



*Stanstead Abbots  
& St Margarets*

Neighbourhood Plan  
2017-2033





## *Foreword*

**D**uring consultations on the East Herts Local Plan 2018-2033, there was much discussion amongst Parish Councils about preparing neighbourhood plans. There were mixed views about the advisability of spending the time and money that this would involve. Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council began to recognise that this would be a way of protecting most of the village from unwanted development and to have a say on where necessary development should take place. The Green Belt and the Conservation areas certainly offer protection but with the publication of the new planning guidelines (NPPF) there were concerns that these might not be sufficient barriers to unwanted change.

East Herts Council advised that the whole of Stanstead Abbotts, St Margarets, and part of Great Amwell (mainly the Folly Estate) constituted one settlement for strategic planning purposes. This strategic position has dictated the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Local Plan stipulates that there must be a 10% increase in

dwelling in the settlement area. At a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at Wallfields we were advised to work on a Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that we could select suitable sites ourselves for at least 94 homes. Without a Neighbourhood Plan the area would be at risk of planning applications for more than 94 homes which could be allowed on appeal.

This very clear directive prompted immediate action from Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council. Meetings began and volunteers came forward – fortunately exceptionally talented and committed people.

The process has revealed enormously strong feelings of attachment to and appreciation of the village. Highly valued is its position within reach of London, while also providing access to the countryside. The preparation of the Plan has prompted much creative thinking and writing about the many aspects of this settlement area in the past, present and future that are covered in this project.




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## 1. Introduction

### *Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan*

- 1.1 The Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan ('the Neighbourhood Plan' or 'the Plan') has been prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (as amended). The Parish Councils of St Margarets and Stanstead Abbotts initiated talks with Great Amwell Parish Council to prepare a neighbourhood plan to cover the so-called 'Settlement Area' or village of Stanstead Abbotts, as defined in the East Herts District Plan 2018. Part of the village is within Great Amwell Parish. This Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement and The Evidence Base. These documents provide more detailed supporting information explaining and evidencing the policies in the Plan.
- 1.2 Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council, as the lead Parish Council, is the "qualifying body" for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is a community-led framework for the future development and growth of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. It has been compiled on behalf of the three Parish Councils by a community Steering Group, which was set up on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017, for the purpose of managing the process and drafting the document.
- 1.3 After some months of discussion between the Parish Councils and East Herts District Council, Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council submitted an application for the Designated Area (the entire parishes of Stanstead St Margarets - known as St Margarets - and Stanstead Abbotts and the South East section of Great Amwell Parish within the village settlement). The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in **Figure 1**. This was formally designated by East Herts Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The Plan period is 2017 to 2033.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to the policies of the East Herts District Plan, adopted in October 2018. The Plan has also been checked against government planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) and the on-line Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Within both the national and local frameworks, the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned with the development and use of land in the designated area in the period to 2033. In accordance with national policy, the Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and embraces a range of social, economic, and environmental issues.
- 1.5 A vision for the designated area is coupled to a list of objectives, which will be achieved through planning policies, and proposals in **Appendix J: Action Plan**. The Neighbourhood Plan consists of a written statement and a policies map, which is depicted on an Ordnance Survey base. The adopted Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan, with East Herts District Plan and together they will form the basis on which planning applications will be determined, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.



*The Designated Area*

# Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Area

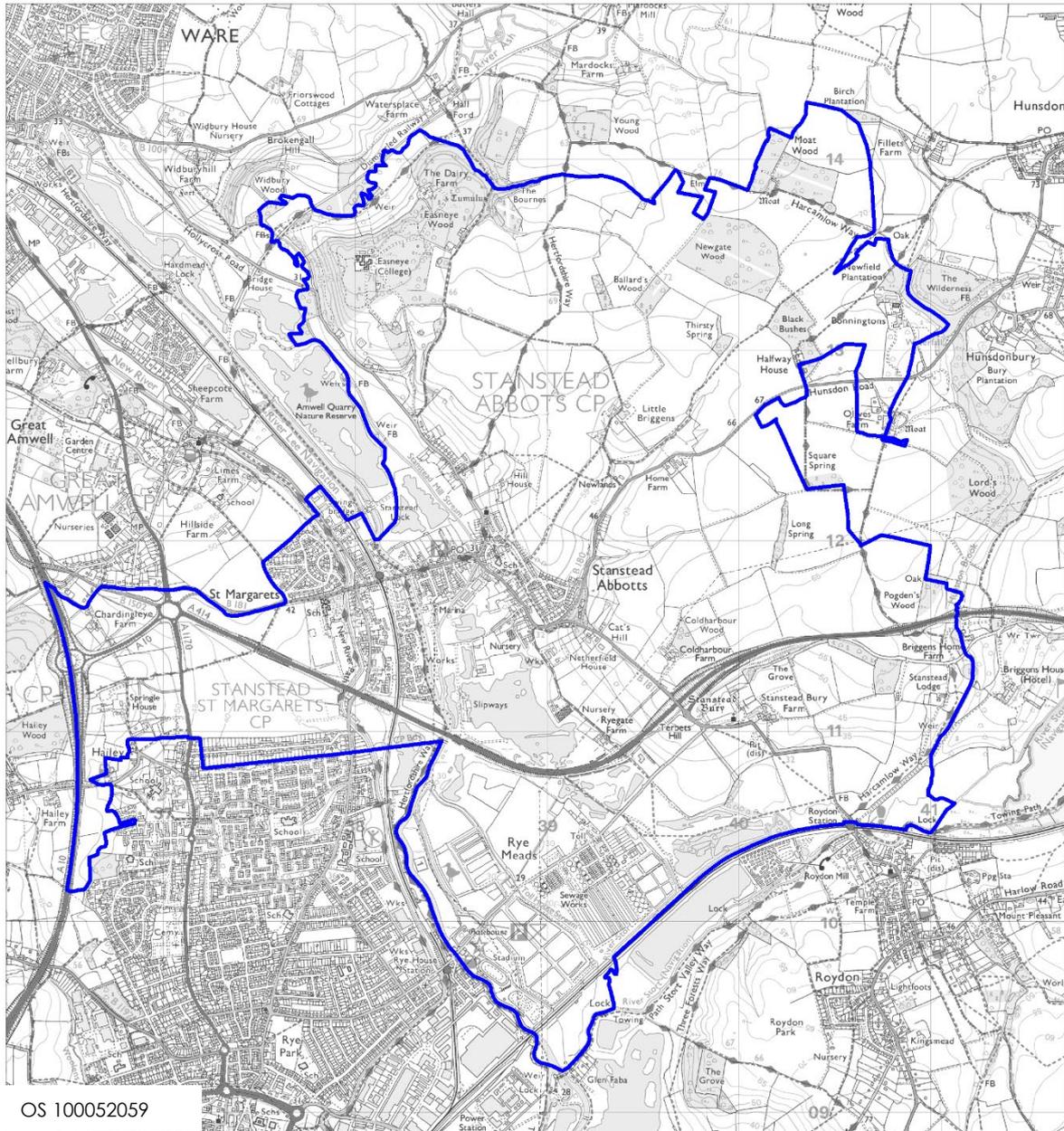


FIGURE 1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGNATED AREA MAP



### *The Basic Conditions*

- 1.6 There is a separate document available to read alongside this summary entitled Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions. The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with other local, national and European (or UK equivalent) policies, as required in the Localism Act. Specifically, it is required to meet four criteria called 'Basic Conditions' as set out in paragraph 8(s) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as referred to by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended):
- (i) The Plan must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the NPPF;(updated December 2023)
  - (ii) The Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - (iii) The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority, in this case, the East Herts District Plan as well as the draft Minerals & Waste Plan 2040; and
  - (iv) The Plan must abide by the relevant EU regulations (or UK equivalent).

Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared to demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Plan meets these Basic Conditions.

### *Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan*

- 1.7 Discussions at the Stanstead Abbots Parish Council Public Meeting in the Parish Hall in Spring 2017 led to the establishment of a Steering Group of approximately 20 enthusiastic volunteers from across the whole of the designated area and from each of the three parishes. The project progressed thanks to the core team that has worked on it for four years and to the work of the planning consultant, Jacqueline Veater.
- 1.8 Starting with information about possible sites in the East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment, possible sites were identified for housing, along with green spaces for protection and the most significant scenic vistas.
- 1.9 There were several restrictions on the choices of sites: Flood Zone 3 was not going to be acceptable. Brownfield sites would be prioritised, green field sites and those within the Green Belt would only be considered if there was insufficient land elsewhere. New homes had to be adjacent to, or, better still, within the settlement area.
- 1.10 Of great importance was to find out what people in the village wanted in the way of new housing, what need had been identified by EHDC and information from local estate agents on the size and type of property that was in demand.



### *Community Engagement*

- 1.11 The Communications Sub-group (a sub-group of the NP Steering Group) has ensured there have been many threads of engagement with the public. After an initial awareness raising survey, a website and Facebook page were set up and frequently updated. The existing Community Facebook Page, has had a number of threads relating to the NP proposals. Regular contributions were made to what used to be a monthly Parish Magazine delivered throughout the designated area. The Steering Group delivered a very detailed survey to every home which was thoroughly analysed, and the results reported back via the Parish Magazine. Following the delivery of the surveys there were open days with further data collection, a design workshop, a drop-in session and more recently a webinar.
- 1.12 Further details of the consultation that was carried out during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Consultation Statement. This describes the engagement techniques used, events held and the results of each consultation. It also contains a list of consultees.

### *Location and Topography of the Area*

- 1.13 Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets straddle the Greenwich Meridian Line on the very southern edge of East Herts District adjacent to the boundary with the Borough of Broxbourne. The Eastern edge is partially alongside the boundaries of Epping Forest District and partially of Harlow Town in Essex.
- 1.14 There are four rivers in the area: the River Lea, (and the River Lea Navigation) the Stort, the Ash and the Mill Stream flowing into the Lea. There is also a section of the man-made New River. The main river valley is a paleo-channel of the pre-Ice Age River Thames before it changed to its current course. This has given the area its London clay and gravel deposits.
- 1.15 Much of the village is low-lying. There has been considerable extraction of sand and gravel which has resulted in there being several lakes within the three parishes and bird and wildlife reserves. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) supports the development activities of Tarmac on the Briggens Estate on the east side of Stanstead Abbots and is keen to bring the site forward as a sand and gravel quarry. There is much opposition to this from residents because of the impact on the landscape and the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.16 The higher (farmed) land on the edges of the village plays a major role in the local economy and provides very attractive vistas while the many and varied, mainly deciduous, trees and shrubs provide habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna – many of the trees form well-loved landmarks within the village and often help to demarcate the popular footpaths and bridlepaths.
- 1.17 St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots are on either side of the River Lea Navigation and the railway line parallel to it. Great Amwell Parish lies to the north of Station Road and the main settlement is to the west of the River Lea. The designated Neighbourhood Plan Area includes parts of Great Amwell Parish, notably the 1950s built estate known as The Folly and the 1980s development which replaced an old



maltings, known as Riversmead, and some additional dwellings including a development on an old timber yard.

### *The Designated Area*

- 1.18 The boundary of the designated area was discussed by councillors from each parish and members of the Steering Group. The discussions followed the lead of East Herts Council who provided a map of the settlement area in the Local Development Plan. This included the whole of St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots. Two members of the Steering Group spoke at a meeting of Great Amwell Parish Council who were clear that they did not wish to be included in their entirety. However they agreed that the parts of the parish referred to in paragraph 1.17 were adjacent to the village settlement area, close to the station and looked towards Stanstead Abbots for their shops and some services. The Steering Group agreed that the other parts of Great Amwell are very much a Category 2 village and should not need to expand under the EHC Development Plan criteria.

## **2. *Planning Policy and Spatial Context***

### *National Planning Policy*

- 2.1 The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan (SAMS) has been prepared in conformity with the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** updated December 2023 which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Paragraphs 13, 21 and 29 and 145 set out:
- 2.2 *'Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.*
- 2.3 *Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.*
- 2.4 *Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.'*



### *Local Planning Policy*

- 2.5 The **East Herts District Plan** was adopted in 2018 and sets out the planning framework for the District from 2011 to 2033 with an overall requirement to deliver 18,458 homes during the plan period. Within the Plan, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is identified as a Group 1 Village consisting of 938 householders (based on the 2011 census) with a 10% growth target of 94 homes projected from 2017 to 2033. Where a need for changes to the Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.
- 2.6 The **Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2040** (draft July 2022) sets out the requirements to plan for future minerals supply for the county. The draft plan identifies the Briggens Estate (Site MASO1), a 175 ha. site to the east of Stanstead Abbots as a location for sand and gravel extraction within the latter half of the plan period. This site is located less than 500m to the west of Harlow Gilston Garden Town villages (HGGT). The Minerals and Waste plans of HCC have been delayed and there is still uncertainty about the plans for the Briggens Estate however it is very likely that there will be a quarry on the estate resulting in continuous extraction of sand and gravel for a period of 25 years. The entrance to the quarry would be on the B181 between the edge of Stanstead Abbots and the link road – Easterly direction – on to the A414. This leads to concern regarding the routing of the sand and gravel lorries away from the site as there is no west bound slip road onto the A414.
- 2.7 Planning policy supporting the development of **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town** is set out with the East Herts District Plan, with specific policies within GA1 to shape delivery of an anticipated 10,000 homes along with supporting infrastructure to be built across seven new villages. Village 7 is located further to the east of the SASM plan, set within the Stort Valley and along the boundary are Hunsdon Brook and Lord's Wood to the west/north west, the A414 to the South, Hunsdon House to the north and close to the proposed site of village 6 to the east.

The **Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework Area 8 Proposals** (April 2019) cover the northern most section of the Regional Park, stretching from Rye House and the RSPB Rye Meads Nature Reserve in the south to the edge of Ware in the north alongside the River Lee Navigation. Stanstead Abbots Parish Council was informed of various proposals from the LVRP to increase use of the park in the parish of Stanstead Abbots. They have updated the signage and notice boards but plans to have cycles for hire and the river bus being accessible in Stanstead Abbots have not yet come to fruition.



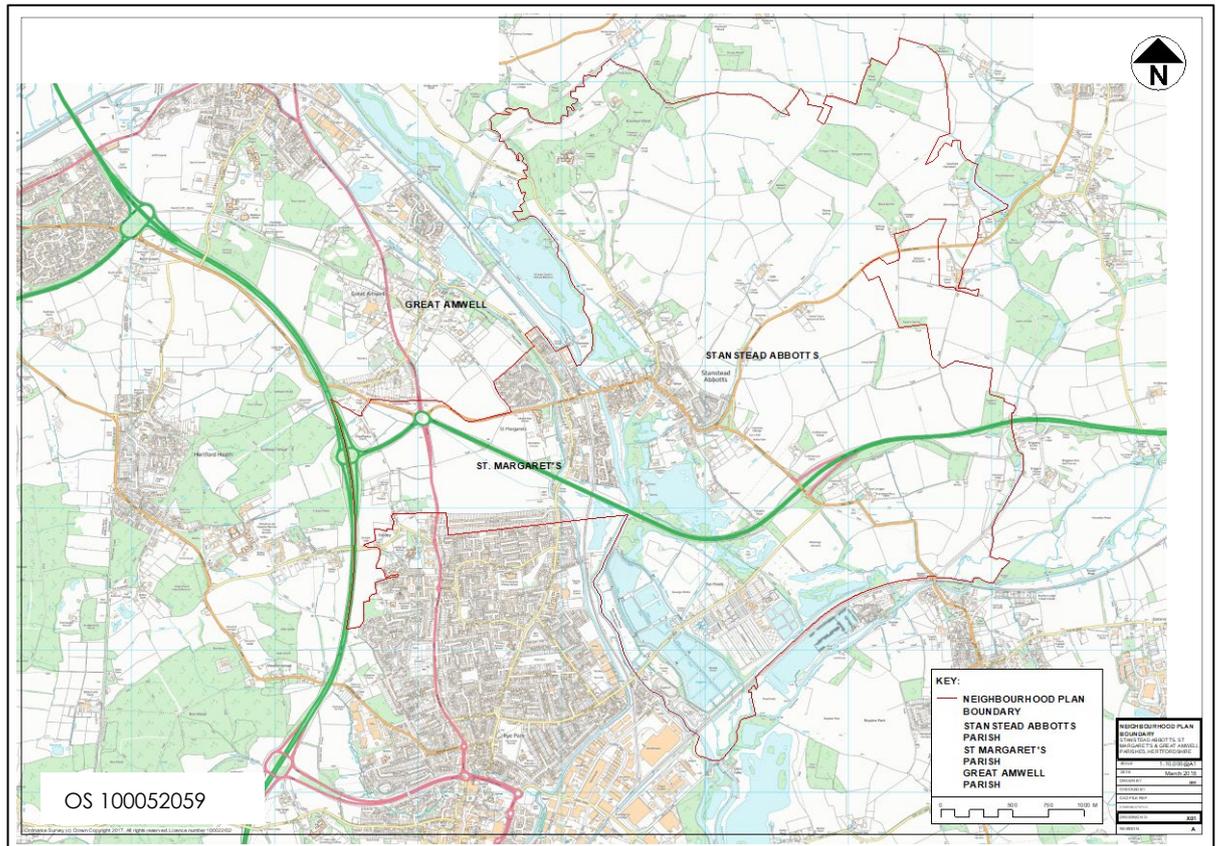


FIGURE 2 THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

### *Historical Context*

- 2.8 The earliest signs of habitation in the area date back to the Mesolithic age. Signs of a Mesolithic encampment were found at the base of Cat Hill along with evidence of tools from around 5000 BCE. Bronze Age settlers of 4-5,000 years ago have left evidence of a henge monument to the south-west of the settlement. An Iron Age gold torc, Roman remains and Medieval moats confirm the area's ancient ancestry with bones from the deposition of wild boar dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> century being found near Cat Hill.
- 2.9 Historically there were two separate villages: Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets. The settlement of Stanstead Abbots is now small in comparison to the surrounding towns of Ware and Hertford. But in pre-Norman times 'Stane Stead' was one of the five most established towns in Hertfordshire. The first mention of Stanstead Abbots is in an early charter of King Swaefred of Essex dating to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century when the area was known as Stanhemstead. There is archaeological evidence of a Market at the head of the High Street near the Mill Stream as far back as the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. It is likely that the very earliest settlement lay on the hill above the High Street in the area of Chapel Fields.
- 2.10 The forming of an Island between the River Lea to the West and its tributary, now called the Mill Stream to the East in this rich clay and gravel valley, created the right conditions for the settlement to grow. Referred to in the Domesday Book of



1080, the village was so important that it had a Mill, 7 Burgesses (protected trades), and a priest. This was surprising for such a small community of only 30 households.

- 2.11 In the early days there was large-scale charcoal production using the plentiful supply of trees. Good agricultural soil produced high quality barley and led to the growth of maltings. There were many taverns and inns to support the trades - beer being far healthier to drink than the unclean water.
- 2.12 The river and its tributaries attracted Henry VIII who lived and fished in the area and much later it was a favourite spot for the noted fisherman, author and social observer, Izaak Walton who is claimed as an early member of a prestigious local fishing club. There were no less than three visits by Elizabeth 1 to nearby Stanstead Bury ensuring that the village was well known in the region.
- 2.13 The River Lea had not only been important for transport and fishing; London was relying on it for water. As the river level was dropping due to the great use made of it in East Hertfordshire, Edmund Colthurst began the construction of the 46-mile New River, starting originally from Emma's Well at Great Amwell and ending at Sadlers Wells, London. Hugh Myddleton completed it in 1613 with finance from King James I.
- 2.14 The River Lea and the Mill Stream were improved in the 1700's and for the next hundred years answered the demand for efficient transport to London: tons of malt and goods took three days to get there by barge – far quicker than packhorses. Horse manure formed return loads and was spread on the agricultural land (one area is still called 'Dung Field' to this day) and the villages became richer in soil as well as from business.
- 2.15 In 1843 the railway came, and from St Margarets Station it was possible to catch a northbound train to Hertford, or alternatively to Buntingford, or to travel south into London. Travel could consequently be measured in hours rather than days and produce was delivered fresh rather than stale. Houses were constructed in South Street for railway workers.
- 2.16 The Buntingford line lasted for over one hundred years but today there is simply the link to Hertford via Ware and south via Rye House and Broxbourne to Liverpool Street. Whilst there are frequent buses going north and south it is less easy to travel east and west without a car. There are still many boats on the river some of which are lived in, but the majority are for recreation. The village lies on the flight path for Stansted Airport which is about a 45 minute drive.

### **3. *Vision and Objectives***

#### *Vision*

- 3.1 The Vision Statement sets out what the Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve up to 2033. This Vision Statement was composed during a Workshop held at the Nigel Copping Centre and run by the Consultant working with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. There had been discussions previously in informal meetings which



had included non-members of the Steering Group. The final Vision developed from the basic feelings of attachment to a village which in itself provides all of the basic necessities for its residents as well as access to the rural environment and a train service into the heart of London.

- 3.2 Our vision is for Stanstead Abbots, St Margarets and The Folly to thrive as a diverse and inclusive rural village that supports varied livelihoods and promotes community cohesion and well-being. We will provide and promote locally accessible and sustainable development that provides affordable housing whilst protecting the heritage of our area. Sustainable means that the present needs for housing and employment are met without there being any compromise in the ability of future generations to meet their needs also. Our vision includes enhancing our green spaces for wildlife and community use, improving natural flood defences, and further establishing our place in the wider Lea Valley corridor.
- 3.3 The Objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan link to the Vision Statement and provide the basis for the planning policies. The main topics within the Neighbourhood Plan have specific objectives relating to them.
- 3.4 The Objectives set out below are in conformity with the East Herts District Council Local Plan as well as the other documents listed in the draft Basic Conditions statement.

### *Objectives*

#### *Housing & Design*

**Objective A:** To promote sustainable development that provides for the current and future needs of our community.

**Objective B:** To ensure suitable sites for development over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan and assess all proposed building against criteria that ensures our need for inclusive, accessible, and adaptable housing is met.

**Objective C:** To balance the market by providing new housing of a suitable size and type to meet those needs in acceptable locations.

**Objective D:** To improve access to well-designed and locally affordable housing, which complements the variety of our existing settlement.

#### *Riverside*

**Objective E:** To celebrate the rivers' unique contribution to the village by increasing opportunities for people to enjoy and directly interact with the rivers.

#### *Heritage*

**Objective F:** To deliver accessible guidance and information to inform residents about heritage requirements and assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

**Objective G:** To identify specific designated and non-designated heritage assets and provide for their protection.

#### *Natural Environment*

**Objective H:** To protect the Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets countryside setting, landscape, and character, for the benefit of the village itself as well as the wider community.



**Objective I:** To improve protection of assets such as woodland spaces and water networks that are vital for wildlife and ensure existing and new developments are resilient to flooding.

**Objective J:** To maintain irreplaceable species, promote ecosystem diversity and ensure that development results in a net gain in biodiversity.

#### *Leisure & Community Facilities*

**Objective K:** To protect open spaces that have recreation, leisure and amenity value and/or are of importance to the local community.

**Objective L:** To improve existing community, leisure and recreation facilities, and make these facilities accessible to everyone.

**Objective M:** To ensure appropriate community, leisure and recreation facilities are provided as part of major developments.

#### *Business and Employment*

**Objective N:** To ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities, including family-owned businesses and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.

**Objective O:** To encourage new businesses to prosper whilst protecting and maintaining the character of the village.

**Objective P:** To support creative and social enterprise, tourism, and community services.

#### *Transport*

**Objective Q:** To implement traffic calming measures, where possible, that will protect the High Street and surrounding roads as well as ensuring safe and sustainable travel options to local schools/nurseries and places of work.

**Objective R:** To promote parking provision in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.

#### *Neighbourhood Plan Policies*

- 3.5 The following chapters contain the Neighbourhood Plan Policies. As the policies aim to achieve the objectives, the following chapter headings replicate the named sections of objectives.
- 3.6 The policies should be read in conjunction with the Policies Map (see **Figure 3 Policies Map**)



### Policies Map

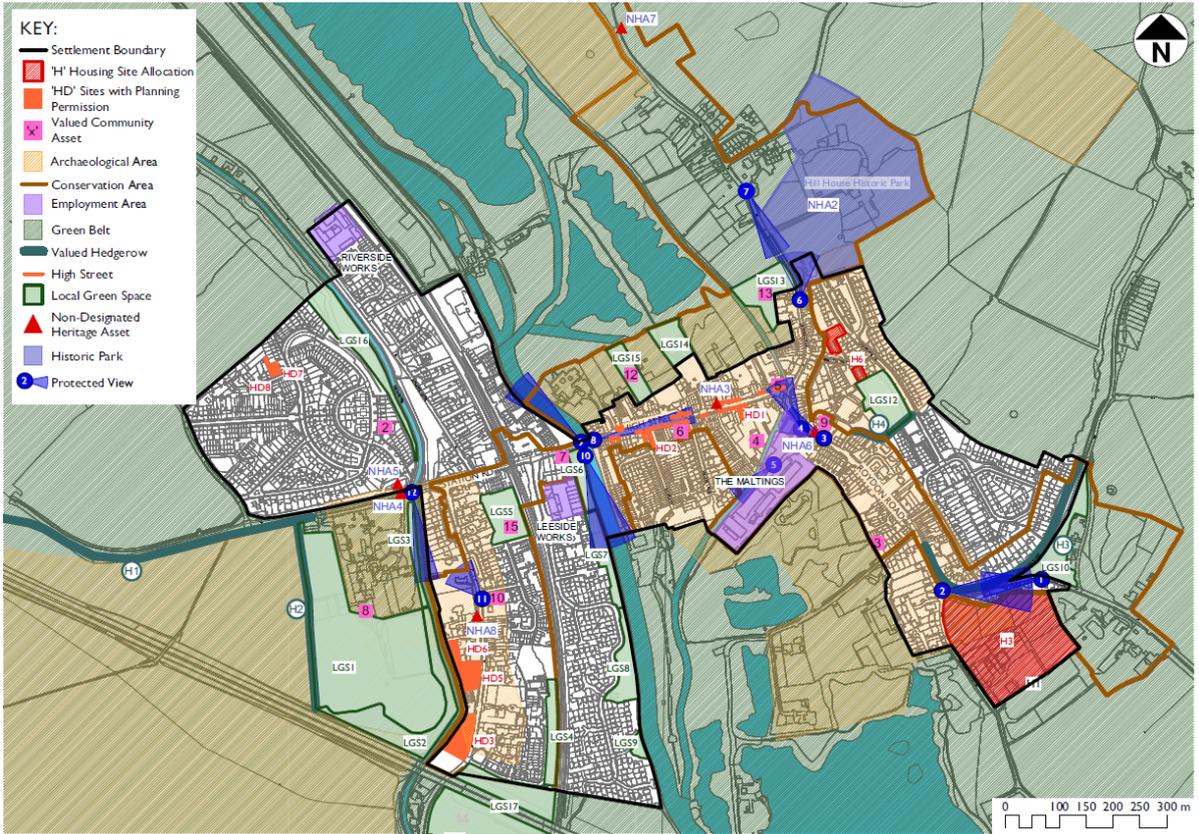


FIGURE 3 POLICIES MAP (INSET)

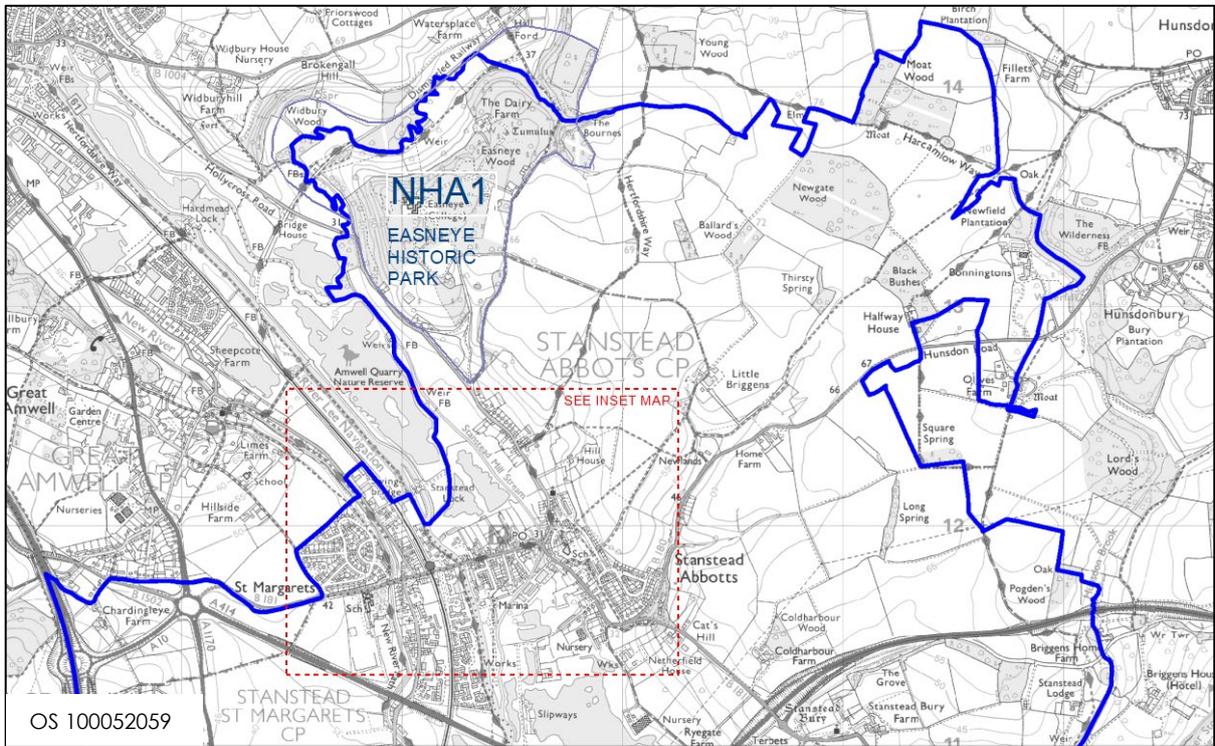


FIGURE 4 POLICIES MAP (SHOWING POLICY NHA1)



## 4. *Housing*

### *Introduction*

- 4.1 Stanstead Abbots is a popular and attractive village, with a range of primary facilities including a dentists' surgery and shops, and good transport links to London and Hertford. These links mean that the village has to some extent been impacted by the "London effect", with house prices above the average for the surrounding area. There is high demand for properties, and houses, particularly family-sized ones, sell quickly. While this is positive for those already adequately housed or selling their homes, for those trying to move into or stay within the village, it is less so. Residents have voiced their concerns about the lack of affordable housing in the area, particularly considering the negative impact on their own children's ability to buy or rent in the village.
- 4.2 Some of the characteristics identified above have contributed to the categorisation of Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets as a Group 1 village in East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1. The contribution of Group 1 villages towards East Herts housing supply between 2011 and 2033 was set at 500 homes in Policy DPS3. This figure will be met by the growth of Group 1 villages by at least 10%, based on the village population in 2011. The number of houses in 2011 is recorded as 940. 10% increase in size was considered to be sustainable - in order for this Neighbourhood Plan to conform to the Local Plan, the Steering Group has therefore sought to accommodate 94 potential homes to be built by the end of the Plan period.
- 4.3 The criteria which was used by the housing sub-group for the site selection may be viewed in Appendix C of this NP.
- 4.4 The search for potential sites for development took place over a lengthy period and the site selection and allocation process underwent several iterations. AECOM were commissioned to review and critique the site selection process and their report made recommendations which led to changes to the process though not to the result.
- 4.5 Site selection was complicated by the uniquely constrained nature of the village settlement area. Stanstead Abbots is surrounded by Green Belt, some of which is high grade agricultural land. It is close to nature reserves, a RAMSAR site, and sites of archaeological interest. Space for homes is also limited by the extent of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in and around the village. Within the village settlement area, there is little spare land, apart from highly valued green spaces.
- 4.6 Surveys and public consultations showed that residents much preferred that building take place on small brownfield sites within the village settlement area and opposed building on the Green Belt. The initial search for sites therefore concentrated on the village settlement area itself, but it rapidly became clear that this would not furnish sufficient opportunity to meet the District Plan's VILL1 Policy target.



