



Old River Lane SPD Consultation Draft

5th July - 2nd August 2022



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Bishop's Stortford is the largest town in the district, with an important sub-regional role related to its retail, leisure and employment offer, which is underpinned by good transport links including the West Anglia Main Line railway, the M11, the A120, and Stansted Airport. The town retains a very attractive historic core and has a thriving town centre. It also benefits from numerous areas of green space along the Stort corridor and within the 'Green Wedges' which penetrate the town.
- 1.1.2 The town is unusual in East Herts in having several remaining brownfield redevelopment opportunities; one of these brownfield opportunities is **Old River Lane** – the subject of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – a site which forms a key opportunity for sustainable redevelopment in the heart of Bishop's Stortford. Located between North Street, Bridge Street, and Link Road the site represents a major opportunity to reconfigure the retail, community, and leisure provision in the town centre.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

- 1.2.1 In line with national guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in adopted development plan documents. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies or allocate land for specific types of development or uses.
- 1.2.2 This SPD sets out the aspirations of the Council for the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site. The ambition is to create a well-designed development that responds to the character of the surrounding area. The SPD will:

- Set out the existing planning policy framework for bringing forward appropriate redevelopment of Old River Lane;
- Establish placemaking and design principles;
- Improve the quality of proposals;
- Ensure high quality design.

1.2.3 The SPD has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will be a key material consideration in determining the acceptability of development on the site and seeks to reduce uncertainty by creating a framework against which development proposals can be assessed.

1.2.4 As supplementary guidance, an SPD does not have the weight of adopted development plan policies in the East Herts District Plan or Neighbourhood Plans; however it does have weight as a material consideration in assessing the quality of proposals as they evolve and in decision making on planning applications.

1.3 Structure of the Document

1.3.1 The Old River Lane SPD is structured in nine chapters:

- **Chapter 1 (Introduction)** describes the background to the SPD including the planning policy context and the process for preparing the SPD.
- **Chapter 2 (Site Context and Analysis)** explores the history of the Old River Lane site and analyses the different features of the site.
- **Chapter 3 (Policy BISH8 Old River Lane)** provides more detailed guidance on Policy BISH8.
- **Chapter 4 (Transport Options)** considers broad transport issues and options.

- **Chapter 5 (Constraints and Opportunities)** sets out the constraints and opportunities that were identified following the appraisal of the site and its existing uses.
- **Chapter 6 (Vision and Development Objectives)** sets out the vision for the Old River Lane site and development objectives.
- **Chapter 7 (Design Principles)** sets out the design principles that will guide development at Old River Lane.
- **Chapter 8 (Strategic Masterplanning Framework)** sets out the framework for development proposals at Old River Lane.
- **Chapter 9 (Planning Application Requirements)** outlines the documents required to accompany planning applications.

1.4 Planning Policy Context

- 1.4.1 The Old River Lane SPD sits within a wider planning framework of both national and local policy and guidance. This section provides a brief overview and summary of the key policy and guidance documents that this SPD will refer to.
- 1.4.2 The main planning policy considerations are set out in the:
- East Herts District Plan 2018
 - Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan 2015
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 1.4.3 Also relevant to this SPD are other guidance documents and topic-based SPDs, including the:
- Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2021
 - Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2020
 - Historic Parks and Gardens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2007
 - Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework 2016
 - Bishop's Stortford Transport Options Report 2018

- Bishop's Stortford Parking Strategy 2019
- Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014
- National Design Guide

East Herts District Plan 2018¹

1.4.4 The East Herts District Plan was adopted in 2018 and sets out the framework for guiding development in East Herts. It describes the Council's spatial vision for the district and includes strategic policies to deliver the homes, jobs and infrastructure that is required. The District Plan also contains development management policies that address a number of topic areas. The key relevant policies include:

- Policy BISH1 – Development in Bishop's Stortford
- Policy BISH2 – Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework
- Policy BISH8 – Old River Lane
- Policy BISH11 – Employment in Bishop's Stortford
- Policy BISH12 – Retail, Leisure and Recreation in Bishop's Stortford
- Policy HOU1 – Type and Mix of Housing
- Policy HOU3 – Affordable Housing
- Policy ED1 – Economic Development
- Policy EDE3 – Communications Infrastructure
- Policy RTC1 – Retail Development
- Policy DES1 – Masterplanning
- Policy DES3 – Landscaping
- Policy DES3 – Design of Development
- Policy TRA1 – Sustainable Development
- Policy TRA2 – Safe and Suitable Highway Access Arrangements and Mitigation
- Policy TRA3 – Vehicle Parking Provision
- Policy HA1 – Heritage Assets
- Policy HA3 – Archaeology
- Policy HA4 – Conservation Areas

¹ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/east-herts-district-plan-2018>

- Policy HA7 – Listed Buildings
- Policy HA8 – Historic Parks and Gardens
- Policy CFLR7 – Community Facilities
- Policy CFLR8 – Loss of Community Facilities
- Policy CC1 – Climate Change Adaptation
- Policy CC2 – Climate Change Mitigation
- Policy CC3 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy WAT1 – Flood Risk Management
- Policy EQ4 – Air Quality

1.4.5 **Policy BISH8 – Old River Lane**, sets out that the site will provide for a mixed-use development and around 100 new homes. The policy includes a number of requirements that the masterplan and any subsequent planning application/s need to assess. Policy BISH8 is set out below (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Policy BISH8

Policy BISH8 Old River Lane

I. The Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework will form the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document, which will be used to inform the masterplanning of this site.

II. The site will provide for a mixed use development and around 100 homes between 2022 and 2027.

III. The site will represent an extension of a historic market town. Therefore the masterplan will address the following:

- a) the creation of a high quality mixed-use development of retail, leisure uses, along with a 'civic hub' of other commercial and community uses such as a GP surgery and B1 office floorspace;
- b) the creation of new streets and public spaces;
- c) connections between the site and the existing town centre, towards Castle Gardens and to parking areas off Link Road;
- d) a reduction in traffic speed along Link Road, with new or enhanced crossing points;
- e) a design and layout which respects the significance and relationship of the site with designated and un-designated heritage assets, within the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Conservation Area;
- f) key frontages such as Coopers will be enhanced by new public realm and buildings that reflect locally distinctive materials and design;
- g) on-site car parking will need to be sufficient to meet the needs of the uses proposed, without encouraging travel to the town centre in order to avoid worsening traffic congestion and further impact on the Hockerill Air Quality Management Area. Parking will need to be provided to serve the town centre as well as commuters.

IV. In addition, the development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:

- a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing), including residential apartments on the upper floors of commercial uses;
- b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);
- c) new utilities infrastructure where necessary;
- d) planning obligations including on and off-site developer contributions where necessary and reasonable related to the development; and
- e) other policy provisions of the District Plan, Bishop's Stortford Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads Wards and relevant matters, as appropriate.

- 1.4.6 The District Plan 2018 also contains a site location plan (**Map 1** below), which details the extent of the Old River Lane site allocation. It should be noted that this SPD looks beyond the site allocation in the District Plan 2018, taking in the edge of Castle Gardens and the car parks to the north of Link Road, together with Bridge Street to the south, in order to better consider wider connections across the site.
- 1.4.7 For the purpose of this SPD the United Reform Church (URC) Hall on Water Lane to the west of the allocated site, along with the modern houses to the south of the URC Hall, are also included within the red line boundary (**Map 2** below).

Map 1: District Plan Old River Lane site allocation



Map 2: Old River Lane SPD Area



Consultation Draft

Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan 2015 and emerging update 2022²

- 1.4.8 Bishop's Stortford has two adopted Neighbourhood Plans; the Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan (2015); and the Bishop's Stortford All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley Neighbourhood Plan (2017). Together both plans cover the entirety of the town, with the former covering the north-east and the latter the south-east of the town.
- 1.4.9 For this SPD, the Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan is the relevant plan as it covers the Old River Lane area. Of particular importance is **Policy BP6** – Future development of the town centre and **Policy BP7** – Prosperity and character of the existing town centre.
- 1.4.10 Both Neighbourhood Plans are currently being updated and the final Old River Lane SPD will reflect any relevant updates.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)³

- 1.4.11 The NPPF provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for development can be produced. Plans and development must comply with national policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The NPPF continues to place significant emphasis on the need to ensure the vitality of town centres known as the “town centres first” approach. Guidance indicates that plans should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

² <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning-activity-east-herts/bishops-stortford-silverleys-and-meads>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Sustainability SPD 2021⁴

1.4.12 The Sustainability SPD was adopted in 2021 and was prepared to provide guidance on the implementation of adopted District Plan policies relating to climate change and sustainable design and construction, in order to improve the environmental sustainability of new development. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.4.13 East Herts Council made a declaration on Climate Change in 2019 and is committed to putting environmental sustainability at the heart of everything it does. As such, the Sustainability SPD sets out a process for developers to follow whilst providing detail and technical guidance on how to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change. The Sustainability SPD has therefore been used to inform how this SPD looks at climate change regarding the Old River Lane development.

Affordable Housing SPD 2020⁵

1.4.14 The Affordable Housing SPD was adopted in 2020 and supports the effective implementation of the affordable housing policies in the District Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The purpose of the Affordable Housing SPD is to aid the implementation of the affordable housing policies and also assist developers in understanding the Council's approach and requirements regarding viability.

Historic Parks and Gardens SPD 2007⁶

1.4.15 The Historic Parks and Gardens SPD was adopted in 2007 and seeks to ensure that development does not undermine the integrity of the district's Historic Parks and Gardens. Historic Parks and Gardens are important assets that add substantial value to both the landscape and environmental quality within the district.

⁴ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>

⁵ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>

⁶ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>

Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework 2016⁷

1.4.16 Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were commissioned in March 2016 to prepare the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework on behalf of East Herts Council. The purpose of the Study was to help set a vision and strategy for the development of Bishop's Stortford. The study was agreed in 2017 and takes account of the town's current and future economic role, and sets out proposals for movement and design projects that will improve the town centre.

1.4.17 The document was developed based on the results of extensive consultation, which helped to shape the identification of key objectives which are summarised below:

- Create a more attractive pedestrian environment.
- Promote a holistic parking and movement strategy.
- Define a framework for the managed growth of retail in the town centre.
- Identify opportunities for flexible and adaptable employment space and ensure that existing employment uses in the town make best use of their sites to best support the town's economy.
- Establish an integrated cultural offer for the town centre.
- Identify opportunities for residential development in the town centre to support the regeneration of key sites and promote a more sustainable living.

1.4.18 The Town Centre Planning Framework is material to this SPD as it sets Old River Lane in a wider-context and is also referred to in Policy BISH8 as forming the basis of this SPD. As such, this SPD will utilise the material and evidence contained in the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework and will ensure that Old River Lane is cognisant of the wider-strategy for the town centre.

⁷ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/east-herts-district-plan/evidence-library/settlement-and-site-specific-studies-sss>

Transport and Parking

- 1.4.19 Two of the key issues in Bishop's Stortford relate to transport and parking. The town centre suffers from very congested roads and junctions. Some of the car parks are very busy whereas others are under-used. There is also a lack of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. To address these issues, two studies have been undertaken to identify actions and interventions which aim to improve the transport network for different users in the town.
- 1.4.20 The **Bishop's Stortford Transport Options Report 2018**⁸ considers broad transport issues and opportunities. It puts forward a wide range of potential options for improving the transport network, including better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, managing traffic congestion and improving access to bus services.
- 1.4.21 The **Bishop's Stortford Parking Study 2019**⁹ focuses upon on and off-street parking within the town with a particular focus on the town centre car parks. It considers how car parks are being used, the number of spaces, the layout of car parks including access routes and how much people need to pay, and recommends a series of actions to address issues.

Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014¹⁰

- 1.4.22 The Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the special character of Bishop Stortford's Conservation Area; identifies elements that should be retained or enhanced; identifies detracting elements; reviews the existing boundaries; and puts forward practical enhancement proposals.

⁸ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/improvement-projects-east-herts/shaping-stortford>

⁹ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/improvement-projects-east-herts/shaping-stortford>

¹⁰ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-areas>

National Design Guide¹¹

- 1.4.23 The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.5 Process of Preparation

- 1.5.1 The potential for the future redevelopment of the Old River Lane site is set out in the East Herts District Plan 2018. This SPD will help define and add detail about the potential land uses, design and scale of development appropriate for the area.
- 1.5.2 The Council recognises the importance of stakeholder engagement and as part of the scoping of this SPD an **Old River Lane Steering Group** has been set up. Membership of the Steering Group includes: Officers from East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council; Councillors; representatives from the Cross-party Working Group on Old River Lane; landowner and developer representatives; as well as other representatives from the Town Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Group, the Bishop's Stortford Climate Change Group, the Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District (BID) and Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation. A number of community representatives also attended the Steering Group meetings.
- 1.5.3 The Steering Group has met on six occasions between November 2021 and May 2022. Meeting with stakeholders has ensured a better understanding of the key issues and aspirations that the community have for Old River Lane. Alongside this the Council has been able to get feedback on emerging proposals and principles as well as jointly setting a vision and objectives for the site. The discussions that have taken place at the

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

Steering Group meetings have therefore influenced both the scope and content of this SPD.

1.5.4 The process of preparation is set out in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2: Process of Preparation

Preparation of Old River Lane SPD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Analysis of site and background research- Steering Group Meetings- Preparation of draft SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">September - October 2021November 2021 - May 2022April - June 2022
Future Stages	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Approval for Consultation- Formal Consultation - 4 Weeks- Consideration of Comments- Adoption of SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">23 June 20225 July - 2 August 2022August - September 202219 October 2022

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This chapter starts by examining the historical development of the area, looking back at the evolution of Bishop's Stortford, followed by a brief history of the Old River Lane site. The town's historic character is key to our understanding of the Old River Lane site and its surrounding area.
- 2.1.2 Further analysis of the Old River Lane site today and how it relates to the wider town centre is then presented. This work has been undertaken to inform the design principles and the strategic masterplanning framework as set out in later chapters.

