



Chapter 10 Villages



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10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The District Plan classifies villages into three groups reflecting their relative sustainability. This is an important element of the strategy, helping to direct housing to the most sustainable locations and control the level of windfall development that takes place in the least sustainable areas of the District, whilst enabling the recycling of land and delivering new homes to meet local housing needs. Villages have been classified following a review of services and facilities, education, passenger transport and employment available at each settlement, as well as consideration of environmental constraints and capacity to accommodate development.

10.1.2 Figure 10.1 below illustrates the key diagram for villages:



Figure 10.1 Key Diagram for Villages



10.2 Development in the Villages

10.2.1 Group 1 Villages are the most sustainable villages in the District. In these villages limited small-scale development and infill development for housing, employment and leisure, recreation and community facilities may be permitted. Growth in these



areas will help to sustain existing shops, services and facilities (including primary schools), deliver affordable housing, provide local job opportunities and deliver community benefits.

10.2.2 In accordance with Policy DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2031) the Group 1 Villages identified below in Policy VILL1 will accommodate at least 500 new homes, spread across the villages. In applying a fair approach to the distribution of this housing growth, each of these villages will need to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock (based on the 2011 Census) over the 15-year period between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2031. This is a level of housing growth that is considered fair, achievable and sustainable for each of the settlements concerned and that will make a meaningful contribution towards alleviating future housing demands, addressing local housing needs and supporting the village economy. Table 10.1 shows the minimum number of homes that each village will need to accommodate. However, the final number of homes will depend on site availability and suitability.

Table 10.1 Indicative increase in new homes at Group 1 Villages, based on 2001 Census figures

Village Name	Resident Population	Number of Households	10% growth 2016-2031
Braughing	818	328	33
High Cross	376	144	14
Hunsdon	929	363	36
Little Hadham	320	126	13
Hadham Ford	259	106	11
Much Hadham	1,147	490	49
Puckeridge	1,940	795	80
Standon	1,379	558	56
Walkern	1,158	474	47
Watton-at-Stone	2,057	846	85
Widford	438	178	18

Note: the figures shown are based on 2001 Census figures interpreted by Hertfordshire County Council. The figures will be updated using 2011 Census figures when these become available in 2014, prior to submission of the District Plan to Examination in Public.



- 10.2.3** Housing growth in these villages will be achieved through the identification of sites within and, where necessary in locations in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, on the periphery of the built-up area which together are sufficient to achieve at least 10% growth.
- 10.2.4** Parish Council's will be encouraged to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to develop a shared vision for their village and to deliver the sustainable development they need (including housing, employment and leisure, recreation and community facilities). Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in this Plan and should not be used to promote a lower level of housing development than is set out in Policy DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2031) and Policy VILL1 below.

VILL1 Group 1 Villages

I. The following villages are identified as Group 1 Villages:

- Braughing
- High Cross
- Hunsdon
- Little Hadham and Hadham Ford
- Much Hadham
- Standon and Puckeridge
- Walkern
- Watton-at-Stone
- Widford

II. Within the Group 1 Villages, as defined on the Policies Map, limited small-scale development and infill development for housing, employment and leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted subject to (VI) below and all other relevant policies in this Plan.

III. In accordance with Policy DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2031) the Group 1 Villages will together accommodate at least 500 new homes. In applying a fair approach to the distribution of this housing growth, these villages will need to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock (based on the 2011 Census) over the 15-year period between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2031.

IV. Parish Councils are encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate land for development or to introduce additional policy requirements aimed at ensuring that development contributes toward local distinctiveness or other community objectives.

V. Where monitoring shows a shortfall in the number of homes coming forward through Neighbourhood Planning, then the District Council will review the District Plan in accordance with Policy VILL4 (Neighbourhood Plans).



VI. Prior to a Parish Council preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, development in the villages listed above will be limited to the built up area as defined on the Policies Map. All development should:

- (a) Relate well to the village in terms of location, layout and connectivity;
- (b) Be of a scale appropriate to the size of the village;
- (c) Be well designed and contribute to the character of the village;
- (d) Not represent a significant open space or gap important to the form and/or setting of the village;
- (e) Not represent an extension of ribbon development or an addition to an isolated group of buildings;
- (f) Not unacceptably block important views or vistas and/or detract from the openness of the countryside;
- (g) Not be significantly detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

10.2.5 Group 2 Villages are generally smaller villages where limited infilling (up to five dwellings on each site) and limited affordable housing for local community needs, together with small-scale employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities may be permitted.

