above, using the definition None/Negligible, Moderate, Major and Paramount. If any one criterion attracted the definition of Paramount, the whole parcel of land was assessed as Very Low suitability for development, regardless of the rest of the assessment.

All of the Green Belt land around Stanstead Abbots is characterized overall as Low or Very Low suitability for development under this assessment; there is therefore no site within the Green Belt close to the settlement area that is considered to be suitable for development. However in the detail of the assessments there are notable points of difference. The parcel of land within which this site is situated (parcel 49) is characterized as Very Low suitability for development based on one criteria only – “to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” – where it scores badly (Paramount). All other scores against other criteria are Moderate or None. However, the parcel of land so assessed is a very large one and the site we have chosen within it has a number of significant features which differentiate it from the major part of the parcel. We would therefore argue with the general characterization of Very Low suitability for development as it applies to our particular site.

The Green Belt Review describes the parcel of land as “generally very open landscape of estate farmland with extensive views south across valley towards north western fringes of Harlow...Any development would represent a very apparent encroachment into open countryside”. However, this description does not apply to any great extent to the site selected. SASM H3 (the Netherfield Lane site) is surrounded on three sides by building – the redundant industrial buildings and hardstanding to the south, the road and cottages to the north and Netherfield Lane houses to the west. These buildings and road form strong natural boundaries on three sides; the eastern side is bounded again (though less tightly) by the road and more cottages up Roydon Road/Cat Hill. Only on one side of the site is there what can be described as “open countryside”.

The proposed site is mixed greenfield and brownfield, the factory and surrounding hardstanding making up a good half of the site.

An outline planning application has been approved to redevelop the factory site for 20 residential units and business space use; this received approval on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Given this is brownfield within the Green Belt, it will represent an island of residential development within the Green Belt, separated from the village settlement boundary by a small piece of greenfield land. This further contradicts the description of the land as “open countryside”.

The constraints on developing the brownfield site mean that it can only supply 20 homes under the current circumstances; the costs of development are very high given the existence of a “lamppost graveyard” on the site, meaning that it is not viable to include affordable housing in those 20 homes. If released from the Green Belt as we propose, it can form part of a larger mixed greenfield and brownfield site and is likely to be able to accommodate a great number of homes, including a number of affordable homes.



Our criteria for amending the Green belt boundary were that the site chosen must be:

- immediately adjacent to the existing boundary (defined as within 50-100m) and relate well to the existing settlement.
- large enough to supply the remainder of the allocation in one place
- located in a place that enabled the drawing of a new, strong defensible boundary between the village and the Green Belt.

The site we have chosen meets these criteria in full and we believe that to amend the Green Belt boundary to take in this area would make strong logical sense.

### **Evolution of the criteria**

The first iteration was a three-stage process, with an initial sift of sites using six critical criteria to weed out any obviously unsuitable ones. These were simple Yes/No questions (i.e. "is the site in Flood Zone 3?"). A second set of more detailed criteria were used to assess sites that passed the initial sift.

If the answer was NO to any of these critical criteria, the site was eliminated. Around 29 sites were eliminated at this stage.

The remaining sites were then scored against a matrix of nineteen more detailed criteria developed and refined over a period of time. The scoring system for each criterion was in the range of 0-4, with a score of 0 representing the worst outcome and 4 the best. To enable as objective and consistent a score as possible, a description of what each score represented was devised – e.g. against the question "is the site greenfield or brownfield?", to achieve 4 the site had to fit the description "Likely uncontaminated / lightly contaminated brownfield site e.g., no below ground liquid storage". The actual scoring was done by the members of the housing subgroup in meetings; whilst the devising of the criteria and assignment of their relative weighting score/description was contentious at times, the process of scoring of each site in practice was generally without controversy.

These criteria and the method of scoring were approved by the Three Parishes meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. At that meeting, some councillors challenged the scoring of particular sites; we then went through the scoring for each of those sites in detail, explaining how conclusions had been reached in each case.

### **AECOM Report**

The next significant stage in the development of the site assessment process was the AECOM report.

Part of our formal process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, we were entitled to technical support; we accessed this support to assist us with site assessment and housing design policy. AECOM, a firm of independent consultants who work closely with Locality, were appointed by them to review the site assessment work carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and to provide advice to the group to help to ensure that the site allocations proposed were supported by robust, transparent and defensible evidence. This was in part prompted by the concerns raised at the three

parishes meetings and subsequently by various councillors from Stanstead Abbots Parish Council regarding the selection of certain sites above others identified.

Whilst their final findings on the sites selected largely concurred with our own, they had a number of criticisms of our site selection process, which they felt needed some additional work. Their main concerns were that we had proceeded to detailed scoring of our selected sites too early in the process, and that we had introduced local criteria for selection in site assessment along with national planning criteria (standard assessment criteria) when these should have been kept for the final site selection process – essentially, choosing between a reduced number of sites which were otherwise equally suitable for development. The initial “sift” that we had carried out should have been extended to become a more wide-ranging RAG rating of all sites, using more of the national planning policy guidelines, with only those sites getting through this RAG rating being scored against more local criteria, based on the priorities identified through the neighbourhood planning process. The outcome of this was that we had completed the process by giving detailed consideration to many more sites than was necessary, as most should have failed a more robust suitability test.

AECOM also recommended that we include more of the standard assessment criteria in our site assessment (such as agricultural land grade, neighbouring land use etc), and that we provide a more detailed definition for two of our existing criteria, relating to loss of open space and to locally protected wildlife spaces. They recommended further that our criteria relating to community view of sites was premature and this should only be considered following further consultation with the village.

AECOM also identified three further sites for consideration; they ruled two of these out immediately according to RAG criteria, leaving one [H4 site ref on map] small site in the Green Belt. This site had come up in the SLAA and had been noted by the group initially, but the landowner had not put it forward when we made our own call for sites, so had been missed when we came to more detailed consideration.

We received the final draft of the report in late October, just before the Three Parishes meeting. We made some changes to our process before taking a revised list of sites to the next Three Parishes meeting on 26 October 2020; the most significant change resulted in the inclusion of the AECOM-recommended site H4 on the list of sites put forward, after an initial scoring showed it performing well. The sites were finally agreed to go forward for public consultation at that meeting, though there were significant challenges, in particular to, the site H4.

The final report was received on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. By that stage, we had identified some serious problems with the new site H4; it became clear that the access the landowner wished to use for a development was across third party land and would result in the felling of significant trees. It should be noted that AECOM's site identification had been via a desktop process, and they had not been aware that this was the route the landowner wanted to use – this only became obvious when a call for sites form was submitted. This contradicted our first round criteria that access must not be via third party land. We met with the landowner, to discuss the issue and possibly identify a solution. He was not prepared to identify another access route across his own land and



or negotiate with the third party to gain access via his preferred route. Eventually the landowner withdrew the site from consideration.

Some more adjustments were made to the first round assessments and to the second round scoring matrix to take AECOM's criticisms into account. Specifically, we added the following criteria to the first ("critical criteria") round:

- What grade of Agricultural land is the site: grade 1 or 2 = red, 3 = amber, other = green?
- Site suitable for development according to green belt policy -Red =low, Amber = moderate or high, Green = not GB.

The scoring matrix was amended to provide more detail in the areas highlighted (criteria 2.5 – loss of open space and 2.12 – protected sites) and to remove one criterion entirely (5.1 community view) and to move one criterion to the first round for RAG rating (2.15 Green Belt).

The outcome of these changes was to remove the site C2 from further consideration, as it failed on two criteria (agricultural land grade and suitability for development).

### **SAPC meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

The terms of reference of our Neighbourhood Plan group require that the parish councils approve the choice of sites and the selection criteria. As the amendments to the criteria made following AECOM's recommendations meant that the choice of sites approved at the 3 Parishes meeting in October had to change. The amendments were taken back to the parish councils for approval in December. Stanstead Abbots PC, alone of the three councils, did not endorse the changes, which led to an impasse in terms of progressing the plan, as we could not proceed to consultation and examination on a plan which included a site which our own criteria ruled out (and which indeed the landowner had withdrawn).

Several attempts were made to change the minds of the SAPC, including holding a workshop which went through the process of site selection. Locality were approached for funding for mediation and appointed Intelligent Plans and Examinations Ltd., who held several meetings with councillors and provided a report and suggestions on the way forward.

A decision was made then by SASM NP to fully revisit the criteria and to re-score the sites based on a revised version.

### **Final Re-assessment**

As the main objections from the SAPC were based on the perception that the recommendations of the AECOM report had not been fully implemented in our earlier revisions, the group went back to the report to conduct a full review.

It was acknowledged that AECOM had recommended a considerable number of other assessment criteria. In view of this, we examined in detail all those criteria which we had not adopted and set out our reasoning. Some of the criteria were then included following further consideration; in other cases, we saw no reason to do so as we felt the criteria were already adequately covered in our assessment. Others would involve

amounts of work that we considered as a group of volunteers to be simply unfeasible, and which could be covered adequately at planning stage. Several of AECOM's recommendations were very generic and not particularly applicable to the sites we have identified in our village; we therefore did not feel they were useful to us in choosing between sites.

It was also recognised by this time that issues had arisen with the Green Belt criteria. This had originally been included in the second stage selection criteria but had been moved to the first RAG rating as it was considered so crucial. We looked again specifically at our assessment criteria here. We had based these criteria on East Herts DC's 2015 review of the Green Belt in 2015; this review had assessed parcels of land in the district for possible future development against criteria based on those for including land within the Green Belt. As follows:

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

The parcels of land assessed are characterized as **Very Low/ Low/ Moderate/High** suitability for development.

Our original assessment had established that the parcel of land in which the Netherfield Lane site was situated was considered of moderate suitability for development (partly because half of it is brownfield), however on closer examination this proved not to be the case. This meant that all the Green Belt land around Stanstead Abbots is characterized as Low or Very Low suitability for development under this assessment; this means that it is not very useful as a tool for selecting between sites as all fall within the same category. For this reason, after consideration we moved this criterion from the RAG rated first round (as it excluded every single site in the Green Belt from further consideration) and put it back into the second round matrix scoring. This meant, that site C2 site survived the first round of assessment.

Following this reassessment of the criteria, we rescored all the sites which made it through the first round and ranked them according to score.

### **Agreement to Proceed to Regulation 14 Consultation**

The final mediation meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 proposed to move directly to public consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, a paper on the revised selection criteria and the results of the re-scoring of all sites was presented to the SAPC meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 and the site selections were agreed.

The full version of this report along with a set of appendices, to illuminate the detail in the text, can be found in the Evidence Base Reports document on [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



The final AECOM report can be found on the [Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

## *Appendix D: Non-Designated Heritage Assets*

### *Easneye Historic Park, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots*

Easneye, Capell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Historic Park (Locally Listed) GR TL381134

Originally a Celtic hill fort with tumuli (2000 BC), a Saxon fort, then given to Bishop of Bayeux at the Norman Conquest, when it became a hunting ground (deer park). The deer park may have covered about 200 acres. The approximate extent of the park is shown on the [Policies Map](#).

The estate was purchased in 1866 by Thomas Fowell Buxton and a mansion (now a Grade II\* listed Heritage Asset in its own right) was completed in 1868. Pleasure gardens with flower beds in the Victorian style and a planted avenue were established. The gardens were not extensive and scattered trees led to thicker mixed woodland intersected by paths. The parkland is largely laid to woodland with some farmland extending beyond the woods to the River Ash to the northwest. To the south and east of the house lay the Victorian park which included a kitchen garden were laid to pasture with scattered trees.

A detailed description of the park and its buildings entitled Easneye Site Record, prepared by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in December 2021 can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

### *Hill House (and Warrax House) Historic Park, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots*

Capell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Historic Park (Locally Listed), Hill House GR TL388123 and Warrax House GR TL386123

The site appears to have originated as a 1 acre plot, Warrax Common Field, for Stanstead Abbots village around 1821. Hill House (Grade II listed) was built circa 1800 and Warrax house is shown on the 1840 Tithe Map. The approximate extent of the park is shown on the [Policies Map](#).

Both houses are set in orchards. Both houses have kitchen gardens. Their pleasure gardens were also small. The main area of parkland is at the top of the hill behind the gardens and is surrounded by a belt of trees. Much of the parkland now appears to be a mix of trees/woodland.

Para 6.66 of the Conservation Area Appraisal says: land to the north consists of a large area of rough grazing land and on the opposite side of the road, open land either side of the entrance drive to Hill House and within the grounds of the church, together form in combination, an open space of high environmental quality and a gap performing an important function in separating two built areas of the village.

A detailed description of the park and its buildings entitled Hill and Warrax House Site Report Site, prepared by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in December 2021 can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



*K6 Telephone Box (now defibrillator station), High Street*

Phone box, now converted to a defibrillator station. The phone box represents a past focal point for the community. It is in excellent condition.



FIGURE 21 K6 TELEPHONE BOX, HIGH STREET

*Greenwich Meridian Marker, Station Road*

New River Meridian Line marker in St Margarets. This marks the Greenwich Meridian (longitude 0°). The Meridian obelisks were placed in 1984 to commemorate the centenary of the adoption of the prime meridian line. This is a matter of community pride in the village.



FIGURE 22 GREENWICH MERIDIAN MARKER, STATION ROAD

*Home Guard defence position opposite Meridian Marker, High Street*

During the Second World War there were two identified Home Guard defence positions at either end of the villages covering the B181 (51.47.14.3N 0.00.07.9W and 51.47.14.3N 0.01.61.2W). The best preserved of these lies in a small depression at the base of a tree, on the opposite side of the road from the New River Meridian marker.



*Drinking Fountain, at front of village hall, Roydon Road*

The drinking fountain close to the Parish Hall is an interesting feature, inscribed 1884.



FIGURE 23 DRINKING FOUNTAIN, ROYDON ROAD

*Edward VII Letter Box, Cappell Lane*

This elaborate letter box has a tiled roof and wooden detailing. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes it as a 'curious and distinctive' feature.



FIGURE 24 EDWARD VII LETTER BOX, CAPPELL LANE



*George VI Letter Box, opposite 42 Hoddesdon Road*

Letter box in good condition on a grass verge in a residential road in the village.



FIGURE 25 GEORGE VI LETTER BOX, HODDESDON ROAD

*Appendix E: Protected Views*



**FIGURE 26 VIEW 1 DOWN CAT HILL FROM THE ALMSHOUSES**

The approach into Stanstead Abbots down Roydon Road as it descends Cat Hill offers a rich variety of natural and built structures. This view is from the bend in the road as it flattens out and the very fine brickwork of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Baesh Almshouses can be glimpsed on the left. There is common land on the immediate right which has thickly growing trees and shrubs and elevated above the road are the distinct white semi-detached houses of Chapelfields.



**FIGURE 27 VIEW 2 EAST UP CAT HILL TOWARDS ALMSHOUSES (showing the landmark cedar tree)**

Roydon Road curves into the junction with Hunsdon Road and then back up towards Netherfield House. It is again a very clearly defined and well-loved scene. Walkers may choose to use the PROW behind the Baesh Almshouses if they are ascending Cat Hill or they may turn to the right on the bridleway which leads them into the Lee Valley Park.





FIGURE 28 VIEW 3 EAST TO THE MALTINGS

Roydon Road is second in importance only to the High St so here on either side of the road are two landmark buildings: the very familiar water trough announces the front of the Parish Hall on the right and the Maltings with the former Mill on the left hand side signal the approach to the junction with the High St.



FIGURE 29 VIEW 4 NORTH TO THE RED LION PH

The Red Lion pub has the distinction of being one of the very oldest buildings in the village and is part of the reason for the village's name as it was home to the monks and abbots who resided here long ago. It is a very attractive building with a welcoming feel – particularly when there are hanging baskets on display. This particular photograph also shows (on the left of the view) the planted-up barrow which was presented to the village by the owner of the French and Jupps Maltings to remind villagers of the industrial past.



**FIGURE 30 VIEW 5 SOUTH ALONG THE MILL STREAM FROM FOOTBRIDGE**

This view is hidden from the main roads. The river runs underground beyond the bridge at the top so the sight of it is an unexpected delight and requires walking into the Maltings site or approaching from the Village Club. An attractive wooden bridge crosses the river from which this photograph has been taken. Since lockdowns seats have been installed on either side of the bank – the Village Club created a terrace for the purpose.



**FIGURE 31 VIEW 6 NORTHEAST TO ST ANDREWS CHURCH FROM CAPPELL LANE**

This view of the bend in Cappell Lane highlights the elevated St Andrew's Church with its flint built walls and the distinctive shape and height of the tower. The grassy area beyond the fine gate posts is the scene of annual remembrance next to the war memorial. This is a view which represents the sense of community, history and belonging.





FIGURE 32 VIEW 7 SOUTH ALONG CAPPELL LANE FROM WARRAX PARK

This leafy approach to the village of Stanstead Abbots is a delightful signal of its semi-rural nature. Just coming into view is St Andrew's Church and the many and varied houses on both sides of Cappell Lane – many of which were built by the owners of Easneye which stretches up the hillside on the left just behind the photographer. A little further along and behind the hedge on the left sheep graze in the field.



FIGURE 33 VIEW 8 EAST ALONG HIGH STREET FROM RIVER LEA BRIDGE

Approaching the village from the hump-backed bridge there is a welcome from this High Street scene. The period lampposts are much cherished by the village; the frontages each has their own story relating back to times when there were many shops and many pubs. The white house on the left clearly demarcates the fact that here is a residential street with pride in its architecture while the shops play a vital part in bringing people together and providing for their needs



**FIGURE 34 VIEW 9 ALONG THE RIVER LEA FROM THE BRIDGE, UPSTREAM**

The view looking North from the bridge over the River Lee Navigation has endless fascination. The scene is constantly changing. The seasons bring very noticeable changes to the trees. The time of day creates changes to the reflections in the river – as does the weather. The ducks, geese, swans, moorhens and coots are just the more obvious inhabitants of the river and are always on the move. People are moving along the towpath for fishing, walking, cycling or just looking for somewhere to rest.