2.2 Historical Development of the Area

Evolution of Bishop's Stortford

- 2.2.1 The origins of Bishop's Stortford can be traced back to the Roman occupation with evidence of a settlement next to a crossing in the River Stort, on the Roman road from St Albans (Verulamium) to Colchester (Camulodunum).
- 2.2.2 The site of the Waytemore Castle was the likely location of a Saxon fort that had been erected due to the strategically important river crossing on the frontier between the Kingdom of Wessex and the Viking controlled Danelaw.
- 2.2.3 The motte and bailey Waytemore Castle was originally built in the 11th century by William I to project power in the region. In 1086 it was granted to the Bishop of London, and was heavily rebuilt in both the 12th and 13th centuries. It was generally used as a Bishop's Court. It was no longer needed as a defensive structure by the 15th century, and fell into disrepair. It was mostly pulled down in the 16th century, but the gatehouse and dungeons were used as a prison until 1649, when the site was sold and the stone was re-used for building materials in the town.
- 2.2.4 A market was established in Bishop's Stortford by 1228 and parts of the street and plot patterns set out at this time survive today.

- 2.2.5 By 1744 road improvements had resulted in many coaching inns and stables in the town centre as a stop off on the London to Cambridge road.
- 2.2.6 In 1769 the Stort was canalised (the Stort Navigation) linking the town to the River Lea at Roydon, Essex. By now the town was a well-established Market Town.
- 2.2.7 The Great Eastern Railway opened in 1842, to the east of the town centre. Trade was growing rapidly and the town was exporting grain and malt by barge to the London breweries. The population of the town was growing fast and by 1901 exceeded 7,000.
- 2.2.8 By the mid-20th century the town was attracting London commuters, travelling by train. Stansted Airport opened as an RAF airfield in 1943 and was used during the war, opening for commercial operations in 1966.
- 2.2.9 The M11 opened in the 1970s improving the road links in the area and the A120 bypass was opened in the 1970s, influencing the shape of the development of the suburbs of the town.

Old River Lane – A brief history

- 2.2.10 The Old River Lane site looks to have historically been open floodplain meadows crossed with drainage channels up until the mid-20th century onwards, despite Waytemore Castle being established adjacent to the site in the 11th century and the historic core of Bishop's Stortford lying to the south-west. Mapping from the late 19th and into the 20th century supports the idea that the area underwent very little change before that time, with most change reserved to those areas south and west of Old River Lane in particular a number of malthouses making use of the Stort River running to the west of the Old River Lane site. To the north-west of the site there was the Hawkes Brewery in buildings which dated from the 18th century and a cattle sale yard.

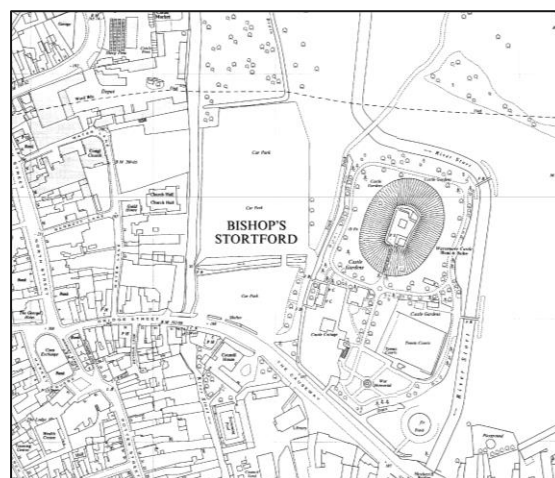


Figure 3 and 4: Historic mapping from 1870's (left) and 1960's (right) show Old River Lane remaining largely unchanged over a century

2.2.11 From the mid-20th century onwards however a number of changes came forward which would alter the landscape of Old River Lane. During the Second World War, in 1942 the American Red Cross built a temporary entertainment centre for the US forces based at the Stansted air base on the site of what is now Charringtons House, and in 1944 this was replaced by a much larger American Hostel that provided accommodation and a canteen. After the war this building was used by the Education Authority as a school and became the first coeducational secondary school in Bishop's Stortford for children aged 11-15, and it remained in this use until the mid-1960s, when the building was demolished and the entire site was used for car parking.

2.2.12 The Link Road was built between 1969 and 1970, which connected The Causeway to Northgate End, and necessitated the demolition of the cattle sale yard. The landscape of Old River Lane continued its significant transformation in the early 1970's when the original course of the River Stort that ran to the west of the site was culverted. The culverting is understood to have been part of wider-plans, alongside creating a new course for the River Stort to the east (1968), to help reduce flooding in the town centre and create more land for development in the core of Bishop's Stortford. A new road then largely followed the route of the culverted river as access to the car parks, the road now known as Old River Lane.

2.2.13 This period in time continued to be the main catalyst of change as the building that dominates Old River Lane to this day was also constructed in the 1970s, Charringtons House. The building project began in 1971 and at the time was the largest project

(apart from the railway) that had taken place in Bishop's Stortford. It was so named Charringtons due to being developed to accommodate the head office for coal merchants Charrington Gardner Locket & Co Ltd who arrived in the offices in 1973.

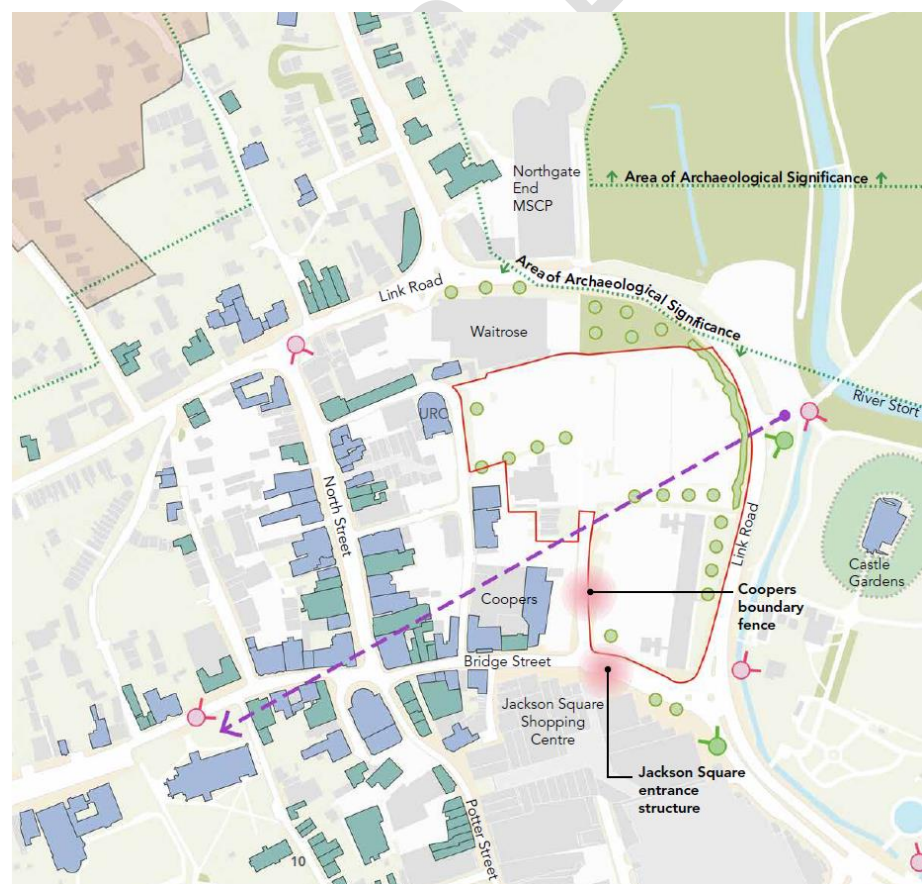
2.2.14 Charrington Gardner Locket & Co Ltd moved out of Charringtons House and relocated in 1999 and East Herts Council began to occupy much of the building and have continued to have a presence there to this day. Alongside this, Waitrose was developed to the north-west of the site in 1994 on the former Hawkes Brewery site which had long been used as a distribution depot. Waitrose is still present today, alongside Charringtons House and their associated surface car parks, with the only major change in the last 30 years being the demolition of 1 Causeway building in 2017.

Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets

- Corn Exchange, St Michael's Church and Waytemore Castle are key heritage assets
- Heritage views from Castle Gardens, Park, North Street and from St Michaels Church
- Within the Bishops Stortford Conservation Area
- Mature trees positively contribute to the character of the area

- Key**
- Listed buildings
 - Important trees/hedgerows
 - Unlisted buildings to be protected from demolition
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - Important views to be protected
 - Proposed enhancement areas (conservation area policies map)
 - Important views to be enhanced
 - Lost views of Church



2.2.15 The centre of Bishop's Stortford is defined by its historical evolution and distinctive setting in the rural countryside. These built and natural assets are a legacy the town has that must be protected and enhanced. As noted above, Old River Lane has long

been adjacent to the historic core of Bishop's Stortford and so has a key role to play in maintaining this legacy. The river has also helped shaped the character in the town centre, with a notably different identity to the wharf and industrial heritage along the River Stort, to that of the market town aesthetic in the historic core along Market Street and North Street.

2.2.16 Most of the town centre is covered by the Conservation Area which includes a significant number of listed buildings and other heritage assets. Many buildings in the town centre on streets such as North Street, Windhill and Potter Street contribute positively to an attractive landscape.



Image 1 and 2: Bishop's Stortford historic market town

2.2.17 There are also a number of important landmarks in the town centre including the Water Lane United Reformed Church, Waytemore Castle mound, the Corn Exchange, and most notably the Church of St Michael which is visible from many points both in and around the town centre.



Image 3 (left) Water Lane United Reform Church and Image 4 (right) Waytemore Castle

2.2.18 Due to its location on the edge of the historic core of the town centre, the Old River Lane site interacts with a number of these heritage assets. To the west of the site, a number of listed buildings are situated, including the aforementioned Water Lane United Reform Church and the Coopers malt house building. Alongside this, The Water House, Guild House and 14 Water Lane are all adjacent to the west of the site. To the east is the Grade 1 listed motte mound of Waytemore Castle which is also a Scheduled Monument, and the Castle Gardens which are identified as a Locally Important Park and Garden in the 2007 Historic Parks and Gardens SPD.

2.2.19 The Old River Lane site also falls firmly within the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area and is an Area of Archaeological Significance. These policy designations are shown on the Heritage Assets diagram above. More information on the wider Conservation Area can be found in the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014¹².

2.2.20 In addition to the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationships of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. There are also a number of key views across Bishop's Stortford. The key views that impact on Old River Lane are shown in the following diagrams (below). The view from Castle Gardens towards the Church of St Michael is particularly valued.

Built Form and Typology

2.2.21 As well as individual heritage assets, the overall palette of materials, textures, colours, and design characteristics all help contribute to the aesthetic and character that make Bishop's Stortford town centre distinctive and attractive. The palettes below highlight the variety of features and materials in the town centre and the dominance of the warm yellow and cream tones of some of the older brick work.

¹² <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-areas>

Materials and Colours:



Materials and Colours:



2.3 Site and surroundings today

- 2.3.1 Today the Old River Lane site represents a major opportunity to extend and reconfigure the retail, community, and leisure provision in the town centre.
- 2.3.2 As set out above the site is on the edge of the historic town centre and has transformed a number of times during the course of the town's history. The site now includes Waitrose and its existing car parking, Charringtons House on Bridge Street and the United Reform Church Hall (see paragraphs 2.4.1 – 2.4.3 below). The existing vehicle access to Waitrose and Charringtons House is via Old River Lane. The rest of the site is a Council owned and managed surface car park.
- 2.3.3 The site itself is relatively flat, with an increase in topography towards North Street to the west. The majority of the site is in Flood Risk Zone 2, with a small part of the site in Flood Risk Zone 3.



Figure 5: Flooding constraints at Old River Lane

2.3.4 There are several large mature trees present across the site. A number of trees are identified in the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal as adding value, including the small attractive commemorative area of open space with mature trees and seating to the north of the site, planted in memorial to David Moore in recognition of his contribution to tree preservation in Bishop's Stortford.

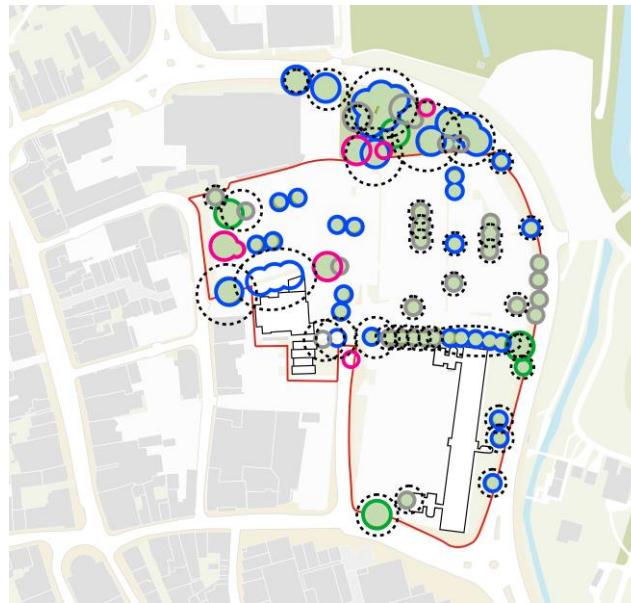


Figure 6: Location and type of trees currently situated on Old River Lane

2.3.5 Below ground constraints include archaeology, a 3m easement for Thames Water rising main sewer and a 5m easement as the culvert is classified as a watercourse.

