

# East Herts Strategic Vision



March 2025

PRIOR  
+ PTNRS



This document has been prepared by Prior + Partners Ltd and was commissioned by East Herts District Council.

Prior + Partners are an integrated planning, masterplanning and economics practice working to unlock the potential of places and communities around the globe. The practice works creatively and collaboratively to help clients and communities to articulate the story of their place, regularly preparing place visions and narratives, transformational masterplans and clear planning strategies.

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# Introduction

## Our Vision

The East Herts Strategic Vision has been developed by East Herts Council as part of a collaborative approach to chart a clear and ambitious course for the District's future. This Vision is the result of in-depth discussions and a participatory process, aiming to address the opportunities and challenges that East Herts is facing, both now and in the future.

By focusing on the District's strengths and unique characteristics, the Vision seeks to embrace East Herts' distinct identity while preparing for societal, environmental, and technological changes that will shape the years ahead.

The Vision provides a framework for guiding the District's strategic direction, ensuring that growth is sustainable, inclusive, and reflective of the community's needs and aspirations.

As the Council looks towards the future, the Strategic Vision will serve as the golden thread for the new District Plan, informing policies and decision-making that will shape East Herts in the years to come.

## Purpose

Our Vision is intended to challenge current thinking and provide a unified direction for the Council's approach to growth, ensuring that future development is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. It aims to strengthen existing communities, facilitate the creation of new, vibrant ones, and position East Herts to capitalise on future trends such as digital and environmental innovation.

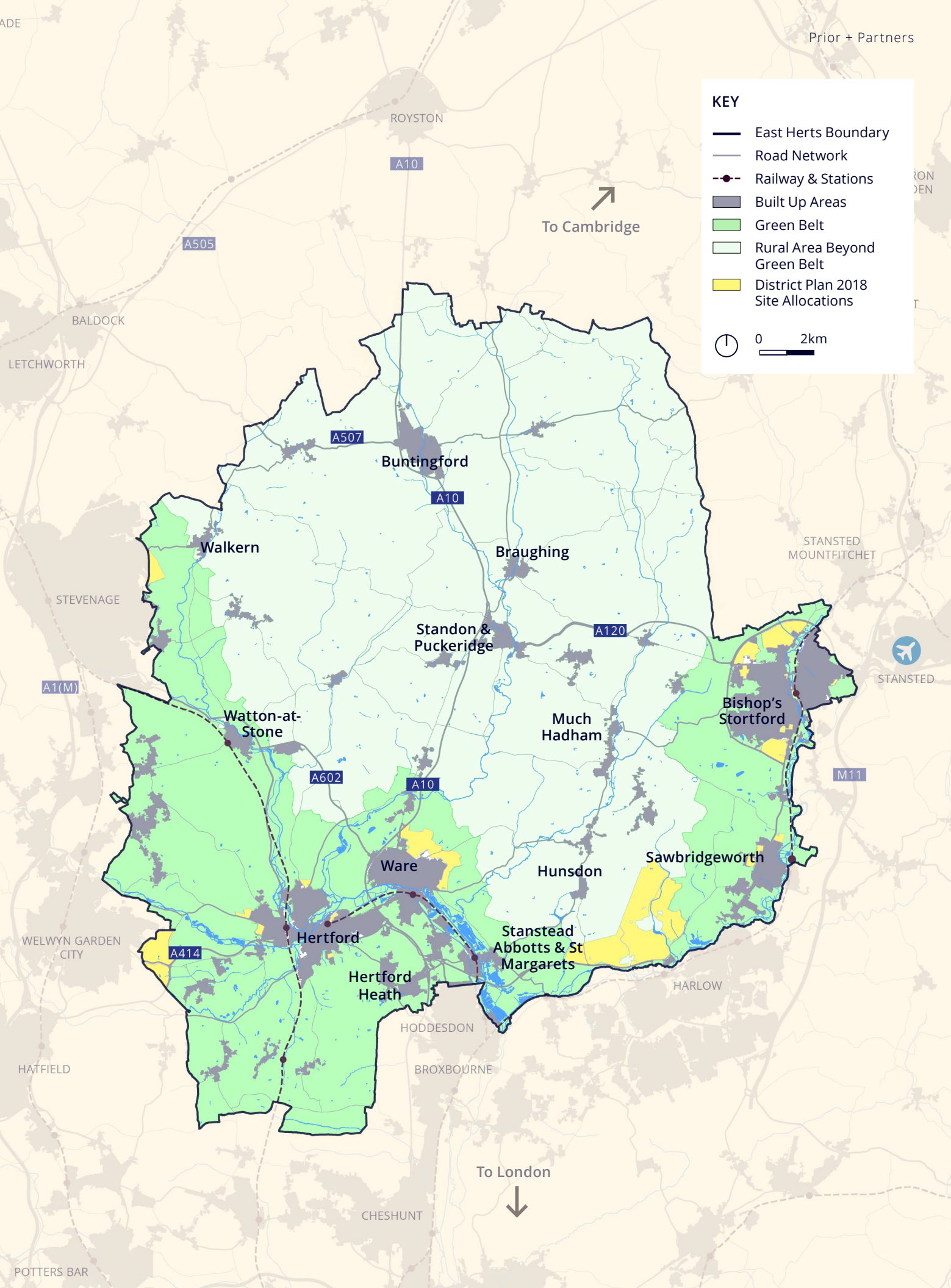
The Vision also serves as a tool for engaging residents, stakeholders, and partners, ensuring that the district's future is shaped not by chance, but by a clear, shared understanding of where East Herts is headed. By embedding climate change mitigation, sustainability, and inclusivity at its core, the Vision will help to navigate the District through evolving challenges, laying the foundation for a prosperous and resilient future for all who live and work in East Herts.

Beyond the District Plan, the Vision will remain a central point of reference, supporting discussions about future growth, investment and strategic priorities beyond planning.

**KEY**

- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas
- Green Belt
- Rural Area Beyond Green Belt
- District Plan 2018 Site Allocations

0 2km



# How we developed our Vision

## A collaborative approach

The Strategic Vision was developed through an active, engaging and participative process aimed at facilitating collaborative working. As part of this process, two stakeholder engagement workshops were held in Ware, Hertfordshire, consisting of:

### → Workshop 1

The here + now: Understanding East Herts today and building towards a Vision.

### → Workshop 2

East Herts: Towards a Vision

A key focus throughout has been to develop the Vision collaboratively, with councillors and the Council's leadership team, sharing ideas and finding consensus and support towards a future blueprint.

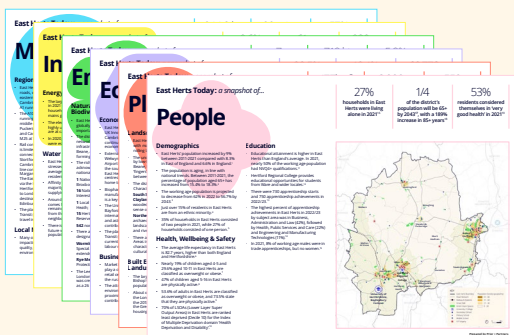
Each workshop was attended by approximately 60 stakeholders, with participants including elected members across East Herts Council, East Herts' Council Senior Leadership Team, Key Officers from various departments including Planning Policy, Design and Conservation, Urban Design, Development Management, Sustainability, Housing and Health, and Economic Development.

The workshops consisted of tailored activities supported by graphic material and documents.

Activities in Workshop 2 were directly informed by outputs from Workshop 1, supporting a process where joint exploration, validation and challenge of lived experiences, ideas, trends and aspirations for the future has directly fed into the Strategic Vision, resulting in a shared Vision that has been co-produced and authored by all involved.



