

# **Draft Local Plan 2041**

## **Main Modifications Publication**

April 2026

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# Chapter 1 - A Spatial Strategy for St Albans City and District

## Introduction

- 1.1 Preparation of a Local Plan (LP) is a statutory requirement for the Council. The Local Plan sets out the planning policies and proposals for the future development of the City and District of St Albans. It establishes the Council's long term spatial planning strategy for delivering and managing development and infrastructure, and for environmental protection and enhancement, to 2041.
- 1.2 The LP is a statutory Development Plan Document (DPD). It must comply with legal requirements. The LP must have regard to the Government's national planning policy, principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also needs to be based on proportionate and justifiable evidence.
- 1.3 The NPPF sets out that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gain across each of the different objectives):
  - a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to Climate Change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 1.4 The NPPF requires that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing), infrastructure, community facilities and conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. Strategic policies should address each of the Council's priorities for the development and use of land in the District, along with policies to address non-strategic matters. The policies in this Local Plan meet with these requirements and are set out with a strategic policy for each main chapter.
- 1.5 This Plan contains all the planning policies and proposals for the future growth of the City and District of St Albans. It covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2041.

The current Plan is the District Local Plan Review 1994 which will be superseded by the new Local Plan.

**Table 1.1 – Overview of the Local Plan process**

Stages in preparing a Local Plan
Collecting Evidence
Issues and Options
First Draft Local Plan – Consultation Regulation 18
Final Draft Local Plan – Publication Regulation 19
Submission of Final Draft to Government
Examination of Local Plan and Adoption

**Regulation 19 Public Consultation**

1.6 Public consultation will begin on 26 September 2024 and run until 8 November 2024.

**Delivering the St Albans and District Council Plan**

1.7 St Albans District Council Plan 2024-2029 sets out five key priorities:

- Combat the Climate Emergency
- Deliver more social housing
- Support our local economy
- Enhance the District’s cultural offer
- Promote equality, inclusion and fairness.

1.8 The Local Plan has a vital role in helping to deliver these priorities through to 2029 and beyond.

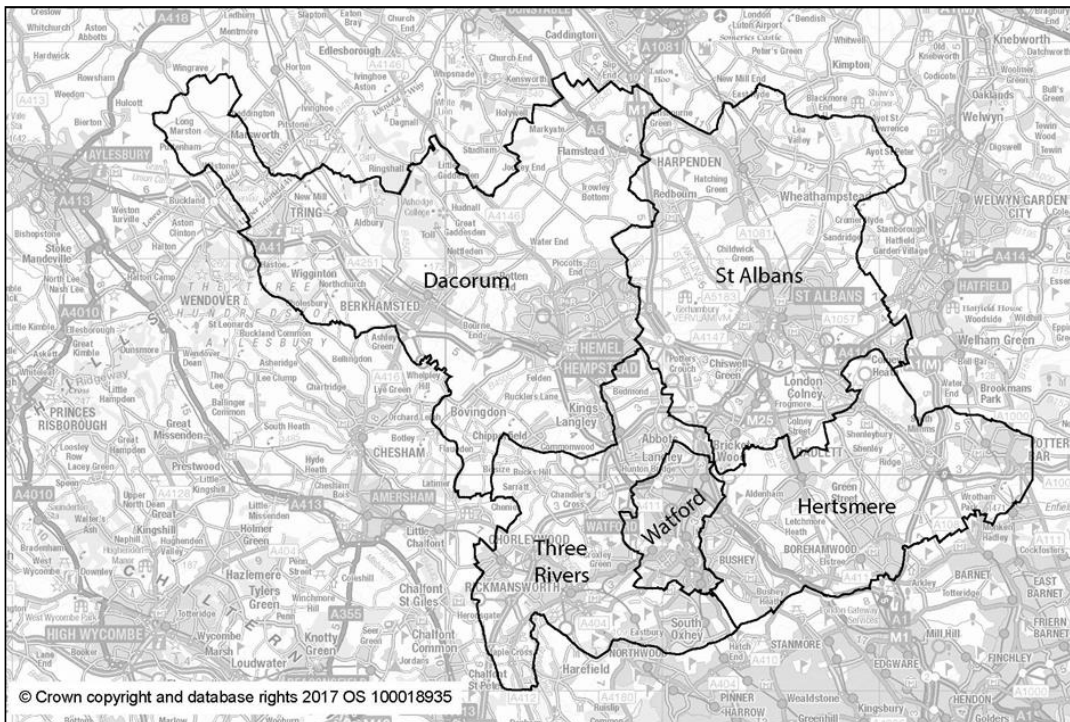
**Duty to Cooperate**

1.9 St Albans Council has a statutory Duty to Cooperate with other local planning authorities and the county council and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic planning matters that cross administrative boundaries.

**Hemel Garden Communities**

1.10 St Albans is working jointly with Dacorum on proposed cross boundary development at Hemel Garden Communities.

**Figure 1.1 – South West Hertfordshire Councils of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford**



## Local Development Scheme

- 1.11 The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme, which sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan, including key production and public consultation stages. This enables the community, businesses, developers, service and infrastructure providers and other interested organisations to know when they will be able to participate.

## Local Transport Plan

- 1.12 The Local Plan must be read in conjunction with the statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP) prepared by the Local Highways Authority, Hertfordshire County Council.

## Minerals and Waste

- 1.13 The District Council has a statutory responsibility for waste management and the safeguarding of mineral resources. The Local Plan must also be read in conjunction with the statutory Minerals and Waste Plans prepared by the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

## Local Plan Evidence

- 1.14 A wide range of evidence has been used in the preparation of this Plan. Key evidence documents are available on the St Albans City and District Council (SADC) website.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.15 The draft Local Plan is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. This is a statutory requirement to be carried out during the preparation the Local Plan that assesses the extent to which the emerging Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

- 1.16 It is also a statutory requirement that the Council carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), to test if the emerging Local Plan could significantly harm the designated features of a European protected habitat site. An HRA process has been undertaken regarding the draft Local Plan.

## **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 1.17 Neighbourhood plans enable local communities to shape and direct sustainable development in their local area. These are plans produced by a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Forum.
- 1.18 As community-led initiatives, the role of the Council is not to create Neighbourhood Plans, but to assist communities in developing them for themselves. Neighbourhood planning work is already underway in many parts of the District and the Council is committed to continue supporting it.

## **A Brief Portrait of St Albans City and District**

- 1.19 St Albans City and District lies within the south west of the county of Hertfordshire and covers an area of 161 square kilometres. The south of the District is more heavily populated while the central and northern areas are more rural, with over 81% of the District being covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The District is 20 miles north of London. The largest settlements are St Albans City and Harpenden, followed in size by London Colney, then the two large, historic villages of Redbourn and Wheathampstead, and numerous smaller villages and hamlets. The historic environment is an important aspect of the District, with 19 Conservation Areas and over 800 statutory listed buildings. The remains of the Roman Town of Verulamium and St Albans Cathedral are particularly notable historic features that draw visitors to the area.
- 1.20 The ONS mid-year 2023<sup>1</sup> population estimates show the population of the District to be 148,750, a number that has been growing steadily in recent years, and increased approximately 6% since 2011. In common with the national picture, the population of the District is ageing, but the desirability of the location for families due to quality of life and good schools means that there are also a high proportion of people in the 30 to 60 year old age bracket and of under 18 year olds. In terms of ethnicity the majority of the District is White British, with Asian / Asian British as the second largest category at 8%, and Black / Black British around 2%<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.21 St Albans has a very long history, growing from a small, ancient Celtic settlement to become the Roman town of Verulamium, then building the Abbey by Norman times which, in 1877, became a Cathedral (officially the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban). Harpenden's origins date back to at least medieval times. For both St Albans and Harpenden their major periods of growth came with the arrival of the railways which enabled them to develop as popular commuter locations for London and other destinations, a situation which continues to this day.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS Mid-year 2023 population estimates, published July 2024

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Census

- 1.22 The District is very well connected by railway and road, and is close to international airports. The Midlands Main Line from London to Nottingham and Sheffield passes through the District, with the fast Thameslink service connecting directly to central London. There is also a low-service local rail route (branch line) known as the Abbey Line that connects St Albans and Watford. The rail options to London underpin the popularity of commuting out of the District. The District is also very well connected by key national road routes, with the M25 running east west through the south of the District, paralleled by the A414 dual carriageway, while the M1 runs down the west and the A1M is just outside the District to the east. Luton Airport is approximately five miles north of the District, while Heathrow and Stansted are both within 25 miles.
- 1.23 Overall the District is prosperous, with above average levels of highly qualified professionals and high average salaries of residents. Combined with the good quality of life offered in the area, this means that house prices are very high throughout the District, averaging £619,567 in 2023. This overall success has the effect of making the area unaffordable for many, and a shortage of reasonably-priced accommodation is an important issue. Whilst the residents are on average prosperous, there are individuals and areas that are more deprived.
- 1.24 The District has significant areas of woodland, including the new Heartwood Forest planted in recent years between St Albans and Harpenden. There are a number of 'commons' of varying scales that contribute significant areas of publically accessible green space in a mix of urban and rural settings. The rivers Lea, Colne and Ver flow through the District, providing globally rare habitats as three of only 210 chalk streams in the world, with the Ver flowing through St Albans City.

### The Vision for St Albans District in 2041

- 1.25 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states :

*Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.*

- 1.26 The Vision for St Albans is a succinct statement for the District through to 2041:

***'A thriving, inclusive and sustainable community which is a great place to live and work and has a vibrant economy.'***

### Local Plan Objectives

- 1.27 The Vision will be delivered through the Objectives, show below in Table 1.2. The Objectives have been used to form the structure for the Local Plan, and preface each chapter in the document.

#### Table 1.2 – Local Plan Objectives

<b>Local Plan Objectives to 2041</b>		
Climate Change and Spatial Strategy (low carbon)	Climate change	Promote adaptation to and mitigation of the Climate Emergency; seek to achieve net zero by 2030, including through the Council doing everything reasonably within its power; promote the use of renewable resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural resources and reduce waste.
	Sustainable use of land / Green Belt	Prioritise the effective use of land by locating new development on previously developed land first, where appropriate; and protecting and enhancing the Green Belt.
Housing	Housing	Provide a sufficient amount of good quality housing which meets the needs of all sections of society in sustainable locations.
Infrastructure	Community infrastructure	Make sufficient provision for and access to community infrastructure in sustainable locations.
	Transport	Prioritise and enable the safe and attractive use of active and sustainable means of transport and reduce the need for people to travel.
	Utilities infrastructure	Ensure that essential utilities infrastructure, including broadband, is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.
Economy and Employment	Economy and employment	Encourage strong and resilient economic growth, employment and skills opportunities; including supporting growth in green and creative sectors; and supporting new ways of working across the District.
	Town Centres and retail	Support the role that the town, district and local centres play at the heart of local communities, sustainable lifestyles and the visitor economy, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
	Natural environment and biodiversity	Protect, maintain and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the

Natural and Historic Environment		landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways.
	Heritage	Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating their local distinctiveness and character.
Healthy Places and High Quality Design	High quality design	Achieve high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in existing and new places.
	Public Health and Wellbeing	Promote active, healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life.

## The Climate Emergency

- 1.28 Climate is changing as a result of human activity and is considered as a key challenge for the Local Plan to address within the context of national policy and the law. St Albans District Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, adopting the *Sustainability and Climate Change Crisis Strategy* in 2020 and subsequent update in 2024. The Climate Emergency informs this Chapter 1 and is the title of Chapter 2, and the issue is addressed as a thread running throughout the Local Plan because of its importance.
- 1.29 This Plan is pursuing a strategy of generally locating growth in the most sustainable locations, minimising the need to travel. It also means planning for sustainable layouts that encourage and enable a shift from the private car towards walking and cycling and the use of public transport, and also greener places with high levels of tree planting which act as carbon sinks and create a sense of wellbeing. It is recognised that planning to act on Climate Change will often contribute to other agendas such as promoting better air quality, biodiversity and health. As such, opportunities to embed these ‘joint benefits’ throughout this Plan have been taken.

## The Spatial Strategy

- 1.30 There is a clear need for more new homes because of the national situation, high house prices and also a need for more local people to have the opportunity to live and work where they were brought up. To do this the District needs in particular a supply of first family homes to purchase, affordable homes to rent and buy, and to provide for opportunities for downsizing and Self-build and Custom Housebuilding. It is also important to maintain a healthy local economy and high quality local jobs that offer genuine alternatives to commuting into London or elsewhere outside the District.
- 1.31 The Council is taking the approach of identifying and prioritising development sites on Previously Developed Land / Brownfield land first.
- 1.32 The Spatial Strategy has been shaped by the need to address the Climate Emergency and new development will generally be concentrated on the basis of the Settlement Hierarchy in Table 1.3 below. This approach gives priority to the larger urban centres which can provide a greater range of services and facilities, supports the re-use of land within the urban areas, and can reduce the need to travel. These

larger urban centres also offer greater accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

- 1.33 Development should make efficient use of land by increasing the density and potentially the height of development, where appropriate. This will be encouraged, particularly in the most accessible parts of the main urban settlements. This will always need to be balanced against constraints such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, protected trees etc.
- 1.34 The Settlement Hierarchy has been based on a combination of both population size and the availability of a range of services and facilities.

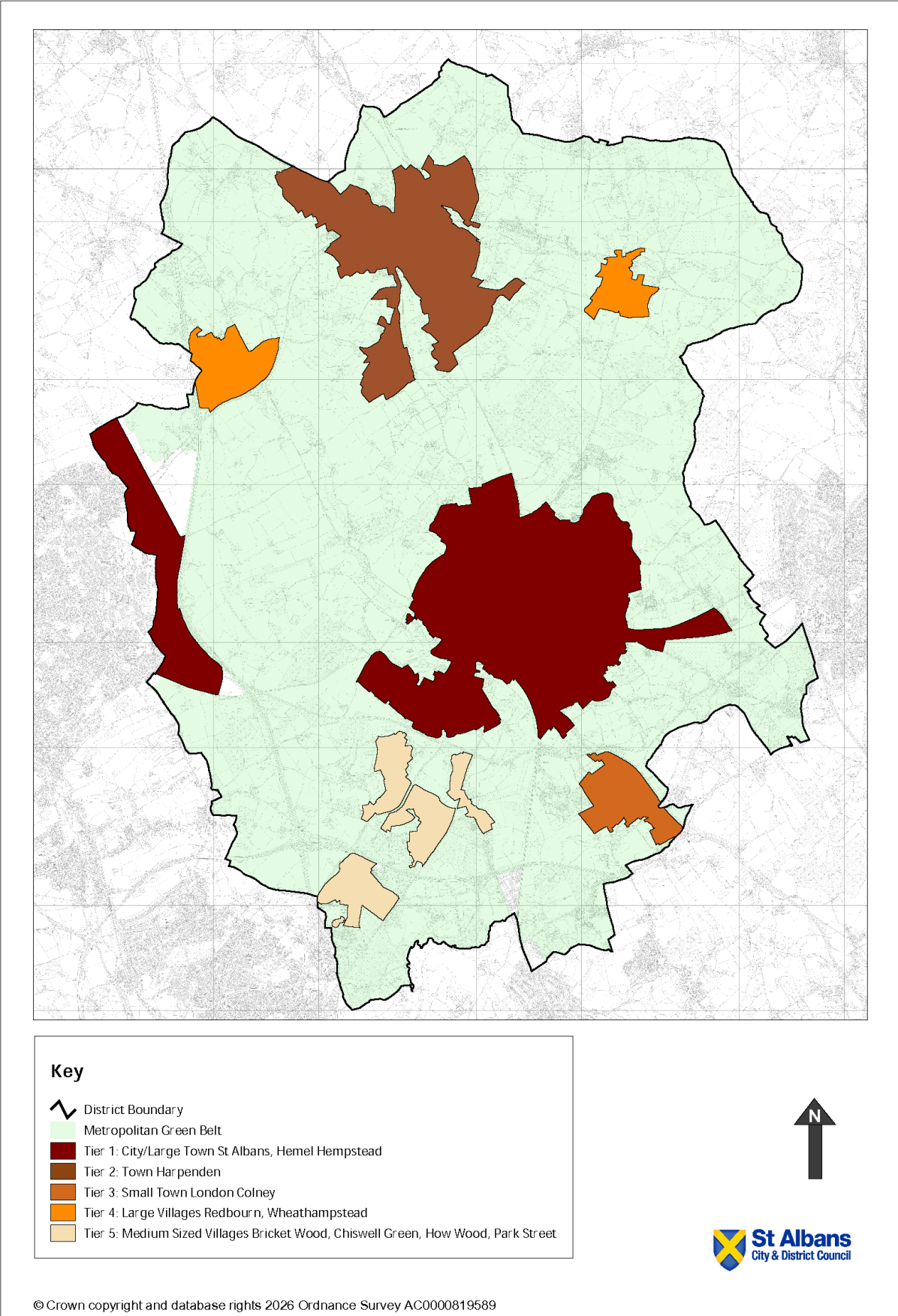
**Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy**

<b>Tier Categories</b>	<b>Key Characteristics of Tier</b>	<b>Settlement</b>
Tier 1 City / Large town	Largest population size Sub regional centre for employment and high-order services such as secondary education, retail and leisure Offers choice and variety of sustainable transport provision and connectivity by mainline train	St Albans Hemel Hempstead (currently within Dacorum Borough, but expansion into District planned)
Tier 2 Town	Considerably lower population size compared to City / Large town Provision of employment and high order services such as secondary education, retail and leisure Offers bus route, cycle lane provision and connectivity by mainline train	Harpenden
Tier 3 Small Town	Third largest population size Some employment provision and high order services including retail and leisure, but currently no secondary school Offers bus routes and cycle provision but lacking connectivity by mainline train	London Colney
Tier 4 Large Village	Smaller population size compared to Small Town Relatively self-contained settlements with provision of key services and employment sites Functional relationship with Harpenden for higher order services Availability of bus routes to provide public transport offer	Redbourn Wheathampstead

<p>Tier 5 Medium Sized Village</p>	<p>Smaller population size compared to the Large Villages Provision of key services Functional relationship with St Albans and Watford for high order services Availability of bus routes and rail branch line to provide transport offer</p>	<p>Bricket Wood Chiswell Green How Wood Park Street</p>
<p>Tier 6 Green Belt Village</p>	<p>Washed over by the Green Belt Smaller population size compared to Medium Sized Villages Some or few key services Generally functional relationship to settlements in higher tiers within the hierarchy which provide key services and higher order services Generally some or limited availability of bus routes to provide public transport offer</p>	<p>Sandridge Colney Heath (three parts) Lea Valley Estate Smallford Sleepshyde Gustard Wood</p>
<p>Tier 7 – Green Belt Hamlet</p>	<p>Washed over by the Green Belt Population less than 250 residents</p>	<p>Folly Fields Annables, Kinsbourne Green</p>

Source: Settlement Hierarchy Report

**Figure 1.2 - Settlement Hierarchy Map**



- 1.35 The strategy will retain St Albans City as the key settlement in the District, because of its population size (approximately 55% of the District population) and its historic City Centre with high quality retailers and a range of restaurants and public houses and the twice a week Charter market. It has a key role as a sub-regional centre for employment, especially with the St Albans City Core Principal Office Location. There are also high-order services such as secondary education, leisure, hospital and the award winning Verulamium Museum that draws visitors from far afield. It also has excellent connectivity as discussed earlier.
- 1.36 Approximately 30% of new residential growth will be in Hemel Garden Communities, an urban extension to Hemel Hempstead (currently all in Dacorum Borough Council's administrative area), lying in the west of St Albans District and bordering the M1. More details on this are found in Chapter 3.
- 1.37 Harpenden is the next level of choice for growth because of its position in the Settlement Hierarchy, and then London Colney where growth will provide a new secondary school and reduce the need to travel to St Albans and to other settlements in other districts / boroughs.

### **Strategic Policy SP1: A Spatial Strategy for St Albans District**

The Spatial Strategy positively plans for the future to ensure that by 2041 St Albans District is a great place to live, work and visit. The Council requires new growth that enhances the attractiveness and unique character of the District through high quality design that respects local heritage. Growth must be supported by the necessary community infrastructure, transport improvements, green spaces and tree planting.

Growth will be located to make the most sustainable use of land in urban areas and then the Green Belt. The approach seeks first to develop Brownfield Land. Development will address the Climate Emergency with regard to layouts, energy and water efficiency and sustainable movement that reduces reliance on private car use. Larger settlements provide a more comprehensive range of services, employment, retail and community facilities, including healthcare facilities, as well as better accessibility and connectivity by walking, cycling and public transport to key destinations.

The City of St Albans will continue to be the pre-eminent focus in the District for housing, employment, services, retail, the evening economy, education and healthcare.

The Settlement Hierarchy (Table 1.3) provides the basis for allocation and location of growth, locating most growth generally within and adjacent to the larger and most sustainable urban centres that are Tier 1 - St Albans and Hemel Hempstead; Tier 2 – Harpenden, and Tier 3 - London Colney.

Strategic Allocations are identified as large urban extensions of 250 or more homes or strategic scale employment. The most significant Strategic Allocations are the four comprising Hemel Garden Communities which is planned to the east

and north of Hemel Hempstead on former Green Belt land, and will provide a large contribution to meeting growth requirements.

Other Strategic Allocations are North St Albans, East St Albans, West of London Colney, North East Harpenden, North West Harpenden, West Redbourn, Glinwell St Albans, and Harper Lane near Radlett.

The other categories of development are Large Sites (100-249 homes), Medium Sites (10-99 homes) and Small Sites (5-9 homes). These sites are concentrated mostly within urban areas and around the higher tiers in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Following the Government's required 'Standard Method' for calculating local housing need, the Plan will enable the delivery of at least **15,045** net additional new houses, or **885** per annum in the period 1 April 2024-31 March 2041.

The Council will undertake a review of the Local Plan, which will commence no later than one year after the adoption of the Plan. An updated or replacement Plan will be submitted for Examination no later than three years after the date of adoption of the Plan.

The review would be undertaken in the context of housing need, national policy, and other relevant circumstances at the time. The review will consider additional sites to be allocated to meet the requirement in future years and provides an opportunity to examine the Plan's performance to that date.

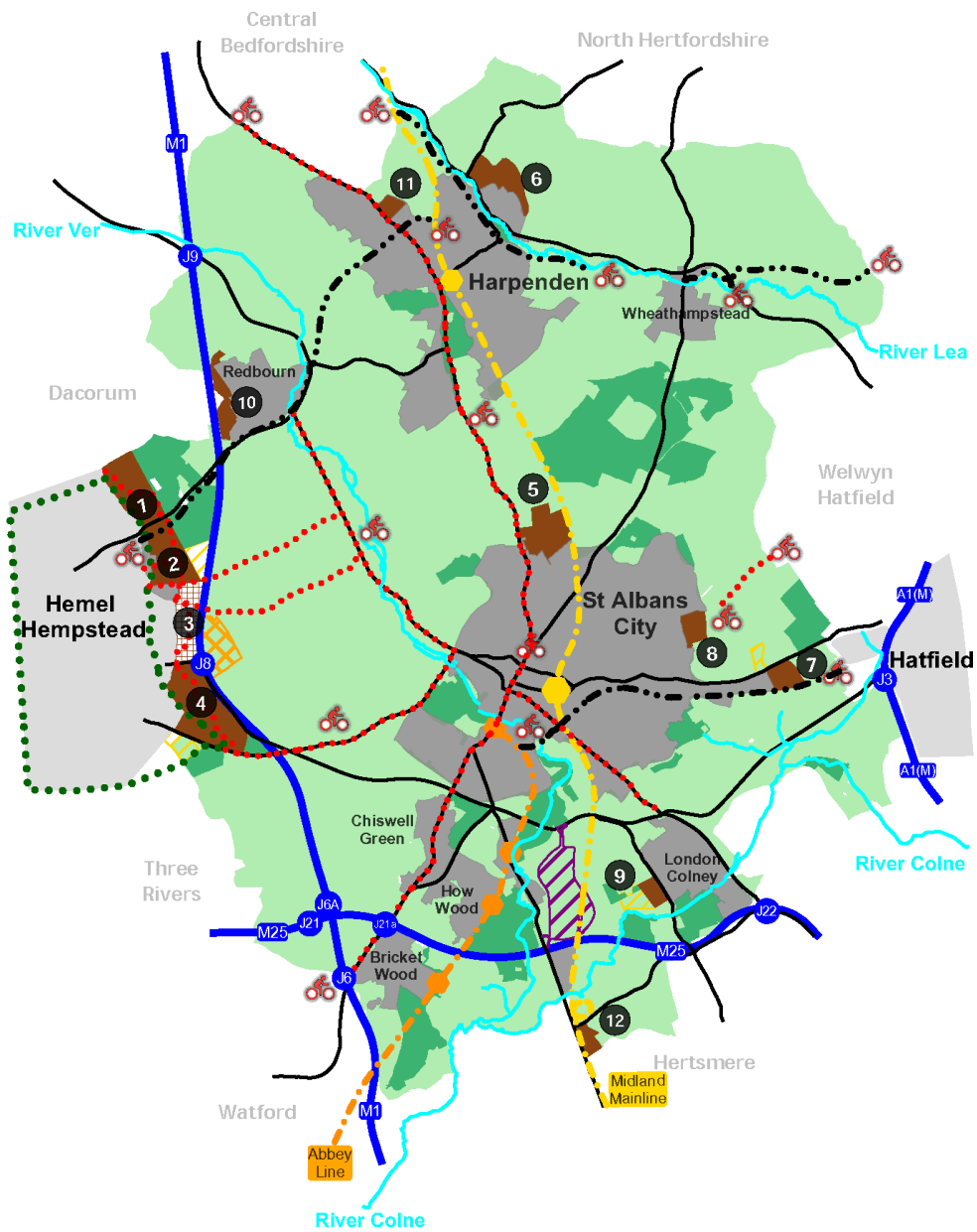
The Local Plan also supports:

- Raising standards and requirements for sustainability of all new buildings;
- Significant new employment space provision;
- Significantly increasing tree cover in the District due to the role of trees in mitigating Climate Change emissions and providing other biodiversity and wellbeing benefits;
- Community infrastructure – provision of new and improvements to existing facilities, including schools, healthcare and for recreation;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (10% +) for relevant new development;
- The aims and delivery of Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy as it applies to the District;
- Green Belt compensatory improvements - including significant new country parks, better access to the countryside via new and improved rights of way, new and improved habitat connectivity;
- Protection and enhancement of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC);
- Significantly improved infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport; and






























- Renewable energy provision and generation. Strategic Allocations will have to provide a comprehensive approach to renewable energy such as wind and solar.

# Figure 1.3 - Key Diagram

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	Green Belt		East Hemel Hempstead North		Glinwell, Hatfield Road		Harper Lane		Cycleways proposed Routes		Roads
	Settlements/Urban Areas		East Hemel Hempstead Central		East St Albans		Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas		Cycleways – Existing Routes		Motorways
	Adjoining Local Authorities/Settlements		East Hemel Hempstead South		West Of London Colney		Strategic Rail Freight Interchange		Cycleways – HGC Circular		Rivers
	Strategic Allocations		North St Albans		West Redbourn		Hemel Garden Communities – Enterprise Zone		Railway – Abbey Line		Education Sites
	North Hemel Hempstead		<u>North East</u> Harpenden		<u>North West</u> Harpenden		M1 Junction 8 – Transport Improvements		Railway – Midland Mainline		

# Chapter 2 – Climate Emergency

## Objective

*Promote adaptation to and mitigation of the Climate Emergency; seek to achieve net zero<sup>4</sup> by 2030, including through the Council doing everything reasonably within its power; promote the use of renewable resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural resources and reduce waste.*

## Introduction

- 2.1 The Council declared in 2019 that it recognises that there is a Climate Emergency and adopted its Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy in 2020. Combatting the Climate Emergency is also a key objective of the Local Plan. The Plan strongly supports adaptation and mitigation to Climate Change, including achieving the Objective set out above, and seeks to promote the use of renewable resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural resources and reduce waste. The Council is developing an ambitious strategy for reducing the Council's own emissions.
- 2.2 Tackling Climate Change is a theme that runs throughout the Local Plan. In many cases the Council is seeking multiple benefits from development and other activity. For example tree planting tackles Climate Change in terms of carbon capture, helps us adapt to a warmer climate by providing shade and reducing the urban heat island effect, while providing other benefits for the environment such as biodiversity, along with wellbeing benefits for people's physical and mental health. Therefore some of these detailed policies are set out in other parts of this Plan.

### **Strategic Policy SP2 – Responding to the Climate Emergency**

The Council recognises the urgent need to respond to Climate Change through mitigation and adaptation. The Council will support in principle proposals that help combat Climate Change where the proposals:

- a) Demonstrate mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change, including pursuing the reduction of whole life-cycle carbon emissions (both operational and embodied);
- b) Prioritise the development of previously developed land;
- c) Are designed to improve resilience to Climate Change, including resilience to increasing temperatures, more frequent drought, more intense storms and wind speeds and heavy rainfall events;
- d) Use the most sustainable locations for growth and so minimising the need to travel while encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- e) Provide on-site renewables, high standards of energy efficiency, and low carbon energy;

---

<sup>4</sup> Under a net zero emissions scenario we reduce emissions into the atmosphere as far as reasonably and practically possible and then remove enough emissions from the atmosphere by natural means

- f) Prioritise the use of sustainable and active modes of travel in new and existing developments;
- g) Deliver biodiversity net gain as set out in NEB6;
- h) Mitigate increasing flood risk as set out in NEB8;
- i) Include Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) where appropriate as set out in NEB8;
- j) Demonstrate tree planting as set out in LG1 and LG4;

Encouragement is given, where appropriate, to sites providing multiple and overlapping natural benefits and 'stacking' credits, for example carbon, biodiversity, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), etc..

N.B. Many policies in this Plan are cross-cutting and relevant to multiple aspects of sustainable development. Therefore, the detailed policies for some aspects of this strategic policy are set out in other parts of this Plan, including for sustainable transport, biodiversity net gain and tree planting.

## **Sustainable Design, Construction and Building Efficiency**

2.3 Sustainable building is primarily about:

- Designing sustainably
- Using materials efficiently
- Energy efficiency
- Water efficiency
- Renewable energy

2.4 Buildings are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 35% of total global energy consumption. Ensuring that buildings are designed to be as energy efficient as possible as the District grows, and ensuring that building construction is carried out in the most sustainable way, are key elements to achieving net zero for St Albans.

2.5 There are a number of proven approaches in the UK for achieving a more sustainable style of home, these include the partnership of the nine Local Authorities in Hertfordshire known as Building Futures who have promoted a Sustainable Design Toolkit. The Home Quality Mark is an independent certification scheme developed by The Building Research Establishment (BRE) based in St Albans District and uses the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), while the Passivhaus Trust buildings need very little energy for heating and cooling and have standards for retrofitting existing buildings.

2.6 There are many design aspects to consider, from location to orientation of homes southwards to achieve 'solar gain', whereby sunlight helps warm a home and reduce energy requirements, using shading and natural ventilation to provide cooling in summer, to installing water harvesting measures such as water butts to save on using clean water for watering gardens.

- 2.7 The Circular Economy is an approach which looks at the whole life cycle of resource use from raw materials to design, production, distribution, consumption, reuse and repair, and seeking to avoid waste while facilitating more recycling.
- 2.8 Building Regulations Part G2 sets a higher option standard for new development of 110 litres per person per day that can be applied where there is an evidence based need that the area is water stressed. St Albans is located within an area classified by the Environment Agency as being under serious water stress. The Regulations refer to the potential consumption of water by persons occupying a new dwelling that must not exceed this requirement. The policy will help to ensure that water supply needs can be met during the Plan period.
- 2.9 A sensitive approach will need to be taken to conserving the special character of designated and non-designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### **CE1 - Promoting Sustainable Design, Construction and Building Efficiency**

New buildings should be designed and constructed to ensure efficient use of energy, water and materials. Energy efficiency and reduced use of energy within buildings is a key component to reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the District.

Applicants must demonstrate sustainable design and construction and a high degree of resource efficiency through evidence supporting planning applications, to a degree proportionate to the proposal, through:

- a) Ensuring all new build development minimises the carbon, pollution and energy impacts of their design and construction. Building conversions, refurbishments and extensions must also minimise carbon and energy impacts. Proposals must demonstrate that they are seeking to limit greenhouse gas emissions through location, building orientation, design, use of renewable and low carbon energy, landscape and planting, taking into account any nationally adopted standards;
- b) Including water conservation, greywater recycling and storage facilities to reduce household water consumption to not exceed 110 litres per person per day including external water use, and new development to include rainwater harvesting;
- c) Retrofitting of existing buildings to improve energy and water efficiency and improve long term resilience to a changing climate;
- d) Adopting sustainable construction and demolition methods including using materials with low embodied carbon that are sustainably sourced, and the re-use and recycling of demolished material from the development site; and
- e) Minimising waste during the construction and operation phases of development by using the Circular Economy approach.

## Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

- 2.10 St Albans District's transformation towards net zero will be supported by the production of renewable and low carbon energy-such as solar, wind and air source heat pumps.

### **CE2 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy**

The Council seeks to increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy in the District.

- a)–
- b) Major development proposals must set out at the planning application stage how they will make use of renewable or low carbon energy within the site through submitting and agreeing an Energy Statement with the Council. Agreed measures will be secured through conditions;
- c) The Council will support in principle a range of low carbon and renewable energy solutions including, but not limited to, the following:
  - i. Solar power, including photovoltaic panels, solar thermal heaters, and maximising passive solar heating through south facing designs;
  - ii. Wind turbines at different scales;
  - iii. Decentralised District Heating and Energy Networks; and
  - iv. Heat Pumps.
- d) To maintain the public benefits of renewable power, proposals which overshadow existing solar panels should be avoided and / or mitigated.

# Chapter 3 – Sustainable Use of Land and Green Belt

## Local Plan Policy Objective

*Prioritise the effective use of land by locating new development on previously developed land first, where appropriate; and protecting and enhancing the Green Belt*

## Introduction

- 3.1 St Albans District has a growing population and changing demographic and therefore an increasing need for new homes, along with an accompanying requirement for land uses for community infrastructure such as schools, leisure, green spaces, and employment. At the same time this growth must be sustainable, including addressing Climate Change.
- 3.2 This Plan is taking the approach of identifying and allocating Previously Developed Land / Brownfield sites first for development so that growth is as sustainable as possible.
- 3.3 National policy states that planning policies should support development that makes efficient use of land. This should be done by taking into account:
  - a) The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
  - b) Local market conditions and viability;
  - c) The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
  - d) The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
  - e) The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 3.4 This approach above favours meeting need within or close to existing settlements to draw on existing infrastructure and reduce the need to travel. Developing brownfield sites – previously developed land – is the preferred approach of national policy. The NPPF sets out that Plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and to seek an uplift in density in locations well served by public transport.
- 3.5 Where there is an insufficient supply of brownfield sites it may be necessary to meet the need by considering other available land; in St Albans District this includes looking at Green Belt land and its boundaries. National policy is clear that before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, it must be demonstrated that all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development have been fully examined.
- 3.6 National policy sets out that when a large supply of new homes is required this can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as significant extensions to existing towns and villages, provided they are well located

and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Small and medium sized sites can also make an important contribution to meeting need and are often quicker to build out, and the Local Plan should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare.

### Requirements for growth

- 3.7 National policy sets out that, to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the Government's 'Standard Method' for calculating local housing need in national planning policy and guidance.
- 3.8 Within the District, a local housing need figure of **885** dwellings per annum has been calculated, based on the Government's required Standard Method. Therefore, the Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver at least **15,045** net additional new homes from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2041.
- 3.9 A significant amount of employment floorspace is required to support the local economy and to provide opportunities for local high quality employment.
- 3.10 The standards and requirements for supporting infrastructure and facilities are provided in the other chapters within this Plan.
- 3.11 Government requirements for housing and employment growth need to be met in line with the law and national Government planning policy. This will ultimately be judged by a Government appointed Planning Inspector. The Council cannot adopt a Local Plan without going through this process. At this point in time, these requirements therefore lead to the use of the housing figures set out at 3.8 above.

### Search for Development Sites - Previously Developed Land (Brownfield) First

- 3.12 The Local Plan seeks to make the most efficient use of land in the District and has undertaken an extensive and rigorous search for Previously Developed Land (PDL) (also known as 'Brownfield land' in national policy) within existing built-up areas. The approach has been underlain by the concept of 'leaving no stone unturned' in the search for appropriate sites on brownfield land.
- 3.13 This extensive search has also included potential PDL opportunities in the Green Belt.

### St Albans Green Belt and the Green Belt Review

- 3.14 The District's Green Belt is highly valued. It performs an important national and local role. Over 81% of the District's area is classified as Green Belt, some 13,141 hectares. National policy states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 3.15 National policy also states that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to meet the development needs of their area.

- 3.16 There is a tension between these competing objectives in national policy that this Local Plan has to address.
- 3.17 The Council has undertaken a detailed Green Belt Review in order to understand the impacts of potential development in the Green Belt.

### Site Selection in the Green Belt

- 3.18 In addition to the Green Belt Review, a Site Selection assessment has considered constraints such as environmental considerations like flood risk and wildlife conservation, and other planning factors such as distance to facilities, heritage and access.
- 3.19 National policy sets out that before concluding that ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the Council should demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This means that the Council’s strategy must (and the Council has):
- a) Make as much use as possible of suitable PDL sites and underutilised land;
  - b) Optimise the density of development in line with national policy, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and
  - c) Has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.

### Strategic Policy SP3 – Land and the Green Belt

The minimum number of homes needed in the District, following a local housing need assessment conducted using the Government’s required Standard Methodology – is **885** dwellings per year, or a total need of **15,045** to 2041. This housing need figure is the same as the housing requirement figure of **885** dwellings per year, or a total requirement of **15,045 in the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2041** to be delivered as follows:

- a) **3,795** homes in the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2031;
- b) **6,050** homes in the period 1 April 2031 to 31 March 2036; and
- c) **5,200** homes in the period 1 April 2036 to 31 March 2041.

The Council also seeks to increase overall employment floorspace in the District.

Growth must be supported by suitable supporting infrastructure, including:

- Schools
- Healthcare and facilities for the emergency services
- Transport - facilities for walking, cycling and public transport in particular
- Parks, play areas, allotments and other green spaces
- Extensive tree planting

- Sports and leisure facilities
- Renewable and low carbon energy generation.

The Council seeks overall to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development, and ensure the most effective use of land in the District up until 2041. This involves select Green Belt boundary adjustments in the right areas to provide wider protection of the rest Green Belt.

The revised Green Belt boundaries are set out on the Policies Map.

The Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Programme is an ambitious cross-boundary proposal to transform Hemel Hempstead through the regeneration of the existing town and delivery of new housing and infrastructure in St Albans City & District Council and Dacorum Borough Council areas.

## Categorisation of Sites

- 3.20 Primarily residential or employment sites in the Green Belt are categorised as Strategic Allocations, and Large, Medium and Small Sites. The associated revised Green Belt boundaries are identified in indicative form on the Key Diagram and in detail on the Policies Map.
- 3.21 The Strategic Allocations are areas of significant urban extension. Table 3.1 below sets out the 12 Strategic Allocations.

**Table 3.1 – Strategic Allocations**

Strategic Allocations	Minimum Capacity	Main land uses
North Hemel Hempstead	1,500 dwellings (including 375 beyond Plan period)	Mixed use, residential, 3FE primary school site, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure, childcare facilities, and other community infrastructure
East Hemel Hempstead (North)	1,600 dwellings (including 365 beyond Plan period)	Mixed use, residential, 3FE primary school site, 8FE secondary school site, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure, childcare facilities, medical centre, sports hub, other community infrastructure and a significant new country park
East Hemel Hempstead (Central)	53 Ha employment provision	Principally employment with related infrastructure, including transport, childcare facilities and energy generation
East Hemel Hempstead (South)	2,400 dwellings (including 460	Mixed use, residential, 3FE and 2FE primary school sites, up to 10FE secondary school site on a separate adjacent allocation, green

	beyond Plan period)	infrastructure, transport infrastructure, childcare facilities and other community infrastructure
North St Albans	1,168	Mixed use, residential, 2 FE primary school site, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
North East Harpenden	738	Mixed use, residential, 2 FE primary school site, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
West Redbourn	594	Mixed use, residential, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure, a childcare facility and other community infrastructure
East St Albans	511	Mixed use, residential, 2FE primary school site, 6FE secondary school site, Oaklands College improvements, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
Glinwell, St Albans	484	Mixed use, residential, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
West of London Colney	324	Mixed use, residential, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
North West Harpenden	293	Mixed use, residential, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure
Harper Lane, near Radlett	274	Mixed use, residential, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure and other community infrastructure, improved connectivity to Radlett and Harperbury / Kingsley Green

- 3.22 Large, Medium or Small sites are defined as follows:
- Large Sites 100 - 249 homes
  - Medium and Small Sites 5 - 99 homes
- 3.23 These sites have the potential to be quicker to assemble and build out than the Strategic Allocations.
- 3.24 Where the Plan refers to ‘major’ development, this includes developments of 10 homes or more, development creating floorspace of 1,000 sqm or more, and developments on sites of at least 1 hectare or more in area.<sup>5</sup>

### **Housing Trajectory**

- 3.25 The NPPF requires that the Local Plan includes a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the Plan period. This is set out for St Albans District in Table 3.2 below.
- 3.26 As effectively required by the NPPF and Inspectors (and is best practice), a buffer is added to provide headroom and ensure a sufficient supply in the event of some sites not coming forward as expected.
- 3.27 The housing trajectory has been stepped in order to allow sufficient time for the significant uplift in housing delivery to be realistically delivered.