**FIGURE 35 VIEW 10 ALONG THE RIVER LEA FROM THE BRIDGE, DOWNSTREAM**

This view looking south from the bridge over the River Lea is a reminder of the fantastic access residents have to the Lea Valley. The towpath alongside the River Lea Navigation is very popular with walkers and cyclists. It is a place of changing light and reflections popular with photographers. On the right is a green at the back of the Jolly Fisherman where the seating is regularly packed with customers. The gardens of attractive homes on the left bank extend right to the water's edge and this view changes regularly as boats come and go.





**FIGURE 36 VIEW 11 ST MARY'S CHURCH, IN ST MARGARETS PARISH, ON HODDES DON ROAD**  
 St Mary's Church in the Parish of St Margarets is a very well-loved landmark. Recently the building has been renovated following enormous efforts to raise money so that it looks very well cared for and historic. The attractive picket fence demarcates the grounds which includes a graveyard and there is a sense of tranquillity and welcome.



**FIGURE 37 VIEW 12 SOUTH ALONG THE NEW RIVER FROM THE BRIDGE ON STATION ROAD**  
 This remarkable view of the New River from the more westerly and more elevated of the two bridges on the B181 into St Margarets reveals the footpath alongside the New River where it is adjacent to the old Croft estate of St Margaretsbury- now a school and a recreation ground. The height and nature of the trees which are reflected in the New River make them ideal habitats for birds, flora and fauna.

### *Appendix F: Valued Community Facilities*

There are two allotment sites, both of which are privately owned. Both allotments are also proposed as Local Green Spaces in this Neighbourhood Plan:

**Town Allotments** – entrance opposite the Co-op in the High Street. 16 allotments (1 is let as 2 half-plots). There is a waiting list for these allotments.

**Church Allotments** – opposite St Andrew's Church on Cappell Lane. 19 allotments (5 are let as half-plots and 2 are let as quarter-plots).

Both allotments are classed as a major asset by those who use them. With "grow your own" being encouraged we would like to ensure these are retained within the village, should the owners ever decide to sell the land. Alternatively, we would like to have the ability to purchase land elsewhere to re-locate these, thereby retaining the provision of allotments within the village.

**St James' Church** - This is an Anglican church, which is recorded as a Grade 1 listed building and was the original Parish Church. The church is currently under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and managed by the Friends of St James' Church. The church has its origins in the twelfth century, and possibly as far back as the Saxon period and its unspoiled interior has hardly been touched since Georgian times and features unusually high box pews and a three-decker pulpit and several monuments, including that of Edward Baesh, who acquired the Manor of Stanstead Abbots from the Crown. Whilst there is no longer any regular pattern to the services held at St James', it is usual for a Rogation Sunday service to be held in the Spring, for a Harvest thanksgiving service to be held in early Autumn and for the Patronal Festival to be held in July. An Advent carol service is usually held when the church is lit by candles. Being consecrated, the use of the surrounding graveyard ensures the church's continued relevance to the village community. To raise money for the essential maintenance and upkeep, as well as open days during the Summer, the church offers a range of events including poetry readings, historic presentations and talks, art exhibitions and events. The church is historically and currently a valued asset within the village, and we would like to ensure its continued existence and maintenance, both from an historic and social perspective.

**Nigel Copping Community Centre** - This building contains a hall which holds up to 80 (seated) and a meeting room for up to 25 seated theatre-style. There is access to a kitchen and parking for 21 cars. The spaces can be hired for various functions/classes including dancing and Tai Chi which can be accessed by all members of the community. This is a community hub, where many people can socialise, and we would like to retain this within the community. The building is owned by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, which manages a Charitable Fund known as the Nigel Copping Fund. It is located at the opposite end of Stanstead Abbots to the Village Hall so it works as a hub for the west side of the village.

**Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall/Ashlea Rooms** - One large hall, with two smaller rooms that can be hired by the community. One room has been used as a music room amongst other things. There are also exercise and nursery classes held here. The Parish Council meets here. There are also regular quiz nights, society meetings, and social events held here, and we are looking to expand the use of the space. This is a community hub,



where people can socialise, and we would like to retain this within the community. The Parish Hall Trust is the Trustee of these halls.

**St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground** - is owned by St Margaretsbury Trust, a charitable trust which was formed by the three Parishes. It has a function room and fully licensed bar, which can be hired out for parties, etc. Several local groups, such as Slimming World, have regular meetings here. There are associate clubs, who play here, including St Margaretsbury Football Club - the first team plays in the Spartan South Midlands League, the reserves play in U25 Development Division of the Spartan South Midlands League and the Under 18 Academy play in the SCYFL; they also provide coaching from age 4. The facilities include three full size football pitches. It is also home to St Margaretsbury Cricket Club which is affiliated to the Hertfordshire County Cricket Association the Club Cricket Conference and are members of the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League. They field three senior XI's on a Saturday which all compete in the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League and there are regular Sunday friendly matches for senior and academy teams. The club also has a highly successful junior section, which fields teams from U10 to U17 age groups in the Hertfordshire Junior Leagues. Since 2005, the club has been awarded Clubmark accreditation by the England and Wales Cricket Board, recognising their commitment to the development and safeguarding of young cricketers within the local community. Two large cricket pitches facilitate two teams playing at home most Summer Saturdays. St Margaretsbury Tennis club is also based here. There are three all-weather tennis courts, all floodlit. The club welcomes people of all ages and abilities and, runs regular social tennis sessions, a junior section, competitive matches, regular coaching and training sessions. They also hold regular social activities, including BBQ's, quiz nights, curry nights, etc. Anyone in the village can access the grounds and it is deemed a very important community asset, encouraging health and fitness, and social interaction, for age groups in the village.

**The Jolly Fisherman** - One of the village pubs sited on the High Street, beside the River Lee Navigation. This pub is very popular within the village and, particularly with visitors to the village. It is owned by the McMullen Brewery. The pub holds a weekly quiz, which is generally well attended, and occasional entertainment and hosts a variety of fundraising events throughout the year, such as the Macmillan Coffee Morning. It also doubles as a restaurant and is considered an integral part of the village and something we would not want to lose. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Fisherman has helped support the community and charities, by running on-line quizzes.

**The Oak** - The Oak (previously the Lord Louis), High Street. Until recently, this pub was very popular within the village and had a restaurant and take-away service. The pub hosted several entertainment events throughout the year, including streaming live football and boxing. The Oak really shone amongst the pubs in the village during the pandemic opening its doors to provide some of the staples, such as flour, eggs, etc, to people within the village - which proved a life line to many. It also started up the equivalent of a "food bank", where people who needed help could go and get the essentials they needed - no questions asked and a collection point for things such as buttons, which were being collected for those villagers making face mask extenders. It really helped raise the community spirit within the village. Sadly, the pub is currently closed.

**The Red Lion** – A privately owned pub in the High Street. Another popular pub within the village and has a restaurant and take-away service. Like The Jolly Fisherman, the pub hosts regular entertainment throughout the year, including folk music evenings. It also streams live football and boxing. During the pandemic, the Red Lion opened its restaurant as a take-away service for villagers. The pub has a football team.

**The Village Club** - Based just off the High Street, the Village Club is another community hub for the village. There is a bar and snooker tables, etc. The club features regular live entertainment and hosts bingo and other regular events. Currently, the club is funded and owned by its members, who pay an annual membership fee. The club is a valuable asset and something the villagers would be loath to lose.

**The Scout Hut** – HQ of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Scouts Group, which provides adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for boys and girls aged 6 to 14 years old. The hut and freehold are held in Trust and registered as belonging to the Scout Association Trust Fund. The hut is also available for hire for private functions. This is a valuable asset, providing activities for the children in the village.

**The Folly Community Centre** – The Folly includes a number of retirement flats and bungalows, which are owned by Network Housing Association. The Community Centre provides a meeting place for the elderly at the Folly and welcomes others from the wider village. It holds activities such as bingo, crafts, lunches and entertainment. This is a very important meeting point for the elderly within the village and, we would like to retain this should Network Housing decide to vacate the area.

**Lounge at Chapelfields** – Chapelfields consists of retirement bungalows. The Lounge provides a meeting place for the elderly at Chapelfields and welcomes others from the wider village. Activities such as bingo and coffee mornings are held there. This is a very important meeting point for the elderly within the village and we would like to retain this should Network Housing (the current owners) decide to vacate the area. The Lounge is at the opposite end of the village to the Community Centre at the Folly.

**Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line** – The trackbed is in private ownership with restricted or limited access along most of its length. Some sections have public or permissive access; notable near the southern end from Holycross Road Bridge continuing south to where the line used to join the Hertford Branch, which now forms part of a Lea Valley Walking trail. You can pick up and walk a section of the trackbed where it forms part of the Amwell walkway. The last section of remaining track is at St Margarets station.

**St Margarets Community Wood** – The wood is a small forest in the parish of Stanstead St Margarets and is maintained by East Hertfordshire District Council. There are entrances on Hoddesdon Road and The Granary, and it is used by the community for walking. It is 0.94 km long and is bounded by the Greater Anglia train line and the New River.

**Sanville Gardens Orchard** – This field is adjacent to Sanville Gardens and is land owned by Councillor Nigel Copping of Stanstead St Margaret's Parish Council. It was planted with 420 saplings gifted from the Woodland Trust in November 2020. Future plans include providing seating, increasing biodiversity and encouraging wildlife with the provision of bird boxes, bat boxes and insect homes. The land will eventually be left to the Parish Council for the community to enjoy this open space in perpetuity.



## *Appendix G: Local Green Space Assessment*

### **Explanation of Criteria and Assessment Process**

The Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space assessment criteria have been created to assess potential green spaces for designation within the neighbourhood plan.

The assessment criteria were compiled using sources including the National Planning Policy Framework, the Open Spaces Society Information Sheet on Local Green Space Designation and Local Green Space Selection Methodology supplied by the neighbourhood plan consultant.

The Neighbourhood Plan Ecology Group, using local knowledge, drawing on evidence of historical significance and wildlife/biodiversity value put the list of sites together. No specific 'call for sites' was undertaken, and the list subject of the assessment included 23 sites, ranging from allotments to fields and woodland to recreational areas.

The criteria are split into General Site Information and Critical Criteria. The Critical Criteria are based on the national definition of a Local Green Space in the National Planning Policy Framework. Each site proposed for designation must be local in character, not an extensive tract of land (less than 10 hectares), demonstrably special, and reasonably close to a settlement (300m – which represents reasonable walking distance). There is no minimum size of site that can be considered.

The General Site Information captures specific aspects of the site, which count either in its favour or against it. Also contained in the spreadsheet is evidence to support local character and specialness.

A simple R.A.G system (Red, Amber, Green) is used to classify each criterion with Red flagging an issue (e.g., not meeting the critical criteria), Amber indicating unknown or questionable, and Green indicating no issue and meets the critical criteria.

The result of the assessment is indicated by the colour of the cell in the Site Description column. A key to colours and notes can be found at the bottom of the spreadsheet. The most favourable sites are shown in green in the table below.

Site description	No	Dev site	Other designation	Common /Village Green	Garden	Owner known	Plan Per.	Local in size	Close	Very Special
St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground	1	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Wilderness woodlands by New River Path/s St Margaretsbury	2	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path	3	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field between Sanville Gardens & The Granary	4	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Treed area north of Sanville Gdns	5	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Green by The Jolly Fisherman Station Road beside towpath	6	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field at end of Rush Close beside towpath	7	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field adj to Lawrence Av. by River Lea Navigation	8	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field adj to Heron Drive beside towpath	9	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Land btw Kitten Lane & Hunsdon Rd & Roydon Rd.	10	N	N	Common	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Land east of Kitten Lane & north of Roydon Road.	11	This LGS was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in National policy								
St Andrews' School Field, off Abbots Way	12	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Allotments off Cappell Lane	13	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Village meadow and playground north of High Street	14	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Allotments north of High Street	15	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River	16	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y



Site description	No	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreation Use	Tranquil	Wildlife
<b>St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground</b>	1	Large public open space	Part of St Margaretsbury estate. Home to cricket club est. 1737. Henge found on adjacent land.	Natural and artificial surfaces used for cricket, football & tennis Dog walking.	No	No information
<b>Wilderness woodlands by New River Path/ s. of St Margaretsbury</b>	2	A little bit of natural woodland within the village.	Partly in an Area of Archaeological Significance.	No	Yes, riverside setting.	Mixed woodland plantation. Potential if restored. HERC-purple
<b>St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path</b>	3	Part of Protected View 12 down the river from Station Road.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance.	PRoW on New River Path	Yes	Mixed woodland plantation. Potential if restored. HERC-purple
<b>Field between Sanville Gardens and The Granary</b>	4	Important amenity green space for residents of The Granary.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Includes children's playground	No	Mostly HERC-purple High potential for habitat creation
<b>Treed area north of Sanville Gardens</b>	5	Attractive natural and semi-natural green space, with grassland and young woodland.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Informal recreation space. Public access.	Yes	Orchids found. Habitat potential to be enhanced
<b>Green beside The Jolly Fisherman Station Road beside towpath</b>	6	View over the bridge, includes meridian stones sculpture. Gathering space. Part of Protected View 10 southwards along river.	Setting to grade II listed pub, 1736. Part of local character. In Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area.	Informal recreation, picnics etc. PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way.	Yes, riverside setting.	Birdlife on river including kingfishers. Green corridor.
<b>Field at end of Rush Close bedside towpath</b>	7	Amenity green space extending the riverside character. Part of Protected View 10.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners, cyclists and for fishing	Yes, riverside setting.	Green corridor. River birdlife, grebes, Canada geese, swans etc.
<b>Field adj to Lawrence Av. By River Lea Navigation</b>	8	Amenity green space extending the riverside character.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners, cyclists and for fishing	Yes, riverside setting.	Green corridor with river birdlife, grebes, Canada geese, swans etc.

Site description	No	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreation Use	Tranquil	Wildlife
Field adj. to Heron Drive beside towpath	9	Grassed area with poplar trees fronting the river.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners et.	Yes, riverside setting.	Birdlife on river. Bee orchid's grow in the field.
Land between Kiffen Lane & Hunsdon Rd & Roydon Rd.	10	Natural and semi-natural green space. Common land.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Publicly accessible green space, popular area.	Yes	Existing habitat with potential for restoration. HERC-purple
Land east of Kiffen Rd & north of Roydon Rd.	11	This LGS was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in national policy				
St Andrew's School Field, off Abbots Way	12	Outdoor sports space-playing fields with natural and artificial surfaces.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance.	Critical for health and wellbeing – under intense use by children.	No	No
Allotments off Cappell Lane	13	Horticultural aesthetic providing opportunity to grow own food and be more sustainable.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Fosters community spirit and family cohesion.	Yes	HERC-Purple. Abundant wildlife reported by allotment holders.
Village meadow and playground north of High Street	14	A naturally wild area providing an amenity space in the centre of the village (like a village green). Includes village playground.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance and Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area	Natural play space for families – maintained by volunteer group.	Yes, peaceful area with benches for reflection	Wildlife reported including great crested newts and hedgehogs.
Allotments north of High Street	15	Horticultural aesthetic providing opportunity to grow own food and be more sustainable. Includes beehives.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance and Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area.	Fosters community spirit and family cohesion.	Yes.	Wildlife reported including bats, owls, and dormice.
Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River	16	Broadleaf woodland plantation.	No	Used by dog walkers and mountain bikers.	Yes	HERC-green (NERC habitat).