# Timeline of engagement



1

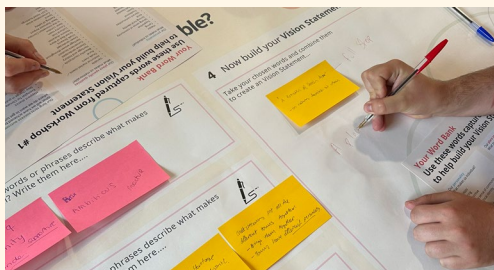
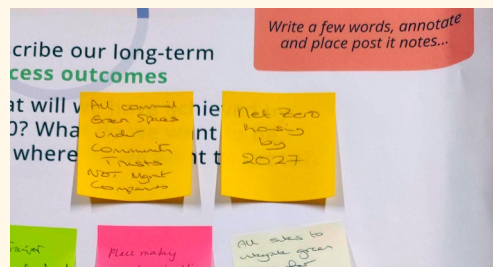
## Building an evidence base

To gain an initial understanding of East Herts as it is today, insights gathered from GIS and Census data were synthesised into a series of informative baseline posters, to help inform discussions for Workshop 1.

2

## Workshop 1, June 2024

Building on the evidence base, a series of activities allowed us to validate, challenge and further understand East Herts through our lived experience. We began to think about our aspirations for the future.



4

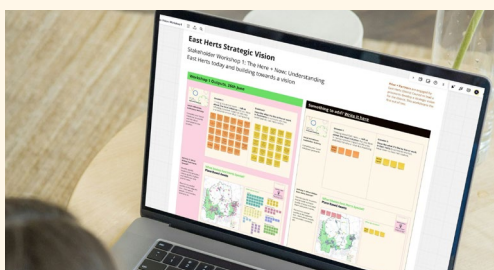
## Workshop 2, July 2024

Continuing to think about local and global trends, we explored different future scenarios to help us draft Vision statements, reflecting who we are now, and where we want to be in the future.

3

## Futures Thinking

Through a futures flipbook, we looked towards global and national trends and how they might impact East Herts, inspiring us to think creatively about how to plan for a more positive future.



5

## Sharing inputs

Inputs from each workshop were recorded onto an online platform, Miroboard. This allowed for wider viewing and further engagement.

6

## Drafting the Vision

Combining our shared understanding of East Herts and the future we aspire to, our Strategic Vision was developed, forming key engagement material for the upcoming District Plan review.



# East Herts today

## Our District

East Herts is a great place to live and work. Strategically located to major global centres such as London and Cambridge, East Herts offers a balance of rural and urban living, great access to nature and open green and blue space, and a rich tapestry of cultural networks, active town centres and local businesses.

The district's distinct local character, rich heritage and high quality environment contribute to its' strong sense of identity and community pride amongst residents.

But where we have strengths, we are also challenged. We can only ensure a district fit for current and future generations if we take stock and recognise areas that must improve.

Covering the themes of People, Place, Economy, Environment, Infrastructure and Movement, a snapshot of our strengths and challenges are highlighted across the following pages, helping to focus our aspirations for the future and toward a Vision that will inform future decision-making for East Herts.







# People

## Strengths

East Herts is a great place to live and our vibrant communities are a testament to that. People here are healthy and happy, and the district is renowned for its outstanding educational and leisure facilities, making it a desirable place for individuals and families seeking a high quality of life.

The welcoming communities in East Herts are deeply connected, with residents who care for one another, evident in the many community groups and strong volunteering sector, and are dedicated to ensuring the well-being of future generations.

Nature and the outdoors are embraced across the district, with residents benefiting from a wealth of walking, cycling, and outdoor recreational opportunities that promote health and well-being.

## Challenges

While East Herts is generally prosperous, there are pockets of deprivation across the district. The demand for new housing, combined with high house prices, exacerbates this issue, highlighting underlying social challenges in some areas. The increasing demand for housing, coupled with rising house prices and cost of living, has made it difficult for many young people and families to find affordable homes, leading to longer stays with parents, or moving out of the area and separating families.

There is also a growing demographic trend toward ageing residents, many of whom require specialised support and accommodation. Addressing these challenges is crucial to sustaining vibrant, multi-generational communities where all residents feel supported and valued.

### 307<sup>th</sup>

out of 317 ranked lower tier authority on the indices of multiple deprivation (1 being most deprived).

### 53%

of residents in 2021 considered themselves in 'very good health'.

### 25%

of the districts population will be 65 years and older by 2043, with a 189% increase in people aged 85 years and above.

### 14.9%

of households in East Herts are classified as 'financially stretched'.



**KEY**

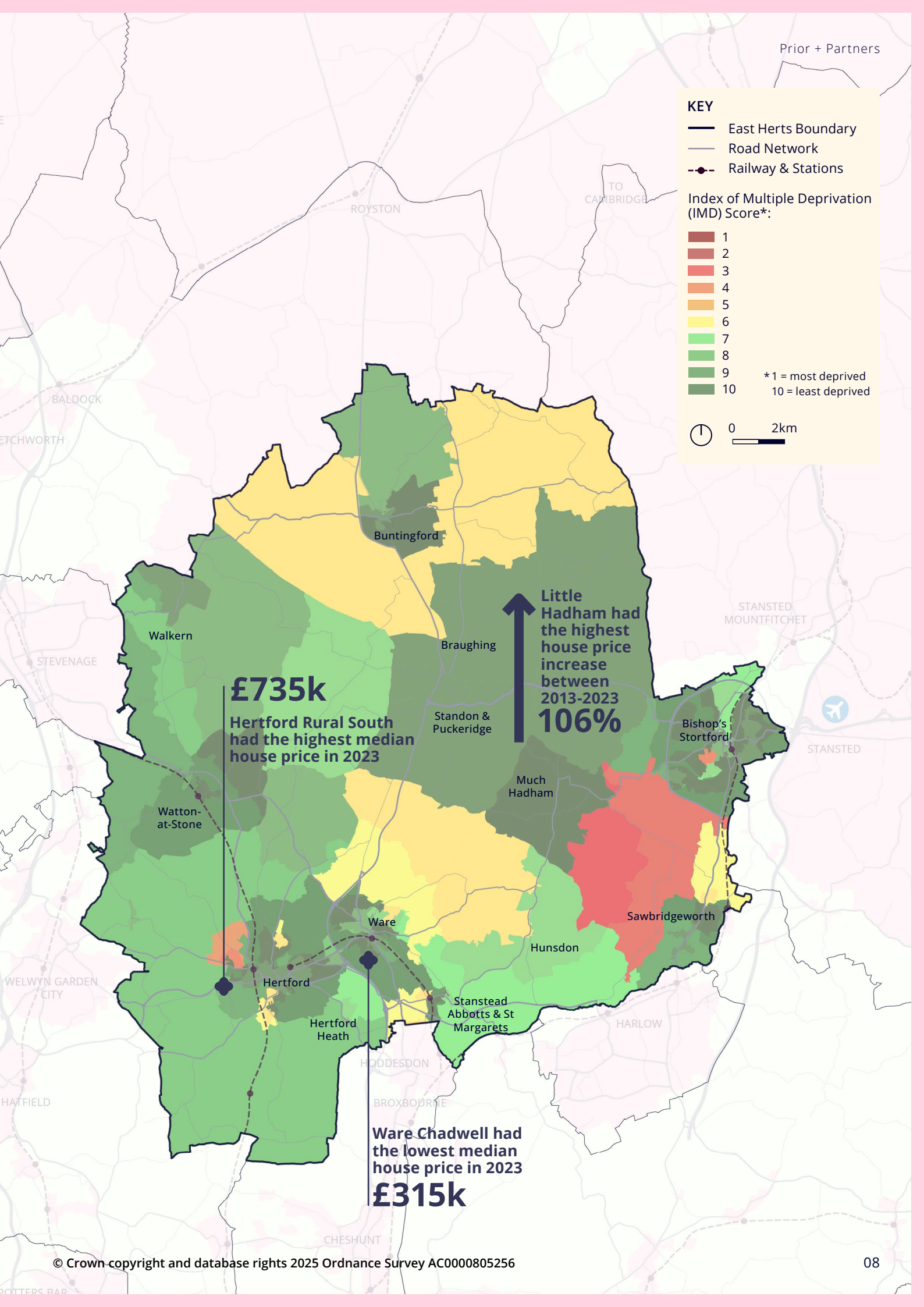
- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations

**Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Score\*:**

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

\* 1 = most deprived  
10 = least deprived

0 2km



**£735k**  
Hertford Rural South had the highest median house price in 2023

↑  
Little Hadham had the highest house price increase between 2013-2023  
**106%**

Ware Chadwell had the lowest median house price in 2023  
**£315k**

# Place

## Strengths

East Herts, with its historic market towns and picturesque villages, possesses a unique charm and character. This fosters a strong sense of place and identity among residents.