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<sup>5</sup> The full definition is in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (or subsequent amendments)

**Table 3.2 - St Albans City and District Council - Regulation 19 Consultation Draft Local Plan Housing Trajectory**

St Albans City and District Council - Local Plan 2041 Housing Trajectory (Base Date 1 April 2024)

Category / Year	Past Completions	Estimated Completions	Years 1-5 (post adoption)					Years 6-10 (post adoption)					Years 11-15 (post adoption)					Total (2024/25 - 2040/41)	
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41		
<b>Permissions:</b>																			
Permissions (Past Completions)	381																		381
Permissions (Estimated Future Completions)		339	457	492	316	254	181	119	54	35	30	13							2,290
Permissions (Estimated Future Completions) -8% Lapse Assumption		-27	-37	-39	-25	-20	-14	-10	-4	-3	-2	-1							-182
<b>Applications:</b>																			
Applications with Committee Resolutions to Grant Permission Subject to S106 Agreement Completion					85	85	80	70	120	120	120	7							687
<b>Windfall Allowance</b>				73	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	1,958
Harpenden NP Site Allocations													15	15	27				57
<b>Part B – Local Plan Site Allocations:</b>																			
Hemel Garden Communities						100	175	250	315	340	365	365	440	490	500	495	465		4,300
Strategic Allocations (250+ Homes)				35	75	235	274	305	460	447	385	385	385	359	309	217	98		3,969
Large Sites (100-249 Homes)						50	100	85	50	30									315
Medium and Small Sites (5-99 Homes)				20	35	140	90	82	145	149	120	57							838
Green Belt - Previously Developed Land									35	20	20	4							79
Sites Within Urban Settlements (HELAA)									15	13									28
Sites Within Urban Settlements (UCS)					15	60	50	25	42	55	41	15	34	20	50	36	25		468
<b>Part B – Local Plan Site Allocations (Total)</b>				55	125	585	689	747	1,062	1,054	931	826	859	869	859	748	588		9,997
<b>Regeneration Opportunity Sites</b>													47	58	65	61	49		280
<b>Estimated Annual Delivery Total</b>	381	312	420	581	646	1,049	1,081	1,071	1,377	1,366	1,239	1,017	1,051	1,072	1,069	954	782		15,468
<b>Estimated Average Annual Delivery for Period</b>	347	347	755	755	755	755	755	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214	1,214	986	986	986	986	986		15,468
<b>Annual Housing Requirement (Standard Method)</b>	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885	885		15,045
<b>Annual Housing Requirement (Stepped)</b>	360	360	615	615	615	615	615	1,210	1,210	1,210	1,210	1,210	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040		15,045

## Strategic Allocations

- 3.28 The District is delivering a significant portion of its growth from the 12 identified Strategic Allocations.
- 3.29 A Strategic Allocation is considered to be a large development of 250 or more homes (or equivalent scale of employment use) that is of sufficient size to deliver significant additional infrastructure and services both for itself and the wider area. There is quite often more than one landowner across the Strategic Allocation and the Council requires a coordinated approach.
- 3.30 Where there is a good range of existing services and facilities that are accessible from the Strategic Allocation the proposed development will be of a scale to deliver significant additional services for both existing and new communities in the area.
- 3.31 Locally accessible facilities will support a sustainable neighbourhood that reduces the need to travel and encourages a sense of community.
- 3.32 Masterplanning is essential to guide a well-designed development. A coordinated approach will be required with the District and County Council and other parties to ensure essential infrastructure such as sustainable transport, roads, community facilities, open spaces and schools are provided in a timely manner.
- 3.33 These areas are defined on the Policies Map and detailed development requirements are set out in Part B.

### LG1 – Strategic Allocations

Proposals within the defined Strategic Allocations (or unallocated windfall development at this scale) must:

- a) Demonstrate a coordinated, Masterplanned approach to development with appropriate input from the District and County Council, statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and other stakeholders; including Dacorum Borough Council for Hemel Garden Communities and Central Bedfordshire Council for B2 North East Harpenden and B7 North West Harpenden. The approach should have regard to the District's Strategic Sites Design Guidance<sup>6</sup>;
- b) Be undertaken in a coordinated way where there are different landowners;
- c) Demonstrate accordance with the requirements set out in Part B;
- ca) Locate built development primarily within the area denoted as Policy LG1 – Built Area on the Policies Map;
- d)–
- e)–
- f)–

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<sup>6</sup> The Strategic Sites Design Guidance is formed of four documents: Design Principles, Design Toolkit, Masterplan Toolkit and Employment Toolkit

- g) Have regard to any relevant Supplementary Planning Document, Masterplan or Development Brief;
- ~~h)~~
- ~~i)~~
- ~~j)~~
- ~~k)~~
- l) Demonstrate how the proposal integrates with and where appropriate seeks to improve the existing transport network with reference to the LCWIP and the RoWIP. Proposals should include excellent walking and cycling links, including accessible routes and public transport services upgrades / improvements;
- ~~m)~~
- n) Normally plant at least 1 semi-mature tree for each dwelling; for C2 accommodation plant 1 semi-mature tree for every 2.5 dwelling equivalent bed spaces;
- ~~o)~~
- ~~p)~~
- q) For sites listed in Appendix 5, be informed by a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment which address the recommendations of the Council's Heritage Impact Assessment;
- ~~r)~~
- s) Establish an appropriate Community Stewardship and Legacy body with sufficient assets to provide long term sustainable management of community facilities and / or open spaces; and
- ~~t)~~
- u) Demonstrate the co-location of community facilities (such as schools, health facilities and services, shops, community centres, strategic public open space) in order to reduce the number of trips that residents have to make and encourage the use of active travel modes.

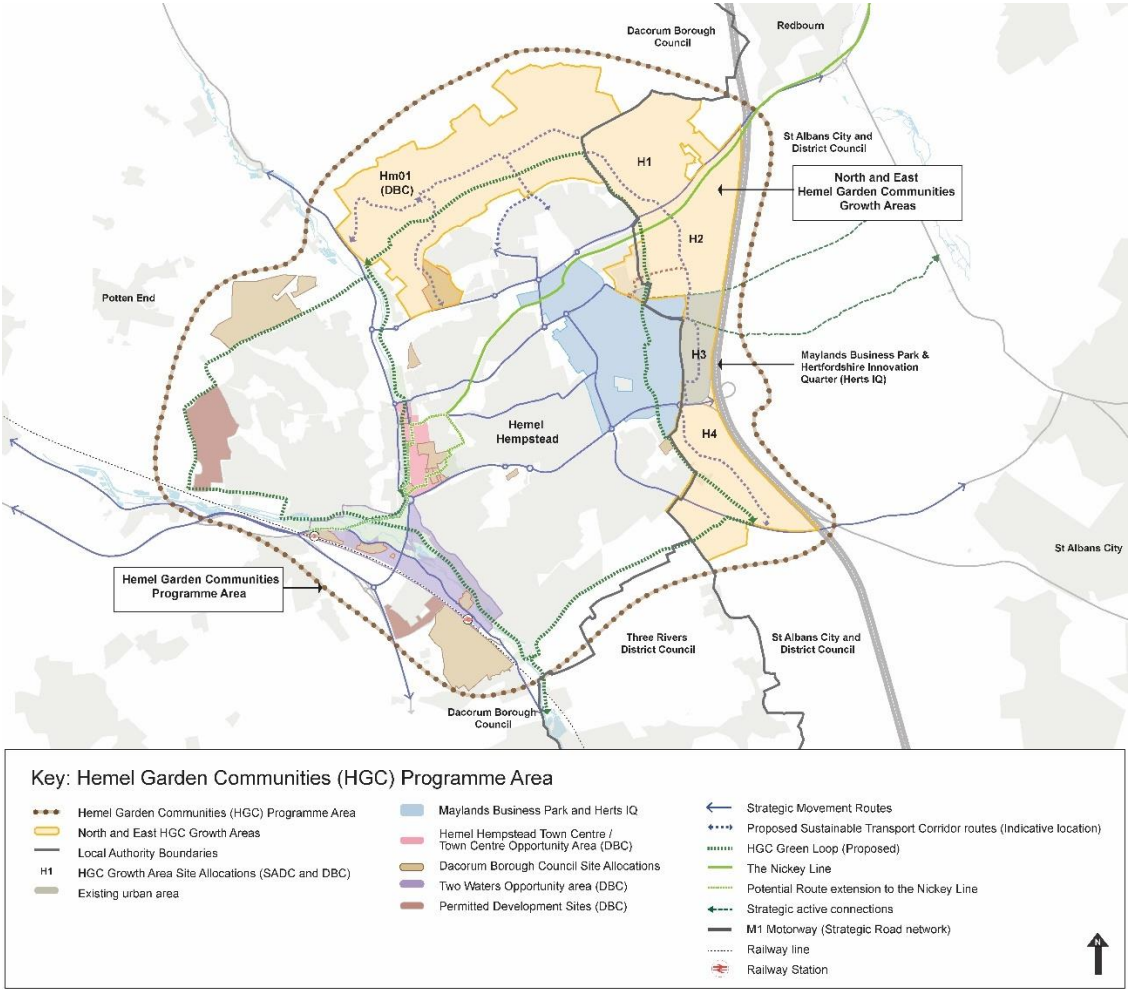
## Hemel Garden Communities

- 3.34 The Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Programme is an ambitious proposal to transform Hemel Hempstead through the regeneration of the existing town and delivery of new housing and infrastructure in St Albans City & District Council and Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) areas. To support this planned growth, the Local Authorities have jointly prepared Local Plan policies and evidence to govern design and delivery of those new communities. These policies do not extend to or imply planning considerations for the jurisdiction beyond St Albans' local authority area.
- 3.35 The HGC Programme Area (Figure 3.1), which is located in both St Albans District and Dacorum Borough encompasses the existing town of Hemel Hempstead, HGC Growth Areas and other site allocations set out in Dacorum Borough Council's Local Plan. The HGC Programme Area will support the transformation of Hemel

Hempstead. In the context of the spatial strategy of this plan, the allocations contained within Part B, Policies H1 to H4, under the overarching policies LG2 and LG3, are intended to supply approximately 40% of the housing requirement and approximately 59% of the total new employment land provision over the life of the Plan. This will be through the delivery of a properly structured, integrated and sustainable strategic extension to the settlement and associated infrastructure which straddles the administrative areas of St Albans and Dacorum.

3.36 To this end, the HGC Growth Areas (Figure 3.2) include land to the east and north of Hemel Hempstead within St Albans District and Dacorum Borough, which will provide a network of garden communities, as well as further site allocations coming forward through the Dacorum Borough Local Plan.

**Figure 3.1: HGC Programme Area (2025)**



3.37 The HGC Growth Areas to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead are expected to extend beyond the Plan period and will deliver up to 11,000 new homes and 10,000 new jobs by 2050 across St Albans District and Dacorum Borough. The transformation will include an extended Maylands Business Park through the delivery

of Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ), which will deliver around 4,000 of the 10,000 jobs, and a regenerated and transformed town centre for Hemel Hempstead and further infrastructure across the rest of the town.

- 3.38 Within St Albans District, the HGC Growth Areas will deliver at least 4,300 new homes by 2041, with a further 1,200 homes by 2050, providing a total of 5,500 new homes. Further housing growth within the area north and east of Hemel Hempstead, Two Waters and Hemel Hempstead Town will be set out in Dacorum's Local Plan.
- 3.39 The Spatial Vision for Hemel Garden Communities<sup>7</sup> sets out the scope for transformation across the town, as well as providing a sustainable approach for growth, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Principles<sup>8</sup>. The Spatial Vision was agreed in 2020 following the national designation of Hemel Hempstead as a Transformational Garden Town as part of the Government's Garden Communities programme and the overarching vision comprises:

“Hemel Garden Communities: creating a greener, more connected New Town:

*Hemel Garden Communities will create new neighbourhoods and transform existing ones and the wider area, building on the best of its heritage and culture to become a greener, more connected New Town. The vision is organised into four thematic pillars, all of which reinforce the aspirations to promote healthy lifestyles and respond to the climate crisis. Hemel Garden Communities will be home to inclusive, integrated neighbourhoods connected by a green network, and thoughtfully designed places with engaged communities, all underpinned by digital connectivity, a self-sustaining economy and pioneering green technology driven by Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ).”*

- 3.40 The Spatial Vision focuses on the creation of a greener, more connected town which builds on its existing strengths, and the heritage and culture of Hemel Hempstead and its New Town legacy.
- 3.41 The Spatial Vision will be delivered through creating a more innovative and dynamic destination and encourage investment in business and jobs, alongside new homes. Creating integrated and balanced communities will be key, with improved local centres, and leisure and green spaces, which connect established areas with the new growth.
- 3.42 There are four key pillars within the Vision governed by Policy LG3: a green network; integrated neighbourhoods; a self- sustaining economy, and engaged communities. The four pillars have guided detailed studies and strategies for the programme and their outputs.

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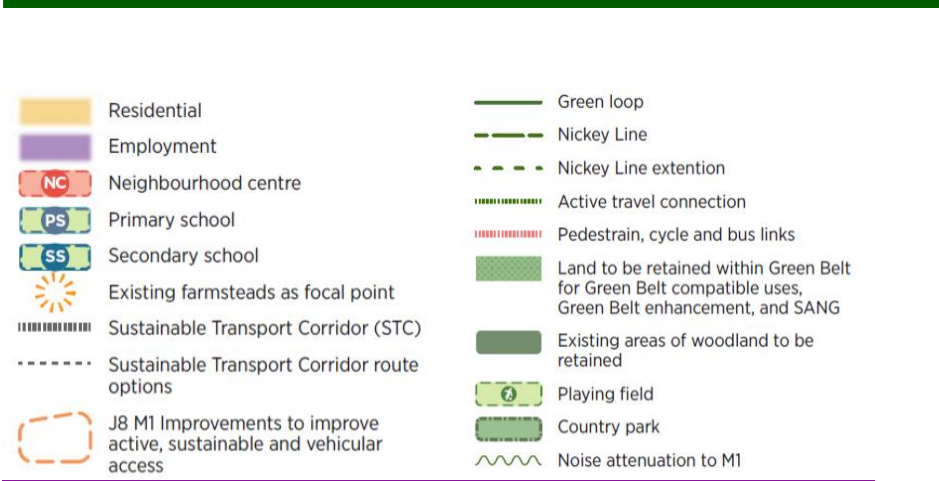
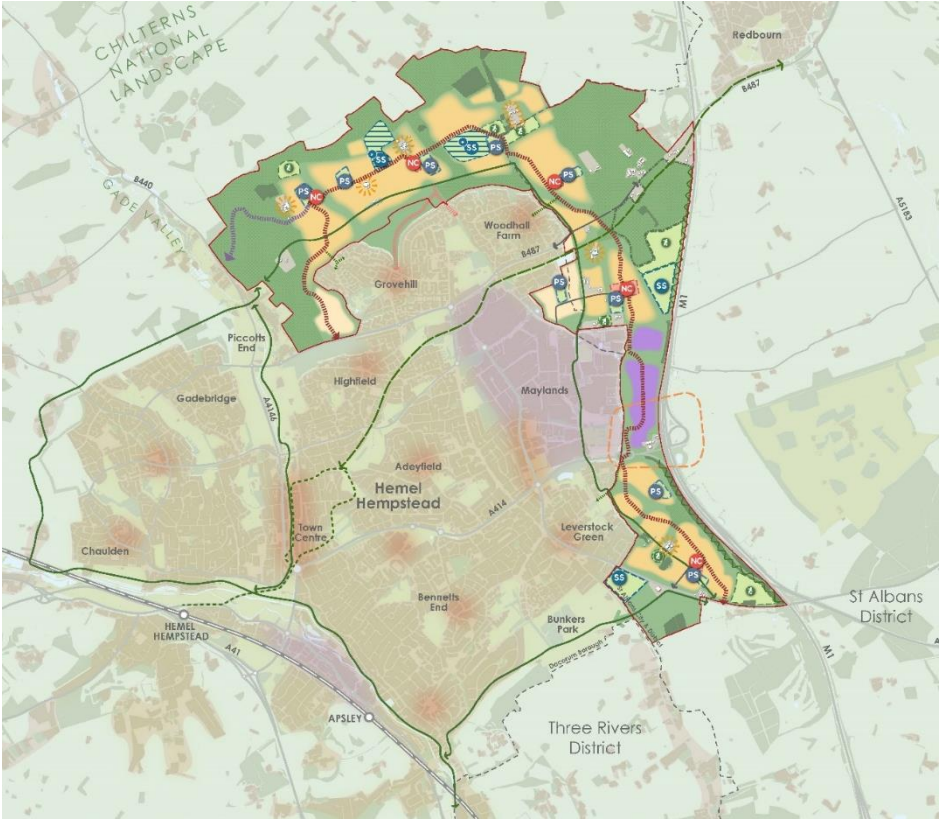
<sup>7</sup> HGC Spatial Vision (2020)

<https://www.hemelgardencommunities.co.uk/media/3hknvayj/hemel-garden-communities-spatial-vision.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> TCPA Garden City Principles <https://tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles/>

- 3.43 The main outputs provide a requirement for a range of infrastructure, projects and initiatives across Hemel Hempstead and wider routes. There are also clear crosscutting transformative themes helping to steer growth, infrastructure regeneration and investment. The Transformative themes are Climate Resilience; Healthy Lifestyles; One Place; and Balanced Communities.
- 3.44 Since receiving Garden Town status, the partners (St Albans City and District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Economic Board 'Hertfordshire Futures' and Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter) have been working collaboratively on strategic issues relating to the delivery of Hemel Garden Communities. The joint working approach is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Figure 3.2: Indicative Concept Plan for the HGC Growth Areas 2025**



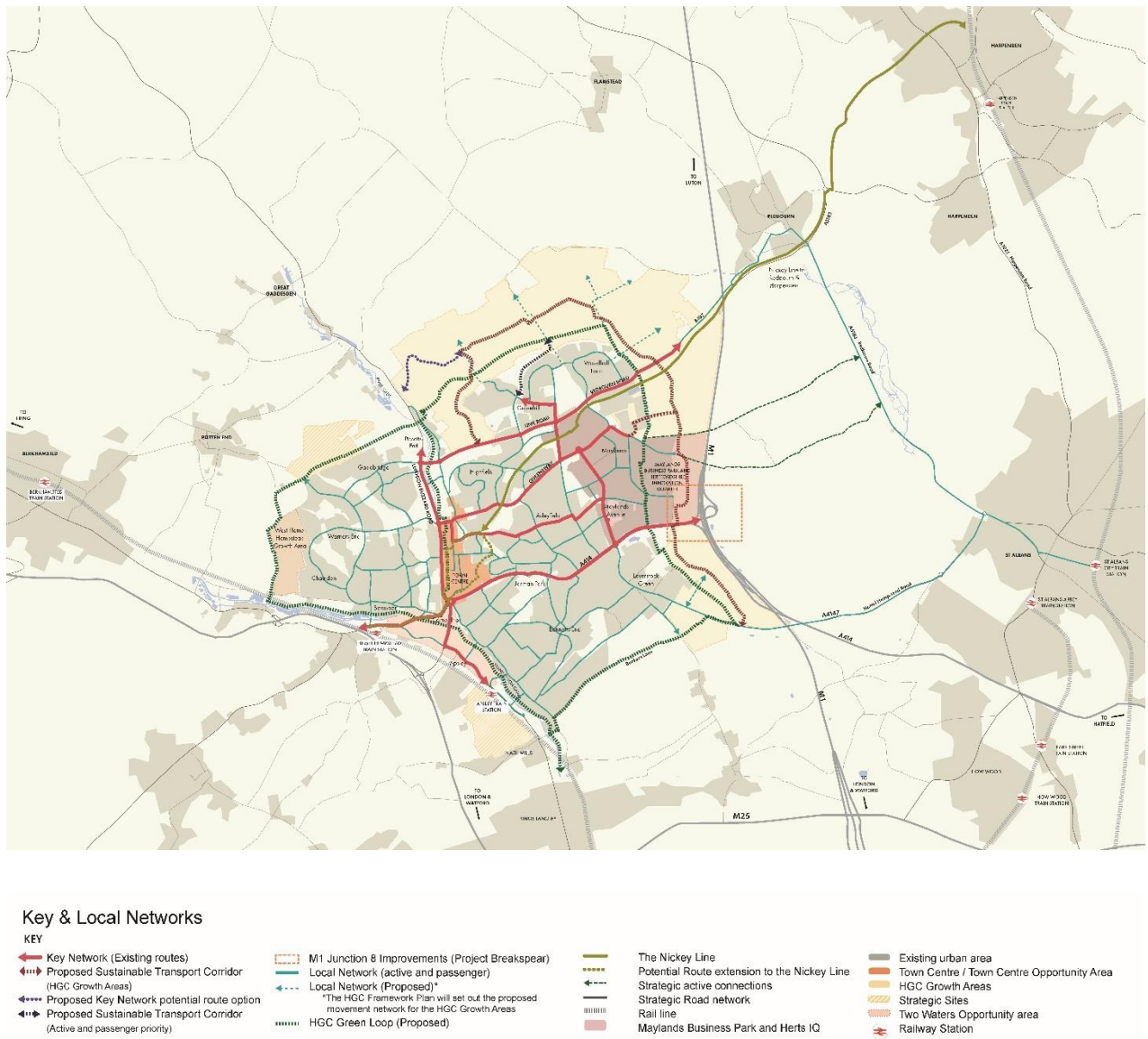
3.45 Building on the HGC Spatial Vision, several studies and strategies have been developed to support the HGC Programme Area and its transformation. This work is explained in more detail within the HGC Delivery Statement. All Hemel Garden Communities guidance should be taken into account in formulating proposals for development to guide the quality of development and infrastructure requirements. Applicants will be expected to show how the SPDs and the IDPs have been taken into account in guiding the design and future implementation of proposals and their cross-boundary implications.

3.46 The HGC Growth Areas are supported by the HGC Framework Plan, a suite of evidence providing a single, holistic spatial and infrastructure framework for the

whole of the HGC Programme Area, with a detailed focus on the North and East of Hemel Hempstead Growth Areas (Figure 3.2). The wider HGC studies and strategies have shaped the Framework Plan.

3.47 The HGC Transport Vision and Strategy document (TV&S) sets out a sustainable movement network approach for the long-term growth and transformation of Hemel Hempstead and wider routes. The approach ensures the HGC programme area can be developed as a successful, integrated, well-connected place. Figure 3.3 identifies the key and local networks, set out within the TV&S, to achieve a town-wide sustainable transport network with a target of 60% of all journeys starting, ending or within the HGC growth areas and 40% of all journeys starting, ending or within the existing town of Hemel Hempstead, to be undertaken by active and sustainable modes by 2050.

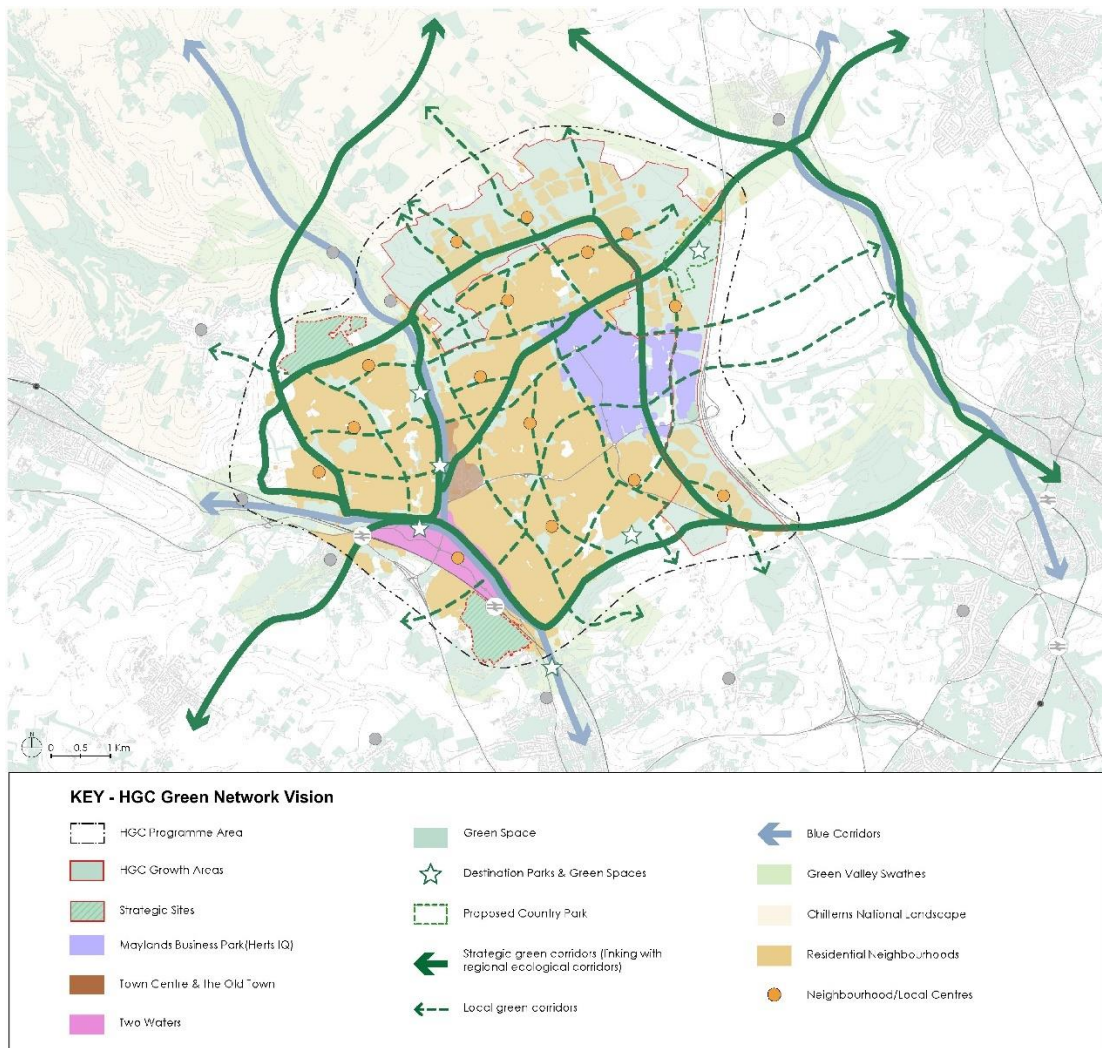
**Figure 3.3: The Key and Local Networks (2025)**



3.48 The HGC Green Infrastructure Strategy document has been developed to create a greener, more connected and biodiverse place. The strategy sets out a high-level framework for guiding delivery of a 'Green Network' for the HGC Programme Area and wider routes. New and improved infrastructure will help transform Hemel Hempstead with strategic greenways noted in Figure 3.4, including the HGC Green Loop greenway, Nickey Line greenway and the River Ver greenway.

3.49 The HGC Green Loop is a strategic figure-of-8 cycle and walking route offering connections between places and key locations within Hemel Hempstead and beyond. The loop will be formed by making new routes and enhancing and integrating existing routes such as the Quietway, Grand Union canal towpath, country lanes and Public Rights of Way. Projects include significant improvements to the greenways, health and play on the way routes, new parks and a variety of play areas, sport and leisure facilities and community food growing. There are synergies with many of the projects outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and wider projects, which can be found in the Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs).

**Figure 3.4: Green Network Vision (2025)**



- 3.50 A strategy is being developed for a single exemplar Stewardship and Placemaking approach across the HGC Programme Area. The strategy focuses on enabling legacy placemaking and strong governance with resident involvement. It aims to achieve higher standards of development and infrastructure provision to support the needs of the community and in-perpetuity, sustainable maintenance of public spaces and community assets, supported by a viable and varied funding model.
- 3.51 Community asset management may include green spaces, (including BNG), heritage and cultural facilities, public realm, sports facilities, community buildings, commercial and residential development and other relevant facilities. A strong governance structure will guide long-term custodian community development, working with local partners to ensure programmes, events and services meet local needs. This approach will empower residents to help shape their communities alongside local authorities, landowners and key stakeholders, and is set out in the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD. The Stewardship Umbrella Body would need to be set up before the first occupation of any dwellings across HGC Programme Area that would contribute towards the overall costs of its set-up and resourcing.
- 3.52 The HGC Socio-Economic Demographic Study provides an overview of the people, place and prosperity in Hemel Hempstead. It highlights deprivation in the central area of the town and north-east and calls for new opportunities for higher skilled jobs and learning opportunities, as well as high quality homes to help rebalance the town. As a result, HGC Partners will work to secure new businesses to facilitate higher skilled jobs and learning opportunities at the Hertfordshire Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone (part of Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter, known as Herts IQ) and within Hemel Hempstead Town Centre.
- 3.53 Two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will bring together evidence and provide further detail on how the HGC Growth Areas and Transformation will be delivered and how Stewardship and Placemaking will be enabled. The Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) includes a chapter on HGC and sets out the infrastructure requirements. It will set thresholds to support development ahead of occupation and infrastructure apportionment and cost sharing methodology.
- 3.53A In addition to the Local Plan IDP, the Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area and strategy for development, are supported by a separate HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plan to 2050. The HGC IDP to 2050 covers the HGC Growth Area site allocations in St Albans (H1-4) and the wider Hemel Hempstead site allocations in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan. H1-4 in St Albans are identified as the Growth Areas to the north and east of the town and also comprise the sites covered by the HGC Framework Plan Concept Plan.
- 3.53B Both Dacorum and St Albans Local Plan IDPs have been used as the HGC IDP's starting point and built upon with additional infrastructure requirements to 2050, a more refined schedule of interventions and a joint apportionment methodology to enable an equitable approach to townwide infrastructure provision. When referring to the IDP within the Local Plan and its policies, it will include delivery of the HGC IDP to 2050 requirements relevant to 2041.

## **Policy LG2 – Support for Transformation of Hemel Hempstead**

Within St Albans District, the Hemel Garden Communities programme will deliver at least 4,300 new homes by 2041, and 5,500 homes in total by 2050, delivering this through a network of new garden communities to the north east and east of Hemel Hempstead.

An expanded Maylands Business Park, the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter, will provide new higher skilled employment and learning opportunities with the creation of around 4,000 jobs. Further job creation will be enabled in the HGC Growth Areas including in the education, retail, health and leisure sectors. In addition to the specific requirements of Policies H1 to H4, it is an overarching requirement that:

1. Major development in the HGC Programme Area must follow a planned, coordinated and phased approach to growth and the provision of supporting infrastructure. This is in order to ensure that residential and business communities are supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure at each stage of development and that the impacts of development are appropriately mitigated in a timely manner.
2. Major development proposals should take into account the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs), Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision, the supporting HGC Framework Plan evidence base including HGC Concept Plan, HGC Local Plan Policies, and supporting SPDs and Design Codes including the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD and the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy SPD. Proposals are required to demonstrate how the SPDs and the IDPs have been taken into account in guiding the design and future implementation of proposals and their cross-boundary implications.
3. Developers and promoters in the HGC Growth Areas should work together and closely with the Councils to secure a collaboration agreement to ensure development is comprehensively delivered in an integrated and seamless way across site boundaries.
4. The costs of delivering strategic infrastructure and supporting land should be shared on an equitable and proportionate basis, as appropriate and dependent on the type of infrastructure.
5. Critical infrastructure necessary to support development must be delivered ahead of occupation. Proposals must not prejudice or impede the provision of wider infrastructure necessitated within the HGC Programme Area.
6. Developers and promoters in the HGC Programme Area must contribute in a proportionate way to improvements to M1 Junction 8 which include:
  - a) Project Breakspear Phase 1  
Phase 1 package of transport measures to enhance M1 Junction 8 and surrounding area - Replacement of the existing Breakspear Way / Green Lane Roundabout (Phoenix Gateway) with traffic signals.
  - b) Project Breakspear Phase 2

Phase 2 package of transport measures to enhance M1 Junction 8 and surrounding area - package of transport measures to prioritise active and sustainable modes of travel including improvements to existing roads, A414 Walking and cycling bridge, East Hemel Mobility Hub and HGC Sustainable Transport Corridor.

c) Project Breakspear Phase 3 (Beyond Plan Period – to 2050)

Phase 3 package of transport measures to enhance M1 Junction 8 and surrounding area. To provide additional capacity and connectivity to Maylands and Herts IQ, and relieve congestion on the A414. Land to the east of Junction 8 is reserved, in case it is required to come forward for junction improvements (Phase 3 J8 enhancements).

The methodology for infrastructure apportionment and cost sharing will be set out in the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) and the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD or successor documents. Infrastructure, contributions and wider funding will be required to deliver on and off-site infrastructure, taking these documents or successor documents into account.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored regularly by the establishment of a stakeholder Hemel Hempstead Infrastructure Review Group (and any necessary subgroups) to ensure compliance and effectiveness. Adjustments to the policy may be made based on the outcomes of these reviews so that the local authorities have the ability to address any emerging issues or changing circumstances over time through review and update of the Plan.

### **LG3 - Hemel Garden Communities Growth Areas Place Principles**

To enable the transformation of Hemel Hempstead, the design and delivery of HGC Growth Areas within the Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area must adhere to the following requirements in addition to the key development requirements for sites H1 to H4:

#### **Pillar 1 - Green Network**

Proposals should:

- a)–
- b)–
- c) Provide a variety of supporting green and blue infrastructure such as parks, open spaces, greenways, ecological corridors, sustainable drainage solutions, sports and leisure facilities, food growing and health and wellbeing projects having regard to in the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD;
- d) Be landscape-led and should include early delivery of open space and structural landscaping in order to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Chilterns National Landscape, views in and out and its setting in perpetuity;
- e) Deliver the Key and Local Transport Network, having regard to the IDPs and HGC Transport Vision & Strategy document, to provide direct sustainable travel connectivity between existing and proposed key and local

destinations. Interventions are required to achieve a target of 60% of all journeys starting, ending or within the HGC Growth Areas and 40% of all journeys starting, ending or within the existing town of Hemel Hempstead, to be undertaken by active and sustainable modes by 2050;

- f) Create a well-connected town with permeable neighbourhoods by providing logical access points at regular intervals to support walking and cycling;
- g) Provide high quality bus priority, bus, cycle and walking networks, infrastructure and wayfinding, that prioritises active travel and enables the most convenient and efficient journeys to local centres and key and local destinations across the town; and
- h) Enhance and improve Public Rights of Way including to existing local footpath links and wider countryside access.

## **Pillar 2 - Integrated Neighbourhoods**

Proposals should:

- a) Deliver well-integrated new neighbourhoods that respect and complement adjacent existing neighbourhoods and the wider existing neighbourhood structure of Hemel Hempstead. Proposals should take into account and be guided by the neighbourhood structure and guidance set out in the HGC Strategic Design Code, part of the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD so far as relevant;
- b) Deliver new local centres, and enable improvements to existing local centres and Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, and ensure new centres support and complement existing centres;
- c) Deliver new neighbourhood local centres designed in close proximity to schools, the Sustainable Transport Corridor and which must include mobility hubs;
- d) Provide the phased delivery of the east and north Growth Area Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) in a coherent, integrated manner to achieve the mode share targets, providing appropriate priority to active and sustainable modes over the private car and providing public transport links along its length (e.g. by bus);
- e) Deliver affordable housing, the location of which shall be agreed with the council, taking account of the need to create balanced communities and the council's most up-to-date evidence on housing need;
- f) Minimise the impact on the surrounding landscape setting, including the Chilterns National Landscape and its setting, whilst achieving a minimum overall net density of 40 dwellings per hectare;
- g) Deliver Key Projects including a Household Waste Recycling Centre and a Local Authorities Depot facility to meet the needs of new and existing communities;
- h) Deliver Herts IQ and improvements to Maylands Business Park and Hemel Hempstead Town Centre to support the priority for new highly skilled jobs and learning opportunities;

- i) Deliver high standards of urban design, architecture and landscaping that promotes climate resilience and healthy lifestyles;
- j) Where appropriate, utilise on-site advanced manufacturing, modern methods of construction and reuse materials as part of a circular economy approach;
- k) Provide public realm which should be inclusive and of the highest quality enriched with local public art and heritage trails and interpretation and effective wayfinding;
- l) Where appropriate, co-locate community facilities and services (including local centres, sports, education, childcare and health facilities);
- m) Deliver sports and physical activity provision in a comprehensive and coordinated manner across all HGC Growth Areas;
- n) Utilise a fabric first approach contributing towards the delivery of net zero homes; and
- o) Seek to protect or enhance heritage assets and their settings, through sensitive masterplanning of the site and the design and location of built forms and open spaces.

### **Pillar 3 - Self-sustaining Economy**

Proposals should:

- a) Prioritise higher skilled jobs and learning opportunities in Herts IQ / Maylands Business Park and Hemel Hempstead Town Centre to help balance communities, and promote development and jobs creation that supports learning, enterprise, innovation and skills diversification;
- b) Maximise opportunities for living, working and socialising locally through the creation of walkable neighbourhoods that prioritise walking and cycling;
- c) Enable the regeneration of and high quality investment in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre;
- d) Provide digital infrastructure on and off-site including ultra-fast fibre-optic broadband to homes and businesses or similar technology as it becomes available;
- e) Deliver remote office hubs, starter units / incubator space, grow-on space, alongside training and higher education facilities in key destinations including local centres;
- f) Promote opportunities for environmental sustainability, green and agricultural technology, circular economy principles, sustainable construction, digital connectivity and innovation; and
- g) Establish strong community partnerships including voluntary sector organisations.

### **Pillar 4 - Engaged Communities**

Proposals should:

- a) Deliver and maintain a single Umbrella Stewardship Body approach to maximise strong governance and engagement of communities including

strong community partnership arrangements between landowners, site promoters, Councils, voluntary sector organisations and residents;

- b) Demonstrate compliance with the strategic principles and ambitions for stewardship and legacy placemaking across the HGC Growth Areas taking into account the forthcoming HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD or successor documents;
- c) Proposals should identify appropriate funding and a variety of income-generating community assets and innovative initiatives, such as energy and data solutions, to secure sustainable long-term funding, maintenance, management and stewardship arrangements; and
- d) Support for early activation projects, such as employment opportunities and community facilities, ahead of and alongside the delivery of homes.

### **Delivery**

High quality new development and infrastructure will be planned and phased in a timely manner to ensure infrastructure and transformation opportunities are maximised. To enable this, the Council and other relevant bodies will consider use of statutory powers including compulsory purchase. Councils, key stakeholders and statutory consultees should be actively engaged in the shaping the delivery considerations of an application.

The approach will be supported by the HGC Framework Plan and Transformation SPD, HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD, and future HGC guidance.

Within the HGC Growth Areas, in addition to meeting Local Planning Authority validation requirements, major planning applications will be required to provide material to demonstrate:

- a) A landscape-led masterplanned approach with Masterplans and Design Codes. The approach must include appropriate input from the Council, statutory consultees, local communities and parishes, landowners and other stakeholders;
- b) Regard to the HGC Policies and with the wider framework masterplan context for the whole neighbourhood the application site falls within;
- c) Details of the on-site infrastructure to be provided and / or contributions to be made to off-site infrastructure and facilities in line with the Local Plan Infrastructure Deliver Plans (IDPs). Where appropriate, such contributions towards infrastructure referred to in the IDPs, shall be payable where infrastructure has been forward funded or delivered by others, but is necessary for the delivery of the development;
- d) A detailed phasing strategy for the application site, including an indicative phasing and implementation plan to show how the site development aligns with the delivery of infrastructure and utilities across the wider neighbourhoods and / or Growth Areas, including any off-site highway works such as Project Breakspear;
- e) Undertaking of Quality Review Panels;
- f) Regard to the forthcoming HGC Framework and Transformation SPD and the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD or successor documents; and

- g) Delivery and arrangements for community development activities appropriate to the creation of new communities.