FIGURE 38 LGS1 ST MARGARETSBURY RECREATION GROUND



FIGURE 39 LGS2 THE WILDERNESS WOODLANDS BY NEW RIVER PATH



FIGURE 40 LGS3 ST MARGARETSBURY ESTATE BY THE NEW RIVER PATH



FIGURE 41 LGS4 PLAYGROUND AT THE GRANARY





FIGURE 42 LGS5 TREED AREA NORTH OF SANVILLE GARDENS



FIGURE 43 LGS6 GREEN BESIDE THE JOLLY FISHERMAN



FIGURE 44 LGS7 FIELD AT END OF RUSH CLOSE, BESIDE RIVER LEA NAVIGATION



FIGURE 45 LGS8 FIELD ADJACENT TO LAWRENCE AVENUE BY RIVER LEA NAVIGATION





FIGURE 46 LGS9 FIELD ADJACENT TO HERON DRIVE BESIDE RIVER LEA NAVIGATION



FIGURE 47 LGS10 LAND BETWEEN KITTEN LANE AND HUNSDON ROAD AND ROYDON ROAD



FIGURE 49 LGS12 ST ANDREWS SCHOOL FIELD OFF ABBOTTS WAY





FIGURE 50 LGS13 ALLOTMENTS OFF CAPPELL LANE



FIGURE 51 LGS14 VILLAGE MEADOW AND PLAYGROUND NORTH OF HIGH STREET



FIGURE 52 LGS 15 ALLOTMENTS NORTH OF HIGH STREET

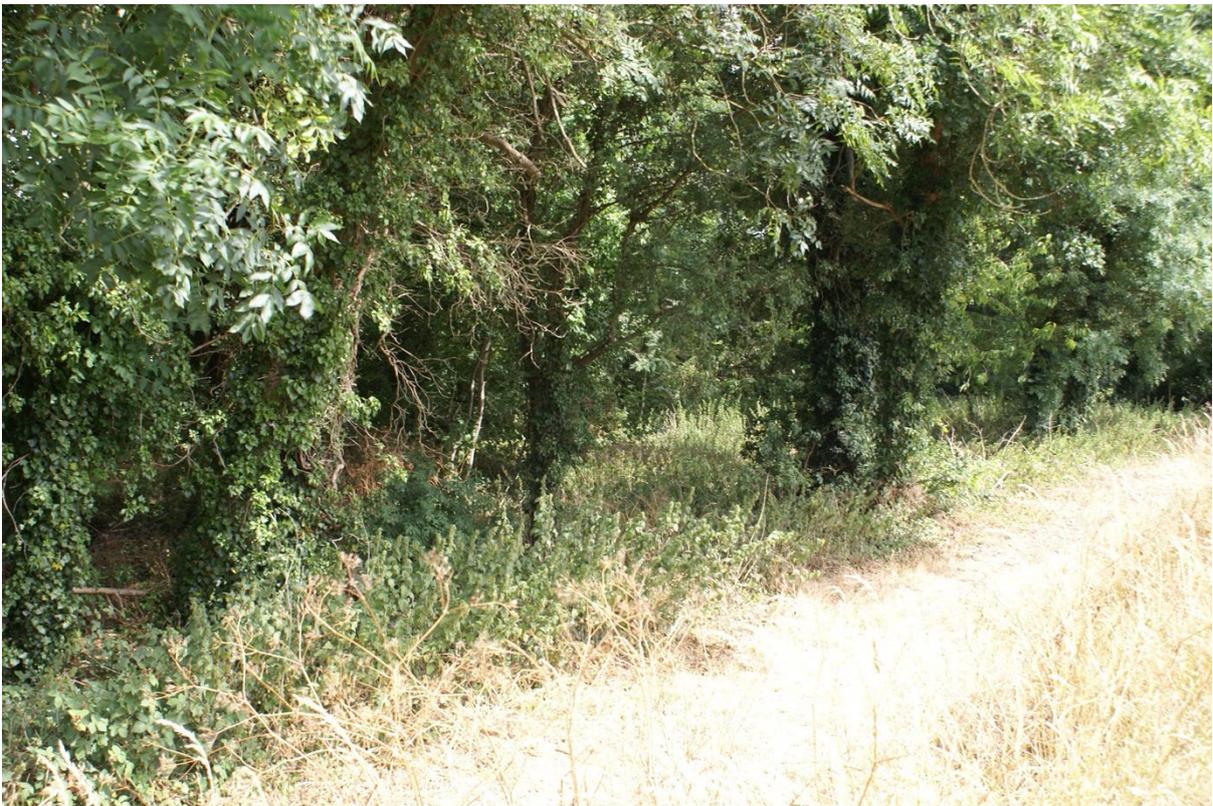
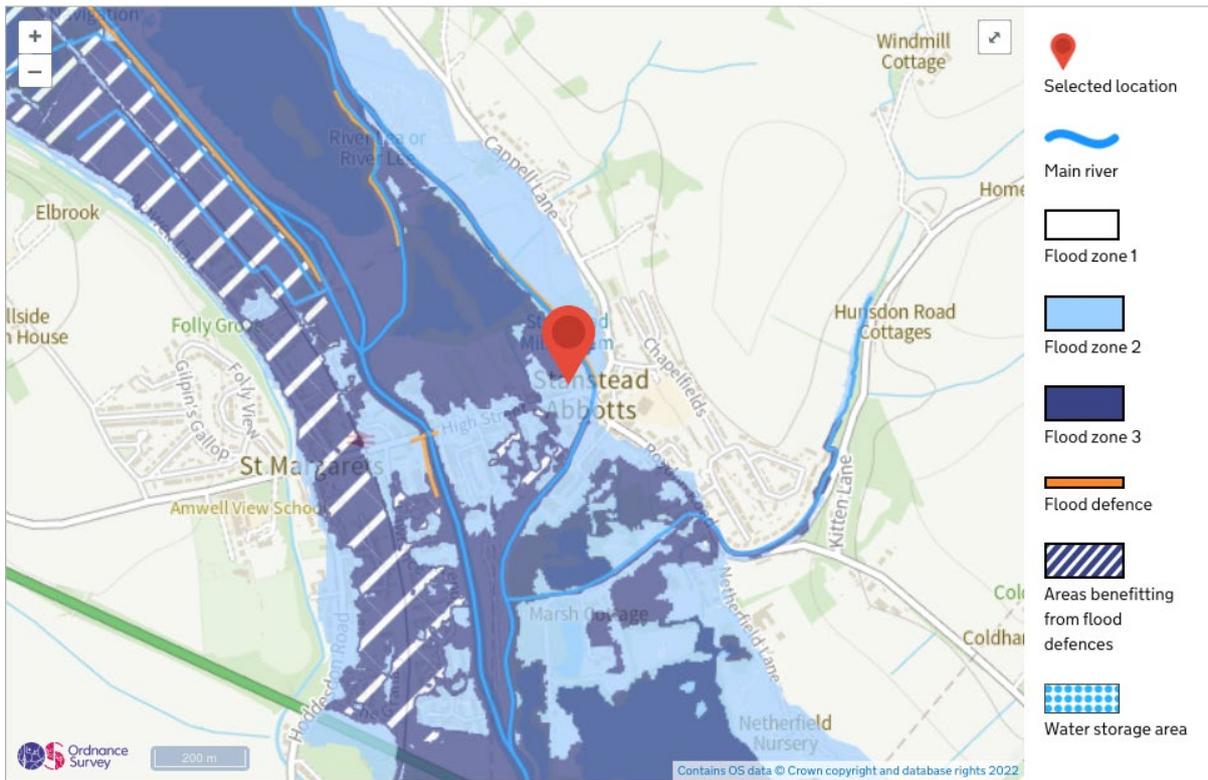


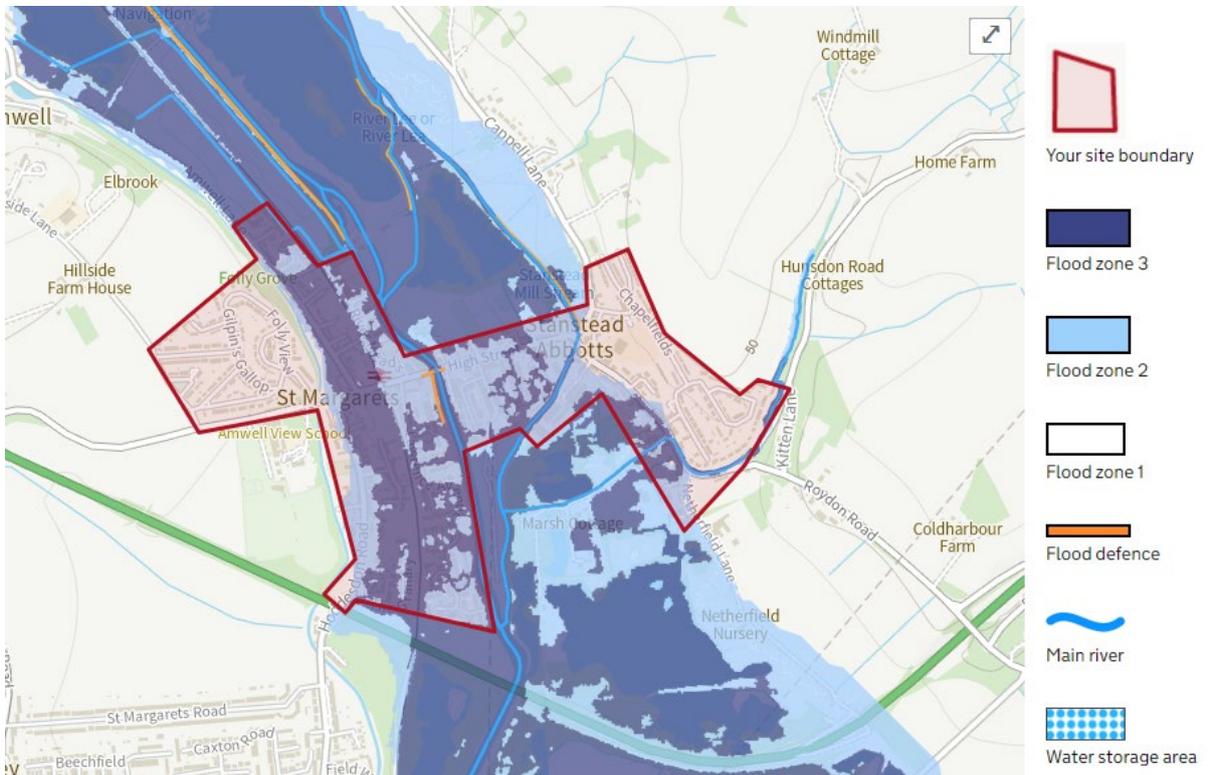
FIGURE 53 LGS16 FOLLY GROVE BETWEEN FOLLY VIEW AND THE NEW RIVER



*Appendix H: Flood Risk Map (July 2022)*



Revised Flood Risk Map (March 2024)



### *Appendix I: Glossary*

- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) – woodland that retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally. This covers all stands of ancient woodland which do not obviously originate from planting.
- Ancient replanted Woodland (AWS - ancient woodland site or PAWS - plantation on ancient woodland site) – woodland where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers and usually this century.
- **RAMSAR** sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Wetlands are designated, protected and promoted to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, which are broadly defined to include marsh, fen, peatland and water.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are areas notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as being of special interest for nature conservation. They represent the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in Great Britain supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. Notification as a SSSI is primarily a legal mechanism organised by Natural England and selected according to specific criteria. The Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs, published in 1989 by the Joint Nature Conservancy Council, set down the selection criteria for both biological and geological SSSIs.
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) are designated under the EC Birds Directive, to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory birds. Any significant pollution or disturbance to or deterioration of these sites must be avoided.
- The NERC Act (2006) requires every public authority, in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats as well as protecting them.



*Appendix J: Action Plan*

<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
T1	Transport	Promote climate friendly measures that help to lower carbon emissions through car usage	Promote the installation of publicly accessible EV charging points	High	0-2 years	Transport Sub-group	TBC
T2	Transport	Improve road safety through reduction of HGV related traffic through the village	Active working with HCC, developers and other transport bodies to improve road safety to highlighted areas at junction of B180/B181 and at exit route onto Roydon Road from A414	High	0-3	Parish Council, HCC, Transport sub group	
T3	Transport	Promote measures in partnership with Greater Anglia and Network Rail to make cycle use combined with train travel more attractive	Provide secure cycle stands at St Margarets Station similar to those at Broxbourne Station	Med	0-3 years	GA Network Rail	Not known
T4	Transport	Promote accessible transport facilities across the SASM Neighbourhood Plan Area	Provision of secure cycle parking facilities at suitable locations to access village amenities	High	0-2 years	Parish Councils	



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
T5	Transport	Address issues of air pollution caused by car engines idling while queuing for the level crossing	Investigate introduction of a byelaw requiring drivers to turn off engines while queuing for level crossing and install signage similar to that outside schools	High	0-1 year	District and Parish council	TBD
T6	Transport	Improve provision of bus services that connect the village with nearby centres	Work in partnership with bus companies to ensure current services will be continued and enhanced particularly routes along Cappell Lane	Med	0-3 years	SAPC	£50.00
T7	Transport	Make the river bus more useful for commuting and leisure for Stanstead Abbots residents	Extend the route of the river bus into Stanstead Abbots by creating a suitable quay	Med	1-2 years	Lee Valley Park and CRT	TBD
T8	Transport	Enable high quality and accessible pedestrian routes into and around the village centre	Ensure main pedestrian paved routes are safe, wheelchair and buggy friendly	high	1-3 years	Parish Council?	TBD
T9	Transport	Reduce the speed of vehicles in the area to enhance safety and reduce pollution	Work with County Council to bring in 20mph speed limit along all roads in the village	high	1-2 years	Parish Council	TBD



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
C1	Community	To facilitate more recycling – particularly Terra Cycle	Work with local businesses to launch this project	Med	0-2 years	Local businesses and PCs	£200 approx
C2	Community	Make paths and the towpath more attractive	Work with District and Parish Councils to increase number of dog poo bins, including finding donors, litter pick and provide more benches	High	ongoing	Residents, Parish and District councils	£2,000
C3	Community	Establish a community library	Interested business sponsors and local residents to find a suitable venue and volunteers to supervise it.	Med	0-3 years	Local businesses Community groups	£200
C4	Community	Increase community composting	Investigate location within one of the existing allotments e.g., Cappell Lane.	Med	0-2 years	Volunteers/Maintenance and Traffic Committee/ local landowners	£50
C5	Community	Improve social opportunities for the disabled; the elderly; young people and children With opportunities for arts and craft	Work with existing venues.	Long term	ongoing	Community groups and possible sponsors in the business community, charities and voluntary groups.	TBD



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
C6	Community	Encourage healthy activities such as canoeing and running	Local sports groups could be encouraged to start up more active and fitness groups and promote Hertfordshire Health Walks	Med	0-3 years	Sponsors and Parish Council	TBD
C7	Community	Provide public toilets	Work with council and local businesses to build and maintain public toilets in a suitable location (e.g., close to the playground)	High	0-2 years	Sponsors/ Parish and District Councils	TBD
C8	Community	Promote community facilities for young people	Replace existing scout hut Increase the range of park equipment suitable for young people with disabilities and for older children	Medium	3-5	Scout movement Volunteers Businesses Parish Councils	Unknown
H1	Heritage	To establish the date of the settlement at Stanstead Abbots	Work with developers to gather information on appropriate sites that help to identify and date activity across the settlement area. Gain community skills and expert cooperation to run a community programme of test pits across the village to gather evidence (Testing should	Medium	Throughout development period and ongoing	Developers (as appropriate) Residents SALHS Ware Museum HCC Heritage team	Unknown



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
			seek to prioritise Burgage plot boundary lines if possible).				
H2	Heritage	Disseminate Heritage information on social media so the community better understands the nature and value of its surrounding heritage	Undertake a programme of postings on village Facebook pages with a focus on settlement history and heritage	High	Throughout development period and ongoing	Heritage Group	None
H3		Disseminate Heritage information on website and noticeboards so the community better understands the nature and value of its surrounding heritage	Use results of social media programme and post site reports on SALHS website and design local information boards that can be displayed in schools, clubs, cafes and other accessible venue	High	Throughout development period and ongoing	Developers Heritage group SALHS	Unknown at this stage
H4	Heritage	To raise local skills and understanding within the community, particularly with regard to below ground heritage assets	Set up an archaeology working group, either as an integral part of SALHS or as a stand-alone club to train for and undertake small, low impact investigations	Medium	End of 2022	SALHS Residents	Unknown



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
H4	Heritage	To raise local skills and understanding within the community, particularly with regard to below ground heritage assets	Set up an archaeology working group, either as an integral part of SALHS or as a stand-alone club to train for and undertake small, low impact investigations	Medium	End of 2022	SALHS Residents	Unknown
H5	Heritage	To enable residents to be able to access information and objects that inform local heritage within the village	Obtain storage/study space within the settlement area where resources may be safely and securely stored and if possible, study undertaken	Low	Long-term aim	SALHS Archaeology group	TBC
H6	Heritage	To begin to address heritage assets that are identified as deteriorating/in need of improvement in the EHDC 2014 Conservation Plan	Drinking fountain outside Roydon Road School to be listed/sympathetically restored (CAA action)	Low	End of 2023	Parish Hall Trust	Unknown
H7	Heritage	To develop and disseminate a greater awareness of key heritage assets, particularly those of a notably early date or 2* EH listing	With the assistance of field experts, gather information on the Henge field site outside St Margarets and disseminate via a Facebook summary and extended posting on SALHS	High	August 2023	Heritage group or Archaeology group if formed working with SALHS	None



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
E1	Environment	To reduce light pollution where compatible with road safety		Low			
E2	Environment	To maximise any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offsite contributions within the Neighbourhood Plan area.		High			
E3	Environment	Enhance wildlife corridors	Strengthen and increase the quantity and quality of hedgerows to support local wildlife. Promote nesting boxes for birds insects and small animals.	High	1-5 years	Whole community Land owners	
E4	Environment	Increase number and type of indigenous trees through the village	Planting , running an education programme	High	1-5 years	Whole community	
E5	Environment	Protect and promote native flora and fauna throughout the village	Promote wild flower planting, and insect habitat promotion and pollinators	High	1-5 years	Whole community	



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
E6	Environment	Support delivery of the Herts and Middlesex conservation plan, RSPB local reserve.	Support habitat creation and enhancement for wild birds, animals and fish	High	1-5 years	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.	
E7	Environment	Reduce the impact of preventable flooding.	Support the initiatives of the Environment Agency in relation to the Stanstead Abbots ditch and the works to reduce pluvial flooding	High	0-5 years	Environment Agency Land owners and volunteers	Unknown



*Appendix K: Policy Map detail sheets*

Policy Map detail sheets follow below:

Policies Map

Housing Site Allocation Map

Protected Views Map

Valued Hedgerows Map

Local Green Spaces Map

Valued Community Assets Map

High Street Map

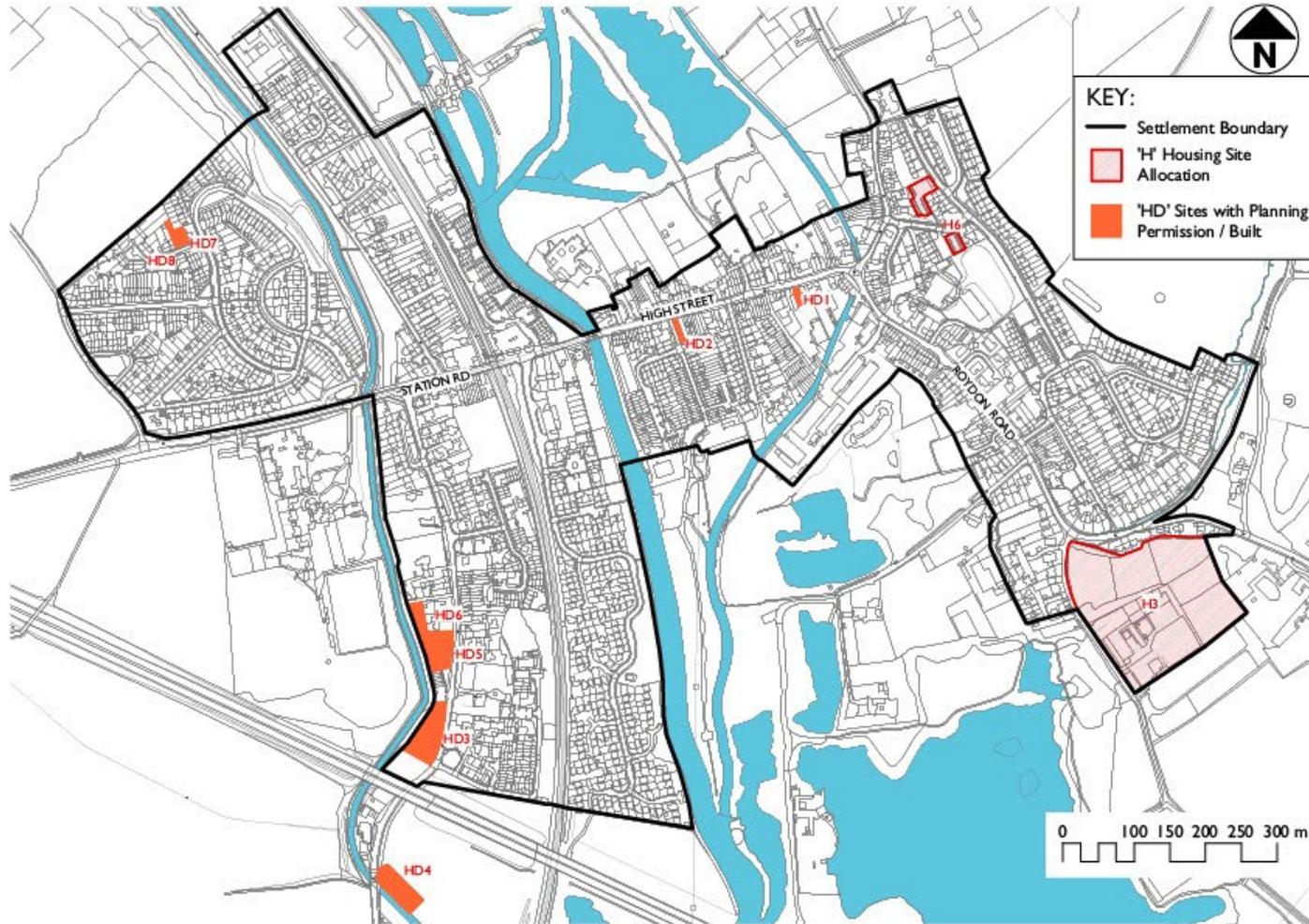
Employment Areas Map

Non-designated Heritage Assets Inset Map

Easneye Historic Park Map







HOUSING SITE ALLOCATION MAP



*Appendix L: Housing Site Breakdown Allocations*

Planning Permission	Address	Existing Dwellings	Proposed Dwellings	Overall Net Dwellings	Notes
3/20/0069/FUL	8 High Street, SG12 8AB	1	2	1	
3/23/0978/FUL	60 High Street, SG12 8AG	1	3	2	
3/19/1689/FUL	The Wilderness	0	8	8	Granted in Aug 2023
3/16/2565/FUL	Pump House Lane	0	4	4	Constructed
3/18/2556/VAR	The Spinney A	0	6	6	Constructed
3/16/1407/FUL	The Spinney B	0	2	2	Constructed
3/15/1459/FUL	6 French Close, SG12 8BB	1	2	1	Constructed
3/18/2413/FUL	4 French Close, SG12 8BB	1	2	1	Constructed Constructed
<b>Total permissions and completions</b>				<b>25</b>	
<b>Site Allocations</b>					
H3	Netherfield Lane				
3/20/0502/OUT	Land to East of Netherfield Lane		20	60	PDL- part of H3 granted PP May 2023;



Site H6

Garages at Chapelfields

7

Granted Aug 2023; consists of two adjacent garage sites- 3/22/2135/FUL grants permission for 5 dwellings in Aug 23. 2 Dwellings on adjacent site still outstanding.

Windfall sites

Within the village boundary

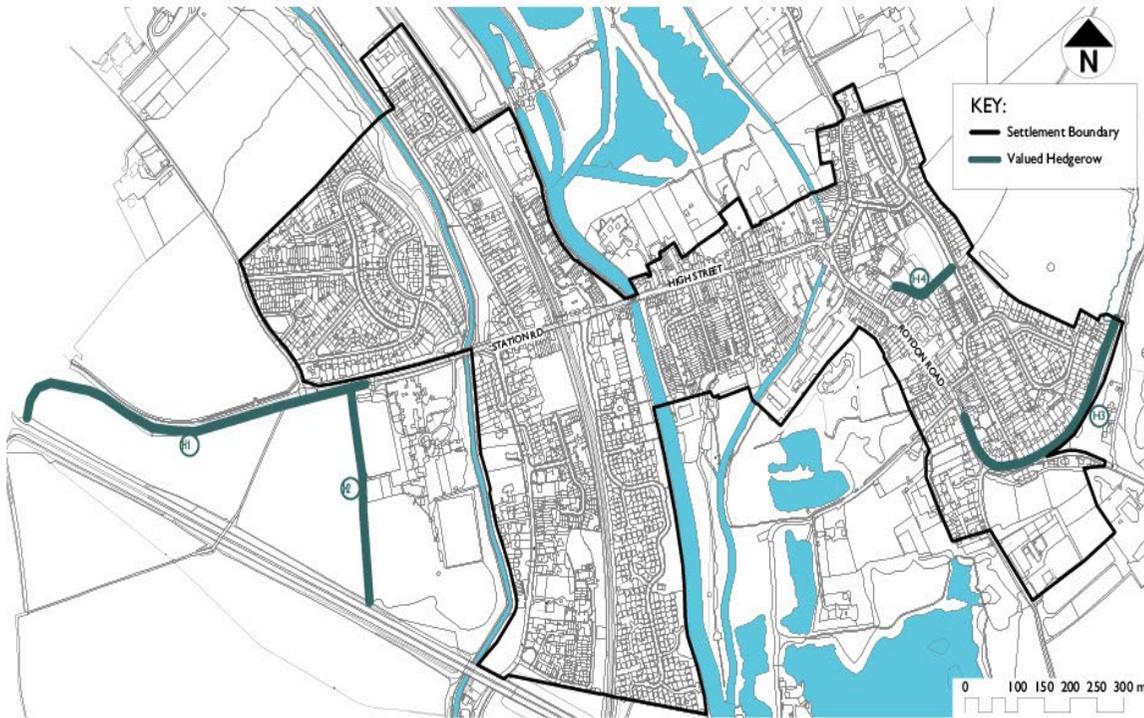
6

<b>Total inc allocations</b>	98
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98



*Appendix M: Hedgerows,*

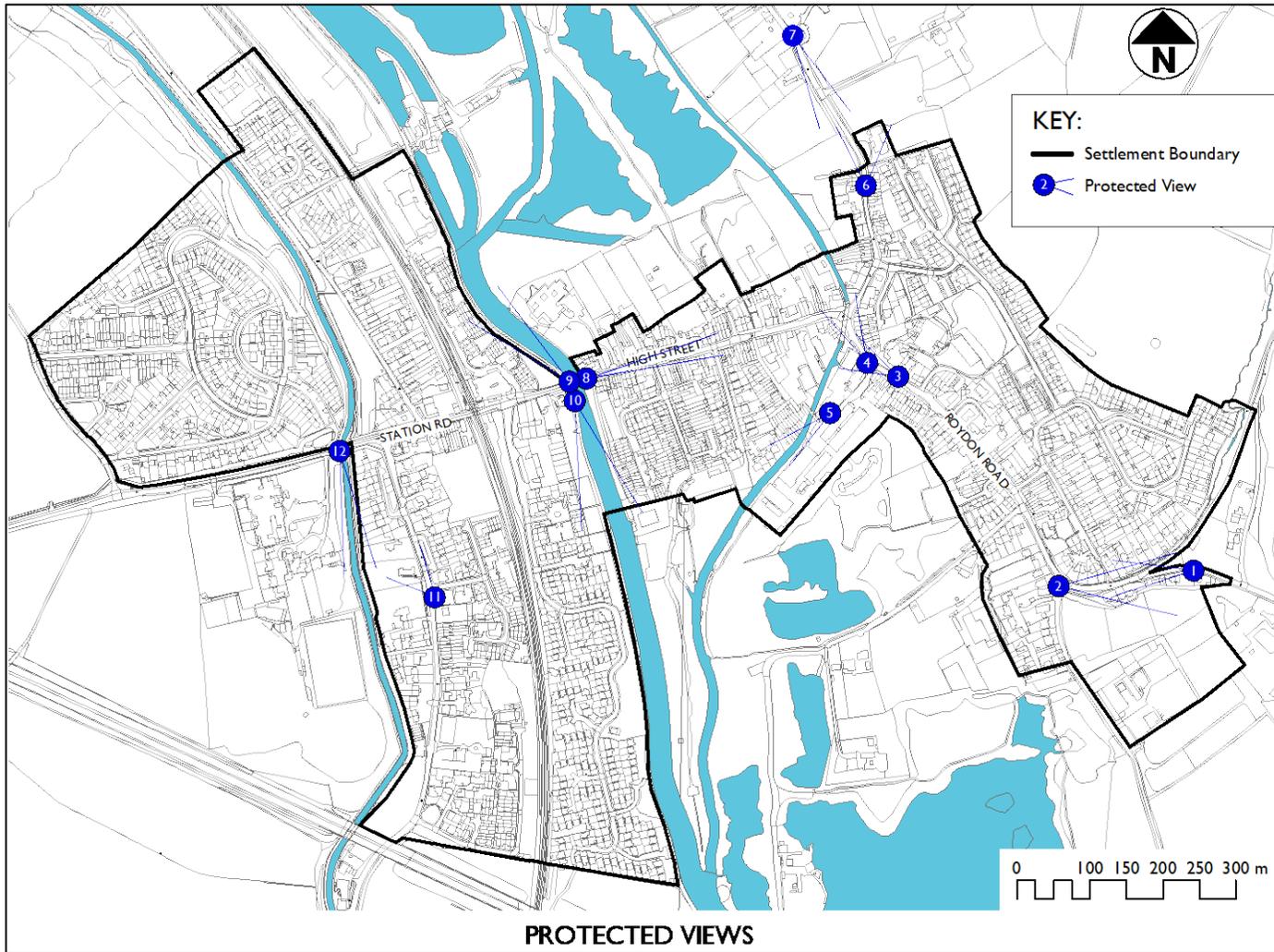


VALUED HEDGEROWS MAP

OS 100052059



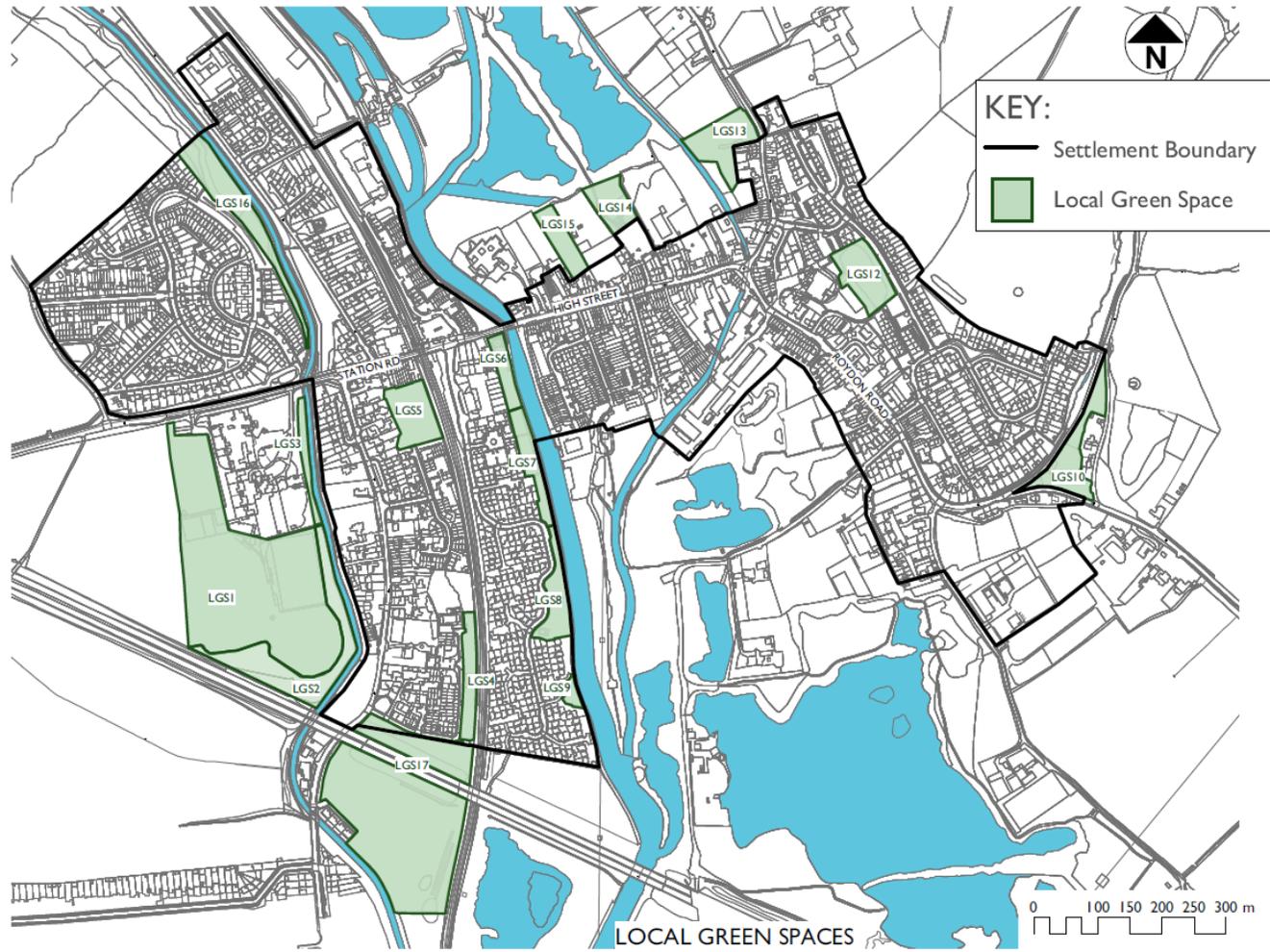
*Protected views*



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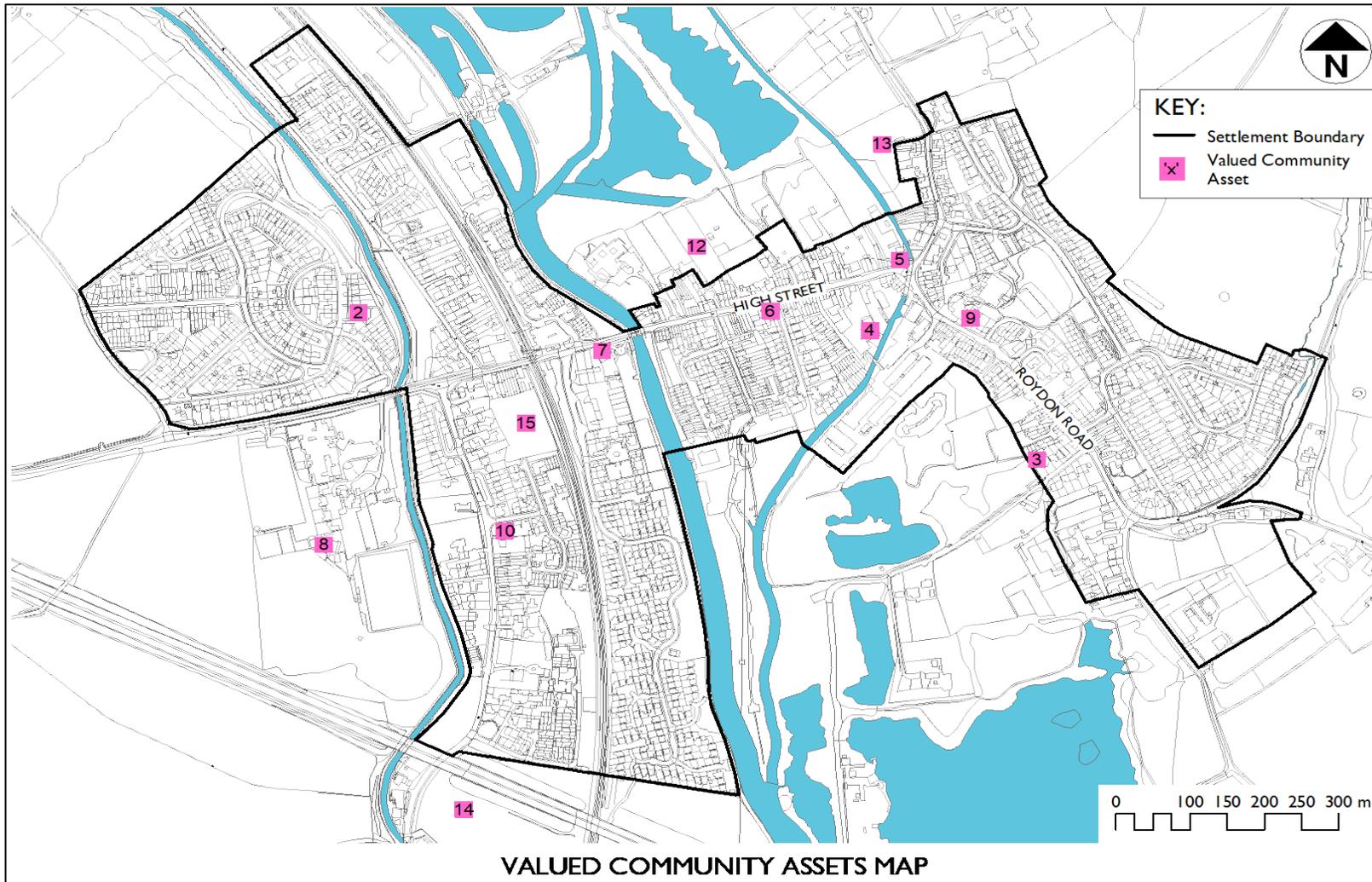