Market towns and villages within East Herts have strong local identities shaped by rich heritage, community groups and seasonal events. Our vibrant high streets have remained resilient despite recent economic challenges, and continue to support local independent businesses as places of culture, leisure and entertainment.

Our incredible open spaces, parks, and waterways are valuable assets that provide leisure opportunities for residents and attract visitors from surrounding areas.

## Challenges

East Herts faces significant pressures on housing affordability and delivery. The high cost of homes and the limited availability of social housing create barriers for many residents, particularly younger generations and those with fewer means.

These pressures must be balanced against preserving the district's protected areas, and the local character and identity of its settlements. New developments can sometimes lack the distinct elements that give East Herts its unique charm and identity.

59

local Landscape Character Areas in East Herts, each with distinct characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features.

3000+

Heritage Listed Buildings across the district.

64

Grade II Listed Buildings are identified at risk by the Local Heritage at Risk Register.

9.5

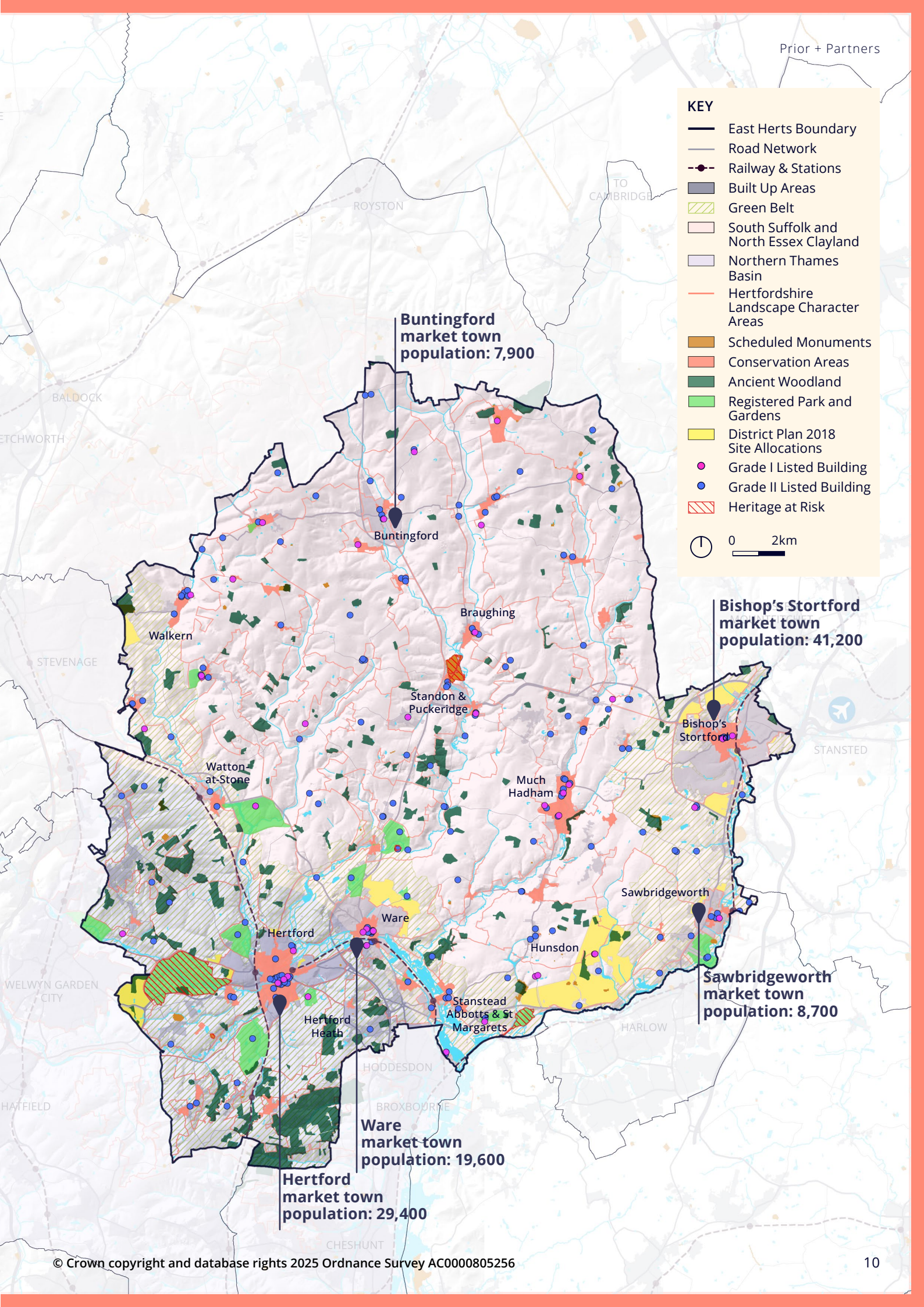
house price to earnings ratio, compared to 8.1 in England and Wales.



**KEY**

- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas
- ▨ Green Belt
- South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- Northern Thames Basin
- Hertfordshire Landscape Character Areas
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Ancient Woodland
- Registered Park and Gardens
- District Plan 2018 Site Allocations
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- ▨ Heritage at Risk

0 2km



# Economy

## Strengths

At the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor (formerly LSCC), East Herts is central to a broader area of economic growth and innovation that is critical to the UK economy. In particular, GSK, a leading biopharma company, has a global manufacturing facility located in Ware and is a key employer in the area. Many residents also work in nearby innovation hubs such as Stevenage, Cambridge, London, Harlow, and also at Stansted Airport, made possible through the existing inter-district connections that are essential to local economic success.

The local economy is also driven by the district's many market towns and villages, which serve as retail centres, employment areas, and tourism destinations, allowing locally owned micro-businesses to flourish. SMEs form a vital part of the wealth generation within the district's economy.

## Challenges

The district faces economic challenges entwined with local mobility and housing affordability. Weak east to west transport connectivity within the district poses challenges to ensuring all residents can access employment opportunities, and high housing costs are driving out our young workforce and key workers.

There is a need to support local and small businesses in finding suitable premises for growth, and to address the potential impact of home-based businesses on future business rates. In a district where the rural economy is the most significant in terms of land holdings, our agricultural industries and food security is threatened amidst the challenges of climate change.

Improving the local job market and supporting sustainable economic growth will be key to creating thriving communities across the district.

**19%**

of enterprises in East Herts are in the 'Professional, Scientific & Technical' industry group.

**90%**

of enterprises in 2023 were micro-sized (0-9 employees).

**2/3**

of land in East Herts is made up of rural areas, with more than 400 agricultural holdings.

**15%**

of all businesses formed in 2016 survived at least five years.