### Large, Medium and Small Sites

- 3.54 A significant part of the District's housing growth will be from those sites that are not in a Strategic Allocation. These are classified in this Plan as Large, Medium or Small sites.
- 3.55 The definition of these in terms of size are: Large Sites (100-249 homes); Medium Sites (10-99 homes); and Small Sites (5-9 homes). These sites are generally concentrated within urban areas and around the higher tiers in the Settlement Hierarchy.

#### **LG4 – Large, Medium and Small Sites**

The Council has allocated sites to support growth that are smaller in size and scale than the Strategic Allocations. These sites are set out in Part B. Proposals on these sites (or unallocated windfall development at this scale) must accord with the following requirements in addition to the site-specific requirements listed in Part B:

- a) Large sites should have Masterplans agreed with the Council before developing detailed designs. The approach should have regard to the District's Strategic Sites Design Guidance;
- b) For major developments, demonstrate appropriate engagement with the Council, statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and other stakeholders;
- c) Be undertaken in a coordinated way where there are different landowners;
- d) Demonstrate accordance with the requirements set out in Part B;
- e)–
- f)–
- g)–
- h)–
- i)–
- j) Demonstrate how the proposal integrates with and where appropriate seeks to improve the existing transport network with reference to the LCWIP. Proposals should include excellent walking and cycling links and public transport services upgrades / improvements;
- k)–
- l) Normally plant least 1 semi-mature tree for each dwelling; for C2 accommodation plant 1 semi-mature tree for each 2.5 dwelling equivalent bed spaces; and
- m)–

n)–

- o) For sites listed in Appendix 5, development proposals must be informed by a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment and where applicable Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment which address the recommendations of the Council's Heritage Impact Assessment.

## Regeneration Opportunity Sites

3.55A The Council has identified a number of Council-owned car park and garage court sites that could be redeveloped for residential use and delivered during the Plan period. As advocated in national policy, they are a potential source of provision of homes in sustainably located urban areas. Furthermore, they follow the Council's spatial strategy to locate growth to make the most sustainable use of land in urban areas and develop brownfield land. They represent 'Regeneration Opportunity Sites'.

3.55B Residential development of these sites would necessarily involve changing use of either some or all of the site. The residential development of a car park does not necessarily mean the loss of all parking provision, with design options that retain car parking to include:

- a) Building on only part of the site;
- b) Allowing car parking on the ground floor while building above (sometimes called 'podium parking'); or
- c) Introducing multi-storey or underground parking.

3.55C In common with a number of the site-specific 'Key development requirements' for other allocations, the Policy requires improvements via delivery or contributions for relevant schemes in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Growth and Transport Plans (GTPs). Further commentary on these schemes is set out in Chapter 8 of Part A, but in summary they encourage and enable shorter journeys to be made by sustainable means, including by walking and cycling, delivering the wider community benefits of active travel. The Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) demonstrates how sites will support delivery of schemes. Transport contributions for sites for 10+ homes should be secured by S106 or similar legal agreements / mechanisms. Transport contributions for sites for 9 or fewer homes could be secured by S106 or another appropriate mechanism (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy).

### LG4A – Regeneration Opportunity Sites

The Council in principle supports residential redevelopment of the car park and garage court sites identified as 'Regeneration Opportunity Sites' in Part B. They are required to provide delivery of / enhancements to support relevant schemes in the LCWIP and GTPs as indicated in the relevant TIA.

Proposals must demonstrate that their redevelopment will not lead to any significant adverse impacts on highway safety, residential amenity or the availability of car parking in the area. Design proposals will be supported where some parking provision can be retained. Where appropriate this may include building on only part of the site, allowing car parking on the ground floor while

building above (sometimes called 'podium parking'), or introducing multi-storey or underground parking.

## Green Belt

- 3.56 The Council attaches great importance to the Metropolitan Green Belt, which will be protected from inappropriate development. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence.
- 3.57 Green Belt in the District performs important national policy objectives as part of the London Metropolitan Green Belt. The Green Belt is also regarded as performing an important local consideration regarding maintaining the existing settlement pattern and the individual identity of settlements, as far as reasonably possible.

### **LG5 – Green Belt**

Proposals in the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with national policy.

Where proposals are consistent with Green Belt purposes and objectives the Council will support in principle:

- a) Opportunities that arise through development to proactively manage Green Belt land to:
  - i. Protect and create attractive landscapes and countryside;
  - ii. Promote healthy ecosystem services;
  - iii. Support productive and sustainable farming and forestry; and
  - iv. Provide space for local and wider recreational needs.
- b) Infrastructure provision identified in this Plan that is essential to ensure sustainable development across the District and beyond, that demonstrates 'very special circumstances'.

## Green Belt Compensatory Improvements

- 3.58 Where it is concluded that loss of Green Belt land for development is necessary, national policy sets out that compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land are expected.

### **LG6 – Green Belt Compensatory Improvements**

The allocations in Part B that are facilitated by Green Belt boundaries changed by this Plan are required, to a degree proportionate to the development, to:

- a) Submit a Green Belt compensation strategy that sets out compensatory measures that align with national planning guidance, relating to:
  - i. New or enhanced green infrastructure;
  - ii. Woodland planting;

- iii. Landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- iv. Improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- v. New or enhanced walking cycling or equestrian routes; or
- vi. Improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.

b)–

- c) Enhance existing green and blue infrastructure links within their sites, and connect any fragmented links, to provide biodiversity (also known as wildlife corridors). Development must also take account of green and blue infrastructure links beyond their sites and try to integrate their designs with them and not create severance through poor design;
- d) Maintain any Rights of Way across / through the site, ensuring provision of a route that is safe and overlooked, is sufficient in width to easily allow the passing of two people, and is carefully designed to become a positive landscape feature, having regard to the RoWIP; and
- e) Ensure access to adjacent Rights of Way are facilitated in a safe and direct manner and maintain linkages that provide for appropriate utility and recreational use, and ensure that improvements are enabled so as to mitigate for the increased user impact of the development on the fabric of the network, including through good design.

The compensatory improvements will not necessarily take place on the site itself but could be undertaken nearby.

NB: Where a development is required to submit both a Green Belt compensation strategy and provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), the Green Belt compensation strategy can incorporate features that are proposed within the SANG, in accordance with this policy.

## Housing Policy in the Green Belt

- 3.59 National policy sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. While local authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, exceptions include limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan, and limited infilling in villages.

### **LG7 – Affordable housing in the Green Belt (rural exception sites)**

Proposals for limited affordable-only housing in the Green Belt for local needs must demonstrate that:

- a) The development is small scale – normally 9 or fewer dwellings and on a site area of under 0.5 hectares;

- b) The housing meets the priority need for social rented housing in the local community and is secured in perpetuity by appropriate planning obligations; and
- c) —
- d) —
- e) There is a close relationship between the proposed site and existing built up areas, either in settlements excluded from the Green Belt or washed over settlements.

3.60 —

3.61 —

## LG8

### Extension or Replacement of Buildings in the Green Belt

- 3.62 As set out above, national policy states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; and the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- 3.63 Evidence shows that there is a very strong demand to extend and replace dwellings and other buildings in the Green Belt. Clear policy is needed to assist applicants to meet their aspirations for additional or alternative accommodation; whilst providing appropriate protection for the openness and character of the Green Belt which otherwise could be markedly and negatively altered over time.
- 3.63A In applying Policy LG9 as to the acceptability of proposals for the extension or replacement of any buildings in the Green Belt, proposals will generally be considered against the following criteria:
- a) **Side extensions:** Single storey side extensions should not close valuable gaps between buildings. Two storey side extensions can often have a detrimental impact and may therefore be resisted.
  - b) **Front extensions:** Porches are generally acceptable. More substantial front extensions should not detrimentally alter the character of the building or landscape.
  - c) **Rear extensions:** Generally viewed more favourably than side / front extensions.
  - d) **Roof extensions:** Significantly raising the eaves or increasing the ridge height or bulk of a roof will normally be considered to create a building of different character and therefore may be unacceptable.

- e) **Basement extensions:** Wholly subterranean basements with no external impact are generally acceptable. Where there are level changes at the site any protrusion of the basement above ground level may be assessed against b) and c). Physical manifestations such as lightwells, sunken terraces, railings etc. will be also be assessed against b) and c). The intensification of the use of the site will also be considered.
- f) **Visibility from public viewpoints:** The visibility of proposals from public viewpoints is a material consideration.

3.63B Table 3.2A below provides a guide to the size of extensions that will normally be permitted under Policy LG9, with reference to the above criteria:

**Table 3.2A**

<b>How well do the proposals perform in relation to criteria a)-f) above?<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Additional size that will normally be permitted<sup>10</sup></b>
Poorly	Less than 90m <sup>3</sup> increase in cubic content or Less than 20% increase in floorspace (gross) subject to a maximum increase in cubic content of 300m <sup>3</sup> (whichever is greater)
Moderately	No more than 135m <sup>3</sup> increase in cubic content or No more than 30% increase in floorspace (gross) subject to a maximum increase in cubic content of 300m <sup>3</sup> (whichever is greater)
Well	No more than 180m <sup>3</sup> increase in cubic content or No more than 40% increase in floorspace (gross) subject to a maximum increase in cubic content of 300m <sup>3</sup> (whichever is greater)
Very well	Above the top of the ranges, or maximum, applicable to Well performing proposals; assessed on a case-by-case basis

<sup>9</sup> A judgment will be made on a case by case basis as to how the type of extension and visibility from public viewpoints affects the openness and character of the Green Belt.

<sup>10</sup> In the case of extensions, the additional size is measured against the original building as defined in the Policy. In the case of replacement buildings, the additional size is measured against the existing building. Some extensions (eg some roof or porch extensions) may be within the presented size limits but unacceptable when assessed against the design policies in Chapter 12.

## **LG9 – Extension or Replacement of Buildings in the Green Belt**

### **Extensions to buildings in the Green Belt:**

The acceptability of extensions to existing buildings in the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with national policy.

Extensions should not create a building that is disproportionately larger or of significantly different character than the original building in terms of scale or visual impact. The original building is defined as the building as it existed at 1st July 1948 or, if constructed after this date, as it was originally built. The cumulative impact of any previous and proposed extensions to the building will be assessed. In judging whether an extension would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, the increase in both volume and floor space over the original building will be considered.

Outbuildings which are a normal domestic adjunct to a dwelling<sup>11</sup> will be assessed as an extension. Other outbuildings within a residential curtilage will be assessed against the scale of the original dwelling and impact on openness, including a cumulative assessment taking into account all outbuildings within the curtilage.

### **Replacement Buildings in the Green Belt**

- e) Replacement buildings should be in the same use and not materially larger than the buildings they replace.<sup>12</sup>
- ea) Replacement buildings should occupy the site of the existing building or be located as close to the existing building as possible. A replacement building may be permitted in a different position if this would improve the visual openness of the Green Belt. In these cases, the removal of the existing building will be secured through a S106 agreement.
- f) The replacement of a temporary dwelling, or short-life dwelling, with a permanent dwelling will be refused.
- g) Permitted development rights<sup>13</sup> may be removed by condition from replacement buildings which are larger than the existing building where this is necessary to prevent further harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

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<sup>11</sup> For example a garage with a close physical and functional relationship with the main dwelling

<sup>12</sup> [Footnote deleted]

<sup>13</sup> Set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended.

# Chapter 4 – Housing

## Local Plan Policy Objective

*Provide a sufficient amount of good quality housing which meets the needs of all sections of society in sustainable locations*

## Introduction

- 4.1 National policy sets out that, within the overall context of the supply of housing, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed. The findings should be reflected in planning policies including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes. Where the need for affordable housing is identified planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required.
- 4.2 St Albans District has high house prices and affordability is an issue for many people. While there is a trend towards smaller household sizes, the District is particularly short of affordable family-sized housing. The provision of medium-sized first family homes (3-bed homes) and opportunities for downsizers are particularly needed and encouraged.

### **Strategic Policy SP4 - Housing**

To provide good quality housing that meets the needs of all parts of society the Council seeks:

- Proposals that provide a suitable mix of housing and affordable housing;
- To preserve the supply of housing by retaining residential accommodation and generally resisting proposals that would result in a net loss of residential accommodation (C2 and C3) through demolition or conversion to other use types;
- The provision of specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities;
- Proposals which provide new accessible and adaptable housing that meets the changing lifetime needs of all occupants;
- To diversify the housing market and increase consumer choice through encouraging Self-build and Custom Housebuilding in suitable sustainable locations; and
- To address the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

All of these matters are addressed by the detailed local policies in this chapter.

## Housing Mix

- 4.3 National policy sets out that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing, based on demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. Local planning authorities should identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in different locations.
- 4.4 The District has a high proportion of large dwellings in its housing stock. Longstanding trends and population forecasts show smaller average household size, including an increasing proportion of single person households. More small and small-medium sized homes are required which would lead to an increase in the proportion of relatively low-cost market housing available to buy, assisting those who are just able to afford to buy on the open market. As well as single person households, this is particularly the case for small-medium sized family housing. This includes one and two bedroom flats and particularly 2 and smaller 3 bedroom first family houses.
- 4.5 The greatest opportunity to provide for the specific locally needed mix of housing is provided by development proposed at the Strategic Allocations and housing sites with a capacity of 100+ units.
- 4.6 There will be a limited number of urban brownfield sites which may require a different mix of more flatted homes and fewer three and four bedroom homes that reflects the site characteristics, context and viability.

### HOU1 – Housing Mix

New residential development proposals (Use Class C3) should provide:

- a) A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households;
- b) In the case of proposals of 10 or more homes, to provide a housing mix as follows:

**Table 4.1 – Housing Mix by Size and Tenure**

Tenure	Home Size			
	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4+ Beds
Market Housing	5%	20%	45%	30%
Affordable Housing (Home Ownership)	20%	50%	30%	
Affordable Housing (Rent)	20%	30%	45%	5%
Acceptable Size in persons for affordable homes	2p	4p		

The delivery of specialist housing at Strategic Allocations could affect the housing mix by increasing the number of smaller units. Therefore the housing mix may be

adjusted on sites that deliver specialist housing units to take account of an increased proportion of smaller units.

Urban brownfield sites with good access to local services (including public transport) by active travel modes, may require a different mix of more flatted homes and fewer three and four bedroom homes, reflecting the site characteristics, context and viability. The housing mix may be adjusted to reflect the Council's latest evidence on Housing Mix if it supersedes the mix in Table 4.1.

## Affordable Housing

- 4.7 National policy sets out that where a need for affordable housing is identified, Plans should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 4.8 The District's house prices are amongst the highest not only in Hertfordshire, but across the whole country. As a result local people on lower-level incomes, especially younger people and key workers, often find themselves priced out of the market, and there is clearly a high need for affordable housing. This is also reflected by the number of people on the Council Housing Register. Three bedroom affordable homes to address the priority needs of the Council's Housing Register and the needs of those in temporary accommodation are particularly needed.
- 4.9 The Council has a priority to provide an appropriate amount of affordable homes. Housing needs and viability research has been undertaken to establish the realistic level at which affordable housing can be delivered as a percentage of private housing in the District.

### **HOU2 – Affordable Housing**

The Council will seek to meet the District's affordable housing needs by:

- a) Requiring residential development proposals (Use Class C3) with a gain of 10 or more homes, or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, to provide:
  - i. 40% of homes as on-site affordable housing;
  - ii. A tenure mix of 30% social rented, 30% affordable rented and 40% affordable home ownership with shared ownership preferred;
  - iii. A design approach where affordable housing is indistinguishable in appearance from market housing on site and distributed across the site with affordable housing dwellings to be clustered in groups;
  - iv. Affordable housing to meet required standards and be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.
- b) Encouraging three bedroom affordable homes to address the priority needs of the Council's Housing Register and the needs of those in temporary accommodation;

- e) —
- d) Expecting that, in cases where the 40% calculation in a) i. and c) provides a part dwelling, the figure should be rounded up;
- e) Ensuring that development proposals which do not propose the full amount of required affordable housing must demonstrate the evidence on why this is the case, and to meet the full amount that is viable;
- f) Only accepting a financial contribution for off-site affordable housing provision where evidence demonstrates that on-site affordable housing provision would not be viable or feasible;
- g) Preventing the artificial subdivision of sites with the same landowner to create separate development schemes which would otherwise cumulatively meet the thresholds of this policy, and will likewise consider the site as a whole where a developer seeks to amalgamate adjacent sites with the same landowner into a single development;
- h) Ensuring that any planning obligations for affordable housing provision or contributions that are agreed as an exception to full policy compliance (on the basis of viability at the time the permission is granted) must include a financial review mechanism that is based on actual sales values and actual construction costs at the time that the development, or development phase, is 80% sold. The review must allow for further provision, or financial contributions in lieu, when the outturn value of the development exceeds the initial viability assumptions or other circumstances enable increased viability of the scheme;
- i) To ensure that Shared Ownership and Discount Market Sales reach the widest and lowest earnings population base; the final purchase price of discount market sales homes should not exceed the midpoint of the range recommended in the Local Housing Needs Assessment<sup>14</sup>, subject to indexing via the UK House Price Index (or equivalent). The initial discount for market sales, and for Shared Ownership the maximum initial share and maximum rent on unsold equity, should be compatible with this benchmark, which is the midpoint of the range.

## Specialist Housing

- 4.10 National policy sets out that local authorities should seek to meet the specific accommodation needs of older people and people with disabilities. The Government's reforms of Health and Adult Social Care are underpinned by a principle of sustaining people living at home for as long as possible.
- 4.11 The Council, working with partners such as the County Council, Registered Providers, health care agencies, and developers, needs to plan for increasing housing need and choices in terms of specialist accommodation for older people and people with disabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> Table 47, Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) 2024

- 4.12 Accommodation for the elderly is moving towards more flexible forms of living and support, which seek to maintain people's independence. There are several options where residents can enjoy their own self-contained home within a site offering extra care facilities. Offering attractive alternative housing choices for older people will assist in freeing-up some family sized homes that are currently under-occupied.
- 4.13 Specialist housing for older people includes housing with support (retirement living and / or sheltered housing) and housing with care (extra care housing and / or housing with care), residential care homes, nursing care homes and other appropriate forms of accommodation on suitable sites.
- 4.14 Specialist housing is allocated at sites listed in Part B. Planning applications by specialist housing providers on ad hoc sites and on HCC land will deliver additional units of accommodation across the Plan period. Taken together, these sources should meet demand for specialist housing.
- 4.15 In planning for specialist accommodation, there are multiple factors that can introduce uncertainty. For example, when estimating future need, individuals who meet the target profile may prefer to stay in their own home with a care package as an alternative, which will reduce demand for specialist accommodation. In terms of supply, viability in new schemes can be difficult to achieve at some locations. To help manage uncertainty, HCC have devised a scheme to assist viability of extra care units; and the Council will monitor the supply for specialist housing.
- 4.16 Hertfordshire County Council's approach to affordable housing has been reflected in the policy below. Planning applications will need to take account of practical delivery arrangements, operator requirements and viability. This could mean the delivery of fewer affordable units on some schemes and 100% affordable units on others to provide an overall quantum of affordable specialist housing for older people across the plan.
- 4.16A The County Council's strategy for specialist older people's accommodation requires the delivery of housing with care units that include a CQC-registered care provider on site and nursing homes over other forms of specialist older person's accommodation. This is because there are people in other forms of accommodation who have a medical or care need who would be better suited to accommodation with on site care or nursing care. Having care available on site also allows people to age in place without the need to move, often at short notice, when their needs exceed what other forms of older people's accommodation without on site care can offer. To deliver on this strategy proposals for housing with care should offer residents a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 4.16B The requirements for specialist housing are derived from the South West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment. Policy HOU3 should be read in conjunction with selected site allocations as shown in the summary table below. Key development requirements for specialist housing can be found in the Local Plan Part B. Specialist housing is distributed across allocated sites as shown in the table below and should provide up to 800 units of Housing with Care and 480 Nursing Home beds.

**Table 4.2A**

Site	Housing with Care (units)	Nursing Home (beds)
H1	140-160	70-80
H2	140-160	70-80
H4	210-240	140-160
B1	70-80	70-80
B2	70-80	
B3	70-80	
B6		70-80
<b>Total (max)</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>480</b>

4.16C Viability evidence indicates for retirement living and extra care units that between 25% to 40% affordable housing and all policy requirements can be supported across the 4 value areas with the highest percentages applying in Harpenden and St Albans. Where proposals seek to deliver less than 40% affordable housing, they must be supported by robust viability evidence to justify the reduced provision. The affordable housing contribution should not normally fall below 25%.

### HOU3 – Specialist Housing

- a) For older people, the amount of specialist housing should be broadly in line with the need figures in the tables below and windfall sites shall give preference to housing with care:

**Table 4.2 – Housing with Support and Housing with Care**

Housing with support and housing with care	Additional Homes to 2041
Housing with support (Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing in NPPF – Use Class C3)	1,154
Housing with care (Extra Care Housing or Housing with Care in NPPF – Use Class C3 or C2)	809

**Table 4.3 – Residential Nursing Homes**

Residential Nursing Homes	Additional Bed Spaces to 2041
Nursing Care (Use Class C2)	377

- b) For people with disabilities, the amount of specialist housing should be broadly in line with figures in the table below:

**Table 4.4 – Housing with Support**

<b>Housing with support</b>	<b>Additional Homes to 2041</b>
Learning Disability supported living units (people)	34
Physical Disability supported living unit (people)	3

- c) The Council will support development proposals for specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities which are in accordance with the following requirements:
- i. Located with good access to public transport and local facilities;
  - ii. Proposals (other than Care Home Accommodation) with a gain of 10 or more units should provide 40% (on greenfield sites) and 25% (on brownfield sites) of the units as on-site affordable housing (irrespective of whether it falls under use class C2 or C3); the mix of tenures should have regard to advice from the NHS or Hertfordshire County Council;
  - iii. Provision to be made for specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and / or people with disabilities within the Strategic Allocations and housing sites providing 500 dwellings or more. In larger sites, it may be appropriate to develop larger housing with care schemes;
  - iv. Proposals for specialist older person's accommodation and people with disabilities should have regard to Hertfordshire County Council's Service Delivery and Placemaking Guide.

## **Specialist Housing for Children**

- 4.16D Under the Children Act 1989, the County Council has a statutory duty to take steps that ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that children (aged 18 and under) in their care are provided with suitable accommodation within the authority's area, unless this as a compelling reason that requires otherwise.
- 4.16E The 2024 South West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment Update identifies a gross need for St Albans to be capable of accommodating 39 children in care by 2041.
- 4.16F The County Council, along with its elected members, employees and partner agencies, are responsible for providing the best possible care, protection and support for these children. Often this requires the placement of children at children's homes. Children's homes are homes for 1-5 children in care and an adult manager. They should not look or feel like institutional settings, and they should be single dwellings that resemble family homes. This approach should apply to both short-stay and longer-term accommodation, providing a positive environment until children can safely return to their families.

- 4.16G Hertfordshire County Council's Service Provision and Place-Making Guide sets out how a successful children's home should be designed and delivered to provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment for the children who live there.

### **HOU3A – Specialist Housing for Children**

Where planning permission is required the Council will support development proposals for Children's Homes to meet the needs of looked after children which are in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) Located with good access to public transport, local facilities and not located close to motorways/dual carriageways, railways, bodies of water or industrial sites;
- b) Detached and externally indistinguishable from surrounding dwellings; and
- c) Have regard to Hertfordshire County Council's Service Provision and Placemaking Guide (or equivalent).

### **Accessible and Adaptable Housing**

- 4.17 Accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently, while also saving on health and social costs in the future. It is better to build accessible housing from the outset rather than have to make adaptations at a later stage – both in terms of cost and with regard to people being able to remain safe and independent in their homes.
- 4.18 South West Herts has lower levels of disability compared with other areas, however, an ageing population means that the number of people requiring specialist accommodation and / or with disabilities is likely to increase substantially in the future. There is therefore a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings, including for wheelchair users. Such homes could be considered as 'homes for life' and would be suitable for any occupant, regardless of whether or not they have a disability at the time of initial occupation.

### **HOU4 – Accessible and Adaptable Housing**

The Council will support development proposals (except where this is not possible for viability or other reasons such as built form, topography and flooding) which:

- a) Provide new accessible and adaptable housing which meets the changing lifetime needs of the occupants;
- b) For all residential development (Use Class C3) achieve compliance with the required Building Regulations (Part M4(2));
- c) For residential development proposals for 10 homes or more (Use Class C3) 5% of market dwellings comply with Part M4(3)(a) of the Building Regulations and 10% of affordable (rent and home ownership) dwellings comply with Part M4(3)(b) (wheelchair user dwellings) of the Building Regulations; and

- d) For M4(2) and M4(3) housing are located, where possible, with good access to public transport and local facilities.

## Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

- 4.19 Self-build and Custom Housebuilding helps to diversify the housing market and increase consumer choice. Self-build and Custom Housebuilders choose the design and layout of their home, and can be innovative in both design and construction.

### **HOU5 – Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding**

With regard to Self-build and Custom Housebuilding the Council:

- a) Requires that on Strategic Allocations and housing sites with a capacity of 100+ dwellings 3% of the total number of homes be provided for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding; with the exception of otherwise acceptable entirely flatted urban schemes;
- b) Encourages Self-build and Custom housebuilding for residential development proposals of 10 homes or more (Use Class C3) in suitable, sustainable locations;
- c) Will seek a mix of Self-build and Custom Housebuilding plots to be made available as informed by the Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register;
- d) Expects that where plots have not been sold, it must be demonstrated that they have been made available and appropriately marketed for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding purposes for at least 12 months before being built out by the developer for market housing.

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 4.20 National planning policy sets out an overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 4.21 The Council seeks to establish a positive framework for how provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be made in the District. This will guide development to more sustainable parts of the District, provide enhanced quality of life for the Gypsy and Traveller community, help to prevent unauthorised sites and ensure that environmental concerns, impact on the Green Belt and community cohesion are proactively addressed.
- 4.22 Evidence shows that there are future accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers over the Plan period. The needs were assessed in accordance with the version of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) published in December 2023, which was the version that was applicable during the preparation of the Plan. These are set out in the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report 2024 and can be summarised as follows:

- Need for gypsy and traveller pitches to 2041 for households that meet the PPTS 2023 definition: 95 pitches
- Need for travelling showpeople plots to 2041: 7 plots

4.22A The Council seeks to meet the identified need for additional pitches and plots; firstly through the regularisation, intensification, reconfiguration and / or expansion of existing sites as listed in Part B; secondly through the two specific allocations identified at East Hemel Central and East Hemel South Strategic Allocations; and thirdly including through windfall as necessary.

4.22B The following table sets out existing and proposed accommodation for Travellers at existing sites, in accordance with the relevant PPTS (2023):

**Table 4.5: Accommodation for Travellers**

Site	Existing pitches / plots*	Additional Proposed pitches / plots	Additional pitches / plots anticipated to be delivered within 5 years	Additional pitches / plots anticipated to be delivered beyond 5 years
Ardens Rise, House Lane, St Albans	14	23	14	9
Chiswell Green Lane, Chiswell Green	1	4	2	2
Meadowside, North Orbital Road, Chiswell Green	4	3	2	1
Mill House Yard, Coursers Road, Colney Heath	4	1	0	1
Nuckies Farm, Coursers Road, Colney Heath	3	5	4	1
Tullochside, Hemel Hempstead Road, Redbourn	17	0	0	0
Woodview Lodge and Hoofprints, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood	16	14	10	4
The Paddocks, Colney Heath Lane, Colney Heath	9	6	4	2
Little Orchard, Barley Mow Lane, Colney Heath	1	1	0	1
Park Street / Watling Street, Watling Street, Park Street	11	0	0	0
Barley Mow, Barley Mow Lane, Colney Heath	15	0	0	0

Site	Existing pitches / plots*	Additional Proposed pitches / plots	Additional pitches / plots anticipated to be delivered within 5 years	Additional pitches / plots anticipated to be delivered beyond 5 years
Ver Meadows, Redbourn Bypass, Redbourn	15	0	0	0
Noke Lane, Chiswell Green (Travelling Showpeople Plots)	4	1	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>110 pitches and 4 plots</b>	<b>57 pitches and 1 plot</b>	<b>36 pitches</b>	<b>21 pitches</b>

*\*As recorded in HOU 05.01 - St Albans Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Report (2024) (GTAA). NB. Unauthorised pitches / plots are not counted as meeting additional needs in the GTAA*

4.22C The Plan therefore provides additional accommodation opportunities which includes provision of new sites as well as potential redevelopment and expansion at existing sites through planning applications. All existing and proposed sites are removed from the Green Belt, but existing public sites are not identified for additional on-site provision.

4.22D Potential new sites would be determined in accordance with national policy. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites is currently the principal national policy, but relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy would also be applicable.

4.22E It is also considered important to ensure that development proposals do not result in a reduction in the number of pitches within the District, unless a suitable replacement is found, or the need no longer exists.

### **HOU6 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers over the Plan period are for a minimum of 95 additional pitches. The accommodation needs for Travelling Showpeople over the Plan period are for a minimum of 7 additional plots.

- a) To provide for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople the Council has allocated sites as set out below:
  - i. East Hemel Hempstead (South) Strategic Allocation - 20 pitches;
  - ii. East Hemel Hempstead (Central) Strategic Allocation - 20 pitches; and
  - iii. Reconfiguring, regularising or extending allocated sites which are listed in Part B.

- b) Other proposals at sites which are not listed in a) will be determined in accordance with national policy.
- c) All proposals should make efficient use of land. Site design should be assessed in relation to the specific circumstances of the site and in particular whether there is a need for integrated general amenity and landscaping space.
- d) Proposals that would result in a reduction of the number of pitches within the District will be refused unless a suitable replacement is found, or the need no longer exists.

# Chapter 5 – Economy and Employment

## Objectives

*Encourage strong and resilient economic growth, employment and skills opportunities; including supporting growth in green and creative sectors; and supporting new ways of working across the District*

## Introduction

- 5.1 St Albans District has numerous economic strengths and competitive advantages that make it an attractive location for businesses, including a highly skilled workforce, high rates of enterprise, good rail connections to London, strategic road connections, centres of research and innovation, and concentrations of high value industries.
- 5.2 The District is generally wealthy and a highly desirable residential location, reflected in the high average salaries of residents and high house prices.
- 5.3 There is a low rate of unemployment in the District, with the workforce possessing a level of qualifications and skills that is well above national and regional averages. A large portion of the well-paid jobs for the District's workforce are dependent on London, with above-average salaries compared to residents who work in the District. This leads to a relatively high level of daily out-commuting to London, largely using the fast Thameslink rail service which stops at the settlements of St Albans and Harpenden.
- 5.4 ICT is an area of strength in the District, with employment increasing 2016 to 2021. While professional services are also an area of strength, employment in this sector declined during this period. A large proportion of these are micro businesses, underlining the appeal of St Albans for freelancers and lifestyle businesses.
- 5.5 St Albans is home to two research and innovation assets of international significance in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and Rothamsted Research. Research and Development and science-based sectors account for a higher share of employment in the District compared to neighbouring authorities.
- 5.6 The District has a high proportion of small businesses, with figures for 2022 showing that out of 8,675 enterprises 91.4% were micro-businesses (employing up to 9 people), 7.1% were small businesses (employing 10 to 49 people), 1.2% were medium sized organisations (employing 50 – 49) and just 0.4% were large organisations (employing 250 plus).
- 5.7 Despite these strengths, there was almost no growth in jobs in the District between 2016 and 2021, while employment growth was stronger in the other South West Hertfordshire local authorities during this period.

## South West Herts Functional Economic Market Area

- 5.8 St Albans District sits within the South West Herts Functional Economic Market Area (SW Herts FEMA) which also contains the districts of Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford. These councils also jointly commissioned the *South West Herts Economic Study (2024)*.
- 5.9 The FEMA was identified because of strong commuting and migration relationships and shared leisure, retail and public sector catchment areas of the five councils. The

FEMA also has an important relationship with Welwyn Hatfield District, and with the neighbouring FEMAs of London, and Luton and Central Beds.

- 5.10 The Council supports the wider economic and employment aspirations of the Hertfordshire Growth Board and Hertfordshire Economic Board 'Hertfordshire Futures' with regard to South West Herts.

### **Office floorspace**

- 5.11 St Albans City has the highest concentration of offices in the District, and is second only to central Watford in the South West Herts sub-region. Offices are concentrated within the area around St Albans City Station and around the City Centre in the vicinity of St Peters Street.
- 5.12 The District has experienced a loss of office floorspace in recent years, driven in part by residential conversions using Permitted Development Rights.
- 5.13 The restrictions introduced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in homeworking, and there are indications that this may become a long-term trend. Nevertheless, there continues to be a demand for office space and it is important that St Albans provides an appropriate supply of offices accommodation to support growth, investment and employment in the District.

### **Industrial and distribution**

- 5.14 There is a range of industrial estates and warehousing in the District, from small to medium scale, with the largest concentration within or on the edge of St Albans City. There has also been a steady loss of industrial floorspace over recent years, largely due to conversion to residential uses. To protect the larger and more significant industrial locations from development for other uses, the Council designates Protected Employment Areas, as set out in Table 5.1 below.

### **The Rural Economy**

- 5.15 St Albans District has large rural areas and the Council fully supports a thriving farming sector, along with the leisure and visitor aspects of the rural economy. This includes farm shops and equestrian facilities along with the more flexible use of farm buildings, developing small-scale localised renewable energy projects and improving rural broadband.
- 5.16 Environmental Land Management schemes are intended to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. Through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for by the Government.

### **Strategic Approach to Employment Land**

- 5.16A Overall, the Council will support the local economy and employment growth through protecting key designated employment areas and bringing forward new areas of employment land. Some less important existing employment areas are allocated for residential development and there will be some further redevelopment of employment land for residential use on unallocated sites. The Council seeks to support the District's existing economic strengths while providing land for additional employment uses including in agri-tech, offices, research and development, light industrial, and distribution and warehousing. As indicated in the South West Hert's Economy Study (2024), St Albans' quantitative additional employment land requirement is 293,500

sqm. Existing commitments including 175,700 sqm at the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) (SADC's 53% assignment of the land at the SRFI, following the recommended approach), 46,400 sqm of other commitments and 71,400 sqm at Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) (SADC's 50% assignment as recommended) meets SADC's requirements in full. The Plan will also deliver 71,400 sqm to meet Dacorum's needs and 155,900 sqm at the SRFI to meet national needs.

5.16B Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) includes a strategic allocation of 53 ha of employment land at East Hemel Hempstead (Central). This allocation provides an agreed oversupply for St Albans District that will assist Dacorum Borough Council to meet some of their overall employment land need, as an expansion of the existing Maylands employment area. 50% of the employment land at East Hemel Central will meet Dacorum's employment land needs, as indicated in the South West Herts Economy Study (2024) at its Table 8.5.

## Strategic Policy

### **Strategic Policy SP5 - Employment and the Local Economy**

The Council will support the local economy and employment growth through protecting key designated employment areas and bringing forward new areas of employment land. The Council seeks to support the District's existing economic strengths while providing land for additional employment including in agri-tech, offices, research and development, light industrial. and distribution and warehousing. The Council will work with stakeholders and local businesses to support economic growth and productivity by maintaining current employment areas and creating new ones such that there is sufficient land and floorspace to cater for full employment and provide for different kinds of employment use. The Council will support intensification of land uses where suitable, encourage new businesses, and seek inward investment.

The Council will:

- a) Protect Employment Areas – as set out in Table 5.1 and through Policy EMP1 - to be retained for appropriate business uses. The Council will encourage full use of designated employment sites and supports new businesses, business growth, and inward investment.
- b) Designate new industrial and business locations as follows:
  - i. 53 ha of Employment land at East Hemel Hempstead (Central) to provide employment space for Hemel Garden Communities, providing for a range of uses including offices, research and development, light industrial and distribution, with 10% of any new development or redevelopment required to contain units for Small Medium Enterprises and expansion / Grow-On units;
  - ii. 33.16 ha of the Government permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at the former Radlett aerodrome - mostly B8 distribution / warehousing;
  - iii. Sites OS3 (1.86ha) and OS4 (1.67ha) to expand Rothamsted Research and support increased activity and jobs at this world-leader in the agri-tech sector.

Due to these allocations providing an oversupply against St Albans District's own needs, 25 hectares of land is allocated towards meeting the employment needs in neighbouring Dacorum Borough.

Site allocations for new employment locations are set out on the Policies Map. Proposals for residential redevelopment on existing unallocated employment sites will be supported in principle.

The Council also supports a prosperous rural economy and will in principle consider positively the sustainable growth of rural businesses, including diversification of agriculture, tourism, schemes that retain local services and community facilities, broadband provision, small-scale renewable energy for local use, and support for Environmental Land Management Schemes.

## Protected Employment Areas

- 5.17 The existing allocated employment sites in the District are typically performing well with generally high levels of occupancy. There is a need to continue protecting these sites as important locations for economic activity, business start-ups and growth, provision of commercial services for the District, and employment.
- 5.18 Table 5.1 includes both key office and key industrial locations in the District. The proposed East Hemel Hempstead (Central) Employment Area and proposed Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange are also included.
- 5.19 The designated protected employment areas are shown on the Policies Map.

**Table 5.1 - Protected Employment Areas in St Albans District**

Employment Area	Location	Site Ref
St Albans City Core Principal Office Location	St Albans City	PEA 1
St Albans City Station Principal Office Location	St Albans City	PEA 2
St Albans Abbey Station Principal Office Location	St Albans City	PEA 3
Porters Wood / Soothouse Spring	St Albans City	PEA 4
Council Depot and adjoining land, St. Albans Road	St Albans City	PEA 5
Alban Park / Acrewood Way / Lyon Way, Hatfield Road	St Albans City	PEA 6
Brick Knoll Park, Ashley Road	St Albans City	PEA 7
Executive Park and adjoining land, Hatfield Road	St Albans City	PEA 8
Camp Road / Campfield Road	St Albans City	PEA 9
North Orbital Commercial Park, Napsbury Lane	St Albans City	PEA 10
Building Research Establishment, Bricket Wood	Bricket Wood	PEA 11
Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (new allocation)	Between Frogmore and London Colney	PEA 12
Coldharbour Lane	Harpenden	PEA 13
Batford Mill Industrial Estate	Harpenden	PEA 14
Southdown Industrial Estate, Southdown Road	Harpenden	PEA 15

Rothamsted Research (including through expansion allocated in Part B at OS3 and OS4) <sup>15</sup>	Harpenden	PEA 16
Redbourn Industrial Park	Redbourn	PEA 17
Station Road	Wheathampstead	PEA 19
North of Buncefield	Adjacent to Hemel Hempstead	PEA 20
East Hemel Hempstead (Central) Enterprise Zone (new allocation)	Adjacent to Hemel Hempstead	PEA 21
Wellington Road	London Colney	PEA 22
The Hertfordshire Business Centre, Alexander Road	London Colney	PEA 23
Riverside Estate	London Colney	PEA 24
Watling Street	Frogmore	PEA 25
Colney Street Industrial / Warehousing Estate	Colney Street	PEA 26

### **EMP1 - Protected Employment Areas**

To protect and enhance the designated Protected Employment Areas in the District, proposals that are within the locations set out in Table 5.1 must demonstrate:

- a) No net loss of employment floorspace; redevelopment or intensification of existing employment uses will usually be supported;
- b) That the use class will normally be B2, B8, or E(g); in the case of E(g) applications conditions may be applied to prevent a change of use to E(a-f) use classes; and
- c) That small-scale services such as a creche or café are ancillary and do not compromise the functioning of the location for B2, B8 or E(g) uses.

### **Strategic Rail Freight Interchange**

- 5.20 The Government gave planning permission for the construction of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange in July 2014, comprising an intermodal terminal and rail and road served distribution units comprising 331,665 metres<sup>2</sup> employment floorspace. Development has commenced and there is now a reasonable prospect that the SRFI will be delivered during the Plan period.
- 5.21 Aside from employment floorspace the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange will provide associated road, rail and other infrastructure facilities and works including earth mounds and a Park Street / Frogmore relief road in a landscaped setting. Further

<sup>15</sup> Potential expansion of site through allocation in Part B

landscaping and other works will provide publicly accessible open space and a community forest on land in and around the site.