10.2.6 No specific housing target has been identified for these villages. Where housing development does take place this will contribute towards the district-wide housing windfall allowance. Infilling development should take place within the built up area of the village as defined on the Policies Map.

10.2.7 Whilst Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets are three of the District's larger villages, each with a reasonable range of facilities, they have particular environmental constraints and issues with education capacity which mean that they are more appropriately identified as Group 2 Villages.

10.2.8 As with Group 1 Villages Parish Council's may consider that the most appropriate way to plan for their community's needs is by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

VILL2 Group 2 Villages

I. The following villages are identified as Group 2 Villages:

- Aston
- Bayford
- Benington
- Birch Green



- Colliers End
- Cole Green
- Cottered
- Dane End
- Datchworth
- Furneux Pelham
- Hertford Heath
- Hertingfordbury
- High Wych
- Letty Green
- Spellbrook
- Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets
- Stapleford
- Tewin
- Thundridge
- Tonwell
- Wadesmill
- Westmill

II. Within Group 2 Villages, as defined on the Policies Map, limited infill development (up to five dwellings on each site) and limited affordable housing for local community identified needs, together with small-scale employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted subject to (III) below and all other relevant policies in this Plan.

III. Development will be limited to the built up area as defined on the Policies Map. All development should:

- (a) Relate well to the village in terms of location, layout and connectivity;
- (b) Be of a scale appropriate to the size of the village;
- (c) Be well designed and contribute to the character of the village;
- (d) Not represent a significant open space or gap important to the form and/or setting of the village;
- (e) Not represent an extension of ribbon development or an addition to an isolated group of buildings;
- (f) Not unacceptably block important views or vistas and/or detract from the openness of the countryside;
- (g) Not be significantly detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.



- 10.2.9 Group 3 Villages** are generally amongst the smallest in East Herts. These villages have a poor range of services and facilities and it is often necessary for local residents to travel outside the village for most of their daily needs. These villages generally lack any food shops, have no primary school and may not have a permanent post office or a village hall or meeting place. Development in these villages, other than that appropriate in the Green Belt and Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, would be unsustainable.

VILL3 Group 3 Villages

- I. Those villages not identified as either Group 1 or Group 2 Villages are identified as Group 3 Villages.
- II. Development will not be permitted in Group 3 Villages other than that appropriate in the Green Belt and Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt including rural exception housing schemes in accordance with Policy HOU4 (Rural Exception Sites).

10.3 Village Boundaries

- 10.3.1** Village boundaries have been defined for all Group 1 and Group 2 Villages, both within and beyond the Green Belt, and are shown on the Policies Map. These have generally been defined by the current outer extent of the built-up area of villages. Development will be limited to the built-up area.
- 10.3.2** It is anticipated, however, that through Neighbourhood Plans village boundaries in Group 1 Villages that are located in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt may need to be amended to accommodate future development.
- 10.3.3** Where villages are inset from the Green Belt then there is no opportunity for an amendment to the boundary to be made via a Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that it is for local planning authorities to establish Green Belt boundaries in their local plans and that, once established, boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the local plan.

10.4 Neighbourhood Plans

- 10.4.1** Neighbourhood planning is a key part of the Government's localism agenda. It aims to give local communities greater power to shape their neighbourhood by taking a more active role in the development of planning policies at a local level.
- 10.4.2** A Neighbourhood Plan allows communities to create a both a vision and planning policies for the use and development of land in their village. For example, communities can identify where new homes should be built and what they should look like.



- 10.4.3** The District Council wants to give Parish Councils the opportunity to empower local people to take a proactive role in shaping the future of the areas in which they live, and give local people greater ownership of the plans and policies that affect their local area. In accordance with Policy VILL1 (Group 1 Villages), Parish Council's will therefore be encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate land for development or to introduce additional policy requirements aimed at ensuring that development contributes toward local distinctiveness or other community objectives.
- 10.4.4** However, given that Neighbourhood Planning is an optional tier of planning, it is important that a monitoring framework is in place so that if a shortfall in delivery is identified then this will trigger a requirement for the District Council to allocate sites for housing through an early review of the District Plan.