**KEY**

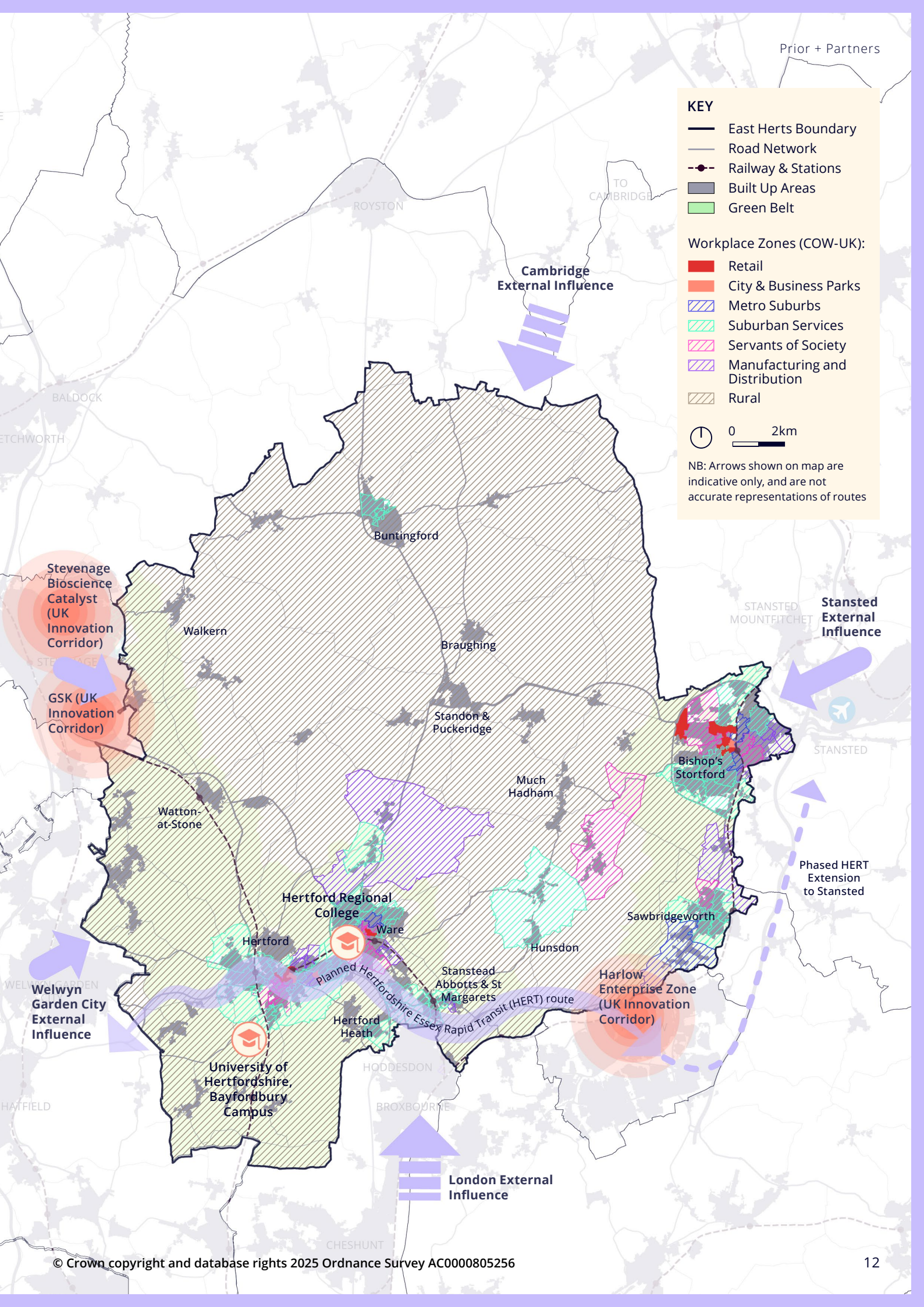
- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas
- Green Belt

**Workplace Zones (COW-UK):**

- Retail
- City & Business Parks
- Metro Suburbs
- Suburban Services
- Servants of Society
- Manufacturing and Distribution
- Rural

0 2km

NB: Arrows shown on map are indicative only, and are not accurate representations of routes



# Environment

## Strengths

From rare chalk streams to ancient woodlands, East Herts is home to an incredibly rich and diverse natural environment. This variety enhances the quality of life for residents and fosters a strong connection to the natural world. Almost all of East Herts' rivers are chalk streams, making up 7 of around 210 globally.

Residents enjoy easy access to nature through an extensive public right-of-way network and opportunities to use the waterways, supported by numerous green spaces and country parks in and around urban areas.

Local communities have shown their commitment to environmental protection and reducing carbon emissions through habitat protection initiatives, participation in solar schemes, and organised litter-picking efforts.

**542**

non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites, 16 national Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 15 wildlife trust reserves, and 1 Local Nature Reserve.

**7**

out of 210 globally rare chalk streams are located in East Herts.

## Challenges

Many of East Herts' natural assets and resources are under threat from climate change and human activity. Pollution from development and waste endangers ecologically important sites, including globally rare chalk streams, and climate change is resulting in hotter and drier seasons, contributing to water scarcity and flood risk. This issue is compounded by the over-extraction of natural resources, which could impact on the district's capacity for new development if not addressed.

Heavy reliance on private vehicles and non-renewable energy sources means households and businesses across East Herts contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

To protect the environment and embrace net-zero, innovative solutions are needed to promote sustainable lifestyles.

**718kt**

total greenhouse Gas emissions in East Herts in 2021, down from 965kt in 2011.

**6.5%**

Mortality rate attributable to particulate air pollution in residents aged 30 years and above.





**KEY**

- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas
- ▨ Green Belt
- Surface Water

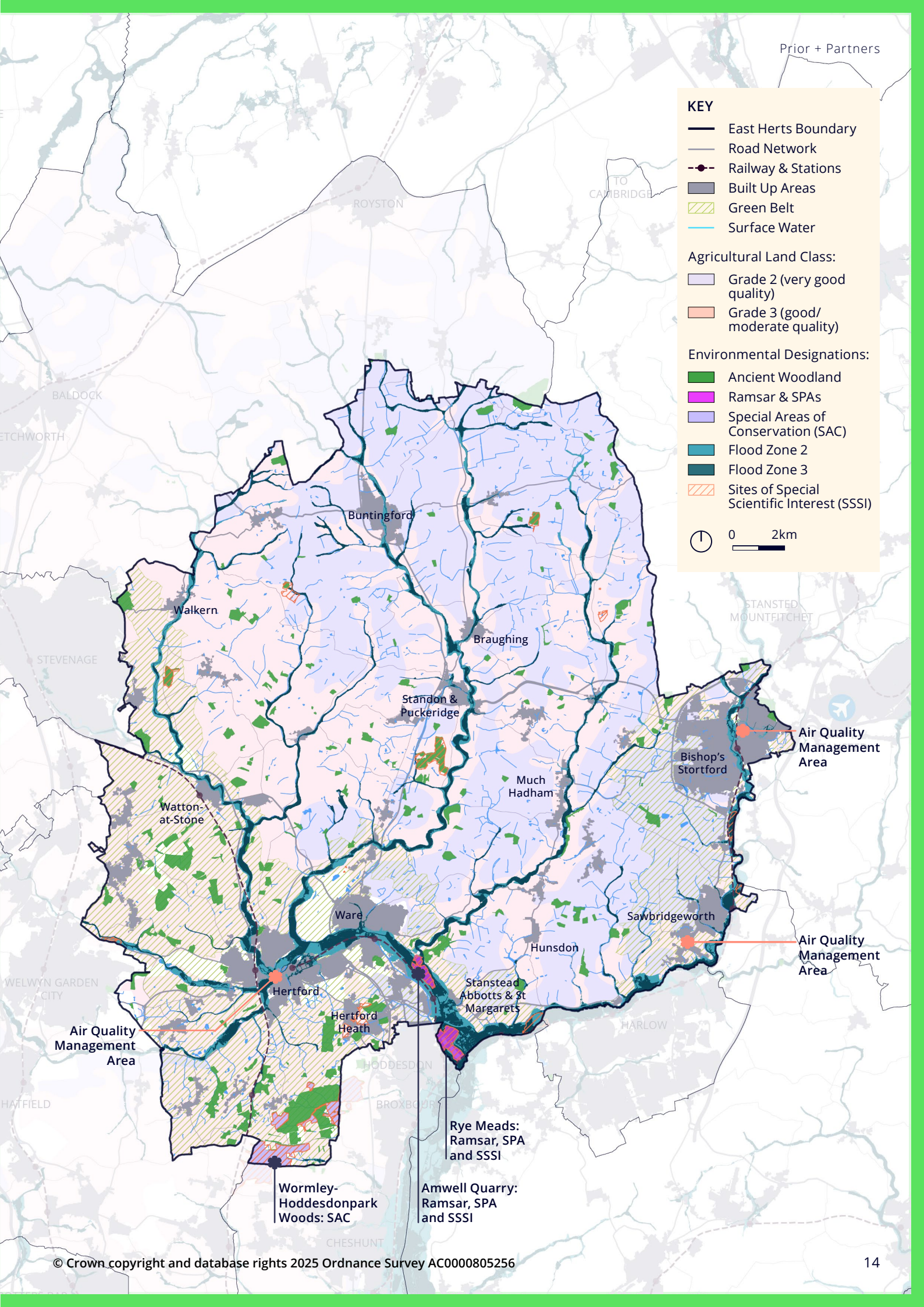
**Agricultural Land Class:**

- Grade 2 (very good quality)
- Grade 3 (good/moderate quality)