Local Green Spaces



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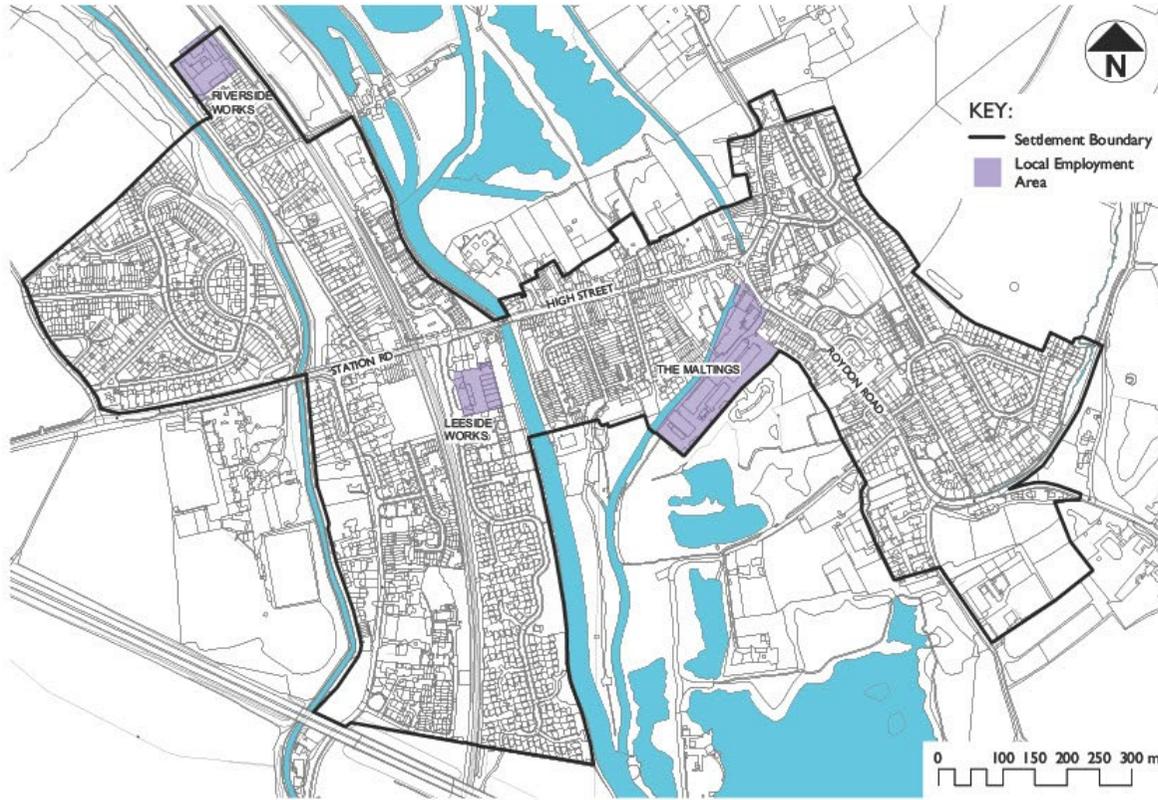




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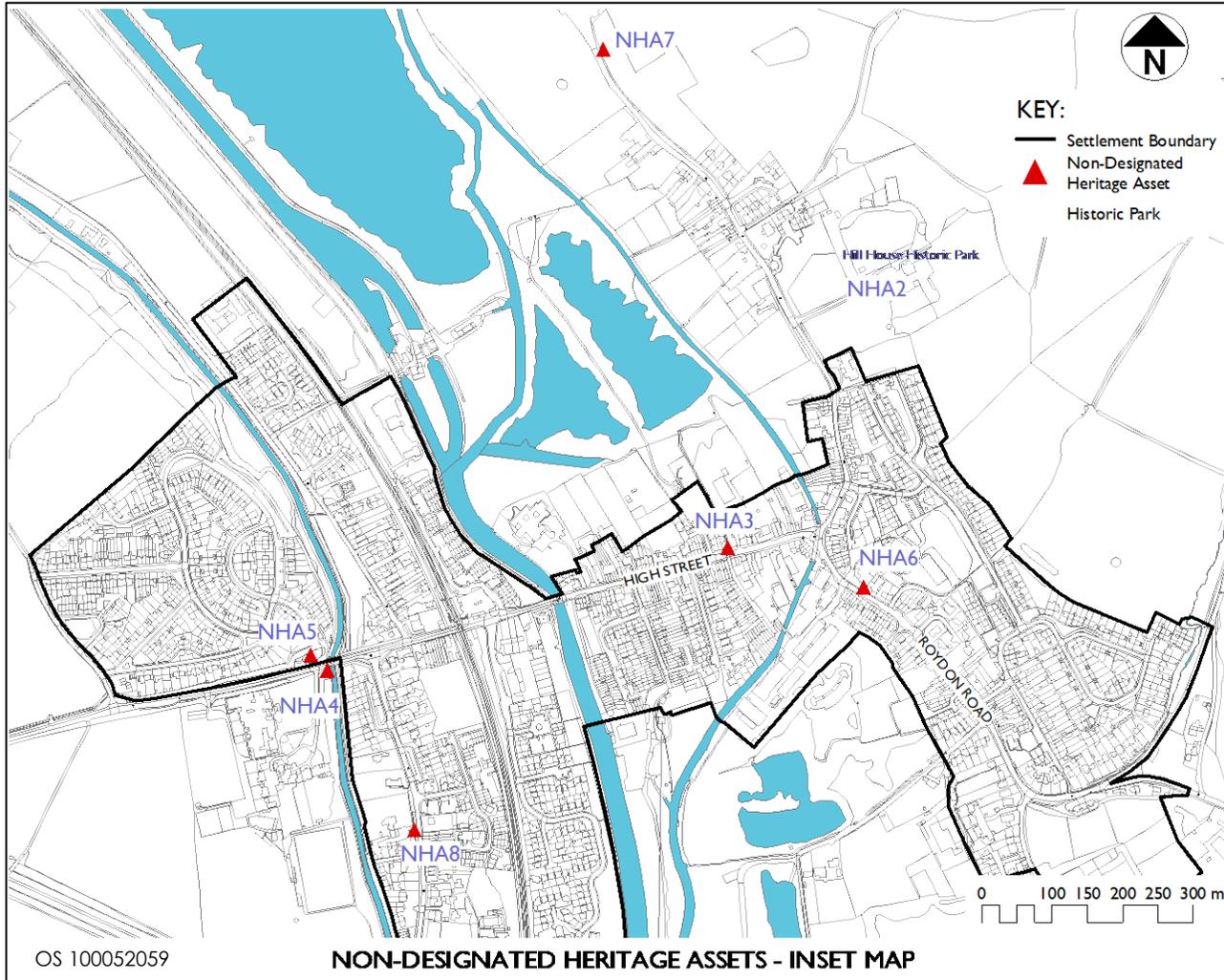


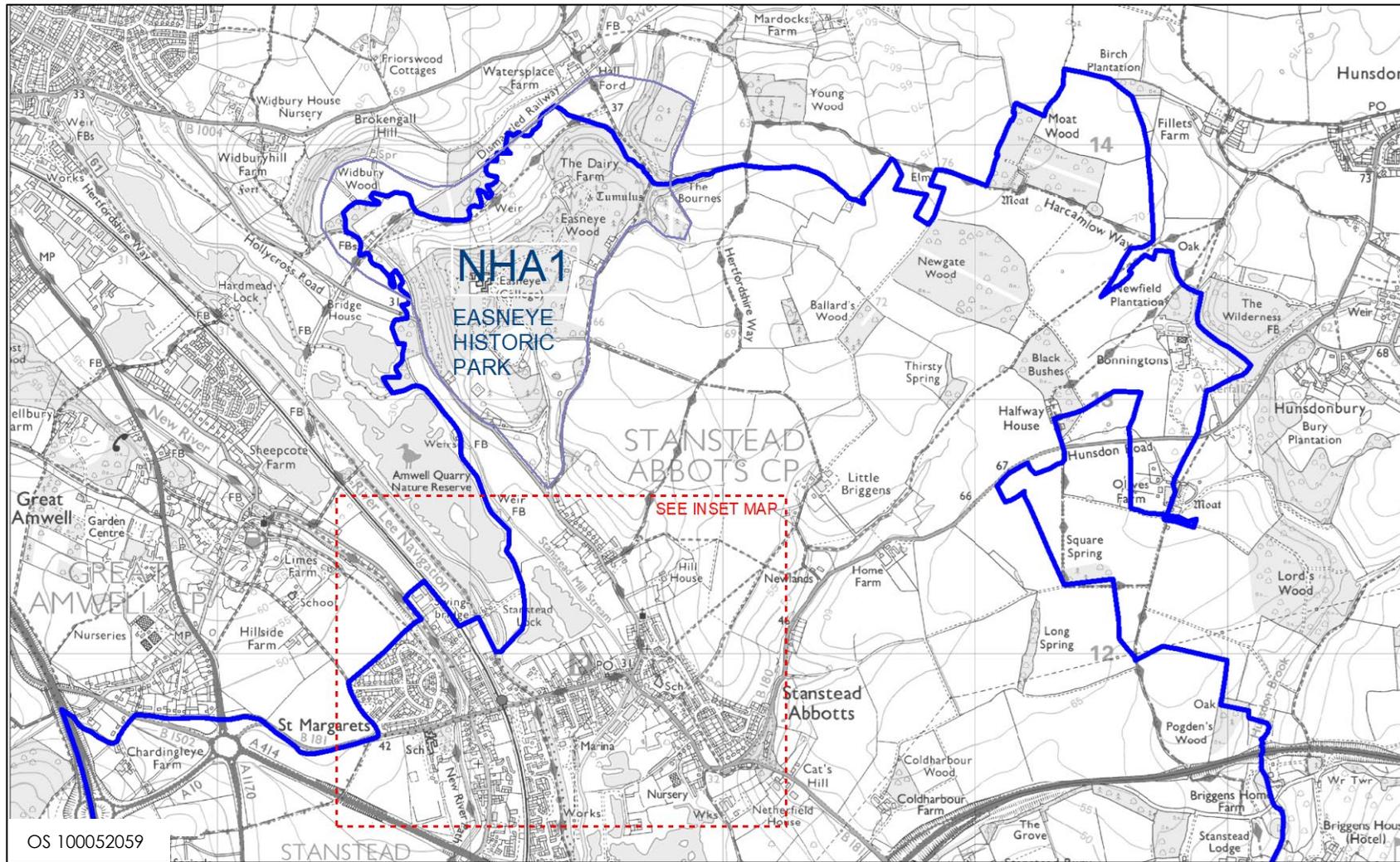


OS 100052059

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS









Rooftops, The Maltings, Linda Gifford

[Front cover, The Canal, Linda Gifford]

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: JAMES ELLIS – DIRECTOR FOR LEGAL, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING OFFICER**

**REPORT TITLE: MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

**WARDS 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.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:**

- a) To approve the minor amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendices A to D.**

#### **1.0 Proposal**

1.1 As set out 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(d) if in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer a change is requested only for the practical purpose, in order to ensure the proper administration of the Council, then the Monitoring Officer may make such a change.

2.3 Any change made under paragraph 2.6.3(d) shall come into force with immediate effect but shall be referred to Full Council as soon as is reasonably practicable and shall only continue to have effect thereafter if agreed by Full Council. The changes made under

paragraph 2.6.3(d) concerns the Policy Framework in relation to the Local Plan as detailed at 3.2.1(n).

- 2.4 The proposed amendments (attached at Appendix A), clarify that Full Council's decision-making role in relation to the Local Plan only relates to setting, approving and adopting the Local Plan policy framework itself, rather than considering or endorsing the associated technical evidence base.
- 2.5 The proposed clarifications will ensure that Council remains focussed on the strategic policy choices that guide development in the district, while the preparation, management and approval of the supporting evidence are matters that the Executive can agree. This distinction strengthens efficiency, maintains clear governance boundaries, and avoids unnecessary duplication in the plan making process.
- 2.6 In addition, amendments have been made to the remit of the District Planning Executive Panel detailed at 8.5.1 (attached at Appendix B).
- 2.7 In June 2025, Executive agreed to reconvene the District Plan Executive Panel (DPEP) as a sub-group of the Executive for the specific purpose of advancing the new District Plan. DPEP has sat in abeyance for a number of years and is being refreshed to go through the current Local Plan process. All Members will be invited to attend all meetings of DPEP and therefore there will be no reduction in the opportunities open to Members to be as involved in the process as they wish to be.
- 2.8 Under paragraph 2.6.3(a) if in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer a change is required to be made to remove any inconsistency, ambiguity, typographical or other such error, changes to staffing structures, job descriptions or changes in terminology then the Monitoring Officer may make such a change.
- 2.9 Section 10 has been amended to reflect the delegations that should sit with the Director of Place and the Director of Communities, following the senior management restructure in 2025 (attached at Appendix C).
- 2.10 Paragraph 4.22 has been amended to reflect the existing process for non-key decisions delegated to officers, which are not subject

to call-in. This ensures consistency across all non-key decision-making processes (attached at Appendix D). The flow chart accompanying section 4 of the report has also been amended (attached at Appendix E).

### **3.0 Reasons**

- 3.1 To comply with the requirements of paragraph 2.6.5 which ensures that a minor change made under paragraph 2.6.3(a) and 2.6.3(d) is notified to all members at the next meeting of Full Council.
- 3.2 To agree that the changes made under paragraphs 2.6.3(a) and 2.6.3(d), continue to have effect going forward.

### **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 Not to approve recommendation (a), this is not recommended. This would mean that a duplication of functions would remain, risking the clarity of decision-making and procedures throughout the year.

### **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 If the Constitution is not amended in line with recommendation (a) it would mean that a duplication of these functions would remain, risking the clarity of decision-making and procedures throughout the year. It would also burden Council with unnecessarily heavy agendas of items that will have already been to both DPEP and Executive.

### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 The proposal in relation to the Policy Framework and District Plan was emailed to Group Leaders for comment on 17 February 2026.
- 6.2 The report was taken through Leadership Team on 24 February 2026.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

**Equalities**

No

**Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

No

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

No

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

Yes, as indicated above.

**Specific Wards**

No

**7.0 Background papers, appendices and relevant material**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Tracked changes showing minor changes to Policy Framework
- 7.2 Appendix B – Tracked changes showing minor changes to Section 8.5 – District Planning Executive Panel.
- 7.3 Appendix C - Tracked changes showing minor changes to Section 10 – Officers’ Responsibility for Functions.
- 7.4 Appendix D – Tracked changes showing minor changes to Section 4 – Executive Arrangements
- 7.5 Appendix E – Tracked changes showing minor changes to the Executive Decision flowchart.

**Contact Officer**

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and Monitoring Officer

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## **Report Author**

Stephanie Tarrant, Assistant Director for Democracy,  
Elections and Information Governance

[Stephanie.Tarrant@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Stephanie.Tarrant@eastherts.gov.uk)

## Proposed Changes to paragraph 3.2.1 of the Constitution

### 3.2 Policy Framework and budget

3.2.1 **Policy Framework:** The Policy Framework is composed of the following plans, policies and strategies with the following titles or reasonably taken to be the following even if they have different titles:

- a) Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy;
- b) Community Grants policies;
- c) Corporate Equalities Policy;
- d) Corporate Strategic Plan;
- e) Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, including Community Safety Strategy;
- f) Fees and Charges Strategy;
- g) Gambling Statement of Principles;
- h) Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- i) Housing Strategy, Allocations Scheme, Tenancy Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, and Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy;
- j) ICT Strategy;
- k) Licensing Statement of Policy;
- l) Parking policies;
- m) Pay Policy Statement;
- n) ~~Plans and strategies which together comprise t~~The Development Plan (including the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans), Supplementary Planning Documents Plans, Conservation Area Character Appraisals and final allocated site Masterplans (other than masterplans that form part of discharging a planning condition), ~~and associated development guidance;~~

- o) Safeguarding Policy;
- p) Taxi policies, including the Driver Suitability Policy;
- q) Treasury Management Strategy; and
- r) Whistleblowing Policy.
- s) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

## 8.5 District Planning Executive Panel

### 8.5.1 Remit

To make recommendations to Council, via the Executive, on [issues-matters](#) associated with the East Herts [District-Local Plan](#) [where it relates to the formal stages of the plan-making process](#).

[To make recommendations to the Executive only on matters associated with the East Herts Local Plan where it does not relate to the formal stages of the plan-making process e.g. evidence base, formulation of strategy.](#)

### 8.5.2 Membership and Meeting Arrangements

The District Planning Executive Panel (herein referred to as 'the Panel' in this section) will be appointed annually by the Executive and membership will be drawn from the Executive only.

### 8.5.3 The Panel will meet as and when required.

### 8.5.4 Delegation of Functions

None – all matters to be subject to recommendations to ~~Council via~~ the Executive [and where appropriate Council, in accordance with 8.5.1 above](#).

### 8.5.5 Procedure at meetings

Meetings of the Panel will be conducted in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.

## **Section 10 – Officers’ Responsibility for Functions**

### **10.1 Introduction**

10.1.1 The Council has adopted a Corporate Plan with four strategic priorities to be listening, open and transparent, environmentally focussed, acting with the community and fair and inclusive. To enable that vision, managerial and operational decisions are taken, within a framework of democratic accountability at the most appropriate level. The scheme is to be interpreted widely to give effect to this overall purpose by empowering staff to carry out their functions and deliver the council’s services within the Budget and Policy Framework set by the Council, and subject to the guidelines set by the Executive and the council’s Leadership Team.

#### Overall Limitations

10.1.2 The exercise of Delegated Powers is subject to the following overriding limitations.

10.1.3 Where broad functional descriptions are used, the delegations in this scheme should be taken to include powers and duties within all present and future legislation, and all powers incidental to that legislation, including the incidental powers and duties under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### Sub-Delegation

10.1.4 Any Officer with Delegated Powers in this scheme is also authorised to further delegate in writing all or any of the delegated functions to other Officers (described by name or post) either fully or under the general supervision and control of the delegating Officers. Administrative functions ancillary to the exercise of Delegated Powers are deemed to be carried out in the name of the officer exercising the function.

#### Further Provisions

10.1.5 It shall always be open to an officer not to exercise their Delegated Powers but to refer the matter to the Council, Executive, or relevant Committee (as appropriate) for decision.

10.1.6 In exercising Delegated Powers, Officers shall consult other Officers as appropriate and have regard to any advice given. In particular, Officers must have regard to any report by the Head of Paid Service or the Monitoring Officer under Sections 4 and 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

10.1.7 In exercising Delegated Powers, Officers shall consider whether the matter is controversial or major and if so shall as appropriate consult or inform the relevant Executive Member(s) and/or Ward Member(s).