- 5.22 The scheme is located south of the North Orbital Road, north of the M25 and east of the village of Frogmore, between the Abbey Line and the West Coast Mainline. The Strategic Rail Freight Interchange is shown as an allocation on the Policies Map.

### **EMP2 – Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI)**

The permitted uses for the SRFI are largely for B8 distribution and warehousing. All of the public benefits including all the country parks and community forest and the Park Street / Frogmore relief road and other requirements set out in the 2014 Planning permission must be delivered.

The SRFI is an allocation in this Plan. On review of this Plan and once the SRFI has been completed, Green Belt boundaries in relation to the SRFI facility will be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

The Strategic Rail Freight Interchange is shown on the Policies Map.

### **St Albans City Principal Office Locations**

- 5.23 St Albans City centre has the highest demand for office space in the District and comprises of three Principal Office Locations: St Albans City Core PEA1; St Albans City Station PEA2 and St Albans Abbey Station PEA3. A sufficient supply of office space can help to attract and retain businesses and keep rental costs lower due to sufficient supply.

### **EMP3 - St Albans City Principal Office Locations**

St Albans City is the key office location in the District. Development proposals within PEA1, PEA2 and PEA3 must:

- a) Avoid net loss of office floorspace that falls within Use Class E(g)(i); and
- b) Provide an active frontage on the ground floor; that within the defined town centre boundary can include retail and leisure uses.

On an exceptional basis, redevelopment for residential use may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:

- c) The proposed development would not compromise other existing office uses within PEA1, PEA2 and PEA3 or the potential for office development on sites within PEA1, PEA2 and PEA3; and
- d) There is no demand for continued employment use, supported by marketing evidence covering a period of no less than 12 months.

The St Albans City Principal Office Location boundaries are identified on the Policies Map.

### **Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter**

- 5.24 St Albans District is home to two nationally and internationally leading research organisations:

- Rothamsted Research, which is a world leader in the agri-tech sector and supports an ecosystem of related research and development; and
- The Building Research Establishment (BRE), which is engaged in research and innovation in building science and also possesses an innovation park that attracts and supports innovative businesses.

5.25 The Hertfordshire Economic Board ‘Hertfordshire Futures’ recognises the growth potential of green sectors. The BRE and Rothamsted sites are included in the Hertfordshire multi-site Envirotech Enterprise Zone, which focused on environmental technologies. This has been re-branded as Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ).

5.26 Herts IQ includes the proposed 53 hectare East Hemel Central Strategic Allocations in St Albans District. There are also proposals in this Plan, as can be seen on the Policies Map, for a modest expansion of the current Rothamsted campus to the south and north-west.

#### **EMP4 - Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ)**

The Council supports development and redevelopment which provides or supports knowledge-based research and development activities for Herts IQ at the following locations:

- Rothamsted Research – including expansion of the site through two allocations OS3 and OS4 set out in Part B;
- Building Research Establishment (BRE); and
- The proposed employment area at East Hemel Hempstead (Central).

### **Employment Skills**

5.27 While the District has a low overall rate of unemployment, for people with low skill levels and low incomes it is important that growth in the District provides employment opportunities and training schemes for local people, this includes in particular younger people and people in need of retraining.

#### **EMP5 – Employment Skills**

To improve employment skills within the District larger proposals must ensure the employment of local people in the construction of larger scale new housing or significant scale commercial. This policy applies to proposals that are of 100 or more dwellings, or with a proposed floorspace of 10,000 square metres or greater of commercial space. Local people for this policy are defined as residents of South West Hertfordshire Local Authorities. Relevant proposals must submit an Employment Skills Strategy as part of the planning application that:

- a) Demonstrates how the local people employed will be given training in skills required by the construction industry, including but not exclusively limited to electrician, gas fitter, plasterer, plumber, carpenter, brick mason, scaffolder, painter, tiler, roofer, excavator, concreter and landscaper; and
- b) Avoids employment work as a general labourer.

If agreeable to the Council, relevant measures will be secured via a planning obligation.

# Chapter 6 – City, Town, District and Local Centres and Retail

## Objective

*Support the role that the town, district and local centres play at the heart of local communities, sustainable lifestyles and the visitor economy, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.*

## Introduction

- 6.1 St Albans District's city, town, district and local centres are vital elements in supporting vibrant and sustainable communities. The centres are retail, leisure, economic and civic hubs and for the District to grow successfully it is important that these are thriving centres. Each has a special character that contributes to the distinctiveness of the District and it is important that this character is retained and enhanced.
- 6.2 St Albans City Centre is the largest and most important shopping centre in the District, with a healthy economy that has a distinctive offer including a wide range of independent outlets, chain stores, retail, financial services, cafes, restaurants and public houses. A notable feature is the large historic Charter Market on St Peters Street. Combined with the generally attractive historical townscape and good accessibility, St Albans centre draws in a wide range of people and is a shopping and leisure destination. There is, however, some leakage of expenditure to surrounding areas outside the District for shopping and leisure activities. The importance of St Albans City Centre has led to the Council working with local groups to develop a specific City Vision.
- 6.3 Harpenden Town Centre has a good range of independent outlets, chain stores, retail, financial services, cafes, restaurants and public houses. The town centre includes areas of green space and is generally attractive, historic and high quality. There is also a lively and well-attended farmers market.
- 6.4 The district centres include small town and village centres such as London Colney, Redbourn and Wheathampstead, and large suburban centres, which generally provide a good range of local retail and other town centre uses providing for local needs.
- 6.5 There are also many small local centres across the District that provide essential local retail and other services.
- 6.6 Outside of the centres are shops that provide for local need within walking distance of their customers.
- 6.7 The Council is required by national policy to define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability. This includes defining the extent of the town centres, district centres and local centres and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations. The District's Centre Hierarchy consists of one city centre, one town centre, seven district centres (small towns, villages and large suburban), and 23 local centres, as well as street markets, and three out of town retail parks.

- 6.8 Town centres have been affected by the growth of online shopping and the impacts of COVID-19. To succeed centres need to attract visitors for a variety of reasons, such as leisure and community infrastructure, and not just purely shopping. There are opportunities for centres to improve their visitor economy, making better connections to local character, and building on unique identities.
- 6.9 The definition of main town centre uses under national policy is broad, and includes retail, leisure, entertainment, cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls, offices, theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities<sup>16</sup>.
- 6.10 The Council expects retail and other town centre uses to be located in the District's town centres, using a 'town centre first' approach, in accordance with national policy.
- 6.11 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in recent years have reduced the Council's control over town centre uses. Many town centre uses fall within the E 'Commercial, Business and Service' Use Class, which incorporates retail, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, offices, medical services, creches and nurseries, and indoor sports. Planning permission is not required to move between these uses. There have also been changes to permitted development rights that expanded the scope of changing from commercial to residential uses.
- 6.12 The boundaries of City, town, district and local centres are identified on the Policies Map.

### **Strategic Policy SP6 – City, Town, District and Local Centres and Retail**

The Council supports City, town, district and local centres as essential locations that provide retail, services, leisure and entertainment, and many other functions to local people, workers and visitors. The continuing vitality and viability of Centres will be promoted, along with diversification where appropriate.

The Council will support centres through:

- a) Applying a 'town centre first' approach to proposals for main town centre uses in accordance with the defined Centre Hierarchy and the sequential and impact approach set out in the NPPF;
- b) Managing and evolving the District's centres to provide a range of town centre uses and functions;
- c) Maintaining the District's Centre Hierarchy as per Table 6.1;
- d) Seeking to enhance the role of St Albans City Centre as a key, sustainable destination through proposals that improve the quality and broaden the range of retail, service, leisure, cultural and civic / community facilities, including St Albans Charter Market;
- e) Setting out a **City Vision** for St Albans City Centre;
- f) Seeking to enhance the role of Harpenden Town Centre as a key, sustainable destination through proposals that improve the quality and

<sup>16</sup> See NPPF Glossary Main town centre uses

- broaden the range of retail, service, leisure, cultural and civic / community facilities, including the existing farmers market;
- g) Seeking to maintain and enhance as appropriate the district and local centres through proposals that improve the quality and broaden the range of main town centre uses, in particular for local users; and
- h) Developing new local centres within Strategic Allocations to serve the day-to-day needs of the relevant wider resident catchment population. Local Centres should:
- Prioritise provision of suitable local shops, such as a convenience store;
  - Be designed with clustering of other complementary uses nearby, such as primary schools, older persons accommodation, mobility hubs, doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and other community infrastructure investment;
  - Maximise good active travel routes from new homes, to encourage walking and cycling.

**Table 6.1: Centre Hierarchy**

Category	Centre
City centre	St Albans City Centre
Town centre	Harpenden Town Centre
District centres (Small towns, villages and large suburban)	London Colney
	Fleetville (St Albans)
	The Quadrant, Marshalswick (St Albans)
	Verulam Estate (St Albans)
	Southdown (Harpenden)
	Redbourn
	Wheathampstead
Local centres within Strategic Allocations	New local centres within each Strategic Allocation to serve the day-to-day needs of the relevant wider resident population
Local centres	St Albans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 153 &amp; 191-207 Cell Barnes Lane</li> <li>• 15-23 Central Drive</li> <li>• 2-36 Beech Road</li> <li>• 8-26 High Oaks</li> <li>• 35-41A Abbey Avenue</li> <li>• 38-54 New House Park</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23-39A Vesta Avenue &amp; 1 Watling View</li> <li>• 30-38 Abbots Avenue West</li> <li>• 399-417 Hatfield Road</li> <li>• 1 Claughton Court, 1-3 Loyd Court &amp; 1 Jacob Court, Russet Drive</li> <li>• 1-10 St Brelades Place</li> </ul>
	<p>Harpenden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95-105 Luton Road</li> <li>• 103-107 Station Road</li> <li>• 138-146 Lower Luton Road</li> <li>• 50-54 Westfield Road</li> <li>• 385-397 Luton Road</li> </ul>
	<p>Bricket Wood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19-27 Black Boy Wood</li> <li>• 81A-97 Old Watford Road</li> <li>• 95-127 Oakwood Road</li> </ul>
	<p>Chiswell Green:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2A Tippendell Lane; 301-305, 192-204, 210-212 &amp; 216A Watford Road</li> </ul>
	<p>How Wood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-30 How Wood</li> </ul>
	<p>Park Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69-71 &amp; 68-78 Park Street; 1-2 Park Street Lane</li> </ul>
	<p>Colney Heath:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11-15A &amp; 14-18 High Street</li> </ul>
	<p>New Local Centres within Strategic Allocations</p>

## Protecting Retail and Main Town Centre Uses

- 6.13 The District's town centres are places that provide retail, services, leisure and entertainment, and many other uses for residents and visitors. These locations are a key focus for local communities and are often accessible by sustainable transport options. The Council will therefore resist the loss of town centre uses.
- 6.14 A Primary Shopping Area is a defined area within a centre where retail uses are concentrated. The Council is required by national policy to define the extent of town centres and Primary Shopping Areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre. St Albans and Harpenden centres have designated Primary Shopping Areas due to their size, diversity and function.

## **TCR1 – Protecting Retail and Main Town Centre Uses**

The Council will protect retail and main town centre uses through the following approach:

- a) Within the defined Primary Shopping Areas -
  - i. Resist the loss of existing retail (Use Class E(a));
  - ii. Support development proposals at ground floor level for the following uses:
    - Retail (Use Class E(a));
    - Food and drink (Use Class E(b));
    - Financial, professional and other services (Use Class E(c)); and
    - Drinking establishments (including bars and pubs) (sui generis).
  - iii. Support development proposals at above ground floor level for the following uses:
    - Retail (Use Class E(a));
    - Food and drink (Use Class E(b));
    - Financial, professional and other services (Use Class E(c));
    - Drinking establishments (including bars and pubs) (sui generis);
    - Crèches, day nurseries or day centres (Use Class E(f));
    - Other main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF;
    - Learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F1); and
    - Residential (Use Class C3).
- b) Within the defined City, town, district and local centres but outside of the Primary Shopping Areas -
  - i. Support development proposals at ground floor level for the following uses -
    - Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E); and
    - Learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F1).
  - ii. Support development proposals at above ground floor level for the following uses:
    - Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E);
    - Other main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF;
    - Learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F1); and
    - Residential (Use Class C3).
- c) Proposals within defined centres that result in the loss of Commercial, Business and Service (E), Learning and non-residential institutions (F1)

or Local Community (F2) Class Uses at ground floor level must demonstrate that:

- i. The unit has been proactively and appropriately marketed for at least 18 months (within the defined Primary Shopping Areas) or at least 12 months (outside the defined Primary Shopping Areas), and it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a realistic prospect of the unit being used for E, F1 or F2 Class uses in the foreseeable future;
- ii. The unit is no longer needed to meet the needs of the community within the local area; and
- iii. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

Note: The location of city, town, district and local centres and primary shopping areas are shown on the LP Policies Map

## Town Centre Uses Outside of Existing Centres

- 6.15 The Council will seek to protect local shops (sometimes referred to as ‘the corner shop’) that are outside of the Centre Hierarchy, but which provide a valuable role in the community through servicing the day to day needs of residents, often within walking distance of people’s homes.

### **TCR2 – Retail Uses outside Existing Centres**

Outside of the Town Centre Hierarchy the Council will:

- a) Resist proposals for new town centre uses unless they are within rural areas that meet the definition of Local Community Shop under Use Class F2(a); and
- b) Refuse proposals that result in the loss of retail use under Use Class E(a) unless the following can be demonstrated:
  - i. The unit has been proactively and appropriately marketed for at least 12 months, and it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a realistic prospect of the unit being used for E(a) or F2(a) uses in the foreseeable future; and
  - ii. The unit is no longer needed to meet the needs of the community within the local area.

## Out-of-Centre Retail Parks

- 6.16 Out-of-centre retail parks provide large retailing units that cannot be accommodated in town centres, together with extensive, typically free, car parking. The units will typically be for national or regional retail chains. The transport focus is very much on the access by private car, which can lead to issues with congestion. Together with the relatively low building density, access issues for pedestrians and cyclists, and a lack of green space, retail parks can relate poorly to the surrounding areas and be low in terms of environmental sustainability. The District has large retail parks at London Colney, Hatfield Road and Griffiths Way, St Albans.

### **TCR3 - Retail Parks**

Proposals within the existing retail parks should improve sustainability by:

- i. Providing layouts, public realm and building designs to respond to the surrounding area;
- ii. Providing high quality and effective pedestrian and cycling and public transport infrastructure on and off-site, including provision for cargo bikes; and
- iii. Increasing green coverage through tree planting and providing areas of natural planting.

### **Visitor Economy**

- 6.17 The District has many attractions including museums and unique heritage such as the Roman town of Verulamium and St Albans Cathedral. Visitors are drawn in by the attractive and vibrant town centres such as St Albans City Centre and at Harpenden. The villages, rural areas and natural environment such as Heartwood Forest also provide places which bring people into the District. Visitors to the District also contribute to the local rural economy and support local businesses and jobs.

### **TCR4 - Visitor Economy**

The Council will support the visitor economy by:

- a) Supporting in principle the development of new or improved visitor infrastructure, including hotels, cafes and restaurants, and transport, and visitor attractions including historic buildings, museums, theatres and markets; subject to other policies in this Plan; and
- b) Supporting where appropriate provision of information boards, heritage trails, route markers and other infrastructure that assists visitors to understand, appreciate and move around the District's visitor attractions.

### **St Albans City Vision**

- 6.18 St Albans City Centre makes up much of the core of the cathedral city and market town which has a distinctive heritage which includes historic buildings, landscapes and archaeology. It has a defined Conservation Area, established over 50 years ago, which covers the medieval core of the city plus key nineteenth century developments and areas of townscape and landscape value. It has a vibrant street market, good shopping, entertainment, eating and hospitality facilities and well-located hotels.
- 6.19 Overall there is an aspiration to achieve a high quality public realm, improving the quality of the environment for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 6.20 There have been successful recent buildings that had responded positively to the local heritage whilst providing modern architectural approaches and valued new facilities. There will continue to be change and growth most particularly in St Peters Street and its vicinity.
- 6.21 A large number of people live within the city centre. This residential role is an important one and both residential amenity and the vibrancy of the wide mix of uses

need to continue to be balanced. Development that would cause significant harm to residential amenity will not be supported.

- 6.22 The City Vision area does not have a defined area – it comprises the City Centre (as defined in Policy SP 6) plus a wider area with strong linkages to the central area; this area is deliberately not defined precisely on the Policies Map.

### **TCR5 – St Albans City Centre Culture, Heritage, Civic Pride and the Leisure Economy**

It is vital to provide a framework to preserve or enhance local historic assets, culture and heritage to be enjoyed and appreciated by local people and visitors both now and in the future, in a context of positive change and growth. To achieve this the Council will support the following:

- a) The enhancement and management of cultural and civic areas to encourage business, commercial, cultural and visitor activities which are a focus of community activity and pride. The Council will seek to encourage activities which celebrate local culture, community and history.
- b) The retention of existing cultural and entertainment facilities unless alternative provision of an equivalent or greater community value and accessibility is provided and it can be clearly demonstrated that they are no longer viable.
- c) The delivery of a cultural cluster in St Albans City centre, including improved facilities for cinemas, museums and theatres. The Cathedral Quarter is a key asset and is integral to the identity of central St Albans.
- d) The future evolution of the main performance space offering within the city centre – currently the Alban Arena. This is likely to need to be: fit for purpose, flexible space(s) with indoor / outdoor potential and scope to be utilised day times / evening / night times, seven days a week.
- e) Heritage trails through the city centre – including blue plaques.
- f) Live music – St Albans has a thriving local live music scene which is a distinctive feature. New development must not inhibit existing venues from continued successful operation.
- g) Film and TV production.
- h) Improved youth provision – including in relation to music and culture.
- i) The Charter Market, other markets, and the environment of Market Square.

A large number of people live within the city centre. This residential role is an important one and both residential amenity and the vibrancy of the wide mix of uses need to continue to be balanced. Development that would cause significant harm to residential amenity by reason of such factors as noise, smell, safety or excessive traffic will be refused.

- 6.23 High quality public realm should provide an environment that is attractive, welcoming, safe and intuitive to move through for people walking and cycling, and with a

movement function that supports the principles of the Local Transport Plan's Transport User Hierarchy. While many aspects of the St Albans City Centre public realm are good, there are improvements that can be made, for example in terms of green spaces and play areas and the routes through which visitors access the centre. There is an aspiration to work jointly with HCC and local groups to bring forward a St Albans City Centre Transport Vision and Strategy (travel and movement) over time.

### **TCR6 – St Albans City Centre Public Realm and movement**

To enable an improved public realm and improved movement through city centre areas the Council will support:

- a) Positive change on the route from the St Albans City railway station to the city centre along Victoria Street that includes providing visitors with an understanding of the culture and history of the City, clearer signage and improving the walking, cycling and sustainable transport provision along this route.
- b) A specific new compact city centre green area, potentially linked to positive change around the Alban Arena area / land to the east side of St Peters Street, including children's play / 'pocket park' / 'play on the way'.
- c) The River Ver project in principle to bring benefit for residents and visitors, for example seeking to re-naturalise the river and lake where possible, taking into account the significant heritage assets.
- d) Improved wayfinding.
- e) More places to sit and socialise with additional benches and green spaces.
- f) The principle of central car clubs / car-sharing, bike-hire, cargo bikes and secure cycle parking.
- g) Continuing to work with St Albans City Station and St Albans Abbey Station stakeholders to make the most of sustainable transport opportunities at, and emanating from, the stations, while recognising and enhancing the hub and gateway roles the stations play.
- h) The improvement of walking, cycle and bus routes to the stations having regard to the Local Transport Plan User Hierarchy.
- i) Implementation of walking and cycling improvements identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- j) Environmental enhancements which may involve:
  - i. Street scene and public realm – including improvements to the historic 'alleys', Drovers Way and where possible rationalisation of bin / waste storage;
  - ii. Landscaping;
  - iii. Lighting;
  - iv. Public art.

- 6.24 A successful mixed economy for St Albans City Centre underpins its future as an attractive place to visit. The vibrant economy provides jobs and makes effective use of the buildings and spaces. St Albans has a wide range of shops, eating out opportunities, services and offices which contribute to maintaining the dynamism of the city centre. The exceptional range of independent businesses/ retail/ food and drink offering should be celebrated and encouraged.

### **TCR7 – St Albans City Centre – Vibrant and Mixed City Centre Economy**

To continue to support and enable a vibrant and mixed city centre economy the Council will support:

- a) A distinctive concentration and diversity of independent businesses / retail / food and drink offering.
- b) Residential uses on upper floors on appropriate sites in the city centre, whilst maintaining active ground floor uses.
- c) A positive evolution of St Peters Street and its immediate vicinity which includes a variety of building heights, respecting and complementing existing scale, massing, and materials, with a role for residential and hotel uses on upper floors – noting that these must not conflict with a lively city centre environment, for example the Charter Market.
- d) Expansion of health uses in city centre locations.
- e) Flexible rentable meeting rooms and workstations or pods, online businesses and start-ups.
- f) Proposals that protect or enhance the amenity and wellbeing of existing and new residents in the city centre.

# Chapter 7 – Community Infrastructure

## Objective

*Make sufficient provision for and access to community infrastructure in sustainable locations*

## Introduction

- 7.1 The growth of the District will create opportunities to improve existing and provide new infrastructure. Community infrastructure covers a wide range of needs, and a wide variety of scales from the largest such as a new secondary school down to a children's play area.

## The Infrastructure Delivery Plans

- 7.2 The Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) set out an understanding of the infrastructure requirements of the District. They take account of existing permissions, allocations and windfall development.
- 7.3 The IDPs assess the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure in the District and its ability to meet forecast demands. The documents also take account of the likely cost of delivery, potential funding gaps, the phasing of delivery, funding sources, and who is responsible for delivery. The IDPs are 'living documents' that will continue to be updated and refined before and after adoption of the new Local Plan.

## Community Infrastructure in the District

- 7.4 Where new development or redevelopment is dependent on, or creates, a specific need for new or improved community infrastructure, the Council may require suitable provision and / or financial contributions to enable development. Planning Obligations are considered further in Chapter 14.

## Healthcare

- 7.5 Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board are currently working with Hertfordshire County Council and local NHS organisations to consider the effective delivery of current and future health and social care provision. Within the District there are a range of local healthcare facilities including an acute care hospital, emergency ambulance, GP surgeries, community health services, mental health services, community pharmacy, dentistry, and ophthalmology services. The District has one main NHS hospital at St Albans City Hospital operated by West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (WHTHT) who are committed to enhancing and upgrading the existing healthcare provision at the hospital. There is also the Kingsley Green mental health and learning disability site, which opened in 2014 and is operated by Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust. A limited number of services are also provided at Harpenden Memorial Hospital.

## Education

- 7.6 Education includes nursery, primary, secondary and Sixth Form education and special needs services and facilities. Forecasting schools places demand is a task undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council, who must provide the sites for schools, through work with landowners and the District Council. Oaklands College is the main provider of further education and is identified as a sports hub, based at the Smallford

campus. Special Educational Need (SEND) provision should be provided in accordance with HCC’s latest SEND Special School Place Planning Strategy.

**Emergency Services**

7.7 The key emergency facilities in the District are two police stations at St Albans and Harpenden; four fire stations at St Albans, Redbourn, Harpenden and Wheathampstead; and two ambulance station response posts (located at fire stations) at Harpenden and St Albans.

**Leisure and cultural facilities**

7.8 Leisure and cultural facilities include community centres, village halls and community halls, libraries, sports and leisure facilities including swimming pools and gymnasiums, sports pitches, museums and arts centres. Notable venues include the Alban Arena auditorium, the Maltings Theatre, the Odyssey Cinema, the Abbey Theatre, and the Eric Morecambe Centre. Other community facilities include religious buildings such as the St Albans Cathedral, churches, temples and mosques, and public realm areas for outdoor exercise and socialising as well as public art.

**Libraries**

7.9 Libraries are provided by Hertfordshire County Council, and there are six in the District located at St Albans Central Library, Harpenden, Marshalswick, London Colney, Wheathampstead and Redbourn.

**Cemeteries**

7.10 There are three cemeteries in the District: two in St Albans and one in Harpenden; and five Churches which carry out burials.

**Youth facilities**

7.11 Development proposals will increase the need for, and use of, youth facilities in the future. Existing facilities are likely to be able to meet some of this demand, such as re-provision of existing community facilities including the Pioneer Centre and skate park on the former Ariston site in St Albans. There are also expected to be improvements elsewhere to smaller youth facilities and play areas, including as part of school joint use, or in community buildings and new open spaces. These can be delivered through new developments.

**Strategic Policy SP7 - Community Infrastructure**

In relation to community infrastructure the Council:

- a) Strongly supports and seeks to protect existing community infrastructure in the District;
- b) Encourages increased and improved provision in areas that are deficient;
- c) Requires that provision is made for enhancing and providing additional capacity for community infrastructure if required as a result of the impacts of new development;
- d) Will not permit development which would lead to the loss of community infrastructure, or land or buildings previously used for such purposes, unless replacement of equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity

in a suitable location is provided, or unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the building or facility is no longer required.

In relation to sports facilities (and open space and recreation) such existing facilities can be built on if the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss (e.g. a dual use sports hall being built on a school playing field).

In relation to the above, community infrastructure includes the following categories:

- i. A range of local healthcare facilities including acute care hospitals, emergency ambulance facilities, GP's surgeries, community health services, mental health services, dentists, pharmacy and ophthalmology services;
- ii. Secondary and primary schools, Sixth Forms and further education, early education including nursery provision and childcare provision, and special needs services;
- iii. Police & firefighting facilities;
- iv. Facilities such as community centres, theatres, and new or improved village halls;
- v. Libraries, sports and leisure facilities, sports pitches, cultural services including places of worship, public realm, public art and Public Houses;
- vi. Cemeteries and burial and crematorium facilities;
- vii. Flood defences; and
- viii. Recycling centres.

## Education

- 7.12 National policy sets out that it is important to have a sufficient choice of school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. A proactive, positive and collaborative approach is encouraged for school planning and to any development that will widen the choice in education. Great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools. Collaborative working with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues is supported.
- 7.13 Evidence indicates that new and expanded Primary and Secondary Schools, as well as Early Years provision, are required to support the housing growth included in the Plan.
- 7.14 Oaklands College St Albans is a key provider of educational and training opportunities. They have a recognised need to expand and improve their facilities within the Development Zone, as shown on the Policies Map. They also have a recognised desire to expand their sports and community facilities within the Sports and Communities Zone, as shown on the Policies Map.

## COM1 – Education

- a) Major residential development will be required to make appropriate provision for new schools and early years facilities (including 0-2, 3–4, and 5-11-year-olds) and post-16 education provision either on-site or by making a suitable contribution towards the improvement or expansion of nearby existing facilities.
- b) Requirements for schools within Strategic Allocations are set out in the Site Allocations (Part B). The associated indoor and outdoors sports facilities should serve a community joint use function. Access must be secured through community use agreements. The provision of playing pitches for community use will be required at new primary and secondary schools.
- c) ~~e)~~
- d) Proposals for the expansion of existing schools and new detached school playing fields will be assessed against the following criteria:
  - i. Expansion of existing schools must provide evidence of education need;
  - ii. New building(s) within Green Belt locations should integrate with the existing landscape and be sited as unobtrusively as possible while providing a good relationship with any existing buildings;
  - iii. Proposals for detached school playing fields in Green Belt locations must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and must not conflict with the Green Belt purposes;
  - iv. Design, external appearance and new landscaping must be to a high standard;
  - v. Effects on the amenity of the surrounding area in terms of visual impact, lighting, noise, disturbance, road access and traffic generation must be acceptable;
  - vi. Sufficient onsite servicing must be provided;
  - vii. Appropriate local infrastructure must be in place, or provided, to encourage cycling and walking, and a Travel Plan will be required to demonstrate a reduction in car based journeys;
  - viii. It is generally expected that provision of the new facilities for wider community uses will be secured through community use agreements.
- e) St Albans has an identified need for a new secondary school in the long term. A site has been identified at East St Albans near Oaklands College.
- ea) London Colney has an identified need for a new secondary school that may be required before 2041. A site has been identified adjacent to West of London Colney, and is identified on the Policies Map. A review and update of the Plan may remove the build zone for the secondary school from the Green Belt if needed.

- f) A new secondary school is proposed at East Hemel Hempstead North. The site is identified on the Policies Map. In addition, Hemel Hempstead is expected to have a need for a new secondary school; a site has been identified and is shown on the Policies Map. The build zone for school buildings has been removed from the Green Belt for the reserved school location at Hemel Hempstead. The build zone shall only be used for education purposes.
- g) Oaklands College St Albans proposes to deliver expanded education, sports and community facilities. A College Development Zone and Sports and Community Zone are identified on the Policies Map and are supported in principle. Community use of sports facilities and playing pitches should be secured by an appropriate mechanism such as a S106 agreement.

## Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

- 7.15 National guidance sets out that the provision of appropriate facilities for cemeteries and burial grounds are not classified as inappropriate development in the Green Belt as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 7.16 Evidence suggests that additional cemetery facilities and burial grounds will be required during the Plan period. London Road cemetery is currently considered to be the most suitable and sustainable site for providing additional capacity for the Council and for residents.

### COM2 - Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

- a) The Council will seek to ensure adequate provision of additional cemetery facilities and burial grounds during the Plan period.
- b) Expansion of the existing facilities at the St Albans Cemetery at London Road, will be supported in principle.
- c) Development for cemeteries and burial grounds in the Green Belt may be acceptable where proposals would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF.
- d) Appropriate risk assessments for potential impacts on groundwater must be undertaken as necessary.
- e) Proposals should have regard to the to the most up to date guidance on groundwater protection, currently the Environment Agency guidance "Protecting groundwater from human burials - Updated 25 June 2025", or any successor document.

## Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities

- 7.17 National policy sets out that the Council should plan positively to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- 7.18 Evidence suggests there is generally good existing provision of sport and recreation facilities in the District, however there are some deficiencies. As well as addressing deficits, there are opportunities to cater to new communities and improve overall

provision. New modern sport and recreational facilities, together with improvements to existing indoor leisure centres, are generally encouraged. The Strategic Allocations will require some new facilities, some possibly provided as part of joint-use education buildings.

- 7.19 It is recognised that there is also a deficit of worship space for some existing and growing communities within the District. This is particularly the case in existing urban areas. Some of these communities have particular challenges in finding appropriate space for religious observance. Their aspirations are positively supported, subject to appropriate consideration of impacts on neighbours, parking, highways etc. Opportunities for new provision can be created as part of development of new Local Centres in the Strategic Allocations, including in joint use community buildings.
- 7.19A New schools may include enhanced sports facilities to meet the Council's sports and leisure strategy and responsibilities. Where there is an intention to deliver enhanced sports facilities on a new school site, the Council as the local authority with sports and leisure responsibilities will make appropriate contributions to the enhancements through planning obligations or other funding mechanisms. The policy requirement for a community use agreement alone does not imply that enhanced facilities must be provided. Schools without enhanced facilities can also support community access but will be operationally limited and may not be sufficient to meet a formal sports and leisure need.

### **COM3 - Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities**

The Council supports new, retained and improved community, leisure and sports buildings and facilities.

- a) The Council will encourage new and enhanced community, sport and recreational facilities in appropriate and sustainable locations, including in particular:
  - i. Facilities located in the City Centre, town centres, district centres or local centres;
  - ii. Improvements to existing Council facilities through refurbishment or redevelopment;
  - iii. New local provision as part of major residential development at Strategic Allocations and strategic sites, including possible joint use of education and multi-purpose community buildings / halls or improvements to existing parish halls / centres near to the new housing areas;
  - iv. At educational sites with community access, including primary schools, secondary schools and Oaklands College; and
  - v. At appropriate locations identified in the playing pitch strategy, such as key centres and hub sites.

### **Public houses**

- 7.20 National policy sets out that that Councils should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities such as public houses. They also play a role in supporting rural communities and the rural economy.

- 7.21 Pubs are an important and distinctive part of the District's built, social and cultural heritage. Whether alone, or as part of a cultural mix of activities or venues, pubs are often an integral part of local culture and the economy. An individual pub can be at the heart of a community's social life, providing a local meeting place, a venue for entertainment or a focus for social gatherings.

#### **COM4 - Public Houses**

The Council seeks to retain the District's valued public houses.

- a) Applications which involve the change of use or demolition of a pub will be refused unless the following is demonstrated:
  - i. That the business is unviable;
  - ii. Marketing of the premises as a pub has been unsuccessful over a minimum period of 12 months;
  - iii. Initiatives have been undertaken to boost viability, including consideration of alternative business models; and
  - iv. There is adequate provision of reasonable alternatives in the area to ensure the community's ability to meet its day to day needs.
- b) A pub plays a significant social role in a local community. Where the criteria in a) are met, it must be demonstrated that alternative uses of community value have been fully explored with the aim of retaining a community use on the site before any non-community use may be found acceptable.
- ~~c)~~
- d) Applications which involve development of part of the pub site or building whilst retaining a pub use will only be approved if it can be demonstrated that the development will have no detrimental impact on the future viability of the pub business.

#### **St Albans City Football Club**

- 7.22 St Albans City Football Club has been looking at opportunities for a new stadium for many years which will include a significant hospitality offer. The Council recognises that a thriving football club and the development of a new stadium and training facilities would be likely to bring community benefits.
- 7.22A Policy requirements are set out below. Other factors that might contribute to 'very special circumstances' considerations include:
- a) Demonstrating that there are no reasonable alternative sites to locate the proposals outside of the Green Belt;
  - b) Demonstrating that the proposals would deliver significant community and public benefits. This would include how the development would help meet identified community, sports and leisure facility needs;
  - c) Demonstrating that the proposals minimise their impact upon the Green Belt.

## **COM5 - St Albans City Football Club**

The Council supports the principle of the development of a new stadium and training facilities, (including associated training, community access, education and conferencing provision) for St Albans City Football Club. The wider social and community benefits arising from such a proposal could carry considerable weight in considering any future proposal for such a new stadium.

- a) It is likely that such a proposal will need other development to cross- fund its delivery. Any cross funding development should be part of the same scheme and should be limited to that which is demonstrably necessary and required to ensure the delivery of the stadium and its continuing viability as a facility for the use of the wider community. A robust business case and viability appraisal must be provided;
- b) Significant community and public benefits must be provided and be secured by legal agreement;
- c) A vision-led approach to transportation must be provided which will facilitate a choice of sustainable transport options for both local and longer journeys that will be made to such a destination;
- d) Development may be supported within the Green Belt if very special circumstances can be demonstrated;
- e) Where any such development occurs in the Green Belt then the proposals must demonstrate the delivery of compensatory improvements such as improvements to the environmental quality and recreational accessibility of the Green Belt.

# Chapter 8 – Transport

## Local Plan Policy Objective

*Prioritise and enable the safe and attractive use of active and sustainable means of transport and reduce the need for people to travel*

### Introduction

- 8.1 This Chapter focusses on the transport issues in St Albans District and the Council's support for the use of active and sustainable means of transport and reducing the need for people to travel, particularly by private car.
- 8.2 National policy sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. This draft Local Plan has already directly addressed 'transport issues' from the start, through the overall approach of significant development in the District being primarily focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making. On-site and settlement level facilities can also reduce the need to travel. Further detailed transport technical work will be taken forward as the Plan progresses to adoption and beyond.
- 8.3 More than 50 percent of all journeys taken in the county are less than two miles and many more could be undertaken by sustainable modes. Whilst private car use will be needed for some journeys, this Plan seeks to reduce this reliance. A focus will be on ensuring local communities can access local facilities using attractive routes.
- 8.4 Evidence suggests that with travel demand increasing in future years, continued reliance on high levels of private car use will lead to worsening congestion and journey time reliability. These would be constraints on economic growth and negatively impact the environment and public health and the attractiveness of the District's places. Addressing the challenge of increased future travel demand cannot be solved solely through capacity driven highway infrastructure improvements. It will require: delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure to provide new and improved facilities making walking and cycling a genuinely attractive alternative to the car; passenger transport improvements and; traffic demand management measures where appropriate.
- 8.5 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) are the transport authority for Hertfordshire, while National Highways are responsible for motorways and major A roads in England. Local Plan policy seeks to build on key principles within HCC Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4) which promotes sustainable modes of transport and related infrastructure, encourages change in travel behaviour and seeks to reduce the need to travel. A key tool to maximise use of sustainable travel modes will be the widespread use of effective Travel Plans which are required for high trip generating developments. HCC have started work on a revised LTP, which is at an early stage of production, and will eventually replace LTP4.
- 8.6 The transport user hierarchy in the LTP sets the following priority: Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel; Vulnerable road user needs (such as

pedestrians and cyclists); Passenger transport user needs; Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs; Other motor vehicle user needs. Sites included in the Plan will be required to demonstrate compliance with the Transport User Hierarchy as set out in the most recent version of the Local Transport Plan and to prioritise vulnerable road users.

- 8.7 South West Herts Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) and South Central Herts GTP are supporting strategies to LTP4 which contain transport schemes for the District. The District worked jointly with HCC to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the Council has developed further transport evidence with HCC. Transport is also being addressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs). These will set out the main transport schemes in the District and together they will provide relevant sustainable transport infrastructure and approaches which promote sustainable modes and create a foundation for enabling significant changes in travel behaviour. They will encourage and enable shorter journeys to be made by sustainable means, including by walking and cycling, delivering the wider community benefits of active travel.

**Strategic Transport Considerations for New Strategic Scale Development**

- 8.7A The Council has worked with National Highways and Hertfordshire County Council to identify an indicative package of measures primarily to mitigate traffic impacts and ensure the sustainability of Hemel Garden Communities in transport terms. This includes measures on the Strategic Road Network and on the local road network within Hemel Garden Communities and within Hemel Hempstead. These are set out primarily in the Hemel Garden Communities, St Albans, and Dacorum IDPs. These IDPs will be updated to ensure they continue to deliver the required modal shift.
- 8.7B Measures on the local road network both within the site and within Hemel Hempstead are necessary to deliver the required mode shift which in turn impacts when some interventions on the Strategic Highway Network (such as M1 Junction 8 Phase 3 and M1 Junction 9) are needed. Committed development, build out rates and the quantum of development permitted within Hemel Garden Communities will also have an effect.
- 8.7C A monitor and manage approach will be needed to determine the actual timing of these improvements. As part of the monitor and manage process a Hemel Garden Communities Transport sub-group was set up in 2021, which includes representatives from St Albans District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and National Highways (as well as key landowners).
- 8.7D Growth in Redbourn will have an impact on the strategic road network, including M1 Junction 9, and therefore growth in Redbourn will also need to form part of the monitor and manage approach.
- 8.7E Growth in London Colney and its vicinity may have an impact on the strategic road network, including M25 Junction 22, and therefore growth in London Colney and its vicinity may also need to form part of the monitor and manage approach.

**Strategic Policy SP8 - Transport Strategy**

The Council will prioritise the use of active and sustainable transport modes and deliver accessibility improvements to the transport and highways network by:

- a) Aligning with the Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP) and other evidence and supporting documents, as relevant;
- b) Supporting development in locations which enable active and / or sustainable transport journeys, including to key destinations; where this is not possible ensuring that sustainable and active transport infrastructure is delivered at the earliest reasonable opportunity;
- c) Supporting reductions in car journeys for existing and new settlements; including in relation to education sites and school journey planning initiatives;
- d) Having regard to guidance which requires all high trip generating uses generating trips in excess of the thresholds set in Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance (Appendix 1A) to prepare, submit and implement Travel Plans to embed sustainable and active travel at an early stage;
- e) Working in partnership with stakeholders including Hertfordshire County Council, neighbouring authorities, National Highways and service providers to ensure that a range of sustainable and active transport options are available to all existing and future users of the transport network;
- f) —
- g) Protecting, adding to and improving existing rights of way, walking and cycling networks and equestrian access, having regard to the RoWIP, and, should diversion be unavoidable, require replacement routes to the satisfaction of the Council and the highway authority;
- h) Supporting inter-settlement connectivity for active modes (e.g. Alban Way, Nickey Line, Ayot Greenway and Upper Lea Valley Walk) and identification and delivery of new routes;
- i) Seeking Masterplans at Strategic Allocations to include implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure, including for bus services, at the earliest reasonable opportunity in order that sustainable travel patterns become embedded at an early stage; and
- j) Supporting a network of mobility hubs at suitable locations such as railway stations and co-located in city, town and district centres where appropriate. The scale and nature of proposals must be appropriate to the size and function of the centre or station and proposals should contribute towards the vitality of a centre. A mobility hub should support sustainable travel and can include: a local bus service, car club facilities, bike repair service, e-bike charging, bike share facilities, ride hailing & ride sharing stop, real time and digital travel information, wifi and phone charging, parcel delivery storage lockers and public realm improvements. Mobility hubs should be supported by online presence and digital functionality.