**Environmental Designations:**

- Ancient Woodland
- Ramsar & SPAs
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- ▨ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

0 2km



# Infrastructure

## Strengths

In recent years, East Herts has made significant progress in embracing solar energy. Relative prosperity and council-led schemes have enabled communities to group-buy solar panels, resulting in 1,438 solar panels being installed between 2022 and 2023.

More broadly, our local infrastructure supports a high standard of living, including excellent social infrastructure provision. Digital connectivity is also impressive, with 96% coverage of superfast broadband. These strengths contribute to the district's economy and desirability as a place to live, work, or visit.

## Challenges

Despite these advancements, the district's infrastructure is under significant strain, with water supply and electrical networks operating near capacity. This could pose challenges to sustainable growth.

In particular, water supply is a pressing issue, as over-abstraction and high water consumption strain existing resources and threaten future provision. Continued mismanagement of wastewater is impacting on the quality of our natural waterways.

Digital inequality also persists, particularly in rural and less affluent communities, limiting access to remote working opportunities and the digital world. Addressing these issues will be crucial to supporting future growth and ensuring equitable access to infrastructure across the district.

**61 GWh**

of total renewable electricity was generated in East Herts in 2022.

**10%**

of households in East Herts were estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2020.

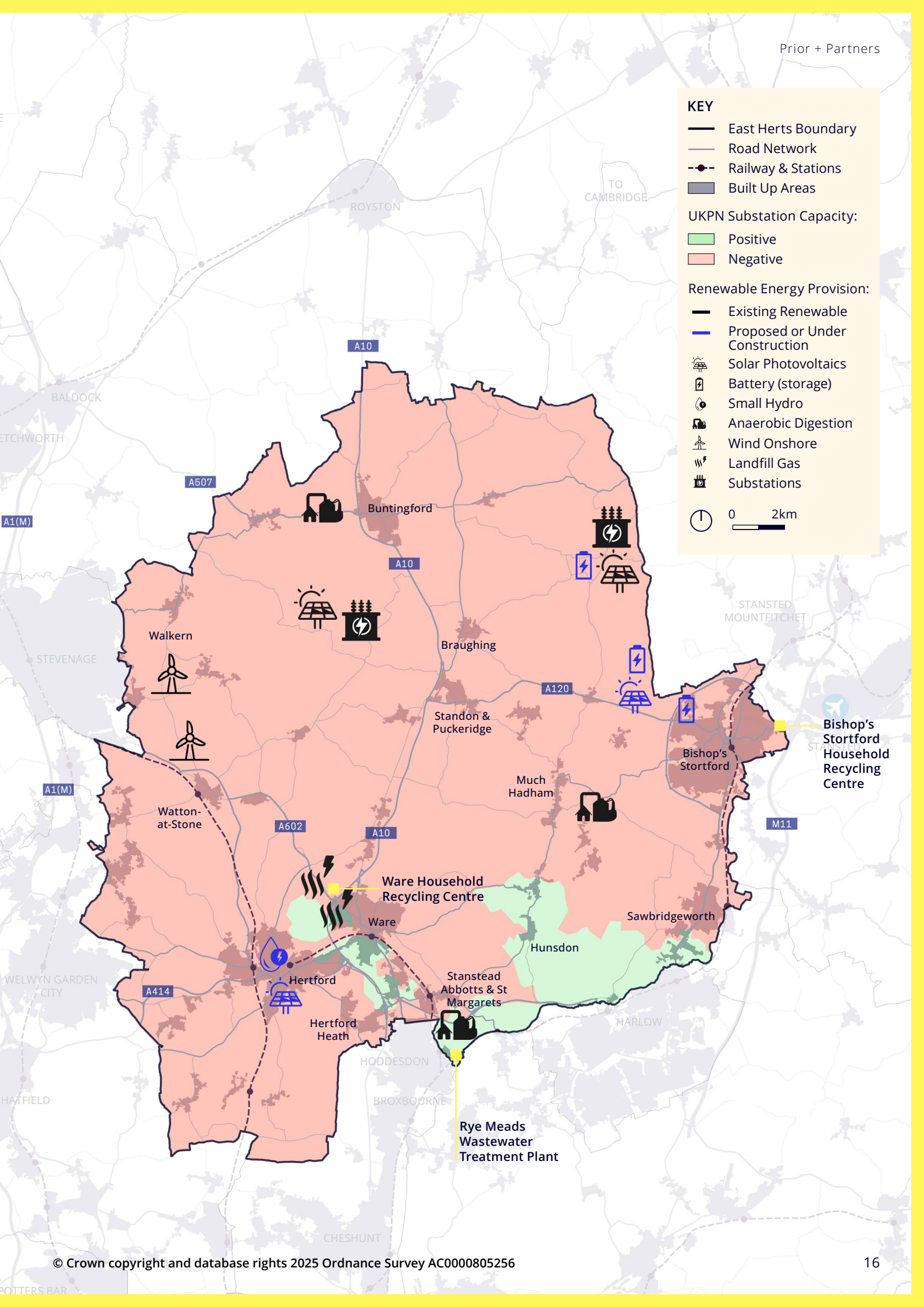
**1,779**

hours of raw sewage was discharged into rivers across East Herts in 2022.

**0.6%**

of households use renewable energy for central heating, while 71% rely solely on gas supply.





**KEY**

- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas

**UKPN Substation Capacity:**

- Positive
- Negative

**Renewable Energy Provision:**

- Existing Renewable
- Proposed or Under Construction
- Solar Photovoltaics
- Battery (storage)
- Small Hydro
- Anaerobic Digestion
- Wind Onshore
- Landfill Gas
- Substations

0 2km

# Movement

## Strengths

The district benefits from excellent national and international connectivity through its proximity to two international airports, Stansted and Luton. Key market towns such as Hertford, Ware, and Bishop’s Stortford enjoy excellent north-south rail connections to London. Cambridge can be accessed from Bishop’s Stortford, while this and other wider environs can be reached through interchanges outside of the district. East Herts is also well-connected to the national road network, bordered by the M11 and A1 on the east and west, and bisected by the A10, which connects central areas to London in the south and Cambridge in the north.

Much of the district is covered by an extensive Public Right of Way network, with many residents utilising it to walk to work. The National Cycle Network Route 61 also connects Hertford and Ware to London.

## Challenges

The district faces challenges with public transport connectivity, particularly within rural areas and east-west connectivity, where reliability and access are limited. Some train stations lack safe footpaths and are not easily accessible without a car. Unreliability and slow journey times on some bus and train routes also contribute to a reliance on private vehicles and isolate those who cannot drive, such as younger or older people, or those with disabilities.

While the network of public rights of way and cycle routes is extensive, these are not always well integrated with each other, public transport, or desired destinations, therefore limiting their use for daily travel.

Improving connectivity and promoting active travel options will be essential for creating a car-free and healthy future.