4.7 As any land outside the village is Green Belt, an amendment to the Green Belt boundary, to extend the village boundary to accommodate land for housing, meant that any land released from the Green Belt had to be adjacent to the village boundary. The focus shifted, to selecting one site that would meet most of the housing target and provide for the housing needs of the village, in addition to a few smaller sites within the village boundary. The overall aim of the site selection process was to identify sites that could achieve a little more than the housing target of at least 94 homes, to future proof the Plan.

4.8 The following policies in this section aim to achieve the following objectives:

**Objective A:** To promote sustainable development that provides for the current and future needs of our community.

**Objective B:** To ensure suitable sites for development over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan and assess all proposed building against criteria that ensures our need for inclusive, accessible, and adaptable housing is met.

### *Green Belt*

4.9 District Plan Policy VILL1 (iii) accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt Boundary, to accommodate an extension of the village to achieve the housing target. The designated Stanstead Abbots Village Development Boundary separates the village from the Green Belt. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF (DLUHC, 2023) sets out that where a need for changes to the Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans. In this case Policy Vill 1 and DPS3, where needed. This aim in the NPPF is very much in line with the views expressed by residents in our consultations who were concerned about intrusions into the Green Belt.

4.10 Paragraph 146 NPPF (DLUHC, 2023) advises that to conclude that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, all other reasonable options for meeting housing need should have been examined fully. This includes making sure that as much use as possible has been made of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land and optimises the density of development. Both requirements were an integral part of the site assessment process carried out in the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Several small sites were identified within the village boundary on brownfield land.

4.11 Consideration of the sensitivity of the Green Belt around Stanstead Abbots was of concern to residents surveyed in the general residents' survey (See Consultation Statement). Most residents also preferred to utilise brownfield sites first and to "pepper-pot" small sites around the village; however, they also strongly preferred sites which would provide a significant amount of affordable housing. Given that under planning policy only sites of 10 or more dwellings are obligated to provide a percentage of affordable housing in the mix, this means that larger sites had to be considered and these were only to be found outside the village settlement



boundary. Therefore, the only sites under consideration, in the Green Belt, were adjacent to the village settlement boundary.

- 4.12 With only very few small achievable sites identified within the boundary, it was necessary to explore the possibility of amending the Green Belt to accommodate a site large enough to provide the remainder of the allocation for the Neighbourhood Plan. The site needed to be in a location that enabled the drawing of a new, strong and defensible boundary between the village and the Green Belt. An explanation of how the housing numbers have been achieved in this Neighbourhood Plan is laid out below. The single Green Belt site is identified in Policy SASM H3 and lies off Netherfield Lane/Roydon Road).

### *SASM H1 Village and Green Belt Boundary*

- I. The Plan defines a village settlement boundary to include the Housing Site Allocation SASM H3 Netherfield Lane/Roydon Road. Development proposals within the village settlement boundary will be supported where they comply with other development plan policies.

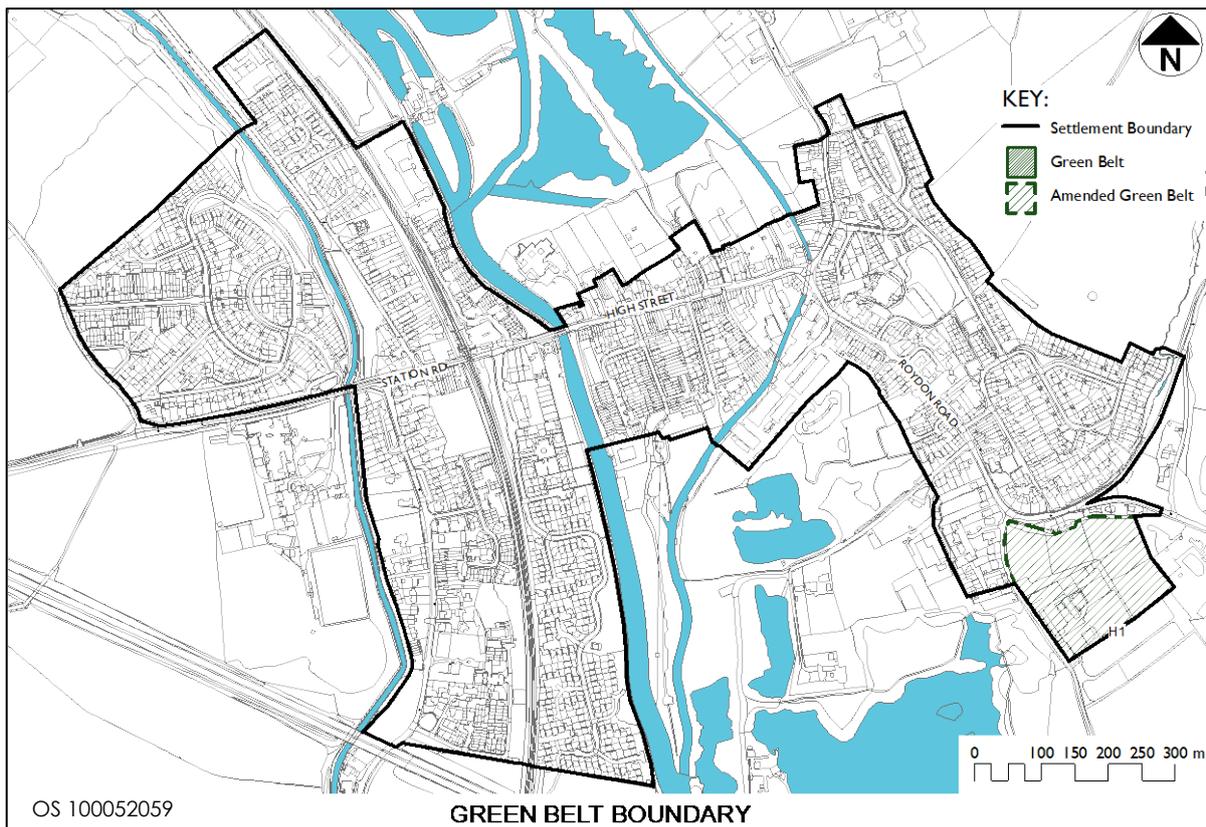


FIGURE 5 AMENDMENT TO GREEN BELT BOUNDARY TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING SITE



### *Flood Zones and the impact on housing sites*

- 4.13 We had initially considered sites that were in Flood Zone 3 but identified as benefiting from flood defences. Following new regulations from the Environment Agency and the removal of flood defenses as a reason to allow development this has reduced further the number of sites available.
- 4.14 Stanstead Abbots has suffered from flooding in the past. The flood defences put in place have significantly reduced the amount of water collected in the High Street and the number of homes impacted. Some residents have unfortunately experienced flood water entering their homes within the last couple of years. It is vital that any new development does not lead to further issues and the Steering Group has been mindful of the District's policy on Sequential Testing (Policy WAT 1 IV).

### *Housing Numbers*

- 4.15 The 2017 East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment identified only 2 sites within or immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundary as suitable for development; one of those (known as the Wilderness) had already received planning permission.
- 4.16 A Call for Sites was undertaken. Several responses were received from individuals as well as others from companies promoting larger sites.
- 4.17 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group systematically surveyed the village noting every potential housing site however small. All possible sites were considered for their suitability and a description of the site assessment can be read in **Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process**.
- 4.18 The following sites are included within the plan, which have been developed or have received planning permission since April 2017, and will provide 25 homes (overall net dwellings):

8 High Street, SG12 8AB	1	HD1
60 High Street SG12 8AG	2	HD2
Wilderness Grove	8	HD3
Pump House Lane	4	HD4
The Spinney A	6	HD5
The Spinney B	2	HD6
6 Frenchs Close SG12 8BB	1	HD7
4 Frenchs Close SG12 8BB	1	HD8

- 4.19 A site allocation for 60 homes on Land East Netherfield Lane/South of Roydon Road, and garage sites on Abbots Way for 7 homes brings the total to 92 homes.



- 4.20 An additional 6 homes within the village boundary on windfall sites brings the total within this plan to 98 homes.
- 4.21 Paragraph 70 (d) NPPF (2023) supports a windfall allowance to be included to meet the housing target. "A windfall allowance anticipates future development that is currently unidentified. It is necessary to include a windfall allowance in this Plan because there are not enough acceptable sites made available by landowners for development within or adjacent to the village development boundary. To support a windfall allowance, there must be evidence that such developments are likely to come forward within the village development boundary."
- 4.22 Over the past 10 years 32 dwellings have been completed within the village boundary (see details in appendix L Pre-approved sites (nb see note below in SASM2 I)). Specific examples of these sites include demolition of single dwellings and erection of 2 x new dwellings (6 Frenchs Close ref 3/15/1456/FUL), 4 Frenchs Close (ref 3/18/2413/FUL), Adjacent to 353 Hoddesdon Road (ref 3/16/1407/FUL) conversions of High Street premises to include residential dwellings, 8 High Street (ref 3/10/0069/FUL), 6 High Street (3/15/1897/FUL), and development of vacant commercial premises, Land to the rear of 45-49 Hoddesdon Road (ref3/16/1407/FUL). It is anticipated that further windfall locations in areas such as Station Road, and the High Street, where conversions of upper floors to residential dwellings or demolition of single dwellings and erection of additional dwellings as well as conversion of single houses into multiple flats are likely to be forthcoming within the plan period. Other areas that could come forward include non-designated employment areas, should there be no identified demand for suitable alternative employment uses.
- 4.23 Whilst it is expected that at least 98 homes will be built in the village over the plan period given the evidence above, in all cases developments are expected to be compliant with this neighbourhood plan and to contribute to the objective of sustainable development. The parish councils consider that it will be extremely likely that the existing sites with planning permission will all be completed for occupation before 31st March 2033.





FIGURE 6 HOUSING SITE POLICY SASM H3 (PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED PART OF SITE)



FIGURE 7 HOUSING SITE POLICY SASM H3 (UN-DEVELOPED PART OF SITE)



### *SASM H2 Housing Numbers*

- I. In accordance with the housing strategy laid out in the District Plan to deliver sustainable development, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets will accommodate a minimum of 98 new homes between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033. These will be achieved through a combination of the following sites and shown on the Policies Map. A detailed breakdown of the allocated housing sites that make up the 98 homes required can be found in **Appendix L**:
  - a) Site Allocation Policy SASM H3 Land east Netherfield Lane/south of Roydon Road for 60 homes (sites K and L).
  - b) Site Allocation Policy SASM H4: Site H6, two garage sites on Abbots Way for approximately 7 homes (sites 32 and 33).
  - c) 25 homes which have been built and occupied since April 2017 (sites 28, 29, 30a, 30b, 36, 37 and 38).
  - d) Windfall sites of which we expect 6.

### *Site Allocations*

- 4.24 Each Housing Site Allocation has its own policy with an extract from the Policies Map to show the site area, a list of basic facts about the site, and policy criteria for site development. It is preceded by information about the site.

#### *Land East of Netherfield Lane/south of Roydon Road*

- 4.25 This site on Netherfield Lane is a combined greenfield and brownfield site within the Lee Valley Regional Park boundary. The brownfield part of the site is a redundant factory; planning permission was originally sought some years ago for redevelopment to residential use but refused as it was not believed that the landowners had made sufficient effort to relet the factory units. Subsequent attempts to re-let having failed, the landowner obtained outline planning permission for a change to residential use (3/20/0502/OUT) for 20 homes and employment use. Due to the substantial amount of remediation that will be necessary to decontaminate the site, planning permission has been granted without the requirement for affordable housing. It is essential that the overall site should be developed in a consistent and structured way. The second part of the policy advises that the allocated site should deliver a coordinated approach to the delivery of its brownfield and greenfield components and accommodate approximately 60 homes, including affordable housing and a 6-home scheme of community led housing.



- 4.26 It was proposed to the landowner that they combine this original site with the unused field next to it. The combined site would accommodate 60 homes, thus enabling the Neighbourhood Plan to reach the housing allocation target. Some further land take surrounding the site has been agreed to enable more extensive landscaping and in particular a “green barrier” between the site and the houses on Netherfield Lane, as well as retaining and enhancing existing hedgerow and tree line, to mitigate any adverse impact from development on the surrounding Lee Valley Park landscape as set out within the LVRPA Park Development Framework (2011), and its proximity to Stanstead Innings as set out in Area 8 Proposals “The Upper Lee Valley – Rye Meads to Ware. The existing woodland and other vegetation along the boundaries should be retained and strengthened; there should be ecological enhancement and connectivity through the site for wildlife. A 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity will be essential. All planting should be native species.
- 4.27 A further feature of the site would be a small complementary development of community-led homes laid out in a courtyard design behind the existing grade II\* listed Baesh Almshouses, which would be available to rent at a truly affordable price. This land will be donated to the Baesh Trust [The Baesh Almshouse Trust has existed since 1638 and a large percentage of the Trustees are appointed by Stanstead Abbots and Great Amwell Parish Councils] to provide affordable homes in addition to the requirement for 40% affordable housing on the part of the site which excludes the land with outline planning consent (3/20/0502/OUT).
- 4.28 The site is suitable for family homes. Figures from EHDC indicate that the greatest demand is for 2 and 3 bed homes and slightly less demand for 1 bed homes. The demand according to local estate agents for purchase is for 3 and 4 bed homes.
- 4.29 The overall pattern of development should respond positively to the the site's immediate surroundings. The second part of the policy and some of the criteria in the fourth part provide guidance on house types and sizes. Given the nature of the existing junction of Netherfield Lane with Roydon Road, new access points into the site will be required. This is addressed in criterion f) in the fourth part of the policy. The scale and nature of the access points should be informed by a transport impact assessment. A lighting plan should be prepared to ensure dark corridors can be maintained along the site boundaries, both during construction and once occupied.
- 4.30 The whole site is within the Green Belt (the factory site being brownfield within the green Belt); justification for release from the Green Belt is given in **Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process**. The green field site is already contained on three sides by existing development and has not been used for agricultural purposes other than for occasional grazing a number of years ago. The need to provide a defensible new Green Belt boundary as detailed in Policy SASM H1 can be met.



### *SASM H3 Land East of Netherfield Lane/South of Roydon Road*

- I. Site H3 is allocated for mixed use development of Class C3 (Residential), Class E (Business).
- II. The site should deliver a coordinated approach to the delivery of its brownfield and greenfield components supported by a masterplan, and accommodate approximately 60 homes, including affordable housing and a 6-home scheme of community-led housing.
- III. Built development should occupy the minimum amount of the greenfield land that is required to deliver 60 homes on the overall site, consistent with good design and layout. The remaining parts of the greenfield area of the site should provide high quality, accessible, green infrastructure including a permanent, defensible, and landscaped boundary to contain the settlement edge and define the new green belt boundary.
- IV. In addition to the design guidelines in Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and design guidelines (AECOM, 2021), development proposals should respond positively to the following site specific criteria:
  - a) Housing mix should reflect local need, with predominantly 3/4-bed homes for open market sale and smaller 1, 2 and 3 bed affordable homes.
  - b) 40% affordable housing should be delivered on the site, and a 6-unit housing scheme to be made available to the Baesh Trust.
  - c) Green space should provide areas for communal recreation, good quality play space and contribute to visual amenity.
  - d) Parking provision should be integral or on plot, and be sympathetically designed to minimise impact on the street scape. Parking for any flats delivered on the site should be provided in a landscaped courtyard.
  - e) Layout should accommodate the retention of all existing trees and hedgerows (see also Policy NE3) to minimise the impact of loss of countryside and achieve a net gain in biodiversity and enhance connectivity to habitats at Stanstead Innings.
  - f) The delivery of a vehicular access to Netherfield Lane and pedestrian and cycle access to Netherfield Lane and/or Roydon Road.
  - g) The development of the site should showcase sustainable design and use an innovative layout to maximise daylight, attractive outlooks, sensitive lighting and ensure appropriate privacy and amenity for occupants.
  - h) The design and layout of the site should respond positively to the listed Baeshalmshouses to the immediate north of the site and provide sufficient distance between new buildings and the almshouses to safeguard their setting.
  - i) Within the context of criterion h), a vehicular access should be provided to the rear of the almshouses for general access and for emergency vehicles.
  - j) Development proposals should improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as retaining bridleway access for horse riders along Netherfield Lane.



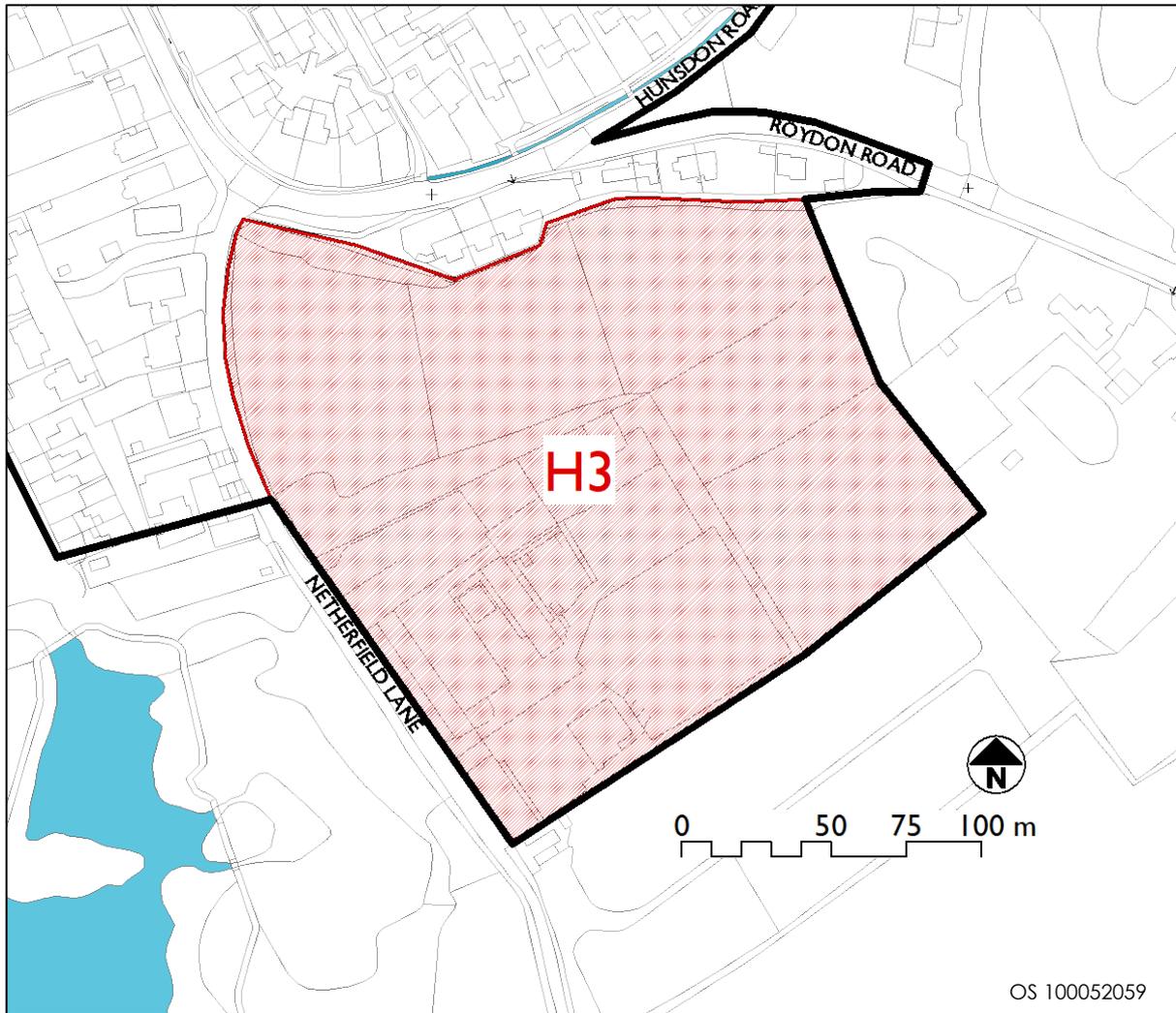


FIGURE 8 HOUSING SITE H3 DETAILED MAP

<b>Address</b>	Land to the east of Netherfield Lane, Stanstead Abbots, SG12 8HE
<b>Ownership</b>	Webster Estates Ltd
<b>Approximate size of site</b>	Up to 3.2 hectares
<b>Current / previous use</b>	B1 (a), B2, B8
<b>How site was identified</b>	Call for Sites
<b>Planning History</b>	Dismissal of Planning Appeal APP/J1915W/17/3185259 / East Herts Council reference 3/16/2296/OUT for proposed redevelopment for 30 dwellings. A subsequent application for 20 homes and 745 sq. m of office space ref 3/20/0502/OUT was granted outline permission with conditions on 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2023.
<b>Estimated timescale</b>	First 5 years of the Plan
<b>Estimated capacity</b>	60 units



### *Chapelfields and Abbots Way Garages*

4.31 This is a small brownfield site within the village settlement area. It is currently owned by Network Homes, a housing association which took much of the housing stock in Stanstead Abbots under a stock transfer from East Herts District Council in 2002. It consists of two sites adjacent to one another, which currently are occupied by garage blocks. Network Homes submitted 2 planning applications to redevelop the garages for residential use and have consulted locally on their plans. One of these applications has been approved to date. The stated intention is to build 7 homes - 2 houses and a block of 5 flats, all to be affordable housing; currently the proposal is for these to all be for sale, however, Network Homes has indicated that they are prepared to be flexible on this, given the high need for rented accommodation in the area.



FIGURE 9 HOUSING SITE ALLOCATION POLICY SASM H6

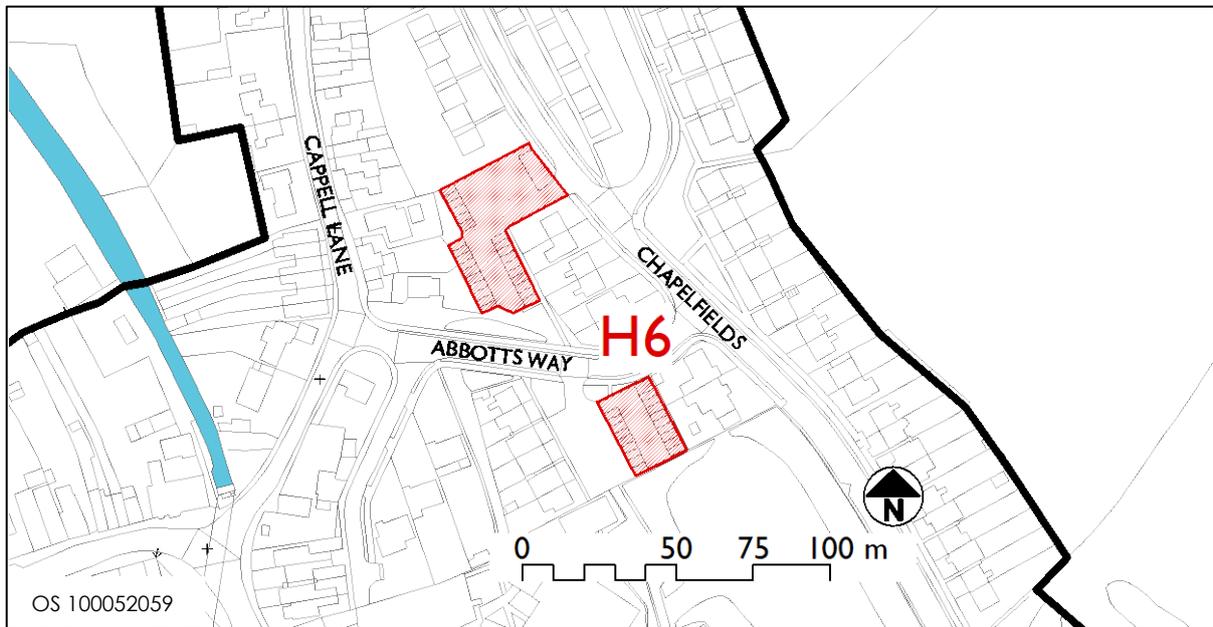


FIGURE 10 HOUSING SITE H6 DETAILED MAP

<b>Address</b>	Chapelfields and Abbots Way, Stanstead Abbots, Sg12 8HZ/HT
<b>Ownership</b>	Network Homes
<b>Approximate size of site</b>	Up to 0.18 hectares
<b>Current / previous use</b>	Garages sites
<b>How site was identified</b>	NP Plan Steering Group
<b>Planning History</b>	None found
<b>Estimated timescale</b>	First 5 years of the Plan
<b>Estimated capacity</b>	7 units

#### *SASM H4: Site H6 Chapelfields and Abbots Way Garages*

- I. Site H6 is allocated for Residential (Class C3). 7 dwellings.
- II. The design and layout of the development should relate sympathetically to the topography.
- III. Development proposals for the two sites should incorporate soft and hard landscaping, including creating usable connected green spaces.
- IV. Development proposals should meet the following site-specific criteria based on the site constraints and additional design guidelines set out in Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM 2021):
  - a) The incorporation of a mix of semi-detached or terraced homes and flats.
  - b) New buildings should be a maximum of 2 and a half storeys to reflect the height of neighbouring residential buildings and be designed with reference to views across the valley from the sites.
  - c) Parking should be on plot and carefully integrated into the overall design.
  - d) Existing trees should be retained with new planting and re-designed green space incorporated.
  - e) Design and material should reflect local vernacular including the proximity of several listed buildings.
  - f) PROW 006 runs east-west between the two garage sites and should be integrated into the development and enhanced.



### *Sites with Planning Permission*

- 4.32 There are currently no sites under construction. The Wilderness Site (site 28), and the Spinney have been recently completed and are now occupied. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) very much regrets the significant loss of trees on the Wilderness Site, An initial application was rejected by East Herts Council but a subsequent revised application was approved.



FIGURE 11 HOUSING SITES COMPLETED (LEFT THE WILDERNESS AND RIGHT THE SPINNEY)

### *Brownfield Land and Windfall sites*

- 4.33 Additional homes will come forward on Brownfield Land within the village. A recent example is the conversion of a home into two flats in the High Street.