## **10.2 Member Consultation**

10.2.1 Officers exercising Delegated Powers in accordance with this scheme are expected in appropriate cases to:

- (a) maintain a close liaison with the appropriate Executive Member or in their absence the Leader or another Executive Member;
- (b) in the case of temporary or project specific delegations, Officers will consult relevant Executive Members;
- (c) ensure the Ward Members are consulted or advised of the exercise of Delegated Powers;
- (d) ensure that the Chief Executive, the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance and the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance are consulted and advised of any decisions as necessary; and
- (e) before exercising any delegated power, Officers must consider whether to exercise the delegated power or refer the matter to the relevant Member or member body to decide.

### **10.3 Reservations**

10.3.1 This scheme does not delegate to Officers:

- (a) any matter reserved by law to the Council, the Executive, the Leader of the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council; and
- (b) any matter which is specifically excluded from delegation by the scheme or by resolution of the Council or Executive.

### **10.4 Restrictions**

- 10.4.1 Officers may only exercise Delegated Powers in accordance with:
- (a) statutory requirements, guidance and codes of practice;
  - (b) the Budget and Policy Framework, including all plans, schemes and strategies approved by or on behalf of the Council or Executive;
  - (c) the council's Procedure Rules including Financial Limits; and
  - (d) the council's equalities and other policies, procedures, standards and the Local and National Conditions of Service.

## **10.5 Delegation in the case of absence or inability to act**

10.5.1 If the officer/s having delegated authority under the Constitution are absent or otherwise unable to exercise their delegation, and there is no other officer to whom the authority has been sub-delegated, these provisions shall apply.

10.5.2 The duties of the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer can be carried out by a deputy, nominated by them, in cases of absence or illness.

10.5.3 The Head of Paid Service may nominate a deputy in the event of absence or illness.

## **10.6 Permissions**

### **10.6.1 Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, all Directors and their duly authorised officers**

The delegations that follow apply to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Directors or their duly authorised Officers when acting in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as described elsewhere in this Constitution. This scheme delegates to post holders named or described in the Areas of Responsibility section all the powers and duties relevant to those areas of responsibility that rest with the Council or Executive or which have been delegated or granted to the Council, subject to the limitations, restrictions and reservations set out above, within the delegations below and the detailed scheme of delegation. This includes all powers and duties under all legislation present and future within those descriptions and all powers and duties incidental to that legislation including but not limited to:

#### **10.6.1.1 Powers in relation to staff**

Take any action in accordance with the council's agreed policies and procedures with respect to the:

- (a) recruitment, appointment, promotion, training, grading, discipline of staff;
- (b) determination of wages and salary scales, determination of allowances of staff; and
- (c) determination and application of conditions of service, including but not limited to allocation of leave, honorariums, ill health retirements and determination of establishment except as

specifically delegated to the Head of Human Resource and Organisational Development and except as detailed in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

#### **10.6.1.2 Powers in relation to contracts and property**

Powers in relation to:

- (a) contracts and property agreements to negotiate;
- (b) put out to tender, bid, submit Tenders, vary, terminate, dispute, extend and renew; and
- (c) in relation to contracts to buy and sell and in relation to the property to acquire, dispose of, let and licence except as detailed in the council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules in Section 9 of this Constitution.

#### **10.6.1.3 Powers in relation to finance**

Powers to:

- (a) incur capital and revenue expenditure;
- (b) to seek recovery of amounts owed;
- (c) to exercise discretion in recovery;
- (d) alter or waive repayment periods or approve exemptions in relation to repayments;
- (e) agree refunds, reduce or remit payments and waive fines, as detailed in the Financial

Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules in Section 9 of this Constitution.

#### **10.6.1.4 Powers in relation to legal action**

Powers to:

- (a) authorise, appoint or nominate Officers;
- (b) investigate, prosecute, enforce, lay summons, require individuals to disclose information;
- (c) serve requisitions for information, publish information, apply to a court, sign notices, issue, serve, vary, revoke and publish notices and orders, including fixed penalty notices and serve documents;
- (d) make prohibition orders, suspend or vary a prohibition order;
- (e) take emergency remedial action, carry out works in default, issue certificates, issue consents, issue licences, issue permits, refuse vary or revoke licensing applications or licences or consents;
- (f) issue temporary exemption notices, obtain, introduce, operate, amend extend, vary and revoke orders; and
- (g) impose conditions, introduce and maintain registers, exercise powers of entry without force, apply for a warrant and in relation to land relevant to the service functions to note applications for licences, planning, consent and

approvals, declarations and grants except as specifically detailed in the delegations below.

These powers shall be taken with reference to the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance where relevant.

## 10.7 Areas of responsibility

For the purposes of the Permissions above the areas of responsibility are as follows:

<b>Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive</b>	Overall responsibility for the delivery of the Council's vision through the delivery of the Corporate Strategic Plan, including cross cutting individual initiatives and projects and the leadership and management of the organisation as a whole.
<b>Director for Regeneration, Customer and Corporate Services</b>	BEAM Customer Services Corporate Support Hub Communications and Digital Media Parking Services Old River Lane
<b>Director for Finance, Risk and Performance</b>	Financial Services Risk and Insurance Revenues and Benefits Shared Service ICT Shared Service
<b>Director for Legal, Policy and Governance</b>	Legal Services Democratic Services Electoral Services

	Transformation Information Governance and Protection Shared Waste Service (Until August 2025)
<b>Director for Communities</b>	Property Services Housing Services Licensing and Enforcement Environmental Sustainability Economic Development Community Wellbeing and Partnerships Shared Waste Services (from August 2025)
<b>Director for Place</b>	Planning and Building Control (including Gilston) Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Environmental Health Land Charges and Street Naming and Numbering Section 106

## **10.8 Officer Specific Delegations**

Any delegation to an officer includes authority for any further delegation within the relevant Area of Responsibility, in the case of the Chief Executive or those acting as Chief Executive, this includes all Directors and below. Officers shall devolve responsibility for service delivery and management to those staff who represent the nearest practicable point of delivery to the service user.

## **10.9 The Chief Executive**

10.9.1 The Chief Executive has been appointed the council's Head of Paid Service.

10.9.2 The following powers and duties are delegated to the Chief Executive. With the exception of 10.9.2(q) below, for which there are separate arrangements, if they are absent or otherwise unable to exercise the delegation, they may be exercised by the Deputy Chief Executive. In the case of 10.9.2(e) below, should the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive be absent or unable to act, the power may be exercised by a Head of Service:

- (a) to carry out the powers and duties of any of the Officers in their absence or in consultation with them (excluding the statutory functions of the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 officer);
- (b) to authorise a Director to act in their absence on any matter within their authority;
- (c) all matters relating to staffing, employment, terms and conditions and industrial relations for the council's workforce, save those matters which have been delegated to Directors above and those relating to the Head of Paid Service and Chief Officers;
- (d) to determine changes within the management structure where these involve substantial changes to responsibilities of first and second tier posts;
- (e) where emergency action is required, to take any action, including the incurring of expenditure;
- (f) to exercise the functions of the Head of Paid Service under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;

- (g) in cases of urgency take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Executive or a Committee in consultation with the Leader, provided that any such decision shall be reported to the next meeting of the Executive, appropriate Committee or Council unless there is a need for confidentiality, in which case the reporting of the decision may be deferred until the need for confidentiality expires;
- (h) to alter the areas of responsibility of the Directors set out in the Areas of Responsibility section of this scheme;
- (i) to issue redundancy notices immediately it becomes apparent that redundancies are likely to arise, subject to any policy constraints which may be applied;
- (j) to rearrange dates and times of meetings, previously approved, following consultation with the Leader of the Council; such action being necessary in the interests of the efficient running of the Council;
- (k) to respond, in consultation with the Leader, to consultation documents in accordance with the council's approved policies;
- (l) to negotiate and settle claims by or against the council where this is considered to be in the best interests of the council in consultation with the relevant Director and Director for Legal, Policy and Governance;

- (m) to carry out all duties and responsibilities and exercise all power under the Localism Act 2011 in relation to a Community Right to Challenge and where appropriate to nominate Officers to carry out those duties or appoint external Officers to carry out part or all of those duties or exercise powers;
- (n) having consulted where appropriate with the relevant Member, to issue news releases and to call press conferences;
- (o) to issue and renew authorisations for Officers, and appoint inspectors to enter premises for the purpose of their official duties, in pursuance of statutory provisions in that behalf;
- (p) after consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance/Monitoring Officer to make revisions and amendments to the list of Politically Restricted Posts maintained under Section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 and to give Certificates of Opinion in connection with applications for exemption;
- (q) to act as Returning Officer, and any variation thereof as appropriate to different elections, and to appoint from time to time such Deputy Returning Officers as appear necessary for the proper conduct of elections; and to act as the Electoral Registration Officer, and appoint deputy Electoral Registration Officers. In the event that the Chief Executive is absent or incapacitated, the Proper Officer for the purposes of exercising the functions of the Electoral Registration Officer shall be the

Assistant Director – Democracy, Elections and Information Governance;

- (r) within approved budgets, to determine all fees for functions carried out in respect of electoral registration and elections;
- (s) in consultation with the Leader to designate an officer of the council as its Monitoring Officer.
- (t) to designate a polling place for each polling district under Sections 18 and 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and
- (u) to undertake a review of polling districts and places under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

## **10.10 Deputy Chief Executive**

- 10.10.1 To carry out the role of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service in their absence.
- 10.10.2 To lead on cross cutting projects spanning the council.
- 10.10.3 To take any steps necessary for the day to day management and routine administration of matters within their remit without reference to the Executive or a Committee but subject to any necessary reference to the Head of Paid Service.
- 10.10.4 To take emergency action necessary for the safety of the public or the preservation of property of the council.

## Human Resources

- 10.10.5 Human Resource matters should be subject to the overall direction of the Head of Paid Service.
- 10.10.6 To interpret, administer and implement the council's organisational, employee development and human resources plans and policies in consultation with Leadership team.
- 10.10.7 To interpret and apply pay scales and conditions of service for all employees.
- 10.10.8 To administer the granting of awards and application of benefits in consultation with Leadership team.
- 10.10.9 To be responsible for an effective policy for the health, safety and welfare of council employees to be implemented at all levels.

## Directors

### **10.11 Director for Legal, Policy and Governance**

- 10.11.1 To carry out all legal action as specified under Permissions above in consultation with the relevant Director or their appointed deputy in their absence.
- 10.11.2 To hold and revise the list of politically restricted posts, in consultation with the Chief Executive and advise on all applications from council employees (or prospective employees) for exemption from political restriction in respect of their posts including, where appropriate, signing the Certificate

of Opinion required by the independent adjudicator under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

- 10.11.3 To carry out a review and submit a report to Council as to the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 political balance provisions.
- 10.11.4 To act as Chief Legal Officer to the Council and take all necessary steps in legal proceedings authorised by the council.
- 10.11.5 To authorise changes to the Constitution to reflect resolutions of Council or of the Executive, and changes of fact and law, or if required for practical purposes, in order to ensure the proper administration of the Council, subject to regular notification to all Members of such changes.
- 10.11.6 To authorise the institution, defence, withdrawal or settlement of any legal proceedings, civil or criminal, including Employment Tribunals (other than for Health and Safety proceedings, council tax, non-domestic rates and sundry debts) at their discretion
- 10.11.7 To negotiate and settle any claim or disputes without recourse to Court proceedings including the use of alternative dispute resolution.
- 10.11.8 To authorise Officers of the council to appear before the Magistrates' Court or County Court District Judges, including under sections 222 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 10.11.9 To certify resolutions and documents as being correct.

- 10.11.10 To obtain Counsel's Opinion, instruct Counsel to appear on behalf of the Council and/or retain the services of other experts or external solicitors whenever they consider such action advisable.
- 10.11.11 To insert and cancel entries in the Local Land Charges Register and otherwise to take all steps in respect of searches.
- 10.11.12 In consultation with appropriate Officers, to grant wayleaves to statutory undertakers.
- 10.11.13 To undertake the role of Senior Responsible Officer under the council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Policy.
- 10.11.14 To fix charges for legal work carried out by the council, including for external bodies.
- 10.11.15 To institute legal proceedings in respect of any contravention of any licences, permits or consents and/or any breach of any condition attached thereto.
- 10.11.16 To sign, and where appropriate, affix the Common Seal of the Council to, any deed or other document, which, in his or her professional judgment, is necessary or desirable to sign and seal.
- 10.11.17 To act as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.
- 10.11.18 To make changes to the Local Land Charge fees, including making changes to existing charges and the introduction of new charges and fee arrangements for new land charge services.

- 10.11.19 To administer the naming and numbering, including the renaming and renumbering, of streets and buildings in the District in consultation with parish and town councils.
- 10.11.20 To appoint the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel, having first consulted the Chief Finance Officer and Group Leaders as to any reason why someone may not be considered independent.
- 10.11.21 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced Officers to exercise powers and duties afforded to District Councils in the relevant legislation.

**10.12 Director for Finance, Risk and Performance**

- 10.12.1 To deliver, direct and manage the medium term financial planning of the organisation ensuring it is monitored and reported in a timely accurate fashion.
- 10.12.2 To deliver unqualified Statement of Accounts in accordance with legislative requirements.
- 10.12.3 To review listing decisions and compensation decisions for assets of community value.
- 10.12.4 To represent the council on the Management Board for the Hertfordshire Shared Audit Service (SIAS) and the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS).
- 10.12.5 Appoint Debt Recovery Agents for the whole or part of the district as the need arises.

- 10.12.6 Authorise and sign bank transfers and other payment types, including cheques and amendments to cheques.
- 10.12.7 Wherever necessary, to amend and agree affected charges for services to take account of changes in VAT or other forms of taxation, provided (in respect of Enforcement Agents), that any action taken shall be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Executive.
- 10.12.8 To be responsible for the rate of interest for any of the council's borrowing activities and issue notices to the council's mortgages of any changes in the council's rate of interest.
- 10.12.9 To administer and manage the council's Collection Fund.
- 10.12.10 To set precept dates in agreement with precepting partners.
- 10.12.11 To administer the council's insurances fund.
- 10.12.12 To make determinations within approved budget as are required under Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in respect of the funding of expenditure capital (but not in respect of borrowing limits) and report the action taken to the Executive for information.
- 10.12.13 To take day-to-day decisions in respect of the investment of council funds in accordance with the Annual Treasury Management strategy last approved by the Council.

- 10.12.14 To be responsible for the custody of any document required to be published and kept available for public inspection under the Audit Commission Act 1998.
- 10.12.15 To pursue appeals against rating assessments on council-owned and council-occupied property which, in his or her judgement, are incorrect or excessive, and agree either new or revised rating assessments on council-owned and/or occupied property on behalf of the council.
- 10.12.16 In consultation with the appropriate Executive Member and Director of Legal, Policy and Governance to prosecute or authorise the prosecution of persons committing malicious damage to council property.
- 10.12.17 To convey the freehold of electricity sub-station sites and to grant the necessary easements to electricity suppliers/distributors in respect of developments.
- 10.12.18 The appointment of Debt Recovery Agents (Enforcement Agents) and the issue of warrants to those appointed and taking such steps as may be necessary, including the levying of distress upon the goods and chattels of the tenant concerned, for the recovery of arrears of rent owing to the council in respect of the occupation of any Council dwelling.
- 10.12.19 To authorise Officers to discharge land drainage functions under the Public Health Act 1936 and the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- 10.12.20 To approve and submit the annual National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR1) return to the Government.

- 10.12.21 Authorise Officers in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to institute and appear in any legal proceedings relating to council tax and national non- domestic rates.
- 10.12.22 To receive and process housing benefit and council tax support applications including initial reviews of decisions relating thereto and to approve the backdating of housing benefit payments and council tax benefit payments to attend, as necessary, valuation and council tax tribunal hearings.
- 10.12.23 To exercise discretion under the 1988 Housing Benefits Scheme (and any amendments thereto) to disregard, in determining a person's income, the whole of any war disablement pension or war widow's pension payable to that person.
- 10.12.24 To carry out all the charging and collection functions arising out of Parts I to III of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (and any amendments thereto) except for:
- (a) the determination of discretionary non-domestic rate relief under Section 47, which should be undertaken in accordance with the most recent discretionary rates relief policy approved by Executive;
  - (b) other than for debts referred to in 14.5 below (bankruptcy, liquidation, and any other legally irrecoverable debt) the writing-off debts

(including council tax, housing benefit and national non-domestic rates) in excess of £5,000; and

(c) the reduction or remission of liability under section 49.

- 10.12.25 To write-off all council tax, housing benefits, and national non-domestic rates outstanding debts which are the subject of formal bankruptcy, liquidation claims, debt relief orders and any other legally irrecoverable debt at any level.
- 10.12.26 To determine charges for the service of a Summons and Liability Order for non-payment of council tax and national non-domestic rates and the issue of a Distress Warrant subject to the approval of the Court.
- 10.12.27 To enter into agreements for deferred payment of national non-domestic rates, subject to registration of a charge on the Land Register, and in accordance with council policy.
- 10.12.28 To consider, in respect of any reapplication for reduction in Non-Domestic Rate bills (within six months of refusal), whether there is a significant change in circumstances in which case the application shall be submitted to the relevant Executive Member for consideration.
- 10.12.29 To determine and pay Discretionary Housing payment in accordance with Housing Benefit regulations and section 13 (A)(1)(c) Local

Government Finance Act 1992, relating to  
Exceptional Hardship in respect of council tax.

10.12.30 To apply powers relevant to Housing Benefit, Council Tax reduction, Council Tax and Business Rates included in the above stated regulations, and any relevant regulations (and any amendments thereto) other than where Executive or Council approval is required.

10.12.31 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced Officers to exercise powers and duties afforded to District Councils in the relevant legislation.