### 34%

of residents in 2022 used walking as part, or all, of their main method of travel to reach a destination, and 1.6% included cycling.

### 45%

of East Herts households in 2022 owned one car, 39% owned two cars and 13% owned three or more cars. This is higher than the national averages of 41%, 26% and 9%, respectively.

### 57%

of residents used a car or van as their main method of travel in 2022.

### 244 kt

of CO2 in East Herts was generated by the transport sector, the greatest contributor in 2021.

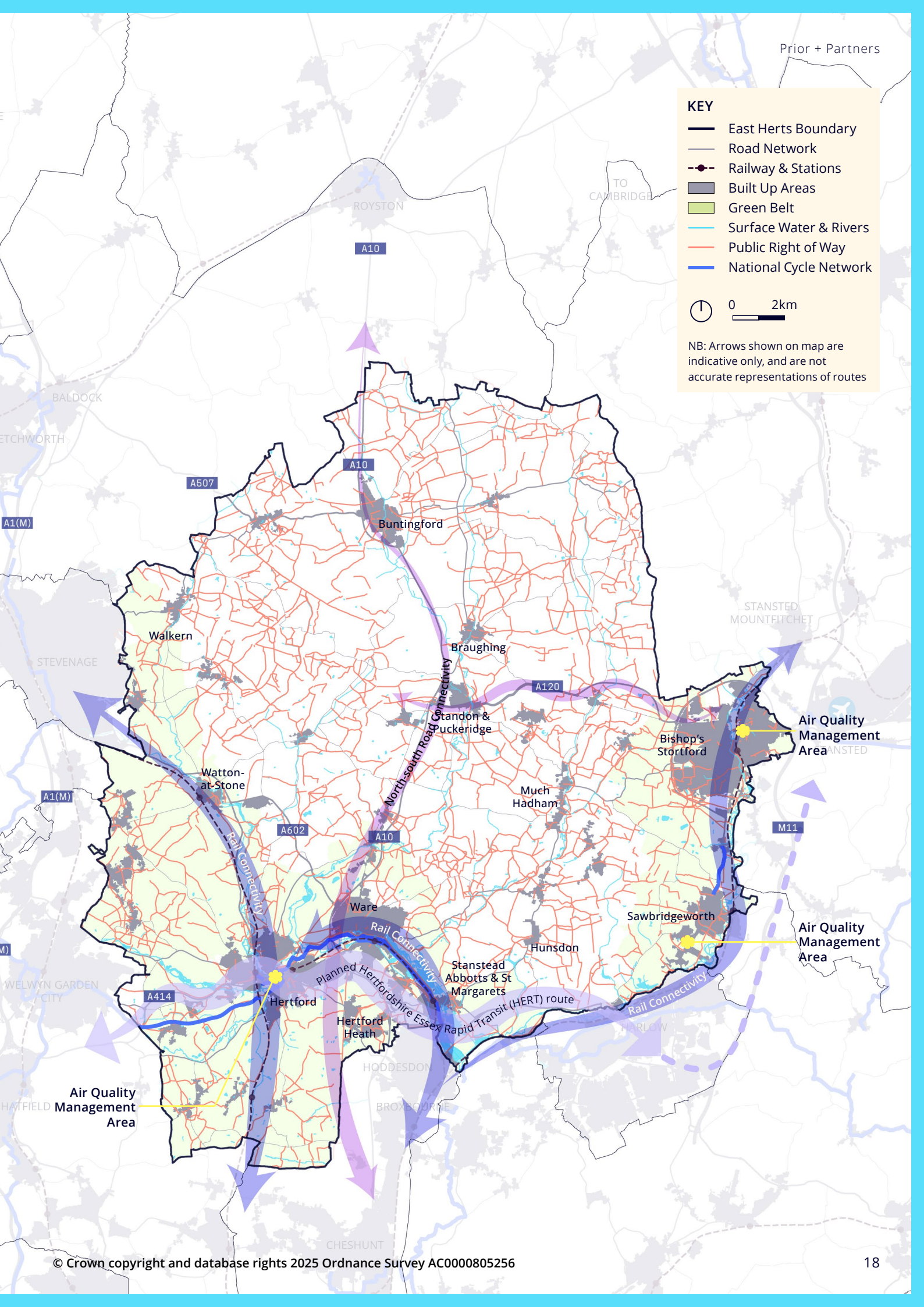


**KEY**

- East Herts Boundary
- Road Network
- Railway & Stations
- Built Up Areas
- Green Belt
- Surface Water & Rivers
- Public Right of Way
- National Cycle Network

0 2km

NB: Arrows shown on map are indicative only, and are not accurate representations of routes



# Our Vision

## The Vision structure

The East Herts Strategic Vision is summarised by an overarching Vision Statement, which reflects our aspirations for the District by 2050. Under the broad themes of People, Place, Environment, Economy, Infrastructure, and Movement, our Vision is explored in greater detail, with each theme containing four key aspirations outlining our objectives.

While a clear Vision and objectives are essential for guiding plan-making, our aspirations must also be grounded and deliverable. To help inspire us, each aspiration is supported by relevant examples of successful local, national, or global projects, and policy examples where local authorities and other bodies across the UK have demonstrated innovative ways on how ambition can be achieved through local planning powers.

These examples serve as inspiration and practical guidance, helping East Herts District Council turn the Vision into reality and achieve its long-term goals.

## Our Vision statement



Renowned for our **unique and charming** historic market towns and villages set within beautiful countryside, rare chalk streams and rich heritage, East Herts will be an exemplar of **sustainability**, where innovative design solutions respect local character and are harnessed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity.

Our communities will continue to thrive, supported by **affordable and accessible** housing, **reliable** public transport, and **improved** public open spaces—promoting active lifestyles and creating **inclusive** places for all.

By nurturing local businesses, we will create a **resilient, prosperous and secure** future for all residents and visitors.

**Collectively, we will recognise the responsibility we have to create a district fit for future generations.**

# Our aspirations in a snapshot



## People

- Encourage diverse communities
- Provide quality education and jobs
- Increase access to affordable housing
- Foster health



## Place

- Enhance our unique local character
- Pioneer high quality design
- Effective land use
- Create inclusive places



## Economy

- Support local businesses to thrive
- Attract good investment
- Grow our green economy
- Promote a fair and resilient economy, including local food production and supply



Image credits: East Herts District Council (all)



## Environment

- Be custodians of the future
- Increase biodiversity
- Address the climate emergency
- Clean air and water management



## Infrastructure

- Grow our renewable energy sources
- Enable high speed digital infrastructure
- Lead sustainable waste management
- Connecting communities through travel



## Movement

- Enable district-wide public transport
- Prioritise active travel
- Reduce car reliance
- Inclusive travel



# People

## Our aspirations

### → Encourage diverse communities

Establish a fair and balanced society by enabling young people, key workers and other East Herts residents to live locally, and support older people by delivering 21st century multi-generational communities.

### → Provide quality education and jobs

Maintain our high standards of education, nurturing a highly skilled and innovative workforce with equitable access to local work.

### → Increase access to affordable housing

Plan for a range of housing types and tenures to ensure equitable and affordable access to housing – meeting the needs of our residents.

### → Foster health

Be known as the ‘happiest district’ where we are renowned for prioritising our population’s health by enabling everyone to lead sustainable lifestyles, using wellbeing as a key indicator.



## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Providing accessible and adaptable homes

Watford's Local Plan was adopted in October 2022 and has since been recognised as the 'Best Plan' at the RTPI East of England Awards for Planning Excellence.

A key aspect of the Plan is to ensure that new homes are designed to the highest standards in terms of being environmentally friendly and affordable for residents. In particular, the Local Plan includes a policy which requires developments of 50 homes or more to design 2% of the dwellings with 'Dementia friendly design principles'.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Nationally...

[Homeshare UK](#) is a programme which matches older people who can offer a spare room with younger people looking for affordable living space. The scheme brings communities and generations together to reduce loneliness and social isolation which affects all ages.