#### *SASM H5: Brownfield Land and Windfall sites*

- I. New housing development will be focused on those sites identified within this plan or on previously developed brownfield sites within the village development boundary. Any other proposals for appropriate infilling within the village development boundary that respond positively to the design policies in the development plan (including Policy D1 of this Plan) will also be supported.
- II. Suitable windfall sites may include:
  - a) Conversions of upper floors to residential dwellings:
  - b) Demolition of single dwellings and erection of additional dwellings:
  - c) Conversion of large single houses into multiple flats.

### *Housing Type and Mix*

- 4.34 Housing need in the village is concentrated in the lower end of property sizes; most of those households on the Housing Register needing one, two or three bed homes. This is in line with the need identified across East Herts and with the District Council's recently published Housing Strategy noting that "there has been a



general increase in the number of households requiring affordable housing." At the end of March 2021 there were 2,168 households on the East Herts Housing Register, 95% of which required homes of three bedrooms or less.

### *SASM H6: Type and Mix of Housing*

- I. Proposals should demonstrate how the mix of dwellings and tenures meet local needs and are appropriate to the location. New housing should be safe, accessible, environmentally sustainable, and spacious enough to accommodate the changing needs of occupants throughout their lifetimes in accordance with EHDC Housing Need Assessment
- II. The provision of one and two-bedroom flats will be supported, particularly in locations close to public transport routes.

## **5. Design**

### *Introduction*

- 5.1 Paragraph 3.6 of the Basic Conditions Statement sets out the intention to foster 'a well designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces. Design is a golden thread running through the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is more than just about aesthetics as buildings and environments need to be functional as well as durable; support occupant well-being, comfort, and physical health, respond to the surrounding environment, as well as minimising anything detrimental to the environment.
- 5.2 The design policies cover the standards of design that will be expected of developments in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the density of new residential development, the basic amenity of natural light that should be afforded to all homes, and how residential amenity space can be provided. These are supplemented by the Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM, 2021) on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#), written specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan.

### *Design of Development*

- 5.3 The importance of good design in the built environment is widely established. Good design is contextual and should respond to the environment, surrounding areas and circumstances and the context should influence architectural style, form, building material selection, scale, massing, and site layout. The NPPF says the neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of their area and how this can be reflected in new development. Our objective is for high quality developments that consider all the factors of context and making places better for people to contribute to overall quality of life.
- 5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has identified six areas in the village with distinct characters derived from the setting, topography, or architectural style. This



is captured in the document Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines (AECOM, 2021) which seeks to ensure future development considers local character and enhances local distinctiveness. Good quality developments can be created using the set of specific principles relating to the six character areas, that can be applied to any development.

- 5.5 Space is a crucial element in promoting good quality health and wellbeing outcomes. Everyone has the right to own a spacious, quality home. Space is valued for different reasons but protecting liveable space through minimum standards will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the occupants.
- 5.6 The Vision Statement for this Neighbourhood Plan refers to community cohesion and well-being – this lies behind the insistence on adequate amounts of space. A fabric first approach involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building envelope to minimise the need for heating and cooling. The building envelope separates the interior from the exterior. By carefully considering the design and construction of the building envelope, you can minimise the energy required, reduce operational costs, and reduce carbon emissions. To achieve the best results with a fabric first, approach important factors are high-quality insulation, increased air tightness, avoiding thermal bridging (where there is a break in the insulation skin of a building causing condensation and heat loss), maximising solar gain without overheating, and natural ventilation. These details will ensure that the requirement set out in our Vision Statement for sustainable development is fulfilled.
- 5.7 When houses and other habitable structures are built close to neighbours, privacy between the neighbouring properties is an important issue as is the level of privacy in relation to the street or public spaces. The building arrangement of new developments should ensure privacy for residents and neighbours within the home. The privacy of private open space is also important. Maintaining views from principal rooms without compromising privacy of private open space should be maximised. The position and aspect of habitable rooms should avoid directly facing windows, gardens and balconies in dwellings that stand opposite one another. Orientating and angling buildings so they do not face one another can be effective as can the use of screening devices, fences, and planting.
- 5.8 The public realm and the relationship between it and the adjacent buildings is an important consideration to achieve high amenity, community safety and visual interest. To maximise these qualities, it is important for buildings to have an 'active frontage' to the public realm. Active frontage refers to street frontages of a building where there is visual engagement between those on the street and the ground and upper floors. Ensuring natural surveillance and human presence on streets are key in building in safety within our environment. This can be achieved by making buildings front on to the public realm with frequent windows and doors, articulation of facades with projections, and minimising exposed blank facades.



- 5.9 A well-designed approach can enhance the safety of users as well as creating a welcoming entrance. The front boundary of a property should be clearly defined between public and private areas, with dwelling frontage open to view, with walls, hedges and fencing kept low. Dwellings should be positioned to face each other to allow neighbours to easily view their surroundings. This gives increased opportunity for natural surveillance, community interaction, engagement, and participation. Clear signage of properties is essential to assist residents, postal and delivery workers, and the attendance of emergency services. The provision of external lighting for safety should be balanced with ecological considerations.
- 5.10 When designing streets that are to be attractive, safe and friendly, parking will have a strong influence on the degree of success. A careful balance needs to be struck between expectations of car owners to park near their houses with the need to maintain the character and setting. Vehicles should not be allowed to dominate the space, or inconvenience pedestrians and cyclists. Consideration should be given to green parking initiatives, for example locally sourced materials which reflect local geodiversity. As well as providing an appropriate level of car parking, the layout, landscaping and lighting of parking areas must be well designed, and where appropriate take into account lighting guidance for bats. As well as providing an appropriate level of car parking, the layout, landscaping and lighting of parking areas must be well designed. Layouts must accommodate the safe passage of emergency, delivery, and refuse collection vehicles. Objective R states the intention to provide parking in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.
- 5.11 Hertfordshire County Council is particularly active in promoting [Secured by Design](#) (PCPI, 2022) through its [Building Futures Toolkit](#) (Hertfordshire County Council, 2022). The Secured by Design Initiative offers in-depth advice and standards on environmental design and physical protection which should be used to create safe developments. Measures to design out crime should be considered at an early stage of the design process. These should include maximising opportunities for natural surveillance and ensuring a clear definition of public and private spaces. Safety and the other matters described in the preceding paragraphs are necessary to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity and where crime and disorder do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience in accordance with the NPPF, para 135 f) (DLUHC, 2023)
- 5.12 Traditionally homes have been separated from workplaces with a clear distinction between the two, except for trades such as farming. Recent years have seen an increase in working from home but the response to Covid-19 has accelerated this and new homes need to adapt and should be designed to accommodate working from home. Space for working from home has been part of the London Housing Design Guide, which sets the standard for residential development in London, and previously in the Code for Sustainable Homes that required space and services to enable a room to be used effectively as a home office.



- 5.13 Servicing of developments is an important consideration and there is a need to balance the efficient use of land, maintaining capacity of transport networks and not undermining the amenity of adjoining occupiers. All new development must be designed to accommodate the waste and recycling regime within East Herts, providing space for the full range of waste and recycling bins to encourage use. Bins should not be visible from the public realm and communal bins should be in robust materials that will withstand vandalism.
- 5.14 Cycling is increasingly recognised for the contribution it can make as a sustainable and healthy form of transport. To support this, there need to be measures in place to make sure the choice to cycle is a convenient one. Cycle parking needs to be designed early in a development to ensure it is good quality. Cycle parking needs to be conveniently located so it is as close as possible to the main entrance/exit to encourage cycling as first choice for short trips. Parking should be easy to use, safe and secure with good lighting and natural surveillance. Ideally parking should be covered, and cycle racks should provide good support, allowing the cycle frame and wheel to be secured. Cycle parking should be in keeping with the surroundings, and where possible include Green Infrastructure benefits such as green roofs, bird boxes or bee hotels.
- 5.15 Designs should take account of the Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) and accompanying Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide to ensure development responds to the 'building blocks' of green infrastructure, for example through use of SUDS, green and blue roofs, green walls, rain gardens and features for species such as nest and roost boxes.



### *SASM D1 Design of Development*

- I. Development proposals should be of a high standard of design and layout. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate the following criteria:
  - a) Design should respond to the local character taking into account the specific characteristic of the character area as defined in the AECOM document '[Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Masterplanning and Design Guidelines](#)' particularly in relation to existing building lines, rhythm of the existing street, height and scale.
  - b) Designs should respond to Green Infrastructure opportunities as set out in the Green Infrastructure Framework (NE, 2023) designed to improve environmental sustainability and protect nature.
  - c) Proposals for housing should be able to demonstrate they meet the requirements and minimum sizes as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and that they have considered how homeworking can be accommodated.
  - d) Developments should be designed with a fabric first approach to reduce energy requirements and designed for maximum energy efficiency. Development that contributes to low or zero carbon objectives will be looked upon favourably.
  - e) Active frontages should be maximised and inactive frontages that form the ground floor of buildings facing publicly accessible space should be minimised, to provide natural surveillance and activity. Developments should allow space for deliveries, emergency access, and maintenance. Where possible, space should be provided off the main highway, with particular emphasis on sites located on the approach to the level crossing.
  - f) All forms of parking should be carefully integrated with the design of landscape and buildings to avoid spaces that are dominated by cars.
  - g) The arrangement of new development should ensure privacy and not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
  - h) Developments should provide adequate refuse and recycling storage space in the curtilage of the development. Within dwellings, built-in storage space for recycling, food waste and waste storage should be included as standard. Consideration should be given to relevant Natural England requirements (e.g. the Green Infrastructure Framework).
  - i) Cycle storage should be secure, adequately lit, easy to use and conveniently located.



### *Housing Density*

- 5.16 Appropriate density should be arrived at through a design-led approach, taking account of the site context and infrastructure capacity. Developments should make efficient use of land, taking into account a range of contextual factors. The efficient use of land requires optimisation of density. Increasing density is a key way of delivering more homes where land supply is constrained. There are several definitions of density and the methods by which it can be measured but the main objective to providing a minimum density for sites is for housing growth to minimise the extent of land required for development and impose less pressure on the Green Belt that surrounds the village.
- 5.17 The existing village context was examined in terms of average density, as a reflection of total number of homes in an area divided by the total residential land (in hectares) where the homes exist, in dwellings per hectare (dph). Lower density areas in the region of 22dph were largely 3-4 bedroom semi-detached or detached two storey dwellings, rising to 68 dph in developments where there are several 1-2 bedroom flats alongside large, terraced units with buildings up to three storeys in height.
- 5.18 Comparisons can be made with Edwardian/Victorian terraces in Hertfordshire at 80dph or new town higher density low-rise in Hertfordshire at 64dph. The report "Better Neighbourhoods: Making higher densities work" (CABE, 2004) is still relevant. However, a design led approach would also consider context, on the edge of the village, The NPPF para 135 (DLUHC, 2023), lists a number of factors that should be taken into account when making the most efficient use of land.

#### *SASM D2 Housing Density*

- I. The density of new residential development should secure the best use of the land and be optimised in locations with good transport and community facilities, subject to achieving quality design (in accordance with Policy SASM D1) and the provision of communal public green space. Furthermore, the density of new residential development should respond positively to the context and character of the immediate area.

### *Amenity*

- 5.19 Access to daylight and sunlight is a vital part of a healthy environment. Sensitive design should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to new buildings while not obstructing light to existing buildings nearby. All new developments should be designed to minimise overshadowing of neighbouring properties. Several factors should be considered such as height, distance to boundaries, size of plot, orientation, and topography.
- 5.20 Good sunlight and daylight should be achieved both within buildings and in the open spaces between them. This would equate to safeguarding daylight and sunlight within existing buildings near new development and protecting daylight for adjoining land, private gardens, and amenity areas.



### *SASM D3 Amenity*

- I. The design and layout of building should enable good standards of daylight and sunlight to be achieved in new development and in existing properties affected by new development. Wherever practicable, all new homes should have a dual aspect, and single aspect dwellings should be avoided particularly where they would be north-facing, exposed to noise or contain three or more bedrooms. All homes should be designed and arranged to allow direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day.

### *Residential Amenity Space*

- 5.21 The design of outdoor space is important, and the arrangement and quality of the spaces can have a significant impact on residents and neighbours and should be provided for all dwellings. Outdoor space can mitigate the effects of living in smaller dwellings and improves the overall liveability of a dwelling. Outdoor space may be public, communal, or private and should incorporate wider biodiversity benefits as set out in the Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide (2023) during design and operational phases. Communal outdoor spaces should be overlooked by adjacent dwellings, easy to maintain and have well defined boundaries. All dwellings should have private usable outdoor open space.
- 5.22 The design of outdoor spaces should be carefully planned as it can have a significant impact on residents and neighbours. Balconies and terraces contribute to the safety and liveliness of the street by creating opportunities for natural surveillance. Wintergardens would also be acceptable as a form of private or communal open space. These can be provided on balconies, roofs or atriums and can contain evergreen shrubbery and winter flowering plants which can be enjoyed year-round.

### *SASM D4 Residential Amenity Space*

- I. All new dwellings should be provided with private open space such as a garden, balcony, terrace or wintergarden. Where communal space is provided, proposals should demonstrate the space is overlooked, accessible, designed for sunlight and will be maintained.



## 6. *Riverside*

- 6.1 The policies in this section provide guidance on how to achieve appropriate sustainable development along the riverside whilst protecting its special ecology. The Lee Valley Regional Park, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB should be encouraged to continue their excellent work in protecting the safety of wildlife as well as visitors and educating residents and visitors about the natural environment around the rivers. The riverside defines Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and is an intrinsic part of its character. These aims are in accordance with Objective E:
- 6.2 **Objective E:** To celebrate the rivers' unique contribution to the village by increasing opportunities for people to enjoy and directly interact with the rivers.
- 6.3 Life in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is very much focused around water. The now very old New River has provided London with water pumped from Chadwell Springs just North of Great Amwell in Ware for hundreds of years and one of the prettiest sections of it passes through Great Amwell (adjacent to the Folly) and St Margarets. Most residents live within sight of either the New River, the River Lea Navigation, Mill Stream or the original River Lea itself. The houses flanking the Lee Valley Park are close to one or other of the many lakes created from former gravel pits which makes them attractive but being low-lying they are vulnerable to flooding.
- 6.4 Any development adjacent to the riverside would need to complement access to the tow paths, ensure the resilience of the river banks and take into account the access to boats on permanent or temporary moorings. Any built or floating structure should allow visual and physical access to the river banks and not obscure the river views from existing buildings. Light pollution should be avoided and the enjoyment of wildlife by visitors to the riverside and to other water bodies in the area should be encouraged.
- 6.5 Boating has become very popular during the last few years with ever increasing numbers of narrow boats and motor- boats sharing the river space and utilising the facilities at the Stanstead Abbots Marina and Chandlery and the sailing club near Stanstead Abbots Lock. Dinghies are sailed on Abbots Lake and a large number are kept there under the auspices of a club. There are several fishing clubs and private fisheries in the designated area which bring many visitors to the village. It is another activity which attracts people to the area whether as residents or visitors.
- 6.6 More people seeking alternative types of housing accommodation are finding living on a canal boat a viable option ([The Waterways Trust](#)). Boats can also provide great holiday accommodation. The leisure moorings in Stanstead Abbots are close to Amwell Nature Reserve and have access to walking, cycling and running routes along the Lea Valley ([Lea Valley Narrowboats](#)). Using the river for these purposes should not detract from the amenities that the river provides.





FIGURE 12 RESIDENTIAL FLOATING STRUCTURES POLICY SASM R1

### *SASM R1 Riverside Development*

- I. Development proposals alongside and adjacent to the river should contribute to improvements and enhancements of the river environment and should ensure that homes establish a sensitive relationship with the river. Development proposals should maximise the benefits of the river setting in terms of views and vistas, while generating natural surveillance of the water space, create public spaces as focal points, and incorporate uses that enable the local community and public to enjoy the riverside, especially at ground level in buildings fronting the river and along the waterway's towing paths.

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals alongside or adjacent to the river should:

- a) Enhance existing public access to the riverside where improvements are feasible; or
- b) Provide new public access to the riverside where possible and maintain existing points of access to the foreshore. All major development proposals adjacent to the river shall provide public access; and
- c) Provide suitable parking, refuse and recycling facilities and utilities infrastructure where additional moorings are proposed; and
- d) Respond positively to the integrity of the waterway structure, navigational safety, safety of all waterway users, ecology, and the biodiversity of the waterway.

### *SASM R2 Floating Structures*

- I. Proposals for moorings and floating structures should:
  - a) respond positively to the character or integrity of the river;
  - b) respect recreation and commercial use of the river; and
  - c) provide a parking space, refuse and recycling facilities, and utilities infrastructure for any permanent mooring.





FIGURE 13 FOOTPATH ACCESS AND INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SASM R2

## 7. *Heritage Assets*

### *Introduction*

- 7.1 Heritage can make a valuable contribution to the well-being of the community and the economy. Heritage assets may be designated or undesignated, visible or below ground. As a resource they are irreplaceable, therefore any development that adversely affects such assets must be carried out with the greatest sensitivity, both to preserve and where this is not possible, to ensure that all information that could be retrieved is received and analysed. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are in line with East Herts District Plan Policies HA1 to HA8.
- 7.2 Through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, awareness of the richness of heritage assets in the area has been raised, particularly archaeology. Guided walks have been produced and events where residents can get involved in heritage preservation have been organised, including archaeological investigations on the Housing Site in Netherfield Lane ([Policy SASM H3](#)). A Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Report has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as an additional evidence document and can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 7.3 Interpretation of heritage raising awareness of special heritage assets already exists in the form of information boards and plaques, and the war-time history of the area is evident from the war memorials in Stanstead Abbots (outside St Andrews Church) and at Great Amwell (beside the river).
- 7.4 The aims of the policies in this section are in accordance with the following objectives:
- Objective F:** To deliver accessible guidance and information to inform residents about Heritage requirements and assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- Objective G:** To identify specific designated and non-designated heritage assets and provide for their protection.



- 7.5 A large part of the settlement area is covered by [Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(CAA\)](#), adopted by East Herts District Council in April 2014. The Conservation Area is made up of areas of different character. The NPPF (DLUHC,2023) paras 196-8 set out a range of positive factors requirements of the local authorities to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. Only the Folly Estate and the Lawrence Avenue estate lie entirely outside the Conservation Area (see Policies Map).
- 7.6 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the Neighbourhood Plan considers the likely impact on the historic environment from housing growth of the settlement. Sites both within and surrounding the settlement are constrained by designated heritage assets. The housing sites allocated in the Plan are adjacent to but not within the Conservation Area. The largest site at Netherfield Lane ([Policy H3](#)) has the greatest potential to impact heritage, in particular the Baesh Almshouses which are Grade II\* listed. However, the design concepts for the site and the capacity of the site to hold more homes than the number proposed will provide essential green space to respect the heritage setting of the site.
- 7.7 The Housing and the Design Policies, along with the Design Guidance, and the Heritage Policies below will ensure that heritage is protected in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### *Designated Heritage Assets*

#### *Conservation Area*

- 7.8 The Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area is irregularly shaped and covers most of the High Street and Station Road plus Roydon Road, Cats Hill, Hunsdon Road and Hoddesdon Road. The Conservation Area Appraisal identified 58 Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area with a similar number outside the Conservation Area but within the Neighbourhood Plan Area; 48 Listed Buildings are within the settlement boundary. Grade I, II\* and II Heritage Assets can be found on [Historic England's website](#). There are also two Scheduled Monuments within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Rye House and Bowl Barrow (see Policies Map), the Grade II\* designated Stanstead Bury and a small part of the Grade II designated Briggens Historic Park and Garden.



### *SASM HA1: Designated Heritage Assets*

- I. Development proposals should pay special attention to the desirability of conserving the significance of designated heritage assets within the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area in accordance with the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2014 and its successors.

### *Non-designated Heritage Assets*

- 7.9 Historic England's publication [Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment Advice Note 11 \(Second Edition, 2022\)](#) identifies the importance of neighbourhood plans including a policy for non-designated heritage assets and identifying those assets which might be included on a local heritage list.
- 7.10 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies many non-designated assets including buildings, walls, and decorative features. Some of these are reviewed in the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Report. Each should be considered worthy of inclusion in a local heritage list. However, for the purpose of this Neighbourhood Plan, [Policy HA2](#) below identifies Non-designated Heritage Assets.
- 7.11 There are several obelisks marking the Meridian Line through the village. The New River Meridian marker is located on the south side of Station Road close to the New River. An article in [Stanstead Abbots Local History Society Publication Issue 6](#) provides more information on Meridian Line markers.
- 7.12 Two Non-designated Heritage Assets are historic parks and gardens of local interest (Easneye and Hill House, Cappell Lane) identified by East Herts in their Historic Parks and Gardens Supplementary Planning Document (2007). Further information on these two locally listed parks and gardens has kindly been provided by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and can be read in the Evidence Base Reports document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 7.13 Details of the Non-designated Heritage Assets can be found in [\*\*Appendix D: Non-Designated Heritage Assets\*\*](#).



***SASM HA2: Non-designated Heritage Assets (NHA)***

- I. The Plan identifies the following Non-designated Heritage Assets
  - NHA1 Easneye Historic Park, Cappell Lane
  - NHA2 Hill House Historic Park, Cappell Lane
  - NHA3 K6 Telephone Box (now defibrillator station), High Street
  - NHA4 Greenwich Meridian Marker, Station Road
  - NHA5 Home Guard defence position opposite Meridian Marker, High Street
  - NHA6 Drinking Fountain, at front of Parish Hall, Roydon Road
  - NHA7 Edward VII Letter Box, Cappell Lane
  - NHA8 George VI Letter Box, opposite 42 Hoddesdon Road
- II. Development proposals which affect the identified non-designated heritage assets should take into account the significance of the heritage asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

7.14 Much of the Conservation Area is also defined as an Area of Archaeological Significance. Hertfordshire Historic Environment Records have been consulted. The HER highlighted the importance of the land to the south/south-west of the village settlement where a Henge monument has been identified from aerial photography (one of only three in Hertfordshire). The Neighbourhood Plan recommends that until such time as field investigation is undertaken, land to the southwest of the village should be protected from development.

7.15 Land at the interface between the flood zone and higher ground within the villages may help with the identification of early medieval settlement. Along the High Street further archaeological investigation may help to offer a date for the earliest occupation within the flood zone. Any development proposals at the interface between the flood zone and higher ground may provide the opportunity to help with identification of the boundary of an early medieval settlement. Development proposals on the High Street may reveal information about the earliest occupation of the area. The Parish Council will press the District Council to add an informative note to any planning consent to work with Hertfordshire County Council and Historic England to monitor the development process and allow retrieval or recording of information.



### *SASM HA3: Archaeology*

- I. Within the AAS to the southwest of the settlement boundary, where aerial photography has revealed a henge and other monuments to be below ground, Development proposals will not be supported without extensive appropriate investigation of those assets and the incorporation of any appropriate mitigation measures.

### *Protected Views and Landscape Character*

- 7.16 The rural nature of the villages is shown in the East Hertfordshire Landscape

Character Assessment, adopted by the District Council in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>1</sup>. It details two landscape character areas which border the settlement: Area No. 78 – Great Amwell Ridge and Slopes, and Area No. 79 - the Amwell Floodplain. Because the villages are surrounded by a combination of farmland, wildlife habitats and woodland, it is important that any development is sympathetic to this landscape character.

- 7.17 Protecting locally valued views and vistas from inappropriate development,

particularly in rural areas, helps to preserve landscape character. The views protected in [Policy HA4](#) are a mix of urban (within the villages) and rural. Views also contribute to and help to preserve the setting of heritage assets. This was specifically mentioned in the Strategic Environmental Assessment in terms of Heritage Assets. Photographs of favourite village scenes are frequently posted on the Community Facebook page to much acclaim. The 12 views selected which are listed below have been fully described in appendix 14. They reflect the requests of residents including the Steering Group and also confirm the importance of the historic sites to the village. The village is a destination for walkers and fishers, runners and boaters, bird-watchers and historians – due to its distinctive character and the appeal of its combination of rural and industrial history.

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<sup>1</sup> East Herts Landscape Character Assessment SPD:  
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/30333/Landscape-Character-Assessment-SPD/PDF/Landscape-Character-Assessment-SPD.pdf>



### *SASM HA4: Protected Views*

- I. Twelve Protected Views were identified either from the Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area and Management Plan July 2014 or identified after the report was produced. Please see appendix E These are:
  - View 1: Down Cat Hill from the Almshouses
  - View 2: East up Cat Hill towards the Almshouses
  - View 3: East to the Maltings adjacent to Abbots Rise Roydon Road
  - View 4: North to the Red Lion PH
  - View 5: South along the Mill Stream from footbridge in Maltings Car Park
  - View 6: Northeast to St Andrews Church from Cappel Lane
  - View 7: South along Cappel Lane from Warrax Park
  - View 8: East along High Street from River Lea bridge
  - View 9: Along the River Lea from the bridge upstream
  - View 10: Along the River Lea from the bridge downstream
  - View 11: St Mary's church in St Margarets Parish on Hoddesdon Road
  - View 12: South along the New River from the bridge on Station Road
- II. The scale, orientation and massing of development proposals should respond positively to the protected views. Where necessary, development proposals should be supported by a Landscape Visual Assessment.



FIGURE 14 CAT HILL WITH ALMS HOUSES

## 8. *Natural Environment*

### *Introduction*

- 8.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area will be improved both for the benefit of residents and for the wider Lea Valley and its associated communities and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan endorses the 15 minute neighbourhood concept; promoting easy access for all residents to good quality natural green space within a 15 minute walk from their homes. Conserving and enhancing natural assets which form a key part of the village character will enrich the quality of life for residents.
- 8.2 Green and woodland spaces, water networks and rights of access will be protected as they contribute not only to landscape, setting and character, but provide open space to enhance well-being for residents. Appreciation of the variety of green spaces and walks available to residents was felt more strongly during Covid 19 lockdowns. Maintaining the irreplaceable and varied species that rely on the village's stewardship of the open and wooded areas surrounding the village is crucial for wildlife and people.
- 8.3 Nature conservation and the appreciation of nature contributes to framing our everyday lives and reflects the relationship between people and place. This includes the interaction between both natural and cultural components. Cultural components include the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions (Tudor, 2014). Natural components include the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna.
- 8.4 Climate change has to be addressed as a matter of urgency and in implementing this Plan, every effort will be made to increase the number of trees and to replace any lost trees; to add to biodiversity; to decrease pollution; and to reduce the over-use of natural resources.
- 8.5 The policies in this section provide guidance on how to achieve appropriate sustainable development whilst respecting the natural environment. These aims are in accordance with the following objectives:
- 8.6 **Objective H:** To protect the Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets countryside setting, landscape, and character, for the benefit of the village itself as well as the wider community.
- 8.7 **Objective I:** To improve protection of assets such as woodland spaces and water networks that are vital for wildlife, but also to the quality of life for residents.
- 8.8 **Objective J:** To maintain irreplaceable species, promote ecosystem diversity and ensure that development results in a net gain in biodiversity.

### *Green infrastructure*

- 8.9 The aim of Natural England to have every resident living within a fifteen minute walk of Local Green Spaces is absolutely in line with the recognition by the Steering Group that Local Green Spaces (LGS) are cherished assets. Designating the most important green spaces as Local Green Space (LGS) can protect these assets for



current and future generations. NPGS recognises that the list of designated Local Green Spaces (LGS) forms a cherished asset which was compiled with almost no dissent. Designating the green spaces identified through the consultation process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan include Green Belt land, meadows and open-access land, towpaths and river courses, rural footpaths, bridleways and allotments.

- 8.10 Local Green Spaces can be designated in neighbourhood plans under paragraph 105 of the NPPF, (DLUHC, 2023) of the NPPF December 2023. As we have set out in our Basic Conditions and in the objectives for this plan the protection of the Natural Environment and recognition of social needs have informed the selection of Local Green Spaces. The criteria used are contained in Paragraph 106 of the NPPF. Policy SASM NE1 identifies existing green spaces that require continuing protection (by location, type, statutory designation, condition and value to the community. Where green spaces already have protection they have not been included – those that are included were assessed against the following criteria: proximity to the community and local significance (ie visual impact, historical significance, recreational value and richness in bio-diversity) See **Appendix G: Local Green Space** Assessment.
- 8.11 One method used for selecting which green spaces meant most to local residents was to ask them at our series of open days at venues around the designated area and including Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall, to identify them on the map with stickers. This basic list was then followed up by a sub-group of the Steering Group. In the Regulation 14 survey a further site (a field adjacent to Housing Site H3) was suggested by a resident which was carefully considered. In the end it was felt it already had sufficient protection to remain a green field in the Green Belt and as it is not accessible to the public it did not meet the criteria.
- 8.12 LGS1 is a recreation ground which includes Football, cricket and tennis clubs which share some of the facilities but have each developed their own membership and ways of working. The field is open to the public and dog-walkers are free to come and go except during matches while young people are able to visit for kickabouts. The site is very well used and is very well maintained by volunteers.
- 8.13 LGS2 The Wilderness and Woodlands alongside the New River are particularly attractive settings for the residents and visiting walkers. The deciduous trees provide an attractive and atmospheric walkway enhanced by the reflections in the New River whilst the flora and fauna are especially appreciated. There was great sadness expressed at the loss of the part of the Wilderness on the eastern side of the New River adding to the determination on the part of residents to protect the remaining area.
- 8.14 LGS3 The splendid trees on the remainder of the historic St Margaretsbury Estate next to the New River Path greet anyone walking South from the bridge on Station Road. Again, there are fauna and flora which are very pleasing as they dominate according to the time of year. There is an abundance of birds here which fly up and down the New River and sightings of kingfishers are often noted.