### **10.13 Director for Place**

10.13.1 To carry out all the functions of the Council as local planning authority, **except where this Constitution limits those powers**, including, but not limited to, the processing of all planning applications, appeals and pre-application enquiries; and the investigation and decision to take or not take enforcement action<sup>1</sup>.

10.13.2 To determine all applications submitted under the Acts or secondary legislation listed in footnote 2<sup>2</sup> **except where** the application:

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt all of the functions of the Council as Local Planning Authority means any functions or activities that are beneficial to securing the proper planning of the authority area. This includes providing a development management service, the provision of a planning enforcement service and provision of a planning policy service to advise on the determination of planning applications, prepare policy and guidance (as set out in other sections of this Constitution) and provide specialist advice on a number of subjects including sustainability, urban design, landscaping and heritage.

<sup>2</sup> All applications submitted under relevant town planning legislation, inter alia the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 (as amended), Part 8 of the Anti-social

- (a) is an outline or full application for a major development as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order (England) 2015 as amended, except:
  - (i) applications which are for major development by virtue of the extent of the site area only;
  - (ii) where the application is a reserved matters application pursuant to a previous major application;
  - (iii) where the application is a major application which the Director of Place recommends to be refused and has notified the Chair of the Development Management Committee of the intended decision.
- (b) is a non-material or minor material amendment application (variation) pursuant to a previous major application except where the Director of Place has notified the Chair of the Development Management Committee that the matter can be dealt with as a delegated decision;
- (c) is an application for planning permission or Listed Building Consent by a Member of the Council;
- (d) is an application other than an application to discharge a condition or make a non-material

amendment and is by an officer of the council employed in the planning service area;

- (e) is an application for planning permission or Listed Building Consent by an officer of the council, other than one employed in the planning service area and proposes development other than householder development;
- (f) is an application other than an application to discharge a condition or make a non-material minor amendment or one for prior approval where a Member considers that Delegated Powers should not be exercised by the Director of Place and the Chair of Development Management Committee agrees that a delegated decision is not appropriate and the Member follows the procedure at a. -c. below. The procedure is:
  - a. The Member must submit a completed application referral form within 28 days of the application being notified or within 21 days of a revised notification being circulated to Ward Members or the Town and Parish Council.
  - b. The application referral form must state the relevant valid planning reasons why the decision should not be delegated and whether the referral relates to a decision to approve or refuse the application.
  - c. Where the Chair agrees that a delegated decision is not appropriate, the Member is expected to speak at Development Management Committee in support of

their referral having followed the procedure set out in 6.5.2.

- d. Following receipt of a referral form as set out in a. and b. and prior to a recommendation being made, the Director of Place shall brief the Chair of Development Management Committee and seek their confirmation as to whether a delegated decision is appropriate.

For the avoidance of doubt, a Member may withdraw their referral at any time in advance of the application being placed on an agenda for consideration by the Development Management Committee, which shall allow the application to be determined under delegated powers (unless another section of this Constitution requires a decision by Development Management Committee).

- (g) is for development by or on behalf of the council, or which relates to a site in which it has a landowning interest, to which an objection has been made which is material to the development proposed.

10.13.3 To take all actions as necessary with regard to the receipt, validation, consultation and administration of all application types.

10.13.4 To take all actions as necessary with regard to the administration and submission of the council's case, including any review, alteration, amendment or withdrawal of that case, following the appeal of a planning decision.

- 10.13.5 To take all actions to negotiate, vary and finalise the detail of legal agreements under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, following authorisation of the heads of terms of such agreements by the Development Management Committee on applications requiring their decision, or following authorisation as a delegated decision, or following the submission of a planning appeal.
- 10.13.6 To authorise the spending of collected s106 monies following notification to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.
- 10.13.7 To take planning enforcement action including registering, investigating and negotiating on alleged breaches of planning control and taking decisions as to whether or not it is expedient to take enforcement action where a breach of planning control has occurred and to take enforcement action both informally and formally, including the serving or withdrawal of notices.
- 10.13.8 In consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance, to initiate prosecutions and the taking of direct action or other enforcement action where Notices have not been complied with, where considered necessary to secure the good planning of the area.
- 10.13.9 In consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance, to apply for injunctions in appropriate cases where there are any breaches of planning and/or building control, Tree Preservation Orders, or Listed Building and Conservation legislation where it is felt that contravention of planning and/or building

control has taken place, and to give any undertakings in damages in such cases.

- 10.13.10 To determine whether or not it is expedient to take enforcement action where a breach of planning control has occurred, save where a Member requests the matter be referred to the DM Committee and, in those cases with the agreement of the Chair of the DM Committee.
- 10.13.11 To make Directions under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), where it is considered to be an urgent matter and directions relating to unlisted buildings in conservation areas.
- 10.13.12 To make Tree Preservation Orders, and to determine applications for consent for the cutting down, topping or lopping of trees applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and those submitted under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and exercise the powers and duties relating to high hedges under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 10.13.13 To exercise the council's powers under Section 70(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, by declining to determine an application for planning permission for the development of any land where, within a period of two years, ending with the date on which the application is received, the Secretary of State has refused a similar application referred to him or her under Section 77, or has dismissed an appeal against the refusal of a similar application, and where, in the opinion of the Director of Place, there has been no significant change since the

refusal or dismissal in the Development Plan or in any other material considerations.

- 10.13.14 The consideration, approval and payment of grants in respect of works to Listed Buildings, Heritage Assets at Risk, Undesignated Heritage Assets and with regard to Conservation Areas.
- 10.13.15 To exercise the council's planning powers for control of demolition.
- 10.13.16 To approve or reject plans submitted as non-material amendments to planning applications other than major planning applications.
- 10.13.17 To determine applications for certificates of appropriate alternative development.
- 10.13.18 To determine applications for certificates of lawful use and development in relation to proposed used and existing use.
- 10.13.19 To make observations and respond to consultations on development proposals and consultations on other matters by or on which comments are sought by Government Departments, the Planning Inspectorate, statutory undertakers, and Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils and any other Local Planning Authorities, which, where relevant, are substantially in accordance with the council's policies and are not likely to be controversial.
- 10.13.20 To carry out all functions relating to National Infrastructure Planning including co-ordination of the Council's response to any consultation,

examination or other any other matter concerned with major infrastructure projects.

- 10.13.21 To advertise in the local press applications required to be advertised by statute or orders or regulations made thereunder, planning applications and applications for listed building consent.
- 10.13.22 To advertise in the local press and/or by a notice on site applications for planning permission as required by any Development Order made by the Secretary of State.
- 10.13.23 After consultation with the Director of Legal, Policy and Governance, to institute legal proceedings in respect of the contravention of Tree Preservation Orders and unauthorised works to trees in Conservation Area.
- 10.13.24 To enter into Planning Performance and Extension of Time Agreements.
- 10.13.25 To provide advice regarding the potential use or development of land or buildings to prospective applications through either the pre-application system, a Planning Performance Agreement or informally.
- 10.13.26 To determine the submission of nominations for the registration of Assets of Community Value.
- 10.13.27 To authorise an officer to enter land at any time for enforcement purposes in cases where admission has been refused or a refusal is expected or in cases of urgency.

- 10.13.28 To determine submissions as to whether prior approval is required in relation to any of the forms of permitted development for which a prior approval process is required as set out in government regulations (as may be subsequently amended) and in relation to all of the matters which, as specified in the appropriate regulations, those approvals are to be made.
- 10.13.29 To give screening opinions and scoping opinions under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 2017 as amended.
- 10.13.30 To determine fees for planning applications and planning performance agreements.
- 10.13.31 To determine the building regulation fees charged by the council and to take all actions as necessary acting at the council's representative on the Commissioning Panel with regard to the commissioning of the Building Control service.
- 10.13.32 To determine applications submitted for approval under the Building Regulations and made under the Building Act 1984 (as amended) and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 10.13.33 To be the Appointing Officer for the purposes of the Party Wall Act 1996.
- 10.13.34 To determine any footpath and bridleways matters including heir protection, creation, diversion, modification and extinguishment.

- 10.13.35 To finalise the wording and requirements of planning conditions and reasons for refusal following the approval or refusal to grant planning permission by Development Management Committee in line with the resolutions of the Committee.
- 10.13.36 To make minor amendments and/or corrections of a clerical, grammatical or editorial nature only to the wording of conditions, obligations, reasons and informatives.
- 10.13.37 To refuse an application where a planning obligation (including a deed modifying or discharging an existing obligation) acceptable to the Director of Place and meeting the requirements of a decision of Development Management Committee (where relevant) has not been entered into.
- 10.13.38 To prepare, consult on, adopt and publish a list of information requirements to be submitted with planning applications, and to use the list to assess the validity of submitted applications.
- 10.13.39 To discharge obligations under s.106 TCPA 1990 (or s.52 of the TCPA 1971) where Director of Place deems that the obligation(s) has been complied with or is no longer relevant due to subsequent planning decisions or the passage of time.
- 10.13.40 Restriction of the use or closure of bowling greens during periods of drought.
- 10.13.41 Control of all grounds owned by the council.

- 10.13.42 The removal, storage and disposal of abandoned vehicles under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.
- 10.13.43 To determine, in the first instance, whether street cleansing is necessary in the interests of public health or the amenity of the area pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on litter and refuse.
- 10.13.44 To be identified as contact officer for the public under the Code of Practice of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 10.13.45 To serve notices under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ~~acting in consultation with the Director for Law, Policy and Governance.~~
- 10.13.46 Pursuant to Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to authorise and institute proceeding in any Court in respect of Officers or other matters falling within relevant legislation subject to the Director of Law, Policy and Governance being satisfied as to the sufficiency of the evidence.
- 10.13.47 To authorise Officers to serve and sign in their own name all authorisation, variation, revocation and enforcement and other notices and orders as related to in the powers and duties afforded to the District Council in legislation.
- 10.13.48 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced Officers to exercise powers and duties afforded to District Councils in the relevant legislation.

- 10.13.49 To apply the powers and duties of enforcement afforded to a District Council in all legislation relating to Environmental Health matters.
- 10.13.50 To authenticate on the council's behalf any notice, certificate or other document required to apply any power or duty afforded to a District Council in legislation relating to Environmental Health unless reserved for determination by another body of the Council.
- 10.13.51 To exercise the powers of the council as registration authority including the issue, renewal, transfer or variation of all licences, consents and registrations set out in legislation pertaining to Environmental Health matters unless in the case of contested matters reserved for determination by another body of the Council.
- 10.13.52 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced officers to act as inspectors and serve and sign in their own name all notices and enforcement instruments as related to the powers and duties afforded to District Councils in Environmental Health legislation.
- 10.13.53 To appoint and instruct veterinary surgeons to act on behalf of the council.
- 10.13.54 To nominate Officers for the council and take appropriate actions as required under the National Assistance Act 1948.
- 10.13.55 To endorse any agreed transfers of enforcement responsibility for any particular premises, or parts of premises, or any particular activities carried on in

them, from the Health and Safety Executive to the council, or vice versa.

10.13.56 To make representation on or objections to any applications for activity in the District on the grounds that permission would be prejudicial to the public interest on environmental, health, nuisance or similar grounds.

## **10.14 Director of Communities**

### Housing

- 10.14.1 To exercise the council's functions with regard to homeless persons.
- 10.14.2 To procure and/or manage temporary accommodation in pursuance of the council's homelessness duties and powers.
- 10.14.3 To write off arrears and debts arising from the discharge of homelessness powers and duties up to a maximum sum specified by the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance.
- 10.14.4 To maintain registers and records of those in housing need requiring social or affordable housing and nominate applicants to properties owned by Registered Providers (RPs).
- 10.14.5 To determine levels of housing need, stock condition and market conditions.
- 10.14.6 To make representations on or objections to housing development applications which are not in

the public interest in relation to meeting local housing need.

- 10.14.7 To draw up development and/or regeneration schemes with RPs and other partners and pay grants to RPs and others on approved development schemes.
- 10.14.8 To make arrangements for and oversee the making of grants and loans and taking of other actions to enable the improvement or return to use of residential properties, including Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 10.14.9 To take action under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Police and Justice Act 2006 and Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 or associated guidance and/or replacement legislation to tackle anti-social behaviour, acting in consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance as appropriate.
- 10.14.10 In all cases involving arrears of mortgage payments to the council and in consultation with the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance and Director for Legal, Policy and Governance or duly authorised Officers, to institute proceedings in the appropriate court to obtain an order for possession of the property and/or recovery of all monies remaining outstanding under the mortgage, legal charge or further charge as the case may be.
- 10.14.11 In relation to the recovery of contributions to the cost of sewerage services in respect of council houses which are sold:

- (a) to determine actual annual costs and payments on account; and
- (b) to make special arrangements in the case of hardship or, where necessary, to comply with an existing agreement.

#### Licensing and Environmental Health

- 10.14.12 To exercise the council's functions relating to hackney carriage/private hire licensing unless relating to a matter reserved for Licensing Committee or Licensing Sub-Committee. To undertake, in consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance, prosecutions of hackney carriage drivers and private hire vehicle drivers for road traffic offences and other drivers for criminal offences relating to taxi ranks.
- 10.14.13 To exercise functions, unless reserved for the Licensing Committee or Licensing Sub-Committee, under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 including all administrative functions and determinations of unopposed applications for premises licences, personal licences, club premises certificates, temporary events notices, regulated entertainment and late night refreshments, permits and the setting of fees and charges where the legislation allows local determination.
- 10.14.14 To apply the powers and duties of enforcement afforded to a District Council in all legislation relating to Licensing and Environmental Health matters.
- 10.14.15 To authenticate on the council's behalf any notice, certificate or other document required to apply any

power or duty afforded to a District Council in legislation relating to Licensing ~~and Environmental Health~~ unless reserved for determination by another body of the Council.

10.14.16 To exercise the powers of the council as registration authority including the issue, renewal, transfer or variation of all licences, consents and registrations set out in legislation pertaining to Licensing ~~or Environmental Health~~ matters unless in the case of contested matters reserved for determination by another body of the Council.

10.14.17 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced officers to act as inspectors and serve and sign in their own name all notices and enforcement instruments as related to the powers and duties afforded to District Councils in Licensing ~~and Environmental Health~~ legislation.

~~10.14.18 To appoint and instruct veterinary surgeons to act on behalf of the council.~~

~~10.14.19 To nominate Officers for the council and take appropriate actions as required under the National Assistance Act 1948.~~

~~10.14.20 To endorse any agreed transfers of enforcement responsibility for any particular premises, or parts of premises, or any particular activities carried on in them, from the Health and Safety Executive to the council, or vice versa.~~

~~10.14.21 To make representation on or objections to any applications for activity in the District on the grounds that permission would be prejudicial to the~~

~~public interest on environmental, health, nuisance or similar grounds.~~

~~10.14.22 To give directions and make applications to Court in respect of unauthorised encampments in the District in consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance as appropriate.~~

## Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety

10.14.23 To determine requirements and make any necessary arrangements for CCTV cameras in public areas funded by the council.

10.14.24 To determine the case for activities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 or associated guidance and/or replacement legislation, including, acting in consultation with the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance, applications to court to conduct covert surveillance.

10.14.25 To be responsible for emergency planning matters.

10.14.26 To exercise the council's functions to promote community safety and deter anti-social behavior and fly-tipping.

10.14.27 To act as the council's designated Lead Officer for Safeguarding, promote safeguarding and respond to safeguarding issues raised.

10.14.28 To devise and administer arrangements for distributing grants to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

10.14.29 To make arrangements to promote environmental sustainability and reduce carbon emissions within the council and throughout the District.

Other

10.14.30 To submit monitoring returns to government departments, regulatory bodies and others.

10.14.31 To determine road closure applications under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

10.14.32 To manage the council's property portfolio.

10.14.33 Lettings of all properties including council offices; consents to assignments and sub-lettings; the granting of easements and licences; entering into leases, sub-leases, licences and easements on behalf of the council as lessee or lessor, sub-lessee, licensee or grantee as appropriate; consent to modification or release of restrictive covenants; rent reviews under existing and future leases, including the approval of terms, subject to reporting transactions half-yearly to the Executive.

10.14.34 To administer the Scheme for the collection of trade refuse.

10.14.35 Approval of types and siting of litter bins provided by parish and town councils.

10.14.36 To take action under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 or associated guidance and/or replacement legislation acting in consultation

with the Director for Law, Policy and Governance.

10.14.37 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced Officers to exercise powers and duties afforded to District Councils in the relevant legislation.

**10.15 Head of ICT Strategic Partnership Manager (or equivalent post-holder as provided by Stevenage Borough Council under the shared services arrangements)**

10.15.1 To develop the council's information systems, information technology and e-government strategies.

10.15.2 To develop the council's information and communications technology strategies including the supply, withdrawal, data protection, security and integrity of the systems to Officers and Members.

10.15.3 To supply connections and services to public sector partners and other organisations as required, provided that the integrity of the council's information systems is maintained.

10.15.4 To advise on and provide resilient ICT hardware and software solutions to maximise the efficiency of the council's operations.

**10.16 Director for Regeneration, Customer and Commercial Services**

10.16.1 To lead interpretation of and promote council compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the Equality Act 2010.