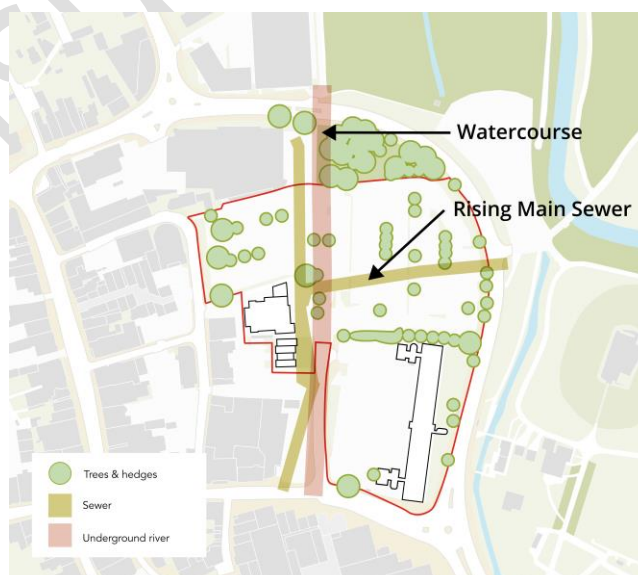


Figure 7: Below ground constraints on Old River Lane

2.3.6 It is important to note that this SPD looks beyond the site allocation in the District Plan 2018 and also takes in the edge of Castle Gardens and the car parks to the north of Link Road, as well as Bridge Street to the south, in order to better consider wider connections across the site. Link Road itself is currently a low quality part of the town centre, a dual carriageway that has limited built frontage which in turn encourages cars to travel faster. On the east side of Link Road sits Castle Gardens and views of the Waytemore Castle mound are visible from within the site. The western edge of the site needs to be carefully considered given the many listed buildings in the area.



Image 7 (left): view across Bridge Street with Charrington's House in the background; Image 8 (right): view south from the Link Road towards Jackson Square



Image 9 (left): Surface-level car parking is a familiar site around Old River Lane, firstly in the Causeway Car Park (left); Image 10 (right): view south across an empty Charrington's House car park

2.4 United Reform Church Hall

- 2.4.1 The United Reform Church (URC) Hall is located in Water Lane, to the west of North Street. It falls within the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area. The Hall was acquired by the Council, along with the houses to the south, in 2019.
- 2.4.2 Whilst the URC Hall lies outside of the BISH8 site allocation area, for the purposes of this SPD the URC Hall has been included within the red line boundary (see Chapter 1, Map 2).
- 2.4.3 The inclusion of the URC Hall within the SPD red line boundary presents an opportunity for proposals to consider the future use of this community facility alongside the BISH8 site allocation, ensuring a comprehensive approach to development in this location. Proposals that will result in the loss of the URC Hall will need to address the requirements of Policy CFLR7 (Loss of Community Facilities):

Policy CFLR8 Loss of Community Facilities

I. Proposals that result in the loss of uses, buildings or land for public or community use will be refused unless:

- a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that the facility is no longer needed in its current form; or
- b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by enhanced provision in terms of quantity and/or quality in a suitable location; or
- c) The development is for an alternative community facility, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.

2.5 Other Developments in Bishop's Stortford

2.5.1 Any development at Old River Lane also needs to be considered in the wider context of Bishop's Stortford, and particularly its town centre. As such Old River Lane should complement and contribute to the town-wide development framework which means not just relating with the existing town centre, but also with planned future developments.

2.5.2 Bishop's Stortford currently has a number of development sites either under construction or being considered through the planning process. Whilst Old River Lane will share some relationship with all of them, the key emerging developments relevant to Old River Lane are those within the town centre which include:

- Northgate End Car Park
- The Good's Yard
- The Mill Site

Northgate End Car Park

2.5.3 Northgate End is a multi-storey car park that is due to open in June 2022 and has been included as part of plans to redevelop Old River Lane for a number of years. This development is in closest proximity to Old River Lane and not only has a link in terms of providing a wider-parking offer, but also has a strong physical link with the site.

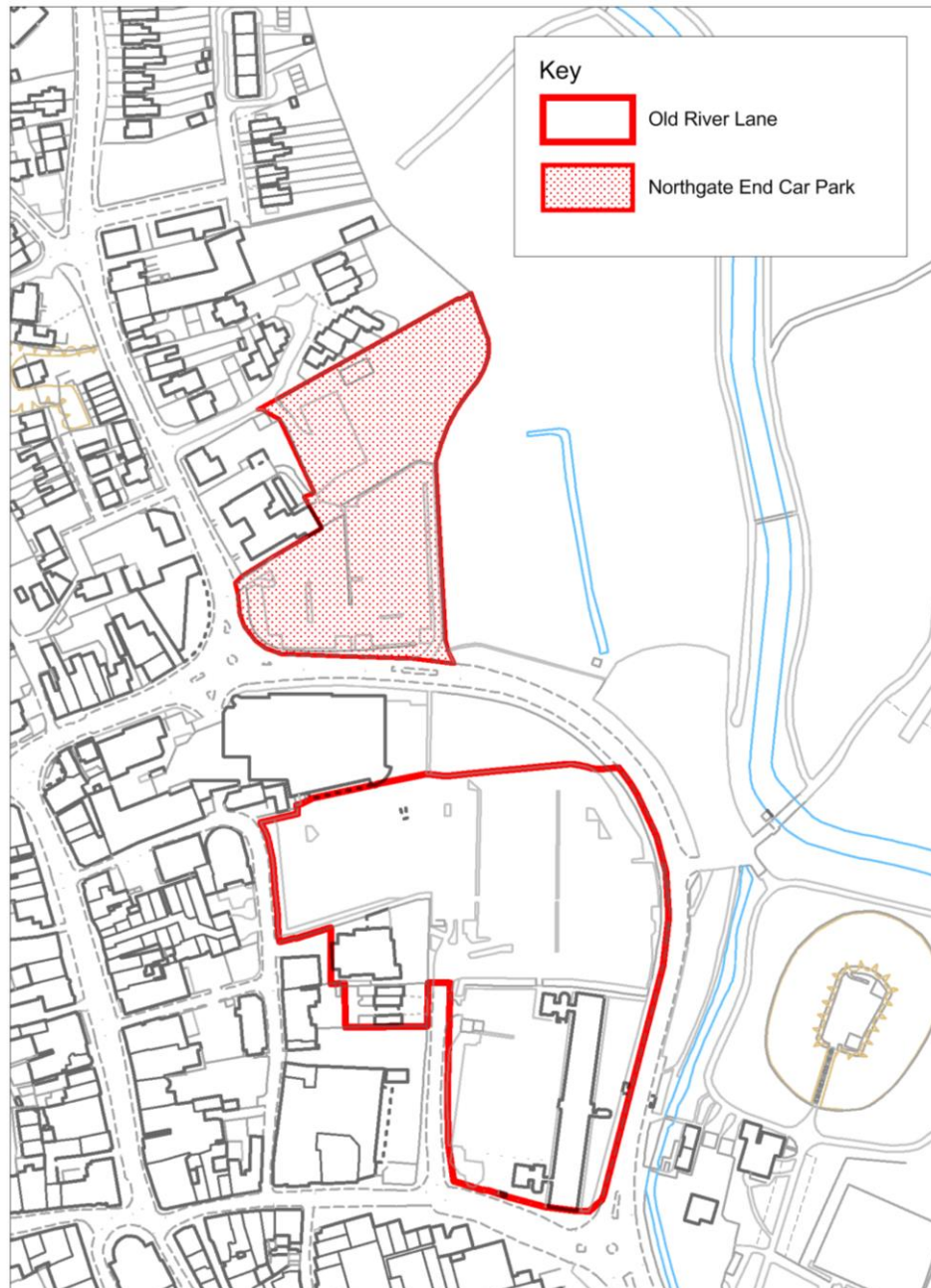


Figure 8: Northgate End Car Park shown adjacent to Old River Lane to the north

The Good's Yard

2.5.4 This site is allocated in the District Plan 2018 (Policy BISH7). The Goods Yard occupies a strategic position between the train station and the town centre and represents an excellent opportunity to substantially enhance the arrival experience to Bishop's Stortford by railway. The site presents a major opportunity to enhance a large portion of the riverside and bring vibrancy and activity to this important part of Bishop's Stortford. The northern part of the site lies within the town centre boundary and will accommodate a mix of retail and commercial development. Any development at Old River Lane should therefore complement the uses being provided.

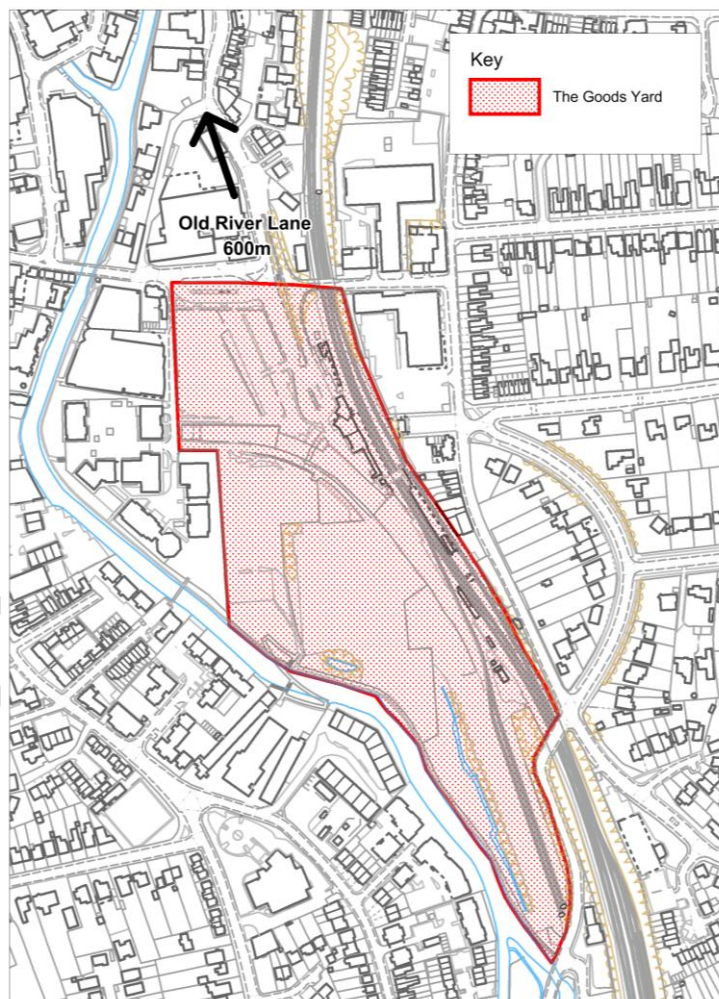


Figure 9: The Goods Yard site allocation to the south of Old River Lane

The Mill Site

2.5.5 This site is allocated in the District Plan 2018 (Policy BISH10) for a new mixed-use riverside hub. The Mill site offers the opportunity to transform the eastern side of the river. Unlike other site allocations however this site is not expected to deliver within a particular timeframe but has been allocated to ensure that if it does come forward for development a comprehensive approach is taken across the site.

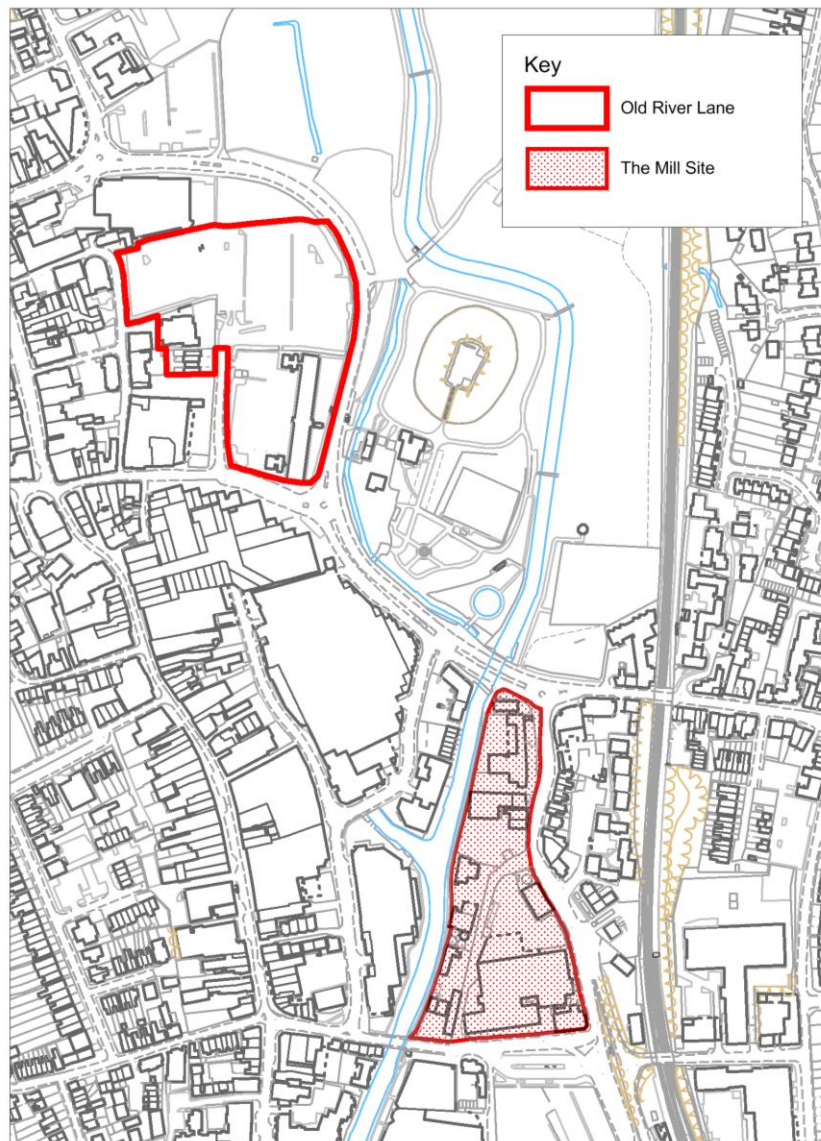


Figure 10: The Mill Site allocation to the south of Old River Lane

3.0 Policy BISH8 Old River Lane

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Policy BISH8 sets out that **'the site will provide for around 100 new homes'** and that the Old River Lane masterplan will address the **'creation of a high quality mixed-use development of retail, leisure uses, along with a 'civic hub' of other commercial and community uses such as GP surgery and B1 office floorspace'**.
- 3.1.2 This section provides further information on these policy requirements. Overall, this SPD supports a degree of flexibility around the precise mix of land uses on Old River Lane, but any proposal should seek to respond positively to the guidance below. The Council will require proposals to provide a clear narrative and justification for the proposed mix of uses in relation to property market demand and opportunities.