- 8.15 LGS4 The field between the Granary and Sanville Gardens has been left derelict – the residents would like it to be cleared and made attractive with a footpath/cycleway linking the two estates as the original plans intended.
- 8.16 LGS5 The field to the North of Sanville Gardens is the remainder of what was a nursery owned by a local family for two generations and which has been developed over the last 15 years. The owner has given his name to the local community centre -the Nigel Copping Hall - having also donated the land on which it was built. LGS5 has been planted as an orchard through the offices of the St Margarets Parish Council and the community has demonstrated its approval on the local Facebook page and in feedback to the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.
- 8.17 LGS 6 Was identified by many consultees in 2018 and comprises a large riverside space which is popular with dog-walkers and children. In the summer the adjacent pub – the MacMullen-owned Jolly Fisherman – sets out picnic tables and the area is packed with dozens of customers consuming their meals and drinks in very pleasant and quite sheltered surroundings. Whilst already benefitting from protection through LVRP designation, protecting this site fulfils our objective to maintain the character of the village for residents and the wider community.
- 8.18 LGS7,8 and 9 are all areas of grassland with one playground which have been well maintained by the district council during the lifetime of the Lawrence Avenue estate constructed in the late 80s/early 90s. Currently the district council is in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council trialling meadow creation in the Rush Close section. Bee orchids have previously been found on LGS9. These grassed areas greatly add to the attractiveness of this riverside estate allowing excellent views of the boats on the river whilst providing the children with play spaces. It is also reassuring for residents that should the river burst its banks there is space for the water to collect before it could reach the majority of the homes. This space exemplifies Objective I which calls for improvements to the quality of life for residents.
- 8.19 First identified in the 2018 survey, LGS10 is a clearly defined area, lying at the fork of the B180 and the B181 at the eastern edge of the village. The site is uncultivated much valued wild-life area which provides an interesting alternative outlook to residents at Chapelfields, on Kitten Lane and on Roydon Road. It lends a strong sense of the village's character to those leaving the village by road.
- 8.20 LGS12 is the playing field on Chapelfields at St Andrew's Church of England Primary School. The school buildings are on Roydon Road and Mill Race and the playing field – including a sustainable garden – stretches up the hill. The field provides a highly valued open area which offers those living in the fairly densely built-up area of Chapelfields a sense of space and wonderful views right across the



Lea Valley. It is essential to the opportunities for the school population to enjoy sports in the open air.

- 8.21 LGS 13 and LGS15 are two areas of allotments that are enthusiastically cultivated by many village residents. There is a waiting list which is partly owing to the obvious success of those who are growing much of what they eat and are able to share with family and friends. The open spaces which they provide to the village are greatly appreciated offering uninterrupted views of the river valley from the church, for example, and they make good use of low-lying parts of the village.
- 8.22 LGS 14 has been adopted by Stanstead Abbots Parish Council and much thought and planning has gone into the playground which has equipment for all ages, and the Meadow which includes an outdoor gym. Recently picnic tables have been added and many residents and visitors enjoy spending leisure time here just relaxing in the pleasant environment with its trees, shrubs and planters. Occasionally it has been the site of village events as it is so central.
- 8.23 LGS16 is an attractive area of trees and shrubs which has a very natural feel to it with trees overhanging the B181. It provides a very pleasing approach to the village – interesting as there is access from the bridge across the New River. It is also close to the junction with Hoddesdon Road and it acts to help slow down the traffic as it approaches that junction where there is frequently a queue of traffic awaiting a train to cross the level crossing a little further on. Residents of the Folly in particular enjoy walking their dogs through the trees which can also be enjoyed by those walking along the New River path.
- 8.24 LGS 17 At the turn of the new millennium the Community Wood was planted and it really helps to detract from the unattractive site of the A414 fly-over across Hoddesdon Road. The trees are becoming well established and runners, walkers and cyclists can all include it on their circuits around the village – this was first identified by respondents to the 2018 which is in the Consultation Statement.



### *SASM NE1 Local Green Space (LGS)*

- I. The areas identified as Local Green Space are listed below, are shown on the Policies Map and on the individual maps below this policy:
  - LGS1: St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground
  - LGS2: Wilderness woodlands by New River Path and south of St Margaretsbury
  - LGS3: St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path
  - LGS4: Field between Sanville Gardens and the Granary
  - LGS5: Treed area north of Sanville Gardens
  - LGS6: Green beside The Jolly Fisherman, Station Road, beside towpath
  - LGS7: Field at end of Rush Close, beside towpath
  - LGS8: Field adjacent to Lawrence Avenue by River Lea Navigation
  - LGS9: Field adjacent to Heron Drive, beside towpath
  - LGS10: Land between Kitten Lane and Hunsdon Road and Roydon Road
  - LGS12: St Andrews' School Field off Abbots Way
  - LGS13: Allotments off Cappell Lane (Grid Ref TL3861012129)
  - LGS14: Village Meadow and playground north of High Street
  - LGS15: Allotments north of High Street (Grid ref TL3834811972)
  - LGS16: Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River
  - LGS17: Community woodland south of the Granary
  
- II. Development proposals within the designatged local green spaces will only be supported where in very special circumstances.

**LGS 11** was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in national policy.



FIGURE 15 LGS 3 ST MARGARETSBURY ESTATE BY NEW RIVER PATH



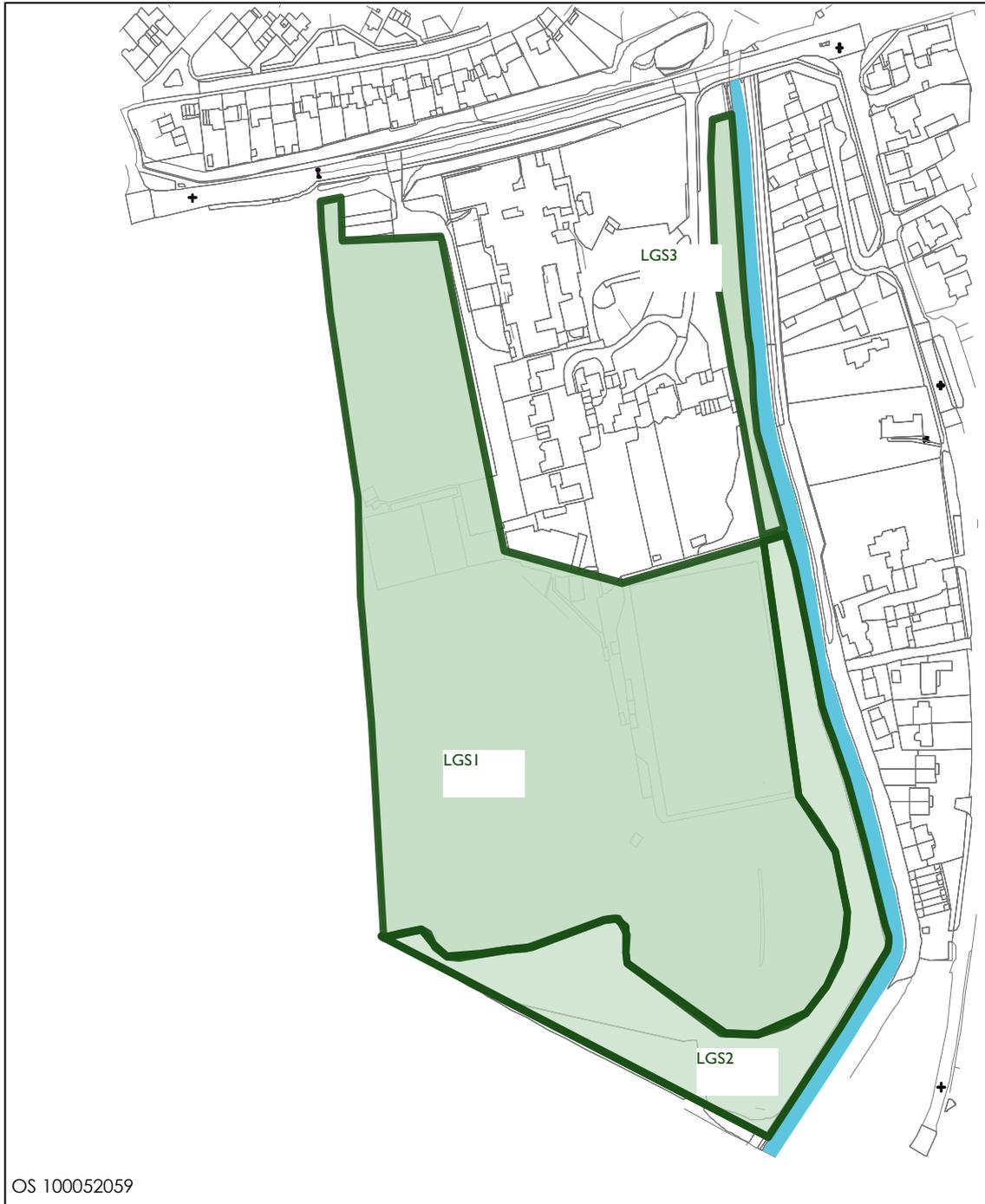


FIGURE 16 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS1 – LGS3)



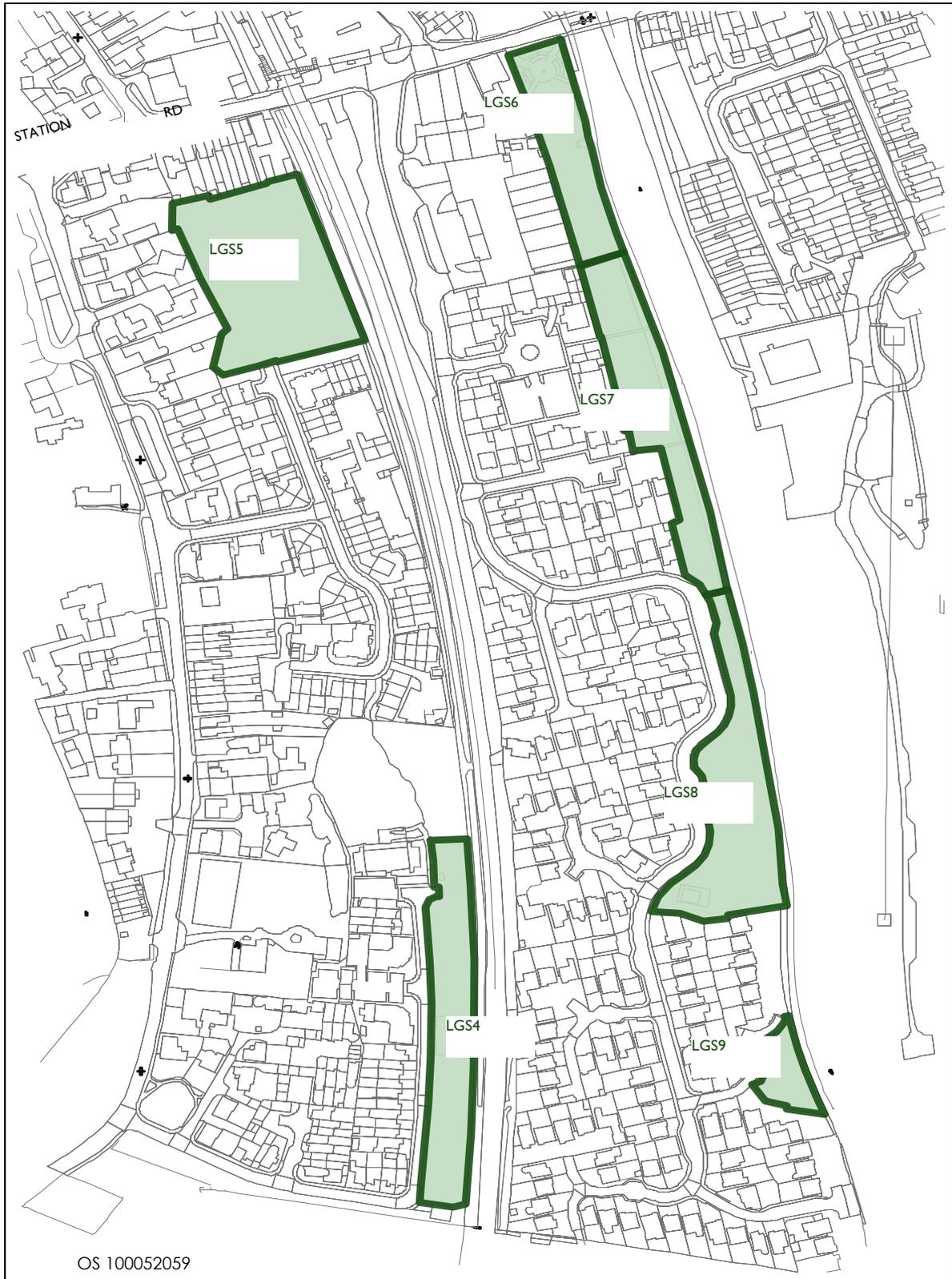


FIGURE 17 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS4 – LGS9)



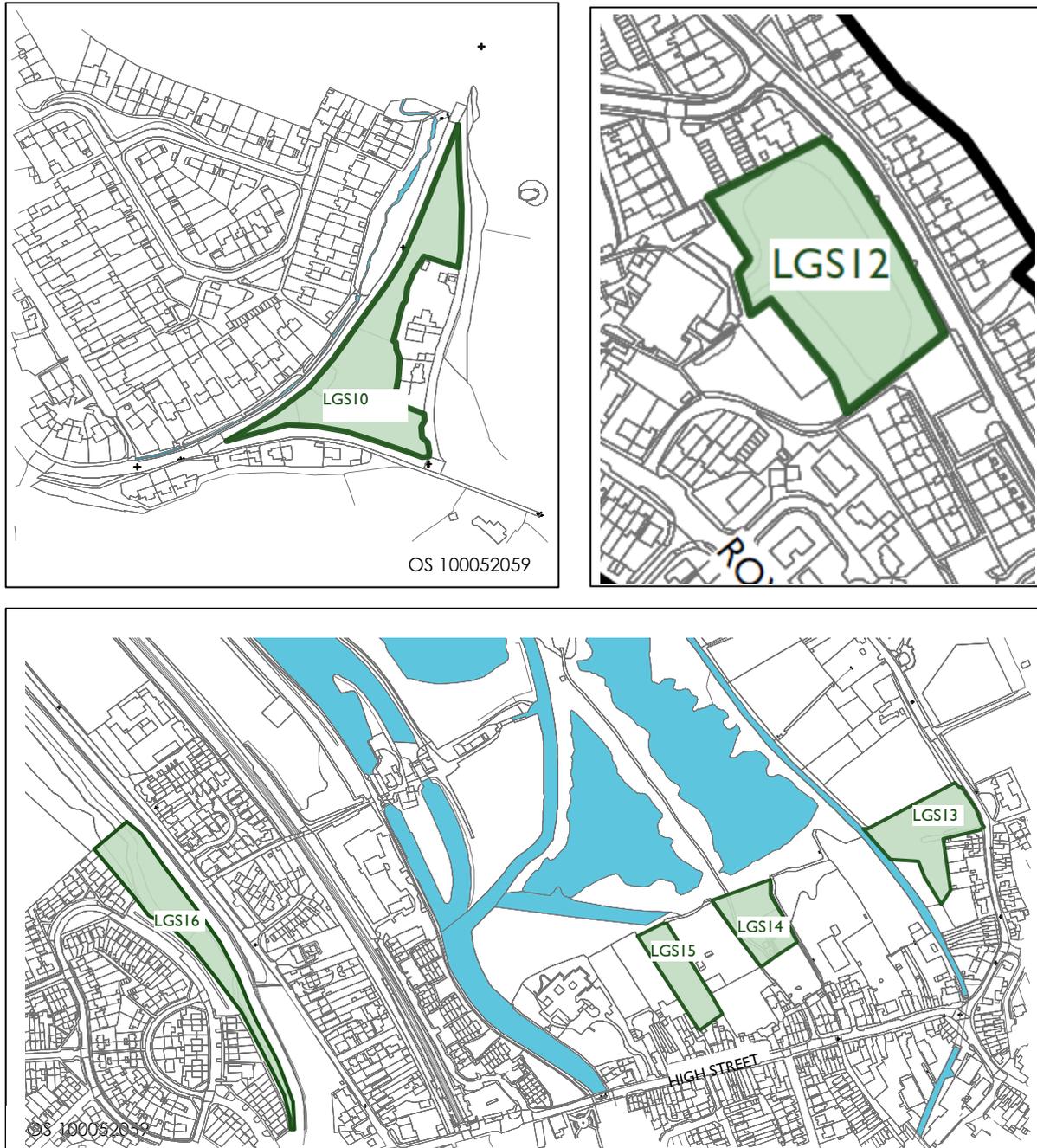


FIGURE 18 LARGE SCALE MAPS OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (LGS10 – LGS16)

### *Soil and Agriculture*

- 8.25 Soil and Agriculture is an important asset in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets – from the character and setting of its surrounding marshland to the quality of agricultural land. Housing Policies in this Plan seek to make the most effective use of our land as a resource.
- 8.26 The village landscape is determined by geology and soil. The underlying solid geology is London clay formed in deep seas circa. 50 million years ago, with areas of Thanet sands and undifferentiated sedimentary rocks. Above this is a complex



geology of chalky till, sands and gravels, silts and clays deposited by meltwater c. 2 million years ago under ice age conditions

- 8.27 Some sites also comprise older, pre-glacial sands and gravels, which were deposited in river and estuary levees c. 3 million years ago. Despite the development pressures affecting rural areas in Hertfordshire, farming remains the area's principal land use.
- 8.28 There has been much gravel extraction within the three parishes which has transformed the landscape into one with a number of lakes. There is very likely to be a new quarry for sand and gravel extraction on the edge of the designated area at Briggens Estate.
- 8.29 The available Agricultural Land Classifications (ALC) recorded for individual sites grades agricultural land quality as Grade 3. This is divided into subgrades 3a and 3b which indicates moderate to good quality land with some limitations that affect the choice of crop, timing and type of cultivation or level of yield.
- 8.30 Wherever possible, agricultural land should be protected from development in the interests of the local farming infrastructure and its future viability (NPPF paragraph 180 (DLUHC, 2023))
- 8.31 Information gathered during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process shows that residents are opposed to the large-scale loss of good agricultural land (particularly Grade 3a).

### *Air Pollution*

- 8.32 The quality of the environment in which we live is determined in great part by the quality of the air we breathe. Air Quality in the UK 2016 report says that a cleaner, healthier environment benefits people and the economy (DEFRA, 2017)
- 8.33 Protecting and improving the air quality as the village expands will be essential to protecting both quality of life, the wider eco-system and biodiversity and livelihoods that makes the village what it is. While East Herts Council records show some improvement in air quality over recent years (East Herts Council , 2020) as initiatives under the National Air Quality Framework take effect, there are pockets where illegal levels of nitrogen oxide have been recorded, including close to the village.
- 8.34 The East Herts District Plan contains specific policies on air quality (Policy EQ4). The Plan recognises the particular measures required to control air pollution in a District such as East Herts which is made up of dispersed towns, villages and hamlets with poor inter-connectivity by passenger transport. The relative affluence and mobility, and high car-ownership, contribute to higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions per person than neighbouring districts (East Herts Council, 2018).
- 8.35 While the District Plan makes specific reference to those areas with Air Quality Management action plans in place, the recommendations should be applied for St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots as part of preventative action to ensure against the further degradation of air quality. In the Neighbourhood Plan



engagement survey 71% of respondents indicated that they would welcome more measures to address air pollution caused by the levels of traffic. Such measures could include speed controls in the village centre and anti-idling controls outside shops, schools and at the level crossing.

- 8.36 All new development should be approached with the spirit of the East Herts Air Quality Action Plan at the heart, which emphasises making it easier for pedestrians, including pedestrian only areas, imposing traffic calming and anti-idling measures, improving traffic flows and encouraging electric vehicles. In bringing forward sites within the scheme, consideration should be given to Natural England's Climate Change Adaptation Manual – NE751.

### *Nature Conservation*

- 8.37 The East Herts District Plan recognises that nature conservation is an integral part of the planning process and identifies the most important areas via its Natural Environment (NE) Policies. It affords protection for international, national and locally designated nature conservation sites. The Neighbourhood Plan Area contains a site of international importance, the Lee Valley Park Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, including Rye Meads. This is a wetland habitat supporting a diverse range of wetland flora and fauna which is susceptible to recreational pressure, air quality reduction, water quality and changes in water levels. In addition, there is a second site of international importance just 3 km south west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Wormley-Hoddesdon park Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Rye Meads is also designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along with Amwell Quarry SSSI bordering the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 8.38 There are large areas of groundwater source protection zones under the SASM plan area. including source protection zone 1 (SPZ1) our most sensitive groundwater areas. The presence of these zones and the subsequent importance of protecting our controlled waters will need to be considered as part of any development proposals. Additionally, where watercourses are failing to reach good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive, any development within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality.
- 8.39 The importance of these sites, combined with the site allocations in this Plan triggered the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Habitats Regulations Assessments will continue as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The purpose of the HRA was to ascertain that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites of the proposals in the NP, or if there were predicted adverse impacts and there no alternatives to the proposals, then what compensation would be necessary.
- 8.40 A HRA was conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM (Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulation Assessment March 2022), prior to the Plan proceeding to Regulation 14. There were two stages to the process: screening and appropriate assessment. Only changes in water quality



were deemed to require assessment. Following assessment, it was concluded that with the implementation of District Plan Policy WAT6 Waste Water Infrastructure, and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the policy framework would ensure no adverse effects, either in isolation or in combination with other projects and plans.

- 8.41 Despite this, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought reassurance from Thames Water that they would be able to respond to the increase of new homes proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Their written response was that there were no plans to expand the capacity of the treatment works. An Appropriate Assessment was undertaken as part of the final HRA report by AECOM. This confirms that the allocated sites and specific housing numbers within the NP contains sufficient policy framework along with implementation of East Herts District Plan Policy WAT6 to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites either in isolation or in combination with other projects or plans,
- 8.42 During the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process, information on sites and species, including non-statutory sites (Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)) was compiled. This includes nature reserves, freshwater and wetlands, woodlands and trees, and wildlife species (i.e. plants, animals, birds and insects). A comprehensive inventory of sites and species is contained in the Natural Environment Evidence Base Report document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
- 8.43 Appropriate weight should be given to the importance of nature conservation sites and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks. Development schemes should be delivered that lead to no net loss of habitat, as required by [A Green Future](#) (the government's 25 year environment plan.)
- 8.44 Biodiversity should be at least increased on any development site. The current Biodiversity Metric, which measures biodiversity, is now embedded in national legislation. The Biodiversity Metric is subject to change, particularly in the light of the **Environment Act 2021**. The Act recommends a net gain in biodiversity of 10% for relevant developments. Sensitive, informed and integrated approaches to any development will help to conserve, enhance and restore locally valued landscapes.
- 8.45 This will require development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits. It is anticipated that all development within the SASM Neighbourhood Plan should seek to achieve on-site BNG contributions wherever possible and an Action Plan will be developed to identify suitable locations for potential off-site benefits within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary should they be required. Further advice will be sought from the LPA as guidance affecting neighbourhood plan implementation becomes available. Measures to deliver Biodiversity net gains could include but are not limited to:



Establish "wildflower recovery areas" and provide habitats for pollinators.

Adopt "best Practice" management guidelines for road verge biodiversity.

Provide bat boxes to encourage bats into areas where there are few roosting sites.

Create new habitats by planting native trees, shrubs or plants of high value to wild birds.

### *SASM NE2 Nature Conservation*

- I. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals within or adjacent to watercourses should seek to improve water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

### *Valued Trees and Hedgerows*

- 8.46 In the East Herts District Plan, policy NE3 states that development which would result in the loss of, or significant change to, trees, hedgerows or ancient woodlands will not be permitted. There is one veteran tree in the village shown on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory. This is the large Horse Chestnut tree in the garden of Walford House, High Street, Stanstead Abbott, which is visible from the village car park. Many notable trees are identified in the Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area Appraisal which benefit from protection because of their location in the Conservation Area. Other notable trees mentioned in the Tree Report (in the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Reports) are a Horse Chestnut on the south west corner of the mini roundabout at Hoddesdon Road/Station Road (TL 38007 11740), an Ash on Station Road (TL 38094 11800), a Corkscrew Willow in Riverside (TL 38324 11781) and a Cedar opposite 90 Roydon.
- 8.47 Concern has been expressed about the loss of hedgerows in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Apart from the Stanstead Abbotts and St Margarets settlement, the remaining area is predominantly rural. Hedges form an important part of its landscape character as well as providing habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.



- 8.48 The Hedgerow Regulations aim to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of modification, where there is a presumption in favour of protecting and retaining important examples. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies several hedgerows of local significance which, while not covered by the Hedgerow Regulation, should be protected for wildlife and retention of landscape character. These are set out below in [Policy SASM NE3](#).
- 8.49 Hedgerows 1 and 2 are well established mixed hedges which contain ash, beech, field maple, hawthorn, hazel, holly, wild cherry and willow. Trees have girths ranging from 36" to 46" and even 60" . They are densely growing with flowering and fruiting shrubs thus providing a significant wildlife habitat that is visually distinctive separating the arable agricultural land from the main road.
- 8.50 Hedgerow 3 demarcates a footpath that is the only safe pedestrian route to the village from the North East. There are mature trees including oak, ash, lime, hazel and horse chestnut, blackthorn and elder. Woodland plants include cleavers, nettles, brambles, Jack by the Hedge, hogweed, mallow, cow parsley, many vetches and Lords and Ladies. The older Elder trees offer a habitat for numerous fungi including Jelly Ears. Sparrowhawks, tawny owls, nuthatches, crows, jays, magpies, woodpigeons, pheasants, blackbirds, great tits, blues tits, coal tits and long tailed tits use the full length of the boundary. Occasional visitors include bullfinches, green woodpeckers, treecreepers and blackcaps. Mammals include moles, shrews and voles, hedgehogs, foxes and occasional muntjac deer.
- 8.51 Hedgerow 4 is the school boundary hedge which consists of hawthorn and links with a very well-established historic boundary hedgerow rising uphill with native species including maple, holly, ivy and blackthorn.
- 8.52 The girths of the tree trunks ranged up to 36", 46" and even 60". It is a well established mixed hedgerow, densely growing, which includes flowering and fruiting shrubs do it is of ecological significance as wildlife habitat along the boundary between the arable field and road into the village. This is an important wildlife corridor and contributes to the rural landscape which is evident along each of the approach roads into the villages
- 8.53 Setting aside various exceptions, principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carryout works to trees in Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area has to be 'notified' to the District Council. Many individual trees and groups of trees within the Conservation Area are already subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The District Council may make a Tree Preservation Order to further protect the tree/s which might be at risk. The Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal Map diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make an important contribution to the Conservation Area, particularly when viewed from the public realm. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.



### *SASM NE3 Valued Hedgerows and Trees*

- I. The following valued hedgerows mark important boundaries, and provide both wildlife habitat and carbon capture along busy roads and are shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals should retain and incorporate these valued hedgerows wherever practicable:

**Hedge 1:** Continuous hedgerow on the southern side of the B181 Station Road from Amwell Roundabout to the village boundary at St. Margaretsbury.

**Hedge 2:** Hedgerow delineating the village boundary from the Green Belt which runs from the B181 Station Road southwards to the A414 along the western boundary of St. Margaretsbury.

**Hedge 3:** On the north side of Roydon Road; and

**Hedge 4:** Around St Andrew's School Field.

Where development proposals enhance or plant new hedgerows, the species used should be native and climate-resilient. Notable trees have been identified in the Tree Report. The proposed removal of unprotected trees, as part of development proposals, should be accompanied by a tree survey report. Trees that have a high biodiversity value should be retained as part of a development proposal. Where this is impracticable, the trees concerned should be replaced with native, climate resilient species in suitable locations.

### *Flooding*

- 8.54 St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots are set within the natural floodplain of the Lea Valley. While a well-managed water way, the natural flood defences need to be protected from degradation, and indeed enhanced as the community develops to ensure the village can withstand extreme events as climate change alters weather patterns, bringing with it both heavier rainfall and droughts. In addition to maintaining the natural flood defences offered by the Lea Valley flood plain, the village must also protect against flooding from surface water, with anecdotal evidence from the Neighbourhood Plan open days that over the years this has been much more a cause of flooding than rising river water due to poorly maintained drainage systems.
- 8.55 Policy SASM NE4 sets out measures to ensure that future development does not impinge on the village's natural flood defences and makes adequate provision for surface water drainage so that homes are safe from flooding. Defra recently announced the decision to make Sustainable Urban Drainage systems mandatory by 2024 in a review document of recommendations for the implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010.