Homeshare enables people to share their lives for mutual benefit in a reciprocal arrangement, addressing the pressure on our housing stock to meet people's needs through mutual trust and respect.

The [Fairer and Healthier Liverpool](#) Group has sought to integrate health considerations into city planning, housing, and resource allocation, fostering a holistic approach to public health in Liverpool that is helping to improve the health and wellbeing of all citizens.

Community engagement sits at the heart of the strategy, ensuring local voices shape policies. The work informs future public health strategies, building on Liverpool's experience and participation in networks such as the Healthy Cities Network.



# Place

## Our aspirations

### → Enhance our unique local character

Enhance the charm and character of our historic market towns and villages, strengthening their unique and individual identities.

### → Pioneer high quality design

Pioneer design-led development to enhance the quality of our places and ensure they mature positively for future generations.

### → Effective land use

Maximise the potential of our land by ensuring a density and diversity of uses that activates streetscapes, improves public transport efficiency, minimises water and energy consumption and enhances biodiversity.

### → Create inclusive places

Engage with all our communities to create healthy, safe and well-connected places, so that they are accessible and inclusive places for all.

## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Centring a place-based approach

The Croydon Local Plan (2021), informed by a Borough Character Appraisal, divides the borough into 16 distinct “Places,” each with its own Vision, policy framework, and proposals diagram.

This approach goes beyond the requirements of national planning policy to enable place-specific policies that protect and enhance the unique character of each area.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Locally...

East Herts has set up [Community Forums and Development Management Forums](#) which bring together residents, planners, local councillors and developers to discuss and share information about housing developments planned for the district, to help collaboratively shape the places where they live, work and play.

Such spaces for community voice will play a vital role in shaping the future direction of the district and ensuring all are brought along on the journey.

### or nationally?

[BedZED](#) is a pioneering eco-community in South London, exemplifying design-led development that prioritizes both high-quality design and sustainability. The award-winning project is centred on creating an environment that not only reduces ecological impact but also enhances the quality of life for its residents. The development’s design features, which include energy-efficient buildings and the use of renewable materials, reflect a commitment to long-term sustainability. By integrating these elements, a standard is set for high-quality living and future-proofing development, ensuring they remain resilient and beneficial for future generations while fostering a vibrant, liveable community.



# Economy

## Our aspirations

### → Support local businesses to thrive

Support a thriving local economy, where local businesses can access suitable, affordable workspace and be supported to grow. Protect and promote the viability of our town centres.

### → Attract good investment

Drive an innovative economy which leverages our advantageous location to attract key industries and inward investment.

### → Grow our green economy

Enable a green and resilient economy, by promoting green industry growth and supporting sustainable business practices including the circular economy, retrofitting and low carbon materials.

### → Fair and resilient economy

Strengthen local economic resilience by prioritising a diversified local economy, including local food production, and create a fair, inclusive economy with flexible, high-quality jobs that enhance people's quality of life.



## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Preston Community Wealth Building

Preston City has become a leading light for community wealth building, creating a resilient and inclusive economy for the benefit of the local area. It has emerged as a powerful approach to local economic development.

Preston City Council and The Centre for Local Economic Strategies have released a joint publication 'How we build community wealth in Preston: Achievements and lessons', which sets out how community wealth has been built in Preston. It outlines key achievements, offers reflections and maps out possible next steps. The publication has had much success, with the 'Preston Model' now used as term used to describe community wealth building.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Locally..?

The [East Herts Launchpad Business Centre](#) at Bishop's Stortford is an innovative space which provides a flexible working environment and meeting space for local entrepreneurs and start-ups.

The centres are run by East Herts District Council, and respond to new economic trends where businesses require more flexible spaces to economise and scale-up where necessary. The centres also offer one month free hot-desking, allowing local entrepreneurship to flourish.

[Mudlarks](#) is a Hertford based charity that enables people of all abilities to learn and work together through gardening.

The charity supports adults with learning disabilities through volunteering and employment opportunities on their allotments and cafe, promoting local skills and food production.

Their gardeners also provide services to local council gardens and elderly community members, charting a pathway from horticultural training into employment while delivering wider benefits to the community.



# Environment

## Our aspirations

### → Be custodians of the future

Protect and enhance our important green landscapes and waterways for future generations to enjoy and benefit from, balancing access to nature with its protection. Implement creative strategies to preserve our water supply and reduce consumption in new and existing communities.

### → Increase biodiversity

Protect habitats to support local ecosystems; promote sustainable, nature-rich environments and increase biodiversity.

### → Address the climate emergency

Embrace solutions to tackle the climate emergency by promoting sustainability through waste reduction, recycling, and low-carbon lifestyles as responsible custodians.

### → Clean air and water management

Protect and enhance our unique chalk stream habitats and ensure our air remains clean, healthy, and safe. Protect landscape, wildlife and communities from the risk of flooding.





## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Putting landscape first

The 2019 South Downs Local Plan is underpinned by a landscape led approach to protect, conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. All policies within the Local Plan having been formulated by putting landscape first, and require any new development to enhance, respect and reinforce the landscape through a landscape led design approach.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Locally...

Beane marsh is a much loved wildlife habitat with stunning views along the River Beane, a peaceful ecological oasis at the very heart of Hertford.

[Save Beane Marshes](#) is a campaign and fundraising initiative that started in 2019 by the local community to protect the Beane Marsh when it was put up for sale. The successful campaign led to the nature reserve becoming owned and managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to secure its ecological value. The objective remains to conserve and enhance the land for the benefit of ecology, wildlife and the local community.

### or nationally?

The University of Sheffield, Yorkshire Water and [Siemens](#) have worked in collaboration to install a network of sensors (Internet of Things) along a series of chalk streams in Yorkshire to continuously monitor their water levels, temperature, and water quality.

Using artificial intelligence, sensors indicate where blockages in Combined Sewer Systems present an overflow risk, so that these can be addressed before unnecessary pollution occurs.



# Infrastructure

## Our aspirations

### → Grow our renewable energy sources

Power our district with clean, affordable and carbon neutral energy by maximising the use of solar, wind, and other types of generation in the right locations.

### → Enable high speed digital infrastructure

Equip communities and businesses with the necessary infrastructure to excel in the digital age by improving access to gigabit-capable and full-fibre broadband.

### → Lead sustainable waste management

Become a national leader in sustainable waste management by boosting recycling rates and reducing the consumption of non-recyclable materials.

### → Connecting communities through travel

Enable communities and businesses to physically connect with one another by ensuring infrastructure is in place so that sustainable and efficient travel choices are available as the most attractive option for journeys.

## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Delivering renewable energy

Stroud District Council's Draft Local Plan supports renewable energy development by identifying suitable areas for wind and solar energy generation, through an evidence-based Renewable Energy Resources Assessment.

Policies focus on community engagement and technical viability, facilitating onshore wind projects within local planning constraints, complying with national planning policy and guidance, and helping the district to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Locally...

East Herts' [Solar Together](#) group buying scheme enables people to come together to invest in solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charging points. Those who have already invested in solar panels can benefit from retrofitted battery storage to help them get more from the renewable energy they generate.

Between 2022 — 2023 East Herts residents used the scheme to install 1,438 solar panels which represents a collective investment of over £1.7 million in solar power. This will generate 12GWh of energy over 25 years leading to a carbon reduction of 2,791 tonnes over that time.

### or globally?

Melbourne City, Australia, has mainstreamed [Water Sensitive Urban Design](#) (WSUD) into all new developments and retrofit schemes. WSUD integrates sustainable water management and urban design to enhance environmental resilience and urban liveability. It employs strategies such as rain gardens, green roofs, permeable paving, and urban wetlands to manage stormwater at its source. These elements capture and filter rainwater, reducing runoff and improving water quality through natural processes.

WSUS is required by city ordinance, with local councils and developers collaborating to integrate these features into residential, commercial, and public spaces.