3.2 Retail

- 3.2.1 The NPPF sets out the need for a dynamic and diverse town centre that can respond to changes rapidly, and the importance of this has been emphasised in recent years through the various economic downturns alongside the Covid-19 pandemic. There is an opportunity at Old River Lane to ensure that the retail offer is flexible enough to sustain long-term vitality and viability.
- 3.2.2 It is expected that the continued growth of Bishop's Stortford will boost existing retail and support the case for new retailers in the town. The scale of the retail offer on Old River Lane should be proportionate and complementary to ensure the continued vitality of Bishop's Stortford town centre.

- 3.2.3 Proposals should contribute towards a thriving and sustainable town centre; applicants must therefore consider any new retail evidence and changes in economic circumstances and their associated impact on retail floorspace needs.
- 3.2.4 Proposals for new retail, commercial or leisure uses on Old River Lane should be responsive and demonstrate adaptability to shifting market trends and dynamics. Units should be capable of amalgamation and, sub-division, and the provision of mezzanine floors will be supported.

3.3 Office Floorspace

- 3.3.1 In 2020, there was around 160 office properties in the Bishop's Stortford market area providing 732,900sqft (c 68,100sqm) of office space. The overall stock of office space increased by 65,500sqft (6,100sqm) between 2010 and 2019, which represents a total increase of about 10% across the town. The increase in the stock of property would have been higher had it not been that some office space being lost through conversion of properties, some of which was through the use of Permitted Development Rights.
- 3.3.2 In 2020 there was a vacancy rate of around 2% which implies that there is currently very little choice for occupiers looking for office space in the local market; and existing occupiers who want to expand or contract are unlikely to be able to find space to move into, potentially leading to market stagnation.
- 3.3.3 In line with the policy, there is an opportunity to provide office space in the town. Proposals should seek to offer high quality office and commercial floorspace which includes a range of units from large operators to single tenants, to more flexible co-working spaces.

- 3.3.4 Proposals should be co-ordinated with the delivery of office space from other developments in Bishop's Stortford including at Bishop's Stortford North (BISH3), Bishop's Stortford South (BISH5) and the Goods Yard (Policy BISH7).
- 3.3.5 Proposals should also take into account the **Town Wide Employment Study for Bishop's Stortford 2013**¹³ and any subsequent updates.

3.4 Civic, Community and Leisure Uses

- 3.4.1 There is a strong tradition of civic, community, and leisure activities in Bishop's Stortford which continue to have a positive impact on the town centre offer, creating diversity and bringing a different audience to a town centre location. Proposals for Old River Lane should seek to complement and extend that offer as part of the development.
- 3.4.2 Civic, community and leisure facilities should play a key role in the activation and animation of the ground floors and especially the public spaces. It is expected that a variety of new leisure and Food & Beverage (F&B) opportunities will create a new vibrant area of the town centre. The clustering of any of these uses should preferably be focussed around a key public space.
- 3.4.3 Health care facilities that complement the existing offer across the town will be looked on favourably at Old River Lane.
- 3.4.4 Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) discusses the inclusion of the United Reform Church Hall within the SPD red line boundary. Proposals that will result in the loss of the URC Hall will need to address the requirements of Policy CFLR7 (Loss of Community Facilities).

¹³ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/evidence-base>

3.5 Housing

- 3.5.1 Housing on Old River Lane is expected to be delivered in accordance with policies HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing) and HOU3 (Affordable Housing) of the District Plan 2018. A mix of residential accommodation should be provided to create an inclusive community by providing homes for all age groups.
- 3.5.2 Homes should be provided in accordance with Policy HOU7 (Accessible and Adaptable Homes) to ensure they are accessible and adaptable to meet the changing needs of occupants, and to support independent living.
- 3.5.3 Proposals across the site should be co-ordinated to ensure that they don't restrict the ability of the site to deliver a diverse spectrum of uses, including those associated with the night-time economy.

3.6 Other Policy Requirements

Air Quality

- 3.6.1 Proposals at Old River Lane must not worsen the pollutant levels within the Hockerill Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Proposals should therefore take account of the air quality measures set out in the Council's Sustainability SPD 2021¹⁴.
- 3.6.2 The impact of development on air quality is a material consideration and must be regarded at all stages in the planning process. The planning system plays an active role in managing local air quality when considering the impact of new development and finding sustainable solutions.

¹⁴ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/sustainability-supplementary-planning-document>

- 3.6.3 District Plan Policy EQ4 (Air Quality) requires that development should include measures to minimise air quality impact at the design stage and should incorporate best practice in the design, construction and operation of all developments. Where development (on its own or cumulatively) will have a negative impact on local air quality during either construction or operation, mitigation measures will be sought. Evidence of mitigation measures will be required upfront.
- 3.6.4 Prioritising sustainable transport such as cycling and walking improves local air quality and encourages healthy communities. Therefore, strong emphasis will be placed on seeking the provision of cycle and pedestrian routes and networks at Old River Lane.
- 3.6.5 Building design should prioritise energy efficiency in order to reduce the need and size of heating plants. This will overall minimise the buildings impact on air quality. The use of renewable, zero and low-carbon technology is encouraged to fulfil the requirements Policy DES4 (Design of Development).

4.0 Transport Options

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Bishop's Stortford is undergoing significant levels of growth with approaching 4,500 new homes planned in the District Plan 2018 (including committed development) by 2033, which will substantially increase the town's population.
- 4.1.2 The town serves as a centre for jobs, retail, education, health and other important services for a large catchment area. Key to the ongoing success of Bishop's Stortford will be the ability to move in, out and around the town, and this will require an effective, reliable and sustainable transport network which can accommodate existing movements and additional movements which will be generated by the increased population.
- 4.1.3 Two studies have been undertaken; the **Bishop's Stortford Transport Options Report 2018** and the **Bishop's Stortford Parking Study 2019**. Of particular relevance to this SPD is the Transport Options report which aligns with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2018¹⁵. This focuses on delivering measures that promote and drive forward the uptake of sustainable transport modes and prioritises the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users over those private car users.
- 4.1.4 The Transport Options report seeks to recognise and balance the needs of residents and workers who travel to/from and park their private vehicles within Bishop's Stortford, with increased sustainable transport opportunities which improve accessibility and encourage modal shift, thereby aiding a reduction in traffic congestion.

¹⁵ <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/transport-planning/local-transport-plan.aspx>

Bishop's Stortford Transport Options

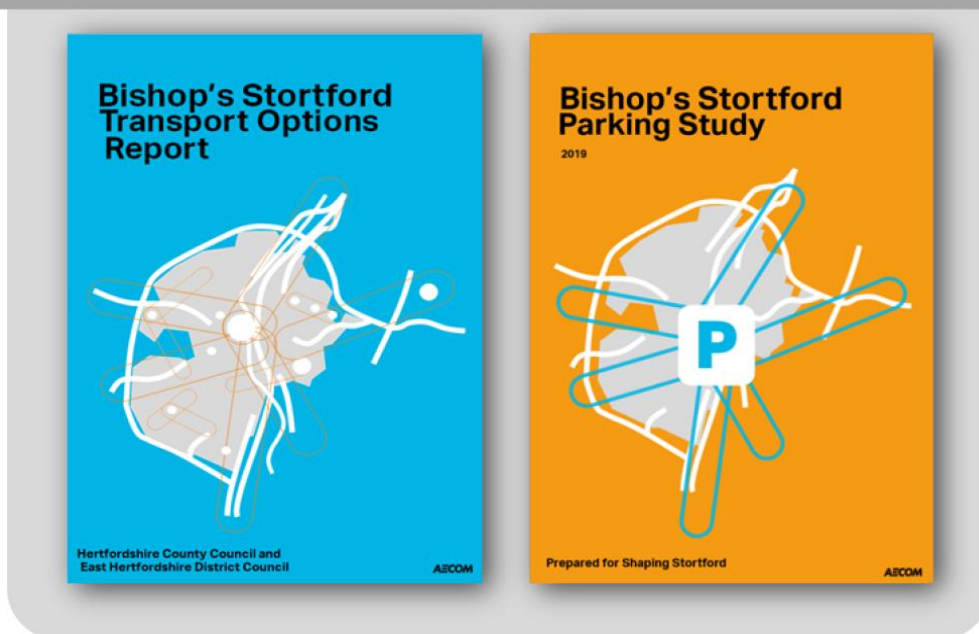


Figure 11: Two key studies undertaken shaping Bishop's Stortford's transport strategy

4.2 Old River Lane and Northgate End Multi-Story Car Park

- 4.2.1 Proposals for Old River Lane will increase the demand for travel in Bishop's Stortford and place additional strain on the existing road network. The Old River Lane development will bring forward notable substantial increase in retail floorspace which is anticipated to enhance the town's retail offer in addition to new leisure uses which could increase the town centre's attractiveness, not only in retaining trips within the town, but attracting trips in from surrounding areas that might otherwise travel to other towns.
- 4.2.2 The Transport Options report puts forward a wide range of interventions, including a specific package associated with development at Old River Lane: **Package 13 – Northgate End Multi-Story Car Park access and connectivity**. This package has the following aims:

- To provide ease of access to / egress from the proposed multi-storey car park so that traffic does not disrupt movement along the A1250 Link Road.
- To ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are not adversely affected by the proposed car park and benefit from safe crossing on the A1250.
- To make moving traffic less intimidating to pedestrians and cyclists travelling along Northgate End.

4.2.3 Northgate End multi-storey car park was completed in summer 2022 and will replace and enhance the current parking capacity at Old River Lane, thus freeing-up the Old River Lane site for redevelopment. With the growth of Bishop's Stortford in terms of population and households, as well as an anticipated growth in the retail offer, it is expected that the Northgate End car park will form an essential part of the town's parking infrastructure.

4.2.4 The multi-storey car park shares a relationship with Old River Lane both in its location and in its function. A suitable crossing point should be established to encourage pedestrians to and from Old River Lane and the Northgate End car park. Likewise, development proposals at Old River Lane should ensure that a clear connection is provided from the car park, through Old River Lane to the town centre.

4.2.5 The Old River Lane development also has a further opportunity to consider and explore the potential for utilising the town centre car parks, including Northgate End, to provide capacity for proposed uses on Old River Lane, particularly employees. Permitting arrangements with new residents should also be explored to help limited the number of spaces needed on the Old River Lane site itself.

4.2.6 Other interventions are also included in the Transport Options report and the Council will require proposals for development at Old River Lane to consider the prioritised list

of schemes set out below. Further information on Bridge Street is set out at Section 4.3.

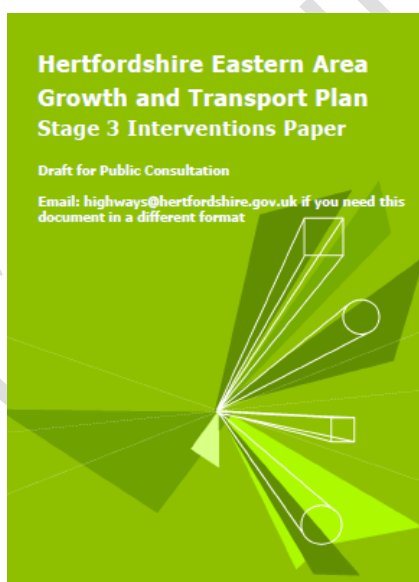
Interventions¹⁶	Name	Description
PR17	Bridge Street (east) improvement	Reduce eastbound to a single lane from where it currently widens to two lanes east of Water Lane to the junction with A1250 Link Road. Retain provision of a bus layby. Widen footways.
PR48	B1004 Northgate End and A120 Link Road and Hadham Road 20mph zone	20mph speed limit zone applied to Northgate End from just north (on Rye St) of junction with Barrells Down Road and A1250 between Half Acres and east of the proposed multi-storey car park access.
PR49	B1004 Northgate End-A1250 Link Road off road shared use cycleway/ footway	Off-road cycle link approximately 35m north of junction to the proposed signal-controlled crossing on the A1250 Link Road, on wards to the existing signal crossroads adjacent to the Link Road surface level car park.
PR60	Towpath to Link Road cycleway	Conversion of the existing footway between the river towpath, Link Road and Bridge Street to a shared-use footway/cycleway, including upgrade of the existing signal controlled crossing to a Toucan crossing.
PR61	North Street Streetscape enhancement	Enhancement of the streetscape on North Street to mimic South Street/Potter Street, with widened footways, planting and seating. Plus 20mph speed limit.
SM2	B1004 Northgate End-A1250 Link Road/Hadham	Highway improvements associated with proposed multi-storey car park. The following alternative approaches

¹⁶ Intervention reference numbers taken from the Bishop's Stortford Transport Options Report 2018

Interventions ¹⁶	Name	Description
		<p>should be considered:</p> <p>A. Existing provision with signal controlled entry/exit to proposed car park off Link Road</p> <p>B. Replace existing small roundabout with signal-controlled junction linked to signal-controlled car park entry/exit.</p> <p>C. As approach B but with a reduced speed limit.</p> <p>D. Reduced road space, 20mph speed limit, junctions on speed table, widened footways/cycleways and mini roundabouts at Northgate End junction and at car park entry/exit. Potentially extend provision westwards along Hadham Road to North Street junction and south-eastwards along Link Road to Link Road car park access/egress.</p>
SM3	Town Centre way finding	<p>A coherent, attractive series of wayfinding and interpretation signs for the town centre area would help improve the legibility of key routes including railway station-South Street and at key pedestrian gateways to the town centre including Apton Road, Windhill, North Street, Bridge Street and Old River Lane. Well designed 'miniliths' will provide information on key routes, facilities, walk times and local history.</p>
SM16	North-East Town Centre one-way system	<p>Creation of a small one-way system on High Street, North Street and Bells Hill, complementing existing one-way operation on Bridge Street and Potter Street. The following alternative approaches should be considered:</p>

Interventions ¹⁶	Name	Description
		A. Convert High Street (from east of the junction with Church Street to the junction with North Street) to one-way operation eastbound only. Convert North Street (between the junction with High Street and A1250 Hadham Road) to one-way operation northbound only. Convert Bells Hill along entire length to one-way operation to southbound only.