- 8.56 Flood alleviation measures have been in place in Stanstead Abbots since the mid-1970s when the river was widened, riverbanks reinforced and flood channels were introduced, to reduce the risk of flooding to 1 in 100 years. Since this time, flooding of the village has been rare, but experienced as recently as the winter of 2014 with severe rain fall. For Flood Risk mapping for the settlement see [Appendix H: Flood Risk Map \(July 2022\)](#).
- 8.57 The major threat of flooding comes from poorly maintained and/or inadequate surface water drainage. It is the responsibility of the lead local flood authority to carry out flood risk assessments from surface water in the event of development.
- 8.58 Flooding also impacts the environment through pollution. Flooding washes chemicals and sewage into freshwater ecosystems as well as causing public health issues.
- 8.59 Freshwater ecosystems are rich in biodiversity and have huge recreational and aesthetic value. Increased surface water run-off causes erosion of soil and organic matter which ends up in water courses and damages ecosystems. This is evidenced in the British Ecological Society paper [Flooding in the UK: ecological impacts of an ecosystem approach](#), a government research report (March 2014) [The Ecological Impacts of Flooding – developing a methodology](#) and a Guardian news report (December 2020) titled [How Restoring Flood Plains Can Help Protect the Climate](#).

#### *SASM NE4 Environmental Impact of Flooding*

- I. Development proposals adjacent to water courses, should include an 8 metre undeveloped buffer from the tops of the banks to maximise the ecological benefits of waterways and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

## 9. *Leisure and Community Facilities*

### *Introduction*

- 9.1 The policies in this section seek to provide an appropriate range of community facilities which will promote the health, education, and physical, mental and spiritual development of all residents, particularly the young and older people. Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the provision and enhancement of leisure facilities for sport and recreation, public open space and green infrastructure will be sought. These aims are in accordance with the following objectives:

**Objective K:** To protect open spaces that have recreation, leisure and amenity value and/or are of importance to the local community.



**Objective L:** To improve existing community, leisure & recreation facilities, and make these facilities accessible to everyone.

**Objective M:** To ensure appropriate community, leisure and recreation facilities are provided as part of major developments.

- 9.2 Leisure facilities are those available for formal and informal sport, recreation, entertainment, play and cultural activities. Community facilities include a variety of buildings and land for the purposes such as schools, nurseries, childcare, health care facilities, hospitals, libraries, halls, meeting places, allotments, and places of worship.
- 9.3 Both St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots have village halls which owe their existence to local benefactors, the Buxtons in Stanstead Abbots and Nigel Copping in St Margarets. The Village Club was built by the owner of the Maltings and remains a popular evening social venue.
- 9.4 The most important open space is St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground which provides opportunities for dog-walking, informal kick-about and formal competitive sport, recreation and social mixing. It is much valued by the community. This open space marks the approach to the built-up parts of the village.
- 9.5 St James' Church is a Grade I listed designated heritage asset which draws visitors to the ancient church and Stanstead Abbots graveyard which surrounds it.
- 9.6 There are many walks available, including through the Briggens Grade II designated Historic Park and Garden and public footpaths that cross the locally important Easneye Historic Park and Garden with views to Canary Wharf. The Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line which now forms part of the Lea Valley Walking trail is also very popular.
- 9.7 These valued facilities will be protected through applications to East Herts Council as Assets of Community Value and through policies SASM CL1 and SASM CL2 below.

### *Community Facilities*

- 9.8 The existing community facilities that have been identified as valued by the community are mapped on the Policies Map, listed below, and described in

#### **Appendix F: Valued Community Facilities:**

- 1 Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line
- 2 The Community Centre, Folly View, SG12 8AY
- 3 The Scout Hut, Marsh Lane, SG12 8QT
- 4 The Village Club, 4-6 High St, SG12 8AB
- 5 The Red Lion, 1 High Street, SG12 8AA
- 6 The Oak, 36 High Street, SG12 8AG
- 7 The Jolly Fisherman, 8 Station Rd, SG12 8DH



- 8 St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground, SG12 8EH
- 9 Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall/Ashlea Rooms, Roydon Rd, SG12 8EZ
- 10 Nigel Copping Community Centre, 88 Sanville Gardens, SG12 8GA
- 11 St James' Church, Roydon Road, SG12 8JZ
- 12 Town Allotments, High Street
- 13 Church Allotments, Cappell Lane
- 14 St Margarets Community Wood
- 15 Sanville Gardens Orchard

### *SASM CL1 Existing Community Facilities*

- I. The extension or relocation of local community facilities will be supported, subject to the services provided being maintained or improved. When there is no longer an identified community need for existing community use or when it is relocated, primary consideration should be given to using and adapting the vacated premises for other community uses. Extensions and relocated facilities should be of a high-quality inclusive design providing access for all.

9.9 There is a Scout Group in the village which operates from the Scout Hut on Marsh Lane. There are also youth football and cricket teams, but there is no offer of informal activity or venue for young people in secondary education to meet socially. New opportunities for leisure facilities may be appropriate on the site of the existing Scout Hut or at St Margaretsbury.

9.10 Any new leisure facility should be inclusive and accessible to young people of all abilities. Additional play provision should be designed so that it can be used by all children. Public toilet provision related to such leisure facilities must also accommodate a cubicle large enough to accommodate an adult or carer with a child.

### *SASM CL2 New Leisure Facilities*

- I. New facilities for young people will be supported where they are in a public and safe and accessible area.
- II. New facilities that promote and/or enhance active use of the river and river paths will be supported, such as a quay to take on or disembark passengers from a river-bus.

9.11 The existing allotments are well used and further allotment provision in a suitable location would be supported.



- 9.12 There is some 'Air BnB' provision but very little else for visitors to the village. Two miles away Roydon has some hotel rooms and some self-catering accommodation at the marina.
- 9.13 There is currently no library in the village. The nearest libraries are in Ware and Hoddesdon. The waiting room at the railway station now has a community library, also the Amwell View charity shop in the high street has a good supply of well organised books for sale and there is also a collection of books available at the Maltings Café – thanks to donations from members of the community.
- 9.14 Public gallery space is non-existent. [The Community Rail Partnership art project](#), sponsored by [The Malting Business Centre](#), on [the old signal box at St Margarets Station](#) was unveiled in November 2021, breathing new life into this much loved building. The Parish Councils would support further initiatives for pop-up gallery space or/and a permanent community use for the signal box, including a permanent home for the [Stanstead Abbots Local History Society](#) archive which temporarily stored in the village hall.



FIGURE 19 ST MARGARETS STATION ART PROJECT

Photo courtesy of THE NEW RIVER LINE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP)



### *SASM CL3 New Facilities*

- I. The provision of the following facilities will be supported where they are in keeping with other development plan policies:
  - a) additional allotments, in suitable locations.
  - b) new tourist accommodation where it does not impact on residential amenity.
  - c) new cultural facilities such as art, library and creative spaces, will be supported in central locations that are accessible to all.

## *10. Business and Employment*

### *Introduction*

- 10.1 Stanstead Abbotts is a relatively affluent village, with low unemployment and almost 50% of residents employed in either Senior Management, Professional or Technical occupations (source *nomis, census 2011*).
- 10.2 Residents and businesses benefit from a village location with excellent public transport links into central London via the Greater Anglia line route into London Liverpool Street and which connects with the London underground at Tottenham Hale. Close proximity to excellent road networks (A10, A414, M11) enables residents to access wider job markets, and creates opportunity for businesses to provide goods and services to the wider Hertfordshire, Essex and north London economic sub-region.
- 10.3 The Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan Area is home to a wide range of business and enterprise activities, which provide accessible local employment and business opportunities. Over 200 businesses support just under 1,100 jobs. Most businesses are located within the three designated employment areas, Leaside Works, Riverside Works, and The Maltings, as well as in the High Street. Within the wider area farmland supports a mix of agricultural activities and farm diversification with a variety of businesses and local enterprises.
- 10.4 Employment areas play a key role in providing accessible and affordable employment and business opportunities for local residents, including, Class E, light industrial (B2) and B8 uses. Stanstead Abbotts has a distinct industrial heritage in the form of French & Jupps malt roasting and the Maltings Business Centre has become a thriving business and enterprise location with a range of small business and start-up incubation units for micro and SME enterprise.
- 10.5 Stanstead Abbotts High Street consists of a local parade which includes a mix of shops, services and cafes which support the day to day needs of the local community, alongside opportunities for social interaction.



- 10.6 A mix of pubs, restaurants and community social clubs provides a thriving evening economy within easy walking distance for local residents. The village has benefitted from foresight, generosity, loyalty to the community and responsibility in particular from amongst its family-owned companies that have been a part of the village for more than one generation.
- 10.7 A Business Survey undertaken in March 2019 received six responses, the majority of which were from construction or manufacturing businesses. These identified a preference for retail, tourism, leisure and crafts, offices (including small businesses) and pubs, restaurants and cafes within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Around half would like to see food and drink production, community services and light industrial and manufacturing. The lowest responses identified social enterprise and financial and professional services. None of the respondents wanted to see an increase in transport, storage and distribution uses. Half of respondents wanted existing employment uses to remain, but the remainder would consider change of use if employment sites became vacant. Five respondents agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should include policies that promote working from home. Key issues identified which would encourage businesses to locate in the SASM area include availability of suitable accommodation, transport facilities, rental costs, access and parking.
- 10.8 Three respondents identified a need for additional space in the next five years, including one industrial/workshop and office space from 50-100sqm, two businesses are seeking industrial/workshop space from 100-200sqm with office space 100-200sqm. One business requires retail 200sqm or more, storage (covered/open) 200sqm or more and parking for staff 200sqm or more.
- 10.9 Three respondents wanted to see an extension of high street retail uses. Respondents expressed a desire to protect local jobs and to encourage local trade. It was acknowledged that if employment sites are used for housing, then new employment sites would need to be found to keep Stanstead Abbots as a working village. A copy of the survey is set out in the Consultation Statement.
- 10.10 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages new businesses to establish and prosper, to provide employment and services locally for the benefit of all, to maintain the character of the village, and to draw in visitors. In addition to the existing offer of light industrial, small business, food and beverage, and local retail, the Plan encourages creative enterprise, tourism, professional and community services and social enterprise to thrive.
- 10.11 The policies in this section will help to achieve the following Neighbourhood Plan objectives:
- Objective N:** To ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities, including family owned businesses and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.
- Objective O:** To encourage new business to prosper whilst protecting and maintaining the character of the village.



**Objective P:** To support creative and social enterprise, tourism, and community services.

10.12 The Business survey results are in the Consultation Statement. Further information to support the policies in this section can be found in the Business and Employment Evidence Base in the Evidence Base Reports document on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

### *Local Employment Areas*

10.13 Local employment areas identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Area should continue to play a vital role in sustaining a thriving and sustainable village economy reducing the need to travel and promoting local spend. They play a key role in providing accessible and affordable employment and business opportunities for residents, including Class E, B2 light industrial, B8 storage and distribution, and a range of small business start-up/incubation units for micro and SME enterprise.

10.14 We support the continued designation of the following employment areas: Leaside Works, Riverside Works and the Maltings, which are seeing continuing demands for space and which have long-standing, highly beneficial and well-regarded status in the village. We also support the continued light industrial uses in Riverside Maltings, as a non-designated area. Websters in Netherfield Lane is a non-designated brownfield site within the Green Belt has been granted planning permission (9/5/2023) for at least 745 sq m of business space as part of their proposed development as well as 20 homes. Due to the residential nature of Netherfield Lane, large scale industrial or open storage uses (B2, B8) will be resisted.



FIGURE 20 THE MALTINGS

10.15 Policy SASMB1 seeks to ensure that the village maintains employment opportunities and that the various businesses contribute positively to the life of the community.

### *SASM B1 Local Employment Areas*

- I. Leaside Works, Riverside Works and The Maltings are designated Employment Areas where conversion or redevelopment of employment uses will be supported where they enhance the employment offer and continued viability of the designated Employment Areas.
- II. In designated Employment Areas proposals for non-business uses will not be supported unless:
  - a) the employment use of the premises is no longer needed or viable and
  - b) no improvements to those premises will make employment uses viable.

### *The High Street*

10.16 Stanstead Abbots High Street should continue to contain a local parade which includes a mix of shops, services and cafes which support the day to day needs of the local community, alongside opportunities for social interaction. We value and will support the current mix of pubs, restaurants and a community social club which provide a thriving evening economy within easy walking distance for residents and with good public transport and car parking facilities to draw in visitors from the wider locality.

10.17 The existing retail, service and community offer in the High Street, will be protected as far as possible within the National policy context and applications converting retail to residential uses to maintain a strong ground floor offer will be resisted. Applications to convert first floor accommodation above shops will be supported as part of a healthy village centre mix.

10.18 Renovations to business premises within the designated conservation area should be carried out in line with the adopted Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Management Plan (2014).

10.19 Adjustments made by businesses in the High Street during the Covid pandemic have resulted in more outside eating areas. The Riverside area adjacent to the Jolly Fisherman public house has been particularly successful in providing informal outside space and is a good example of a local business working in partnership with the Lee Valley Park.



### *SASM B2 The High Street*

- I. To reflect changing retail requirements, proposals which create a mix of retail, commercial, leisure and community uses within the High Street will be supported.
- II. Development proposals should maintain active ground floor frontages within the designated commercial properties in the village core (as shown on the Policies Map) wherever practicable.

### *Design of Employment Premises*

10.20 We positively encourage flexible working practices, and the provision of flexible workspace as part of mixed-use development. Cafes and other community hubs will be encouraged to provide alternative areas for 'hot desking' and co-working opportunities.

10.21 The supply of super-fast broadband should be installed in employment areas to promote business sustainability and growth. As the numbers of self-employed and employed spending time working from home increase, new housing development will need to be connection-ready to allow for reliable and fast broadband.

### *SASM B3 Flexible Working*

- I. Wherever practicable, the provision of flexible working space should be incorporated within mixed-use developments for employment/community use.

### *Farm Diversification and Tourism Related Business*

10.22 Farming and agriculture form an important part of the rural heritage of the area, and includes arable and some grazed land, alongside land rented to other farmers for cattle and sheep. The availability of seasonal farm workers has declined over time due to a range of factors including automation, anti-migration policies and more recently the impact of Brexit and Covid-19. Local farmers advise that for many years they have had to diversify; including measures such as letting out farm buildings and renting fields for weddings and events, as there is insufficient income generation from farming alone.

10.23 As Stanstead Abbots forms part of the Lee Valley Regional Park, we strongly support development of leisure and tourism uses which boost the quality of life for local residents. We are particularly aware of the rural spaces attached to various businesses such as farms, and to encourage appropriate and successful uses of that space, including farm shops, education and leisure. Overnight accommodation such as hotel, guest house and/or B&Bs in suitable locations will be supported, in order to encourage visitors to enjoy our riverside and wildlife habitats.



### *SASM B4 Farm and Tourism Related Business*

- I. Proposals for the diversification of farm businesses will be supported provided:
  - a) the development supports the vitality of the existing farm holding; or
  - b) the development is ancillary to the agricultural business.
- II. Proposals for development of leisure and tourism uses that support delivery of the Lee Valley Park development framework for Area 8 will be supported including:
  - a) visitor and recreational moorings, boat repair and other boat related services at Stanstead Marina to support recreational use of the waterways; and
  - b) commercial opportunities for cycle hire, leisure boat and water taxi facilities, in partnership with the Canal and Rivers Trust.
- III. Proposals for overnight stay accommodation will be supported in association with leisure uses (see also Policy SASM CL4), and social and education functions.

10.24 All new business and enterprise space should reflect the diverse needs of the community and be designed in a way that enables people with protected characteristics to participate fully in business and employment opportunities.

10.25 Local employers will be encouraged to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities for residents. Local labour, training and apprenticeships should form part of s106 obligations for development in the village (See Implementation Policy).

## *11. Transport*

11.1 Stanstead Abbots lies to the East of the A10 and largely North of the A414 (Hertford lies to the west and Harlow to the east). From the junction of those two main roads, Station Road leads into the High Street, there is a T-junction with Hoddesdon Road and a level crossing allowing trains to travel on the branch railway from Broxbourne to Hertford East, stopping on their way at St Margarets Station. There is a landmark humped back bridge over the River Lea which marks the boundary of the two parishes. The B181 from Roydon links the village to two junctions on the A414 and at Great Amwell to the West with the A10. A transport audit correct at the time of publication of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Transport Audit in the Evidence Base Reports on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

11.2 The High Street is mainly brick laid, which is popular and helps to reduce speed and was the result of funding from the Herts. County Council after the A414 bypass was completed in 1987. However, it is at risk of serious deterioration because of the volume of traffic and the weight of some vehicles using the road. The semi-rural approach roads from the nearby towns of Ware and Hoddesdon are narrow, bendy, and tarmacked with limited passing places, due to on-street parking. The nature of these roads in the parish makes them unsuitable for significant increases in traffic within and through the village.



- 11.3 Transport is an emotive issue in Stanstead Abbots. People rely on the car to be able to get to work or school. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2019 indicated that 65% use cars and 42% trains for their work commute, leisure, shopping, medical visits and to get to schools. St Margarets train station is of great importance, being the main line into London Liverpool Street. It has become particularly well-used since the introduction of the Oyster facility and lack of parking restrictions in surrounding roads has led this to be a popular station. With development in Hertford and Ware the increased number of coaches on many of the trains has helped to relieve the problem of there being too few seats. There are fairly frequent bus services to Hoddesdon, Ware and Hertford and a small number which go to Harlow and Bishop's Stortford via the high Street on weekdays.
- 11.4 Residents of Stanstead Abbots are particularly concerned about speeding traffic and heavy goods lorries illegally driving through the village. 71% of residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey of 2019 would like speed limit reductions within the village. 67% support a traffic light system at the Amwell Roundabout to improve safety and traffic flow in and out of the village.
- 11.5 While there are weight restrictions on vehicles passing through the village, anecdotal evidence says that vehicle weight limits are poorly enforced. 87% of residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey were in support of better enforced weight restrictions through the High Street.
- 11.6 Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets are thriving villages, but with this comes high volumes of traffic, particularly during peak times as people travel to work and schools, but also throughout the day as people and heavy goods vehicles travel through to the A414, A10, Hertford and the surrounding area. The railway crossing also results in the build-up of traffic along the high street.
- 11.7 While the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan is not subject to Air Quality Management Plans currently, nitrogen dioxide levels are on the increase in places, as shown in the government's 2017 Air Quality in the UK 2016 report. Neighbouring Broxbourne has been identified as having one of the highest nitrogen dioxide levels in the country due to its proximity to the A414 and A10, which also run close to the designated area.
- 11.8 The Government Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants reported in March 2015 that there was consistent evidence that nitrogen dioxide, including from traffic related pollution, caused increased cardio morbidity and mortality, with increased hospital admission from respiratory related diseases.
- 11.9 All new developments should be approached with the spirit of the East Herts Air Quality Plan at the heart, which emphasises making it easier for pedestrians (including pedestrianised areas), imposing traffic calming and anti-idling measures, improving traffic flows and encouraging electric vehicles, for example, through provision of EV charging points in public spaces.
- 11.10 In Stanstead Abbots two cars per household is the typical level of car ownership. Increasingly, households have three or more vehicles, probably due to offspring remaining at home into their adult years. Without a good bus service, cars are a



lifeline to amenities and facilities outside the village particularly to work, school and shops. Policy SASM TR1 addresses this important matter. A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) must be submitted with planning applications for multiple homes which would have the potential to generate significant increases in traffic in and around the village.

- 11.11 On road parking is currently seen as a problem in some areas of the village. Throughout the consultation process respondents have expressed concerns about this. Car parking standards have, therefore been carefully considered and are included in the Neighbourhood Plan Policy to take into account the high levels of car ownership in the settlement area, the rural location and the limited availability of public transport. New developments should provide the required parking as set out in the Council's Vehicle Parking Provision Supplementary Planning (2008, or as amended) and can be viewed at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/vehicleparking](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/vehicleparking).
- 11.12 The 25 Public Rights of Way (PROWS) around the village are highly valued by residents and should be protected from the impact of any development. Details of these PROW can be found in the Natural Environment Evidence Base on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#) and an interactive map is available on [Hertfordshire County Council's website](#).
- 11.13 The following policies are set in the context of Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:
- Objective Q:** To implement traffic calming measures where possible that will protect the High Street and surrounding roads as well as ensuring safe and sustainable travel options to local school/nurseries and places of work; and
- Objective R:** To promote parking provision in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.

#### *SASM TR1 Safe and Sustainable Transport*

- I. Wherever practicable, residential and community development proposals should be designed and arranged in a way in which the amenities in the village can be readily and safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. Development proposals should also respect and where appropriate enhance public rights of way to allow pedestrians and cyclists to have access to amenities in the village.
- II. Development proposals which would result in the loss of Public Rights of Way or negatively impact the enjoyment of their uses should demonstrate how the right of way will be re-provided or how the impact of the proposed development will be mitigated.



11.14 Strategic transport policies in Hertfordshire are set out in the [Local Transport Plan \(LTP4\)](#).

11.15 The South East Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan has now been adopted. This is a new transport strategy to help direct and plan transport improvements and investment in Hertford, Ware, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Cheshunt and Waltham Cross, and to surrounding areas, which includes Stanstead Abbots.

11.16 Local initiatives, including the provision of public Electric Vehicle charging points, as referenced in the County Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, that have been identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Appendix J: Action Plan.



## 12. Implementation

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented primarily through the determination of planning applications by East Herts Council. The policies in the Plan will provide detailed criteria against which to judge planning applications and to protect assets such as Local Green Spaces and Heritage Assets.
- 12.2 The accompanying **Appendix J: Action Plan** includes projects that were put forward through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, by residents or businesses. Implementation of these projects will be through S106 funding, a future Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding schemes or activities of volunteers.
- 12.3 The Neighbourhood Plan's success in achieving the aims and objectives set out within it will be monitored along with any national or local planning policies changes that might necessitate a revision of the Plan. Such a review of the Plan will be carried out by the three parishes in accordance with current best practice. The new District Plan may have an impact on the strategic level of growth required in the neighbourhood area. In this context the parish councils will assess the need or otherwise of a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the New District Plan.

### *SASM IM1 Spending Priorities*

- I. In line with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 neighbourhood plans should deliver community benefits especially where the Neighbourhood Plan accommodates additional development over that required by the policy. Spending priorities have been identified by the community, through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, to improve the lives of people living and working in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- II. Spending priorities are contained in the **Appendix J: Action Plan**. These priorities should be reflected in Section 106 agreements, where appropriate. The Parish Councils in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will direct funding received from any New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy, or other funding streams, towards projects which fall within these priorities.

## 13. Appendices

In addition to the Appendices attached below, additional evidence documents can be found in the Evidence Base Reports document along with independently produced reports on [Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



## *Appendix A: Bibliography*

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### **Other references used in the compilation of this Neighbourhood Plan:**

[Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory](#)

[Herts Environmental Records Centre](#)

[Protected species: when applicants need a species survey](#)

[Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act: Section 41 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance \(2006\)](#)

[Wildlife Sites Inventory for East Herts \(2013\)](#)

[National Pollinator Strategy 2014 to 2024](#)

[Natural England Data](#)

[Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust](#)



*Appendix B: Acknowledgements*

<b>Members of the Steering Group</b>	<b>Subject areas and Responsibilities</b>
Rob Bennett	Heritage & Design
Sarah Chapman	Housing & Communications
Andrew Clayden	Business, Housing & Management Group
Julia Davies	Business, Communications, Community, Housing, Management Group & Chair
Mike Dormon	Business, Communications, Design, Finance, Housing, Management Group & Vice Chair
Tom Foy	Housing & Management Group
Robin Jewett	Transport
Rowan Lloyd	Ecology & Design
Clare Maynard	Business & Transport
Jan Reynolds	Community
Sharon Strutt	Business & Housing
Maria Tasker	Ecology, Heritage & Communications
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Jacqueline Veater	Planning Consultant
Anne Washbourn	Community, Design & Housing
Christina Whellams	Admin & Management Group Secretary

Significant roles were previously undertaken by:

Beth Knight – Lead on Ecology

Vanessa Murphy – Lead on Communications

Leah Pybuss - Secretary



### *Appendix C: Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process*

This appendix provides an explanatory narrative to the Housing Site Selection and Allocation Process. Further information, evidence and the document produced by AECOM on site assessment can be found in the Evidence Base on [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

#### **Site Identification**

The task of identifying sites for possible development began early on in the neighbourhood planning process, not long after the Steering Group was set up in 2017.

Sites were identified through various means: village walkabouts by groups, open days, call for sites advertising, and surveys of residents. Some landowners were already aware of the existence of our Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and approached us direct; they were asked to make a formal application via the call for sites process. We also reviewed East Herts District Council's 2015 Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) for possible sites.

All stages of site identification were transparent and subject to challenge.

**Village Walkabouts** - A series of village "walkabouts" began in 2017 and continued into 2018, when a group of residents (some of whom formed the nucleus of the Neighbourhood plan Steering Group) undertook to search different parts of the settlement area for possible sites. Photographs of potential sites were taken and discussions held at subsequent meetings as to their availability and viability. From this, landowners were identified and approached to discover whether they were prepared to allow development.

**Open Days** – three open days were held in November 2018 in different parts of the settlement area: the community hall on the Folly Estate, the Nigel Copping Centre and the Parish Hall. Residents attending the open days were encouraged to identify possible sites by means of pinpointing their location on a map.

**Survey** – a question in the main survey carried out in 2018 asked residents to identify possible sites for development.

**Call for sites** – a formal call for sites process was followed, with an advert placed in the local press in March 2019. A number of landowners came forward with sites, all of which without exception were in the Green Belt surrounding the village.

Through these means we identified over 60 possible sites, mostly small sites within the settlement boundary, and some larger ones in the Green Belt adjacent to the village. Further down the line, around 13 of these were discounted without further detailed assessment as they were considered entirely unsuitable (most of these were simply larger than usual grass verges in already developed areas) or it was known that the landowner did not wish to develop.

Although our extensive and thorough site identification process resulted in over 60 sites being considered over time, the fact that so many of these sites proved unsuitable or unavailable, demonstrates the difficulty posed in site selection by the unique constraints under which our village labours. We are surrounded by Green Belt and RAMSAR sites,



much of the village is in a conservation area, and most is in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The settlement area is very heavily developed. All of this made identifying sites extremely difficult and has meant that any site of any significant size is located both outside the settlement area and in the Green Belt. Whilst development can take place in the Green Belt, it has to be agreed to be released – in our case, we would be expected to justify the release of Green Belt land in the Neighbourhood Plan. To do so, we would have to demonstrate that the site both met our criteria for preferment and that we could not reach our target allocation by developing other sites not in the Green Belt.

### **Site Assessment**

The site assessment criteria were developed over a period of time and underwent a number of iterations.

These were initially based on criteria developed by other similar villages, amended to reflect our own particular issues. The aim was to produce a set of criteria which were objective, fair and factual, and which would stand up to challenge. We had to be able to demonstrate that the criteria we chose were justified, that they were in line with the East Herts District Plan and that they reflected the vision and the priorities of the village as expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. All criteria were subject to robust discussion and consensus reached within the Housing Subgroup of the Steering Group; it was essential that they were not retrospectively skewed to eliminate or promote sites on which members of the group had already formed some opinion – we were of course already aware of several contentious sites.

We were also forced to juggle sometimes conflicting priorities when developing the criteria. An example being the desire of most who have expressed a preference to produce the necessary units via a number of small infill sites on brownfield land, with the simultaneous wish for more affordable housing which can generally only be delivered as part of larger developments, since East Herts policy of 40% affordable only applies on sites of 10 or more dwellings. We faced the possibility of delivering the 94 dwellings required without a single affordable house amongst them unless we opted for some larger sites, all of which were by necessity (as above) situated more or less in the Green Belt. Another major concern was to avoid sprawl; reconciling this with the need to use sites outside the village settlement area has led to some difficulties.

### **Rationale for amending the Green belt boundary for site SASM H3**

East Herts DC's 2015 review of the Green Belt assessed parcels of land in the district for possible future development against four criteria based on those for including land within the Green Belt.

These criteria were as follows:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment



- To preserve the setting and spatial character of historic towns (not considered relevant to Stanstead Abbots)

The parcels of land assessed are characterized as **Very Low/ Low/ Moderate/High** suitability for development. Assessment was carried out against each criterion above, using the definition None/Negligible, Moderate, Major and Paramount. If any one criterion attracted the definition of Paramount, the whole parcel of land was assessed as Very Low suitability for development, regardless of the rest of the assessment.