# Movement

## Our aspirations

### → Enable district-wide public transport

Enable residents to travel sustainably with ease between our market towns, rural villages and beyond by creating an efficient, reliable and affordable public transport system.

### → Prioritise active travel

Promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles by prioritising walking, cycling, and wheeling as the go-to methods for daily travel.

### → Reduce car reliance

Foster an environment that minimizes our reliance and preference for private vehicles by encouraging the use of public transport and active travel.

### → Inclusive travel

Ensure everyone has equal access to a range of transport options irrespective of age, gender, disability or income by creating safe and accessible public transport and active travel infrastructure.



## The power of the plan: Policy examples

### Promoting active travel towns

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2021 and presents an alternative model to growth.

Hailsham Town Council identified that all everyday services and facilities were within a five to ten minute walk, cycle or bus journey, which was possible due to the town's relatively compact nature. However, the existing infrastructure and road design made it undesirable or unsafe to travel by any means other than by car, resulted in significant car usage. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to enhance Hailsham as a 'ten-minute town', where people of all ages and abilities can easily access day-to-day services and facilities without the use of private vehicles.

## Where can we draw inspiration from...

### Locally..?

Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts Council are working together to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The LCWIP will identify measures to make it easier, safer and more enjoyable to walk, wheel and cycle in East Herts so that more people can choose to make their everyday journeys in an active and sustainable way.

[LCWIP](#)'s aim to give communities more options for how they travel, so that individuals and families can go to work, school, shopping or carry out other everyday journeys on foot or by bike and feel safe. They also enable more funding opportunities to be accessed to help deliver the schemes.

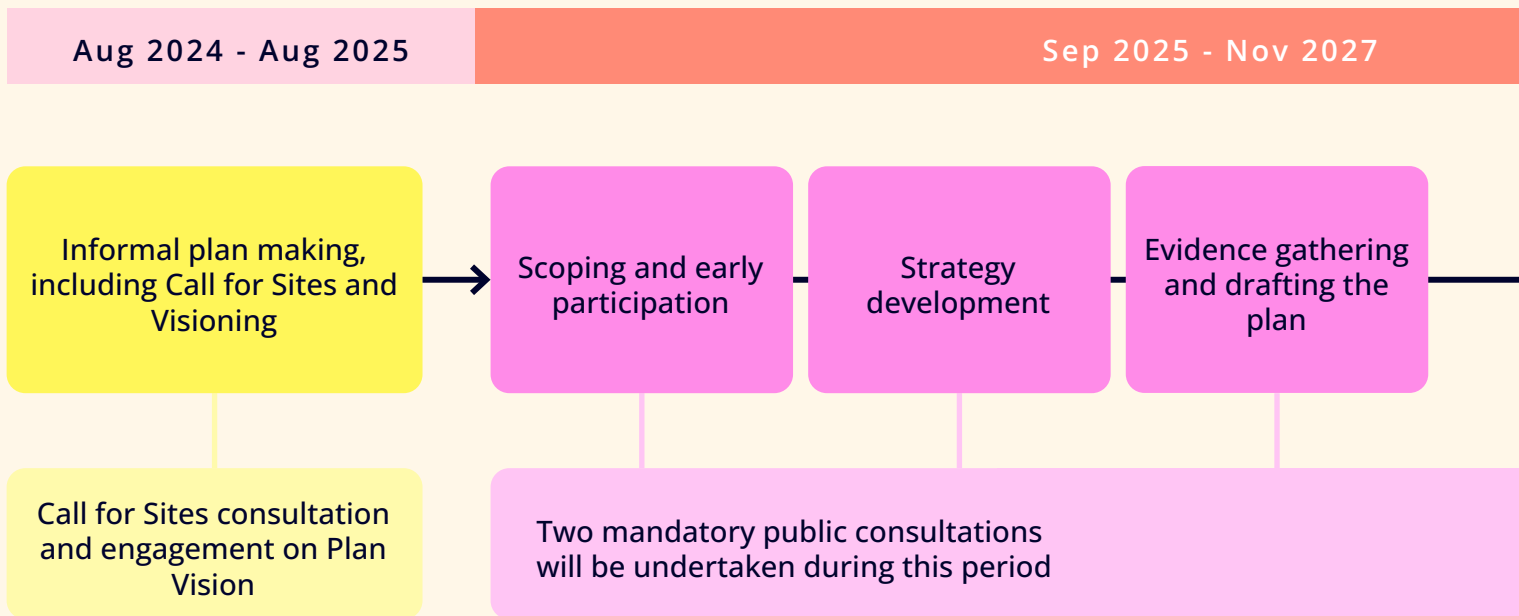
[The Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit](#) (HERT) is a long-term project to create a new, sustainable passenger transport network. This will be achieved through an accessible, reliable and affordable east-west transit system which connects people easily to where they live, work and visit.

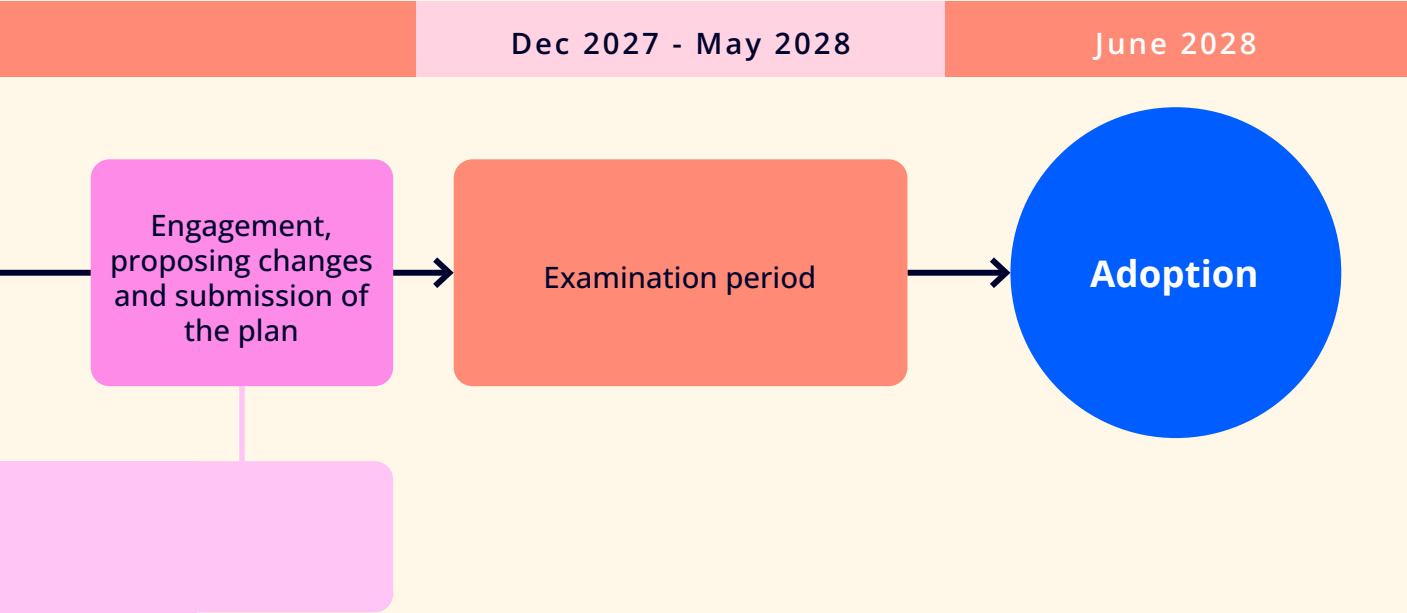
The HERT will support economic growth, improve the environment and positively impact our existing and new communities. It will also connect with north-south rail lines to create new sustainable journey options across the whole of Hertfordshire and beyond.

# Next steps

## District Plan Review Timeline

Following the development of the Strategic Vision, East Herts Council will embark on their district plan review. The timeline below outlines the steps in the district plan review process.





\* Dates subject to change

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