4.2.7 It should also be noted that the emerging **Hertfordshire Eastern Area Growth and Transport Plan** includes a number of other improvement packages (consistent with the Bishop's Stortford Transport Options report). Package PK18 which deals with Town Centre Traffic Congestion Management is particularly relevant to any proposals at Old River Lane. The overarching aim of Package PK18 is to: *'Directly tackle traffic congestion levels within the town centre area through highway interventions which seek to reduce delays by re-prioritising movements at junctions and providing alternative routes away from areas of traffic congestion.'*



PK18 – Town Centre Traffic Congestion Management		
SM1	London Rd-Station Rd link road	Mitigate traffic congestion by implementing a new road linking the B1383 London Road and Station Road through the proposed Goods Yard development. (IC3)
PR16	Adderley Road lane allocation improvement	Revise turning movement allocations at the Adderley Road-the Causeway junction to manage traffic queues (IC7)
SM6	Hockerill Junction Improvement	Improvement to the Hockerill junction to reduce congestion (IC7)
SM131	Alleviate congestion on the A1250	Alleviate congestion on the A1250 through Bishop's Stortford (IC5)
SM132	Alleviate congestion on Windhill	Improve peak time traffic flows along Windhill (IC5)
SM133	Bells Hill/Hadham Road junction improvement	Alleviate congestion at the junction of B1004 Bells Hill and A1250 Hadham Road (IC7)
SM134	Alleviate congestion on routes into Bishop's Stortford	Improve the efficient flow of traffic on routes into Bishop's Stortford, particularly around the choke point at junction North Street/Market Street/Bridge Street/High Street (IC5)

4.3 Bridge Street

- 4.3.1 Bridge Street is situated directly adjacent to the south of the Old River Lane site. The current environment is dominated by vehicular traffic and a 3-lane highway. Proposals for Old River Lane should include intervention PR17 (above) in order to improve the pedestrian experience to the south of the Old River Lane site.
- 4.3.2 Reducing the number of vehicular carriageways on Bridge Street and widening the footways achieves two goals; firstly, the improvement of the poor pedestrian environment along Bridge Street by making best use of the opportunity to integrate Bridge Street directly with any public square or public building to the south of Old River Lane; and secondly, it will support the key objective to increase active travel to, and from, and through the Old River Lane site.

4.4 Link Road and Castle Gardens

- 4.4.1 Similar to Bridge Street, the Link Road currently presents a very poor, car dominated environment that heightens the separation of the Old River Lane site from the Castle Gardens. Its character and the pedestrian experience should be substantially improved alongside the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site.
- 4.4.2 Castle Gardens are on the opposite side of the Link Road to Old River Lane. Plans to upgrade and improve the Castle Gardens, as well as the wider Castle Park are currently on-going with some schemes being implemented and other being formulated. One of the key upgrades to the gardens is the improvement of the main pathway and entrance. In terms of location there is likely to be no difference in the two main access points (shown below in **Figure 12**), but there are subtle differences to their function and potential.

- 4.4.3 Old River Lane presents an opportunity to transform the current environment of the Link Road as well as the town centre's relationship with Castle Gardens. Therefore the location of these access points into the Castle Gardens should be used to inform crossing points between the Castle Gardens and Old River Lane. The layout of Old River Lane should reflect these crossings and access points to ensure the most legible and direct route.
- 4.4.4 The type of crossing and access point should also be considered. The 'southern' access into Castle Gardens is for pedestrians and likely to be the main entrance point, whereas the 'northern' access has potential for a cycle path and crossing.
- 4.4.5 Currently plans exist to extend and enhance the cycle route that runs north to south through the Green Wedge along the river (**Figure 12** below). This would allow cycling access along the river for residents to the north, including the new development being delivered at Bishop's Stortford North. Once the cycle route is completed, access points into the town centre would still be challenging, but Old River Lane presents an opportunity to provide the infrastructure and connections necessary to encourage cycling access into the town.
- 4.4.6 Section 106 contributions towards the rearrangement of the current access point in Castle Gardens could include the following:
- Removing the gate and providing bollards (or another suitable alternative);
 - Rearranging the footpath and vehicular access to ensure bikes have enough space to operate alongside pedestrians and vehicles;
 - Any necessary surface upgrades needed between the bridge and the river to ensure connection of the cycleway.

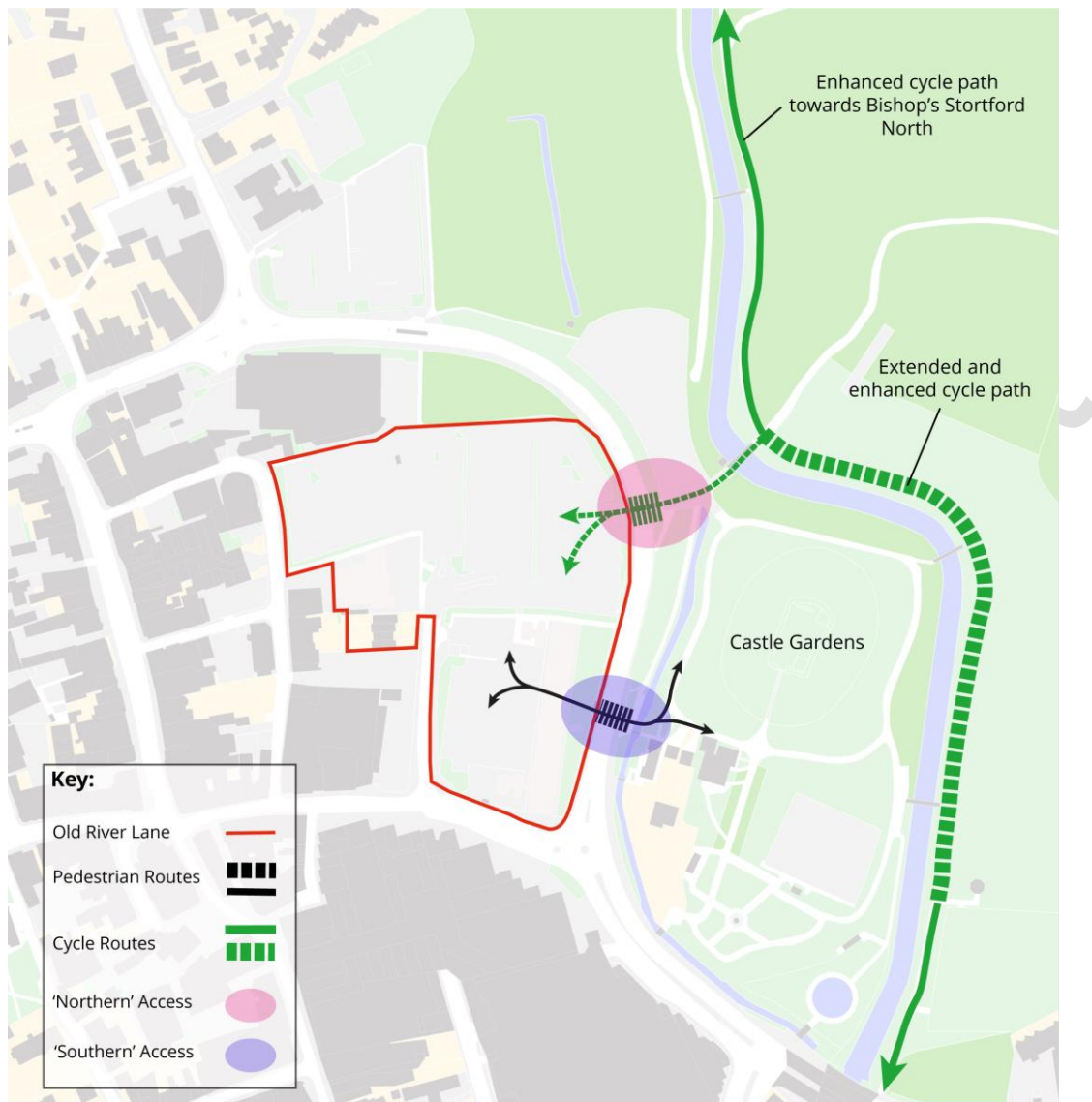


Figure 12: Shows access points to Castle Gardens with potential crossing points and functions

5.0 Constraints and Opportunities

5.1 Identification of Constraints and Opportunities

5.1.1 In carrying out the background research for production of this SPD and undertaking consultation with stakeholders through the Old River Lane Steering Group, a number of opportunities and constraints have emerged. These can be summarised as follows:

Constraint: Traffic and Transportation	Opportunity: Traffic and Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Pedestrian/cycling/vehicular conflict both within and on streets surrounding the siteb) Lack of permeability and connectivity within the sitec) Inadequacy of existing servicing arrangementsd) Lack of cycle parkinge) Poor quality of access for those with disabilitiesf) The sweeping shape of Link Road presents a low quality environmentg) High pollution levels in the nearby Hockerill Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To prioritise walking and cycling as modes of transport within the site and improve permeability for pedestrians and cyclistsb) To rationalise and reduce car parking and improve servicing arrangements/ facilitiesc) To improve external junctions/crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehiclesd) To strengthen pedestrian connections from the town centre to Castle Gardens
Constraint: Public Realm/Environment	Opportunity: Public Realm/Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Lack of legibilityb) Lack of public space within the sitec) A small part of the north-eastern edge of the site is within flood zone 3, most of the site is within flood zone 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To deliver new high quality public spaces within the developmentb) To secure the long term stewardship of public spaces within the developmentc) To consider the use of water features and

Constraint: Traffic and Transportation	Opportunity: Traffic and Transportation
	public art in the design of the new spaces to reference the former route of the River Stort
Constraint: Land Use	Opportunity: Land Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Waitrose own a lease on the portion of car parking to the south of their store, limiting the development potential of this part of the site b) Need to re-provide displaced Waitrose space, totalling around 170 spaces c) The United Reform Church Hall is a valued community asset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To introduce more 'active' uses to create vibrancy during day/evening and at all times of year, including active frontages along Link Road b) To create a high quality mixed use development of retail, leisure uses, along with a civic hub of other commercial and community uses c) To centre new development along a pedestrian-focused north/south route from Bridge Street to the new multi-storey car park to the north of Waitrose d) To extend the retail heart of the town centre and connect the site to North Street via a series of links that reflect the historic character of the existing lanes e) To consider the benefits of including the United Reform Church Hall in proposals to ensure a comprehensive redevelopment of the area f) To promote sustainability in its widest sense
Constraint: Heritage/Landscape	Opportunities: Heritage/Landscape
a) The importance of heritage assets and the	a) To protect and enhance the setting of Listed

Constraint: Traffic and Transportation	Opportunity: Traffic and Transportation
<p>contribution they make to the town centre</p> <p>b) The site has a very attractive historic edge to the west with a prevailing height of one to three storeys</p> <p>c) The unsuitability of Charringtons House to meet modern day needs</p> <p>d) A number of mature trees exist, including Category A (significant value)</p> <p>e) The triangle of trees and green space towards the northern edge of the site should be protected</p> <p>f) Views from within the site to the Church of St Michael and the motte mound of Waytemore Castle and open green spaces should be retained and enhanced</p>	<p>Buildings, the Conservation Area and other important heritage assets, including Coopers building and views to the Church of St Michael and the motte mound of Waytemore Castle</p> <p>b) To create an identity, a sense of place that respects and enhances the historic grain, material palette and massing of the town centre and key assets such as the Water Lane United Reformed Church</p> <p>c) To create an environment of highest quality as part of any new development or redevelopment</p>

6.0 Vision and Development Objectives

6.1 Vision

- 6.1.1 As a result of discussions with the Old River Lane Steering Group the following vision for the site has been developed:

“Old River Lane will be a **high-quality, accessible, and sustainable** redevelopment of a town centre destination that incorporates a **mixture of uses** that contribute to the **vibrancy** of Bishop’s Stortford and **complements the uniqueness** of this historic market town.”

6.2 Development Objectives

- 6.2.1 In bringing forward the vision, the future development of the site should seek to:

Objective 1	Deliver a sensitive redevelopment which enhances Bishop’s Stortford’s historic setting and complements local assets.
Objective 2	Deliver a place which enables active and healthy lifestyles by encouraging sustainable modes of travel that prioritise pedestrian movement over the private car.
Objective 3	Deliver a mix of town centre uses, including arts and culture, to create a vibrant place that supports and complements the wider town centre offer.
Objective 4	Create new high quality public spaces and public realm that are accessible and inclusive to all and establish a civic destination where people can meet and enjoy spending time.
Objective 5	Deliver a place that is increasingly resilient to variable conditions resulting from climate change with environmental sustainability embedded throughout.
Objective 6	Support a sustainable community by providing a mix of housing types, and a range of employment opportunities that meet the local need.