All of the Green Belt land around Stanstead Abbots is characterized overall as Low or Very Low suitability for development under this assessment; there is therefore no site within the Green Belt close to the settlement area that is considered to be suitable for development. However in the detail of the assessments there are notable points of difference. The parcel of land within which this site is situated (parcel 49) is characterized as Very Low suitability for development based on one criteria only – “to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” – where it scores badly (Paramount). All other scores against other criteria are Moderate or None. However, the parcel of land so assessed is a very large one and the site we have chosen within it has a number of significant features which differentiate it from the major part of the parcel. We would therefore argue with the general characterization of Very Low suitability for development as it applies to our particular site.

The Green Belt Review describes the parcel of land as “generally very open landscape of estate farmland with extensive views south across valley towards north western fringes of Harlow...Any development would represent a very apparent encroachment into open countryside”. However, this description does not apply to any great extent to the site selected. SASM H3 (the Netherfield Lane site) is surrounded on three sides by building – the redundant industrial buildings and hardstanding to the south, the road and cottages to the north and Netherfield Lane houses to the west. These buildings and road form strong natural boundaries on three sides; the eastern side is bounded again (though less tightly) by the road and more cottages up Roydon Road/Cat Hill. Only on one side of the site is there what can be described as “open countryside”.

The proposed site is mixed greenfield and brownfield, the factory and surrounding hardstanding making up a good half of the site.

An outline planning application has been approved to redevelop the factory site for 20 residential units and business space use; this received approval on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Given this is brownfield within the Green Belt, it will represent an island of residential development within the Green Belt, separated from the village settlement boundary by a small piece of greenfield land. This further contradicts the description of the land as “open countryside”.

The constraints on developing the brownfield site mean that it can only supply 20 homes under the current circumstances; the costs of development are very high given the existence of a “lamppost graveyard” on the site, meaning that it is not viable to include affordable housing in those 20 homes. If released from the Green Belt as we propose, it can form part of a larger mixed greenfield and brownfield site and is likely to be able to accommodate a great number of homes, including a number of affordable homes.



Our criteria for amending the Green belt boundary were that the site chosen must be:

- immediately adjacent to the existing boundary (defined as within 50-100m) and relate well to the existing settlement.
- large enough to supply the remainder of the allocation in one place
- located in a place that enabled the drawing of a new, strong defensible boundary between the village and the Green Belt.

The site we have chosen meets these criteria in full and we believe that to amend the Green Belt boundary to take in this area would make strong logical sense.

### **Evolution of the criteria**

The first iteration was a three-stage process, with an initial sift of sites using six critical criteria to weed out any obviously unsuitable ones. These were simple Yes/No questions (i.e. "is the site in Flood Zone 3?"). A second set of more detailed criteria were used to assess sites that passed the initial sift.

If the answer was NO to any of these critical criteria, the site was eliminated. Around 29 sites were eliminated at this stage.

The remaining sites were then scored against a matrix of nineteen more detailed criteria developed and refined over a period of time. The scoring system for each criterion was in the range of 0-4, with a score of 0 representing the worst outcome and 4 the best. To enable as objective and consistent a score as possible, a description of what each score represented was devised – e.g. against the question "is the site greenfield or brownfield?", to achieve 4 the site had to fit the description "Likely uncontaminated / lightly contaminated brownfield site e.g., no below ground liquid storage". The actual scoring was done by the members of the housing subgroup in meetings; whilst the devising of the criteria and assignment of their relative weighting score/description was contentious at times, the process of scoring of each site in practice was generally without controversy.

These criteria and the method of scoring were approved by the Three Parishes meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. At that meeting, some councillors challenged the scoring of particular sites; we then went through the scoring for each of those sites in detail, explaining how conclusions had been reached in each case.

### **AECOM Report**

The next significant stage in the development of the site assessment process was the AECOM report.

Part of our formal process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, we were entitled to technical support; we accessed this support to assist us with site assessment and housing design policy. AECOM, a firm of independent consultants who work closely with Locality, were appointed by them to review the site assessment work carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and to provide advice to the group to help to ensure that the site allocations proposed were supported by robust, transparent and defensible evidence. This was in part prompted by the concerns raised at the three



parishes meetings and subsequently by various councillors from Stanstead Abbots Parish Council regarding the selection of certain sites above others identified.

Whilst their final findings on the sites selected largely concurred with our own, they had a number of criticisms of our site selection process, which they felt needed some additional work. Their main concerns were that we had proceeded to detailed scoring of our selected sites too early in the process, and that we had introduced local criteria for selection in site assessment along with national planning criteria (standard assessment criteria) when these should have been kept for the final site selection process – essentially, choosing between a reduced number of sites which were otherwise equally suitable for development. The initial “sift” that we had carried out should have been extended to become a more wide-ranging RAG rating of all sites, using more of the national planning policy guidelines, with only those sites getting through this RAG rating being scored against more local criteria, based on the priorities identified through the neighbourhood planning process. The outcome of this was that we had completed the process by giving detailed consideration to many more sites than was necessary, as most should have failed a more robust suitability test.

AECOM also recommended that we include more of the standard assessment criteria in our site assessment (such as agricultural land grade, neighbouring land use etc), and that we provide a more detailed definition for two of our existing criteria, relating to loss of open space and to locally protected wildlife spaces. They recommended further that our criteria relating to community view of sites was premature and this should only be considered following further consultation with the village.

AECOM also identified three further sites for consideration; they ruled two of these out immediately according to RAG criteria, leaving one [H4 site ref on map] small site in the Green Belt. This site had come up in the SLAA and had been noted by the group initially, but the landowner had not put it forward when we made our own call for sites, so had been missed when we came to more detailed consideration.

We received the final draft of the report in late October, just before the Three Parishes meeting. We made some changes to our process before taking a revised list of sites to the next Three Parishes meeting on 26 October 2020; the most significant change resulted in the inclusion of the AECOM-recommended site H4 on the list of sites put forward, after an initial scoring showed it performing well. The sites were finally agreed to go forward for public consultation at that meeting, though there were significant challenges, in particular to, the site H4.

The final report was received on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. By that stage, we had identified some serious problems with the new site H4; it became clear that the access the landowner wished to use for a development was across third party land and would result in the felling of significant trees. It should be noted that AECOM's site identification had been via a desktop process, and they had not been aware that this was the route the landowner wanted to use – this only became obvious when a call for sites form was submitted. This contradicted our first round criteria that access must not be via third party land. We met with the landowner, to discuss the issue and possibly identify a solution. He was not prepared to identify another access route across his own land and



or negotiate with the third party to gain access via his preferred route. Eventually the landowner withdrew the site from consideration.

Some more adjustments were made to the first round assessments and to the second round scoring matrix to take AECOM's criticisms into account. Specifically, we added the following criteria to the first ("critical criteria") round:

- What grade of Agricultural land is the site: grade 1 or 2 = red, 3 = amber, other = green?
- Site suitable for development according to green belt policy -Red =low, Amber = moderate or high, Green = not GB.

The scoring matrix was amended to provide more detail in the areas highlighted (criteria 2.5 – loss of open space and 2.12 – protected sites) and to remove one criterion entirely (5.1 community view) and to move one criterion to the first round for RAG rating (2.15 Green Belt).

The outcome of these changes was to remove the site C2 from further consideration, as it failed on two criteria (agricultural land grade and suitability for development).

### **SAPC meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

The terms of reference of our Neighbourhood Plan group require that the parish councils approve the choice of sites and the selection criteria. As the amendments to the criteria made following AECOM's recommendations meant that the choice of sites approved at the 3 Parishes meeting in October had to change. The amendments were taken back to the parish councils for approval in December. Stanstead Abbots PC, alone of the three councils, did not endorse the changes, which led to an impasse in terms of progressing the plan, as we could not proceed to consultation and examination on a plan which included a site which our own criteria ruled out (and which indeed the landowner had withdrawn).

Several attempts were made to change the minds of the SAPC, including holding a workshop which went through the process of site selection. Locality were approached for funding for mediation and appointed Intelligent Plans and Examinations Ltd., who held several meetings with councillors and provided a report and suggestions on the way forward.

A decision was made then by SASM NP to fully revisit the criteria and to re-score the sites based on a revised version.

### **Final Re-assessment**

As the main objections from the SAPC were based on the perception that the recommendations of the AECOM report had not been fully implemented in our earlier revisions, the group went back to the report to conduct a full review.

It was acknowledged that AECOM had recommended a considerable number of other assessment criteria. In view of this, we examined in detail all those criteria which we had not adopted and set out our reasoning. Some of the criteria were then included following further consideration; in other cases, we saw no reason to do so as we felt the criteria were already adequately covered in our assessment. Others would involve



amounts of work that we considered as a group of volunteers to be simply unfeasible, and which could be covered adequately at planning stage. Several of AECOM's recommendations were very generic and not particularly applicable to the sites we have identified in our village; we therefore did not feel they were useful to us in choosing between sites.

It was also recognised by this time that issues had arisen with the Green Belt criteria. This had originally been included in the second stage selection criteria but had been moved to the first RAG rating as it was considered so crucial. We looked again specifically at our assessment criteria here. We had based these criteria on East Herts DC's 2015 review of the Green Belt in 2015; this review had assessed parcels of land in the district for possible future development against criteria based on those for including land within the Green Belt. As follows:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and spatial character of historic towns
- To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The parcels of land assessed are characterized as **Very Low/ Low/ Moderate/High** suitability for development.

Our original assessment had established that the parcel of land in which the Netherfield Lane site was situated was considered of moderate suitability for development (partly because half of it is brownfield), however on closer examination this proved not to be the case. This meant that all the Green Belt land around Stanstead Abbots is characterized as Low or Very Low suitability for development under this assessment; this means that it is not very useful as a tool for selecting between sites as all fall within the same category. For this reason, after consideration we moved this criterion from the RAG rated first round (as it excluded every single site in the Green Belt from further consideration) and put it back into the second round matrix scoring. This meant, that site C2 site survived the first round of assessment.

Following this reassessment of the criteria, we rescored all the sites which made it through the first round and ranked them according to score.

### **Agreement to Proceed to Regulation 14 Consultation**

The final mediation meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 proposed to move directly to public consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, a paper on the revised selection criteria and the results of the re-scoring of all sites was presented to the SAPC meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 and the site selections were agreed.

The full version of this report along with a set of appendices, to illuminate the detail in the text, can be found in the Evidence Base Reports document on [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



The final AECOM report can be found on the [Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



## *Appendix D: Non-Designated Heritage Assets*

### *Easneye Historic Park, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots*

Easneye, Capell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Historic Park (Locally Listed) GR TL381134

Originally a Celtic hill fort with tumuli (2000 BC), a Saxon fort, then given to Bishop of Bayeux at the Norman Conquest, when it became a hunting ground (deer park). The deer park may have covered about 200 acres. The approximate extent of the park is shown on the [Policies Map](#).

The estate was purchased in 1866 by Thomas Fowell Buxton and a mansion (now a Grade II\* listed Heritage Asset in its own right) was completed in 1868. Pleasure gardens with flower beds in the Victorian style and a planted avenue were established. The gardens were not extensive and scattered trees led to thicker mixed woodland intersected by paths. The parkland is largely laid to woodland with some farmland extending beyond the woods to the River Ash to the northwest. To the south and east of the house lay the Victorian park which included a kitchen garden were laid to pasture with scattered trees.

A detailed description of the park and its buildings entitled Easneye Site Record, prepared by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in December 2021 can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).

### *Hill House (and Warrax House) Historic Park, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots*

Capell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Historic Park (Locally Listed), Hill House GR TL388123 and Warrax House GR TL386123

The site appears to have originated as a 1 acre plot, Warrax Common Field, for Stanstead Abbots village around 1821. Hill House (Grade II listed) was built circa 1800 and Warrax house is shown on the 1840 Tithe Map. The approximate extent of the park is shown on the [Policies Map](#).

Both houses are set in orchards. Both houses have kitchen gardens. Their pleasure gardens were also small. The main area of parkland is at the top of the hill behind the gardens and is surrounded by a belt of trees. Much of the parkland now appears to be a mix of trees/woodland.

Para 6.66 of the Conservation Area Appraisal says: land to the north consists of a large area of rough grazing land and on the opposite side of the road, open land either side of the entrance drive to Hill House and within the grounds of the church, together form in combination, an open space of high environmental quality and a gap performing an important function in separating two built areas of the village.

A detailed description of the park and its buildings entitled Hill and Warrax House Site Report Site, prepared by Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in December 2021 can be found on the [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan website](#).



*K6 Telephone Box (now defibrillator station), High Street*

Phone box, now converted to a defibrillator station. The phone box represents a past focal point for the community. It is in excellent condition.



FIGURE 21 K6 TELEPHONE BOX, HIGH STREET



*Greenwich Meridian Marker, Station Road*

New River Meridian Line marker in St Margarets. This marks the Greenwich Meridian (longitude 0°). The Meridian obelisks were placed in 1984 to commemorate the centenary of the adoption of the prime meridian line. This is a matter of community pride in the village.



FIGURE 22 GREENWICH MERIDIAN MARKER, STATION ROAD

*Home Guard defence position opposite Meridian Marker, High Street*

During the Second World War there were two identified Home Guard defence positions at either end of the villages covering the B181 (51.47.14.3N 0.00.07.9W and 51.47.14.3N 0.01.61.2W). The best preserved of these lies in a small depression at the base of a tree, on the opposite side of the road from the New River Meridian marker.



*Drinking Fountain, at front of village hall, Roydon Road*

The drinking fountain close to the Parish Hall is an interesting feature, inscribed 1884.



FIGURE 23 DRINKING FOUNTAIN, ROYDON ROAD



*Edward VII Letter Box, Cappell Lane*

This elaborate letter box has a tiled roof and wooden detailing. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes it as a 'curious and distinctive' feature.



FIGURE 24 EDWARD VII LETTER BOX, CAPPELL LANE



*George VI Letter Box, opposite 42 Hoddesdon Road*

Letter box in good condition on a grass verge in a residential road in the village.



FIGURE 25 GEORGE VI LETTER BOX, HODDESDON ROAD



*Appendix E: Protected Views*



**FIGURE 26 VIEW 1 DOWN CAT HILL FROM THE ALMSHOUSES**

The approach into Stanstead Abbots down Roydon Road as it descends Cat Hill offers a rich variety of natural and built structures. This view is from the bend in the road as it flattens out and the very fine brickwork of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Baesh Almshouses can be glimpsed on the left. There is common land on the immediate right which has thickly growing trees and shrubs and elevated above the road are the distinct white semi-detached houses of Chapelfields.



**FIGURE 27 VIEW 2 EAST UP CAT HILL TOWARDS ALMSHOUSES (showing the landmark cedar tree)**

Roydon Road curves into the junction with Hunsdon Road and then back up towards Netherfield House. It is again a very clearly defined and well-loved scene. Walkers may choose to use the PROW behind the Baesh Almshouses if they are ascending Cat Hill or they may turn to the right on the bridleway which leads them into the Lee Valley Park.





FIGURE 28 VIEW 3 EAST TO THE MALTINGS

Roydon Road is second in importance only to the High St so here on either side of the road are two landmark buildings: the very familiar water trough announces the front of the Parish Hall on the right and the Maltings with the former Mill on the left hand side signal the approach to the junction with the High St.



FIGURE 29 VIEW 4 NORTH TO THE RED LION PH

The Red Lion pub has the distinction of being one of the very oldest buildings in the village and is part of the reason for the village's name as it was home to the monks and abbots who resided here long ago. It is a very attractive building with a welcoming feel – particularly when there are hanging baskets on display. This particular photograph also shows (on the left of the view) the planted-up barrow which was presented to the village by the owner of the French and Jupps Maltings to remind villagers of the industrial past.





**FIGURE 30 VIEW 5 SOUTH ALONG THE MILL STREAM FROM FOOTBRIDGE**

This view is hidden from the main roads. The river runs underground beyond the bridge at the top so the sight of it is an unexpected delight and requires walking into the Maltings site or approaching from the Village Club. An attractive wooden bridge crosses the river from which this photograph has been taken. Since lockdowns seats have been installed on either side of the bank – the Village Club created a terrace for the purpose.



**FIGURE 31 VIEW 6 NORTHEAST TO ST ANDREWS CHURCH FROM CAPPELL LANE**

This view of the bend in Cappell Lane highlights the elevated St Andrew's Church with its flint built walls and the distinctive shape and height of the tower. The grassy area beyond the fine gate posts is the scene of annual remembrance next to the war memorial. This is a view which represents the sense of community, history and belonging.





FIGURE 32 VIEW 7 SOUTH ALONG CAPPELL LANE FROM WARRAX PARK

This leafy approach to the village of Stanstead Abbots is a delightful signal of its semi-rural nature. Just coming into view is St Andrew's Church and the many and varied houses on both sides of Cappell Lane – many of which were built by the owners of Easneye which stretches up the hillside on the left just behind the photographer. A little further along and behind the hedge on the left sheep graze in the field.



FIGURE 33 VIEW 8 EAST ALONG HIGH STREET FROM RIVER LEA BRIDGE

Approaching the village from the hump-backed bridge there is a welcome from this High Street scene. The period lampposts are much cherished by the village; the frontages each has their own story relating back to times when there were many shops and many pubs. The white house on the left clearly demarcates the fact that here is a residential street with pride in its architecture while the shops play a vital part in bringing people together and providing for their needs





**FIGURE 34 VIEW 9 ALONG THE RIVER LEA FROM THE BRIDGE, UPSTREAM**

The view looking North from the bridge over the River Lea Navigation has endless fascination. The scene is constantly changing. The seasons bring very noticeable changes to the trees. The time of day creates changes to the reflections in the river – as does the weather. The ducks, geese, swans, moorhens and coots are just the more obvious inhabitants of the river and are always on the move. People are moving along the towpath for fishing, walking, cycling or just looking for somewhere to rest.



**FIGURE 35 VIEW 10 ALONG THE RIVER LEA FROM THE BRIDGE, DOWNSTREAM**

This view looking south from the bridge over the River Lea is a reminder of the fantastic access residents have to the Lea Valley. The towpath alongside the River Lea Navigation is very popular with walkers and cyclists. It is a place of changing light and reflections popular with photographers. On the right is a green at the back of the Jolly Fisherman where the seating is regularly packed with customers. The gardens of attractive homes on the left bank extend right to the water's edge and this view changes regularly as boats come and go.





**FIGURE 36 VIEW 11 ST MARY'S CHURCH, IN ST MARGARETS PARISH, ON HODDES DON ROAD**  
 St Mary's Church in the Parish of St Margarets is a very well-loved landmark. Recently the building has been renovated following enormous efforts to raise money so that it looks very well cared for and historic. The attractive picket fence demarcates the grounds which includes a graveyard and there is a sense of tranquillity and welcome.



**FIGURE 37 VIEW 12 SOUTH ALONG THE NEW RIVER FROM THE BRIDGE ON STATION ROAD**  
 This remarkable view of the New River from the more westerly and more elevated of the two bridges on the B181 into St Margarets reveals the footpath alongside the New River where it is adjacent to the old Croft estate of St Margaretsbury- now a school and a recreation ground. The height and nature of the trees which are reflected in the New River make them ideal habitats for birds, flora and fauna.



### *Appendix F: Valued Community Facilities*

There are two allotment sites, both of which are privately owned. Both allotments are also proposed as Local Green Spaces in this Neighbourhood Plan:

**Town Allotments** – entrance opposite the Co-op in the High Street. 16 allotments (1 is let as 2 half-plots). There is a waiting list for these allotments.

**Church Allotments** – opposite St Andrew's Church on Cappell Lane. 19 allotments (5 are let as half-plots and 2 are let as quarter-plots).

Both allotments are classed as a major asset by those who use them. With "grow your own" being encouraged we would like to ensure these are retained within the village, should the owners ever decide to sell the land. Alternatively, we would like to have the ability to purchase land elsewhere to re-locate these, thereby retaining the provision of allotments within the village.

**St James' Church** - This is an Anglican church, which is recorded as a Grade 1 listed building and was the original Parish Church. The church is currently under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and managed by the Friends of St James' Church. The church has its origins in the twelfth century, and possibly as far back as the Saxon period and its unspoiled interior has hardly been touched since Georgian times and features unusually high box pews and a three-decker pulpit and several monuments, including that of Edward Baesh, who acquired the Manor of Stanstead Abbots from the Crown. Whilst there is no longer any regular pattern to the services held at St James', it is usual for a Rogation Sunday service to be held in the Spring, for a Harvest thanksgiving service to be held in early Autumn and for the Patronal Festival to be held in July. An Advent carol service is usually held when the church is lit by candles. Being consecrated, the use of the surrounding graveyard ensures the church's continued relevance to the village community. To raise money for the essential maintenance and upkeep, as well as open days during the Summer, the church offers a range of events including poetry readings, historic presentations and talks, art exhibitions and events. The church is historically and currently a valued asset within the village, and we would like to ensure its continued existence and maintenance, both from an historic and social perspective.

**Nigel Copping Community Centre** - This building contains a hall which holds up to 80 (seated) and a meeting room for up to 25 seated theatre-style. There is access to a kitchen and parking for 21 cars. The spaces can be hired for various functions/classes including dancing and Tai Chi which can be accessed by all members of the community. This is a community hub, where many people can socialise, and we would like to retain this within the community. The building is owned by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, which manages a Charitable Fund known as the Nigel Copping Fund. It is located at the opposite end of Stanstead Abbots to the Village Hall so it works as a hub for the west side of the village.

**Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall/Ashlea Rooms** - One large hall, with two smaller rooms that can be hired by the community. One room has been used as a music room amongst other things. There are also exercise and nursery classes held here. The Parish Council meets here. There are also regular quiz nights, society meetings, and social events held here, and we are looking to expand the use of the space. This is a community hub,



where people can socialise, and we would like to retain this within the community. The Parish Hall Trust is the Trustee of these halls.

**St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground** - is owned by St Margaretsbury Trust, a charitable trust which was formed by the three Parishes. It has a function room and fully licensed bar, which can be hired out for parties, etc. Several local groups, such as Slimming World, have regular meetings here. There are associate clubs, who play here, including St Margaretsbury Football Club - the first team plays in the Spartan South Midlands League, the reserves play in U25 Development Division of the Spartan South Midlands League and the Under 18 Academy play in the SCYFL; they also provide coaching from age 4. The facilities include three full size football pitches. It is also home to St Margaretsbury Cricket Club which is affiliated to the Hertfordshire County Cricket Association the Club Cricket Conference and are members of the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League. They field three senior XI's on a Saturday which all compete in the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League and there are regular Sunday friendly matches for senior and academy teams. The club also has a highly successful junior section, which fields teams from U10 to U17 age groups in the Hertfordshire Junior Leagues. Since 2005, the club has been awarded Clubmark accreditation by the England and Wales Cricket Board, recognising their commitment to the development and safeguarding of young cricketers within the local community. Two large cricket pitches facilitate two teams playing at home most Summer Saturdays. St Margaretsbury Tennis club is also based here. There are three all-weather tennis courts, all floodlit. The club welcomes people of all ages and abilities and, runs regular social tennis sessions, a junior section, competitive matches, regular coaching and training sessions. They also hold regular social activities, including BBQ's, quiz nights, curry nights, etc. Anyone in the village can access the grounds and it is deemed a very important community asset, encouraging health and fitness, and social interaction, for age groups in the village.

**The Jolly Fisherman** - One of the village pubs sited on the High Street, beside the River Lee Navigation. This pub is very popular within the village and, particularly with visitors to the village. It is owned by the McMullen Brewery. The pub holds a weekly quiz, which is generally well attended, and occasional entertainment and hosts a variety of fundraising events throughout the year, such as the Macmillan Coffee Morning. It also doubles as a restaurant and is considered an integral part of the village and something we would not want to lose. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Fisherman has helped support the community and charities, by running on-line quizzes.

**The Oak** - The Oak (previously the Lord Louis), High Street. Until recently, this pub was very popular within the village and had a restaurant and take-away service. The pub hosted several entertainment events throughout the year, including streaming live football and boxing. The Oak really shone amongst the pubs in the village during the pandemic opening its doors to provide some of the staples, such as flour, eggs, etc, to people within the village - which proved a life line to many. It also started up the equivalent of a "food bank", where people who needed help could go and get the essentials they needed - no questions asked and a collection point for things such as buttons, which were being collected for those villagers making face mask extenders. It really helped raise the community spirit within the village. Sadly, the pub is currently closed.



**The Red Lion** – A privately owned pub in the High Street. Another popular pub within the village and has a restaurant and take-away service. Like The Jolly Fisherman, the pub hosts regular entertainment throughout the year, including folk music evenings. It also streams live football and boxing. During the pandemic, the Red Lion opened its restaurant as a take-away service for villagers. The pub has a football team.

**The Village Club** - Based just off the High Street, the Village Club is another community hub for the village. There is a bar and snooker tables, etc. The club features regular live entertainment and hosts bingo and other regular events. Currently, the club is funded and owned by its members, who pay an annual membership fee. The club is a valuable asset and something the villagers would be loath to lose.

**The Scout Hut** – HQ of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Scouts Group, which provides adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for boys and girls aged 6 to 14 years old. The hut and freehold are held in Trust and registered as belonging to the Scout Association Trust Fund. The hut is also available for hire for private functions. This is a valuable asset, providing activities for the children in the village.

**The Folly Community Centre** – The Folly includes a number of retirement flats and bungalows, which are owned by Network Housing Association. The Community Centre provides a meeting place for the elderly at the Folly and welcomes others from the wider village. It holds activities such as bingo, crafts, lunches and entertainment. This is a very important meeting point for the elderly within the village and, we would like to retain this should Network Housing decide to vacate the area.

**Lounge at Chapelfields** – Chapelfields consists of retirement bungalows. The Lounge provides a meeting place for the elderly at Chapelfields and welcomes others from the wider village. Activities such as bingo and coffee mornings are held there. This is a very important meeting point for the elderly within the village and we would like to retain this should Network Housing (the current owners) decide to vacate the area. The Lounge is at the opposite end of the village to the Community Centre at the Folly.

**Old St Margarets and Buntingford Railway Line** – The trackbed is in private ownership with restricted or limited access along most of its length. Some sections have public or permissive access; notable near the southern end from Holycross Road Bridge continuing south to where the line used to join the Hertford Branch, which now forms part of a Lea Valley Walking trail. You can pick up and walk a section of the trackbed where it forms part of the Amwell walkway. The last section of remaining track is at St Margarets station.

**St Margarets Community Wood** – The wood is a small forest in the parish of Stanstead St Margarets and is maintained by East Hertfordshire District Council. There are entrances on Hoddesdon Road and The Granary, and it is used by the community for walking. It is 0.94 km long and is bounded by the Greater Anglia train line and the New River.

**Sanville Gardens Orchard** – This field is adjacent to Sanville Gardens and is land owned by Councillor Nigel Copping of Stanstead St Margaret's Parish Council. It was planted with 420 saplings gifted from the Woodland Trust in November 2020. Future plans include providing seating, increasing biodiversity and encouraging wildlife with the provision of bird boxes, bat boxes and insect homes. The land will eventually be left to the Parish Council for the community to enjoy this open space in perpetuity.



## *Appendix G: Local Green Space Assessment*

### **Explanation of Criteria and Assessment Process**

The Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space assessment criteria have been created to assess potential green spaces for designation within the neighbourhood plan.

The assessment criteria were compiled using sources including the National Planning Policy Framework, the Open Spaces Society Information Sheet on Local Green Space Designation and Local Green Space Selection Methodology supplied by the neighbourhood plan consultant.

The Neighbourhood Plan Ecology Group, using local knowledge, drawing on evidence of historical significance and wildlife/biodiversity value put the list of sites together. No specific 'call for sites' was undertaken, and the list subject of the assessment included 23 sites, ranging from allotments to fields and woodland to recreational areas.

The criteria are split into General Site Information and Critical Criteria. The Critical Criteria are based on the national definition of a Local Green Space in the National Planning Policy Framework. Each site proposed for designation must be local in character, not an extensive tract of land (less than 10 hectares), demonstrably special, and reasonably close to a settlement (300m – which represents reasonable walking distance). There is no minimum size of site that can be considered.

The General Site Information captures specific aspects of the site, which count either in its favour or against it. Also contained in the spreadsheet is evidence to support local character and specialness.

A simple R.A.G system (Red, Amber, Green) is used to classify each criterion with Red flagging an issue (e.g., not meeting the critical criteria), Amber indicating unknown or questionable, and Green indicating no issue and meets the critical criteria.

The result of the assessment is indicated by the colour of the cell in the Site Description column. A key to colours and notes can be found at the bottom of the spreadsheet. The most favourable sites are shown in green in the table below.