- 10.16.2 To ensure compliance with Section 88 of the Localism Act regarding the registering of Assets of Community Value.
- 10.16.3 To ensure compliance with the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity pursuant to the Local Government Act 1986.
- 10.16.4 To advise on best practice in public consultation in line with the Cabinet Office's Consultation Principles 2016 and any successor guidance or requirements.
- 10.16.5 To administer the council's Complaints Policy and liaise with the Ombudsman when complaints have been escalated.
- 10.16.6 To take action against persistent and unreasonable complainants.
- 10.16.7 To authorise appropriate action to be taken in respect of any contravention of any Order made under Section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) by persons at any car park(s) detailed within such an Order, subject to the outcome of any legal proceedings taken being reported to a subsequent meeting.
- 10.16.8 To charge users a fixed charge equivalent to the charge for the first variable charging period on those occasions when a short stay car park's variable charge equipment is temporarily out of commission.
- 10.16.9 To authorise the use of the council's off-street car parks by commercial and non-commercial

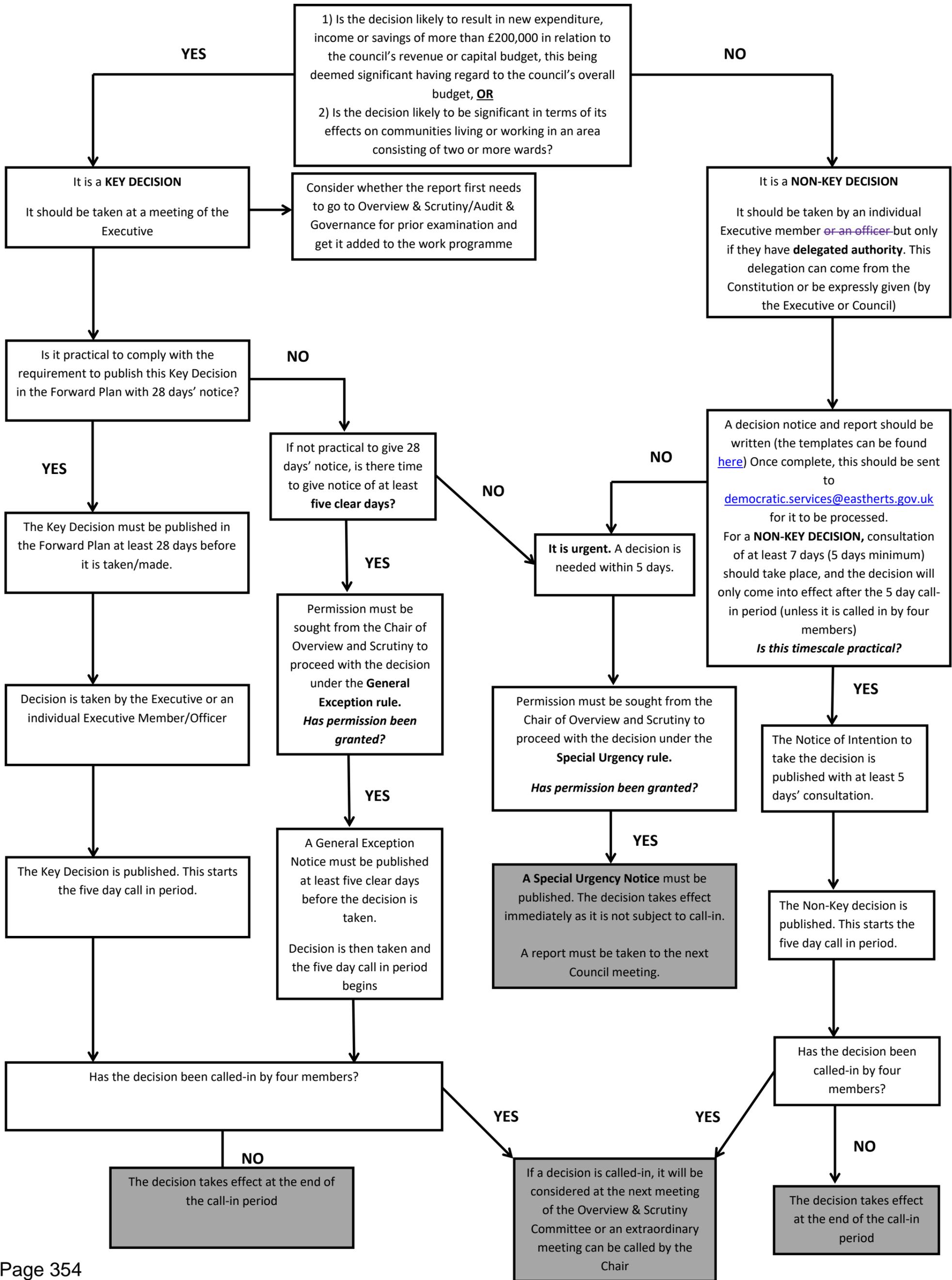
organisations on Sundays only, and to determine the charge to be levied in such circumstances.

- 10.16.10 To consider objections received in relation to proposed Traffic Regulation Orders in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability.
- 10.16.11 The letting of council gardens and car parks
- 10.16.12 To deal with requests for the provision of signs to prohibit litter or other nuisances within the highway or car parks, in consultation with the Leader.
- 10.16.13 To authorise suitably qualified and experienced Officers to exercise powers and duties afforded to District Councils in the relevant legislation.

## 4.22 Making non-key decisions

- 4.22.1 Non-key decisions may be taken by the Executive, by an individual Executive Member, ~~a committee of the Executive or by an officer~~. In all cases, the decision-making body or person will be determined in accordance with powers delegated generally or specifically for that purpose.
- 4.22.2 No non-key decision shall be acted upon until either the deadline for submission of a requisition (often termed 'call in') has passed without one being submitted or any requisition submitted has been disposed of, unless the urgency provisions under paragraphs 4.25.2 (b), 4.25.2 (c) and 4.25.3 below apply.
- 4.22.3 Where an Executive Member ~~or an officer~~ receives a report which they intend to take into account when making a non-key decision, they must not make that decision until the report has been available for inspection by members and the public for at least five clear days. This mirrors the notice period applicable to reports relating to key decisions.
- 4.22.4 The Executive Member ~~or officer~~ must ensure that the Proper Officer makes the report referred to in 4.22.3 above (and a list and copies of Background Papers) available for inspection by members and the public as soon as reasonably practicable after the Executive Member ~~or officer~~ receives it.
- 4.22.5 Before making a decision, the decision-maker shall give full consideration to all reports made available relating to the decision, any comments on the proposed decision made by Members and, where necessary, consideration shall be given to the need for further consultation or information.

**EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (KEY, NON-KEY AND URGENT)**



## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026**

**REPORT BY: JOINT REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR  
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE DIRECTORS OF  
MILLSTREAM PROPERTY INVESTMENTS LTD**

**REPORT TITLE: MILLSTREAM BUSINESS PLAN: 2026/27**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

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### **Summary**

- East Herts Council established Millstream Property Investments Ltd in 2018 to provide a good rate of return on its capital within the range of options available at the time, however, much has changed since leading to the Council, Millstream's sole shareholder, having reviewed its options at the Council meeting of 26 February 2025. At last year's Council meeting, Council resolved that the company should dispose of its assets, thus giving the Council access to the money currently invested in the company.
- This report lays out the work to date by the company to dispose of its assets and the projected disposal programme up to the end of 2027/28, which will see all the company's properties sold.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL, that:**

- (a) Millstream Property Investment Ltd's 2026/27 Business Plan, presented in the EXEMPT Appendix A, which includes the continued disposal of the company's properties, be approved.**

#### **1.0 Proposals**

- 1.1 As required by the Shareholder Agreement, Millstream has revised and updated its business plan and now puts before Council its new Business Plan commencing 2026/27.
- 1.2 As presented to Council on 26 February 2025, much has changed since the company's incorporation in 2018. Most notably, the Council has moved from internal borrowing to external borrowing,

that is, the Council now needs to fund its capital project from borrowing rather than use of its own resources (termed, internal borrowing). As a result of this, council officers have informed Millstream that it has had to prioritise how best to utilise the monies invested in the company.

- 1.3 The company understands that for every £100,000 the Council has to borrow to finance its capital programme, revenue costs from interest and minimum revenue provisions of £7,000 accrue. At the same time, £100,000 invested in Millstream yields £3,480. Clearly, the company understands that the Council can make better use of its money than continuing to hold its resources in the form of loans to and shares in Millstream. It is for this reason that Council (Millstream's sole shareholder) decided to seek to liquidate its investment in the company by resolving that the company should sell its properties and return the monies to the council through loan repayments and dividends.
- 1.4 Millstream commenced its programme of disposals in 2025/26 and projects that all its properties will be sold by the end of 2027/28.
- 1.5 This report recommends that Council, as the company's shareholder, approves Millstream's business plan to dispose of all its properties by the end of 2027/28.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting of 5 September 2017, the Executive approved the establishment of a property investment company wholly owned by East Herts Council, subsequently incorporated in February 2018 as Millstream Property Investments Ltd.
- 2.2 The Council established the company as a commercial endeavour. Since inception, the company has produced a revenue income stream for the council arising from:
  - interest on loans made by the council to the company
  - council officer time and services sold to the company at a 5% premium

- operating surpluses available as dividends, on the assumption that the company pro-actively manages surpluses so as to legitimately minimise losses to corporation tax, which has in fact resulted in no such dividends to date.

2.3 At its meeting of 26 February 2025, Council approved the use of the power reserved for the shareholder in the Shareholder Agreement (between the council and company) over decision-making on a series of important matters including, among others, *‘the sale, transfer or **disposal** of the whole or a substantial part of the Business’* [emphasis here added] (paragraph 10.1.5). Consequently, Council resolved that the company should sell its entire property portfolio.

### 3.0 Reasons

3.1 The company understands that as the Council has moved from a position of funding capital expenditure from its own reserves to relying on borrowing, which incurs interest and minimum revenue provision costs, the annual income to the Council created by Millstream’s activities in return for the capital invested in the company is now *lower* than the costs of borrowing. This is shown in the tables below:

#### ***Return to the council per £100,000 invested in Millstream***

3.2 For each £100,000 the council has invested in Millstream, the council *receives* each year:

	<b>Annual return to the council per £100,000 investment</b>
Interest payment on 63%* of the £100,000 at 4.73%**	£2,980
Proportion of the total value of services sold by the council to Millstream***	£500
Dividend to the Shareholder^	£0
<b>TOTAL income to council</b>	<b>£3,480</b>

\* To avoid ‘thin capitalisation’, that is, the company relying on a level of borrowing that would

be unacceptable to HMRC, a maximum (average) loan-to-value of 63% applies to all properties. The remaining 37% paid over from the council to Millstream to enable property purchase has resulted in the council holding shares in the company to a commensurate value.

\*\* This is the fixed 30-year loan rate that, on consultants' advice, the council charges. This rate was originally set in relation to (the now defunct) LIBOR. There are no penalties payable by the company for earlier repayment.

\*\*\* Based on an average recharge of £25,000 a year. Pro rata-ing £100,000 as a proportion of the council's total investment equates to £500 of the recharge per £100,000 of invested funds.

^ The company has sought to minimise profits to legitimately avoid/minimise leakage to Corporation Tax.

***Opportunity cost of using money invested in Millstream to pay down existing council debt and/or avoid new debt***

3.3 As the Council now borrows to fund its Capital Programme, unlike at the time of Millstream's inception, £100,000 of capital use (for whatever purpose) now costs the council. This is illustrated in the table below:

	<b>Annual cost to the council per £100,000 borrowed</b>
Interest payment on £100,000 at 5%*	£5,000
Minimum revenue provision over 50 years**	£2,000
<b>TOTAL cost to the council</b>	<b>£7,000</b>

\* Typical 30 year PWLB borrowing rate.

\*\* This is the lowest applicable minimum revenue provision (MRP). Of note, if applied to borrowing to purchase waste collection vehicles, the MRP term would be eight years and thus the annual MRP would be £12,500 in this example, making the opportunity cost losses due to investment in Millstream even higher.

3.4 The tables above show that revenue to the council from Millstream's activities of c£3,480 a year comes with a negative opportunity cost for the council in that every £100,000 'tied up' in Millstream requires the council to borrow £100,000 to fund its capital programme. This borrowing comes at a cost of c£7,000 per £100,000. There is thus a net loss in opportunity costs of c£3,520 per £100,000 or c£177k a year given the level of council resources 'tied up' in Millstream.

***Does this mean that the council was wrong to set up and invest in Millstream?***

- 3.5 The Council was not wrong to set up and invest in a wholly owned property investment company as the reasons for doing so in 2018, along with the financial and regulatory environment at that time, made this a sound financial decision. It is unforeseen changes to the national regulatory environment, notably the obligation to make a minimum revenue provision on any investments in a property company which was not the case in 2018, in combination with the Council's switch to external borrowing discussed above, which mean that the original business model is no longer viable. Consequently, it was financially prudent for Council, as the shareholder, to resolve in 2025 that the company should liquidate its assets.
- 3.6 In following this course of action, by the time the Council's loans to Millstream have been repaid and the Council has benefitted from dividends arising from the disposals, the company will have provided the Council with an internal rate of return on its investment since 2018/19 of 6.3%. This is better than interest rates available for cash held on deposit and underlines the financial probity of the Council's decision to establish Millstream eight years ago.

***Millstream's Business Plan 2026/27***

- 3.7 Millstream's directors contend that the proposed business plan as presented in the **EXEMPT Appendix A** meets the requirements of the Shareholder Agreement. It shows how the company itself can continue to operate as a going concern given its existing loans and liabilities while it follows a programme of property disposals that will see all the company's properties sold by the end of 2027/28.

**4.0 Options**

- 4.1 Do not adopt the revised Millstream Business Plan and retain the

existing plan approved by Council on 26 February 2025. NOT RECOMMENDED because while the previous plan included an illustration of property disposal, it did not include a detailed projection for disposals for the company to follow.

- 4.2 Preparation of an alternative plan that would see the Council's loans and shares liquidated by means of the company refinancing its borrowing from a 'high street lender' and repaying its loans to the Council and buying back (all but one) of the shares it has issued to the council. NOT RECOMMENDED because financing the company in this way has been investigated before – members are directed to the report to Council of 1 March 2022 for a more detailed discussion – and has been found to not be feasible. In short, even with an uplift in the value of the company's property portfolio, refinancing would require borrowing at a loan-to-value ratio of around 90% which would not be attractive to the market. Even if a loan on these terms were available, an interest and capital repayment loan would require payments of c£300k per year and an interest only loan would require payments of £220k per month. At present, the company would be able to only fund c£180k at best, thus this option is not viable.
- 4.3 Approve the revised Millstream Business Plan as presented, including provisions for the disposal of the company's portfolio prior to the end of 2027/28. RECOMMENDED for the reasons outlined in this report.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Millstream's directors have identified a series of risks and mitigations.
- 5.2 Risk 1: a slow property market could see the company having difficulty achieving the surveyor's valuations on disposal. This risk is being mitigated by the directors' decision to keep investing in the maintenance of the properties up until the point of any future disposal. To date, the company has achieved one sale and has sold another property subject to contract. A third property is currently on the market. The company always seek the expert

advice of local estate agents on pricing. At all times, the directors act so as to maximise shareholder value, that is, by seeking to attain best consideration for the properties.

- 5.3 Risk 2: the preference to only dispose of properties when an existing tenant choose to relinquish their tenancy could mean that not all properties would become vacant through this route in time to dispose of the entire portfolio by the end of 2027/28. Directors will keep this under review and seek possession, though only if absolutely necessary, adhering to the incoming provisions of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 at all times and providing advice about how the council can provide assistance if someone is unable to find suitable alternative accommodation in the open market. If needing to serve notice to sell, the company would first explore whether the sitting tenant would wish to acquire the property themselves.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 The company has shared the revised business plan with members of the Shareholder Advisory Group and council officers.
- 6.2 Detailed tax advice continues to be sought to ensure that the company's finances are managed in the most tax efficient way.

## **Community Safety**

Yes/No

## **Data Protection**

Yes/No

## **Equalities**

Yes/No

National evidence has found that those with a number of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are likely to experience lower incomes than others. Millstream provides good quality homes at the lower rental end of the private market and thus provides opportunities for those struggling to afford average private rents.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes/No

Millstream pays close attention the Energy Performance Certificate ratings of the properties it acquires. In addition, it prioritises works to its properties to increase energy efficiency, for example, high efficiency condensing boilers and internal insulation.

## **Financial**

Yes/No

See the discussion above.

## **Health and Safety**

Yes/No

## **Human Resources**

Yes/No

## **Human Rights**

Yes/No

## **Legal**

Yes/No

## **Specific Wards**

Yes/No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 EXEMPT Appendix A – DRAFT Millstream Business Plan 2026/27.

### **Contact Member**

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# Agenda Item 16a

## **Motion to undertake new Community Governance Reviews in Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford**

**Proposed by:** Councillor Angus Parsad-Wyatt (Sawbridgeworth)

**Seconded by:** Councillor Cllr David Woolcombe (Buntingford)

Having received petitions from the residents of Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford, each supported in excess of the 7.5% statutory threshold of the respective local government electorate,

### **this Council notes that:**

1. Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) relating to Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford were completed in 2025 and resulted in proposals to introduce parish warding arrangements.
2. Both Sawbridgeworth Town Council and Buntingford Town Council expressed opposition to warding during those reviews.
3. Significant numbers of residents in both towns have since signed formal petitions requesting that East Herts District Council abandon the current warding proposals; and undertake fresh Community Governance Reviews that properly consult local residents and reflect the identities and interests of the communities concerned.
4. The petitions in both towns reached or exceeded 10% of the local government electorate, substantially above the 7.5% statutory threshold set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as amended by the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Reviews) Order 2015.
5. The strength of resident engagement in both Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford represents a clear and exceptional expression of local democratic opinion.
6. While the completion of CGRs within the previous two years removes the automatic duty on the Council to undertake further reviews, it does not remove the Council's discretion to do so.

### **Council therefore believes that:**

1. Community governance arrangements should command clear local confidence and reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
2. The scale and consistency of resident opposition in both Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford indicates a loss of confidence in the

previous CGR outcomes; and raises wider concerns regarding consultation and resident engagement.

3. The statutory guidance on Community Governance Reviews requires that outcomes reflect the identities and interests of local communities and command local support. Where those conditions are demonstrably absent, the Council has both the discretion and, in the interests of good governance, a responsibility to revisit its decisions.

4. Undertaking fresh, robustly consulted CGRs would provide an opportunity for this Council to rebuild trust with the electorate, ensure democratic legitimacy, and secure governance arrangements that are effective and locally supported.

**Council resolves to:**

1. Undertake new Community Governance Reviews for both towns at the earliest practicable opportunity.

2. Ensure that those reviews include:

- o clear, transparent, and widely publicised consultation with residents;
- o engagement with the relevant town councils and community stakeholders; and
- o full consideration of whether warding reflects local identity and effective governance.

3. Publish: i) Terms of Reference for the new CGRs; and ii) a timetable for completion in accordance with statutory guidance as soon as practicable.