7.0 Design Principles

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The design principles for Old River Lane are based on the constraints and opportunities set out in Chapter 5 and the analysis in the previous chapters.
- 7.1.2 The development of the site should create high quality streets, spaces and buildings. New development will be required to demonstrate high standards of design and architectural quality that enhance the site, the setting of adjoining and nearby Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.

7.2 Movement

- 7.2.1 The location of Old River Lane has the potential to influence patterns of movement across Bishop's Stortford to adjacent areas. The location of the site on the edge of the town centre, with the Castle Gardens and the new multi-storey car park on the opposite side of the Link Road means that the approach to movement will have wider-impacts across the town. Any new development should therefore contribute to creating active and pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces that help to form a legible and attractive pedestrian network in the town centre.
- 7.2.2 It is important to recognise that Old River Lane performs a number of functions, it's a destination, a home, a retail/employment area and it's a route which people will pass through on a longer journey to somewhere else. As such the active travel routes through the site need to make sense in all these contexts and provide the most direct option for people, identifying the key destinations in the wider area and showing how the active travel routes provide the most direct route to those destinations.

7.2.3 The Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework 2016 notes the potential of Old River Lane to create new, clear pedestrian and cycle connections between North Street and Castle Gardens (east-west) as well as providing a clear route from the multi-storey car park at Northgate End, through the development to Bridge Street (north-south).

7.2.4 This section sets out key design principles which will promote modal shift by supporting and encouraging sustainable transport modes of travel, and also address the current movement constraints on the site.

Prioritising Walking

7.2.5 The following design principles will enhance the experience of the pedestrian both within and through the Old River Lane site:

- Proposals should improve walking connections, wayfinding, and legibility from and to Castle Gardens, Northgate End Car Park and Bishop's Stortford Town Centre;
- Proposals should provide safe, secure conditions for walking, with good overlooking providing passive surveillance wherever possible;
- Surface-level crossings and dedicated footways should be provided as part of new streets where applicable;
- There should be better integration of walking routes from North Street, Bridge Street and across the Link Road;
- Opportunities for urban greening through tree planting and soft landscaping should be maximised where possible;
- Provision of seating in appropriate locations on pedestrian routes to support walking by all community groups; also in key spaces to encourage people to meet or dwell and enjoy the public space and the retail environment;
- Materials should be high-quality and accessible for all, with designs that reinforce the individuality of different streets;
- Street lighting should be used to ensure safety, a welcoming ambience after dark, and support for night-time economy activities.

Prioritising Cycling

7.2.6 The following design principles will send out a clear message that the private car is not the preferred mode of travel:

- Proposals should improve cycling connections, wayfinding, and legibility from and to Castle Gardens, Northgate End Car Park and Bishop's Stortford town centre;
- New cycling routes should be integrated with existing cycling routes beyond Old River Lane where possible;
- Proposals should explore opportunities for cycle parking;
 - This should be located in prominent locations with good surveillance to encourage all potential users;
 - Any medium to long-term cycle-parking should be secure and covered;
 - Provision of high levels of private cycle-parking for residential and non-residential uses, making positive use of ground floor and internal courtyard/podium spaces as appropriate.
- Consideration should be given to providing facilities that will encourage employees looking to travel to work by bike, such as showers, changing rooms, and space for lockers;
- Cycle-parking and infrastructure should seek to accommodate non-standard bike types e.g. cargo bikes.

7.3 Parking and Servicing

- 7.3.1 Some level of on-site parking, sufficient to meet the needs of the uses proposed, is expected to be accommodated within the new development at Old River Lane; likewise an access point for cars to continue to enter the Waitrose car park and to service the new buildings means that despite prioritising active travel, vehicular movement and any associated parking will still need to be considered.
- 7.3.2 The Council's 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development' Supplementary Planning Document sets out the amount of spaces that should be provided in association with any new development. However, on this site, given the high level of accessibility to public transport and facilities, there should be a significantly reduced amount of parking, including residential and other uses. All of the following matters should be explored in order to achieve this objective:

Residential Parking

- Travel planning arrangements should encourage and incentivise car free travel;
- Building design and management should facilitate car free living (especially in respect of servicing, deliveries, and cycle storage);
- Development proposals should include car club facilities and incentives;
- Car parking for disabled people should be provided in suitable locations to allow easy and level access to buildings and spaces;
- Permitting opportunities for residents in the adjacent multi-storey car parks at Jackson Square and Northgate End should be explored.

Commercial Parking

- Travel planning arrangements should encourage and incentivise car free travel;
- Consideration should be given to providing facilities that will encourage employees looking to travel to work by bike;
- Permitting opportunities for employees in the adjacent multi-storey car parks at Jackson Square and Northgate End should be explored.

Servicing and Vehicular Access

- Vehicular access into and within the site should be based on the prioritisation of walking and cycling as the preferred method of movement through the site;
- Servicing for retail units should be carefully considered to avoid a detrimental impact on the pedestrianised areas;
- Development proposals should seek to minimise conflict between servicing and vehicular access and pedestrian and cycle movement;
- Proposals should provide a clear summary of how future servicing arrangements will be managed;
- Proposals should demonstrate an integrated approach to the deliveries and collection points (including domestic residential deliveries), with potential to identify consolidated facilities where possible.

7.4 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

7.4.1 Environmental sustainability and climate change have become central considerations in planning and development in recent years. As such, the redevelopment of Old River Lane should seek to provide a development that maximises sustainability at every possible opportunity.

7.4.2 Guidance and policy already exists in this area, and this section of the SPD does not seek to repeat this, but proposals should take into account the following key documents:

- Climate Change Chapter – East Herts District Plan 2018 (Chapter 22)
- The East Herts Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2021
- The Bishop’s Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan emerging update 2022

7.4.3 It should be noted that the emerging Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan has specific policies that relate to climate change which any proposals will need to take account of. Alongside this, the Council, as part of its validation requirements for submitting a planning application, requires all development to submit a **Sustainable Construction, Energy and Water Statement**.

7.4.4 Applicants are also required to submit a **Sustainability Checklist**, which addresses the following topics:

- Energy and carbon reduction
- Climate change adaptation
- Water efficiency
- Pollution: air quality and light pollution
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable transport
- Waste management

7.4.5 The checklist should demonstrate how the development complies with District Plan policies that seek to improve the environmental sustainability of new development and the sustainable design and construction guidance set out in the Sustainability SPD. As part of information provided, development at Old River Lane should also consider the following as part of the Sustainability Checklist:

- The application of opportunities for a fabric first approach to low energy buildings to ensure that the design, materials, construction, and operation of the development seek to minimise overheating in the summer and reduces the need for heating in the winter to reduce energy consumption;
- Integration of green infrastructure, urban greening, and water management;
- Carbon reduction on-site unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable (in such cases effective off-setting measures to reduce on-site carbon emissions will be accepted as allowable solutions);
- Carbon dioxide emissions will be minimised in aspiring to work towards the Council's district-wide goal of net carbon zero by 2030;
- Reduction in energy embodied in construction materials through re-use and recycling of existing materials, where feasible, and the use of sustainable materials and local sourcing;
- Incorporation of high quality, innovative design, new technologies and construction techniques, including low carbon energy and water efficient design and sustainable construction methods;
- Exploration of standards above and beyond the requirements of conversant Building Regulations where appropriate and achievable.
- The Council will encourage, high quality sustainable development and recommends the use of construction standards to demonstrate excellence in sustainable development.

7.5 Layout and Edges

7.5.1 The layout of Old River Lane should support the movement design principles above, and should have connections – through active travel – at the heart of its layout proposals. Likewise, the treatment of edges is essential to how Old River Lane will interact with the surrounding area. Proposals should therefore ensure that the following key principles are taken into account:

- Legibility and access should be at the heart of any layout; encouraging and strengthening connections within and beyond the site itself;
- Edges of the buildings should present active edges;
- Key buildings should be located around any public square or key public space;
- High quality architectural treatment should be focussed on main accesses and entrances and key focal points;
- Along the Link Road the site should provide a streetscene with active edges and passive surveillance.

7.6 Heights, Massing, and Grain

7.6.1 The heights and massing of any development proposal at Old River Lane should be sensitive to the areas adjacent to the site.

7.6.2 The majority of Bishop's Stortford town centre generally displays building heights of around 3-4 storeys. To the south of Old River Lane, Jackson Square is around 4-6 storeys and to the north the new Northgate End multi-storey car park is approximately six storeys high. The main consideration outside of the site which needs to be reflected

in the heights, massing, and grain of any proposal is the impact on heritage assets. In particular, consideration should be given to:

- The retention of the view from Castle Gardens to the Church of St Michael;
- The setting of the motte mound of Waytemore Castle, which is a Grade 1 Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument;
- The various Listed Buildings to the west of the site including; the Coopers malt house building, The Water House, Guild House, 14 Water Lane, and the Water Lane United Reform Church;
- The general townscape of Bishop's Stortford, including how the heights, massing, and grain of the development proposals impact on the character and appearance of the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area.

7.6.3 The above principles should inform the masterplan for the site, and also be comprehensively addressed within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and the Heritage Statement submitted as part of any planning application.

7.6.4 Alongside the above considerations, the height, massing, and grain of any proposals should give consideration to the potential impact on the amenities of the surroundings and the internal area of the site, including the impact of design decisions on the proposed public spaces to be created. Specifically, careful consideration should be given to the potential impacts of particular issues, including, but not limited to:

- daylight/sunlight;
- noise;
- light glare;
- overbearing impact;
- effect of wind;
- outlook/aspect;
- privacy;

- effect on green infrastructure;
- Increase in the sense of enclosure.

7.6.5 Particular care should be taken to ensure that the daylight/sunlight impacts are positive around any public space, or key pedestrian routes.

7.7 Public Realm

7.7.1 Policy BISH8 requires the creation of new streets and public spaces and as such having a high-quality public realm will be key to the successful implementation of these public spaces and streets at Old River Lane.

7.7.2 The public realm should be accessible to all and an attractive, welcoming, and safe environment. The following design principles should apply:

- Logical and well located street furniture which avoids clutter and superfluous furniture, barriers and signs;
- Use of street lighting to ensure safety, a welcoming ambience after dark, and support for night-time economy activities;
- Good signage and legibility; with a consistent and coordinated design of these elements across the development;
- Robust selection of materials that provide longevity and are serviceable over the long-term;
- Consideration should be given for opportunities for public art that can enhance the character of the Old River Lane site, reference local characteristics or history, and aide legibility within the site;
- High-quality, robust, hard and soft landscaping, including planting and the retention of existing mature trees where possible. Planting should be used to reinforce key routes and improve connections. All planting should complement the character and function of the adjacent public realm.
- SUDS within the site should be carefully considered as part of a holistic design process so as to integrate with the surrounding public realm, including hard and soft landscaping.
- Ensure long term stewardship and governance of public spaces and public realm for the benefit of the community.

8.0 Strategic Masterplanning Framework

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The strategic masterplanning framework is the culmination of information presented in the previous chapters and reflects the vision and development objectives for Old River Lane.

8.2 Town Centre Planning Framework 2016

8.2.1 The Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework (TCPF) initially presented two illustrative options for the redevelopment of Old River Lane; both of these are shown below:

Option 'A'



Option 'B'

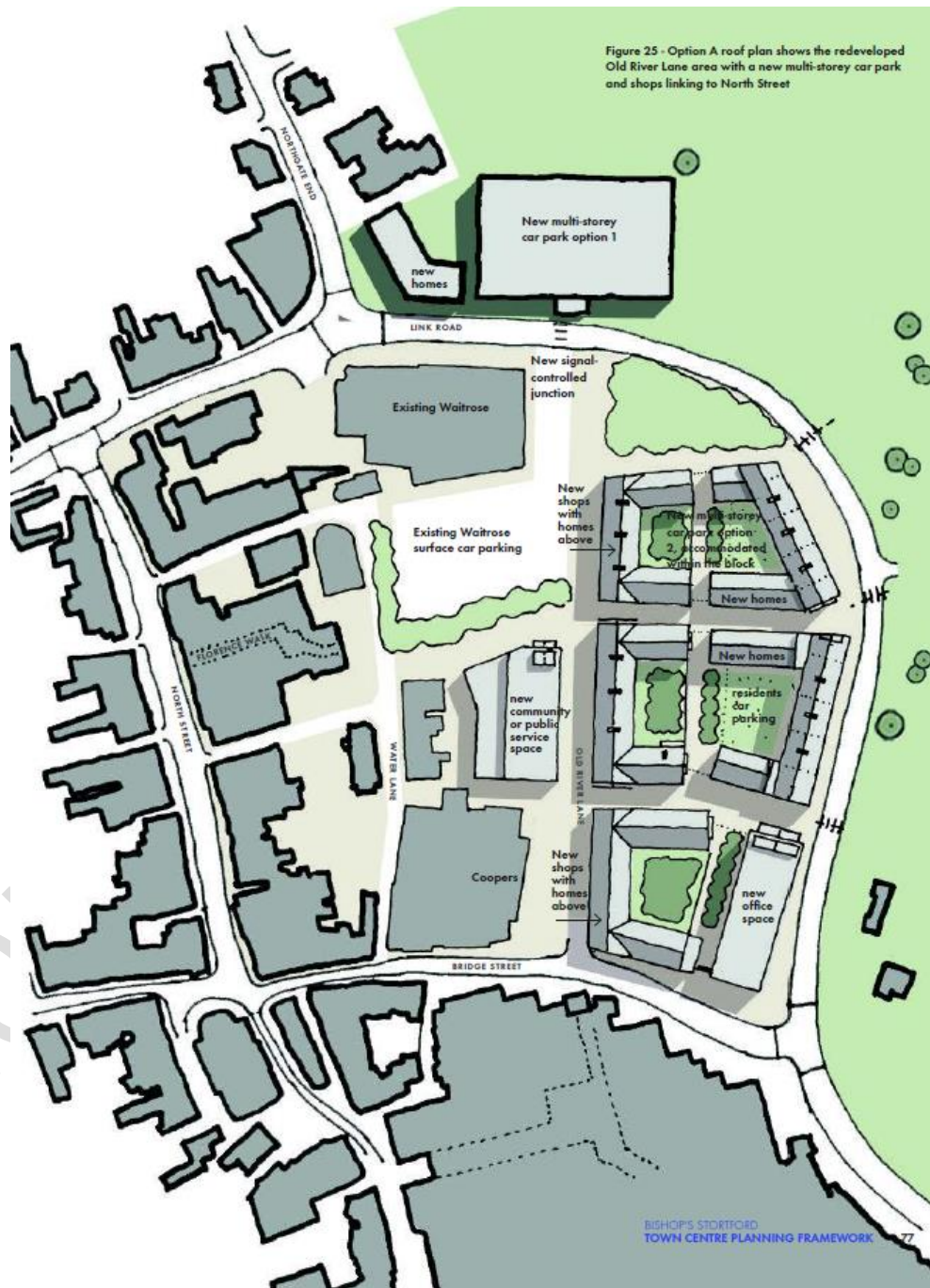


Figure 13 and 14: show the two illustrative options set out in the TCPF

8.2.2 'Option A' illustrates the ground floor plan of the development, showing larger retail units along Old River Lane with new homes in blocks towards Castle Gardens.