#### General infrastructure requirements

- k) The developers of HGC must fund and deliver a coordinated, and comprehensive, package of transport infrastructure (such as sustainable transport improvements and road junction improvements) as identified through Transport Assessments, the IDPs and other evidence documents.

These must deliver significant modal shift, reducing the need to travel by car, result in freeing/creating capacity on strategic and local roads, improve safety and air quality. Planning obligations will be required to deliver the mitigations identified on a site-by-site and strategic scale. In the case of the HGC Programme Area, this includes delivering interventions required in, and beyond, the plan period.

#### Strategic road network

- l) SADC, DBC, HCC commit to the development of a 'Monitor and Manage Plan', for agreement by National Highways, that will set out what is required of SADC, DBC, HCC, National Highways and the developers of HGC.
- m) The allocated sites at Hemel Garden Communities shall contribute financially and provide relevant data to deliver the monitor and manage approach to the timing of the delivery of improvements to M1 Junctions 8 (Phase 3) and 9. This includes a financial contribution towards monitoring and contributions towards the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
- n) Developers of B6 West of London Colney must contribute financially and provide relevant data to deliver the monitor and manage approach to the timing of the delivery of improvements, if needed to M25 Junction 22. This includes a financial contribution towards monitoring and contributions towards the delivery of strategic infrastructure.

## **Transport Considerations for New Development**

- 8.8 National policy sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, seeking to address the potential impacts of development on transport networks.
- 8.9 In order to be successfully accommodated, new development must give due consideration to road safety, road hierarchy and national level and Highways authority advice. Appropriate provision must be made for sustainable transport measures and their delivery. The District will work closely with Hertfordshire County Council when assessing the likely impact of development proposals, to assist in delivering this policy.

### **TRA1 – Transport Considerations for New Development**

- a. Proposals must demonstrate:
  - i. That safe and suitable access can be provided for walking, cycling and vehicles, accommodating equestrians where appropriate;
  - ii. That development would achieve safe and suitable access to the site for all users and would not cause unacceptable impacts upon the wider transport network, including the network in neighbouring authority areas; and
  - iii. Suitable evidence in relation to i. and ii, including the provision of suitable Transport Statements or Transport Assessments along with other appropriate evidence where required.

- b. Major proposals must demonstrate as appropriate how:
- i. Measures to reduce the need to travel by private car are identified and implemented alongside measures to reduce the need to travel overall;
  - ii. Active and sustainable connections to key destinations will be delivered at an early stage of development;
  - iii. The proposed scheme would be served by public transport and would not have a detrimental impact to any existing or planned public transport provision;
  - iv. Safe, direct and convenient routes for active journeys to key destinations are provided and prioritised in their design;
  - v. Comprehensive and coherent integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, Rights of Way, public transport and road networks will be secured;
  - vi. —
  - vii. The needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility will be addressed;
  - viii. The charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles will be enabled in safe, accessible and convenient locations; and
  - ix. —
  - x. Suitable mechanisms will be provided to secure sustainable transport measures, including contributions towards or delivery of schemes identified in the LCWIP, Bus Service Improvement Plan, Growth & Transport Plan and IDPs and improvements to the existing highway network and other appropriate transport mitigations, including as identified in Supporting Documents to the Local Transport Plan.
- c. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

## Major Transport Schemes

8.10 Major transport schemes are required to ensure appropriate provision of transport infrastructure. The policy seeks to support the delivery of new schemes and the retention of existing transport infrastructure. The District Council may provide feedback to assist implementation of major transport schemes. Where the detailed implementation of schemes are considered to be acceptable by the District Council, they will be supported.

8.10A The M1 Junction 8 package of measure consists of multiple elements, which can be split down into 3 different phases. Phase 1 includes the replacement of the existing Breakspear Way / Green Lane Roundabout (Phoenix Gateway) with traffic signals. Phase 2 consists of a package of transport measures to prioritise active and sustainable modes of travel including improvements to existing roads, a new A414 Walking and cycling bridge, a proposed mobility hub at East Hemel and the Hemel

Garden Communities Sustainable Transport Corridor in East Hemel. Phase 3, beyond the Local Plan period, seeks to provide additional capacity and connectivity to Maylands and Herts IQ, and relieve congestion on the A414. Land to the east of Junction 8 is reserved for a new bridge over the M1 should it be required. Appropriate contributions to the M1 Junction 9 upgrade may also be required through the monitor and manage process.

**TRA2 – Major Transport Schemes**

- a) The Council supports the delivery of the following major transport schemes in principle:
  - i. Improvements to Walking and Cycle Infrastructure
  - ii. A package of transport measures to enhance M1 Junction 8 (M1 J8) and surrounding area, in association with Hemel Garden Communities (HGC);
  - iii. Mobility Hubs located at Land East of Hemel Hempstead in association with HGC;
  - iv. Transport schemes identified in the IDPs;
  - v. Abbey Line enhanced service; and
  - vi. Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transport Scheme (HERT).
- b) There is now a reasonable prospect that the Government permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange identified in policy EMP2 will be delivered during the Plan period. The Council supports the road and sustainable transport infrastructure needed to mitigate it, in particular A414 enhancement.
- c) Development should not prejudice the construction or effective operation of the existing transport infrastructure and schemes listed above. Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to impact upon transport infrastructure or the delivery of the identified schemes will not be supported unless it is demonstrated the proposal would not harm their delivery.
- d) As the options for the transport schemes progress, the impact of the delivery of the major transport schemes will be subject to assessment in accordance with policies in the Plan such as archaeological assessment, environment assessment and flood risk.

**Development Generating New Lorry Movements**

8.11 A key aspect of managing traffic on the network is managing the movement of freight and logistics vehicles. Effective freight and logistics operations are important to local and national economy, Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4 aims to support these operations but in a way that does not compromise the natural environment and quality of life for residents. Proposals at the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and East Hemel Hempstead Central employment area are likely to generate new

lorry and freight movements and the policy seeks to reduce impacts of these movements.

### **TRA3 – Development Generating New Lorry Movements**

- a) Proposals for development leading to significant increases in lorry movements shall demonstrate that:
  - i. Any increase in lorry movements can be appropriately accommodated on the site or elsewhere;
  - ii. The opportunities for sustainable transport access have been maximised;
  - iii. The development does not result in significant adverse environmental effects on the surrounding area;
  - iv. There is adequate and suitable provision for lorry parking overnight; and
  - v. The site is accessible by other modes as set out by the user hierarchy for residents / employees / visitors.
- b) To reduce impact on the environment and congestion in both towns and rural areas, major development proposals should:
  - i. Encourage and enable Heavy Goods Vehicles to use the primary route network by means of signing and traffic management. In locations where problems persist, appropriate measures to restrict inappropriate heavy goods movements shall be promoted; and
  - ii. Minimise the number of freight, servicing and delivery trips to and from developments at the operational and construction phases.
  - iii. <sup>47</sup>

## **Parking**

- 8.12 National policy states that, when setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account: a) the accessibility of the development; b) the type, mix and use of development; c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport; d) local car ownership levels; and e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 8.13 The County Council's Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4) seeks to achieve a modal shift away from car use to more sustainable modes such as passenger transport, walking and cycling. For significant new developments including those on sites allocated under Policy LG1 (Strategic Allocations), there is scope to prioritise sustainable modes of transport in line with the aims of national policy and LTP4.
- 8.14 The amount of parking provision associated with development can have a significant effect on the mode of transport used to access it. Provision should also be

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<sup>47</sup> [Footnote deleted]

considered in relation to how the needs of users may change over time, including the predicted shift to low and ultra low emission vehicles that will require charging points.

- 8.15 Building Regulations include various requirements for provision of charge points and cable routes for new homes and new non-residential buildings, and there is also County Council policy and guidance in this regard.
- 8.16 In St Albans District, car ownership and usage levels are high and accessibility by non-car modes of transport in most of the District is insufficient to justify a significant level of parking restraint. For planning purposes the operation of the car parking standards is based on a zonal approach, with a degree of parking restraint imposed in locations that are most accessible to services, community facilities and public transport (Zone 2), and a particular focus on full mitigation for any shortfall in areas of likely overnight parking stress (Zone 3). There is also scope for large new developments at Strategic Allocation sites (Zone 4) to prioritise sustainable and active modes of transport such as to require reduced parking provision, as part of a bespoke parking strategy. Zone 1 comprises the parts of the District not within Zones 2, 3 or 4. The draft zones will be available on the Council's evidence base and this information will be reviewed as required.
- 8.17 Zone 2 comprises the District's most sustainable and accessible areas, which are those areas within 800m (10 minute walk) of the City / town centre and mainline railway stations of St Albans and Harpenden. This includes the main town centre services and facilities, bus stops and mainline railway stations for the District's largest settlements. Within Zone 2 there is reduced need for parking for private cars.
- 8.18 Zone 3 comprises areas of likely overnight parking stress; where the type and scale of development and local streetscene characteristics indicate that there is likely to be overnight parking stress, and where evidence for existing Controlled Parking Zones indicates that demand for on-street parking exceeds available space.
- 8.19 There are parts of central St Albans which fall within both Zones 2 and 3. The Policy and standards allow for this situation by requiring robust mitigation for any shortfall in provision having first applied the reduction against standards allowed for in Zone 2.
- 8.20 Parking standards can be found at Appendix 1. Maps showing the current (2025) extent of Parking Zones 2 and 3 are included in Appendix 1; they are also available via the Council's website, where any subsequent updated mapping will be shown. The car, cycle and disabled and inclusive parking standards are minimum standards, subject to the further guidance in relation to car parking standards in the various parking zones set out in Appendix 1 'Figure 1: Amount of car parking to be provided in each Zone'.

## **TRA4 – Parking**

### Parking Standards

- a) On-site car and cycle parking standards for new residential and non-residential development are set out in Appendix 1. Development proposals should:
  - i. Meet car parking standards as set out in Appendix 1, whilst taking into account the accessibility of the site to public transport and the nature of the use;

- ii. Provide at least the cycle parking standards in Appendix 1; and
- iii. Provide at least the disabled and inclusive parking standards for both car parking and cycle parking in Appendix 1.

#### Public Parking

- b) Within St Albans and Harpenden town centres<sup>18</sup>, and within areas of likely overnight parking stress (Zone 3), on and off street car parking available for public use should be maintained at least at current levels; unless otherwise allowed for specifically in an allocation in Part B.

#### Areas of Likely Overnight Parking Stress

- c) Within areas of likely overnight parking stress (Zone 3), proposals for new homes that do not meet the parking standards in Appendix 1 (including a Zone 2 reduction where applicable) will be refused unless appropriate financial contributions are made towards measures<sup>19</sup> to mitigate the shortfall in parking space provision.

#### Cycle Parking

- d) Cycle parking provision must meet the standards and requirements in Appendix 1.

#### New Development at Strategic Allocations

- e) New development at Strategic Allocations should:
  - i. Prioritise sustainable and active modes of transport;
  - ii. Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that attractive alternatives to the private car would lead to reduced demand, such as to justify a reduction in parking provision against the standards; and
  - iii. Develop an appropriate parking strategy with lower than standard parking requirements which must be agreed with the Council and which can realistically be enforced by planning obligations and / or on-street parking controls, seeking to avoid situations where there would be unacceptable on-street parking on site or nearby.

#### Car Clubs

- f) The Council supports provision for car clubs to help reduce the need for private car parking. Provision of suitable onsite car club facilities is required for development of 100 or more dwellings or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floorspace. The Council will either seek appropriate financial contributions from all major developments to car club facilities and schemes, or the Council will secure a car club to be delivered by the developer.

#### Bike and E-Bike Share Scheme

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<sup>18</sup> As shown on the Policies Map

<sup>19</sup> This could include car clubs, public transport, micro-mobility and active transport, through measures such as discount vouchers, low cost membership fees and discount travel passes for new occupiers.

- g) The Council supports provision for bike share schemes to help reduce car journeys. The Council will seek appropriate financial contributions from all major developments to Bike Share facilities and schemes.

Electric and other ultra-low emission Vehicle Parking

- h) Electric and other ultra-low emission vehicle charging points or the infrastructure to ensure their future provision within a development, in addition to meeting Building Regulations standards, should have regard to up to date guidance from the Local Highway Authority (Hertfordshire County Council), where proportionate. Adequate provision of parking spaces for plug-in and ultra-low emission vehicles should be made in major developments.

Layout

- i) Where parking is provided, it must be of a design and layout that will function satisfactorily and safely, and should have regard to up to date guidance from the Local Highway Authority (Hertfordshire County Council).

# Chapter 9 – Utilities Infrastructure

## Objective

*Ensure that essential utilities infrastructure, including broadband, is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.*

## Introduction

- 9.1 This chapter sets out the strategic policy for sufficient provision of utilities infrastructure, along with specific policies relating to the provision of fibre broadband and telecommunications.
- 9.2 Utilities infrastructure is provided as part of statutory market / commercial systems, including water, energy and digital infrastructure. The growth that is planned for the District as set out in this Local Plan leads to associated requirements for this utilities infrastructure.
- 9.3 The Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) set out the detailed assessment of the infrastructure requirements of the District, including in relation to utilities infrastructure. They assess the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure in the District and its ability to meet forecast demands due to population growth and the provision of new homes and jobs, and identifies provision requirements of planned growth. It is for utility providers and developers to provide the utilities infrastructure required to enable the planned growth in the District.

## Water Infrastructure

- 9.4 Water infrastructure includes infrastructure relating to water supply, wastewater, foul drainage and sewage treatment. The District is supplied water by Affinity Water, which has a legal requirement to supply water to new developments. It has produced a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) which sets out how it plans to provide a reliable, resilient, efficient and affordable water supply to customers whilst protecting the environment. At the core of this is the need to balance the amount of water available for supply with the demand for water. The most recent WRMP covers the period 2020-2080 and identifies a significant supply / demand deficit in the Central Region (which covers St Albans District); which it plans to address through demand management and leakage reduction measures, and through transferring water from neighbouring areas.
- 9.5 Thames Water is the statutory sewerage undertaker for the District, and its network includes sewers, pumping stations and other equipment used to capture and transport sewage. The Hertfordshire Water Study confirms that there is available water supply to support projected levels of growth in Hertfordshire in the current round of Local Plans. Additionally, the Study confirms that wastewater treatment capacity is available to support current growth levels in Hertfordshire to 2031; however, investment in capacity will be required to service growth beyond that period. The St Albans District Council IDP notes that the majority of wastewater from the St Albans region is treated at the Maple Lodge sewage treatment works, which is already operating at close to capacity and frequently gets overwhelmed; but that during stakeholder consultation in May 2023 Thames Water indicated that the Local Plan's growth scenario will not likely cause significant issues on the wastewater network and that capacity is expected to be available to support the growth.

## Electricity Infrastructure

- 9.6 National Grid Electricity Transmission owns and maintains the electricity transmission system in England and Wales. The energy is then distributed to the electricity distribution network operators, so it can reach homes and businesses. UK Power Networks manages the local electricity distribution network in St Albans District, and they have an obligation to develop and maintain an economic and efficient network. Electricity generation is in a state of transformation currently, due to the push for Net Zero to improve energy security and reduce fossil fuel use. There are no reported infrastructure or capacity issues in the District, although there may be some delays waiting for new connections in areas where demand capacity is showing as highly utilised. It is the responsibility of the developer to engage with consultants to determine their load requirements and determine the connection to the electricity and gas networks. Where proposed development triggers the need for reinforcement then the developer will pay all or a proportion of the costs.

## Gas Infrastructure

- 9.7 National Gas Transmission owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission system across the UK, and has a duty to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical transmission system for the conveyance of gas. Cadent Gas is the regional distribution network operator, and provision of on-site gas distribution is the responsibility of the developer. The current government decarbonisation policy is likely to significantly reduce gas demands, and Cadent's most recent Long Term Network Development Plan indicates a relatively stable level of peak gas demand in the ten-year future forecast.

## Digital Infrastructure

- 9.8 Digital infrastructure includes infrastructure relating to broadband and communications. National policy sets out that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being, and that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including full fibre broadband connections and next generation mobile technology (such as 5G).

### **Strategic Policy SP9 – Utilities Infrastructure**

- a) The Council requires and supports the programmed delivery of utilities infrastructure within the District to meet identified needs relating to water, wastewater, foul drainage, sewage treatment, electricity, gas, broadband and communications.
- aa) Development proposals must consider phased / co-ordinated provision and strategic routing of underground utilities to ease management and maintenance, and demonstrate that early engagement with utilities providers has taken place to enable this.
- b) Planning permissions may be subject to phasing conditions where these are required to ensure development is not occupied until the necessary utilities infrastructure is delivered.
- c) The siting and appearance of utilities infrastructure should be designed to minimise impacts on amenity and to contribute to the creation of a high quality built environment wherever possible.

d) Development proposals must not impact on existing utilities infrastructure provision, unless impacts are mitigated or it is demonstrated that the infrastructure will no longer be required.

## Broadband

- 9.9 Access to broadband is a vital component of infrastructure in today's world. It is key to growing a sustainable local economy, vital for education and home working and an increasingly central part of community cohesion and resilience. Local planning authorities and property developers have a pivotal role in ensuring that new developments are 'future proofed' through enabling the installation of direct fibre access.
- 9.10 Within the District, full fibre ('Fibre to the Premises') broadband has become more widespread. The St Albans District Council IDP identifies that the District is generally well-served by broadband services but there are some gaps in existing provision. Since December 2022 it has been a requirement of Building Regulations that developers install gigabit-ready physical infrastructure and gigabit-capable connections during the construction of new homes, but full fibre provision is of a higher standard and will also be beneficial for other forms of development. Broadband provision is commercially based, and within the District the main providers of infrastructure (as opposed to specific services through that infrastructure) are Openreach, Hyperoptic and Virgin Media.
- 9.11 Early contact between developers and service providers is necessary to ensure provision within new developments.

### **UIN1 – Broadband**

The Council considers that full fibre broadband is essential infrastructure and vital to the delivery of sustainable development.

Major residential and employment developments should enable all the development to be connected to full fibre broadband from first occupation without any post development works.

## Telecommunications

- 9.12 National policy supports the expansion of communications networks and sets out detailed requirements for evidence to support applications to enable this. It states that the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion; and notes that local planning authorities should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure. Legislation setting out a prior approval process for telecommunications apparatus within certain size parameters allows control over matters of siting and appearance only.
- 9.13 The apparatus primarily takes the form of street furniture but can also potentially be installed on suitably located rooftops and buildings. In this context, the provision of telecommunications installations to further the expansion of electronic communication networks is supported, subject to acceptable siting and appearance.

## **UIN2 – Telecommunications**

Telecommunications apparatus and associated structures must:

- a) Minimise negative impacts on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
- b) Be acceptable in relation to other planning matters.

# Chapter 10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

## Objective

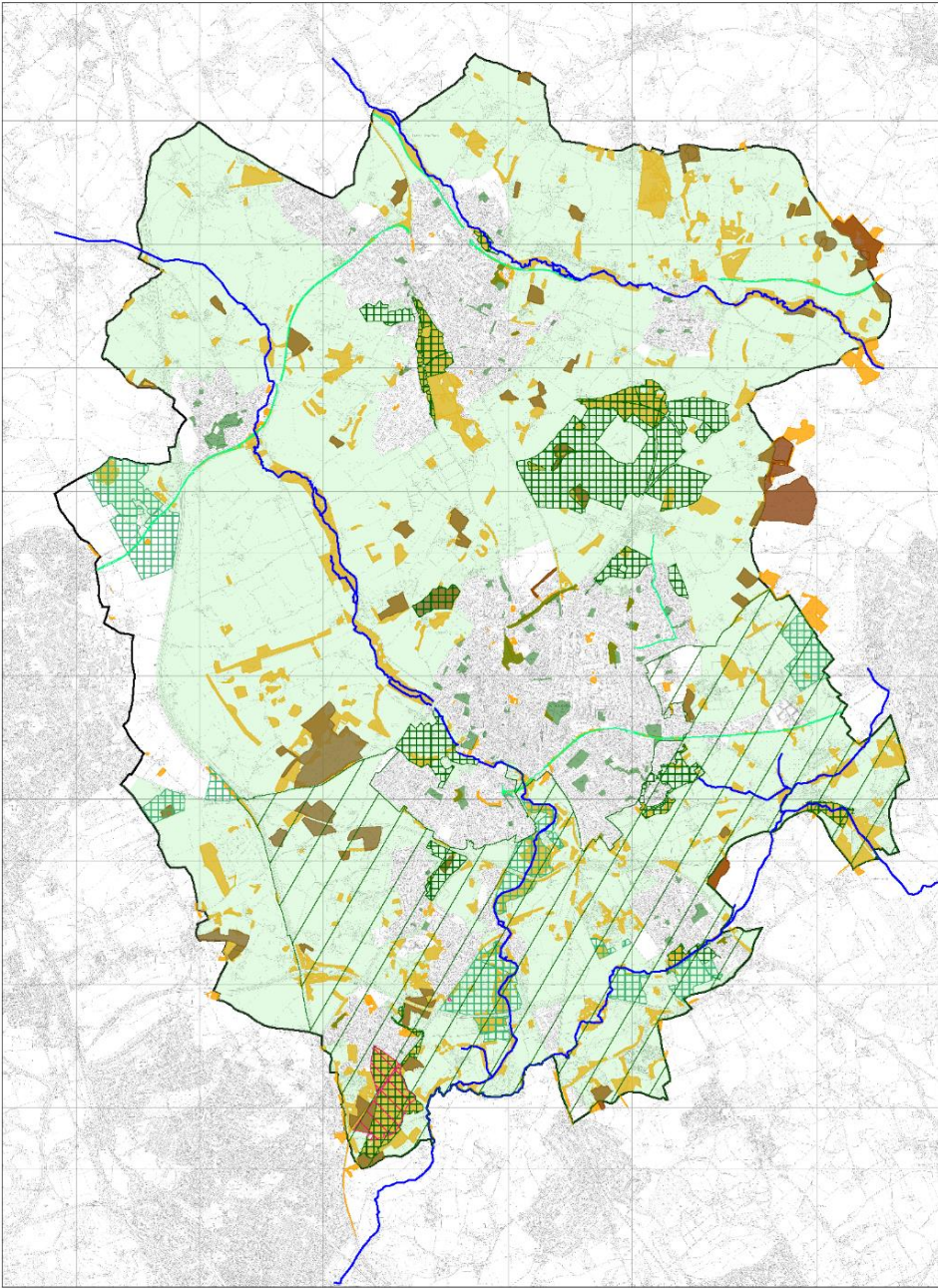
*Protect, maintain and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways.*









## Introduction

- 10.1 St Albans District possesses a rich natural environment and biodiversity within both rural and more urban areas. There are numerous scattered ancient and secondary woodlands, as well as the more extensive recent Heartwood planting. Grasslands constitute about a fifth of the District, whilst arable farmland and urban areas make up around two thirds of the area. There are small but important remnants of heathland, whilst the rivers provide valuable landscape and ecological corridors through the District. Roadside verges, old orchards, ponds, hedgerows and old parklands with veteran trees are also valuable components of the wider countryside and urban environments, whilst street trees, gardens, allotments, commons and parks can add further accessible biodiversity resources.
- 10.2 The natural environment plays an important role in tackling Climate Change through, for example, absorption and storage of greenhouse gases, ameliorating and managing flood risk, and supporting biodiversity. Trees within built-up areas provide shade and help to lower the impact of high summer temperatures. The Council is committed to increasing tree planting in the District, both within the rural and urban areas and adopted a new Tree Strategy in 2024.
- 10.3 In recent years' the District has benefited from the planting of the new Heartwood Forest and has supported the Watling Chase Community Forest Plan. New country parks are planned at the former airfield at Ellenbrook, as part of Hemel Garden Communities and as a compensatory measure as part of the Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI).
- 10.4 The natural environment is fundamental to people's health through its everyday uses for recreation, sports and leisure. Experiencing nature can be relaxing and highly beneficial to wellbeing. In many places the natural landscapes of St Albans are valued for their visual amenity and role in providing a sense of place. The District's public open spaces are also locations for popular outdoor activities such as children's play areas and trim trails.
- 10.5 The District has many playing pitches for outdoor sports including football, rugby, cricket and tennis. These are generally very popular and well-used by a wide range of age groups. The 'Playing Pitch Strategy' (2023) undertook a survey of the provision across the District and provides evidence for future provision.
- 10.6 Allotments provide an important resource for people to grow their own food in a way that is healthy and environmentally sustainable. The Council manages eleven allotments around the City of St Albans and has waiting lists than run from one to seven years. A further 29 allotment sites providing approximately 1,069 plots are located in the parishes of: London Colney, Wheathampstead, Redbourn, St Stephens and Harpenden. An additional 2 sites totalling 82 plots are managed privately by the Highfield Park Trust.

- 10.7 Flood risk is increased by Climate Change, with the waterways in the District posing a fluvial flood risk, while surface water flood risk occurs where rainwater is unable to drain away.
- 10.8 The Environment Act (2021) is a significant piece of legislation that for the first time sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world. In particular, the Act brought in the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The Environment Act also modified the Biodiversity Duty in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to include the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in exercising the functions of a public authority (the Biodiversity Duty).
- 10.9 St Albans District Council is a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP). The HCCSP has produced the '*Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity*' (2022).
- ~~10.10~~
- 10.11 An assessment of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by Dacorum Borough Council in 2022 revealed that more action is needed to help protect Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest on the Hertfordshire-Buckinghamshire border which is under increasing visitor pressure from the surrounding areas. If nothing is done, new development will lead to further visitor pressures and damage to the integrity of the SAC. A buffer Zone of Influence of 12.6km around this covers part of St Albans District, and the Council is legally required not to issue decisions within this buffer until appropriate mitigation is secured through a Mitigation Strategy. A key element in the Mitigation Strategy will be the identification and / or creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to draw people away from using the SAC.
- 10.12 Green infrastructure is defined by the NPPF as 'a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity'. Plans should take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries. Planning policies should also recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling / shading, carbon storage or food production.
- 10.13 The Council will work in partnership with stakeholders to protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore the District's existing natural environment, biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure assets.
- 10.14 The Council will also seek opportunities to create new diverse, linked networks of multi-functional green across the District, including Local Green Spaces.

Figure 10.1 – Green Infrastructure



Key					
	Metropolitan Green Belt		Proposed Linear Green Space		Watling Chase Community Forest
	District Boundary		Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Contains © Natural England copyright 2024. All rights reserved.	
	Local Green Space		Watercourses	Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.	
	Existing Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas		Natural England – Ancient Woodlands	 © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey AC0000819589.	
	Proposed Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas		Natural England – Priority Habitats Inventory		

## **Strategic Policy SP10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure**

The Council will protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure for its role in combating Climate Change and supporting biodiversity, along with its value for recreation, health and wellbeing, and landscape value. The Council will support the overall aims and objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as it applies to SADC. Tree planting and tree care in both rural and urban locations is a priority for the Council and will be required as part of new developments.

The Council will support proposals that ensure the protection and improvement of the District's green infrastructure and the wider natural environment, where the proposals:

- a) Connect to existing green infrastructure assets including opportunities to enhance connections and extensions to Public Rights of Way and other rights of way used by the public, where appropriate;
- b) Explore opportunities to add to the District's green infrastructure, including key linear green spaces;
- c) Avoid the loss, fragmentation or reduced functionality of green infrastructure and restore them within a development site where practical;
- d) Contribute towards local green infrastructure projects via planning obligations, where appropriate;
- e) Secure provision of long term maintenance through Section 106 agreements, including for Green Belt Compensatory Improvements (see Chapter 3);
- f) Make appropriate contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS), where the proposal is for additional housing within the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) Zone of Influence (ZOI). Such development proposals will also need to make provision for a new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), or alternatively contribute towards the maintenance of a suitable SANG project elsewhere; and
- g) Have regard to the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### **Woodlands, Trees and Landscape Features**

- 10.15 The Council greatly values the District's existing trees and natural landscapes, and fully supports planting of trees. New developments are expected to fully contribute to increasing the number of trees. This includes through requirements for a minimum of 'at least 1 semi-mature tree for each dwelling' for the Strategic Allocations and Large, Medium and Small Sites.
- 10.16 There is a preference for the planting of species native to the local area, particularly outside of the urban areas, since these will be best adapted to the local conditions and help to form a suitable environment for the other local plants and animals. Planting from stock grown entirely within the UK is also preferred for biosecurity reasons.

#### **NEB1 – Woodlands, Trees and Landscape Features**

The Council will enhance tree cover in the District and protect existing woodlands, trees and landscape features through the following approach:

- a)–
- b) Significant healthy trees and other important landscape features shall normally be retained. Development proposals that affect sites with significant existing woodland and trees must:
  - i. Be supported by a Landscape Survey - Landscape and tree surveys must conform to the requirements within BS5837 (2012) and subsequent revisions (landscape features on the site and adjoining land, tree species, canopy spread, trunk diameter and levels at the base of each tree should be recorded);
  - ii. Ensure that woodland and trees to be retained on the site are not endangered by construction works or underground services or proximity to development. Sufficient provision should be made for root protection. New development must not be sited where it is likely to lead to future requests for tree felling or surgery for reasons of safety, excessive shading, nuisance or structural damage.
- c) Where appropriate or necessary, Tree Preservation Orders will be made and / or planning conditions attached to planning consents, to protect existing woodland and trees (specified in accordance with BS 5837 (2012), and subsequent revisions);
- d) Ancient Woodland must be protected from removal or damage;
- e) There will be a presumption against the removal or destruction of any hedgerow that is considered important (according to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997).

## Local Green Spaces

- 10.17 Local Green Spaces are open spaces of particular importance which are not in the Green Belt. Local Green Spaces will be identified on the Policies Map and may be further supplemented in Neighbourhood Plans. These areas represent a strategic public and private open space network and are an essential part of the District's green infrastructure.
- 10.18 Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a Local or Neighbourhood Plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.
- 10.19 Designating a green area as Local Green Space provides protection consistent with that in respect of the Green Belt.
- 10.20 Character assessments and proposals for use, management and enhancement of Local Green Spaces, (including new areas created in the Strategic Allocations), may also be included in Neighbourhood Plans or Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 10.21 The District's Local Green Spaces are identified on the Policies Map.

### **NEB2 – Local Green Spaces**

Local Green Spaces provide an essential resource and they are supported by the Council. Existing Local Green Spaces will be protected and new Local Green Spaces sought where this is beneficial to the local community or a new development.

Proposals within designated Local Green Spaces will be determined in accordance with national planning policy.

## Non-Designated Local Green Spaces

10.22 National policy states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

10.23 The Open Spaces Study (2024) provides an assessment of provision across the District.

### NEB3 – Non-Designated Local Green Space

Development of non-designated areas of public green space, or green space in community use, will be refused permission unless the following criteria are met:

- a) The land no longer serves an important recreational, sporting, amenity or biodiversity purpose, and an assessment has been undertaken which has shown the open space / buildings / land to be surplus to requirements; Or, if this does not apply, suitable equivalent replacement land and facilities can be provided elsewhere and must be laid out and playable before the existing site is lost;
- b) The proposed development would not damage the character of any remaining green space, or the environment of the surrounding area, or the strategic function of any green space with which the site is associated; and
- c) Maintaining and improving biodiversity has been provided for in the design and landscaping of the proposed development and remaining green space.

Proposals to provide ancillary forms of built development necessary to support community access to, and use of, the spaces will be supported in principle.

If existing green space is to be developed, details of the enhancement of the remaining areas and future management of these spaces may be required and secured through planning obligation.

The loss of allotments will be refused permission unless it can be shown that suitable replacement allotments are to be provided, or it is demonstrated that there is no need for the allotments, taking into account current and previous usage of the site and any others in the vicinity, and there is not likely to be a need in the future.

## Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas

10.24 In recent years the District has benefited from the planting of the new Heartwood Forest. New country parks are planned at the former airfield at Ellenbrook Fields, as part of Hemel Garden Communities and as a compensatory measure as part of the Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI).

10.25 The Council wants to identify them to reflect the significance of their importance to the District. This includes a wide variety of aspects, such as access to semi-natural green space, facilities for recreation and biodiversity. These locations have a critical role in assisting maintaining a high quality of life and supporting mental and physical health.

#### **NEB4 - Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas**

The Council will preserve and enhance the following areas:

- Heartwood Forest
- Ellenbrook Fields (existing and proposed)
- Rothamsted Park
- Harpenden Common
- Nomansland Common
- Verulamium Park
- Jersey Farm Open Space
- Jersey Farm Woodland Park
- Bricket Wood Common
- SRFI Country Park(s) (approved)
- Hemel Garden Communities Country Park (proposed)
- North Hemel Significant Publicly Accessible Green Area (proposed)
- East Hemel (South) Significant Publicly Accessible Green Area (proposed)
- Highfield Park
- Batford Springs Nature Reserve
- Broad Colney Nature Reserve
- Colney Heath Common
- Batchwood

Key Linear Green Spaces:

- Jersey Lane
- Alban Way
- Nickey Line
- Ayot Greenway
- Lea Valley Line

The Council will seek development contributions from relevant major developments to mitigate impacts and support the maintenance and enhancement of these areas, including through delivery of Greenspace Action Plans and Greenspace Management Plans.

Except if required to deliver development allocated in Part B of this Plan, development must not result in the loss of all or part of a Key Linear Green Space to other uses, or significantly adversely impact on its amenity value as a place of

recreational, travel, wildlife, historic and visual significance, including through the removal of trees, hedges or other natural features.

## Blue Infrastructure

- 10.26 The District has long stretches of water in the rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, along with many lakes and ponds. High quality, clean watercourses are important for human health and for maintaining biodiversity. While recreational access to waterbodies is highly valued, it must also be recognised that the impact of people and pets can be detrimental to the environment. The District's chalk streams in particular are a globally rare habitat that must be carefully protected and enhanced.

### NEB5 - Blue Infrastructure

Watercourses and their settings will be protected for their biodiversity value (in particularly the District's globally rare chalk stream habitats) and to improve water quality to meet the standards set out in the Environment Agency Thames River Basin Management Plan. Development proposals that include or are likely to impact upon watercourses or waterbodies are required, as appropriate, to:

- a) —
- b) Include river restoration, including naturalisation and the removal of culverted sections of river or watercourse, or in exceptional circumstances, where restoration is not technically feasible, contributions to restore another section of the same watercourse will be sought and secured via a Section 106 Agreement;
- c) Conserve watercourses and their settings for biodiversity value (particularly for globally rare chalk stream habitats) and to improve water quality, flow and morphology to meet the standards set out in Environment Agency River Basin Management Plans;
- d) Undertake a Water Framework Directive (WFD) impact assessment for developments which require an EIA, where these are within 8 metres of a WFD designated surface water body;
- da) Ensure a minimum 8-metre buffer between all new development and the top of riverbank / flood defence / culvert;
- e) Minimise new buildings overshadowing the river channel due to excess shading hindering the growth of some riverine plants which impacts on foraging species and consequently biodiversity;
- f) Improve the habitat to increase biodiversity;
- g) Ensure no increase in flood risk; and
- h) Improve public access to the watercourse or waterbody where feasible and can be done without causing habitat damage.

## Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 10.27 Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of life present in any given area, including animals, plants, fungi and many microorganisms that make up the natural world. These species and their habitats interact to form complex ecosystems which, together, help to provide ecosystem services from food, water quality and flood control to pollination and pest control. Maintaining healthy, diverse and balanced ecosystems

is important for the health of the natural world and ultimately, the health and future of humanity, our wellbeing and quality of life.

- 10.28 The impacts of human activity have often damaged natural ecosystems and reduced biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach that limits the impact of development and provides a net ecological gain, helping to support recovery of the natural world. Achieving a minimum BNG of 10% as a result of development is a legal planning requirement under the Environmental Act (2021) from November 2023. This should be calculated using the latest Biodiversity Metric from Natural England and / or DEFRA.
- 10.29 A number of significant landowners within the District have set out that they intend to deliver significantly above the minimum 10% BNG on allocated sites set out in this Plan. This higher level of BNG aspiration reflects their corporate or local Sustainability ambitions. The Council strongly supports delivery of higher than 10% BNG on site where possible.
- 10.30 The Council will work in partnership with the County Council, the Office for Environmental Protection and Natural England to protect designated areas and species of national and local importance for biodiversity (see Policies Map). Identified and designated areas, sites and networks of importance for biodiversity including sites of local importance will be conserved, enhanced and managed. The Council will seek to implement the objectives of Hertfordshire-wide and local habitat and biodiversity strategies. The Hertfordshire Local Nature recovery Strategy is in development and will be a key tool in identifying species / habitats of importance.
- 10.31 Information on landscapes, habitats and sites of particular importance will be maintained and regularly updated as a current GIS data set by Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre.

### **NEB6 – Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain**

Proposals that are likely to impact on protected designated areas and species of national and local importance for biodiversity must:

- a) Undertake an ecological assessment for the planning application. Proposals will be refused if there are adverse impacts to any of the following:
  - i. Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
  - ii. Nature Reserves (international, national, regional and local);
  - iii. Any other sites of wildlife, geological or geomorphological importance, including Local Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites;
  - iv. Irreplaceable habitats;
  - v. Any site supporting species protected by UK or European law;
  - vi. The natural hydrology of both surface or ground water levels and flows affecting ponds, in river valley floodplains and their other associated wetland features and habitats.
- b) Apply the mitigation hierarchy (avoidance, mitigation, compensation) and in addition provide Biodiversity Net Gain (see below);
- c) Demonstrate ecological benefits through planning gain which take appropriate account of ecological advice from Hertfordshire Ecology and

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and on data from the Herts Environmental Records Centre, or from any of their successor bodies as appropriate;

- d) Take opportunities to link or reconnect fragmented wildlife habitats;
- e) Where appropriate, include a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy with infrastructure that will provide a number of different functions relating to amenity, ecology and flood risk;
- f) Make use of on-site beneficial features to improve biodiversity such as SuDS bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog highways, hibernacula and insect houses. Off-site initiatives supporting biodiversity will be through environmental land management schemes including alongside mandatory biodiversity net gain as another source of income to enhance biodiversity and the wider environment; and
- ~~g)~~
- h) Support the overall aims and objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

In line with national guidance and statutory requirements for BNG, development should provide a net gain in biodiversity.

Relevant development proposals must ensure that they:

- i. Meet a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity that is calculated using the latest Biodiversity Metric from Government guidance and is approved via a Biodiversity Gain Plan. Off-site habitat creation and / or enhancement contributions will be allowed only where on-site is not possible or desirable and these should be within the District wherever possible. Payments in lieu to the national statutory biodiversity credit scheme will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances; and
- ii. Secure long term management and maintenance (at least 30 years) for existing and new biodiversity, including any net gains, through Section 106 agreements and conservation covenants.

Where possible, higher than 10% net gain in biodiversity on site is strongly encouraged.

- 10.32 The development of new buildings and open spaces must avoid creating places which are sterile and low biodiversity. The Council is highly supportive of measures within new developments that increase wildlife.

### **NEB7 - Biodiversity Provision in the Design of New Buildings and Open Spaces**

The Council requires that:

- a) Development proposals have regard to the biodiversity already present within the site;

- b) Development proposals identify opportunities to maximise the provision for biodiversity on the design of new buildings in line with national and local nature conservation priorities;
- c) All new housing developments include suitable features in numbers appropriate to the scale of development to enhance local wildlife such as one swift brick, bat box and insect box per dwelling, on average for the development, installed in groups in optimal locations;
- d) All new proposals for suitable non-residential buildings must include suitable features to enhance local wildlife such as groups of integrated swift bricks in numbers appropriate to the scale of development;
- e) New wildlife habitats and features, including predominantly native trees, shrubs, or fruit trees as community orchards where space allows, and durable tree mounted nest boxes, hibernacula, bat boxes and insect boxes, will be incorporated into bee-friendly landscaping schemes and the general layout of the built environment. All fencing should be hedgehog friendly and hedgehog highways should be incorporated throughout the development to a proportionate degree.