VILL4 Neighbourhood Plans

I. Parish Council's are encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to deliver at least 500 homes in Group 1 Villages in accordance with Policy VILL1 (Group 1 Villages).

II. The District Council will expect at least 250 homes to be delivered in the Group 1 Villages in the period 2016-2021. Where monitoring shows a shortfall in the number of homes coming forward through Neighbourhood Planning during this period, then this will trigger a requirement for the District Council to identify specific sites for housing through a review of the District Plan.

III. On the basis that at least 250 homes are delivered in the period 2016-2021 then the District Council will continue to monitor the situation and if a shortfall in delivery is identified then, as with (II) above, this will trigger a requirement for the District Council to identify specific sites for housing through a review of the District Plan.

10.5 Employment in the Villages

- 10.5.1** The District Council provides support for rural businesses and the rural economy through its planning policies and through implementation of its Economic Development Strategy. Employment areas within the rural area have a key role to play in providing accessible and affordable employment and business opportunities. The Local Plan Second Review 2007 designated several Employment Areas in the villages, all of which have been retained.
- 10.5.2** In Stanstead Abbots, The Maltings continues to offer a well managed estate serving a local need for small office premises. In addition, the following two sites are identified as Employment Areas reflecting the market demand for these premises in the village:
- Leaside Works, Stanstead Abbots
 - Riverside Works, Amwell End, Stanstead Abbots



VILL5 Village Employment Areas

In accordance with Policy ED1 (Employment) the following locations are designated as Employment Areas:

- (a) Silkmead Industrial Estate, Hare Street;
- (b) Oakley Horseboxes, High Cross;
- (c) Langley House, Station Road, Standon;
- (d) Standon Business Park, Standon;
- (e) Leaside Works, Stanstead Abbots;
- (f) Riverside Works, Amwell End, Stanstead Abbots;
- (g) The Maltings, Stanstead Abbots;
- (h) Warrenwood Industrial Estate, Stapleford;
- (i) Thundridge Business Park, Thundridge.

10.5.3 Sensitive small scale employment development can help sustain the rural economy and achieve a wider range of local employment opportunities. It can enhance the vitality of villages and reduce the need to travel. Proposals must however be in scale with the location. This means that larger proposals are more likely to be considered favourable in Group 1 Villages, whilst only very small scale proposals are likely to be acceptable in Group 2 Villages.

10.5.4 The District Council also recognises that in order to ensure the continued viability of existing rural businesses there may be a need for premises to expand. Applications for small-scale extensions or alterations to premises, which provide an important source of local employment and cannot be relocated without damage to the local economy or community, will therefore be viewed sympathetically subject to Policy VILL6 (New Employment Development).

VILL6 New Employment Development

I. Within the built up area of Group 1 and Group 2 Villages, as defined on the Policies Map, new employment development (B1 and B2 uses) may be permitted provided that the proposal:

- (a) Relates well to the village in terms of location, layout and connectivity;
- (b) Is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village;



- (c) Is well designed and contributes to the character of the village;
- (d) Does not represent a significant open space or gap important to the form and/or setting of the village;
- (e) Does not represent an extension of ribbon development or an addition to isolated group of buildings;
- (f) Does not unacceptably block important views or vistas and/or detract from the openness of the countryside;
- (g) Is not significantly detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

II. In the Green Belt and Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, outside the towns and Group 1 and Group 2 Villages, the extension or alteration of existing premises in B1 or B2 use may be permitted provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.

10.6 Retail, Leisure and Community Facilities in the Villages

- 10.6.1** Village shops, post offices and pubs play a vital role in rural areas helping to maintain villages as viable communities. They are often a focus of community life, providing a wide range of services. The District Council wishes to support the continued provision of these facilities recognising in particular that they are of value to less mobile members of society and those without access to a car.
- 10.6.2** Planning applications that result in the loss of village shops, post offices and pubs will not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that every effort has been made to retain them in accordance with Policy CFLR7 (Community Facilities).
- 10.6.3** Small-scale extensions/alterations to existing village shops, post offices and pubs may be permitted in Group 1, 2 and 3 Villages in accordance with Policy CFLR7 (Community Facilities), where the use is considered essential to the vitality and viability of the village and is of a scale and use appropriate to the size and location of the village.



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