8.2.3 'Option B' demonstrates a less comprehensive redevelopment option, with the United Reform Church (URC) Hall retained and an option for a northern block to come forward at a later date.

Figure 15: shows a detailed version of 'Option A'



- 8.2.4 **Figure 15** above demonstrates a more detailed version of 'Option A'. Proposals at that time included the demolition of Charrington's House, the URC Hall and the three dwellings located to the south of the URC Hall.
- 8.2.5 Alongside the delivery of four new blocks of development, this proposal, as well as Option B, both presented a significant change in the infrastructure and accessing arrangements for Old River Lane. A new 4-way signal controlled junction to the north of the site was proposed as the main entrance into the site and the Waitrose car park. Both options presented a reduction in the need for the current southern vehicular access point and allowed for the widening of the footpaths along Bridge Street.
- 8.2.6 Since 2016 further work has been undertaken to refine these options, including the adoption of the District Plan 2018 which sets out criteria for the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site.

8.3 Refining Options

Vehicular Access

- 8.3.1 Following publication of the Town Centre Planning Framework, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as Highways Authority has taken the opportunity to further revise its proposals for the Old River Lane site, having concluded that the 4-way signal controlled junction to the north of the site is not feasible.
- 8.3.2 Alternative options were explored with HCC, as summarised in **Figure 16** below. It was concluded that a western access wasn't feasible due to its impact on existing car park arrangements and listed buildings in the vicinity. Whilst a southern access was possible it would detract from the quality of the public realm and pedestrian experience and so wasn't a preferred option. The preferred solution was an eastern access off Link Road.

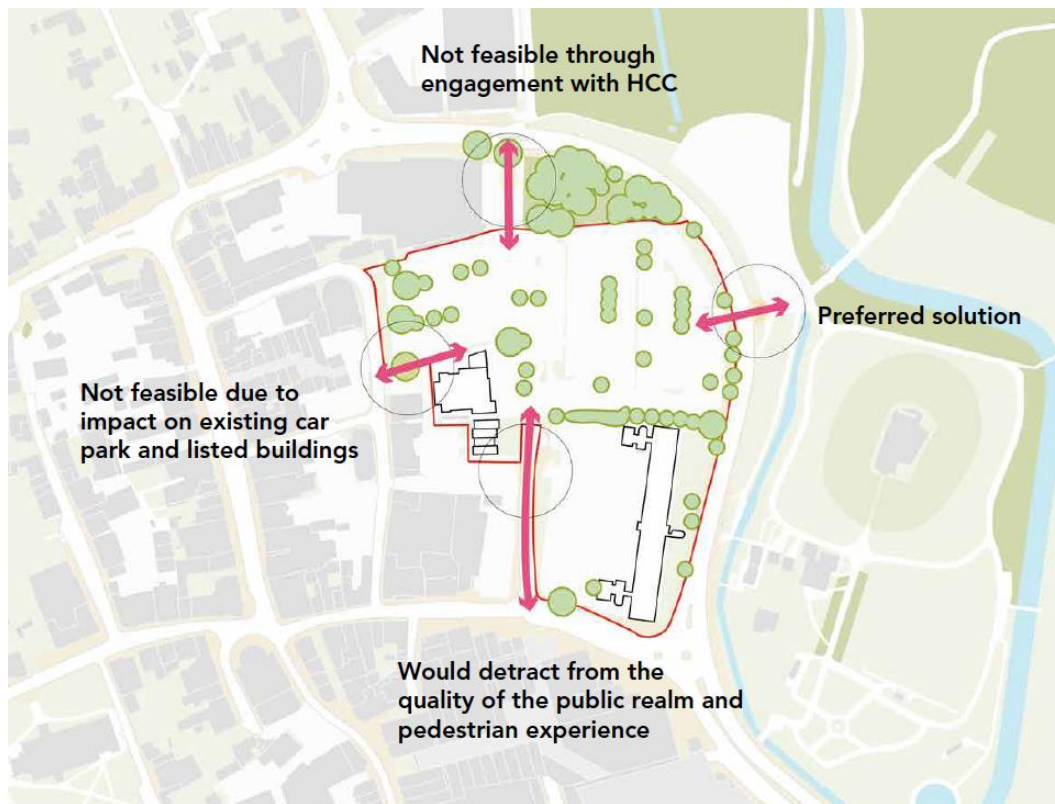


Figure 16: identifies the location of the potential access points into Old River Lane with the preferred option shown to the east

Waitrose car park

- 8.3.3 Further discussion has also been held with Waitrose, specifically around re-providing around 170 spaces to service their demand. This requirement and how this provision is configured will have implications for the proposals.

Layout

- 8.3.4 The Town Centre Planning Framework presented illustrative options for the site which looked at a configuration of three or four main blocks for development, with the Waitrose car park to the north-west of the site and the main access point to the north.
- 8.3.5 Following the review of vehicular access options, and the preferred eastern access being identified, this has necessitated a reconfiguration of the layout.

8.3.6 Further consideration has also been given to Policy BISH8 (Old River Lane) which requires the masterplan for the site to address, inter alia, the following:

- (b) the creation of new streets and public spaces;
- (c) connections between the site and the existing town centre, towards Castle Gardens and to parking areas off Link Road;
- (d) a reduction in traffic speed along Link Road, with new or enhanced crossing points;
- (e) a design and layout which respects the significance and relationship of the site with designated and undesignated heritage assets, within the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Conservation Area;
- (f) key frontages such as Cooper's will be enhanced by new public realm and building that reflect locally distinctive materials and design.

8.3.7 The above matters have all been taken into account in the Strategic Masterplanning Framework set out below.

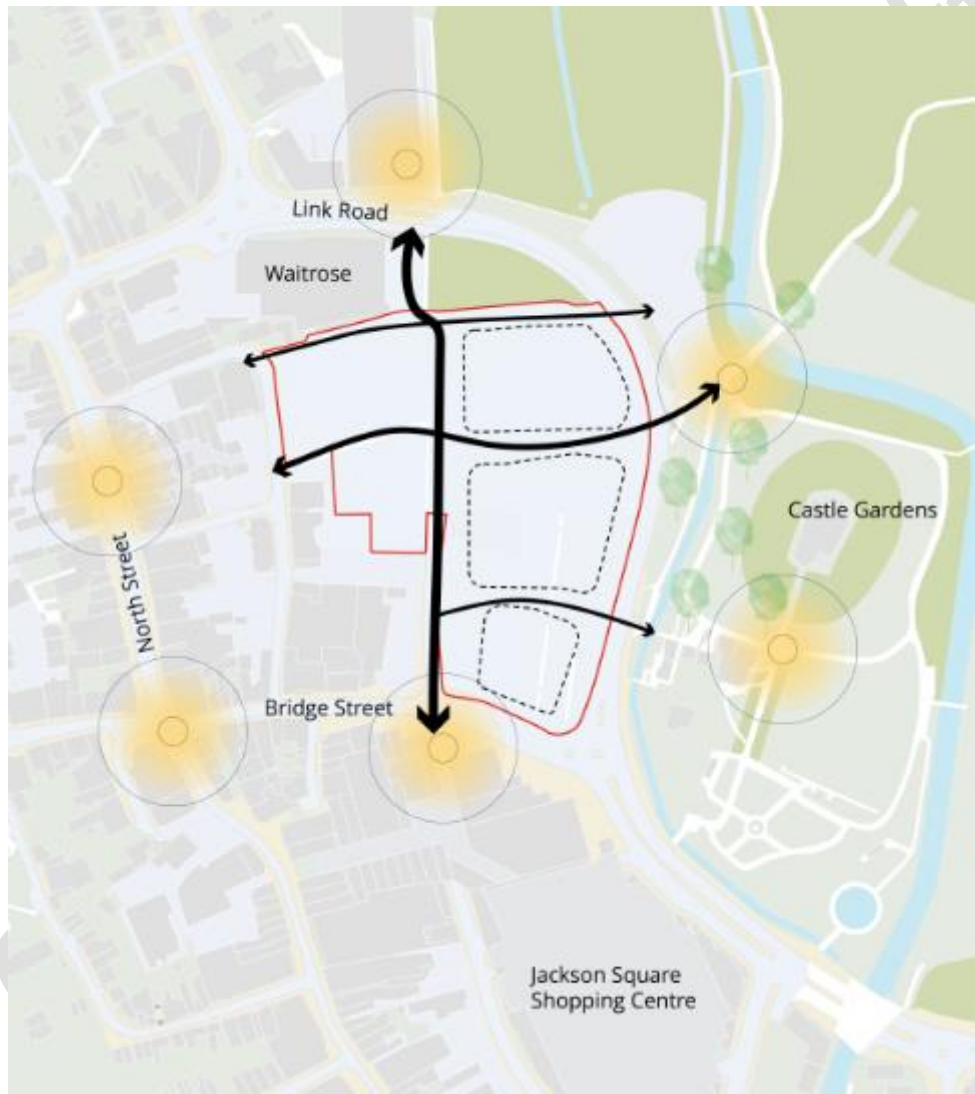
8.4 Strategic Masterplanning Framework

8.4.1 The Strategic Masterplanning Framework responds to the constraints and opportunities presented in Chapter 5; and reflects the vision and development objectives set out in Chapter 6. Proposals will also need to meet the policy requirements set out in BISH8 and expanded upon in Chapter 3, as well as consider the design principles set out in Chapter 7.

8.4.2 The Strategic Masterplanning Framework will:

- Reinforce existing connections
- Create new public spaces
- Embed green infrastructure
- Extend the commercial heart of Bishop's Stortford

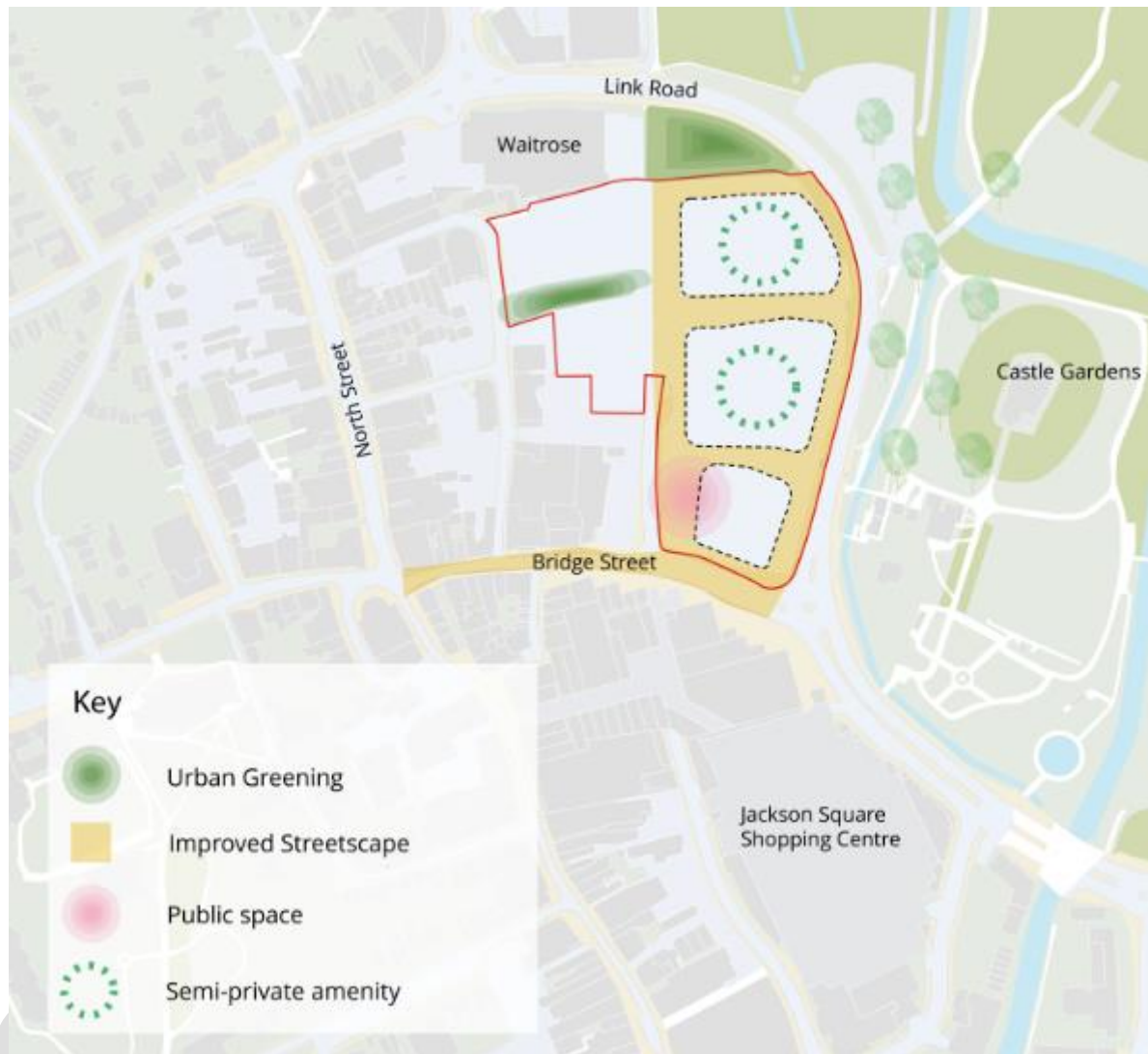
Figure 17: Reinforce existing connections



8.4.3 High quality routes along desire lines should be created to connect the town's main assets. The pattern of development should allow for good desire lines through the site to Castle Gardens as well as from the town centre towards the Northgate End multi-

storey car park. The north-south route between Waitrose and Jackson Square should be pedestrianised.