Site description	No	Dev site	Other designation	Common /Village Green	Garden	Owner known	Plan Per.	Local in size	Close	Very Special
St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground	1	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Wilderness woodlands by New River Path/s St Margaretsbury	2	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path	3	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field between Sanville Gardens & The Granary	4	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Treed area north of Sanville Gdns	5	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Green by The Jolly Fisherman Station Road beside towpath	6	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field at end of Rush Close beside towpath	7	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field adj to Lawrence Av. by River Lea Navigation	8	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Field adj to Heron Drive beside towpath	9	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Land btw Kitten Lane & Hunsdon Rd & Roydon Rd.	10	N	N	Common	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Land east of Kitten Lane & north of Roydon Road.	11	This LGS was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in National policy								
St Andrews' School Field, off Abbots Way	12	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Allotments off Cappell Lane	13	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Village meadow and playground north of High Street	14	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Allotments north of High Street	15	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River	16	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y



Site description	No	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreation Use	Tranquil	Wildlife
<b>St Margaretsbury Recreation Ground</b>	1	Large public open space	Part of St Margaretsbury estate. Home to cricket club est. 1737. Henge found on adjacent land.	Natural and artificial surfaces used for cricket, football & tennis Dog walking.	No	No information
<b>Wilderness woodlands by New River Path/ s. of St Margaretsbury</b>	2	A little bit of natural woodland within the village.	Partly in an Area of Archaeological Significance.	No	Yes, riverside setting.	Mixed woodland plantation. Potential if restored. HERC-purple
<b>St Margaretsbury Estate by New River Path</b>	3	Part of Protected View 12 down the river from Station Road.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance.	PRoW on New River Path	Yes	Mixed woodland plantation. Potential if restored. HERC-purple
<b>Field between Sanville Gardens and The Granary</b>	4	Important amenity green space for residents of The Granary.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Includes children's playground	No	Mostly HERC-purple High potential for habitat creation
<b>Treed area north of Sanville Gardens</b>	5	Attractive natural and semi-natural green space, with grassland and young woodland.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Informal recreation space. Public access.	Yes	Orchids found. Habitat potential to be enhanced
<b>Green beside The Jolly Fisherman Station Road beside towpath</b>	6	View over the bridge, includes meridian stones sculpture. Gathering space. Part of Protected View 10 southwards along river.	Setting to grade II listed pub, 1736. Part of local character. In Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area.	Informal recreation, picnics etc. PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way.	Yes, riverside setting.	Birdlife on river including kingfishers. Green corridor.
<b>Field at end of Rush Close bedside towpath</b>	7	Amenity green space extending the riverside character. Part of Protected View 10.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners, cyclists and for fishing	Yes, riverside setting.	Green corridor. River birdlife, grebes, Canada geese, swans etc.
<b>Field adj to Lawrence Av. By River Lea Navigation</b>	8	Amenity green space extending the riverside character.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners, cyclists and for fishing	Yes, riverside setting.	Green corridor with river birdlife, grebes, Canada geese, swans etc.



Site description	No	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreation Use	Tranquil	Wildlife
<b>Field adj. to Heron Drive beside towpath</b>	9	Grassed area with poplar trees fronting the river.	No	PRoW. Part of Hertfordshire Way. Used by dog walkers, runners et.	Yes, riverside setting.	Birdlife on river. Bee orchid's grow in the field.
<b>Land between Kiffen Lane &amp; Hunsdon Rd &amp; Roydon Rd.</b>	10	Natural and semi-natural green space. Common land.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Publicly accessible green space, popular area.	Yes	Existing habitat with potential for restoration. HERC-purple
<b>Land east of Kiffen Rd &amp; north of Roydon Rd.</b>	11	This LGS was deleted at Examination because it did not meet the designation requirements set out in national policy				
<b>St Andrew's School Field, off Abbots Way</b>	12	Outdoor sports space-playing fields with natural and artificial surfaces.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance.	Critical for health and wellbeing – under intense use by children.	No	No
<b>Allotments off Cappell Lane</b>	13	Horticultural aesthetic providing opportunity to grow own food and be more sustainable.	In Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area.	Fosters community spirit and family cohesion.	Yes	HERC-Purple. Abundant wildlife reported by allotment holders.
<b>Village meadow and playground north of High Street</b>	14	A naturally wild area providing an amenity space in the centre of the village (like a village green). Includes village playground.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance and Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area	Natural play space for families – maintained by volunteer group.	Yes, peaceful area with benches for reflection	Wildlife reported including great crested newts and hedgehogs.
<b>Allotments north of High Street</b>	15	Horticultural aesthetic providing opportunity to grow own food and be more sustainable. Includes beehives.	In an Area of Archaeological Significance and Stanstead Abbots Cons. Area.	Fosters community spirit and family cohesion.	Yes.	Wildlife reported including bats, owls, and dormice.
<b>Folly Grove between Folly View and the New River</b>	16	Broadleaf woodland plantation.	No	Used by dog walkers and mountain bikers.	Yes	HERC-green (NERC habitat).





FIGURE 38 LGS1 ST MARGARETSBURY RECREATION GROUND



FIGURE 39 LGS2 THE WILDERNESS WOODLANDS BY NEW RIVER PATH





FIGURE 40 LGS3 ST MARGARETSBURY ESTATE BY THE NEW RIVER PATH



FIGURE 41 LGS4 PLAYGROUND AT THE GRANARY





FIGURE 42 LGS5 TREED AREA NORTH OF SANVILLE GARDENS



FIGURE 43 LGS6 GREEN BESIDE THE JOLLY FISHERMAN





FIGURE 44 LGS7 FIELD AT END OF RUSH CLOSE, BESIDE RIVER LEA NAVIGATION



FIGURE 45 LGS8 FIELD ADJACENT TO LAWRENCE AVENUE BY RIVER LEA NAVIGATION





FIGURE 46 LGS9 FIELD ADJACENT TO HERON DRIVE BESIDE RIVER LEA NAVIGATION



FIGURE 47 LGS10 LAND BETWEEN KITTEN LANE AND HUNSDON ROAD AND ROYDON ROAD





FIGURE 49 LGS12 ST ANDREWS SCHOOL FIELD OFF ABBOTTS WAY





FIGURE 50 LGS13 ALLOTMENTS OFF CAPPELL LANE



FIGURE 51 LGS14 VILLAGE MEADOW AND PLAYGROUND NORTH OF HIGH STREET





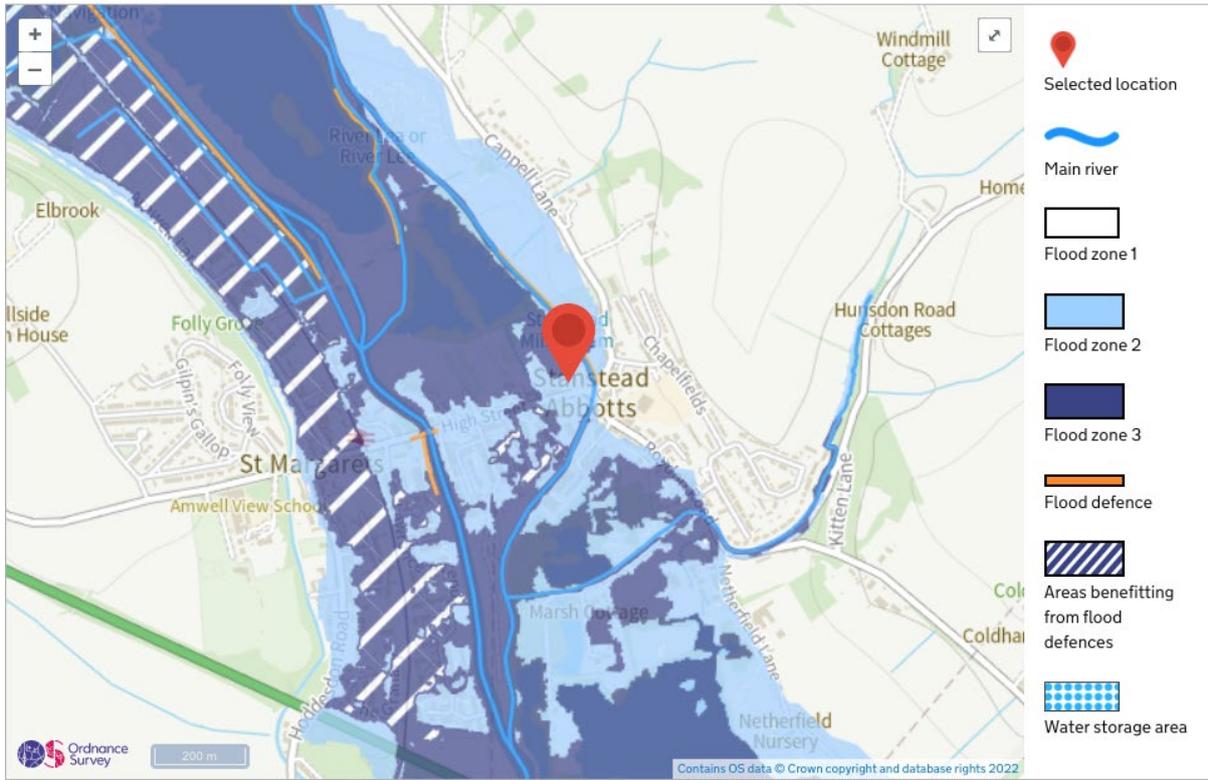
FIGURE 52 LGS 15 ALLOTMENTS NORTH OF HIGH STREET



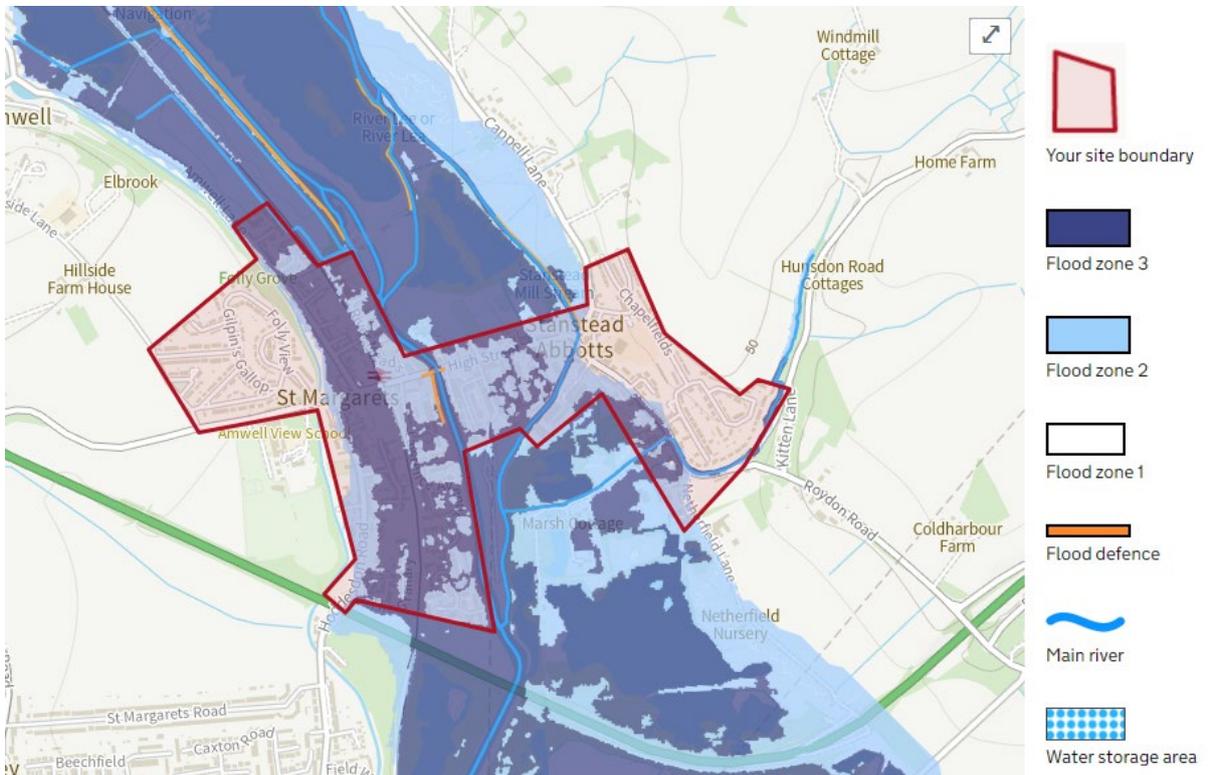
FIGURE 53 LGS16 FOLLY GROVE BETWEEN FOLLY VIEW AND THE NEW RIVER



*Appendix H: Flood Risk Map (July 2022)*



Revised Flood Risk Map (March 2024)



### *Appendix I: Glossary*

- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) – woodland that retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally. This covers all stands of ancient woodland which do not obviously originate from planting.
- Ancient replanted Woodland (AWS - ancient woodland site or PAWS - plantation on ancient woodland site) – woodland where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers and usually this century.
- **RAMSAR** sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Wetlands are designated, protected and promoted to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, which are broadly defined to include marsh, fen, peatland and water.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are areas notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as being of special interest for nature conservation. They represent the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in Great Britain supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. Notification as a SSSI is primarily a legal mechanism organised by Natural England and selected according to specific criteria. The Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs, published in 1989 by the Joint Nature Conservancy Council, set down the selection criteria for both biological and geological SSSIs.
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) are designated under the EC Birds Directive, to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory birds. Any significant pollution or disturbance to or deterioration of these sites must be avoided.
- The NERC Act (2006) requires every public authority, in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats as well as protecting them.



*Appendix J: Action Plan*

<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
T1	Transport	Promote climate friendly measures that help to lower carbon emissions through car usage	Promote the installation of publicly accessible EV charging points	High	0-2 years	Transport Sub-group	TBC
T2	Transport	Improve road safety through reduction of HGV related traffic through the village	Active working with HCC, developers and other transport bodies to improve road safety to highlighted areas at junction of B180/B181 and at exit route onto Roydon Road from A414	High	0-3	Parish Council, HCC, Transport sub group	
T3	Transport	Promote measures in partnership with Greater Anglia and Network Rail to make cycle use combined with train travel more attractive	Provide secure cycle stands at St Margarets Station similar to those at Broxbourne Station	Med	0-3 years	GA Network Rail	Not known
T4	Transport	Promote accessible transport facilities across the SASM Neighbourhood Plan Area	Provision of secure cycle parking facilities at suitable locations to access village amenities	High	0-2 years	Parish Councils	



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
T5	Transport	Address issues of air pollution caused by car engines idling while queuing for the level crossing	Investigate introduction of a byelaw requiring drivers to turn off engines while queuing for level crossing and install signage similar to that outside schools	High	0-1 year	District and Parish council	TBD
T6	Transport	Improve provision of bus services that connect the village with nearby centres	Work in partnership with bus companies to ensure current services will be continued and enhanced particularly routes along Cappell Lane	Med	0-3 years	SAPC	£50.00
T7	Transport	Make the river bus more useful for commuting and leisure for Stanstead Abbots residents	Extend the route of the river bus into Stanstead Abbots by creating a suitable quay	Med	1-2 years	Lee Valley Park and CRT	TBD
T8	Transport	Enable high quality and accessible pedestrian routes into and around the village centre	Ensure main pedestrian paved routes are safe, wheelchair and buggy friendly	high	1-3 years	Parish Council?	TBD
T9	Transport	Reduce the speed of vehicles in the area to enhance safety and reduce pollution	Work with County Council to bring in 20mph speed limit along all roads in the village	high	1-2 years	Parish Council	TBD



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
C1	Community	To facilitate more recycling – particularly Terra Cycle	Work with local businesses to launch this project	Med	0-2 years	Local businesses and PCs	£200 approx
C2	Community	Make paths and the towpath more attractive	Work with District and Parish Councils to increase number of dog poo bins, including finding donors, litter pick and provide more benches	High	ongoing	Residents, Parish and District councils	£2,000
C3	Community	Establish a community library	Interested business sponsors and local residents to find a suitable venue and volunteers to supervise it.	Med	0-3 years	Local businesses Community groups	£200
C4	Community	Increase community composting	Investigate location within one of the existing allotments e.g., Cappell Lane.	Med	0-2 years	Volunteers/Maintenance and Traffic Committee/ local landowners	£50
C5	Community	Improve social opportunities for the disabled; the elderly; young people and children With opportunities for arts and craft	Work with existing venues.	Long term	ongoing	Community groups and possible sponsors in the business community, charities and voluntary groups.	TBD



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
C6	Community	Encourage healthy activities such as canoeing and running	Local sports groups could be encouraged to start up more active and fitness groups and promote Hertfordshire Health Walks	Med	0-3 years	Sponsors and Parish Council	TBD
C7	Community	Provide public toilets	Work with council and local businesses to build and maintain public toilets in a suitable location (e.g., close to the playground)	High	0-2 years	Sponsors/ Parish and District Councils	TBD
C8	Community	Promote community facilities for young people	Replace existing scout hut Increase the range of park equipment suitable for young people with disabilities and for older children	Medium	3-5	Scout movement Volunteers Businesses Parish Councils	Unknown
H1	Heritage	To establish the date of the settlement at Stanstead Abbots	Work with developers to gather information on appropriate sites that help to identify and date activity across the settlement area. Gain community skills and expert cooperation to run a community programme of test pits across the village to gather evidence (Testing should	Medium	Throughout development period and ongoing	Developers (as appropriate) Residents SALHS Ware Museum HCC Heritage team	Unknown



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
			seek to prioritise Burgage plot boundary lines if possible).				
H2	Heritage	Disseminate Heritage information on social media so the community better understands the nature and value of its surrounding heritage	Undertake a programme of postings on village Facebook pages with a focus on settlement history and heritage	High	Throughout development period and ongoing	Heritage Group	None
H3		Disseminate Heritage information on website and noticeboards so the community better understands the nature and value of its surrounding heritage	Use results of social media programme and post site reports on SALHS website and design local information boards that can be displayed in schools, clubs, cafes and other accessible venue	High	Throughout development period and ongoing	Developers Heritage group SALHS	Unknown at this stage
H4	Heritage	To raise local skills and understanding within the community, particularly with regard to below ground heritage assets	Set up an archaeology working group, either as an integral part of SALHS or as a stand-alone club to train for and undertake small, low impact investigations	Medium	End of 2022	SALHS Residents	Unknown



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
H4	Heritage	To raise local skills and understanding within the community, particularly with regard to below ground heritage assets	Set up an archaeology working group, either as an integral part of SALHS or as a stand-alone club to train for and undertake small, low impact investigations	Medium	End of 2022	SALHS Residents	Unknown
H5	Heritage	To enable residents to be able to access information and objects that inform local heritage within the village	Obtain storage/study space within the settlement area where resources may be safely and securely stored and if possible, study undertaken	Low	Long-term aim	SALHS Archaeology group	TBC
H6	Heritage	To begin to address heritage assets that are identified as deteriorating/in need of improvement in the EHDC 2014 Conservation Plan	Drinking fountain outside Roydon Road School to be listed/sympathetically restored (CAA action)	Low	End of 2023	Parish Hall Trust	Unknown
H7	Heritage	To develop and disseminate a greater awareness of key heritage assets, particularly those of a notably early date or 2* EH listing	With the assistance of field experts, gather information on the Henge field site outside St Margarets and disseminate via a Facebook summary and extended posting on SALHS	High	August 2023	Heritage group or Archaeology group if formed working with SALHS	None



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
E1	Environment	To reduce light pollution where compatible with road safety		Low			
E2	Environment	To maximise any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offsite contributions within the Neighbourhood Plan area.		High			
E3	Environment	Enhance wildlife corridors	Strengthen and increase the quantity and quality of hedgerows to support local wildlife. Promote nesting boxes for birds insects and small animals.	High	1-5 years	Whole community Land owners	
E4	Environment	Increase number and type of indigenous trees through the village	Planting , running an education programme	High	1-5 years	Whole community	
E5	Environment	Protect and promote native flora and fauna throughout the village	Promote wild flower planting, and insect habitat promotion and pollinators	High	1-5 years	Whole community	



<b>Id</b>	<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources/ Cost if known</b>
E6	Environment	Support delivery of the Herts and Middlesex conservation plan, RSPB local reserve.	Support habitat creation and enhancement for wild birds, animals and fish	High	1-5 years	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.	
E7	Environment	Reduce the impact of preventable flooding.	Support the initiatives of the Environment Agency in relation to the Stanstead Abbots ditch and the works to reduce pluvial flooding	High	0-5 years	Environment Agency Land owners and volunteers	Unknown



*Appendix K: Policy Map detail sheets*

Policy Map detail sheets follow below:

Policies Map

Housing Site Allocation Map

Protected Views Map

Valued Hedgerows Map

Local Green Spaces Map

Valued Community Assets Map

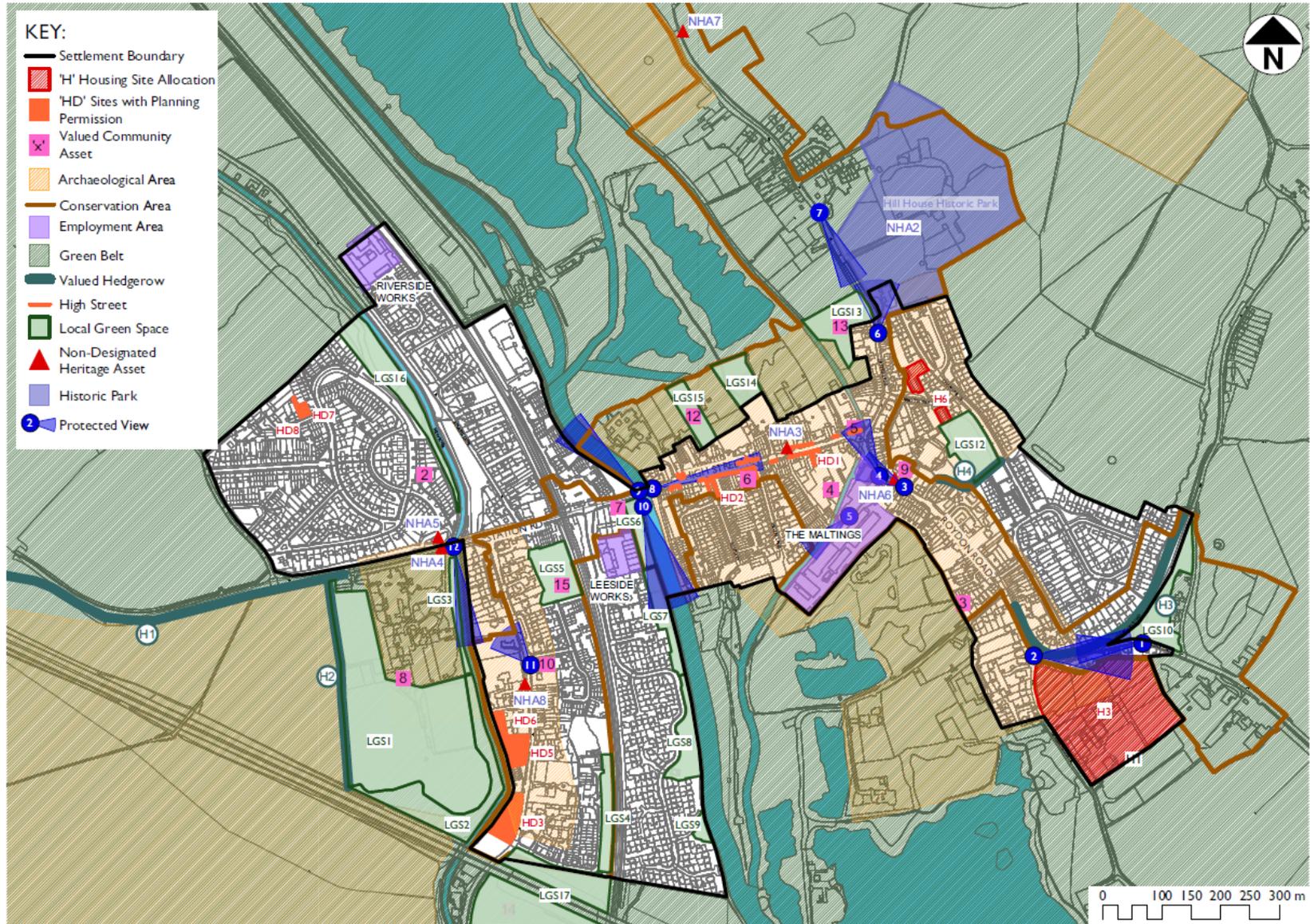
High Street Map

Employment Areas Map

Non-designated Heritage Assets Inset Map

Easneye Historic Park Map

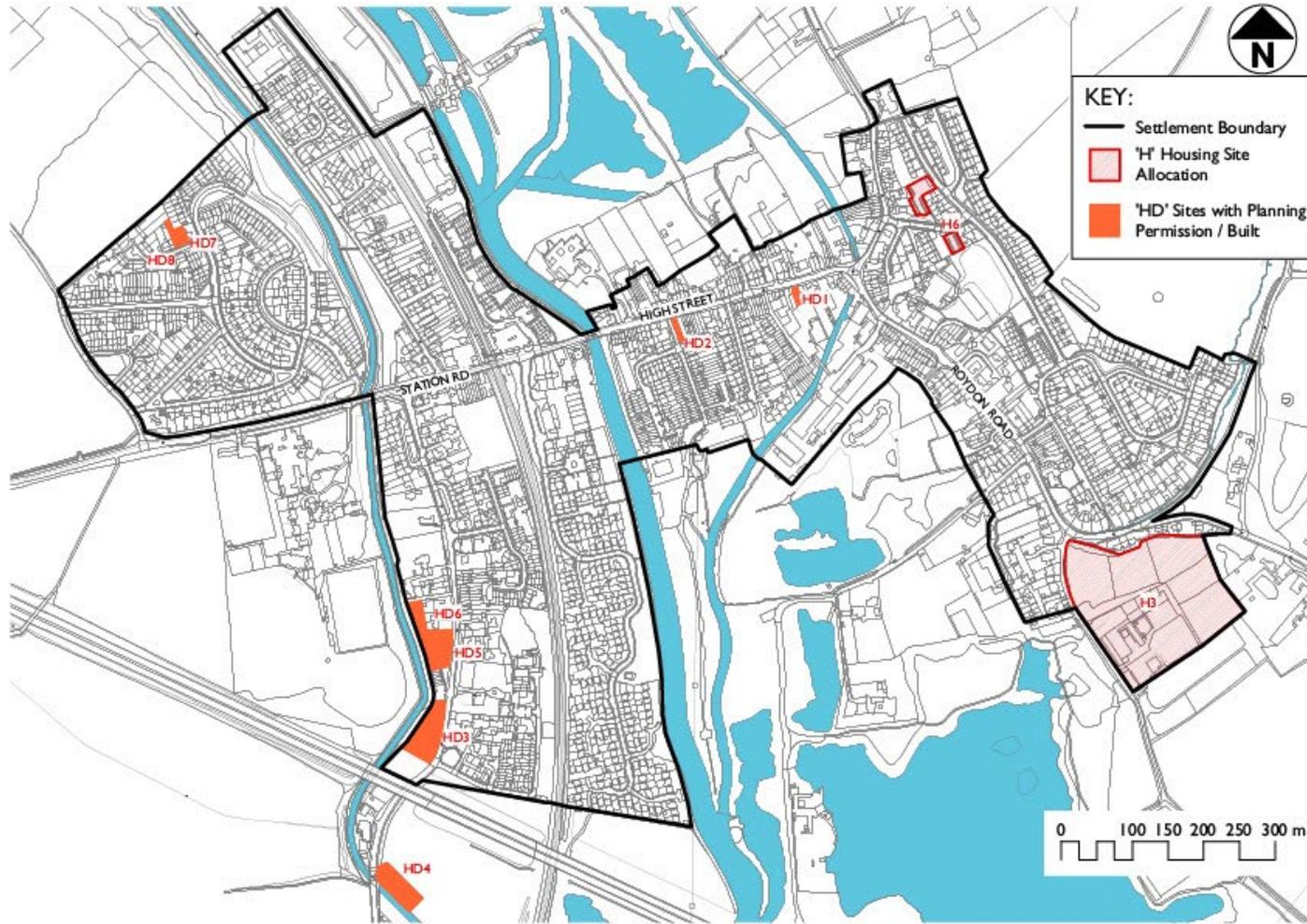




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**POLICIES MAP**





HOUSING SITE ALLOCATION MAP

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*Appendix L: Housing Site Breakdown Allocations*