## Flood Risk

- 10.33 Development in the District may be susceptible to the risk of flooding, both from the network of rivers, ordinary watercourses, groundwater, and from surface water. As noted above, Climate Change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of flood events.
- 10.34 National policy requires that strategic plans should be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). St Albans prepared a SFRA Level 1 jointly with Three Rivers District Council, Dacorum Borough Council and Watford Borough Council, published in 2018.
- 10.35 Water management and flood risk issues must be fully addressed by new development and the Council will work with the Environment Agency, the Lead Local Flood Authority and other risk management authorities, in order to mitigate flood risk impacts.
- 10.36 National policy requires that plans apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of Climate Change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. If it is not possible for development to be located in areas with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test may have to be applied.
- 10.37 The sequential and exception tests have already been applied to sites designated for development in this Plan. Windfall sites located within Flood Zones 2 or 3, or sites within Flood Zone 1 where there is an identified flood risk, which have not been subjected to Sequential and Exception Tests, will be required to do so.

## **NEB8 – Managing Flood Risk**

Proposals located within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 or 3, or sites within Flood Zone 1 where there is an identified flood risk) need to meet the requirements of the sequential and exception tests, in accordance with national policy. Any Flood Risk Assessment must be undertaken in accordance with advice from the Environment Agency (if applicable) or Lead Local Flood Authority.

Where the sequential and exception tests have been applied, proposals located within areas identified as being at risk of flooding will not be permitted unless the following is demonstrated:

- a) That the most vulnerable development within the site is located in areas of lowest risk;
- b) That all sources of flood risk are considered, including fluvial and surface water flood risk;
- c) That the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient and incorporates appropriate infrastructure to address the increasing potential for flood events due to Climate Change;
- d) That flood risk will not be increased elsewhere and, where possible, reduce flood risk offsite;
- e) How the proposal incorporates sustainable drainage systems;
- f) How any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- g) That safe access and egress routes are included where appropriate and have an agreed emergency plan.

Where a development may affect a watercourse or waterbody, the proposal must demonstrate flood and drainage storage areas as necessary.

~~h)~~

~~i)~~

~~j)~~

### **Surface water management**

- k) All major development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into proposals, and manage surface water run-off to achieve greenfield run-off rates where feasible;
- l) Proposals for minor and householder development should incorporate SuDS where applicable;
- m) SuDS should be green, provide multiple benefits, such as biodiversity and integrate into the green infrastructure network; and should follow the following drainage hierarchy;
  - i. Storing rainwater for later re-use;
  - ii. Use infiltration techniques;
  - iii. Attenuate rainwater in ponds/basins for later gradual release;
  - iv. Attenuate rainwater by storage for later gradual release;

- v. Discharge rainwater directly to a watercourse;
- vi. Discharge rainwater to a surface water sewer;
- n) Discharge of surface water to watercourse or sewer system is not to exceed pre-development (greenfield) runoff rates; and
- o) Development proposals incorporating SuDS will need to include management and maintenance plans for the proposed SuDS, with appropriate contributions sought where necessary.

## Agricultural Land

- 10.38 National policy sets out that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

### NEB9 – Agricultural Land

Other than where development is allocated in this Plan, where development on more than 20 Hectares of agricultural land is proposed, a detailed survey (approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or an independent expert), which includes an assessment of grading, should be submitted. Development resulting in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 or 3a) will not normally be acceptable unless it can be evidenced that there is a need for the development and there is no reasonably available land of a lower quality which could be used. The economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be recognised in decision taking.

## Landscape

- 10.39 The District has a wealth of attractive landscapes, much of it classified as Green Belt, that provides a valuable natural resource for biodiversity, recreation and farming. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscape.
- 10.40 Good landscape design in new developments is vital, and must be considered alongside the design principles and policies provided in Chapter 12 High Quality Design.

### NEB10 – Landscape

The Council considers that protecting and enhancing landscapes is essential to creating sustainable and attractive places.

- a) Proposals must demonstrate:
  - i.—
  - ii. For major developments, how the existing landscape will be protected, enhanced and integrated into the development, detailed in a Landscape Strategy, along with new tree planting as part of any new green space provision; and
  - iii.—

- iv.—
  - v.—
  - vi.—
  - vii. That where changes to landscape may be required, details be provided of existing landscaping, trees and shrubs trees to be removed; the planting of new trees, shrubs and grass; alongside details of and level changes, enclosure, screening and paving; significant healthy trees and other important landscape features shall normally be retained.
- b) Any development proposal in a Landscape Character Area must:
- i. As appropriate conserve, restore or enhance the prevailing quality, character and condition of the natural and historic landscape; and
  - ii. Be accompanied by a statement to demonstrate how the proposal responds to managing change, including restoration of historic field, transport, settlement and built forms where appropriate.
- c) Proposals in Strategic Allocations should have regard to the recommendations of the Council’s Landscape and Visual Appraisal 2024.

## Chilterns National Landscape

- 10.41 The Chilterns National Landscape (NL) (formerly referred to as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) lies to the north of St Albans District. The statutory purpose of the NL is to conserve and enhance the area’s natural beauty and the Council has a statutory duty to ‘seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area’. Whilst this Plan does not allocate sites within the NL, some sites do lie close to the designated landscape and so have the potential to impact upon the NL’s setting.

### **NEB11 – Chilterns National Landscape**

Where relevant, proposals must demonstrate that they would not have a significant negative impact on or harm the statutory purpose of the Chilterns National Landscape to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in the Chilterns National Landscape. The scale and extent of development within any nationally designated landscape areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

## Green Space Standards and New Green Space Provision

- 10.42 National policy states that policies on the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate. The Council prepared the ‘Playing Pitch Strategy’ (2023) which surveyed provision across the District and provides recommendations for future potential provision.

10.43 Green Space requirements need to be set out for future development, including amenity green space, areas for nature and biodiversity, parks and gardens, allotments, and children’s play areas. The proportion of any site to be set aside for green space will be assessed in accordance with standards and guidance set out in the policy with regard to the extent, nature and accessibility of existing provision, the suitability of the site and the form of the proposed development. Policy sets out expectations in terms of future maintenance and management of green spaces. Detailed information is provided in the ‘Open Spaces Study’ (2024).

### **NEB12 - Green Space Standards and New Green Space Provision**

New residential development in the District should meet the standards set out in this policy.

- a) New Green Space** - The creation of new green space within a new development should be based on the following approach:
  - i. The new green space should be provided within the development site to meet the needs of the new development and any existing local green space needs and deficiencies, with suitable arrangements provided for ongoing management to be secured by planning obligation;
  - ii. Larger strategic open spaces / play areas are preferable where possible so as to maximise use options and ease management and maintenance;
  - iii. Spaces should be multi-functional and provide varied aspects for all age groups in an appropriate way so as to avoid potential conflict between different age groups;
  - iv. As well as being for good general public access and appropriate recreational and sporting use, design and management arrangements should also seek to be for the benefit of ecological / wildlife habitats; and
  - v. —
  - vi. Encourage the provision of ancillary infrastructure to support the use of green spaces, where appropriate.
- b) Quantity Standards** - The quantity of new green space provision required for new housing development is set out in Table 10.1 below. Where possible, all green space should be multi-functional and provide for various types of users.

**Table 10.1 - Quantity Standards**

Type of green space		Quantity standard (sqm per person)
Multi-functional green space	Amenity green space (including use as multi-functional space)	15.3
	Natural and semi-natural green spaces	34.6

	Parks and gardens (including use as multi-functional space)	7.1
	Playing pitch provision & / or financial contributions	In line with Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator
	Total multi-functional green space standard	57
	Allotments	4.5
	Children's play areas	0.6

c) **New Development On-Site Provision** - Developments should provide new multi-functional green spaces as set out in Table 10.2 below. In some exceptional cases it may be acceptable for this requirement to be in the form of a financial payment to support maintenance and improvement of an existing green space; this space should be located within the accessibility standard set out in Table 10.3 and be suitable to serve the residents of the new housing.

d) —

e) Children's play facilities will generally be designed and provided in line with national best practice guidance (set out by Fields in Trust<sup>20</sup>), or in other local guidance. Where additional play facilities are required, provision through the enhancement of existing play facilities or through the creation of new, larger, and strategic play facilities, (rather than smaller facilities within the housing area) may be preferred.

**Table 10.2 - New Development On-Site Provision**

Size of development	Provision required
30 – 250 dwellings	Amenity green space and play areas on site
250+ dwellings	Full provision on site

**Table 10.3 - Accessibility Standards**

	Type of green space	Accessibility standard (metres) *
Multi-functional green space	Amenity green space (including use as multi-functional space)	480
	Natural and semi-natural green spaces	720

<sup>20</sup> Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard  
<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/PAD/FINAL%20ONLINE%20Planning%20Guidance%20for%20Outdoor%20Sport%20and%20Play%20Provision%20Oct%202015.pdf>

Parks and gardens (including use as multi-functional space)	710
Allotments	1,000
Children and teenager play areas	Younger children (LAP <sup>21</sup> ): 100 Older children (LEAP <sup>22</sup> ): 400 Strategic play area (NEAP <sup>23</sup> ): 1,000

\* Distance from nearest edge of the development site.

**f) New Sport Pitches** – The following should be taken into account in the provision of new sports pitches and / or financial contributions:

- i. For the majority of developments, off-site provision in the form of a financial contribution towards delivering priority projects in the local area will be preferential to small scale on-site provision;
- ii. The provision should be in line with the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator;
- iii. Priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards a strategic approach to alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality;
- iv. The Playing Pitch Strategy findings should be taken into account and for large developments consultation should take place with Sport England;
- v. Multi-pitch and multi-sports sites should be supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities; and
- vi. New outdoor sports facilities should be designed having regard to Sport England’s design guidance.

**g) Existing Sport Pitches**

- i. Enhancements of existing outdoor sports facilities will be supported;
- ii. Key centres and hub sites as identified in the playing pitch strategy should play a role in increasing the playing pitch capacity for existing settlements; and
- iii. Developer contributions may assist with delivery of extra capacity at key centres and hub sites.

<sup>21</sup> Local Area of Play. Usually small landscaped areas designed for young children. Equipment is normally age group specific to reduce unintended users.

<sup>22</sup> Local Equipped Area of Play. Designed for unsupervised play and a wider age range of users; often containing a wider range of equipment types.

<sup>23</sup> Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play. Cater for all age groups. Such sites may contain MUGA, skate parks, youth shelters, adventure play equipment and are often included within large park sites.

# Chapter 11 - Historic Environment

## Objective

*Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating their local distinctiveness and character*

## Introduction

- 11.1 St Albans District has a rich and varied historic environment which greatly contributes to a distinctive local 'sense of place' and a high quality of life for residents, businesses and stakeholders. The District has a large number of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments, as well as Registered Parks and Gardens, locally identified non-designated heritage assets and extensive archaeological remains.
- 11.2 As set out in national policy, heritage and the historic environment play an important role in other areas of sustainable development including as a source of economic prosperity, and growth. The historic environment is an essential aspect of a distinct and special place which is more likely to prosper. This in turn not only helps visitor economies, but other areas of economic growth and sustainable development.
- 11.3 In national policy, the historic environment is one aspect of the environmental objective which must be achieved when pursuing sustainable development. National policy places great emphasis on conserving and enhancing the historic environment and local distinctiveness. However, the NPPF makes it clear that whilst great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, this should be balanced against facilitating development where it provides benefits which outweigh harm.
- 11.4 Currently the District's designated heritage assets include:
- 19 Scheduled Monuments
  - 19 Conservation Areas
  - 3 Registered Parks and Gardens
  - Over 800 listed buildings
- 11.5 The Historic Environment Record maintained by Hertfordshire County Council forms a primary source of information. Where heritage assets or archaeological deposits may be impacted by proposed development works the Historic Environment Record should be consulted in advance of planning applications being submitted.
- 11.6 Non-designated built heritage assets will also be periodically reviewed and added formally to the 'local list'. Keeping and periodically reviewing a formal list means that these non-designated heritage assets can be recognised and form a material planning consideration.
- 11.7 As part of a proactive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment, the Council has maintained a local list of heritage at risk within the District since 1993. This is a list of heritage assets which are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. The Council works with owners and occupiers to find new, appropriate uses and solutions to secure the future of heritage assets so that they can be positively removed from the list. This is used in conjunction with Historic England's national register of heritage at risk.

- 11.8 Over the lifetime of the Plan, a programme of work will be carried out to appraise the District's Conservation Areas and produce character statements and consider amending boundaries where appropriate. Priority will be given to those which are the oldest and / or most in need of updating and, where applicable, have the highest development pressure.
- 11.9 Other guidance documents relating to detailed design guidance for listed buildings and development within Conservation Areas will be produced throughout the lifetime of the Plan. These documents will form a material planning consideration.
- 11.10 The Council will seek high quality design for all new development and accordingly proposals should also comply with the policies within Chapter 12 where these have implications for proposals affecting heritage assets

### **Strategic Policy SP11 – Historic Environment**

The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and its setting. The Plan sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

- a) Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;
- b) Ensuring new development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character;
- c) Ensuring appropriate consideration is given to the archaeological impact of new development and management of the archaeological resource of the District;
- d) Identifying and monitoring sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register and work towards removing them positively from the register;
- e) Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and locally identified non-designated assets; and
- f) Publication of detailed guidance as needed.

### **Designated heritage assets**

- 11.11 National Policy states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets irrespective of the scale of the harm a proposed scheme would have. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification and sufficient information should be provided to assess the proposal's impact on the heritage asset's significance. The Council will require applicants to assess the significance of any designated heritage asset affected by the proposals, including from development within its setting, and justify and detail the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the asset.
- 11.12 National policy sets out that substantial harm to designated heritage assets should be avoided, unless it is demonstrated that such a loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits which outweigh that harm or specific exception criteria are met. Where

proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, it is necessary to weigh any harm against the public benefits of the proposal including (where appropriate) securing an asset's optimum viable use.

- 11.13 The Council will require proposals to be designed to respond to the designated heritage assets they affect. Proposals shall appropriately consider the characteristics and significance of each designated heritage asset affected and demonstrably be designed to minimise any potential adverse impacts. Particular care will be required when considering the scale, layout, design and materials of development proposals within, or adjacent to, Conservation Areas. Proposals should be designed to complement their surroundings and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Similarly development within registered parks and gardens will be required to suitably respect the special interest and characteristics of the landscape. Scheduled Monument consent is required for works to a Scheduled Monument and this process is administered through Historic England.

### **HE1 – Designated heritage assets**

The Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and will have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens or their settings or any features of architectural or historic interest which they possess.

- a) Proposals which would affect designated heritage assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a heritage statement, proportionate to the scale of the proposal, which should include:
  - i. An assessment of the significance of the heritage asset, including any contribution made by their setting;
  - ii. Reference to the appropriate historic environment record including Conservation Area character statements; and
  - iii. An impact assessment of the proposed development including the measures taken to avoid or, if not possible, to minimise any identified harm and any mitigation measures.

#### Listed Buildings

- b) The Council will support works to listed buildings which:
  - i. Preserve their special architectural and / or historic interest;
  - ii. Relate sensitively to the period and architectural detail of the building; and
  - iii. Protect or, where appropriate restore, features, detail and fabric of significance.
- c) Development proposals which affect the setting or views of listed buildings will be supported where they take opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance.

#### Conservation Areas

- d) Development which is within Conservation Areas, or affects a Conservation Area setting, should preserve features and characteristics which contribute to its special character and appearance, including any identified in an adopted Conservation Area Character Statement, and

take opportunities to enhance the significance of the Conservation Area and its setting, wherever possible. Proposals should:

- i. Retain the existing urban grain, street patterns and hierarchy, historic building lines and groups of buildings which contribute to the special character and appearance of the area;
- ii. Retain and reinforce local distinctiveness and character, appropriately responding to the local height, massing, scale, form, proportions, and architectural detailing, including wall to window ratios;
- iii. Appropriately respond to the local area's roofscape, reflecting the local roof forms. Dormers may be supported where they are appropriately sized, avoid terracing effects, and are appropriate to the local roofscape. Flat roof dormers and other flat roof forms (such as crown roofs) will only be supported where they are characteristic of the local area;
- iv. Use good quality, natural materials which have good long-term weathering characteristics and are compatible with the local distinctiveness of the area;
- v. Retain the public realm characteristics which contribute to the special character and appearance of the area including surface materials, street furniture, boundary treatments and the balance of soft and hard landscaping; and
- vi. Where relevant and practical, remove features which have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### Registered Parks and Gardens

- e) Development will only be supported where it respects and appropriately responds to the design, character, appearance and setting of registered parks and gardens and safeguards those features which contribute to their significance and are important to their character and appearance.

#### Scheduled Monuments

- f) Scheduled Monuments and their settings will be preserved, and opportunities taken to enhance and communicate their significance, where appropriate.

### **Non-designated heritage assets**

11.14 The District's rich heritage is also comprised of historic buildings, designed landscapes and archaeological deposits which though not designated, are of local interest and contribute to a strong sense of place. Non-designated heritage assets are identified by the Council as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes noted as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets.

11.15 Non-designated heritage assets may be identified for conservation during the development management process or other planning processes to assess local character. These include Conservation Area appraisals, emerging Neighbourhood Plans and when assessing potential development sites. Non-designated heritage

assets may also be identified outside of the planning application process, such as through community archaeology excavations.

- 11.16 National policy states that when assessing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The Council will seek the retention of non-designated heritage assets and their characteristics and features of interest which contribute to their significance.

## **HE2 – Non-designated heritage assets**

- a) Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets should ensure they respond appropriately to their significance. Where harm would result, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, and consideration will be given to the significance of the asset and the extent of harm or loss. Any special features which contribute to a non-designated heritage asset's significance should be retained and, where possible and well evidenced, reinstated. This includes appropriate consideration of the contribution made by its setting and impacts on the local character.
- b) Demolition of non-designated heritage assets identified on the local list of buildings shall only be supported where there are acceptable and detailed proposals for any redevelopment which show what is proposed and how it will affect the street scene and local character, and either:
  - i. Sufficient evidence is provided which demonstrates that the viability of alternative uses for the building has been fully explored (including the possibility of sale to an alternative user) and that the building cannot at reasonable expense be retained; or
  - ii. Public benefits will outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

## **Archaeology**

- 11.17 St Albans is rich in archaeological heritage, spanning the whole range of British pre-history and history. The Roman city of Verulamium was the third largest town in Roman Britain. It developed alongside a major Iron Age settlement in the valley of the River Ver. Other highly significant sites are Beech Bottom, the replica of the Mohne Dam, Devils Dyke and the monastic earthworks of St Albans Cathedral. Much of the archaeology of the District is buried with a continual process of new sites being identified as a result of survey, development and aerial photography.
- 11.18 Archaeological sites are of considerable importance academically, educationally, as tourist attractions, as landscape or townscape features and as places of local interest. The archaeological deposits are a non-renewable resource and once damaged or destroyed they cannot be replaced.
- 11.19 There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or not). The more important the asset, the greater the weight will be for preservation in situ. In accordance with national legislation, preservation of remains may require the refusal of development that could be detrimental.
- 11.20 Developers will be required to make appropriate provision for the recording of any heritage assets adversely impacted by development and to make provision for full

analysis and reporting, and to ensure this, and any archive generated, is publicly accessible. Provision will be required to enhance the Urban Archaeological Database and to provide for the long-term curation of the archive in addition to the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.

- 11.21 Where appropriate, provision will be required for interpretation and access in situ, where public access is possible without detriment to the site, or at a suitable off-site location, and for realising the social, cultural, economic, and environment benefits of the historic environment.

### **HE3 – Archaeology**

The Council will seek to protect the District's unique and significant heritage assets. The Council seeks to ensure that the damage to archaeological remains caused by development is minimised; that well preserved remains of national significance are preserved in situ; and that development in St Albans protects and enhances the city's unique archaeological and historic character.

Development which would adversely affect the significance of, or fail to preserve or enhance, a designated or known archaeological site (including a Scheduled Monument) will not be supported. This includes appropriate consideration of the contribution made by its setting.

Development may be permitted following appropriate assessment of the significance of archaeological deposits, and if important remains would not be damaged or the character of the site adversely affected. Proposals should adhere to the following requirements:

- a) Sites of archaeological interest should be clearly identified and protected, and sites that become known, whether through formal evaluation as part of a Planning Application or otherwise, will similarly be protected according to their importance;
- b) Where appropriate, pre-determination desk-based assessment, and / or an archaeological field evaluation, must be submitted where proposals are on or adjacent to sites of known archaeological interest or sites believed to possess potential archaeological significance, and the results submitted in support of a planning application; and
- c) Where the loss of the whole or a part of a heritage asset's archaeological significance is justified, planning conditions will be attached to a planning permission to ensure that an adequate record is made of the heritage asset before it is lost. Appropriate publication and interpretation (such as public access / interpretation) will be required.

- 11.22 The Council will seek to ensure the conservation of remains designated as Scheduled Monuments and Sites for Local Preservation and to resist their destruction through development works. Developments near to archaeological sites and monuments have the potential to damage the character and historic atmosphere of remains.

#### **HE4 – Scheduled Monuments**

Planning applications for development which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument<sup>23a</sup>, will be refused on archaeological grounds unless prior Scheduled Monument consent<sup>24</sup> has been obtained from the Secretary of State (where Schedule Monument Consent is required). The Council will seek to preserve the national significance of Scheduled Monuments by resisting proposals within scheduled areas which would detract from their character. This includes appropriate consideration of the contribution made by its setting.

#### **HE5 – Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation**

Development that preserves or enhances the remains and character of sites identified for local preservation (Appendix 3) will be supported. Where harm would result, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, and consideration will be given to the significance of the asset and the extent of harm or loss. Applications shall have assessed the site in consultation with the Historic Environment Record and taken account of the archaeological importance of any remains, the need for the development, the likely extent of any harm, and the likelihood of the proposal successfully preserving the archaeological significance of the site.

- 11.23 Preservation is not essential in other Areas of Archaeological significance. However, it is often crucial that a record of the area be made, normally by excavation, in advance of or during development.

#### **HE6 – Archaeological Sites Subject to a Recording Condition**

Within the sites listed in Appendix 4, the Council will expect that the applicants shall have assessed the site in consultation with the Historic Environment Record and taken account of the archaeological importance of those remains, the need for the development and the likely extent of any harm. Where archaeological potential is identified but there is no overriding case for the remains to be preserved in situ, development which would destroy or disturb potential remains will be permitted, subject to conditions ensuring an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording, reporting and archiving, prior to development commencing. There will be a requirement to make the result of these investigations publicly accessible.

N.B. The sites in Appendix 4 are not a comprehensive list of archaeological sites (See the Historic Environment Record) and the potential for previously unknown sites which may be impacted by proposed development would need to be considered as part of the planning process.

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<sup>23a</sup> The list of Scheduled Monuments in the District (as of 2025) are set out at Appendix 2.

<sup>24</sup> As required by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

## Change of use and heritage assets

- 11.24 Keeping heritage assets in a viable use is, so far as practicable, important for their maintenance and continuing conservation. A heritage asset's use should be viable in the long-term to avoid any unnecessary successive changes to a heritage asset. Uses can also contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, for example a public house or church as a focal point for a community. Within area designations such as Conservation Areas, these patterns of use can be important in defining the character and function of the area. The Council will seek to maintain any uses which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 11.25 Changing the use of a heritage asset, such as a listed building, can involve considerable and irreversible changes and it is important that any proposed change of use is based on an understanding of the heritage asset's significance, its relationship to the wider setting and its sensitivity to, and capacity for, change. National guidance states that the optimum viable use of a heritage asset is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future change. However, if there is only one economically viable use, then this would be the optimum viable use. The Council will support applications which seek the optimum viable use of heritage assets, or uses which are consistent with their long-term conservation and do not cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 11.26 The Council will seek sufficient information on the changes necessary to ensure that the impact of a change of use is fully assessed as part of the application process.

### **HE7 – Change of use and heritage assets**

- a) The contribution of existing uses to the character, function and appearance of Conservation Areas will be considered when assessing a change of use application. A change of use will be refused where the proposed use or the loss of the existing use would cause harm to the significance of a conservation area, taking into account cumulative impacts.
  - b) Any proposed change of use to a Listed Building should be consistent with the Listed Building's long-term conservation. Proposals will be supported where:
    - i. The proposed use can be accommodated without causing harm to the significance of the building and its setting; and
    - ii. The proposed use would not diminish its ability to remain in a viable use in the long term;
- Or
- iii. The proposals are sufficiently demonstrated to be the optimum viable use<sup>25</sup> for the building.

Proposals should include sufficient information to assess the impact of the change of use on the significance of the heritage asset. Where appropriate and proportionate, proposals should include information on subdivision and servicing.

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<sup>25</sup> As defined by national planning practice guidance

## Responsible retro-fitting

- 11.27 The Council is committed to tackling the climate emergency and reducing the carbon footprint of the District. At the same time, the Council is committed to conserving the District's historic environment and preserving and enhancing its heritage assets, The Council's aim is to ensure a balanced approach between protecting the District's heritage assets and reducing the carbon footprint of the District.
- 11.28 Vernacular buildings and traditional construction have evolved over time and respond to local conditions. Due to the nature of their construction, historic buildings often do not appear to meet the performance of modern construction, particularly if standardised approaches to assessing energy efficiency are used<sup>26</sup>. Adaptive re-use of a building saves significantly on embodied carbon and energy in a building's fabric, so focusing on improving environmental performance is an important part of tackling Climate Change.
- 11.29 Acceptable levels of intervention will vary dependent upon the impact on the significance of the heritage asset in question. Additionally, traditionally constructed buildings have different technical requirements and specifications, and inappropriate retrofitting can cause long-term problems to the condition of a building. Accordingly the Council will support works to heritage assets where they are based upon a thorough understanding of the heritage asset's significance and the environmental performance of the existing building. Works should be based on the current best practise guidance for retro-fitting buildings and should, where appropriate reference energy efficiency guidance from Historic England<sup>27</sup>, and other relevant bodies, such as the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance<sup>28</sup> or the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers' guidance on building services.

### HE8 – Responsible retrofitting

- a) Proposals to enhance the environmental performance of heritage assets or buildings in Conservation Areas will be supported where:
  - i. The proposed works are designed to preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposals;
  - ii. Proposed works are designed to have a sensitive and hierarchical approach<sup>29</sup> to improving performance; and
  - iii. The design and specification of the works would not compromise the heritage asset affected by the proposals through inappropriate interventions, including through aggravating long-term deterioration.
- b) Works to remove or rectify previous inappropriate retrofitting adaptations to a heritage asset will only be supported where there is an appropriate scheme for the works and where the replacement and the method for removal would result in the long-term preservation or enhancement of the heritage asset.

<sup>26</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/energy-performance-certificates/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://stbauk.org/>

<sup>29</sup> The energy hierarchy in the context of sustaining heritage significance is set out in Historic England 2020 Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes, Advice Note 14

# Chapter 12 – High Quality Design

## Objective

*Achieve high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in existing and new places.*

## Introduction

- 12.1 St Albans District has a varied built environment with a rich heritage that includes historic buildings and a wealth of archaeology. The largest settlements are the historic cathedral city of St Albans and the town of Harpenden. The District has several smaller settlements including London Colney, Redbourn, Wheathampstead, Bricket Wood and How Wood, each with their own character. While historic centres are a distinctive feature for many settlements, much of the District's developed areas comprise a residential suburban form that was built in the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries. The majority of the District is designated Green Belt, and the farmland and woodland helps to form the setting for the city, towns and villages. Land values are high and the District is subject to significant development pressure, which presents both challenges and opportunities.
- 12.2 National policy sets out that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. A successfully designed development will be a positive addition to its surroundings. New development should help to create or enhance a sense of place where people want to live, work and visit, and which helps make development acceptable to existing communities. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development that supports the Council's approach to tackling the Climate Emergency.
- 12.3 The National Design Guide<sup>30</sup> reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design. The District's Strategic Sites Design Guidance<sup>31</sup> (SSDG) accords with the approach taken in national guidance and sets out design principles and a Masterplanning process for the high quality design of new strategic-scale developments<sup>32</sup>, tailored to the local area context. The SSDG should be followed for the design of strategic-scale development on the edge of existing urban areas, as set out in Chapter 3 of this Plan; and it may usefully inform the design of other significant or complex development. Furthermore, for significant or complex schemes it may be beneficial to undertake formal design review.
- 12.4 In addition to Government and local guidance, designs should be informed by other best practice guidance including Building for a Healthy Life<sup>33</sup>, along with other national and County Council guidance as appropriate. Further design policy may be set out in Neighbourhood Plans or in future design-related development plan documents.

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<sup>30</sup> National Design Guide 2021

<sup>31</sup> The Strategic Sites Design Guidance is formed of four documents: Design Principles, Design Toolkit, Masterplan Toolkit and Employment Toolkit, and is available via the SADC website

<sup>32</sup> Residential development of at least 100 dwellings or non-residential development of at least 10,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/>

## **Strategic Policy SP12 – High Quality Design**

High quality design is an important component of sustainable development across the District. New development should:

- a) Respond positively to its context;
- b) Be of high quality architecture;
- c) Enhance public space;
- d) Make efficient use of land; and
- e) Provide for a high standard of amenity.

### **Design of New Development**

- 12.5 The Council requires new development to respond positively to its context and provide for a high standard of amenity. Development with high quality architecture, including innovative and contemporary styles where appropriate, will be encouraged. The design quality of development should be retained through to completion, and samples or further information regarding materials and detailed design features may be required by condition in order to ensure high quality design is delivered.
- 12.6 National policy sets out that policies should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. In providing for a high standard of amenity, the design of new development should take account of the needs of users including where they may change over time, and should seek to ensure that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. This may be through following the principles set out in 'Secured by Design', which is the official UK Police security initiative supporting the principles of 'designing out crime' through physical security, or through following other best practice guidance.
- 12.6A A high proportion of planning applications are for extensions to existing buildings. It is important that extensions relate well to the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. This form of development commonly leads to impacts in relation to amenity, landscaping and parking, and reference to such matters and the related policies is included in the policy. Development must also be acceptable in relation to other planning matters where applicable.
- 12.6B In applying the requirements of criterion i) relating to terracing effect, the appropriate distance referred to in the policy would normally be a minimum of 1m. In applying the requirements of criterion j) iii. relating to single storey rear extensions, the maximum extent along a party boundary would normally be 3m.

### **DES1 – Design of New Development**

All new development should, to a degree proportionate to the development:

- a) Be of a layout that takes account of the character and pattern of development in the locality and avoids unduly prejudicing the future development potential of adjacent sites<sup>34</sup>;
- b) Respond positively to its context, taking into account the local distinctiveness of an area, in relation to its scale, form, massing, setting, height, character and building line;
- ba) Incorporate landscaping that:
  - i. Contributes to delivering an attractive and sustainable place that enhances the area;
  - ii. Does not adversely affect the outlook and amenity of existing and future residents;
  - iii. Includes the planting of trees along new streets, roads and public places, as appropriate;
  - iv. Includes the use of appropriate native species with all stock sourced and where possible grown entirely in the UK; and
  - v. Includes provision for ongoing management and maintenance.
- c) Demonstrate an inclusive approach that provides for a diverse community including people with disabilities, and be adaptable for changing needs over time;
- d) Be designed to minimise the likelihood of crime and antisocial behaviour;
- e) Use high quality materials with good long-term weathering characteristics;
- f) Provide high quality detailing that adds to the visual interest and distinctiveness of the building;
- g) Provide active frontages to the ground floor of buildings where appropriate, which interact with and animate the surrounding areas and are visually interesting;
- h) Be designed to provide opportunities for encouraging physical activity where appropriate;
- i) Be set at an appropriate distance from any neighbouring property / party boundary above ground floor level, so as to avoid an undesirable terracing effect or other unacceptable impact on amenity and harm to the character and appearance of the area; and
- j) Proposals for extensions to existing buildings should additionally conform to the requirements below:
  - i. **Compatibility with existing building** - Extensions and alterations must be compatible with the architectural style, roof form, fenestration, detailing and materials of the existing building;
  - ii. **Single storey extensions** - Single storey extensions, whether at ground floor level or above, should not extend along a party boundary to such a degree as to lead to an unacceptable impact on amenity; and

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<sup>34</sup> [Footnote deleted]

- iii. **Annex accommodation** - Annex accommodation for relatives, dependents or staff must be subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated into the main house accommodation if use as an annex ceases. A condition may be added to ensure that the annex remains ancillary to the main dwelling.

## Public Space

- 12.7 Public spaces are streets, squares and any other spaces that are open to all. High quality and well-functioning public space is important for creating places that support communities and businesses, and can contribute to improved health and wellbeing. Spaces should be accessible, inclusive and safe, and should cater to a range of needs including spaces for rest and shelter, as well as more active spaces. Public spaces when well-designed can encourage sustainable and active forms of travel that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Public space is space that is open to all, irrespective of ownership.
- 12.8 Public spaces and the buildings around them should be designed as an integrated whole. Private spaces also contribute to the quality of the public realm, and the interaction between the private and public should be a consideration in the design approach. Public space should be designed so that it is multi-functional in order to maximise its potential use and make it suitable for the whole community. Development proposals should deliver enhancements to public space both as part of the development and through appropriate contributions. Proposals should comply with other relevant policies, particularly those within Chapter 10, Natural Environment and Biodiversity, and Chapter 11, Historic Environment.
- 12.9 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls, and can provide benefits for water quantity, water quality, biodiversity and amenity. It should be noted that SuDS can be retrofitted on a local level and features such as permeable paving, tree pits, swales and rain gardens can be implemented locally to provide the benefits.
- 12.10 The 'Healthy Streets' approach<sup>35</sup> focuses on creating healthier places for people to live in. It would be beneficial for new developments to prioritise and balance the 10 evidence-based Healthy Streets Indicators (or equivalent guidance) to improve social, economic, and environmental sustainability through how streets are designed and managed.
- 12.11 Sport England's 'Active Design' guidance<sup>36</sup> sets out ten key principles for ensuring new developments are designed to incorporate opportunities for people to take part in physical activity. It is consistent with the Local Plan's strategic objective relating to promoting active, healthy and sustainable communities, and it would be beneficial for new development to be consistent with this guidance.
- 12.12 Street furniture includes features such as benches, planters, bollards, railings and signage. These are important elements in creating successful public spaces and must be provided through appropriate and coherent design; and ongoing management and

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.healthystreets.com/what-is-healthy-streets>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

maintenance of street furniture is vital. Poorly designed street furniture, or the cumulative impact of badly coordinated decisions, can lead to visual discord and clutter that negatively affect the character of an area and can provide barriers to movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

## **DES2 – Public Space**

Proposals that create or affect public space should, to a degree proportionate to the development:

- a) Contribute to the creation of legible and easily navigated routes and spaces that are designed for all users and make appropriate links to existing movement routes;
- b) Prioritise pedestrian and bicycle movements and be integrated with active travel networks;
- c) Contribute to the creation of places where car movements interact safely with pedestrians and bicycles, and where cars and associated infrastructure are not visually dominant; with any parking, garaging and service access providing a visually attractive setting;
- d) —
- e) Provide and / or protect spaces for community events, including street markets, where appropriate;
- f) Be supported by ancillary infrastructure where appropriate, such as cafes, toilets, resting places and cycle parking;
- g) Provide appropriate street furniture and consider providing suitable public art where appropriate; which is designed to be compatible with the surrounding area and to not result in visual clutter;
- h) Retain heritage features including historic light columns, railings and other street furniture or townscape features;
- i) Provide surfacing materials that are compatible with and appropriate to the character and appearance of the site's context;
- j) Be designed to integrate public space with surrounding buildings and landscaping in a coherent and attractive manner, with clear transitions between the private and public realm;
- k) Only include lighting provision that is appropriate to the character of the location, takes into account the significance of heritage assets, increases safety at night, and that does not negatively affect ecology or the amenity of nearby residents and users of the public spaces; and
- l) Avoid enclosing publicly accessible amenity land where this would detract from the character of the surrounding area or lead to other negative impacts on amenity.

## **Efficient use of Land**

12.13 National policy sets out that planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. The Council's approach is to encourage higher density development within the District's more sustainable and accessible areas, and to require that new development makes efficient use of land.

This approach assists in meeting development needs within settlements and in reducing the pressure on the Green Belt. Furthermore, concentrating development in locations with more options for active travel and public transport is in line with the aims of national policy and supports the Council’s Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy. In addition, there can be sustainability benefits from higher density development, both in terms of the embodied carbon and the operational greenhouse gas / energy costs to use the buildings.

12.14 Higher densities can often be achieved without increasing building heights, through consideration of design, layout, building type and housing mix. For example, density may be increased through incorporation of suitably designed flats, maisonettes or cluster houses. Careful analysis and consideration of the site’s context and constraints should be undertaken to ensure denser development does not detract from the character of an area. The optimum density for a particular development will be influenced by the site-specific factors and constraints.

12.15 There are many ways in which density can be measured but the simplest and most common way is dwellings per hectare (dph); with net dph representing the density of the developable area only, excluding land for infrastructure, open space, main roads, schools and community facilities. In accordance with previous Council density studies, current best practice and the need to make efficient use of land; it is considered that 40 net dph is a minimum density that can generally be readily achieved throughout the District. Furthermore, in existing higher-density areas, new development should not fall below the density of the site context, which would be determined on a site by site basis having regard to the density and character of the site and its surroundings.

**DES3 – Efficient Use of Land**

Development proposals should make efficient use of land. Development should:

- a) Where additional residential units are proposed, achieve at least the density of the existing site context or 40 net dwellings per hectare, whichever is higher; and
- b) Optimise site capacity within city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. This requires development to be of the most appropriate form and land use for the site, having regard to site context and constraints.

Development proposals that do not make efficient use of land will be refused.

~~12.16~~

**DES4 –**

**Residential Amenity Standards**

12.17 National policy sets out that planning policies should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Impacts on users of both the new development and neighbouring sites should be considered. Factors to consider include a development’s impacts in relation to privacy, sunlight, daylight and outlook, internal space standards and amenity space standards.

12.18 Careful consideration of design, layout and orientation is essential to ensure proposals do not adversely affect others, and to ensure they provide for the wellbeing of occupiers. New residential development should provide adequate internal living space and external amenity space. The amount and type of private outdoor amenity space required will vary depending on the type of unit and the location of the development.

12.18A In applying the requirements of criterion a) relating to privacy and separation, the following standards and separation distances should normally be achieved, unless divergence from them is justified by the particular nature of a site and its surroundings:

- i. New balconies or upper-floor windows serving habitable rooms should not lead to a harmful degree of overlooking for existing and future users of both the new development and neighbouring sites;
- ii. A minimum distance of 22m between upper floor rear windows of habitable rooms and facing windows of habitable rooms; and
- iii. A minimum distance of 11m between new upper floor rear windows and the rear boundary.

12.18B In applying the requirements of criterion d) relating to private amenity space, new residential development should normally achieve the following amenity space provision<sup>36a</sup>:

- i. Studios – 15m<sup>2</sup> for each room e.g. 75m<sup>2</sup> for a block of 5 x 1 bed studios;
- ii. Flats – 20m<sup>2</sup> for the first bedroom of each flat and 10m<sup>2</sup> for each additional bedroom e.g. 180m<sup>2</sup> for a block of 6 x 2 bed flats. Communal amenity space should be provided for flatted developments, although ground floor flats may be able to benefit from private space immediately adjacent to the residential unit;
- iii. Houses – 40m<sup>2</sup> for the first bedroom and 20m<sup>2</sup> for each additional bedroom e.g. 80m<sup>2</sup> for a 3 bedroom house. Private gardens should be provided for houses

## DES5 – Amenity Standards

All development must achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of both the new development and neighbouring buildings. Development proposals will be assessed in relation to all types of amenity impact including the following considerations and standards:

- a) **Privacy and separation** – Proposals for both residential and non-residential development should provide for an appropriate degree of privacy for existing users of adjacent sites and for future users of the proposed development, and should avoid compromising the future development of adjoining land for residential uses. Privacy should be provided for habitable rooms<sup>37</sup> of dwellings, and to a lesser extent for private residential gardens and other private amenity

<sup>36a</sup> Only useable areas of amenity space, such as gardens, balconies and roof terraces, will be counted as contributing to the required provision. Unusable areas will be excluded, for example car parking, narrow landscaping strips, or strips of land less than 1m wide, and areas under tree canopies. Older person's housing schemes must provide high quality amenity space suitable for older people on site, but a lower overall quantum may be acceptable.