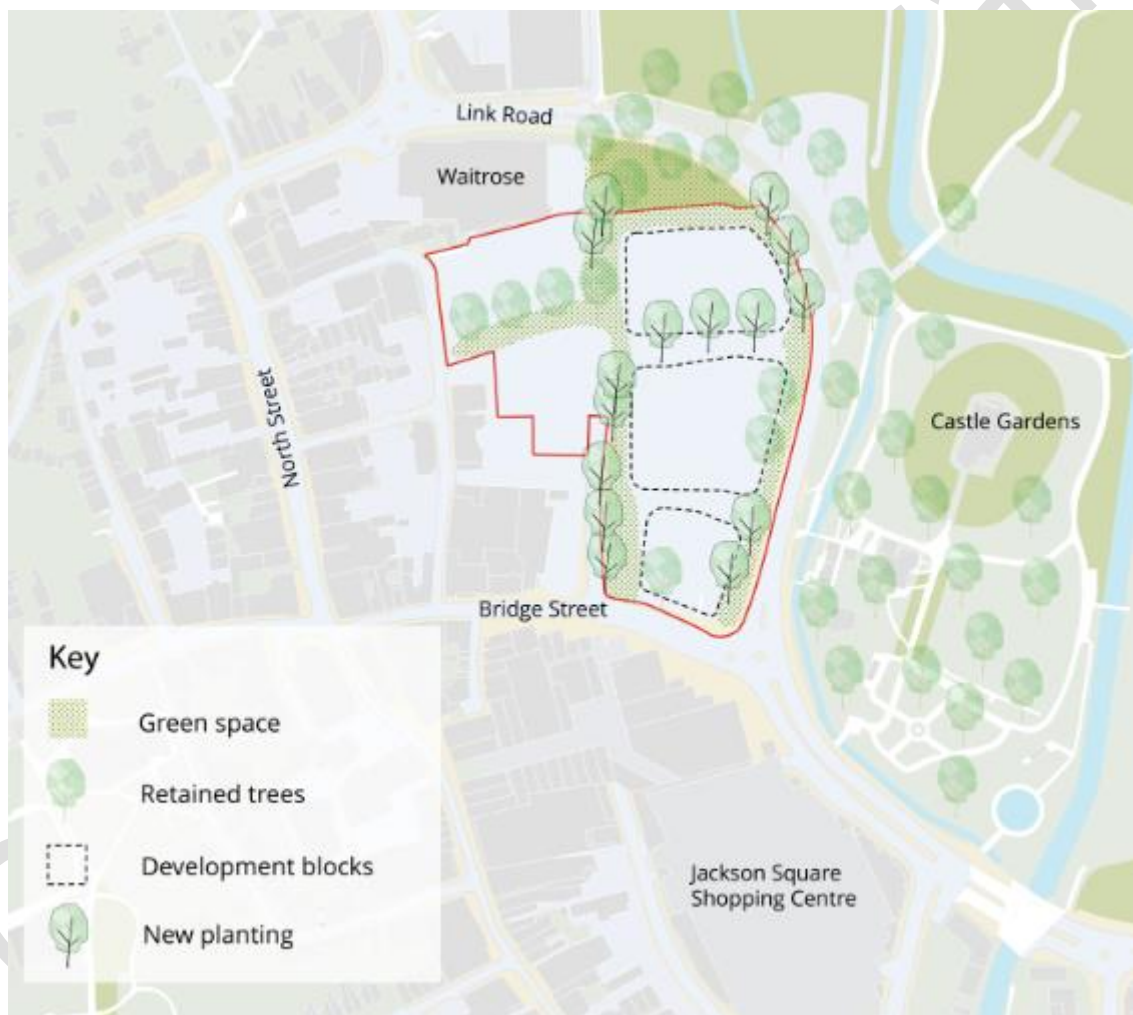
Figure 18: Create new public spaces



8.4.4 High quality new streets will be created and public spaces will be provided in strategic locations alongside key frontages and buildings, including Coopers and along Bridge Street.

8.4.5 Any public square should provide a welcoming, legible, and adaptable public space at the confluence of pedestrian and cycle routes, with active edges presenting retail opportunities, generous levels of passive surveillance, benches to meet and rest on, and public art to reinforce a memorable character that enhances the character and appearance of the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area.

Figure 19: Embed green infrastructure



8.4.6 Proposals should utilise and incorporate existing green infrastructure, taking account of the large mature trees present across the site. Planting should be used to reinforce key routes and improve connections.

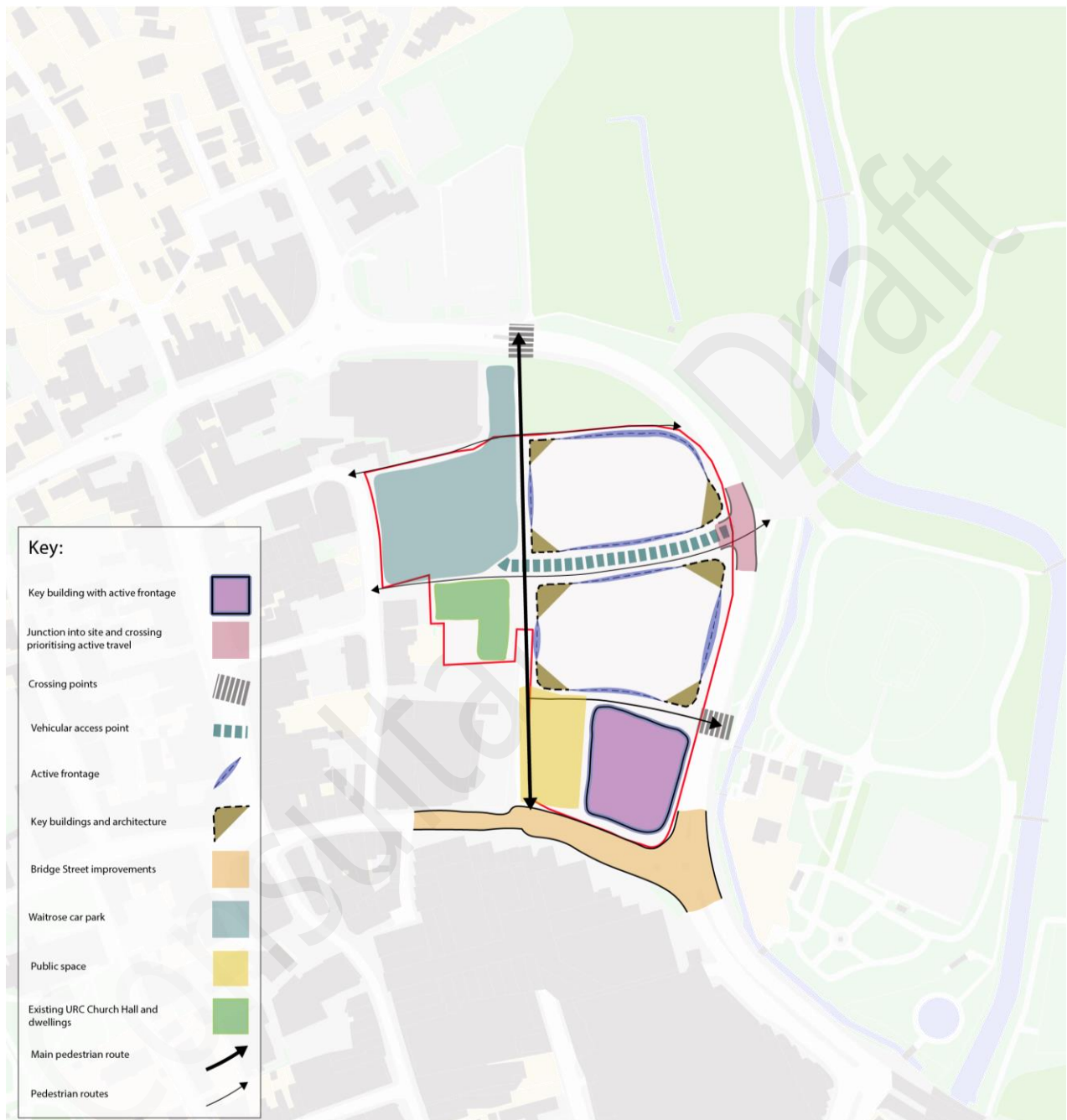
Figure 20: Extend the commercial heart of Bishop's Stortford



8.4.7 A variety of new leisure, Food and Beverage (F&B) and workspaces should be delivered to create a vibrant new area of the town centre. Active frontages on Link Road and around public spaces will be encouraged. A mix of residential accommodation, including affordable housing, should create an inclusive community by providing homes for all ages.

8.4.8 The Strategic Masterplanning Framework set out below will ensure that Old River Lane is a high-quality, accessible, and sustainable redevelopment of a town centre destination that incorporates a mixture of uses that contribute to the vibrancy of Bishop's Stortford and complements the uniqueness of this historic market town.

Figure 21: The Strategic Masterplanning Framework



8.4.9 The Strategic Masterplanning Framework should be used to inform the emerging proposals for Old River Lane.

8.5 Delivery and Phasing

- 8.5.1 This SPD has identified a need to improve a range of existing infrastructure. The following section should inform S106 discussions so that proposals can mitigate the impact of development, including cumulative impacts and improved infrastructure. The full list and scope of individual planning obligations requirements will be defined in detail through the consideration of the planning application/s.
- 8.5.2 It is expected that S106 obligations and financial contributions will be related to each individual development phase of the proposals such that infrastructure improvements and works are both necessary and reasonably related to the proposed development being carried out. This will also be related to the specific land use(s) proposed and the individual impacts.
- 8.5.3 Residential development is likely to result in increased demands for community infrastructure such as public open space, sports, health and community facilities and additional school and nursery places. Some of these demands will be met on site and others via commuted sums to provide new or enhanced infrastructure off site.
- 8.5.4 Transport improvements will be needed on and off site. Such transport improvements and other necessary mitigation measures will need to be identified through the Transport Assessment process that will accompany any planning application/s. Waste and recycling facilities will also need to be secured.
- 8.5.5 Financial contributions towards improvements to public realm and the provision of on street servicing areas and other forms of external infrastructure should be related to the development phase as it takes place.

Indicative Planning Obligations Schedule

Residential development	Affordable Housing – on-site provision of up to 40% subject to viability; affordable housing tenure split to be agreed in detail buy starting point will be the requirements set out in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD. Other requirements relative to number of units being proposed e.g. education, open space, community facilities, library, transport and highways requirements.
All types of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public realm improvements • Landscaping, trees and greening • Pedestrian improvements • Improved pedestrian connectivity particularly east-west and north-south and with surrounding green spaces • Improved signage and way finding • Active frontage strategy • Public safety enhancements and improved lighting • Contributions to strategic transport projects • Public transport strategy and improvements • Other transport and highways improvements • Car clubs • Electric motor vehicle charging points • Improved short and long term public cycle parking provision • Sustainability and energy requirements including waste and recycling • Public art
Other site specific requirements	To be identified through individual planning application/s taking account of assessment of impacts.

8.5.6 Issues such as timing of delivery, triggers and amount of financial contributions where applicable will be considered in respect of individual planning application/s.

9.0 Planning Application Requirements

9.1 Requirements

- 9.1.1 Given the sensitivities of the Old River Lane site, any planning application should include the following supporting evidence, in accordance with national planning policy and the Council's adopted planning policy framework. The list below is not exhaustive, as additional requirements may arise as a result of site specific conditions.
- 9.1.2 Furthermore, in order to ensure that the level of detailed assessment is relevant to any particular planning application, applicants should enter into pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority.

Planning Requirements:

- Affordable Housing Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity and Ecology Survey
- Carbon Reduction Template
- Community Facilities Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Economic and Business Development Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Assessment
- Foul Sewerage and Utilities Assessment
- Heritage Statement including Archaeological Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Light Impact Assessment
- Masterplan
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Phasing/Implementation Construction Statement
- Planning Obligations Statement including Draft Heads of Terms
- Planning Statement
- Retail Impact Assessment
- Sustainability Checklist (including Old River Lane SPD requirements)
- Sustainability Construction, Energy and Water Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Tree Survey/Arboricultural Report