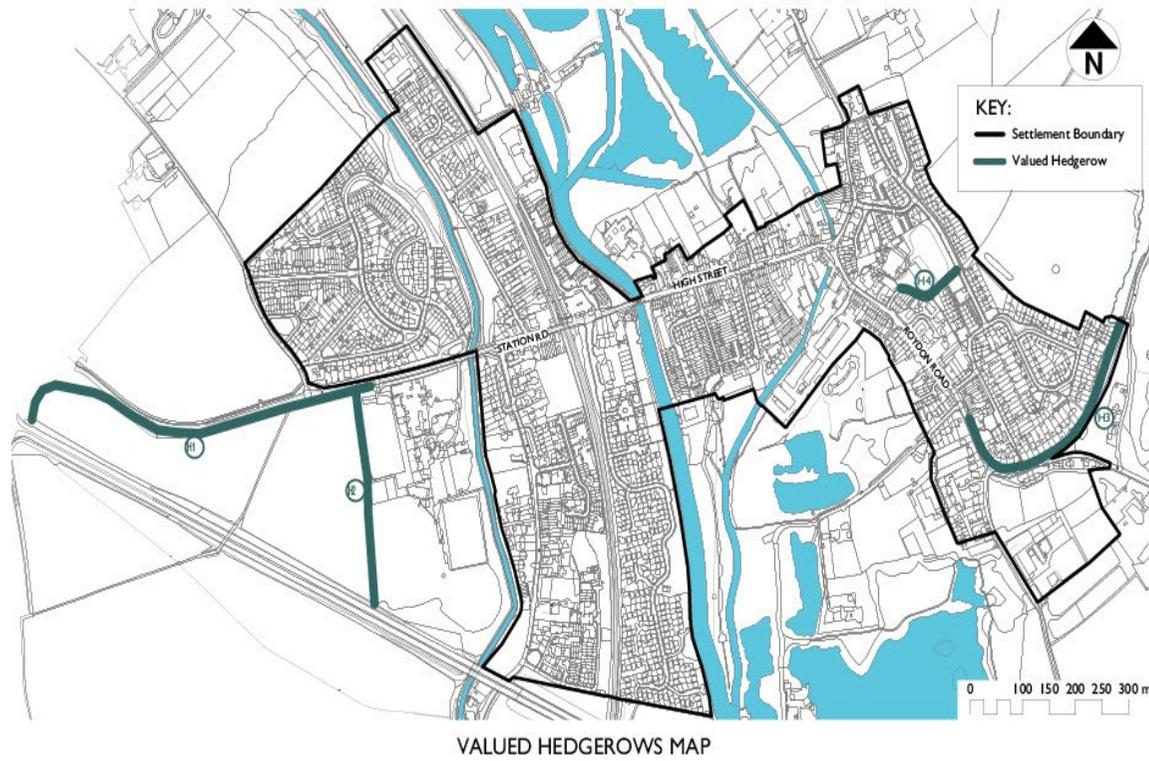
Planning Permission	Address	Existing Dwellings	Proposed Dwellings	Overall Net Dwellings	Notes
3/20/0069/FUL	8 High Street, SG12 8AB	1	2	1	
3/23/0978/FUL	60 High Street, SG12 8AG	1	3	2	
3/19/1689/FUL	The Wilderness	0	8	8	Granted in Aug 2023
3/16/2565/FUL	Pump House Lane	0	4	4	Constructed
3/18/2556/VAR	The Spinney A	0	6	6	Constructed
3/16/1407/FUL	The Spinney B	0	2	2	Constructed
3/15/1459/FUL	6 French Close, SG12 8BB	1	2	1	Constructed
3/18/2413/FUL	4 French Close, SG12 8BB	1	2	1	Constructed Constructed
<b>Total permissions and completions</b>				<b>25</b>	
<b>Site Allocations</b>					
H3	Netherfield Lane				
3/20/0502/OUT	Land to East of Netherfield Lane		20	60	PDL- part of H3 granted PP May 2023;



Site H6	Garages at Chapelfields	7	Granted Aug 2023; consists of two adjacent garage sites- 3/22/2135/FUL grants permission for 5 dwellings in Aug 23. 2 Dwellings on adjacent site still outstanding.
Windfall sites	Within the village boundary	6	
<b>Total inc allocations</b>		<b>98</b>	



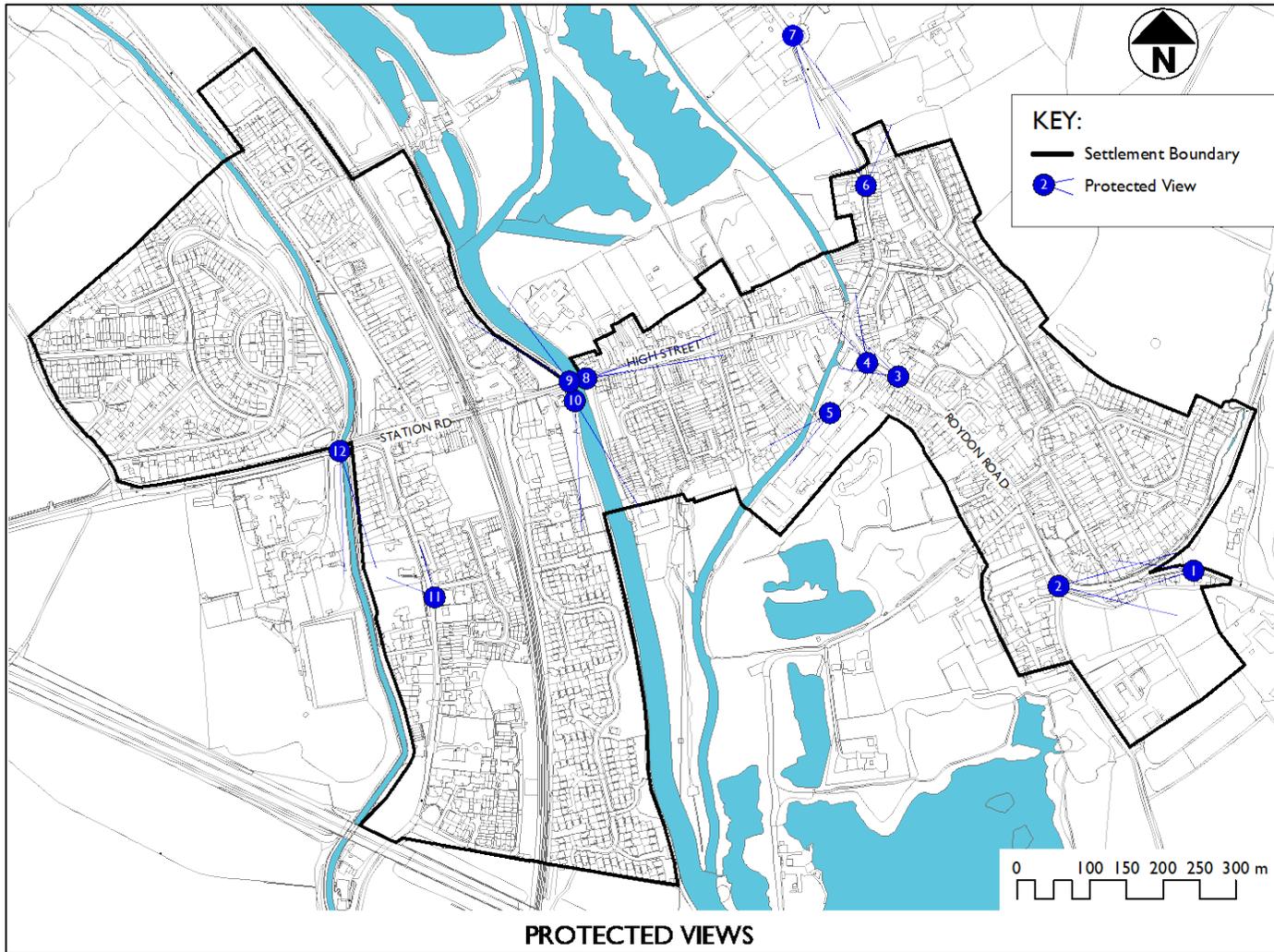
*Appendix M: Hedgerows,*



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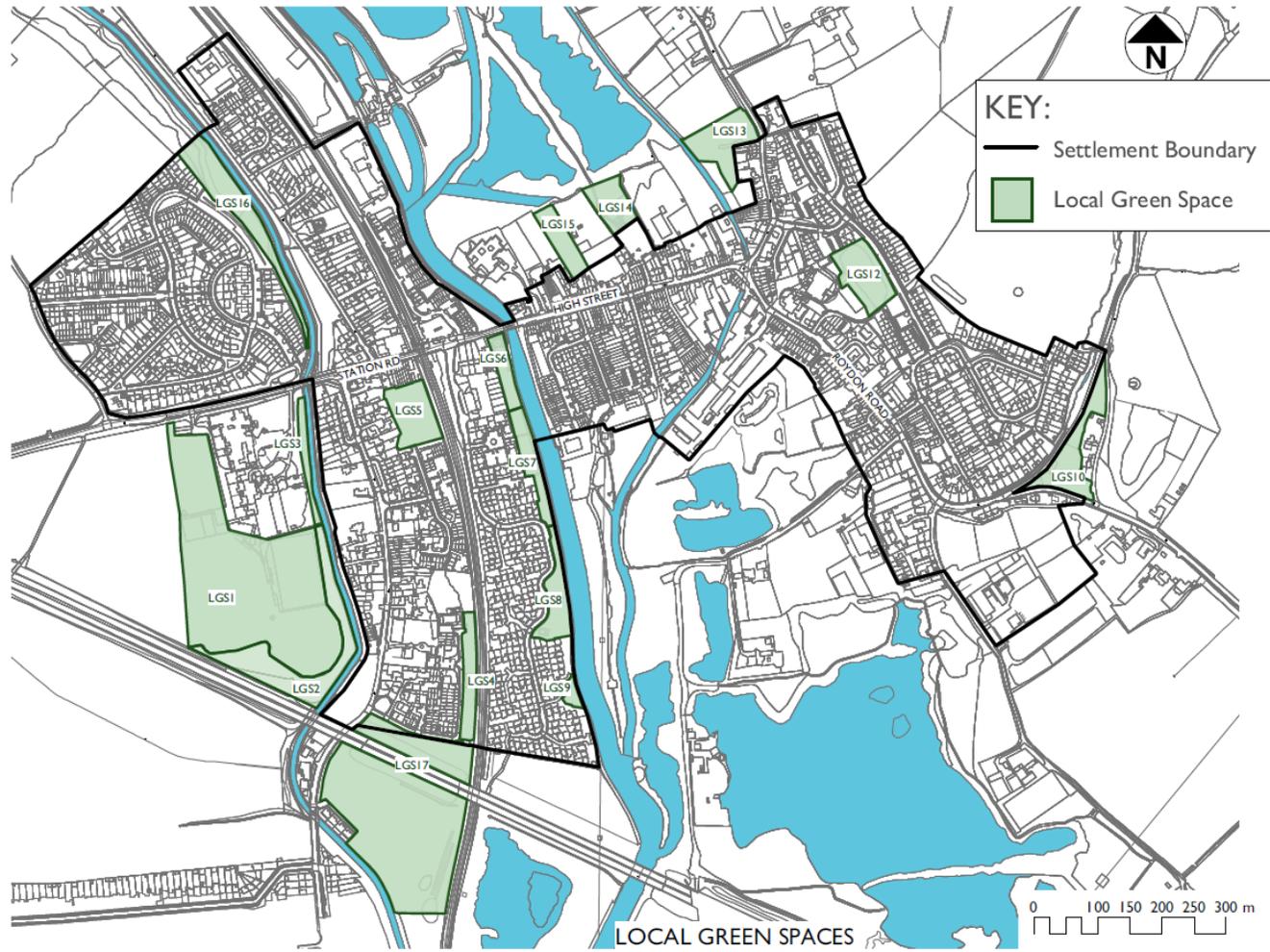
*Protected views*



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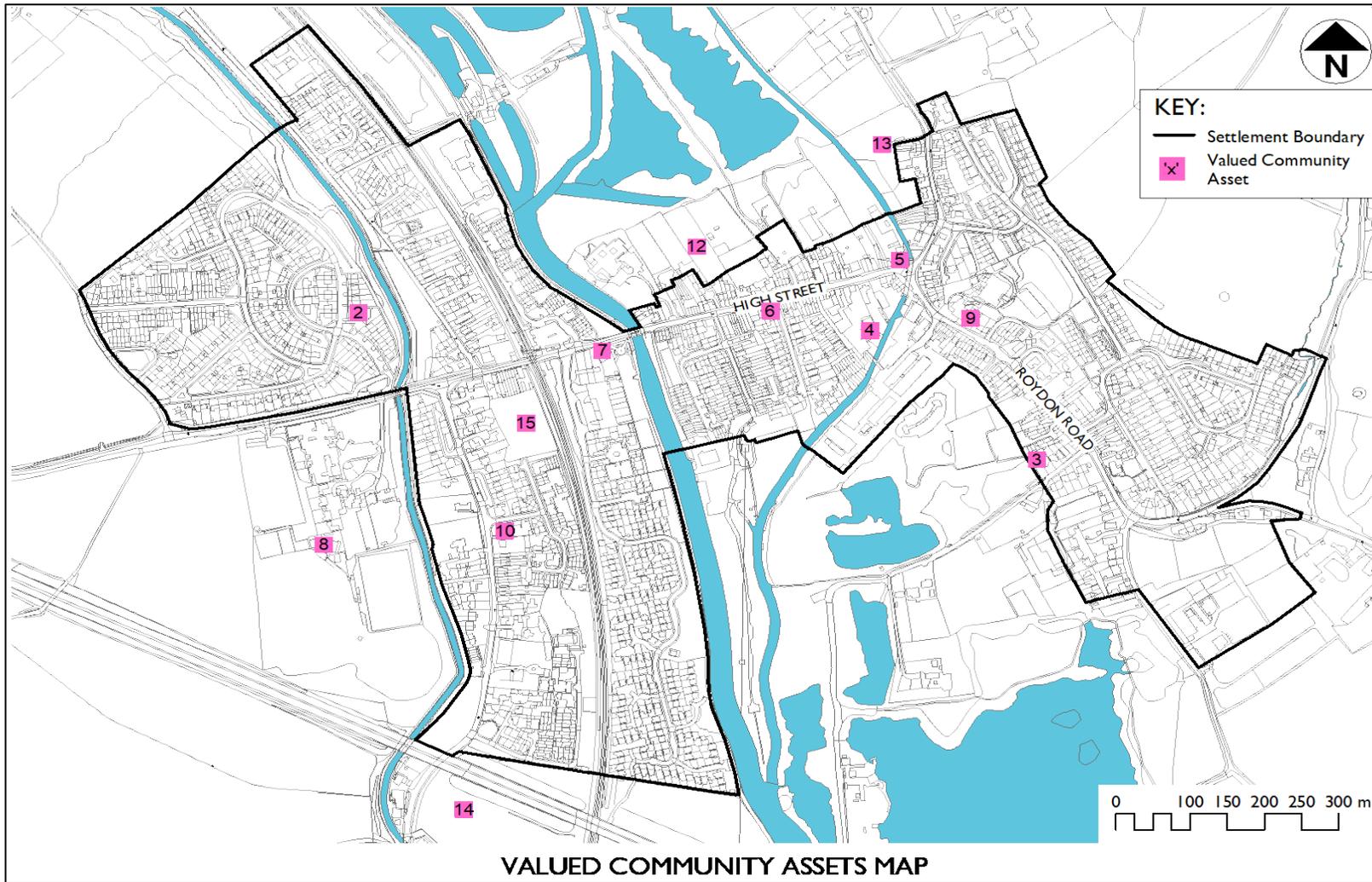


*Local Green Spaces*



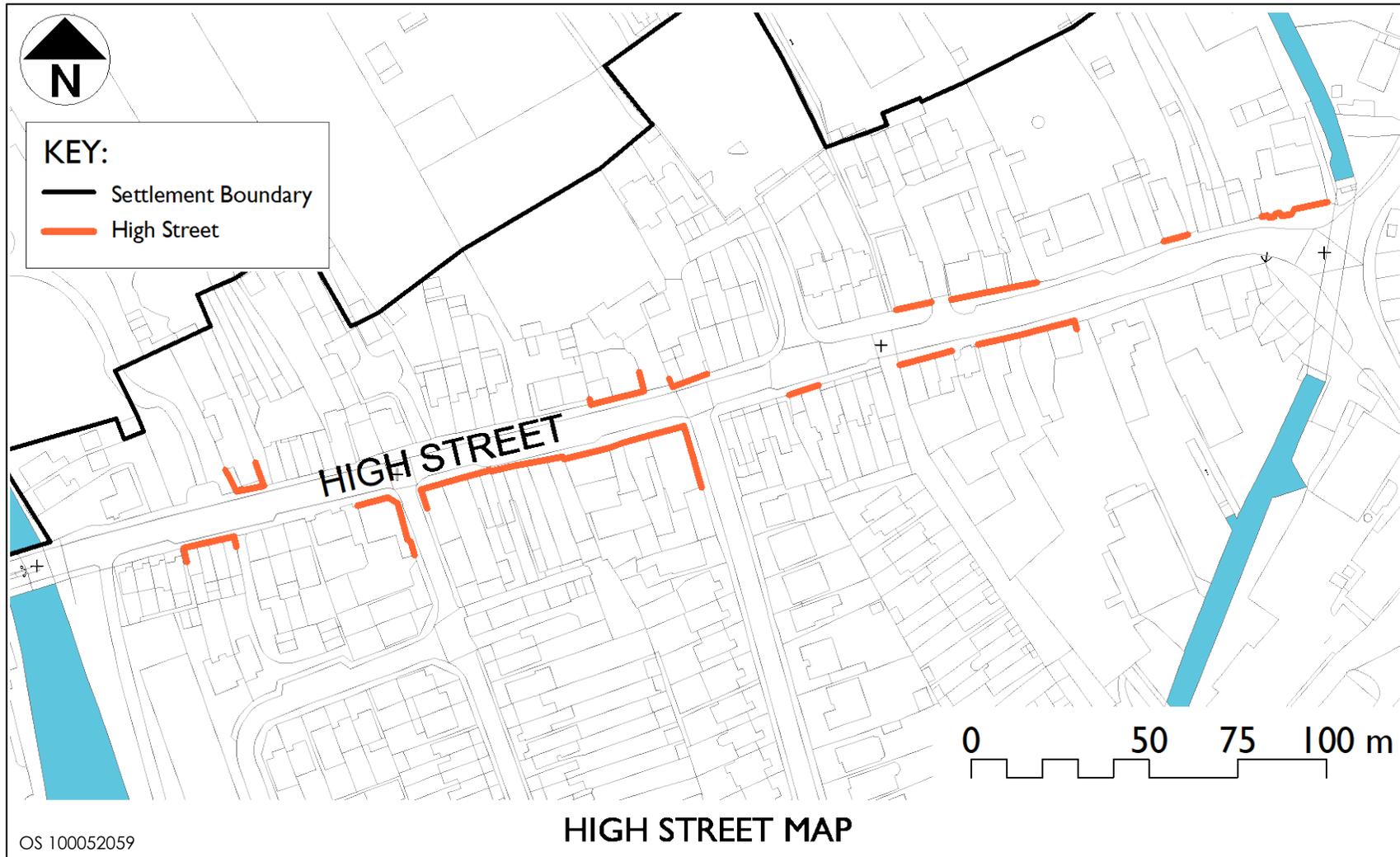
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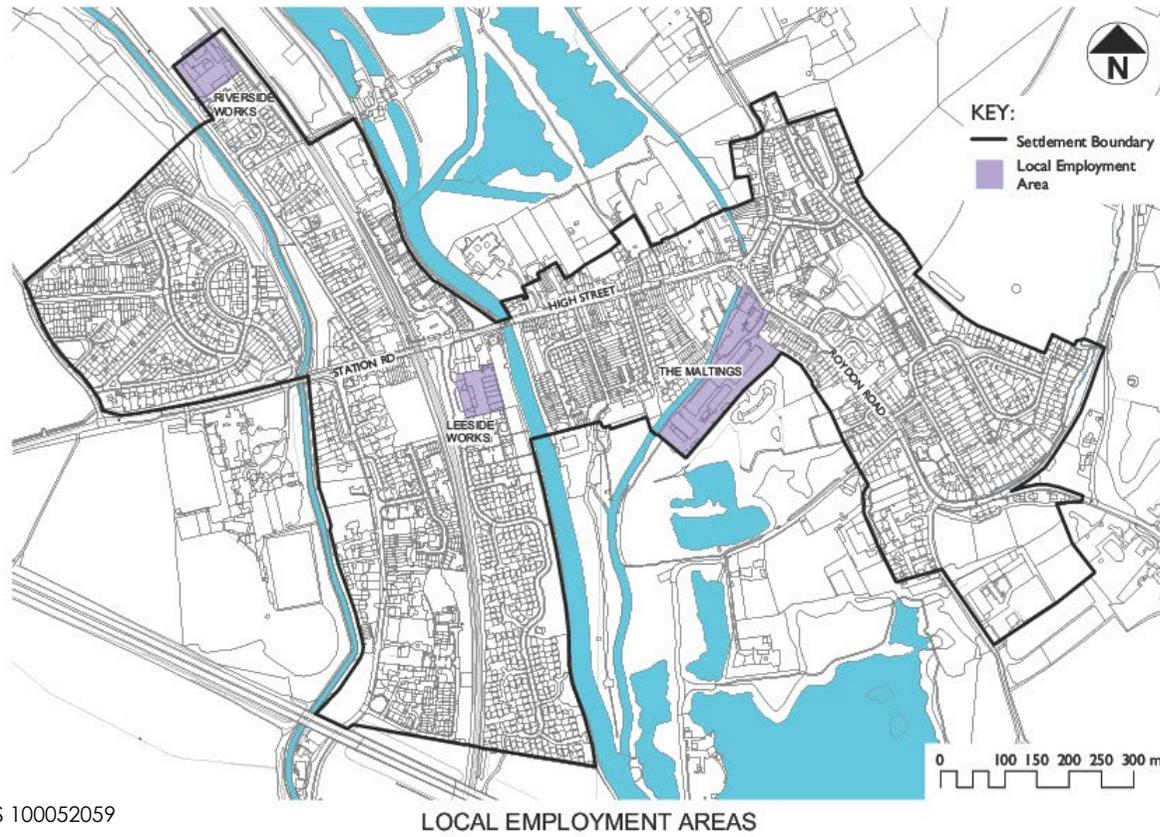


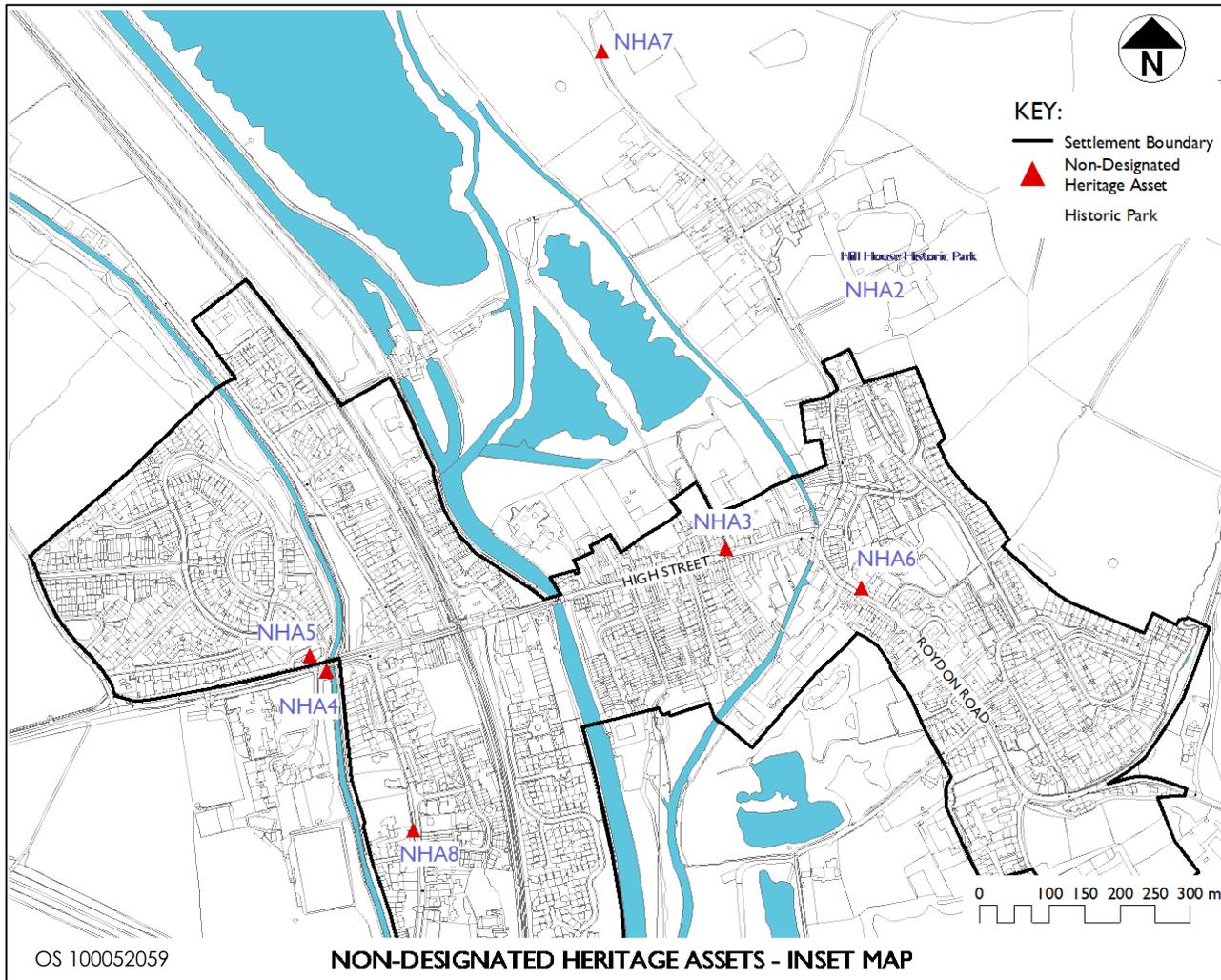


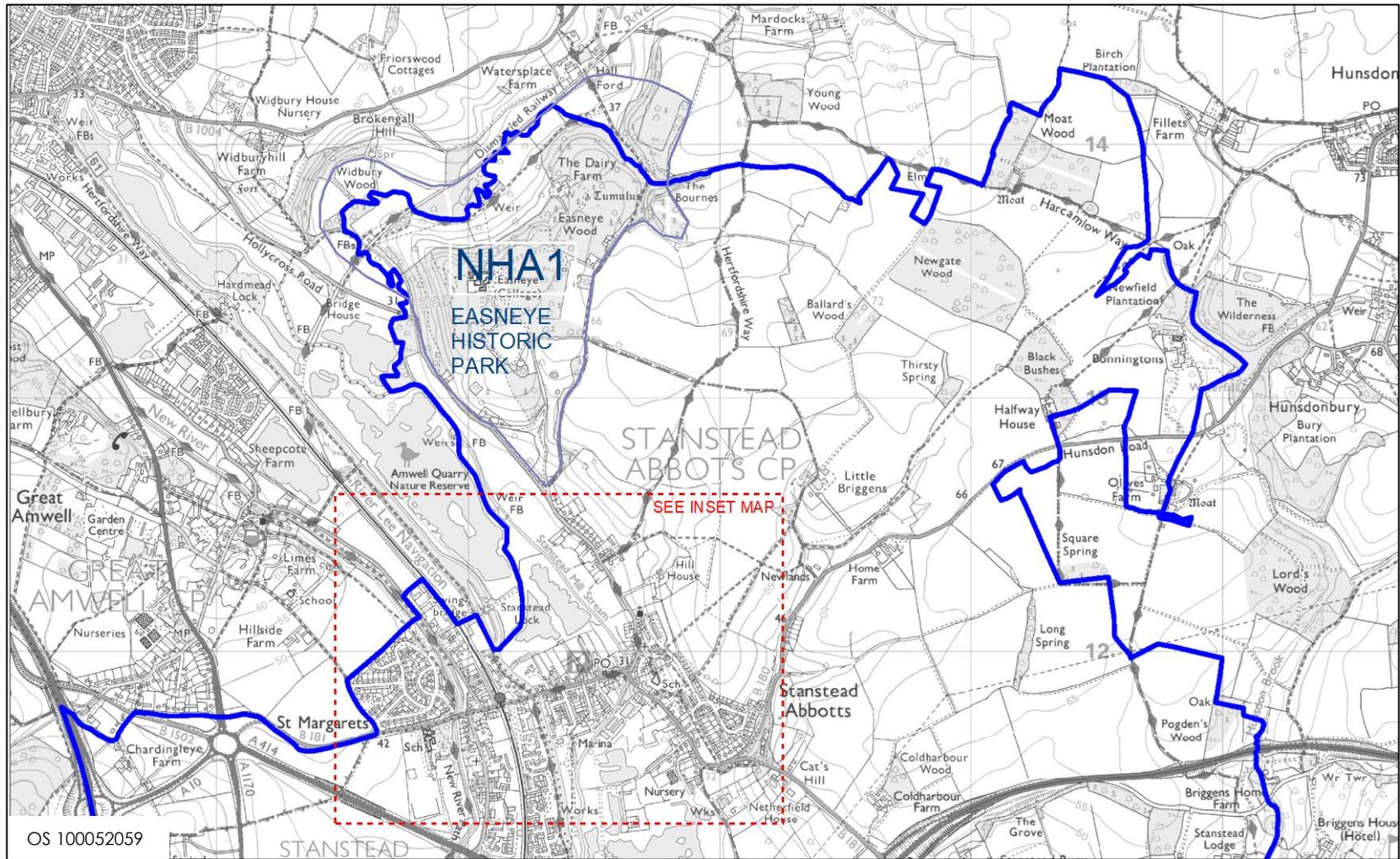
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Rooftops, The Maltings, Linda Gifford

[Front cover, The Canal, Linda Gifford]