<sup>37</sup> Habitable rooms are rooms used or intended to be used for sleeping or living, but does not include bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundry rooms, hallways or utility rooms.

areas and to adjacent sites with potential for residential development. Impacts will be less severe where affected rooms or private amenity spaces are already overlooked to some degree, or where there is effective mitigation.

b) **Daylight and Sunlight** – Development proposals should:

- i. Provide adequate access to daylight and sunlight for any new residential units and should maintain adequate access to daylight and sunlight for occupants of neighbouring sites, including adjoining land with potential for residential development<sup>38</sup>; and
- ii. Maximise the provision of dual aspect dwellings; proposals for single aspect dwellings should demonstrate that they will all provide for adequate passive ventilation, daylight and privacy, and avoid overheating.

c) **Internal space standards** – New residential development should meet or exceed the nationally described space standards<sup>39</sup> unless it is demonstrated that this is unfeasible;

d) **Private amenity space** - New residential development must provide sufficient private amenity space for future occupants<sup>40</sup>.

## Building Heights

12.19 The District's current built form is predominantly suburban and low-rise, with building heights generally of no more than three storeys. Taller buildings are predominantly located around St Albans City centre and adjacent areas, in particular around St Albans City station. The historic core of the city contains many designated heritage assets, with St Albans Cathedral as a dominant feature.

12.20 Buildings which are significantly taller than the surrounding built form can have a considerable impact on townscape. Accordingly, their design should be carefully considered and applications must be sufficiently supported including by accurate visual representations and any relevant technical assessments, to enable proper assessment.

12.21 St Albans city centre sits on a hill adjacent to the Ver valley which allows for long-distance views of the historic city and its skyline. While the St Albans Cathedral dominates, there are other landmarks which punctuate the skyline, and the traditional clay and slate pitched roofs create a varied and interesting roofscape. The views of the roofscape can be particularly appreciated while moving (termed 'kinetic' views). St Albans has a Building Height Control Area (BHCA) that protects these important characteristics of the city, which also contribute to the significance of the St Albans Conservation Area, St Albans Abbey and the other identified heritage assets. The potential impact that a building that is taller than the surrounding built form has on the significance of these assets will be a critical factor in the consideration of the proposal. Zones of Visibility from middle distance public viewpoints have been defined to protect important views of the BHCA. The BHCA was subject of a comparable policy in the

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<sup>38</sup> In assessing whether development proposals comply, regard will be had to the guidelines in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) guide "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight, A Guide to Good Practice" as set out in the 2022 edition, or as amended in subsequent editions

<sup>39</sup> 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' of March 2015 (or a subsequent amendment)

<sup>40</sup> [Footnote deleted]

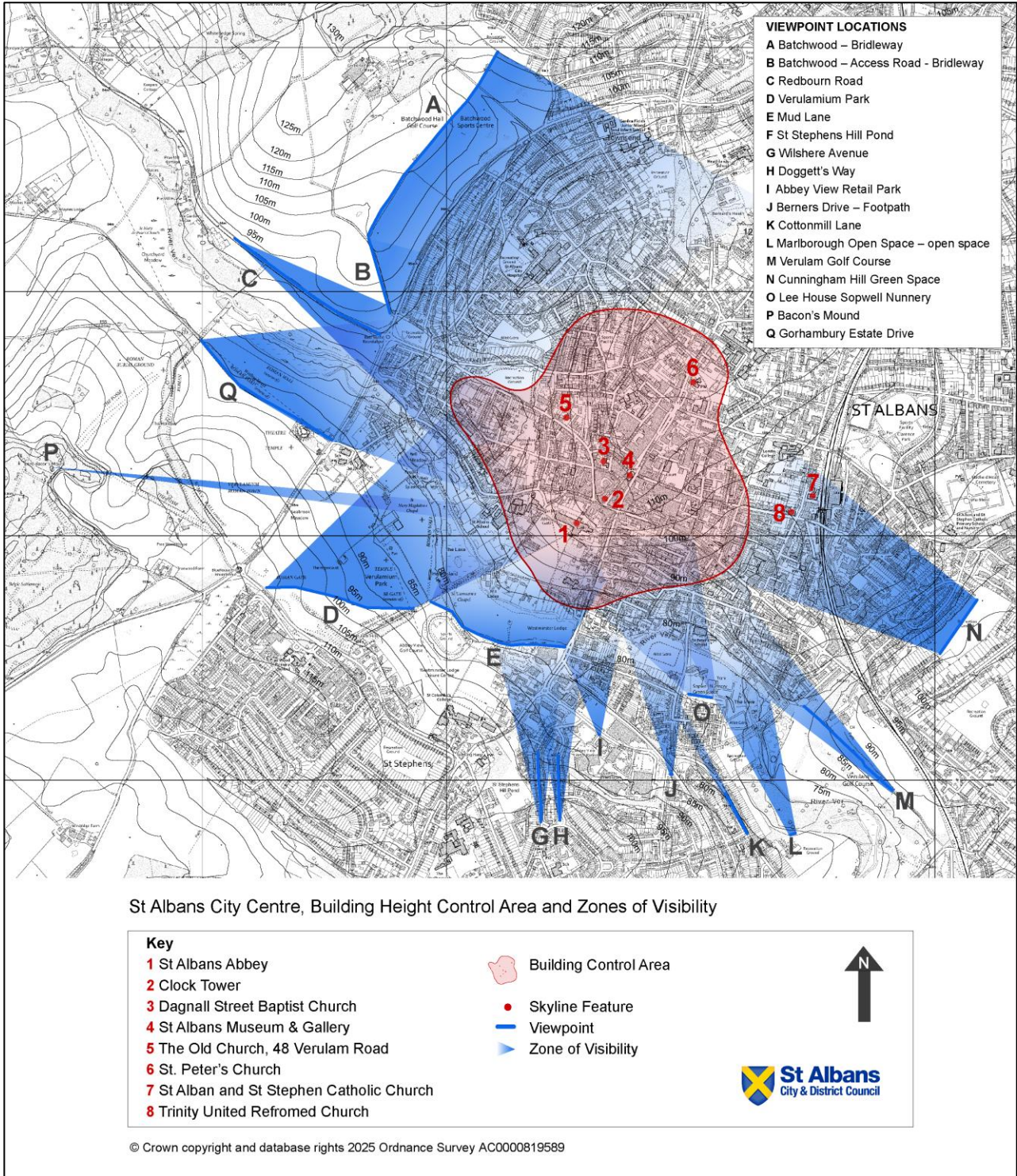
1994 Local Plan, and it has been reviewed and amended to take account of recent development. The extent of the BHCA is shown in Figure 12.1.

## **DES6 – Building Heights**

Proposals for buildings which are significantly taller than the surrounding built form must be sufficiently supported including by accurate visual representations and any relevant technical assessments, to enable proper assessment.

- a) Proposals that are significantly taller than the prevailing built form will be refused unless:
  - i. The height, massing and design of the proposed development positively responds to the character and distinctiveness of the surrounding area;
  - ii. The design positively contributes to valued townscapes and landscapes where applicable, and does not detract from important landmarks, heritage assets, key views and their settings;
  - iii. The design retains the variety, features and articulation of the existing surrounding roofscape and does not result in the simplification of the roofscape through the creation of large continuous blocks of development, taking into account the location and siting of plant equipment; and
  - iv. The amenity of users of neighbouring buildings and open spaces would not be adversely impacted.
- b) Proposals within the **Building Height Control Area** must:
  - i. —
  - ii. Not create large and / or bulky monotonous building forms;
  - iii. Appropriately respond to the topography of the area;
  - iv. Not break the skyline or have a negative impact when viewed from the viewpoints shown in Figure 12.1; and
  - v. Not mask or diminish the historic features of:
    - St Albans Cathedral
    - Clock Tower
    - Upper Dagnall Street Baptist Church
    - Town Hall
    - Christ Church
    - St Peter's Church
    - St Alban and St Stephen Catholic Church
    - Trinity United Reformed Church
- c) Within the Zones of Visibility as shown in Figure 12.1, proposals should not obscure or detract from views of the historic roofscape of the Building Height Control Area.

**Figure 12.1: St Albans Building Height Control Area**



## Servicing of Development

12.22 Good design considers how buildings operate in practice and how people access and use them on a day-to-day basis, both now and in future. It incorporates servicing as an integral part of the design to ensure that the development functions properly for its users. Servicing includes refuse storage, bicycle storage, facilities for handling post and parcel deliveries, and mechanical systems.

12.23 While servicing is important for all buildings, particular consideration is needed for larger buildings such as blocks of flats or offices. These buildings will generate a high number of trips by the occupants and visitors, and a significant degree of servicing activity including refuse collection and deliveries. To operate safely and effectively these buildings must accommodate the need for different types of storage and servicing activity, along with mechanical servicing and plant.

12.24 Mechanical servicing and plant systems include ventilation, heating and cooling, extraction equipment, fire equipment, lifts and plumbing, water and sprinkler tanks, and micro renewables; along with associated screening and environmental health mitigation measures. The systems and equipment should be integrated into the design at an early stage to ensure high quality design, and particular consideration is needed for development affecting heritage assets.

### **DES7 – Servicing of Development**

The servicing needs of development should be considered at an early stage in the design process to ensure a high level of integration with the development and to ensure overall design quality is not compromised. Adequate servicing arrangements should be provided. Proposals must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements, as appropriate to the scale and complexity of the development:

- a) **Refuse Storage** - Refuse and recycling storage must be accessible and have regard to current local and County Council guidance unless it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative arrangements will be made. The location and design of refuse and recycling storage must not detract from the overall appearance of the development. The layout of new residential and commercial development should allow for efficient refuse storage and collection, and should have regard to applicable current guidance unless it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative arrangements will be made.
- b) **Cycle Storage** - Cycle storage must be accessible, secure and safe to use with sufficient space to enable moving of cycles within the storage facility. It should be integrated into the overall design of the development. It should be accessed externally and located close to building entrances; cycle storage in front gardens / forecourts will only be supported where it does not compromise visual amenity or access.
- c) **Parcels and Deliveries** - New flatted development should include secure, safe and convenient provision for parcel receipt and storage that should generally be located on the ground floor within the main building. The layout of new residential and commercial development should allow for efficient deliveries to occupants.
- d) **Mechanical Servicing and Plant** - Mechanical servicing and plant systems and equipment must be integrated into the overall design of the development. Proposals will be refused where mechanical services and plant equipment would have an adverse impact on the appearance of the development or surrounding area. Proposals should ensure that:
  - i. Rooftop and external plant and lift overruns are sensitively located, away from conspicuous or prominent locations so as to minimise or negate visual impact;

- ii. Ventilation shafts, pipework and flue routes, and other ancillary service equipment such as meter boxes, are integrated into the overall design of the development and are not sited in visually intrusive locations or constructed of materials or finishes that lead to a harmful visual impact.

## Shopfronts and Advertisements

- 12.25 Shopfronts, external signage and other advertisements can have significant impacts on the character of an area, and are an important factor in the amenity of town centres. When designed and placed well, these features contribute greatly to the vibrancy and vitality of the street scene and the public realm. However, when poorly designed and inappropriately placed they can create visual discord and clutter, and cumulative impacts can be severely detrimental to the character of an area.
- 12.26 The retention, enhancement or restoration of original / historic or significant shop front elements is often integral to the character of buildings and that of the wider street scene. It is important in terms of the positive contribution historic shop fronts make to the character of an area, and also the economic benefit of providing traditional and bespoke shopping units to shop owners.
- 12.27 A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, and the NPPF sets out that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

### DES8 – Shopfronts and Advertisements

Proposals for new shopfronts and advertisements must be appropriate to the character of the location and should not detract from the significance of heritage assets<sup>41</sup>.

#### Shopfronts

a) Proposals for shopfronts must:

- i. Retain existing historic shopfronts and features of architectural and historic interest and, where appropriate, restore or enhance historic shopfronts;
- ii. Be appropriate to the scale, proportions, character and materials of the whole building and, where appropriate, adjoining buildings and the wider street scene; and
- iii. Incorporate materials appropriate to the age and character of the building.

#### Advertisements

b) Proposals for advertisements must:

- i. Preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets;

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<sup>41</sup> In assessing whether a proposal complies, regard will be given to the specific guidance in the 'Design Guidance: Shopfronts and Advertisements' available via the SADC website.

- ii. Avoid contributing to visual clutter, taking into account cumulative impacts, and should remove redundant signage;
  - iii. Only provide illumination where designed to respond positively to the site's context. Internal illumination within Conservation Areas will be refused;
  - iv. Not be placed above fascia level on shopfronts and should not normally be placed above ground floor level;
  - v. Be acceptable in relation to public safety; and
  - vi. Be capable of adhering to the 'standard conditions' set out in the Advertisement Regulations<sup>42</sup>.
- c) Advertisements on buildings must respect the scale, proportions, character, features and materials of the whole building and, where appropriate, adjoining buildings and the wider street scene.
- d) Within Areas of Special Control, advertisements must preserve the special character of the District's countryside.
- e) Poster and banner advertisements will normally be resisted, particularly where they are located in residential areas, villages and Conservation Areas.

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<sup>42</sup> Schedule 2 ("the standard conditions") of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (or equivalent amended conditions)

# Chapter 13 –Health and Wellbeing

## Objective

*Promote active, healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life.*

## Introduction

- 13.1 National policy supports local authorities creating and maintaining healthy and safe communities. This chapter sets out the key areas where the Council can have a positive influence through this Plan.
- 13.2 The Royal Town Planning Institute document ‘Enabling Healthy Placemaking’ (2020) sets out that health needs to be a core consideration for planning. While the land use planning system cannot resolve all of this on its own, it can play its part to help, and health is a key thread running through the Local Plan, from encouraging active populations through priority for pedestrians and cyclists, to better quality green spaces to spend time in, and access to jobs and more affordable homes. It is important to support and encourage an active population to help tackle health issues such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.
- 13.3 The King’s Fund report, ‘Driving better health outcomes through Integrated Care Systems – The role of District councils’ (2023) key message is that District Council services across housing, planning, economic development, welfare, leisure and environmental health have a greater influence on population health outcomes than the quality of health services.
- 13.4 The overall health of St Albans District residents is ‘Good’ against England monitored indicators; excess weight, smoking and physical activity.
- 13.5 While St Albans District is wealthy overall and has a high average wage it does, however, have some areas of relatively higher deprivation in terms of income, jobs and health outcomes. However, nowhere in the District comes within the top 20% most deprived areas in England as per the ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation.

### **Strategic Policy SP13 – Health and Wellbeing**

The Council aims to improve people’s health and wellbeing and encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle through non-clinical initiatives. The overall priorities are to:

- Improve physical health and wellbeing;
- Improve mental health and wellbeing; and
- Reduce inequalities

These priorities will be sought through relevant policies throughout this Plan, and in particular the Council supports pursuing the following:

- a) Improved walking and cycle infrastructure to allow people to move around more easily using active modes of travel, so reducing air pollution and increasing levels of everyday exercise;
- b) Creating more opportunities for active play for children;

- c) Seeking provision for exercise and sports, including trim trails in areas of open space;
- d) Considering using areas of open space to provide sensory gardens to benefit physical and mental relaxation;
- e) New development to provide new or enhance existing green and blue spaces as set out in Policy NEB12;
- f) Increased tree planting and support for biodiversity as set out in Policies NEB1 and NEB6;
- g) —
- h) Ensuring major developments promote active design having regard to relevant guidance, including that from Sport England, as set out in Policy DES2;
- i) Encouraging designs that reduce community severance and improve opportunities for social interaction, including reducing the dominance of the car;
- j) Affordable housing provision and necessary mix of housing types so local people have more opportunities to live locally as set out in Policies HOU1 and HOU2;
- k) Providing access to healthy foods, including through access to shops and food growing;
- l) Protecting allotments and seeking to create new allotments as set out in Policies NEB3 and NEB12;
- m) Schemes to be resilient and adaptable to Climate Change, including through SUDs, rainwater collection, and efficient design in line with Policies CE1 and NEB8;
- n) Considering the impacts of pollution and microclimates, and designing schemes to reduce any potential negative outcomes;
- o) Ensuring development embraces and respects the context and heritage of the surrounding area as set out in Policies HE1 and HE2; and
- p) Supporting the value of equestrian activities and associated infrastructure.

## **Air and Noise Pollution**

- 13.6 The Council recognises four main types of pollution that it can have a direct influence over air, noise, light and land pollution.
- 13.7 Air and noise pollution are identified as issues in national policy. Air pollution is damaging to human health, as well as wildlife and ecosystems, and buildings. Much of the air pollution is caused by motor vehicles and there is one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in St Albans District.
- 13.8 There are many sources of noise pollution, most commonly from road traffic, as well as from commerce and industry, and social, entertainment or sporting venues. Road traffic noise impacts negatively on the urban and rural areas of the District. In some cases noise pollution can affect a person's wellbeing. Inappropriate traffic speeds can also generate excess noise and affect the quality of the local environment and people.

The DEFRA England Noise and Air Quality Viewer online shows three large noise corridors affecting the District: the M1, A1 and M25.

13.9 Noise pollution uses the following scale:

Not present	Present and not intrusive	Present and intrusive	Present and disruptive	Present and very disruptive
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Source: Planning Practice Guidance: Noise

13.10 Where noise pollution cannot be prevented, mitigation should be sought. Mitigation measures will depend on the proposed development and needs to be proportionate to the likely impact.

13.11 Examples of mitigation of air and noise pollution include maintaining adequate separation distances between roads, sources of air pollution and people, and using green infrastructure, in particular trees, where this can create a barrier or maintain separation between sources of pollution and receptors. Appropriate soundproofing on affected properties can be used.

### HW1 – Air and Noise Pollution

Development proposals, including those for new residential dwellings, schools, nurseries and care homes and other uses which are noise and pollution sensitive; or in areas which may exceed national legislative air quality pollution limits; must demonstrate suitable mitigation, including as required:

- a) Maintaining distances between road and other sources of noise and air pollution (including odour pollution) and people;
- b) Using green infrastructure, in particular trees, where this can create a barrier or maintain separation between sources of pollution and receptors;
- c) Appropriate means of filtration, ventilation and soundproofing on affected buildings;
- d) Effective control of dust and emissions from construction, operation and demolition;
- e) Use of optimal layout and orientation to promote avoidance of elevated pollution without mitigation which will reduce the level of mitigation where necessary;
- f) Air quality and / or noise assessments at the earliest stage of development.

Development proposals that would generate new noise and air pollution in proximity to residential and other noise-sensitive uses must demonstrate and put in place measures to avoid or mitigate any such impacts.

### Light Pollution

13.12 Artificial lighting needs to be considered when a development may increase levels of lighting, or where an area would be sensitive to prevailing levels of artificial lighting. Artificial light provides benefits such as illumination of public areas for safety and security, and extended hours for sports and recreation. It can, however, also be

harmful, potentially causing sleep and physiological problems, and can negatively affect wildlife and plants.

- 13.13 The natural view of stars and planets are vanishing under the impacts of light pollution known as 'skyglow,' affecting scientists and the casual observer alike. Use should also be made of GN01/21 The Reduction of Obtrusive Light, by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) in respect of how development can avoid glare, light spill, excessive light and reflected light (skyglow).

## **HW2 – Light Pollution**

Development must be designed to minimise or prevent any detrimental impact of external lighting on local amenity and safety, biodiversity, heritage assets, roads and woodlands and rivers.

This includes new residential, employment, retail development, as well as sporting and entertainment venues and new roads and their associated infrastructure. This should be achieved by careful consideration of the lighting used in terms of its level of luminosity, siting, direction of the lighting beam, and hours of operation. The effects of glare, light spill, excessive light and reflected light (skyglow) should be minimised through good design, type of lighting, appropriate equipment, timing of use and potentially, landscaping. Proposals for lighting within different Environmental Zones<sup>43</sup> will be assessed accordingly.

Redevelopment or refurbishment of existing buildings and infrastructure that are subject to planning approval should seek to minimise the impact of light pollution.

## **Contaminated Land**

- 13.14 Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines 'contaminated land' as land where substances in, on or under that land (e.g. heavy metals, fuels, oils, tars, chemical substances, gases, vapours and / or asbestos) could cause:
1. Significant harm or significant possibility of such harm to people, the built environment and natural environment
  2. Significant pollution of surface waters or groundwater, or there is significant possibility of such pollution being caused.
- 13.15 This contamination is usually associated with historical industrial uses such as former factories, heavy industry, petrol stations, mines, refineries and / or waste landfill sites. The Council has a duty to maintain a Contaminated Land Register.

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<sup>43</sup> As defined by Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance

### **HW3 – Contaminated Land**

Any development proposals which would cause harm to the environment or neighbouring land or properties from a significant increase in pollution into the air, soil or any water body by virtue of the emissions of fumes, particles, effluent, radiation, smell, heat, light, noise or noxious substances, will not be permitted.

Any development proposals on sites affected by contamination or land stability issues must demonstrate that a safe development can be secured. Responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and / or landowner. Conditions will be applied to ensure safe development.

### **Groundwater Pollution**

- 13.16 Source Protection Zones provide protection for groundwater supplies to safeguard drinking water quality. The whole District is covered by Source Protection Zones: Inner Zone 1, Outer Zone 2 or Total Catchment Zone 3. Certain activities and types of development are not appropriate within the zones, especially Inner Zone 1.

### **HW4 – Groundwater Pollution**

The Council supports the prevention of groundwater pollution and the protection of groundwater as a resource. Development must take account of the relevant advice with regards to the Source Protection Zone that it lies within. Developers must comply with the most up to date guidance provided by the Environment Agency (EA) to safeguard groundwater against pollution and seek the advice of the EA.

Two sites in the District have particular groundwater contamination that must be taken into consideration for proposals in these locations:

- There is a Contaminated Land Special Site in Sandridge, St Leonard's Court, from which a plume of bromate and bromide groundwater pollution stretches some 20 kilometres, approximately eastwards. Land use in this area should not exacerbate the groundwater pollution or interfere with remediation e.g. with infiltration drainage, or losing or damaging monitoring infrastructure and access to sample the groundwater and surface water; and
- The groundwater beneath Buncefield Oil Depot and down-hydraulic gradient (approximately stretching to the southeast) is impacted by fire-fighting chemicals, including PFAS.

For both of these above locations the Environment Agency must be consulted at the early stage of any proposals.

### **Health Impact Assessments**

- 13.17 Health Impact Assessments consider how the local population will be affected assessing both positive and negative health impacts. Hertfordshire County Council has a Health Impact Position Statement online which outlines their position on the need for them. They are concerned about groups who are particularly vulnerable to health inequalities, which includes;

- Children and young people
- Older adults

- People with disabilities
- People from lower socio-economic groups; and
- People with long term illnesses.

13.18 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) looks at wider determinants of health and in particular the effects on the vulnerable populations listed above, who are more likely to experience health inequalities. Hertfordshire County Council's new HIA Guidance and Toolkit provides further information.

### **HW5 – Health Impact Assessments**

Health Impact Assessments should have regard to the latest Hertfordshire County Council Position Statement, and the local Health Impact Assessment methodology set out in Hertfordshire County Council's Health Impact Assessment Guidance and Toolkit document.

A Health Impact Assessment must be submitted for the following types of applications:

- a) Residential proposals of 100 dwellings or more;
- b) Major transport infrastructure improvements, including major new roads or major new junctions, existing rail networks, rail stations, the Government permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and the proposed Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit (HERT);
- c) Any other locally or nationally significant infrastructure project;
- d) Landfill, waste treatment and management facilities, major composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, new minerals workings and aggregate depots, other permanent infrastructure such as coated stone plants or ready mix plants and recycling centres;
- e) Developments subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment; and
- f) Non-residential developments of over 1,000 square metres.

Where a Health Impact Assessment has identified an issue that may have a significant adverse impact, the applicant should set out how this will be addressed and mitigated as part of the proposal.

### **New development and existing uses (agent of change principle)**

13.19 National policy sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). It sets out that existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.

13.20 Development should be designed to protect the amenity of adjacent land uses and their occupants and local amenity, and to enhance the public realm. In accordance with the 'agent of change' principle, new development must ensure it does not cause

existing uses in the vicinity to curtail their activities. New development will be required to assess its potential impacts on neighbouring land uses, including the cumulative effects, and set out mitigation measures where appropriate. Policy HW1 requires mitigation of new development that would generate new noise and air pollution, and Policy HW4 seeks to protect such existing development from being curtailed by new development.

**HW6 – New development and existing uses (agent of change principle)**

New development must effectively integrate with existing uses, and existing businesses and community facilities must not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of it. Where such impacts arise and cannot be avoided through mitigation, planning permission will be refused.

# Chapter 14 – Implementation

## Introduction

- 14.1 A key test for the Local Plan at Examination in Public is that it must be shown to be effective, meaning that it should be deliverable over the Plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters.
- 14.2 Planning Practice Guidance states that early discussions with infrastructure providers and service delivery organisations is particularly important to identifying infrastructure deficits and requirements, and opportunities for addressing them.
- 14.3 Details of infrastructure requirements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) which identify infrastructure requirements across the District, setting out what is needed, where, and when. Developers must ensure that new development provides fully integrated infrastructure in line with the most recent Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and facilitate the growth proposals in this Local Plan through its provision.

## Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

- 14.4 Under the 2008 Planning Act, the Government introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy. The aim of the levy is to encourage development to contribute to the provision of strategic and local infrastructure. Section 106 (S106) contributions provide only a partial and variable response to funding infrastructure and it is intended that CIL will operate alongside S106 obligations. It is acknowledged that changes could be introduced to the developer contribution system during the lifetime of the Plan.
- 14.5 Currently, the Council seeks various contributions in respect of large scale and major development. The contributions normally sought on new developments are payable to either the Council or Hertfordshire County Council. Contributions sought by the County Council are set out in the Hertfordshire Planning Obligations Toolkit.

## Delivery of Infrastructure

**Strategic Policy SP14 - Delivery of Infrastructure**

Proposals should make provision for infrastructure that is necessary in order to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development. The Council will therefore:

- a) Ensure that planning obligations are only sought where they meet all of the following tests: necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. This includes on-site and / or off-site improvements and infrastructure necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development in order to:
  - i. Ensure appropriate provision of facilities and infrastructure for new residents;
  - ii. Help address cumulative impacts that might arise across multiple developments;

- iii. Avoid placing unreasonable additional burdens on the existing community or existing infrastructure;
  - iv. Mitigate any adverse impacts;
  - v. Enhance existing infrastructure, where appropriate, or make good their loss or damage; and
  - vi. Fund maintenance and / or operating costs of any such new infrastructure provision and / or demonstrate a financially robust and sustainable proposal for funding such costs. Where the Council facilitates or sets up an overarching stewardship body for any particular area or site, the costs of doing so, including retrospective set-up costs and contributions for resourcing and monitoring of community assets, will be borne by the development within that area or site and secured by a legal agreement.
- b) Ensure new infrastructure to support new development is operational no later than the completion of development or phase in which it is needed, unless otherwise agreed with relevant providers.
- ba) Ensure access is made available at nil cost in order not to restrict or delay delivery of strategic infrastructure and that the proposed development is designed to ensure good connectivity between the proposed development and adjacent sites including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian/bridleway access without impediment to or financial consideration for such connectivity. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site;
- c) Refuse planning permission where appropriate agreements or processes ensuring criteria (a) and (b) can be met are not in place;
  - d) Require proposals to have regard to any guidance or requirements in relation to planning obligations and any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), or their replacement;
  - e) Work with landowners, developers and other agencies in facilitating the delivery of sites identified in the Local Plan and seek to overcome known obstacles;
  - f) Require developers to fully justify their approach if they consider that viability issues impact the delivery of key infrastructure and / or mitigation measures; and
  - g) Expect that infrastructure requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Hemel Garden Communities IDP will be delivered. Where infrastructure requirements could render major development unviable, proposals should be supported by an independent and transparent viability assessment that accords with Planning Practice Guidance. Where proposals comprise part of an allocation site, the viability appraisal shall include a financial appraisal for the whole of the allocation site. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence, the Council will:
    - i. Use a financial review mechanism to review the viability of the development at an appropriate stage or stages prior to the completion to determine whether the viability has improved; and

- ii. Prioritise developer provision / contributions for critical and essential infrastructure based upon the detail of requirements outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
  - iii. Use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, where appropriate.
- h) Where appropriate, contributions towards infrastructure shall be payable where infrastructure has been forward funded or delivered in advance by others.

## Additional Requirements for Strategic Scale Development

- 14.6 To ensure appropriate delivery of infrastructure, there are additional requirements for major development.

### **IMP1 – Additional Infrastructure Requirements for Strategic Scale Development**

- a) Developers / applicants for Strategic Allocations and other Strategic Scale developments, defined as 100+ homes or 10,000 square metres of commercial floorspace (retail, leisure and industrial); are required to:
  - i. Engage with the Council and infrastructure providers and service delivery organisations in early pre-application discussions;
  - ii. Deliver infrastructure to a set of timescales agreed with the Council, infrastructure providers, service delivery organisations and any other relevant organisations, and set this out in the planning application;
- b) In order to deliver optimum infrastructure outcomes, neighbouring landowners / developers should facilitate and co-ordinate infrastructure provision together, or demonstrate why this cannot be achieved.
- c) Strategic Scale planning applications should be supported by information demonstrating that the developer has explored existing capacity (and opportunities for extending it) with the appropriate utilities providers. The siting and appearance of utilities infrastructure should be designed to minimise impacts on amenity and to be as unobtrusive as possible.

# Glossary

**Active Frontage** - Ground floors where windows and doors face onto the street, avoiding blank walls and which enable people to see into and out of buildings.

**Active Travel** - Non-motorised travel, such as walking and cycling.

**Adaptation (Climate Change) -**

Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of Climate Change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Affordable Homes** - Housing for sale or for rent for those whose needs are not being met by the market. This includes social rented housing, affordable rented housing and intermediate housing.

**Agent of Change Principle** - The new use is responsible for mitigating any future impacts on existing surrounding uses. New development must ensure it does not cause existing uses in the vicinity to curtail their activities, or have a negative impact on the local area (for example noise pollution).

**Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)** - Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

**Area of archaeological interest** - A locally designated area which holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

**Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** - report that summarises the performance of planning policies and is used to identify how effectively the Local Plan is implemented.

**Biodiversity** - The full diversity and extent of higher and lower plants, animals and micro-organisms, interacting with each other in a given area in a range of different habitats, maintaining ecosystems and providing important services.

**Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** - A way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity. It seeks to secure appropriate net gains in ecology on or as close to the development site as possible.

**Biodiversity Metric** - Also known as a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC), it is a metric which calculates (in terms of Biodiversity Units) the value of key habitat types on a site prior to development, site BU value post development and the type and value of any BU necessary for habitat creation or enhancements needed to achieve a given % of BNG on and / or off-site. The Government's advice is for the preferred use of the latest NE (DEFRA) metric.

**Blue Infrastructure** - Networks of water including (but not limited to) rivers, ponds, lakes and canals.

**BRE** - Building Research Establishment

**BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method)** - An assessment that measures the sustainability of a new building including issues related to energy, health and wellbeing, innovation, land use, materials, management, pollution, transport, waste and water.

**Brownfield Sites** - Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Building Regulations** - Government standards set for design and construction which apply to most new buildings and

alterations to existing buildings in England and Wales.

**Carbon Offset** - A method to reduce emissions by compensating elsewhere. These offsets are measures in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

**Care Home Accommodation** - Accommodation where personal care and accommodation are provided together as a package with no clear separation between the two, the person using the service cannot choose to receive personal care from another provider, people using the service do not hold occupancy agreements such as tenancy agreements, licensing agreements, licences to occupy premises, or leasehold agreements or a freehold, and likely CQC-regulated activity will be 'accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care'.

**Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC)** - An area of particular international importance included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations. The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is close to St Albans District within Dacorum.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

**Comparison Retail** - Retail items not bought on a frequent basis, for example televisions and white goods (fridges, dishwashers etc).

**Convenience Goods** - Convenience goods include everyday items such as food and drink.

**Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)** - A legal function that allows certain bodies which need to obtain land or property to do so without the consent of the owner.

**Conservation Area** - An area designated by the Council for its special architectural or historical interest. Within these areas

planning authorities have extra powers to control works and demolition of buildings to protect or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

**Controlled Parking Zones** - An area where all on street parking is controlled and restricted by the local Council.

**CQC** - Care Quality Commission

**DBC** - Dacorum Borough Council

**DEFRA** - UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**Density** - A measurement of how intensively land is occupied by built development. For housing, this is often measured in dwellings per hectare. Net dwellings per hectare is the density of the developable area only, and excludes land for infrastructure, main roads, schools and public facilities.

**Development Brief** - Informs developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a site, and the type of development expected or encouraged by local planning policies.

**Development Contributions** - Contribution in the form of money, land or other means collected from developers to deliver infrastructure. This could be through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or a Section 106 Agreement as well as onsite contributions.

**Development Plan Document (DPD)** - Development Plan Documents are prepared by local planning authorities and outline the key development goals. Examples of Development Plan Documents include Local Plans and Area Action Plans. DPDs form part of the statutory development plan for an area.

**District Centre** - A group of shops and some service outlets serving part of an urban area and providing a geographic focus for it, separate from the town centre but with more variety than local centres. As listed in policy RTC1 and defined on the Policies Map.

**Duty to Cooperate** - The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effective of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

**Evidence Base** - The information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in the Local Plan, including physical, economic and social characteristics of an area.

**FE** - Form Entry

**Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)** - An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)** - The geography of commercial property markets should be thought of in terms of the requirements of the market in terms of the location of premises, and the spatial factors used in analysing demand and supply, often known as the functional economic market area.

**Green Belt** - The designation around cities or built up area with the aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. As stated in the NPPF, the Green Belt serves five purposes, which are: to check 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 special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Green Infrastructure (GI)** - A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Green roof** - Also known as an eco-roof, living roof, or vegetated roof, is one that is either partially or completely covered in vegetation on top of the human-made roofing structure.

**GTP** - Growth and Transport Plan

**Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)** - An assessment which identifies any aspects of an emerging DPD / Local Plan that would have the potential to have a significant effect on certain designated wildlife sites (i.e. SACs (habitats), SPAs (birds), Ramsar Sites (wetlands)) and begin to identify appropriate mitigation measures where such effects are identified.

**Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)** - An assessment of land availability which identifies a future supply of land which is potentially suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the Plan period.

**HCC** - Hertfordshire County Council

**HCCSP** - Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

**Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** - An assessment of how a proposal may potentially affect health and wellbeing of a population.

**Heritage Impact Assessment** - An assessment of the significance of heritage and archaeological assets, the impact of development, and recommends mitigation.

**Heritage Asset** - A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significant meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**HERT** - Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transport Scheme

**Herts IQ** - Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter

**HGC** - Hemel Garden Communities

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)** - Identifies all the types of infrastructure (roads, health centres, schools etc) required to support the growth within an area.

**Intensification** - Further development within the existing urban area.

**LCWIP** - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

**Listed Building** - A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures.

**Local Centre** - An area including shops and facilities for local people.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - The local planning authority's scheduled plan for the preparation of Local Development Documents.

**Local Green Space** - A designated to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

**Local List** - A list of locally important buildings valued for their contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed building status.

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)** - a spatial strategy for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Prepared locally by a Government recognised 'responsible authority' (Hertfordshire County Council), it must:

- Agree priorities for nature's recovery;
- Map the most valuable existing areas for nature;
- Map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

**Local Nature Reserve (LNR)** - A statutory designation for a site on which a

public body has a legal involvement. Formally welcomed by Natural England on receipt of an acceptable management plan, it supports at least a local ecological value and enables high public involvement where understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

**Local Plan (LP)** - The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP)** - All local transport authorities are required to produce a Local Transport Plan. The Plan sets out the objectives and priority schemes for developing transport within the authority's area.

**Local Wildlife Site (LWS)** - Non-statutory sites of County / District value, important for the conservation of wildlife within the Borough. They do not benefit from legal protection, but all meet minimum criteria, are accountable to scrutiny by local and national expert bodies, and benefit from protection consistent with NPPF and local planning policies.

**Locally Listed Building** - Buildings, structures or monuments of local interest that contribute to the heritage, identity and streetscape of the District. Locally listed buildings do not merit statutory listing under the Planning Act (1990), but are considered to be of local architectural or historic value.

**Main Town Centre Uses** - Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**Major Developments** - For housing, development where 10 or more homes

will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Masterplan** - A type of planning brief outlining the preferred usage of land and the overall approach to the layout.

**Mixed-use Development** - A development that is comprised of different land uses, such as employment and residential uses.

**Mobility (Transport) Hub** - A facility that provides a convenient interchange between a range of mobility types (public transport, bikes, scooters etc.) for all users and which is co-located with other community facilities such as cafes, shops, parcel drops etc. For further advice, see CoMoUK Guidance.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)** - Published in March 2014, the NPPG adds further context to the NPPF and replaces over 7,000 pages of planning guidance that was previously published in separate document. The NPPG is separated into 48 pieces of guidance and covers topics such as: Local Plans, Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, Viability and Duty to Cooperate.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011). A Neighbourhood Plan would, once brought into effect, comprise part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. It would therefore, alongside any adopted Local Plan documents, need to be considered

when assessing any development proposals affecting the area.

**ONS** - Office for National Statistics

**Plots and Pitches** - For the purposes of this Plan, the term "pitch" means a plot on a "gypsy and traveller" site and "plot" means a pitch on a "travelling showpeople site". This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for "gypsies and travellers" and mixed-use plots for "travelling showpeople", which may need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

**Policies Map** - Illustrates on an Ordnance Survey base map the Policies contained within the Local Plan.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL)** - See entry for 'Brownfield site'.

**Protected Species** - Plants and animal species afforded protection under certain Acts and Regulations.

**Public Space** - streets, squares and any other spaces that are open to all.

**Regulation 18** - Part of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 sets out the requirements for invitation of bodies and persons to submit representations, which the Council must then take account of prior to Regulation 19 stage. Also known as the 'preparation' stage of emerging Local Plans.

**Regulation 19** - Part of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 19 sets out the requirements for making the revised draft Local Plan available prior to submission of the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate. Also known as the publication stage of emerging Local Plans.

**Renewable Energy** - Energy from renewable sources such as sunlight, wind, rain and geothermal heat. The use of these resources to create energy is sustainable for human consumption.

**Representation** - Formal term for comments / feedback submitted through a Local Plan consultation.

**Retail Hierarchy** - Classifies and ranks retail areas based upon the role, range of choice, distance people will travel and popularity from outside the town.

**RoWIP** - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

**SADC** - St Albans City and District Council

**SAMMS** - Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy

**SANG** - Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space

**Scheduled Monument** - Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that enjoy greater protection against inappropriate development through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**Section 106 Agreement (S106)** - A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

**Semi-Mature Tree** - The term 'semi-mature' tree indicates the tree has a stem of at least 18-20cm girth.

**Site Allocation** - Sites which are identified for a specific use e.g. housing on the Local Plan Policies Map.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Within any county, they represent part of the series of nationally important habitat sites.

**Social Infrastructure** - A wide variety of services that are essential to the sustainability and wellbeing of a community such as education facilities, places of worship, health provision,

community, cultural, recreation and sports facilities.

**Soundness** - Tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which must be passed before a Planning Inspector can recommend that a Local Plan (or other Development Plan Document) meets national requirements and can be adopted by the Council as policy. The four tests are that Local Plans should be: positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy.

**Source Protection Zone (SPZ)** - The Environment Agency identifies Source Protection Zones to protect groundwater from developments that may damage its quality.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - Sets out the processes to be used by the local authority in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of development plan documents and development management decisions.

**Strategic Allocation** - An allocation for development of 250 or more homes, or equivalent scale of employment use.

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** - An assessment on the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** - An assessment of a local planning authorities full housing need in a defined geographical area. The assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.

**Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)** - This is a key component of the evidence base. It is an assessment of land availability which identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over a plan period.

**Strategic-scale development** - Residential development of at least 100 dwellings or non-residential development of at least 10,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace.

**SRFI** - Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

**Strategic Sites Design Guidance (SSDG)** - Guidance which sets out design principles and a Masterplanning process for the high quality design of new strategic-scale developments, tailored to the local area context. It is formed of four documents: Design Principles, Design Toolkit, Masterplan Toolkit and Employment Toolkit.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** - Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - An appraisal of the economic, social and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with sustainable development.

**Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)** - An alternative solution to the direct channelling of water. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to control the quantity and rate of run-off from a development; to improve the quality of the run-off; and, to enhance the nature conservation, landscape and amenity value of the site and its surroundings.

**Town Centre** - Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas

predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area.

**TIA** - Transport Impact Assessment

**Transport Assessment (TA)** - A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel Plan** - A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action which is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** - A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to a tree preservation order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without consent of the local planning authority.

**Use Classes Order** - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments, group a number of land uses into categories or 'Use Classes'. Changes of use within the same Use Class or between certain different Use Classes as set out in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) are normally deemed to have consent and do not in most cases require specific planning permission.

**Windfall Sites** - Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process.

**ZOI** - Zone of Influence

# Part B – Site Allocations

See accompanying document.

# Appendix 0 – Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 replaced by the St Albans Local Plan to 2041

Local Plan Policy	Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 that the Draft Local Plan Policy is replacing
Strategic Policy SP1 - A Spatial Strategy for St Albans District	1 - Metropolitan Green Belt 2 - Settlement Strategy
LG1 – Strategic Allocations	4 - New Housing Development in Towns, 5 - New Housing Development in Specified Settlements
LG4 - Large, Medium and Small Sites	4 - New Housing Development in Towns, 5 - New Housing Development in Specified Settlements
LG4A - Regeneration Opportunity Sites	4 - New Housing Development in Towns, 5 - New Housing Development in Specified Settlements
LG5 - Green Belt	1 - Metropolitan Green Belt 96 - Medium Intensity Leisure Uses in the Green Belt
LG7 - Affordable housing in the Green Belt (rural exception sites)	8 - Affordable Housing in the Metropolitan Green
LG9 - Extension or Replacement of Buildings in the Green Belt	13 - Extension or Replacement of Dwellings in the Green Belt
Strategic Policy SP4 - Housing	10 - Loss of Residential Accommodation
HOU2 - Affordable Housing	4 - New Housing Development in Towns 5 - New Housing Development in Specified Settlements 7A - Affordable Housing in Towns and Specified
HOU6 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	18 - Residential Caravans, Mobile Homes and Dwellings Constructed of Short Life Materials
Strategic Policy SP5 - Employment and the Local Economy	19 - Overall Employment Strategy
EMP1 - Protected Employment Areas	20 - Development in Employment Areas
EMP3 - St Albans City Principal Office Locations	119 - St Albans City Centre Policy Area 5, Central Office Core

<b>Local Plan Policy</b>	<b>Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 that the Draft Local Plan Policy is replacing</b>
Strategic Policy SP6 - City, Town, District and Local Centres and Retail	51 - Shopping and Services Uses, Overall Strategy
TCR1 - Protecting Retail and Main Town Centre Uses	52 - Shopping Development in St Albans City Centre 53 - Shopping Development in Harpenden Town Centre 54 - Shopping Development in Neighbourhood Centres 55 - Local Shopping Facilities 56 - Loss of Retail Floorspace 57 - Service Uses 116 - St Albans City Centre Policy Area 2, Central Shopping Core 121 – St Albans City Centre Policy Area 7, (London Road East), 128 London Road (East) 128 - Harpenden Town Centre Policy Area 2, High Street (North)
TCR2 - Retail Uses outside Existing Centres	56 - Loss of Retail Floorspace
TCR4 - Visitor Economy	99 - Overnight Accommodation and Ancillary Facilities
Strategic Policy SP7 - Community Infrastructure	60A - Hospital Services 62 - Community Care
COM1 - Education	65 - Education Facilities 65A - Day Nurseries and Creches
COM3 - Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities	67 - Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities 91 - Location of Leisure Facilities
Strategic Policy SP8 - Transport Strategy	35 - Highway Improvements in Association with Development 97 - Existing Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways
TRA1 - Transport Considerations for New Development	34 - Highways Considerations in Development Control 35 Highway Improvements in Association with Development 36A -Location of New Development in Relation to Public Transport Network
TRA2 - Major Transport Schemes	31 - King Harry Junction Improvement St Albans 33 - Hemel Hempstead North-East Relief Road
TRA4 - Parking	39 - Parking Standard, General Requirements 40 - Residential Development Parking Standards 43 - Elderly Persons Dwellings and Residential Homes/hostels, Parking Standards 44 - Business Use, Industrial and Storage and Distribution Parking Standards 45 - Motor Trade Uses Parking Standards

<b>Local Plan Policy</b>	<b>Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 that the Draft Local Plan Policy is replacing</b>
	47 - Food and Drink Establishments Parking Standards 48 - Surgeries and Clinics Parking Standards 49 - Hotels and Guest Houses Parking Standards
Strategic Policy SP10 - Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure	106 - Nature Conservation
NEB1 - Woodlands, Trees and Landscape Features	74 - Landscaping and Tree Preservation
NEB2 - Local Green Spaces	75 - Green Space Within Settlements
NEB3 - Non-Designated Local Green Space	75 - Green Space Within Settlements, 95 - Allotments
NEB4 - Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas	75 - Green Space Within Settlements
NEB5 - Blue Infrastructure	84 - Flooding and River Catchment Management 84A - Drainage Infrastructure
NEB6 - Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain	106 - Nature Conservation
NEB7 - Biodiversity Provision in the Design of New Buildings and Open Spaces	106 - Nature Conservation
NEB8 - Managing Flood Risk	84 - Flooding and River Catchment Management, 84A - Drainage Infrastructure
NEB9 - Agricultural Land	102 - Loss of Agricultural Land
NEB10 - Landscape and Design	104 - Landscape Conservation
NEB11 - Chilterns National Landscape	104 - Landscape Conservation
NEB12 - Green Space Standards and New Green Space Provision	70 - Design and Layout of New Housing
HE1 - Designated heritage assets	85 - Development in Conservation Areas 86 - Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest 90 - Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings
HE2 - Non-designated heritage assets	87 - Locally Listed Buildings
HE4 - Scheduled Monuments	109 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments

<b>Local Plan Policy</b>	<b>Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 that the Draft Local Plan Policy is replacing</b>
HE5 - Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation	110 - Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation
HE6 - Archaeological Sites Subject to a Recording Condition	111- Archaeological Sites Where Planning Permissions May Be Subject to a Recording Condition
HE7 - Change of use and heritage assets	85 - Development in Conservation Areas, 86 - Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest 88 – New Uses for Historic Buildings
HE8 - Responsible retrofitting	85 - Development in Conservation Areas
Strategic Policy SP12 - High Quality Design	69 - General Design and Layout
DES1 - Design of New Development	70 - Design and Layout of New Housing 72 - Extensions in Residential Areas 74 - Landscaping and Tree Preservation
DES2 - Public Space	74 - Landscaping and Tree Preservation
DES5 - Amenity Standards	70 - Design and Layout of New Housing
DES6 - Building Heights	114 - St Albans City Centre, Building Height, Roofscape and Skyline
DES7 - Servicing of Development	37 - Commercial Servicing
DES8 - Shopfronts and Advertisements	78 - Advertisement Control 90 - Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings
HW2 - Light Pollution	80 - Floodlighting
Strategic Policy SP14 - Delivery of Infrastructure	143B - Implementation
<i>Saved Policy of the District Local Plan Review 1994 to be deleted without replacement</i>	7 - Houses in Multiple Occupation 9 - Non - Residential Uses Within Residential Areas 11 - Residential Conversion 12 - Accommodation for Relatives, Dependants or Staff 23 - Business Use Development 24 - Unallocated Employment Sites 26 - Land for Employment Development at North East Hemel Hempstead 36 - Roadside Services 42 - Loss of Residential Off-Street Parking Areas and Garage Courts

Local Plan Policy	Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 that the Draft Local Plan Policy is replacing
	<p>58 - Major Retail Development Outside Existing Town Centres</p> <p>60 - Garden Nurseries in the Green Belt</p> <p>73 - Article 4 Directions</p> <p>89 - New Uses for Historic Agricultural Buildings</p> <p>92 - New Indoor Sports Facilities</p> <p>93 - New Areas of Public Open Space</p> <p>98 - Kennels and Catteries</p> <p>113 - St. Albans City Centre, Environmental Enhancement Measures</p> <p>122 - St. Albans City Centre Policy Area 8, City Station/ Former London Road Station</p> <p>132 - Highfield Oval, Future Uses</p> <p>139 - Napsbury Hospital Redevelopment</p> <p>142B - Land at White Horse Lane, London Colney - Allotment Land</p> <p>143 - Land Use Proposals Within the Upper Colne Valley</p> <p>143A - Watling Chase Community Forest</p>

# Appendix 1 – Cycle and Car Parking Guidance and Standards for New Development

## 1. General Guidance

- a) The operation of the car parking standards is based on a zonal approach. Maps showing the current (2025) extent of Parking Zones 2 and 3 are included at the end of this Appendix; they are also available via the Council’s website, where any subsequent updated mapping will be shown. The amount of car parking to be provided for developments in each zone is shown in Figure 1 below:

Zone	Location	Land Use	Amount of Car Parking to be Provided
1	All St Albans District except Zones 2, 3 and 4	All Uses	Must normally meet parking standards in full
2	Most Sustainable and Accessible Areas	All Uses	50% of parking standard minimum; unless b) below applies
3	Areas of likely overnight parking stress	Residential	Any shortfall against standards (including a Zone 2 reduction where applicable) to be fully mitigated in accordance with Policy TRA4 c)
4	Strategic Allocations	All Uses	A bespoke parking strategy with lower than standard parking requirements should be developed, in accordance with Policy TRA4 e)

*Figure 1: Amount of car parking to be provided in each Zone*

- b) In locations within 400 metres walking distance of public car parks in the city, town, district and local centres set out in Chapter 6 of the Local Plan; for developments within Use Classes E, F.1, F.2, C1 (hotels only), and food and drink and entertainment uses which are proportionate to the size of the centre, on-site car parking provision will not normally be required. This is to support commercial development in central locations. In such locations on-site cycle parking will not normally be required, but where the Centre has an identified deficiency in high-quality cycle parking provision contributions may be sought to support improvements to cycle parking provision in the Centre.
- c) The standards set out below apply to on-site parking provision.
- d) Where necessary to ensure appropriate parking provision, a planning permission may include a condition to restrict development to a specific use within a Use Class<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended

- e) Additional spaces will not normally be required for householder extensions; however existing provision should not be lost where this would result in a shortfall against the parking standards.
- f) Where a requirement results in a fraction of a space, this should be rounded up to the nearest whole number. The exception to this is for single dwellings, where it should be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

2. Notes on vehicle parking standards:

- a) The required dimensions for car-parking spaces and manoeuvring areas should be in accordance with the latest guidance adopted by the Local Highway Authority (Hertfordshire County Council). The extant guidance<sup>45</sup> sets out that: parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.5 x 5 metres (and wider parking bays for use by disabled people should be provided); in lay-bys or on the public highway, bay lengths should be 6 metres; garage spaces must measure a minimum of 3 x 6 metres internally; and a driveway in front of a garage or gate should be set back 6m from the edge of the highway to allow for parking in front of the garage / gates.
- b) Motorcycle parking provision must be addressed in larger developments.
- c) It will not normally be necessary to make good any shortfall that may already exist on the site.

3. Notes on cycle parking standards

- a) For the purposes of applying the cycle parking standards from the table below, a 'space' is defined as a space to park one bicycle.
- b) A long term cycle parking space is one used for home cycle storage or primarily for employees at a place of work or at transport (mobility) hubs for an onwards journey. A short term cycle parking space is one used primarily by visitors at destinations.
- c) Cycle parking provision should be of good quality and in accordance with the guidance in Chapter 11 of the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' and any subsequent guidance / amendments; along with up to date guidance from Hertfordshire County Council<sup>69</sup>.
- d) If a development proposal does not fall within a land use covered by the cycle parking standards below, the standards for the closest appropriate equivalent category should normally be met.

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<sup>45</sup> The latest adopted HCC guidance is found in the Place & Movement Planning and Design Guide for Hertfordshire 2024

## Cycle Parking Standards<sup>46</sup>

Land use type	Sub-category	Short stay requirement (obvious, easily accessed and close to destination)	Long stay requirement (secure and ideally covered)
<b>All</b>	Parking for adapted cycles for disabled people	5% of total capacity co-located with disabled car parking.	5% of total capacity co-located with disabled car parking.
<b>Retail</b>	Small (<200m <sup>2</sup> )	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup>
	Medium (200-1,000m <sup>2</sup> )	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
	>1,000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 250m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Employment</b>	Office / Finance	1 per 1000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
	Industrial / Warehousing	1 per 1,000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Leisure and Institutions</b>	Leisure centres, assembly halls, hospitals and healthcare	Greatest of: 1 per 50m <sup>2</sup> or 1 per 30 seats / capacity	1 per 5 employees
	Educational Institutions	–	Separate provision for staff and students. Based on Travel Plan mode share targets, minimum: Staff: 1 per 20 staff Students; 1 per 10 students
<b>Residential</b>	All except sheltered / elderly housing or nursing homes	-	1 per bedroom
	Sheltered / elderly housing / nursing homes	0.05 per residential unit	0.05 per bedroom
<b>Public Transport Interchange</b>	Standard stop	Upon own merit	-
	Major interchange	1 per 200 daily users	-

<sup>46</sup> This table reproduces the ‘Suggested minimum cycle parking capacity for different types of land use’ in Table 11-1 of the Department for Transport’s (DfT’s) Local Transport Note 1/20 ‘Cycle Infrastructure Design July 2020; and if these DfT standards are updated the new updated standards will be applied.

## Residential Car Parking Standards

Use	Description	Car parking standards
Residential Within Use Class C3	a) General housing (including retirement and sheltered elderly persons accommodation, and similar non-C2 uses)	1 bedroom dwellings (including studios): 1.5 spaces (either 1.5 unallocated, or 1 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)  2 bedroom dwellings: either 2 spaces (either 2 unallocated or 1 allocated and 1 unallocated) or 2.5 spaces (2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)  3+ bedroom dwellings 2.5 spaces (2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)
	b) Not more than six residents living together as a single household	0.5 spaces per tenancy unit
Houses in multiple occupation Within Use Class C4	Small shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities	0.5 spaces per tenancy unit
Car parking for disabled motorists, to be included in the overall parking provision	(i) General	1 space for every dwelling built to mobility standards
	(ii) Elderly persons dwellings	
	Up to 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	3 spaces
	More than 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	1 space per 4 spaces
		Consideration should also be given to the provision of space and charging points for mobility scooters

## Non-Residential Car Parking Standards

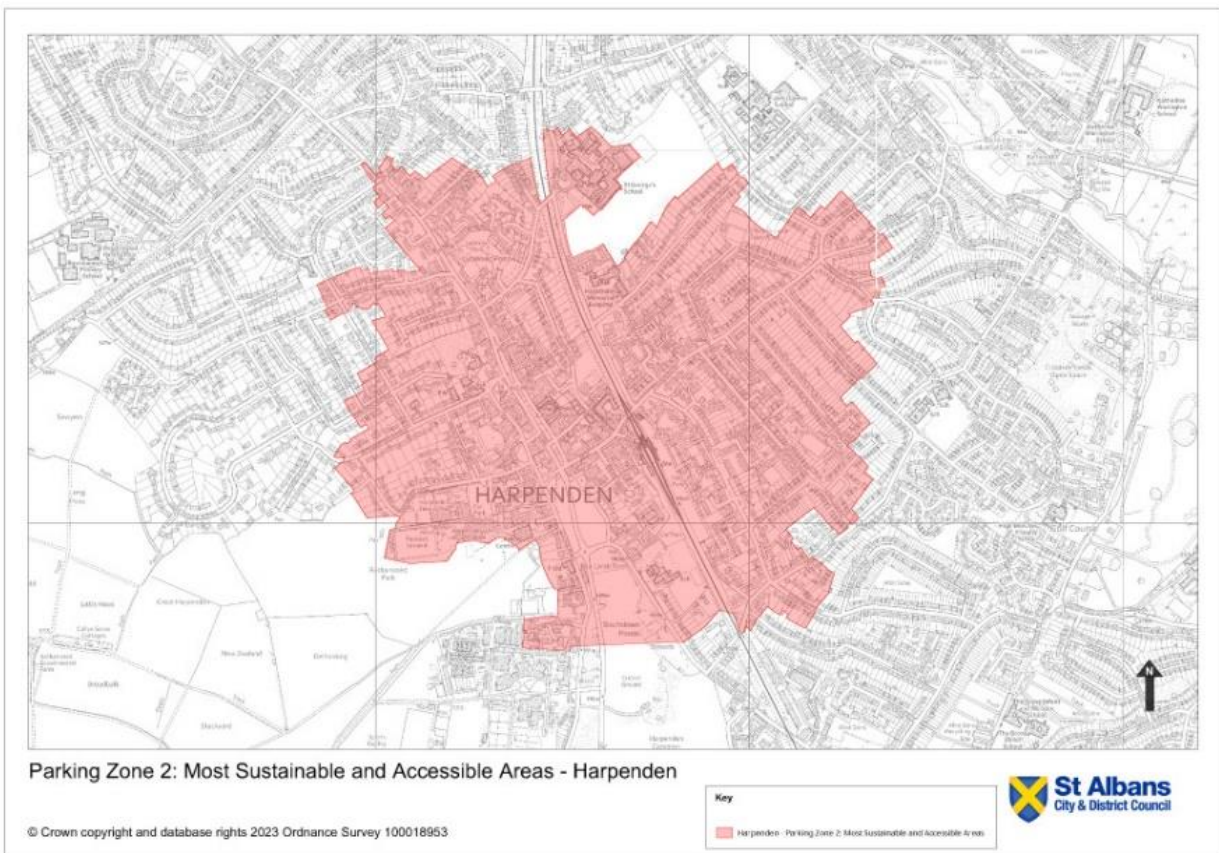
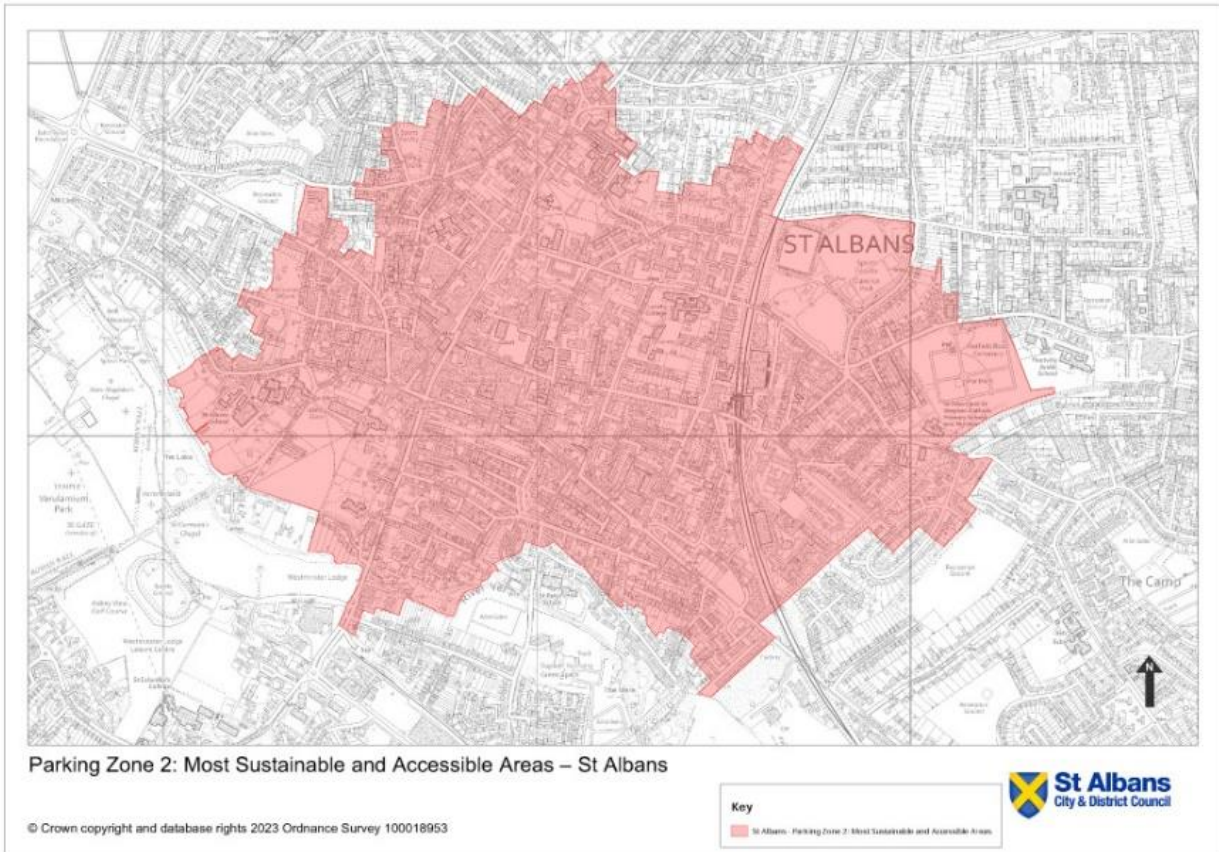
Use	Description	Car parking standards
Retail foodstores Within Use Class E (a) or F.2 (a)	a) Shops up to 500m <sup>2</sup> gross floor area (gfa)	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> gfa
	b) Supermarkets exceeding 500m <sup>2</sup> gfa, superstores and hypermarkets	1 space per 14m <sup>2</sup> gfa (including some spaces for parents and infants, near the store entrance)
Non-food retail Within Use Class E (a)	Non-food retail, including retail warehouses and garden centres	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> gfa
Financial & professional services Within Use Class E (c)	Banks, building societies, estate agencies, betting shops	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> gfa
Restaurants and cafés Within Use Class E (b)	a) Restaurants / cafés	1 space per 5m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace of dining area
	b) Roadside restaurants	1 space per 4m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace of dining area
	c) Transport café	1 lorry space per 3.5m <sup>2</sup> gfa
Drinking establishments Sui Generis	Public houses / bars	1 space per 3m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace of bar area
Hot food takeaways Sui Generis	a) Hot food takeaways (excluding fast food drive through restaurants)	1 space per 3m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace of public area
	b) Fast food drive through restaurants	1 space per 8m <sup>2</sup> gfa
Business Uses Within Use Class E (c)	(a) offices (b) research & development and (c) light industry	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> gfa
General industry Within Use Class B2	General industry	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup> gfa; lorry provision to be - 1 lorry space + 1 per 500 m <sup>2</sup> or in accordance with a site specific Transport Assessment
Storage & distribution Within Use Class B8	Wholesale distribution, builders merchants, storage	1 space per 75m <sup>2</sup> gfa; lorry provision to be - 1 lorry space plus 1 lorry space per 500 m <sup>2</sup> gross floor area or in accordance with a site specific Transport Assessment
Hotels & hostels Within Use Class C1 or Sui Generis	a) Hotels	
	(i) Bedrooms	1 space per bedroom (including staff accommodation)
	(ii) Staff	1 space per manager, plus 2 spaces per 3 other staff, minus spaces related to staff bedroom
	(iii) Restaurants and bars open to the public	As Restaurants and cafés and Drinking Establishments standards above for any restaurant and bar space over and above that needed to serve hotel residents
	(iv) Conference facilities	1 space per 5 seats
(v) Leisure facilities	Applicants must demonstrate that sufficient parking is provided	

Use	Description	Car parking standards
	(vi) Exhibition halls	1 space per 6m <sup>2</sup> of public area
	(vii) Coach parking	1 space per 100 bedrooms
	b) Hostels (i) Small (single parent or couple with no children) (ii) Family (2 adults with children)	3 spaces per 4 units  1 space per unit
Residential institutions Within Use Class C2 or C2a	a) Residential home / hostel with care staff working on premises (includes elderly persons homes and nursing homes)	Residents: 1 space per 5 bedspaces Staff living on premises: As C3 (a) below Staff living elsewhere: 1 space per 2 staff
	b) Hospitals	1 space per 0.5 beds or to be decided on individual merits (including a full transport assessment and proposals in a travel plan)
	c) Education - halls of residence	Staff: 1 space per 2 full-time staff Students: 1 space per 3 students (but with linkage to student transport plans where appropriate)
Non-residential institutions Within Use Class E, Use Class F.1 or Use Class C2	a) Public halls / places of assembly	1 space per 9m <sup>2</sup> gfa or 1 space per 3 fixed seats plus 3 spaces per 4 staff members
	b) Community / family centres	1 space per 9m <sup>2</sup> gfa plus 1 space per full-time staff member or equivalent
	c) Day centres	1 space per 2 staff members plus 1 space per 3 persons attending or 1 space per 9m <sup>2</sup> gfa
	d) Places of worship	1 space per 10m <sup>2</sup> gfa
	e) Surgeries & clinics (including doctors', dentists', vet's surgeries, and to health centres and clinics)	3 spaces per consulting room plus 1 space per employee other than consulting doctors / dentists / vets
	f) Libraries, miscellaneous cultural buildings	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> gfa of freestanding development (otherwise assessed on merits)
	g) Miscellaneous cultural buildings	2 spaces plus 1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> of public floorspace
	h) Educational establishments (including residential) (i) schools and higher and further education  (ii) nursery schools / playgroups  Note: overspill parking for community purposes (outside school day) should be catered for	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 space per 15 students (i.e. total number of students attending an educational establishment, rather than full-time equivalent figures)  1 space per 4 pupils

Use	Description	Car parking standards
	by use of dual purpose surfaces such as school play areas	
Assembly & leisure Within Use Class E, F.2 or Sui Generis	a) Indoor uses (except cinemas and conference centres) - includes entertainment / leisure uses and indoor sports uses	1 space per 22m <sup>2</sup> gfa
	b) Cinemas (including multiplexes) and conference centres	1 space per 5 seats
	c) Stadia	Cars: 1 space per 15 seats and standing spaces Coaches: To meet likely demand
	d) Outdoor tennis	4 spaces per court
	e) Outdoor sports grounds (i) with football pitches (ii) without football pitches	20 spaces per pitch 50 spaces per hectare
	f) Golf (i) 18 hole golf course (ii) 9 hole golf course (iii) golf driving range (iv) golf courses larger than 18 holes and / or for more than local use	100 spaces 60 spaces 1.5 spaces per tee to be decided in each case on individual merits
	Motor trade related	a) Employees
b) Showroom car sales		1 space per 10 cars displayed
c) Vehicle storage		2 spaces per showroom space or to be decided in each case on individual merits
d) Hire cars		1 space per 2 hire cars based at site
e) Ancillary vehicle storage		3 spaces or 75% of total if more than 3 vehicles
f) Workshops		3 spaces per bay (for waiting & finished vehicles) in addition to repair bays
g) Tyre & Exhaust		2 spaces per bay
h) Parts stores / sales		3 spaces for customers
i) Car wash / petrol filling station		3 waiting spaces per bay or run in to row of bays (additional parking is required where a shop is provided)
Public transport facilities	a) Rail stations	to be decided in each case on individual merits
	b) Bus stations	to be decided in each case on individual merits
Car parking for disabled motorists, to be included in the	a) Employment generating development	

Use	Description	Car parking standards
overall parking provision	(i) up to 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	individual spaces for each disabled employee plus 2 spaces or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater
	(ii) more than 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	6 spaces plus 2% of total capacity
	b) Shops / premises to which the public have access / recreation	
	(i) up to 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	3 spaces or 6% of total capacity, whichever is greater
	(ii) more than 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	4 spaces plus 4% of total capacity

# Parking Zones Maps





Parking Zone 3: Areas of likely overnight parking stress

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**Key**

- Parking Zone 3: Areas of likely overnight parking stress



# Appendix 1A – Hertfordshire County Council’s Development thresholds requiring Travel Plans

Land Use	Measure	Travel Plan Statement	Full Travel Plan
A1 Food retail	Gross Floor Area	>250<800 sq. m	>800 sq. m
A1 Non-food retail	Gross Floor Area	>800<1500 sq. m	>1500 sq. m
A2 Financial and professional services	Gross Floor Area	>100<2500 sq. m	2500 sq. m
A3 Restaurants and cafés	Gross Floor Area	>300<2500 sq. m	2500 sq. m
A4 Drinking establishments	Gross Floor Area	>300<600 sq. m	>600 sq. m
A5 Hot-food takeaway	Gross Floor Area	>250<500 sq. m	>500 sq. m
B1 Business	Gross Floor Area	>1500<2500 sq. m	>2500 sq. m
B2 General Industry	Gross Floor Area	>2500<4000 sq. m	>4000 sq. m
B8 Storage or distribution	Gross Floor Area	>3000<5000 sq. m	>5000 sq. m
C1 Hotels	Bedrooms	>75<100 bedrooms	>100 bedrooms
C2 Residential institutions – hospitals, nursing homes	Beds	>30<50 beds	>50 beds
C2 Residential institutions – residential education	Students	>50<150 students	>150 students
C2 Residential institutions – institutional hostels	Residents	>250<400 residents	>400 residents
C3 Dwelling houses	Dwelling unit	>50<80 units	>80 units
D1 Non-residential institutions	Gross Floor Area	>500<1000 sq. m	>1000 sq. m
D2 Assembly and leisure	Gross Floor Area	>500<1500 sq. m	>1500 sq. m
Educational establishments	Increase in pupil numbers and/or further development of the site		
Others	Discuss with the county council		

Strategic sites	Larger developments for specified land uses require TRICS SAM monitoring
C3 Dwelling houses	>250 units
A1 food retail	>2000 sq. m

## Appendix 2 – List of Scheduled Monuments

- Romano-British cemetery, Rothamsted, Harpenden Rural,
- The Aubreys Camp, Redbourn
- Wheathampstead Earthwork incorporating Devils Dyke and The Slad, Sandridge
- Devils Ditch, Gorhambury, St. Michael
- Bacon's House, Old Gorhambury, St. Michael
- The Pondyards, Gorhambury, St. Michael
- Verulamium, Bacon's Mount, St. Michael
- Site of Verulamium, St. Albans
- Verulamium, The Fosse, St. Albans
- Verulamium, part of wall and ditch of Roman City, St. Albans
- Verulamium, Prae Wood settlement, St. Michael Beech Bottom Dyke, Sandridge
- The Clock Tower, St. Albans
- St. Albans Abbey Gatehouse, St. Albans
- St. Albans Abbey, Site of Conventual Buildings, St. Albans
- The Benedictine Priory of St Mary (Sopwell Priory) and the post-medieval mansions known as Sopwell House or Lee Hall, St. Albans
- Batch Wood, moated manorial site, St. Michael
- Colney Chapel moated site, London Colney
- Replica of the Mohne Dam, in the grounds of the Building Research Establishment, Garston, St. Stephen

## Appendix 3 – List of Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation

- Roman Site, Friars Wash, Redbourn
- Roman Villa, Childwickbury, St. Michael
- Belgic Occupation Area, Wheathampstead
- Enclosure and Ring Ditch, Nomansland Common, Wheathampstead
- Land adjacent to Batch Wood moated manorial site, St. Michael
- Three Enclosures, Gorhambury / Butlers Farm, St. Michael
- Roman Occupation Area, North of Verulamium, St. Albans
- Belgic Occupation Area, East of Prae Wood, St. Albans / St Michael
- Roman Kilns, Smug Oak, St. Stephen
- Abbey Precincts, St. Albans

## Appendix 4 – List of Archaeological Sites Which May Be Subject to a Recording Condition

- Cropmarks, near Friars Wash, Redbourn
- Area around Roman Mausoleum, Rothamsted
- Medieval Manor, Rothamsted
- Medieval Manor, Harpendenbury
- Saxon and Medieval Village, Redbourn
- Area around the Aubreys, Redbourn
- Cropmarks, Beaumont Hall, Redbourn
- Medieval Manor, Redbournbury
- Earthwork Enclosure, Redbournbury / Childwickbury
- Roman and Medieval site, Thane's Wood, Mud Lane, Harpenden
- Roman and Medieval site, Clappers Wood, Ayres End Lane, Harpenden
- Prehistoric Ring Ditch (Cropmark), Bride Hall Lane
- Cropmark, Bladderwood
- Area around Belgic Oppidum and Cropmarks north of River Lea, Wheathampstead
- Saxon and Medieval Village, Wheathampstead
- Possible Roman building and environs, Amwell
- Prehistoric and Saxon finds, Nomansland Common
- Cropmark, Sandridgebury
- Saxon and Medieval Village, Sandridge
- Area of Roman finds, Porters Wood, Sandridge
- Cropmark, Butlers Farm
- Cropmark, Old Jeromes
- Area around Verulamium
- Area around Beech Bottom, St. Albans
- St. Albans - including Saxon Kingsbury, the Saxon and Medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery
- Medieval Village site, Westwick
- Cropmarks and Medieval village site, Windridge
- Cropmarks, Westfield Farm
- Area of Roman occupation, Potterscrouch
- Earthworks, St. Julians Wood

- Cropmarks of Enclosures, Plaistowes Farm
- Medieval Manor and Deserted Village, Burston Manor
- Medieval and Roman sites, Holt Farm
- Cropmarks, Searches Farm
- Belgic and Roman Site, Waterdale
- Roman tile kiln site, Blackboy Pit, Bricket Wood
- Palaeolithic to Saxon finds, Cube Valley including the site of the Medieval village of Hansteads
- Roman and Medieval occupation site, the Wick, Sandpit Lane, St. Albans
- Roman and Medieval occupation site, west of Knight's Wood, Tyttenhanger
- Cropmarks, Shenleybury Roman Kilns,
- Houndswood Medieval Village Centre, Harpenden
- Cropmarks, London Colney
- Area around Medieval Moated Chapel,
- All Saints Convent, London Colney

# Appendix 5 – List of Sites Subject to the Council’s Heritage Impact Assessment

- H1 - North Hemel Hempstead, AL3 7AU
- H2 - East Hemel Hempstead (North), HP2 7HT
- H3 - East Hemel Hempstead (Central), HP2 7LF
- H4 - East Hemel Hempstead (South), HP2 4PA
- B1 - North St Albans, AL3 6DD
- B2 - North East Harpenden, AL5 5EG
- B3 - West Redbourn, Redbourn, AL3 7HZ
- B5 - Glinwell, Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL4 0HE
- B6 - West of London Colney, AL2 1LN
- B7 - North West Harpenden, AL5 3NP
- B8 - Harper Lane, north of Radlett, WD7 7HU
- L1 - Burston Nurseries, North Orbital Road, St Albans, AL2 2DS
- L2 - West of Watling Street, Park Street, AL2 2PZ
- L3 - East and West of Miriam Lane, Chiswell Green, AL2 3NY
- M2 - Hill Dyke Road, Wheathampstead, AL4 8TR
- M3 - Bedmond Lane, St Albans, AL3 4AH
- M6 - South of Harpenden Lane, Redbourn, AL3 7RQ
- M8 - Verulam Golf Club, St Albans, AL1 1JG
- M9 - Amwell Top Field, Wheathampstead, AL4 8DZ
- M14 - Beesonend Lane, Harpenden, AL5 2AB
- M17 - North of Wheathampstead Road, Harpenden, AL5 1AB
- M18 - North East of Austen Way, St Albans, AL4 0XH
- M21 - Rothamsted Lodge, Hatching Green, AL5 2GT
- M22 - Wood End, Hatching Green, Harpenden, AL5 2JT
- P2 - Land at North Orbital Road, AL2 1DL
- U2 - Land South West of London Colney Allotments, AL2 1RG
- UC4 - Car Park to rear of 32-34 Upper Marlborough Road, St Albans, AL1 3UU
- UC5 - 18- 20 Catherine Street, St Albans, AL3 5BY
- UC7 - 5 Spencer Street, St Albans, AL3 5EH
- UC11 - 50 Victoria Street, St Albans, AL1 3HZ
- UC19 - 50-54 Lemsford Road St Albans, AL1 3PR
- UC20 - 104 High Street, London Colney, AL2 1QL

- UC27 - Berkeley House, Barnet Road, London Colney, AL2 1BG
- UC35 - Market Depot, Drovers Way, St Albans, AL3 5FA
- UC54 - Harpenden Railway Station Car Park East, Harpenden, AL5 4SP
- UC57 - Telford Court, Alma Road, St Albans, AL1 3BP
- OS2 - Toulmin Drive / Highelms, St Albans, AL3 6DX
- OS3 - Extension to Rothamsted Research, Harpenden Campus, AL5 2JQ
- OS4 - Extension to Rothamsted Research, Harpenden Campus, AL5 2JQ
- ROS1 - Civic Close Car Park Bricket Road, St Albans, AL1 3JX
- ROS2 - London Road Car Park, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1NG
- ROS3 - Keyfield Terrace Car Park, Keyfield Terrace, St Albans, AL1 1PD
- ROS4 - Bowers Way East Car Park Bowers Way, Harpenden, AL5 4EQ
- ROS8 - Garage Block west of Thirlestane, St Albans, AL1 3PE
- ROS9 - Garage block to front of 94-142 Riverside Road, Riverside Road, St Albans, AL1 1SE
- ROS5 - Car Park to rear of 85-101 Hatfield Road, Hatfield Road, AL1 4JL
- ROS11 - Garage Site adj. Verulam House, Verulam Road, St Albans, AL3 5EN
- ROS6 - Car Park adj. to 42-46 Adelaide Street, St Albans, AL3 5BH

## Appendix 6 – Monitoring Framework

Chapter	Policy	Proposed Measures/ Indicators	Target
<b>1 – A Spatial Strategy for St Albans City and District</b>	SP1 – A Spatial Strategy for St Albans District	Net additional dwellings completed	Adopted LP requirements
<b>2 – Climate Emergency</b>	SP2 – Responding to the Climate Emergency	Number / percentage of additional dwellings built on previously developed land	-
<b>3 – Sustainable Use of Land and Green Belt</b>	SP3 – Land and the Green Belt	Net additional dwellings completed	Adopted LP requirements
		Five year land supply (estimated dwelling numbers)	Adopted LP requirements
	LG5 – Green Belt	Area of Green Belt (Hectares)	-
	LG8 – Small Scale Development in Green Belt Settlements	Net Additional Dwellings Completed, by Settlement Category / Settlement	-

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Proposed Measures/ Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>4 – Housing</b>	SP4 – Housing	Type - dwelling completion numbers by detached houses / terraced houses / apartments, on market / affordable split	-
	HOU1 – Housing Mix	Size - dwelling completions by number of bedrooms (bed spaces), on market / affordable split	-
	HOU2 – Affordable Housing	Number / Percentage of gross dwellings completed as affordable	-
		Affordable housing completions by type	-
	HOU5 – Self-Build and Custom-Build Housebuilding	SADC Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Relevant Permissions and Plots	-
		SADC Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Registrations	-
	HOU6 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Net additional pitches	-
<b>5 – Economy and Employment</b>	SP5 – Employment and the Local Economy	New employment development land (hectares) immediately available (outline permission)	-
	EMP1 – Protected Employment Areas	Change in employment (B use class - B2 / B8 and E use class – E(g)(i) / E(g)(ii) / E(g)(iii)) floor space stock (by type - office / industrial and warehousing ‘shed’ - and by main employment location)	No employment floor space on Protected Employment Area (PEA) designated employment areas lost to non-employment uses

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Proposed Measures/ Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>
	EMP3 – St Albans City Core Principal Office Location	Office to Residential – Prior Approvals with Permission to be Completed	-
<b>6 – City, Town, District and Local Centres and Retail</b>	TCR1 – Protecting Retail and Main Town Centre Uses	<p>Change in retail / service / leisure floor space stock (by centre / frontage and by type - retail / food and drink / other services)</p> <p>St Albans City Centre Primary Shopping Area, Vacant Units &amp; Use Class</p> <p>St Albans City Centre Primary Shopping Area, Percentage Use Class</p> <p>St Albans City Centre Non-Primary Shopping Area, Vacant Units &amp; Use Class</p> <p>St Albans City Centre Non-Primary Shopping Area, Percentage Use Class</p> <p>The above are repeated for Harpenden Town Centre, District (Neighbourhood) Centres, Local Centres and Out of Centre Retail Parks</p>	-
<b>7 – Community Infrastructure</b>	SP7 – Community Infrastructure	Infrastructure Funding Statement	-
	COM1 – Education	Infrastructure Funding Statement	-
	COM3 – Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities	Infrastructure Funding Statement	-
<b>8 – Transport</b>	SP8 – Transport Strategy	Infrastructure Funding Statement (HCC)	-

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Proposed Measures/ Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure</b>	NEB2 – Local Green Spaces	Loss of Local Green Spaces	No net loss of Local Green Spaces
<b>14 – Implementation</b>	SP14 – Delivery of Infrastructure	Infrastructure Funding Statement (and HCC IFS)	-